Household Size & Child Support Income Policy

Policy Number: SOP-002
Version: 1.1
Related Program: 13GEM Sporting Scholarship Opportunity Program
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Approved By: Jacob Echevarria
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1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent rules for determining **household size** and the treatment of **child support income** under the 13GEM Sporting Scholarship Opportunity Program.

Household size is an important component of scholarship eligibility because it determines the applicable Federal Poverty Level (FPL) guideline used to calculate a family's household FPL percentage.

This policy is intended to provide a clear, consistent, and reasonably administrable household definition without requiring unnecessarily invasive information about extended family members or unrelated individuals living in the home.

2. General Household Definition

For purposes of the 13GEM Sporting Scholarship Opportunity Program:

Household size consists of parent(s) or legal guardian(s) plus children age 18 or younger who are part of the family unit.

Household size is determined according to this policy rather than simply counting every person residing at the same address.

3. Definition of Child

For purposes of this policy, a **child** means an individual:

Age 18 or younger.

An individual over age 18 is not counted as a child for scholarship household-size purposes, even if that individual continues to live in the home or receives financial support from the parent or legal guardian.

4. Parents

A parent who is part of the applicant family household is included in household size.

Depending upon the family's circumstances, this may include:

- One parent; or
- Two parents.

The fact that another biological parent exists does not automatically mean that parent is included in the applicant's scholarship household.

Divorced, separated, and noncustodial-parent situations are addressed later in this policy.

5. Legal Guardians

A legal guardian may be treated as a parent for household-size purposes when that person has legal responsibility for the child and the child is part of that guardian's family unit.

13GEM Sporting may request reasonable documentation of guardianship when necessary to resolve a material household-size question.

6. Stepchildren

A stepchild age 18 or younger may be included in household size when the child is genuinely part of the applicant's family unit.

The determination should reflect the actual family household rather than merely a biological relationship.

7. Extended Family Members

Extended family members are **not included in scholarship household size merely because they live in the same residence or receive financial support from the applicant.**

Examples generally excluded include:

- Grandparents;
- Adult children over age 18;
- Adult siblings;
- Aunts;
- Uncles;
- Cousins; and
- Other extended relatives.

The purpose of this rule is to maintain a clear and consistently administrable household definition centered on parents/legal guardians and children age 18 or younger.

8. Grandparents

A grandparent is not counted merely because the grandparent:

- Lives in the applicant's home;
- Contributes toward household expenses;
- Receives financial support from the applicant; or
- Provides childcare.

If a grandparent is the child's **legal guardian**, however, the grandparent may be counted as the legal guardian under Section 5.

9. Adult Children

Children **over age 18** are not included in scholarship household size under this policy.

This remains true even when the adult child:

- Lives with the family;
- Is attending school;
- Is financially dependent upon the parents; or
- Receives substantial financial support from the household.

This program intentionally uses **age 18 or younger** as its child definition for consistency and administrative simplicity.

10. Unrelated Individuals and Roommates

Roommates and other unrelated individuals are not included in scholarship household size merely because they share the same residence.

Their presence in the home does not, by itself, make them part of the applicant's scholarship household.

11. Basic Household Examples

Examples include:

Household Size 1

- One parent/legal guardian

Household Size 2

- Two parents/legal guardians; or
- One parent/legal guardian + one child age 18 or younger

Household Size 3

- Two parents/legal guardians + one child; or
- One parent/legal guardian + two children

Household Size 4

- Two parents/legal guardians + two children; or
- One parent/legal guardian + three children

The same structure continues for larger households.

12. Divorced or Separated Parents

When parents are divorced or separated, both parents are **not automatically included** in the same scholarship household.

The applicant household should generally reflect the parent or legal guardian household in which the child is considered part of the family unit under this policy.

The noncustodial parent's entire household and income are not automatically included merely because that parent is biologically related to the child or has a child-support obligation.

13. Primary Residence of the Child

When parents maintain separate households and physical custody is not substantially equal, a child should generally be counted in the household where the child **primarily resides**.

Primary residence will generally be determined by where the child spends the majority of time during the school year.

13GEM Sporting does not intend to require unnecessarily detailed custody records when the child's primary residence is reasonably clear.

14. Substantially Equal / 50-50 Physical Custody

When parents maintain separate households and physical custody is substantially equal or approximately 50-50, the child may be considered part of the household of the parent applying for the scholarship, provided the child is genuinely part of that parent's family unit.

This rule recognizes that a child in substantially equal physical custody may legitimately be part of both parents' family lives.

However, it does not permit the same child to be used inconsistently to manipulate scholarship eligibility.

15. Preventing Duplicate Household Claims

13GEM Sporting may take reasonable steps to prevent the same child from being counted inconsistently in multiple scholarship applications for the same applicable registration period.

When a duplicate or inconsistent claim creates a material eligibility question, 13GEM Sporting may request reasonable clarification.

The purpose is to maintain consistent scholarship administration—not to unnecessarily investigate private family arrangements.

16. Custody Documentation

Formal custody documentation should **not automatically be required**.

When custody materially affects household-size eligibility and the arrangement is unclear, 13GEM Sporting may request the least intrusive reasonable information necessary to resolve the question.

Possible clarification may include:

- A brief written explanation from the applicant;
- Relevant portions of a custody or parenting arrangement;
- School or residence information when appropriate; or

- Another reasonable source establishing the child's household circumstances.

Applicants should generally be permitted to redact unrelated sensitive information.

17. Child Support Received

Child support **actually received by the applicant household** is included as household income for scholarship eligibility.

This applies whether support is received:

- Regularly;
- Through a formal child-support order;
- Through another established payment arrangement; or
- Through another reasonably verifiable child-support arrangement.

