



SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

HOW DO I APPLY FOR AN EMPOWER ILLINOIS SCHOLARSHIP?

The application is a two-step process. First, visit the [Empower Illinois website](#) opening **Wednesday, January 13, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. CT with submission at 7:00 p.m CT** to reserve your place in line. You will complete a brief, two-page online form containing parent's name, contact information, and child's name. This will time stamp your application.

After reserving your place in line, you can access the application through your student portal on **Friday, January 15**. You will receive instructions by email about setting up your student portal after your reservation has been completed. We will begin awarding scholarships on Friday, **January 29**. Scholarship awards are subject to the availability of funds at your school of choice. Empower Illinois recommends, however, you submit your application before Monday, **January 25** for the best chance of receiving a scholarship. Failing to submit your application before **January 25** may cause other students who have completed their application to receive a scholarship before you, even if you reserved a place in line in front of them.

IF I HAVE MULTIPLE CHILDREN, DO I NEED TO MAKE A RESERVATION FOR EACH CHILD?

No. Please include all children on a single reservation.

WILL I NEED TO SUBMIT ANY DOCUMENTS TO RESERVE MY SPOT IN LINE?

No. The application is a two-step process: reserve and apply. You will not submit any documents during the reservation step. Eligibility documents are only needed when you are completing the full application.

WHAT DOCUMENTS DO I NEED TO COMPLETE THE FULL APPLICATION?

You will need **proof of Illinois residency** and your **adjusted gross income** to apply. Choose your most recent household and income documents, and use documents from the same year throughout your application.

Proof of Illinois Residency

ONE of the following for the parent/custodian completing the application:

- » Illinois driver's license
- » Illinois identification card (issued by the Secretary of State)
- » Utility bill in the custodian's name
- » Statement of benefits from WIC
- » Statement of benefits from SNAP
- » W-2
- » 1099
- » Residential lease in the parent/custodian's name
- » Federal Tax Form 1040 with current address

Adjusted Cross Income

ONE of the following for the household:

- » Federal Tax Return, pages 1 & 2*
- » W-2
- » 1099/s
- » Year-end pay stub
- » Letter, on letterhead, from employer/s indicating cash wages paid

* If your federal tax return is not available to you and you receive WIC or SNAP benefits, you may submit your statement of WIC or SNAP benefits.

HOW MUCH TIME DO I HAVE TO COMPLETE THE FULL APPLICATION?

Applicants can reserve their place in line beginning **Wednesday, January 13, at 7:00 p.m.** You will complete a brief, two-page online form containing parent's name, contact information, and child's name. This will time stamp your application.

After reserving your place in line, you can access the student application in your portal on **Friday, January 15.** Empower Illinois will begin awarding scholarships on Friday, **January 29.** While there is no deadline, Empower Illinois recommends you submit your application before Monday, **January 25** for the best chance of receiving a scholarship, subject to the availability of funds. As mentioned above, failing to submit your application before **January 25** may cause other students who have completed their application to receive a scholarship before you, even if you reserved a place in line in front of them.

WHAT LANGUAGES WILL THE APPLICATION BE AVAILABLE IN?

The application will be available in Spanish, English, and Polish.

WHAT IF I DON'T KNOW WHAT SCHOOL MY CHILD WILL BE ATTENDING?

Please list three schools that your children are likely to attend, and/or your children are applying to attend. This will increase the likelihood of matching your application to available funds. When you complete the application, you will be asked to place these schools in priority order (first, second, and third). The way you rank the schools is the order in which we will try to match funds. No awards will be finalized until your school of choice has confirmed enrollment.

ARE ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS REQUIRED FOR THOSE WHO RECEIVED A TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIP LAST YEAR FROM AN ORGANIZATION OTHER THAN EMPOWER ILLINOIS?

If a family received a scholarship from a scholarship granting organization other than Empower Illinois last year, they may be required to provide a letter from the school they attended on that scholarship. A family must provide this letter if they do not meet any other Category 1 criteria or have an income greater than 300% FPL. This letter will be required during part two of the application. The letter should be on school letterhead and include:

- » Student name
- » School name
- » School year the student received the scholarship for
- » Name of the organization that provided the scholarship

WHAT IF I AM NEW RESIDENT TO ILLINOIS? CAN I STILL APPLY?

Yes. As long as your student is in Illinois by the start of the 2021-2022 school year, you can receive an Empower Illinois tax credit scholarship. However, you will be required to submit paperwork confirming your residency. If your family is relocating to Illinois for work and does not yet have a permanent address, please submit a confirmation letter (on company letterhead) from your employer.

WHEN WILL I RECEIVE CONFIRMATION THAT MY APPLICATION WAS RECEIVED?

You will receive a confirmation email from Empower Illinois within 48 hours of submitting your application.

WHEN WILL I BE NOTIFIED OF MY APPLICATION STATUS?

Empower Illinois will notify you of your application status based on your self-reported data within 10 business days of receiving your application. You will only receive additional updates from Empower Illinois if your application is missing information or if funds become available for your student at one of your school choices.

WHEN WILL I BE NOTIFIED IF I AM RECEIVING A SCHOLARSHIP?

Scholarships will be granted beginning January 29, 2021, on a rolling basis as funds are available. Check your portal page for updates on your application and award status.

IF I NEED HELP DURING THE RESERVATION OR APPLICATION PROCESS, WHO CAN I CONTACT?

Please contact scholars@empowerillinois.org or (800) 616-7606 if you have questions about the application process. Assistance will be available in English and Spanish.