

EDUCATION FREEDOM

Eligibility Requirements

Who is an eligible student for an [Education Freedom Scholarship \(EFS\)](#)?

Any Tennessee student who is a U.S. citizen or lawfully present and who is entitled to attend a public school in grades K-12 is eligible to apply. The student must enroll in a registered Category I, II, or III non-public school located in Tennessee prior to funds being awarded.

OVERVIEW of Scholarship Availability

For the 2025-26 school year, the Tennessee Department of Education (department) will award 20,000 scholarships:

10,000 Universal Scholarships

Open to any eligible student

AND

10,000 Qualified Scholarships

Reserved for eligible students based on income, IEA eligibility, or ESA eligibility

While all scholarships operate in the same manner and will be the same award amount, a family may opt to provide additional information, if applicable, to apply for a qualified scholarship to increase the likelihood of obtaining one of the 20,000 scholarships available.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS for All Applications

Applications must meet **ALL** of the below requirements:

- Tennessee Residency (2 documentations of proof required)
- Student's Proof of U.S. Citizenship (1 proof required)
OR Lawful Presence in the U.S. (2 proofs required)
- No more than 13 years in school and entering grades K-12
- Student must be five years old by September 30, 2025

Additional Documentation for Qualified Scholarships*

To be considered for a qualified scholarship, the application must demonstrate **ONE** of the following:

→ Income Eligibility

Income levels below 300% of the Federal Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Guidelines (2024 federal income tax Form 1040 Line 9)

Household Size · \$ Line 9 Max Income			
2	\$113,442	5	\$203,019
3	\$143,301	6	\$232,878
4	\$173,160	7	\$262,737

OR Eligibility for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program

OR Eligibility for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

→ Individualized Education Account (IEA) Program Eligibility

Find more information about the IEA program, including eligibility requirements, process, and awards [here](#).

→ Education Savings Account (ESA) Program Eligibility

Find more information about the ESA program, including eligibility requirements, process, and awards [here](#).

**Note: If an application's additional documentation fails to satisfy the requirements for a qualified scholarship, then the application will be considered for a universal scholarship.*





Education Freedom Scholarship (EFS)

Student Application Checklist

For the 2025-26 school year, the Tennessee Department of Education (department) will award 20,000 scholarships:

10,000 Universal Scholarships
Open to any eligible student

AND

10,000 Qualified Scholarships
Reserved for eligible students based on income, IEA eligibility, or ESA eligibility

Applications will be reviewed in the order received by the department.

Please consider the following when preparing to complete your application:

- **Completeness & Accuracy:** Only complete applications will be reviewed for scholarship eligibility. It is imperative applications have all required documentation uploaded, documentation is clear and legible, and all required fields are completed. Incomplete applications will be returned and **will not maintain their place in line for scholarship consideration.**
- **Contact Information:** When completing the application, please be consistent with an email address. The department will use this email address to send valuable information and program updates. Be sure to check this email inbox frequently once the application is submitted.
- **Multiple Children Applying:** Individual applications must be submitted with the necessary documentation for each child. The online application portal allows for the copying of family information across multiple applications.

EFS Simplified Checklist for Each Application Type

Refer to the following pages to see more detailed descriptions for each proof of documentation. Sample types for each required documentation can be found at the end of this document.

ALL APPLICATIONS must include:

	Two (2) Proofs of Tennessee Residency Documents	
	One (1) Proof of Student's United States (U.S.) Citizenship	OR Two (2) Proofs of Student's Lawful Presence in the U.S.

QUALIFIED APPLICATIONS must ALSO include:

	Income Documentation	OR	IEA Eligibility	OR	ESA Eligibility
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Documents must be saved and uploaded individually into the application. Each file upload should capture only a single document. Acceptable file formats include: jpg, gif, png, pdf, hevc, heic.

ALL APPLICATIONS must include:

Two (2) Proofs of Tennessee Residency Documents

Both documents must include the:

- 1** Name & Current Address of the Parent/Guardian or Eligible Student
- 2** Required Date Range from Groups I, II, or III below



Tennessee Proof of Residency Approved Documentation

GROUP I (Issued within the last 90 days)

- Utility Bill or Connection Notice (*internet, gas, electric, water, garbage*)
- Installment Loan Statement (*auto, mortgage, personal, student, bank*)
- Insurance Bill or Policy (*homeowner's/renter's, auto, health*)
- Affidavit of Residence (*landlord signed & notarized*)
- Fiscal Documentation (*paycheck stub, bank statement*)
- Agency Documentation (*social security, disability, TANF, SNAP, public assistance/government benefits*)
- Court Documentation

