



Family Support and Community Engagement (FsACE)

2025 CSBG Scholarship Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The following FAQ is provided to assist you with the most common and frequently asked questions about the CSBG Scholarship Program.

1. What is the CSBG Scholarship Program?

CEDA’s CSBG Scholarship Program offers financial aid ranging up to \$5,000 for income-eligible individuals residing in suburban Cook County for post-secondary education at an accredited institution of higher education in the state of Illinois for the 2025-2026 academic year. The award must be used for only the 2025 fall semester. This assistance is funded via CEDA’s Community Services Block Grant (CSBG).

2. Who is eligible for the CSBG Scholarship Program?

The scholarship is available to any suburban Cook County resident who is enrolled in a post-secondary institution for undergraduate or graduate degree programs (not doctorate) by September 15, 2025 and living in a household that is determined to meet income eligibility guidelines. Please see the chart below for income eligibility guidelines. Additional application requirements apply.

2025 Income Eligibility Guidelines (Gross Income)		
Size of Household	30-Day Income Limit	Annual Income Limit
1	\$2,608.00	\$31,300.00
2	\$3,525.00	\$42,300.00
3	\$4,442.00	\$53,300.00
4	\$5,358.00	\$64,300.00
5	\$6,275.00	\$75,300.00
6	\$7,192.00	\$86,300.00
7	\$8,108.00	\$97,300.00
8	\$9,025.00	\$108,300.00
For each additional person add	\$917.00	\$11,000.00

3. What qualifies as income?

Income includes total annual cash receipts before taxes from all sources, with exceptions noted in #4 below. Income includes money wages and salaries before any deductions; net receipts from nonfarm self-employment (receipts from a person’s own incorporated business, professional business, or partnership, after deductions for business expenses); net receipts from farm self-employment (receipts from a farm which one operates as an owners, renter, or sharecropper, after deductions for farm operating expenses); regular payments from social security, railroad retirement, unemployment compensation, strike benefits from union funds, workers’ compensation, veterans’ payments, public assistance (including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, and non-Federally General Assistance or General Relief money payments), and alimony, child support and military family allotments or other regular support either from an absent family member(s) or someone not living in the household; private pensions, government employee pensions (including military retirement pay) and regular insurance or annuity payments; dividends, interest, net rental income, net royalties, period receipts from estates or trusts, and net gambling or lottery winnings.



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4. **What does not qualify as income?**

Income does not include the following types of money received: capital gains; any assets drawn down as withdrawals from a bank, the sale of property, a house, or a car; or tax refunds, gifts, loans, lump-sum inheritances, one-time insurance payments, or compensation for injury. Also excluded are noncash benefits, such as the employer-paid or union-paid portion of health insurance or other employee fringe benefits, the imputed value of rent from owner-occupied nonfarm or farm housing, and such federal noncash benefit programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps, school lunches, and housing assistance.

5. **Who has to provide proof of income?**

All family members 18 years of age or older and those members younger than 18 receiving a sustainable income such as SSI for a medical condition are required to provide income documentation.

6. **What documentation do I need to submit if I have no income or no proof of income?**

If a household member has no income or cannot provide proof of income, they are required to complete a "No Income/No Proof of Income Affidavit," which is included with the scholarship application. On this affidavit, the individual must indicate the month(s) for zero income or no proof of income, provide an explanation, sign and date the form. The "No Income/No Proof of Income Affidavit" must be witnessed and anyone who knows the applicant may be the witness.

7. **What documentation do I need to submit if I don't have an ID or social security card?**

If a household member, *other than the applicant*, has no ID or social security card readily available to submit with the CSBG scholarship application, they are required to complete a "No Identification Affidavit," which is included with the scholarship application. On this affidavit, the individual must indicate which statement applies, sign and date the form. The "No Identification Affidavit" must be witnessed and anyone who knows the applicant may be the Witness.

