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**November 21, 2011**

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## **D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program Enrolls 1,615 Low-Income D.C. Students for 2011-12 School Year**

*More than 1,600 students enrolled in D.C. private schools through federally-funded scholarship program*

**Washington, D.C.** – [The D.C. Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation \(the Trust\)](#) announced today that it has enrolled 1,615 students in the D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program (OSP) for the 2011-12 school year. Demand for the program is high with a 60 percent increase in enrollment over the previous school year.

The students are attending 45 of the 53 participating District private schools. The participating schools are located across the entire city with the highest number in Ward 8, which includes parts of Southeast and Southwest D.C. Without their D.C. Opportunity Scholarship, more than 92 percent of these students would otherwise be assigned to a school in need of improvement, corrective action, or restructuring.

The program has been a lifeline for participating students, whose families have an average household income of \$23,401 in 2010. Approximately 98 percent of enrolled students are black or Hispanic, with more than 40 percent residing in wards 7 and 8.

The D.C. Opportunity Scholarship Program provides federally-funded scholarships to low-income District children to attend a school of their parent's choice. For the 2011-12 school year, annual scholarship amounts are up to \$12,000 for high school and up to \$8,000 for elementary and middle school. The scholarships may be used at a participating nonpublic school for the cost of tuition, school-related fees, and public transportation. The program received \$13.7 million in federal funding this year.

To be eligible, students must be current residents of the District of Columbia, come from households currently receiving Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits or have an income below 185 percent of the federal poverty line, which is roughly \$41,347.50 in 2010 for a family of four.

The program was enacted in 2004 as part of a citywide effort to improve all of the District's educational sectors - public, public charter and non-public - to expand quality educational experiences for District families. In April 2011, the OSP was reauthorized by Congress for an additional five years. Evidence points to the program's effectiveness. About 91 percent of OSP participants graduate, more than 30 points higher than their peers in public school. Participants also increased their reading scores on standardized tests and surveys showed parental satisfaction. Demand for the program remains high, with more than 10,000 applications for the OSP since its inception.

The Trust will begin accepting new applications for the 2012-13 school year in February 2012. For more information, visit [www.dcscholarships.org](http://www.dcscholarships.org) or call 1-888-DC-YOUTH.

*The D.C. Children and Youth Investment Trust Corporation is the primary resource for developing partnerships that expand and improve services and opportunities for children and youth in the District of Columbia, especially during their time out of school. The partnerships include public schools, city agencies, and employers, including non-profit providers. Since its inception in 1999, the Trust has provided grants, technical assistance, youth worker training, capacity building, learning opportunities, convenings, and policy support in the District. For more information, visit [www.cyitc.org](http://www.cyitc.org)*

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