



NCSEAA
**OPPORTUNITY
SCHOLARSHIP**

2026–27

OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP HANDBOOK



Welcome to Opportunity Scholarships!

Dear Parent:

Welcome to the Opportunity 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 Opportunity Scholarship program.

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

OpportunityScholarships@ncseaa.edu

Sincerely,
The Opportunity Scholarship Program Team
NCSEAA



HELPFUL LINKS



[K12 Scholarships Page for Parents](#)



[Opportunity Scholarship Homepage](#)

NCSEAA Support for Families

📞 855-330-3955

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

✉️ OpportunityScholarships@ncseaa.edu

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

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

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2 Your Scholarship Year at a Glance

Your Opportunity Scholarship Year At a Glance

Let's take a high-level view of your Opportunity Scholarship year.

1. Scholarship Offer: Be sure to accept your Opportunity Scholarship by the specific deadline stated in your offer. To accept offer from NCSEAA:

- Log in to your NCSEAA MyPortal
- Go to your To-Do List
- Click "Respond to Award Offer"
- Choose "Accept"

2. School Selection: Opportunity Scholarship students must attend a [Direct Payment School](#) , a school that receives a direct payment on behalf of Opportunity Scholarship recipients. You can choose or update the school in the "School Choice" section of MyPortal.

Send us an email if you need to update your student's school choice after **August 1**.

3. Enrollment: Accepting an Opportunity Scholarship does not enroll your student in a school. Follow the enrollment process for your school of choice.

4. Parent Endorsement: Endorsing is completed in MyPortal—it's the act of officially approving the award amount as well as verifying that the student is enrolled and attending the school listed.



A TIP FROM NCSEAA

Review the amount award carefully, and as the system is case-sensitive, type your name exactly as it appears in MyPortal when endorsing.

5. Tuition Disbursement: Schools that accept direct payments from SEAA are paid scholarship funds on behalf of students twice a year; once for fall semester and once for spring semester. All tasks are completed in MyPortal by the school and parent.

6. Renewal Period: Beginning in late January, students who used scholarship funding the previous fall semester will receive an offer to renew their scholarship. Families have until **April 15** to respond to their renewal award offer. Be sure to check your notifications in MyPortal weekly and respond to required tasks by the deadline.

7. Important Deadlines & School Communication Timing:

📅 August

- **School Choice**—Make sure school choice is correct in MyPortal by early August. Schools begin certification

📅 September

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

📅 October

Enrollment Deadline—Student must be attending a [Direct Payment School](#) by **Oct. 1** to use fall funds

📅 January

- **Endorsement #2**—Schools and parents endorse spring semester funds (Also: SEAA sends spring funds to school)

📅 February

- **Time to Renew**—Scholarship renewal period for next school year, and applications open for new students

📅 March

Enrollment Deadline—Student must be attending a [Direct Payment School](#) by **March 1** to use spring funds

📅 April

- **Renewal Deadline**—Deadline to renew scholarship for next year, and scholarship offers are sent to new students

📅 May–June

- **Complete required tasks in MyPortal** (Important: failure to complete required tasks could result in funding delays or scholarship cancellation)



HELPFUL LINKS



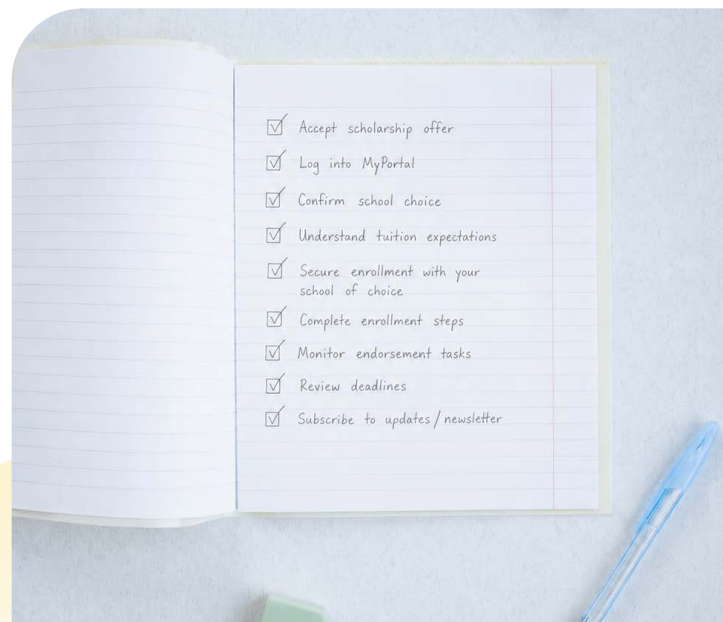
[Direct Payment Schools](#)

