



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 funding 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 the more than 475,000 students served by Step Up, more than 200,000 have special needs or qualify for free or reduced price lunches. Parents and guardians can apply for any of the scholarships here: [Apply For A PreK-12 Scholarship Today - Step Up For Students](#)

The Florida Tax Credit Scholarship

Created in 2001, the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship (FTC) served 15,585 low-income students in the inaugural 2002-03 school year. Step Up funded 54,239 FTC students in private schools in 2024-25. Scholarships are paid for by private corporate donations, with donors receiving a dollar-for-dollar state tax credit for their contribution. Tax credits are capped at around \$1 billion. Scholarship values vary by county and by grade, but average about \$8,000. Today, the FTC program is open to all K-12 students in Florida. Scholarship funds are prioritized to pay school tuition and fees, but remaining funds can cover textbooks, curriculum, state-approved online courses and more.

Scholarship applications first open to renewal students in the spring before the new school year. Applications for new students are awarded on a priority basis, with the highest priority new students including: students whose households are at or below 185% of the federal poverty level, students in foster care or out-of-home care, homeless students, students who are dependents of members of the armed forces, and students who are victims of bullying. Next-level priority is reserved for students whose household incomes are at or below 400% of poverty. Application season closes in December of the current school year. The parent handbook can be found [here](#).

The Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options (FES-EO)

The Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options (FES-EO) is a universal private school scholarship funded through the Florida Education Finance Plan (FEFP). FES-EO is open to all K-12 students in Florida and has no enrollment cap. FES-EO began in 2019 with 17,724 students as a means of relieving the waitlist for the FTC program. Step Up funded 253,370 students to attend private schools across the state in 2024-25. Scholarship values vary by grade and county but average about \$8,000. Scholarship funds are prioritized to pay school tuition and fees, but remaining funds can cover text books, curriculum, state-approved online courses and more.

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The Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities (FES-UA)

The FES-UA program was created in 2014 (first as the Personalized Learning Scholarship Accounts and then the Gardiner Scholarship) as an education savings account (ESA) for students with unique abilities ages 3 through 12th grade, or age 22, whichever comes first. In 2022, FES-UA merged with McKay Scholarship, which began in 2000. As with the FES-EO scholarship, FES-UA is funded through the FEFP, but allows families to personalize the education of their children by directing money toward a combination of programs and approved providers, such as textbooks, school supplies, tutors, therapies, curriculum, as well as tuition and fees at private schools or even for part-time tuition at public schools. For 2024-25, Step Up funded 122,051 PK-12 students with unique abilities with an average scholarship value of about \$10,000.

Scholarship applications first open to renewal students in the spring before the new school year. Priority for new students is given to students who had been awarded but did not utilize a scholarship, or declined a scholarship, in the prior school year. Application season closes in December of the current school year. A list of eligible diagnoses can be found here: [Unique Abilities Scholarship - Step Up For Students](#) The latest parent handbook can be found [here](#).



The Transportation Stipend

The Transportation Stipend originated as the Transportation Scholarship under the FTC program as a means of helping low-income children attend out-of-district public schools. Later the program was amended to assist students in attending public schools outside their neighborhood-zoned school. In 2023, the Legislature removed the Transportation Scholarship from FTC and created the Transportation Stipend, funded through line-item appropriations. The scholarship offers households \$750 to pay for transportation for students in grades K-8 to attend public schools of choice.

The Transportation Stipend application season opens in the spring and continues through December of the following school year. The parent handbook can be found [here](#).

