

Returning Families,

The financial aid process is changing at Wheaton Academy. These changes could be significant for your family, so please review the following information carefully.



The new deadline for financial aid applications for the 2022-2023 school year is December 31, 2021.

Why the change?

- This modified timeline allows Wheaton Academy to grant aid awards to returning families before new family aid awards are considered.
- This 2021-2022 school year yielded record enrollment for Wheaton Academy. We anticipate another year of full enrollment, and more financial aid requests than funds available. An earlier deadline is needed for the school's continued financial and enrollment health.
- Over 80% of our financial aid awards are distributed in February, so we want to include our returning families in this distribution.

Our records indicate that your family received a financial aid award through a tax credit scholarship this year. As you know, tax credit scholarship awards require a two-step application process. To be considered for an award for the 2022-2023 school year, **we require your family to first apply through the FACTS® application starting November 1, 2021 and before December 31, 2021.** Then, we will guide you through the tax credit scholarship application in early January 2022.

Scroll to page two for your family's printable financial aid application checklist.

YOUR FINANCIAL AID CHECKLIST

1 Complete the required FACTS® application by December 31, 2021

Visit wheatonacademy.org/affordable and click to access [the FACTS® application](#) starting November 1

Submit the FACTS® application and upload supporting documentation to the FACTS® portal

This required documentation could include:

- W2
- Most recent pay stubs per working parent
- Tax Returns. Wheaton Academy permits families to use their 2020 tax returns to apply for financial aid considering the December 31 deadline.

Confirm receipt of the FACTS® application.

The status of your FACTS® application can be found on the FACTS® portal upon log-in.

Please note that FACTS® takes about two weeks to process finished applications and verify submitted documentation. The FACTS® portal will directly email families reminders to complete any outstanding items, so please look for these notifications and respond accordingly.

2 Complete the Empower IL tax-credit scholarship application. Application reservations open on January 12, 2022 at 6:30pm.

In the meantime, the Wheaton Academy Business Office will use the information from your family's completed FACTS® application to pre-screen your family's possible qualification for a 2022-2023 tax credit scholarship.

Before the Empower IL application process opens, the Business Office will notify your family of the appropriate steps to take to be considered for a Empower IL tax credit scholarship.

Your family will need to promptly complete the Empower IL reservation and application process once it opens on January 12.

Reservation and application instructions may be found here: empowerillinois.org/apply/how-do-i-apply

What Happens Next?

The Wheaton Academy Financial Aid Committee will then issue financial aid award decisions to families beginning **February 15, 2022**. This timing mirrors the start of tax credit scholarship awarding. However, Empower IL exclusively determines the timing and prioritization of tax credit scholarship awards. The Committee will work closely with our representatives from Empower IL to learn of their timing and awarding.

Award decisions will be issued to your family through the Empower IL award portal. Should your family qualify for a tax credit scholarship, your family will need to accept the scholarship within one week's time.

Please note: Awards are distributed as funds are available. There may be a season of a financial aid waitpool for families, even after awards begin to be issued. Thanks in advance for your patience should this possibility become a reality.

Please understand that failure to complete the FACTS® application and upload supporting documentation by December 31, 2021 could result in a reduced or denied aid award for your family. Additionally, Empower IL can only award scholarships to families who have completed the FACTS® application.

SOME COMMON QUESTIONS

Q: Will my family receive the same financial award as last year?

A: Current families who pay reduced tuition because of financial aid can expect to receive similar levels of funding each year if their financial circumstances remain the same. Typically, families pay part of any annual tuition increase. However, every family must re-apply for financial aid each year and meet all stated deadlines.

Additionally, the eligibility criteria for tax credit scholarships can be found here: empowerillinois.org/apply/do-i-qualify. Please note that the criteria update each year, and the criteria for the 2022-2023 year has yet to be posted to this page.

Finally, funding for the tax-credit scholarship is directly related to the amount of funds donated to the scholarship granting organization. It is possible that less funds will be donated for the 2022-2023 school year, and a family's total aid award may have to be reduced as a result.

Q: Why do I have to apply for FACTS® if my family's financial aid award comes from a scholarship granting organization? Do I have to complete BOTH applications?

A: We require families to complete both applications to ensure the best possible financial aid award for your family. In the event that more families apply for tax-credit scholarships than funds available, your family's completed FACTS® application will allow our Financial Aid Committee to immediately explore other avenues of funding. Additionally, the pre-screening made possible through a completed FACTS® application greatly aids the Business Office's provided guidance.

Q: Can you explain the Empower IL reservation and application system?

A: Please review the "How Do I Apply?" information on Empower IL's website. empowerillinois.org/apply/how-do-i-apply

Q: I received a tax credit scholarship from Children's Tuition Fund last year. Is that funding still available?

A: This year, Wheaton Academy streamlined the donation process through Empower IL to make the process simpler. We therefore request that your family does not apply for a scholarship through Children's Tuition Fund for the 2022-2023 school year. This change should not decrease the total funds available to families; it will just centralize our ability to efficiently distribute funds.

Q: I am applying another student for the 2022-2023 school year? Is there a separate process for new students?

A: No—your family's FACTS® application and Empower IL application should include both your returning student(s) and new student(s). Additionally, your family's financial aid award amount may be re-evaluated considering your family's increased enrollment.

Q: I need help completing my FACTS® application and my Empower application. Who do I contact?

A: If you have specific questions regarding your FACTS® application and how to upload your required documentation, we recommend you contact FACTS® Customer Service directly: 866-315-9262. Their service is fantastic and confidential.

If you have questions regarding the Empower IL application process, please consult the resources on the Empower IL website: empowerillinois.org/apply/how-do-i-apply.

If you have any other questions, please contact Pat Brooke pbrooke@wheatonacademy.org or Sheri Guarnizo sguarnizo@wheatonacademy.org in the Business Office.

Q: My family's financial circumstance has changed, and we are no longer in need of financial assistance. Who do I contact?

A: Please contact Pat Brooke pbrooke@wheatonacademy.org directly so we can update our files accordingly.

Q: Are there any other factors that contribute to financial aid awards?

A: All aid awards are need-based; however, families must be current in their tuition payments to receive future awards.



Thank you in advance for your timely response.

Please let us know if you have any questions about our updated financial aid process

Kind regards,
Steve Karlson