

Welcome St. Mark Families

Texas Education Freedom Accounts (TEFA) Informational Sessions 2026

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Introducing Texas Education Freedom Accounts

In 2025, the Texas Legislature passed [Senate Bill 2](#) and provided \$1 billion in funding to create the Texas Education Freedom Accounts (TEFA) program and give parents greater freedom and flexibility in choosing the best educational environment for their children.

The TEFA program, administered by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, is expected to be the largest day-one school choice initiative in the nation. Through this program, parents who choose to enroll their children outside of the public school system – including a private school or homeschool – and are accepted into the program can use their child's TEFA



Introducing Texas Education Freedom

<https://educationfreedom.texas.gov/>



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2026-27 TEFA Funding Amounts

- Private School Students: \$10,474
- Private School Students with a Disability: up to \$30,000
- Homeschool Student: \$2,000



Acceptable Fees:

All must be education-related expenses



Definitely Yes: Application fees, registration fees, course-specific fees, uniforms, textbooks and instructional materials, costs related to assessment instruments, fees for a private tutor or teaching service, fees for educational therapies, costs related to transportation, computer hardware and software (no more than 10% of total amount allocated), breakfast and/or lunch at school

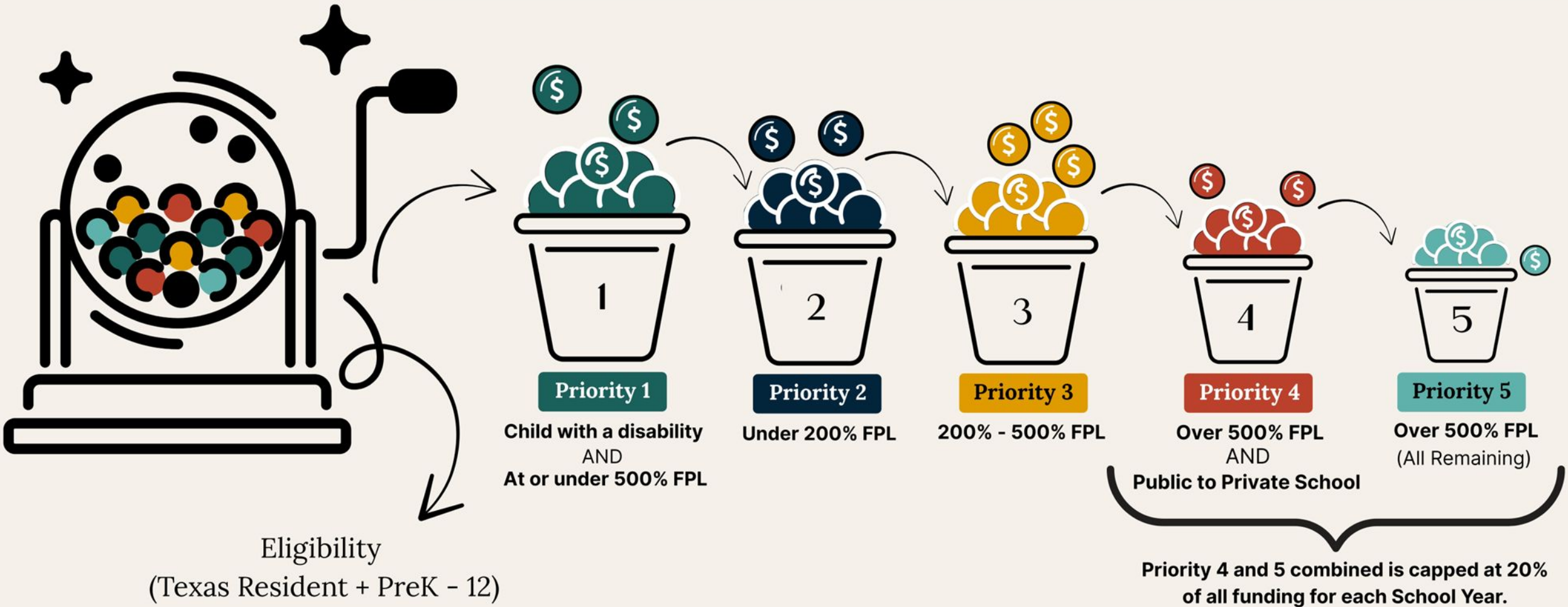


Not Confirmed: Sports fees, activity fees, trip fees

TEFA LOTTERY PROCESS



Once the application window closes, each group will be funded based on the prioritization criteria. If there is an oversubscription of applicants, students will be randomized within that priority group, and those students not selected shall be placed on a waitlist.



The Adjusted Gross Income is the amount considered for income levels.

Alternative documents or data will be required for families who have not filed federal tax returns.

Household Number	Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) yearly income	200% of FPG yearly income	500% of FPG yearly income
1	\$15,650	\$31,300	\$78,250
2	\$21,150	\$42,300	\$105,750
3	\$26,650	\$53,300	\$133,250
4	\$32,150	\$64,300	\$160,750
5	\$37,650	\$75,300	\$188,250
6	\$43,150	\$86,300	\$215,750

Prioritization for Lottery

1. Children with disabilities whose family income is equal or less than 500% of FPG. *(5 current at SML)*
2. Families with income 200% or less than FPG. *(3 current at SML)*
3. Family income between 200-500% of FPG. *(28 current at SML)*



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- ~~4. Only New from Public to Private~~
- ~~5. Universal School Choice~~



Pre-K Eligibility – 3 and 4 year olds

1. Unable to speak and comprehend the English language.
2. Educationally disadvantaged, which means eligible to participate in the national free or reduced-price lunch program which is up to 185% of federal poverty guidelines (up to \$59,477.50 for family of four).
3. Homeless.
4. Child of an active-duty member of the U.S. armed forces, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who is ordered to active duty by proper authority.
5. A child of a member of the U.S. armed forces, including the state military forces or a reserve component of the armed forces, who was injured or killed while serving on active duty.
6. Is or ever has been in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services or foster care in another state or territory if the child resides in this state.
7. Is the child of a person eligible for the Star of Texas Award as a peace officer, firefighter, or an emergency medical first responder
8. Is the child of a person employed as a classroom teacher at a public primary or secondary school in the school district that offers a prekindergarten class under Education Code 29.153

Category 1

Children with Disabilities & IEPs



Special Education Considerations

Diagnoses:

- Physical disability;
- Intellectual or developmental disability;
- Emotional disturbance;
- Learning disability including dyslexia;
- Autism;
- Speech disability; or
- Traumatic brain injury.



