

What types of *education expenses* are covered?

Educational expenses approved by the South Carolina Dept. of Education include, but are not limited to:

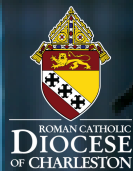
- Tuition and fees
- Textbooks, curriculum and other instructional materials
- Tutoring services
- Computer hardware or other technological devices primarily for student educational needs
- Tuition and fees for an approved nonpublic online education service provider or course
- Exams for college or university admission
- Education services for pupils with disabilities
- Contracted teaching service and classes
- Fees for transportation



Where can I learn more?

[classwallet.com/programs/
SouthCarolinaESTF](https://classwallet.com/programs/SouthCarolinaESTF)

charlestdiocese.org/schools/esas



What is the Educational Scholarship Trust Fund Program?

In May 2023, Gov. Henry McMaster signed the Education Scholarship Trust Fund Act into law.

This new ESTF program – modeled after similar programs around the country – allows qualifying South Carolina parents to apply for an annual scholarship worth \$6,000.

These scholarships may be used to create a customized, flexible education for their child.



Frequently Asked Questions for *Catholic Schools*

Everything you need to know about the new **Educational Scholarship Trust Fund Program**



Does each school need to *apply* to participate in the South Carolina ESTF Program?

Yes! Individual schools must apply directly for this program.

Who is *eligible*?

To be eligible, students must:

- Be a resident of South Carolina; AND
- Have attended a South Carolina public school during the previous school year, OR
- Have not yet attained the age of five on or before Sept. 1 of the previous school year but have attained the age of five on or before Sep. 1 of the current school year, OR have received a scholarship the previous school year; AND
- Have a household income as follows for School Year 2024-2025: Does not exceed 200% of the federal poverty guidelines.
- Students currently enrolled in a public charter school, home school students and students participating in the Educational Credit for Exceptional Needs Children's Fund program (as defined in Section 12-6-3790) are **not** eligible for this scholarship program.

What household income qualifies for the 2024-2025 school year?

2023 Federal Poverty Guidelines

May be updated January 2024

Persons in Family	Poverty Guideline	200% of Poverty Guideline
1	\$14,580	\$29,160
2	\$19,720	\$39,440
3	\$24,860	\$49,720
4	\$30,000	\$60,000
5	\$35,140	\$70,280
6	\$40,280	\$80,560
7	\$45,420	\$90,840
8	\$50,560	\$101,120

For households with more than eight people, add \$10,280 for each additional person. If enrolled in 4K First Steps program, he/she will automatically qualify for the ESTF scholarship.

What if a household income exceeds the current eligibility requirement?

This program will increase over the next few years to include more families:

2024-2025 school year	< 200% of federal poverty guidelines
2025-2026 school year	< 300% of federal poverty guidelines
2026-2027 and after	< 400% of federal poverty guidelines



What if the tuition to attend Catholic school is *more than \$6000*?

Any ESTF-qualifying family applying to a school whose tuition is above \$6,000 will need to apply for financial aid through the individual schools via FACTS Grant and Aid. When a qualifying family applies for financial aid through FACTS Grant and Aid above and beyond the \$6,000, the full amount of the \$6,000 will be deducted from their calculated need, therefore lowering any additional financial assistance they may receive. This should be communicated to families to make sure they understand before they determine how to spend the funds.

How will we handle *extra fees* (extracurricular activities, field trips, technology fees, etc.)

This will be at the discretion of each school with a Diocesan recommendation of at least 80% of the ESTF being earmarked for tuition. When a qualifying family applies for financial aid through FACTS Grant and Aid above and beyond the \$6,000 ESTF fund, the full amount of the \$6,000 will be deducted from their calculated need, therefore lowering any additional financial assistance they may receive.

How do education service providers *apply to participate* in the program?

The S.C. Dept. of Education will develop an application process for participation in the program which outlines the criteria and timeline for approval and will certify a list of approved education service providers no later than Feb. 1, 2024. This list will be available on the department's website. Applications are open beginning Jan. 8. at classwallet.com/programs/southcarolinaestf.

When and how may a parent or legal guardian *apply for a scholarship* for their student?

Scholarships will first be available for the 2024-2025 school year. The law requires that the scholarship application process open no earlier than Jan. 15, 2024, and close no later than March 15, 2024. The S.C. Dept. of Education will create, announce and publicize a standard application process.