

# Get scholarships!

Think you have to be the star quarterback or have straight A's to get a scholarship? Think again. The reality is that there are huge numbers of scholarships, grants and other prizes available to students with less-than-stellar grades or athletic abilities, but with other great qualities. By following these tips, you can increase your chances of tapping into the billions of dollars available every year to students just like you!

## Find out what's available

When it comes to searching for scholarships remember this: make your search thorough and ambitious. The Internet, local library, your school, local businesses and service organizations all offer opportunities to locate many different types of awards. And some of these awards can be for large sums of money with very little competition simply because people don't know they are available.

**SCHOLARSHIPS I FOUND:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Tap into the Web

There are several large Internet-based scholarship databases, such as

[www.NextStepU.com/Scholarships](http://www.NextStepU.com/Scholarships), that match your personal profile to potential scholarships. These databases list hundreds of thousands of awards. The number of criteria you enter varies by site and may be limited, so it's worth a shot to alter your personal profile. The database may find additional scholarships for you that it may not have with previous search criteria.

## Check with your high school guidance office

Many scholarship committees mail their application materials straight to your high school. Most schools have a scholarship file available, so be sure to ask. Also check with the schools that you wish to attend, as many of them offer scholarships and grants that may not pop up in the databases or in your high school.

## Canvas your community

The local library should have scholarship directories listing awards, too. Also check with local businesses and service organizations, as many of them may have awards available to students in the local community. Have your mom and dad check with their employers; some organizations offer awards to children of their employees.

## Apply

Once you've found as many scholarships as you can that you are eligible for, start applying. Put the applications in order by deadline and apply for as many as possible, even if the award amount seems small or your chances seem slim. Even a

few small awards will shrink your college costs.

## Stay organized

Keep track of your submissions so that you make deadlines and have all your materials together.

**SCHOLARSHIPS I APPLIED TO:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## Prepare well

Finally, prepare for any interview portions of your applications. Be ready to answer questions about your background, achievements, goals, finances and values. Remember that good social skills go a long way, from the introductory handshake to the thank-you note after the interview.

*Excerpted from article "How can I increase my chances of winning a scholarship" by Brenda Wychulis.*

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