



The BISON Children's Scholarship Fund FAQs

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Attention WNY Families!
The BISON Fund is a privately funded program offering partial tuition assistance to low income families. Families awarded a BISON scholarship can enroll their child in any kindergarten through 8th grade private school of choice in Western New York. Scholarships are awarded by annual lottery drawing and are not academic or race-based scholarships, but awarded solely based on need.

1. **Who qualifies for the scholarship?**
All applicants must be residents of the eight counties of WNY with children entering K-8th grade. The total family income must fall within the income eligibility scale. (see below) You may only apply for your biological children or children that you have legal guardianship or custody.

2016-2017 Income Eligibility Scale Maximum Income Based on Total Annual 2015 Household Income	
Household size	Maximum Allowable Income
2	\$40,861
3	\$51,531
4	\$62,202
5	\$72,872
6	\$83,542
7	\$94,212
For each additional child add \$10,670	

2. **How do new families apply?**
New families must first electronically fill out the Pre-Application Form. The new family Pre-Application Form deadline is February 29, 2016. You can apply online through our website at www.bisonfund.com. Preference is NOT given to early applications; however you must apply by February 29th to be considered.
3. **How are BISON scholarship recipients chosen?**
All scholarships are awarded using a lottery from all submitted Pre- Application Forms which is conducted in early March. Lottery winners will receive a full application with important papers that must be completed to receive the scholarship.
4. **How do I know if I won the lottery?**
All applicants will be notified by mail the results of the lottery drawing in March 2016. The deadline to complete the application is April 30, 2016.

5. **Why do families have to pay part of the tuition?**

One key component of educational success is parental involvement. Making a financial sacrifice is a strong incentive to becoming, and remaining, involved. Therefore, the scholarship is a hand-up, not a hand-out. The families are required to pay a minimum of \$500 per family.

6. **What if I am not satisfied with my child's school?**

You are free to transfer your child to another private school. Contact the BISON Fund office to let us know you are switching schools and we will send you the necessary paperwork.

7. **Can the scholarships be used for pre-school or pre-kindergarten?**

No. Children must be at least 5 years old and entering kindergarten or a higher grade to be eligible for the scholarship.

Listed below are the four steps lottery winners need to complete to be considered for a BISON scholarship.

1. All lottery winners will receive an application and financial form along with a school commitment form. The application and financial forms are to be completed by the parent/guardian who applied for the scholarship and the school commitment form is to be completed by the school you have chosen for your child. Along with these three forms, we must receive all required supporting documents by April 30, 2016. Please be sure to include a copy of all income sources including your FEDERAL 1040 tax return, child support, business income, public assistance, food stamps, social security income, unemployment insurance, worker's compensation and financial assistance from friends and family.
2. Scholarship recipients may use the scholarship at any private school of their choice. Please see the school list tab on our web-site for a list of schools in the Western New York area. When searching for a school, please keep in mind that the maximum award amount for the 2016-2017 school year is \$1,800 per child.
3. After we receive all the required forms and documents, your scholarship amount will be calculated based on your household size and income as well as the tuition amount. You must re-qualify annually to continue with the BISON program as long as your child is enrolled in a private school through eighth grade. Families will also need to remain income eligible.

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