



# Success Center Tips for Scholarship Essay Writing

Scholarships can be an important resource for financing your college education. The scholarship essay gives you an opportunity to personalize your application. Through the essays the reviewer has a chance to learn more about you and why you are a good candidate for the scholarship.

Besides these general tips for writing a Foundation scholarship essay, please keep in mind the specific requirements for your scholarships and incorporate that information into your writing. Be sure to type your essay in Microsoft Word (or similar program) first, as your total essay has to fit onto **one 8 ½" x 11"** sheet of paper. Take time to make sure your essay is grammatically correct and coherent.

## General Pointers:

- ❖ Keep focused! Remember what you are supposed to be talking about, and try not to ramble off topic. Your overall focus is why you deserve/want a scholarship!
- ❖ Brainstorm your ideas before drafting an actual paper.
- ❖ Review the essay to correct misspellings, repeated words, grammatical and punctuation errors. Check for sentence variety.
- ❖ Remember, a paragraph focuses on one idea, which is usually stated within the first sentence.
- ❖ Thank the donor for providing the scholarship
- ❖ Reread what you've written aloud to yourself. Also have someone else read it to eliminate confusing word choices, mechanical errors, etc.

## Guiding Ideas for Essay:

### Educational & Professional Goals

**Discuss your plans for the future and where you intend to go both academically and professionally.**

Educational Goals	Professional Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What degree/certificate are you working toward?</li><li>• Who influenced you to attend college?</li><li>• Why have you chosen that degree/certificate?</li><li>• Do you have any GPA goals? (e.g., I want to improve or maintain my current GPA.)</li><li>• Have you attended other colleges?</li><li>• Have you participated in any educational camps or workshops?</li><li>• Are you considering graduate school?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What job and/or career are you pursuing?</li><li>• Have you researched the educational requirements to enter into the field?</li><li>• Have you job-shadowed or interviewed professionals to learn more about this career?</li><li>• What do you hope to take from this career?</li><li>• What opportunities will become available because of this career move? (More financial freedom, ability to be your own boss, etc.)</li><li>• Will your career allow you to contribute to a cause, organization, project and/or movement you believe in?</li></ul>

## Recent Honors or Awards Received & Involvement in Community Groups/Organization

Awards	Community Service / Volunteer Activities
<p>List and explain awards or recognition you have received.</p> <p><b>Examples of Awards</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honors awards for academic excellence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ High school Honor Society, Vice President's Award, Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Sports awards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Has your team won any competitions? Have you received any personal awards for team work?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Employment promotions/acknowledgements? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Receiving a raise for certain qualities or actions, acknowledgement for something like team work or leadership skills, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Club awards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ List any awards you've won while competing in club competitions (such as chess tournaments, dance competitions, acting awards, etc.).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Talent competition placing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Talent shows or photography, painting, drawing, writing competitions, etc. Also, was your winning piece published in a paper? Shown at a gallery?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Describe and list how many hours have you spent on various volunteer or service activities?</p> <p>Why did you participate in this program?</p> <p><b>Example of Community Groups/Organizations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scouts, Explorers</li> <li>• School groups or clubs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ PTO, volunteer coach or sponsor, Octagon Club, Student Council, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Church organizations</li> <li>• Humanitarian &amp; environmental organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Peace Corps, Americorp, Green Peace, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Do you regularly participate and/or donate to a particular organization? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ex: Red Cross, Defenders of the Wildlife, ASPCA, OCC, Salvation Army</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Civic groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lions Club, Freemasonry, Rotary Club, Red Cross volunteer work</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Awareness groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cancer awareness walks, child abuse awareness activities, gay pride, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Performing Arts groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Community band, theatre groups, art committees (Art on the Square, Solo/Honors Contests)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Financial Need

Briefly explain your financial situation and why you are applying for a scholarship.

<p>What financial barriers do you face?</p> <p>Avoid a long, detailed account of your bills and debts. Briefly explain <i>what kind</i> of expenses you face, how scholarships can assist you, and why you believe you financially need/deserve one.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you a first generation student? (First generation students are children of two parents who never graduated college.)</li> <li>• Do you live on your own and/or pay your own bills?</li> <li>• Do you have children or other relatives that depend upon you?</li> <li>• Is your income less than satisfactory for your needs or desires? (Explain.)</li> <li>• Consider transportation fees as well. (Car fees or paying bus fare and so on.)</li> <li>• How much or little of a contribution can you expect from your family in assisting your academic pursuits?</li> <li>• What is your employment status?</li> </ul>
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