



The Compass Alliance Pathways: Scholarships

Welcome to the Scholarship Resource Repository! With rising costs of higher education, reducing the burden of student loans becomes paramount. To meet this need, *FIRST* partners with scholarship providing organizations who make available over \$80 million in scholarships for *FIRST* participants and alumni. This pathway will give you the tools and insight into the application process to set you up well to... Apply, Apply, Apply!

Level 0: Stepping Stones

1. Why Apply?
 - a. Rising costs in higher education
 - b. Create a higher return on investment for your education
2. Where can I find these scholarships?
 - a. The [FIRST Scholarship website](#)
 - i. You can search for available scholarships and filter results with: Location, Grade, Citizenship / Residency, *FIRST* Program Type, Focus Type and Deadline
3. When should I apply?
 - a. Beginning in September of your Senior Year
 - i. There *are* a few scholarships within the *FIRST* Scholarship Program that require applications in your Junior year, but most require that you apply as a senior.
 - b. Deadlines are spread out over the academic year - with the majority falling around Build and Competition seasons.
 - c. Start by making a list of the schools you have applied to and compare to those that make available *FIRST* Scholarships
 - i. Note: There are some scholarships independent of universities such as the Society of Women Engineers scholarships; Gates Company; and others.
 - d. Try making a spreadsheet ([like this](#)) with all of your deadlines
4. What does a scholarship application involve?
 - a. All scholarship applications are unique, but many contain these components
 - i. General Contact Information
 - ii. List of Extracurricular Activities/Employment
 - iii. ACT/SAT scores and GPA
 - iv. Essay/Short Answer questions
 - v. Recommendation letters (typically from a mentor)
 - b. Print out your own [FIRST Scholarship Checklist](#) to be more prepared





Level 1: Venturing Onwards

1. Selecting which scholarships to apply for
 - a. Make a list of the schools you will/may apply to that offer scholarships
 - b. Apply to each of them, even if you are unsure if you will get into the school
 - c. Learn more about the school and degree programs
 - i. Visit school website to get more information on programs and offerings
 - ii. If possible, visit school in person to learn more
 - iii. If possible, meet up with professors and/or deans to discuss their programs and your involvement in FIRST
2. Essay Tips and Tricks
 - a. Your essay is a marketing tool
 - i. Make sure to feature your positive, effective, and unique qualities
 - ii. Even if the prompt is not directly related to you personally, make sure that the reader gets to know you
 - b. Speak from your perspective
 - i. It should be well-written, but avoid over-formalities - it's coming from you
 - c. Answer the question
 - i. The prompt/question will tell you what the reviewers are asking,
 - ii. This seems obvious, but understanding this can be a huge advantage
 - d. Revise repeatedly
3. Recommendation letters
 - a. Talk to a mentor that knows you on a level beyond your skill set
 - b. Allow for as much time as possible for them to write (at least a couple of weeks)
4. Common confusions
 - a. What do I do if I can't find the application?
 - i. Make sure you clicked on "Details and Application" link
 - ii. Try the search bar on the university home page
 - iii. Google the school name and "FIRST scholarship"
 - iv. If all else fails, email *FIRST* at scholarships@firstinspires.org
 - b. Double checking deadlines
 - i. Sometimes the deadlines listed with *FIRST* are only for certain sections
 1. i.e. early decision; or regular admission
 - ii. Double check on the university website for all deadlines
 - iii. Still not sure? Email *FIRST* at scholarships@firstinspires.org
 - c. What if I don't plan on majoring in STEM?
 - i. No problem, approximately 35% of all scholarships are for any course of study, so apply away!





Level 2: Venturing Onwards - Case Studies

1. Scholarship recipient stories
 - a. [Scholarships Blog](#)
 - b. [FIRST Alumni Blog](#)
2. Tips from scholarship reviewers
 - a. Be sure to expand your story about your time on your *FIRST* team beyond yourself - how did you take your experience and acquired knowledge and use it to help and impact others?
 - b. Give details on what you contributed to your team, don't sell yourself short, but don't exaggerate - it is easy to pick out exaggerations. Beyond your past accomplishments, talk about what you plan to do with the skills you've developed through *FIRST* in the future. How will you give back (through *FIRST* or otherwise) after you graduate and why is it important to you?
 - c. It really matters here that you show how your *FIRST* experience was about more than robots.
 - d. Make sure that you double, or triple, check your application prior to submission, even small errors can cause an otherwise well prepared application to be rejected.

Remember: Apply, Apply, Apply!





Appendix A - Revision History

Revision #	Revision Date	Revision Notes
1.0	Feb. 2018	Initial Release
2.0	Sept. 2018	Improved formatting Added revision history Added additional details on school selection Updated scholarship numbers

