SCHOLARSHIP GUIDE

Life Literacy Project • High School Edition

Goal: Find scholarships that fit you, stay organized, avoid scams, and submit strong applications.

How to Use This Guide

Scholarships can help reduce the amount you and your family need to pay for college. You do not have to wait until senior year to start building your scholarship profile. Use this workbook to collect your activities, experiences, essays, recommendations, deadlines, and application materials in one place.

Remember: eligibility, deadlines, award amounts, and requirements can change. Always verify current information on the scholarship provider's official website.

1. Know Your Scholarship Categories

- Academic achievement
- Community service and volunteering
- Leadership
- Arts, music, dance, or creative activities
- Athletics
- Career, major, or professional interests
- Local/community organizations
- Employer or family-member workplace programs
- Special competitions, projects, or achievements
- Scholarships based on eligibility or background requirements

My Scholarship Strengths

What activities, skills, experiences, jobs, responsibilities, or achievements could make me a strong applicant?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. Build Your Scholarship Profile

Before searching, create a master list of information you can reuse. This makes applications faster and helps you notice themes in your experiences.

Category	My Information
Academic strengths	
Activities/clubs	
Leadership	
Community service	
Work/job experience	
Arts/athletics	
Awards/honors	
Career/major interests	
Personal or family experiences I may write about	

3. Scholarship Search Strategy

- Start with scholarships offered by colleges you are considering.
- Check local foundations, community organizations, libraries, businesses, and professional organizations.
- Search for scholarships connected to your intended major or career.
- Look at scholarships connected to activities, service, leadership, arts, athletics, or employment.
- Ask your school counselor about local opportunities that may not appear in large databases.
- Search regularly instead of doing one huge search at the last minute.

Trusted starting points include your school counseling office and official scholarship-provider websites. Federal Student Aid also recommends organizing applications by due date and submitting before the deadline when possible.

4. Scholarship Tracker

Add every opportunity you are seriously considering. Use one row per scholarship and update the status as you work.

Scholarship	Amount	Deadline	Requirements	Essay?	Status

Application Status Ideas

Researching • Eligible • Materials Needed • Essay Drafting • Recommendation Requested • Ready to Submit • Submitted • Finalist • Awarded • Not Selected

5. Application Checklist

- Confirm that you meet every eligibility requirement.
- Read the full instructions before writing.
- Record the exact deadline and time zone if listed.
- Gather transcripts, activity information, résumé, and other required materials.
- Ask for recommendation letters early.
- Answer the prompt directly and stay within the word limit.
- Proofread names, dates, attachments, and contact information.
- Submit through the official method listed by the provider.
- Save a copy of the final application and confirmation.
- Record the result so you can update your scholarship tracker.

6. Scholarship Essay Planner

Prompt: What exactly is the scholarship asking you to answer?

_____
_____
_____

Main story or example: Choose a specific experience rather than listing everything you have done.

_____
_____
_____
_____

What did I learn? Explain how the experience changed your thinking, goals, values, or actions.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Why does this matter for my future?

_____
_____
_____

Details I want the reader to remember:

_____
_____
_____

7. Recommendation Letter Planner

- Choose someone who knows your work or character well and follows the scholarship's rules.
- Ask early and provide the deadline, prompt, résumé/activity list, and submission instructions.
- Politely follow up before the deadline.
- Thank the person afterward.

8. Avoid Scholarship Scams

Be cautious if an opportunity pressures you to pay for access, guarantees that you will win, asks for unnecessary sensitive information, or uses suspicious contact information. Verify the opportunity through the provider's official information and ask a trusted adult or school counselor if something feels wrong. Federal Student Aid advises students that they do not have to pay to find scholarships or financial aid.

My Scholarship Action Plan

Goal	My Plan
Scholarships I will research this month	
Applications I will start	
Essay I will draft first	
Person I will ask for a recommendation	
Deadlines I must watch	
One thing I can improve in my applications	

Final Reflection

What did I learn about the types of scholarships that fit me?

_____
_____
_____

What is one action I will take this week?

_____
_____
_____

Useful reminder: A scholarship does not have to be huge to matter. Several smaller awards can add up.