



Using Your D.C. Opportunity Scholarship

Family Guide

2024-2025 School Year

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Dear D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Family:

Congratulations! We are thrilled that your student will be participating in the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) for the 2024-2025 school year.

This family guide, *Using Your D.C. Opportunity Scholarship*, provides answers and helpful information on frequently asked questions about the OSP. We hope this offers a clear understanding of how to use your scholarship this coming school year.

We are excited to get to know your family better in the months ahead. As always, if you have any questions, please contact Serving Our Children by email at info@servingourchildrencdc.org or call 1 (888) 329-6884.

Sincerely,

Rachel Sotsky

Executive Director, Serving Our Children

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Scholarship Payment Basics

Learning how to use your scholarship effectively will enhance your student's academic experience this school year. Below you will find some basic facts about your scholarship award.

Scholarship funds are awarded to you via your student's school

All schools shall have an **Invoice Confirmation Report (ICR)** outlining charges to your scholarship; schools must review charges with each parent

Your scholarship check is sent to you via your student's school **2-3 times** per school year

Parents must review and sign the ICR and endorse the scholarship check **after confirming they agree** with all charges (if not, parents must review the charge with the school or Serving Our Children) prior to signing the check

Parents should talk with their student's school about fees that may not be covered by the scholarship

Notify Serving Our Children **immediately** if your student is no longer enrolled at their private school

What is my student's scholarship award?

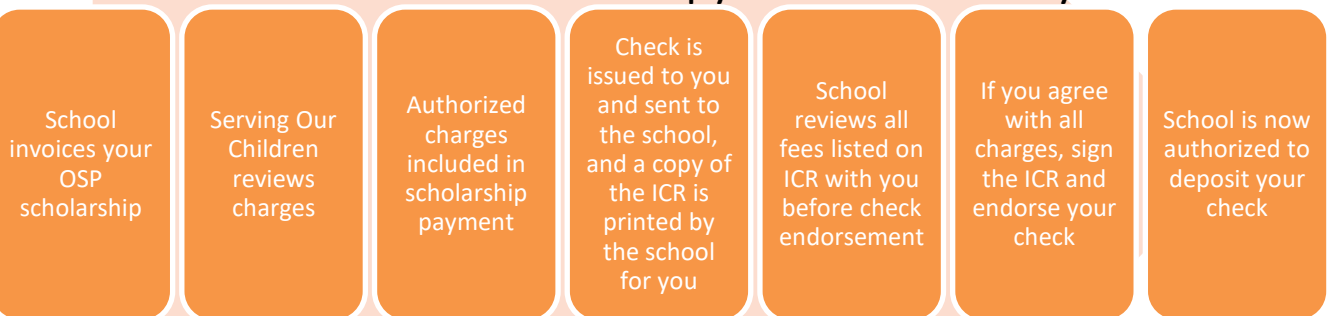
Your student's award for this school year depends on his/her grade level. Please see the table below for the maximum scholarship awards for the 2024-25 school year. The maximum award is set by the US Department of Education, in accordance with the enabling legislation.

Grade Level	Maximum Scholarship Award
Kindergarten – 8 th Grade	Not exceeding \$10,000 per student
9 th Grade – 12 th Grade	Not exceeding \$15,000 per student

How do I pay the school with my scholarship?

The school is authorized to invoice for tuition and other fees to be applied against your student's scholarship when a signed School Placement Form (SPF) is received by Serving Our Children. The school invoices your scholarship through STARS. Serving Our Children reviews the charges and determines whether they are authorized and if they shall be paid from your student's scholarship.

Once the charges and amounts are confirmed, Serving Our Children sends your check to you via your student's school. Your school's finance department should print the **Invoice Confirmation Report (ICR)** and review with you the assigned charges to your student's account. A household copy of the **ICR** is for you to retain.



Why must I endorse a check from Serving Our Children to my student's school?

As per the Program, your check is issued in the name of the parent/guardian and delivered to your student's school. Thus, for the school to deposit this stipend, the check must be endorsed by you, the parent/guardian. This provides an opportunity for you to review the application of the payment against tuitions, fees, and charges assessed by your school.

