Congressional School
Financial Aid Policy

Financial Aid Policy

Congressional School is committed to enrolling a talented and diverse student body by making a Congressional School education accessible to qualified families across a range of financial circumstances. Through need-based financial aid, the School provides support to families who demonstrate financial need.

Financial aid is available for qualified students entering Preschool through Grade 8 and is determined based on demonstrated financial need, available resources, and the number of qualified applicants. Because financial aid funds are limited, eligibility does not guarantee that a family will receive an award. All financial aid awards are provided as grants and do not need to be repaid. Families who qualify typically receive awards ranging up to 80% of tuition.

Financial aid for Preschool and Junior Kindergarten is limited. Awards for these grades are up to 25% of tuition and are typically reserved for families who also have an older child enrolled in Kindergarten through Grade 8 at Congressional School. Students enrolled in the Infant and Toddler Program at Congressional School are not eligible for financial aid.

Financial Aid Review Committee

The Congressional School Financial Aid Committee is appointed by the School and is responsible for reviewing financial aid applications and making award decisions within the financial aid budget established by the Board of Trustees. The Committee seeks to distribute available financial aid as equitably as possible among qualified families while considering each family's demonstrated financial need.

Financial aid applications and awards are confidential. Information regarding a family's financial aid application or award is limited to members of the Financial Aid Committee and, as necessary, the School Controller and Registrar for billing and administrative purposes. Families receiving financial aid are expected to respect the privacy of their award information and recognize that financial aid decisions are individualized based on each family's unique financial circumstances. Sharing award information with other families or submitting fraudulent information may result in the reconsideration or loss of financial aid.

As a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), Congressional School follows the Principles of Good Practice in administering its financial aid program.

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Application Process

Congressional School uses Clarity, a secure third-party service, to help determine a family's financial need. Clarity provides the School with an assessment of a family's financial circumstances and a recommended contribution amount. The Congressional School Financial Aid Committee makes the final determination regarding eligibility and award amounts.

The financial aid process is separate from the admissions process. Students must complete the admissions process and be accepted to Congressional School before they can be considered for financial aid.

For returning families, financial aid must be renewed annually. Because family circumstances and available financial aid funds may change from year to year, a family's financial aid award may increase, decrease, or remain the same upon annual review.

Awards are contingent upon the student remaining eligible for reenrollment. Students must continue to meet the School's academic and behavioral expectations, and families must remain in good financial standing with the School.

Financial aid awards are intended to assist with current tuition obligations and cannot be applied to prior outstanding balances owed to Congressional School. Any outstanding balance owed by the financially responsible parent(s) or legal guardian(s), including balances associated with any student for whom they are financially responsible, must be resolved before a financial aid award can be finalized.

When reviewing financial aid applications, the Financial Aid Committee considers several factors, including:

- The recommendation of Clarity based on the information provided on the application and tax documents.
- The availability of financial aid funds within Congressional School's annual budget.
- The number of families applying for financial aid.
- Completion of all required application materials by the published financial aid deadlines.
    - Late applications will only be considered if funding remains available.
- Families who are returning to Congressional School are given priority for financial aid funds during the reenrollment process.

In addition to these factors, the Financial Aid Committee reviews each family's overall financial circumstances. This includes sources of income, household size, number of dependent children, family assets, spending priorities, and significant financial obligations and expenses. The Committee also considers how a family's financial resources are allocated when determining demonstrated financial need.

Families are responsible for providing complete and accurate information during the financial aid application process. If information changes or if inaccurate or incomplete information is

discovered, Congressional School reserves the right to reconsider or adjust a financial aid award.

Parental Responsibilities

Responsibility for payment of tuition remains with the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) designated as financially responsible in the enrollment agreement.

Divorced, Separated, or Unmarried Parents

For families with divorced, separated, or unmarried parents, Congressional School requires financial information from both legal parents, when applicable. Each parent must submit a separate Clarity application and all required supporting documentation so the Financial Aid Committee can conduct a complete and equitable review. Exceptions may be considered in circumstances such as documented estrangement, absence, or other situations reviewed by the Financial Aid Committee.

A parent who is not listed on the enrollment agreement may still be required to submit a financial aid application if they reside in the student's household or provide financial support for the student. This information allows the Financial Aid Committee to gain a complete understanding of the family's financial circumstances.

If a parent is completely estranged from the student and family and has no contact or financial involvement, the requirement to submit a financial aid application may be waived. Families requesting a waiver may be asked to provide supporting documentation.

If either parent has remarried, the income and assets of the entire household, including those of a stepparent, will be considered when determining a family's demonstrated financial need.

Families are responsible for determining how financial aid awards and tuition obligations will be allocated between parents. The school does not determine how an award should be divided between spouses or parents.

Parents Voluntarily Reducing Income

Congressional School does not provide additional financial aid to offset a voluntary reduction in income. Examples include voluntarily leaving employment, starting a new business, returning to school, or making a career change.

When a family chooses to reduce its income voluntarily, the Financial Aid Committee assumes that the decision was made with consideration of the family's ability to meet its student's educational expenses. In these situations, demonstrated financial need may be evaluated based on the family's earning capacity or income prior to the voluntary reduction, rather than the reduced income alone.

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Non-Working Parents

Congressional School recognizes that families contribute to educational expenses in different ways and expects families to consider all available resources when planning for a Congressional School education. When a parent is not employed while their children are enrolled in school full time, the Financial Aid Committee may consider an imputed minimum income for the non-working parent when determining demonstrated financial need.

This policy does not require a parent to seek employment. Rather, it recognizes the potential contribution a parent may be able to make based on their earning capacity and helps ensure that financial aid decisions reflect the family's overall financial circumstances. This policy may not apply if a parent can provide documentation that they are unable to work due to circumstances such as a disability or caregiving responsibilities for an aging parent or other dependent.

Trust Funds and College Savings Accounts

Trust funds, 529 savings plans, and accounts designated for educational expenses for higher education are considered student assets and are evaluated accordingly when determining demonstrated financial need. While families may not be able to access the principal of these funds for tuition expenses, the asset is considered when assessing the family's ability to contribute toward educational costs.

Special Circumstances

Families experiencing significant changes in financial circumstances at any point during the school year are encouraged to contact the Director of Enrollment Management and Financial Aid to discuss whether additional information should be submitted for consideration. Examples may include job loss, unexpected medical expenses, or other significant financial changes.

Appeal Process

Families may appeal a financial aid award decision by submitting an email to the Director of Enrollment Management and Financial Aid within 10 days of receiving their decision. The appeal should include a letter explaining how the family's current financial circumstances have changed since the application, along with any supporting documentation, such as pay stubs, a monthly budget, and an explanation of the tuition amount the family believes they can reasonably afford, either monthly or annually. Submission of an appeal does not guarantee a change to the financial aid award. The Financial Aid Committee will review all submitted information and communicate any adjustments based on the circumstances presented.