



What You Need to Know About the “Invest in Kids” Tax Credit Scholarships

Through the “Invest in Kids Act,” Illinois children from low-income households who want to attend private schools will have access to new scholarships. The scholarships offered through this program could cover up to 100 percent of tuition and eligible fees for next school year. Below is more information about how to apply and details on eligibility requirements.

TAX CREDIT SCHOLARSHIPS

Students from low-income households in grades K-12 have the opportunity to receive tax credit scholarships, which are awarded on a first come, first served basis. This program started during the 2018/19 school year and many families in our Catholic schools are benefiting. The scholarships are funded by donors who receive a 75 percent credit on their Illinois state income tax as a result of their donation. If you received a tax credit scholarship this year (2018/19 school year), you must reapply for a tax credit scholarship for next year.

You need to apply for tax credit scholarships through a scholarship granting organization (SGO), which will distribute the scholarships. The Archdiocese of Chicago is working with two SGOs: Empower Illinois and Big Shoulders Fund SGO.

APPLICATION PROCESS

EMPOWER ILLINOIS SGO

The Empower Illinois tax credit scholarship application is a two-step process:

Step 1: On Tuesday, January 15, 2019 at 7 p.m., you will complete a brief reservation form on Empower Illinois’ website – empowerillinois.org – that timestamps your reservation. This is a critical step as your timestamp matters and may impact your chances of receiving a scholarship. You will want to complete this form right at 7 p.m. Minutes matter.

The reservation form will ask you for the following information:

- Parent name
- Contact information – address, phone number, email address
- Child(ren) name(s)

Step 2: Beginning on or about Friday, January 18, 2019, you may complete the full scholarship application through the Empower Illinois online student portal. You will receive instructions via email about setting up your student portal after your reservation has been completed (step 1). Empower Illinois will begin awarding scholarships on Monday, January 28, 2019. Scholarship awards are subject to the availability of funds at your school of choice. We recommend you submit your application **before Monday, January 28** to increase your chances of receiving a scholarship.

Please note: The Empower Illinois application will be available in English, Spanish and Polish.

For more information, visit empowerillinois.org.

BIG SHOULDERS FUND SGO

The Big Shoulders Fund SGO will follow a similar application process as its’ process last year. It will be a one-step process, which will open on **Tuesday, January 22 at 8 a.m.**

Please note: The Big Shoulders Fund SGO application will be available in English and Spanish.

For more information, visit bigshouldersfundsgo.org.

WHAT YOU NEED TO APPLY

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

Proof of Illinois Residence

(one of the following for the household)

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

Adjusted Gross Income

(one of the following for the household)

- Federal tax return, pages 1 and 2**
- W-2
- 1099(s)
- Year-end pay stub
- Letter, on company letterhead, from employer(s) indicating cash wages paid

Valid Email Address

(e.g. Gmail, Hotmail, AOL, etc.)

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

To learn more, please visit archchicago.org/tcs or contact the Archdiocese at investinkids@archchicago.org or 312.534.5321.