

ESA-IEA-EFS Comparison for 2025-26

Please note that a student can only be enrolled in one opportunity program at the same time.

Choice Scholarship Programs	Education Savings Account (ESA)	Individualized Education Account (IEA)	Education Freedom Scholarship (EFS)
Grades	Entering Kindergarten – Grade 12	Entering Kindergarten – Grade 12	Entering Kindergarten – Grade 12
Location	• TN resident • Available to eligible students zoned to Memphis-Shelby County Schools, Metro Nashville Public Schools, or Hamilton County Schools; also open to those zoned to attend a school in the Achievement School District as of May 24, 2019	• TN resident • Available to eligible students statewide	• TN resident with U.S. citizenship or lawful U.S. presence • Available to eligible students statewide
Enrollment	• Prior school year in a TN public school OR • Eligible for the first time to enroll in a TN school OR • Enrolled in or eligible for the first time to enroll in a TN public school in the 2019-20, 2020-21, or 2021-22 school year	• Prior school year in a TN public school OR • Eligible for the first time to enroll in a TN school	• There is no prior year enrollment requirement for eligibility.
Income	• Family annual household income for the previous year does not exceed twice the federal free lunch limit. Please see website for more detailed information.	• There is no income requirement for IEA eligibility.	• Family annual household income for the previous year does not exceed three times the federal reduced lunch limit for 10,000 of these scholarships. • There is no income requirement for 10,000 additional scholarships. Please see website for more detailed information.
Special Education	There is no Individualized Education Program (IEP) requirement for ESA eligibility.	IEP must list one of the ten disability categories listed in law as the primary or secondary disability and must be in effect at time of request for participation.	There is no IEP requirement for EFS eligibility.

Funding	- The maximum annual amount is equal to either the amount representing the average allocation that students generated under the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement (TISA) for the student's zoned local education agency (LEA) OR the combined statewide average of required state and local (Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement) TISA allocations per pupil, whichever is less. - Up to 50 percent of the current year's award can roll over to the next school year for approved students.	- The maximum annual amount is equal to the amount representing the base funding allocation and the average special education funds generated by students with disabilities under the TISA formula. - Up to 50 percent of the current year's award can roll over to the next school year for approved students. Participating IEA students in the 2024-2025 school year must not receive an annual amount in subsequent school years less than what they received in 2024-2025	- The scholarship is equal to the base funding amount of the TISA formula and is solely state-funded. - All available funds can roll over to the next school year for approved students.
Non-public school options	- Students must enroll in a Category I, II, or III non-public school. Funds may be used to pay tuition at an ESA participating Category I, II, or III non-public school. - Enrollment in a Category IV or V non-public school or an independent homeschool is not permitted.	Students may use funds to pay tuition at a participating Category I, II, III, IV, or V school, or may participate in independent homeschooling.	- Students must enroll in a Category I, II, or III non-public school in Tennessee that is registered to accept funds from the program. Funds must first be used on school tuition and fees. - Enrollment in a Category IV or V non-public schools or an independent homeschool is not permitted.
Other eligible expenses	There are several allowed expenditures from an ESA in addition to tuition and fees, including after-school educational programs, which are not allowed under an IEA.	There are several allowed expenditures from an IEA in addition to tuition and fees, including approved curricula, online learning programs, and investments in Coverdell and/or ABLE TN accounts, which are not allowed under an ESA.	There are several allowed expenditures from an EFS scholarship that can be accessed <i>only after</i> funds are used to pay for tuition and fees at a Category I, II, or III non-public school.
Application deadlines	To participate in the next school year, apply between February 3 and July 1. To participate in only the second semester of the school year, apply between August 1 and December 1.	To participate in the next school year, apply between February 15 and April 15.	Applications for the 2025-26 school year opened on May 15, 2025, and were posted to the tn.gov/education website.
Websites	tn.gov/education/esa 	tn.gov/education/iea 	tn.gov/education/efs 
Program inquiries	ESA.Questions@tn.gov	IEA.Questions@tn.gov	EFS.Questions@tn.gov