

Scholarships 411

College scholarships can be a great way to help pay for college. Nearly everyone knows scholarships are “out there;” the key to finding them is to know where to look. Here are a few tips to help with your scholarship search:

First stop - School Counseling Office

The school counselors’ office should be the first stop for any high school student. Most counselors’ offices have files full of available scholarships, and many distribute information about upcoming scholarship opportunities. Check bulletin boards around the guidance center, too. Some scholarships require you be nominated by a school counselor, teacher or principal of your school.

If you have a particular major in mind, music, for example, check your high school’s music department bulletin boards, with the department chairperson, and teachers for upcoming scholarships.

Search the Internet

Internet searches can reveal a wealth of scholarship opportunities. The New York State Higher Education Services Corp. Web site (HESC.org) is a great place to start. You can set up searches by field of study, key word, location, and other variables. Some scholarships have online applications. Look out for “.com” scholarship searches; they may try to sell you something you don’t need.

Colleges or schools you are considering may have scholarships available. College Web sites are a wealth of information about paying for college, and include details about campus scholarships offered to incoming students. Look in the admissions or financial aid sections.

Employer and Community Scholarships

Employers may offer college scholarships as an employee benefit. Your parents or guardians should check with their human resources department to see if a scholarship is available for family members. If you work part time, you may qualify for an employee scholarship, if one is available where you work.

Clubs, professional and social organizations, and hobby interest groups may have scholarships for their members or their families. If you played Babe Ruth baseball, belong to a bowling league, have a parent who belongs to a professional or social organization such as the Elks Club or a fraternity of police, or like to knit, skateboard, or drink milk, there is probably a scholarship for you. Be sure to include these variables in your Internet search or visit the Web sites of sponsoring organizations or clubs to which you or your family members belong.

Your church, synagogue, or other religious organization may have scholarship opportunities available. Speak to your religious leader to let them know of your interest.

Major companies and businesses like Target, Coca Cola, and McNeil Consumer Healthcare’s Tylenol offer national scholarship competitions. Browse the Internet or check your school counseling office.

Military Scholarships

Interested in military service? All branches of the military offer a Reserve Officer Training Corp. (ROTC) program at many four-year colleges. ROTC programs offer scholarships to pay all or part of college costs, and provide high-quality leadership training. Upon graduation, you will earn a college diploma and a commission in the military. You must agree to active or reserve duty service for a specified period. Find details about ROTC scholarships at www.Military.com/ROTC.

Remember...

If you haven’t already developed a resume of your academic and personal experience, do it now. Be sure to include any special projects you completed, awards earned, clubs, leadership positions, volunteer work or paid jobs. It will help you determine whether you meet the scholarship’s requirements and will organize your achievements.

Keep records of the scholarships for which you applied and when; keep a copy of the application and essay, if one was required, for your own records.

The scholarships are out there waiting for you...you just need to find them and apply.

This HESC e-Library article may be reproduced freely and without permission.



www.hesc.org