

Indiana Choice Scholarship Program

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Providing educational options and opportunities for thousands of Indiana families.

The Indiana Choice Scholarship Program, enacted in May of 2011, provides scholarships to attend a school of choice, to lower income Indiana families. In conjunction with the Indiana Scholarship Tax Credit Program (see back), these programs offer the opportunity for Indiana families to choose the school that best suits their children's needs.

Program Summary

The Choice Scholarship Program provides scholarships to eligible students by utilizing a portion of the state funds allocated for that child to follow them to the non-public school of their choice. There is a cap on the number of scholarships provided in years one and two: 7,500 and 15,000 respectively.

Student Eligibility and Scholarship Amounts

- Students must have been in a public school for the two semesters prior to the semester in which they will receive the scholarship. Note that Kindergarten cannot count as the prior two semesters. OR Students who have received a scholarship through the Scholarship Tax Credit Program in a prior year are also eligible for the program without being a public school the year prior.
- Families below the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Income Guideline are eligible to receive a voucher/scholarship for 90% of state tuition support (based on the funding level in their school district of residence). This income level is around \$40,000 for a family of four.
- Families below 150% of the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Income Guideline are eligible to receive a voucher/scholarship for 50% of state tuition support (based on the funding level in their school district of residence). This income level is around \$60,000 for a family of four.
- The Scholarship amount will be the lesser of tuition and fees or (the applicable percentage of) the state tuition support in the district of residence. However the cap for grades 1-8 is tuition or \$4,500 whichever is least.

Non-Public School Eligibility and Participation

- Participating non-public schools must be accredited by the state or another regional accreditation agency recognized by the state board and administer the ISTEP
- Participating non-public schools must not discriminate in admissions based on race, color, or national origin
- Participating non-public schools must conduct a lottery if the number of voucher applicants meeting admissions criteria exceeds the number of slots available for students receiving scholarships
- PL 221 accountability (school grading system) applies and any school who is consistently in lowest categories will become ineligible to receive scholarship funds
- Participating non-public schools must meet certain curricular standards which are consistent with state-accreditation in addition to not advocating for any government overthrow
- Annual teacher performance evaluation plans must also be implemented

Indiana Scholarship Tax Credit Program

Indiana Scholarship Tax Credit Program

Providing educational options and opportunities for thousands of Indiana families.

The Indiana Scholarship Tax Credit Program was enacted in 2009, but has been expanded as part of the 2011 Choice Bill. In conjunction with the Choice Scholarship Program (see reverse) these programs offer the opportunity for Indiana families to choose the school that best suits their children's needs.

Program Summary

The Indiana Scholarship Tax Credit Program provides eligible lower income families with scholarships given by certified Scholarship Granting Organizations (or SGOs) to attend the school of their choice. Private donors receive a 50% tax credit for their donations to these SGOs to fund scholarships. The total program cap for FY 2011 is 5 million dollars.

Student Eligibility and Scholarships (Note that these are program eligibility requirements and may be set lower by the individual SGOs)

- Families who fall under 200% of the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch Qualifying amount (this is about \$80,000 for a family of four) are eligible for a Tax Credit Scholarship
- Students must have been enrolled in a public school the year prior to receive a scholarship or be entering Kindergarten.
- Scholarship amounts are determined by the individual SGOs
- Scholarships are portable and follow the student from one eligible school to another

Non-Public School Eligibility and Participation

- Participating non-public schools must be accredited by the state or another regional accreditation agency recognized by the state board and administer the ISTEP or another nationally recognized norm-reference test
- Participating non-public schools may not accept students from an SGO whose staff is an employee or board member with the school
- Annual teacher performance evaluation plans must also be implemented