Special Education Diagnosis for Prioritization Only

For prioritization, NOT for increased funding, proof of eligibility to participate in a school district's special education program by meeting an eligibility described by 19 TAC 89.1040 signed by **one or more licensed professionals qualified to attest that the child meets the applicable eligibility definition***. An FIE (Full Individual Evaluation) will also be sufficient for prioritization.

**A licensed specialist in school psychology (LSSP)/school psychologist, an educational diagnostician, or other appropriately certified or licensed practitioner with experience and training in the area of the disability. Or a licensed or certified professional for a specific eligibility category.*

IEPs Required for Increased Funding

Families may request evaluations from either the district that the child resides in OR from the district where the private school is located.

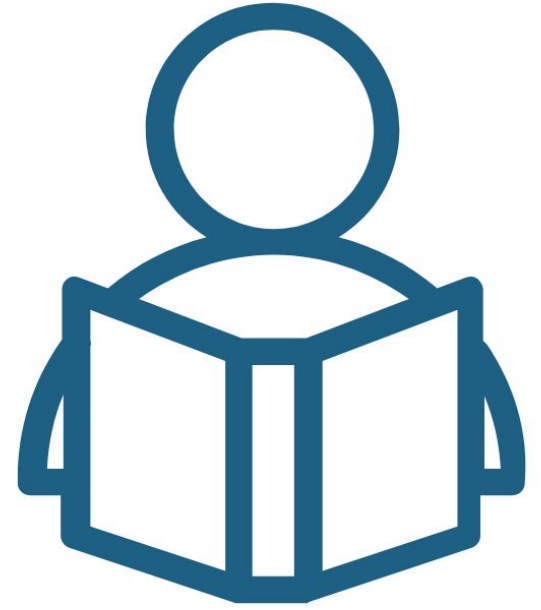
Districts are aware of their responsibility to conduct these evaluations and receive increased funding to do them, even for students in private schools with no intention of attending public school.

Materials and evaluations done at the private school may be helpful to the districts. Feel free to provide them.

The IEP is not time limited so can be from any date.



Student Applications



1. One of these items needed to prove **citizenship or legal residency**: A birth certificate issued in US or a territory, certificate of U.S. naturalization, a certificate of US citizenship, a U.S. Consular Report of Birth Abroad, a U.S. passport, a Legal Permanent Resident Card, an order or judicial decision issued from the Executive Office of Immigration Review, or other documentation issued by the Department of Homeland Security affirming lawful admission.
2. One of these items needed to prove **current residency**: a utility bill, lease or mortgage statement, driver's license or state identification card, voter registration card, letter from a U.S. government agency or notarized affidavit of residency

Student Applications (Continued)

1. Opens February 4th. Closing date not yet announced.
2. Children may be admitted from the waiting list, and the funding of the child's account will be prorated for the remaining months of the program year beginning on the first day of the month following the month of approval. The regular dates for payments are by July 1, October 1 and April 1, but the Comptroller may choose to make the final payment early.
3. Participating parents do not have to reapply every year, but they must be in good standing and provide notice to Odyssey if the parent intends for their child to continue in the next year.
4. Wait-listed students may update or supplement his or her application rather than beginning the process anew.



1

Parent Application

The application window opens on February 4, 2026 and closes on March 17, 2026.

2

Notification of Funding Status

Funding notifications will be sent to parents beginning in early April 2026.

3

Private School Confirmation

For private school students, parents will indicate the school where their student is enrolled. Private schools will confirm enrollment.

4

Initial Funding

July 1, 2026 – At least 25 percent of approved funding will be available in participant accounts.

5

Additional Funding

October 1, 2026 – At least 50 percent of approved funding will be available in participant accounts.

April 1, 2027 – Remaining funding will be available in participant accounts.



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TUTION ASSISTANCE

The primary objective of SML's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) is to support families by sharing the cost of education with the student and their family, when there is a demonstrated need. All U.S. citizens, seeking to enroll in grades K-8 school year, are eligible for TAP consideration.

[APPLY FOR ASSISTANCE](#)

CURRENT FAMILIES - TIER 1

- The TAP Priority Application Deadline is December 31. A complete application, including any requested forms, must be submitted through FACTS by the stated deadline.
- Applications for tuition assistance completed after the Priority Deadline will be considered on a funds-available basis.



Welcome Financial Aid Applicant



Have an account?

[Sign in](#)

New User

To begin applying for aid as a first time user to the new FACTS system

[Create an Account](#)

[Having difficulties? Check our FAQs.](#)

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TEFA Funding Timeline

- TEFA payouts will be in July, October and April
- Special Accounting Contracts will be generated
- SML is committed to continuing to support those with a demonstrated need



NEXT STEPS

- Apply for TEFA starting February 4th
- Complete the FACTS application if in Categories 1-3
- Familiarize yourself with the website <https://educationfreedom.texas.gov/>
- Sign-up for updates from TEFA
- Take handouts & ask any questions

