



# Open Enrollment Transportation Assistance

## Introduction

The purpose of this guidance is to provide parents, guardians, and school districts with information about the requirements for open enrollment transportation assistance. The guidance document includes information about what the income eligibility guidelines are, how parents can apply for assistance, and what the resident district’s responsibilities are in this process.

## Eligibility

Transportation assistance for those who qualify according to income guidelines (see Table 1) is available only between contiguous (or bordering) school districts. The resident district determines how assistance is distributed; this is not a parent’s choice. If the student’s household does not meet this requirement, the parent or guardian of the 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 (281— IAC 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	\$27,180	\$2,265	\$1,133	\$1,045	\$566
2	\$36,620	\$3,052	\$1,526	\$1,408	\$763
3	\$46,060	\$3,838	\$1,919	\$1,772	\$960
4	\$55,500	\$4,625	\$2,313	\$2,135	\$1,156
5	\$64,940	\$5,412	\$2,706	\$2,498	\$1,353
6	\$74,380	\$6,198	\$3,099	\$2,861	\$1,550
7	\$83,820	\$6,985	\$3,493	\$3,224	\$1,746
8	\$93,260	\$7,772	\$3,886	\$3,587	\$1,943
For each additional family member (if more than 8), add:	\$4,720	\$393	\$197	\$182	\$98

\*These guidelines reflect the revisions made in the [federal poverty guidelines](#) that are effective for July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023. *These guidelines are DIFFERENT from 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 farming income. 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.

## Transportation Assistance Process

### Parent or Guardian Responsibilities

If a parent or guardian qualifies for transportation assistance, they may request transportation assistance on their open enrollment application. It is important to note that transportation assistance is only available to families who open enroll between contiguous (or bordering) districts. To request transportation assistance, the parent or guardian must indicate they wish to participate (i.e., Yes to #11 of the application) and attach verification of income and household information to the open enrollment application. If the household's monthly income changes by \$50 or more, the parent or guardian must notify the resident district. If the household has not already completed and filed a free- and reduced-lunch application, it is recommended that they do so.

### Resident District Responsibilities

#### DETERMINE WHAT TYPE OF TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE WILL BE PROVIDED TO ELIGIBLE FAMILIES

The resident district has the right to determine which transportation assistance option it will use. 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 will 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 do this will not discharge the resident district's obligation for transportation assistance.
3. The resident district may provide a parent or guardian transportation reimbursement. If the resident district selects this option, the amount it pays the parent or guardian:
  - a. Must be the state-calculated average as determined in Iowa Code section 285.1, subsection 3, or the local cost per pupil for the previous year as specified on the resident district's annual

transportation report, whichever is lower. The annual amount for 2021-2022 was \$643. The 2022-2023 amount will be released in January 2023.

- b. Is limited to reimbursement for three elementary (kindergarten to grade 8) students and one secondary (grades 9 to 12) student.
- c. Can be prorated according to the date of application submission.

#### RECEIVE THE OPEN ENROLLMENT APPLICATION AND REQUEST FOR TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE

If a parent or guardian qualifies for transportation assistance, the request for transportation assistance is indicated on their open enrollment application filed with the resident district and supported by eligibility attachments (i.e., verification of income, number of individuals in the household). The district should remind parents and guardians that they must notify the district if their family's monthly income changes by \$50 or more.

#### PAY THE RECEIVING DISTRICT TUITION MINUS INCURRED TRANSPORTATION COST

The resident district deducts its incurred transportation reimbursement cost from the tuition it sends to the receiving district. This may be prorated after the start of the year.

##### *Students with IEPs*

Transportation assistance costs for students with individualized education plans (IEPs) cannot be deducted from special education tuition. *It is important to note that when a parent elects to open enroll their child to another school district, the parent waives the right for transportation as a related service on their child's IEP. It is only for transportation assistance under Open Enrollment that the resident district becomes involved again.*

## Questions and Additional Guidance

For additional guidance, see the [Department's Open Enrollment webpage](#) or contact Max Christensen at [max.christensen@iowa.gov](mailto:max.christensen@iowa.gov) or 515-336-3965 or Sara Nickel at [sara.nickel@iowa.gov](mailto:sara.nickel@iowa.gov) or 515-971-7558.