

Memphis College of Art Scholarship Guide

Types of scholarships

Scholarships (or "free money") are an attractive way to pay for college because they don't need to be paid back. Scholarship awards can range from small awards to covering the full tuition bill. It differs between scholarships.

Scholarships are offered by many organizations, including federal and state governments and private sources, such as:

- Employers
- Individuals
- Companies
- High schools and colleges
- Religious groups
- Professional associations

Scholarship eligibility

You can be considered for a scholarship for any of the following reasons (and more):

- Academic performance
- Athletic achievement
- Financial need
- Religious affiliation
- A unique set of criteria that's important to the organization providing funds
- Minority status
- Heritage
- Community affiliations

Applying for scholarships

Different scholarships have different requirements and use their own criteria to select scholarship recipients.

Consider the following when starting a [scholarship](#) investigation:

- You may be required to [write an essay](#), pass a written exam, or complete a project demonstrating your potential.
- Programs may specify how scholarship funds must be used, set time restrictions for disbursing the funds, or set a ceiling on qualifying family income.
- Scholarship funds may be paid directly to the college.
- Failure to meet certain requirements could jeopardize your ability to keep the scholarship.

Scholarship tips

There is no magic formula for applying for and receiving a scholarship. But these tips can start you on the right foot.

Be organized. Stay on top of deadlines, gather all pertinent documents, and make copies of everything you submit. It is a good idea to send your applications by certified mail to ensure receipt.

Be honest. Don't exaggerate your grades, memberships, skills, or qualifications. It is better to

Memphis College of Art Scholarship Guide

focus on the scholarships for which you might be eligible.

Follow instructions carefully. Some scholarships require you to write an essay; others may want letters of recommendation. Send in what is requested and proofread everything. Typos and missing materials can cost you a scholarship.

Writing essays

Many scholarship applications require at least one essay. These essays are usually shorter and take less time to write than college admissions essays.

The personal essay is critical to winning a scholarship because it lets the selection committee get to know you beyond your grades, test scores, and activities listed on the application. It is also your best opportunity to make a strong and lasting impression.

A good scholarship essay ...

Scholarship essays captivate readers and encourage them to care about you. Writing a good essay is not always easy. It takes time to put words on paper and finesse each sentence to convey the correct meaning.

While there is no right or wrong way to write a great essay, a good scholarship essay ...

- ... is original.
- ... states clearly why you deserve to win.
- ... has a main point.
- ... avoids meaningless information.
- ... is more than just a sob story.
- ... is honest.

Get others to review your essay

When you finish your essay, get feedback from others, such as a parent, teacher, or friend. Don't just ask them to look for grammar or spelling mistakes. Ask them to point out any unclear passages and, most important, ask them if your essay convinces them that you deserve to win the scholarship.

Avoiding scholarship fraud

So you get an unsolicited scholarship application by email. You appear to have the qualifications, and you have time to apply. But as you are about to dive into the application, something holds you back; something doesn't feel right ... How can you tell if a scholarship offer is legitimate?

Memphis College of Art Scholarship Guide

Beware of scholarship scams

Be alert for services that solicit money in exchange for guaranteed scholarships. Watch out for pitches that boast:

- **"You're a finalist!"** or **"You've won!"** a contest or scholarship you never entered. Be wary, especially if they ask you for a credit card or bank account number to hold your "winnings." Don't believe it. You must apply for scholarships first to receive them.
- **"First come, first served."** While you do need to get your application in before the scholarship deadlines, the "first come, first served" rule does not apply to scholarships.
- **"Millions of dollars go unclaimed."** Legitimate scholarship awards are predetermined. Sponsors work very hard to find the most qualified applicant.
- **"It's guaranteed!"** Scholarship searches can guarantee search results. They can't guarantee you the scholarship money.
- **"We'll do the work for you ... for a fee."** The fee may be nominal and the offer may come from someone who sounds official. So make sure you do your research before paying anyone to do a search for you.

If the offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

WHERE TO GET HELP

Report scholarship scams

[Federal Trade Commission](#)

CRC-240 Washington, D.C. 20580 Toll-free (877) FTC-HELP [(877) 382-4357]

[National Fraud Information Center](#)

(800) 876-7060

More about scholarship scams

[Federal Trade Commission](#) (Consumer Protection)

[Better Business Bureau](#) (Scam Alerts)

Memphis College of Art Scholarship Guide

Resources

The internet is full of information regarding how to save and find ways to pay for college. Many of the active scholarships being posted are done online. Consider what follows to be a tool that you may use. There are many more results available but these are the sites that we would recommend that are both safe for you to explore as well as providing the best opportunity for you to receive a scholarship.

Fast Web (www.fastweb.com)

This site will help you find scholarships that you qualify for based on the information you enter.

College Board (www.collegeboard.org)

This site includes scholarships from public and private sources at the national and state level. The database is updated annually so some of the information may be outdated.

U.S. News (www.usnews.com/education)

This site is a great resource for exploring a snapshot of the different colleges around the country. The Scholarship Coach is their program that offers advice about applying for scholarships as well as offering several different scholarships.

Scholarships360 (scholarships360.org)

The site offers a different scholarship every day of the week. You are able to subscribe to their mailing list to receive the daily scholarship offers to your email.

U.S. Scholarship Guide (www.scholarshipguide.org)

This scholarship search engine does not ask for the personal information that some engines do and allows you browse through the different categories of scholarships. You are able to provide as little or as much information as you would like during this scholarship search.

Feel free to contact me with any questions you may along the way. I am more than willing to help you in your search.

MEMPHIS COLLEGE OF ART
Financial Aid Office
1930 Poplar Ave
Memphis TN 38104
financialaid@mca.edu

Aaron White
Director of Financial Aid
(800) 727-1088
(901) 272-5136
awhite@mca.edu