

THE SCHOLARSHIP PROCESS

This document is meant to give students suggestions about the process of searching for and applying for scholarships.

Finding Donors: *There are a variety of places you can look to see who is offering scholarship money to students.*

- Ask the Librarian in Langson Library and/or a public library to see a book of scholarships
- Search the UCI Financial Aid Office Website at <http://www.ofas.uci.edu/>
- Make an appointment with the UCI Scholarship Opportunity program
- Ask the Academic Counselors in your School
- Ask your parents to find out if their employers give scholarships to employee's children
- Search online for scholarship

Scholarship Search: You want to apply for scholarships that you are eligible to receive. Some scholarships for college are *merit-based*. You earn them by meeting or exceeding certain standards set by the scholarship-giver. Merit scholarships might be awarded based on academic achievement or on a combination of academics and a special talent, trait, or interest. Other scholarships are based on financial need. Many scholarships are geared toward particular groups of people.

- Use key words like: First generation college student, African American, Black Male/Female, Mexican, Latino (a), Female, Math Major, or Low Income.

Scholarship Application:

- The advertisement/application for the scholarship should give you an idea of who qualifies for the scholarship and how to apply.
- Read through the entire application to get an overview of application requirements.
- Make a list of all attachments that are required i.e. transcripts, recommendation letters, essay questions, etc.
- Fill out the application completely.
- Make sure you meet the application deadline.
- REMEMBER YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE TO PAY.

Letters of Recommendation: Recommendations can lend credibility to your application. Request them as soon as possible.

- Ask former and current instructors, employers, clergy members or other credible sources that know you well.
- Ask for the letter of recommendation at least 2 week before the application deadline
- Provide your letter writer with information about the scholarship (give them a copy of the scholarship application).
- Prepare a typed outline of information about yourself that will help them to write a good letter on your behalf, which includes your educational and career goals,

academic success, honors/awards/achievements, volunteerism, hobbies and interests, and possibly other relevant personal information.

- Request either a scholarship recommendation letter, or a general letter of recommendation that can be used broadly.
- Start a file of these letters that can be used for future applications.
- Send a thank-you note to the recommender.
- Follow up and let them know the outcome of your application, especially if you are awarded a scholarship.

Essay Questions: Your opportunity to give information about yourself, tell them why they should give you money, and what you have done to make yourself fundable.

- Create an essay that you can alter for various scholarships.
- Make sure your grammar and spelling are impeccable.
- Make sure you address all points from the essay questions.
- After you have completed the essay re-read the essay question to make sure you have addresses every point.
- Have someone with strong writing and editing skills proofread the essay before you submit it.

Organizing Your Search: Applying for scholarships will be less stressful if you plan ahead and organize your search.

- Be proactive and choose a specific time of year to look for scholarships i.e. research scholarships in July and August each year.
- Keep track of the deadlines for all scholarships that you will apply for.
- Request and save recommendation letters.
- Update your essay to match specific scholarships.
- Keep a list of scholarships that you apply for.
- Apply for the scholarships before the due date.

Getting Awarded: Things that you should be aware of should you receive a scholarship.

- The money might go directly to your college, where it will be applied to any tuition, fees, or other amounts you owe, and then any leftover funds given to you. Or it might be sent directly to you in a check. The scholarship provider should tell you what to expect when he/she informs you that you've been awarded the scholarship. If not, make sure to ask.
- A scholarship can affect your other student aid because all your student aid added together can't be more than your cost of attendance at your college. The financial aid office will subtract the amount of the award from your cost of attendance (and from certain other aid, such as loans, that you might have been offered). Then, any amount left can be covered by other financial aid for which you're eligible. For questions about this, ask a financial aid office representative.

Student Support Services Scholarship Process Checklist

Use the checklist below to help you with your scholarship search

- _____ Have you searched for a scholarship on the Financial Aid Website?
- _____ Have you asked the Academic Counselor in your school about scholarship?
- _____ Have you asked your parents to find out if their employers give scholarships to employees children?
- _____ Have you reviewed scholarship books in the library?
- _____ Have you found some scholarship that you are eligible for?
- _____ Have you filled out the scholarship application(s)?
- _____ Have you prepared a typed outline of information about yourself that will help your reference to write a great letter on your behalf?
- _____ Have you requested a letter of recommendation?
- _____ Have you prepared your essay/short answer?
- _____ Have you had someone with strong writing and editing skills proofread your essay?
- _____ Have you mailed/turned in your scholarship application by the deadline?
- _____ Have you sent a thank you note to your reference/recommender?