WASHINGTON, D.C. · STATE AID REFERENCE

DC State Aid Cheat Sheet, 2027–28

For the Class of 2027: students starting college in fall 2027, which is the 2027–28 aid year.

DC has no state university system, so the District pays part of the out-of-state bill instead. Aid runs through three doors: the **FAFSA**, the **DC OneApp** for the DC Tuition Assistance Grant (DCTAG), and **OSSE's scholarship portal** for Mayor's Scholars. DC-CAP has its own application. **What changed in 2026:** DCTAG's first increase since 1999. The public-college award rose from $10,000 to **$15,000** a year, the private award from $2,500 to **$3,750**, starting with 2026–27. DC-CAP's Ward 7 & 8 and Last Dollar awards are closed to new students, and DC Futures took no new students for 2026–27.

The Programs at a Glance

Program	What it pays and who qualifies
DCTAG, public colleges	Up to **$15,000/yr** toward the in-state vs. out-of-state tuition gap; $75,000 lifetime; 6 years max. Public two- and four-year colleges in any state, Puerto Rico, Guam. **No GPA, no test score.** 12 months of DC domicile before college; family taxable income under **$642,544** (2026–27); at least half time.
DCTAG, private colleges	Up to **$3,750/yr**; $18,750 lifetime. Private four-year HBCUs nationwide and private nonprofit colleges in the DC area only. For-profit colleges never qualify.
Mayor's Scholars	Up to **$4,000/yr** for tuition and fees, last-dollar; $24,000 lifetime for a bachelor's. DC public or charter graduates with a **2.5 GPA**, or recent GED/NEDP earners; income under 300% of poverty ($99,000 for a family of 4, 2026–27); approved DC-area colleges only.
DC-CAP University Partner	**$5,000 to $7,500/yr**, renewable up to 5 years. DC public or charter seniors, 2.5 GPA, eligible for DCTAG and Pell, admitted to one of 13 partner colleges. Competitive; tied to one college.
Pell Grant (federal)	Need-based, from the FAFSA. Required for DC-CAP. Counted before Mayor's Scholars, which pays only what is left.

Deadlines to Post on Your Wall

Date	What happens
Sept 23, 2026	2027–28 FAFSA opened. DCTAG needs a processed FAFSA Submission Summary showing the SAI.
Oct 15, 2026	DC-CAP registration and College Navigator opened at apply.dccap.org.
Nov 1, 2026	Early deadlines at many colleges, including American University and Howard University.
Jan 4 to Mar 1, 2027	DC-CAP application window. Closes March 1 at 11:59 p.m.
Feb 1, 2027 (expected)	DC OneApp opens for DCTAG and Mayor's Scholars opens in OSSE's portal. **File that week.**
Apr 13, 2027	DC-CAP selected students accept the partner college and apply for DCTAG.
Aug 2027 (expected)	Final DCTAG and Mayor's Scholars deadline. Closed Aug 21 at 3 p.m. in 2026.
Oct 1, 2027	DCTAG begins paying colleges. Students reapply every February.

OSSE has not announced 2027–28 dates. February 1 is DC-CAP's listing and matches the last two OSSE windows.

The Rules That Trip Families Up

- **The gap sets the check, not the cap.** At public colleges DCTAG pays the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition, up to $15,000. A $9,000 gap means a $9,000 award.
- **The college must be on OSSE's list.** A public college without a signed DCTAG agreement pays $0. UDC is not DCTAG-eligible (it is on the Mayor's Scholars list).
- **Everything is a new application every year,** with new residency documents uploaded all at once. Review takes up to 7 business days.
- **Mayor's Scholars is last-dollar.** If Pell and DCTAG already cover tuition and fees, it pays $0 that year. That is not a rejection. New applicants are funded in the order complete applications arrive.
- **DCTAG pays tuition only, straight to the college.** No DC program pays for housing.

