

Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP)

Abundant Life Christian School entered the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) beginning with the 2019-20 school year. **For students selected by the state, families receive a voucher that pays their students' school tuition in full.**

The open application period for the statewide WPCP for the 2020-2021 school year begins February 3 and runs through April 16, 2020. ALCS will offer seats in the program at each of the entry points, which are Kindergarten, first grade, and ninth grade. Students in these grades are eligible to apply for a seat in this program.

As a result of the 2017-2019 Biennial Budget enacted as Act 59, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) will waive the prior year attendance requirement, allowing ALCS students at all grade levels to apply for WPCP seats. **THIS IS A ONE YEAR OPPORTUNITY FOR CURRENT STUDENTS.**

The WPCP online parent application is available beginning February 3 at dpi.wi.gov/choice. A Spanish version of the application is also available through the same website. The application period for the 2020-2021 school year is from February 3 - April 16, 2020. Late applications will not be accepted for any reason. Parents must complete the online student application and provide residency documentation and income documentation, if applicable, to the school(s) they apply to during the application period or the application is ineligible. Parents/guardians may either:

- (a) Use the DPI's income determination method by answering a series of income questions in the online application and providing paper income documentation to the school as directed in the application during the open application period or
- (b) Provide their social security numbers or taxpayer identification number to the school and have the Department of Revenue (DOR) determine whether the student is income eligible for the program.

The school will verify that the student meets the income requirements. Applicants must also provide proof of residency directly to the school during the open application period.

Is Your Family Eligible WPCP?

To meet the income requirements for the program a student's family must have an Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) at or below 220% of the federal poverty level. Married couples applying should subtract \$7,000 from their AGI before comparing to the income chart.

2020-2021 Adjusted Gross Income Limits	
Family Size*	Family Income**
1	\$27,478
2	\$37,202
3	\$46,296
4	\$56,650
5	\$66,374
6	\$76,098

* Add \$9,724 for each additional family member above six (6).

** Family Income is the AGI on 1040 tax form for the prior year (2019 for the 2020-2021 school year). When a married couple applies for a WPCP voucher, \$7,000 is SUBTRACTED from their adjusted gross income **before** comparing it to the income chart.

Who gets picked for a voucher through WPCP?

Students who receive a voucher through the WPCP to attend ALCS may renew the voucher in following years. The subsequent applications are much simpler: only residency verification is needed. Kindergarten, first grade, and ninth grades are considered 'entry points' in the program. This means all incoming students at these grade levels who meet the income criteria are eligible to be picked. The cap for vouchers in the 2020-2021 school year

is 4% of the school district's total enrollment where the family resides. If more than 4% of a district's students apply for vouchers, they are selected in a random drawing by the DPI.

Is early application advantageous?

The timing of the application **does not** give the applicant family an advantage. Those who register near the end of the enrollment period have the same opportunity as those who register early. **However**, an early application is still recommended to be sure that the state and ALCS receive the correct information prior to the end of the enrollment period.

What happens if more students apply than the seats available?

If more students apply to the WPCP than what ALCS has opened at a specific grade level, the state of Wisconsin will conduct a lottery to select students for that grade level. On occasion, a selected student may decide not to enroll. If this happens, an opportunity will be extended to a student at that grade level who was not initially selected.

If an ALCS student is in the WPCP, will he or she be treated differently?

Students in the WPCP are ALCS students in every sense. They have the same opportunities both in the classroom and in co-curricular activities. Only three in-school personnel know the identity of the WPCP students. They are the school's choice administrator (Principal), the assistant to the WPCP administrator who is the individual directing the voucher payments (Finance Manager), and the Principal's designee who will help process the applications (Admissions Coordinator). The student and his/her family will know that they are in the WPCP, but the identity of other WPCP students is not known to them.

Does the WPCP payment cover every school related expense?

No. The WPCP payment covers tuition and education-related fees in full. Expenses not covered by the WPCP payment include:

- Social and extracurricular activities (e.g.: sports fees, special event costs, field trip fees for elective trips unrelated to academic requirements, etc.)
- Fees for classes that are not required for graduation (e.g.: band class)
- Rental of musical instruments
- Shuttle or school transportation costs
- School meals

There may be other fees for which ALCS may charge. The above list is not intended to be an exhaustive one. If you have questions, contact ALCS' WPCP administrator (the Principal), the assistant to the WPCP administrator (Finance Manager) or principal's designee (Admissions Coordinator) for an explanation.

Is my family automatically in the program once we meet the income and residency requirements of the WPCP?

Not necessarily. Current WPCP guidelines allow 4% of the student population of a school district to participate in the program. For example, if a district has 1,000 students, 4% of that total - 40 students - may participate. Keep in mind that all WPCP schools in the area share those 40 students. If the number of applicants from a district exceeds the 4%, a state-held lottery randomly selects which students receive vouchers. This means that some qualified applicants may not be selected.

The good news is that ALCS draws from **many** different districts. Which means, 4% of the student population of *each district* is eligible for the WPCP. Furthermore, there are a limited number of WPCP schools in the areas from which ALCS draws its students.

