



A BETTER CHANCE

Since the founding of A Better Chance in 1963, our mission has rested on a single goal: to increase substantially the number of well-educated youth of color capable of assuming positions of responsibility and leadership in American society.

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## Application Instructions and Information

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### About the Application Process

The College Preparatory Schools Program (CPSP) recruits, places and supports students of color in outstanding college preparatory middle and high schools throughout the nation. At A Better Chance we recognize that students come from different backgrounds and educational opportunities, so each application is evaluated on an individual basis. There are no score cut-offs for standardized tests, but test scores, along with school transcripts, extracurricular activities and personal qualities, are used to assess academic strength.

A Better Chance does not make admission decisions. The A Better Chance Admission Committee evaluates applications and refers qualified candidates to select independent and/or community schools. After a candidate is chosen for referral, A Better Chance submits the application directly to Member Schools on his/her behalf.

Qualified students should:

- o Be in grades 5 -10 during the application year
- o Consistently perform at or above grade level in math and English, averaging a B+ or better
- o Rank in the top ten percent of their class
- o Participate in extracurricular activities
- o Demonstrate leadership potential, either in school or through activities outside of school
- o Receive good teacher recommendations
- o Be of upstanding character

Students who are accepted to, and enroll in, one of our Member Schools become A Better Chance Scholars. Scholars are eligible to participate in the other programs offered by A Better Chance.

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Becoming an A Better Chance Scholar is a three-step process:

#### **Step 1: Complete the 2012 A Better Chance Application**

Candidates should get started early. Our application process begins one (1) year prior to enrolling. For example, if a student is currently in the 8th grade he or she would be applying for the 9th grade. **It is important to complete and submit your application by the deadline dates. The later your application is received, the more limited opportunities for placement become. In this application, you must supply an email address that you commit to checking frequently, as email will be the primary source of communication throughout this process.**

The application has two parts: Part I (Parent and Candidate Section)—which must be postmarked by October 1, and Part II (School Section)—which must be postmarked by November 1.

For your application to be considered:

- o You must complete and submit both parts of the application, results from a standardized admission test, and all supporting documentation (e.g. recommendations, transcripts, etc.)
- o You must complete the Parent Financial Statement (see "About Financial Aid" Section, p. 2) if you require financial assistance to attend an independent school

All students are strongly encouraged to interview; each regional A Better Chance office hosts Interview Day programs for prospective Scholars in the fall. If you do not live in a city where an Interview Day program is being held, you should contact your regional Program Manager to schedule a phone interview.

## Step 2: Referral to Member Schools

Qualified candidates are referred to select independent and community schools between November and late January. The process is competitive, and students who do not meet the A Better Chance admissions criteria will not have their applications sent to our Member Schools.

Students who advance to the referral phase of the process will be invited to informative workshops about the next steps in the admissions process.

## Step 3: Placement at a Member School

Our Member Schools ultimately decide which student will be offered a place at their schools after taking our recommendations and their needs into consideration. Admission decisions are sent in the spring directly from the Member Schools. If you receive an acceptance letter, you will be asked to sign a contract to indicate your commitment to that school for the fall of the upcoming school year. Once you have signed a contract to attend a Member School, you may not "change your mind" to sign with another school. Once you have committed to an A Better Chance Member School, you are contracted to attend that school, and you officially become an A Better Chance Scholar. Scholars are then eligible to participate in the other programs offered by A Better Chance.

A Better Chance families are expected to be active participants in the program. A family is only considered "active" when parents:

- Pay annual dues of \$40 to their regional Parents-As-Partners (PAP) chapter
- Attend at least 4 out of 10 events per year (if living within a 50 mile radius of a sitting PAP club)
- Commit to at least 1 volunteer activity per year
- Update contact information at the start of each year

The first event as a Scholar is a **mandatory** weekend Orientation the summer before starting the new school. This Orientation is designed to help the student transition, as well as meet other Scholars and recent alumni. The Orientation dates are as follows: July 11-14, 2013 for West Coast Scholars, and July 25-28, 2013 for East Coast Scholars. New middle school Scholars will be contacted about Orientation by their Program Manager after placement.

## About Financial Aid

A BETTER CHANCE IS NOT A SCHOLARSHIP ORGANIZATION AND DOES NOT PROVIDE FINANCIAL AID. Financial aid is awarded to Scholars by the schools to which they are accepted. The amount of aid is determined by each school based on its guidelines and an examination of the candidate's family's total financial situation. IT IS EXPECTED THAT FAMILIES WILL CONTRIBUTE IN SOME WAY TO THEIR CHILD'S EDUCATION. It is important to pay attention to deadlines; financial aid budgets disappear quickly, so you must respond immediately to any request for further financial information. Please note that financial information submitted to A Better Chance and its Member Schools is regarded as strictly confidential, and as such, will not be divulged to third parties.

### Filing for Financial Aid

In addition to the information required on P5 of this application, all families must fill out the the financial aid applications by Dec. 1. We recommend that you apply for financial aid with School and Student Services (SSS) by completing the Parents' Financial Statement. In the case of divorce or where both parents do not live in the home, each parent should complete a separate PFS form.

