

# 2026-27 DSF SCHOLARSHIP POLICY

## Table of Contents

- [Initial Eligibility for New Applicants](#)
- [Apply for the DSF Scholarship – Deadline May 1](#)
- [Apply for Financial Aid by Your College’s Priority Deadline](#)
- [College Choice & Financial Aid Requirements – Deadline July 15](#)
- [Enrollment Requirements – Deadline by Your College’s Census Date](#)
- [Financial Aid Requirements – Before Your DSF Award Can Be Sent to Your College](#)
- [Ongoing Student Success Requirements](#)
- [Financial Aid Requirements – Deadline November 15](#)
- [Getting your Scholarship Award](#)
- [Scholarship Annual Awards Table](#)
- [Summer Scholarships](#)
- [Contacting DSF and Submitting Documents](#)
- [Appeals](#)
- [High School GPA Requirement](#)
- [Full-time Enrollment Requirement & Part-time Enrollment Requests](#)
- [Student Success Requirements \(SSRs\)](#)
- [Initial Payment Deadline](#)
- [Years of Eligibility & Eligible Colleges for the DSF Scholarship](#)
- [Extensions due to COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [Submitting the FAFSA or CASFA](#)
- [Definitions](#)

## 2026-27 Scholarship Policy

### Initial Eligibility for New Applicants

1. MUST have been enrolled in a Denver Public Schools (DPS) high school by the Colorado state [October Count](#) for all four (4) years of high school.
  - a. Students who graduate from a DPS high school in less than four years must have been enrolled (via October Count) each and every year at DPS.
  - b. Students who moved to Colorado from another state or country and graduate from a DPS high school will be eligible to apply for the scholarship. These students must have been enrolled in DPS for their entire high school time in Colorado.
2. MUST graduate from a DPS high school by July 1 with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 (weighted or unweighted, whichever is higher). Final cumulative high school GPA will determine the type of college where you will be eligible to receive the DSF scholarship:
  - a. 2.75 or higher GPA: eligible for scholarship at any [DSF college partner](#) (technical, community, or 4-year college/university).
  - b. 2.5 - 2.749 GPA: eligible for scholarship only at a DSF partner technical or community college.
  - c. 2.0 – 2.49 GPA: eligible for scholarship only at a DSF partner technical college.

See [High School GPA Requirement section](#) for more details about [eligible college types](#).

3. MUST apply for the DSF Scholarship and meet initial eligibility requirements within one year of high school graduation. Students have until December 31 of the year after graduation from high school (typically 18 months) to receive an [initial DSF scholarship award](#).

### Apply for the DSF Scholarship – Deadline May 1

1. Submit a completed DSF Scholarship application at [portal.denverscholarship.org](https://portal.denverscholarship.org).
2. *For New Applicants only:*

Apply for other Scholarships & Support Programs: at least 3 additional scholarships OR 2 scholarships and 1 student support program.

  - a. DSF recommends applying for [institutional scholarships](#) (offered by your college).
  - b. DSF Future Centers or [denverscholarship.org/scholarships](https://denverscholarship.org/scholarships) are accessible to learn about scholarship opportunities and student support programs (Note: FAFSA, CASFA, and the College Opportunity Fund (COF) are not scholarships).

### Apply for Financial Aid

All applicants, regardless of eligibility for federal student aid, will be required to Complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#), [Colorado Application for State Financial Aid \(CASFA\)](#), or other aid application as required by your college.

NOTE: To ensure to be considered for all possible state, federal, and institutional aid, it is

important to complete all required aid applications (FAFSA, CASFA, or other) by [your college's priority deadline](#).

## College Choice & Financial Aid Requirements – Deadline July 15

1. Must notify DSF of your final 2026-27 college enrollment plans by submitting a [College Choice Form](#).
  - a. Must attend a [DSF College Partner](#) in order to be considered for a scholarship award.
  - b. See more information on [Mid-Year Transfers](#).
2. Complete all financial aid requirements at your college by July 15 for fall DSF eligibility.

