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What is ACE?

The Ohio Afterschool Child Enrichment (ACE) Educational Savings Account program provides funds to a student’s parent or guardian to use on various enrichment and educational activities. The program is being offered through a contract between Merit International, Inc. and the Ohio Department of Education.

The ACE Educational Savings Account program provides qualifying families with a $500 credit that can be used to pay for a variety of enrichment activities that will accelerate learning for students impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. These funds can be used for:

- Before- or after-school educational programs;
- Day camps, including camps for academics, music and arts;
- Tuition for learning extension centers;
- The purchase of curriculum and material for home-school families;
- Educational, learning or study skills services;
- Field trips to historical landmarks, museums, science centers and theaters – including admission, exhibit and program fees;
- Language classes;
- Musical instrument lessons;
- Tutoring

The Ohio Department of Education will accept requests from families and determine program eligibility. **Merit International, Inc. will provide eligible families with their portal access to the savings accounts and a marketplace to purchase allowable services and materials.**

How To Apply for ACE:

There are several steps to complete before applying for an ACE account. Please follow the checklist below as you complete the application process. This manual shows you how to go through each step.

Checklist:

- Step 1: Create an OH | ID account
- Step 2: Complete the Department of Education Profile Setup
- Step 3: Access to the Income Verification System
  - Complete application request
- Step 4: Edit Contact Information
- Step 5: Create New Income
  - Complete income verification for the school year being applied for
- Step 6: Income Verification System Dashboard
  - Enter all household members
  - Enter household income
  - List of acceptable income documents
  - Upload income supporting documents
  - Income must be in at least the “submitted” status before ACE applications can be submitted
- Step 7: Apply for the ACE Savings Account
  - Select students for the ACE program
  - Verify your students information
  - Apply to ACE
  - Check status
Which Students Qualify?

The ACE Educational Savings Account program is available to any Ohio child ages 6 - 18 years old whose family income is at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level. Eligible children include those who attend any Ohio public or nonpublic school or are home educated by their parents and have been excused from the compulsory attendance law for the purpose of home instruction.

Note: Community schools in Ohio are considered a public school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number in Household</th>
<th>Gross Annual Amount (300%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$40,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$54,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$69,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$83,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$97,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$111,570</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$125,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$139,890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For each additional person add.</td>
<td>$14,180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Figure 1 Federal Poverty Level 2023)
Source: Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation/US Dept of HHS

Why is Merit Working with Ohio ACE?

Merit has partnered with the Ohio After School Child Enrichment (ACE) Educational Savings Program to ensure that qualified individuals can receive up to $500 per student per year to spend on after-school programs.

Merit will be reaching out to organizations that offer approved services or goods to Ohio students. Organizations that would like to participate in the Ohio ACE program will fill out an application to become a Qualified Education or Service Provider (QESP). Each application will be reviewed by two individuals and if approved, added to the Ohio ACE online marketplace.

Merit will be providing support to qualified Parent/Guardians to ensure they are able to submit receipts or vouchers for individual reimbursement or direct payment to the qualified organization.

The Ohio Department of Education will determine eligibility to participate in the ACE Savings Account Program through an Income Verification process. The Department of Education will share parent information with Merit Inc who will provide a Marketplace for parents/guardians to utilize their saving account funds.
Step 1: Create an OH | ID Account

The first step to apply for an ACE savings account is to create an OH|ID. Access to the Ohio Department of Education’s ACE system is available on the Department’s website at https://ohid.ohio.gov/. The goal of OH|ID is to create one simple and secure location for all Ohio citizens to access information and conduct business with the State of Ohio.

For instructions on how to set up your OH|ID, WATCH THIS VIDEO. If you need additional assistance, please reach out to the Contact Center at contact.center@education.ohio.gov or call (877) 644-6338.

NOTE: Parents/Legal Guardians must create an OH|ID account and a Department of Education Profile to access the ACE system and submit applications for their ACE student/students.

Your next step is to create a Department of Education profile or link your new OH|ID account to your existing Department of Education profile. Please proceed to the Department of Education Profile Setup section of this manual for instructions.
Step 2: Department of Education Profile Setup

You will create your Department of Education profile (or link to your existing Department of Education profile) after setting up your OH|ID account. Go to https://ohid.ohio.gov/ to log in to your OH|ID account. Then follow the directions below.

1. Select the “Visit the App Store” button within My Apps.

   ![Visit the App Store](Figure 2 Visiting the App Store)

2. On the “Department of Education Profile Setup” app tile select “Request Access”.

   ![OH|ID Apps Store](Figure 3 OH|ID Apps Store)
3. Select “Request Access to Group”

4. A pop-up will appear containing the Terms and Conditions. Check the box next to Agree to Terms and select “Request Access to Group” to proceed.

