

Wisconsin Parental Choice Program-WPCP

[St. John's Lutheran School Report Card](#)

[Step by Step Instructions for Registering for School Choice](#)

About the WPCP

Continuing in 2024, St. John's Lutheran School will be part of the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP). **For students selected by the state, families receive a voucher that pays their students' St. John's Lutheran School tuition in full.** The open application period for the statewide Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) for the 2024-2025 school year begins **February 1 and runs through April 18, 2024.**

Students entering 4K, Kindergarten or 1st grade and those transferring from a public school at any grade level are eligible for this program. The St. John's Lutheran School Board has approved 100 seats for the 2024-2025 school year. This number reflects a sufficient number of seats for St. John's students currently enrolled in school with the remainder open for new choice students in all grades.

We are able to allow all incoming families with children in **4K, and Kindergarten-8th grade**, who meet the income requirements, to apply for the Choice program. We have opened up seats for students in each grade level. This means all students who meet the income requirements are eligible to be picked. The cap for vouchers in the 2024-2025 school year is 9% of the school district's total enrollment where the family resides. If more than 9% of a district's students apply for vouchers, they are selected in a random drawing by the Wisconsin DPI. If more students apply for Choice than the number of seats we have open, then a lottery system will take place. The State of Wisconsin will select the students who receive the open seats. Families selected will be notified in the summer and will have the opportunity to choose their school and accept or decline the School Choice voucher.

We encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to enroll at St. John's Evangelical Lutheran School.

If my child is enrolling at St. John's Lutheran and I hope to use the choice program, for which program am I eligible? St. John's is in the *Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP)*

A student must also meet the following requirements when applying to the WPCP:

- (1) be applying to grades K4, K5, 1, or 9, **OR**
- (2) meet one of the following requirements for the 2023-24 school year: (a) attended a public school in Wisconsin; (b) attended school in another state; (c) were not enrolled in school (including homeschool for the entire 2023-24 school year); (d) participated in the MPCP, RPCP or WPCP; (e) are on a MPCP, RPCP or WPCP waiting list, **OR**

- (3) are applying to the WPCP and are on any prior year WPCP waiting list in 2015-16 or later due to a school district enrollment cap.

There are two other choice programs in Wisconsin, the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP): Students must reside in the city of Milwaukee, and the Racine Parental Choice Program (RPCP): Students must reside in the Racine Unified School District.

However, they are for parts of the state from which St. John's does not draw students.

The Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) online parent application is available February 1 at <https://sms.dpi.wi.gov/ChoiceParent/> A Spanish version of the application is also available through the same website.

Resources For Parents: dpi.wi.gov/choice

- Link to Online Parent Application
- Application Process Presentation
- Parent Brochure (available in English and Spanish)
- Frequently Asked Questions (available in English and Spanish)
- Online Parent Application Print Screens
- School Lists and Contact Information
- Allowed Residency Documents
- Alternative Residency Documentation Form
- 2024-2025 Income Limits
- Department of Revenue (DOR) Income Determination Method FAQ

Application Guidelines for Parents

The application period for the 2024-2025 school year is from February 1–April 18, 2024.

Late applications will not be accepted for any reason. Parents must complete the online student application.

- Parents must electronically submit the Online Parent Application at <https://dpi.wi.gov/choice>, and all applicants, regardless of their Choice status in the prior school year, must apply for the program every year.
- Parents must provide the school(s) to which they apply proof of student eligibility including residency documentation and income documentation (if applicable). This documentation must be received by the school prior to the close of the application period in which the application is submitted via the Online Parent Application.
- Schools may assist parents during the application process, but schools may not submit applications on behalf of parents in the Online Parent Application. Schools may answer questions and have computers available for parents to use.

Step 1: Online Application Each year, parents must complete the online parent application at dpi.wi.gov/choice. An email address is required. All schools have the same open application period for WPCP students.

Parents may apply to one or more schools for their student(s) during the available open application period(s).

Step 2: Supporting Documentation Parents will receive a confirmation email after submitting an application with information about the supporting documentation parents must provide to the school(s) to complete the application process. Parents must provide supporting documentation directly to each school they apply to during the open application period as explained in the application and confirmation email, or the application is ineligible:

- **Residency Documentation:** All parents must provide residency documentation.
- **Income Documentation:** Parents of students that participated in any Choice program in the prior year and students on a Choice waiting list in the prior year applying to the same Choice program are not required to provide income documentation. Parents of new students must show income eligibility by either: (1) providing their social security numbers or taxpayer identification numbers and having the Department of Revenue determine whether the student is income eligible **–OR–** (2) using the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Income Determination method by answering a series of income questions in the online parent application. Generally, documentation must be submitted directly to the school(s) if the parent selects the DPI Income Determination method.

