



[www.ncaquariums.com](http://www.ncaquariums.com)

**North Carolina Aquarium Scholars Program  
Frequently Asked Questions  
2024-2025 School Year**

**Things to know before applying:**

1. What is North Carolina Aquarium Scholars?  
Aquarium Scholars is a partnership between the NC Aquariums, the NC Aquarium Society, and NC Public Schools, through which private donors help fund access to Aquarium education programs for Title I eligible schools across North Carolina.
2. What is the goal of the NC Aquarium Scholars program?  
The NC Aquariums, in partnership with the NC Aquarium Society, aim to provide immersive STEM programs at Jennette's Pier, at the NC Aquarium on Roanoke Island, at the NC Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores, at the NC Aquarium at Fort Fisher, onsite at your school, or virtually in your classroom at little to no cost to your school.
3. What is the timeline for Aquarium Scholars applications for the 2024-2025 school year?  
Applications will be accepted until September 6, 2024. Teachers will be notified of awarded applications by September 30, 2024. See below for a list of key dates.
4. What can I use Aquarium Scholars funding for?  
Funding can be used to cover costs associated with any of the following program options: field trips to participate in programs on location at any of our four facilities (NC Aquariums at Pine Knoll Shores, Roanoke Island, Fort Fisher, and Jennette's Pier), outreach programs that bring Aquarium educators to your school, or virtual distance learning programming live-streamed to your classroom.  
  
For trips to our locations, funding can be used to assist with transportation to/from our sites, food for your group, chaperone fees, and substitute teachers.
5. Can I use Aquarium Scholars funds to pay for admission for my group?  
All North Carolina students and school faculty receive free admission to the NC Aquariums or Jennette's Pier for one visit per school year (on approved days). Aquarium Scholars funds can be used to pay for parent chaperone admission fees, provided the school makes one group payment in advance for the admission fees.

Department of Natural and Cultural Resources  
Roy Cooper, Governor • D. Reid Wilson, Secretary • Hap Fatzinger, Division Director





[www.ncaquariums.com](http://www.ncaquariums.com)

6. Why do I have to pay for Aquarium programs on-site if I am getting Aquarium Scholars funding? Doesn't that money go directly to programming?  
Aquarium Scholars funding from the NC Aquarium Society can cover program costs at any of the four NC Aquarium locations, including other eligible expenses outlined in question 4. You will be invoiced for program fees, which help support the staff at each site. These funds may be allocated toward those fees. The NC Aquarium Society, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, supports the work and mission of the NC Aquariums and Jennette's Pier. Learn more about the Society here: <https://ncaquariumsociety.com/>
7. When can I schedule my field trip/program?  
Field trips can be scheduled for the fall of 2024 through mid-March of 2025 (or later for Jennette's Pier). (This may vary slightly by location and if participating in outreach or virtual programming.) We strongly recommend booking your field trip between October-February. Visitation is lower during this time, and our staff will have greater availability to facilitate programs and engage with your students.
8. Do Aquarium programs align with NC Essential Science Standards?  
Yes. We offer a variety of opportunities on-site, with outreach, and via virtual programs that align with NC Essential Science Standards.
9. Can I apply for more than one teacher, or more than one grade level?  
Yes. Principals and teachers can apply for individual classes or grade levels. One (or two) teachers can also apply for all students in their grade.
10. How do I know if my school qualifies for an Aquarium Scholars grant?  
If your school is located in North Carolina and designated as a Title I eligible school, it is qualified.
11. What kind of groups can utilize funds?  
Organized teacher-led field trips for Title I eligible North Carolina public schools during standard instructional learning time qualify for funding. Outreach programs and virtual distance learning can be booked for school-wide events or individual classes.

Department of Natural and Cultural Resources  
Roy Cooper, Governor • D. Reid Wilson, Secretary • Hap Fatzinger, Division Director





[www.ncaquariums.com](http://www.ncaquariums.com)

**Things to know if awarded funds:**

12. What do I need to do to accept my Scholars funding award?

You will be notified by the NC Aquarium Society of your award status via email by September 30<sup>th</sup>. You and your principal will then receive DocuSign forms via email from the NC Aquarium Society staff containing an acceptance letter for **both you and your principal to complete**. You will **both** need to sign, complete, and return the award letter via DocuSign to the NC Aquarium Society. If this step is not completed by **both** individuals, this will slow the process down and delay your receipt of funding. Once signed, simply click "Send" to submit your completed form. You will also need to contact your site of choice to schedule your visit/program or outreach/virtual programming.

13. When can I expect to receive my funding?

Upon completion of your DocuSign emails and acceptance letter, AND after scheduling a date for your visit/program, the NC Aquarium Society will issue a check for your awarded amount and mail this to your school. It usually takes about two weeks to complete this process once your materials are received and your visit/program date is scheduled.

14. What do I do if I have any unused funds?

If you have more than \$100 remaining in your unused funds, these funds should be returned by mail to the Society via check. Please send to:

NC Aquarium Society  
3125 Poplarwood Court  
Suite 160  
Raleigh, NC 27604

15. Do I need to complete a report of how I used my Aquarium Scholars funds?

No. A report is not required, but we love to receive feedback and photos!

16. Who do I contact if I have any questions or problems with this process?

You can reach the Aquarium Scholars team at [NCAquariumScholars@ncaquariums.com](mailto:NCAquariumScholars@ncaquariums.com) or call 919-877-5500.

17. How do I switch from a scheduled on-site visit to an outreach program?

Communicate intention and reason for switching to the on-site coordinator you have been in contact with. All on-site planning will be canceled at that time. Begin communicating with the outreach coordinator to plan your new experience. The NC Aquarium Society funds will need to be returned to their central office (see question 14 for returning funds). The outreach coordinator will manage all invoices with the NC Aquarium Society directly.

Department of Natural and Cultural Resources  
Roy Cooper, Governor • D. Reid Wilson, Secretary • Hap Fatzinger, Division Director





[www.ncaquariums.com](http://www.ncaquariums.com)

**Important Dates to Remember:**

- Applications Open: May 31, 2024
- Application Deadline: September 6, 2024
- Announcement of Award Recipients: September 30, 2024
- Deadline to schedule your field trip and program(s): December 13, 2024
- Deadline to return your award letter: January 10, 2025
- All Aquarium and Jennette's Pier trips and programs must be completed by: March 14, 2025
- Outreach and Virtual programs must be completed by: June 13, 2025

Department of Natural and Cultural Resources  
Roy Cooper, Governor • D. Reid Wilson, Secretary • Hap Fatzinger, Division Director

