



Meeting The High Cost Of Higher Education

(NAPSA)—If you or someone you care about is—or hopes to be—a college student soon, a few facts and stats may prove educational:

- As of February of 2019, the U.S. had \$1.56 trillion in total student loan debt
- This exceeds U.S. credit card debt by about \$521 billion
- Of the college students from the class of 2018, 69 percent took out student loans.

Fortunately for the many current and former college students struggling with this financial burden—and the large number who simply can't attend college because of finances—there are organizations that offer a solution: scholarships.

Some scholarships for college are merit-based. You earn them by meeting or exceeding certain standards set by the scholarship-giver. Merit scholarships might be awarded based on academic achievement or on a combination of academics and a special talent, trait or interest. Other scholarships are based on financial need.

Many are geared toward particular groups of people; for instance, there are scholarships for women or graduate students. Some are available because of where you or your parent works, or because you come from a certain background (for instance, there are scholarships for military families).

A scholarship might cover the entire cost of your tuition or it might be a one-time award of a few hundred dollars. Either way, it's worth applying for, because it'll help reduce the cost of your education.

The experts at the U.S. Department of Education suggest you try these free sources of information about scholarships:

- The financial aid office at the college or career school you're considering
- A high school or TRIO counselor
- Federal agencies
- The state grant agency
- The library's reference section
- Foundations, religious or community organizations, businesses and civic groups
- Organizations (including professional



Student loan debt has reached astronomical levels in the United States but special scholarships can help.

associations) related to your field of interest

- Ethnicity-based organizations
- The U.S. Department of Labor's free scholarship search tool.

One organization, Scholarship America, has been committed to giving as many students as possible access to higher education. Since 1958, the organization has distributed \$4.2 billion to more than 2.5 million students.

To further help with the financial burdens college students may face—such as overdue rent and child care—the organization created initiatives such as Dreamkeepers, which offers emergency financial aid, and Collegiate Partners, which gets educational institutions to promise not to take away student aid because of private scholarships.

Currently, Scholarship America is accepting applications for the 2020 Scholarship America Dream Award. It provides financial stability to those who have overcome significant obstacles in their lives and gotten off to a strong start at college. Applicants must be in their second year or higher of postsecondary education to be eligible for the award.

Learn More

To apply for a scholarship, to learn more or to donate to the education of scholarship recipients, visit <https://scholarshipamerica.org>.