The relevant amount is the child support actually received by the applicant household according to the applicable income measurement period.

18. Noncustodial Parent's Other Income

The noncustodial parent's entire income is **not included** in the applicant household's income merely because that parent:

- Is the child's biological parent;
- Has a child-support obligation;
- Pays child support; or
- Contributes financially to the child through an established support arrangement.

Only the child support or other income specifically countable under 13GEM Sporting scholarship policy is included.

19. Child Support Paid by the Applicant

Child support paid by an applicant parent or legal guardian to another household is:

Not deducted from the applicant household's income for scholarship eligibility purposes.

Scholarship household income is calculated according to the established income rules rather than by subtracting the applicant's personal expenses or financial obligations.

20. Child Support Example

A parent earns:

$45,000 per year

and actually receives:

$18,000 per year in child support.

Two qualifying children primarily reside in the applicant household.

The scholarship determination would generally use:

Household Size: 3

Employment Income: $45,000

Child Support Received: $18,000

Total Countable Household Income: $63,000

The noncustodial parent's other income would not be included merely because that parent pays the $18,000 in child support.

21. Irregular Child Support

When child-support payments are irregular, inconsistent, or materially different from the amount formally ordered, 13GEM Sporting should use a reasonable amount representing child support **actually being received**, consistent with the Scholarship Income Definition & Calculation Policy.

13GEM Sporting may use a representative measurement period when necessary to reasonably determine current child-support income.

22. Unexpected Loss or Reduction of Child Support

A significant and unexpected termination or reduction of child support previously received may constitute a qualifying financial event for consideration under the **Hardship Scholarship Policy**.

In a Hardship Scholarship review, 13GEM Sporting may consider the amount of child support **actually currently being received** rather than assuming that a previously established amount continues to be available to the household.

The family may be asked to provide reasonable documentation sufficient to verify the material reduction or termination.

23. Child Support Documentation

13GEM Sporting may request reasonable documentation when necessary to verify child support actually received.

Examples may include:

- Payment records;
- Child-support agency records;
- Relevant portions of a support order;
- Payment-platform records;
- Other reasonably reliable payment history; or

- Another reasonable form of verification.

13GEM Sporting should not require unnecessarily broad court, financial, or family records when narrower documentation sufficiently answers the eligibility question.

24. Documentation Should Be Proportional

All household-size, custody, and child-support verification under this policy is subject to the principle:

Documentation Should Be Proportional.

13GEM Sporting should request only information reasonably necessary to establish:

- Household size;
- Whether a child properly belongs in the applicant household;
- Child support actually received; or
- Another material eligibility fact governed by this policy.

Additional documentation should be requested only when a legitimate unanswered question materially affects scholarship eligibility.

25. Applicant Responsibility

Applicants are responsible for providing accurate household, custody, and child-support information to the best of their knowledge.

A good-faith mistake should be distinguished from:

- Fraud;
- Intentional misrepresentation;
- Falsification of documentation; or
- Intentional failure to disclose material information that existed when the application was submitted.

26. Changes During an Existing Standard Scholarship

Ordinary household or income changes occurring after a Standard Scholarship has been approved do not ordinarily result in immediate recalculation of the existing award.

Standard Scholarship eligibility is generally re-evaluated at the family's annual renewal.

A significant unforeseen negative financial change may instead support a request for Hardship Scholarship consideration when applicable.

27. Changes During an Existing Hardship Scholarship

Changes in financial circumstances occurring after a Hardship Scholarship award has been approved will generally be considered at the family's next registration cycle rather than resulting in a retroactive adjustment to an existing award.

Exceptions may apply in cases involving:

- Fraud;
- Intentional misrepresentation; or
- Failure to disclose material information that existed when the application was submitted.

28. Relationship to Other Scholarship Policies

This policy establishes household-size and child-support rules.

Other scholarship determinations are governed by the applicable 13GEM Sporting policies, including:

- **SOP-001 — Scholarship Opportunity Program Policy**
- **SOP-003 — Scholarship Sliding Scale & FPL Eligibility Chart**
- **SOP-004 — Scholarship Income Definition & Calculation Policy**
- **SOP-006 — Scholarship Documentation Requirements**
- **SOP-007 — Hardship Scholarship Policy**

If an administrative question arises that is not expressly addressed in this policy, it should be resolved consistently with the overall Scholarship Opportunity Program rather than through an undisclosed exception for an individual applicant.

29. Confidentiality

Household, custody, child-support, and related financial information collected through the Scholarship Opportunity Program is confidential.

Information should be accessed only by individuals with a legitimate scholarship-administration need to know.

13GEM Sporting should avoid unnecessary disclosure of family circumstances to:

- Coaches;
- Volunteers;
- Donors or sponsors;
- Other participating families;
- Unrelated staff; or
- Other individuals without a legitimate administrative need.

30. Governing Principles

This policy is governed by the following principles:

Household size is based on parent(s)/legal guardian(s) and children age 18 or younger who are part of the family unit—not every person living at the same address.

A child's primary household should be determined consistently and reasonably.

Substantially equal custody should not automatically prevent a child from being included in the applying parent's household.

Duplicate or inconsistent household claims may be reasonably clarified.

Child support actually received is household income.

The noncustodial parent's entire income is not automatically household income.

Child support paid by the applicant is not deducted from household income.

Unexpected loss or substantial reduction of child support may be considered through the Hardship Scholarship process.

Documentation should be proportional, minimally invasive, and limited to legitimate eligibility questions.

31. Approval

Approved By: Jacob Echevarria

Title: Founder, Owner, Director

Signature: JE

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