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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



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Understanding Your Student's Scholarship Amount

Understanding Your Opportunity Scholarship Amount

How Amounts Work:

Once you've applied, SEAA will assign your student an Award Tier based on the household size and income you submitted on the application

Income-Based Award Tiers:

The Award Tier determines the scholarship amount your student may receive based on your household income & size from the previous tax year. Use the link below to visit the Award Tier Chart to determine the amount of the scholarship a student may qualify for based on your household income and size from the previous tax year

What the Scholarship Covers:

The scholarship funds can be used to pay for tuition and other required fees to attend registered private schools. The scholarship amount varies by Award Tier and may not cover the full cost of tuition and fees of every school. If a school's tuition and fees exceed the student's scholarship amount, families are responsible for paying the difference

What Families May Still Owe:

The Opportunity Scholarship supports families by helping them pay for private school tuition, and its amounts are scaled by household income. All K-12 students in North Carolina are eligible for this program regardless of income. You can monitor your scholarship amount through MyPortal, and you may wish to contact your chosen school in order to secure an overview of tuition, fees, and your expected remaining responsibility



HELPFUL LINKS



[Award Tier Chart](#)



[Opportunity Scholarship Income Guidelines 2026-2027](#)



Remember:
Check MyPortal
Weekly

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Choosing a School

How to Choose a School: A Guide

Researching Schools: Opportunity Scholarship students must attend a Direct Payment School, which are schools that receive a direct payment on behalf of Opportunity Scholarship recipients. Funds from an Opportunity Scholarship cannot be sent to a public school or home school. Visit the [link here](#) to find out which schools accept direct payment.

Admissions Timelines: Make sure your school choice is correct in MyPortal by early August. Fall semester funds: Your student must be attending a direct payment school by **Oct. 1**. Spring semester funds: Your student must be attending a direct payment school by **Mar. 1**.

Tuition Conversations: Awards range from approximately \$3,500 to \$7,900 based on the information reported for a family's household income from the previous tax year. It is important to understand the financial obligations you agree to when enrolling your child in a particular school. If the school's tuition and fees exceed the student's award amount, families are responsible for paying the difference.

Parents should have a conversation with the school to understand how much they might owe, based on their award tier. When verifying tuition, keep in mind that in addition to the actual tuition, there may be school fees associated with the total cost. Be sure to ask for a comprehensive list of costs and charges that you should expect.



6 Understanding Endorsement

All About Endorsement

Let's dig into the endorsement process.

What Endorsement Means

Endorsement is the act of officially approving the award amount as well as verifying that the student is enrolled and attending the school. Schools must endorse before a parent can endorse

Parent Endorsement

Once a parent endorses in MyPortal—which is done twice a year, in the fall and spring—funds are sent electronically to the school within 7–10 business days

Semester Timing: Enrollment & Endorsement Deadlines



Enrollment, fall semester funds: Your student must be attending a direct payment school by **Oct. 1**. Enrollment, spring semester funds: Your student must be attending a direct payment school by **Mar. 1**



Endorsement: What to Expect

Fall semester funds: typically August/September.
Endorsement, spring semester funds: January/February

You will receive an email to alert you when it's time to complete endorsement, and there will be a task on your MyPortal To-Do List



7 Managing Changes During the School Year

Changing Schools, Moving & More

Sometimes things don't go according to plan. If a school transfer is necessary, remember: The Opportunity Scholarship awards funds to a student, not to a school, so the funds are portable. We're ready to help you make a seamless change between schools during the scholarship year if necessary.

How to Change Schools

You can transfer your student's scholarship to another eligible Direct Payment School. You are responsible for notifying your current school that you wish to withdraw and for enrolling your student in a new school. The easiest time to transfer is between semesters or between school years.



A TIP FROM NCSEAA

The easiest time to transfer is between semesters or between school years.

How to Transfer the Scholarship to Another School

Transferring scholarship funds is conducted in MyPortal—program staff will collect withdrawal information and refund (if necessary) from the previous school (See [link here](#) for school transfers.)

Moving

State law requires that students live in North Carolina with the parent of record in order to be eligible for Opportunity Scholarship funding. Families must meet residency documentation requirements—and the student must enroll and begin attending school—no later than October 1 in order to be eligible for fall funds.

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Renewing Your Scholarship

Scholarship Renewal: An Explainer

Beginning in late January, students who used scholarship funds the previous fall semester will receive an offer to renew their scholarship. If your student will receive scholarship funding for the spring semester only, then you will receive an offer to renew your student's scholarship later in the spring semester.

