

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW HOPE FOR THE FUTURE + ESAs



Hope for the Future has been the bridge.

ESAs are the next step making Catholic education possible for more families than ever.

WHAT IS HOPE FOR THE FUTURE (HFF)?

Hope for the Future (HFF) is the Archdiocese of San Antonio's tuition assistance program. Thanks to incredible donors, Hope for the Future provides partial tuition assistance to families so their children can attend Catholic schools within the Archdiocese of San Antonio.

WHAT IS AN EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNT (ESA)?

ESA is a new program created by the State of Texas. Starting in 2026, families could receive approximately \$10,000 per child, per year to cover tuition and other educational expenses, often enough to pay for the full cost of Catholic school tuition in most of our schools.

HOW DO HFF AND ESA WORK TOGETHER?

Most families who qualify for HFF fall into an ESA priority group. While the selection of ESA recipients is subject to a lottery with no guarantee an application will be awarded, it is an incredible opportunity for our families. ESAs could cover up to 100% of K-8 tuition, plus extra expenses (uniforms, books, meals, technology, therapies). Have a high schooler? ESA will still cover a majority of the tuition. HFF will continue to award families a portion of their students' tuition for those families not selected for an ESA.

SHOULD HFF FAMILIES APPLY FOR ESA?

We encourage all families to apply to both due to the ESA lottery. Hope for the Future will still be available for qualifying families not awarded ESAs.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS FOR HOPE FOR THE FUTURE FAMILIES?

1. Stay connected: Sign up at sacatholicschools.org to receive ESA updates.
2. Gather documents: You'll need your child's birth certificate and proof of residence when applications open, along with any supporting documentation to qualify in a specific tier.
3. Join us for town hall meetings and other events to guide you through the process. To receive information about these events, make sure to sign up to stay connected today.



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EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNT (ESA):
GROWING OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN OUR FAITH COMMUNITIES.

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EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNT AT A GLANCE

SCHOOL



WHAT IS AN EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNT?

An Education Savings Account (ESA) is a new state program that gives families access to funds (~\$10,000 per child) to use for approved educational expenses, including Catholic school tuition, uniforms, technology, tutoring and more.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Any student who is eligible to enroll in a Texas public school may apply. This includes students currently in public, private, or homeschool settings, as well as those entering kindergarten. ESAs will be distributed through a lottery system, so every eligible family is encouraged to submit an application.

WHEN DOES THE PROGRAM START?

Applications open in January 2026, with funds available for the 2026–2027 school year.

HOW DO ESA'S HELP CATHOLIC SCHOOL FAMILIES?

For many families, tuition cost has been the biggest barrier to Catholic education. With ESAs, the doors to Catholic schools are more open than ever—making an excellent, faith-filled education possible for more children.

CAN CURRENT CATHOLIC SCHOOL FAMILIES APPLY?

Yes. If your child is eligible to enroll in a Texas public school, you may apply for an ESA—even if your child is already attending a Catholic school.

DO I STILL NEED TO APPLY FOR TUITION ASSISTANCE (HOPE FOR THE FUTURE)?

Recognizing that not all families will receive an ESA award for the upcoming 2026–2027 school year, tuition assistance will continue to be awarded to families who meet eligibility requirements for Hope for the Future (HFF). We know that Hope for the Future does not cover the full amount of tuition, but it is still an integral part of keeping our Catholic schools affordable for more families. HFF Application and Award information will be released this Fall, and all families are eligible to apply, though funds will be reserved for families who do not receive ESA funding.



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EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNT AT A GLANCE

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WHERE CAN I GET HELP WITH THE APPLICATION?

The Department of Catholic Schools- Archdiocese of San Antonio will provide ESA information sessions, step-by-step guides, and application workshops to help families through the process. Make sure to fill out the QR Code at the bottom to stay connected.

WHAT ARE THE "PRIORITY GROUPS" FOR FUNDING?

While every eligible family is encouraged to apply, the state has designated priority groups for funding distribution. Here is the breakdown of each funding group:

TIER 1: Students with a **disability** (defined by Texas Education Code Sec. 29.003) whose family income is **= or <500%** of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG)

TIER 2: Children whose family income is **= or <200%** of FPG

TIER 3: Children whose family income is between **200% and 500%** of FPG

TIER 4: Everyone else (depends on available funds). Students who wish to transfer from public schools will be prioritized over currently enrolled private school students in this category only.

TEXAS ESA INCOME GUIDELINES

Number of people in household	200% of Poverty Guidelines Yearly Income	500% of Poverty Guidelines Yearly Income
1	\$31,300	\$78,250
2	\$42,300	\$105,750
3	\$53,300	\$133,250
4	\$64,300	\$160,750
5	\$75,300	\$188,250
6	\$83,920	\$215,750
7	\$108,300	\$270,750



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EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNT AT A GLANCE

TIER 1 FOCUS



HOW DOES TEXAS DEFINE A "STUDENT WITH SPECIAL NEEDS" FOR TIER 1 ELIGIBILITY?

A student with special needs (Tier 1) is defined as a child age 21 or younger with a disability listed in Texas Education Code §29.003 that requires special services to be adequately or safely educated in a public school. Eligible conditions include visual or auditory impairment, physical disability, intellectual or developmental disability, emotional disturbance, learning disability, autism, speech disability, or traumatic brain injury.

WHAT DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED TO PROVE SPECIAL NEEDS ELIGIBILITY?

An evaluation from a school district conducted by a Licensed School Psychologist within the last three years.

HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE FOR THIS GROUP OF STUDENTS?

Tier 1 students receive the highest ESA allocation (up to \$30,000), which equals the average per-pupil allotment plus additional special education weights based on the student's instructional arrangement. In practice, this could mean well above the approximately \$10,000 base, depending on services.

WHAT SPECIFIC SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES/THERAPIES ARE COVERED?

The rules allow spending on licensed or accredited providers of:

- Speech therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

Counseling and other therapies tied to a student's disability needs

WHO CAN PROVIDE SERVICES UNDER ESA?

Only licensed or approved providers. The rules specify that therapists, tutors, or specialists must meet credentialing/approval standards to receive ESA funds.

HOW DO INCOME LEVELS AFFECT PRIORITY GROUP ELIGIBILITY?

- Priority Group A – Students with a qualifying disability (= or > 500% of FPL).
- Priority Group B – Students from families with income at or below 200% of the federal poverty line (FPL) (similar to free/reduced lunch guidelines).
- Priority Group C – Students from families with income between 200% and 500% of FPL.
- All other students – Any child eligible for public school (Pre-K-12) may apply, but will be considered after priority groups if funds are limited. (< or = 500% of FPL)

Number of people in household	200% of Poverty Guidelines Yearly Income	500% of Poverty Guidelines Yearly Income
1	\$31,300	\$78,250
2	\$42,300	\$105,750
3	\$53,300	\$133,250
4	\$64,300	\$160,750
5	\$75,300	\$188,250
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