

How to Find Free Money for College – The Scholarship Hunt

Written by Cary Yates

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While college can be one of the best experiences of your life, it can also be one of the most expensive. The average cost per year for a 4-year degree at a state-sponsored school currently runs \$22,261 for in-state students and \$35,321 for out-of-state students, according to a 2012 College Board report. With a few tips and strategies, you can ease your financial burden by applying for scholarships.

The fact is, the more money you can get in scholarships, the less you'll need to borrow. Scholarships are awarded by universities, nonprofit organizations, corporations and private individuals. There are many different kinds of scholarships – some are need-based while others focus on what a student's interests are – so start searching early and be persistent.

Fortunately, there are plenty of helpful ways to find scholarships. Look online by conducting a simple keyword search or by using free scholarship search services such as Fastweb, CollegeBoard, or Edvisors. If you are still in high school, counselors can give you directions for what types of scholarships you should apply for. If you know where you're going to college, be sure to talk with the financial aid office and see if they can assist you with your search. The admission's office may be able to help you determine if there are any school-specific scholarships.

You can also look for scholarship sources within your own community. Check with your local newspaper, community organizations, and your parents'/guardians' employer. Religious organizations, banks or other civic organizations often offer scholarship programs. Enroll in Wells Fargo's CollegeSTEPS program to get additional information on finding scholarships as

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well as college planning tips and for tools and other resources. Once you enroll, you'll automatically be entered into the Wells Fargo CollegeSTEPSSM sweepstakes for high school and college students. Students will have the chance to win one of 40 \$1,000 cash prizes that may be used for college or other expenses.

Scholarships are “free money,” so you should never have to pay money to get them. Watch out for scholarship scams or companies that require a credit card number just to perform a search. Save the money and do it yourself.

Once you identify the scholarships and grants you want to apply for, take careful note of the due dates, then complete and submit the applications accordingly. Give yourself plenty of time to devote to the scholarship hunt and application process. It may seem like a lot of work when you don't have a lot of time to spare, but in the end, it's worth it to secure college money that doesn't need to be repaid.

To learn more about paying for college, visit www.wellsfargo.com/student/calculators and for more about financial aid, visit www.wellsfargo.com/student/five-steps-financial-aid.

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