

# Scholarships: Get Paid to go to College



# Agenda

- Scholarship Fundamentals
- Searching for Scholarships
- Deadlines
- Unusual and Specific Scholarships
- Scholarship Tips
- The “ESSAY”
- Don’ts and Dos
- Conclusion



# Scholarship Fundamentals

- Free money for schools
- Each year about \$3.3 billion is awarded in gift aid by private sources
- Each year \$46 billion in grants and scholarships is awarded by colleges and the Dept. of Education
- Many scholarships are for incoming freshmen (but not all)
- It's wise to search year-round for scholarships
- In 2016 the average college student had \$27,857 in debt!
- Average starting salary for a college graduate is \$49,785 in US
- A great option if you don't want to take on a lot of debt



# Scholarship Fundamentals

- Common Requirements:
  - Application form
  - Essays
  - Letters of reference
  - Needs evaluation (FAFSA)
  - Interviews
  - Transcripts
- Some scholarships (arts, music) may require a portfolio or sample of work, audition, or recorded performance
- TIME

**Slide 4**

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**MI1**

Melissa Iverson, 10/21/2015

# Scholarship Fundamentals

In addition to **merit**, scholarships can be awarded for any criteria the donor chooses.

- **Institutional** – based on major, county, need, etc. Anybody heard of WUE?
- **Activities** – 4-H, sports, music, speech and debate, etc.
- **Local/Community** – churches, banks, local businesses, employers, service organizations (Elks, Rotary, etc.)

**Bottom Line:** Apply often! Make scholarship application a priority and your part-time job.



# Scholarship Fundamentals

- Make scholarship searching a part-time job
- Dedicate time every week to the application process
- Aside from the deadline, the essay is usually the most important component
- Apply, revise, re-read, REPEAT
- Create a separate email account for scholarship and admissions applications – time for a professional name!



Create a professional e-mail address for admissions and scholarship application materials and communications – time for a name change!

partyanimal2015@gmail.com      **NO!**

joseph#johnson2015@gmail.com      **YES!**





# “I’m overwhelmed! Where do I begin?”

## First

- Your school counselor or local Reach Higher Montana advisor
- The college you are attending (check for scholarships at your top choices and apply)

## Then

- Churches
- Employers
- Service organizations
- Local/community resources
- Facebook
- Internet searches come last but can still score \$\$\$



# Searching for Scholarships

## Use the internet

- [reachhighermontana.org](http://reachhighermontana.org) to access Scholly – access code “RHM2018”
- [goodcall.com](http://goodcall.com)
- [bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org)
- [unigo.com](http://unigo.com)
- [jlvcollegecounseling.com](http://jlvcollegecounseling.com)
- [fastweb.com](http://fastweb.com)
- [petersons.com](http://petersons.com)
- [dosomething.org](http://dosomething.org)
- [scholarships.com](http://scholarships.com) (list for Juniors!)
- [raise.me](http://raise.me)



# Searching for Scholarships Avoid Scams!

- “This scholarship is guaranteed, or your money back.”
- “We guarantee you will get at least \$5,500 in awards!”
- “You can’t get this information anywhere else!”
- “We just need your credit card or bank account number to hold this scholarship.”
- “You’ve been selected by a ‘national foundation’ to receive a scholarship,”  
or “You’re a finalist,” in a contest you never entered.

Bottom Line: You should never have to pay for a scholarship. If it sounds too good to be true it probably is.



# Priority dates (FAFSA) and Deadlines (Scholarships)

## Carroll College

- FAFSA priority date – Dec. 1
- Scholarship priority deadline – varies

## Dawson Community College

- FAFSA priority date – Dec. 1
- Scholarship priority deadline – Mar. 15

## Flathead Valley Community College

- FAFSA priority date – Dec. 1
- Scholarship priority deadline – Feb. 15

## Miles Community College

- FAFSA priority date – Dec. 1
- Scholarship priority deadline – Dec. 1

## Montana State University

- FAFSA priority date – Dec. 1  
(apply as early as possible)
- Presidential Scholarship – Dec. 2
- Premier Scholarship – Priority deadline  
Feb. 1

## MSU - Billings

- FAFSA priority date – Dec. 1
- Chancellor's Excellence – Jan. 15
- Scholarship priority deadline – Feb. 1

## MT Tech of The University of Montana

- FAFSA priority date – Dec. 1
- Scholarship priority deadline – Jan. 15

# Priority dates (FAFSA) and Deadlines (Scholarships)

## Great Falls College Montana State University

- FAFSA priority date – see website
- Scholarship priority deadline – mid Feb.

## MSU - Northern

- FAFSA priority date – Feb. 10
- Scholarship priority deadline – Jan. 27

## Helena College University of Montana

- FAFSA priority date – Dec. 1
- Scholarships – deadlines vary

## The University of Montana Western

- FAFSA priority date – Dec. 1
- Scholarship priority deadline – Jan. 1

## Rocky Mountain College

- Rolling awards
- Apply early for best aid

## The University of Montana & Missoula College University of Montana

- FAFSA priority date – Dec. 1
- Scholarship priority deadline – Feb. 15

## University of Great Falls

- No scholarship deadline
- Apply early for best aid

# Unusual Scholarships

Many scholarships have very unique criteria you may meet.