Renewal Timeline & Deadlines:

Families have until **April 15** to respond to their renewal award offer. Be sure to check your notifications in MyPortal weekly and respond to required tasks by the deadline

How to Renew:

Renewals are offered in MyPortal. Go to your student's To-Do List in MyPortal and respond to the renewal offer.

Annual Action Steps:

All students eligible for renewal will be asked the following questions:

- Do you want to renew for next year?
- Will your student graduate high school at the end of the current school year?
- Do you, the parent on file, have a valid North Carolina driver's license? (You'll be asked to enter the license number on the renewal.) If you don't have a driver's license, SEAA will verify your residency over the summer
- You will also have the option to disclose income for the previous tax year and household size. You will also have the option to withhold this information, but this will result in your student being eligible for Award Tier 4, which is the base award amount.

Consequences of Missing Deadlines:

Deadlines are critically important—get in touch with program staff if you've missed a deadline.

9 Income Verification

Income Verification

What is income verification?

The law that governs the Opportunity Scholarship program requires SEAA to verify a percentage of Opportunity Scholarship applications for income each year. Either new or renewal scholarship families may be selected for [income verification](#).

How do I know if I've been assigned to verify my income?

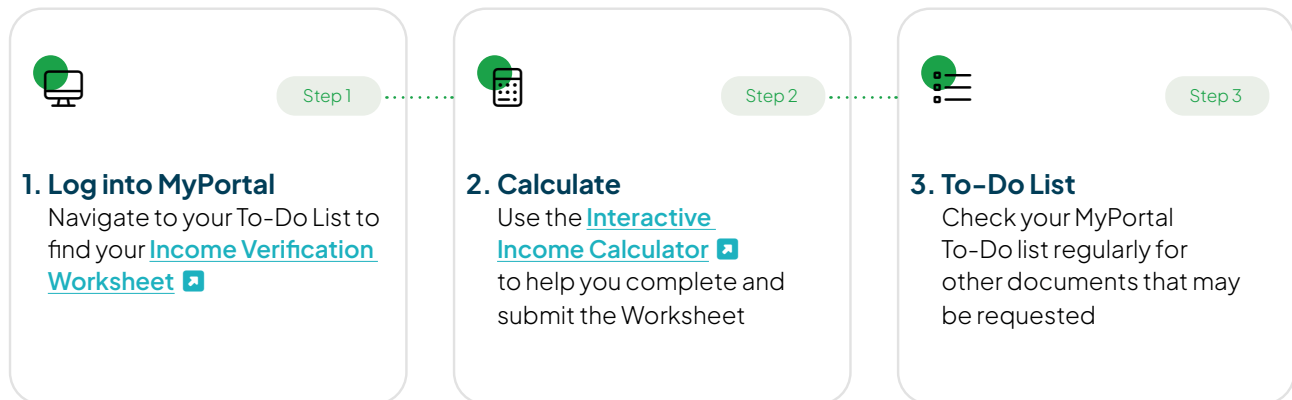
You should be logging into MyPortal weekly to review your notifications and To-Do List. If you receive a notification that reads "Opportunity Scholarship application selected for verification," you will be required to complete income verification.



If you are not notified about completing income verification, you do not need to go through this process.

What are the steps to complete income verification?

There are just a few steps you must complete for income verification.



Do you have questions about the income verification process? We can help.

☎ 855-330-3955

✉ OpportunityScholarships@ncseaa.edu



Remember:
Check MyPortal
Weekly

10 Using MyPortal

How to Use MyPortal / Using MyPortal: A Guide

What Is MyPortal?

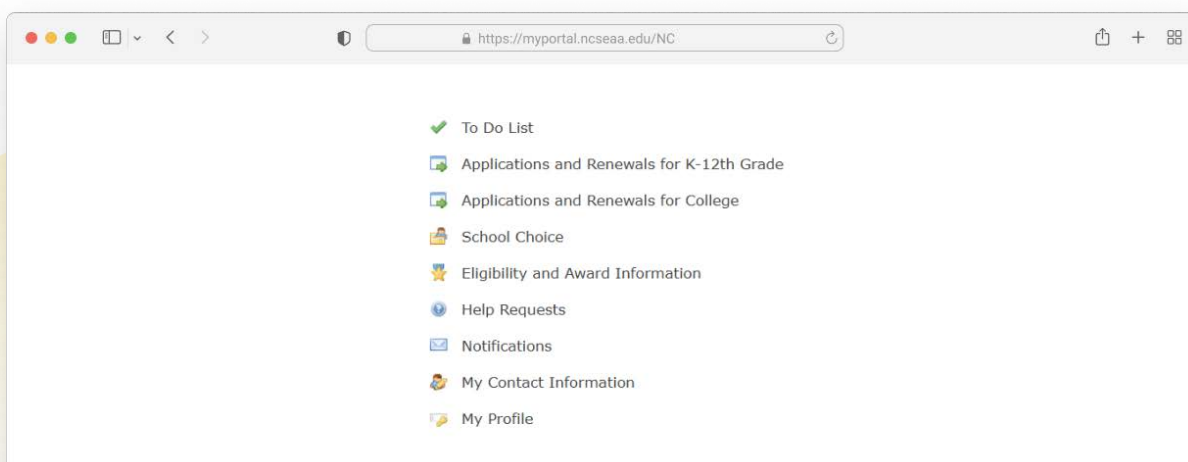
-  MyPortal is the platform families use to apply for and manage the Opportunity Scholarship

