

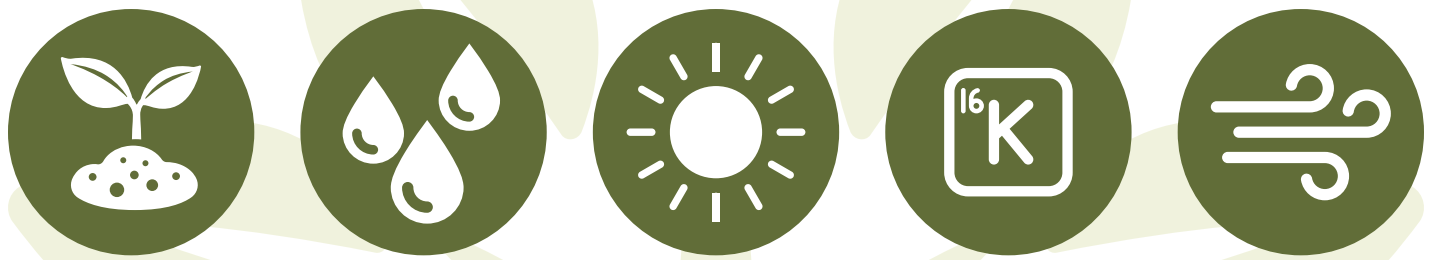
Plant Quest

**Guide for Careers in the Fertilizer
and Agriculture Industry**



Career Plant Quest

To grow, plants need six basic resources: soil, water, light, nutrients, air, and room! Water moves plant nutrients down through the soil and to the plant roots. There, plant stems move nutrients and water up the plant to get these resources where they need to go. Sunlight and air are absorbed by the leaves of the plant. As these processes happen, the plant roots itself further in the soil, as it grows up and out! Flowers blossom and fruit thrives!



Very similar to a plant's requirements for growth, your pursuit of a career also requires many resources! Just like a plant needs soil, water, sun, and nutrients, you too need to make sure you have all the resources and room to grow into the career that best fits YOU!

Start with the Soil!

Farmers always consider the soil and land before planting. They must know their soil and what it lacks before planting! Before you can embark on your career path, you need to know more about you. Take your own personal soil sample and see!

1

What are your top three career choices? *Hint: Use the three options that the Career Explorer Assessment gave you as a starting point!*

2

Pick your favorite! Select one career you are most interested in. Jot down a brief description of it below.

3

Will there be any nutrients you need to add before you plant? What challenges might stop you or possibly prevent you from growing to your full potential? (Financial assistance, support, education access, etc.)



To the Roots!

Roots absorb water and nutrients. What do you need to absorb before you start your path up the career stem?

1

Which courses or education will you need to obtain?



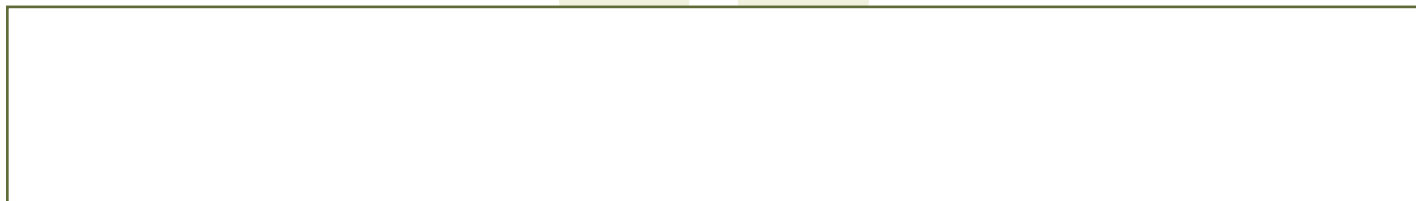
2

What knowledge do you need to absorb?

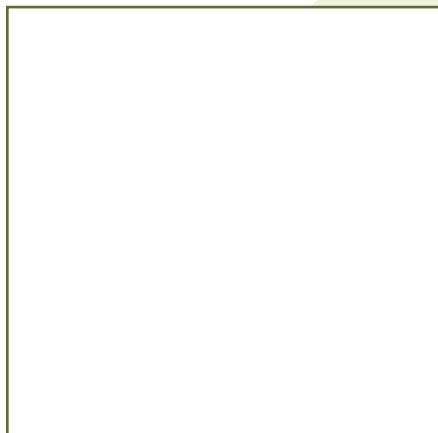
Up the Stem! Almost There!

The stem supports and strengthens the plant. What steps can you take now to support and strengthen your future?

