



SCHOLARSHIPS ARE WORTH YOUR TIME!

IF IT TAKES YOU 2 HOURS TO COMPLETE AN APPLICATION FOR A **\$2000** SCHOLARSHIP... THAT'S A PRETTY GREAT RETURN ON INVESTMENT!

TREAT APPLYING TO SCHOLARSHIPS LIKE A PART-TIME JOB

Apply to 30-40 per year

SMALL SCHOLARSHIPS CAN ADD UP

Don't pass over a scholarship just because it's small! A \$250 scholarship is still \$250 less you have to pay for college. There tends to be less applicants (less competition!) for smaller awards when compared to larger awards.

The WSU General Scholarship Application strategically uses prompts that are often asked in scholarship applications. You can start with these answers then customize them for other scholarship applications.

- **SAVE COPIES OF ESSAYS IN A WORD DOCUMENT** IN CASE YOU GET A SIMILAR QUESTION ON ANOTHER APPLICATION.
- **UPDATE THE ESSAYS EACH YEAR!** You WILL HAVE NEW EXPERIENCES AND STRENGTHEN YOUR WRITING SKILLS EACH YEAR.
- **CUSTOMIZE** YOUR SAVED ESSAY FOR **EACH SPECIFIC SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION!**

SCHOLARSHIP TIPS

Student Financial Services

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

EMAIL: SCHOLARSHIPS@WSU.EDU | PHONE: (509) 335-9711

HTTPS://FINANCIALAID.WSU.EDU/SCHOLARSHIPS/

SCHOLARSHIP TIPS



Student Financial Services

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

FIND SCHOLARSHIPS: WHERE TO START YOUR SEARCH

WSU GENERAL SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION



COMPLETE EVERY YEAR

APPLICATION WILL OPEN BY SEPTEMBER AND CLOSE ON JANUARY 31 FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR.

One application for hundreds of WSU scholarships.

CHECK YOUR MAJOR

CHECK WITH YOUR ACADEMIC ADVISOR FOR DEPARTMENTAL RESOURCES. Most majors at WSU award scholarships through the WSU General Scholarship Application, but your major may have the ability to award additional scholarship funds.



START LOOKING THE YEAR BEFORE YOU WILL NEED THE SCHOLARSHIP. THEY ARE GENERALLY AWARDED IN SPRING FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR.

LOOK LOCALLY: STATE, CITY, OR COUNTY



FEWER COMPETING STUDENTS

DONORS HAVE MORE CONTEXT FOR YOUR LOCAL ACHIEVEMENTS & INVOLVEMENT

School Booster Clubs, Social Clubs/ Civic Organizations (Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis etc.), Place of Worship, workplace, insurance company, banks, credit unions, athletic clubs, local businesses, local government, chamber of commerce, county fairs.

YOUR FUTURE CAREER

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR YOUR INTENDED CAREER FIELD. They tend to have scholarships to support the next generation of their workforce.



SCAMS! USE COMMON SENSE AND CAUTION. THERE ARE MANY SCAMS OUT THERE JUST LOOKING TO EXTRACT STUDENT INFORMATION.

TRUSTED SCHOLARSHIP SEARCH ENGINES

WSU HAS NO SAY IN WHO IS AWARDED OUTSIDE SCHOLARSHIPS, THESE SOURCES HAVE BEEN VETTED FOR RELIABILITY.



<https://financialaid.wsu.edu/scholarships>
Search WSU awarded Scholarships & "from Outside WSU"



- <https://www.unigo.com>
- <http://thewashboard.com>
- <https://www.fastweb.com>
- <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search>
- <http://www.scholarshipmonkey.com>
- <https://finaid.org>

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WRITING SCHOLARSHIP ESSAYS

BRAINSTORM



Create an Outline– highlight key points

- What sets you apart?
- What are your strengths?
- How do you spend your time?
- What accomplishments are you proud of?
- What experiences have shaped you?
- What leadership experiences have you had?
- What is important to you?
- What are you good at?
- What do I like to do or not do – why is that?

DOES YOUR EXPERIENCE OF LEADERSHIP, CREATIVITY, ADVERSITY, COMMUNITY SERVICE, SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES, OR GOALS LOOK DIFFERENT THAN THE “TYPICAL” DEFINITIONS? GREAT! APPLY! DON’T APOLOGIZE. DON’T MINIMIZE YOUR LIVED EXPERIENCE. EXPLAIN & PERSUADE THE READER HOW YOUR EXPERIENCE APPLIES TO THE QUESTION.

WRITE AN ESSAY NOT A LIST

Don’t just list things!

Narrate your story.

- Explain your impact.
- Describe your experience.
- Why do you do what you do?
- What have you Learned?
- How have you Grown?

Use your unique voice while maintaining a professional tone.



RESUMES AND PERSONAL STATEMENT ESSAYS ARE DIFFERENT

Resume is the *What*

Personal Statement Essay is the *How* and *Why*

PROOFREAD

- Spelling and grammar count!
- Ask a trusted friend or family member to look it over.
- Read it out loud to check for flow.
- Spelling and grammatical errors could cost you a scholarship.
- **Don’t leave anything blank!**
- Word Counts: Be concise and thoughtful

FYI: AVOID ACRONYMS

Avoid Acronyms, don’t assume the reader knows the acronyms for your clubs or organizations.



QUANTIFY YOUR COMMITMENT

Use Clear Numbers. How many hours you devote to an activity, volunteer project club or team? Break it down by the most impactful unit of time: hours per week, hour per month, or by total hours. Have you volunteered for years?

SPECIFIC ESSAY QUESTIONS

LEADERSHIP / GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS

What leadership experiences have you had?

Describe specific leadership moments

Leadership means leading, the act of leading does not require the title of president or captain.

Describe one moment when you were a leader in: your family, a classroom, at your workplace, OR a club or team.

KNOWLEDGE OR CREATIVITY IN A FIELD

What are your hobbies? What is an area you have researched? What started as a Wikipedia rabbit hole and ended as a passion project?

How does this connect to your larger understanding of yourself, your culture, and the world around you?

DEALING WITH ADVERSITY

You don’t have to write about the hardest thing, just one hard thing.

What is a hard thing you handled well? Work backwards and describe the steps that allowed you to come out the other side. What led to the positive outcome?

Is this a story you want representing you in a professional setting?

Be open within your own boundaries of comfort. If it is still too fresh and hard to put into words, then wait to write about it.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

It doesn't have to be formal volunteer work! How have you helped, improved, or participated in your community? Think about religious, cultural or family involvement.

If you have had to work or had family responsibilities that did not allow “traditional” volunteer work explain (don’t apologize!) how your dedication helped your family, your immediate community, and what it taught you.

How long have you been involved?

Give context for length and depth of involvement: hours per week, total hours spent, years you have been involved.

What did you learn?

HANDLING SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES

Write a narrative of how you have encountered and handled systemic challenges. Choose one situation to describe.

How have you become aware of systemic struggles and how has that shaped your actions and world view? How will you carry this learning into the WSU community?

GOALS/ TASK COMMITMENT

Start with something you have achieved and work backward. Identify your steps.

Share your goals and **describe your progress** to achieve them.

What’s important - do these relate to your career goals?

BEFORE YOU TURN IT IN, CHECK: DID YOU...

- ACTUALLY ANSWER THE QUESTION
- PERSUADE THE READER THAT YOU ARE A GOOD INVESTMENT
- PROOF READ ONE MORE TIME: *IS THIS A STORY YOU WANT REPRESENTING YOU IN A PROFESSIONAL SETTING?*
- SAVE YOUR ESSAY IN A WORD DOCUMENT