

# The Opportunity Scholarship, Disabilities Grant, and Education Savings Account Programs

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North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority (SEAA) is a state agency that offers three programs (the Opportunity Scholarship, the Disabilities Grant, and the Education Savings Account) to North Carolina (NC) families to expand school choice for their eligible students in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. This document lists the similarities and differences across the programs.

## Similarities

- ▶ SEAA manages the application and award process, ensures that eligible schools meet program requirements, verifies student eligibility, and disburses funds.
- ▶ Nonpublic schools must register with SEAA to participate in one or more of the programs.
- ▶ To qualify for any of the programs, a student must meet *all* of the following requirements:
  - Be a resident of NC
  - Be 5 on or before August 31 of the upcoming school year
  - Be younger than 22 as of the date the upcoming school year begins
  - Not have a high school diploma
  - Apply and enroll to the eligible school of their choice
- ▶ The student must also meet at least *one* of the following requirements:
  - Be a new student entering kindergarten or 1<sup>st</sup> grade
  - Have a parent on full-time active duty with the United States military
  - Students not entering kindergarten or 1st grade, or whose parent is not on full-time active military duty must have been a full time student attending a NC public school or a Department of Defense school in NC for at least 75 days of the spring semester before the school year for which the family is applying, unless the student meets one of the exceptions listed below (e.g. foster care)
  - Student must also meet program specific criteria, see “Additional Required Eligibility Criteria” below
- ▶ New student applications for all of the programs are online at [www.ncseaa.edu](http://www.ncseaa.edu).
- ▶ Within each program, renewing students (students who received funds in the prior year) have priority over new students.

## Differences

	Opportunity Scholarship	Disabilities Grant	Education Savings Account
<b>Additional Required Eligibility Criteria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student must live in a household which meets Income Eligibility Guidelines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student requires special education, as documented on his/her active Individualized Education Program (IEP)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student requires special education, as documented on his/her active Individualized Education Program (IEP)</li> </ul>
<b>Additional Possible Eligibility Criteria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students in foster care, or</li> <li>• Students adopted in the last year even if they do not meet the public school enrollment criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students who have lived in NC the last six months but who do not meet the public school enrollment criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students in foster care, or</li> <li>• Students adopted in the last year even if they do not meet the public school enrollment criteria</li> </ul>
<b>School Choice Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nonpublic school, not including home schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nonpublic school, including home schools, or</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nonpublic school, including home schools</li> </ul>

*These descriptions do not represent a complete list of the Opportunity Scholarship, Disabilities Grant, or the Education Savings Account policies or rules. See the information posted online for full details*

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	Opportunity Scholarship	Disabilities Grant	Education Savings Account
<b>Part-time Public School &amp; Nonpublic School Enrollment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not permitted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public school for which tuition is required</li> <li>Not permitted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Permitted if the school that the child attends is a nonpublic school that exclusively provides services for children with disabilities as identified by the Authority</li> </ul>
<b>Award is used for</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tuition and required fees at a participating nonpublic school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tuition and required fees at a participating nonpublic school</li> <li>Qualified expenses as defined by Program statute related to educating a child with an active IEP in a regular nonpublic school or home school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tuition and required fees at a participating nonpublic school</li> <li>Qualified expenses as defined by Program statute related to educating a child with an active IEP in a regular nonpublic school or home school</li> </ul>
<b>Award Disbursement Method</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funds are disbursed directly to the school for tuition &amp; fees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funds are disbursed directly to the school for tuition &amp; fees, and/or</li> <li>Parents are reimbursed for qualified expenses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents are provided a debit card to be used for tuition &amp; fees and/or qualified expenses (expenses must be approved in order to continue participation in the program)</li> </ul>
<b>Award Amount</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to \$4,200 per student per school year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to \$8,000 per student per school year</li> <li>Unused funds are not carried forward.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$9,000 per student per school year</li> <li>Unused funds are carried forward provided the family/child continues to participate in the program and continues to meet the program's requirements</li> </ul>
<b>Application Timelines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new student application is available each year on February 1</li> <li>The application remains available until funds are exhausted however March 1 is the deadline for priority consideration</li> <li>New, eligible students are selected by a lottery system (see program details for additional information)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new student application is available each year on May 1</li> <li>The application remains available until funds are exhausted</li> <li>New, eligible students are considered in the order in which applications are received (see program details for additional information)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new student application is available each year on February 1</li> <li>The application remains available until funds are exhausted however March 1 is the deadline for priority consideration</li> <li>New, eligible students are selected by a lottery system (see program details for additional information)</li> </ul>

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