



## North Carolina Education Student Accounts (ESA+) Program FAQ

Your student may be eligible for this scholarship. These **Frequently Asked Questions** can assist you in the application process.

### **What is the ESA+ Scholarship?**

North Carolina's Education Student Accounts (ESA+) program is available to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Funds may be used to pay tuition and fees for eligible independent schools and for expenses such as speech therapy, tutoring services, and educational technology. Awards are determined by the [North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority \(NCSEAA\)](#).

### **How much is the ESA+ Scholarship?**

The annual award is \$9,000; students with certain designated disabilities may be eligible to receive \$17,000 a year.

### **How do I apply?**

Scan this QR code or click [this link](#) to visit the NCSEAA website, where you can create a MyPortal account and complete the online application. Full instructions for how to apply are located [here](#).



### **What is required to qualify for the ESA+ Scholarship?**

Students must be in grades K through 12. Eligibility is based on documentation of a disability that "requires special education, as documented by a North Carolina public school IEP Eligibility Determination." The student must have a documented disability, and families must provide the Eligibility Determination Form from a North Carolina public school.

### **My student currently receives the ESA+ Scholarship. Do I need to apply again?**

Yes, you must reapply for the ESA+ Scholarship through NCSEAA each year. Beginning in late January, students who received funding the previous school year should receive communication from NCSEAA to renew their scholarship. Please log into your NCSEAA MyPortal account to complete your application.

### **When will I find out if my student will receive ESA funds?**

The NCSEAA expects they will notify families by early April.

### **If my student qualifies, will they definitely receive the ESA+ scholarship?**

Eligible students are awarded by lottery if there are more applications than funds available. Students who receive the ESA+ for one year will not enter the lottery for the following year (as they typically receive funds in subsequent years as long as the application is completed as required.)

**How does the certification and distribution of funds work?**

The family should select NGFS as their school as soon as they are awarded the ESA+ Scholarship. NCSEAA funds come directly to the school in the form of 2 payments, one in the fall and one in the spring. This award will appear in your NGFS FACTS payment account, showing as a credit for the full award at the beginning of the school year. Around September/October, NGFS certifies your student's enrollment with the state. Once certified, you will need to enter your MyPortal account and "endorse" your child's award. The same process applies for the spring semester. After you have signed off on the award, it will be distributed directly to the school.

**What happens if there are funds left over?**

After tuition and school expenses are paid to the school, any additional funds will go into your "Class Wallet" in MyPortal. These funds can be used for other expenses such as tutoring, speech therapy, and specialized educational technology. Instructions for submitting qualifying expenses are in the MyPortal area.

**As an NCSEAA ESA+ grant recipient, will my student need to take a standardized test?**

Yes, students receiving the ESA+ Scholarship are required to take a nationally standardized test each year they receive these funds. Test scores are reported to the state anonymously, and no minimum score is required to maintain the scholarship.

Students in grade 11 will take the ACT. Students in grades 3 and 8 will take a test to be determined by the Superintendent of Public Instruction and designated by the NCSEAA. ESA+ recipients in grades 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, and 12 will take a nationally standardized test chosen by NGFS. Tests given in the past have included the ERB, Iowa, and Stanford 10. All tests will be administered by NGFS.

**Who can I contact if I have questions?**

If you have a question about your ESA+ application, contact the NCSEAA at 1-855-330-3955 or [ESA@ncseaa.edu](mailto:ESA@ncseaa.edu). For NCSEAA MyPortal login help, contact 1-855-763-5333 or [loginhelp@ncseaa.edu](mailto:loginhelp@ncseaa.edu). If you are a prospective family and have questions about admission, contact Chris Skidmore, Director of Admissions, [cskidmore@ngfs.org](mailto:cskidmore@ngfs.org).