



## How To Protect Your Local Scholarships

Your journey of financing your college education may have a twist in the road—possible “scholarship displacement.” If you receive a “private” scholarship from anyone other than your college, you need to make sure that these awards are added to the aid that your college promises you. None of your local scholarships—including any Community Foundation scholarships—should be replacing or reducing the grants or scholarships you were offered by your college.

Here’s what you need to do to protect your hard-earned scholarship money:

- 1. Read your financial aid letters.** Once you’ve been accepted by a college or university, if you apply for financial aid, you should receive a financial aid offer letter from each school. Your aid package may include a mix of loans, work study, grants (including a Pell Grant), and other scholarships. Keep these financial aid letters, read them, and understand them.
- 2. Choose your college according to your aid package, and how they would handle any local scholarships you receive.** Once you have picked your top two or three schools, talk to them about the aid they have offered you. Call the financial aid offices, and ask them how they’d apply any local scholarships you receive to the financial aid package that they have offered you. While you’re at it, ask them if the scholarships they’ve offered you are guaranteed across all four years of college. You may want to base your final college selection not only on the aid they have offered you, but on how they will treat any local scholarships you receive.
- 3. If you receive a local scholarship, make sure it is ADDED to your school’s financial aid.** Once you have selected your school and receive your first bill/statement, make sure that it shows all the local scholarships you were awarded. Then, make sure that your local scholarships are used to reduce your loans, work study, or any unmet need. Compare your bill to your original financial aid offer letter, and make sure that none of the scholarships or grants from your college were reduced due to local scholarships. If they do reduce your scholarships or grants, call your financial aid office and politely ask them to fix it. For example, they can spread out your local scholarships over several semesters or years to ensure that you benefit from every dollar you earn.
- 4. Learn more.** There is great information available online. Start by searching for “scholarship displacement” on [www.edvisors.com](http://www.edvisors.com).

*Questions? Please contact us at 252-261-8839 or [nandy@obcf.org](mailto:nandy@obcf.org).*