

# LHS “College Pot of Gold” Scholarship Strategy

## Step One – FAFSA & Federal Programs

The FAFSA makes Pell grant (free monies) available to those income-eligible.

Important! The FAFSA is often required and used to determine eligibility for free state monies, scholarships at your college of choice, and many private scholarships, which is why it is the first “scholarship” step.

- **Create an FSA ID for yourself** at [www.fsaaid.ed.gov](http://www.fsaaid.ed.gov)
- **Have your parent create an FSA ID** at [www.fsaaid.gov](http://www.fsaaid.gov)
- **Fill out the FAFSA** at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) ?’s, please call: 1800 4FED-AID  
The application is available October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016. You will be using tax information from your 2015 taxes (if you filed taxes in 2015), and your parents (parent information is considered until you are 24, unless there is a special circumstance to declare yourself as an independent student).
- **Check the Federal Student Aid website to see if you are eligible for other federal aid programs** at <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/>. These programs may require separate applications or additional communication with your school to request the aid. Federal loans are also available through your FAFSA.

## Step Two – State Grant Programs & Private Organizations

- **Look through the state funding opportunities overview** at <http://www.wsac.wa.gov/sfa-overview> Most of these do not require a separate application from the FAFSA. However, we advise you to be educated about these programs to ensure you are communicating with your college about those you feel you may be eligible for.
- **Apply for any state funding opportunities which require a separate application**, such as the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship found here: <https://www.waopportunityscholarship.org/new-applicants/overview>
- **Identify any private state scholarships which you are eligible for**, calendar their deadlines, and submit each application according to instructions. Our website will list these as we receive them.

### Step Three – Scholarships by Institution

The college(s) of your choice will have many scholarships. You need to locate the Financial Aid page (select the scholarship tab/tabs) on their website.

- Most institutions now have a **General Scholarship Application (GSA)** to apply for all the scholarships they have available. Turn it in on time! Complete this with as much information as you can provide, as some scholarships are narrow, and you do not want to disqualify yourself from any. The website may show a list of all the scholarship opportunities your GSA will be making you an applicant for. Occasionally, a school will not use a GSA, and you'll need to complete each scholarship application individually.
- Incoming freshmen will often have **automatic merit scholarships** based on your GPA, test scores, etc. These generally do not require a separate application (check with your school to be sure), but are awarded based on information you included in your admission application. You should look on the website for an overview of these awards, and if your school's award package/letter does not include a merit scholarship you feel you might be eligible for, please communicate with them.
- **Departmental/talent scholarships** are another opportunity available to you. Check your school's website (sometimes these are found on the Financial Aid page and sometimes under your department/major's web page – see an "Academics" tab to find your program) to find requirements and deadlines.

### Step Four – LHS & Local Scholarships

- We have a number of **LHS scholarships** that are only offered to graduating students at our high school. These generally are offered in the spring, with application deadlines in early May. These scholarships have very little competition, so your odds of being awarded are very good, so please apply!
- Many organizations in our **city, county, and region** are offering scholarships. Our website will list these as we receive them. Each will have different criteria. Please identify which you are eligible for, calendar their deadlines, and submit each application according to instructions.
- Please do not forget to **check with your employer, and your parents' and grandparents' employers** to see if scholarships are offered in the company.

## Step Five – Scholarship Search Engines

- There are a vast amount of scholarships available through non-profit organizations, corporations and private donors/foundations. However, if you Google the word “scholarship”, you will most certainly be overwhelmed about where to begin, and discouraged by “scholarships” that are not legitimate opportunities. We recommend you **use a scholarship search engine** (SSE) to find opportunities customized to a student profile you create.
- Don’t forget to search for **essay contests and video contests** (popular now).
- As a general rule, **it should never cost money** to find money. Scholarship scams are prevalent, so please never provide a credit card number or pay for “lists” of scholarships. (exception: [www.myscholly.com](http://www.myscholly.com) which charges a one-time \$2.99 fee to join the platform, and has legitimate opportunities)
- **Choose wisely.** You can apply for as many scholarships as you have resources of time and energy, but since you will have a busy senior year, choose those you believe you are the “best match” for the criteria.
- **Keep going!** Scholarships on the web are always going year-round, so work through the summer, and as you begin school next fall to keep the funding coming.

## My “College Pot of Gold”

### Pell Grant/Federal Programs

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State Grants \_\_\_\_\_

State Private \_\_\_\_\_

Institution Awards \_\_\_\_\_

LHS/Local \_\_\_\_\_

SSEs/Web \_\_\_\_\_

