



How to Apply for Scholarships!



- **Scholarship Search Engines**

- www.fastweb.com
- www.zinch.com
- www.scholarships.com
- www.collegeboard.com
- www.finaid.org/scholarships
- www.studentscholarshipsearch.com
- www.careersandcolleges.com

- **Scholarship Research**

Where to obtain scholarship information:

- Internet: scholarship search engines and college financial aid websites
- Counselor, Teachers, Mentors
- Scholarship Binder located in the Natomas Charter School Media Center
- Church, union (parents), employer (yours and/or your parents)
- *Never pay any company or person for scholarship information.*

- **Getting Organized**

Create folders with the following categories:

- Scholarship applications
- Personal statements and scholarship essays (paper copies and computer files)
- Letters of recommendations (teachers, counselors, coaches, community contacts)
- Official and unofficial high school and college transcripts
- Updated résumé (paper copies and computer files)
- Awards/certificates
- Financial aid information or Student Aid Reports

- **Prioritize Scholarship Deadlines**

- Read eligibility criteria and requested documentation *carefully* when you obtain a scholarship application. Is the deadline "post-marked" or "received by"? What will you need to submit?
- Use both personal planners and family calendars to keep track of deadlines.
- Create your own benchmark deadlines to submit the applications early.
- Make requests early (at least 2 weeks) for letters of recommendation and official transcripts.
- It is good practice to provide your recommender with copies of your résumé and personal statement.

- **Résumé / List of Activities**

- Maintain good records of all of your accomplishments and activities. These would include work experience, honors, awards, and achievements, community service, and extracurricular activities.
- Describe each activity so that the reader understands what it is and include dates of involvement.
- See the backside of this handout for a sample résumé.

- **Letters of Recommendation**

- A good recommender would be a teacher, counselor, or community person who knows you well and can describe your strengths. Do not use relatives as recommenders.
- You can request a letter tailored to a specific scholarship application or a general letter that can be used in several scholarship applications... or ask for both!
- Give recommenders about 2-3 weeks notice and give them a specific deadline that is earlier than the application deadline. Also provide them with a résumé to help them write a strong letter.

- **Essays and Personal Statements**

- Be prepared to write several personal statements, each with a different emphasis, but with overlapping information.
- Key areas to write about include: Academic/career goals, leadership, personal accomplishments, community involvement, and obstacles that you have overcome.
- Have a teacher, a counselor, and/or a mentor review and edit your essays.

- **Effort**

- Treat your pursuit of scholarships as you would a job. Dedicate the time and effort to do it well. Remember, scholarships are not 'just money'; they are recognitions of your accomplishments that will be with you for a lifetime!
- *Proofread your entire application before submitting it.*