Scholarships: What’s out there and how to get them

Where to begin your search

1. University of Oregon
   - The university offers two large scholarships, General University and Diversity Excellence
   - You can also find scholarships through your specific major, college, or program
   - Log into the UO Scholarship Dashboard with your DuckID (UO email) and fill out a general application, then look for scholarships that apply to you

2. State
   - The Office of Student Access and Completion, mostly for Oregon residents, is another scholarship portal
   - The Ford Family Foundation offers scholarships for residents in Oregon and parts of California

3. Community
   - Your Greek Life Organization, club, place of worship, employer or parent’s employer may offer scholarships
   - Look into civic groups in your hometown, like the Rotary Club, Elks Club or Key Club
   - You may have a better chance of receiving these community scholarships because the applicant pool is often smaller

4. Beyond
   - Look at the university’s Scholarship Bulletin Board
   - Use scholarship search engines like Fastweb, CollegeScholarships.org, and Scholarships.com

University of Oregon Scholarships

General University Scholarship
- One-time award
- $1,000-$3,000
- Undergraduate and graduate students can apply
- Resident, non-resident, and international students can apply
- 3.5 GPA minimum
- Selection Committee considers:
  - Academic performance
  - Extracurricular and community involvement
  - Quality of recommendation letter
  - Writing ability and creativity as demonstrated in required essays
- Due March 1, 2021

Diversity Excellence Scholarship
- Renewable award
- Up to $6,500 per year
- Undergraduate and graduate students can apply
- Resident, non-resident, but not international, students can apply
- 3.0 GPA minimum
- Selection Committee considers:
  - Academic performance
  - Extracurricular and community involvement
  - An individual’s ability to contribute to diversity
  - Preference given to students with financial need, first generation students, and Oregon residents
- Must submit FAFSA or ORSAA
- Due March 1, 2021
Free money for college: No essays required?
- Money you don’t have to pay back
- Based on financial need by submitting a FAFSA by March 1, 2021
- You may be eligible for:
  - Pell Grant up to $6,345
  - Oregon Opportunity Grant $3,600
  - Tuition Waiver $1,000
  - FSEOG $1,050
  - Work Study up to $1,800

ORSA – Oregon Student Aid Application
- An alternative to FAFSA for undocumented Oregon student, including students who have DACA status
- This is how you demonstrate need for:
  - Oregon Opportunity Grant
  - OSAC Scholarship (that require need)
  - Diversity Excellence Scholarship
  - Some department scholarships

What’s in an application?
- Letters of Recommendation
  - Typically from professors or advisors
  - Make sure to start building relationships with your professors as soon as possible
  - Ask them early
  - Provide information about you to help them write the best letter possible
  - Thank them for their time
- Financial Need
  - Some scholarships might require that you demonstrate financial need
  - If you submit the FAFSA, you’re done
  - If you are unable to submit the FAFSA, you can submit the ORSA
    - ORSA is made for Oregon students, but Oregon residency is not required
    - Great options for undocumented students, including some students who have DACA status
- Essays
  - Essays help the scholarship committee decide why you would be a good recipient of the scholarship
  - They typically ask about what you’ve done, what you’ve become, or who you are
  - Reflect on important leadership experiences in your past, your biggest goals for your future, causes you are passionate about, talents and skills you are proud of, and challenges you’ve faced to prepare yourself
  - Remember to research the organization that offers the scholarship so you can connect your goals to their goals

Essay Tips
- Just like an academic essay, a personal essay should have an argument and a thesis
- In these essays, your argument is that you should receive the scholarship because of something about you that relates to the prompt
- Essays should have an easy-to-follow structure, with a beginning, middle, and end

Beginning
- Hooks the reader
- Shows how you stand out
- Includes a thesis that directly answers the prompt
- Does not begin with a quote or cliché
- A specific story is great!

Middle
- Strong body paragraphs develop thesis
- Maintains focus on the prompt
- Brings out your personality in detail
• Tie the scholarship to your educational or career goals

End

• Avoid reiterating or summarizing essay

• Answers "so what?"
  o Why was the essay important?
  o How do you align with the organization?
  o How would this help you reach your goals or make an impact?

• Avoid fillers like "in conclusion"