The DMV Stack: Where Both DC Programs Pay

Eight public colleges are on both the DCTAG list and the Mayor's Scholars approved list: Bowie State, College of Southern Maryland, George Mason, Montgomery College, Northern Virginia Community College, Prince George's Community College, University of Maryland College Park, and University of Maryland Global Campus. For a DC public or charter graduate under the Mayor's Scholars income limit, DCTAG closes the out-of-state gap and Mayor's Scholars can cover what is left of tuition and fees, up to $4,000, while the student commutes from home. OSSE's posted Mayor's Scholars list is labeled 2025–26; confirm it at (202) 741-6406.

DCTAG: Check These Things Early

A student qualifies only when **every** line is true. There is no GPA or test score requirement.

- Family domiciled in DC for **12 consecutive months before the first year of college**, and through all of college. Under 24 and dependent: residency runs through the parent or guardian. A DC P.O. box does not count.
- Diploma, GED, or NEDP earned **within 15 years** of the first award (2011–2026 for 2026–27).
- U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen; not in default on a federal loan; no bachelor's degree yet.
- At least **half time** in a first undergraduate degree at an eligible college; keeps satisfactory academic progress. Part-time awards are reduced.
- Family taxable income under **$642,544** (2026–27, students who started college in 2019–20 or later). Adjusted for inflation each year.

College type	Per year	Per semester	Lifetime
Public, any state, PR, Guam (incl. community colleges)	Up to $15,000 (tuition gap)	Up to $7,500 ($5,000/quarter)	$75,000
Private 4-yr HBCUs nationwide; private nonprofits in the DC area	Up to $3,750	Up to $1,875	$18,750

DC area for the private award: DC; Alexandria, Falls Church, and Fairfax cities; Arlington and Fairfax counties, VA; Montgomery and Prince George's counties, MD. Six years of awards maximum. Summer can be paid if the annual maximum is not used.

Counselor Calendar: What to Tell Students When

When	What to tell them
Junior spring	Families planning a move: DC residency must start 12 months before the first day of college. Start the residency folder from OSSE's supporting documents checklist.
Senior fall	FSA IDs and FAFSA. Check every public college against the DCTAG list and find its tuition gap. DC public and charter seniors: register with DC-CAP and add a partner college if it fits.
Senior winter	DC-CAP application by March 1. College aid forms (CSS Profile where required) by each college's date, often November 1 to February 1.
Senior spring	DC OneApp and Mayor's Scholars the week they open, all documents at once. Award letter in hand before any deposit; send it to the college's aid office.
First year of college	Reapply every February. Before any family move, call a DCTAG advisor first.

Three Mistakes That Cost DC Students Money

- **Waiting for August.** August 21 is when OSSE stops accepting applications, not when it is safe to start. The award letter, DC-CAP, and the Mayor's Scholars line all reward February.
- **Assuming DCTAG is for low-income families only.** The income limit is above $640,000. Families who never file lose up to $15,000 a year.
- **Choosing a public college with a huge out-of-state gap.** DCTAG stops at $15,000. Everything past it is the family's, unless the college adds nonresident aid.

The Address Rule: DC's Most Expensive Fine Print

For a dependent student, the parent's address is the student's address, and OSSE re-checks it with every annual application. **If a parent moves to Maryland or Virginia while the student is in college, DCTAG ends**, which can mean up to $75,000 over a full public-college award. Tell families to call a DCTAG advisor at (202) 727-2824 **before** any move, lease, or custody change.

Free Resources: No Account, No Cost, No Data Collection

Resource	Where
DCTAG rules, college list, income limits	osse.dc.gov/dctag · advisors (202) 727-2824 or 1-877-485-6751
DC OneApp (DCTAG application)	dconeapp.dc.gov (use Google Chrome)
Mayor's Scholars	osse.dc.gov/mayorsscholars · applications at scholarships.osse.dc.gov
DC-CAP University Partner Scholarship	dccap.org/faq · apply.dccap.org
Full DC guide, worked examples, FAQs	collegereadyparent.org/dc/

No paywall, no accounts, no lead forms, no student data collection. Counselors and educators: you may freely copy, print, and distribute this sheet. Corrections: leo@collegereadyparent.org. Verified against the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) and the DC College Access Program, October 29, 2026. Program rules, amounts, and dates change, and DCTAG depends on annual federal funding. Confirm with OSSE and each college's financial aid office before making decisions.