

Steps to Follow to Make Applying for Scholarships, Financial Aid, and Grants Easier and More Successful

Finding enough funding for college has become a major concern for many college students and their parents. The cost of attendance and everyday living expenses for full time college students is much higher this year. One method for obtaining the needed extra funding is to apply for scholarships and grants. How does anyone make their scholarship application stand out above the other applicants?

- The application should be neat, contain no spelling errors, all questions answered, and all required documents should be attached. The applicant should have someone (teacher) or a friend to read over the application to check for errors and to evaluate the essay.
- If a box is checked stating that the applicant has held leadership roles, participated as a team member, or completed community service work than supporting documents should be attached or added to the application as verification.
- The people that are to be used as personal references should be notified that they are being used as a reference. They should be adults, business leaders, teachers, ministers, employers, or Tribal leaders. The reference should know the applicant in order to provide a good reference. The applicant should provide their personal references with a current resume to refresh their memory and to update them on new accomplishments.
- The form that is provided to request a transcript is to be mailed or taken by the applicant to the school. The scholarship program or the college financial office will not request the transcript.

Students can make the scholarship and grant application process faster and easier by gathering the supporting documents ahead of time and organizing them. The documents can be copied and organized in a file folder or file box and then added to the applications as needed. Remember to replace the copies in order to have a continuous supply for additional applications. When the application is mailed, it is wise to request a receipt from the scholarship program.

Make several copies (5 at least) of the documents listed below.

1. ACT of SAT Scores
2. Club membership documentation
3. Community service documentation (statement from supervisor or program leader)
4. Completed application (make one extra copy for your files)
5. Contact information for references
6. Copies of award certificates
7. Copies of scholarships that have been mailed (Needed for reference and in case something became lost in the mail)

8. Copies of your income tax form and a copy of your parent's income tax form if you are their dependent. You will need these if your college requests a verification of income.
9. Current resume
10. Federal Application Federal Student Aid Report (SAR)
11. High school transcripts
12. Internship Documentation (statement from supervisor or program)
13. Letters of Recommendation
14. Letter of acceptance from the college you plan to attend
15. Letters from the college Dean or President congratulating you for making their list
16. Poarch Creek Documentation (copy Tribal Roll Card or if a Tribal descendant a notarized letter of Poarch Tribal Descent is available)
17. Scholarships applications (make copies before you begin work on the application)
18. Scholarship essays
19. Statement of career goals
20. Stamped Self Addressed Envelopes (Some scholarship applications must be requested by mail and they ask for envelopes that are self-addressed and a postage stamp attached to the envelope)
21. Summer Program Documentation (Acceptance Letter or Certificate of Completion)
22. Transcripts for previous College Work (Dual Enrollment or college credit earned participating in an internship program)

Most scholarships and grant funds are awarded for an academic year and the majority of the scholarship applications become available during the fall and early spring. Do not wait until after January to start applying for scholarships. January is the time to apply or renew your FAFSA application (Free Application for Federal Student Aid application). The information from the 2008 tax forms is needed, but it does not have to have been filed (mailed or electronic filed) in order to complete the FAFSA application. All students should apply for the FAFSA regardless of family income. Students with higher incomes do qualify for Work Study (paid employment usually working on a college campus for 15 to 20 hours per week) and other grants. State grants and college based scholarships are awarded based on the FAFSA's SAR (Student Aid Report) report.

Students should avoid mailing their scholarship applications on the last day it is due. It is however; better to mail it on the last day than not mail at it all. When the application is mailed two weeks before the deadline, it allows the scholarship program staff members time to contact the student if they need additional information. FASTWEB.com is a free scholarship program that keeps students updated by email when scholarship applications are available and when the deadlines are approaching. A list of additional scholarship search programs can be found at http://www.college-scholarships.com/free_scholarship_searches.htm. The "Hints and Advice" columns provided at www.freschinfo.com have helped a number of the Tribal students to be successful in the scholarship application process.