SCHOLARSHIPS - - The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

The Good: There are thousands of scholarships available offering millions of dollars
The Bad: Winning scholarships is time consuming and hard work
The Ugly: Some colleges reduce what they have offered if you win your own scholarships

Scholarship Myths
- Only students with the highest grades and test scores win scholarships
- Only students from low income families win scholarships
- Only good athletes and minorities win scholarships

Keys to Success
- Persistence – no fear of rejection
- Winning is, to a large extent, a numbers game
- There is a learning curve – you have to keep going
- Reuse and recycle
- Look at past winners
- Work with a friend – keep each other motivated

Now, Get Organized!
- Create a binder/notebook/folder to stay organized and on top of deadlines
- Bookmark sites
- Create a special, dedicated email address for scholarship searches
- Break it into bite-sized tasks … don't get overwhelmed

Let's Go!

CREATE YOUR OWN PROFILE SHEET

Know yourself and your family.   Ask questions – the more information you have about your parents and grand parents lives, the more potential opportunities you will have.   Write down extensive personal info.

Include:
- Personal info (Age, sex, birthplace/date, schools attended, grades, test scores, etc.)
- Credentials
- Characteristics
- Interests
- Goals
- Affiliations (plus those from parents/grandparents)

Scholarships by types
- Geographical
- Organizational Membership
- Family Affiliation
- College Career/goal
- Race/Ethnicity/Religion
- Gender
- Disabilities
- Student Employment, Activities, Hobbies
- Other

Cast wide but focus narrowly. Record all aspects. Don't just go for the broadest scholarships. (Lots of competition.) Include (but don't just limit yourself to) the specialized ones. DO BOTH.

PERSONAL STATEMENT WORKSHEET

Use the following sets of questions to help you generate material that you can use when building your personal statement.

1. What makes you stand out?
   a. What special, unique, and/or impressive facts can you share about you or your life story?

   b. What details of your life (personal or family problems, people or events that have shaped you or influenced your goals/future) would set you apart from other applicants?

2. What inspires you?
   a) What reasons do you have behind going to college?

   b) What insights have you gained and how have those pushed you to apply for scholarships?

   c) What do you hope to accomplish but receiving scholarships and ultimately going to college?

3. What experience do you have that will help you succeed in college?

4. What are your career goals?

5. How do you explain _____? Are there any gaps in your academic record or application that you should explain (i.e. lower grades, lower ACT/SAT scores, etc.)

CREATE A PERSONAL INVENTORY

This is for your personal review only. Be sure to keep this current—update often. Include details on awards/honors/leadership roles, time commitment). Compile List of:

- Extracurricular activities
- School Clubs
- Summer Camps
- Jobs (part-time or full)
- Internships
- Hobbies
- And Every activity you do outside of school

Awards and Honors (list broadly, everything)

Record the top 3 specific tasks you did for every activity. This helps when you need examples/anecdotes for your essays. If possible, try to record the top 3 positive characteristics you've demonstrated as part of each activity.

Keep a separate list just for service projects because they are often important criteria for scholarships. Treat this like a timesheet. Record all your time because you may need an accurate tally. Again keep it current so you don't have to recall later on.

See attached sample scholarship profile form.

SCHOLARSHIP DATABASES

Best databases contain adequate information on:
- Name/Amount of Award
- General description
- Information on providers
- List of relevant contact info (name, addresses, #'s, emails and websites)
- Data on: eligibility, application material, deadlines & number of scholarships awarded

Search mechanism (database) must function well. Two types of search mechanisms:

- Matching System (Based on questionnaire and your personal fit)
- Browsing System (browses categories of scholarships based on the criteria you select) Browsing system allows more flexibility than just looking at lists.

Browsing system is better than matching system. Matching is not always accurate or created well so it is more limiting, but browsing does take more time, plus it is easy to get confused about what you have looked at.

Each database uses different methods for gathering scholarships and focuses on different types of scholarships. No one database covers more than a small percentage of scholarships available.

Check multiple boxes to be more inclusive. (The database is not that smart and will only include what you specify) If they only allow you to check a few boxes at a time, you can do multiple searches on same database and vary the info in your questionnaire. If database design doesn't allow you to vary personal info once you've imputed it, re-register under a new name/email and complete a fresh questionnaire.

Don't exclude scholarships whose deadlines have past. Sometimes dates are from previous years, or are inaccurate. Or you may just want that information for a future year.

When filling out online forms, you don't want to lose information so you may need to complete in one sitting. It may also shut down if you get up for a while. So have all your data available ready to go and do it in one sitting.

Conduct search specific to your characteristics but perform a generic database search as well. Specify minimal info on self. Too much info will narrow the search too much and cause database to omit some of the broader scholarships.

Create a new, dedicated email address for scholarship searches. You may receive lots of junk email once you begin the process.

SCHOLARSHIP RESOURCES

Start with your high school counselor and/or scholarship coordinator. (Hint: if your high school does not offer much, look at other school websites)

Search Locally
- Service Clubs – Rotary, Soroptimist, Elks, Kiwanis, Lions, etc.
- Large Companies with scholarship programs (Comcast, Best Buy, etc.)
- Consider parent's employer and associations
- UCSC Women's Club for returning women students
- Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County

Consider your family's background (parents, grandparents, etc.)
- Religion
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Heritage

Consider any and all affinity groups & hobbies
- Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts
- 4H, Future Farmers

Check your college or university
- Most have scholarships for new and returning students

Use the internet (google) for specific searches
- Be Creative!

Online scholarship search databases – see next page for samples
- Try several and decide which ones work best for you

Steve Shapiro, CPA CFP   *www.TuitionSolutionsNow.com*   *831/465-1148*

Scholarship Search Engines

(alphabetical – a sample)

Big Future – College Board

Broke Scholar

Cappex

Career One Stop Scholarships

Chegg

College Express

GoodCall

JLV College Counseling

Niche

Petersons

Sallie Mae Scholarships

ScholarshipOwl

Scholarships.com

Scholly

Student Scholarships.org

StudentScholarshipSearch.com

SuperCollege.com

Tuition Funding Sources

Unigo