TOP 10 TIPS FOR WINNING SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

1. Apply only if you are eligible. Read all the scholarship requirements and directions carefully. Make sure you are eligible before you send in your application.

2. Complete the application in full. If a question does not apply to you, note that on the application. Do not leave a question blank. Be sure to supply all additional supporting materials, including transcripts, letters of recommendation, and essays.

3. Follow directions. Provide everything that is required. However, do not supply things that are not requested--*you could be disqualified.*

4. Neatness counts. Always type your application, or if you must print do so neatly and legibly. Make a couple of photocopies of all the forms before you fill them out. Use the copies as working drafts as you develop your application packet. If filling out an application online, make sure everything is typed properly.

5. Write an essay that makes a strong impression. The key to writing a strong essay is to be personal and specific. Include concrete details to make your experience come alive: the who, what, when, and where of your topic. The simplest experience can be monumental if you honestly present how you were affected.

6. Watch all deadlines. To help keep yourself on track, impose your own deadline that is at least two weeks prior to the official deadline. Use the buffer time to make sure everything is ready on time. Do not rely on extensions--very few scholarship providers allow them at all.

7. Make sure your application gets where it needs to go. Put your name (and Social Security number, if applicable) on all pages of the application. Pieces of your application may get lost unless they are clearly identified.

8. Keep a back-up file in case anything goes wrong. Before sending the application, make a copy of the entire packet. If your application goes astray, you will be able to reproduce it quickly.

9. Give it a final 'once-over.' Proofread the entire application carefully. Be on the lookout for misspelled words or grammatical errors. Ask a friend, teacher, or parent to proofread it as well.

10. Ask for help if you need it. If you have problems with the application, do not hesitate to call the funding organization.

Source: Kay Peterson, Ph.D., Fastweb.com