

El Dorado High School



Scholarship Handbook

Welcome to the World of Scholarships!

The process of applying for scholarships is a little like applying for jobs. First, you need to get your skills & experience firmly set in your mind. Second, you find places that are a good match for you. And finally, you begin filling out applications.

Why apply?

It's money for college that doesn't have to be paid back. Scholarships are available for college, community college, and technical school.

But it takes too much time.

Yes, it's a little extra work. But after you complete one application, you've done most of the work. Really, it's worth it.

But I haven't done any volunteer service.

You probably have more than you think. If you work and don't get paid, it's volunteering – even if your parents dragged you along.

But my parents make too much money.

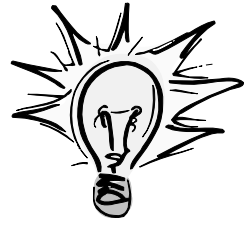
You just need to apply for the *right scholarships*. Many of our local scholarships are merit scholarships – they're looking for a good student, talented artist, dedicated volunteer, etc.

It requires a little time and effort, but every year El Dorado High School students win thousands of dollars from local sponsors, individuals, and community organizations, federal, state, and campus-funded programs. You can do it too!



Come to the Career Center, we're here to help!

Brainstorm



Brainstorm your accomplishments

– include the month and year.

You'll have to brag about yourself

a little, so put some thought into it. Get someone

to help you. You've probably done more than you

think! Get another sheet of paper & jot down

some notes, you'll need them later...

List all accomplishments & month/year:

academic achievements	extra-curricular
special honors	awards
clubs	athletics
special skills	work experience
scouting	hobbies
church-affiliated	offices held
community service	leadership roles
other	other

Request letters of recommendation

Get a Letter of Recommendation Personal Data form from the Career Center or website and fill it out.

Make a couple copies of it. Find at least two people to give it to, three or four is better. Good choices

would be teachers/staff members

who know you well, coaches, or others who have seen the best in you. Remember to give them at least 2 weeks lead time to write the letter!

(That's why you're doing this step first.)



Many scholarships ask that one of the letters of recommendation be from someone NOT at the school. You don't need to use the Personal Data form when asking your boss or a community member to write a letter for you (although they may ask you what kinds of things you need included in the letter).

So far I have asked:	On this date:	Letter Rec'd
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>



Always send the person who wrote your letter a THANK YOU note. Even a simple handwritten note saying, "Thank you very much for the time & effort you took in writing me such a nice letter of recommendation," will go a long way to show the person that you appreciate the time they took to help you out.

Search for local scholarships

Register at www.CALocalScholarships.org. This website has a list of scholarships that are open to ONLY El Dorado County students, which really limits your competition – a very good resource.

If you only look one place for scholarships, this is the place to look! The personal data they ask you for is used to filter for scholarships that match your profile.

Search for regional scholarships

Google / Yahoo search for regional scholarships: Sacramento Region, Greater Sacramento Area, Northern California, Sacramento & Surrounding Counties – you get the idea. Check the Career Center website to find any that we've learned about. Also search the region where you're planning to attend college.



Search with your interests in mind

Google / Yahoo search for: scholarship, blank. Fill in the blank with your own unique traits & interests. Maybe your nationality, religion or intended college major; or try tall, vegetarian, or glasses; hobbies such as equestrian or amateur radio; causes like peace or feminist; sports you play; an employer or group you volunteered for. Check your resume for ideas.

Search with your parents in mind

Same Google / Yahoo search as above, but fill in the blank with your parents' affiliations – clubs, community service groups, fraternities, unions, banks, professional organizations. Also try their employer or field – agriculture, nursing, law enforcement, PG&E, Intel, etc. Or maybe something in your family history, like military service, cancer, or hurricane.



Search a national database

If you don't mind the lengthy profile to fill out, you might want to give one of the popular national scholarship databases a try:

www.fastweb.com
www.collegeboard.com
www.scholarships.com

Also note, when using these websites, always pay careful attention to the purpose of the screens and/or fields you're filling out. Many of the advertisements are difficult to distinguish from profile questions and you may accidentally sign up for a credit card or request that a college contact you. If a screen looks strange to you, look for a small text link that says something like "no thanks" or "continue."



