

Scholarship Tips

- 🍏 **Your application is the interview.** Selection committee members do not know you, your family members or friends and in most instances, will not meet you before the award decision is made. Your application must sufficiently represent your interests, values, achievements and future plans. Take every opportunity to make a good impression.
- 🍏 **View your complete application as the entire package.** Everything you want people to know about you should be found in the application you submit.
- 🍏 **Start early & make sure it is complete.** Send/submit your completed application as early as possible and make sure all required documents are included. If by mistake there is missing information, this gives extra time for it to be caught and remedied before the deadline.
- 🍏 **Don't leave any area of the application blank.** It might be appropriate to use the term "Does not Apply" but make sure you think about why the question was asked. Remember, questions asked on applications are used for committee members to learn something about you.
- 🍏 **Brainstorm.** Take time to write down all of your accomplishments, interests and activities. Think outside of what you do in school – include community, church and family activities. Ask your parents, family members, school advisors or others that know you well for help. After brainstorming, make sure you include a diverse group of items from your list in your application somewhere, stressing those most important to you.
- 🍏 **Review the application more than once.** Read all directions thoroughly and make sure all parts of the application are complete. Don't forget attachments. If the application requests an official copy of your transcript – make sure you submit an official copy.
- 🍏 **Use Microsoft Word to spell check.** Online applications might not spell check for you. Type the information in a Microsoft Word or other word processing document, spell check and then cut and paste into the application.
- 🍏 **Show that you can thrive at a college level.** Scholarships are competitive. Show that you deserve a scholarship and will utilize it to succeed in college.
- 🍏 **Think about the final appearance of the application and delivery.** Should your application be handwritten? If so, make sure it is legible, otherwise type the information. Deliver the application neat and clean. Think about how you want it to look to the person opening the envelope for the first time.
- 🍏 **Proofread – Proofread – Proofread!** Not only should you proofread your work multiple times, a family friend, parent or school official should be asked to read each application and essay you prepare. An English teacher is a valuable resource! Reading your essay and short answers out loud can also help catch mistakes.

- 🍏 **Thoughtfully consider the information you share.** Information about illegal activities may be detrimental to your application.
- 🍏 **Consider your audience.** Tailor the application for the audience. Think about what you are sharing and how it will be perceived. Are some things too personal to be appropriate?
- 🍏 **Spelling and Grammar Matter.** Don't shorten or abbreviate words. Also, don't use "texting" lingo. Capitalize when needed.
- 🍏 **Write a personal and specific essay.** Allow committee members to get to know you through a personal and compelling essay. Do not simply restate accomplishments mentioned elsewhere in the application. Write passionately in your essay and share with the committee something about you that will help them develop a connection to you. Even a simple experience can be powerful if you explain its impact on your life. Make sure your essay answers the question asked and it is written specifically for that scholarship application.
- 🍏 **Take the SAT or ACT.** It's important to take a college entrance exam even if you are in running start or plan on attending community college. The SAT or ACT is another indicator of classroom achievement and helps compare your test results with other students from other school districts. If you do not have to take the entrance exams, explain why. Don't leave the section blank.
- 🍏 **Request letters of reference from people who know you well.** Ask people who are able to share about your values, traits or qualities that you consider worthwhile, such as your compassion, drive, leadership, honesty, independence, etc. A well-written letter from a teacher or supervisor at work who knows you very well is more important than a letter from someone with an impressive title. Coach them to provide specific examples in the letter that tell a story about you – how you overcame a specific obstacle, your compassion for fellow students, the difference you have made in the life of another, etc. It is generally not advisable to ask a family member or peer for a letter of reference and may result in disqualification.
- 🍏 **Submit current letters of reference that are dated.** If a letter of reference is not dated, the committee may consider it old and the information less valuable. A dated letter shows you have been in recent contact with the letter writer and the information they have shared is current. In some instances, an outdated letter is cause for disqualification.
- 🍏 **The letter of reference writer's affiliation to you is clearly stated.** Make sure it is clear who the letter writer is and in what capacity they know you. Are they your teacher, coach, employer/supervisor, etc.?
- 🍏 **Ask questions.** If a phone number or email address is provided on the application, take advantage of the opportunity to ask questions. This is especially valuable if you are unsure if you meet the application qualifications.