

Read me first

Not sure where to start with your scholarship essay? Here are some sample responses from one of ScholarshipsA-Z's student leaders. These well-written, powerful essays helped this student win scholarships worth over \$1,000. The student's name has been changed to protect the student's identity.

SAMPLE QUESTION 1: What are your career goals, and how will earning a college degree or certificate from PCC help you achieve those goals?

My name is Abigail Lopez. I am a student at Southeastern College completing an associate's degree in science and planning on transferring to a four-year college or university. My educational aspirations consist of acquiring a bachelor's degree in any biological or health science that would assist me in pursuing a medical career as a doctor. On the other hand, my career vision is to one day be able to provide affordable health care to marginalized communities in the United States. However, I am certain that if I do not complete my college degree I could never have the opportunity to achieve my career goals.

I decided that I will attain a career as a doctor since my passion has always been assisting others and trying to improve their quality of life. Therefore, I think that pursuing such a career will provide me the opportunity to help improve the community's health quality conditions and learn about their medical needs. After becoming a certified doctor, I want to specialize in oncology, the study of cancer, and add my knowledge to the cancer research field.

Furthermore, I want to contribute back to undeserved populations in the U.S. that struggle every day to sustain a family, and who do not have as much access to medical assistance as other privileged groups. The first health project I want to accomplish throughout my career as a doctor is to establish a free clinic where affordable medical

assistance can be provided regardless of the patient's immigration status. The diverse health services would include free doctor consultations, low-price or free medication, and nutritional classes to prevent the presence of diabetes or heart disease. I also intend to provide an interpreter for patients in case they do not speak English and establish a financial assistance program to help patients who are not able to pay for any type of surgery that needs to be performed.

The second biggest career goal that I want to accomplish is to establish a non-profit organization where I can create internships for medical school students around the U.S., and allow them to travel to isolated communities around the world to provide free medical services. I also want to provide nutrition education to support these marginalized communities, especially indigenous groups from Latin American countries. This will help contribute to the physical development of kids and offer a solution to malnutrition.

I know that all of my goals will remain dreams if I do not complete my medical degree. Therefore, I am committed to working hard in school and looking for opportunities that could help me make my goals a reality.

SAMPLE QUESTION 2: What is the most challenging aspect of attending College for you? What you have done to overcome that challenge?

After I graduated high school, I became certain that if I wanted to pursue a higher education I needed to be persistent and determined to achieve my career aspirations. However, I would not be at this level in my education without my mom's support. Without having my father's emotional and economical assistance, she has learned how to provide me with a decent quality of life. She works as a hair stylist in my hometown, but she knows the money she earns is not enough to pay for my medical career. As a result, I search for scholarships and job opportunities that could contribute to the achievement of my college education and help pay for basic needs in our home.

I also believe that being an immigrant made my decision of attending to college more challenging. I immigrated to the U.S. from Mexico when I was sixteen years old. Luckily I spoke English, but my mom and I did not really understand how the school system worked. Therefore, when senior year of high school arrived I did not really understand the process of attending college. I did not know that I had to talk to a school advisor about attaining a college education or find scholarships to pay for school. I had no knowledge of the types of tests that I had to take like the SATs, ACTs, or even college assessment exams. However, after researching this information online and meeting with college advisors, my mom and I have learned all of these strategies that help students accomplish a higher education.

One of the first things that I have done in order to overcome the challenge of being a low-income student has been looking for a job. As I mentioned before my mom works as a hair stylist, but in order for her to maintain our house and pay the bills, she also cleaned houses for elderly people in our community. Since she worked so much in both jobs, I

thought that my mom was overwhelming herself, so I decided to help her run the cleaning business in June 2008. In order to help my mom focus on her hair-styling business, I later took over the cleaning business in November 2008, and still manage it today. Currently, I clean houses for various families and usually work between three to ten hours per week, which is a flexible schedule that allows me to be a full-time college student. In addition, I help cover my family's basic expenses by babysitting and tutoring other college students in math or chemistry.

While I am constantly trying to find more work and searching for scholarships that will help me pay for my education, I remain grateful to find opportunities like the one your foundation is providing to students. It makes me feel that I am not alone on the journey of accomplishing my educational goals.

SAMPLE QUESTION 3: Why should you be selected for a scholarship? Please describe any academic achievements, community service activities, examples of leadership, or other personal characteristics that make you deserving of this scholarship?

I believe I deserve to be selected for one of your foundation's scholarships because as a hard working student I commit myself to effectively take advantage of the opportunity that the scholarships will provide me. Besides, I am a student that does not only persistently works hard academically, but also I constantly try to improve my own community's quality of life by doing volunteer work.

I believe education is the key to success, and I try to connect my passion for education with my desire of helping others. As a result, I decided to be part of the establishment of a non-profit organization named ScholarshipsA-Z, which provides college educational resources to parents, educators and students regardless of immigration status. Along with other college and university students and advisors, we decided to unite and create such organization in order to establish a more educated community about the steps needed to take in order to attain a higher education. As a board member of the organization, my responsibilities consist of planning and organizing educational discussions about immigration at conferences and high schools, doing research about scholarships for students regardless of immigration status, updating a scholarship list on the ScholarshipsA-Z website, and translating any ScholarshipsA-Z documents including a 60-page student resource guide. I believe that education should be a right not a privilege, and when I see that students are being denied the right of acquiring a college education, I feel the need to take action. Consequently, this is the major reason why I decided to be an

active member of ScholarshipsA-Z.

On the other hand, there are other leadership roles that I played in community organizations. From 2009-2010, I was a programming intern for a leadership program at the university where I organized and planned social events for student participants. In addition, I was the Student Government Vice President at my community college where I organized social, cultural and community service events for the campus, and led group discussions about social justice as a project facilitator for an anti-discrimination club. Prior to this, I was the Community Service Chairperson for the Student Government, and was in charge of organizing community service activities for the campus including blood drives and a monthly cleanup of local neighborhood streets.

I am grateful to find opportunities like the one that your foundation is providing to students like me who are constantly fighting for the right to receive an education. I remain persistent and will keep working hard until I reach my career goals. I am hopeful to become one of your foundation's scholarship recipients, so that I can continue on my pathway to become a doctor.