

Law School Scholarship Negotiations

Many law schools and admitted students engage in scholarship discussions beyond the original award offered. While some schools state openly negotiations are not an option (do not even try at these schools), many will entertain a dialogue to assist students with a financially feasible way to pay for school. These tips will help you in these discussions.

Before you attempt to negotiate scholarship money, review all of the financial aid awards received and create a comparison chart including:

- The actual cost of education as provided by the law school
- The cost of living
- The actual scholarship/grant award made
- Any renewal stipulations (such as GPA)

Subtract the scholarship from the cost of education to determine “real” costs, rather than looking at which school gave the most money. Differences in cost of living, tuition, renewal stipulations, and whether the tuition is “frozen” should be factored in the chart.

To determine actual costs and how much scholarship money schools offer, make use of these sites.

- [ABA 509 Standard Disclosures](http://abarequireddisclosures.org/) from law schools will show where you likely are in the class, how much money they tend to offer in scholarships, and may help you anticipate whether a school would be likely to offer you more money
- [Analytix by AccessLex](https://www.accesslex.org/analytix-by-accesslex) allows you to do a side-by-side comparison of law schools and compare costs and cost of living.

Do

- Only discuss scholarships with schools you really want to attend. For example, pick the two schools you really would attend and compare those real costs. Don't ask schools to enter into a bidding war for the sake of getting more money, and don't include schools where it is unlikely you would attend.
- The rule of thumb is if the difference between the schools is less than \$5,000, a query is a realistic option for the increase to occur. If the difference in cost between the schools is more than \$15,000, a query can be made but is not likely to be matched.
- Send a formal email and attach the award letter from the other school. State that you are deciding between these two schools and hope that the school can increase the offer to make their school more affordable than the other one. Law schools realize that if this query is sent, other factors will still be considered in your final decision, so you do not have to commit to attending that school.
- If the school does increase the offer, reply with a thank you and the anticipated timeline for finalizing your decision. Even if the school does not increase the offer, thank the school official for their time and consideration.

- Ensure that your email and all other contact with the school is professionally presented. Take the time to look up the name of the Head Admissions Officer, Dean/Assistant Dean/Director of Admissions and use their name and title in communications.

Don't

- Do not be casual in your communications with the school. Always use the person's title and last name. For example, “Dear Associate Dean Smith,” not “Hi Betsy.”
- Don't email the Dean of the Law School with your inquiry.
- Web sites that offer information on “this is how you ask for money” are overused. If you want to go to law school, start by making your own argument.
- Don't be arrogant in the request – threatening to not enroll, or claiming a school with a lower ranking offered money is not a good approach.
- If the school chooses not to increase their award, don't reply with a negative response. Be polite and thank them for their consideration. If you honestly want to withdraw at that time, it is correct to include, “I will be attending the other school, since finances are a primary consideration.”

These tips are based on a list from Pamela A. Bloomquist, Assistant Dean of Admissions & Financial Aid, Chicago Loyola University School of Law