

SSS BY NAIS FEE WAIVERS: Frequently Asked Questions for Families

The vast majority of financial assistance given by schools comes in the form of need-based grants. Schools typically require families to complete an application to determine the family's ability to contribute to educational expenses. We partner with School and Student Services (SSS) by NAIS in our financial aid process. To begin your financial aid application, you will complete SSS's Parents' Financial Statement (PFS). Using their unique methodology, they estimate the amount you can contribute to school expenses and forward that estimate to the appropriate schools. It's one form, for one fee, for any number of siblings, for any number of schools.

In keeping with their mission as a non-profit organization, SSS is introducing a new program this year where they will waive application fees for the families most in need of financial help.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

SSS will use Federal poverty guidelines as a starting point, combined with a cutoff for families with substantial assets. Over time, the goal is to expand the program to reach all families supported by the National School Lunch Program, a federally assisted meal program operating in public schools that provides free lunches to children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level.

HOW WILL IT WORK?

SSS will use the income and asset information in the PFS itself to assess a family's situation and automatically apply a waiver if the family qualifies. Qualifying families will simply bypass all payment screens when their PFS is complete.

CAN FAMILIES REQUEST FEE WAIVERS?

No, eligibility for a fee waiver will be automatically determined by the SSS system.

There are no applications to be filled out or requests to be made. If you're eligible, you simply won't have to pay in order to complete your application.

WILL FAMILIES WHO'VE RECEIVED WAIVERS IN THE PAST AUTOMATICALLY RECEIVE THEM AGAIN?

Many families that received fee waivers in the previous years will automatically qualify for the new program, and the access organizations we work with will continue to receive waivers that they can distribute to families according to their own guidelines and policies. It's just as important to note, however, that some returning families who received fee waivers in the past will not receive an automatic waiver in the new system. The reason is very straightforward—their income and/or assets may simply be too high to qualify under the new guidelines.

WHEN WILL THIS NEW PROGRAM BE IN PLACE?

This functionality will be fully operational when the 2016-17 PFS opens on November 2, 2015.

HOW DO YOU APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID THROUGH SSS BY NAIS

Beginning November 2nd, go to sssbynais.org/ parents to begin your PFS online. On the PFS, indicate which schools should receive your information. This way, you only have to fill out one form to apply to any number of schools. Once you've completed the form, submit your payment of \$47.00. If you have qualified for their new fee waiver program, this will not be required in order for you to finish. You'll then have access to a section called "My Documents." If schools require additional documents like tax returns, you can upload them there.

