



Explore the Possibilities!

Scholarships from **Riverside Community College** are not the only scholarships available. Here are some Basic Scholarship Search Tips to help you *Explore the Possibilities* for scholarships!

► Tip #1: This is a numbers game!

Numbers matter in the grand scholarship quest. The more awards you apply for (assuming you are eligible for them), the more awards you are likely to receive.

Set your expectations by the rule of 10. For every scholarship you are awarded, you have to apply for 10. For every scholarship you qualify and apply for, you'll need to research 10 opportunities.

Happily at last count, there are approximately 2.4 million scholarships available, worth approximately \$14 billion in aid.

The bottom line: to get more, apply for more.



► Tip #2: Small is the new big!

If you are awarded 10 scholarships for \$1,000 or one scholarship for \$10,000, the net effect is the same - you do not pay that \$10,000 out of pocket. Every scholarship for which you are eligible is worth applying for, because a bunch of small scholarships will add up to a big one.

More importantly, smaller scholarships tend to have fewer competitors than larger ones. Most people in their scholarship search try to apply for a few big awards and neglect the smaller ones.

► **Tip #3: Save time with a portfolio**

Each scholarship application asks for information about you. Questionnaires, essays, quizzes, and forms all want generally the same information about you. Rather than reinvent the wheel each time, develop a portfolio of materials that you can draw on, time and time again. Have a standard biographical profile of yourself, plus answers to common questions in typical lengths for essay style questions of 250 words, 500 words or more. Remember to customize answers for each application.



► **Tip #4: The key is in the details**

What's the number one killer of scholarship applications? If you guessed simple, preventable mistakes, you'd be right. Attention to detail is vital for scholarship applications, from when to meet deadlines to the format in which you submit your application.

Some common mistakes:

- **Missing deadlines.** Probably the number one killer mistake of scholarship applications is missing a deadline.
- **Incorrect information** in applications, such as misspelling your name, address, or college/university.
- **Omitted information**, such as leaving required boxes blank on an application form or failing to include required documentation.
- **Not following directions** for essay length requirements. If an essay question specifies 500 words, aim for exactly 500 words, no more, no less.



All of these mistakes are preventable. If you want to win, get organized from the very beginning and stay organized!

► **Tip #5: Scholarship searching is a year round sport**

Since scholarship deadlines are scattered throughout the year, scholarship searches should also be performed throughout the year. Be sure to set aside time weekly - even if it is only 5 or 10 minutes at a time - to review new scholarship opportunities. Consider scholarship hunting to be a full time job and you will be rewarded with a pay day!

► **Tip #6: There are scholarships for everyone**

While it may seem that many scholarships are intended for the very top academic performers or the poorest students, the reality is that there are scholarships for everyone. For example, the Duck Tape Brand Tape Prom dress Award for students who attend their prom wearing nothing but duct tape isn't awarded to the valedictorian, merely someone who shows up at prom in a nice outfit made solely of duct tape. While that sounds absurd, the \$3,000 scholarship that comes with it is money to be taken seriously.

Other fun or unusual scholarships include a David Letterman Scholarship for communication students with mediocre grades, scholarships for left handed students, and so on. These and many more can be found at the following free scholarship search sites:

www.fastweb.com

www.scholarshipexpert.com

www.scholarships.com

www.scholarshiphunter.com

www.studentscholarshipsearch.com



► **Tip #7: It's never too early or too late to search!**

When is the best time to start searching for scholarships? Right now - and never stop until you're out of school and debt free. There are even scholarships which will help you pay off school debts, so keep searching. The best time to start is always right now, even if you are halfway through your last year.

It's also not too early to start searching for scholarships. There are scholarships available for students as early as grade school, typically, in the form of 10-year savings bonds. The earlier you start looking for scholarships, the more you can earn and the less you have to panic when college does finally roll around.

Searching for scholarships while in school is vitally important. Dedicate as much time as practical during the school year, even while enrolled in college, to finding scholarships, since every scholarship earned represents money you don't need to pay out of pocket. With as much uncertainty as there is about the economy and availability of some kinds of student aide, finding scholarships is more important than ever.

Obviously, the earlier you start, the better, but better to be late to the game than to not play at all.



**Good Luck in your scholarship
search and
*Exploring the Possibilities!***

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