- **Not a 4.0 student?** There are lots of scholarships for average students – Montana PTA, Burger King McLamore Foundation, Taco Bell Foundation, Women’s Jewelry Association, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, etc.
- **Can you throw a football under pressure?** Dr. Pepper has awarded over \$8,000,000 in tuition since 2008 to students who threw footballs into huge Dr. Pepper cans during football halftime shows.
- **Don’t like writing essays?** Not all scholarships require essays.





# Unusual Scholarships



# Unusual Scholarships

## Duct Tape Scholarship!

- Why would anyone give a scholarship for a prom outfit made out of duct tape?
- Imaginative
- Artistic
- Free thinker

Creative people have a “strong commitment to a personal aesthetic, ability to excel in finding problems, mental mobility, willingness to take risks, objectivity, inner motivation” – *Tara K. Harper*







2017 First and Second  
Place Winners



# Unusual Scholarships

## The “Stuck at Prom” Scholarship

- First place - won \$10,000 each
- Second place - \$5,000 each
- Third place - \$3,000 each
- Category for “singles” winners
- Apply March – July each year
- [stuckatprom.com](http://stuckatprom.com)



# Unusual Scholarships

## “Shout It Out Scholarship”

- Must be 13 years of age or older
- Must be currently enrolled in college or enroll no later than fall of 2023
- Submit a response to the following question in 250 words or less
  - “ If you could say one thing to the entire world at once, what would it be and why?”

More “unusual” scholarships can be viewed at:

<http://www.collegexpress.com/lists/list/60-of-the-weirdest-college-scholarships/1000/>



# Unusual Scholarships

## “Don’t Text and Drive Scholarship”

- \$1,000 award
- Open to students in all fields of study
- Must be at least a high school freshman to apply
- No minimum GPA required
- 140 character essay that finishes this statement - “**I pledge to not text and drive because....**”
- <http://www.digitalresponsibility.org/dont-text-and-drive-scholarship/>



# Scholarships for Students with Disabilities

- Many available online and in scholarship searches
- U of M – check out: <https://www.umt.edu/dss/Students/Scholarships.php>

## Examples:

- Downtown Lions Club – visual impairment
- Don McGonigle – offered for any student with a disability through School of Business
- Many more...

More Examples: American Foundation for the Blind, National Stuttering Association Scholarship, Michael Yasick ADHD Scholarship





# Scholarships for High School Juniors

It is **NOT** too early to start looking!

- Check out [scholarships.com](http://scholarships.com) – they have a BIG list!
- Check out clubs you belong to (or can join).
  - Junior Achievement, Key Club – both offer scholarships you can apply for as a junior.
- Check online – Google search, etc.
- Doodle for Google Scholarship - <https://doodles.google.com/d4g/>
  - Winner is awarded a \$30,000 scholarship!



# Scholarships for Students Who Can Click “Submit”

- 10 - \$500 scholarships
- Winners selected at random
- Sign up online



Go to <https://www.usbank.com/community/financial-education/scholarship.html> for details.



# Scholarship Tips

- NEVER pay for scholarships
- Scholarships aren't a one-time deal. You need to continue to apply
- Scholarships are personal
  - Tell your story
  - Selection committees want to know about you, not just about your grades
  - Tell about your goals, why they should invest in you, and what you are going to give back
  - Sell your story – show why you are the best person for this award





# Scholarship Tips

- Expect rejection letters – no one gets every scholarship they apply for
- Don't let rejection stop you – apply again and again
- Scholarships are well worth the effort
  - The average scholarship application takes two hours to complete
  - Where else can you earn \$200 - \$5,000 per hour?
- Make scholarship application a permanent, part-time job



# Scholarship Tips

Get in the habit

- Start looking for scholarships **NOW**
- Figure out what you need (letters of reference, essays, applications, etc)
- Start the application process
- Complete the application before the final deadline
- Dedicate at least 1-2 hours per week to applying for scholarships
- Respond to an award by accepting the offer right away
- Write thank you letters (to donors and references) even if you don't get the scholarship!
- Start the cycle over and prepare for the next year



# Scholarship Tips

## Letters of Recommendation

Do you want to get a letter of recommendation from your reference?

