



Open Enrollment Transportation Assistance

Eligibility

To be eligible to receive open enrollment transportation assistance, a student’s total household income must be at or below the amount included in Table 1 for their household size. If the student’s household does not meet this requirement, the parent or guardian of a pupil who has been accepted for open enrollment is responsible for transporting the pupil without reimbursement to and from a point on the receiving district’s regular school bus route (Iowa Administrative Code rule 281—17.9(1)).

Table 1. Income Eligibility by Household Size

Persons in Household/Family	Yearly Income	Monthly Income	Twice Per Month Income	Every Two Weeks Income	Weekly Income
1	25,760	2,147	1,074	1,008	501
2	34,840	2,930	1,465	1,367	684
3	43,920	3,660	1,830	1,708	854
4	53,000	4,417	2,209	2,061	1,031
5	62,080	5,173	2,587	2,414	1,207
6	71,160	5,930	2,965	2,767	1,384
7	80,240	6,687	3,344	3,121	1,560
8	89,320	7,443	3,713	3,473	1,737
For each additional family member (if above 8), add:	4,540	378	189	176	90

*These guidelines reflect the revisions made in the [federal poverty guidelines](#), which are effective from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. **These guidelines are DIFFERENT from the eligibility guidelines for free- and reduced-price lunch.**

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; and
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 Other cash income would include cash amounts received or withdrawn from any source, including savings, investments, trust accounts, and other resources.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 determines which transportation assistance option will be provided. This is not a parent or guardian choice. Transportation assistance for those who qualify according to income guidelines (see Table 1) is available only **between contiguous districts** and may be deducted from the amount the resident district sends 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 only if there is road construction or road relocation that makes this necessary.

The resident district may discharge their obligation to provide open enrolled students with transportation to the receiving district in one of three ways. The resident district may:

1. Provide transportation for the pupil(s) to a stop on the bus route of the receiving district.
2. Allow the receiving district to enter the resident district to pick up the open enrolled pupil(s) only if there is road construction or road relocation that makes this necessary. Failure of the receiving district to decide to do this will not discharge the resident district's obligation for transportation assistance.
3. Provide a parent or guardian reimbursement. If this option is selected by the resident district, the amount to be paid to the parent is determined as follows:
 1. 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 2020-2021 was \$513 (annual). The 2021-2022 amount will be released in January 2022.
 2. This amount is limited to reimbursement for three elementary (K-8) students and one secondary (grades 9-12) students.
 3. The amount of transportation assistance can be prorated according to the date of application submission.
 4. Transportation assistance costs incurred by the resident district are deducted from the cost per pupil amount required to be sent 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 individualized educational plans (IEPs) cannot be deducted from special education tuition.

Process to Apply for Transportation Assistance

If a parent or guardian qualifies for transportation assistance, the request for assistance is filed with the resident district. Verification of income should be attached to the open enrollment application. The district should remind parents and guardians that the district must be notified if the family income changes by \$50 or more per month. Parents may apply for transportation assistance by checking the transportation request box on the open enrollment 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 may be deducted from the tuition sent to the receiving district.

For students with IEPs that are eligible for transportation assistance, the resident district pays for the assistance as a special education cost instead of deducting from the actual tuition costs. However, by open enrolling their child in another district, the parent or guardian waives the child's right to transportation as a related IEP service (Iowa Admin. Code r. 281—41.412(6)).

Additional Guidance and Questions

For additional guidance, see the Department's [Open Enrollment webpage](#) or contact Sara Nickel at sara.nickel@iowa.gov or 515-281-3778.