

Scholarship Application and Letters of Recommendation Tips

***FOLLOW DIRECTIONS!!** *Incomplete applications are tossed out and not even considered. Careless omissions may cost you hundreds or thousands of dollars.*

What to watch for :

--**Recommendations**—How many? From whom? Teacher, Administrator, Coach, Employer, Youth Worker? Other? *Some Scholarships request one recommendation from a person within the school setting and another one from a person outside school.*

--**Most Recent Transcript**—should include PSAT, ACT, SAT scores

Some scholarships may also request a third quarter senior year report card.

--Is there any kind of **signature document** that needs to be included?

***PLAN AHEAD** Pick up a copy of a scholarship application or read it through online **as soon as it is published and immediately ask for recommendations if they are needed.** Please give the people you ask for recommendations at least **two weeks notice.** Asking for a recommendation close to the application deadline is extremely discourteous, disrespectful, and may rightfully be denied.

***PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION**

- Typed
- Correct spelling and grammar
- Clean, crisp, unwrinkled pages

Helpful Hints for Letters of Recommendation

*It is critical you choose individuals who really know you and can be specific about your talents, contributions, etc. A one or two paragraph, “so-so” written letter may actually hurt you more than help you. If they don’t know you well, but you want them to write the letter (e.g., award is for writing and she/he is your English teacher), that’s okay; but, take the time to tell them more about you before the letter is written so it doesn’t sound like it is written by a stranger.

*It is Okay to ask several people to write you letters and then pick the **best ones** (maybe they are not good writers, or maybe they didn’t take the time with it!) The letters will reflect on **you** in the selection process.

*It is traditional to tell recommenders **what** you want them to highlight—don't just give them a general request like, "I want a letter about me in your class." Maybe they don't remember all your contributions. It is important that you give them some reminders and pointers about what you would like the letter to do for you (e.g., "In this letter I want to show that I am a dedicated student and work hard on projects, even though I am not a straight A student. Remember when I did that big project on Asian cultures?")

*Have a recommender write the letter for the specific cause you are applying to—don't accept a "To Whom it May Concern" letter that is so general it could be to anyone, for any type of opportunity. Also, make sure they write it on **letterhead** if they represent any organizations you were part of (school, leadership club, service organization, youth group, etc.).