Who Is Eligible For Financial Assistance?

All students in Grades K - 12 who qualify financially are eligible for need-based assistance. Each year, Hawken School awards over $5.3 million to approximately 33% of the student body in Grades K-12. The majority of financial assistance is awarded to students in Grades 6 through 12. Students in Kindergarten through Grades 5 are welcome to apply for assistance, but grants at these grades are limited and rarely exceed 50% of tuition.

Will Filing For Financial Assistance Diminish The Chances Of My Child Being Accepted?

Families apply for admission and financial assistance concurrently, but they are separate processes. Financial assistance applications are kept strictly confidential, and do not influence admissions decisions. Financial information is viewed only by the Financial Assistance Committee, and awards are seen only by the Committee, the Admission Office Administrative Assistant, and the Business Office. All financial assistance decisions are considered to be confidential agreements between Hawken School and the recipient family, and are treated accordingly.

What Factors Are Considered When Determining Financial Assistance Awards?

Hawken School uses the calculations provided by SSS as a starting point in determining the demonstrated need of a family. Other factors taken into consideration include the information provided by the tax forms, the number of children in tuition-bearing schools, as well as extenuating circumstances. Additional criteria is used for those who are self-employed or own a business or farm, or if there is a non-working parent and all children are of school age; please contact the Financial Assistance Office at 440-423-2955 for more information.

If We Receive An Award This Year, Will We Receive The Same Amount Next Year And Do We Need To Apply Again?

Current families who are receiving financial assistance can expect to receive a similar grant each year if the financial analysis from SSS, income, and assets remain the same. However, every family must reapply for financial assistance each year and meet all stated deadlines. If the current financial picture for the family changes, the assistance award may be adjusted. It is important to request a family copy of the SSS report each year to better ascertain your eligibility for assistance. Families who file late applications can expect that the awards will be adjusted to reflect the remaining financial assistance budget.

How Do We Apply For Financial Assistance?

Families interested in applying for assistance may begin the financial assistance application process on November 1. The financial assistance application is separate from the admission application, but should be completed concurrently. Complete instructions are provided in the Financial Assistance and Affordability brochure. Families who complete the financial assistance process by the necessary deadline will receive notification of an award with the letter of acceptance.

While Hawken has a generous financial assistance budget, it is not unlimited. For that reason, it is very important that families follow the published financial assistance application timeline. For questions regarding the financial assistance process, please call us at 440-423-2955.

What Consideration Is Given To Families With Multiple Children Who Attend Independent Schools?

The Financial Assistance Committee uses the SSS methodology as the basis for its determination of what a family might reasonably expect to contribute toward educational expenses. The total amount available from a family for education costs is divided among all children attending tuition-charging schools, through the undergraduate degree level. It is Hawken's policy that a family requesting aid from Hawken will also apply for aid at all other tuition charging schools.

What Scholarships Are Available At Hawken School?

The majority of Hawken's financial assistance awards are based solely on a family’s demonstrated financial need. In addition, a limited number of new Upper School students entering ninth and tenth grade will be eligible for merit scholarships through the James A. Hawken Scholarship Program, based on the strength of their academic record, personal qualities and anticipated future contributions to Hawken School. Hawken does not offer athletic scholarships of any kind.

If I Expect That My Circumstances Would Only Allow For A Small Grant, Should I Still Apply?

Absolutely! Each year, Hawken makes grants ranging from $1,500 to $25,000. We recognize that every family situation is different and that even a small amount of assistance can make a critical difference for many families.
Are The Filing Deadlines Important?

The filing deadlines are extremely important. In order to make fair, informed, and expedient decisions for all families it is very important to adhere to the established deadlines. However, when a family is unable to obtain all necessary tax information by the financial assistance deadlines, a provisional Form 1040 may be submitted. Of course, all awards will be subject to verification of the official Form 1040 information. Families who submit late applications for assistance may receive reduced awards, reflecting the remaining budget at that time.

I Am Not Married. How Should I File For Assistance?

For students whose parents are divorced, separated or were never married, Hawken School requires that both natural or adoptive parents, in addition to spouses or live-in partners, complete a separate SSS application for each household and submit all required forms. All financial information is kept strictly confidential and at no time will one party have access to the others’ information. Hawken will bear in mind the obligation of the custodial parent to her or his new family and the obligation the stepparent has to his or her natural children. Consideration of the non-custodial natural parent will be based upon the belief that a family’s contribution for education is a reflection of “the ability to contribute, not the willingness to contribute” which is standard NAIS/SSS policy. As a result, the School is not bound by existing decrees, agreements or arrangements exempting a parent from financial responsibility for her/his child’s education. If a parent is no longer involved in the life of the child in any way, please speak directly with the Director of Financial Assistance at Hawken. Hawken awards a single grant to the student; it is the responsibility of the parents to determine a payment schedule.

If, After We Receive The Award, We Feel We Still Cannot Afford To Send Our Child To Hawken, Is There An Appeal Process To Request More Assistance?

You may appeal the financial assistance award by submitting, in writing to the Director of Financial Assistance, the reasons why you feel the award is not sufficient. Hawken expects that any family making an appeal will have a Report of Family Contribution in hand prior to making the request. Hawken strives to make awards that are fair and equitable for all families applying for aid and we are unable to meet the full need of every family requesting assistance.

What Does Financial Assistance Cover?

Financial assistance grants are applied to the Tuition and Fees schedule that accompanies the enrollment agreement. Costs not included in tuition and fees include optional transportation fees, instrument rental as needed, some incidental athletic fees (gym uniforms, etc), and for students in Grades 9-12, books. Other costs may include Tuition Refund Insurance, which is dependent upon the payment plan option selected. Included are all lunch fees and field trips. Middle and Upper School students who receive a grant for tuition will also receive a separate grant to assist in buying a tablet computer, according to the purchase policy/schedule established by the Technology Department.

Who Will See My Financial Assistance Application?

All financial assistance information will be treated as highly confidential. Only the Financial Assistance Committee will see this information, and only the Committee, Admission Office Assistant, and Business Office will see the award. Division heads and faculty members are not privy to any financial materials, nor are they aware of which families apply for financial assistance.

If We Sacrifice In Order To Pay Tuition At Hawken, We Are Using Resources That Could Be Set Aside For College. How Can We Justify This Commitment For Secondary School?

We believe the value of an independent school education impacts not only the intellect but also the character of a young person and exceeds that of a college education and is more long lasting. Our hope is that students will emerge from Hawken School with greater college preparedness, maturity and motivation, and hence, choices. Colleges attended by Hawken graduates typically have extraordinarily strong financial aid programs to assist families in financing their child’s education at this next level. Hawken School and our College Counseling Office are able to provide guidance in this area.

Are There Accommodations Available For Significant Changes In Income?

Hawken School realizes that some families experience unexpected temporary financial stresses due to the sudden loss of a job, family illness, or other circumstances. Families are strongly encouraged to contact the Business Office or Admission Office as soon as it becomes apparent that there is a change in circumstance. The Business Office is happy to work with families to develop a temporary payment plan during a time of difficulty.

If We Do Not Qualify For Assistance, What Can We Do?

Families who apply for assistance but do not qualify have several options, including a variety of payment plans. Additionally, a limited number of low-interest loans are available.

Will We Be Asked To Contribute To The Annual Fund?

Families will be asked to donate to the Annual Fund, as it is a vital link to the overall health of the school. As the parent or guardian of a Hawken student, you may be asked to give of your time, energy, or resources to the extent that you are able. Every gift to the Annual Fund, regardless of size, matters. For those with special talents and time, the School is always seeking volunteers to assist with the Parents Association.