Step 3: Notifications of Acceptance or Nonacceptance to the Choice Program (WPCP ONLY) For the 2024-2025 school year, state law mandates that no more than 9% of the pupil membership of a public school district participate in the WPCP. The DPI will conduct a random drawing, which includes certain required preferences, of all eligible applications. The DPI will notify parents via email in the summer of students chosen in the WPCP random drawing and students on the WPCP waiting list. Parents of students chosen in the random drawing must confirm with the school their acceptance and indicate whether or not their students will attend the school. If the school finds a student's application ineligible, the school must notify the parent of non-acceptance by the first weekday of June.

Is Your Family Eligible for Parental Choice?

INCOME LIMITS

For the 2024-25 school year, the family income of a student new to a choice program must be at or below the amount listed in the table below for the program the student is applying. All students must apply each year at dpi.wi.gov/choice. **If a student is continuing in any of the choice programs or was on the choice waiting list for the same Choice program in the prior year, he or she does not need to meet the income limits.** Family income includes the income of the student's parent(s)/legal guardian(s) that reside in the same household as the student applicant. If the student's parents/legal guardians that reside in the same household are married, their income is reduced by \$7,000 when determining income eligibility for the program (**i.e. married family income minus \$7,000**). For example, if a family of four with parents that are married has an income of \$60,000, subtract \$7,000 from their income and compare that amount (\$53,000) to the income limit for a family of four in the appropriate table below. Family size includes parents/legal guardians and their children by birth, marriage or adoption that reside in the same household as the student applicant.

WPCP Only Income Limits 220% of the Federal Poverty Level for 2024-25

Family Size	Maximum Yearly Income- Single Parent Family	*Maximum Yearly Income- Married Family
1	\$32,076	\$39,076
2	\$43,384	\$50,384
3	\$54,692	\$61,692
4	\$66,000	\$73,000
5	\$77,308	\$84,308
6	\$88,616	\$95,616
	For each additional member add \$11,308	plus \$7,000

*NOTE - Figures listed in the right column will not be listed on the DPI site but reflect the \$7,000 adjustment for married couples with children.

**Family Income is the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) on 1040 tax form (Line 8b) (A clarification: when a married couple applies for a Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) voucher for their child, \$7,000 is SUBTRACTED from their adjusted gross income before comparing it to the income chart. This is considered a benefit to married parents. The rightmost column on the above chart shows the 2-parent household income for eligibility under the income limits.) Family size includes parents/legal guardians and their children by birth, marriage, or adoption that reside in the same household as the student applicant.

***Add \$11,308 for each additional family member above 6

[Income Limits Document](#)

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOUR FAMILY?

If your student is new to St. John's Lutheran School and you have a need for Financial Aid, apply for **both** Financial Aid and the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) if you meet the income criteria of the WPCP.

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 St. John's Lutheran School receive the correct information.

What happens if more students apply than the seats available?

If more students apply to the WPCP than what St. John's 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 a St. John's Lutheran student is in the choice program, will he or she be treated differently? Students in the choice program are St. John's Lutheran students in every sense of the word. They have the opportunity to ride the bus each day, take the same classes as other St. John's students, and participate in co-curricular activities. In short, they are St. John's students. Only the choice administrative team knows the identity of the choice students at St. John's. They are the school's choice administrator (Principal), the assistant to the choice administrator who helps process applications (School Administrative Assistant), and the individual directing the voucher payments (Church Administrative Assistant). The student and his/her family will know they are in the choice program, but they will not know the identity of other choice students. St. John's Lutheran School will take every possible precaution to safeguard the identity of its choice students.

Does the choice payment cover every related expense?

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

- social and extracurricular activities (e.g.: band and piano fees, etc);
- rental of musical instruments;
- school meals served through our hot lunch program (Note: St. John's Lutheran School does not currently participate in the national school lunch program.)

There may be other fees for which St. John's Lutheran may charge. The above list is not intended to be an exhaustive one. If you have questions, contact St. John's Lutheran choice administrator (the Principal) for an explanation.

Is my family automatically in the program once we meet the income and residency requirements of the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP)?

Not necessarily. Current WPCP guidelines allow 9% of the student population of a school district to participate in the program. For example, if a district has 1,000 students, 9% of that total - 90 students - may participate. Keep in mind that all WPCP schools in the area share those 80 students. If the number of applicants from a district exceeds the 9%, 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 St. John's Lutheran School draws from more than just the Jefferson School District. 9% 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 St. John's Lutheran School will draw its students. The likelihood that a family who applies to and qualifies for the WPCP may send a student to St. John's under the program is good.

St. John's Lutheran School has financial aid 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 financial aid. If the family does not qualify for choice or is not selected if a lottery is held, they may still be able to send their student to St. John's 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 St. John's Lutheran School.

