

Financial Requirements for a Student Visa

If you want to apply for a student visa in the U.S., you'll need to prove you can afford the tuition and related costs.

As an applicant for a [student visa](#) to the United States, you are expected to prove that you can cover your tuition and living expenses. This means that you'll need to cover not only for your own expenses, but those of your spouse and children, if any, and if they will be staying on with you in the United States. You'll have to do this without relying on any employment that you might pick up in the United States while you're a student—and without your spouse or children working at all.

How Money Much You'll Need

If you will be on F-1 ([academic student](#)) status, your financial resources must clearly cover a 12-month academic term. And, you must show indications that your additional years of study will be covered as well. The U.S. government doesn't expect you to be able to pay for all your years of education right away, but it does expect you to show where the money will come from. Similarly, if you will be on M-1 ([vocational student](#)) status, your resources must cover your entire 12-month (or shorter) study term.

Sources of Financial Support

Your sources of financial support can include personal funds; personal assets or pieces of property that are readily convertible to cash; pay from work that you do as part of a fellowship or scholarship; or specified funds from other persons or organizations. As part of the application process, **you will need to gather documents that will supply evidence of the existence of these things**. For example, you might show evidence of:

- Personal or family funds, such as copies of bank statements or stock certificates. Combine this with a list summarizing your total cash assets. Note that if a bank statement shows a recent deposit but a low average balance, the U.S. government will want an explanation. Attach something in writing (your own statement or an official document showing the source of the new cash) to the copy of the bank statement. Your goal is to overcome any suspicion that the money was borrowed from a friend to pad the account and make the financial situation look better than it is.

- The employment status of family members who will support you, such as a letter, on company letterhead, from their employer (explaining the person’s job title, salary, and that it’s a permanent position); **or** copies of their income tax statements.
- Assets held by you or your family members that can be readily converted to cash. (The conversion must be done in a country whose currency is traded on the international exchange.) For example, real estate (land) is a good asset to show. The immigration authorities will want to see whether the property is owned free and clear or whether it carries any debt or lien (so you’ll want to attach bank or other receipts that show to what extent any loans or mortgages have been paid off). If the ownership papers don’t make the value clear, or show a value that seems too low, you can hire a professional appraiser to prepare an estimate and report.
- Any scholarships, fellowships, assistantships, grants or loans from your school, government or private sources. Although these will also be listed on the Form I-20 that you receive from the school that accepts you, **you must provide independent confirmation of them**. Usually a **copy of the notification letter** you received is best.

If your family members will be supporting you, they can use a USCIS **Form I-134** to indicate that they not only have the income and assets you’ve shown, but they are willing to spend them on your studies and living expenses.

Support from Non-Family Members

If individuals who are not members of your family are willing to support you, use any of the types of evidence mentioned above for family members, including a Form I-134 Affidavit of Support. The person who decides whether to issue your visa will wonder, however, why someone who is not related to you will want to pay for you to get an expensive U.S. education. For that reason, **non-family members should also write a sworn statement explaining why they are so willing, able, and motivated**. The statement should mention that the person understands that he or she is not just a “backup” if other sources fail, but will be immediately responsible for paying all or part of your tuition, fees, and expenses.