

Frequently Asked Questions about the Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options (“FES-EO”) program

Currently, there are two Florida income-based scholarship programs: the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship (“FTC”) and the Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options (“FES-EO”). This FAQ addresses questions that are frequently asked about the FES-EO program.

Q1. What is the main difference between an FTC and an FES-EO scholarship?

A1. FES-EO scholarships are government-funded and the payments come from the state of Florida to the Scholarship Funding Organization (“SFO”) serving the student each quarter. FTC scholarships are privately funded. The funding for a student receiving an FTC Scholarship comes from donations to the Scholarship Organization that serves their household.

Q2. The FES-EO scholarship amount funded to the school was less than the amount listed on my child’s FES-EO award letter. Did the state of Florida reduce my child’s FES-EO award amount?

A2. Students qualifying for an FES-EO scholarship are funded by the state of Florida for the lesser of 1) the award amount or 2) the cost of tuition, books and fees at the eligible private school of their choice. However, the state of Florida will then reduce the amount they fund based on the date that the student’s School Commitment Form (“SCF”) is submitted to the SFO serving that student.

Date SCF is submitted to the SFO	Percentage funded
By November 1 st	100%
Between November 2 nd and March 1 st	50%
After March 1 st	Zero

Q3. How often are FES-EO payments sent to the schools?

A3. There are four payments scheduled to be made by AAA to eligible schools each school year (September, November, February and April). If AAA receives a “supplemental” or unscheduled funding from the state for the student, we will make a payment to the school within seven (7) business days of receiving the funding.

Q4. I understand the FES-EO scholarship payments are mailed directly to the private school, but if tuition has already been paid at the start of the school year, would the SFO pay the school the amount that was previously paid by the parent, then the parent reimbursed from the school or would the SFO then only pay the tuition moving forward?

A4. The tuition/fee information submitted to the FL DOE for funding is what the school lists on the SCF. The amounts listed on the SCF have to match the information on the school’s published tuition/fee schedule. If the parent has already paid the school privately before an FES-EO scholarship payment is mailed to them, then the parent and school must decide how to handle those previous private payments.

Q5. Do FES-EO students have to re-apply each year?

A5. No. By law, active FES-EO students do not need to re-apply for subsequent school years as long as they remain eligible. AAA will send renewal FES-EO SCFs to their households for subsequent school years each mid-February. The renewal FES-EO SCF must be completed by the school and signed by both the parent and school, then returned to AAA by the stated deadline to indicate that the renewal award has been accepted. Acceptance of an award should not be postponed. The household must find an eligible private school for their student(s) as soon as they receive a renewal FES-EO SCF. Failure to meet the deadline stated on the renewal FES-EO SCF will result in the forfeiture of the awarded scholarship.-

Q6. Are renewing student's FES-EO funds kept in account to "roll forward" the same way the funds are for the FES-UA scholarship and does the scholarship allow for us to use those funds moving forward to the start of the new school year 2022?

A6. No. An eligible FES-EO student must be enrolled and attending an eligible private school in order for the FL DOE to fund the student's account. If funded, the amount will be the lesser of the award amount or the cost of attending the school. Please note that the award amount may be reduced by the FL DOE. Subsequently, there should be no "unused" funds in an FES-EO account to roll forward.

Q7. If we enroll our child into a school and pay the tuition, once funding rolls out would we be reimbursed for that?

A7. No. Payments from a student's funded FES-EO account are made directly to eligible schools by SFOs. Reimbursements to parents/guardians are not allowed. An eligible FES-EO student must be enrolled and attending an eligible private school in order for the state of Florida to fund the student's account.

Once AAA determines that a student is eligible and an award letter and School Commitment Form is sent to their home address. The SCF must be completed by the school and signed by both the parent and school, then returned to AAA. Information about the student and the school is submitted to the FL DOE to request funding. Please note that the award amount will be reduced by the state of Florida if the SCF is submitted to AAA after November 1st and reduced to zero if the SCF is submitted after March 1st.

Q8. If my child qualifies for an FES-EO scholarship for the first time this year and remains active throughout the entire school year, are they considered a "renewal" for the following year or do they go back down to the bottom of the funding priority list?

A8. As long as an eligible and funded FES-EO remains active through the end of the school year and continues to meet the state's eligibility requirements; they will be considered a renewal for the following school year and will be excluded from the annual state funding cap.