## Enrollment Requirements – Deadline by Your [College's Census Date](#)

1. Enroll full-time (at least 12 credit hours per semester/quarter) at an [eligible DSF College Partner](#) based on your High School GPA and [years of eligibility](#).  
See [Full-time Enrollment Requirement & exceptions information](#)

## Financial Aid Requirements – Before Your DSF Award Can Be Sent to Your College

1. Complete any steps necessary to qualify for Colorado residency classification (for in-state tuition or state aid at private institutions), as determined by your college.
2. Demonstrate Financial Need:  
*For New Applicants only:* Demonstrate financial need through a qualifying [Student Aid Index](#) between zero – 2.5x the maximum [Student Aid Index \(SAI\)](#) to qualify for a Pell grant, upon completion of all financial aid requirements. For 2026-27, your final SAI must be between 0-16,640\* to meet the DSF requirement of demonstrated financial need.
3. Complete any financial aid requirements added by your college after July 15 to ensure that your financial aid file is complete and eligible for disbursement.

## Ongoing Student Success Requirements

1. Complete DSF [Student Success Requirements](#) as defined by your college each semester/quarter that you receive a DSF award.
  - a. Your [DSF Campus Contact](#) will help you meet these requirements!
2. Meet your college's requirements for [Satisfactory Academic Progress \(SAP\)](#).

---

\* Based on 250% of the 2026-27 maximum SAI to qualify for a Pell Grant. This limit will be adjusted if the maximum SAI for Pell is changed.

## Financial Aid Requirements – Alternate Deadline November 15 (if missed July 15)

1. If you did not complete all financial aid requirements by the July 15 deadline, you may qualify for a winter/spring award if you complete your financial aid requirements by November 15 and meet all other DSF requirements as described above.
2. Your financial aid file must be complete and eligible for disbursement before your DSF award can be sent to your college.

## Getting your Scholarship Award!

The scholarship award payment is sent directly to the college for DSF Scholars who have met all requirements.

- Aug/Sept: Fall payments sent to college
- Jan/Feb: Winter/Spring payments sent to college
- Your scholarship award payment may not appear on your college award letter until DSF has sent the payment to your college.

Your eligibility and award amount will be determined by:

1. Your [DSF Cohort](#) & [Years of Eligibility](#) at your college type
2. The type of [DSF college partner](#) you are attending
3. Your [demonstrated financial need](#)
4. The number of college credits you are enrolled in  
[See Full-time Enrollment Requirement & exceptions information](#)

## Scholarship Fall/Winter/Spring Awards Table\*

DSF Partner College Type	Required Minimum HS GPA	Annual Award Amount
Four-year College/University	2.75	\$3,600
Community College	2.5	\$1,700
Technical College	2.0	\$1,700

\* Annual scholarship award amounts are based on full-time enrollment & will be divided equally per semester/quarter for the fall/winter/spring terms of each academic year.

## Summer Scholarships

DSF Scholars are eligible for one (1) summer scholarship award per year if the following requirements are met:

1. Must have received a DSF scholarship award in at least one term of the current academic year;
2. Must be attending a DSF college partner;
3. Must be enrolled in at least 3 credits;

4. Must be meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP); and
5. Must complete DSF Summer Enrollment Intention form no later than June 1, 2027 (for the 2026-27 academic year).

### *2026-27 Summer Scholarship Awards Table*

Enrollment Level	Summer Award Amount
3 – 5 credit hours	\$500
6 or more credit hours	\$1,000

Summer award amounts apply to all college types. Scholars will have the option to receive their summer award at a different DSF college partner than the college at which they received their fall and/or spring award. Appeals related to summer awards will not be considered.

## Contacting DSF and Submitting Documents- All Purpose

All required/requested documents [must be submitted online to DSF](#) by 11:59 p.m. Mountain Time on the day of the corresponding deadline. All document submissions must include the student's:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Phone number
- Student ID number (college ID preferred)
- Email address

If you have questions about the DSF Scholarship, contact DSF at [denverscholarship.org/contactus](https://denverscholarship.org/contactus) or 303.640.6564.

