



TEXAS EDUCATION FREEDOM ACCOUNTS

PARENT APPLICATION GUIDE

FEBRUARY 2026



KELLY HANCOCK • ACTING COMPTROLLER OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS



GET READY TO LEARN YOUR WAY

The application period for families to participate in the Texas Education Freedom Accounts (TEFA) program in the 2026-27 school year runs from 9 a.m. CT on Feb. 4, 2026, through 11:59 p.m. CT on March 17, 2026.

Only a parent, guardian or other person with legal authority to act on behalf of a child can submit an application. This guide is intended to assist you in the application process.

The application generally takes 10-20 minutes depending on the documents you are submitting. A [video application guide](#) is also available.

Before you begin your application, please note:

1. Submit one application for your household that includes all the children you would like to sign up for TEFA.
2. This is not a first-come, first-served program. Filling out the application on the first or last day of the application window will not affect your chances of receiving funding.
3. Funding is limited, and not all applicants are guaranteed funding.
4. If demand for TEFA accounts exceeds available funding, funding will be allocated by lottery. The lottery will prioritize applications in priority tiers based on household income. The first priority tier also includes children with qualifying disabilities. For more information on prioritization, please see page 3.
5. If you believe your child may qualify for prioritization as a child with a disability, please see additional information below in the section for parents of children with disabilities.
6. The application system will attempt to electronically verify information when possible, but it may be necessary for you to upload documents as part of the process.
7. Participation in TEFA does not guarantee admission to a private school. If you intend for your child to attend a private school, contact your preferred private school about admission and complete the school's process. Not all private schools are eligible to participate in TEFA, and some eligible schools may choose not to participate. Please see our school finder tool on the TEFA website at educationfreedom.texas.gov to locate participating private schools in your area. Schools can apply to the program and be added at any time.

8. If you need to update any information on your application, you may log back in and make changes at any time before applications close at 11:59 p.m. CT on March 17, 2026.
9. Additional information about the program, including participating schools and eligible expenses, can be found at educationfreedom.texas.gov. Details on how to use your child's account will be available in a separate participant handbook.

QUESTIONS? GET SUPPORT YOUR WAY

Visit support.withodyssey.com

Chat with an AI assistant: <https://chat.withodyssey.com/>

Call 737-379-2362

Email: help.tx@withodyssey.com

About Odyssey

The Comptroller's Office selected Odyssey as the certified educational assistance organization to help administer the TEFA program. Odyssey's technology platform helps families apply for the program, manage their accounts, and make approved purchases.

ELIGIBILITY

Your child is eligible for TEFA if they:

- Live in Texas (at least one parent must be a Texas resident),
- Are a U.S. citizen or national or in the country legally, and
- Are eligible to enroll in a Texas public or open-enrollment charter school.

If you're a military family, you can meet residency requirements by uploading orders that require you to be in Texas for the 2026-27 school year, even if you are not stationed in Texas when you apply.

Your child may be enrolled in a public or charter school when you apply, but they may not receive TEFA funding while enrolled in public or charter school.

Students may participate in TEFA if they meet eligibility criteria for state prekindergarten programs. See the prekindergarten section below for details.

PRIORITIZATION

For the 2026-27 school year, if eligible applicants exceed available funding, applicants will be prioritized as follows:

1. Children with a qualifying disability who are members of a household whose total annual income is at or below 500% of the Federal Poverty Level (see section on students with disabilities for details).
2. Children who are members of a household whose total annual income is at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.
3. Children who are members of a household whose total annual income is between 200% and 500% of the Federal Poverty Level.
4. Children who are members of a household whose total annual income is at or above 500% of the Federal Poverty Level. Within this group, children who were enrolled in a Texas public school or charter school for at least 90% of the prior school year will be prioritized. Funds for children in this category may not exceed 20% of the amount of money appropriated from the program fund for that school year.

2026 Federal Poverty Level in Texas

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+
Federal Poverty Level (FPL)	\$15,960	\$21,640	\$27,320	\$33,000	\$38,680	\$44,360	\$50,040	\$55,720	Add \$5,680 per additional person.
200% FPL	\$31,920	\$43,280	\$54,640	\$66,000	\$77,360	\$88,720	\$100,080	\$111,440	Add \$11,360 per additional person.
500% FPL	\$79,800	\$108,200	\$136,600	\$165,000	\$193,400	\$221,800	\$250,200	\$278,600	Add \$28,400 per additional person.

If one child is selected in the lottery, all their eligible siblings who apply at the same time will be accepted with them — even if they are prioritized differently. Participants who remain in good standing will not need to reapply each year.

