

Path to Scholarships

Financial Aid		
Work-Study	Job while in school	Financial Need Based
Grants	Free \$	Financial Need Based
Scholarships	Free \$	Merit &/or Financial Need Based
Loans	Pay Back	

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>

- First step in applying for most federal, state and institution-provided financial aid
- There are funds that you will not qualify for if you DO NOT fill it out
- Opens every **Oct 1st** (the year before you plan to attend college)
- First come, first serve for state and college funds (complete ASAP but definitely NLT December)
- Complete for each year you plan to attend college
- Usually requires parent's income tax information from the previous year (the parent you live with 51% of the time)
- Colleges will ask for verification documents
- Questions about FAFSA call 1-800-4-FED-AID
- If you are not a U.S. citizen but are a Texas resident, then complete the TASFA

Make yourself competitive – preparation starts in the 9th grade!

- **Good grades**.....scholarships want to see your GPA (usually 3.0 or higher) & Class Rank
- **High SAT/ACT scores**....get study guides, use apps on your phone, take the PSAT, register for SAT & ACT at the end of your junior year and again at the beginning of your senior year
- **Quality community service**....have documented hours (signed by person overseeing the service)
- **Multiple leadership experiences**...join school & community clubs/organizations, serve as officer
- **Strong Letters of Recommendation**...get people of authority (who are NOT related to you) to write you a letter of recommendation (teachers, pastor, employer, club sponsor, coaches, community leader....) It should NEVER be a relative!
- **Winning Essay**...It should read like a **STORY** and includes the following paragraphs:

Introduction	Be creative and start with something that grabs their attention.
Life Purpose	Share your educational & career goals....why you want to pursue that career.
Family Background	Provide details about your family life so they can get to know you (Ex. oldest, first to go to college, raised by your grandparents....).
Obstacle/Challenge	Share an obstacle you have overcome, where it made you a better person or you learned from it. It should sound like you are a victor and not a victim and that it can demonstrate that you are ready for college.
Community Service & Leadership Experience	If you have lots of both....you can make 2 separate paragraphs. Don't just share quantity, but rather share the impact it had on you and others!
Conclusion	Why you need or deserve this scholarship

Create/maintain a **Portfolio** of things needed to complete scholarships (electronically or notebook).

- **Community Service** – documented hours
- **Résumé** – work experience, leadership experience, honors & awards, certifications (include dates)
- **Essays** – save them all!
- **Recommendation Letters** – use Recommendation Request Form
- **Academics** - Transcript with GPA, Class Rank & Test Scores
- **Tracking Spreadsheet**

The above info is from June McBride's Path to Scholarships which provides a great organizational method for applying for scholarships and takes you through the steps. www.PathToScholarships.org

Where to look for scholarships:

- School (college & high school)
- Affiliation (employer, clubs, religious institutions, financial institutions)
- APPS (Scholarships.com or Scholy)
- Internet (Search engines like College Green Light, Cappex, Fast Web)(Goggle Search)