- Scholarship checks are made out to the guardian on file with Serving Our Children. **Only the guardian whose name is written on the check may sign it.** By endorsing the check, the parent/guardian allows the release of his/her scholarship money to the school.
- When a scholarship payment is issued, you will receive notification from Serving Our Children informing you that your check has been mailed to the school. *Be sure to keep your contact information up-to-date with Serving Our Children so we may provide you with this information in a timely manner.*
- You must go to the school at least two times during the school year to review the charges to your scholarship and to endorse your check. You should review the charges listed on the ICR **with the school official** to ensure they are correct.

If you agree with the charges, sign the ICR and endorse your check. Otherwise, inform the school of any discrepancies. Resolve any

discrepancies with the school or SOC and then endorse the ICR and sign the check. *See the payment calendar for general dates.*

Review the Invoice Confirmation Report before endorsing any checks.

Parents must confirm and agree

How may I best use my scholarship?

Plan in advance! Complete the “My OSP Budget” chart for each OSP student in your family to help determine which of the categories applies to your student.

Staying Below the Scholarship Cap

Choose the services that are most important to you. We encourage you to meet with school officials before school starts to go over fees and services. This will help to avoid unexpected costs later in the school year. You may keep track of fees using the “My OSP Budget” page (additional chart located at end of guide).

Some participating schools have tuition costs that are below the maximum award amount. In these cases, there may be limited funds left over to cover other school fees after paying tuition, however the scholarship may not be able to cover all of these additional fees. Please contact the school directly to review all costs.

My OSP Budget

Work with your school to complete this chart to determine if your student’s scholarship may cover any additional fees.

SCHOOL FEES WORKSHEET FOR SY 2024-25

I. Maximum Scholarship Award

1. What is your student’s grade level? _____

Enter the grade from your school placement letter

2. Based on the grade level, please **\$10,000** **\$15,000**
 circle the maximum award amount: (Grades K-8) (Grades 9-12)

II. Estimated Costs for Tuition and School Fees¹

School Name: _____

Write in name of your student’s school

Tuition	\$
Registration	\$
Book fee	\$
Uniforms	\$
Before care and/or after care	\$
Public transportation (WMATA only, with use of a registered DC One Card)	\$
Cafeteria or lunch fee	\$
Summer school or other summer program	\$
Other fees (approved fees submitted via a Fee Approval Form)	\$

¹ Check with school to confirm which fees may be invoiced to scholarship (school policies may vary).

Total: Est. Costs for Tuition & School Fees	\$
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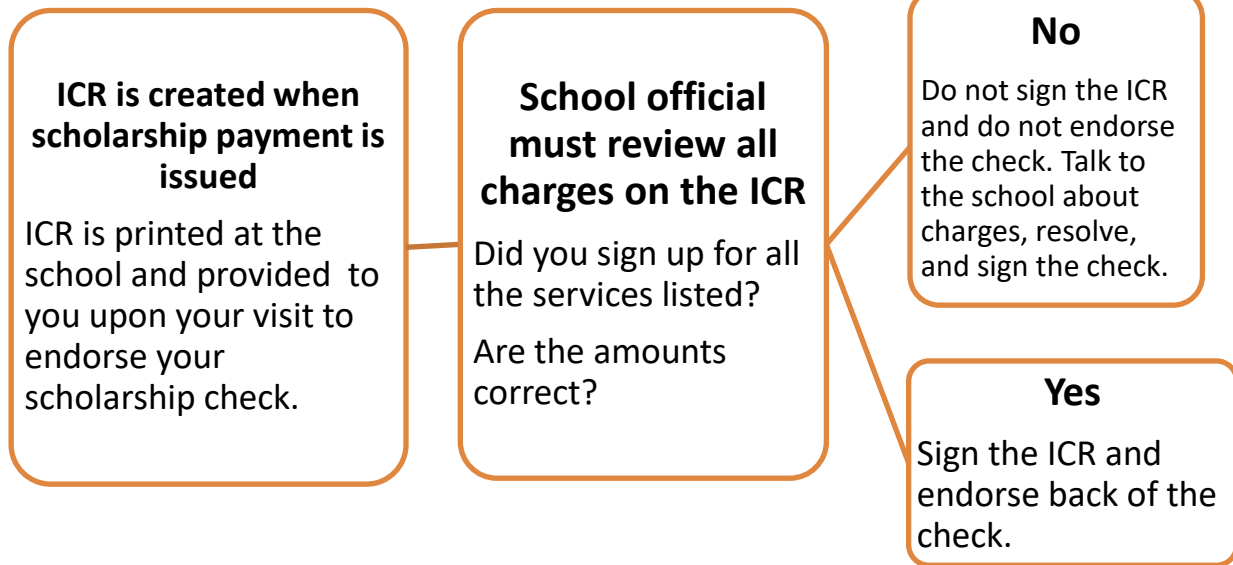
III. Scholarship Balance Calculation