GROUP II (Issued within the last 365 days)

- Rental or Mortgage Contract (*deed of sale for property, mortgage contract, rental or lease agreement (signed by landlord & resident)*)
NOTE: Handwritten contracts or agreements must be notarized
- Tennessee Vehicle or Voter Registration
- Tax Documentation (*2024 IRS tax return (Form 1040), real estate/property tax receipt*)

GROUP III (Non-Expired)

- Tennessee Identification Cards (*driver's license, identification license or card, handgun carry permit*)

One (1) Proof of Student's United States (U.S.) Citizenship

OR

Two (2) Proofs of Student's Lawful Presence in the U.S.



Be sure the name on the document(s) are for the student identified on the application.

Documents to Demonstrate the Student's U.S. Citizenship

- A valid Tennessee Driver's License or Photo Identification License issued by the Department of Safety containing a Real ID Marker
- A valid Driver's License or Photo Identification License from another state where the issuance requirements are at least as strict as those in Tennessee, as determined by the Department of Safety
- An official Birth Certificate (*not the Mother's Copy*) issued by a state, jurisdiction or territory of the United States, including Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Swains Island, Guam; Puerto Rican birth certificates issued before July 1, 2010, shall not be recognized
- A U.S. Government-Issued Certified Birth Certificate
- A valid, unexpired U.S. Passport
- Certificate of Report of Birth issued by U.S. Department of State (*DS-1350*)
- Report of Birth Abroad issued by U.S. Department of State (*FS-240*)
- A Certificate of Citizenship (*N560 or N561*)
- A Certificate of Naturalization (*N550, N570 or N578*)

Documents to Demonstrate the Student's Lawful Presence in the U.S.

- Pursuant to TCA 4-58-103(d)(1), an applicant shall present two (2) forms of documentation of identity and immigration status:
- 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 I-551" 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

QUALIFIED APPLICATIONS must ALSO include One (1) of the following:

The following items are needed only if applying for a qualified scholarship.

10,000 scholarships are reserved for students at or below 300% of income qualifying for reduced-price lunch **OR** student eligible for the IEA **OR** ESA Programs. Learn more about the income requirements [here](#).

Income Documentation OR IEA Eligibility OR ESA Eligibility

Income Documentation (2024 Form 1040 U.S. Individual Income Tax Return OR TANF OR SNAP)

For income documentation, you will need to submit your Form 1040 filed by the parent/guardian that lists the eligible student as a dependent. Forms for both parents/guardians must be included if either of the following apply:

Parents/guardians of the eligible student share joint primary residential custody such that neither or both are designated as the primary residential parent in a custody order.

OR

Parents/guardians of the eligible student share a household but file taxes as “married, filing separately” or as “head of household.”

Household Size	2	3	4	5	6	7
300% of Federal Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Guidelines for 2024-25	\$113,442	\$143,301	\$173,160	\$203,019	\$232,878	\$262,737

Line 9 on the 1040 Tax Return will be the income considered for eligibility.

OR Documentation for TANF OR SNAP (must be within 365 days and include the name of the parent/student)

To obtain TANF or SNAP documentation:

Log into the One DHS portal to retrieve your information. You can also get a copy of the eligibility letter online [here](#).

OR

Call the Family Assistance Service Center at (866) 311-4287 for assistance.

OR

You can also get a copy of the eligibility letter from the Families First office.

TANF Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program

SNAP Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

OR IEA Eligibility (IEP Documentation)

Find more information about the IEA program, awards, and qualifications [here](#).

For IEA eligibility, you will need to submit the front page of the student’s most current, active Individualized Education Program (IEP).

OR ESA Eligibility

Find more information about the ESA program, awards, and qualifications [here](#).

For ESA eligibility, you will need to submit:

- Residency documents to demonstrate student is zoned to attend a Memphis-Shelby County School, a Hamilton County School, a Metro-Nashville Public School, or a school in the Achievement School District.
- 2024 Form 1040 U.S. Individual Income Tax Return (“Form 1040 Tax Return”) filed by the parent/guardian that lists the eligible student as a dependent. Forms for both parents/guardians must be included if either of the following apply:

Parents/guardians of the eligible student share joint primary residential custody such that neither or both are designated as the primary residential parent in a custody order.

OR

Parents/guardians of the eligible student share a household but file taxes as “married, filing separately” or as “head of household.”

