



NCSEAA
ESA+

2026–27

ESA+ **SCHOLARSHIP** **HANDBOOK**



Welcome to ESA+ Scholarships

Dear Parent:

Welcome to the Education Student Accounts (ESA+) scholarship program.

This handbook is designed to support families of awarded students throughout the entire scholarship year. Inside, you'll find clear guidance on processes, timelines, and answers to questions about the ESA+ scholarship program as well as its three distinct school categories—Direct Payment Schools, Reimbursement Schools, and Home Schools.

Our goal is to help you understand all aspects of this scholarship. If you have questions that aren't answered in this handbook, we're here to help. Please feel free to reach out to us directly:
855-330-3955
ESA@ncseaa.edu

Sincerely,
The ESA+ Scholarship Program Team
NCSEAA

HELPFUL LINKS

 [Stay Informed—Newsletter Sign-Up](#)

NCSEAA Support for Families

 855-330-3955

On-demand interpreters are available by phone in 230+ languages

 ESA@ncseaa.edu

 Website: <http://www.k12.ncseaa.edu>

 Monday–Thursday 8AM–6PM;
Friday 8AM–5PM

1 ESA+ Scholarship Overview

Overview: ESA+ Scholarship

The ESA+ Scholarship is one of the two state-funded K12 scholarship programs that is offered by North Carolina and administered by NCSEAA.

ESA+ (Education Student Accounts)

What is it?

Flexible funding that helps families pay for private or home school education and services for children with disabilities (this could include tuition as well as allowable expenses such as speech therapy, tutoring, curriculum, and educational technology).

Who can apply?

North Carolina students with disabilities who require special education services (the student's Eligibility Determination from a North Carolina public school will be part of the application process, and updated documentation of the child's disability is required every three years).

Who can apply?

There are two funding levels—the base level is a \$9,000 annual award, while students with certain designated disabilities may be eligible to receive a \$17,000 annual award.

What You'll Find in This Guide

- Allowable Expenses Guide
- How to Use MyPortal
- Finding & Adding Service Providers
- and more

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2 Your ESA+ Year at a Glance

The Annual ESA+ Scholarship Cycle: **Direct Payment Schools**

Stay on track with important deadlines and reminders for your ESA+ scholarship

Ongoing Reminders

- Respond to your renewal offer each year to keep your scholarship active.
- Check MyPortal regularly for deadline reminders and important updates.
- ESA+ notifies you when it is time to update your student's documentation of a disability.
- Subscribe to the ESA+ [newsletter](#) .
- **Transfers from Home School to Direct Payment School:** Contact ESA+ for help before **October 1** for fall or before **March 1** for spring.

(Early) **August**

- Make sure school choice is correct in MyPortal

September

- **Endorsement #1**—Schools and parents endorse fall semester funds (Also: SEAA sends fall funds to school)

October

- Student must be attending a [Direct Payment School](#)  by **Oct. 1** to use fall funds.
- Any funds that remain after tuition and fees are paid are deposited in [ClassWallet](#)  account

January

- **Endorsement #2**—Schools and parents endorse spring semester funds, and Continuing Eligibility documentation due (for students with outdated evaluations). (Also: SEAA sends spring funds to school. Any funds that remain after tuition and fees are paid are deposited in ClassWallet account)

February

- Scholarship renewal period for next school year, and applications open for new students

March

- Student must be attending a Direct Payment School by March 1 to use spring semester funds

April

- **April 15** is the deadline to renew your scholarship for next school year, and scholarship offers are sent to new students

May

- ClassWallet orders should be submitted by the end of this month, ahead of ClassWallet closing in June for the school year. [Continuing Eligibility Documentation](#)  must be updated every three years. You will receive an email in spring if your re-evaluation will be due at the end of the calendar year

June

- ClassWallet closes for the school year (Annual June reminders: Be sure to use your funds before **June 15** of each school year, and submit your Parent Agreement, W-9, and, if pertinent, Home School Registration)

2 Your ESA+ Year at a Glance

The Annual ESA+ Scholarship Cycle: Home Schools & Reimbursement Schools

Stay on track with important deadlines and reminders for your ESA+ scholarship

📅 (Early) August

- Make sure school choice is correct in MyPortal

📅 September

- **Disbursement 1**—SEAA deposits fall scholarship funds in [ClassWallet](#) 📄

📅 October

- Parents make purchases and pay service providers (Also: The deadline is **Oct. 1** for Home School families to transfer funds to a [Direct Payment School](#) 📄 for the fall semester)

📅 December

- Parents of students in Reimbursement Schools submit tuition receipts in ClassWallet

