Tips for External Scholarship Searches

Please consider and review these steps in preparation for your search!

• 1) Start Looking Early and Often – Begin your search and application process at least one year in advance of when hope to use the scholarship. Most deadlines are in the Spring for award during the following academic year. Continue your search year round, however, for newly posted scholarship opportunities.

• 2) Assess Your Strengths – Inventory your strengths and give priority to those scholarships that best fit your qualifications. Examples of these strengths may be talent, educational background, community service experience, ethnic origins, or other personal characteristics.

• 3) Do Your Research and Look Locally – Use online scholarship search engines, local libraries, and your local neighborhood organizations (such as your parent’s employer, high school and religious organizations) to help you target specific scholarship programs.

• 4) Be Smart- Avoid paying scholarship application fees or giving out your credit card and bank account information. You should never pay to apply for scholarships!

• 5) Organize and Prepare Your Application Timeline – Collect letters of recommendation and carefully prepare a standard essay for various applications. Use these items to systematically apply for multiple scholarships with the same core requirements. Keep a calendar of deadlines and notifications so that you may follow up on applications in a timely manner.

• 6) Utilize CCU’s Resources – Visit the University’s writing center for writing tips and essay topics. Utilize the University’s library resources when possible and keep an eye out for the latest version of Coastal Carolina University’s Scholarship Opportunities Brochure.

• 7) Submit Your FAFSA Early - Visit www.fafsa.ed.gov as soon after January 1 each year as possible to complete your FAFSA for the upcoming academic year. Most applications require the student document their financial need with the institution.

• 8) Don’t Get Discouraged - Most students apply for over anywhere between ten and fifteen scholarships before receiving a single positive response. Most external scholarships opportunities range from $500 - $2000. The more scholarship funding you obtain, the less likely you will be to accrue unwanted loan debt.