

PCDS Financial Aid

Frequently Asked Questions

Will needing financial assistance put us at a disadvantage in the applicant pool?

Not at all - indicating a need for financial assistance has no bearing on admission. Once admissions decisions are made, financial aid applications for admitted students are evaluated. Admissions decisions and financial aid decisions will be communicated at the same time.

How important are the stated deadlines?

It's critical for you to plan ahead to meet all deadlines.

Current PCDS families have an earlier deadline, as we need to know who among our current families will continue to need financial aid, and if the need has changed. Reenrollment contracts for current financial aid families are released in mid-February.

New applicant families need to adhere to published deadlines so that we can make timely awards for admitted students. Financial aid funds may not always be available for newly admitted students who have not previously filed a financial aid application.

Failure to provide information or meet stated deadlines could affect financial aid award decisions.

Why do you need my tax returns and other documents?

PCDS has a generous financial aid budget, and documentation allows us to make fair and appropriate award decisions with those funds. Recognizing that every family is different, these documents help us get a full picture and verify self-reported information.

If needed, we may ask for additional documents such as statements from public assistance agencies, social security, or disability payments, hardship documents from 401K distributions, bankruptcy judgments, trust documents, severance information, K-1 forms, partnership agreements, or other documents deemed necessary. Our goal is to understand each family's circumstance and arrive at an equitable tuition level.

My most recent tax return is from 2022. My 2023 return will not be filed for several months. How will you know what is really happening in my family?

Like most independent schools and colleges, PCDS uses prior year information when making award decisions. We require your prior year IRS 1040 when your application is filed and your current IRS 1040 (2023) as soon as it is filed. We will verify all reported information. When reviewing the new returns in the spring, if a family has significantly over or underestimated their current situation, PCDS may need to adjust the award.

For most families, circumstances change very little from year to year. If your family has had a significant life change (birth of a child, loss of a job, promotion, inheritance, etc.) we ask you to outline these circumstances in a letter to the financial aid committee. We also encourage you to make an appointment with Kristie Berg.

I'm concerned about sharing confidential information. How do I know it will be secure?

PCDS recognizes that the financial information you share is personal and private. The financial aid committee reviews applications and keeps all submitted information in the strictest confidence.

The organization *School and Student Services* (SSS) has been chosen to analyze and store data, due to their superior track record of protection, confidentiality, and security. Information regarding their Information Security Protocols can be found on their website.

I am divorced from my child's other parent.

The resources of both natural parents will be considered when a divorce or separation has taken place. This information must be provided to the School. The availability of complete information from both parents is essential to assure a fair assessment of the family contribution. Please contact Kristie Berg with any questions or concerns.

I don't think my family will qualify for financial aid, but the tuition is beyond my comfort level. Any advice?

Anyone who feels that tuition is out of reach should make an appointment with Kristie Berg to discuss your situation. Sometimes families do not qualify for need-based financial aid but can benefit from either the **Arizona Private School Tax Credit Program** OR the **Arizona Empowerment Scholarship Account Program**. Information regarding these programs can be found on the PCDS website.

What is the AZ Private School Tax Credit Program?

The state of Arizona allows Arizona taxpayers to redirect part of their tax liability towards scholarships for students to attend private schools. There are strict rules and guidelines on who can receive these scholarships. Many PCDS families use this program to help offset their family tuition obligation. Information regarding the program can be found on the PCDS website. Kristie Berg is always ready to walk families through this process as well.

What is the Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA)?

The ESA program is a scholarship through the Arizona Department of Education available for students who DO NOT attend Public School. ESA funds can be used for approved educational expenses such as private school tuition, books, and tutoring. Additional information can be found at the [Arizona Department of Education](#).

Can we use both of these programs in the same school year?

NO. Families must decide which program works best for them and ARE NOT PERMITTED to use these programs in combination.

What if I still have questions?

Please contact Kristie Berg at Kristie.berg@pcds.org or 602-955-8200 ext. 2228 to schedule a confidential appointment.