

West Lafayette Jr.-Sr. High School Scholarship Handbook



2016-17

Paying for higher education can be expensive, but if you consider looking for scholarships and awards a part-time job, you can actually make your time very profitable. The counseling department makes every attempt to broadcast as many scholarships and opportunities as we learn of. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the students and their families to pursue resources in order to obtain financial assistance for the expenses of college.

This scholarship booklet is a work in progress and is to be used as a tool to research as many possibilities as you can. Dates in the booklet may not be accurate, so you are encouraged to look at each website and determine if you are truly eligible, when you might anticipate the current year's application to be released, and the due dates for submission of your materials. If you need a transcript or letter(s) of recommendation, follow the guidelines given to you at the senior and parent meeting in August.

TOP TEN THINGS COUNSELORS THINK YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. Keep a calendar with all your important deadlines.
2. Be sure all applications for admission are turned in by their deadlines. Missing a deadline could keep you from being eligible for scholarships. Remember that there are usually separate applications and deadlines for admissions and scholarships. Late applications will probably not be accepted.
3. Details count. Check your grammar and spelling. Applications need to be neat and error-free. Word processed applications are the most impressive. Never submit an application written in pencil.
4. Applications for admission and scholarships are reviewed by a committee that knows nothing about you. Take pride in yourself when compiling your information. Be sure to include information on your application that will set you apart from other applicants, but do not overdo it. If it asks for five activities you did in high school, pick your top five, and list only those. In most cases, giving more information than is asked for is an automatic disqualifier.
5. It is your responsibility to get recommendations when needed. Give the recommender the needed information, and allow ten business days for him/her to complete a letter of recommendation. When not submitted electronically, the recommender may give the recommendation directly to your counselor, or he/she may give it to you in a sealed envelope.
6. For an online application, double-check that it has been correctly submitted. Also check with your counselor and any recommenders you listed to be sure he/she received your request. If you enter an email address incorrectly, your request goes to cyberspace, never to be seen again.
7. Don't procrastinate.
8. Submit your FAFSA on time.
9. Give your counselor time to complete her part of applications. Use ten business days or more as a rule of thumb.
10. Your counselor is here to help. Ask questions as they come up so you get all the information you need as you go through the process.

PLANNING FOR COLLEGE AND BEGINNING YOUR SCHOLARSHIP SEARCH

The college selection process can be a very stressful one. The following tips can make this process much easier.

- Start early. Gather materials from as many different sources as possible. Begin a file on each school in which you are interested.
- Consider all your options. Use your college days to visit schools and narrow your choices.
- Compare the programs, size, cost, location, etc. of your schools to help you pick between them.
- Compare acceptance letters/ scholarships/other financial aid offers from individual schools in order to make your final decision.
- Organize all your information and establish a timetable for making your final college decision.
- Your ultimate decision deadline is May 1. Notify all school(s) to which you applied to let them know whether you are accepting or declining admissions or scholarships.

The process of applying for scholarships involves a great deal of time, effort, and meticulous work. The following tips will aid you in your financial aid search.

- Be sure to meet the school's admissions and scholarship deadlines and fill out all applicable forms neatly and completely. Visit the college's website or contact the college to see if a separate scholarship application form is required.
- When you receive your acceptance letter, contact the financial aid office at the college if you have not already done so to see if there are additional scholarships or grants for which you qualify. Ask about scholarships related to your interests, potential major, or athletics.
- Only apply for scholarships for which you qualify. Read the eligibility requirements and assess your qualifications in order to avoid wasting time and effort. If you qualify, be sure you apply.
- Check with the company for whom you or your parents work to see if they offer scholarships to employees and their families.
- Focus your energy on local and state scholarships since they have fewer applicants.

TEN SCHOLARSHIP SCAM WARNING SIGNS

These quick tips can help you spot a scam and can keep you from being a scholarship scam victim.

1. **Fees:** You shouldn't have to pay to search for or apply for scholarship.
2. **Credit card or bank account information needed:** You should never have to give credit card or bank account information to scholarship providers.
3. **Scholarship guarantee:** No one can guarantee that you'll win a scholarship because no one can control scholarship judges' decisions. Also, be wary of the claim of HIGH SUCCESS RATES. They usually do not refer to actual award winners.
4. **No work involved:** You can't avoid putting in time to fill out a scholarship application.
5. **No contact information:** Legitimate sponsors should provide contact information upon request. If the sponsor does not supply a valid email address, phone number, and mailing address (not a PO box) after you've asked for one, that could be a bad sign.
6. **Unsolicited scholarships:** If you are called to receive an award for which you never applied, be alert. It might be a scam. Check with your counselor when in doubt.
7. **Pressure tactics:** Don't allow yourself to be pressured into applying for a scholarship, especially if the sponsor is asking for money up front.
8. **Claims of EXCLUSIVE scholarships:** Sponsors don't make their scholarships available through only one service.
9. **Sponsor goes out of their way to sound official:** Scammers use official-sounding words like NATIONAL, FEDERAL, or EDUCATION, or they display an official-looking seal to trick you into thinking they are legitimate. Check with your counselor if you question a scholarship provider's legitimacy.
10. **Your questions are answered directly:** If you can't get a straight answer from a sponsor regarding an application, what will be done with your information, or other questions, proceed with caution.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION GUIDELINES

