Scholarship & College Money - Quick Guide

CRITICAL DATES

- **Aug 1:** Common App opens
- **Oct 1:** FAFSA opens → File ASAP (aid can be first-come, first-served) https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa
- **Oct 1:** CSS Profile opens (required by some colleges)
- **Nov 1–15:** Early Decision deadlines
- **Jan 1–15:** Decision deadlines
- **May 1:** College Decision Day (deposit deadline)

YOUR #1 MONEY MOVES

- ✅ File the FAFSA early
- ✅ Apply for scholarships every week (Jan–Mar peak)
- ✅ Stack awards when allowed
- ✅ Compare NET cost, not just scholarship amounts

HOW TO WIN MORE SCHOLARSHIPS

Build once – reuse everywhere:

- Brag sheet (achievements + impact with numbers)
- 1-page résumé
- 2 short essays + 1 core essay
- Transcript + extracurricular activities

Winning formula for essays:

- Context → Action → Result → Impact

Numbers win hearts - quantify everything:

- People reached, hours led, money raised, publications, patents, wins, championships, event turnout, retention %

SIMPLE WEEKLY SCHOLARSHIP PLAN (90 MIN)

1. Track upcoming deadlines
2. Complete 1 major application
3. Submit 2 quick scholarships
4. Update your tracker

HIGH-VALUE SCHOLARSHIPS (START EARLY)

- **Coca-Cola Scholars** – $20,000
- **Gates Scholarship** – Full cost of college
- **Jack Kent Cooke** – Up to $55,000/year
- **Dell Scholars** – $20,000 + support
- **Elks MVS** – Up to $30,000
- **Burger King Scholars** – Up to $60,000
- **QuestBridge Match** – Full cost to top colleges
- **SEEF** - Up to $10,000

RECOMMENDATION LETTERS

- Ask 3–4 weeks early
- Choose someone who knows your leadership or work ethic
- Give them your resume + highlights

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

- ❌ Missing small requirements
- ❌ Generic essays
- ❌ Waiting until the deadline day
- ❌ Paying to apply (scam)

WHERE TO SEARCH

- Your high school counselor
- Community foundation websites
- Reputable scholarship search sites
- College financial aid pages

DON'T SKIP LOCAL SCHOLARSHIPS

- ✓ Less competition = better odds
- ✓ Often one application = multiple awards
- ✓ Check:
  - School counselor
  - Community foundations
  - Parent employers
  - Local businesses & civic groups
  - Parents/gaurdians of current college students

SUCCESS FORMULA:

Start early + Stay organized + Apply consistently = LESS COLLEGE DEBT! **Every award counts!**

The SimonESTES Educational Foundation, Inc.

Since 1983, The Simon Estes Educational Foundation has been committed to helping academically talented Tulsa-area high school seniors with financial needs pursue a college education through scholarships, mentoring, and ongoing support. Founded by Jayne L. Reed and opera star Simon Estes, the Foundation has already served students for more than four decades, sustained by dedicated volunteers, donors, and fundraising efforts.

For the past 43 years, the Foundation has helped 437 graduates continue their education at colleges and universities across the country. Historically, scholars go on to enter the professional world—reflecting the Foundation's longevity, impact, and success.