Household Size	2	3	4	5	6	7
100% of Federal Free Price Lunch Guidelines for 2024-25	\$53,144	\$67,132	\$81,120	\$95,108	\$109,096	\$123,084

Line 9 on the 1040 Tax Return will be the income considered for eligibility.

Sample types for each required documentation can be found on the following pages.

EDUCATION FREEDOM

Education Freedom Scholarship (EFS) Application Required Proof of Documentation Samples

Examples of Proof of Tennessee Residency

MLGW Utility Bill

MEMPHIS LIGHT GAS AND WATER DIVISION
MLGW
EDITABLE DOCUMENT SAMPLE

Page 1 of 2
UTILITY BILL
Date: January 31, 2018
Amount Due: \$ 11,700.00
Due Date: February 16, 2018

For: FLORENCE E. FORD
Service at: 600 Dr. M. L.K. Jr Blvd, Nashville TN 37243 January 30, 2018 at 08:26 Account Number 00012-3456-7890-123

Previous Balance	\$ 10,423.00	Service:	
Adjustments	-0.27	Day of Service:	32
Balance Forward	10,422.73	Average Utility Cost Per Day:	\$ 39.91
		Average Temperature:	31
		Billing Cycle:	21
		Next Reading Date:	February 28, 2018

Service:

Day of Service:	32
Average Utility Cost Per Day:	\$ 39.91
Average Temperature:	31
Billing Cycle:	21
Next Reading Date:	February 28, 2018

Contact:
Non-MLGW See back of bill
New Service Requests \$20-7878
Transfers, Disconnects and Trouble Maintenance
Billing Inquiries 544-MLGW(6549)
Payment Arrangements and Service Reconnects
Hours: Monday-Friday 7AM- 7PM
My Account Access Code: 111143
Pay Online! www.mlga.com
Pay by Phone! 1 866 315-0277

Payment Arrangements Online at www.mlga.com/payarrange
PAYMENTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 3:00 PM CENTRAL TIME TO POST SAME BUSINESS DAY.

Current Charges are continued on the reverse side. If paying in person please present both portions of bill. Please detach and return in the enclosed envelop with payment.

Tennessee Driver's License

USA TN
Tennessee THE VOLUNTEER STATE

DRIVER LICENSE

DL NO 123456789 DOB 02/11/1974
EXP 02/11/2026 ISS 02/11/2019
CLASS D END NONE
REST 01

SEX F HGT 5'-05" EYES BLU
DD 1234567890123456 DL
SAMPLE JANICE
123 MAIN STREET
APT. 1

Tennessee Vehicle Registration

Tennessee Department of Revenue
CERTIFICATE OF VEHICLE REGISTRATION

RENEW ONLINE AT www.tn.gov/vehicleclerk.com

Invoice	21280	License No	0A00A0	Class	1000	Base Yr	2022	Trans Code	O25	Date of Issue	1/1/2022	Expiration Date	10/31/2022
Time Stamp	09:27:27	Title No	123456789	Make	CHEV	Model	SLV	Year	2001	Body	PK	Lien	A
Station No	WK01	VIN	ABCDEFGH12345HIJKL	Zone		Driver License		Lease					
Client/Draw	CH 11	Emission No	1	Vehicle No		County Sticker	P	City Sticker					
Cash	00	County	Davidson	County Clerk	Brenda Wynn	Veh Use	P	Reg Weight	N/A				
Check	84.00												
Check #	3130												
Credit	00												
Credit #													
CC Auth #													
Voucher	00												
Charge	00												

Registration Fees:

Registration	28.50
Exc Vech	.00
Credit	.00
Lease	.00
Trans	.00
Clerk	.00
Insurance	2.50
Title	.00
Lien	.00
SA Tax	.00
Local Tax	.00
Adm Tax	.00
City Veh Tax	56.78
Provlage	.00
Online Fee	.00
INS Fee	.00
Total Tax	.00
Total Fees	84.78
TS Verby	5212119

Owner's Name: JOHN Q PUBLIC
Address: 123 MAIN ST, NASHVILLE TN 37027

10-22
0A00A0
TN TP

T.C.A. 55-4-108 Every Certificate of Registration shall at all times be carried in the vehicle to which it refers or shall be carried by the person driving or in control of such vehicle. Renewals of registration for all vehicles (except permanent registrations) are for twelve (12) months from the current expiration date. If the current expiration date falls on Saturday, Sunday, or a holiday, the current registration remains valid until the next business day.

