

EdChoice Scholarship Program Income Verification: Frequently Asked Questions

What is income verification?

Income verification is the process of having your income verified by the EdChoice Office to see if you qualify for low income status. Families that qualify for low income status receive priority (after renewal students) in the awarding of scholarships and do not have to pay any tuition difference if the private school's tuition rate is higher than the maximum EdChoice scholarship amount.

Do I have to have my income verified?

No. Income verification is optional; you are not required to do it. However, to qualify for low income status, you must have your income verified by the EdChoice Office.

I already know that I do not meet the requirements for low income status. Do I still need to have my income verified?

No. If you have checked the federal poverty guidelines and/or know that you do not qualify for low income status, you do not need to complete the income verification form. Only parents who know that they qualify or who are not sure if they qualify should have their income verified.

Can I qualify for low income status without having my income verified?

No. To qualify for low income status, you must complete the income verification form and submit it, along with any supporting documentation, to the EdChoice Office by the deadline.

What do I need to do to have my income verified?

First, complete the Scholarship Request Form (new applicants) or the Scholarship Renewal Form (students already receiving EdChoice).

Second, check the Federal Poverty Guidelines chart (available at <http://edchoice.ohio.gov>, on the request form, or at the private school). If you think that you meet the requirements for low income status, make sure that you indicate your status on Scholarship Request Form or the Scholarship Renewal Form.

Third, obtain the Income Verification Form from either the private school or at the EdChoice website (<http://edchoice.ohio.gov>).

Complete the Income Verification Form and mail it, along with supporting income documents, to the address listed on the form by the deadline listed on the form.

What types of documents may I submit regarding income?

Submit copies of documents that support the **current** sources of income that you listed on the Income Verification Form. Sources of income may include:

4 current pay stubs

- a. W-2s for the most recent tax cycle
- b. 1099 forms
- c. Current income tax returns Business records
- d. Correspondence from the Social Security Administration, Ohio Bureau of Worker's Compensation, Department of Job and Family Services, and other providers of benefits showing the amount of benefits you are receiving
- f. Print out from child support enforcement

We haven't done our taxes yet but we don't want to miss the deadline. What do we do?

Current W-2s or pay stubs can be used instead of tax returns. The income verification form and all supporting income documents must be submitted by the deadline each year; no exceptions are given to those who plan to file their taxes late. If EdChoice requires that your tax returns be submitted and you are unable to provide those documents, then you will not be able to have your income verified and therefore cannot qualify for low income status.

I don't have all my documents now. Can I send what I have now and the rest later?

Yes. You may send what you have at this time; however, the income verification will not be processed until all required documentation is received. ALL documentation must be received by the specified deadline in order to determine if you qualify for low income status. You cannot qualify for low income status without having your income verified.

Whose income must be documented?

Income verification is required of those whose earned income and/or benefits support the household.

My child works. Do we need to submit his/her income?

No. Minors are exempt from documenting earned income/wages if they are in school full time.

I haven't received or have lost my W-2. Can I use my pay stub?

Yes, but include at least 2 to 4 current pay stubs.

My children and I reside with my mother. I did not work or receive any benefits during the past calendar year. Her income supported us throughout the year. How do I document my income?

You need to submit a statement from your mother indicating that she is covering your living expenses. The statement needs to be signed by both you and your mother.

Although I did not qualify for low income priority early in the school year, I have since lost my job and now I think I do qualify. Is it too late to have my income verified?

Yes, it is too late. All income verification forms submitted by the deadline will be reviewed based on the family's income situation at that time. If you lose your job at some later point, you cannot submit new income information to try to qualify for low income status. For the purposes of the EdChoice program, your income status remains the same for the entire school year, regardless of whether your income situation improves or worsens.

However, if your income situation changes **before** the deadline for submitting the Income Verification Form, contact the EdChoice Office at 877-644-6338 and ask to speak with an EdChoice staff member.

My employer pays me in cash. How should I document my income?

You should submit a copy of your income tax forms for the most recent tax cycle. In addition, you must obtain a signed statement from the employer on company letterhead. The statement must include the amounts and frequency of pay, as well as the contact information for their direct supervisor.

Note: It is important that you are able to document your income sources. Written confirmation from an employer who pays you in cash usually means that taxes are not being filed. Failure to provide proper income documentation could lead to your income not being verified and you not being able to qualify for low income status.

I receive child support from my child's father but it is not ordered by the court. How should this be documented?

You must obtain a signed statement from the father that specifies the amount and frequency of the child support payment. Your name, the father's name, and the child's name should also be included on the statement.

What if my income is seasonal and the amount changes during the year?

When income is from work that normally involves seasonal periods of unemployment, the family's annual income will be used. If income fluctuates from week to week, several months of income can be used to determine a representative figure.

Do I send my income verification form and documents to the private school?

No. Send the income verification form and supporting income documents to the EdChoice Office. The address is listed on the form.

If the private school requires that I fill out income verification for FACTS, PSAS, or some other income verification company, must I also complete the EdChoice income verification process?

Yes. To be eligible for low income status, you must have your income verified by the EdChoice Office. This is separate from completing the financial aid process for FACTS or PSAS.