

WHERE DO I FIND SCHOLARSHIPS?

One of the most important tasks for high school seniors is applying for scholarships. One of the most common questions I am asked by both parents and students is “how do I find scholarships?” Let me begin by saying that looking for scholarships is very time consuming. It is very important that you stay very organized and aware of deadlines. Also, it is not your school counselor’s job to find scholarships for you. Their role is to assist you with the process.

Let’s get started by identifying the difference between merit and competitive scholarships. Both of these are given by the colleges themselves. **Merit means that just by having the required GPA and ACT and applying correctly, the student will receive the scholarship.** Competitive means that many students will apply with the required GPA and ACT score and the colleges will pick the top recipients from their applicant pool.

One of the first places to look for scholarships is the colleges and universities that the senior is interested in. Those will be listed on their admissions page. When you visit the college and meet the admissions representatives you should ask questions and find out all the details. Be especially careful about deadlines. These are hard deadlines and I have seen many students miss out on scholarship offers because their applications were not received on time.

There are many search engines out there, but this is a list of my personal favorites. Also, I would recommend creating a separate email address that you use strictly for college/scholarships. This helps ensure that you don’t miss out on important information by overlooking it. Make sure your college email address is **appropriate**.

- *Going Merry – This is a new site I am using this year because other senior counselors have been bragging about how much they love it. It is a national site but I am able to upload local & state scholarships (for MY students only) as well. Students must create a free account to use it. An app is also available.*

<https://www.goingmerry.com>

- *Get2College – is a program of the Woodward Hines Education Foundation. This website has tons of information and services include: finding the right college fit, understanding scholarships & fin aid, assisting with resume, essays, interviews, & FAFSA completion assistance. Local office in Ocean Springs-Appointments available. (DO NOT PASS UP THIS AWESOME SERVICE!)*

<https://get2college.org/mississippi-scholarships>

The two websites above should suffice but if you still want to keep looking....

- *Scholarships.com - The free scholarship search is one of the most established and robust, tracking a reported \$19 billion in scholarships. Updated daily!*

<https://www.scholarships.com>

- *College Green Light – this is a free scholarship search engine for first generation and underrepresented college bound students.*

<https://www.collegegreenlight.com>

- *Fastweb.com – this company is owned by Monster.com, it claims to have more than 1.5 million scholarships in its database. Expect a flood of emails, which is why I suggested creating a separate email address for college. Once you create a profile it uses the information to match scholarships to you.*

<https://www.fastweb.com>

- *Cappex.com - Cappex allows students to search both schools and scholarships, with a database of more than \$11 billion in scholarships.*

<https://www.cappex.com>

TIPS FOR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS:

1. *Apply if you are eligible: Read all requirements and directions carefully.*
2. *Fully complete the application: If a question does not apply to you, make a note of this on the application. Do not leave questions blank and be sure to offer any additional information, supporting materials (letters of recommendation, transcripts, and essays).*
3. *Follow directions: Provide everything that is required; yet, do not supply things that have not been requested.*
4. *Neatness counts: Type all applications. If you must print, make sure you are neat and print legibly. Make copies of the form before you fill it out. The copies can be used as drafts.*
5. *Be sure your essay leaves a strong impression: The keys to writing a good essay are to be specific, personal, and include concrete details. Address the who, what when, and where of your topic. Even small experiences can be immense if you use honesty and creativity when presenting how you were affected by it.*
6. *Be aware of deadlines: The help to stay on track, set a deadline for yourself that is two weeks prior to the actual deadline. Scholarship providers rarely provide extensions.*
7. *Clearly identify yourself on each page: In order to be sure your application gets to the correct place in one piece, be sure your name is on each page, each page is clearly marked, and that all application components are bound together.*
8. *Back up your files: Make copies of the packet before you send it out. As you work, save often and remember that you can also email yourself a copy if you are worried about the reliability of equipment.*
9. *Review your application before submitting: Proofread your application thoroughly and/or ask others to help with this. Sometimes others can catch mistakes you have missed. Look for misspelled words, grammatical errors, or repetition.*
10. *Don't be afraid to ask for help: School counselors and most teachers have a great deal of experience working with students on letters of recommendation and scholarship applications, so don't hesitate to ask them for advice, input, or help filling out the application. You can also email or call the scholarship organization directly and ask for help.*

OTHER USEFUL WEBSITES:

<https://get2college.org/> - I cannot say enough about this website!! FREE ACT prep, college application assistance, FAFSA assistance, career interest surveys, etc... Appointments available – AT NO CHARGE!!

<https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/> Find the college that's right for you on this website. All U.S. colleges/universities can be accessed from this site and then compared by cost, size, graduation stats, etc...

<https://fafsa.ed.gov/> FAFSA – Free Application Federal Student Aid. This is the site to complete the FAFSA after October 1st. DO NOT pay someone to assist you in completing the FAFSA. FREE is what the “F” stands for.

<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/> Additional resources to assist with FAFSA.