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Aside from grants and loans, private scholarships are some of the best ways to fund your college education. There are thousands of scholarships for third-year high school students, and the amount of eligibility requirements, deadlines, and awards varies, so the time to do research is definitely worth it. The senior year is prime crunch time when it comes to searching for your college scholarship. I've compiled a list of the best college scholarships for high school seniors based on availability and award amounts. These scholarships are generally flexible (so you can use them at any accredited university you attend) and they also have no geographical restrictions (so regardless of where you live in the United States, you are eligible to apply). The list is divided into four sublists: scholarship competitions, merit-based scholarships, needs-based scholarships, and professional awards. Don't forget to check out the end of the article for strategies to get the most scholarships possible! These types of scholarships can be quite intensive, so if you plan to pursue one of them, give them extra time to prepare effectively. All scholarships are competitions and you have to go head-to-head with other students to win your next scholarship. Voice of democracy scholarship competition Students compete for this award by writing and recording audio essays on patriotic themes. The theme of the 2020-21 contest is Is it the country that the founders had in their own right? The first-place winner will receive a \$30,000 grand prize and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. The program offers awards and incentives totaling \$1.9 million each year. Qualifications: Grades 9-12 Deadline: October 31, 2020 Fountainhead Essay Contest Students compete for this award by writing essays on one of three topics related to Ayn Rand's book The Fountain's Head. The first-place winner will receive a \$10,000 grand prize. The runners-up will also receive the award. Each year, a total prize pool of \$22,500 is awarded. Qualifications: Grade 11-12 Deadline: In late May 2021, students in the Atlas Schragged Essay Contest will compete for the award by writing an essay on one of three topics related to Ayn Rand's novel Atlas Schragged. The first prize winner will receive a \$25,000 prize. The runners-up also win prize money and are awarded a \$40,000 scholarship each year. Qualifications: High school 3rd grade, college students, graduate student deadline: September 21, 2020 American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest Are you a good public speaker or do you want an excuse to hone your public speaking skills? Students compete for this prize. And as well as 8-10 minutes of decoration on some aspects of the US Constitution, we will give a 3-5 minute speech on the assigned topic. You can read this year's topic here. The first place winner will receive \$25,000, the second place will receive \$22,500 and the third place will receive \$20,000. There are also small awards for state winners. More than \$203,500 will be awarded annually. Qualifications: U.S. high school student deadline under 20: Varies from state to state as the local American Legion division arranges contests, but this scholarship is pretty unique - and it's great for students with some untapped artistic talent! The winner will receive \$10,000 and the winner's school will also receive \$1,000. Qualifications: Deadline for high school and college students 14 years and older: March 9, 2021 To win these scholarships, you need to show that you are tough. Academic Scholarships The following scholarships are generally awarded based on a student's academic performance, along with several other factors, including leadership skills and commitment to community service. As a result, the most competitive applicants become committed and high-grade students who are also invested in their communities. Coca-Cola Scholars Program Coca-Cola scholars are primarily judged for academic performance, extracurricular these activities, leadership experience, and community service. This scholarship program is pretty big: 150 awards of \$20,000 are handed out each year. For more information about the Coca-Cola Scholarship, see our winning guide. Qualifications: A third-year high school student in the United States. Children and grandchildren of Coca-Cola employees (current and former) are not allowed Deadline: October 31, 2020 Burger Kings Colors Program applicants will be reviewed for GPA, work history, extracurriculars and community services. Awards can vary from a small one of \$1,000 to an amount of \$50,000. Qualifications: Employees and their spouses/partners/children, U.S. high school senior deadlines: Perhaps mid-December 2020 Ronald McDonald House Charitable Scholarships In these cases, award eligibility requirements vary based on your local Ronald McDonald House Charity Chapter. For example, some have ethnic qualification requirements. Deadlines and award amounts also vary by location, but some of the larger national awards can be as high as \$100,000! For more information on obtaining an RMHC scholarship, see our how-to guide. Qualifications: You're in your third year of high school, but other requirements may apply depending on the scholarship deadline: needs-based if your family's income is usually not enough to cover college expenses, depending on your scholarship it would be a great option for you. The following scholarships, based on the need for funding, take into account the financial needs when selecting the winners. But for many of these programs, financial necessity is just one of many criteria considered. In other words, strong applicants are also successful students, leaders, or community activists. Most of these applications require you to submit documents about your family's income. Horatio Algiers Scholarship Award This generous needs-based scholarship is designed for students who face and overcome major obstacles. To be considered eligible, an adjusted family's total income must be \$55,000 or less. At the national level, there is a prize of 106 \$25,000. At the state level, there are \$10,000 each scholarships for all 50 states (and the District of Columbia). This one scholarship application will be considered for many other national, state and professional scholarships, which means more opportunities for less work and scholarship funding for you! To be considered eligible, you must specify that you are a minority student. As many as 60 new scholarships are awarded each year. The scholarship is a four-year award, and recipients can receive as many as \$30,000 over four years. Eligibility: Third-year U.S. minority high schools with 21 minimum SAT 1000/ACT scheduled to earn a bachelor's degree at the U.S. deadline: In early February 2021, the Engebretson Foundation Scholarship This needs-based scholarship is very simple: it is awarded to one student each year who demonstrates not only financial needs, but also impressive academic performance and leadership abilities. Annual winners receive \$5,000 per semester of college. Winners can re-apply each year. Qualifications: High school seniors with high GPA and SAT/ACT scores and financial needs who plan to attend the four-year college deadline: March 1, 2021 (applications must be submitted by mail) Jack Kent Cook Foundation University Scholarship Program In addition to funding college, this scholarship program provides personal advice on college choice, navigating the financial aid process, and transitioning from high school to college. Applicants are judged on academic ability and achievement, financial needs, persistence, desire to help others, and leadership skills. The award is given to students each year and can be as high as \$40,000 per grade. In 2019, 50 students participated in the program. Qualifications: High school seniors with financial needs who plan to attend the 4-year college deadline: October 30, 2020 Elk's National Foundation Most Valuable Student Competition Scholarships based on this need are judged on their scholarships and leadership abilities. Each year, 500 scholarships are distributed nationwide, with awards between \$4,000 and \$50,000. You must submit an application to the elk lodge closest to your home address, so be sure to research your local elk lodge before applying. Qualifications: Third-year U.S. high school students scheduled to attend the four-year U.S. college deadline: November 15, 2020 Gates Scholarship The Gates Scholarship is intended to help academically outstanding minority high school seniors reach their full potential. Each year, 300 students receive scholarships that include tuition, tuition, rooms, boards, books, and transportation expenses that are not spent on other financial aid or donations to their families. Learn more about the Gates Scholarship and how to earn it in our complete guide. Eligibility: A third-year U.S. minority high school student with Pell qualifications (Peripeable?). The program, which has a minimum 3.3/4.0 GPA and is scheduled to attend the four-year U.S. university deadline: the September 15, 2020 UNCF STEM Scholarship Program, created by the United Negro College Fund (UNCF), aims to provide financial assistance to leading students in high-achieving African-American high schools and colleges. Each year, 100 winners choose to receive scholarships of \$2,500 (for college freshman and sophomore) or \$5,000 (for juniors and seniors). Winners can also get \$5,000 in benefits to use for STEM-related research projects and internships. Qualifications: Deadline for African-American high school and college students majoring in STEM fields: In mid-March 2021, these next scholarships are as unique as all student applicants! From the next president of the SPCA or the president of the United States, you should be able to find the right professional scholarship for you! CIA Undergraduate Research Fellow Program This program offers more than just scholarships — if you were selected as a winner, you would be part of a fairly unique internship program. Interns work for the CIA during the summer holidays and receive both an annual salary (with benefits) and an annual scholarship award (up to \$18,000). In order to qualify, you need to show financial necessity. The upper limit for income eligibility is \$90,000 per family. Qualifications: U.S. high school third grade deadline: Perhaps mid-June, 2021 Vegetarian Resource Group Scholarship Are you a proud vegetarian? This may seem like a niche award, but scholarships are very real! If you promoted vegetarianism in your school or community, you would be a strong candidate for this scholarship. 