## More Detail on Scholarship Policies & Deadlines

### Appeals

DSF considers appeals to request exceptions to the scholarship policy in cases of exceptional circumstances. If you feel your situation may be appropriate for an appeal, please contact the DSF Scholarship team or your Campus Contact to discuss the situation.

DSF will review and consider appeals based on the following extenuating circumstances:

Death in your immediate family
Medical illness or injury (personal/immediate family)
Demonstrate financial need through an alternative to Student Aid Index if you are considered Dependent for purposes of FAFSA or CASFA and your parent(s) refuse to provide their information on your FAFSA or CASFA
Other special circumstances beyond your control

Time management issues, poor decision-making, forgetting about a deadline, and human error are not sufficient grounds for an appeal.

Appeals are considered on a rolling basis. Your completed appeal and any supporting documents (like a transcript or doctor's letter) must be submitted at least 30 days before the end of the term if you wish to be considered for a scholarship award in that term.

A *Guide to Appealing for an Alternative Demonstration of Financial Need* is available on the Resources tab of the [DSF Student Portal](#) and on the Denver Scholarship Foundation website ([denverscholarship.org](http://denverscholarship.org)).

DSF does not consider appeals for the following situations:

DPS # of Years Enrollment	Scholarship Amount
DPS Graduation	Length of Eligibility
High School GPA < 2.0	Graduate School
Eligible Colleges	Summer Scholarships

### High School GPA Requirement

Your final cumulative high school GPA (weighted or unweighted, whichever is higher) will determine the college type(s) where you are eligible to receive the DSF Scholarship. [Click here to see DSF's High School GPA Requirement webpage and FAQs.](#)

If Your Final HS GPA is:	You are eligible for the scholarship at the following DSF Partner College Type(s):	When you successfully complete your program at your initial college type:
2.75 or higher	<u><a href="#">Any college partner:</a></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Four-year College/University</li> <li>- Community College</li> <li>- Technical College</li> </ul>	...You will continue to be eligible at any college type within your years of eligibility (or through completion of your first bachelor's degree, whichever is first).
2.5 – 2.749	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u><a href="#">Community College</a></u></li> <li>- <u><a href="#">Technical College</a></u></li> </ul>	...You will be eligible at a four-year college/university within your years of eligibility.
2.0 – 2.49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <u><a href="#">Technical College</a></u></li> </ul>	...You will be eligible at a community college or four-year college/university within your years of eligibility.

If you plan to enroll at a college type where you do not meet the minimum required high school GPA, you have two options:

- Successfully complete a technical or community college program and provide proof to DSF;
- OR

- [Complete a GPA Appeal](#) once you meet the following requirements for an exception to the high school GPA requirement:
  - [Successful completion](#) of a minimum of 12 college credit hours at a community college or four-year college/university, as shown on a college transcript; and
  - Minimum 2.0 cumulative college GPA\*; and
  - Meeting current college's [Satisfactory Academic Progress](#) requirements (not on academic/financial aid suspension).

\*DSF uses the cumulative college GPA earned in the credits you use to meet the GPA Appeal requirements. If you use credits from more than one college as part of your appeal, DSF will refer to your submitted transcripts and combine all credits and grades to calculate your cumulative college GPA.

GPA Appeals are reviewed on a rolling basis and must be submitted at least 30 days before the end of the term to qualify for a DSF award in that term.

If you previously submitted an approved GPA Appeal or successfully completed a technical or community college program in a previous year, you will continue to be eligible for the scholarship at any college type for your years of eligibility as long as you meet all other scholarship requirements.

If you intend to transfer to a different college type for the Winter/Spring term, confirm that you meet the High School GPA Requirement for your transfer college type. If you do not, you must submit a GPA Appeal or proof of successful completion of a technical/community college program, along with your Mid-Year Transfer form and transcript, no later than February 1.

