

## DMS Financial Aid Program

Our Financial Aid Program supports the mission of DMS to build community and to create and maintain diversity of perspectives, viewpoints, experiences, and cultures.

Financial aid is based on a family's ability to pay. Desert Montessori School considers financial need to be the difference between what it costs to attend DMS and a family's ability to pay tuition; financial aid is not a loan. Financial aid awards are based on a percentage of tuition and not a set dollar amount. Historically, tuitions at private schools have increased each year by 4-5% in order to cover increasing personnel and program costs. DMS assumes that a family's income also increases on an annual basis. Consequently, while the financial aid percentage a family receives generally remains the same from year to year, the amount a family pays each year is likely to increase.

On occasion, DMS is able to offer families a Parent Work Exchange Grant. These grants are considered part of our financial aid program and are administered using the same methodology. If you are interested in applying for a work exchange grant, please indicate that on your application. There are a limited number of financial aid funds and work exchange grants available each year.

As with many other private schools, we follow a "need-blind" policy in weighing a child's application for admission. Admission is no guarantee that a family will receive financial aid. The amount of aid offered depends on: 1) your family's eligibility and 2) the amount of funds we have available.

**How do we know if we qualify for aid?** Few families find it easy to pay for private school tuition. Most families adjust their spending priorities, maximize parents' earnings, and carefully manage assets to do so. The decision to award aid is based on many different factors. Among those considered are income, assets (including home equity, college funds, and investments), family size, and the number of children attending tuition-charging institutions.

**What if a spouse does not work?** DMS believes that families should bear the primary responsibility for financing their children's education and therefore we expect that both parents will contribute financially. Each application is evaluated individually.

**What does DMS expect of families and students who receive financial aid?** Aid is awarded in the basis of a family's ability to pay. DMS believes all families should contribute to their child's educational expenses. Regardless of whether or not they receive financial aid, DMS expects *all* families to maintain the qualities that led to their admission and to uphold the integrity on which the school stands and grows.

**When is the deadline to apply for aid?** The deadline to apply for FA is March 31.

### How do we apply for Financial Aid?

- **Complete the School & Student Services (SSS) Parents' Financial Statement form (PFS).** You only need to complete one PFS form even if you have more than one child applying to DMS, or if you are applying to multiple schools that require a PFS form. The form and details about completing it are available online at [sss.nais.org](http://sss.nais.org).
- **Complete the SSS Business Farm Statement**, if applicable. If your family owns a business and/or farm, you will also need to complete this form.
- **Submit supporting tax documentation.** In addition to the PFS and Business Farm Statement, DMS also requires submittal of supporting tax documentation such as Federal Tax Returns and W2s, and may request partnership/sole proprietorship and/or corporate returns.
- **Complete the Family Financial Aid Request Form.** This form is available in the front office.