8. **If I am attending a vocational training center to obtain a certification, can I apply for the CSBG scholarship?**

No, the CSBG scholarship is only for post-secondary education. In previous years, vocational training students could apply for this scholarship, but now they must apply for financial assistance through the Trade Skills Program offered by CEDA's Family Support and Community Engagement department. More information about the Trade Skills Program is available at www.cedaorg.net or by calling (312) 259-4237.

9. **What does the scholarship cover?**

The scholarship covers tuition, uniforms, books, and fees related to education.

10. **What does the scholarship not cover?**

The scholarship does not cover the purchase of laptops or computers, payment of previous balances, costs that have already been paid, or costs not related to education.

11. **What school semester does the scholarship cover?**

Scholarship awards are for the fall 2025 semester only. Awards cannot be applied towards spring or summer semesters.



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12. What schools are eligible for the scholarship?

Only accredited post-secondary educational institutions in the state of Illinois are acceptable.

13. If I am a city of Chicago resident, which application do I use?

The Chicago Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) manages the CSBG Scholarship Program for Chicago residents.

The application for Chicago residents is available online at www.cityofchicago.org. Do a keyword search for "2025 CSBG Scholarship Application".

Chicago residents who have questions or need more information should email DFSScsbgscholarship@cityofchicago.org.

14. If I am a suburban Cook County resident, which application do I use?

Community and Economic Development Association of Cook County, Inc. (CEDA) manages the CSBG Scholarship Program for suburban Cook County residents.

The application for suburban Cook County residents is available at www.cedaorg.net. A sample completed application is available to download for reference.

Suburban Cook County residents who have questions or need more information should email csbgscholarship@cedaorg.net or call (312) 259-4237.

15. What documents are needed to apply for the scholarship?

In order to apply for the scholarship, you will need to provide:

- CSBG scholarship application (application pages 1-4)
- Proof of household gross income from May 7, 2025 through June 6, 2025 (for all family members 18 years of age and older)
- Illinois driver's license or state I.D (for all family members 18 years of age and older)
- Social security cards (for all family members including infants and children)
- Minimum 300-word essay

Transcripts and a letter of recommendation are no longer required.

16. Is there a guide available to help me complete the application accurately?

Yes, a sample completed application is available online at www.cedaorg.net. In addition, workshops will be conducted to provide information on how to complete the application correctly. To register for a workshop, please email csbgscholarship@cedaorg.net. Participation is not required.

17. How long will it take to know if I will receive a scholarship award?

Applicants will be notified the week of August 11, 2025.



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18. What happens if I submit my application with missing documentation?

Incomplete applications will not be reviewed and will not be eligible for the CSBG Scholarship Program. No exceptions.

19. What is the deadline and how do I submit the application?

The 2025 CSBG Scholarship Application is due by **Friday, June 20, 2025 no later than 5:00pm.** It can be hand delivered or mailed to the address below. Mailed, delivered, or postmarked applications that arrive after June 20, 2025 at 5pm will not be accepted.

CEDA of Cook County, Inc.
ATTN: 2025 CSBG Scholarship Program
53 East 154th Street
Harvey, IL 60426

20. How are scholarship applications evaluated?

CEDA implements an evaluation process that ensures all applications receive fair and unbiased reviews. Applications are assessed by an eligibility committee that reviews whether an applicant meets program eligibility requirements (income and residency). A final review evaluates submissions based on application completeness and financial need.

Incomplete applications are not reviewed and are not eligible for the CSBG Scholarship Program.

21. How is the award amount determined?

The applicant's school costs and need are used to determine the final award amount.

22. Who receives the check for the scholarship award?

The check for the scholarship award is made out to the school and mailed directly to the school.

23. Can part of the award go to the student?

The scholarship award cannot go to the student. The entire award must be applied towards allowable expenses (see #9). Any unused funds must be returned to CEDA by the school.

24. How often can I apply for CSBG Scholarship Program?

Scholarship funds are dependent upon funding. Individuals that have received assistance in a calendar year can apply the next year, provided they meet eligibility requirements.

25. What do I do if I have questions?

If you have any questions regarding the program or how to complete the application, you can email csbgscholarship@cedaorg.net or call (312) 259-4237.