SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION TIPS

Applying for a scholarship is like applying for a job—you’re asking someone to “risk” money on you and your abilities. Like a job interview, you must promote yourself. Unlike an interview, you must promote yourself on paper.

Read instructions carefully. Include only the requested information or documents. If the scholarship announcement or application does not indicate whether or not attachments are required, always submit the completed application form, your unofficial transcripts from all colleges attended, two recommendation letters, and a personal statement stating how you fit the criteria and why you are needy. If an application form is not provided, include create a cover letter which contains factual information about yourself: name, address, phone number, scholarship for which you are applying, and a list of the enclosures (other documents you’re including in the envelope).

Your personal statement and your letters of recommendation must be compelling—they must convey why you are a better “risk” than someone else.

Your personal statement should address your educational and career goals. It should cover where you’re coming from, where you are, and where you are going. You should be SPECIFIC. Include the reasons the particular scholarship is important to you—how the scholarship will help you attain your goals—and how you fit the scholarship criteria.

Your letters of recommendation should be addressed to the specific scholarship for which you are applying. Choose your recommenders wisely. Ask them to cover your ability to achieve and to complete your studies. Recommendation letters should also be specific and identify how you fit the scholarship criteria (provide written biographical information and give a copy of the scholarship criteria to your recommenders). You should plan ahead. Allow your recommenders plenty of time to put together a compelling letter.

Be sure to send thank you notes to your recommenders and let them know whether or not you received the scholarship.

Other things to consider: Read all instructions carefully. TYPE all forms, resumes, essays, letters, etc. Make sure your name is on all documents. Have someone proofread your materials. Make copies of all the documents you submit. Use only one side of the paper for personal statements and letters.

PLAN AHEAD. Do not wait until the last minute to gather materials and submit the application. Set a due date before the final filing date. If you encounter snags, you will have time to deal with them.

This is important. When you receive a scholarship thank the PROVIDER of the scholarship, not the scholarship selection committee. Scholarship donors are more likely to provide future funding when they know their donations are appreciated by the recipients. If you have received a renewable scholarship, send a progress report to the provider during each funding period.

To make your application stand out, make sure you’ve created a professional application package. DO NOT put materials in any special folders or binders. DO make sure that the presentation of your materials is professional looking (neat and readable), the contents and information are organized (personal statements and essay question responses are clear, address the topic, and contain complete information), and the form and content of your package is complete (follow application instructions and make sure all requested materials are included).

The secret to being a successful applicant is PERSISTENCE. Don’t give up. Keep working at improving your application package. Keep improving your personal statement. Keep developing recommenders. Keep applying, applying, applying for all scholarships for which you’re eligible.

“Little effort, little result; big effort, big result. It’s that simple.” – A. A. Montapert