📅 January

- [Continuing Eligibility Documentation](#) 📄 due (for students with outdated evaluations), **Disbursement 2**—SEAA deposits spring scholarship funds in ClassWallet, and parents make purchases and pay service providers

📅 February

- Scholarship renewal period for next school year, and applications open for new students

📅 March

- The deadline is **March 1** for Home School families to transfer funds to a Direct Payment School for the spring semester

📅 April

- **April 15** is the deadline to renew your scholarship for next school year. Parents in Reimbursement Schools may submit receipts in ClassWallet

📅 May

- ClassWallet orders should be submitted by the end of this month, ahead of ClassWallet closing in June for the school year. Continuing Eligibility Documentation must be updated every three years. You will receive an email in spring if it is time for re-evaluation

📅 June

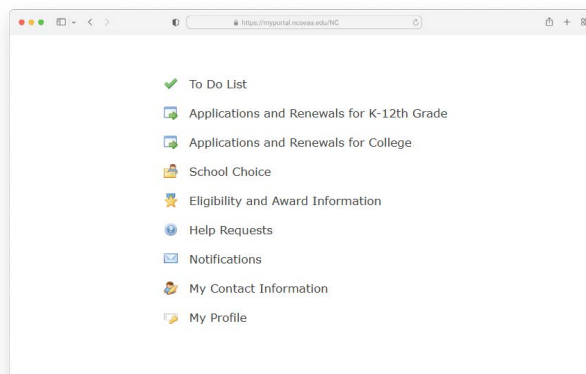
- ClassWallet closes for the school year (Annual June reminders: Be sure to use your funds before **June 15** of each school year, and submit your Parent Agreement, W-9, and, if pertinent, Home School Registration)

Nothing in this document should be construed to supersede the Program Statute, Program Rules or other Program policies. In addition, these policies do not represent an exhaustive list of all Program rules; rather, these policies are set forth to provide a broad overview of the Program. See the Program Rules and Statutes on each Program's website at www.k12.ncseaa.edu for more details.

3 Getting Started Checklist

Checklist: Getting Started

1. Log into MyPortal
2. Accept scholarship offer
3. Review MyPortal To-Do List for required tasks & review deadlines
4. Confirm school choice
5. Monitor endorsement tasks



4 Understanding ESA+ Funding

Understanding ESA+ Scholarship Funding

How ESA+ Funds Work

You can buy three types of products and three types of services with ESA+ scholarship funds. SEAA reviews and authorizes all purchases to make sure that they are an allowed use of ESA+ funds.

Following the information provided in this handbook—as well as on the [Parent Guide to Allowable Expenses](#) —will help ensure that your orders can be processed quickly and accurately.

What's Allowable?

Products

- Curriculum
- Educational Technology
- Standardized Testing Materials/Textbooks

Services

- Educational Therapy
- Tutoring/Supplemental Teaching Services
- Transportation

Direct Payment Schools vs. Reimbursement Schools vs. Home Schools

Let's dig into the endorsement process.

Direct Payment Schools:

Schools that receive a direct payment on behalf of ESA+ recipients (once funds have been applied to tuition and fees, remaining funds can be used for allowable expenses)

Reimbursement Schools:

Schools that choose not to receive funds directly from the K12 Programs (families enrolling their students in these schools pay tuition and fees out of pocket, and are reimbursed by ESA+)

Home Schools:

Home Schools use ESA+ funds for allowable products and services, not for tuition.

Dual Award Students

Students can receive both the Opportunity Scholarship and ESA+ Scholarship (Dual Award Recipients). Students must be enrolled in a Direct Payment School to use both awards. Any remaining ESA+ funds are deposited to the student's ClassWallet account.



Remember:

Check MyPortal Weekly



HELPFUL LINKS



[How Scholarship Funds Work](#)



5 Allowable Expenses Guide

Get to Know Your Allowable Expenses

Products

-  **Curriculum:** Learning materials to teach an academic subject
 -  **Educational Technology:** Products designed to assist individuals with disabilities
 -  **Standardized Testing Materials/ Textbooks:** Fees for nationally standardized norm-referenced achievement tests, advanced placement tests, or nationally recognized college entrance exams.
- Testing materials are typically purchased for students in home schools, while textbooks must be required by your student's home school or private school and related to one of the core academic subjects: Math, Science, English/Language Arts, and Social Studies.

