

## TUITION ASSISTANCE: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Qualified students from all economic backgrounds are encouraged to attend WIWS. Tuition Assistance (TA) is the process by which WIWS adjusts tuition to meet the family's ability to pay school tuition. To the extent that budgeted school funds are available, TA is granted to qualified students whose parents demonstrate financial need and who are willing to complete the TA application. This document will answer some of the most frequently asked questions surrounding the TA process at Whidbey Island Waldorf School.

### 1. What is Tuition Adjustment (TA)?

Tuition Assistance (TA) is a financial, need-based program that provides tuition support to students who qualify through the WIWS TA application process. Financial need is the difference between the cost of tuition and a family's ability to pay tuition. TA is a tuition-support award that is not repaid to the school. Like other schools, WIWS uses the *TADS for Financial Aid* as the basis for TA application process. *TADS* determines how much a family can pay toward their child's tuition using proprietary analytical tools.

### 2. Am I eligible for TA?

WIWS believes that the family is primarily responsible for paying their child's tuition. We also believe that families should spend their own resources before seeking Tuition Assistance. Only the family can decide if it needs financial assistance. If you are not sure whether you can afford the cost of full tuition, you probably should apply. This process will request information that might take considerable some time to organize from your personal financial ledger. There is no specific income level at which a family will qualify for Tuition Assistance.

### 3. If my child received Tuition Assistance last year, will s/he automatically receive TA this year?

No. Family finances constantly change, so you must reapply each year and provide the most current, accurate information.

### 4. Is there a limit to the amount of TA that I can receive?

Although we require that each family pay the supply fees, field trip fee, and something toward tuition, tuition adjustment is only limited by the cost of tuition.

### 5. How will WIWS evaluate my financial status and ability to pay if I am separated or divorced?

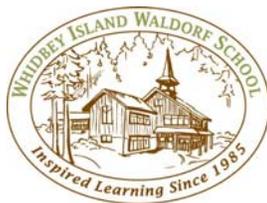
Whidbey Island Waldorf School believes that it's the primary responsibility of the families to pay their child(ren)'s tuition. TA is not based on willingness to pay, but on the ability to pay. Thus, we may require all parents/guardians to complete a TA application. If one or both parents are remarried or have a domestic partner, their financial information may also be taken into account.

### 6. How much does it cost to apply for TA?

TADS charges \$34 for a single household online application. There may be additional fees for certain circumstances, please refer to their website if you have concerns. If your family resides in two households (i.e. divorce, legal separation) each household must file an application (\$34/each).

### 7. Who sees the information that I send to TADS?

All information sent to TADS is confidential. Information will be reviewed only by those persons directly involved in the TA evaluation process (the WIWS Financial Manager, the TA Committee, and maybe the Board of Trustees).



### **8. Why do I send other documents to TADS in addition to my online application?**

TADS provides an electronic platform for our TA committee to review your financial information. This secure website allows our school to eliminate paper processing costs and assists with a professional evaluation of your situation. Upon receiving the application and recommendation from TADS, the WIWS TA Committee reviews the documents to get a full picture of your finances to better determine your ability to pay tuition. The amount that you can afford to pay will be subtracted from the total tuition costs for the year, and the result is your financial need, or TA request.

### **9. Will you consider our application for tuition adjustment even if we have not provided all the requested information?**

No. Only families who have completed and sent their TA applications are eligible for TA. TADS lists all required documents as well as those still needing to be submitted in their worksheet. The TA committee will contact you if we need clarification or additional materials.

### **10. How long will it take before we can expect an answer to my application?**

Applications that are complete and filed with TADS by the April 1, 2016 deadline will have a response no later than April 30, 2016. This deadline will allow the families to make the re-enrollment deadline of May 15, 2016 to avoid the re-enrollment fee.

Applications that are submitted or have documents lag after the April 1 deadline will be considered from the remaining TA funds as they come in. Only completed applications are forwarded to WIWS from TADS, so incomplete applications can not be considered.

The process takes about 2-4 weeks once WIWS receives an application. This time includes the time it takes for TADS to make your documents available to WIWS, the time it takes to schedule and hold a TA committee meeting and any special board meeting, as well as the time to document and provide return notification.

### **11. How does WIWS determine a family's financial need?**

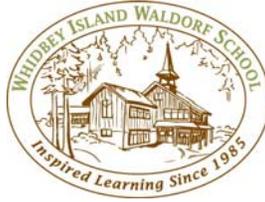
The TADS Financial Aid application processes the information you provide using their proprietary system to assess your family's ability to pay tuition. Their assessment is then sent to Whidbey Island Waldorf School. TADS takes into account many factors including: income (both taxable and nontaxable), assets (home equity, savings, investments, etc.), expenses, indebtedness, family size, age of parents/guardians (to allow for retirement savings), and the number of students attending tuition-charging schools. WIWS then takes this assessment and uses it to assist in determining a final financial need value. This value is measured against all other applicants as well as available budget funds before the TA committee determines a final TA award offer for a family.

### **12. If there isn't enough TA award money for all the applicants, who gets first priority?**

Re-enrolling families who meet the WIWS April 1, 2016 re-enrollment TA application deadline will be given first priority. New families who submit their complete TA application upon enrollment will also be given first priority. Families who have unforeseen financial hardship can apply outside these normal application times and still have access to remaining TA funds. Within our pool of new and re-enrolling applicants, who have submitted their forms by the deadline date, funding priority is given to families who best meet the criteria listed in the WIWS Tuition Assistance Policy.

### **13. Shouldn't my TA amount be the difference between the cost of tuition and what my TADS application says we can pay?**

Not always. Every family at WIWS is asked to contribute a minimum tuition amount plus applicable supply and field trip fees. In addition, the requests for Tuition Assistance are usually beyond our resources, we can't always meet the recommendation. We hope that by reducing a substantial percentage of the tuition cost and offering creative payment arrangements, your child(ren) will be able to attend WIWS.



**14. What can I do if WIWS can't meet my family's full financial need?**

We offer flexible payment plans through TADS that might make payments easier on your family's budget. Other places, like extended family, family trusts, your local bank, place of employment, community organizations, or local foundations might be able to provide additional tuition funding.

**15. What if my child has significant savings set aside for college?**

TADS will assess a child's financial assets and depending upon the rest of the financial picture, apply a portion of those funds to what the parents can pay toward tuition while preserving a portion for 4 years of college tuition. The sum of the parent and the student contribution is the recommended family contribution.

**16. Will a TA application affect my child's admission to the school?**

No. Admission and Tuition Assistance decisions are made by separate groups. The faculty must admit a student before the TA Committee reviews a TA application.

**17. Are TA students treated differently than other students?**

No. All students are expected to meet the same academic and, behavioral standards. Moreover, The TA committee does not discuss family finances with teachers and/or staff. All Tuition Assistance matters are handled with the highest level of discretion and confidentiality. We expect families to keep their awards private as well.

**For additional information, please contact:**

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If you wish to set up an appointment, please call or email to set up a time and date.