

# Senior Update

**Columbus High School**

**Nov. 21, 2024**

## **FAFSA TIPS:**

If you were unable to make it to the FAFSA presentation here are a few notable points.

The application is expected to be fully open Dec. 1. There could be a mad rush of people trying to complete the application so there could possibly be a crash of the system. You may want to wait a few days to start your application.

It may work best to complete your application on a computer instead of your phone.

You and your parent(s) will need an FSA ID which is like your electronic signature. You should apply for that now. Go to: <https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch>

Do not pay for anyone to complete your FAFSA for you. You are on the incorrect website if it is asking for money to continue with the application. Go to [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov) for the application. Be sure the domain is .gov, not .com or .net.

Which parent do you use on the FAFSA:

There is a “Who’s My Parent” wizard you can use to determine which parent to have complete the FAFSA.

Go to: [studentaid.gov/fafsa-apply/parents](https://studentaid.gov/fafsa-apply/parents).

The application process works best if the student completes his/her part first and then invites the parent to complete theirs. Once the student does this the parent will receive an email inviting them to complete their portion.

You will want to “approve” the FAFSA to draw from the IRS or you will automatically not receive any aid.

- Colleges will not accept your FAFSA until you have been accepted. So, you need to get your college applications done ASAP.
- Apply for the FAFSA even if you think you will not qualify for federal aid. Most colleges use this information for their own school specific scholarships.

- Most colleges stamp a date on your FAFSA when they receive it. Many distribute their monies “first come first serve.” So, I cannot stress enough to complete your FAFSA as soon as possible-once the glitches are worked out.
- You can select up to 20 colleges to have your FAFSA sent to.

## Reminder:

- **Use an email address you will have throughout your college years. Do not use your columbus.k12.mt.us email address.**
- **Check your email often after you apply for important information regarding your FAFSA.**
- **Print off confirmation number.**
- **Your 2023 tax return will be used. If, for some reason, your family has experienced a hardship since 2023 contact the financial aid office of the college you plan to attend. They may make an adjustment for you.** You can decline any help given to you by a college once you make your final decision as to where you want to attend college.
  - **It is a good idea to get to know the people who work in the financial aid office at the colleges. They are there to help you and answer any questions you may have.**

When you see “priority deadline” it means that is the date they start the process of distributing money..... you can still submit after that deadline you just may miss out on financial opportunities because it is “first come first serve.”

# **Scholarships:**

## **Pheasants Forever Scholarship:**

**DEADLINE:** January 31, 2025

**Scholarship:** \$1,500

**Criteria:** GPA 3.0, pursuing a career at a Montana college in any wildlife management or conservation-related field including biology, natural resources, or conservation law enforcement.

Applications available in black box.

## **U.S. JCI Senate Foundation Scholarship**

**DEADLINE:** January 17, 2025

**Scholarship:** \$1,500

**Criteria:** 3.75 GPA, follow the instructions carefully.

Application is available on line at: [www.usjcisenate.org](http://www.usjcisenate.org)

Click on Scholarship Program 2024-2025 Scholarship Application & 2024-2025 Student Checklist.

There is a paper copy in the black box to look at before applying online.

## **U.S. JCI Senate Vocational Scholarship**

**DEADLINE:** January 17, 2025

**Scholarship:** \$1,000

**Criteria:** 3.25 GPA, going to attend a vocational school for a degree in the trades, follow the instructions carefully.

Application is available on line at: [www.usjcisenate.org](http://www.usjcisenate.org)

Click on Scholarship Program 2024-2025 Vocational Scholarship Application & 2024-2025 Student Checklist.

There is a paper copy in the black box to look at before applying online.

## **LGBTQ Scholarship:**

**DEADLINE:** January 10, 2025

**Scholarship:** Varies

**Criteria:** Must be resident in one of the Northwest states, attending any form of higher education, over 50 different scholarships available.

Scholarship application available at [www.pridefoundation.org](http://www.pridefoundation.org). Look under the "Find Funding" tab.

## **AMT Montana Public Criminal Justice Scholarship:**

**DEADLINE:** March 15, 2025

**Scholarship:** \$500

**Criteria:** pursuing a criminal justice or law enforcement degree from a Montana college, or a child of an active duty or retired member.

Scholarship Application available at: [www.montanatrooper.com/scholarships](http://www.montanatrooper.com/scholarships)

### **Horatio Alger Montana Undergraduate Scholarship:**

This scholarship will be awarded to 50 Montana high school seniors in the amount of \$15,000 over 4 years. Students must demonstrate financial need, school and community involvement, and perseverance in overcoming personal adversity. Student must plan to attend the University of Montana or Montana State University or any of their affiliate schools with a commitment to pursue and complete a bachelor's degree. Must have 2.0 GPA and family income of \$65,000 or less.