1st place winner will receive The two runners-up will each receive \$5,000. Qualifications: High School 3rd Grade Deadline: February 20, 2021 Davidson Fellowship Scholarship Do you have extraordinary achievements that you are particularly proud of? Scholarship requirements vary depending on the type of project, with awards ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000. Eligibility: U.S. citizens or permanent residents 18 years old and under the deadline: February 10, 2021 Equitable Excellence Scholarship (formerly AXA Achievement Scholarship) is for students who have empowered society through results that reduce risk. This idea can be interpreted fairly widely, so spend some time working out what the risks mean and whether you participated in making the world a safer place through your activities. In 2020, there were hundreds of students representing all 50 states. Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico received a one-time scholarship of \$2,500, \$10,000, or \$25,000. Eligibility: U.S. High School 3rd Grade Deadline: If you're probably passionate about the U.S. Senate Youth Program Public Service at the William Randolph Hearst Foundation in late 2020, this is the scholarship for you. The Senate Youth Program is for students who plan to join the high school government and study history and political science at the university. Applicants are judged on leadership skills, academic performance, community engagement, and extracurricular activity. Each winner will receive an \$10,000 award in addition to Education Week, which paid all expenses in Washington, DC. Qualifications: Deadline for juniors and seniors in high school: Pending this year due to COVID-19. Updates are posted here (usually varying from state to state, but usually October) U.S. higher education costs have skyrocketed over the past 20 years, but it's still possible to get a great education without breaking the bank. See how to maximize the quality of college education while minimizing costs with a six-hour online course. Here's a tip to get your tips here! The following three tips will help you submit as many successful scholarship applications as possible. #1: As you've probably noticed when you do your own research, many of the scholarships above are pretty generous national awards that are probably very competitive. Unfortunately, you are a strong applicant for many of these scholarships and still cannot win big awards. So what do students need to do? The more niche the scholarship program is, such as background, identity, etc., the more likely you are to win an award (assuming you qualify). Do some research on scholarship programs that work in your area or are offered to students with your specific interests, experiences, skills, or passions. The Ronald McDonald House Charity Scholarship is a good place to start. You can also visit a guidance counselor who should have detailed information about local scholarships. You can also branch out on your own by searching for scholarships online in your area. If you have a specific talent, skill, or interest, look for scholarships offered to students based on that criteria. #2: Applying for scholarships widely, such as applying to university, is a numbers game. If you want to optimize your chances of entering a great university, it doesn't apply to just one school, right? It is free to apply for most scholarships. Finally, take advantage of applications that submit you for consideration for many scholarship awards, such as the Horatio Algiers Scholarship above. #3: Deadline Notes: Scholarship applications are all over the place, and the filing deadline doesn't define a scholarship season, but many expire before the college application deadline. Therefore, it is a good idea to start searching for scholarships sooner or later so as not to miss out on great opportunities. The summer before your senior year is a good time to start creating notes for programs you're interested in. Keep a spreadsheet that updates regularly to track application deadlines. This is especially useful when the application needs to request a recommended letter. You can be sure to give enough advance notice to teachers and leaders to write to you. What's next? Do you want to get a head start on scholarship scope-outs? Then check out our comprehensive guide to winning the most competitive national scholarships, including gates scholarships, Coca-Cola scholarships, Walmart scholarships, and McDonald's scholarships. Looking for scholarships in low-hand applications? Our article on the easiest scholarships to apply for will give you a great departure list. Do you wonder if you can get a scholarship for something like left-handed? Need more help in your scholarship search? read our expert guide on how to find college scholarships and the best scholarship search websites. Do you want to improve your SAT score by 160 points or 4 points with an ACT score?