



Tuition Assistance - Frequently Asked Questions

When our family applies for tuition assistance, what information will schools require?

Tuition assistance is based on financial need. To determine how much financial assistance you need, schools use the School and Student Services (SSS) computations to first figure out how much you can contribute. The school needs to know such information as:

- Family size
- Income from all sources
- Savings, investments, and other assets (including home equity)
- Children's assets
- Indebtedness
- Medical, dental, and unusual expenses.

This information, and much more, is collected on the Parents' Financial Statement (PFS) and shared with all the schools you want to receive it. The PFS is called a common application, or common app, because you only need to complete one application for many schools.

Most schools will require you to submit a copy of your most recently completed federal tax return to verify that the information you used on the application is true and accurate. In certain cases — for example, if you own a farm or business — schools may also ask you for additional documentation.

What is SSS?

SSS is used by more than 2,400 K-12 private schools and other organizations to help determine a family's ability to pay school costs. The service and process helps ensure all schools use the same methods and objective procedures to evaluate your tuition assistance application.

Where do the funds come from for tuition assistance?

Good Shepherd allocates 16% of the operating budget in support of tuition assistance. Approximately 25% of our students are on some level of assistance.

Do I need to complete this again if I did it last year?

Yes, it is required that all families complete the process in SSS annually, including uploading all of the required documents.

What happens with all of the information I upload to SSS?

All information is treated highly confidentially. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Tuition Assistance Assistant (TA) are the only individuals at the school with access to your detailed information. The CFO reviews all information and provides a summarized report to the Tuition Assistance committee for determining awards. This committee is composed

of several school administrators. Teachers and parents are not a part of this process and are never made aware of which students receive aid.

What do I do if I am not comfortable uploading my personal documents to the SSS site?

While the SSS portal provides encryption for your documents, we recommend social security numbers are redacted from all documents before uploading. Alternatively, you may bring hard copies to the front desk or email copies to support@gsesdallas.org

What is the income level at which a family is no longer eligible for assistance?

There is no specific income limit. If you feel you cannot pay all the costs yourself, it's worth asking whether assistance is available.

When and how will I find out my award?

Tuition assistance awards are sent at the same time as enrollment contracts. Families will receive an email from the business office detailing the award amount or a regret letter if funds were not available for your request. For returning students, this occurs when re-enrollment contracts are published. New students will receive the award or regret letter at the time of the admissions decision letter.

Are there any tips or common pitfalls in completing the application?

SSS questions frequently ask for ANNUAL amounts, not monthly amounts. Families tend to underestimate their medical and unusual expenses. In the medical expense section, please include premiums that are deducted from paychecks, as well as all out of pocket expenses. For unusual expenses, some examples include legal costs, charitable contributions, child support payments and financial support to other family members. Please make sure to be thorough in your personal letter and family budget. These documents help support your case.

Who can I ask for help in completing the PFS form?

If you've read the online instructions but still have questions, call the SSS Customer Service Center toll free at (800) 344-8328).

If my family returns its tuition assistance application late, is there any chance more funds may be available later in the year?

Virtually all tuition assistance funds are distributed during the enrollment process January through March. For late admitting students or families with a mid-year change in circumstances, the school wants to be as supportive as possible as allowed by budget. Please reach out to the CFO in these cases.

How does my tuition assistance application affect the school's fundraising efforts?

The school wants all members of the community to feel a sense of belonging. Please reach out to the CFO if your financial circumstances are hindering your community involvement, including participation in the Annual Fund campaign and GSPO events such as Carnival and Auction.