1. Follow Directions
Read all of the requirements and directions carefully before you begin.
Apply only if you are eligible.
Provide everything that is required (transcript, letter(s) of recommendation, etc.).
Do not send items that are not requested.
If a question does not apply to you, note that (leave no blanks).
2. Make a Good Impression
For paper applications, begin by making a copy of the application to use as a draft.
Applications should be word processed. If you do hand-write, write neatly in black or dark blue ink.
Proofread the entire application and ask a friend, teacher, or parent to proofread it as well. Misspelled words or other errors may eliminate you from consideration. NOTE: It's okay to use White Out to fix errors.
3. Meet the Deadline
Keep track of your deadlines.
Request letters of recommendation at least ten business days before the deadline.
Give your counselor at least ten business days to complete her portion.
Put your name on all pages of the application in case pages get separated.
Be sure your completed application gets where it needs to go on time.
4. Keep a Record
Before sending, make a copy of any paper work for your records.
5. Need Help?
If you have a question or problem, call the funding source for assistance.

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- After being notified you are a recipient and if you are unable to accept a scholarship, please reply to that effect so that the scholarship may be awarded to an alternate. Alternate recipients are usually selected for each scholarship. If the primary recipient is unable to meet the scholarship requirements, the alternate will be awarded.
- Keep your scholarship award notification. The award notification includes the amount you will receive, the method of payment, and the time period covered.
- Maintain full-time enrollment.
- Be aware of status changes. Some scholarships are based on study within a certain field or major, maintaining a certain grade point average, or other conditions. If you have a scholarship with specific criteria, learn how a change in your status might affect your award.
- Contact the Financial Aid Office for answers to your scholarship questions, to provide information about any change in your enrollment status, or if problems arise that may affect your scholarship eligibility.
- Keep your address updated with Student Records and Registration.

FINANCIAL AID RELATED WEBSITES

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| ACT | www.act.org |
| BigFuture | https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/ |
| Cash for College Campaign (Learn More Indiana) | http://www.cashforcollegeindiana.org/ |
| College Answer | www.collegeanswer.com |
| College Choice 529 Investment Plan | www.collegechoiceplan.com |
| CollegeData | www.collegedata.com/ |
| College Goal Sunday (FAFSA help) | www.collegegoalsunday.org |
| College Is Possible | www.collegeispossible.org |
| College Opportunities On-Line (COOL) | www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool |
| Disability-New Freedom Initiative | www.disabilities.gov |
| FAFSA on the Web | www.fafsa.ed.gov |
| FastWeb (scholarship search) | www.fastweb.com |
| Go College | www.gocollege.com |
| Guide to Defaulted Student Loans | www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/DCS |
| Indiana Commission for Higher Education | www.che.state.in.us |
| Indiana Commission on Proprietary Education | www.in.gov/cope |
| Indiana Learn More Resource Center | www.learnmoreindiana.org |
| Indiana Secondary Market for Educational Loans, Inc | www.ismloans.org/ |
| Indiana Student Financial Aid Association (ISFAA) | www.isfaa.org |
| Jump\$start Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy | www.jumpstartcoalition.org |
| Know How 2 Go | http://www.knowhow2go.org/ |
| Mapping Your Future (college career/financial aid info) | www.mapping-your-future.org |
| National Assoc. of Student Financial Aid Admins. | www.nasfaa.org |
| Prepare For My Future | www.ed.gov/students/prep/college |
| Peterson's (Education/Career Information) | www.petersons.com |
| SallieMae | www.salliemae.com |
| Saving For College | www.savingforcollege.com |
| Scholarship Information | www.scholarships.com |
| Selective Service System | www.sss.gov |
| State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana | www.in.gov/ssaci |
| Student Aid - U.S. Department of Education | www.studentaid.ed.gov |
| Student Gateway to the U.S. Government | www.students.gov |
| The Smart Student Guide to Financial Aid | www.finaid.org |
| TRIP to College | www.triptocollege.org |
| Twenty-first Century Scholars Program | www.scholars.in.gov |
| U.S. Department of Education | www.ed.gov |
| USA Funds | www.usafunds.org |
| You Can Deal With It (money, student loans, life) | www.youcandealwithit.com |