

ScholarshipsCanada.com

# Applying for Scholarships

## Intro

You've already got **a lot to do**. Some days, just *getting* to school seems like a feat. On top of that, you're supposed to **dedicate time** each week to **applying for scholarships**? Well, yeah, if you plan to go to college or university. Education is expensive, but **scholarships make paying for it a little easier**. Of course, not only do you need to apply for scholarships, you need to win. Read on for help with **wowing scholarship administrators**. [ScholarshipsCanada.com](https://www.scholarshipscanada.com) has even more advice — and a **searchable database of thousands of awards**.



## Your Eligibility

Whatever your grades or background, **there are awards for you**. When you're searching for awards, consider your **interests, heritage, clubs, and other affiliations** — anything that sets you apart and makes you you. You'll be surprised at the breadth of awards.

**Don't worry about your grades**. Some scholarship administrators will ask, but most listings on [ScholarshipsCanada.com](https://www.scholarshipscanada.com) aren't interested in your academic average at all. There are **awards for everybody**. *No excuses!*

Be sure to **read the requirements** carefully **before you apply**, though. Read the listing so you understand what the scholarship admins are looking for. When you know what you're up against, you can **tailor your application** appropriately.

Some awards are designated for **Automatic Consideration**. This means that if you qualify, the school will consider you when you accept your admissions offer — no application needed.

What's meant by **Financial Need** varies by award. Unless the listing states a level of need explicitly, just apply. If you're dying to know the details, you can always reach out to the scholarship administrator for more information. **Contact info** for scholarship admins is included at the bottom of every listing on [ScholarshipsCanada.com](https://www.scholarshipscanada.com).

## Writing Your Personal Essay

**Read the questions or topics closely** and do some research if needed. You're probably going to be asked about your individual experiences, but make sure you can back up your assertions with facts. Do some pre-writing, first, to **flesh out your ideas**. Remember, writing is rewriting, so don't be afraid to edit your work.

Be **clear and concise** in your writing. Avoid ambiguity: state plainly why you're a great candidate to receive the award, but be **respectful and polite**. If there's a **word count**, respect it. Write as much as you can, but don't go over the limit — and don't forget your spelling and grammar check.

Reflect on the lessons you've learned so far, and **connect the award to your own educational journey**. Demonstrate the effect winning the award will have on your life and education.

## Finding References

Opt for **professional**, as opposed to personal, referees. This means no family and friends! Teachers, coaches, employers, religious leaders — anyone who has **known you a year or more** in an academic or professional context will have a good idea of your strengths and weaknesses. Where possible, **match your referees to the particular award**. If you're applying for a STEM award, your math teacher would make a good referee. Your art teacher, maybe not so much.

Be sure to give your referee **two or three weeks' notice** before your deadline. **Offer a link to the award** so your referee knows what you're after, as well as a copy of your resumé, application letter, personal essay, and any other relevant documents.

Of course, make sure you thank your referee, and **follow up if you win!** Referees typically love to share in your good news, so spread the word. Let them know what you'll do with your award.

## Best Practices and Good Advice

**Don't neglect the smaller awards.** \$500 here and \$1,000 there can really add up for a cash-strapped student. If nothing else, it's less you'll have to pay back later on your student loans.

Apply early and apply often. **Dedicate an hour or two per week** — more if you can — to searching, prepping, and applying for awards. It'll take you some time, but odds are good **you'll come out ahead** in the end. You'll thank yourself when the money rolls in.

**Consider scrubbing your social media** before you start applying. If you've got old posts that are less than professional, you may want to hide them. Think of **applying for an award** like you're **applying for a job**. Scholarship administrators may well Google you to learn more about your personal life, and if they find something crude or compromising, they could move on to the next applicant. Why should future-you suffer for the actions of past-you?

If you have time, **research the scholarship administrator**. Try to figure out why they're offering the award in the first place. **Look into past winners**, too. Who are they, do they have anything in common, how might you replicate their success? You may even be able to **find winning essays or applications online**, to help you model your own submissions. *(No plagiarism, please!)*

Check out [ScholarshipsCanada.com](https://www.scholarshipscanada.com) for more tips, advice and answers to frequently asked questions — and of course, a **searchable database of thousands of awards**.

Good luck!