- Ask 2 weeks in advance of the scholarship due date
- Provide a sheet of helpful information about you
  - GPA, test scores
  - School activities and clubs
  - Job info, volunteer work, community service, etc.
- Send a reminder prior to your deadline
- If possible, pick up and send the reference letters with your scholarship applications



# Scholarship Tips

Rules for successful scholarship applications:

- Read the directions
- Complete the scholarship application
- Re-read the directions prior to submitting
- Don't just meet the deadline – beat the deadline
- Give yourself some extra time for slow mail, the unexpected, etc.
- Be sure to check deadlines – they change each year

Making errors or not following directions can cost you \$\$\$



# The Essay

- The most important component of scholarships – show your passions and WHO YOU ARE
- Essays require time, thought, planning, and more
- Write one very strong, thorough essay – personalize it to meet many essay requirements
- Proofreading tricks
  - Read your essay out loud – you'll hear mistakes before you see them
  - Read back to front – end to beginning, one sentence at a time
- Have someone read and edit your essay
  - Parents and friends might not be your best editors – they know you so well they might not catch errors
  - Ask a writing instructor or counselor

# Essay Don't - Thesaurizing

“My personal and educational endeavors and extracurricular involvements, ie, my curriculum vitae, allow me a bird’s eye view of the paradigm provided by the committee in their statement of mission. I have considerable desire to carry the work I have begun, my oeuvre, to higher heights on the wings that higher education offers. My joie d’vivre will effuse my contribution throughout the whole university, and aid the toiling professorial ranks to ascend the slope of professional contributorial scribehood bringing the lather of praise and laudation on the university itself.”

- Donors and scholarship committees want to get to know you, not your thesaurus
- Unless this is how you actually talk (and good luck with that) use your own words to tell your own story

Example courtesy of [beattuition.com/scholarship-essay-examples](http://beattuition.com/scholarship-essay-examples).



# Essay Don't - Poor editing

“Too rite essays, I always use spell check. Their our so many errors that spell check will fix. Its so helpful, I wont even have two proof read my papers after I am dun.”

- Spell check will not fined words witch are miss used butt spelled rite!
- Know the differences among the following because spell check won't help:
  - they're – their – there
  - too – two – to
  - who – whose – who's
  - its – it's
  - you're – your

# Essay Don't - Text speak

“Thru my xperiences n hi schl, i hv lrnd lots of imprtnt stuff 2 sum up, i h8 hi schl but IMHO ill like collage. U shld gv me \$ for collage.”

- no 1 likes txt spk n scholrshp apps. no 1 likes txt spk n email. U prolly wdn't rite p8prs in txt spk, bt smtimes it sneaks n bcuz u use it evry day.
- Use proper language on your scholarship application
- You are important enough to deserve a capital “I”
- It's college – never collage





# Essay Dos - Write about what you know and love

## ***Who has been the most influential person in your life?***

“I idolized my older sister. She was five years older than me and my link to the shadowy world of adulthood that seemed so out of reach. When she went away, I was devastated. It was a very wet summer that year and one particularly rainy day, I was lying in her empty bed looking at the artifacts she'd left behind, clutching an old sweater. My eyes travelled around the room and came to rest on her bookshelf. For whatever reason, I picked one book up and began thumbing through it. It was Emile Zola's *Germinal* and it was to change my life forever.

*Germinal* woke me up from my slumber. I began to see the world around me, to look at it with new eyes. I always thought things like poverty, greed and injustice happened elsewhere, to people that more or less deserved it. But the more I read about Etienne, Catherine, and the Vandame mine, the more I began to realize the universal nature of suffering. This is part of what makes Zola's novel a great work of art.”

Example courtesy of <http://www.collegescholarships.com/application-essays/scholarship-essays>



# Essay Dos - Get personal

## ***Describe a major hurdle or obstacle you've had to overcome.***

“I was fourteen when I found out my mother had a tumor. My parents threw around big words like benign and malignant. My mind immediately went back to my eighth grade health class when we learned about our bodies and medical terms, as well as the circulatory system and benign and malignant tumors. The type of stuff I never thought would apply to me. The words benign or malignant meant either nothing to worry about or cancer. Knowing this at age fourteen was like getting a punch to the stomach.

The idea that my mother could potentially have cancer seemed impossible. It wasn't real to me. It became very real the day she had the tumor removed. I remember I got to skip school and drive to the hospital with my family. As the doctor described what was going to happen to my mother, I had the impulse to cover my ears, close my eyes, and pretend it was all a bad dream. I told myself to be strong as my mother headed back with a nurse to a place the rest of our family couldn't go. I sat in the waiting room under bright fluorescent lights, crossing my fingers, hoping everything would be okay. I can still feel the goosebumps that covered my skin. After a few hours, it was all over. They had completely removed it, and everything went as planned.”

Example courtesy of <http://www.collegescholarships.com/application-essays/scholarship-essays>



# Still think you can't get a scholarship?

## “Make Me Laugh Scholarship”

- Open to any student who is at least 13 years old who knows how to make people laugh
- \$1,500 award for the student who writes the funniest story
- Get creative!

Go to <https://www.unigo.com/scholarships/our-scholarships/make-me-laugh-scholarship> for more details.



# The moral of the story

- Scholarships are for **EVERYONE**, no matter what your background or academic level is
- They are not just for those students with a high GPA or perfect test scores
- They have many different criteria that you may meet
- Donors want to see your creativity, individuality, community involvement, etc.



Thank you!

Questions?



Complete survey and turn it in tonight for a chance to win a \$25 gift card!

Katherine Foster  
Bozeman Advisor  
(406) 451-2565



[kfoster@reachhighermontana.org](mailto:kfoster@reachhighermontana.org)

