

A Student Guide to Scholarship Searches

Where Do I Start?



1. Start your search with the **colleges to which you are applying**.
 - a. Most colleges are very transparent about what you qualify for when you visit their financial aid and scholarship pages. Call financial aid offices with questions. Ex. [Ohio University](#) [Wright State Scholarships](#) [Miami University](#)
 - b. Some scholarships are based on GPA and SAT/ACT scores; some are based on need.
 - c. With some scholarships, you do NOT need a separate application but with others you do.
 - d. This is one part of the application process parents can help with—parents can search for opportunities and deadlines and work with their seniors to work out a schedule for applying.
 - e. Dig deeper than the general college scholarship page—look at *specific department pages* on the college websites. Ex. Psychology or Education departments may offer their own scholarships for those majors.
1. Check out **SchoolLinks and Schoology** for updates on local scholarships as well as national scholarships we receive. **SchoolLinks is your #1 Resource at MHS for scholarships.**
 - a. SchoolLinks houses scholarships sent to MHS (FINANCES page under ‘Scholarship Matching’ tab), so check it out weekly. More opportunities are typically posted in the Winter and Spring.
2. Sign up for **FREE scholarship search websites**.
 - a. Enter your specific information.
 - b. Do your research--note things about yourself: left-handed, education majors, women in STEM, heritage info, businesses where your parents work, military family.....Google "unique or unusual scholarships for college"
 - c. Check email notifications often.
 - d. Popular sites include: Fastweb; Going Merry; College Board; Scholarships.com
 - i. [9 Best Scholarship Websites- Forbes](#)
 - e. If there is a charge for a search, it is probably a scam! Beware!
3. Complete the **FAFSA**
 - a. Find out how to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); <https://studentaid.gov/2324/help/deadlines>
 - b. FAFSA application opens later this year: **Launches December 2024**
 - c. Most merit-based scholarships require that you complete the FAFSA even if you think you may not qualify for need-based financial aid.
 - d. Parents and Students can get a PIN in advance of FAFSA opening.
4. Check out more information on the scholarship search process on the [US Dept. of Education Financial Aid website](#)

Other Tips

- Gather your information before you apply: GPA; Resume; Activity List; Transcript
- Ask for your letters of recommendation early. The last thing you want to do is rush your teachers when they are helping you out by writing you a letter. The earlier you ask, the more time they'll have and the better they'll make their letters. **Note: Not all scholarships require letters.**
- Follow directions exactly; take your time.
- Proofread essays when they are required. Have another person read the essay.
- Be authentic, use your personal voice, and stay on topic.
- Be mindful of deadlines.
- Don't forget your online presence makes a difference.
- Do not lie or exaggerate your qualifications.
- Practice your interview skills, especially for college-based merit scholarships.
- Consider WORK STUDY programs at your college.
- Treat the search like a part-time job! You can earn \$\$\$\$ but you need to put the time into it.
- Don't forget to follow up on your scholarship application with a thank you.

