scholarship application
TIPS AND POINTERS

■ Make Your Application Stand Out
• Make sure your application is professional in appearance. Type your application whenever possible. Always check for grammar and spelling. Presentation matters. Do your research on the organization offering the scholarship. Take the time to understand their mission and the purpose of the scholarship. Be sure to think about what the scholarship granting organization values. Be sure to highlight all the ways in which you match the purpose of the scholarship.

• Most applications will ask for a personal statement or essay. The essay is usually the most important piece of a scholarship application; the reviewers often give it the most weight. A good strategy is to develop one great essay that you can tweak for slightly different applications.

• Develop a strong personal statement that communicates what you have achieved, your future goals and how you plan to realize them. Be sure to use specific examples and details to illustrate your point. Tell the reader what is unique about your accomplishments and any obstacles you have overcome. They want to hear what kind of person you are and what you will accomplish with the aid of their scholarship. Readers don't want to hear a sob story; they want to be inspired by your accomplishments and vision.

■ Be Aware of Scholarship Scams
Before you apply for a scholarship, check it out. Make sure the organization is legitimate. The organization's contact information should be listed on their website and application. Don't pay a company or person who claims they will search for and apply for scholarships on your behalf. There are plenty of free, high-quality search engines.

You should never pay to apply for a scholarship. Legitimate scholarship agencies want to help students and would not expect them to pay to submit an application.

Never give away your bank account, credit card or debit card information to secure a scholarship. Be aware of claims such as "You've been selected by a 'national foundation' to receive a scholarship," in a contest you never entered. Students don't just get scholarships out of the blue. You must apply for scholarships yourself. Be cautious of anyone, besides your school, that claims you have won a scholarship for which you never applied.

Be cautious when giving out your social security number. If the scholarship organization is asking for your social security number you may want to call them to ask to ask for an exception.

Common scholarship scams can be found at:
http://www.finaid.org/scholarships/scams.phtml