

Scholarship Application Checklist

A step-by-step checklist for finding and applying for scholarships.

Search and shortlist

- Start with your school's financial aid office and lists.
- Search reputable scholarship databases.
- Look for local, community and employer scholarships.
Local awards often have fewer applicants and better odds.
- Check awards from colleges you're applying to.
- Note eligibility, award amount and deadline for each.
- Build a tracking list ranked by deadline and fit.

Check eligibility

- Read each scholarship's requirements carefully.
- Confirm you meet GPA, major or background criteria.
- Verify residency, age or enrollment requirements.
- Avoid any scholarship that charges a fee.
Legitimate scholarships never require a payment to apply.
- Skip awards you clearly don't qualify for.
- Prioritize the best-fit, highest-value options.

Gather documents

- Collect official transcripts and proof of enrollment.
- Update your resume of activities and achievements.
- Gather proof of income or aid forms if required.
- Compile test scores or certificates as needed.
- Prepare proof of eligibility for specific awards.
- Keep digital copies organized in one folder.

Write essays

- Read each essay prompt and word limit closely.
- Draft a strong core essay you can adapt.
- Tailor each essay to the prompt and the award's mission.
- Tell a specific, personal story with real examples.
- Revise for clarity, tone and length.
- Proofread and have someone review each essay.

Recommendations

- Choose recommenders who know your work well.
- Ask each one at least three weeks before deadlines.
- Share your resume, goals and the award details.
- Give clear submission instructions and deadlines.
- Send a polite reminder before each due date.
- Thank every recommender after they submit.

Submit and track

- Complete every field of each application.
- Attach all required documents and essays.
- Proofread the full application before submitting.
- Submit well before each deadline.
- Save confirmations and note next steps.
- Follow up on results and report any awards you win.