

Scholarship Suggestions, Tips, and Guidelines

*Adapted from article by Walt Anthony, former Scholarship Program Coordinator,
[The Hispanic Scholarship Fund](#)*

The following suggestions will help you more efficiently and effectively apply for scholarships. We hope these guidelines will make the application process easier, and improve your chances, when being considered for a scholarship award.

- Scholarship information is available through the links on our web site www.lyncs.org/collegescholarships and many other **internet sources**.
- Use links on each web-site you visit to branch-off and locate other related sites.
- Use Search Engines: look under key words such as: Scholarships, Funding, Minorities, etc.
- Your College Financial Aid Office should have other scholarship resources, as well as your local public or school library. There are many scholarship opportunities available, never limit yourself to applying to just one. Research as many funding sources as you can, and learn which ones you may qualify for, then apply promptly each new school year.
- Many scholarships have similar criteria for their awards. By maintaining a high Grade Point Average, staying as active as possible in your community and extracurricular activities, evaluating and cataloguing your personal/professional strengths, and setting future goals for your education and career, you will be ready with the necessary information and experience to apply for need and/or merit based scholarship funding.
- Each Scholarship Fund has its own specific guidelines, before applying for a scholarship, be certain that you meet, or will meet, all the necessary qualifications such as: academic standing, specified financial situation, and personal or professional background.
- Once you are certain that you meet the qualifications to apply, be careful with the application process by clearly expressing and explaining all your qualifying factors.
- Ask for assistance! Many terms and words used in higher education and financial aid are unfamiliar and can be confusing. It is always a good idea to ask for the assistance of a school advisor, counselor, or professors, when applying for a scholarship. Your Registrar's Office and Financial Aid Office can also help you with questions.
- Start to build a network of professionals and educators who are willing to advise you, write recommendations, proofread your applications and essays, and guide you through the application process. Don't rely on just one person, get as many opinions and points of view as you can.

The Competitive Process:

- Scholarships are a competitive process, and alertness, caution, and care must be taken when applying to give yourself the best possible advantage.
- Do not assume that because you have received a scholarship previously, that you will automatically receive another award. Some students make the error of assuming that they will not have to be as careful filling out their application package and writing their personal statement when applying the second or even third time around.

Your Application:

- Have at least one other person review your application package, and supporting documents. Find the most qualified person to proofread for you. Don't be too shy to ask for assistance, keep looking until you find someone who will spend the time to carefully go over your application package. There are people out there who, given the chance, would be happy to assist you.
- Proofread your application. Pay particular attention to any spaces you have left blank; blank spaces can deem your application incomplete and ineligible! If the answer is zero, write in 0 rather than leaving a blank spot.
- Your application represents the entire, and only, picture of you the selection committees has. Always type or neatly print information in black ink. Make sure your application appears business-like and professional.
- Do not presume to know which questions are applicable to you. We may deem applications incomplete and ineligible when students have "second guessed" the application and decided for themselves which questions apply to their situation. If you write N/A as an answer you risk eliminating yourself for the selection process. Simply answer all questions to the best of your knowledge and move on, this will increase your chances of an award. Also check, did you answer every question exactly as it was asked?
- Only answer what is asked, volunteering unneeded information could actually effect your evaluation negatively!
- Double check with the people you ask for assistance: is your transcript complete, and does your recommendation letter cover all the points asked?
- Re-read your work and ask: "would I give an award to this person, if all I knew about the person was in this envelope?"

Personal Statement:

- Be aware that a Personal Statement is viewed as the equivalent of a face-to-face interview. Part of your proofreading should include attention to the tone of your statement. Do you sound like a student an organization would be proud to offer a scholarship? If not, rework your statement until you, and your proofreader, are certain that you have accomplished this. Take pride in your life and work. The way you phrase your statement can have a positive influence on the selection committee members.

- Make absolutely certain that all requested topics are covered in your personal statement, completely and in detail, use specific examples whenever possible.
- An "outline format" can be helpful. Address each point one by one, anything you do to make your materials easier to read and understand will aid selection committee members in evaluating your package.

Your Reference or Recommendation Letter:

- Give the school official, or teacher, that you hope to use as a reference advance notice, **at least two weeks**, whenever possible, so that he or she can do a great job for you. Find a school official who will give you a terrific recommendation letter on official school letterhead.
- A word of caution regarding reference letters: make certain that the letter is written specifically for and about you since "canned" or template letters can be easily detected.
- Also, if you are asking a teacher, employer or person from a community organization for a reference letter, please ask them to print it on official letterhead. This increases your chances of being given full credit: some students lose points for having typed or word-processed "unofficial letterhead".
- Be sure to supply the person writing your letter all the information they will need to write an accurate letter. Please provide him or her with the instructions from the application form. Be certain that they are aware of the topics which need to be covered in the letter.
- Chances are the person you are asking is very busy, so be clear and efficient when making your request.
- Show your appreciation and professionalism by writing a note or card of thanks for the time taken to write your letter.

***One Final Reminder : Spelling, Grammar and Neatness Counts!
Remember to proofread your applications and essays!***