1 What college, junior college, trade school, or training education will you need before you start your career?



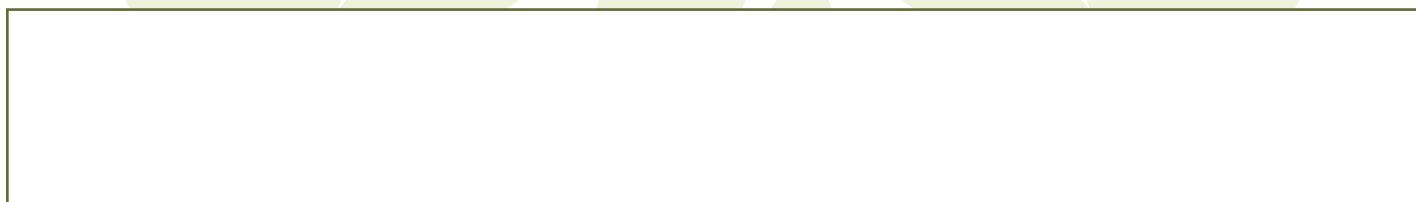
2 Will you be applying for scholarships or financial assistance (FAFSA)? If so, make a quick list of which ones!



3 If you aren't sure yet about scholarships, who can you talk to about getting information about financial assistance?



4 Are there internships available to gain some on-the-job training before you start?



Growing Up and Out!

Leaves take in sun and air.
Who do you want to absorb
experience from?



1


Who are you interested in working for?

2

Do they offer internships or on-the-job experience?

Final Destination: Flowers and Fruit!

You too can blossom and be fruitful! What will you produce?



1 What is the market outlook for this career?

2 What is the average annual salary for this job? *Hint: Average annual salary means how much money you will make each year!*

Before You Get Growing

Before you begin applying for scholarships, know what documents and sources you absolutely need to have! Having these documents ready to go will allow the process to go smoothly as you apply for multiple scholarships.

1

Résumé

This document contains a collection of your contact information, education, work experience, volunteer experience, school activities, sports, clubs, and any other extracurricular activities. Think of this as a data sheet of your experiences! The more experiences you have the better. Use the links below to access some helpful resources. You can also use templates on other software applications, such as Google or Canva.

Sample Résumé and Fillable Template

Click [here](#) for a sample résumé and fillable template.

Bank of Sample Résumés

Click [here](#) for a bank of sample résumés.

2

Cover Letter

Most scholarships require a cover letter. This is formal letter explains in detail who you are, what your experiences are, and why you should receive the scholarship. It will assist the scholarship committee in making their decision to choose you.

3

Letters of Recommendation

Most scholarship committees require multiple letters of recommendation. These letters, written by your mentors, teachers, counselors, or coaches, explains in detail why you should receive the scholarship. These references should be people who know you well and can speak highly of you! There are a few things to keep in mind as you assemble your letters of recommendation.

Do not use family members as references.

Ask for these early and ask in person! This courtesy gives the individual ample time to write and print the letter.

Make sure to provide them with a copy of your résumé and cover letter so they know what to write about you.

Helpful Tips

Read the scholarship description carefully. Include what this description is asking for in your cover letter.

Start your search for scholarships early! You should start looking for some online and in your school counseling office toward the end of your junior year.

If you are not sure you qualify, apply anyway! You never know what can be available for you.

If you need extra assistance, ask a teacher or counselor to help.

Make sure you provide adequate contact information, including a professional email address that contains your first and/or last name so it is easily identifiable.

Check out due dates and put them on your calendar! A late scholarship app is a missed opportunity.

Double-check that you have provided all the required information including an application, résumé, cover letter, letter of recommendation, etc.

Have someone proofread your documents.

If you are applying for more than one scholarship (we hope you are!), make sure you change the scholarship titles and names in your cover letter, letter of recommendation, etc.

Scholarship Essays

1

Saving Your Document

Keep all your scholarship essay question responses saved in one Word document. Roughly 90% of all essay questions are the same across all scholarships. You can reuse your responses in other applications. Remember to tailor each response to fit the scholarship you are applying for.

2

Formatting Your Essay

If responding to an essay question, use a professional format, like this one below:

"Winning this scholarship will make a difference to me because it will allow me to cover college financial issues that may hold me back from reaching my future career as a Laboratory Technician. Being less stressed about college fees will allow me to focus more in class in order to earn the credits, apply for internships, participate in clubs, and worry less about how I am going to pay for the class."

Here is a longer example:

"My parents were never given an opportunity to have an education beyond high school. They were never given the chance to show their full potential and make a difference in the world. Being young and seeing my parents struggle has been difficult for me. I realized I can do something about it. I can get good grades in school. I can take college-level courses throughout high school. I can attend a four-year university and earn my bachelor's degree in Agriculture Business.

