Maryland
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

BOOST Scholarship Program (2026-2027 school year)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Parents

The list below constitutes frequently asked questions about the BOOST Scholarship Program. This page will be updated with frequently asked questions and answers on a continual basis.

1. **Question: I did not work in 2025. Or, I receive SSI benefits. Or, my only income is child support. Do I still need to upload a 2025 Federal 1040 Tax form?**

   Answer: Yes. The BOOST Program ***only*** accepts the Federal 1040 Tax form. So, all applicants are required to complete a 2025 Federal 1040 Tax form with their taxable income and upload it to their online application. Some SSI benefits are taxable, and some are not. Here is some guidance from the IRS on SSI benefits. When in doubt, please consult a tax professional.

2. **Question: Can you provide some resources for completing the Federal 1040 Tax Form?**

   Answer: Sure! Below are some helpful resources:
   - Free File Fillable Forms and Guided Tax Software
   - IRS Tax Tips
   - IRS Customer Service
   - Visit 211 Maryland for services in Maryland
   - Reach out to your tax professional for advice

3. **Question: I'm still not sure how to fill out the 2025 Federal 1040 Tax form. What should I do?**

   Answer: Please consult with a tax professional or review the guidance from the IRS. We cannot provide tax advice.

4. **Question: I have not filed my Federal 1040 tax forms yet for 2025. Can I upload taxes from 2024 or my W-2?**

   Answer: No. Your application will be incomplete and will be declined. Do not submit your application until you have the correct documentation.

5. **Question: Can I just update my 2025-2026 application for the 2026-2027 school year?**

   Answer: No, these are two different applications. You must complete the newest application for the correct school year. Here is a link to the application.

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6. **Question: My child's school changed. How can I edit my application?**

   Answer: You have to send us a request to open your application up for you to edit it. Click here for a video on how to do this.

7. **Question: Are applications awarded on a first-come-first-serve basis?**

   Answer: No. Applications are reviewed for eligibility & priority. The deadline to apply is May 8, 2026.

8. **When will parents be notified if they are receiving an award?**

   Answer: Applicants will be notified by August 2026 of their award status. As parents decline awards, we'll continue to offer a scholarship to the next eligible student on the waiting list. We'll be making award offers from summer – December 11, 2026.

9. **Question: Will new applicants get an award?**

   Answer: We won't know until the budget bill is passed in April 2026 and the BOOST Advisory Board meets in Summer 2026.

10. **Question: Are there any other programs that offer tuition assistance?**

    Answer: Currently, BOOST is the only state-sponsored scholarship program. Some private schools offer discounts or financial aid based on family income or student merit. The school may have information on private scholarships. We've gathered a short list of other opportunities:

    - Children's Scholarship Fund Baltimore
    - The Theresa F. Truschel Charitable Foundation, Inc
    - Knotts Scholarship
    - Hillel International
    - The Maryland Knights of Columbus Scholarship Program
    - The Lucinda Jasper Scholarship
    - The Young Scholars Program
    - The John Carroll Society
    - Carson Scholarship

    Beyond 12th grade, the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) offers scholarships and financial aid.

11. **Question: My family is really struggling, and we need some assistance. What resources are available?**

    Answer: Here are some resources:
    - If you are struggling financially, the Department of Human Services (DHS) offers all types of assistance (nutrition assistance, medical assistance, emergency assistance, etc.).
    - Families may also turn to the American Red Cross for support during a financial crisis.
    - If your child has a disability and you are looking for information on your rights, please check out the Parent Information Series offered by MSDE's Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services.

12. **Question: I qualify for free meals at the public school and receive SNAP benefits. Does this mean I'm automatically eligible for BOOST?**

    Answer: No, not necessarily. We review your 2025 Federal 1040 Tax forms to determine your household size and the household income. The BOOST Program does not allow business losses to reduce income. Also, we consider income received from interest, dividends, IRA distributions, pensions, annuities and social security benefits as part of your household income. Then, we compare your household size and household income against the most recent FARMs (guidelines not available yet) income eligibility guidelines. Therefore, while your child may receive free meals at the public school, it doesn't guarantee eligibility for a BOOST award.

16. **Question: I see that renewals are first priority. What does a "renewal" mean?**

    Answer: A renewal student is a student that received and accepted a scholarship award for the 2025-2026 school year, the school confirms the child's enrollment, and the scholarship check is deposited towards the child's tuition.

17. **Can I carry over my child's BOOST scholarship award to the next school year?**

    Answer: No, the scholarship funds can only be used in the 2026-2027 school year.

18. **Question: Can I split the award between all of my children or give it to another applicant? Or transfer unused funds from one child to another?**

    Answer: No. Individual BOOST awards cannot be split or transferred to other eligible applicants. Any unused funds will be returned and offered to the next eligible applicant.

19. **Question: Can I listen to the BOOST Advisory Board meeting?**

    Answer: Yes! Once the date has been scheduled, we'll send a link to all parents who have submitted an application. Or, you can visit the BOOST Advisory Board webpage.

20. **When will my child(ren) receive their BOOST scholarship?**

    Answer: The scholarship check will be sent directly to the selected school sometime between September through December.

21. **I am going through financial hardship, is there a way to increase the scholarship value?**

    Answer: No, these are set amounts determined by the BOOST Advisory Board. Please refer to the recorded meetings on the BOOST Advisory Board webpage or questions #10 and#11 for additional resources.