

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR ATTENDING THE HIGH SCHOOL OF ST. THOMAS MORE

QUESTIONS

Is there financial assistance available? What is required?

The parishes of the Champaign Vicariate generously provide financial assistance from their parish budgets. To be considered for assistance, a family must be registered and in good standing with a parish in the Champaign Vicariate. After completing the application process with FACTS, applicants will meet with their pastor to determine the final amount of assistance.

What determines if I am a parishioner in good standing?

For purposes of financial assistance, to be considered a “family in good standing” a pastor may look to the following criteria:

- the family is a registered and active parishioner of the parish.
- Sunday Mass attendance
- the family is actively supporting the parish with its time, talents, and treasures
- the family has completed all parts of the application for financial assistance by the deadline

For what can financial awards be used?

Financial assistance is only available for tuition. Other expenses such as lunch, uniforms, athletic fees, and incidentals will not be considered for financial assistance. Please discuss other arrangements with the Business Office or the Principal

PROCESS

What is the process for applying for financial assistance?

- All families seeking assistance must complete the FACTS Application with the deadline of April 15th, 2019.
 - More information on FACTS can be found here: <https://online.factsmgmt.com/aid>. This may be completed online: Only one form per family is needed, regardless of how many schools are involved.
 - All families regardless of receiving assistance or not will be using FACTS for tuition payment per Peoria Diocese Policy.
- All families seeking assistance must also apply for the Illinois Tax Credit scholarship. More information about the scholarship can be found on the STM Website. Families could receive anywhere from 50%, 75%, to 100% of tuition from the scholarship program. To apply for the scholarship, a family can go to <https://empowerillinois.org/>

to fill out the student application beginning on January 24th, 2018. To apply for the information families will need the following documents:

- Copy of 2017 federal tax return, 1099, W-2 or year-end pay stubs.
- Verification of Illinois residence (utility bill, driver's license etc.).
- Documentation of student age (birth certificate, federal/state ID or passport).
- Student's prior semester report card.
- If available, letter of acceptance or enrollment at an eligible school.
- Families can also receive assistance through the John Lancaster Spalding Scholarship Fund with the FACTS Deadline of April 15, 2018. Application information will be available after December 1, 2018 and can be found here:
<http://cdop.org/why-choose-catholic-schools/financial-assistance/>.
- "Families of students currently receiving grants are reminded that all grants are for one year only, and anyone seeking to renew a grant for next year must *reapply*."
- A family applying for Spalding Scholarship assistance must be an active member in good standing of a parish in the Catholic Diocese of Peoria.
- The student[s] for whom the aid is being sought must be enrolled in good standing [or seeking to be enrolled] in grades K through 12 in a Catholic school located in the Diocese of Peoria.
- All scholarship assistance will be based on a family's financial need objectively assessed. The diocese will use FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment Services to determine financial need.
- All scholarship assistance will also be dependent upon the recommendation of the pastor that the family is an active member of the parish in good standing
- Notification of grant awards will be made by May 30, 2019.
- Families interested in applying for tuition assistance from the Spalding Scholarship Fund must complete a FACTS Grant & Aid Application online at online.factsmgt.com/aid.
- Families must also request the pastor submit a recommendation to the Office of Catholic Schools verifying good standing in the parish.
- The application process is complete only when the pastor's recommendation has been submitted to the Office of Catholic Schools and when a completed parent financial aid application, and required supporting documents and the fee, have been submitted to FACTS.
- Only completed applications which include supporting documents submitted on or before April 15, 2019 will be considered when Spalding assistance awards are determined.
- If the student receives a full or partial Illinois Tax Credit Scholarship, they become ineligible for a Spalding award, and any Spalding award previously granted for 2019 – 2020 will be rescinded.
- [Spalding Scholarship Checklist for Completion](#)

What is the general timeline for deciding what kind of assistance we are eligible for?

- February: Information is submitted to FACTS and the Diocese (if seeking assistance from the Lancaster Scholarship)
- April: Recommendations from FACTS will be mailed to schools & Families and pastors can meet to discuss these recommendations and awards
- May: Final tuition agreements and plans will be set and mailed from STM
- ***If a family receives a 100% Tax Credit Scholarship they will not be eligible or need assistance from STM, Parish, or the Spalding Scholarship Fund***

General Questions

I may not have my 2017 taxes completed in time, what should I do?

- If you are unable to have your 2018 tax return and 2018 documents in by April 15th, 2019 (FACTS deadline), you may use your 2017 tax return with all of your 2017 income documents (W2s, etc.)
- Families will not be considered for the Lancaster Scholarship without the current tax return.

I am not sure if my child will be attending STM, I have not submitted an application. Can I still apply for financial aid?

- Yes. However, the STM application is needed to further the financial aid process.

I rather not waste my time with FACTS because I know I will not be recommended for assistance. Can't I just meet with my pastor to discuss my family's financial situation?

- No, because STM is required to have a FACTS form completed for any student wanting to receive a grant.
- This is because of the IHSA's rules regarding athletic recruiting as the IHSA audits STM's records regarding all awarded grants

What happens once the FACTS is submitted?

- FACTS will provide monetary recommendations for students to STM and the diocese.
- STM sends the information to the parish priests and meet with the families to determine financial assistance; each Parish completes this process differently. Families can contact their Parish for more information.
- Two scenarios are possible:
 - FACTS submits a recommended amount of assistance for the student
 - FACTS recommends that no financial assistance be given

Is the FACTS recommendation the final say? Is there little chance of my family getting assistance?

- No, STM and the supporting parishes realize that FACTS does not tell the whole story of a family's financial situation. Therefore, meeting with your parish priest is the best way to tell your family's story.
- So, whether the recommended amount from FACTS is \$5,000 or zero, every family is encouraged to take the FACTS information from STM and meet with their parish priest to discuss what the family can actually afford and to learn what kind of opportunities are available to support the student's cost of education.

Once the family and their pastor have determined what the family can actually afford, the pastor will meet with STM administration and together they will determine how to meet the student's unmet need.

There are several additional opportunities for support:

- *STM scholarship funds*
- *Parish funds designated for STM students*
- *Private donations*
- *Empower Illinois Tax Credit Scholarship*
- *Parents Serving STM Program (qualifying families)*

One way or another, your pastor and STM administration will help your family bridge the gap. Catholic students WILL NOT be denied the opportunity to attend STM due to a lack of funds.

The bottom line is this: *Any family who is in need of a grant MUST complete the FACTS form and meet with their parish priest.*

STM and your parish are committed to making sure every student who wants a Catholic high school education receives one. But STM must also follow the policy on how they we about awarding grants.

FACTS must receive your forms and documents by April 15th, 2019. It is NOT sufficient that they are postmarked by April 15th, 2019.

The John Lancaster Spalding Scholarship deadline for the Diocese is also April 15th, 2019.

We urge you to complete the required forms so the process can get underway.

If you have additional questions, please call our principal, Jason Schreder at STM (352-7210), or talk directly to your pastor.