TOP TEN TIPS FOR WINNING SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

Ever wonder what the folks who award scholarships want to see?
Fastweb.com polled scholarship providers across the country, asking for their tips on applying for scholarships.

TIP #1 *APPLY ONLY IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE*
- Read the scholarship requirements and directions carefully and make sure you are eligible before you send in your application. Your application won't make a bit of difference if you are not qualified to apply

TIP #2 *COMPLETE THE APPLICATION IN FULL*
- Be sure to complete the entire application. If a question does not apply, note that on the application ("n/a" for not applicable). Don't just leave it blank

TIP #3 *FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS*
- Provide everything that is required, but do not supply things that are not requested-you could be disqualified.

TIP #4 *NEATNESS COUNTS*
- Make a couple of photocopies of all the forms you receive. Use the copies as working drafts as you develop your application packet. Type the application, or if you must print, do so neatly and legibly and use black ink so it will photocopy

TIP #5 *MAKE SURE YOUR ESSAY MAKES AN 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.

TIP #6 *WATCH THE DEADLINE*
- To help keep you on track, impose a deadline for yourself that is at least two weeks prior to the stated deadline. Use this 'buffer time' to proofread your application before you send it off or deliver it. Don't send your packet in late; the committee refuses late applications. EXTENSIONS ARE NOT ALLOWED.

TIP #7 *TAKE STEPS TO MAKE SURE YOUR APPLICATION GETS TO WHERE IT NEEDS TO GO*
- Before sending in the application, make a copy of the entire packet and keep it on file. If your application goes astray, you can always reproduce it quickly. Make sure your name appears on all pages of the application. Pieces of your application may get lost unless they are clearly identified.

TIP #8 *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, or parent to proofread it as well.

TIP #9 *ASK FOR HELP IF YOU NEED IT*
- If you have problems with the application, visit your school's scholarship coordinator. If you have specific questions about the application, contact Ventura County Community Foundation.

TIP #10 *REMEMBER: YOUR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION REPRESENTS YOU!*
- Your ability to submit a neat, timely, complete application reflects on you. It's your face to this organization. Take pride in yourself by submitting the best application you can.