



NEW WORLDS SCHOLARSHIP ACCOUNTS PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK



Welcome

This handbook is designed to help you navigate the New Worlds Scholarship Accounts program. Inside, you will find in-depth guidance for using it in accordance with the law.

If you need assistance along the way, our team is ready to help. The Step Up For Students Customer Engagement Center is available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. EST to support families with any questions or concerns:



[Inquiry Form](#)

Fill out this form to send us a question or message online



(877) 735-7837

Call us to speak directly with a team member



[Live Chat](#)

Click the red “Online Chat” tab on the right-hand side of our website



Click on any line within the Table of Contents to go directly to the section.

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Scholarship Overview

The New Worlds Scholarship Accounts program was created to help eligible students who struggle with reading or math.

Step Up For Students is a state-approved, eligible nonprofit Scholarship Funding Organization (SFO) that empowers families to pursue and engage in the most appropriate learning options for their children.

Step Up For Students is one of the SFOs that administers Florida's education choice programs, and the only one that administers the New Worlds Scholarship Accounts program.

In the 2025 Legislative Session, the Florida Legislature decided to not allocate further funding to the New Worlds Scholarship Accounts program in the Florida Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget. Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, no new scholarships will be awarded or funded.

Students who have funds remaining in their New Worlds Scholarship Account from a previous school year may continue to spend those funds until they are gone. If an account is inactive for one consecutive fiscal year, it will be closed, and any remaining funds will revert to the State of Florida.

This handbook guides families through the process of using the New Worlds Scholarship Accounts program funds.

About Step Up For Students

Our Work

Step Up For Students is a nonprofit Scholarship Funding Organization approved by the state of Florida to administer the New Worlds Scholarship Accounts program and other education choice programs. To explore the various programs administered by Step Up For Students and determine which one is the best fit for your family, we invite you to watch these helpful [videos](#).

Our Mission

Beyond administering scholarship programs, our mission is to empower families to access the best possible learning options for their children. Since 2002 we have worked to be deeply integrated in the community, highlighting innovation in education and sharing inspiring family stories. To learn more about how we put our mission into action, please visit our [website](#).

Accrued Interest

Florida law requires Step Up For Students to track any interest earned on a student's scholarship account and apply it to the account balance. The earned interest will be deposited into the student's scholarship account based on the quarter in which it was earned.

The table below shows the interest deposit schedule:



Interest Accrual Period	Deposit to Student Account by
July - September	October 31
October - December	January 31
January - March	April 30
April - June	July 31

Multiple Scholarships

An eligible student may participate in the Transportation Stipend and the New Worlds Scholarship Accounts program at the same time. A student may not participate in the New Worlds Scholarship Accounts program and any other Florida K-12 scholarship program at the same time.

Receiving Payments, Refunds, or Rebates

Parents or guardians may not receive a payment, refund, or rebate of scholarship funds from a provider.

Authorized Uses of New Worlds Scholarship Account Funds

The following categories of items are approved uses of funds for the New Worlds Scholarship Account program. Please see the appendix at the end of this handbook for a chart outlining the Authorized Uses of Funds for the program. All purchases made using New Worlds Scholarship Account funds must be made using direct pay. Reimbursements for out-of-pocket purchases are not permitted using New Worlds Scholarship Account funds.

Instructional Materials

Instructional materials must be related to helping the student with reading and literacy or math, including, but not limited to:

- Digital materials or stand-alone online classes
- Online software programs related to reading and literacy or math
- Books, including:
 - Board and card games
 - Blocks
 - Puzzles
 - Workbooks
- Digital devices, limited to:
 - Desktop computers
 - E-readers
 - Laptop computers
 - Tablets, including Apple iPad, Amazon Fire, Samsung Galaxy Tablet



Curriculum

Curriculum is defined as a complete course of study for a particular content area or grade level, including any required supplemental materials and associated online instruction related to reading and literacy or math.

Tuition & Fees For Part-Time Tutoring Services

Part-time tutoring services must be provided by a person who holds one of the following:

- A current, valid Florida educator's certificate under Florida Statute [1012.56](#);
- An adjunct teaching certificate under Florida Statute [1012.57](#);
- A baccalaureate or graduate degree in the subject area taught;
- Demonstrated mastery of subject area knowledge under Florida Statute [1012.56\(5\)](#);
- A micro-credential under [1003.485](#); or
- For a prekindergarten student, a person who holds a credential under Florida Statute [1002.55\(3\)\(c\)1](#), or an educational credential under Florida Statute [1002.55\(4\)](#).

