



APESF and Universal ESAs

Frequently Asked Questions about Universal ESA Funding and STO Scholarships

What is the Universal Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA)?

Universal ESA is an account administered by the Arizona Department of Education (ADOE) and funded by state tax dollars to provide options for the education of qualified students in Arizona. The ESA program allows parents of qualified students to utilize public monies to purchase educational services from private schools, education providers, and/or vendors. Eligible students receive 90% of the State aid that would have gone to the student's school district or charter school had the student remained enrolled in the public school system.

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Which should I choose - Universal ESA or STO scholarships?

Each family's situation is different. Here are a few things to consider:

- **The cost of tuition for each student.** If ESA funding would fully cover your student's tuition, using ESA may be the best option. ESA funding is approximately \$4,000 for Kindergarteners and \$7,000 for grades 1-12 for the 2022-23 school year.
*NOTE: The ESA funds are payed out quarterly, not in one lump sum.
- **Your family's financial responsibility.** If you choose to use ESA and the student's tuition exceeds the ESA funding, you are responsible to pay any balance.
- **Delays in ESA payment.** Because the program is so new, you can expect delays in payment from the Arizona Department of Education. You may be responsible for payment before the ESA funding is delivered.

Can I use STO scholarships and Universal ESA funds at the same time?

- No, you may not receive STO scholarships and ESA funding in the same quarter. If you have already received STO scholarships in the same quarter that your ESA contract was signed, STO scholarships will need to be returned by the school to the respective STO.
- If you choose to cancel an ESA contract, tuition can be paid using STO scholarships starting in the quarter following the cancelled contract.

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If I decide to use Universal ESA funds should I notify APESF and other STOs I have applied with?

Yes! Let us know if you have signed an ESA contract. Please call our office at 480-699-8911 or email helpdesk@apesf.org so that we can update your family's application. Please be sure to include your student's full name, grade level, and school when emailing or leaving a voicemail.

Can I use ESA funding for one of my children and STO scholarships for another child in my family?

Yes, both programs are based on the individual student, not the family. You may choose to use ESA funding for one child and STO scholarships for another child in your family.

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Can we use ESA funding for one quarter and then switch to STO scholarships the next quarter?

We recommend asking your school finance department how they prefer to handle this. Every school operates differently, and they may require you to choose which funding source you will use for the entire school year.

What will happen to the STO scholarship(s) that has already been awarded to my student in the quarter that an ESA contract was signed?

- The school will be responsible for returning any STO scholarships already awarded to your student.
- APESF will allow the schools to return the funds allocated for each quarter once that quarter's ESA payments have been received.
- Student recommended funds returned to APESF will be held in your student's name and may be used for tuition scholarships in future years.

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For More Information:

[Arizona Department of Education ESA Program Page](#)

[Arizona Department of Education ESA Frequently Asked Questions](#)



Arizona Private Education Scholarship Fund, Inc.



480-699-8911



helpdesk@apesf.org



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