

CARSON SMITH OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM (CSOS) GENERAL OVERVIEW

Prospective applicants may view additional program information at the [Children's First Education Fund Website](#)

Important Update

The Utah Legislature recently passed Senate Bill (S.B.) 44, Alternative Education Scholarship Combination. This legislation directly affects participants in the Carson Smith (CSS) and Special Needs Opportunity Scholarship (SNOpS) programs. The legislation creates a new scholarship that will eventually combine the CSS and the SNOpS, into one scholarship program the CSOS. You can review the bill in its entirety at the following link: [S.B. 44](#). As noted, on the CSS General Overview page, existing CSS students may continue receiving the CSS Scholarship until they withdraw for any reason. At that point, students will have the opportunity to utilize the CSOS program or other scholarship options.

Carson Smith Opportunities Scholarship (CSOS) Program

The CSOS is an education choice model for Utah residents that provides tuition assistance for eligible students with disabilities not enrolled in a public school. It is designed for students who would qualify for special education and related services in public schools, Preschool through 12th grade (3-21 years of age).

Together, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) or multidisciplinary teams, CSOS eligible private schools, and parents determine special education eligibility as defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The requirements for eligibility for the scholarship are the same as the eligibility requirements for special education services in public schools.

Student Eligibility Requirements for the CSOS Program

To be eligible for a scholarship, the student must meet all the following requirements:

1. The student's custodial parent or legal guardian must reside within the State of Utah.
2. The student must be eligible to participate in public school, in Pre-K, kindergarten, or grades 1 through 12 (and between the ages of 3 and 21).
3. A student, during the school year for which the student is applying for the scholarship, may not be: a student who receives a scholarship under the CSS Program created in Section [53F-4-302](#); or a public school student and must meet one of the following conditions:
 - a. Have a current Individualized Education Program (IEP) and been admitted to an eligible private school; or
 - b. Has been determined by a multidisciplinary evaluation team to be eligible for services under the IDEA, Subchapter II, 20 U.S.C. Secs. 1400 to 1419. (Note: Eligibility determined by a multidisciplinary evaluation team is not binding on any LEA.

c. Conditions of Understanding and Issues of Acceptance

When a CSOS is accepted, the following expectations are understood by the parents of the eligible student:

1. The student must not be enrolled in a public school or public charter school.
2. Private schools and "qualifying providers" become eligible by meeting eligibility requirements.
3. The parent assumes full financial responsibility for the education of the student.
4. Acceptance of the CSOS has the same effect as a parental refusal to consent to special education services.
5. The scholarship may or may not pay the full tuition, supplies, and/or fees at the eligible private school.
6. Any remaining tuition and fees after the scholarship has been paid is the responsibility of the parent.
7. A student who receives the CSOS may not participate in a dual enrollment program in a public school including participating in extracurricular activities.
8. A student who receives CSS funding is NOT eligible for the CSOS program.
9. A parent agrees to provide information as needed to process payments and to verify continuing student eligibility.
10. An eligible "scholarship expense" means:
 - a. published tuition and fees of a qualifying school or qualifying provider.
 - b. fees and instructional materials at a technical college.
 - c. tutoring services.
 - d. fees for after-school or summer education programs.
 - e. textbooks, curricula, or other instructional materials, including any supplemental materials or associated online instruction that a curriculum, qualifying provider, or a qualifying school recommends.
 - f. educational software and applications.
 - g. supplies or other equipment related to an eligible student's educational needs.
 - h. computer hardware or other technological devices that are intended primarily for an eligible student's educational needs.
 - i. fees for the following examinations, or for a preparation course for the following examinations, that the scholarship granting organization approves:
 - i. a national norm-referenced or standardized assessment described in Section 53F-6-410, an advanced placement examination, or another similar assessment.
 - ii. a state-recognized industry certification examination; and
 - iii. an examination related to college or university admission.
 - j. educational services for students with disabilities from a licensed or accredited practitioner or provider, including occupational, behavioral, physical, audiology, or speech-language therapies.
 - k. contracted services that the scholarship granting organization approves and that an LEA provides, including individual classes, after-school tutoring services, transportation, or fees or costs associated with participation in extracurricular activities.

- l. ride fees or fares for a fee-for-service transportation provider to transport the eligible student to and from a qualifying school or qualifying provider, not to exceed \$750 in a given school year.
 - m. expenses related to extracurricular activities, field trips, educational supplements, and other educational experiences.
 - n. any other expense for a good or service that a parent or scholarship student incurs in the education of the scholarship student and the scholarship granting organization approves in accordance with Subsection 53E-7-405(3).
11. A Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO) shall determine a full-year scholarship award to pay for the cost of one or more scholarship expenses in an amount not more than for an eligible student described in Subsection 53E-7-401(1)(a) and 53E-7-401(2)(a) who is:
- a. in kindergarten through grade 12 and whose family income is:
 - i. at or below 185% of the federal poverty level, the value of the weighted pupil unit multiplied by 2.5; or
 - ii. except as provided in Subsection (3)(a)(i)(C), above 185% of the federal poverty level, the value of the weighted pupil unit multiplied by two; or
 - iii. above 185% of the federal poverty level and the eligible student would have received an average of 180 minutes per day or more of special education services in a public school before transferring to a private school, the value of the weighted pupil unit multiplied by 2.5; or
 - b. in preschool, the value of the weighted pupil unit; or
 - i. for an eligible student described in Subsection 53E-7-401(1)(b) and 53E-7-401(2)(b), half the value of the weighted pupil unit.
12. Eligibility for a scholarship as determined by a multidisciplinary evaluation team under this program does not establish eligibility for an IEP under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Subchapter II, 20 U.S.C. Secs. 1400 to 1419 and is not binding on any LEA that is required to provide an IEP under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
13. The SGO shall prepare and disseminate information on the program to a parent applying for a scholarship on behalf of a student.
14. The CSOS program is funded by tax credit donations and money appropriated by the Legislature for that purpose. Scholarships are not guaranteed and are subject to the availability of funds.
15. The scholarship amount allocated to tuition may not exceed the tuition and fees charged to parents by a private school but may be used for allowable services provide by a qualified provider or approved by the SGO.
16. Scholarship payments may be written to the parent or guardian of the student or paid directly to the school on behalf of the parent.
17. A scholarship remains in force for three years, provided the student continues to meet eligibility requirements.
18. The scholarship may be renewed in three-year increments if an assessment team determines the student continues to meet eligibility requirements. For more information regarding renewal of the scholarship contact the SGO.