

# A SCOTTIE'S GUIDE TO SCHOLARSHIPS

Funding your education does not have to be as daunting as it may seem! In addition to applying for scholarships and grants available through your college, working with external scholarship organizations can be an excellent idea. Applying for external scholarships, most often called outside scholarships, will take time, dedication, and effort, but it can lead to a noticeable payoff. Here are some tips and ideas to help you put your best foot forward.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

It's important to understand how your scholarship will affect your financial aid at each college or university. Agnes Scott will not reduce your institutional or federal aid if you obtain an outside scholarship, but other institutions may reduce aid. Reach out to the school's financial aid department and ask for their policy.

For each outside scholarship, make sure you look at the rules and understand the guidelines. Is the scholarship a one-time award or renewable for four years? Does the scholarship require you to have a particular major? What happens if you change your major? Are there requirements about sending in a transcript yearly or maintaining a certain GPA? Keep track of this information for all scholarships to which you apply.

## MYTHS

Outside scholarships are only available to high school students.

You must have a 4.0 GPA.

The amount you could earn is so insignificant that applying isn't worth it.

This is something I have to do by myself without input from family, friends, mentors, etc.

There is too much competition for scholarships to make applying worth it.

## HOW TO FIND OUTSIDE SCHOLARSHIPS

### SEARCH TERMS AND CATEGORIES

#### ACADEMIC INTERESTS

Declared major, intended major, career, STEM, etc.

Places of worship, community organizations, volunteer experiences, political organizations, etc.

Chick-fil-a, Burger King, Starbucks, Kroger, Publix, Barnes & Noble, etc.

#### PEOPLE GROUP AFFILIATION

First generation college students, low income families, women, women of color, LGBTQ+, race/ethnicity/heritage, city, county, state location, families of first responders, veterans, etc.

There are many outside scholarship aggregation websites you can use: Scholly, College Green Light, Fastweb, etc. Agnes Scott also has a list of scholarships at [agnesscott.edu/outsidescholarships](http://agnesscott.edu/outsidescholarships).

Check with admission counselors, high school counselors, or your Financial Aid office; they can let you know what scholarships have been won by students at your high school or college in the past.

Apply for a variety of scholarships. It is tempting to focus all your attention on large national scholarships, but many students have better luck with smaller, local scholarships.

Never pay to apply for outside scholarships; if they are asking you to pay, they are likely a scam.



Scottie Tip: Don't force yourself to apply to something that doesn't fit you; if you don't like STEM, you won't enjoy those classes, and it's not worth it for the funding.



Scottie Tip: Sweepstakes scholarships with questions like "what's your favorite ice cream?" take up time and are usually not worth the same amount of effort.

# COUNTDOWN TO THE APPLICATION DEADLINE

## RESUMÉ

Prepare a full resume that has everything you have done in high school or college: volunteer commitments, internships, jobs, clubs, award. Many scholarships put emphasis on community service and leadership, so make sure to keep track of your volunteer locations and hours.

## TRANSCRIPTS


Many organizations ask for a transcript and may require an official copy. Keep an unofficial transcript on hand. Know the process for requesting official copies from your school. If you need an official transcript, make sure to leave enough time for it to be sent. It's a good idea to request this 3-4 weeks in advance of the scholarship deadline.


## PERSONAL ESSAY

Many times, essay prompts can be very similar across applications. You can edit pre-existing essays to fit the prompt. Follow all the essay guidelines for length, format, and prompt. Make your wording specific and stay on topic. Proofread, proofread, proofread! Have someone else read your essays for mistakes. If you have access to a writing center, like the Center for Writing and Speaking at Agnes Scott, use it as a resource for support!

## REC LETTERS

Many scholarships require letters of recommendation. Identify a pool of 6-8 people who might be able to write a strong one for you. Tailor the recommenders to the scholarship. Help your recommenders by giving them specific requirements on what to write and providing your resume. Ask them about a month before the deadline to give them plenty of time, and check in about two weeks before the deadline so they don't forget.

 **Scottie Tip:** Save all your essays from classes and admission applications. Label them so you can tweak for later as needed!

 **Scottie Tip:** Proofread for the most commonly overlooked things like not changing the name of the scholarship in an essay you are reusing.

# COUNTDOWN TO THE APPLICATION DEADLINE

## ONE MONTH...

Ask recommenders for letters of recommendation. Request official transcripts. Draft essay or find a pre-existing essay to edit.

## THREE WEEKS...

Finish first draft of essay. Polish resume in any way you need.

## TWO WEEKS...

Remind recommenders. Proofread essay and have someone else proofread.

## ONE WEEK...

Make sure you have all requirements completed. Submit the application!



**Scottie Tip:** Maintaining a good relationship with your recommenders is important. A thank you note will go a long way! Let them know if you got the award they helped you apply for.

## APPLICATION

- Keep application confirmation emails in an inbox folder.
- Don't be afraid to ask scholarship committees if they received your application materials.
- Keep a binder or spreadsheet with all deadlines and requirements.
- Apply for scholarships throughout college.
- Set a goal! Apply to one per week, spend three hours each month. Treat yourself once you reach it.

## GENERAL TIPS AND TRICKS

## INTERVIEW

- Be prepared! Make sure you know the history and goals of the company or organization that will be interviewing you.
- Relieve stress. Arrive early to give yourself time to breathe and feel prepared.
- Take a moment after every question to consider your answer.
- Be authentic. Answer questions in a way that is authentic to you. If you say what you think they want to hear, every other applicant probably said the same thing too.
- Send a thank you note or email immediately following the interview. Make sure to spell the names of your interviewers correctly!

## WHEN YOU DON'T GET THE AWARD

Don't get discouraged. You won't receive all of the scholarships you apply to. Don't dwell in that space.

Don't compare yourself to other people. This is a personal process.



**Scottie Tip:** Reach out to interview committees for scholarships you don't receive to see how you can improve for your next interview. They will appreciate you reaching out and give you good advice!

## WHEN YOU DO GET THE AWARD

Congratulations! Take the time to celebrate.

Make sure you are keeping track of any requirements to formally accept the award (i.e. submitting proof of school enrollment).

Check with your college to see how you submit award information or funding to them.