



**Choice Scholarship Program  
Frequently Asked Questions  
2023-2024**

Indiana’s Choice Scholarship Program, authorized under Indiana Code (IC) 20-51-1 and IC 20-51-4, provides scholarships to eligible Indiana students to offset tuition costs at participating schools.

<b>General Questions</b>		
<b>1</b>	<b>What is the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program?</b>	The Choice Scholarship Program provides state funding to qualifying students that is used to offset tuition costs at participating Choice schools. Students qualify based on household income.
<b>2</b>	<b>Who administers the Choice Scholarship Program?</b>	The Indiana Department of Education’s (IDOE’s) Office of School Finance administers the Choice Scholarship Program.
<b>3</b>	<b>When and where can I apply for the program?</b>	Student applications are submitted electronically by the participating Choice school to IDOE.  <b><u>2023-2024 Choice Scholarship Application Windows</u></b>  Period one: Wednesday, March 1, 2023, to Friday, September 1, 2023 Period two: Wednesday, November 1, 2023, to Monday, January 15, 2024
<b>4</b>	<b>What is the difference between first and second period student applications?</b>	First period student applications are for the entire upcoming school year. Second period applications are for the students enrolling in a Choice school after the period one deadline for an award to be used for the second half of the school year and as such, the second period award amount is half the amount the student would qualify for in the first period.
<b>5</b>	<b>Which schools participate in the Choice Scholarship Program?</b>	A list of participating schools can be found on the program <a href="#">website</a> . The list is updated as schools apply to participate in the Choice Scholarship Program each year.
<b>6</b>	<b>Can a Choice Scholarship be transferred to another school in the same year?</b>	No. The Choice Scholarship is specific to a student as well as to a school. The scholarship is terminated when the student is withdrawn from the school. However, if a student transfers to another Choice school during the second period application window, the student may apply for a second period award at the new school if it is a participating Choice school.

## Eligibility Questions

7	<b>What is the student eligibility criteria for the Choice Scholarship Program?</b>	To be eligible, a student must satisfy <u>each</u> of the following requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have legal settlement in Indiana;</li> <li>● Is at least five years of age and less than 22 years of age on October 1 of the school year; and</li> <li>● Is a member of a household with an annual income of not more than 400% of the amount required for the individual to qualify for the free/reduced lunch program.</li> </ul>
8	<b>Can a kindergarten student qualify for a Choice Scholarship?</b>	Yes, a parent/guardian of a kindergarten student may apply for a Choice Scholarship if the child satisfies the eligibility criteria.
9	<b>Can a pre-k student qualify for a Choice Scholarship?</b>	No, Choice Scholarships are not awarded to students in pre-k. Parents/guardians should work with the school to determine if financial assistance is available for their pre-k student.
10	<b>What are the household income limits?</b>	The income guidelines for the 2023-2024 school year are posted on the Choice Scholarship Program <a href="#">website</a> under student eligibility.
11	<b>Is the household income of the foster parent included when determining a foster child's eligibility for a Choice Scholarship?</b>	No. Foster children are automatically income eligible for the Choice Scholarship Program. Official documentation of the student's current foster status must be kept in the student's file.  If the household includes biological or adopted children in addition to foster children, payments received for serving as a foster parent will not be included in the household income calculation for purposes of determining eligibility for the biological or adopted children.

## Application Process

12	<b>What counts as income and who should be included in the household size?</b>	Each person residing in the household and all income received is included in determining income eligibility for a Choice Scholarship. For questions regarding income and household size, please contact the Choice school. Income verification information is also posted on the Choice <a href="#">webpage</a> . The school will assist with questions and provide guidance specific to your circumstances.
13	<b>Are children included in household size if they are on the tax forms for their household?</b>	Yes. The household which serves as the child's primary residence should be used for purposes of applying for a Choice Scholarship. If a child is claimed by the other parent on taxes, documentation of this agreement should be kept in the student's file. More guidance for determining household size is available in the income verification rules posted on the Choice <a href="#">webpage</a> .

