

# HOW TO FIND COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

College scholarships are financial aid for college that you do not have to repay. They can be need-based, merit-based, or based on things like your hobbies, field of study, ethnicity, religion, and more. You don't need to be number one in your class or an all-star athlete to get free money for college. Most scholarships can be found on various websites and require an application and possibly an essay, high school transcript, recommendations, resume, or a video. Your teachers that wrote a letter for your college applications can also be used for scholarship applications.

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Log into your [NAVIANCE](#) account for a current list of local scholarships and links to other scholarship databases.

Students considering attending Joliet Junior College can apply [online](#) for scholarships Jan. 1 – April 1, 2018.

The **College and Career Center (Room #300)** is open **Monday – Friday during all lunch periods.**

There are several computers and laptops available for students to use to do college, career, and scholarship research. To utilize the College and Career Center during study hall, students must sign in for attendance at the beginning of the period. To request an individual meeting to discuss college or career related questions students can fill out a request form in Student Services.

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## WHEN TO APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

Apply for scholarships as early as freshman year of high school but most are available during senior year. You don't need to wait until you've made your final decision about your school to apply. But don't worry if you missed out on some of the earliest scholarship applications. There are lots of scholarship opportunities out there, all with different deadlines. Apply for scholarships every year you're in college, too—there are many scholarships for current college students.

## SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION TIPS

As you get ready to apply for college scholarships, keep in mind that different scholarships have their own qualifying criteria and require certain documents. These tips can help as you choose which scholarships to apply for:

**Be careful.** Beware of scams. If the application asks you to disclose bank account numbers, credit card numbers, or social security numbers, it is probably a scam. If they call and ask you for personal information to "confirm your eligibility," "verify your identity" hang up immediately.

**Be thorough.** Don't overlook smaller scholarships. Even a few hundred dollars can help offset the cost of textbooks and supplies.

**Be honest.** Don't exaggerate your grades, memberships, skills, or qualifications. You're more likely to receive scholarships if you apply for the ones that match your interests and skills.

**Be proactive.** Apply for scholarships every year you're in college. Approximately 50 percent of available scholarships are for students already enrolled in college.

**Be diligent.** Pay attention to details. Some scholarships require you to write an essay while others may want letters of recommendation. Send in what's requested and proofread everything. Typos and missing materials can be the difference between winning or losing a scholarship.

**Be on time.** Some scholarships are very quick and easy to apply for. Others take a little more time. If the scholarship application can't be submitted electronically, use certified mail. Missing a deadline could disqualify you.

## TIPS TO HELP YOU WRITE YOUR SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY

What makes a good essay? One that shows your background, experiences, ambitions, and personality. It's your opportunity to make a strong and lasting impression. These tips can help:

- Brainstorm topics and make an outline to organize your thoughts.
- Create an essay with a strong introduction, followed by supporting arguments and an appropriate conclusion.
- Ask others for their feedback.
- Proofread the final version—more than once!

## WAYS TO SAVE WHILE YOU'RE IN COLLEGE

**Find a part-time job on campus.** Every extra dollar you earn is one that you won't have to borrow for school. Many colleges offer part-time jobs for students. Think about working at local shops, restaurants, or libraries to earn some income.

**Work closely with an advisor.** Make smart choices for classes and try to graduate in four years or less.

**Consider graduating early.** Take classes over the summer at a community college (make sure that your college will allow transfer credits) or add more courses during the year to finish a semester early, which can save you tuition and housing costs.

**Buy used books or share.** Textbooks can come with a hefty price tag. Look around for discount bookstores or buy them used from your campus bookstore. If you share classes with your roommate or friends, offer to share textbooks.

**Share the housing expenses.** Having a roommate and splitting the rent is a no-brainer. Compare on-campus with off-campus with living at home (if that's possible). An apartment may sound great, but it could add to your living expenses.

**Eat at the dining hall.** You'll probably have to pay for a meal plan anyway, so use it for daily meals instead of spending additional money on groceries and eating out.

**Use your school gym instead of paying for a private gym membership.** Use the resources available to you on campus. It's a great way to keep expenses down and meet other students at the same time.

**Don't bring your car to school.** Insurance, gas, and parking mean expenses. Does your campus have ridesharing or is it near public transportation?

## BEST WEBSITES TO FIND A COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP

Most of these websites may require you to register and create a personal profile in order to match you with available scholarship opportunities that match your academic strengths, skills, activities, and other criteria. In order to get the most accurate search results, it's critical to fill out as many details as you can in the profile that's used for searching.

[Cappex.com](http://Cappex.com)

[Chegg.com](http://Chegg.com)

[Collegeboard.org](http://Collegeboard.org)

[CollegeNET.com](http://CollegeNET.com)

[CollegeScholarships.org](http://CollegeScholarships.org)

[Fastweb.com](http://Fastweb.com)

[Illinois Student Assistance Commission \(ISAC\)](http://Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC)) – provides college and financial aid planning and special scholarships for Illinois Students.

[Niche.com](http://Niche.com)

[Petersons.com](http://Petersons.com)

[Raise.Me](http://Raise.Me) – high school students can start earning college scholarships as early as 9th grade for good grades, sports, extracurricular and other achievements.

[SallieMae.com](http://SallieMae.com)

[Scholarships.com](http://Scholarships.com) – One of the largest scholarship databases out there and it's updated on a daily basis.

[Scholarship Monkey](http://Scholarship Monkey)

[ScholarshipPoints.com](http://ScholarshipPoints.com)

[Unigo.com](http://Unigo.com)

U.S. Labor Department Career One Stop [FREE scholarship search tool](#)

Be sure to also check with your local public library or your parents' employers for scholarship opportunities.