

# 2014 SCHOLARSHIP SUCCESS PACKET

Created for and provided to RCC students by your Associated Student Government.

## SCHOLARSHIP SEASON

Scholarship season peaks during January and February.

This packet is designed to help you organize and complete applications for funding this scholarship season.

This packet includes information about major funding opportunities for RCC students, and some materials for making the process simple and painless.

Good luck!



## INCLUDED IN THIS PACKET:

- ✓ Scholarships 2014: Deadline Checklist
- ✓ FAFSA: The Details
- ✓ RCC Foundation: Just for RCC Students
  - Recommendation Request Forms
- ✓ Personal Essays: How to Stand Out
  - Sample Outline
- ✓ OSAC: What It Offers
- ✓ Scholarship Central: RCC's Database

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*Many scholarships go un-awarded because nobody applies! It's easier than you think!*

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# SCHOLARSHIPS 2014: DEADLINE CHECKLIST

RCC Financial Aid – [www.roguecc.edu/financialaid](http://www.roguecc.edu/financialaid)

## ORGANIZATION

There are a lot of deadlines, and it can get overwhelming and lead to procrastination.

Help yourself stay organized by creating a reasonable timeline for completing this season's financial aid applications.

### Some helpful tools:

Calendar w/deadlines.

A task list application for phone/tablet.

Post-it notes.

## ✓ FAFSA – JANUARY 1, 2014

[www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)

May be submitted at any time before or during enrollment. RCC recommends that you submit it as soon after January 1 as possible. Some funding is limited.

## ✓ RCC FOUNDATION – MARCH 3, 2014

[www.rccfoundation.org](http://www.rccfoundation.org)

All components of your application must be submitted by 5pm on March 3, 2014.

## ✓ OSAC – FEBRUARY 15 & MARCH 3, 2014

[www.oregonstudentaid.gov](http://www.oregonstudentaid.gov)

Early Bird deadline is February 15, 2014. Applying by this deadline automatically enters you in an extra scholarship drawing. Final deadline is March 3, 2014. Apply for Ford Family Foundation scholarships through OSAC.

## ✓ SCHOLARSHIP CENTRAL – NOW!

[www.roguecc.edu/financialaid/scholarships](http://www.roguecc.edu/financialaid/scholarships)

Scholarships are listed here year-round, but December to February is prime scholarship season.

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*If it takes you three hours to fill out an application and you only win \$300, you just made \$100 per hour!*

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## TIME

Deadlines will be here before you know it. By completing your application early, you allow time for recommendation letters to be written, time to edit and re-edit your essays, and time to make sure you have covered everything and made your application look professional and well organized. Create your own deadlines for scholarship components. Set small and reasonable goals, and then stick to them.



# FAFSA: THE DETAILS

FREE Application for Federal Student Aid – [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) (NOT [www.fafsa.com](http://www.fafsa.com)!)

## HOW MUCH?

How much federal aid you are eligible to receive depends on your income, EFC (Expected Family Contribution), and enrollment status.

Pell Grant: \$5,645 maximum for 2013/14 (changes yearly)

Oregon Opportunity Grant: \$2,000 (fixed amount)

Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant : \$4,000 maximum



## GET STARTED RIGHT AWAY

Submit your FAFSA as early as January 1 and well before the posted deadline for your school. Some funding is limited and only available to those that apply early.

### **Q: Shouldn't I wait until I file my taxes to submit my FAFSA?**

A: No. You should submit it right away with estimates of your income and tax information. Use the IRS Data Retrieval Tool two weeks after your taxes have been filed, and the information will automatically populate the fields on your FAFSA.

### **Q: Should I still apply even though I'm sure I don't qualify?**

A: Yes! The information generated by your FAFSA application is used to qualify you for many other types of funding. Without the FAFSA, you may be out of the running for loans and scholarships.

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*Federal Student Aid provides over \$15 billion in federal grants, loans, and work-study funds each year.*

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## I SUBMITTED MY FAFSA, NOW WHAT?

Once your FAFSA is complete, you will receive an email confirmation, followed by an estimate of what you may be eligible for. This is NOT an award letter. You are not guaranteed this amount.

Look for an email from OSAC about potential Oregon Opportunity Grant eligibility.

The college you listed on your FAFSA will receive your information and begin processing your file. The college will contact you starting in February or March, so make sure you have an accurate email and street address listed. The college may also prompt you to provide information or documents. Respond as soon as possible because they cannot continue the process until you have completed your part.

Once you have submitted your FAFSA and replied to correspondence from your college, you must wait. When the college has finished processing your information, you will receive an award letter. This will depict the actual amount you are eligible to receive through your school.

# RCC FOUNDATION: JUST FOR RCC STUDENTS

Rogue Community College Foundation – [www.rccfoundation.org](http://www.rccfoundation.org)

## HOW MUCH?

More than 50% of applicants receive a scholarship averaging over \$1,300!

Individual award amounts vary from \$100 up to \$3,000+, however students may receive multiple awards.

Many scholarships also base their award on need, according to FAFSA information (you submitted your FAFSA, right?), and will not award without that information.

