10 Tips for Winning Scholarships

Before you submit your scholarship application(s), check out these tips provided by scholarship sponsors nationwide.

1. **Apply only if you are eligible.**
   Read all the scholarship requirements and directions carefully to make sure you're eligible before you send in your application.

2. **Complete the application in full.**
   If a question doesn't apply, note that on the application; don't just leave it blank. Supply all additional supporting materials, such as transcripts, letters of recommendation and essays.

3. **Follow directions.**
   Provide everything that's required, but don't supply things that aren't requested - you could be disqualified.

4. **Neatness counts.**
   Always type your application, or if you must print do so neatly and legibly. Make a couple of photo-copies of all the forms before you fill them out. Use the copies as working drafts as you develop your application packet.

5. **Write an essay that makes a strong impression.**
   The key to writing a strong essay is to be personal and specific. Include concrete details to make your experience come alive – the who, what, where, and when of your topic. The simplest experience can be monumental if you present honestly how you were affected.

6. **Watch all deadlines.**
   To help keep yourself on track, impose your own deadline that is at least two weeks prior to the official deadline. Use the buffer time to make sure everything is ready on time. Don't rely on extensions - very few scholarship providers allow them at all.

7. **Make sure your application gets where it needs to go.**
   Put your name (and Social Security number, if applicable) on all pages of the application. Pieces of your application may get lost unless they are clearly identified.

8. **Keep a back-up file in case anything goes wrong.**
   Before sending the application, make a copy of the entire packet. If your application goes astray, you'll be able to reproduce it quickly.

9. **Give it a final "once-over."**
   Proofread the entire application carefully. Be on the lookout for misspelled words or grammatical errors. Ask a friend, teacher, counselor, or parent to proofread it as well.

10. **Ask for help if you need it.**
    If you have problems with the application, don't hesitate to call the funding organization.