



## **SCHOLARSHIPS: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW**

### **What is a Scholarship?**

A scholarship is a financial grant to fund education. Unlike student loans, scholarships do not require repayment. Scholarships are awarded based on varying requirements and provide a wide range of dollar amounts. Because scholarships are independent of other financial aid, they can be pursued at any time during a student's education. Everyone can submit a scholarship application. The majority of students qualify; success is usually a matter of finding the scholarship that best fits your profile and needs.

### **Scholarship Types**

**Merit.** Based on athletic, academic, or artistic ability; may factor in community service record

**Need.** Based on income

**Student-specific.** Based on race, gender, religion, disability, or medical history

**Career-specific.** Based on a specific field of study and/or returning/advanced degree status

**Other.** Based on essays, letters of recommendation, and/or personal appeals

### **Tips for Success**

Securing scholarships takes work, persistence, and careful planning. We recommend you apply for scholarships throughout your education at BCMT. We'll show you how.

**Apply only if you are eligible.** Read all the scholarship criteria, requirements and directions completely before beginning your application. Assume that published criteria is not negotiable.

**Prioritize.** Weigh the time required to complete applications against scholarship award amounts. Apply for scholarships that offer the lowest cost/benefit ratios first. Work progressively toward scholarships with the highest cost/benefit ratios.

**Follow directions.** Provide all the information and supporting documentation that's required, but don't supply items that aren't—this could disqualify you.

**Solicit letters of recommendation.** Ask BCMT faculty or someone you respect at work. Recommendations must be on letterhead. Ask for several originals (more impressive than copies) to support multiple applications. Thank those who recommend you with a handwritten note.

**Complete the application in full.** If a question doesn't apply to your situation, don't leave the space blank; answer with "n/a." Supply transcripts, letters of recommendation, essays, and other supporting material as required.

**Ask for help.** If you have problems with the application, don't hesitate to call the issuing organization for guidance and advice.

**Be smart and neat.** Make photocopies of all application forms before you fill them out. Use these copies as working drafts. Type your final application if you can. If you must fill it out by hand, do so neatly and legibly.

**Sweat the details.** Put your name on each page of the application in case pages become separated.

**Track your deadlines.** Post application deadlines (including two-week buffers) to your calendar to ensure you don't miss opportunities due to unforeseen circumstances or mail delivery delays.

**Proof it, proof it, proof it.** Proofread your application carefully. Ask a friend to proofread it as well.

**Write your essay.** Develop a master essay. This will serve as a “toolbox” from which you’ll draw to create customized essays for each scholarship. Your master essay should be about 1500 words.

**Be honest, personal and specific.** Tell a story that drives your aspirations and frames your decision to pursue your education. Include concrete details to make your experience come alive.

**Answer the question “why?”** Be sure to convey why you qualify for this scholarship, why you want or need it, and why you represent the best “return on investment” for the scholarship program to which you’re applying.

**Dream big but demonstrate practicality.** Be confident, but humble.

**Make a positive impact.** Describe how you intend to use your education to help others.

**Be upbeat.** Use positive terms to demonstrate how you overcame difficult challenges.

**Use excellent grammar.** Speak with a genuine, professional voice. Avoid grandiose terms.

**Proofread your essay.** Have one or two friends proofread it as well.

**Get organized.** Before sending the application and essay, make backup files and/or paper copies of each page so if your application is misplaced, you can reproduce it quickly. Archive all of your copies in one file folder.

## **Additional Information**

To find the latest information on scholarships, review the information on our website:

[www.bcmf.org](http://www.bcmf.org) > Admissions > Scholarships

## **In her own words: Jessica Shada, BCMT CMT/AOS Graduate**

Even as I started my first semester, I realized that scholarships were my only chance at completing school, so I applied for as many as I could. Halfway through the program at BCMT, just as I was really feeling the stress of my financial situation, my efforts paid off. I received my first scholarship. To date, 90% of my tuition has been paid through scholarships!

When you win a scholarship, the award committee isn’t just saying, “Here’s some financial help.” They’re saying, “We believe you can succeed. We believe you can change the world. We believe you will give back more than we’re giving to you.”

One of my favorite moments was when I told someone who wrote me a letter of recommendation that I had been granted another scholarship. She replied, “What else is new?” In retrospect, I believe I was successful because I gained confidence with each scholarship I was awarded. That developed into a determination to prove I was special, qualified, and worth the investment.