Services

-  **Tutoring:** Tutoring and supplemental teaching services supplement a student's learning (this can include a live [not recorded] class or an in-person class)
-  **Educational Therapy:** Therapists must enroll with SEAA and hold a license or credential in their field to accept ESA+ funds (includes applied behavior analysis therapy, speech therapy, and more)
-  **Transportation:** Funds may be used for transportation services to and from educational services and activities

Tips for Successful Ordering

- The ClassWallet marketplace is the only place families may purchase products with ESA+ funds
- Tutors, therapists, and transportation providers must be enrolled with SEAA to accept ESA+ funds. Use the [searchable database](#)  to find enrolled providers.



Note: Not all services offered by enrolled providers are allowable—refer to the Parent Guide to Allowable Expenses for information

6 Finding & Adding Providers

ESA+ Service Providers

What's a Service Provider?

The ESA+ Scholarship provides funds for North Carolina families that can be used to pay for education and other support services for children with disabilities. Service Providers are tutors, therapists, and transportation providers—individuals or organizations—that have enrolled with SEAA to accept ESA+ funds

How to Search for Providers

To search for Providers, use the link below to visit the NCSEAA Provider Search Site

How Providers Enroll

Providers can visit the ESA+ Service Provider Enrollment page to learn more about the enrollment process and required credentials (see the link below)

Schools That Provide Supplemental Services

Supplemental services, such as tutoring and educational therapies, are provided by schools to ESA+ students in addition to the services provided as part of the regular school day that are covered by tuition and fees

HELPFUL LINKS

 [NCSEAA Provider Search Site](#) [NCSEAA Provider Portal](#) [ESA+ Service Provider Enrollment](#)

7 School vs Provider

ESA+ Schools & Service Providers: A Comprehensive Guide

Distinguishing schools from service providers can be confusing—the good news is that we’re here to help.

The ESA+ program uses specific categories to determine who can receive scholarship funds and for what types of services. **Only certain types of educational entities can accept ESA+ funds for tuition.** The entity must be a school registered with the North Carolina Division of Non-Public Education (DNPE). No other entity can be a “school” for purposes of charging tuition.

ESA+ Schools and Categories

ESA+ students may choose from three different types of schools.

Direct Payment School:

Schools that receive a direct payment from SEAA on behalf of ESA+ recipients

ESA+ Reimbursement School:

Schools that choose not to receive funds directly from the K12 Programs. Families who enroll their students in these schools pay tuition and fees out of pocket and are reimbursed by SEAA. An ESA+ Reimbursement School must be registered with the North Carolina Division of Non-Public Education (DNPE)

Home School:

Parents of students in a home school spend their ESA+ funds for Allowable Expenses rather than tuition—ESA+ funds cannot be used to pay for tuition on behalf of students in a Home School

Service Providers Overview

ESA+ scholarship funds can be used to pay for education and other support services for children with disabilities. Service Providers are tutors, therapists, and transportation providers—individuals or organizations—that have enrolled with SEAA to accept ESA+ funds.

Some Direct Payment Schools are also enrolled as ESA+ Providers and offer supplemental services to ESA+ students.

Tuition vs. Services

Families can use ESA+ scholarship funds to pay for private school tuition and fees, and also for allowable expenses related to educating a child with a disability. The amount of funding available for allowable expenses depends on the type of school you choose (a Direct Payment School, ESA+ Reimbursement School, or Home School)

North Carolina Division of Nonpublic Schools (DNPE)

To use ESA+ funds at a Reimbursement School, your nonpublic school of choice must be registered with the North Carolina Division of Nonpublic Schools. To find out whether your school is registered with DNPE, visit or consult the school. For home school students, parents register their Home School with DNPE

Co-Enrollment

Students who receive the ESA+ or Opportunity Scholarship may enroll full-time in a private school or choose from a variety of co-enrollment options. **Note:** There is a reduced award for ESA+ recipients who co-enroll in a public school (more info can be found at the Co-Enrollment page)

Families who plan to enroll their student as part time will need to complete additional documentation to verify their co-enrollment.



HELPFUL LINKS



[Choosing a School](#)



[Co-Enrollment](#)

8

Using MyPortal

How to Use MyPortal / Using MyPortal

What Is MyPortal?

-  MyPortal is the platform families use to apply for the ESA+ scholarship

How Families Use MyPortal

-  MyPortal is your one-stop source for managing your account—you can receive notifications by email and check the status of your student's application

Renewals in MyPortal

-  Beginning in late January, students who used scholarship funding the previous fall semester will receive an offer to renew their scholarship.

This is not automatic—you have until **April 15** to respond to your student's renewal award offer in MyPortal. Be sure to check your notifications in MyPortal weekly and respond to required tasks by the deadline.

