



# BISON

## CHILDREN'S SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Giving Parents a Choice • Giving Children a Chance

A private scholarship fund providing tuition assistance for low-income families in the 8 counties of Western New York who want to enroll their children in private schools.

### BISON Scholarship Quick Facts:

- Average scholarship \$1,300
- Max scholarship \$2,100
- Currently BISON has over 1,800 scholars in 70 different private elementary schools in Western New York.
- Each family must contribute toward their child's private education.

### step one

Complete a **pre-application online at [bisonfund.com](http://bisonfund.com)** between January 1 - February 28. If you have any questions, you can call BISON at (716) 854-0869 ext. 1.

### step two

Watch for notification after the **BISON Lottery** is held in March. Winners are notified by email and wait-listed families are also notified.

### step three

If selected, complete the full application online. Enroll your child(ren) in the school of their choice and ask the school to complete the School Commitment Form.

### step four

Once all the steps are completed, BISON will notify you of your scholarship amount. Watch for notices to annually renew your BISON Scholarship in February.



### BISON Contact Information:

**Cindy McDonald**, Program Director (program questions)  
**Amy Popadick**, Executive Director (fundraising questions)

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## FAQ FOR FAMILIES

More detailed information can be found on our website at [www.bisonfund.com](http://www.bisonfund.com)

### Who qualifies for a BISON Scholarship?

Residents of the 8 counties of WNY with children entering K-8<sup>th</sup> grade with a total family income within the eligibility scale (details online). You may only apply for your biological or legal guardian children.

### How do new families apply?

New families must complete a Pre-Application Form electronically (online) on our website at [www.bisonfund.com](http://www.bisonfund.com). The new family deadline is February 28, 2018. Preference is NOT given to early applications; however you must apply by 2/28 to be considered for the lottery. Families applying after the February 28th deadline will be placed on our waitlist.

### How are BISON scholarship recipients chosen?

Scholarships are awarded using a lottery from all submitted Pre-Application Forms in March 2018. Lottery winners will receive an email with a link directing them to complete a full application in order to receive the scholarship.

### How do I know if I won the lottery?

All applicants will be notified of lottery results by email in March 2018.

### I received a Scholarship award email ... now what?

In your award email, there will be a link that will take you where you need to go to complete your Full Application. Click on the link and follow the application steps. The deadline to complete the application is April 30, 2018. Please be sure to include all your 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 family & friends. Select your school (a complete list can be found on our website) and contact the school to complete the School Commitment Form. After receipt of all the required documents, your scholarship will be calculated based on your household size and income, as well as tuition amount. You must requalify annually to continue with BISON.

### I received an email that I'm on a waitlist ... now what?

Unfortunately, there are always more applicants than available funding. We keep waitlist names for the academic year hopeful that additional funding becomes available. If you are not taken off the waitlist, you will need to resubmit a Pre-Application next year to be considered.

### 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. BISON scholarships are a hand-up, not a hand-out. BISON families are required to pay a minimum of \$500 each year.

### What if I am not satisfied with my child's school?

You are free to transfer your student to another private school. Your scholarship will transfer with you unless you are delinquent with tuition payments or a child is asked to leave. Contact the BISON Fund office if you decide to transfer and we will walk you through the next steps.

### Can the scholarship be used for Pre-K or High School?

No. Children must be at least 5 years old by 12/21/18 and entering kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade to be eligible for a BISON scholarship.

