Congratulations on this well-deserved scholarship!

Now, here are some critical steps you must take to protect your hard-earned money.

You worked hard to earn this scholarship. Now it is up to you to ensure that this award — and any other local or non-university scholarships you receive — are added to the financial aid that your college has offered you. None of your additional scholarships should be replacing the grants or scholarships already promised to you from your college. Believe it or not, 1 in 5 colleges will try to reduce your financial aid by the amount of this scholarship — only YOU can prevent this from happening! Here’s what you need to do:

1. **Complete our Student Response Form at** [www.tinyurl.com/OBCF2020](http://www.tinyurl.com/OBCF2020). **The deadline to complete this form is June 30, 2020.** Assuming we get your information on time, we will mail your scholarship money directly to your college in mid-July.

2. You may already have received a financial aid statement from your school. If so, **find your financial aid letter, understand it, and save it.** These letters are often very confusing, so if you’re not sure what the various components are, call your financial aid officer, and ask him or her to explain each line of your aid package to you. Learn which funds are loans that you must eventually pay back, and which funds are grants or scholarships that you do not pay back. Of those scholarships, ask if they are guaranteed across all semesters, or if there are any conditions to those awards (e.g., a GPA requirement).

3. **Notify your financial aid office of this scholarship, and ask them how they’ll apply this scholarship — and any other non-university scholarship you receive — to the financial aid package they promised you.** You may want to send them a copy of your award letter (enclosed) so that they’re expecting our payment.

4. Once we mail your scholarship in mid-July, you should get a revised bill or statement from your school. **Compare your revised bill or statement to your original financial aid letter.** Make sure that it reflects this scholarship, and any other non-university scholarships you receive, and that these awards are used to reduce your loans, work study, “unmet need,” or any final amount you owe. None of your scholarships or grants should have decreased in amount. If your school does reduce your scholarships or grants, call your financial aid office and politely ask them to fix it.

5. If your financial aid office will not apply this scholarship against your loans, work study, unmet need, or final amount you owe, call us at **252-261-8839,** and we will work with your school directly. Perhaps you were lucky enough to receive more scholarships than you need for your first semester of school; in that instance, your college should defer some of those scholarships until your spring semester or second year, so that you don’t lose any money.

6. **Learn more about this issue.** There is great information online. Start by searching for “scholarship displacement” at [www.edvisors.com](http://www.edvisors.com). And, call us if you have any further questions.