A. Maximum Scholarship Award <i>Write in answer from section I</i>	\$
B. Total estimated tuition and school fees <i>Write in total from section II</i>	\$
C. Total scholarship balance available <i>(A)___ - (B)___ = (C)___</i>	\$

What if my tuition is more than the scholarship cap?

For tuition amounts more than the total scholarship cap, the scholarship will be used towards tuition first and **no additional fees will be covered.**

Confirming Charges to Your Scholarship



What happens to funds my student does not use?

Any remaining scholarship funds are returned to the Opportunity Scholarship Program account.

Scholarship funds may only be used for the awarded student for a specific school year. Unused funds may not be transferred to another student, nor may they be used towards fees for another school year.

May Serving Our Children send a check directly to me to repay for out-of-pocket expenses?

No, the law that created the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) states that your scholarship may only pay for authorized tuitions and approved fees at the school where your student is actually enrolled. Application fees may be reimbursed as per the Application Subsidy program (please review the Application Subsidy addendum).

What other options do I have for financial assistance?

Before your student begins school, be sure to talk to the appropriate staff at the school to discuss what options are available to pay any remaining balance. Policies vary by school, but some options may include:

- Merit-based scholarships (e.g., scholarships awarded based on your student's academic performance)

- Other financial aid options
- A payment installment plan to spread costs over the school year
- Parent/guardian volunteer hours

Please visit www.servingourchildrendc.org to find more information on financial assistance resources. Some programs include:

- Archdiocese of Washington, DC
- Black Student Fund
- Capital Partners for Education
- FitzGerald Program
- Jack Kent Cooke Program

All other resources for financial assistance may be used in conjunction with your scholarship.

Fees Covered By the Scholarship

What fees may the scholarship cover?

The scholarship pays for tuition first. If the tuition is less than the scholarship cap, then you may be able to cover other school-related fees with the scholarship, such as uniforms².

Ask your student's school which fees may be billed to the scholarship. It is up to the discretion of each school, subject to approval by SOC, to decide which fees may be billed to the scholarship. An example of a fee that may not be covered by your school is public transportation³.

Fees Your Scholarship May Cover

Check with your student's school to confirm whether or not they will invoice for certain fees.

Uniform (maximum of \$350 annually)

Before and After Care

Books

Field Trips

Public transportation (WMATA only, with use of registered DC OneCard, max of \$30 per month)

² Uniform vouchers are supplied by your school, not by Serving Our Children.

³ Gasoline, taxi-service, and costs for personal vehicles are not covered by the scholarship.

Which fees may not be paid with my scholarship?

Serving Our Children's scholarship payment policies were established in accordance with the legislation that created the program.

Fees Not Covered by the Scholarship:

Punitive Fees

- Late fees
- Parent/guardian participation and/or fundraising fees
- Penalties for student behavior

Supplies and Select Uniform Items

- Basic school supplies
- Computers
- Undergarments
- Gym shoes or sneakers

Other Fees

- Personal transportation
- Other items not related to your student's academic success
- Other fees your school has determined are not billable to your student's scholarship

Punitive Fees

Punitive fees are levied in some schools for a variety of reasons, including to ensure parental participation and may not be billed to the scholarship. Some common examples of punitive fees are:

