



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

EDUCATION

Policy Updates Related to Coronavirus (COVID-19): DCTAG Documentation Requirements

Background

As a part of the District of Columbia's response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) is modifying, updating, and re-circulating certain policies. In all decisions, OSSE will consider relevant federal requirements, and fairness to new and returning applicants of the DC Tuition Assistance Grant (DCTAG) One App.

Scope

This document contains details and policies specifically relating to the **DCTAG 2021-22 academic year application cycle** for new and returning students.

Effective Date

This policy will take effect from Feb. 1, 2021, and will remain in effect through the Sept. 17, 2021, unless revoked by OSSE.

DCTAG 2021-22 Academic Year Change in Documentation to Prove Domicile

Historically, OSSE has required that District of Columbia D-40 income tax returns submitted to prove domicile for the purposes of DCTAG eligibility must be certified by the DC Office of Tax and Revenue (OTR). Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, OSSE is waiving the requirement that D-40 income tax returns must be certified by OTR for DCTAG application purposes for the 2021-22 academic year application cycle. D-40 income tax returns must be completed and filed with OTR but no longer have to be certified to meet DCTAG requirements.

This waiver was originally put in place for the 2020-21 application cycle. Past guidance on this topic indicated that awarded applicants would be required to submit certified D-40 income tax returns retroactively in subsequent application cycles. However, OSSE has removed this retroactive verification requirement. Consequently, applicants who submitted completed and filed but non-certified D-40 income tax returns in the 2020-21 application cycle and applicants who will do so in the 2021-22 application cycle will not be required to submit certified versions of those returns at a later date.

Rationale

OTR provides certified D-40 income tax returns at its walk-in customer service center. This customer service center is currently closed with its operating status uncertain throughout

the DCTAG 2021-22 application cycle. If OTR's walk-in customer service center does open, OTR has informed OSSE that it anticipates that the number of individuals allowed in the service center would be limited. Consequently, the DCTAG program is altering the requirement that D-40 income tax returns submitted as part of the application be certified. District regulations, specifically 29 DCMR 7003.2(h), provide OSSE with flexibility in determining what documents to accept in support of DCTAG eligibility. As such, DCTAG has determined the combination of a submitted but not certified D-40 income tax return is sufficient to determine District domicile as applicants must also submit other supporting documentation, such as utility bills, pay stubs, or mortgage statements. Further, federal policy guidance supports this temporary change to uncertified tax returns, particularly in emergency situations. Therefore, while OTR's walk-in customer service center maintains an altered operating status, DCTAG will accept D-40 income tax returns that are completed and filed but not certified by OTR. If the customer service center returns to normal operating status prior to the DCTAG application deadline, OSSE may reconsider this policy.

If the information on the D-40 tax return meets general tax-related requirements and other required documentation is on file, then the application will be considered complete and the applicant will be considered for DCTAG eligibility during the 2021-22 application cycle.