ALCS has tuition assistance available for its students. All families who feel that they have financial need may apply. Families of prospective WPCP students are encouraged to apply for tuition assistance right away. If the family does not qualify for WPCP or is not selected if a lottery is held, they may still be able to send their student to ALCS with this assistance.

Am I finished with the process after I have completed the online application?

No. All applicant families must additionally provide two pieces of information to ALCS. One is proof of residency. This may be a recent utility bill, a cable bill, a tax bill, or another government-issued mailing that proves that the family lives at the location that it claims. Proof of residency is important since the 4% figure (mentioned above) is determined by this.

Secondly, the family must document its financial eligibility. For those using the DPI method, this typically means providing their completed and signed 2019 tax forms to ALCS. For those using the DOR method, this means providing the Social Security number(s) of the parent(s) during the application process. Whichever method the family selects, the online application form informs parents what to provide to the school.

Steps to Apply for Parental Choice

1. Fill out the online application. The online application needs to be completed through the WPCP website dpi.wi.gov/choice. The application window is open from February 3 through April 16, 2020.
 1. Note: An email address is required to register. Communications on the status of applications and the steps necessary to complete them will be emailed to the parent or legal guardian.
 2. Once an application is electronically submitted, the parent or guardian will be able to correct it online until the final day of the application period. Be sure to record the email address and password that you use. Missing or incorrect information will cause problems processing applications and may cause students to be ineligible.
2. Provide Proof of Residency to ALCS. ALCS must be given a copy of ONE of the following documents. The document must be current (within the last 3 months):
 1. Current water, gas, electric, cable, satellite, or landline phone bill. (Cell phone and internet bills are NOT acceptable).
 2. 2019 Property tax bill or current (signed and dated) lease agreement
 3. Current wage statement (can be a 2019 year-end W2)
 4. Recent government correspondence. Current benefits statements from access.wisconsin.gov
3. Families applying to the WPCP for the first time need to provide income documentation. The DPI method allows applicants to know up front if they qualify financially.
 1. DPI Method Documentation includes:
Copy the first two pages of your 1040 Federal Income Tax Return for 2019.
Needs to be **signed** and **dated** by taxpayers.
OR
If your taxes are not completed, you may submit copies of all 2019 income documentation (employer W2s, 1099s, etc).
OR
If you do not file for income tax, you must provide copies of all other income documentation for 2019 (social security statements, unemployment compensation statements, child support statements, etc).
 2. DOR Method: Provide Social Security Number(s) of parents/guardians through the application to ALCS.

DPI Method or DOR Method?

There are two methods by which families applying to the WPCP may determine their financial eligibility:

1. The DPI method is a series of income questions that are answered in the initial online application. Once completed, the parent(s) must provide hard copies of income documentation to ALCS as directed in the application. The school will then verify that the student meets the WPCP's income requirements.
2. The DOR method requires the parent(s) to provide their social security numbers or taxpayer identification numbers during the online application. The parent enters these numbers into the state's online system and the DOR determines income eligibility for the program.

What else should families do?

Families who apply for the WPCP should also complete school enrollment steps - including the variable tuition application, school visit, and student class placement assessments. This helps the school plan for adequate staffing and other resources.

Know that when the application period closes on April 16, ALCS must have all required income and residency documents in its possession. If these materials are not at ALCS by the end of the day that the application period closes (or the closest weekday preceding it if April 16 falls on a weekend), the application is nullified;

- ALCS contacts applicants who need to submit documents to remind them of this deadline. If you are a WPCP applicant and have recently received an email or voicemail from ALCS, return that communication as soon as possible.
- After ALCS receives the necessary income and residency documentation, processing occurs. An applicant may check the status of an application by logging into the online application system where the application was first made. If ALCS has verified the application, the phrase "The school has completed the verification" will appear on the page.
- Submitting income and residency documentation well before the April 16 deadline makes it possible for ALCS to follow up if necessary.

Once an application has been made for a WPCP voucher and the applicant parent has met with ALCS, what's next?

You wait! The application period lasts until April 16 for all families with a current WPCP student(s) to reapply and for all families applying on behalf of a new student. After the application deadline, ALCS is given ten calendar days to finish processing its applications. Then, the DPI takes over. DPI reviews the school's online verification and determines how many applicants will receive a "seat" (i.e.: a voucher). Typically, the DPI notifies verified applicants in June if they have received a voucher. After that, the parent must notify ALCS within 14 calendar days if they accept. If acceptance is not done in this time frame, the voucher offer is withdrawn.

In late June or early July, ALCS will reach out to the family to complete any final registration steps (ie. elective forms, class schedules, welcome packets, etc.). Over the course of the summer, the school will continue to share valuable information with the family regarding school calendar, student and parent orientation days, school supplies, extracurricular opportunities, etc.

Whom to Contact with Questions?

Please call the ALCS Admissions Office (608) 221-1520 with questions about the program. Our Admissions Coordinator, Ms. Lesly Verbeten, is available to schedule tours and provide school information.