- **Late Fees:** This fee is to ensure parent/guardians are on time. For instance, many schools have late fees by the hour, or by the minute, if students are picked up late from after-care. These fees are charged because the school has to pay the staff extra to stay late to care for the student.
- **Parent Participation and/or Fundraising Fees:** Parents/guardians who do not volunteer a certain number of hours and/or fundraise a certain amount of money, may be charged a penalty fee. It is common for families to be required to help raise money for the schools through various fundraising events, or to volunteer in other ways. This also encourages parents/guardians to participate in the student's school life.
- **Penalties for Student Behavior:** If a school determines your student is not in compliance with any of their mandatory policies, they may seek to charge punitive fees. This is solely at the school's discretion. In order to avoid these fees, please review all of the school's policies and procedures.

Supplies and Select Uniform Items

The scholarship may not cover fees that are not charged to all enrolled students. Fees may include:

- **School Supplies:** Backpacks, paper, notebooks, pencils and other supplies are not covered. Only supplies billed through a “School Supply Fee” may be covered.
- **Gym Shoes or Sneakers:** Gym shoes or sneakers are not covered by the scholarship. However, some shoes may be covered if they are a part of the uniform, prepaid by the school, and within the maximum amount available for uniforms.
- **Undergarments:** Underwear or undershirts are not covered. Socks are not covered unless they are part of the uniform, prepaid by the school and within the maximum amount available for uniforms.
- **Computers:** The purchase of computers are not covered by the scholarship.

Other Fees Not Covered by the Scholarship

- **Personal Transportation:** Gasoline, taxi-service, and costs for personal vehicles are not covered by the scholarship. Only public transportation fees may be invoiced to the scholarship.
- **Other fees for activities not related to academic success of your student:** Fees that are not related to your student's academic success may not be covered by your scholarship.
- **Other fees your school has determined are not billable to your student's scholarship:** School policies may vary regarding which fees may be invoiced to your student's scholarship. Check with your school to confirm which fees may be invoiced.

Why does the school say I have to pay for an educational fee/service?

Two common reasons schools may ask you to pay for particular services are:

1. The particular fee is not covered under the scholarship, based on the school's policies. Common examples of fees that may not be covered are:
 - Registration
 - Parent/guardian participation fees
 - Punitive fees
 - Public transportation (WMATA only, with use of registered DC One Card)

2. You have spent the maximum scholarship amount, and owe the school money for the remaining amount.

Remember, each school has its own policy about what fees may be covered. Talk to your school about which fees that may be billed to your scholarship.

How do I know if a fee may be invoiced to my scholarship?

The first step is talking to your school to know what is billed to the scholarship.

Any fees not listed on the school's published schedule of tuition and fees must be approved by Serving Our Children before they may be invoiced. The schools will contact Serving Our Children to determine if these fees meet program guidelines.

I have signed up for services and materials that will be paid by my scholarship, where may I pick them up?

Your school distributes all services and materials covered by the scholarship. For example, if your scholarship covers uniform vouchers, you must contact your school to obtain them. Serving Our Children does not distribute any school materials or services.

Why is the school saying I have to pay for a fee when they already invoiced it to my student's scholarship?

There could be two reasons for this:

1. You have spent the maximum scholarship amount, and owe the school money for the remaining amount;
2. The school official may not be aware the fee has been invoiced to your student's scholarship.

Be sure to speak with the OSP billing contact at your student's school so he/she may answer any questions about the charges to your scholarship and remaining balance owed (if applicable).

What should I do if I notice a fee listed on my ICR that I have already paid for out-of-pocket?

Do not sign the check until you clarify the charge(s) with the school official. If you have, in fact, paid for the fee out-of-pocket, your school must contact Serving Our Children to coordinate any applicable refunds or credits to your scholarship. **Do not sign the ICR and the check until all fee disputes are resolved.**

Transferring to another School

What should I do if I remove my student from his/her current OSP school?

Notify Serving Our Children immediately. It is important that you notify Serving Our Children as soon as your student is no longer attending a participating school. This will allow us to collect any overpayments owed to your student's scholarship by the school (if applicable). We may also help you find a new participating school for your student; any remaining funds will be made available to you to use towards tuition and fees at another participating school.

