

Searching for Scholarships

Welcome to “College Prep News” – helpful tips from EducationQuest Foundation on how to plan -- and pay for college.

Hi! This is Maggie from EducationQuest and I'm going to talk about scholarships. You see, not only do I work at EducationQuest - I'm also a college student - so *I KNOW* how important it is to find money to pay for school.

Scholarships are great because they provide free money for college -- you don't have to pay them back! And because there are such a wide variety of scholarships out there, you should be able to find some you can apply for -- regardless of your academic or financial situation.

If I had it to do over, I would have applied for *a lot* more scholarships when I was in high school. There are thousands of them out there and some go unused because students don't apply!

I've learned so much about scholarships since working for EducationQuest – and I'll share some of what I've learned with you - like where to find scholarships and how to increase your chances of earning them.

Start looking for scholarships during your junior year of high school and continue through your senior year - and even after you're in college.

So where should you look?

Check with the colleges you are considering as they offer a variety of scholarships. Some are based on academics, some on financial need, and some on other criteria. Ask the college admissions office about scholarships they offer, how to apply, and about deadlines.

Other good sources are organizations right there in your hometown. The dollar amounts may be small, but so is the pool of eligible students. Let's say you spend four hours applying for local scholarships and end up getting \$1,000 - you just earned 250 bucks an hour!

A great online resource for finding local and state scholarships is *ScholarshipQuest* at EducationQuest.org. It has *over 2,000* scholarships for students in Nebraska. When you log on, you'll complete a profile to help you find awards that match your criteria.

Of course, there are also thousands of national scholarships - and there are Web sites that will link you to them. You'll find some sites in the “links” section at EducationQuest.org – and your guidance counselor can also tell you where to look.

The EducationQuest locations in Kearney, Lincoln and Omaha have reference books and other resources for local, state and national scholarships – so feel free to stop in and take a look.

Okay...now that I've told you *where* to look for scholarships, I'll give you a few tips on how to increase your chances of actually earning some.

- First, put your scholarship applications in deadline order and find time to work on them each week.
- As you complete the application, include your community service, activities, awards, and employment. Use the Activities Resume at Educationquest.org to track this information.
- If the scholarship requires a letter of recommendation, give the person writing the letter a list of your accomplishments and activities, along with a deadline.
- If an essay is required, pay close attention to the instructions. Once you've completed your essay, ask your English teacher to review it.
- Lastly, make sure the application is complete, have someone proof it for you, and submit it by the deadline. Incomplete or late application could be disqualified.

I'm going to end with one more piece of advice... Beware of any scholarship sites or services that charge a fee. Instead use *free* resources like your guidance office and EducationQuest.

Now...go for it! Apply for as many scholarships as you can. Think of it as a part-time job that can have a big pay-off.

That concludes this segment of *College Prep News*. Thanks for listening!

For free help with college planning, visit EducationQuest.org for information and resources - and to find the EducationQuest location nearest you.

EducationQuest Foundation is a nonprofit organization with a mission to improve access to higher education in Nebraska.