



Opportunity Scholarship Program

**Information for Parents and School
Administrators**

Updated January 2015

Opportunity Scholarship Program



- The Opportunity Scholarship Program expands school choice in North Carolina through scholarship grants for eligible children in kindergarten through 12th grade.
- This program provides funding of up to \$4,200 per year for eligible children who choose to attend a participating nonpublic school.
- The program is administered by the State Education Assistance Authority (SEAA).

Eligibility (1)

- A student who has received a high school diploma is not eligible.
- An eligible student must live in a household whose income meets the Income Eligibility Guidelines established by the Opportunity Scholarship Program.



Eligibility (2)

A student must also meet ONE of the following requirements:

- Was a full-time student assigned to and attending a North Carolina public school for the previous semester (Spring 2015)

OR

- Received an Opportunity Scholarship during the previous school year (2014-15)

OR

- Is entering kindergarten or first grade in 2015-16

OR

- Is a child in foster care

OR

- Is a child who was adopted within the last year



Scholarship Priority

First priority is for eligible students who received Opportunity Scholarship funds during the 2014-15 school year.

After Opportunity Scholarships have been awarded to prior recipients, the following priorities will apply:

- At least 50% of the remaining funds must go to students who live in a household with an income meeting an amount established by the Opportunity Scholarship Program.
- No more than 35% of the remaining funds can be awarded to students entering either kindergarten or first grade.
- Any remaining funds will then be awarded to other eligible students.



Opportunity Scholarship Amounts: *an Introduction*

1. No Opportunity Scholarship will exceed \$4,200 per school year (\$2,100 per semester).
2. The Opportunity Scholarship Program has established two income levels. Opportunity Scholarship recipients must meet one of those levels.
3. For the first (lower) income level, the award will be for tuition up to \$4,200.
4. For the second (higher) income level, the award will be for 90% of the tuition or \$4,200, whichever is less.
5. See the Household Income Eligibility Guidelines established by the Opportunity Scholarship Program and the examples which follow.

Household Income Eligibility Guidelines 2015-16

Income Eligibility for Opportunity Scholarships

| Persons in Household | Maximum Household Income | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | for full Tuition up to \$4,200 | for 90% of the Tuition or \$4,200* |
| 2 | \$29,471 | \$39,196 |
| 3 | \$37,167 | \$49,431 |
| 4 | \$44,863 | \$59,667 |
| 5 | \$52,559 | \$69,903 |
| 6 | \$60,255 | \$80,138 |
| 7 | \$67,951 | \$90,374 |
| 8 | \$75,647 | \$100,610 |

** The Opportunity Scholarship will be for 90% of the required tuition and fees or \$4,200, whichever is less.*

Example #1

There are 3 people in my household, and our total household income in 2014 was \$33,500. I might want my child to attend Nonpublic School A where the required tuition and fees are \$3,800 a year, but I'm also considering Nonpublic School B where the required tuition and fees are \$5,200 a year. What are my options?

Your income meets the "tuition up to \$4,200" Income Eligibility Guideline.

The Opportunity Scholarship would pay the entire tuition and fees for Nonpublic School A. The Opportunity Scholarship would pay \$4,200 toward the tuition fees at Nonpublic School B, and you would be responsible for the \$1,000 difference.

Example #2

There are 2 people in my household, and our total household income in 2014 was \$33,500. I might want my child to attend Nonpublic School A where the required tuition and fees are \$3,800 a year, but I'm also considering Nonpublic School B where the required tuition and fees are \$5,200 a year. What are my options?

Your income meets the "90% of the tuition or \$4,200" Income Eligibility Guideline. The Opportunity Scholarship will pay 90% of the required tuition and fees or \$4,200, whichever is less.

The Opportunity Scholarship would pay 90% of the tuition and fees for Nonpublic School A (\$3,420). You would be responsible for the difference (\$380). The Opportunity Scholarship would pay \$4,200 toward the tuition fees at Nonpublic School B, and you would be responsible for the \$1,000 difference.



How It Works: *Application*

- Renewal applications for current recipients are now available on the student's Opportunity. Each renewal student will complete a separate renewal application.
- Online applications are available now for new applicants for the 2015-16 school year at www.ncseaa.edu/OSG.htm.
- New and renewal applicants must report 2014 annual gross income for all household members when they complete the application.



How It Works: *Deadlines*

- The priority deadline is March 1, 2015.
 - Current Opportunity Scholarship recipients with eligible applications who renew by March 1 will be guaranteed an Opportunity Scholarship.
 - All new applicants who apply by March 1 will be entered in a lottery and have an equal chance of being selected for an Opportunity Scholarship.
- New applicants who are not selected in the lottery will be added to a waitlist in the order of the lottery number.
- Any renewal applicants who apply after March 1 will not be guaranteed to receive an Opportunity Scholarship.
- A new or renewal application received after March 1 will be added to the waitlist.



How It Works: *Award Process*

- Notification of new Opportunity Scholarships will begin on March 31, 2015. Some recipients will be selected for income verification.
- SEAA will send the Opportunity Scholarship funds to the student's school twice a year. The parent or guardian will be required to sign an endorsement form before Opportunity Scholarship funds can be deposited into the school's account. Endorsement must be done in person at the school.

Verification of Eligibility



- The SEAA will verify information on Opportunity Scholarship applications from eligible students.
- Household members of Opportunity Scholarship applicants are required to authorize the SEAA to access information held by other state agencies. If a household fails to cooperate with verification, the student's Opportunity Scholarship may be revoked.

Requirements for Participating Nonpublic Schools

Requirements include submitting documentation of required tuition and fees, conducting a criminal background check for the head of the school, and administering nationally standardized tests to Opportunity Scholarship recipients.

Participating schools cannot discriminate with respect to race, color, or national origin.

For an updated list of participating schools, go to the Opportunity Scholarship website at <http://www.ncseaa.edu/OSG.htm>. Full details regarding the requirements for nonpublic schools are also available on that website.

Additional Information

www.ncseaa.edu/OSG.htm

Contact:

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