### **Full-time Enrollment Requirement & Part-time Enrollment Requests**

You must enroll full-time (12 credit hours or more) to be considered for the DSF Scholarship, unless enrolled in a certificate program. With pre-approval as detailed below, you may receive a prorated DSF Scholarship award while enrolled less than full-time for one of the following limited exceptions. [Click here to see DSF's Enrollment Requirements webpage.](#)

- Enrollment in a technical certificate program (pre-approval not required); or
- Enrollment in an academic program designed to be less than full-time (i.e., students with disabilities or programs such as study abroad); or
- Fewer than 12 credit hours are required to complete your associate's or bachelor's degree; or
- For a maximum of one academic year during your years of DSF Scholarship eligibility:
  - Part-time enrollment is needed due to prerequisite requirements; or
- For one term only during your years of DSF Scholarship eligibility,
  - Part-time enrollment is needed due to [developmental education](#); or
  - Part-time enrollment is a condition of an academic appeal.

To obtain pre-approval for part-time enrollment for any reason listed above other than enrollment in a technical certificate program, you must submit a complete [Part-Time Enrollment Form](#) to DSF by the time classes start.

- *If you enroll less than full-time for a reason other than enrollment in a technical certificate program, without pre-approval:* You will not receive a scholarship award for the term(s) in which you are enrolled part-time. You must continue to meet all other DSF Scholarship requirements to be considered for an award when you increase to full-time enrollment.

To obtain approval for part-time enrollment for any reason not listed above, you must submit an appeal for an exception due to significant extenuating circumstances. Examples of extenuating circumstances causing you to temporarily enroll part-time include medical or mental illness or injury, death in your immediate family, or other unusual circumstances beyond your control in which temporary part-time enrollment is recommended by an academic advisor or other support professional. See the section on [Appeals](#) for more details about DSF's appeal process.

### **Student Success Requirements (SSRs)**

As part of your Student Success Requirements (SSRs), you will meet with a [DSF Campus Contact](#) each semester/quarter who will help you work on completing your requirements. The SSRs help you stay on track to graduate by getting you involved on campus, keeping you on top of your academic success, and connecting you to people who can help you succeed.

If you qualify for a scholarship award and become a DSF Scholar, you are required to meet the SSRs for your college each semester/quarter. Visit the Resources tab of your DSF Student Portal or [denverscholarship.org/ssr](https://denverscholarship.org/ssr) to find your DSF Campus Contact and a complete list of all SSRs and deadlines for each college.

*If you do not meet the SSR requirement at your college:* You will be placed on scholarship suspension and will not receive a scholarship award for the next term, even if you transfer to another college.

### **Initial Payment Deadline**

You have until December 31 of the year after you graduate from high school to receive an initial DSF scholarship award. If you do not receive an initial payment within that time, you will not be eligible to apply for DSF in future years. [Contact DSF with any questions](#) about the initial payment deadline.

*For example,* applicants who graduate from high school in 2025 must receive an initial DSF scholarship award by December 31, 2026, in order to be considered for a scholarship in future years.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, students who graduated from high school in 2020 or 2021 had an additional year to receive their initial DSF payment.

1. 2020 high school graduates must have received their initial DSF payment by December 31, 2022.
2. 2021 high school graduates must have received their initial DSF payment by December 31, 2023.



## Years of Eligibility & Eligible Colleges for the DSF Scholarship

Your DSF Scholarship length (in years) of eligibility begins when you first meet the requirements to become a [DSF Finalist/member of a DSF Cohort](#). If you meet the [initial payment deadline](#) & continue to meet other scholarship deadlines/requirements, you are eligible for scholarship consideration for multiple years, as follows:

- 2 years at a technical college
- 3 years at a community college
- 5 years at a four-year college/university
- [Click here to see DSF's Years of Eligibility webpage](#)

*For example*, for students in the 2026 Cohort, their first school year of eligibility will be 2026-27. These students may continue to renew the DSF Scholarship through the 2030-31 school year as long as they have met the [initial payment deadline](#). Remember, you must re-apply for DSF each year by May 1 to continue to be eligible for the scholarship.

