



## FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM

### PHILOSOPHY

We believe that, in order to prepare students for life in an ever more diverse society, a school should strive to attract a qualified student body that reflects the diversity of that society. To achieve this goal, it is essential that the ability to pay full tuition not be the deciding factor in attending Countryside. Therefore, Countryside offers need-based financial aid. The school's budget provides funds for such aid. This aid is intended as a supplement to family resources, and awards are made to families whose ability to pay school costs is limited. Admission decisions are made independently of financial aid decisions and without knowledge of aid requests, which in no way affect an applicant's chances for admission. The admission procedure and the Financial Aid Program are open to students of any race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, or gender orientation.

### PROCEDURE

New families submit a financial aid application at the same time as the application for admission. The Financial Aid Committee evaluates applications according to a standardized format. Newly admitted students will be notified of their financial aid award at the same time as they are notified of acceptance.

Returning families must submit their application by February 15. Returning students will be notified at least 2 weeks prior to the deadline for submitting tuition contracts.

### PAYMENT OPTIONS

To meet the yearly financial obligation of tuition, families have the option of 4 payment plans: annual, semi-annual, quarterly, or monthly.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q: Does applying for financial aid influence the admissions decision?**

**A:** No. Countryside School does not use financial need as a consideration in determining a student's eligibility for admission. The admission and financial aid processes are completely separate. Decisions regarding financial aid are not made until after the admission decision.

**Q: Is financial aid a loan? Does it need to be paid back?**

**A:** Financial aid is not a loan. It is a reduction in tuition and does not need to be paid back.

**Q: Is there an income cutoff for financial aid?**

**A:** No. Need will vary depending on the number of family members and family circumstances. There is no fixed income limit for aid. A variety of factors are considered, including family income, assets, liabilities, number of children attending Countryside, and extenuating circumstances.

**Q: How do I apply for financial aid?**

**A:** We use the online service of Financial Aid for School Tuition (FAST) to process applications for financial aid. Please access the link on our school website Afford page: [www.countrysideschool.org/FAST](http://www.countrysideschool.org/FAST) and follow the instructions in the FAST Application Procedure. If you do not have computer access, please contact the Business Manager at Countryside (217-355-1253).

Countryside School will pay your FAST application fee. To arrange for this payment, returning families should contact the Business Manager to receive a voucher number for inclusion in their application; new families should provide the Business Manager their FAST log-in and password by filling out that information on the bottom of the next page and submitting it in a sealed envelope addressed to the Business Manager. She will then complete the process for you by logging in and paying the application fee.

**FINANCIAL AID PROGRAM (Continued)**

**Q: When do I apply for financial aid?**

**A:** Returning families must submit their application by February 15. Families applying to Countryside should submit their application for financial aid at the time that they apply for admission.

**Q: Is financial aid automatically renewed each year?**

**A:** No. Because of the school's varying resources and changing applicant pool, and possible changes in family circumstances, awards are granted only on an annual basis. Returning families must reapply by February 15 for aid for the following school year. Priority is given to families who are currently receiving financial aid, provided that they continue to qualify for aid.

**Q: When will I be notified of my award?**

**A:** Newly admitted students will be notified of their financial aid award at the same time as they are notified of acceptance. Returning students will be notified at least 2 weeks prior to the deadline for submitting tuition contracts.

**Q: How much financial aid could I expect to receive?**

**A:** Using the financial analysis from FAST, the Financial Aid Committee determines the family's award. A variety of factors are considered, including family income, assets, liabilities, number of children attending Countryside, and extenuating circumstances. In general, the maximum award will be no more than 50% of tuition.

**Q: Is the application process confidential?**

**A:** All requests, forms, and awards are kept strictly confidential among the Committee.

**Q: Can I receive financial aid to cover supply fees?**

**A:** No. Each family is responsible for paying the yearly supply fee.

**Q: What is the New Student Enrollment Fee and does financial aid cover this fee?**

**A:** The New Student Enrollment Fee is a one-time fee for new students and is not covered by financial aid. However, it is taken into consideration by the Financial Aid Committee in calculating the financial aid award. If paying the entire New Student Enrollment Fee in one lump sum is a hardship, a family can arrange with the Business Manager for an installment plan for payment.

For more information about tuition, financial aid, and payment options, please contact:

Vivian Carpenter, Business Manager  
carpenter@countrysideschool.org  
Phone 217.355.1253  
Fax 217.355.7492



New Applicants only, please submit the following information to the Business Manager:

**Applicant Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**User Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Password** \_\_\_\_\_