NOTE: You may receive notification that your request to access the Ohio Department of Education Profile has been submitted. Check the email you used when setting up your OH|ID account to verify your request has been granted. Click on the link provided in the email.
5. After creating an account in OH|ID, the next step is to access the Department of Education. Select “Launch Department of Education Profile”

6a. If a Department of Education profile is found, you will be prompted to view your Department of Education apps. Click “View Applications”. After this step, you are ready to access the Income Verification system; otherwise go to Step 6b. Please proceed to the Accessing Income Verification System section of this manual.

6b. If a Department of Education profile is not found, click Create Profile to create your Department of Education Profile
7a. Complete the Department of Education Profile Creation Pages. In the “Which role best applies to you?”, for ACE Parents/Guardian(s) select the option “I am a parent signing up to submit income documents for scholarship and/or ACE”.

7b. You must use your State of Ohio ID card or Ohio driver’s license when setting up the account. When filling in your personal information, the name must match exactly to what is on your Ohio driver’s license. If you do not have an Ohio driver’s license, please reference in Figure 18 where it reads “Click here for acceptable verification documents” and upload the verification document, this will become a manual approval.

NOTE: If you have a former SAFE profile, you will be able to link your profile to your new OH|ID account once your account is established.

(Figure 9 Department of Education Selection of Role Profile Creation)
8. After you have completed the Department of Education Profile Creation pages, **check your email for a validation code in a confirmation email**. Enter the information requested, including the validation code, in the confirmation dialog box and click **Continue**.

At this point the Parent/Guardian is ready to access the Income Verification system. Please proceed to the **Accessing Income Verification System** section of this manual.
Step 3: Accessing Income Verification System

If you are new to the Income Verification system, our program office has created an online system. This system allows parents to submit their Income Verification electronically and monitor the status of their income case during the review process. This will help eliminate mailing paper documents, offering a faster and more secure process.

If you already have students in a scholarship program, you can proceed to the Create New Income section of this manual.

Parents/Guardians may now use the Income Verification System to enter and submit their income information electronically to the program to verify income status. Users must enter household member information, income information and upload supporting income documents directly into the online system.

Please complete the following steps to request access to Income Verification system:

1. First, you must have an OH|ID account and create a Department of Education Profile. If you have not completed these steps, please follow the instructions beginning in the Create an OH|ID Account section of this manual.

2. After you have created an OH|ID account and Department of Education Profile, navigate to https://ohid.ohio.gov/ and log in to your OH|ID account.

3. Open the Income Verification app.
4. Update and confirm home email address.

(Figure 12 Update email address)

5. To begin the Income Verification Process, click “Create New Income Verification”. If you need to log out during this point in the process, you may do so. When you log back in you should be directed to this page. You will click “Go to Income Verification”. You are now ready to access the Income Verification system. Please proceed to the enter all your household members in the Income Verification System Dashboard section in this manual.

(Figure 13 Select “Create New Income Verification”)
Step 4: Edit Contact Information

1. Please review your contact information.

2a. If you need to make edit changes, select “No, My Contact information needs an Edit”, you will see the yellow message which directs you to “Safe Home” where you make the edits.

2b. Make edits to the contact information in SAFE, edit and save.

Depending on whether the parent/guardian has had a student in a scholarship program as to what the next view will look like. Please proceed to the Income Verification System Dashboard section in this manual.
Step 5: Create New Income

If you are applying for ACE for 2022-2023 school year, you must complete the income verification for 2022-2023. Within the School Year you are applying for line, select the “Create New Income Verification” button. Before you will see anything else, you must first enter at least one household income.

NOTE: Income Verification must be done on a computer, not a mobile device.

(Figure 16 Create New Income Verification)
NOTE: Household size is determined by the following: the ACE Educational Savings Account student, the birth mother or the legal guardian of the ACE student, the spouse (also includes birth father of any child in the household), all children under the age of 18 which the legal guardian or spouse also has legal custody.

1. Within the Household Members section, select “Add New Members”.

2a. Fill in the boxes and select “Save Member”.

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(set the image of the household members section)
2b. Repeat 2a for each person living in the household (including head of household and spouse). If your child is 18 years old and is in high school, you will need to go through a manual process. If this applies to your family, please contact (614) 441-0895 for support.

2c. If you make a mistake in any of the information provided for household members, click the three dots to the left of that household member’s name, edit and click “Update”.

3a. Add Household Member’s Income, select “Add New Income”.

3b. Select “Members Name”, “Income Source”, “Income Frequency” from each dropdown selection. The last box is asking for “Gross Amount” based on the previous selections then select “Save Income”.

