

TEN STEPS TO A STRONG SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

1

GET ORGANIZED.

Students should consider purchasing an expandable file. This will allow them to keep and protect copies of their scholarship applications or printouts of applications that were submitted online.

2

HAVE A PHOTO TAKEN.

Some applications request a photograph, which should be a simple headshot.

3

DRAFT A GOOD RESUME.

Students should prepare an academic resume that includes all organizations, clubs, volunteer work, and extracurricular activities they have participated in. Include honors and awards received from ninth grade on, from both school and outside activities.

4

REQUEST RECOMMENDATIONS.

Gather at least three recommendations. Ask teachers, counselors, and church or community leaders early. Avoid including recommendations from family or fellow students.

5

OBTAIN A HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT.

Students should keep copies of their school transcript available in case it is requested as part of an application. If a scholarship committee does not specifically ask for an official transcript, include only a photocopy. If the committee requests an official transcript, students should request that one be sent from their school.

6

WRITE GENERAL ESSAYS AHEAD, THEN CUSTOMIZE.

Essays are often one element of a scholarship application. It's helpful to have prewritten statements on goals, achievements, and financial need, though students must make sure to tailor their responses to address each application's specific topic.

7

SET UP A SIMPLE, CONVENTIONAL EMAIL ADDRESS.

Make sure students set up and use an email address that represents them well and doesn't sound odd or inappropriate.

8

TRACK DUE DATES.

Pay close attention to all due dates and track them on a calendar. Applications will not be considered if they are not received by the due date.

9

SUBMIT APPLICATIONS EXACTLY AS REQUESTED.

For example, if the scholarship committee asks for the application, transcript, resume, and two letters of recommendation, make sure the documents are presented in that order.

10

MAKE COPIES BEFORE SUBMITTING.

If students have a paper application, encourage them to make a copy for their records before sending. Students should mail applications using delivery confirmation so that they have proof of receipt before the deadline.