

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 will be discussed
- 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 March 15th, 2017.
 - More information on FACTS can be found here: <https://online.factsmtg.com/aid>. This may be submitted by mail or completed online: Only one form per family is needed, regardless of how many schools are involved.
- Families can also receive assistance through the John Lancaster Spalding Scholarship Fund with the FACTS Deadline of March 15, 2017 with the notification of grant awards to be made by mid-April 2017. Application information will be available after December 1, 2016 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*.”

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

General Questions

I may not have my 2016 taxes completed in time, what should I do?

- If you are unable to have your 2016 tax return and 2016 documents in by March 15th, 2017 (FACTS deadline), you may use your 2015 tax return with all of your 2015 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*
- *Volunteering at the Assembly Hall or Memorial Stadium*
- *Parents Serving STM Program*

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 rules on how they go about awarding grants.

FACTS must receive your forms and documents by March 15th, 2017. It is NOT sufficient that they are postmarked by March 15th, 2017.

The John Lancaster Spalding Scholarship deadline for the Diocese is also March 15th, 2017.

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.