Note: [Federal Poverty Level](#) guidelines are set annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

GATHER YOUR DOCUMENTS

The application system will verify your information electronically wherever possible, but you will be required to upload certain documents or provide information they contain.

You may upload documents in PDF, JPG, PNG or HEIC formats. File sizes are limited to 10 MB. You can scan paper documents to your computer or take a well-lit picture with a mobile phone.

All applicants need:

- Proof of Texas residency. You may provide your Texas driver license number or state identification number. If these cannot be verified, you may prove residency with **one** of the following:
 - Utility bill
 - Lease agreement
 - Mortgage statement
 - Voter registration card
 - Letter from a government agency in the U.S.
 - A notarized affidavit of residency
- Your Social Security Number (SSN) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number
- Your child's SSN. If it cannot be verified, you will be asked to upload **one** of the following:
 - Birth certificate,
 - Report of live birth abroad,
 - Certificate of naturalization,
 - Certificate of citizenship, or
 - Other official document affirming lawful admission to the United States.
- The IRS tax return (Form 1040) filed for tax year 2024 or 2025 on which this child is claimed as a dependent.

For prioritization:

You may document your child's disability by providing **one** of the following:

- Texas Individualized Education Program (IEP) or authorization to verify the IEP with the Texas Education Agency (TEA);
- Full Individual and Initial Evaluation (FIIE);
- Out-of-state IEP verified by the issuing state or school district; or
- [TEFA Disability Certification Form](#) issued by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts and signed by one or more qualified professionals.

For additional funding:

- Your child must have a Texas IEP from school year 2023-24, 2024-25 or 2025-26 on file with TEA.

PROGRAM TIMELINE

FEBRUARY 4 – Applications for the 2026-27 school year open at 9 a.m. CT.

MARCH 17 – Applications close at 11:59 p.m. CT.

This is the deadline for:

1. Parents to indicate their child will attend a participating private school or other setting, including homeschool, in order to establish the amount of funding each child would receive.
2. An IEP to be on file with the Texas Education Agency to determine eligibility for additional funding, up to \$30K based on a child's IEP.

AFTER APPLICATIONS CLOSE – Odyssey will conduct a lottery within each priority tier to allocate available funding.

EARLY APRIL – Notifications begin for TEFA participants.

JUNE 1 – Initial deadline for parents to select schools.

JUNE 15 – Initial deadline for schools to confirm enrollment.

JULY 1 – First round of funding to be made available in Odyssey's platform.

JULY 15 – Final deadline for parents to select schools.

JULY 31 – Final deadline for schools to confirm enrollment.

MID-AUGUST – Final deadline for first round of funding to be made available in Odyssey's platform.

Additional funding will be allocated no later than Oct. 1 and April 1, 2027.



APPLICATION GUIDE

PARENT INFORMATION

The first part of the application will prompt you to provide contact information and other important documents that confirm your identity, Texas residency and household income.

- It is important to enter information that matches your identification.
- You must provide your physical Texas address. Post office boxes are not accepted. If you're meeting residency requirements with military orders, you may provide the address of the Texas base where you will be stationed.
- The household size should match the 1040 tax return that you upload.

STUDENT INFORMATION

The second part of the application will prompt you to provide information on each child for whom you are applying.

A number of questions are required for program reporting and will not impact eligibility, prioritization or funding, including the following: gender, race/ethnicity, and the public-school **campus** to which you are zoned.

Be sure to select the current school **district** for which your child is zoned. This information is necessary for reporting, and if your child has a qualifying disability, this could affect their funding.

To identify your zoned district, visit the Texas School District Locator at <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/general-information/school-district-locator>. Enter your home address to find the district where you reside.

EDUCATIONAL SETTING

You will be prompted to select an educational setting for your child for the 2026-27 school year. This may be different from your child's educational setting at the time you apply.

- Selecting "private school" will set the amount a child is eligible to receive at \$10,474. The school must be accredited and registered to participate in TEFA for your child to receive this funding amount.

- A child with a disability selecting “private school” would be eligible to receive up to \$30,000 based on the IEP on file with TEA by March 17, 2026, for either the 2023-24, 2024-25, or 2025-26 school year. For more information, please see the section below specifically for students with disabilities.
- Selecting “homeschool/other” will set the amount a child is eligible to receive at \$2,000. Choose this option if you will not be attending a participating accredited private school, but plan for your child to participate in a nonpublic education setting, including homeschooling.

You will not be required to select a specific private school at the time you apply. You will only need to declare whether you intend for your child to attend an accredited private school that is participating in the program. You will need to confirm their enrollment in a participating school before your child can receive funding.