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 9% figure (mentioned above) is determined by this.

Secondly, the family must **document its financial eligibility**. For those using the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) method, this typically means **providing their completed and signed 2023 tax forms** to St. John's Lutheran School. For those using the Department of Revenue (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 St. John's Lutheran School.

STEPS TO APPLY FOR PARENTAL CHOICE AT ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN SCHOOL

- 1. Fill out the online application.** The online application needs to be completed through the WPCP website. The application window is open from **February 1 through April 18, 2024**.
 - Note: An e-mail address is required to register. Communications on the status of applications and the steps necessary to complete them will be e-mailed to the parent or legal guardian.
 - 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 e-mail address and password that you use. Missing or incorrect information will cause problems processing applications and may cause them to be ineligible.
- 2. Provide Proof of Residency to St. John's.** St. John's Lutheran School must be given a copy of **ONE** of the following documents. The document must be current (within the last 3 months):
 - Current water, gas, electric, cable, satellite, or landline phone bill. (Cell phone & internet bills ARE NOT acceptable).
 - 2023 Property tax bill or current (signed and dated) lease agreement
 - Current wage statement (can be a year-end W2)
 - Recent government correspondence. Current benefits statements from access.wisconsin.gov
[Allowed Residency Documents.pdf](#)
- 3. Provide income documentation**
 - **St. John's Lutheran School prefers that families select the DPI Method.** The DPI method allows applicants to know up front if they qualify financially.
 - **DPI Method Documentation (*Preferred Method*)** -- Acceptable documentation includes:
 - Copy the first two pages of your 1040 Federal Income Tax Return for 2023. This needs to be **signed** and **dated** by the taxpayers.

OR

- If your taxes are not completed, you may submit copies of all 2023 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 2023 (social security statements, unemployment compensation statements, child support statements, etc).
- **DOR Method (Secondary Method):** Provide Social Security Number(s) of parents/guardians to St. John's Lutheran School.

DPI OR DOR?

There are two methods by which families applying to the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) may determine their financial eligibility:

- **The DPI (Department of Public Instruction)** method is the preferred one. It 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 St. John's Lutheran School as directed in the application. The school will then verify that the student meets the WPCP's income requirements.
 - **The DOR (Department of Revenue)** 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 Wisconsin Department of Revenue determines income eligibility for the program. Although St. John's Lutheran School may process applicant families via both methods, the DPI method is preferable since the parent(s) will immediately know if the family is income eligible for the WPCP.
- We recommend you use the **DPI method**.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD FAMILIES DO?

Families who apply for the WPCP should also complete St. John's Lutheran School online enrollment process- including financial aid. This helps the school plan for adequate staffing and other resources. A link to this will be provided as soon as we have it available for the 2024-2025 school year.

- Know that when the **application period closes on April 18**, St. John's Lutheran School must have all required income and residency documents in its possession. If these materials are not at St. John's Lutheran School by the end of the day that the application window closes (**1st weekday in February-3rd Thursday in April**), the application is nullified;
- St. John's Lutheran School telephones applicants who need to submit documents to remind them of this deadline. If you are a WPCP applicant and have recently received a voicemail from St. John's Lutheran School, return that phone call as soon as possible;
- After St. John's Lutheran School 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 St. John's 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 18** deadline makes it possible for St. John's Lutheran School to follow up if necessary.

Once an application has been made for a Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) voucher and the applicant parent has met with the St. John's, what's next?

You wait! The application period lasts until **April 18** 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, St. John's Lutheran School is given ten calendar days to finish processing its applications. Then, the state Department of Public Instruction takes over. It reviews the school's online verification and determines how many applicants will receive a "seat" (i.e.: a voucher). Typically, the state notifies verified applicants in June if they have received a voucher. After that, the parent must notify St. John's Lutheran School within 14 calendar days if they accept. If acceptance is not done in this time frame, the voucher offer is withdrawn.

During the month of July, the classroom teachers will call or email the family of students in their classrooms to schedule an appointment for a home visit. During the visit, the teacher will share valuable information with the family about our Back to School event, the first day of school, and other important items related to their specific classrooms. St. John's teachers like to complete home visits in late July or early August.

WHOM TO CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS?

Please call the St. John's Lutheran School office (920-674-2922) or contact Principal Peter Lemke (plemke@sjlwels.org) with questions about the program.

St. John's Lutheran School believes that participating in the WPCP will be an asset to families as we seek to provide a distinctly Lutheran education to the students in the city of Jefferson and also the surrounding communities.

Helpful Resources:

[Application Guidelines for Parents](#)

[Overview of Private School Choice Programs in Wisconsin](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions for Parents 2024-2025 School Year](#)

[Wisconsin Educational Options](#)

[St. John's Lutheran School Report Card](#)