Mastery of Subject Area Knowledge:

Acceptable means of showing master of subject area knowledge are listed under Florida Statute [1012.56\(5\)](#):

- For a subject requiring only a baccalaureate degree for which a Florida subject area examination has been developed, achievement of a passing score on the Florida-developed subject area examination specified in state board rule;
- For a subject for which a Florida subject area examination has not been developed, achievement of a passing score on a standardized examination specified in state board rule, including, but not limited to, passing scores on both the oral proficiency and written proficiency examinations administered by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages;
- For a subject for which a Florida subject area examination has not been developed or a standardized examination has not been specified in state board rule, completion of the subject area specialization requirements specified in state board rule and verification of the attainment of the essential subject matter competencies by the district school superintendent of the employing school district or chief administrative officer of the employing state-supported or private school;
- For a subject requiring a master's or higher degree, completion of the subject area specialization requirements specified in state board rule and achievement of a passing score on the Florida-developed subject area examination or a standardized examination that is directly related to the subject specified in state board rule;
- Documentation of a valid professional standard teaching certificate issued by another state;



- Documentation of a valid certificate issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards or a national educator credentialing board approved by the State Board of Education;
- Documentation of successful completion of a United States Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center program;
- Documentation of a passing score on the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT); or
- For a subject requiring only a baccalaureate degree for which a Florida subject area examination has been developed, documentation of receipt of a master's or higher degree from an accredited postsecondary educational institution that the Department of Education has identified as having a quality program resulting in a baccalaureate degree or higher in the certificate subject area as identified by state board rule

Fees For Summer Education Programs

Summer education programs must be designed to improve reading and literacy or math skills.

Fees For After-School Education Programs

After-school education programs must be designed to improve reading and literacy or math skills.

Direct Payment Through The EMA Marketplace

Parents and guardians will make direct purchases of goods and services through the EMA Marketplace. Please note the EMA Marketplace cannot schedule services. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to contact the service provider and schedule services for their student.

Parents and guardians must be aware of their student's scholarship account balance. Any purchases made that exceed the amount of funds in the student's account are the parent or guardian's responsibility and will not be reimbursed.

If a student already works with an eligible provider, but that provider is not listed in EMA or MyScholarShop, please contact Step Up For Students [here](#) to request that they be added. Some providers may choose not to participate in the scholarship program.

Step Up For Students reserves the right to deny requests or to limit or deny access to EMA or MyScholarShop.

MyScholarShop

Step Up For Students has developed [MyScholarShop](#), an online marketplace where parents or guardians can purchase eligible education items without any upfront cost.

MyScholarShop will become accessible soon after funds are deposited into a student's account. Parents or guardians can log in to EMA to access MyScholarShop.

If an item is not in MyScholarShop or the program [Purchasing Guide](#), it may still be an eligible expense.



MyScholarShop Guidelines

The parent or guardian should ensure there are enough available funds in the student's scholarship account to cover the entire purchase.

If an item requires pre-authorization, the pre-authorization request must be approved before a parent or guardian places the order. The approved pre-authorization number must be included in the appropriate field to avoid a delay or denial of order.

If an item has an associated purchasing rule, such as size, quantity, or frequency limitation, those same rules apply in MyScholarShop.

MyScholarShop orders will ship to the mailing address listed in the guardian profile in EMA. Parents and guardians must confirm that the listed mailing address is accurate before submitting an order.

Step Up For Students reserves the right to deny requests.

MyScholarShop Returns

Individual vendors list their return policies and instructions in MyScholarShop.

Once the vendor has received the item, it may take up to a few weeks for the funds to be credited to the student's scholarship account.

MyScholarShop Status Definitions

- **Composing:** The MyScholarShop request is pending. Items in the shopping cart have not been submitted for purchase.
- **Submitted:** The MyScholarShop request was submitted and is pending review.
- **Approved:** The order has been approved
- **Denied:** The purchase request has been denied.
- **Ordering:** An approved order is being generated.
- **Ordered:** All items associated with an order have been sent to the vendor to fulfill.
- **Cancelling:** The order was cancelled after it was placed.
- **Cancelled:** The order was cancelled after being submitted and approved.
- **Receiving:** Ordered items have been shipped and are in the process of being delivered.
- **Received:** Ordered items have been delivered.

For more in-depth information on MyScholarShop, [click here](#).

Pre-Authorization Requests

New Worlds Scholarship Account families only need to submit a pre-authorization request if they want to purchase a second technology device, such as a laptop, desktop, or tablet, within two (2) calendar years.