Go to <https://horatioalger.org/scholarships/>.

Opens Dec. 1 due date is March 15, 2025. Get started early.

### **Reach Higher Montana Scholarship**

**DEADLINE:** There are several

**Scholarship:** \$500 - \$1,000

**Criteria:** Go to [www.reachhighermontana.org](http://www.reachhighermontana.org) to view various scholarship opportunities.

Also, put their app on your phone.

### **Beartooth Electric Cooperative Leadership Scholarship:**

**DEADLINE:** Feb. 14, 2025

**Scholarship:** 1 per high school- \$2,500

**Criteria:** parents must be served by Beartooth Electric Cooperative, must be attending college in the fall of 2025, academic achievement, personal statement, financial need, community activities, school activities. Essay required. Go to the website to read further details about the scholarships.

Application available at [www.beartoothelectric.com/community/scholarships](http://www.beartoothelectric.com/community/scholarships)

### **MECA Memorial Scholarship:**

**DEADLINE:** February 14, 2025

**Scholarship:** \$500

**Criteria:** parents must be served by Beartooth Electric Cooperative, must be attending college in the fall of 2025, academic achievement, personal statement, financial need, community activities, school activities. Personal statement required. Complete this application and the Beartooth Electric application.

# **Montana University System (MUS)** **Honor Scholarship** has extended the

ACT test date deadline to February. If you want to retake the ACT test to improve your score or super-score register to take the test either Jan. 3 (with a late fee if you register before Jan. 20) or Feb. 8.

## **College specific scholarships:**

All colleges have school specific scholarships available. To locate these scholarships, go to the college web site and search for “scholarships” or “financial aid”. Many of these scholarships will have an early application deadline so check online immediately. Check to see if there is a separate scholarship application or just an admissions application. Each college has their own scholarship criteria. Apply for all. You can decline them when you decide for sure where you will be attending college.

## **Scholarship searches:**

Remember to search through the numerous websites I gave you for additional scholarship opportunities. [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) (National Scholarship Directory – several scholarships for unique circumstances and other categories), [www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com), [www.reachhighermontana.com](http://www.reachhighermontana.com) are great resources. They will e-mail you scholarships that link with your profile.

Go to the CIS360 program at [portal.mt.cis360.org](http://portal.mt.cis360.org).

Create an account by clicking on MT Resident Login.

Once you have a username and password go to:

Education Tab > Scholarship > when the list of scholarships come up click on the Cluster tab to see the scholarships in “groups” to make it easier to search what pertains to you. This will take some time to go through but it could pay off.

## **Searching for and completing scholarship applications is time consuming but it is free money and it will pay off.**

Put time into writing your first essay for a scholarship application. Once you have a well written essay completed you can reuse it by editing it to fit most other essay topics for other scholarship applications. This will save you time in the long run. So, reuse what you can. Don't start from scratch with each essay.

**If you have a parent who has served in the armed forces you may be eligible for the Post 9/11 GI Bill. Go to: <https://benefits.va.gov/gibill/> to see if you are eligible. Look under "About GI Bill".**

## **CAMPUS VISITS:**

Call the colleges to schedule a visit. Do it now before the weather turns bad.

Go to the college website and search "campus visits" for contact information.

## **TIPS:**

- Remember to ask for letters of recommendation.
- Have you completed your resume?
- Use your planner for dates and deadlines.
- Complete the scholarship applications ahead of time instead of waiting for the last minute!
- Make copies of everything before you mail items.

**Make sure you are paying close attention to deadlines.**

<b>DEADLINE</b>	<b>SCHOLARSHIP</b>	<b>AWARD</b>
Nov. 30, 2024	Reach Higher Montana Sticker	\$500
Dec. 1, 2024	Hagan Scholarship	Varies
Dec. 6, 2024	MSU-Bozeman Presidential	Tuition
Dec. 6, 2024	UM Honors Scholarship	Varies
Jan. 10, 2025	LGBTQ Scholarship	Varies
Jan. 17, 2025	U.S. JCI Senate Foundation	\$1,000
Jan. 31, 2025	Pheasants Forever Scholarship	\$1,500
Feb. 3, 2025	Elks Legacy Awards	Varies
Feb. 14, 2025	Beartooth Electric Coop Leadership	\$2,500
Feb. 14, 2025	BEC MECA Memorial Scholarship	\$500
March 15, 2025	AMT Montana Public Criminal Justice	\$500
March 15, 2025	Horatio Alger Scholarships	Varies
Various	Reach Higher Montana	Varies