14	<b>Who is responsible for determining a student's Choice Scholarship eligibility?</b>	IDOE determines eligibility. The parent/guardian of the student must provide documentation establishing eligibility, which must be kept on file at the school.
15	<b>How is the amount of the Choice Scholarship award determined?</b>	The first period award is the lesser of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tuition and fees reported on the Choice student's application at the Choice school; or</li> <li>2. 90% of the per-student state funding allocation, based on the student's school corporation of residence.</li> </ol> The second period award is half of this amount.
16	<b>Where can I review the Choice Scholarship award amounts?</b>	The award amounts for each school corporation are available on the Choice Scholarship Program <a href="#">website</a> .
17	<b>How will families be notified of the Choice Scholarship awarded to their child?</b>	Once an application is submitted by the school, the system will automatically approve or deny the application based on eligibility criteria. The school will print the award or denial letter to inform families. The initial award letter is an estimated award amount; actual award amounts are calculated using information that is not available until later in the school year. A letter with the final award amounts will be available to the Choice school when the public tuition support payment amounts are final. Families should retain copies of all forms and letters.
18	<b>Can a parent/guardian of a student apply for a Choice Scholarship to multiple schools?</b>	A student can only have one application for a given application period. If a parent/guardian wishes to apply at a different school, the parent/guardian must withdraw the student's application at the original Choice school and then they may apply at the preferred Choice school so long as the application window for the period the student is applying for is still open.
<b>Tuition and Fees</b>		
19	<b>Can participating schools charge tuition and fees in addition to what is covered by the Choice Scholarship award?</b>	Yes, the parent/guardian is responsible for any tuition and fees that the participating school charges more than the Choice Scholarship award amount. A parent/guardian should carefully read any agreement signed at a participating school. A Choice school is not allowed to charge Choice Scholarship students additional fees and costs that are not routinely charged to non-Choice eligible students.
20	<b>Will the Choice school receive additional</b>	The parent or guardian of an eligible special education student will designate either the Choice school or the public school corporation as the

	<b>funding if a student receives special education services?</b>	special education service provider. If the Choice school is selected as the service provider during the first period, the Choice school will be eligible to receive the state special education funding allocated for that student. This funding is to be used to provide special education services for the eligible student. If the Choice school is selected as the service provider during the second application period, the Choice school will not be eligible to receive the state special education funding allocated for that student. For more information on the Choice Scholarship Program and special education, please review the Choice Scholarship and Special Education Services FAQ available on the Choice Scholarship Program <a href="#">website</a> .
21	<b>What should be included in the tuition and fees policy for the Choice school application?</b>	The tuition and fees policy should include descriptions and amounts for all tuition, fees, and discounts used by the applying Choice school. The policy must be finalized for the 2023-2024 school year prior to the submission of the school application. The policy and amounts must be applied uniformly among Choice and non-Choice students.
22	<b>Can an optional fee be included in the tuition and fees on the Choice school application?</b>	No, the optional fees cannot be included in the reported tuition and fees on the Choice school application. However, the Choice school can charge optional fees that are not included on the Choice student application.
23	<b>Can a Choice school receive funding for curricular materials for a Choice student?</b>	Choice schools can receive curricular material reimbursement for students qualifying for free and reduced price lunch if the cost for curricular materials was not included in the tuition and fees amount covered by the Choice Scholarship.
<b>Attendance and Payment Process</b>		
24	<b>Can a student receive a Choice Scholarship after the school year has already begun?</b>	To be awarded a Choice Scholarship in period one of the 2023-2024 school year, a complete application must be submitted for the student on or before Friday, September 1, 2023. For a second period Choice Scholarship, a complete application must be submitted for the student on or before Monday, January 15, 2024.
25	<b>Can a student who has been withdrawn from a Choice school return to that school later in the school year and continue to receive his/her</b>	At the time a student is withdrawn from the Choice school, the parent/guardian forfeits the remaining portion of the student's Choice Scholarship award. If the student enrolls at another school and then chooses to return to the original school, the student may have the school submit an application for a second period award during the application window which opens on Wednesday, November 1, 2023 and closes on Monday, January 15, 2024.