Because reimbursement requests are not allowed for the New Worlds Scholarship Accounts program, if a technology device previously purchased with scholarship funds is broken, families



must submit a pre-authorization request in EMA to purchase a new device through MyScholarShop. Families cannot be reimbursed for repairing a technology device with their student's New Worlds Scholarship Accounts funds.

Other pre-approved expenses do not require pre-authorization.

Include detailed information about the technology device requested for pre-authorization, along with any supporting documents summarizing the need for the purchase (for example, a description of the damage if the item is broken).

If the pre-authorization request is put on hold, log into EMA to see the reason why it was put on hold, provide the required information or documentation, and re-submit the pre-authorization request.

If the pre-authorization request is denied, the reason for the denial will be listed in EMA. Denied pre-authorization requests may not be appealed, so no further action may be taken.

If the pre-authorization request is approved, you will need to complete your request in EMA by selecting "Finish my Request" in the Pre-Authorization tab in EMA and then using the Pre-Authorization ID in the comments section of the checkout screen in MyScholarShop.

The status of pre-authorization requests can be monitored in EMA.

Frequency of Purchase Limitations

Program rules limit the frequency with which families can purchase certain items using scholarship funds. For the New Worlds program, digital devices, including desktop computers, laptop computers, and tablets may only be purchased using scholarship funds once every two years. The first digital device purchased does not require pre-authorization. Subsequent purchases of digital devices must be pre-authorized through EMA before ordering.

These rules apply by calendar year. For example, a laptop may have a two-year purchasing frequency, meaning a student who purchased a laptop on November 10, 2025, will be eligible to purchase another laptop using scholarship funds on or after November 11, 2027.

Frequency of purchase rules apply to all scholarship programs, even if a student changes programs. For example, if a parent or guardian purchased a tablet with New Worlds Scholarship Accounts funds on November 10, 2025, the student will not be eligible to purchase a tablet using funds from any other scholarship until November 11, 2027.

For broken digital devices, repair services may not be paid for using scholarship funds. Instead, a parent or guardian must submit a pre-authorization for a new device.



Account Closure

To close a student's New Worlds Scholarship Account, please [contact Step Up For Students](#).

Parents and guardians must notify Step Up if the student plans to participate in the Family Empowerment Scholarship or Florida Tax Credit Scholarship programs or plans to leave the Florida Public School system. Leaving the Florida Public School system could affect the student's scholarship eligibility.

If no money is spent from the student's account for one (1) consecutive fiscal year (July 1-June 30), the student's account will be closed, and all remaining funds will be returned to the Florida Department of Education.

If scholarship eligibility is denied or revoked by the commissioner for fraud or abuse, including but not limited to, the student or student's parent or guardian accepting any payment, refund, or rebate, in any manner, from a provider of any services, their account will be closed, and all remaining funds will be returned to the Florida Department of Education.

Parent & Guardian Rights & Responsibilities

Parents and guardians of scholarship recipients are subject to all scholarship program rules and responsibilities described in the application and Terms & Conditions in EMA, relevant Florida statutes, and rules set by Florida Department of Education.

For an eligible student to receive a scholarship account, the student's parent or guardian must:

- Submit an application to an SFO by the deadline established by the SFO; and
- Utilize the SFO's system to make direct purchases of qualifying expenditures. Step Up For Students offers EMA and MyScholarShop systems for parents and guardians to make direct purchases.

Parents, guardians, students, or providers of any services may not bill any insurance company, Medicaid, or any other agency for the same services that are paid for using scholarship funds.

The parent or guardian is responsible for the payment of all eligible expenses in excess of the amount of the scholarship in accordance with the terms agreed to between the parent or guardian and any providers.

The terms outlined in this handbook are subject to change.

Items That Are Lost, Stolen, or Broken Beyond Repair

If an item purchased with scholarship funds is broken beyond repair, it may be replaced with a similar item of equal or lesser value.

A parent or guardian must submit a pre-authorization request and documentation from a repair shop or service technician showing the item is beyond repair. Photos of the damaged item do not qualify as sufficient documentation.



If the item can be repaired, scholarship funds may be used to cover the cost of repair, but they cannot be used to cover the cost of a replacement.

If an item was stolen, a parent or guardian must submit a pre-authorization request and police report for review.

Replacement of lost devices will not be approved.

If a replacement item is authorized, the two calendar-year time period will reset. For example, a student who purchased a television on July 10, 2025, but then is authorized to purchase a replacement on October 10, 2026, will not be eligible to purchase another television using scholarship funds until October 11, 2028.

