

CheapScholar's Guide To Finding Outside Scholarships

Definition: Outside Scholarships — educational funding not provided directly by or through the college or university that you plan to attend. The main sources of these scholarships are private foundations or organizations and it is estimated that billions of dollars of outside scholarships are awarded each year.

Five Useful Tips To Secure An Outside Scholarship

- **Scholarship databases:** Check out all the scholarship search-engine databases that you can find. A great many of them are available online, but make sure they are legitimate before you share any of your information with them. The best scholarship search engines won't ask for your personal information and they never charge you a fee. CheapScholar.org has a listing of the most prominent scholarship databases.
- **Local neighborhood:** Search your local community for extra scholarship dollars. First visit the service-focused not-for-profits like Rotary, Kiwanis and Lion's Club, and after that, scour your local foundations and private organizations.
- **Widen your search:** Once you have filtered through the opportunities from your local community, start looking at the same types of groups on a more regional, state, and ultimately at the national level.
- **What makes you special?:** The broader your scholarship search becomes, the more you need to identify the niche or traits that make you stand out from the crowd and make you the one and only for whatever scholarship opportunity might be available.
- **Networking:** More than ever, it's a great time to call upon friends and family members to help you find those outside scholarship dollars. Use Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, family reunions, graduation parties, weddings, or just about any social medium possible in which you can let your network know that you are looking for scholarship money. Chances are someone will know somebody (or an organization) able to help you out.

All of the above is easier said than done, but to be truly successful in securing outside scholarships, you will have to dedicate some time and make use of your connections as efficiently as possible.

The payoff in the end is sure to be beneficial as you start to see the outside scholarships trickle in and witness the positive impact that they have on your out-of-pocket college expenses.



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