

# 6 tips to winning college scholarships

If your teenager has contemplated looking for private [college scholarships](#), now is a good time to search.

Some of the biggest private college scholarship providers have fall deadlines for their contests. Another popular scholarship deadline is February.

Here are six others tips for finding college scholarships:

## 1. Look for private scholarships on Twitter.

Search for awards on [Twitter](#) using the hash tag #scholarships. Students and parents will find tweets and links about private scholarships from scholarships providers, counselors, schools and others.

Also try other related hash tags such as #meritscholarships, #financialaid and #privatescholarships.

When you locate people who are providing valuable information about scholarships, start following them. Also check to see whom these people are following.

- [5 myths about getting in and paying for college](#)
- [Avoid these 8 financial aid mistakes](#)
- [7 cheap ways to study for the SAT and ACT](#)

In particular, check if these scholarship sources have created lists of individuals who are also helpful dispensers of scholarships information. This is an easy way to broaden your search for scholarship leads.

## 2. Seek out scholarships that require an essay.

If your child wants to search for scholarships that are less popular, they should check out contests that require an essay. The [WOW Writing Workshop](#) maintains a [list of private scholarships that require an essay](#).

## 3. Write a scholarship essay that stands out.

[Susan Knoppow](#), a cofounder of WOW Writing Workshop has been a judge on many scholarship panels and she notes that most essays that she's read were mediocre.

Just like college admission essays, too many of these writing samples are boring and written like a standard high school English paper, which is not what scholarship sponsors want. Sponsors want teenagers to write an entertaining essay with a great opening line that shares the writer's genuine voice.

#### **4. Think twice about pursuing large national scholarships.**

The best-known and most generous scholarships are inundated with entries. Students' chances of winning the [Coca-Cola Scholars](#) award, for instance, are 25 times worse than the odds of gaining admission into Stanford, which rejects the vast majority of its students. Teenagers will usually experience better luck by applying to local scholarships.

#### **5. Understand the limitation of scholarship search engines.**

Many large databases routinely pelt students with ads and often generate scholarship suggestions that are mismatches. You can learn more about this phenomenon by reading this recent post, "[Do college scholarship search engines work?](#)"

#### **6. Check out institutional scholarships.**

[MeritAid.com](#) is an excellent search engine that you can use to find merit scholarships from colleges and universities, which are usually bigger than the standard private scholarships. Families should also look at a college's admission and financial aid sites to find a list of their scholarships.

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