## ABOUT

Each winter, the RCC Foundation conducts an annual scholarship process in which hundreds of scholarships are awarded to RCC students for the next academic year. Through submission of just one RCC Foundation Scholarship Application, applicants are eligible for over 220 individual scholarship funds, many of which provide multiple awards. In the 2013-14 process, nearly 450 students were awarded \$750,000 in scholarships.

### **Q: What is the application process?**

A: The online application became available in December and the deadline for 2014/15 will be March 3, 2014 at 5:00pm. Supplemental documents must be turned in by this time. Awardees will be notified in May 2014.

### **Q: What does the scholarship review board look for?**

A: People who review scholarship applications are very busy, so make certain that your application is well organized and concise. Be scrupulously careful not to allow errors in grammar or spelling. Scholarship providers do not want to award scholarships to careless students. Have someone proofread your application before submitting it.

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## APPLICATION COMPONENTS

The application has four major components.

1. Submit your FAFSA.
2. Personal statement essay, a one page (max. 600 words) opportunity to make yourself stand out from the crowd.
3. Two recommendations submitted online by appropriate counselor, instructor, employer, or coach etc. No family members or friends.
4. List your activities and employment, including information about your volunteer service, community involvement, clubs, sports, and school activities.

Online tutors give detailed feedback on essays. Access this service, provided to RCC students free of charge, through the RCC website by going to Quick Links > Online Tutoring.



# SCHOLARSHIP RECOMMENDATION REQUEST FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Scholarship you are applying for: \_\_\_\_\_

Deadline Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Academic/Vocational Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

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Why have you chosen this course of study? What has motivated and/or inspired you? \_\_\_\_\_

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What qualities and accomplishments make you a good candidate for this scholarship? \_\_\_\_\_

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Are the necessary forms attached? Yes No

Will you pick up completed recommendations? Yes No

If yes, when? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, please provide distribution instructions: \_\_\_\_\_

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# PERSONAL ESSAYS: HOW TO STAND OUT

Go to [www.roguecc.edu](http://www.roguecc.edu) > Quick Links > Online Tutoring

## IT SEEMS OBVIOUS

Read the directions. This may seem simple enough, but make sure you fully address the issue you are asked to write about.

When writing on a specific topic, do your research and think it through. It should be a well-researched and informed essay.

Spelling and grammar must be impeccable. Have someone with strong writing and editing skills proofread it before you submit it.



## ESSAYS

Scholarship essays often serve as the determining factor for whether or not a student is awarded a scholarship. They are important and should not be taken lightly. It is a student's opportunity to stand out from the crowd when applying for funding. The content must be compelling and well organized. A reader will be able to tell how much thought and effort went into an essay, and they only want to give money to students that show they are driven to do well.

### **Q: What should I write in a personal essay?**

A: Your essay is an opportunity to tell your story and brag about yourself. Applications are so impersonal, and the essay provides the opportunity to impress someone with your character and personality. Ask friends and family what makes you unique and deserving. You should spend just as much time brainstorming as you do writing.

### **Q: Should I talk about hardship in my life or not?**

A: Nothing is worse than a scholarship essay about how pitiful your life is. Nobody will take pity on you for your troubles and give you money for it. However, if some adverse life circumstance has drastically shaped you into a motivated and productive person, then it should absolutely be a part of your essay. Be cautious when writing about these things, though. Don't dwell on the negative experience. Express what happened enough to make the reader understand you were in a difficult situation, then elaborate on what you did to learn and grow from this experience.

Good Example: "Breaking free from an abusive relationship allowed me to become my own person, and I never could have done this without the compassion from the social worker. My experience has given me the drive to attend college to become a social worker so that I can help other women that are experiencing domestic abuse."

Bad Example: "The worst decision I ever made was marrying my previous husband. He beat me and frightened our children. I went to the hospital many times because of what he did to me. He has ruined ten years of my life and I am severely depressed because of it. I need money for college because he took the house and car."

# PERSONAL ESSAY: SAMPLE OUTLINE

Here is a sample outline and example topics for Rogue Community College Foundation Scholarships, switch it up and add a personal touch to suit your personality and style.

1. Introduction: Engage the reader's interest in the first few sentences.
  - Make them want to get to know you more.
  - Anecdotal story that shows your character.
  - Bold statement about yourself.
  - Avoid philosophical quotes or obvious definitions unless you can make it relate strongly to the theme of your essay.
2. Educational Objectives and Career Goals
  - What are you going to school for?
  - Why have you chosen this field?
  - What type of future career can you see for yourself?
3. Brief Background
  - Give the reader a sense of who you are.
  - Brag about a past accomplishment.
  - Hardships you have overcome. (be positive)
  - What makes you unique? (interests, hobbies)
  - Community involvement or academic achievements
4. Establish Need
  - Why are you deserving of a scholarship?
  - Why do you need scholarship money? Don't say "to pay my rent." Many scholarships are specifically for tuition costs only, and you don't want to alienate yourself from those.
  - How would you benefit from scholarship money? (e.g. reduce student loans)
5. Conclusion
  - The end is just as important as the beginning, make it stand out.
  - Summarize the theme of your essay.
  - Revisit your introduction statement.
  - How will you give back you your community?
  - Go out with a bang that leaves the reader impressed.
  - Do not forget to thank your reader!