Application Instructions:
1. Clean debossed area in the upper right corner of plate. 2. Remove decal by folding at edge of decal and separate from registration.
3. Rub firmly to apply decal to upper right corner of plate. 4. Keep registration with vehicle.

Photos not included:

- Utility Bill or Connection Notice (*internet, electric, water, garbage*)
- Installment Loan Statement (*auto, mortgage, personal, student, bank*)
- Insurance Bill or Policy (*homeowner's/renter's, auto, health*)
- [Affidavit of Residence](#) (*landlord signed & notarized*)
- Fiscal Documentation (*paycheck stub, bank statement*)
- Agency Documentation (*social security, disability, TANF, SNAP, public assistance/government benefits*)
- Court Documentation

- Rental or Mortgage Contract (*deed of sale for property, mortgage contract, rental or lease agreement (signed by landlord & resident)*)
NOTE: Handwritten contracts or agreements must be notarized
- Tennessee Voter Registration Card
- Tax Documentation (*2024 IRS tax return (Form 1040), real estate/property tax receipt*)
- Tennessee Identification Cards (*identification license or card, handgun carry permit*)

Examples of U.S. Citizenship

Certificate of Naturalization



Tennessee Driver's License with Real ID Marker (star upper right)



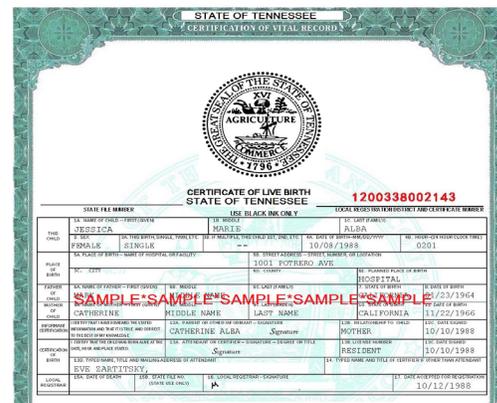
U.S. Passport



Certificate of Report of Birth issued by U.S. Department of State (DS-1350)



Birth Certificate



Report of Birth Abroad issued by U.S. Department of State (FS-240)



Photos not included:

- A valid Driver's License or Photo Identification License from another state where the issuance requirements are at least as strict as those in Tennessee, as determined by the Department of Safety
- A Certificate of Citizenship (N560 or N561)

Examples of Lawful Presence in the United States

Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record

Class of Admission must be for: *Asylee, Parolee or Parole, Refugee, Asylum, HP-humanitarian parolee or public interest parolee (PIP).*

U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Securing America's Borders

Get I-94 Number | I-94 FAQ

Admission (I-94) Number Retrieval

Admission (I-94) Record Number: 61234567890 **I-94 Number**

Admit Until Date (MM/DD/YYYY): 10/10/2012 **Expiration Date**

Details provided on Admission(I-94) form:

Family Name: ADAMS **Last Name**

First (Given) Name: JOHN **First Name**

Birth Date (MM/DD/YYYY): 01/01/1990

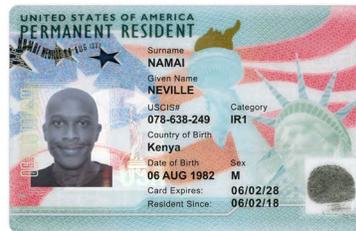
Passport Number: P123123213

Passport Country of Issuance: Mexico **Issuance Date**

Date of Entry (MM/DD/YYYY): 04/11/2012

Class of Admission: **Category / Class of Admission**

U.S. Permanent Resident Card



Permanent Resident Re-entry Permit



Office of Refugee Resettlement Eligibility Letter for benefits under Trafficking Victims Protection Act

AUG 9 2015

CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Office of Refugee Resettlement

Eligibility Letter

Dear [Name]:

This letter confirms that under section 10759(a)(1)(B) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2005, you are eligible for benefits and services under any Federal or State program or activity funded or administered by any Federal agency for the same reason as individuals who are admitted to the United States as a refugee under section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, provided you meet other eligibility criteria. This letter does not confer immigration status.

Your eligibility date is the date you were granted asylum or refugee status. If you are a refugee, your eligibility date is the date you were granted asylum or refugee status. If you are an asylee, your eligibility date is the date you were granted asylum or refugee status. If you are a public interest parolee, your eligibility date is the date you were granted public interest parole.

You should present this letter when you apply for benefits or services. Beneficial agencies must call the toll-free tolling number (1-800-368-1010) in the Office of Refugee Resettlement to verify the validity of this document and to inform you of the benefits for which you are eligible.