Note that the selected educational setting “locks” at the end of the application period.

After the application period closes, you can change from private school to “homeschool/other” and receive the lower funding amount of \$2,000, but you cannot make a change that results in additional funding.

Locking in the educational setting allows the program to establish the amount of funding each child can receive, and therefore, the number of accounts we can fund.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT HISTORY

You will be prompted to provide information about your child’s school enrollment history. This information is necessary for verification purposes.

For children in the last priority tier (for families with household incomes at or above 500% of the Federal Poverty Level), priority will be given to children who were enrolled in a school district or open-enrollment charter school for at least 90% of the 2025-26 school year.

SCHOOL SELECTION

If you indicated that you plan to enroll your child in a participating private school for the 2026-27 school year, you will be asked to select a school for your child.

Please complete this section as soon as you can. If you are not ready to select a school immediately after completing the application, you may skip this step and make your selection later. But selecting a school will be necessary to receive funding. If your child is selected to participate in TEFA, you will be reminded of the summer deadlines for school selection and enrollment confirmation.

Please note:

1. TEFA school selection does not guarantee admission to a private school. You must complete a school's application and enrollment process separately.
2. If your preferred school does not currently participate or appear in the school finder, please continue to check back. New schools are added on a rolling basis.
3. School selections do not affect your child's eligibility for or prioritization in the TEFA program.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The application will ask whether your child is eligible to participate in a school district's special education program. If you answer "yes," you will be prompted to complete additional information to help determine prioritization and funding.

You will be asked if your child has an IEP.

If the answer is no, you will be prompted to the following section for prioritization only (see "prioritization only" below). Selecting this option means your child's application can receive priority in a lottery, but they will not receive additional funding based on their special education accommodations.

If the answer is yes:

- You will be asked for the student's Texas Unique Student Identification number (UID). (You may access your child's S-number or UID on previous school records or by contacting the child's previous school.)
- You will be asked to enter the numerical instructional code found on the IEP. This is usually found in sections related to the "Least Restrictive Environment" or "Instructional Arrangement/Setting," or in the "Local Variation" section.
- You will be asked to identify the school district that created the IEP.

An accurate and complete response for each of these questions is important to match your application with current IEP records on file with TEA. We may ask for additional information or documents for verification if an electronic match is not found.

If your student has only attended private school, your local public school district will load your child's IEP information into the state's APEX system. This will generate a UID for your student, which the district can provide to you.

If you have exhausted all methods of obtaining a UID, then you may enter "11111" followed by your zip code in the application instead of the UID. This will allow you to continue with the application. However, please note that the only way to

ensure additional funding for a child with a disability is to have a validated IEP on file with TEA, which requires the child to have a valid UID.

Please note that the amount of additional funding is set by the IEP and varies by student.

Prioritization Only: If your child does not have a recent IEP on file with TEA, your child may still be prioritized in tier 1 if you meet income requirements and provide acceptable proof of a qualifying disability. The table below outlines acceptable disability documentation. You should plan to upload these documents with the application.

Priority + Funding	Prioritization Only
TEFA will use IEPs from the 2023-24, 2024-25 or 2025-26 school years on file with TEA by March 17, 2026, to confirm prioritization and eligibility for additional funding based on the instructional codes in the IEPs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current or expired IEP from Texas• Current or expired out-of-state IEP verified by the issuing state or school district• FIIE that documents a qualifying disability• Comptroller-approved Disability Certification Form signed by one or more qualified professionals.

The Comptroller-approved Disability Certification Form is a new form created specifically for the TEFA program. Many providers may be unfamiliar with this document. The form, instructions and a fact sheet for providers are available at educationfreedom.texas.gov/toolkit/#informational.

Other important application information for parents of a child with a disability:

- TEA has provided instructions to school districts on uploading IEPs for the TEFA program. If your student is currently in private school and has a new IEP you would like the district to upload, please notify the district that created the IEP of your intention to apply for TEFA to ensure it is available in TEA's system.
- For current public school students with new or updated IEPs since Nov. 1, 2025, please notify your school district of your intention to apply for TEFA for a smoother verification. New or updated IEPs from this period may require additional steps to validate if they are not recorded with TEA.

SPECIAL EDUCATION NOTICES

A private school is not subject to federal and state laws regarding the provision of educational services to a child with a disability in the same manner as a school district or open-enrollment charter school.

Information regarding rights to which a child with a disability is entitled under federal and state law if the child attends a school district or open-enrollment charter school can be found at Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), U.S. Department of Education, including rights provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. Section 1400 et seq.); and rights provided under Subchapter A of the Texas Education Code.

