



HOW TO FIND SCHOLARSHIPS

YOUR GUIDE TO FINDING THE BEST SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Check Out Scholarships for Students Experiencing Homelessness

These programs were created to support students facing housing instability or who have been in foster care:

1. [SchoolHouse Connection Youth Leadership & Scholarship Program](#)
2. [NAEHCY Scholarship](#)
3. [Horatio Alger National/State Scholarships](#)
4. [Jack Kent Cooke Foundation College Scholarship Program](#)
5. [The California Chafee Grant for Foster Youth](#)

Ask Your School

Your high school will have numerous resources available to you, including:

1. School Counselors: Ask about local scholarships and school-specific opportunities
2. College & Career Centers: Check bulletin boards or binders for updated lists
3. Teachers & Coaches: They may know subject- or sport-specific awards

4. McKinney–Vento School Liaison: They can help verify eligibility, waive college/test fees, connect you to local scholarships, and advocate for you in applications

Use Scholarship Search Tools

Check out these sites:

1. [Going Merry](#)
2. [Fastweb](#)
3. [BigFuture](#)
4. [Scholarships.com](#)

Explore Support Programs

Look for support programs based on the institution you wish to attend:

1. Community Colleges

- Community colleges are often affordable and supportive environments—especially for students facing housing instability.
- Many offer:
 - Promise Programs – 2 years of free tuition
 - Support Services – For students experiencing homelessness or foster care
 - Housing Resources – Referrals, grants, or emergency help
- Ask about:
 - Guardian Scholars – For current and former foster youth
 - NextUp – Available at California Community Colleges for foster youth
 - EOPS & CARE – Help with books, supplies, counseling, and transportation

2. 4-Year Universities

- Universities have dedicated programs for housing-insecure and foster youth students.
- These may include:
 - Campus-Based Support Centers – Often called “Guardian Scholars,” “Renaissance Scholars,” or similar

- Year-Round Housing – Some schools provide priority or emergency housing
- Liaisons or Case Managers – To help navigate financial aid, housing, food access, and academics
- Special Scholarships & Grants – Reserved for students with lived experience in foster care or homelessness
- Be sure to:
 - Ask the financial aid office if you qualify for additional support
 - Visit the school’s student support or basic needs center
 - Check for student-led organizations that offer mentorship and community

3. Trade Schools & Certificate Programs

- Trade and technical schools are great options if you’re looking to start work sooner.
- They may offer:
 - Paid Training or Apprenticeships
 - Housing Assistance or emergency housing funds

Search by Employer or Organization

Ask about scholarships from:

1. Major employers (Target, McDonald’s, Walmart)
2. Local businesses
3. Organizations like:
 - Rotary Clubs
 - NAACP
 - Elks Club
 - Cultural or faith-based groups

Find Local Scholarships

Local awards are often less competitive and only open to students in your city, county, or region. Check out:

1. Credit unions

2. Utility companies (gas, electric, water)
3. Local newspaper or TV station websites
4. Community foundations

Final Tips

1. Prepare Your Materials

- A short personal statement (include your goals and resilience)
- A resume or list of school/work/volunteer/family responsibilities
- Letters of recommendation (counselor, coach, mentor, liaison, or tutor)
- Your unofficial transcript

2. Stay Organized

- [Use a simple checklist or spreadsheet](#)
 - Track deadlines and required materials
 - List scholarships you've applied for
 - Note if a follow-up is needed
- Start early—some deadlines are in fall or winter

3. Ask for Help

- People want to help you!
- Check out our [volunteer mentors page](#) to find additional support