You must notify this office of your current mailing address. Please send a card and signed letter with any change of address to Trafficking Program Specialist, Office of Refugee Resettlement, P.O. Box 1015, Dallas, Texas, 75201-1015. If you are unable to send a card, please call the toll-free tolling number, and any notices mailed to your current mailing address constitute subsequent notice. You may also want to share this information with your local law enforcement agencies.

Kelley Carey
Kelley Carey
Office of Refugee Resettlement

Department of Homeland Security
CBP I-94A (1104)
Departure Record

Departure Number: 000000000 11 **I-94 Number**

Family Name: SAMPLE **Last Name**

First (Given) Name: SAMPLE **First Name**

Birth Date (MM/DD/YYYY): 14, 12, 76 **Issuance Date**

Country of Citizenship: MEXICO **Expiration Date**

Class of Admission: 20161204 US-VISIT 20161204 MULTIPLE **Category / Class of Admission**

See Other Side | STAPLE HERE

Prima Facie Determination Letter for VAWA

October 3, 2018

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
U.S. Visa Application Centres
U.S. Visa Application Centres

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

PRIMA FACIE DETERMINATION

Receipt Date: October 3, 2018

Petitioner: Petitioner for Amerasian, Widow(er), or Special Immigrant

Form: Form I-589

The above petition has been reviewed and found to establish a prima facie case for classification under the self-petitioning provisions of the Violence Against Women Act.

THIS PRIMA FACIE DETERMINATION IS VALID FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR FROM THE NOTICE DATE SHOWN ABOVE, AND EXPIRES ON THE DATE INDICATED BELOW.

EXPIRATION DATE: October 5, 2019

I-797 Approval Notice for T Nonimmigrant Status

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
I-797A | NOTICE OF ACTION

Receipt Date: August 11, 2017

Priority Date: [Redacted]

Notice Date: August 11, 2017

Page: 1 of 1

Case Type: Approval Notice

Case #: [Redacted]

Valid from 08/11/2017 to 08/11/2027

Section: Self-Petitioning Spouse of U.S.C. or L.P.R.
ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIMA FACIE CASE

The above petition has been reviewed and found to establish a prima facie case for classification under the self-petitioning provisions of the Violence Against Women Act.

THIS NOTICE MAY BE USED TO ASSIST YOU IN RECEIVING PUBLIC BENEFITS.

THIS PRIMA FACIE DETERMINATION IS VALID FOR A PERIOD OF 180 DAYS FROM THE NOTICE DATE SHOWN ABOVE, AND EXPIRES ON THE DATE INDICATED AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE.

We will send you a written notice as soon as we make a decision on this case. It is not expected that a final decision will be made in this case before the end of 180 days. If this period is coming to a close and you need an extension of this prima facie determination in order to continue receiving public benefits, please submit a written request for extension at least 15 days prior to expiration.

A COPY OF THIS NOTICE MUST ACCOMPANY ANY REQUEST FOR AN EXTENSION OF THIS DETERMINATION.

PLEASE NOTE: ESTABLISHING A PRIMA FACIE CASE FOR CLASSIFICATION UNDER THE SELF-PETITIONING PROVISIONS OF THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT YOUR PETITION WILL BE APPROVED.

EXPIRATION DATE: December 11, 2017.

Form I-797 Establishment of Prima Facie Case for VAWA Petition

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
I-797 | NOTICE OF ACTION

Receipt Number: [Redacted]

Receipt Date: August 11, 2017

Priority Date: [Redacted]

Notice Date: August 11, 2017

Page: 1 of 1

Case Type: Petition for Amerasian, Widow(er) or Special Immigrant (Form I-589)

Section: Self-Petitioning Spouse of U.S.C. or L.P.R.
ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIMA FACIE CASE

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PLEASE NOTE: ESTABLISHING A PRIMA FACIE CASE FOR CLASSIFICATION UNDER THE SELF-PETITIONING PROVISIONS OF THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT YOUR PETITION WILL BE APPROVED.

EXPIRATION DATE: December 11, 2017.

You will be notified separately about any other applications or petitions you filed. Send this notice. Please enclose a copy of it if you write to us about this case, or if you file another application based on this decision. Our address is:

UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES
VERMONT SERVICE CENTER
75 LOWER WILDEN STREET
ST. ALBANS, VT 05479

FORM I-797 (REV. 08/01/16)

Photos not included:

- Foreign Passport stamped by the U.S. Government indicating that the holder has been "Processed for I-551"
- Travel Document issued to Refugees (I-571)