Notification may be accomplished by various means, such as telephone call to the Serving Our Children's offices, and email, or via the parental portal at our website. Once we have this data, we will verify the exit date with the exiting school. This is important in settling all tuitions, fees, and charges with the exiting school.

Serving Our Children may issue an additional scholarship payment if there are any outstanding fees owed at your student's previous school. Any additional payments will require you to review the ICR. The school may only deposit your checks once you approve the final charges by signing the ICR and endorse your scholarship check. It is important that you confer with SOC and the exiting school to reconcile accounts.

It is important to contact Serving Our Children before enrolling at another participating private school to determine the amount of available funds in your scholarship (if any).

Why am I being billed if my student did not attend any days at the school?

Once you submit a signed *School Placement Form* and/or *School Transfer Form* to a participating school, the school reserves the right to invoice for fees that it has incurred on behalf of your student.

Often times, schools will purchase materials in advance based on their expected enrollment and will incur costs for students prior to the first day of school. Your scholarship may be invoiced for these pre-paid fees (e.g. books, uniforms).

If you plan on transferring schools before school starts or choose not to attend the school where you submitted your *School Placement Form*, alert the school immediately to avoid any fees being charged to your scholarship.

If my student transfers to another school mid-year, may I use the scholarship at a new school?

While we highly recommend your student stay in his/her school for the entire year, we understand there may be circumstances under which a school change may be necessary during the year.

Once your student is no longer placed at the previous school (an Exit Form has been received by Serving Our Children), you may enroll your student at another participating school. The receiving school will generate the *School Transfer Form* to authorize your student's new school to invoice your scholarship. You must sign this form and it should be done upon enrollment. Any remaining scholarship funds may be used to pay for authorized charges.

The *School Transfer Form* is used to verify your student's first day of attendance at the new school. Your scholarship payments will be pro-rated according to the total days of enrollment at the respective schools. Again, this form must be signed by you and authorized staff from your student's previous school and new school.

Important Documents & Forms

School Placement Form

The **School Placement Form (SPF)** is available on STARS for download. A copy is also sent to the receiving school for completion. This is done after the student is awarded a scholarship for the given school year.

Your child cannot receive scholarship payment without a signed SPF form. This form allows your scholarship to be billed for by the school. You must fill out this form and request the school sign it to notify Serving Our Children where your student is enrolled. Families must not submit more than one SPF per student for current enrollment. (For any change in enrollment after the school year begins, families must complete the school transfer process.)

School Placement Letter

The **School Placement Letter** is no longer sent to the OSP parent/guardian. All enrollment information about your student is available on the family portal in STARS. Contact Serving Our Children immediately if any information included in the letter is incorrect (that is, student no longer enrolled at the school, incorrect grade listed, etc.).

Invoice Confirmation Report

The **Invoice Confirmation Report (ICR)** is a summary of tuition and fees that have been billed to your scholarship. Your ICR is generated when a payment is issued, typically occurring two to three times in a school year, and is printed by your school or by Serving Our Children to be reviewed upon your visit to endorse your scholarship check. Be sure to review all charges to your student's scholarship. If there are unclear or incorrect charges, contact your student's school. You must sign this form confirming all charges are correct for your student.

Exit Confirmation Form

The **Exit Confirmation Form** is filled out by the student's previous school and sent directly to Serving Our Children. It must be completed for any student who has left or will be leaving the school where he/she is currently placed. This form must be completed before your student may be placed at another OSP school. **If your student has an unexcused absence of ten (10) consecutive school days, your school has been directed to disenroll your student.**

The placement of your student and the status of your student with respect to enrollment, invoiced charges and fees, as well as all other germane information may be accessed via the family portal at www.servingourchildrenc.org.

School Transfer Form

The **School Transfer Form** must be completed for students who are transferring from one OSP school to another OSP school in the same school year. This form is similar to the *School Placement Form*, as it allows Serving Our Children to authorize the school to invoice your student's scholarship.

The parent/guardian and officials from the student's receiving school must complete and sign this form before the school may invoice for tuition, fees and other charges. As is the case with other OSP documents and forms, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to get this form completed.

