

VAST FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

GUIDELINES

Purpose:

Autism Spectrum Disorders are treatable. The VAST Foundation provides financial assistance to families in the greater San Francisco Bay area for needed biomedical treatments, supplements and therapy services for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

The VAST Family Scholarship Program was developed to help families who are pursuing biomedical treatment for their children with autism, but are struggling to find the funding. We understand how difficult it is to stretch the family budget to include these treatments. It is our desire to provide limited financial assistance to qualified families.

Eligibility:

Families must meet the criteria below to be eligible to receive assistance from the VAST Family Scholarship Program.

Scholarships Criteria:

- Have one or more children, up to the age of 12, diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder.
- Reside in the greater San Francisco Bay area of Northern California.
- Have a combined annual household income of **less than** \$85,000. (Applicants with higher household incomes will be considered, but priority will be given to those below \$85,000.)

Available Scholarships:

VAST will provide financial assistance to families with a child with autism for the following:

- Initial Defeat Autism Now! doctor appointment
Families can apply to receive funding for an initial appointment and one follow-up appointment with a specialized practitioner/physician. As part of the application process the family must choose a specialized practitioner/physician and confirm the costs of an initial visit and follow-up.
- Follow-up appointment with current practitioner/physician
Families can apply for a follow-up appointment for their current practitioner/physician. The application would need to include cost breakdown for the appointment and the date of the last appointment.

- Lab work - as recommended by a specialized practitioner/physician. Application would need to include information on the cost breakdown of the lab work being requested and the contact information for the preferred Lab.
- Supplements and therapy services as recommended by practitioner/physician

NOTE: Payments, once authorized, are NOT made directly to the family, but are instead paid on the family's behalf directly to the vendor who is providing goods and services. Please understand vacations, trips to Disneyland and other similar events are **not** selected for funding.

Funding Dates:

Currently application deadlines are September 1st and April 1st. Applications will be accepted up to these dates, and, funding permitted, grants will be awarded by the 20th of the following month.

The first deadline for applications is September 1, 2009. This is a **RECEIVED BY** deadline and **NOT** a postmark deadline. In other words, completed applications must be received in the VAST offices by the 1st in order to be eligible. **Applications will not be accepted via fax and incomplete applications will not be considered.**

Frequency:

The VAST Family Scholarship Program is not meant to fund on-going services. There are restrictions with this funding through VAST. Once an application is approved, VAST will fund only one request per family per year through the Family Scholarship Program.

Application Process:

To apply for a VAST Family Scholarship, please contact VAST at (925) 826.3860 or download an application at www.vastfoundation.org. Applications are generally reviewed every six months, funds permitting. Assistance will be based on the needs of the family and the availability for funds. Applicants who have not received funds from VAST previously will be given highest priority. However, VAST reserves the right to provide assistance more than once to the same family. The amount of assistance will vary, depending on availability of funds.

Please do not call to check on the status of your application. You will be notified as soon as possible about our decisions. Only formal written applications will be accepted. Applications will not be accepted via fax and incomplete applications will not be considered.

Documentation:

When applying for a VAST Family Scholarship, you must provide:

- Completed and signed application
- A letter from your doctor or other proof indicating your child's diagnosis
- Previous year's tax return (pages 1 & 2) - Please note: both tax returns if you are married filing separately are required if you are married
- Current year's pay stub (most recent pay period) showing year to date income for all household income workers
- Total cost breakdown for what is being requested (This can include estimates from doctor for initial appointments, lab work and supplements. The doctor's office should be able to help you with this.)
- Depending on the nature of your request, additional information may be required
- Please note that, in order to comply with state and federal law, VAST reserves the right to follow up with the family to ensure the assistance was successfully used for its intended purpose.

Conclusion:

Not every family who applies for the VAST Family Scholarship will receive funding. VAST, through our Scholarship Application Review Committee volunteers, will award the scholarships every six months. This process of selection will depend upon the number of applications received in the time period, the applicant's unique circumstances, and the amount the VAST Family Scholarship Program has available to make the best decision possible.