

Have a Scholarship Application that Wins!!

There are lots of articles, (some good-some not so good), on the internet that talk about how to have a winning scholarship application. **Remember the earlier and younger you start applying the better!** Start early, the Foundation for the Advancement of Aboriginal Youth (FAAY) starts their bursaries for students as young as 13. That's right 13, when you are in your middle years of school, you can start looking and applying for bursaries and scholarships. Filling out scholarships takes time so to assist you, we've researched a number of articles and have put together a number of tips to use when applying for scholarships and bursaries.

1. **Pay attention to the deadline date.** Try to have your application arrive EARLY if possible. If you are applying for a number of scholarships it is easy to confuse the deadlines and send the applications on the wrong date. To avoid this, have a calendar and write the name of each scholarship in red on its deadline, and in black one week before the deadline. Try to get scholarship applications in before the black deadline, however, make sure it arrives before the red deadline date.
2. **Identify and Meet the Sponsor's Goals.** Read through all the scholarship information watching for details and clues about what the sponsor's formal and informal requirements. By meeting the sponsor's goals you increase your chance of winning exponentially!
3. **Start your Application with a "Thank You" Cover Letter**

1111 Win Street

Town, Saskatchewan, Postal Code

Date

Name, (Chair of Selection Committee)

Whatever Scholarship Committee

Address

Town, Saskatchewan, Postal Code

Dear (Name of Chair of Selection Committee)

This letter is an introduction of myself, (your name), and my desire to participate in the (whatever it is called) Scholarship Program. I have been accepted to (Name of Institute/University etc.) for the 2010 fall term.

I would like to thank you and the (whatever) Scholarship Committee for supporting post-secondary students with an opportunity for financial assistance through your scholarship program. Enclosed you will find my application form, transcript of my marks, letters of recommendation, and other pertinent information. Again, thank you for your interest on my behalf and the youth of our province.

Respectfully,

Your Name

4. **Participate in extracurricular activities.** Most scholarship committees do not simply choose the student with the highest grade point average. Instead, most scholarships are equally interested in a student's extracurricular activities. Is he involved in his community? Does he have an after-school job? Did he start his own business? What hobbies does he have? The scholarship committee is interested in giving the award to the person they consider the most well-rounded student. **Grades are important, however, they are only half the story.**

5. **Add Extra Items to Your Application (if not forbidden).** Most if not all applications today will ask you to write some sort of essay – most are about yourself, others may have a specific topic for you to write on. Here are a few ideas to get you started.
 - a) Write a short essay on MY EDUCATION/CAREER GOALS. Try to keep it to one page but no more than two.

- b) Write a paragraph or two on how this scholarship award will help you reach your education/career goals. In here, if your scholarship is from for a specific region (eg. Northern Saskatchewan) explain how you having this scholarship will benefit the region in the coming years and the company awarding the scholarship.
- c) If you have received any awards or letters of commendation, be sure to include these. They will show you in a “positive light” to the committee.
- d) If the scholarship requires that you write an essay, don’t simply use abstract information – use concrete examples. For example, instead of writing an abstract essay about volunteering in the community, write about your experiences while volunteering, what you learned while volunteering, the people you met and how they bettered you as an individual. Scholarship sponsors want to hear about you and your experiences, not about some abstract topic.

These are just a few examples to get you thinking. Limit your extras to three or four at the most. Too many and you will “sour” your application. **Again, MAKE SURE you are not forbidden to add extra items before you do so.**

Be creative to find things that make you look good and share them with the committee.

6. **Personalize the Letters of Recommendation.** This conveys that you took the time to make this application special. When you have a letter of recommendation addressed to the specific organization or person that is administering the application process it says that you took the time and effort to make this letter “Special” for them. If all you have is a letter that starts “To Whom It May Concern”, it is better than nothing. But if you can personalize the letter it says you cared to send the very best.
 - a) **Tip 6a.** Offer to do the work for the writer of your letter of recommendation. It is one thing to ask a person to write one letter of recommendation, quite another to ask them for twenty letters. Once you have their letter, ask if you can put it on the computer so the TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN can be personalized for each application and your writer only has to “sign their name.”
 - b) **Tip 6b.** Try to get three to five letters of recommendations in your files. This will allow you to pick and choose which to send in for a specific application. Never send more than three unless they ask for more.
7. **Proof Read All Materials and Neatness is a MUST!** Make sure you use correct grammar and there are no spelling errors. Proof read your essay, cover letter, extra items

you have included, and even letters of recommendation prepared by others. Have others proof read the same material. When there are a large number of applications to review, correctness and neatness may become the first screen out factor. Only when the “pile” is smaller does the content of your application start to become a factor in the selection process.

8. **Packaging your application.** So your application is complete, now the final “presentation” tip. Your “Thank You Cover Letter” is on top. For the final “touch” include a wallet size picture of yourself in the lower left side of your packet. The next items are those required in the application. Next add any extra items (if not forbidden) and finally place any letter (s) of recommendations. Your application packet is a great looking presentation of YOU, so don’t fold it! Place your application in an 8x10 envelope so it arrives looking great.