Disputes with your School

Occasionally, when reviewing the ICR, charges assessed on the invoice may be disputed. It is your right to have these charges explained. If the charges were incorrectly assessed, please be sure to resolve any disputes prior to endorsing the check over to the school. If your school agrees, we can void the check and issue a corrected ICR and check, and you may review and endorse the check at a later date with the agreed to charges. Please review these disputed charges with the school before contacting our offices. If you are not able to resolve the dispute(s) with the school, Serving Our Children shall investigate and render a decision on the validity of the charge.

Ultimately all disputes must be resolved and a check must be signed over to the school for your student to remain in the OPS program. Failure to endorse a check rendered for payment of

received and utilized services shall prohibit participation in the program in future years. While Serving Our Children will attempt to assist in the resolution of disputes, all disputes of this nature must ultimately be settled between the parent and the school, and not Serving Our Children.

Payment Calendar SY 2024-25

Payment 1

Schools select option A or B

October, 2024 – Payment 1 Sent

Payments shall roll through November until complete

Payment 2

Schools select option A or B

January, 2025 – Payment 2 Sent

Payments shall roll through March until complete

Payment 3

Schools select option A or B

June, 2025 – Payment 3 Sent, if necessary

Payments shall roll through July until complete

Participating Schools (As of September, 2024)

Participating School Name	Grades	Address	Phone
Aidan Montessori School	PK – 6	2700 27 th Street NW	(202) 387-2700
Annunciation Catholic School	PK – 8	3825 Klinge Place NW	(202) 362-1408
Archbishop Carroll High School	9 – 12	4300 Harewood Road NE	(202) 529-0900
The Bishop John T. Walker School for Boys	K – 5	1801 Mississippi Avenue SE	(202)678-1515
Blessed Sacrament School	K – 8	5841 Chevy Chase Pkwy NW	(202) 966-6682
The Bridges Academy	PK – 8	6119 Georgia Avenue NW	(202) 829-1901
Christian Family Montessori School	PK – 6	201 Allison Street NW Ste. B	(202) 722-1520
Cornerstone School	PK –12	3742 Ely Place SE	(202) 575-0027
Dupont Park Adventist School			
• Alabama Avenue Campus	PK – 5	3942 Alabama Avenue SE	(202) 583-8500
• Massachusetts Avenue Campus	6 –8	3985 Massachusetts Ave. SE	(202) 575-5307
Edmund Burke School	6 – 12	4101 Connecticut Avenue NW	(202) 362-8882
The Field School	6 – 12	2301 Foxhall Road NW	(202) 295-5800
Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School	9 – 12	1524 35 th Street NW	(202) 337-3350
Gonzaga College High School	9 – 12	19 I Street NW	(202) 336-7100
Holy Trinity School	PK – 8	1325 36 th Street NW	(202) 337-2339

Participating Schools (As of September, 2024)

Participating School Name	Grades	Address	Phone
Howard University Early Learning Program	PK – K	531 College Street NW	(202) 806-7102
Kuumba Preparatory School of the Arts	PK – 11	3328 MLK, Jr. Avenue SE	(202) 563-5971
Lowell School	PK – 8	1640 Kalmia Road NW	(202) 577-2000
Milton Gottesman Jewish Day School of the Nation's Capital			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Campus 	PK – 1	4715 16 th Street NW	(202) 291-5737
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Campus 	2 – 6	6045 16 th Street NW	(202) 291-5737
The Monroe School	6 – 12	601 50 th Street NE	(202) 399-8350
National Presbyterian School	PK – 6	4121 Nebraska Avenue NW	(202) 537-7508
Our Lady of Victory School	PK – 8	4755 Whitehaven Pkwy NW	(202) 337-1421
Parkmont School	6 – 12	4842 16 th Street NW	(202) 726-0740
Sacred Heart School	PK – 8	1625 Park Road NW	(202) 265-4828
San Miguel School	6 – 8	7705 Georgia Avenue NW	(202) 232-8345
Sheridan School	K – 8	4400 36 th Street NW	(202) 362-7900
Sidwell Friends School	PK – 12	3825 Wisconsin Avenue NW	(202) 537-8100
St. Albans School	4 – 12	Mt. Saint Alban 3001 Wisconsin Avenue NW	(202) 537-6435

