

Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) Program

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Arizona Department of Education
1535 W. Jefferson St. Bin #41
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Email: ESA@azed.gov
Website: www.azed.gov/esa
ESA Hotline: 602-364-1969
Hours: Monday-Friday 8am-5pm

The Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) program is available to residents of Arizona to provide an option other than public school for Arizona's students. There is specific eligibility criteria that MUST be met in order to be approved for the program. Once on the ESA program, the applicant is given a pre-paid debit card that is loaded with the quarterly amount allotted to their student for use on a range of alternative educational expenses. Private school tuition, home-based educational programs and tutoring are allowable expenses on the program.

Applications: <https://esa.azed.gov/ESA/OnlineApplication>

Webpage: <http://www.azed.gov/esa/>

ESA Statute: <https://www.azleg.gov/arsDetail/?title=15>



Eligibility Categories:

Students can qualify for the Empowerment Scholarship Account Program under the following categories

if they and the applicant are Arizona residents:

- K-12 Student with Disability
- Preschool Student with Disability
- Active Duty Military or Parent killed in the line of duty military
- Legal Guardian is Legally Blind, Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- Attends a D or F Rated School or District 1-12 grades
- Resides in a D or F rated school for Kindergarten age students
- Resides on an Indian Reservation
- Sibling of Qualifying Applicant
- Ward of Court (permanent placement or adoption)

Note: Additional criteria must also be met, depending on which category the student may qualify for.
These qualifications are based on the most recent legislative updates and are subject to change annually.



QUICK GUIDE TO ESA

1. The student cannot be enrolled in public or charter school, including public online schools.
2. Online submission of expense reports is required quarterly, even if there are zero expenses to report. These reports are completed through the ESA parent portal.
3. All charges require a receipt/invoice including the student's name (detailing the charge) which should be uploaded with the expense report. Expenses should not be pre-paid and all expenses paid for **must** have occurred in the quarter for which they are paid.
4. Credentials are required for all teachers, instructors, tutors, and providers paid for with ESA.
5. No medical expenses or co-pays can be charged or otherwise associated with the ESA card.
6. Familiarize yourself with all expense report deadlines and funding dates.
7. Check the ESA webpage regularly for updates and sign up to receive the Monthly Newsletter and Tip of the Week. A calendar and other parent training resources are also available.
8. ESA does not require you to share your award amount or contract with your chosen school. You do not have to keep your debit card on file with the school as an ESA requirement. The contract is between the applicant and the Arizona Department of Education only.
9. Hiring other ESA recipients to provide services is prohibited. Please contact the ESA office with questions.
10. Within the school year, you must spend a portion of ESA funds on the education of the qualified student, which includes providing an education in at least reading, grammar, math, social studies and science.

APPLYING FOR AN ESA

Applications for ESA are available year-round.

Applicants will receive a letter of approval or denial within 45 days of submitting a completed application.

If the application is incomplete, a request for information will be sent, listing any additional required documentation to be provided within 10 days.

If the application is approved, and after a request for Pupil Withdrawal Verifications or Exemption has been verified, a contract will be issued to the applicant. The signed contract and required documents must be received by the ESA Program before funding begins.

Funding will begin in the quarter following that in which the contract is received and fully executed by the applicant and ADE. For example, if a contract is fully executed in Quarter 1, the applicant will begin receiving funding at the beginning of Quarter 2.

Arizona Department of Education Quarterly Dates:

Quarter 1: July 1-September 30

Quarter 2: October 1– December 31

Quarter 3: January 1– March 31

Quarter 4: April 1– June 30

ALLOWABLE EXPENSES

- PRIVATE SCHOOL TUITION & EXPENSES
- CURRICULA AND REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS
- TUITION AND FEES FOR PRIVATE ONLINE LEARNING PROGRAMS
- TUTORING
- FEES FOR NATIONALLY STANDARDIZED TESTS
- POST-SECONDARY EXPENSES

*ADDITIONAL ALLOWABLE ITEMS AND CATEGORIES BASED ON ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.

