



# Open Enrollment Transportation Assistance

## Eligibility

The parent/guardian of a pupil who has been accepted for open enrollment shall be responsible to transport the pupil without reimbursement, except for those pupils that meet the eligibility requirement listed below. 281 IAC 17.9

Household Size	Yearly	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	26,540	2,212	1,107	1,020	510
2	35,859	2,988	1,494	1,379	689
3	45,177	3,764	2,843	1,737	868
4	54,496	4,542	2,272	2,096	1,048
5	63,814	5,318	2,659	2,454	1,227
6	73,132	6,094	3,048	2,812	1,406
7	82,451	6,872	3,436	3,171	1,585
8	91,769	7,648	3,824	3,529	1,764
<b>Additional family member</b>	9,318	777	388	358	179

\*These guidelines reflect the revisions made in the Federal Poverty Guidelines that is effective for July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. **These guidelines are NOT the same as the guidelines for Free and Reduced Fees**

## Definition of Income

"Income" means income before any deductions such as income taxes, social security taxes, insurance premiums, charitable contributions and bonds. Income includes the following:

1. Monetary compensations for services, including wages, salary, commissions or fees
2. Net income from non-farm self-employment
3. Social Security
4. Dividends or interest on savings or bonds or income from estates or trusts
5. Net rental income
6. Public assistance or welfare payments
7. Unemployment compensation
8. Government civilian employee or military retirement, pensions, or veterans payments
9. Private pensions or annuities
10. Alimony or child support payments
11. Regular contributions from persons not living in the household
12. Net royalties
13. Other cash income including income from farming. Other cash income would include cash amounts received or withdrawn from any source including savings, investments, trust accounts and other resources. Income does not include any income or benefits received under federal programs that are excluded from consideration as income by any legislation prohibition.

## Types of Transportation Assistance

The resident district has the right to determine which option will apply. This is not a parent / guardian choice. Transportation assistance for those who qualify according to income guidelines (see chart above) is available only **between contiguous districts** and shall be deducted from the amount sent to the receiving district. In case of road construction or road relocation, a receiving district may drive into another district to pick up open enrollment students if, and only if, there was road construction or road relocation that makes this necessary.

The resident district may discharge this obligation in one of three ways:

1. The resident district may actually provide transportation for the pupil(s) to a stop on the bus route of the receiving district.
2. The resident district may allow the receiving district to enter the resident district to pick up the open enrolled pupil(s). Failure of the receiving district to decide to do this will not discharge the resident district's obligation for transportation assistance.
3. The resident district may provide a parent / guardian reimbursement. If this option is selected by the resident district, the amount to be paid to the parent is determined as follows:
  - o The transportation reimbursement amount shall be the state calculated average as determined in 285.1(3) or the local cost per pupil for the previous year as specified on the resident districts Annual Transportation Report, whichever is lower. The amount for 2018-2019 was \$521 (annual). The 18-19 amount will be released in January 2020.
  - o This amount is limited to reimbursement for three elementary (K-8) students and one secondary (grades 9 -12) students.
  - o The amount of transportation assistance can be prorated according to the date of application submission.
  - o Transportation assistance costs incurred by the resident district may be deducted from the cost per pupil amount it is required to send to the receiving district for an open enrollment regular education pupil. This may be prorated after the start of the year. Transportation assistance costs on students with IEPs cannot be deducted from special education tuition.

## Process to apply for Transportation Assistance

If a parent/guardian qualifies for transportation assistance, the request assistance is filed with the resident district. Verification of income should be attached to the open enrollment application. Parents should be reminded that the district must be notified if the family income changes by \$50 or more per month. Parents may apply for transportation assistance by indicating on the application and attaching verification of income. It is recommended that the parent complete a free and reduced lunch application if one has not been filed.

Transportation assistance is only available to families who open enroll between contiguous districts. The cost of transportation reimbursement incurred by the resident district should be deducted from the tuition sent to the receiving district. For students with an IEP eligible for transportation assistance, resident district pays as special education cost and is not deducted from the actual tuition costs.

Transportation required on the IEP is waived when a student is open enrolled so that has nothing to do with this. It is only for transportation assistance under Open Enrollment that the resident district becomes involved again.

### Open Enrollment Contact:

Sara Nickel  
Iowa Department of Education  
Division of Learning and Results  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146  
515-281-3778 or [sara.nickel@iowa.gov](mailto:sara.nickel@iowa.gov)