Participating Schools (As of September, 2024)

Participating School Name	Grades	Address	Phone
St. Anselm's Abbey School	6 – 12	4501 South Dakota Avenue NE	(202) 269-2350
St. Anthony School	PK – 8	12 th and Lawrence Street NE	(202) 526-4657
St. Augustine School	PK – 8	1421 V Street NW	(202) 667-2608
St. Francis Xavier Academy	PK – 8	2700 O Street SE	(202) 581-2010
St. John's College High School	9 – 12	2607 Military Road NW	(202) 363-2316
St. Peter School	PK – 8	422 3 rd Street SE	(202) 544-1618
St. Thomas More Academy	PK – 8	4265 4 th Street SE	(202) 561-1189
Washington Jesuit Academy	5 – 8	900 Varnum Street NE	(202) 832-7679
Washington School for Girls			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THEARC Campus 	6 – 8	1901 Mississippi Avenue SE	(202) 678-1113

My OSP Budget (Additional Student)

SCHOOL FEES WORKSHEET FOR SY 2024-25

I. Maximum Scholarship Award

1. What is your student's grade level? _____

Enter the grade on your school placement letter

2. Based on the grade level, please circle the maximum award amount: **\$10,000** **\$15,000**
(Grades K-8) (Grades 9-12)

II. Estimated Costs for Tuition and School Fees⁴

School Name: _____

Write in the name of your student's school

Tuition	\$
Registration	\$
Book fee	\$
Uniforms	\$
Before care and/or after care	\$
Public transportation <small>(Metrorail only, with use of registered DC One Card)</small>	\$
Cafeteria or lunch fee	\$
Summer school or other summer program	\$
Other fees	\$
Total: Est. Costs for Tuition & School Fees	\$

⁴ Check with school to confirm which fees may be invoiced to scholarship (school policies may vary).

III. Scholarship Balance Calculation

A. Maximum Scholarship Award <i>Write in answer from section I</i>	\$
B. Total estimated tuition and school fees <i>Write in total from section II</i>	\$
C. Total scholarship balance available $(A)__ - (B)__ = (C)__$	\$

If total fees are less than the maximum award:

- Scholarship funds **may** be available to cover other approved fees throughout the year

If total fees exceed the maximum award:

- All scholarship funds have been spent
- No additional scholarship funds are available
- You are responsible to pay any remaining balance for tuition and fees to your student's school
- No additional scholarship funds are available
- You are responsible to pay any remaining balance for tuition and fees to your student's school

May the scholarship pay for Summer School?

Summer school **may be paid for academic programs:**

1. If your student attended an OSP school during the current academic year; **and**
2. If money is remaining in your student's scholarship account after:
 - a. Tuition and all other fees have been paid, **and;**
3. Summer school charges have been billed **on time** with Serving Our Children by your school. Be sure to contact Serving Our Children well before summer starts to ask if funds are available for summer school.

Remember, payments may only be sent to the school where your student is enrolled. To use another academic summer school program, talk to school officials about billing your scholarship and completing the proper documentation. If you plan to use a summer program at a school other than the one your student currently attends, a *School Transfer Form* must be submitted and signed by yourself, the current school your student attends, and the school your student will be attending for a summer program. This form may only be completed once your student has been admitted to the summer program. Payment may not be made until all documents are correctly submitted to Serving Our Children.

Sign up for summer school early. It is your responsibility to check with your school to ensure your scholarship is billed by the Payment 3 deadline **and** you have signed a summer school registration form listing the amount you will be charged. (Please see *Payment Calendar for dates/deadlines.*)

Application Subsidy Program

Serving Our Children shall reimburse for payments made by our families towards application fees charged by our schools:

1. Parents make an application to a school and pay the fee.
2. Parents receive a receipt describing the payment (school, date, and amount – and a designation of “application fee.”
3. Parents submit a request for reimbursement from SOC.
4. SOC shall issue a reimbursement check to the parent/guardian that made the payment
5. SOC shall reimburse up to five (5) schools maximum per academic year.
6. SOC shall reimburse for testing that may be required at some of our schools.



Serving Our Children

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