That was my thought process as a freshman. Now being a senior I turned those "I cans" into "I dids." I DID get good grades all through school. I DID take college-level courses. I will be walking straight out of high school with 15 college credit hours. I DID get into a four-year university; and four years from now, I want to be able to say I DID earn my bachelor's degree in Agriculture Business. Nothing would make me happier than to be able to take care of my parents the way they have been taking care of me all my life; and nothing would make me better as a person than to be able to say I did this.

Winning this scholarship will make a difference to me because it will allow me to cover college financial issues that may hold me back from reaching my career. Being less stressed about college fees will allow me to focus more in class in order to earn the credits, apply for internships, participate in clubs, and to worry less about how I am going to pay for the class. Even book fees will add up over time due to how many different classes there are. Being able to use this scholarship to pay for books that are required for a certain class will be a big help, especially for a student who has lots of classes that have to be taken."

3

Final Touches

Remember to proofread your paper for spelling, capitalization, and grammatical errors. Use spell check! Have a counselor, parent, guardian, coach, or teacher read and proofread your responses. Follow [this link](#) to view a list of commonly asked essay questions and how to respond to them.

Scholarship Interviews

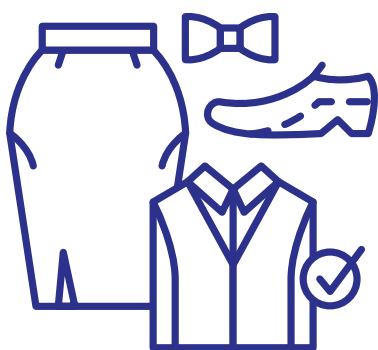
You may be asked in some instances to participate in an interview panel for the scholarship. If that is the case, here are some helpful tips for how to nail the in-person or virtual interview.



In-Person Interviews

Preparation is key! Review these tips to help prepare yourself for an interview.

Make sure you look clean and presentable. Make sure your hair is neat and groomed, your nails are clean and trimmed, and you are wearing appropriate clothing. For example:



A clean dress shirt, slacks, or dark pants

A shirt, tie, and jacket

A dress shirt, blazer, and slacks or dress pants

Closed-toe dress shoes — clean and polished

Arrive EARLY! Make sure you know where to wait and where to go for the interview.

Make sure your phone is off and tucked away.

Upon entering the interview room, shake the hand of everyone on the panel and introduce yourself by your first name.

Before you sit, ask the panel if you may have a seat.

Sit up straight, heels together. Fold your hands neatly on the table or on your lap.

Try to avoid fidgeting or playing with clothing or hair.

Before you answer any question, pause and THINK!

[Here](#) is a list of common scholarship interview questions:

If you did not hear a question clearly, ask them politely if they could please repeat the question.

When the interview has concluded, ensure that you shake everyone's hand and thank them again before you leave.

Look the panelists in the eyes, and answer as calmly and clearly as you can. The most commonly asked first question in any interview is "Tell us about yourself." Here is what you should include:

Your first and last name

Age and year in school

Where you live and go to school

Activities you are involved in (clubs, sports, etc.)

Previous work or volunteer experience

What your career or educational goals are

With most questions, try your best to answer the question using the "sandwich method":

Restate the question

"The reason I believe I should receive this scholarship is because..."

Provide one or two major points

"I have a desire to become an engineer."

"This scholarship will allow me to assist my family in supporting me financially."

Provide one or two examples on the major points

"Ever since I was a small child, I enjoyed tinkering and building things. It has since become a lifelong dream of mine to continue building things for others."

"Both of my parents work full time to support me and my younger siblings. This scholarship will allow me to further my education without being a financial burden on them."

Restate and conclude

"I believe I should receive this scholarship because not only is it a dream of mine to pursue this career, but it could enable me to follow my dreams without hurting my family financially."

2

Virtual Interviews

In this day and age, it is not uncommon to have a virtual interview instead of an in-person one. If that is the case, keep these tips in mind:

Make sure you have a working computer, tablet, or smartphone.

If you do not, ask your teacher or counselor for a school laptop or computer lab.

Public libraries often have computers, as well.

Ensure you have a solid internet connection and good audio connection.

Make sure you have a Zoom, Google, or Microsoft Teams account.

Make sure you know what the panel will be using.

Make sure you log on early to avoid any mishaps, and keep your email on standby in case there are any technical issues.

Make sure your phone is off and tucked away, unless the panel needs to call you.

Ensure you have a neutral background behind your camera or use a virtual background.

A blank wall or nothing behind you is best, but if you are in your room make sure your area is tidy and clean.

Make sure you have good lighting.

Use a desk lamp or a window so they can see your face clearly.

Center yourself in the camera.

Let people in your home know you have an interview, and at what time, to lessen distractions.

Put pets outside and make sure siblings are being watched to avoid additional distractions.

Prepare yourself like you would in an in-person interview.

*Be clean and wear appropriate clothing, even though you are not in person!
It keeps your head in the game.*