

Find College Scholarships Related to Your Hobbies

From gaming to knitting, there's a scholarship for almost every interest.

By Cole Claybourn [USNews](#) Feb. 27, 2023

The cost of attending [college](#) continues to [rise](#), but countless [scholarships](#) exist to help pay students [pay for their education](#). While many scholarships reward academic and athletic performance, those are far from the only avenues where students can earn money.

Many scholarships reward students for interest in a hobby, like video gaming or art. Even if an interest is more specific, unusual or personal, there's likely a scholarship available. The more niche a scholarship is, the better the chance a student has of receiving it, says Will Geiger, co-founder and CEO of Scholarships360.org, which offers free services to help students find applicable scholarships. **"It's a huge misconception that scholarships are just for top students or for students who might be ... stellar athlete(s)," Geiger says. "Those are the most visible examples of scholarships, so I think it is definitely a misconception problem."**

Hobby-based scholarships can range from a couple hundred dollars to tens of thousands. Some are annually renewable, while others are one-time awards. They also vary in the number of recipients, with some going to just one student and others to multiple winners. "There are some new categories which are quite popular, such as eSports scholarships," Kevin Ladd, chief operating officer for the scholarship search database Scholarships.com, wrote in an email. "Every year we are seeing new types of scholarships."

Geiger estimates that millions of dollars in scholarships are available for students that they might not be aware of. Some are even available to current college students. "If you think about your interests a little bit more, there might be some opportunities," Geiger says. "From my perspective, these are the types of awards that students are just much more likely to win versus something that's very general where there's so many applicants."

He recommends students start by making a list of their characteristics, interests, background, demographics, religion and other defining attributes – even as specific as a favorite book. Then, search deeply for any applicable scholarships. Typically, scholarships that require essays are the ones to target because they get fewer applications, he says.

There are scholarships available for all types of students, Jackie Bright, executive director of the National Scholarship Providers Association, wrote in an email. Along with places like Scholarships.com and Scholarships360.org, a number of other free scholarship matching databases exist, such as the [College Board's BigFuture](#). Students complete a profile and provide other information, and the database helps match them with the scholarships for which they're eligible. "The typical high school senior will match to dozens

of scholarships," Bright says. Experts suggest students avoid using scholarship matching services that charge a fee.

Students will have the most success when they spend time tailoring their application to the specific scholarship, says Geiger. "You're going to have better results if you're really thoughtful and intentional," he says. "You don't have to apply for thousands of scholarships. You're much better off applying for scholarships that are well-aligned with your interests, your background, your experiences and your goals." Students should research their own interests to find scholarships that might be a good fit, but here are some examples of hobby-based awards.

Video Gaming

Gaming is a popular hobby for many people, particularly teenagers, and some colleges and organizations are starting to recognize that. Competitive gaming, or eSports, is a growing outlet, with many colleges fielding eSports teams and competing in national competitions. More than 30 U.S. colleges and universities offer scholarships for gamers, [according to Scholarships.com](#), with [Robert Morris University](#) in Pennsylvania offering students up to \$19,000 per year in gaming scholarships. [Stephens College](#) in Missouri, meanwhile, was the first women's college to field a varsity eSports team, and offers partial scholarships for players, according to Scholarships.com.

Another gaming scholarship is the \$2,000 [Apex Hosting Minecraft Scholarship](#), for which students write a 500-word essay "about their opinion on how Minecraft can be a positive influence within their education and career development." There are also scholarships available for students interested in [video game design](#).

Cooking and Food

For students with an interest in cooking or other food-related hobbies, even following certain diets, there might be a scholarship available. The Vegetarian Resource Group offers two \$5,000 awards and one \$10,000 award each year "to graduating U.S. high school students who have promoted vegetarianism in their schools and/or communities," according to the organization's [website](#). Meanwhile, beef lovers might be interested in applying for the American National CattleWomen's [Collegiate Beef Advocacy Program award](#), which awards \$2,000 to multiple recipients to serve as collegiate spokespeople for the beef industry, "sharing the positive story of beef."

The [Asparagus Club Scholarship](#) awards up to 10 scholarships each year, worth \$2,000 per semester, to rising college juniors, seniors or graduate students who are earning specific degrees that lead to a career in the grocery industry. And if students find they have skills or interest in making candy or other sweets, the [National Candy Technologists Scholarship](#) is a one-time \$2,500 scholarship for a college sophomore, junior or rising

senior with a "demonstrated interest in confectionery technology" and majoring in a food science or related field.

Activism

Student filmmakers who are passionate about environmentalism and sustainability may be interested in the [One Earth Young Filmmakers Contest](#). High school seniors, college students and recent college graduates can win a \$1,000 scholarship or cash prize plus a \$1,000 matching grant for a live action, animation or stop-motion film. Other awards are also available for students all the way down to third grade.

The [World Wildlife Foundation-U.S. Conservation Leadership Award](#) also recognizes students working on environmental issues with a \$5,000 award to be put toward studies or professional development related to conservation work.

The [Planet Fitness Judgement Free Generation Scholarship](#), in partnership with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, offers 50 one-time \$5,000 scholarships to high school seniors "who model the judgement free, pro-kindness, and anti-bullying values for which Planet Fitness and Boys & Girls Clubs of America collectively stand," according to the website. Students are asked to write an essay as well as create a short video demonstrating their commitment to spreading kindness and preventing bullying.

Arts

Google offers students the chance to use their imagination and show what they are grateful for through the [Doodle for Google Scholarship](#), which awards the winner a \$30,000 college scholarship, a \$50,000 technology package for their school or non-profit organization and a trip to Google headquarters in California, as well as Google hardware and merchandise. The winner's artwork will also be displayed as the Google Doodle for a day.

For crafty types who focus on knitting and crochet, the [Beans For Brains Scholarship](#) program offers four to five scholarships annually of \$2,500 each. Beans For Brains, sponsored by Jimmy Beans Wool, a knitting and craft supply company, has provided more than \$50,000 in scholarship assistance since 2010, according to the company's website.

Design-minded students willing to work with unconventional materials can win up to \$10,000 from the [Stuck at Prom Scholarship Contest](#) by creating the most creative dress or tuxedo using Duck Brand duct tape. The [Arts for Life! Scholarship](#) awards \$1,000 scholarships to 25 graduating high school seniors in Florida "who demonstrate excellence in creative writing, dance, drama, music or visual art," according to Scholarships.com.

Students interested in anime, a style of Japanese animation, can earn money through the [Midwest Animation Promotion Society](#), which awards up to \$3,000 for full-time college students in specific majors.