



Learning Options for Every Student in Florida

Florida is a national leader in educational choice with more than 1.6 million students attending schools of choice. Step Up For Students, a 501c3 scholarship granting organization, helps deliver several of those options. Today, Step Up offers six scholarships to meet the diverse needs of Florida's public, private and home education students. Of these students, more than 90,000 have special needs and more than 120,000 qualify for free or reduced price lunches.

The Florida Tax Credit Scholarship

Created in 2001, the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship (FTC) served 15,585 students in the inaugural 2002-03 school year. Step Up funded 129,653 students in private schools in 2023-24.

Scholarships are paid for by private corporate donations. Donors receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit for their contribution with tax credits capped at more than \$1 billion. Scholarships values vary from county-to-county and by grade, but average between \$7,550 and \$8,250, depending on grade and county. Students may also receive a \$750 transportation scholarship to attend a different public school other than the one they were assigned.

The Family Empowerment Scholarships

The Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES) has two programs: the Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options (FES-EO) a universal voucher and the Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA). Like the McKay Scholarship for students with special needs, FES is funded from the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), an operational formula that determines funding amounts for K-12 students in district schools, charter schools and private schools.

FES-EO began in 2019 with 17,724 students and now funds 146,479 students. Scholarship values vary by grade and county but average between \$7,550 and \$8,250. Another 4,453 receive transportation scholarships to attend a different public school.

The FES-UA program (formerly the Gardiner Scholarship and the McKay Scholarship beginning July 1, 2022) was created in 2014 as an education savings account (ESA) for students with special needs. The program allows families to personalize the education of their special-needs children by directing money toward a combination of programs and approved providers, such as textbooks, school supplies, tutors, therapies, curriculum, and even tuition and fees. For 2023-24, Step Up funded 91,057 students with unique abilities with an average scholarship value of about \$9,900

The Hope Scholarship

Florida created the Hope Scholarship in 2018, making it a first-of-its-kind school choice program that provides scholarships to students suffering from bullying at their prior public school. K-12 students who have reported an incident of harassment, hazing, bullying, robbery, sexual assault and more, may be eligible for a scholarship to attend a private school or a public school in a different school district.

The scholarships are funded by individual donors who receive a tax credit, up to \$105 on their motor vehicle purchase taxes to the program. Scholarships average between \$7,250 and \$7,850 depending on grade and county of residence. Students may also receive a \$750 transportation scholarship to attend an out-of-district public school. 865 students were funded in 2023-24.

The New Worlds Scholarship

In 2019 Florida became the first state to offer an education savings account (ESA) for students enrolled in public schools. The program offers families of public school students in K-5th grade, who are struggling with reading, literacy and math, access to ESAs worth \$500. The scholarship pays for tuition and fees related to part-time tutoring, summer and after-school programs, instructional materials and curriculum. Step Up funded 17,586 students in 2023-24 and scholarships will be available until September.

The Personalized Education Program

Florida created the nation's first universal home education savings account in 2023 with the Personalized Education Program (PEP). PEP allows parents of home education students to customize the learning of their child by paying for tutors, curriculum, school supplies, part-time tuition and more. Step Up funded 19,514 students in 2023-24.