



Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

Summary of the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program

Since 2013, parents across the entire state of Wisconsin have had the ability to match their children with schools that best fits their needs.

The Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) allows parents to receive a voucher to enroll their children in a private or religious school. The program is limited to those families with Adjusted Gross Income at or below 185% of the federal poverty level.

Who is eligible for the WPCP?

Students who are residents of Wisconsin, outside of the Milwaukee and Racine Unified school districts, with an Adjusted Gross Income at or below 185% of the federal poverty level are eligible to receive a voucher to attend a private or religious school through the WPCP.

Do I meet the income requirements?

To meet the income requirements for the program a student's family must have an Adjusted Gross Income at or below 185% of the federal poverty level, with an additional \$7,000 allowed for a married couple as illustrated in the table below.

2015-2016 Adjusted Gross Income Limits

Family Size	Single Family	Married Family
2	\$29,566	
3	\$37,197	\$44,197
4	\$44,828	\$51,828
5	\$52,459	\$59,459
6	\$60,090	\$67,090

For each additional member add \$7,631.

What if my income increases in subsequent years?

A "once in, always in" provision means your child keeps his or her voucher even if family income rises. Family income is determined for each student in the year they enter the program. Families could have some children qualify and others that do not qualify depending on family income in the year each child sought entry into the program. The "once in, always in" provision applies only if a student continues to attend a school in the WPCP and does not voluntarily leave the program.

Which students may apply to participate in the WPCP?

- All public school students in grades K4-12 meeting the income requirements may apply to the program.
- All students who in the previous school year were not enrolled in school may also apply.
- Students currently attending a private or religious school may apply to the program only when entering K4, K5, 1 and 9 grade.

Which grade levels are available at the private or religious school?

Each private or religious school determines the grade levels and the number of seats it will make available at each grade level to students in the WPCP. The grade levels and number of seats available will vary from school to school.

Which schools will participate in the program?

Call your preferred private or religious school to see if they intend to participate in the WPCP. A list of schools that have applied to participate in the program and the grades they will serve is available at the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) website. The 2015-2016 list of schools will be available February 2nd:

<http://sms.dpi.wi.gov/wpcp-statewide>

Can I apply to more than one school through the program?

Yes.

How do I apply for the WPCP?

To apply for the program, a parent or guardian must complete an online application that will be available during the open enrollment period from February 2nd-April 20th, 2015. A link to the application is available at:

sms.dpi.wi.gov/wpcp-statewide

Within the online application the parent or guardian will select the schools to which they wish to apply. After completing the online application, the parent or guardian must provide proof that they meet residency and income requirements to each school to which they have applied, no later than April 20th, 2015. The online application is not complete until each school to which the parent or guardian has applied has verified and accepted the required documentation.

What if the parent or guardian does not have access to a computer or the Internet?

- Most public libraries have computers and internet available for public use.
- The private or religious school to which you apply may have computers available for your use. Please contact the school.

How many students and how many schools will participate in the WPCP?

- The Governor's proposed budget has no limits on the number of vouchers available to families meeting income and residency requirements.
- The Governor's proposed budget has no limits on the number of schools that may participate.

When will I know if my child was accepted?

It is likely that parents will not know if their child has been accepted to the program until July or August of 2015, after the passage of the Wisconsin state budget in June. The DPI and the individual school will contact parents to inform them whether their child has received a voucher or their child has been placed on a waiting list.

What do I do if my child is accepted?

Parents must reply to the school within five days after notice from DPI or the school whether or not they accept the voucher and placement at the school. If the parent has applied to more than one school, the parent must choose which school they wish to attend and reply to that school within five days of notification.

What is the dollar amount of the voucher?

In 2014-2015, the amount of the voucher is \$7,210 for grades K-8 and \$7856 for grades 9-12. The amount of the voucher for 2015-2016 will be known after the passage of the Wisconsin state budget in June.

Will I have to pay additional tuition?

No. The voucher must be accepted as full payment of the cost of education.

Can a school collect fees from a student participating in the program?

Yes. A school may charge a student participating in the WPCP reasonable fees for personal items such as towels, gym clothes or uniforms, social and extracurricular activities if the activity is not a part of the required curriculum, musical instruments, meals, and high school classes not required or credited for graduation. A student may not be charged a fee for registration or application to the program, books, teacher salaries, buildings, maintenance, equipment, computers, or any other fee directly related to the required curriculum.

Does my child have to meet academic standards to attend a school through the program?

A student that meets residency and income requirements is eligible for the program. A school may not use grades or test scores as a condition of acceptance into the program. Once a student is accepted into the program, a school may test a student for placement purposes.

Will my child be required to follow the school rules?

Yes. State law requires schools to have policies and procedures in place regarding suspension and expulsion. Once a student is accepted and enrolled in the school, he or she is required to follow the school's policies and procedures. A parent should contact the school for a copy of its policies and procedures.

My child has a special need. Can I apply for the program?

Eligibility for the program is based only on residency and income requirements. Please contact the school in which you are interested in enrolling your child for more information and to discuss which services they provide.

Do the schools provide transportation?

A private school is not required to provide transportation to students in the program. If the school chooses to provide transportation, a fee may be charged. In some cases, the district of residence will provide transportation or reimburse the parent a certain amount for their transportation costs through a contract. Check directly with the private school you plan to attend or with your district of residence.

Where can I find more information about the WPCP?

Department of Public Instruction
608-266-2853 or 608-266-0523
sms.dpi.wi.gov/wpcp-statewide

School Choice Wisconsin
855-827-1372 or 414-319-9160
www.chooseyourschoolwi.org

Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools
608-287-1224
www.wcris.org