

7 of the strangest college scholarships

- From ordinary to the obscure, there are lots of scholarships available to students to help cover the cost of college.
- Here are a few of the most unusual opportunities.

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Few families can cover the skyrocketing cost of college outright. Luckily, there are more than 7 million scholarships available to help.

But wading through the options can be overwhelming. Enter free search sites, like Tuition Funding Sources, which help students find the most desirable kind of assistance — money that does not have to be paid back.

"Schools have made it so easy to borrow money, but the free money is the ticket," said Richard Sorensen, the president of Tuition Funding Sources, a search site for higher education funding.

Some students and parents are catching on. This year, scholarships were the [single most-used resource](#) to pay for an undergraduate's college bill, according to the 11th annual "How America Pays for College" report from student loan corporation [Sallie Mae](#).

"In most cases, the reason students don't get scholarships is because they don't try hard enough," Sorensen said.

To maximize your chance at scoring free money, answer all of the profile questions — even optional ones, such as your height, for example, Sorensen said. You just might find that you qualify for an award.

Robert Franek, The Princeton Review's editor-in-chief and author of "Colleges That Pay You Back," advises students to look for scholarships locally, particularly from organizations in their community, where the odds of nabbing an award are better than national competitions.

"But, above all, we say never let a scholarship search cost you the time you need to spend doing your homework, getting good grades in school and prepping to score your best on college admission exams," he added. "These efforts are far more likely to pay off."

For those that want to reach for the stars, here are a few of the more obscure awards currently available:

1. Stuck at Prom Scholarship Contest

Application Deadline: June 3, 2019

Award Amount: \$10,000

High school students must create and wear promwear made from Duck Brand duct tape and/or crafting tape, then upload a photo in their creation during prom season and vote online for the best dressed. Winners in best dress and best tux each receive \$10,000.

2. Chick and Sophie Major Memorial Duck Calling Scholarship Contest

Application Deadline: Nov. 23, 2018

Award Amount: \$2,000 for first place, \$1,000 for second place, \$750 for third place and \$500 for fourth place

All high school seniors in Arkansas who successfully demonstrate their duck calls have a chance to win some college aid. During its 43-year history, the contest has awarded more than \$73,000 in scholarships to young duck callers attending 32 different colleges and universities in 13 different states, according to the site.

3. DoSomething.org Easy Scholarships

Deadline: Jan. 15, 2019

Award Amount: \$5,000

Through this organization, students can win scholarships by volunteering. There are a number of community service projects that apply, such as spreading the word about the dangers of impaired driving, which includes driving while drunk, high or drowsy.

4. Tall Club Scholarships

Deadline: March 1, 2019

Award Amount: Multiple scholarships of up to \$1,000 each

Heads up: These awards are specifically for students under 21, attending their first year of college, and who meet the height requirements of at least 5' 10" for women and 6' 2" for men.

5. For the Love of Chocolate Foundation Scholarships

Deadline: Oct. 1, May 1 and June 1 annually

Award amount: Varies depending on the funds available per semester

For those with a sweet tooth, the Love of Chocolate Foundation provides scholarships to students planning to pursue specialized training in pastry arts. The funding, which is meant to offset tuition, is available to on a first-come, first-served basis.

6. United Federation of Doll Clubs Scholarships

Deadline: April 1, 2019

Award amount: \$1,000 each

Calling all Barbie fans! Four scholarships are available to promote the research, knowledge, understanding and appreciation of dolls, including antiques, collectibles and modern dolls.

7. American Fire Sprinkler Association Scholarships

Deadline: April 1, 2019

Award amount: \$2,000 each

Safety first: These scholarships are designed to educate the public about automatic fire sprinklers. There are a total of 10 available to this year's high school seniors who want to pursue a college degree or attend a trade school. Winners are selected at random.