SCHOLARSHIP ACTION PLAN

SCHOLARHIP ACTION PLAN:

* Plan your search strategy
* Create list of scholarships to apply for and deadlines
* Brainstorm activities/awards/skills/work experience
* Clarify career/educational goals
* Articulate challenges you’ve faced and overcome
* List potential references

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| |  | | --- | | RIGHT NOW  □ Search for scholarships  □ Make a list of scholarships and deadlines  □ Get started on your personal essay  □ Build relationships with people who can write you letters of recommendation later | | |  | | --- | | 3-4 WEEKS BEFORE DEADLINE  □ Ask for letters of recommendation  □ Revise, revise, revise your essay  □ Collect and submit all required materials | |

# My Search Strategy

Start your search early– don’t wait and find out you already missed the deadline. Sometimes you have to apply a year ahead of time. Begin by looking locally for scholarships – less people apply for these than for national scholarships, so you may have a greater chance of winning. Use your network, and don’t be afraid to ask about scholarships. Beware of scholarship scams. Never provide your bank account information or credit card number to apply for a scholarship. Use the following checklist to get your search started:

\_\_\_ I’ve contacted admissions/financial aid to ask about scholarships I’m eligible for at the transfer schools I want to attend.

\_\_\_ I’ve asked TRIO professionals, advisors, counselors and instructors about scholarship opportunities.

\_\_\_ I’ve found out if my employer or my parents’ employer offers scholarships. \_\_\_ I’ve found out if my church, club, credit union, etc. offer scholarships.

\_\_\_ I’ve asked friends, family, coworkers, and acquaintances about scholarship opportunities.

\_\_\_ I’ve searched online for scholarships (Fastweb, College Board, CollegeNet, Developed by Rachel Juen for the Educational Opportunity Association Foundation.

# Scholarship List and Deadlines

Applying for one or two scholarships is good, but applying for more is even better. Only apply to scholarships that you fit the qualifications for or you will be wasting your time. Use the following chart to help organize the list of scholarships you plan to apply for. Pay attention to due dates!

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Scholarship | Info/Notes | Due Date | Done |
| Century College Foundation Scholarships | Apply online Feb 1– Apr 1  https://www.century.edu/foundationalumni/foundation/scholarshipopportunities | Apr 1 |  |
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# Writing a Scholarship Essay

* Grab the reader’s attention and write about what makes you unique.
* Include your career/educational goals, what skills you’ve gained through related work or volunteer experience, and how you fit specific requirements of the scholarship.
* Follow the instructions carefully! Answer specific questions the essay prompt may ask and make sure to follow the word limit.
* Recycle your essays for more than one application, but make sure to take the time to adjust them to fit each scholarship’s specific guidelines and focus.
* Check for spelling and grammar mistakes!
* Have someone review your essay and provide advice such as a TRIO professional, teacher, or counselor.

# Brainstorming Part 1: My Scholarship Resume

This is not the same as a resume for job applications. A scholarship resume is a summary of your accomplishments, strengths, and interests. Use this list as a brainstorming tool to give you ideas about what to include in your scholarship essay. You may also want to give a copy to the people you ask to write your letters of recommendation.

Things to include in your list:

* Academic achievements– awards, honor roll, competitions  Work experience/ volunteer experience
* Athletic/artistic achievements  Skills
* School involvement  Personal interests
* Community involvement  Positive personal characteristics
* Seminars/conferences/workshops

# Brainstorming Part 2: My Career/Educational Goals

Most scholarship essays will need to include something about your goals. Scholarship committees want to know what kind of career you are aiming for and how that will benefit you, your family, your community, etc.

* What degree(s) do you plan to earn? What kind of career do you want to have?
* What inspired you to want to choose this degree/field of study?
* How do you plan to make your community/the world a better place?

# Brainstorming Part 3: Challenges I’ve Faced

Writing about overcoming challenges can help you explain how you plan to not give up even if things are difficult. Scholarship evaluators are often looking for people who are resilient.

* What difficulties have you faced in life?
* How are you overcoming them?
* What lessons have you learned from this experience?

Example 1. Financial challenges: Some scholarships are awarded on the basis of financial need. If so, then your essay will need to talk about how and why it is difficult for you to afford an education. Why have you or your family struggled with money/bills? How are you trying to make this situation better? How will scholarships help you overcome the financial burden of a college education and help you achieve your goals?

Example 2. First generation college student: Some scholarships are for first-generation college students. They often will want to hear in your essay about what being a first generation college student means to you. What is hard about it? Why is it important? How will succeeding in college make a difference in your life and to your family?

# Potential References

Ask early! Most people need at least 3 weeks notice so that they will have enough time to craft a well-written letter. Ask the right person. Choose someone who actually knows you like a teacher, coach, counselor, or employer. Do not ask a family member.

Give them information about the scholarship so they know what the scholarship committee is looking for. Refresh their memory by talking to them or giving them a list of your career goals, volunteer/extracurricular activities, and anything else that will help . them know more about you and how you fit the scholarship. Make sure they know the due date and follow-up with them to make sure the letters have been sent.

Remember to say thank-you and write a thank you note as well!

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| Name | Contact info | How they know me | Follow up | Thank you sent |
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