If you complete the PFS on paper, you must mail it directly to SSS. (The address will be found on the SSS application.) However, we strongly recommend that you complete the PFS online at [sss.nais.org](http://sss.nais.org). The electronic application will be processed within 48 hours, while the paper application takes at least one week. When you complete the PFS you must include **recipient code 1024** to make sure the report is sent to A Better Chance. SSS will request a 4506-T form (Request for Transcript of Tax Return), which can be found at [www.irstaxrecords.com/4506.pdf](http://www.irstaxrecords.com/4506.pdf). Please keep a copy of the completed document for yourself.

In addition, please submit the following:

- A copy of last year's W-2 and/or 1099 tax forms
- A copy of last year's US Individual or Joint Tax Return (Form 1040), including all schedules

Please note that there are a few schools that do not use SSS. If you are referred to such a school, we will let you know which form to complete at that time.

## **Instructions for Filling Out the A Better Chance Application**

### **PART 1: Parent and Candidate Sections (Postmarked by October 1)**

#### **Parent Section (P1-P6)**

The information you provide on these forms ensures that you will receive information from A Better Chance throughout the application process. This section includes basic contact information, your school preferences, family financial information, standardized testing dates, and an opportunity for you to tell us about your child. At the end of the parent section you will be required to sign attesting to the truthfulness of the information submitted. **YOU MUST PROVIDE AN EMAIL ADDRESS AND COMMIT TO CHECKING IT FREQUENTLY, AS EMAIL WILL BE OUR PRIMARY MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.**

#### **Candidate Section (C1-C3 postmarked October 1, C4 postmarked November 1)**

Students are asked to complete a self-evaluation on their academic and personal strengths, respond to essay questions, list their activities, and submit a graded writing sample.

### **PART 2: School Section (Postmarked by November 1)**

#### **School Section (S1-S4)**

In this section, your child's school counselor or principal will be asked to comment on the candidate's academic ability, as well as submit transcripts for the last two school years. In addition, your child's current math and English teachers must submit recommendations. Please remember, you are required to give permission to your child's current school to release these documents to A Better Chance by signing every page in this section. The last page of the School Section is a personal recommendation form. Anyone outside of your immediate family who is not already completing a recommendation may complete this form on your child's behalf.

It is your responsibility to ensure that all parts of the application are sent to and received by A Better Chance. It is also your responsibility to keep a copy of all materials sent to A Better Chance. You must follow-up with individuals to whom you have given recommendation forms to make sure they are completed and have been submitted. If you receive a notice of missing parts from A Better Chance, you must follow up immediately.

If you have questions at any stage of the application or referral process, please do not hesitate to call us at (800) 562-7865 or (646) 346-1310 or write us an email at [cpasp@abetterchance.org](mailto:cpasp@abetterchance.org). Contact information for regional offices can be found on the next page.

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## Application Checklist

THE FOLLOWING FORMS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY OCTOBER 1, 2012:

- P1 General Information
- P2 Parent Form
- P3 School Options
- P4 Test Registration
- P5 Financial Information
  - Complete 2011 Federal Income Tax Return, copies of all W-2's and other proof of income
- P6 Parent Pledge
- C1 Candidate Questionnaire
- C2 Short Essays
- C3 Original Essay

THE FOLLOWING FORMS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY NOVEMBER 1, 2012:

These sections should be completed after the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year

- C4 Graded Writing Sample (current)  
This sample must be something you submitted during the 2012-2013 school year
- S1 2012-2013 School Year School Recommendation (Completed by guidance counselor or principal)
  - Submit transcripts from last two (2) years, and current transcripts
- S2 2012-2013 School Year Current English Teacher Recommendation
- S3 2012-2013 School Year Current Math Teacher Recommendation
- S4 Optional Personal Recommendation  
Completed by appropriate recommender of choice as described on form

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MUST BE FORWARDED TO A BETTER CHANCE

- SSAT or ISEE scores (recipient code 1024 for SSAT/ 222665 for ISEE)
- PFS (Parent Financial Statement, recipient code 1024) (Available November 1 and due December 1)

Please note that Forms S1, S2, S3, and S4 should be mailed directly to A Better Chance by the school or recommender, or should be given to the candidate in sealed envelopes to be forwarded to A Better Chance.

Until all pieces are received, the application is considered incomplete.  
PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF ALL MATERIALS SENT TO A BETTER CHANCE

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## College Preparatory Schools Program

### NATIONAL OFFICE

253 West 35th Street, 6th Floor  
New York, NY 10001  
Main: (646) 346-1310  
Toll-Free: (800) 562-7865  
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### Mid-Atlantic Region

(DC, DE, MD, PA, VA, WV, Southern NJ)  
Keith Wilkerson, Senior Program Manager  
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### Northeast Region

(NY, Northern NJ, CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)  
Johnathan Gibson, Senior Program Manager  
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### Northwest Region

(Northern CA, AK, ID, MT, ND, OR, SD, WA, WY)  
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### Midwest Region

(IA, IL, IN, KS, KY, MI, MN, MO, NE, OH, OK, WI)  
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### Southeast Region

(AL, AR, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN)  
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### Southwest Region

(Southern CA, AZ, CO, HI, NM, NV, TX, UT)  
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### Community Schools Programs

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