

CHECKLIST FOR SUBMITTING SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS AND TRANSFER ESSAYS

- ☐ Read the entire application, making notes of important points.
- ☐ Make a copy of the original application so that you can use it as a working application.
- ☐ Follow the directions exactly. If no color of ink is specified, use black. If handwriting or typing is not specified, always type. Neatness counts. If the application is a PDF, see if it is writable.
- ☐ Remember to sign the application if they request you to do so.
- ☐ Make sure you enclose everything the application requests i.e., fees, application fees, recommendations, transcripts, OR you can make arrangements for these items to be sent. Do not include anything that is not specified.
- ☐ If the application asks for hours involved in a project, do not write, “varies.” This means nothing to the selection committee. Estimate the hours as accurately as you can. If the scholarship asks for total hours, do not give weekly or monthly hours, give total hours.
- ☐ Do not use acronyms until you have used the entire title once, with the acronym in parentheses.
- ☐ Every page of your application should be numbered and each should contain your name.
- ☐ Check the date of the deadline and the day of the week on which it falls. Mail in the application well before the deadline. Find out when the college or awarding institution begin to accept applications. The earlier you mail it in the better.

ASKING FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- ☐ Be sure to ask early for any needed letters of recommendation. The more information you can provide the writer (i.e., resume, personal goal statement, type of scholarship you are applying for and/or desired transfer college), the more detailed the recommendation letter will be.
- ☐ All forms should be filled out by you before given to the letter writer.
- ☐ Be sure to give the letter writer a stamped envelope addressed to the scholarship office and/or college to where it is to be sent.
- ☐ Before the deadline, politely follow-up with the person submitting your recommendation.
- ☐ Do not forget to send a thank you letter and let your letter writers know if you received any awards.

ORGANIZING YOUR APPLICATIONS

- ☐ Create a separate folder for each college and/or scholarship to which you are applying.
- ☐ Keep copies of all your application materials, so when you apply for additional scholarships, you can rework information you have already developed, rather than starting from scratch.

LIST OF ACTIVITIES

- ☐ Employment – paid work
- ☐ Experiential learning - research, internships/apprenticeships, special training (ROTC)
- ☐ Athletics – high school and college teams, intramural and club
- ☐ Performance - musical, theatrical or physical
- ☐ Production/publishing – school radio, television, newspaper, lit journal, yearbook
- ☐ Competitive speech – forensics, speech or debate team, Mock Trial or Model UN
- ☐ Volunteerism – service to your school, church, or local communities through student or area clubs, honor societies, non-profit organizations, hospital work, student government, electoral politics, advocacy on behalf of others or an idea/belief

WRITING WITH DIRECTION – TELLING A STORY

- ☐ Give yourself plenty of time to write and rewrite essays.
- ☐ Your essay must be original and fit the requested format. Reusing essays without reworking them to fit the specific scholarship is not effective.

- ☐ If the scholarship requires answering essay questions, be sure your essay answers the question. If the question has more than one part, be sure to address the various components of the question.
- ☐ Choose a topic that is meaningful to you so you can put your heart into your writing.

BRAINSTORMING

- ❖ What are your major accomplishments?
- ❖ What attributes, qualities, or skills distinguish you from everyone else?
- ❖ Consider your favorite books, movies, people, songs, or works of art you admire and how they influenced you.
- ❖ Have you ever fought hard for something and succeeded?
- ❖ What are your future aspirations, dreams, and goals?
- ❖ How do you want to be remembered, or what do you want to be known for?
- ❖ What have you done outside the classroom that shows more of who you are as an individual?
- ❖ What are your most important extracurricular and community activities?

PERSONAL SITUATION

- ❖ Your personal background, including any highlights, special situations in your life or other information that you want the scholarship committee to take into consideration (i.e., returning to school later in life, raising children while pursuing a degree, etc.).
- ❖ Any barriers to your obtaining your educational goals and how you have or plan to overcome them (i.e., socioeconomic or educational disadvantages).
- ❖ Hardship: if you experienced a hardship, try not to spend more than two sentences explaining it. If you choose to write about a traumatic experience, write about how it caused you to grow, rather than focusing on the negative outcomes of the event.
- ❖ Don't write negative comments or criticism; although being honest about yourself is important, reviewers take negative comments very seriously. This could impact the overall ranking of your essay.

THE SCHOLARSHIP

- ❖ Do not use an essay just to repeat information already in the application.
- ❖ Your objective is to convince someone else that they should invest their scholarship in you.
- ❖ Your essay needs to be engaging and memorable. Start out strong, but do not lie or exaggerate.
- ❖ Emphasize the things that are unique about you.
- ❖ Be sure to choose a topic that will give you the opportunity to be convincing.
- ❖ Do not be overly humble in your application. The selection committee is not likely to know you, or to realize you do not like to brag. You can be clear about your accomplishments without sounding like the biggest ego in the universe.
- ❖ Know your audience and speak to their interests. For example, if you are applying for a business scholarship, describe your personal interests and experiences in business-related areas.
- ❖ If the scholarship asks for educational goals and you are not sure what you want to do, either;
 1. pick one likely scenario and explain it, or
 2. explain everything you do know such as: how much education you want, the type of work and work setting you wish to prepare for; the driving force that makes work meaningful to you; and/or some areas of interest you are currently considering.
- ❖ Humor on paper is tricky; save it for your friends.
- ❖ Be yourself and be creative. Do not adopt a negative or preachy tone.
- ❖ Leave these phrases out of your application: "I didn't do much in high school", "Next year I plan to do some volunteer work...", "I just can't tell you how meaningful that was for me."
- ❖ If the essay has a page or word number limit, do not go over the limit. Scholarship committees need to be able to compare parallel essays. If yours is longer, it gives you an unfair advantage. Some committees may solve this by removing your application from consideration.

PROOF READING

- ❖ Check and double-check the grammar and spelling. Do not depend on the spell-checker.
- ❖ Have someone critically proof read for you. The experience may be painful, but the payoff is more important.
- ❖ Be especially certain you spell the name of the scholarship correctly.