

Family Empowerment Scholarship—Educational Options (FES EO) FAQs

1. What is the Family Empowerment Scholarship Educational Options Program (FES EO)?

The Family Empowerment Scholarship Program was established in 2019 by the Florida legislature (Section 1002.394, Florida Statutes) to provide children of families in this state which have limited financial resources with educational options to achieve success in their education.

On March 27, 2023, Governor Ron DeSantis signed into law House Bill 1, which expands available school choice options for all students in Florida. As of the 2023-24 school year, financial eligibility restrictions and the current enrollment cap for FES EO have been eliminated.

2. What are the eligibility requirements for FES EO?

A parent of a student may apply for and receive from the state a scholarship if the student is a Florida resident and is eligible to enroll in kindergarten through grade 12 in a public school in this state.

Priority is given first to students whose household income level does not exceed 185% of the federal poverty level or who is in foster care or out-of-home care, then to students whose household income level exceeds 185% of the federal poverty level, but does not exceed 400%.

3. What options are available for students under FES EO?

Families of students participating in FES EO may choose to enroll their students in private school that best meets their academic needs and is approved to participate in the scholarship program.

Alternatively, the family of a student enrolled in a Florida public school that is different from the school to which they were assigned may request to receive a \$750 scholarship to help cover the cost of transportation if the school district does not provide the student with transportation to the school.

4. How many students may participate in FES EO?

As of the 2023-24 school year, there is no longer a cap on the number of FES EO participants in the scholarship law.

5. What is the average award amount for FES EO?

The maximum scholarship amount for each student is based upon their grade level and county of residence. In the 2022-23 school year, the average award amount was \$7,700. Updated award amounts for 2023-24 will be available soon.

6. How do parents apply for FES EO?

Parents must apply to an eligible non-profit scholarship funding organization that is administering the program. For a list of non-profit scholarship funding organizations please visit the Department's [SFO website](#).

7. Who determines students' eligibility for FES EO?

Once families apply to one of the two approved [scholarship funding organizations \(SFOs\)](#), Those organizations are responsible for collecting and evaluating documentation in support of the applications. SFOs submit eligible students to the Department for funding on a quarterly basis, and then distribute tuition payments to private schools on behalf of the families.

8. What are my responsibilities as a parent?

The parent of a student participating in FES EO is responsible for

- Enrolling the student full-time in a private school that is approved to participate in the FES EO program.
- Meeting with the school's principal or designee prior to enrollment to review the school's academic programs and policies, specialized services, code of conduct, and attendance policies.

- Requiring the student to take the norm-referenced assessment administered by the private school.
- Approving each payment made to the private school prior to deposit of funds.
- Fulfilling financial obligations for all eligible expenses in excess of the amount of the scholarship as applicable.
- Applying or renewing participation in the program and providing any necessary documentation in support of the application or renewal, meeting deadlines and other requirements established by the SFO.

9. Can a child receive an FES EO scholarship and receive their education through a home education program?

In the 2023-24 school year, students participating in FES EO will meet attendance requirements by enrolling in a private school that is approved by the Department to participate in the scholarship program.

Traditional home education options are only available to eligible FES UA students. The Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program will, however, include a “homeschool” option for up to 20,000 students in the 2023-24 school year referred to as a personalized education program (PEP). Families should indicate their interest in the new option when completing their student’s application with the SFO.

10. Are sibling(s) of FES UA students eligible for an FES EO scholarship?

With the passage of HB1, all Florida students eligible to enroll in a K-12 public school may receive an FES EO scholarship. Parents of students who participated in FES EO as the sibling of an FES UA student in the 2022-23 school year should complete an FES EO application for the 2023-24 school year to continue participation.

11. May FES EO students take Florida Virtual School courses?

No K-12 scholarship student may take Florida Virtual School courses except as a private-paying student.

12. Who will administer FES EO funds to schools?

SFOs provide funds to the private school of the parent’s choice on a quarterly basis. Parents must approve the payment before scholarship funds are deposited.

13. Can FES EO students use scholarship funds to attend a school that does not meet the requirements for scholarship participation?

No. In order to use scholarship funds, FES EO students must be attending a private school approved by the Department to participate in the program.

14. Will all private schools be required to accept FES EO students?

Private schools are not required to participate in K-12 scholarship programs. Private schools may request to participate in FES EO and become approved by the Department once they have met the requirements established in scholarship law.