Data Confidentiality

Parent and guardian information in EMA and MyScholarShop, including login credentials, is personal and confidential.

A parent or guardian may not assign responsibility for submitting any application or documentation to another user and must not provide anyone, including service providers or school personnel, access to a student's scholarship account by providing a username and password.

Doing so may result in loss of scholarship eligibility and funding, or financial or criminal penalties. Step Up For Students will not be responsible for changes or purchases made by anyone other than the account owner if the login information has been shared.

This policy is intended to prevent misuse of scholarship funds and protect the confidentiality of sensitive personal financial and educational information that belongs to students and their parents or guardians.

Data Security

Step Up For Students will never ask a parent or guardian for the following information via email, phone call, or text message:

- Full account password or any part of it
- Full social security number (Step Up may ask for the last 4 digits for account verification)
- Credit card number or banking details
- Any personal identification numbers other than the PIN provided on the scholarship application

Parents and guardians who receive any communication requesting this type of information or have received a suspicious email should not respond or click on any links. Instead, they should [report the activity immediately on the Contact Us page](#) on the Step Up For Students website.



Maintaining Up-To-Date Contact Information

Parents and guardians should keep contact information current, especially a primary email address that is checked regularly. This is the primary way Step Up For Students will communicate important information related to a student's scholarship.

Parents and guardians should update email filters to accept messages from Step Up For Students so emails are not sent to spam or junk folders.

If at any point there is a change of physical or mailing address, telephone number, cell phone number, or email address, the information must be updated in EMA. Parents and guardians should contact Step Up For Students if they need to update their Proof of Residency.

If there is a change of physical or mailing address, telephone number, cell phone number, or email address, the information must be updated in EMA.

For More Information

- [NWSA SUFS Page](#)
- [New Worlds Scholarship Accounts Statute](#)
- [New Worlds Scholarship Accounts FLDOE Rule](#)
- [EMA Provider Request Form](#)



Appendix A- Authorized Uses of Funds Chart



Authorized Use of Scholarship Funds 2025-26

Authorized Use of Funds	Scholarship Program				Payment Method
	FES-UA	FES-EO/FTC	PEP	NWSA	
Instructional materials	X	X	X	X (DP)	DP or R
Curriculum and curriculum materials	X	X	X	X (DP)	DP or R
Tuition and fees for:					
Full-time, in-person private school	X	X			DP or R
Part-time, in-person eligible private school	X		X		DP or R
Hybrid private school			X		DP or R
Home education instructional programs	X		X		DP or R
Eligible postsecondary institution	X	X	X		DP or R
Dual enrollment	X	X	X		DP or R
Approved pre-apprenticeship programs	X	X	X		Reimbursement
Approved online or virtual provider	X	X	X		DP or R
Private-pay Florida Virtual School	X	X	X		DP or R
Approved VPK program provider	X				DP or R
Approved school readiness provider	X				DP or R
Standardized testing fees	X	X	X		DP or R
Contracted services provided by a public school or school district	X	X	X		DP or R
Private tutoring					
Full-time private tutoring	X		X		DP or R
Part-time private tutoring	X	X	X	X (DP)	DP or R
Services provided by a Choice Navigator	X	X	X		DP or R
Contributions to approved college savings programs					
Stanley G. Tate FL Prepaid College Program	X				DP or R
FL 529 Savings Program	X				Direct Pay
Specialized services by approved providers or a Florida hospital					
Applied behavior analysis	X				DP or R
Speech-language pathologist services	X				DP or R
Occupational therapy services	X				DP or R
Physical therapy services	X				DP or R
Listening and spoken language specialist services	X				DP or R
Psychotherapy or counseling by a licensed Psychologist, School Psychologist, Mental Health Counselor, Marriage and Family Therapist, or Clinical Social Worker	X				DP or R
Vision therapy by a licensed Optometrist	X				DP or R
Fees for specialized summer education programs	X				DP or R
Fees for specialized after-school education programs	X				DP or R
Fees for summer education programs that improve reading, literacy, or math skills				X (DP)	Direct Pay
Fees for after-school education programs that improve reading, literacy, or math skills				X (DP)	Direct Pay
Transition services provided by job coaches	X				Reimbursement
Annual home education evaluation fees	X				DP or R
Fees for horse therapy	X				DP or R
Fees for music and art therapy	X				DP or R

"DP" = Direct Pay through EMA or MSS; "R" = Reimbursement. All NWSA purchases must be made by Direct Pay

11/2025