	<b>Choice Scholarship award?</b>	
26	<b>Is there anything that the parent/guardian needs to do once school starts?</b>	The parent/guardian plays a significant role in the payment process. The parent/guardian designates the Choice Scholarship award to be paid directly to the participating Choice school on the student's behalf. At the time of the application, the Choice school will download and print a Choice Scholarship Endorsement Form (EF). The EF must be signed and dated by the parent/guardian. Without the completed EF, IDOE will not make payment for the student.
27	<b>What happens to the payment if the student is withdrawn before the school year is over? Are there any costs to the family beyond what is covered by the Choice Scholarship?</b>	At the time a student is withdrawn from the Choice school, the parent/guardian forfeits the remaining portion of the student's Choice Scholarship award. Please review the participating school's policies concerning student withdrawal and tuition payment as individual school policies vary and may require that tuition and fee costs be paid for the full month for which the student withdraws or even for the full semester. In accordance with the school's policy, the family may be responsible for any unpaid tuition resulting from the state's process of prorating payments.
28	<b>How does the payment process work?</b>	<p>To receive a payment, a student must have:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An approved Choice Scholarship,</li> <li>2. Current enrollment record,</li> <li>3. Be included in the Choice school's Membership submission, and</li> <li>4. Have an EF signed by the parent/guardian and the school has uploaded this in the STN Application Center by the posted deadline.</li> </ol> <p>The EF instructs the state to provide payment to the school on the student's behalf. Without the completed EF, a payment will not be made.</p>
29	<b>What happens to the payment if the student is withdrawn before the school year is over?</b>	<p>When a student is withdrawn from the participating school, the Choice Scholarship amount is prorated to the number of days that the student was enrolled at the Choice School - providing that the student was claimed in the school's membership data and a signed EF was uploaded for the student by the posted deadline. This process is repeated for the second count day.</p> <p>Individual school policies vary, and in accordance with the school's policy, the family may be responsible for any unpaid tuition resulting from the state's process of prorating payments.</p>
30	<b>How often will state payments be</b>	At a minimum, Choice Scholarship payments will be made at least once per semester.

	made?	
<b>Scholarship Granting Organization (SGO) Program</b>		
31	<b>What is an SGO Scholarship?</b>	The SGO program provides a 50% state tax credit for contributions made to qualified SGOs that offer scholarships to children to attend non-public schools of their choice. More information about SGOs is posted on IDOE's school scholarship <a href="#">website</a> . For more information on whether your child qualifies for an SGO award, please contact the participating school.
32	<b>Can a student who receives a Choice Scholarship also receive an SGO Scholarship?</b>	Yes. A student who meets the requirements for a Choice Scholarship may also qualify for an SGO Scholarship in the same year.
33	<b>What is the minimum SGO award amount?</b>	There is no minimum or maximum amount that an SGO can award to an eligible student. SGOs determine their policies about SGO award amounts, the participating school will have information regarding student qualifications and SGO award amounts.
<b>School Policies</b>		
34	<b>Does my school need to remove its religion classes and/or religious affiliation?</b>	No. Participation in the Choice Scholarship Program does not require schools to remove religion classes or alter their religious affiliation.
35	<b>How does the Choice Program affect my school's admissions policy?</b>	A participating Choice school may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin. The school must have a written admissions policy. This policy is required to be included in the school's application to participate in the Choice Scholarship Program. Admission standards for Choice students may not differ from those used for non-Choice eligible students.
36	<b>Is my Choice school required to do teacher evaluations?</b>	Yes. Pursuant to IC 20-28-11.5-4, eligible Choice schools are required to develop a plan for annual performance evaluations for each certified employee.
37	<b>Are background checks required?</b>	Yes. Background checks are required for all individuals who will have direct, on-going contact with students.
<b>Accreditation and Accountability</b>		
38	<b>If my school is not state accredited, can it participate in the Choice Program?</b>	To be an eligible school, the school must be accredited for the entire school year that it wishes to participate in the Choice Scholarship Program. The accreditation must be by the State of Indiana, approved by the Indiana State Board of Education (SBOE), or by an accrediting agency recognized by SBOE. The list of accrediting entities recognized by the SBOE are posted on

