

## Tips and Tricks to Scholarship Applications

### Formatting Basics:

- Whenever possible, type your responses; if you can't type them, write neatly in ink. Do not fill out anything using a pencil.
- Write as though it is a paper for your English teacher and grammar/mechanics count against you; capitalize, use commas/semicolons/apostrophes, and write in complete sentences.
- Pay attention to requirements such as word count (minimum/maximum), number of examples, how many recommendation letters you need, etc.
- When in doubt, ask a teacher or another person close to you for editing help and to check your formatting.

### Recommendation Letters:

- Ask a potential recommender in person whenever possible; if you simply cannot, email or call him/her to ask before you give him/her any information about what you need. Don't forget that you are asking for a favor; it would also be appropriate to write a "thank you" note/email when you receive the recommendation.
- If you are asking someone to write you a letter, give him/her ample time to do so--this means make your request at least two weeks before you need it back. First, you're asking a busy professional for a favor; be respectful of his/her time by asking early. Second, the more time he/she has to write your letter, the more thought/effort he/she can put in to it, which means you'll likely get a better letter, which means you have a better chance.
- Give the recommender some information to help him/her write the letter. This could include a list of your extracurricular activities, volunteer activities, community service, etc. You could also provide him/her with what qualities the group/person giving the scholarship are looking for in a scholarship recipient; this can always be found on a scholarship application. This way the recommendation is tailored to the scholarship.
- Make sure that you're asking an appropriate person for a recommendation letter; you want someone who knows you well and has every reason to think very highly of you.

### General Tips:

- Don't wait until the deadlines; work ahead to make sure you have everything you need. This is not an instance where exceptions will be made: deadlines are deadlines.
- Sell yourself but be honest; don't exaggerate or stretch the truth. You may be asked to prove any information that you list. Don't use your weighted GPA (unless the scholarship specifically says you can or you contacted someone in charge of the scholarship who said it was okay and you have that in writing).
- Don't skip an application because it has an essay; a lot of other students do this, which means there are fewer applicants, which means you have a better chance to win.
- Take the time to write an essay that differentiates you from other students.
- Don't "recycle" whole essays; you may be able to reuse parts of an essay for more than one scholarship, but the odds aren't good you can use exactly the same essay.
- Don't skip any information; everything should be completed. You may be disqualified automatically if you leave out information and/or don't submit required items (such as reference letters, essays, or transcripts).
- If you're having trouble addressing a required essay topic, ask people who know you well to help you; others' perspectives may be very helpful.
- Don't skip applications for smaller scholarship amounts. Any amount saves you money, and lesser amounts can add up to a lot of money!
- Use the Scholarship google document to help you determine for which scholarships you should apply. All of these scholarships are listed on CMHS's website. You can also look on fastweb.com, Ohio Means Jobs, and the college(s) to which you're applying to find scholarships.