*If you withdraw/stop out or do not qualify for an award for any term(s):*

You may choose NOT to enroll (i.e., stop out) for one or more academic terms after becoming a DSF Finalist. However, the time taken off from your college program will be deducted from your remaining years of eligibility. Additionally, any academic term(s) in which you do not qualify for a scholarship award will also be deducted from your remaining years of eligibility.

- You may re-apply for the DSF Scholarship at any time within your remaining years of eligibility as long as you meet the [initial payment deadline](#). You must meet all DSF application deadlines and scholarship requirements to receive a payment.

## Extensions of Eligibility due to Covid-19 Pandemic

In response to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on DPS students and DSF Scholars, DSF added an additional year of eligibility for the scholarship or eligibility to apply for certain students in the 2018-2020 DSF cohorts or 2020 and 2021 graduates of DPS.

Students in the 2020 cohort who qualified for the COVID extension were eligible for their fifth and final year of DSF in 2024-25. They did not receive an additional sixth year of eligibility resulting from the change in overall years of DSF eligibility. The COVID extension has been retired.

## Submitting the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) or CASFA (Colorado Application for State Financial Aid)

FAFSA is an online federal form that students who are eligible for Federal Student Aid must complete annually to determine eligibility for student financial aid. Visit <https://fafsa.gov/> to complete the form.

If you are eligible for [Federal Student Aid](#) (U.S. Citizen, Legal Permanent Resident, or other [eligible non-citizen](#)) you must submit the FAFSA each year to be considered for a DSF Scholarship. To ensure that you qualify for all possible state, federal, and institutional aid, complete FAFSA and/or any other required aid applications by your college's [priority deadline](#).

CASFA is an online state form that students who are not eligible for Federal Student Aid must complete each year to determine eligibility for state or institutional financial aid. Visit <https://cdhe.colorado.gov/colorado-application-for-state-financial-aid> to complete the form. If you are eligible for federal aid, you should not complete CASFA (except under limited extenuating circumstances when you may choose CASFA instead of FAFSA).

To ensure that you qualify for all possible state and institutional aid, complete CASFA and/or any other required aid applications by your college's [priority deadline](#).

### Mid-Year Transfers

To encourage DSF Scholars to complete their degrees on time, DSF discourages Scholars from transferring from one DSF college partner to another between the fall and winter/spring terms, except in certain limited situations. See the [Mid-Year Transfer Form](#) on the Forms tab of the DSF Student Portal or [contact DSF](#) for more details.

*If you want to be considered for a Winter/Spring award at a different DSF college partner than you attended in the Fall:* You must meet all requirements on the [Mid-Year Transfer Form](#) and submit the form to DSF no later than February 1, 2027 for the 2026-27 academic year.

If you do not meet the [minimum high school GPA requirement](#) for your intended transfer college, you must also submit a completed [High School GPA Appeal](#) and college transcript showing that you meet the requirements along with your Mid-Year Transfer form.

## Definitions

### Associate of Applied Science (AAS)

The Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree is a two-year undergraduate degree similar to the Associate of Arts (AA) and the Associate of Science (AS) degree. Unlike AA and AS degrees, which are designed primarily as transfer degrees, the AAS degree is a technical degree and is designed for students who intend to enter the workforce immediately following graduation from their program.

### Census Date

A date set by your college that typically marks the last day you can add or drop classes for a full tuition refund. On this day, the college takes a "snapshot" of all students' enrollment for reporting or record-keeping purposes. Your enrollment on the census date is used for determining financial aid eligibility and to determine if you have met the DSF requirement of full-time enrollment (12 or more credit hours per term).

### College Choice Form (CCF)

Online form used to tell DSF which college you will attend. The form is available at [portal.denverscholarship.org](https://portal.denverscholarship.org) after you submit your DSF application. You must notify DSF of your final college choice for the upcoming academic year no later than July 15 in order to be considered for an award payment at that college.