The New Worlds Scholarship

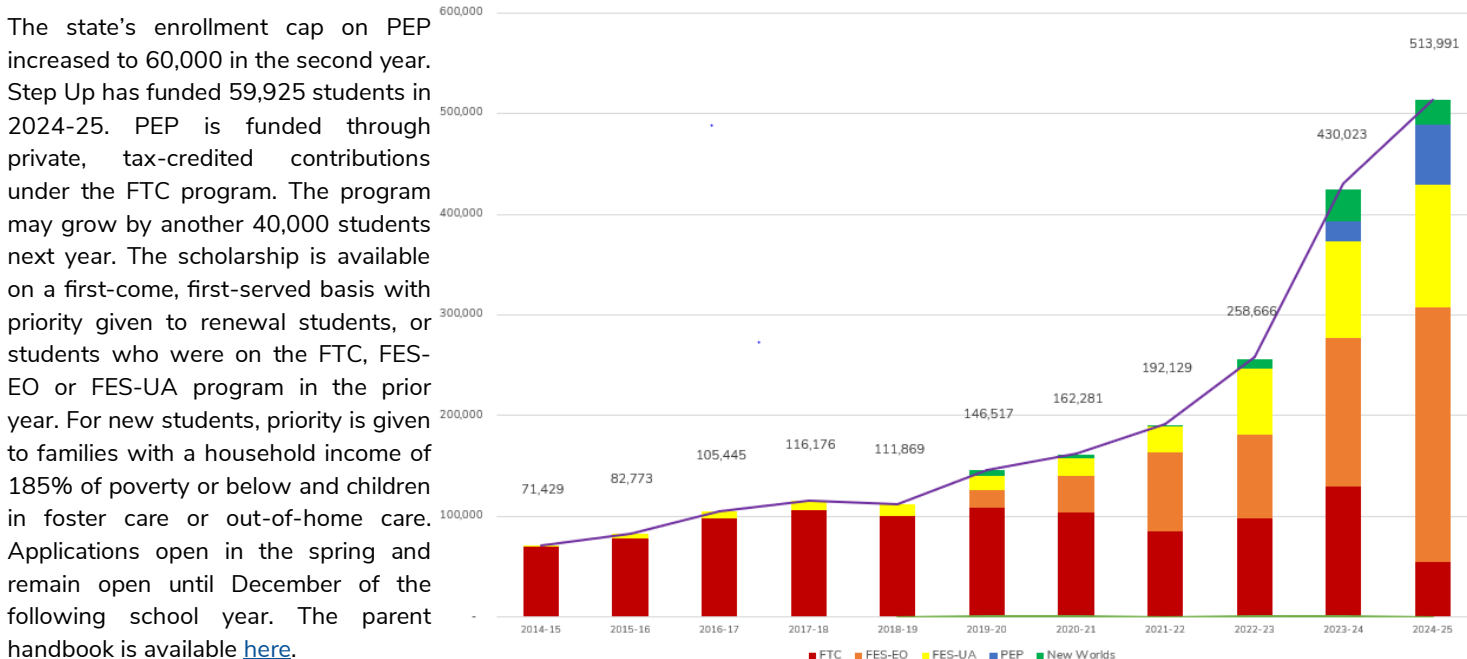
In 2019 Florida became the first state to offer an education savings account (ESA) for students enrolled in public schools. The program benefits students in VPK or grades K-5 who are struggling with reading, literacy and math, exhibit characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia, or scored a Level 3 or lower on the most recent statewide assessment of English Language Arts or Mathematics. Eligible students receive scholarships worth \$1,200 to pay for tuition and fees related to part-time tutoring, summer and after-school programs, instructional materials and curriculum.

Step Up funded 31,764 students last year and is currently accepting applications for 2024-25. Applications are open year round, but the vast majority of applications come in the late spring after parents receive state test scores for their students. The scholarship is available on a first-come, first-served basis and is capped by availability of funds granted by the Florida Legislature. The parent handbook is available [here](#).

The Personalized Education Program

Florida created the nation's first universal home/hybrid education ESA in 2023 with the Personalized Education Program (PEP). PEP allows parents of K-12 students not enrolled full-time at a public or private school to customize the learning of their child by paying for tutors, curriculum, school supplies, part-time tuition and more. Scholarships vary by grade and county, but average about \$8,000. Enrollment was capped by statute to 20,000 in the first year. More than 18,000 students received a PEP scholarship from Step Up in the inaugural 2023-24 school year.

Step Up For Students Scholarship Growth



The state's enrollment cap on PEP increased to 60,000 in the second year. Step Up has funded 59,925 students in 2024-25. PEP is funded through private, tax-credited contributions under the FTC program. The program may grow by another 40,000 students next year. The scholarship is available on a first-come, first-served basis with priority given to renewal students, or students who were on the FTC, FES-EO or FES-UA program in the prior year. For new students, priority is given to families with a household income of 185% of poverty or below and children in foster care or out-of-home care. Applications open in the spring and remain open until December of the following school year. The parent handbook is available [here](#).

* Student enrollment across all scholarships is counted by the number of cumulative funded scholarships as of 12/12/2024