MyPortal Deadlines

May

- Complete Parent Agreement, W-9, and, if pertinent, Home School Registration

June–July

- Confirm school choice

August

- Complete all tasks, including the LEA Release, if pertinent

October

- Your student must be enrolled and attending school listed by **October 1st**

February–March

- Respond to renewal offer

April

- Submit renewal application



Remember:

Check MyPortal Regularly

School Choice Updates

You can update your school choice independently in MyPortal until **August 1**. After **August 1**, contact the program team for assistance. The deadline to select a school and enroll your student is **October 1**. Failure to choose a school by this date will result in cancellation of the student's scholarship award.

**Having trouble logging in?
Let us help.**

 (855) 763-5333

 loginhelp@ncseaa.edu



HELPFUL LINKS



[MyPortal Guide](#)



[Uploading Documents In MyPortal](#)



[MyPortal Login](#)

9

Understanding Continuing Eligibility

Eligibility Determination: Documentation & More

What Is the Eligibility Determination?

The Eligibility Determination is a document issued within the last three years by a North Carolina public school or a Department of Defense school located in North Carolina.

Continuing Eligibility Requirements

Families must provide a re-evaluation of their student's disability every three years to remain eligible to receive the ESA+ scholarship

Renewing families have two re-evaluation options*:

Re-Evaluation Options for Renewing Students

If the primary or secondary disability listed on the student's Eligibility Determination has not changed, renewing families may submit one of the following to SEAA:

1 Public School Eligibility Determination:

The local public school system assesses the student to determine if the student continues to be a child with a disability. The document to submit to ESA+ is the Eligibility Determination issued by the IEP team.

OR

2 Psychologist Assessment*: A North Carolina Licensed Psychologist with a school psychology focus or a North Carolina Licensed Psychiatrist assesses the student to evaluate if the student has improved his or her educational performance and would continue to benefit from the Eligible School or Home School. The document to submit to ESA+ is the [Continuing Eligibility Form](#) .

a) The cost of a psychiatrist or psychologist is an acceptable use of ESA+ funds if the provider is enrolled with SEAA and completes the Continuing Eligibility Form while providing a therapeutic service.

*Exceptions to Psychologist Assessment:

- 1 The Psychologist Assessment cannot be used to document a change in the area of disability.
- 2 The Psychologist Assessment cannot be used if the student's primary disability designated on the IEP Eligibility Determination is Developmental Delay.



Note: Public School

Eligibility Determination:

The local public school system assesses the student to determine if the student continues to be a child with a disability. The document to submit to ESA+ is the Eligibility Determination issued by the IEP team.

Re-Evaluation Reminders

The process's three-year cycle begins with the date of the most recent Eligibility Determination or previous Continuing Eligibility date on file with SEAA. You will receive email reminders in MyPortal when it is time to complete the re-evaluation

Eligibility Timeline Expectations

We will send you reminders in MyPortal when your renewal deadline is approaching.

Don't wait!

Continuing Eligibility is a requirement for your student to remain in the ESA+ scholarship program. Allow time to complete the re-evaluation process before the deadline.



HELPFUL LINKS



[Continuing Eligibility](#)

10 Glossary & FAQs

ESA+ Key Terms & Glossary

Direct Payment School: Schools that receive a direct payment from NCSEAA on behalf of ESA+ recipients

Reimbursement School: Schools that choose not to receive funds directly from the K12 Programs (families enrolling their students in these schools pay tuition and fees out of pocket, and are reimbursed by ESA+)

Service Provider: Service Providers are tutors, therapists, and transportation providers—individuals or organizations—that have enrolled with SEAA to accept ESA+ funds

ClassWallet: An online shopping platform for ESA+ families. With ClassWallet, families can make payments to service providers, purchase allowable products with ESA+ funds, and submit receipts from an ESA+ Reimbursement School.

MyPortal: The platform families use to apply for and complete tasks related to the ESA+ Scholarship

Endorsement: The act of officially approving the award amount as well as verifying that the student is enrolled and attending the school. Schools cannot receive scholarship funds until families endorse their awards

Continuing Eligibility: Continuing Eligibility is the process of updating the documentation of a disability

Tuition: For purposes of the ESA+ program, only nonpublic schools may charge tuition. Nonpublic schools are private schools that have registered with the North Carolina Division of Non-Public Education.

FAQs

For answers to commonly asked questions about the ESA+ Scholarship program, use this link below to access a full list of program FAQs.

<https://k12.ncseaa.edu>

11 Contact Information & Resources

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help@classwallet.com

Website:

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