### College Partner

College with official partnership with DSF that provides DSF Scholars with additional support on campus to help them be successful. DSF Applicants must enroll in a DSF college partner in order to be considered for a DSF scholarship award payment. [Click here for a list of DSF College Partners.](#)

### Developmental Education

Classes that are a pre-requisite for a college level course in reading, writing and mathematics to be successful in completing a college degree. Check with your Campus Contact or Academic Advisor if you're not sure whether you need to complete Developmental Education.

### DSF Finalist/Cohort

Applicants who meet the initial application eligibility requirements become DSF Finalists for the first time in a specific year and are assigned into that year's cohort. Each "cohort" is defined as each "group" with this shared timing (year). For example, New Applicants who meet the criteria to become DSF Finalists by July 15, 2026 will be members of the DSF 2026 Cohort.

### Eligible College Type

College type at which a Finalist is initially considered for a DSF scholarship award based on the student's final cumulative high school GPA (weighted or unweighted, whichever is highest). See [High School GPA Requirement](#) for details.

### Expected Family Contribution (EFC)

The former term used to describe the calculated measure of family financial strength produced by FAFSA or CASFA. This term will be retired after the 2023-24 academic year and is replaced by [Student Aid Index \(SAI\)](#). The number is confirmed by your college's Office of Financial Aid once the financial aid process is complete, and it helps determine the amount of financial aid you are awarded.

### Federal Student Aid (FSA)

Awarded by the U.S. Department of Education. It may include grants, work-study funds, and low-interest loans, including the Pell grant and Direct Student Loans. Covers such expenses as tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and transportation. Aid can also help pay for other related expenses, such as a computer and dependent care.

To be eligible, you must have financial need, be a U.S. citizen or [eligible noncitizen](#) (such as a Legal Permanent Resident), and be enrolled in an eligible degree or certificate program at your college or career school. For details about eligibility requirements for Federal Student Aid, visit [studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility](https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/eligibility) or your college's Office of Financial Aid.

### Institutional scholarships/financial aid

Any aid that comes directly from the college that you have applied to. It can be need-based aid or merit scholarships. In some instances, you do not need to be eligible for Federal Student Aid to be eligible for institutional aid. For more information about available institutional aid at your college, talk to your Office of Financial Aid.

### October Count

The enrollment window (usually about two weeks at the end of September - beginning of October) that is determined by the Colorado Department of Education every year. This is used by DSF for determining qualifying years of eligibility.

### Pell Limit

The maximum Student Aid Index ([SAI](#)) that qualifies for the federal Pell grant. The Pell limit is set by Federal Student Aid each year and may change annually; it is currently 6,656 for the 2026-27 academic year. The Pell limit is used to determine financial need for the DSF scholarship. If the maximum Pell-eligible SAI for 2026-27 is adjusted, DSF will update its policy accordingly.

### Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

Measure of successful completion of college courses and progress toward a degree based on meeting minimum requirements for GPA and course completion rate as defined by each college or university; required to maintain financial aid eligibility and eligibility for the DSF Scholarship.

### Student Aid Index (SAI)

The Student Aid Index or SAI is calculated based on the financial information that a student and any other contributors (such as a spouse, parent, or parent spouse or partner) provide on the FAFSA or CASFA. The SAI measures your family's financial strength and is used to determine your eligibility for federal, state, and institutional (college) aid. The SAI is a new term introduced by Federal Student Aid for the 2024-25 academic year and replaces Expected Family Contribution (EFC). The calculation is confirmed by your college's Office of Financial Aid once the financial aid process is complete, and it helps determine the amount of financial aid you are awarded. It is also used to determine whether you meet the DSF Financial Need requirement for the scholarship.

### Successful Completion

Completion of a course in which a Scholar receives a grade of A, B, C, D, S/A, S/B, S/C, or S (or equivalent as determined by your college). If the Scholar receives a grade of I, F, U, U/D, U/F, W, or AW (or equivalent as determined by your college), credits from that course will not be counted in the determination of how many credit hours the Scholar successfully completed. Based on some institutional academic and/or financial aid evaluation contexts, sometimes a grade of D will not qualify as successfully passing.