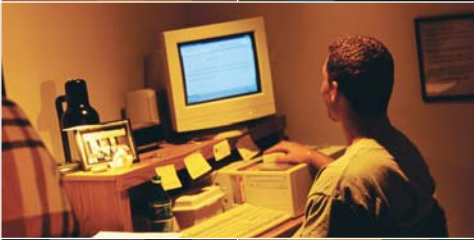


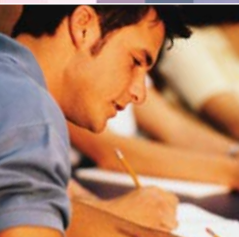
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Scholarships:

Free Money

for College



Scholarships : Free Money for College

Many students have the misconception that only straight-A students or star athletes are awarded scholarships for college. This simply isn't the case! Scholarships are available from many different sources, and students are awarded scholarships for all kinds of different reasons. Finding the right kind of scholarship for you—then applying for it, winning it, and keeping it—does require some hard work. However, the fact that you don't have to repay scholarship funds—meaning that a scholarship is FREE MONEY—makes that hard work well worth it. Commerce Bank offers you the following information to make your scholarship search as easy as possible.

Where do scholarships come from?

Scholarships come from a lot of different sources. Some of these include:

- Colleges and universities
- State and local governments
- High Schools
- Companies
- Clubs and Associations
- Civic and Religious Groups
- Private Foundations and Charities
- Labor Unions and Trade Associations
- Ethnic Organizations

Why are scholarships awarded?

Some of the most common reasons that students receive scholarships are:

- Academic Performance
- Athletic Performance
- Financial Need
- Religious Affiliation
- Minority Status
- Nationality/Family Heritage
- Community Affiliations

Some trade organizations or labor unions may award scholarships to students planning a career in an area that is facing a worker shortage. Or, the company where one of your parents works may offer scholarships to children of its employees. Students with disabilities, or with parents who have disabilities, should also investigate those options. And finally, there are quirky scholarships with unique qualifications that you might meet—you never know who might be looking to give money to someone just like you!

Where do I begin looking for scholarships?

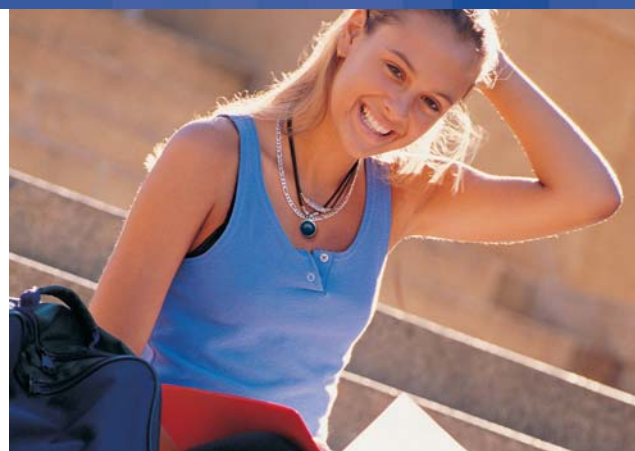
First, you need to check out local resources—remember, the less people applying for a scholarship, the better your chances. Most importantly, be sure that you **start early**, preferably during your junior year.

- **High School Counselor or College Financial Aid Counselor**—make an appointment to sit down and discuss scholarships for which you might qualify. Ask that they nominate you for any scholarships that might be appropriate.
- **Clubs and Organizations**—Are you a member of your school's band or service organizations? Check with moderators or officers of these organizations to see if they sponsor scholarships.

- **Community Groups**—Groups like the Rotary and Lions Clubs usually award scholarships that are open to all students in the community. Be sure to check with all local chapters of these types of groups.
- **Your Employer and Your Parents' Employers**—If you work, ask your manager or Human Resources department if the company sponsors scholarships for its employees. Your parents should also check with their Human Resources departments.
- **Groups to which Your Parents Belong**—If your parents belong to a labor union or community group, have them check to see what scholarships are available to members' children.
- **Churches or Religious Organizations**—See if the church to which your family belongs offers scholarships.
- **Local Government or Politicians**—Cities and counties, as well as local politicians, may have scholarship funds set up.
- **Local Businesses**—Check with well-known local businesses, as well as the Chamber of Commerce, to see if they offer scholarships to local students.
- **Local Media**—Radio and television stations, as well as newspapers, may advertise scholarships.
- **Local Libraries**—Your local library should have resource books available.

Next, start surfing the Internet. Register with the following free scholarship searches:

- www.fastweb.com
- www.collegeboard.com
- www.collegeview.com
- www.princetonreview.com
- www.fastaid.com
- www.mach25.collegenet.com
- www.xap.com



Then, visit the web sites of particular organizations, agencies, and companies that you think may want to award a scholarship to someone like you. For example, African-American students should check out the United Negro College Fund web site at www.uncf.org. Students who plan to major in engineering, for instance, should visit web sites of major engineering firms.

Should I pay a company to help me find scholarships?

NO! You never should pay someone to locate scholarships that you can easily find on your own. Companies that aren't legitimate may try to scare you into paying for their services by stating that "millions of dollars go unclaimed every year" or claiming to have access to information not available to the general public. This simply isn't true.

If you receive a phone call or letter stating that you've won a scholarship that you haven't applied for, be wary. Do not give out any personal information, such as your social security number or account numbers. Ask for any offers in writing. If you have doubts about whether or not a company is legitimate, check with the Better Business Bureau, your high school counselor, or your college's Financial Aid Office.

Now that I've found some scholarships to apply for, what do I do next?

If you're serious about getting a scholarship, organization is the key. Make a calendar of deadlines. Keep all information about scholarships, as well as copies of your applications, in a file. Obtain copies of your transcripts before you begin the process.

Once you know the requirements for a scholarship, keep these tips in mind:

- Fill out the application neatly and completely.
- Be sure to follow all instructions exactly as they are listed.
- Adhere to deadlines—better yet, apply early!
- Be creative—try to find a way to make your application stand out—but remember to keep it in good taste!
- Be totally honest on all parts of the application. Do not falsify any information.
- Ask teachers, counselors, and co-workers to write a letter of recommendation to send with your applications.
- Follow up with the organization by phone to make sure they've received your application. Find out what their timeframe is for making a decision. You may continue to follow up by phone or letter if you don't hear an answer from them within the stated timeframe.

What happens if I am awarded a scholarship?

It depends. Some scholarships are disbursed directly to the student to use as they wish. Others are much more strict, specifying how funds must be used. Most scholarships are paid directly to the school.

Once you are awarded a scholarship, keep in mind that you will probably need to work hard to keep that scholarship! Academic scholarships require you to maintain a certain grade point average, while athletic scholarships will require you to continue to participate in your sport while performing satisfactorily in school. Need-based scholarships may not be renewed if your family's income increases. And scholarships based on your field of study will probably be taken away if you change your major.

Commerce Bank is here to help!

Call 1-800-MONEY:101 to reach the experts in our student loan department. We *ask listen solve* to help you make sense out of financial aid—whether it comes in the form of grants, scholarships, or loans. Call, click, or come by for help today.

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