

CSSSA FINANCIAL AID

Frequently Asked Questions

I don't live in California. Can I still qualify for financial aid?

No, unfortunately, CSSSA's financial aid is only available to students residing in California. However, you can consider other financial aid sources such as the Anthony Quinn Foundation scholarships. Visit the Tuition & Financial Aid page on our website for more information.

What information do I need to apply for financial aid?

There are four parts to our financial aid application: 1) Parent/guardian information, 2) Student Aid Index (SAI), 3) supporting document(s) upload, 4) your signature.

What do I do if my parents do not file taxes?

Yes, it is possible you can still qualify for financial aid. There are many reasons why a family may not file taxes, such as undocumented status or income that falls below the threshold. Instead of tax return documents, you may upload proof of income such as pay stubs, social security or public assistance award letters, and any other supporting documentation. Please contact us at comments@csssa.ca.gov for further instruction.

What if my parents cannot access copies of their most recent tax return?

We are required to verify your application with the most recently filed taxes. You must submit your CSSSA Financial Aid request and a copy of your parents'/guardians' 2023 or 2024 income tax return prior to the deadline in order to be considered. We recommend your parent/guardian contact their tax preparer for copies or the government agency where they are filed.

Will my financial aid application affect my chances of being accepted to CSSSA?

No, your request for financial aid will have no bearing on the admission process. Your financial aid application will only be reviewed once admission decisions are made. No applicant is denied solely based on inability to pay.

Will receiving CSSSA financial aid affect any federal grants me or my siblings may receive for college?

The short answer is, no, it will not have an effect on other financial aid for you or your family members. CSSSA's financial aid awards are applied directly to your balance for CSSSA's tuition and do not need to be disclosed on FAFSA applications.

I attended CSSSA last year. Will I qualify for financial aid again this year?

Financial aid is only available to first-time California attendees. If you attended CSSSA in a previous year, you will not be eligible for financial aid.

What's the maximum allowable household income for me to qualify for financial aid?

There is no maximum amount. Financial aid is based on many variables, including your parent/guardian's income. By filling out the financial aid forms and providing copies of your parent/guardian's most recently filed tax returns, we are able to assess your eligibility for aid.

Will I be notified if I have been approved for financial aid?

Once you are invited to attend CSSSA 2025 summer session, you will be notified via a separate email detailing the financial aid award amounts. Award amounts are for either full or partial (50%) tuition. If you were not awarded financial aid, you will not receive an email.

Is financial aid a scholarship or a loan?

CSSSA Financial Aid is based on an assessment of a student's needs. Students are not turned away if they are unable to pay. Whether a student receives a partial or full scholarship, they do not have to pay the amount back. They would only be responsible for any remaining amount of tuition if they receive a partial scholarship.

How is financial aid handled if the student is independent from their parents?

If the student is claimed as a dependent on their parents' taxes, then the parents' financial information needs to be included in the financial aid application. If the student is not claimed as a dependent on anyone's taxes and they file taxes independently, then only the student's financial information needs to be included in the application.

What is the SAI?

The SAI is an eligibility index number we use to determine whether you qualify for CSSSA's financial aid. The SAI is not the dollar amount your family is expected to provide. CSSSA uses the federal SAI estimator tool to determine your SAI.

What are examples of 'investments'? Do I need to report savings in a 401K or IRA?

You only need to include investments that are listed on your tax return.

Can international students apply for financial aid?

International students may apply for the CSSSA program, but cannot apply for financial aid. The CSSSA program is heavily subsidized by California taxpayers, and financial aid is only available to California residents.

Will my residency in a high-cost-of-living (HCOL) area be considered in my financial aid request?

Financial aid is determined by household AGI and SAI. If you would like CSSSA to consider additional or extraordinary circumstances you believe are relevant, you may upload a 1-page statement in the Supporting Documents section. Please note, however, that while CSSSA will review all submitted information, we cannot guarantee that any awards will be granted as a result.

Is there a fee waiver for the application?

There are several options to waive the application fee, such as your school is a Title 1 school, you receive free and reduced lunch, CSSSA representatives visited your school, or you attend a high school that partners with CSSSA. If any of these apply to you, please answer the questions in the fee waiver section at the end of the online application.