



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 a school that best fits their child’s needs.

The Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) allows parents to receive a voucher to enroll their children in private or religious schools. The program is limited to those families with adjusted gross incomes at or below 185% of the federal poverty level. In 2014-15, participation is limited to 1000 students with no more than 1% from any individual school district.

Student applications for the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program can be submitted online from February 1st to April 21st, 2014.

Who is eligible for the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program?

Students who are residents of the State of Wisconsin, outside of the Milwaukee and Racine Unified school districts, with a family 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. A married couple may subtract \$7,000 from their adjusted gross income before determining eligibility. Adjusted Gross Income limits are shown below.

Family Size	Single Family	Married Family
2	\$29,095	
3	\$36,636	\$43,636
4	\$44,177	\$51,177
5	\$51,718	\$58,718
6	\$59,259	\$66,259

For each additional member add \$7,541

What if my income increases in subsequent years?

A “once in, always in” provision allows family income to rise once a student is in the WPCP. 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 can apply to the WPCP?

All students in grades 4K-12 meeting the income requirements, whether public school students or private school students, can apply for the program. Students who in the previous year were not currently enrolled in school can also apply.

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 their school 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 schools to see if they intend to participate in the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program. A list of schools that have applied to participate in the program and the grades they will serve are available at the DPI website:

<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 Wisconsin Parental Choice Program?

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 1st to April 21st. A link to the application is available at:

<http://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 they meet residency and income requirements at each school to which they have applied no later than April 21st. 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 schools to which you apply also may have computers available for your use. Please contact the school.

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

The Wisconsin Parental Choice Program will be limited to 1000 students in 2014-2015.

If more than 1000 student applicants are reported on April 21st, the 25 schools throughout the state with the most applications will be allowed to participate in the program in 2014-2015.

Each of the 25 schools will be guaranteed 10 seats, to be assigned at each school by random drawing, with preference given to siblings. The remaining 250 seats will be assigned by random lottery among the 25 schools with no guarantee of additional seats at any particular school.

When will I know if my child was accepted?

Shortly after the open enrollment period closes on April 21st, the Department of Public Instruction (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 whose children successfully receive a voucher must reply to the school within five days after notice from DPI 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.

How much is the voucher worth?

In 2014-2015, the amount of the voucher is \$7,210 for K-8 and \$7856 for 9-12.

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, and 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 into the school, he or she is required to follow a 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 on what services they provide.

Must the school 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 Wisconsin Parental Choice Program?

Department of Public Instruction
608-266-2853 or 608-266-0523

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

School Choice Wisconsin at:
414-319-9160

<http://www.chooseyourschoolwi.org>

Wisconsin Council of Religious and Independent Schools at:
608-287-1224

<http://www.wcris.org>