



Searching for Scholarships



Are you looking for “free money” to help pay for college?

Grants and scholarships are a form of gift aid – gifts of money to pay for college that you don't have to repay. Money is out there, but you must seek it!

Not sure where to start?

It is never too early to begin searching for scholarships and grants. Contact the following sources to request scholarship and grant information and deadlines:

- State Agencies
- Federal Agencies
- Community Organizations
- Local Businesses
- College Financial Aid Office
- College Foundation Office
- College Department (for your major)
- Religious Organizations
- Employers (Student's and Parents')
- Foundations
- Public Library
- High School Guidance Counselor's Office
- Professional Associations or Organizations (related to your field of interest)

Avoid Scholarship Scams!

Be aware of scholarship scams. Remember:

- You should not have to pay to file the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA).
- “Guaranteed scholarships” do not exist.
- You should not have to pay money to get money.

For more information about scholarship scams or to report a scam, contact the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) by visiting www.ftc.gov or calling toll-free at 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357) or TTY 1-866-653-4261.

How to Write an Essay

Scholarship committees are looking for students who have the ability to effectively communicate in writing. Essays are an excellent way for scholarship judges to choose the most qualified, deserving candidates. The following tips should help you conquer this not-so-easy aspect of the scholarship application process.

Give Yourself Time

The amount of time needed to construct a quality essay varies from person to person; however, as a general rule, you should allow yourself at least two weeks to finish your essay.

Follow Directions

Read the instructions carefully. Following the directions demonstrates that you are attentive and willing to do what is asked of you.

For example:

- Do you meet the eligibility requirements?
- Answer the question that is being asked.
- Do not go over the word limit.
- Use the proper font and type size, if specified.

Focus on the Topic

Scholarship essays usually require students to write about a particular topic or answer a specific question. Remember to stay focused on your topic. Show the scholarship committee why they should choose you!

- *Include Extracurricular Activities* - Scholarship boards can learn a great deal about you by knowing which extracurricular activities you chose to engage in.
- *Highlight Major Accomplishments*—What are your major accomplishments? Explain how you are a talented, hard-working individual that deserves a scholarship.
- *Describe How You Overcame a Difficult Situation*—Explaining how you overcame an adversity not only demonstrates your critical thinking skills, but also shows your willingness to succeed when times are tough. If you choose this angle, it is very important to remain positive and objective.

Create an Outline—You should always make an essay outline. An outline provides the framework for your essay, and helps you focus your thoughts.

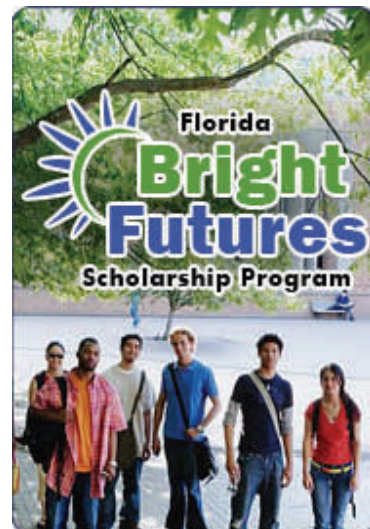
Edit and Proofread Your Work—Your essay should be clear and concise. Proofread your work several times, and correct any errors. Remember, your scholarship essay should flow as smoothly as possible.

Get Feedback—Ask friends and family to read your essay and provide you with feedback. This process ensures that your ideas are clearly interpreted.

Florida State Grants & Scholarships

State Grants and Scholarships

A wide variety of state grants and scholarships are available to help you pay for college. State grant and scholarship eligibility may be based upon academic achievement, financial need, minority, or heritage.



Scholarship Programs

- Florida Bright Futures Scholarship
- José Martí Scholarship
- Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship
- Rosewood Family Scholarship
- Children and Spouses of Deceased or Disabled Veterans and Servicemembers
- Mary McLeod Bethune Scholarship

Grant Programs

- Florida Student Assistance Grant
- Florida Public Postsecondary Career Education Student Assistance Grant
- William L. Boyd, IV, Florida Resident Access Grant
- Access to Better Learning and Education Grant
- First Generation Matching Grant

Other Programs

- Critical Teacher Shortage Student Loan Forgiveness Program
- Critical Teacher Shortage Tuition Reimbursement Program
- Florida Work Experience Program

For detailed state grant and scholarship information, please visit www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org and select "State Grants, Scholarships & Applications," and then click on "Programs Offered."

How to Apply for Florida Financial Aid

In order to apply for Florida Financial Aid, you must first complete the Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA). The FFAA becomes available every **December 1st**, but must be completed before graduating from high school.

It is important to:

- Check application deadlines. Each grant or scholarship deadline may vary.
- View the Web site often to track the status of your application.
- Remember to also complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Most federal financial aid programs and some of Florida's financial aid programs require students to complete this federal application.

Apply online for Florida Financial Aid by following the directions below:

- Visiting www.FloridaStudentFinancialAid.org.
- Select "State Grants, Scholarships & Applications."
- Click on "Apply Here" and under "STUDENTS" select the best option that fits you. For example, if this is your first time applying for Florida Financial Aid, select "Initial State Student Application."

Do you have questions concerning state grants and scholarships? Contact OSFA's Customer Service staff by calling toll-free at 1-888-827-2004.

Quick Links to Help You Search for Funding for College

Federal Resources:

www.fafsa.ed.gov

www.students.gov

www.studentaid.ed.gov

www.nationalservice.gov

www.va.gov

State Resources:

www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org

www.facts.org

National Scholarship Databases:

www.scholarships.com

www.fastweb.org

www.finaid.org

www.studentscholarshipsearch.com

