

SAFE Grants

Safe Access to Flexible Education

SAFE Grants FAQ for Schools



What are Safe Access to Flexible Education (SAFE) Grants?

SAFE Grants is a program, developed by Governor Henry McMaster, to address the educational needs of eligible K5-12 students who attend a participating independent school.

SAFE Grants are funded through a federal CARES Act grant made to the Office of Governor Henry McMaster. Governor McMaster has dedicated up to \$32 million of this grant, known as the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund, to provide subgrants for the benefit of eligible students to participating independent schools, which have been deemed essential education-related entities by the Governor.

Modeled on successful grant and scholarship programs serving thousands of students in states like Florida, Arizona, and North Carolina, SAFE Grants will provide critical support of up to \$6,500 per student for working and low-income families to stabilize their child's education journey during the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure these students can access an education environment of their choice.

What students are eligible to participate in the SAFE Grants program and how will SAFE Grants be awarded?

K5-12 students whose household adjusted gross income is 300% or less of the federal poverty level are eligible to apply for the program. Parents and guardians may apply for these scholarships through a secure online portal which may be accessed in coming weeks at MySCEducation.org.

Household Size	300% FPL
1	\$38,280
2	\$51,720
3	\$65,160
4	\$78,600
5	\$92,040
6	\$105,480
7	\$118,920
8	\$132,360
9	\$145,800
10	\$159,240

Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2020 FPL Calculations

Parents may sign up at MySCEducation.org to receive an email notification when the online portal opens.

The first 2,500 scholarships will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, after which a lottery program will be instituted (if necessary) to allocate the balance of available grant funds.

What schools may participate in the SAFE Grants program and how do they apply?

Independent schools that wish to participate in the program must satisfy the compulsory attendance requirements of Section 59-65-10 of the South Carolina Code of Laws and certify that they:

- Offer a general education to elementary students, secondary students, or both;
- Do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin;
- Are located in South Carolina;
- Have an educational curriculum that includes courses set forth in the State's diploma requirements, and where the students attending are administered national achievement or state standardized tests, or both, at progressive grade levels to determine student progress;
- Have school facilities that are subject to applicable federal, state, and local laws;
- Are a member in good standing of Cognia, the South Carolina Association of Christian Schools, the South Carolina Independent Schools Association, the Palmetto Association of Independent Schools, the Association of Christian Schools International, or National Council for Private School Accreditation, or their respective successors; and
- Have been impacted by COVID-19.

Schools must complete the online application, found at surveymonkey.com/r/SAFEGrantSchool.

Applications will be reviewed by a Governor's school advisory panel, which will certify or deny applications pursuant to the above criteria. Incomplete applications will not be considered, although additional clarification may be sought by the panel.

How will SAFE Grants funds reach my school?

Funds will be distributed to approved schools through the secure online platform established to manage student eligibility applications. Funds will be disbursed into these parent-controlled accounts for tuition payments on a quarterly basis. Approved schools will receive information to enroll as a vendor within the program online platform, which simply entails entering basic contact and banking information and completing a W-9.

Only active, approved vendors (schools) within the online platform may receive SAFE Grant payments, eliminating the potential for misuse of subgrant funds. In the event that a student withdraws from the school during the school year, the school must issue a pro-rated refund to the SAFE grant program for any unexpended or pre-paid tuition.

How can I promote this to parents at my school who may qualify and wish to apply?

Please visit MySCEducation.org to find parent-friendly information, and encourage parents to sign up to receive program email alerts about the application process.