		IDOE's School Accreditation <a href="#">webpage</a> .
Assessment		
<b>39</b>	<b>Will my school be responsible for the cost of state mandated tests?</b>	No. Indiana provides state-mandated assessments to Choice and state accredited non-public schools with no fees.
<b>40</b>	<b>What assessments are Choice schools required to administer?</b>	Depending on the grades served, Indiana statewide assessments must be administered as part of a school's participation in the Choice Scholarship Program. All enrolled students who are in tested grades must complete the required assessments. Refer to IDOE's Office of Student Assessment <a href="#">website</a> for information on specific assessments and 2023-2024 testing windows.
<b>41</b>	<b>Is the test administrator (TA) required to be a licensed teacher?</b>	Statewide assessment TAs must have an IDOE-issued license (instructional, administrative, or school services). See the <a href="#">Indiana Assessments Policy Manual</a> (Section 4) for details; this document is posted and can be found on the Assessment <a href="#">website</a> .
<b>42</b>	<b>How will parent/guardian be notified of test results?</b>	The school will provide student results to parents in a secure manner to protect student data. As per IC 20-32-5.1-13, school corporations, charter schools, and accredited non-public schools must promptly provide parents with information to access their child's test results.
<b>43</b>	<b>Are schools responsible for managing the ILEARN rescore request process?</b>	Yes. The school must communicate details of the rescore request process to all parents/guardians of students who participated in ILEARN testing ahead of the defined rescore window. As per IC 20-32-5.1-139(d), parents/guardians must have the opportunity to request resources for eligible, open-ended ILEARN test items. Schools must manage this process locally for any interested parents/guardians.
<b>44</b>	<b>Our school does not have access to technology for all our students. Are we required to participate in tests online?</b>	<p>Schools are required to participate in online testing to the extent possible. A school does not need to be 1:1 to participate in online testing. Testing can be administered using a stationary computer lab, mobile computer lab, or Bring Your Own Device (BYOD). A formal request to the Office of Student Assessment must be made for paper testing approval. In some cases, only partial approval may be granted. Approvals will be determined on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Schools requesting paper must participate in a Systems Readiness Test to confirm technology capacity issues that would prevent the successful implementation of online tests.</p>
<b>45</b>	<b>Can students take a state assessment remotely if they are remote</b>	State assessments may not be administered remotely to students under any circumstances. Additional guidance and support may be viewed through the 2023-2024 Corporation Test Coordinator (CTC) and All Staff Test Security & Integrity Training, which is required annually by CTCs and school staff prior to administering assessments.

	<b>learners?</b>	
<b>46</b>	<b>What is the process for ensuring alternate testers are noted, along with accommodations, in the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE) when Indiana IEP (IIEP) is not utilized?</b>	Student information regarding alternate testing that is not submitted through a certified SIS/DEX vendor for students with a CSEP must be communicated to Alyson Traficante, Accessibility and Accommodations Specialist, at <a href="mailto:atraficante@doe.in.gov">atraficante@doe.in.gov</a> or 317-234-0658.

Further questions concerning the Choice Scholarship Program not addressed in this FAQ resource should be directed to the Choice school in which you are interested in having your student attend. Additional questions may be directed to [IDOE's Choice Scholarship Program team](#) or call (317) 233-2200.