



**NORTHWEST INDIANA
CHOICE SCHOLAR**

FREQUENTLY

ASKED

QUESTIONS

about the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program

- 1. Who is eligible for the Indiana Choice Scholarship?**
 - a. To be eligible, students must meet the following requirements:
 - i. Be a resident of Indiana
 - ii. Be accepted and enrolled at a participating Choice school in Indiana
 - iii. Be between the ages of 5 and 22 no later than Oct. 1 of the current school year
 - iv. Meet the income eligibility requirements
- 2. What is the income requirement to receive an Indiana Choice Scholarship?**
 - a. Qualifying families can earn up to (but not exceed) 400% of the Federal Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Program (FRL). For example, a family of four can earn up to \$220,000 in the 2023–24 school year. In Northwest Indiana, 99% of families are financially eligible for the scholarship.
 - b. A more detailed breakdown of household income limits can be found below in [Appendix A](#).
- 3. What qualifies as income?**
 - a. The total household income may include several types of income including wages earned from work, welfare/child support/alimony, retirement/disability benefits, and more. A complete list of acceptable sources of income can be found in [Appendix B](#).
- 4. Are preschool and kindergarten students eligible to receive an Indiana Choice Scholarship?**
 - a. No, preschool students cannot currently receive a Choice Scholarship. However, kindergarten students are now eligible to apply for and receive an Indiana Choice Scholarship.
- 5. Is the Indiana Choice Scholarship application separate from the school enrollment application process?**
 - a. Yes, the applications are technically separate, but the school at which your child is enrolled is responsible for submitting the Choice Scholarship application on behalf of your child. Once you have applied and are accepted to a Choice school, the school will then begin the process of submitting your application for the Choice Scholarship. Only an approved Choice school may submit a Choice Scholarship student application.
- 6. Where can I apply?**
 - a. Only approved Choice schools may submit applications. Your application will be submitted by the approved Choice school after you have applied to that school and been accepted through their regular school admissions process.



- 8. When can I apply?**
 - a. There are two application periods for the Indiana Choice Scholarship. First period student applications are for the entire upcoming school year. Second period applications are for students enrolling in a Choice school after the period one deadline, for a scholarship to be used for the second half of the school year. The second period award amount is half the amount the student would qualify for in the first period.
 - b. The Indiana Department of Education will accept period one applications from March 1, 2023, through September 1, 2024, for the 2023-24 school year. Period two applications will be accepted beginning November 1, 2023, through January 15, 2024.
- 9. Can I apply for the Indiana Choice Scholarship at multiple schools at once?**
 - a. No, a student can only have one Indiana Choice Scholarship application submitted to one school at a time. You may, however, apply for admission to several schools at once. Once you are accepted and enrolled at the school of your choice, you can proceed with the Indiana Choice Scholarship application through that school.
 - b. If an Indiana Choice Scholarship application has already been submitted, and 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 submit an alternate application at the preferred Choice school.
- 10. What should I do before I start my application?**
 - a. Before starting your application, make sure you have researched schools in your area to ensure you have found the school that is the right fit for your child and family. Next, check to make sure you meet the eligibility requirements to qualify for the Indiana Choice Scholarship. You can also use the calculator at NWChoiceScholar.org to see how much your child may qualify for.
- 11. Who receives my application and how is it evaluated?**
 - a. The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), Office of School Finance, reviews Choice Scholarship applications and determines who is awarded scholarships.
- 12. When will I hear back about my application?**
 - a. Once your Indiana Choice Scholarship application has been submitted, the Choice school will then review your materials and issue an award letter or a denial letter. If you receive an award letter, the initial amount listed is an estimated award amount. The actual amount will be updated and issued later on in the school year when all necessary information becomes available.
- 13. What if my child is already enrolled in a Choice school but is not currently receiving an Indiana Choice Scholarship?**
 - a. You can still apply for the Indiana Choice Scholarship as long as you are currently enrolled at a participating Choice school and meet the income eligibility requirements.
- 14. What if my child is already receiving other scholarship support or tuition assistance?**
 - a. Students may continue to receive free or reduced lunch, as well as curricular materials assistance, so long as they qualify for such assistance and those costs are not already included in the tuition fees and amounts covered by the Indiana Choice Scholarship.
- 15. Is this opportunity only available to Catholic families and students?**
 - a. No, you do not need to be Catholic to qualify for the Indiana Choice Scholarship and attend a Catholic school. The Choice schools affiliated with the Catholic Diocese of Gary welcome all students and families, regardless of religion, ethnicity, race, or income. Many Catholic school families come from a variety of religious backgrounds.
- 16. What if I'm not sure if my child is eligible for the Indiana Choice Scholarship?**
 - a. You can check your eligibility using the NWI Choice Scholartool, powered by Big Shoulders Fund. Find out if you are a candidate here: NWChoiceScholar.org.



APPENDIX

Appendix A:

Families must have an annual income equal to or below 400% of the Federal Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Program (FRL).

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	HOUSEHOLD INCOME LIMIT TO QUALIFY
1	\$107,892
2	\$145,928
3	\$183,964
4	\$220,000
5	\$260,036
6	\$298,072
7	\$336,108
8	\$374,144
9	\$412,180
10	\$450,216

For each additional household member over 10, add \$38,036 to the household income limit to qualify.

Appendix B:

The following types of income must be included in the total household income:

- **Earnings from work**
 - Wages, salaries, tips, commissions, overtime pay, bonuses
 - Income from self-owned businesses and farms
 - Strike benefits, unemployment compensation, and workers' compensation
- **Welfare/Child Support/Alimony**
 - Public assistance payments/welfare benefits
 - Alimony or child support payments
- **Child's income**
 - Earnings of a child who is a full-time or regular part-time employee are included
 - Social Security
 - Supplemental security income
- **Retirement/Disability Benefits**
 - Pensions, retirement income, veterans' benefits
 - Social Security
 - Supplemental security income
 - Disability benefits
- **Other income**
 - Distributions from retirement or investment accounts
 - Rental income, annuities, and royalties
 - Interest and dividend income
 - Inheritance, income from estates, trusts, and/or investments
 - Cash or investment gifts
 - Military pay that is not received as a result of the service member's deployment to or service in an area that has been designated as a combat zone
 - Military pay that is received prior to the service member's deployment to or service in the designated combat zone
 - Living insurance benefits
 - Living allowance

The following types of income are excluded from the total household income:

- Payments received for the care of foster children
- Student financial assistance provided for the costs of attendance at an educational institution, such as grants and scholarships
- Loans, such as bank loans
- Value of non-cash benefits
- Value of benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Food Distribution Program on Indiana Reservation (FDPIR)
- Military pay received as a result of the service member's deployment to or service in an area that has been designated as a combat zone
- Occasional earnings received on an irregular basis (not recurring, such as payment for occasional baby-sitting or mowing lawns)
- Adoption subsidies
- If 2020 unemployment exemption was not applied on the family's 2020 tax return, the first \$10,200 of 2020 unemployment may be deducted from the household income