# Finding A Better Way To Pay For College

*It's Time To Fix An Outmoded System, And Can't Happen Fast Enough*

ScholarshipOwl

By **Kenny Sandorffy**

Every year, about 22 million students head off to U.S. colleges, graduate schools and other post-secondary educational institutions such as trade schools. They face a daunting task: figuring out how to pay for that year of school (and the next, and the next), even as more and more employers require some kind of degree to even be considered for a solid job.

But these days, the average price tag for a year in college or graduate school runs more than $30,000. Not many families have that kind of cash laying around, particularly if they have more than one college-age child. And loan programs designed to unlock higher education for many have themselves become post-graduation shackles, loading many young adults with massive debt before they've worked a single day in their new careers.

What to do? It turns out many other sources of money exist that can help pay for an education, sources that too many students know too little

about. In fact, there are more than 3.5 million scholarships available for college and grad students that can help finance much of their schooling. Any individual student may be eligible for dozens, even hundreds, of scholarships, if they can just find and apply for them all.

But finding that scholarship match, pulling together the required information, finishing the application and mailing it off to the provider, then doing that process again for another match (and another and another) can be a brain-melting exercise in tedium. Managing it all can be overwhelming.

And for students who can't track down and make those matches, it's a huge lost opportunity. The savvy ones may focus on applying for a handful of the biggest scholarships out there, but even they miss the many smaller ones they are most certain to win. Everyone loses.

And here's another issue: students remain eligible for many scholarships every year they are in school, not just that first one. And eligibility windows open and close throughout the year, meaning students who aren't monitoring their possible matches regularly can miss out on financial help they need.

I faced the same issues when I went to college. In fact, it took me longer to complete an application for a single scholarship than it did to apply to the college I ultimately attended. Wading through the scholarship process left me frustrated and unhappy then and remained with me for years afterward.

Just as importantly, the current application system also causes problems for many scholarship providers. Their mission is to give away as much money as they can, to as many qualified students as possible. Yet too often, they can't find enough applicants to even meet their own goals. Money that could help worthy students ends up not being awarded. No one wins in this mess of a system that's remained largely unchanged for decades.

There has to be a better way. So years after I had all my problems getting scholarships, my team has created an online solution that we believe fixes this mess.

We came up with ScholarshipOwl.com, which automates and simplifies the process of finding, matching and applying for scholarships for college and graduate school. It's a free membership site that makes it easy to find and win all the scholarship aid a student deserves. We also offer a range of other services that can help fine-tune applications, and a unique email address for each member to consolidate the process and keep spam out of personal email accounts.

ScholarshipOwl won't fix everything that makes going to college such a daunting process. But we hope we can fix one key part of it. Our goal is to help every student pay their way through college with scholarship aid. Join us, won't you?

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