Send your essay to the online writing tutors through the RCC website. They give excellent detailed feedback. Also, have a close friend or family member look at it to see if you are representing yourself accurately. They may have something that they think is great about you that you missed. Please check spelling and grammar. This one element can make a huge difference. Scholarship providers are not interested in awarding funding to careless students. Read your speech aloud and listen to see if it flows, or is clunky in some areas that need improvement. Once again, have other people with excellent writing and editing skills read it. You are asking for money and you have one page to do it. Take the time to make it perfect and powerful. Good luck!

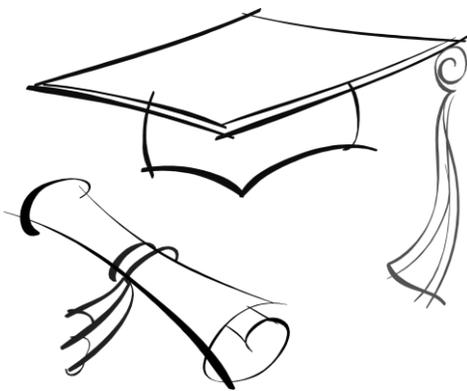
# OSAC: WHAT IT OFFERS

Oregon Student Access Commission – [www.oregonstudentaid.gov](http://www.oregonstudentaid.gov)

## OVER 450 SCHOLARSHIPS IN ONE APPLICATION!

When you fill out your OSAC Scholarship application, your information matches you to scholarships you may be eligible for. You may choose up to 20 of these to send your application to.

Most students only qualify for a few out of the 450+ available. However, keep in mind that these are only available to Oregon students. Awards range from \$500 to \$10,000 or more.



## WHAT IS OSAC?

OSAC offers several programs that provide funding to Oregon students. The programs they administer funds for are the Oregon Opportunity Grant - which you are automatically applied for when you fill out your FAFSA, the Chafee Grant for former foster care youth, the Childcare Grant, and Scholarships. They also provide ASPIRE, a mentoring program for middle and high school students.

## GET STARTED ON STATE SCHOLARSHIPS

The online OSAC Scholarship application process opened up November 1 and closes on March 3, 2014. Those that apply by February 15, 2014 are entered into an extra scholarship drawing. Applying early also allows you time to provide documents that are missing or errors that require amendment of your application.

### Q: What if I don't have a high GPA?

A: Some scholarships are awarded based on academic achievement – measured by GPA. Others choose to award based on financial need, life circumstance, military service, high school attended, disability, field of interest, association with their business, extra-curricular activities, community involvement, or location. For many, GPA isn't everything.

### Q: Do I need to submit an essay?

A: Somewhat. The OSAC application has a section that asks for four short personal statements, like four mini-essays. Each answer must not exceed 1,000 characters (about 150 words). These are the four essay questions:

1. Explain your career aspirations and your educational plan to meet these goals.
2. Explain how you have helped your family or made your community a better place to live. Please provide specific examples.
3. Describe a personal accomplishment and the strengths and skills you used to achieve it.
4. Describe a significant change or experience that has occurred in your life. How did you respond and what did you learn about yourself?

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*Nearly \$70 million awarded each year to help  
Oregon students pay for college!*

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# SCHOLARSHIP CENTRAL: RCC'S DATABASE

Scholarship Central – [www.roguecc.edu/financialaid/Scholarships/](http://www.roguecc.edu/financialaid/Scholarships/)

## ANOTHER ESSAY?

Many scholarships require essays. Your essay can be the determining factor in whether you are chosen to receive a scholarship.

Read the directions. This may seem simple enough, but make sure you fully address the issue you are asked to write about.

Spelling and grammar must be impeccable. Have someone with strong writing and editing skills proofread it before you submit it.



## WHAT IS SCHOLARSHIP CENTRAL?

Scholarship Central is an online scholarship database managed by RCC. There are pre-screened scholarships hand-picked for our students from dozens of other online databases and private organizations. While there is a high volume of scholarships available December through February, Scholarship Central is updated year-round, providing scholarship opportunities all year long.

### Q: How do I find scholarships I am eligible for?

A: Scholarship Central has a basic search feature that allows students to sort based on specific criteria such as GPA, field of study, or age, etc.

### Q: Aren't scholarships for students with a high GPA?

A: Not always. Each scholarship was created to be given to a specific type of student. Here is a list of example criteria for scholarships.

- Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Financial need (based on info from FAFSA, did you submit it?)
- Best essay (from gun control to surviving a zombie apocalypse)
- Volunteer service
- Extra-curricular activities
- Sport involvement
- Disability
- Military service (Thank You)
- Recovery from addiction
- Adverse life circumstance
- Art contest winner
- Most "likes" on social media site
- Cancer survivor
- LGBTQ
- Ethnicity (particularly minority students and first generation)
- Corporation relationship (parent employed by major corporation)
- Group/Club relationship (parent Elks or Rotary member)

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*Many scholarships go un-awarded because nobody applies. Winning scholarships can be easier than you think!*

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