To learn more about your rights under special education law, please see the [Texas Legal Framework for Child-Centered Special Education Practices](#), [Disability Rights Texas's IDEA Manual](#) and the [Notice of Procedural Safeguards from SPEDTEX](#).

PRE-K STUDENTS

Students who are eligible for free prekindergarten under existing Texas law are eligible to participate in prekindergarten through the TEFA program. Your child may qualify if:

1. The child is unable to speak or comprehend the English language.
2. The child's household income is below 185% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (see table on page 3). Families receiving TANF or SNAP benefits are also automatically eligible in this category.
3. The child is homeless.
4. At least one parent is an active-duty member of the U.S. armed forces.
5. At least one parent is a member of the U.S. armed forces who was injured or killed while on active duty.
6. The child is or has been in foster care.
7. At least one parent is a qualifying first responder, including peace officers, fire fighters, and emergency medical first responders, who was seriously injured or killed in the line of duty, or
8. At least one parent is a classroom teacher at a public primary or secondary school in a school district that participates in the free prekindergarten program.

For all the above categories, additional documentation or verification may be required either during or after the application process before your child can receive TEFA funding.

ATTESTATIONS FOR ALL PARENTS

At the end of the application, all parents must agree to requirements of the application and responsibilities of program participation.

- I affirm that all the information I have submitted in this application is true and complete.
- I understand that only a parent can submit an application for a child and that “parent” means a Texas resident who is a natural or adoptive parent, managing or possessory conservator, legal guardian, custodian, or other person with legal authority to act on behalf of a child.
- I affirm that I have the legal authority to request an education savings account for the child(ren) included in this application.
- I affirm that the child(ren) included in this application has not been claimed on another application.
- I affirm that the child(ren) included in this application has not yet graduated from high school or received a GED or equivalent and is otherwise eligible to participate in the program.
- I agree that I must notify the program within 30 business days if my participating child(ren) graduates from high school or receives a GED or equivalent, enrolls in a public school or open-enrollment charter school, or otherwise becomes ineligible to continue participating in the program.
- I affirm that the child(ren) included in this application is a citizen or national of the United States or is lawfully present in the United States and is a resident of the state of Texas.
- I agree that I must comply with all program requirements, the administrative rules implementing the program, and applicable law.
- I understand that my child(ren)’s program account may be suspended or permanently closed, and all account funds returned to the state, if my information is incorrect, if any improper benefits are awarded to the account, or if I fail to comply with any program requirement, administrative rule or applicable law.
- I agree that funds can only be used for qualified education expenses of my participating child(ren).
- I agree that I will share or authorize the administrator of an assessment instrument to share with Odyssey the results of any assessment instrument required to be administered to my participating child(ren).
- I agree that I will not sell any item purchased with program money.
- I agree that my child(ren)’s program account will not be reimbursed for any purchase made outside the program marketplace and that no school, service provider, or vendor may rebate, refund, credit, or share any program money with me, my participating child(ren), or anyone on behalf of me or my child(ren).

- I understand that the state shall have the authority to conduct audits of the accounts of participating children, schools, service providers and vendors and may take remedial actions to accounts as necessary.
- I understand that any evidence of fraudulent use of a program account may be referred to the appropriate local county attorney or district attorney for prosecution.
- I consent to the sharing of my information and the information of each child included in this application with and by any individual or organization necessary to process each application, including financial information and personally identifiable information from student records under FERPA (20 U.S.C. Section 1232g).
- I agree that the Comptroller, its contractor Odyssey, the Texas Education Agency and other governmental entities, as necessary, may share my child(ren)'s special education status, public school enrollment and prekindergarten eligibility as part of my child(ren)'s application for this program.
- I agree to receive email, SMS/text, phone calls and mail from the program related to this application or my child(ren)'s account.
- I understand this agreement is binding for as long as any child included in this application participates in the program and applies to any information given or benefit received.
- I understand that application to the TEFA program does not guarantee or constitute admission to a private school. I acknowledge that if I have selected "private school" for my child(ren), I must separately apply to the private school directly for my child(ren) to be considered for admission and enrollment. I understand the state and Odyssey are not parties to any contract entered into between me and the school.
- I agree to provide additional information or documentation requested by the state or Odyssey that is necessary to administer my child(ren)'s account.
- I agree that funding will not be used to pay any person who is related to the program participant.
- I acknowledge that any offer of TEFA participation and funding will be related to the educational setting selected when applications close and that my child's account will not receive additional funding for changes in the educational setting that I selected (e.g., homeschool/other to private school) or changes in an IEP after the application deadline closes for the 2026-27 school year.

EDUCATIONFREEDOM.TEXAS.GOV