

November 3, 2025

Hello ESA Families,

We hope everyone is enjoying the change of season and the cooler temperatures. As we begin Quarter 2 of the school year, we want to announce a very important improvement within the ESA program.

Given the program's importance to Arizona families, we continuously strive to implement enhancements that increase public trust and improve the service levels we provide. In our efforts to improve security measures over this important public program, we are implementing new ways of verifying all ESA holders' Arizona residency status. Our new processes leverage the expertise, resources, and technology of an identity verification and identity fraud prevention partner. These enhancements help to ensure that only eligible ESA holders participate in the program.

As a result of these enhancements, new ESA applicants will soon be required to enter the last 4 digits of their social security number (SSN) or individual tax identification number (ITIN) if an applicant does not have an SSN. Existing ESA holders who are not making any changes to their accounts will not be required to do anything additional at this time. However, all ESA holders will be required to enter the last 4 digits of their social security number or individual tax identification number when they renew their ESAs for next school year. Additionally, the ESA program will be verifying all ESA holders' Arizona residency on an annual basis moving forward.

We understand that the security of your personal data is of the highest importance to you. We would like to assure you that the Arizona Department of Education and its service providers are required to meet the highest level of data security standards to protect your sensitive information. Additionally, the last 4-digits of ESA applicants' social security numbers or individual tax identification numbers will not be retained in our information technology (IT) systems for longer than a 24-hour period, except in cases when longer retention is required because an applicant's Arizona residency cannot be established within the 24-hour time period.

These measures we are taking will further safeguard the integrity of the ESA program and its success.

We appreciate your continued support of the ESA program and all that you do to promote education freedom.

Sincerely,

John Ward

Executive Director, Empowerment Scholarship Account Program

ESA Program Team