(Figure 20) New members added

(Figure 21) How to make edit changes to Household Members

(Figure 22) Add new income

(Figure 23) Enter and Save Income
The income entered during step 3b should be displayed, the next step will be to enter supporting income documentation.

(Figure 24 Display of income added to the system)

If you make a mistake with income information provided for household members, click the three dots to the left of that household member’s name, edit and click “Update.” Please be sure to make any corrections before you upload income documents.

(Figure 25 Select update to or delete to change)

3c. Select the first green box within the red box below to upload the income documents. A list of acceptable forms of income documentation can be found on the next page.

(Figure 26 Select box to add supporting Documents)
List of Acceptable Forms of Income Documentation

**Current employment at the same position as last year:**
Must provide either previous year’s W2 or 1099, previous year’s Federal tax return, or current pay stubs (4 pay stubs for weekly pay and 2 pay stubs for bi-weekly pay, semi-monthly, or monthly. (22/23 school year, must provide their 2021 Federal tax return, 2020 Federal tax returns cannot be accepted).

**Self-employment:**
Must provide at least the first page of the previous year’s federal tax 1040 or complete previous years federal income tax documents.

**Social Security:**
Must provide official letter from Social Security department showing gross amount received or previous years 1099 or federal tax return.

**Food stamps:**
Must provide official letter from Job and Family services or statement showing that their case is open, and the amount received each month.

**OWF Cash Assistance:**
Must provide official letter from Job and Family services or statement showing that their case is open, and the amount received each month.

**Retirement income:** (May also include Veteran’s Benefits)
Must provide official letter from employer on company letterhead or previous year’s 1099 or federal tax return.

**Child Support:**
Must provide official documentation from Child Support agency or legal court documents showing amount received.

**Adoption Assistance:**
Must provide official documentation showing the amount received.

**Alimony:**
Must provide official documentation from agency or legal court document showing the amount received.

**Unemployment:**
Must provide official documentation from agency showing the amount received or previous years federal tax return or 1099.

**No income:**
Must provide the previous year’s federal tax transcript showing no income or showing that they did not file taxes, **3rd party letters will NOT be accepted.**

**No pay stubs or previous years W2:**
Must provide the previous year’s federal tax transcript. **Written letters from the employer or a 3rd party stating that the parent/guardian works for them or that they are supporting the parent/guardian will NOT be accepted.**
3d. Select the “Add Documents” button to the left in the red box

(Figure 27 Add supporting income documents)

3e. Select from the dropdown list the “Document Type” being uploaded. In this example the parent is uploading “Pay Stubs”.

3f. Upload the Income Documents by either drag and drop or select click here to browser for files.

3g. When finished uploading documents, select “Close Add Documents” button.

3h. Close dialog box by selecting the red X.

After you close the Document upload dialog box, you will see a number in the documents green box below that shows how many documents were uploaded.

(Figure 28 View that shows one document has been added to the Income Verification System)
3i. Message is displayed stating “New Income has been added successfully”. Please upload income documentation for each household members income entered. If you are ready to submit, please click the submit button at the top of page, you may need to scroll up towards the top of the page to locate the “Submit” button as shown below.

(Figure 29 Select the “Submit” button when all income has been entered)

3j. After selecting “Submit” on the Household Members and the Income Verification documents, you will now have the ability to submit your student(s) for the ACE Savings Account Program, select “Yes, I am applying for the ACE Program”. Once complete, please proceed to the Apply for the ACE Savings Account section of this manual.
Step 7: Apply for the ACE Savings Account

1. Once you complete the checklist located on page three, you may begin to apply for the ACE Savings account. Sign into your OH | ID, within my apps and select the Income Verification Tile:

   (Figure 30 Income Verification system tile)

   (Figure 31 Scholarship Parent Dashboard)

2a. Within the “Student” dropdown field, select the child you are applying for ACE

2b. Within the dropdown “I am the”, select how you are related to the student. Within the dropdown “School Type”, select the current school type the student attends

   (Figure 32 Adding students to the ACE program)

2c. Place a check in the “Yes, I have read and acknowledge the Message above” along with selecting the “Add Applicant” button to submit this student. Repeat 2a – 2c for each student.

3. You have completed the ACE application process and you can log out of the Scholarship System.
Status of ACE Application

Once Parent adds the ACE application you can see three statuses on the parent dashboard. The Ohio Department of Education will determine eligibility to participate in the ACE Savings Account Program through an Income Verification process. The Department of Education will share parent information with Merit Inc who will provide a Marketplace for parents/guardians to utilize their saving account funds.

OH|ID Account Help

Should you need any assistance with your OH|ID account, including editing your profile, changing your password, or setting up your security options, simply click the Help icon at the top of your OH|ID account screen. From the OH|ID Help page, you can look up how to edit your profile, change your password or make changes to your personal information.