

## How to increase your chances with scholarships

When it comes to scholarships, there are several things you can do to improve your chances. Here are some things to consider.

### **Apply early.**

Every scholarship program is unique, so you'll find that application deadlines vary. Some programs time and date stamp their applications. Although the committee may not consider this as a factor in selecting those who receive awards, when you submit your application early, you may have an opportunity to revise or correct your information or submit parts you may have forgotten about.

### **Submit an easy-to-read, well-organized application.**

Print or type neatly, and follow all the directions provided. Don't leave any item blank; if something does not apply to you, enter "none" or "not applicable." Don't leave it up to the committee to interpret your answers.

Check your grammar, spelling, punctuation, and organizational structure. Have a counselor, teacher, or parent review your application before submitting it. If the application allows you to include attachments, use them if necessary. Be creative in your approach in essays, but avoid doing anything too unusual, like sending your application in a strange, unmanageable, or oversized package.

### **Avoid redundancy in your essays.**

Good writing is key. When you rush to prepare an essay, you may be more likely to repeat yourself — don't. Your goal in an essay is to show the selection committee three things: that you can write, that you can organize your thoughts well on paper, and that you can show something unique about yourself.

### **Make contact, but do it cautiously.**

If it is allowed, try to make one contact with a member of the committee or with the organization. You can do this by e-mail, over the phone, or in person. Ask a question or express your appreciation for the program. Above all, however, be brief. Committee members may be busy, so you want them to remember you — but make sure they remember you positively. If you become a pest, you'll probably be eliminated from consideration quickly.

### **Stand out from the crowd.**

One of the most difficult things to do, but also one of the most important, is to prepare your application in a way that makes you stand out to the committee. When you are able to show who you are through your application, you increase your chances of being selected.

Good luck with your scholarship applications!