

# Tennessee Vouchers

## Important Things Students and Families Need To Know Before Applying for a TN Education Freedom Scholarship (EFS)

EdTrust-Tennessee believes we must prioritize robust, transparent investments in our public schools, ensuring every child has the chance to succeed. EFS directs more than 900 million taxpayer dollars to private institutions over the first five years of the program, undermining the very foundation of an equitable, accessible public education across our state.

Before signing up, students and families deserve to know the real cost of EFS and what's at stake. Once public dollars leave our public schools, they don't come back.

### Immigrant Students Could Be Denied Access

Access to the EFS program is restricted based on immigration status, and applicants who are not U.S. citizens will be required to supply two forms of documentation of identity and immigration status from the list below. Immigrant students who cannot supply these forms of documentation status will be denied access to the EFS program.

- Government-Issued Identification (may only serve as one form of documentation)
- U.S. Permanent Resident Card (I-551)
- Foreign Passport stamped by the U.S. Government indicating that the holder has been "Processed for I-551"
- Permanent Resident Re-entry Permit (I-327)
- Arrival Departure Form I-94 with "Temporary I551" stamp and holder's photograph affixed
- Travel Document issued to Permanent Residents (I-327)
- Travel Document issued to Refugees (I-571)
- Form I-94 stamped with one of the following statuses: Asylee, Parolee or Parole, Refugee, Asylum, HP-humanitarian parolee, or PIP-public interest parolee

- I-797 Approval Notice of I-914 Petition for T Nonimmigrant Status
- Office of Refugee Resettlement Eligibility Letter for benefits under Trafficking Victims Protection Act
- I-797 Prima Facie Case for I-360 Special Immigrant Petition pursuant to Violence Against Women's Act (VAWA)
- I-797 Approval Notice of Application for I-360 Special Immigrant Petition pursuant to VAWA
- Prima Facie Determination Letter for I-360 Special Immigrant Petition pursuant to VAWA

## Students with Disabilities Must Waive Their Civil Rights

When accepting the EFS funds, parents must waive their child's right to receive special education and related services from their local school district through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). EFS recipients with disabilities retain the right to an Individualized Service Plan (ISP) under IDEA. However, not all of the services required under an IEP are required under an ISP. Additionally, private schools are only required to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 if the private school receives federal funding.

## The EFS Likely Does Not Cover The Full Cost of Your Private School

For the 2025-2026 school year, the projected amount each student will receive from the EFS is projected to be \$7,295 per student. The average cost of private school tuition in Tennessee is \$11,886 per year. When applying for the program, families must agree to pay any amount not covered by the EFS program for their child's private school.

## The EFS May Not Be Available in Your Community

Only 38 of Tennessee's 95 counties have a participating private school as of May 6, 2025. Students in communities without a private school option can attend a virtual private school, but lack access to an in-person school that accepts the EFS in their community. The graphic below shows which counties have a school accepting the EFS.