Search the college's website

Most colleges (and their affiliated organizations) offer scholarships that you can apply for. Go to each college website and enter 'scholarship' in their search field. See what they have available.

Special note: Beware of scholarship scams

The main rule here is – if it asks for money for any reason, consider it suspicious. Other danger signs are a money-back guarantee, the absence of contact information, or the request to verify a credit card number. An official-sounding name using "national," "federal" or "administration is no guarantee it is legitimate. Always look for a valid email, phone number, and street address, and if it seems too good to be true – it probably is!



Pick one scholarship to start with

You can apply for hundreds of scholarships once you get going, but start with just your favorite one. Read it again just to make sure you have all of the qualifications.

Now print out the guidelines. Summarize the requirements onto a checklist. On the next page is an example to get you started:

Sample Scholarship Checklist

Date Due: _____

Scholarship Name: _____

Where & how do I submit my app? _____

Items Needed

Cover page with photo (unless prohibited) _____

Table of Contents _____

Application _____

Personal Statement _____

Resume _____

Letter(s) of Recommendation _____

Transcript (official or unofficial?) _____

(Remember this is just an example. Read your guidelines carefully and be sure to include every required item.)

Keep it neat & organized

Set up a system, maybe a folder or a large envelope to make sure items don't get lost or wrinkled beyond recognition. Also remember as you go along to keep a list of scholarship applications you've already submitted.



The application form

Now we're ready to start working on it. Refer to the guidelines you printed out earlier. Where do you get the application? This is an especially important question when working on applications from the CALocalScholarships website. Many of these use the standard application from the website. If a scholarship refers you to the Career Center for an application, it usually means they do not accept the standard application. Don't waste your time – make sure you get the correct application.



The resume

Some scholarship applications will ask for a resume. This is simply a list of your awards, accomplishments, work experience, clubs, offices held, volunteerism, sports, etc. You can use the list you brainstormed at the beginning of this handbook to help you. Samples are available in the Career Center.

□ The essay / personal statement

Most scholarship applications require you to write something – an essay or a personal statement. Some will want to know about your background, others will ask about your educational or career plans. It is important to read the essay prompt carefully and be sure to address the topic.

There are many websites with tips to help you make your essay stand out from the crowd.

For some great information try:

www.collegescholarships.org



Remember that your goal is to give the reader a glimpse of who you are, and the best essays show rather than tell. Invest some time in self-reflection to think of a story or circumstance that reflects your personal qualities, and use that story to make your point.

Have someone read your first draft to make sure the concept works, then have one or two other people read your almost-final draft and ask them to be honest with you. You want to make sure that your work looks neat, you make your point clearly, you capitalize proper nouns, and that there are no grammatical or spelling errors.

Remember, the essay is your chance to show that YOU are their ideal candidate!

The transcript

Official or Unofficial? An official transcript will cost you \$2 must be obtained in advance from the counseling office with a 24-hour turnaround time. (Remember – if you open the envelope, the transcript becomes unofficial.) You can get an unofficial transcript on-the-spot in the Career Center for free.



Present yourself well

Make sure you have carefully followed all instructions given for assembling your information. Any handwritten information should be neat and legible. If it's not prohibited, a nice cover page with the name of the scholarship, your name, and a simple, posed photograph of yourself adds a professional touch to your application.

Other documentation

Read your scholarship guidelines carefully. Be sure to include any other types of required documentation. If you are missing anything, your application will likely be rejected.



- Turn it in to the right place – on time!

Read your scholarship guidelines again. Where, when, and how do you submit your application packet? Mail it? Drop it off at a place of business? Hand it in at the Career Center? Is it “postmarked by” or “received by”? Don’t waste your time and effort. Get it to the right place – on time!



Your scholarship application is a reflection of you!

You want to make the best impression possible. Therefore prior to submitting your application, check it for overall completeness, neatness, spelling errors, capitalization, and have someone else look over the entire application as well.



And when you win...

Always remember to thank the sponsor promptly.

Not only is it polite, the sponsors really like to know that you appreciate their effort and support.