How Families Use MyPortal

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

Renewals in MyPortal

-  Beginning in late January, students who used scholarship funding the previous fall semester will receive an offer to renew their scholarship. Your scholarship is not automatically continued. You have until **April 15** to respond to your student's renewal award offer in your student's To-Do list. Be sure to check your notifications in MyPortal weekly and respond to required tasks by the deadline.



School Choice Updates

-  Log into MyPortal to choose your school. Until August 1, you can choose or update the school in the "School Choice" section of MyPortal. Send us an email if you need to update your student's school choice after August 1.



The deadline to select a school and enroll your student, for fall semester funds, is **October 1**.

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

 (855) 763-5333

 loginhelp@ncseaa.edu

11 Key Terms & Glossary

Opportunity Scholarship Key Terms & Glossary

Get to know key terms that pertain to the Opportunity Scholarship program.

Award Amount: SEAA assigns your student an Award Tier based on the household size and income you submitted on the Opportunity Scholarship application

Direct Payment School: Schools that receive a direct payment from SEAA on behalf of Opportunity Scholarship recipients

Dual Award Student: Students can receive both the Opportunity Scholarship and ESA+ scholarship. Students who will benefit from both the Opportunity Scholarship and ESA+ must be enrolled in a Direct Payment School. SEAA will first use funds from the Opportunity Scholarship to pay the cost of tuition and fees to the Direct Payment school on behalf of the student, followed by ESA+ funds

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

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

Opportunity Scholarship: The Opportunity Scholarship helps North Carolina families pay for tuition and other required fees to attend registered private schools from kindergarten through 12th grade

Renewal: Students who used scholarship funds the previous year will receive an offer to renew their scholarship. Award offers are made to all eligible renewal students before offers are made to eligible new applicants

Scholarship Offer: Scholarship offer refers to the Opportunity Scholarship funds that can be used to pay for tuition and other required fees to attend registered private schools

Tuition: Tuition refers to the cost of education, and the Opportunity Scholarship program helps families pay tuition and required fees at registered private schools across North Carolina

12 FAQs

Opportunity Scholarship FAQs

Here are some answers to commonly asked questions about the Opportunity Scholarship program. Use the link below to access a full list of program FAQs.

General Program FAQs

- ?** Does the scholarship cover all tuition and fees for private schools?
- A** **Not always.** The scholarship amount varies by award tier and may not cover the full cost of tuition and fees of every school. If a school's tuition and fees exceed the student's award amount, families are responsible for paying the difference.
- ?** Does my student have to be attending a private school before applying?
- A** **No.** Students are not required to be enrolled in a private school when they apply. However, Opportunity Scholarship funds can only be used for tuition and fees at registered private schools. If a student is awarded a scholarship, they must be enrolled in and attending a registered private school, also known as a Direct Payment School, by **October 1** to use scholarship funds for the fall semester.
- ?** My family is moving to North Carolina Can we still apply for the Opportunity Scholarship?
- A** **Yes.** Families who move to North Carolina can submit an application for the Opportunity Scholarship as soon as they are physically residing in the state, provided that the application period is still open. You will need to meet residency documentation requirements no later than **October 1**.
- ?** Is full-time home school an option for the Opportunity Scholarship?
- A** **No.** Opportunity Scholarship funds can only be used for tuition and fees at registered private schools. However, students may be co-enrolled in both a homeschool program and in a registered private school, with scholarship funds applied to the private school tuition and fees.



HELPFUL LINKS



[Opportunity Scholarship Frequently Asked Questions](#)

13 Contact Information & Resources

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MyPortal Login Help

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Opportunity Scholarship Help

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Website:

<https://k12.ncseaa.edu/> 



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