



## PRIVATE SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAMS 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR STUDENT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

The Private School Choice Programs (Choice) includes the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP), Racine Parental Choice Program (RPCP), and the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP). The information in this document is based on Wis. Stats. §§118.60 and 119.23 and Wis. Admin. Code PI 35 and PI 48. Please see the Residency Documentation Bulletin for information on the residency documentation requirements, the Income Documentation Bulletin for information on the required income documentation, and the Application Verification and Corrections FAQ for information on how to correct the Online Application System (OAS). To be considered complete, all applications require residency documentation and certain applications require income documentation. See further information on the application process in the Application Process bulletin. These documents are available on the [School Application Processing webpage](#). *Training 8: Student Applications & Eligibility* on the [On Demand Training webpage](#) also provides information on how to complete the application eligibility determination, including print screens of the OAS screens.

Schools are required to retain a copy of the letter accepting or denying the application, and all supporting documentation received, even if the application is not accepted. **Schools should retain a copy of all documentation received for an application, even if other information is required to correct the application.**<sup>1</sup> Schools should not destroy any of the application documentation received.

### Residency Information:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ School District Determination: Determine what school district the address is in using one of the permitted school district verifications in the Residency Documentation Bulletin. Please note only the options listed in the Bulletin may be used. Maintain a print screen of the school district verification for your auditor's review. Note: If the family is participating in the Safe at Home program, 1-4 are not required. See 5h for information on the Safe at Home program requirements.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Address in Required District for MPCP: Based on the school district identified in 1, determine that the address is in the City of Milwaukee (Milwaukee Public School District). If not, the application is ineligible.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Address in Required District for RPCP: Based on the school district identified in 1, determine that the address is in the Racine Unified School District. If not, the application is ineligible.

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<sup>1</sup> If a birth certificate, marriage certificate, certificate of naturalization, or certificate of citizenship is provided, the school should follow Appendix C of the Residency Documentation Bulletin rather than making a copy of the document.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ WPCP School District Verification: Complete the following:
- 4a. \_\_\_\_\_ Based on the school district identified in 1, determine that the address is in Wisconsin but not in the Racine Unified School District or City of Milwaukee (Milwaukee Public School District). If not, the application is ineligible.
- 4b. \_\_\_\_\_ Verify that the school district identified in 1 matches the school district on the OAS Application Verification screen. If not, this must be corrected as described in the Residency Documentation Bulletin and Application Verification and Corrections FAQ.

5. \_\_\_\_\_ Residency Documentation: Determine that the parent/guardian (parent) has submitted a residency document that shows that the applicant resides at the address on the application at the time of application. DPI's guidance is that schools obtain one of the documents listed in 5a-5h below. If a different document is used, the document must contain the name of a parent on the application and an address that matches the application, and the school must ensure the documentation shows the applicant resides at the address on the application at the time of application. If a different document is used, the school should complete the review described in 5i.

The residency documentation provided must meet the requirements in 6, 7, and 8 below.

- 5a. \_\_\_\_\_ **Wage statement (i.e. pay check stub) or 2023 Form W2 Wage and Tax Statement.** Note: 2023 Form W2 Wage and Tax Statements are not acceptable for applications received after April 2024.
- 5b. \_\_\_\_\_ **Water, sewer, gas, electric, cable, satellite or landline phone bill.** Schools should use the bill date or the last meter reading date on a utility bill to determine that the bill meets the date requirements described in 8. DPI's guidance is that the bill should be for services at the address on the application. A gas bill may include a natural gas or propane gas bill.
- If the bill includes both a mailing address and a service address, DPI recommends that the addresses match, unless the mailing address is a PO Box or email address. If the mailing address and service address do not match and it is not due to the mailing address being a PO Box or an email address, this is a potential indication that the individual may not reside at the service address. The school must have documentation that shows the parent lives at the address on the application.
- 5c. \_\_\_\_\_ **Letter from the water, sewer, gas, electric, cable, satellite, or landline phone utility, regarding these utility services at the address on the application.** This letter must have been sent to the address on the application. Examples of this letter include a letter from the utility company establishing service at the new address or a past due letter sent to address on the application for service at that address.
- 5d. \_\_\_\_\_ **Signed and dated lease agreement** with a lease term that includes the date the application was received. Therefore, expired leases are not acceptable. The lease agreement must be complete and legible. Generally, schools should try to obtain one of the residency documents on this list other than month-to-month leases. However, if a month-to-month lease is used, the start date must be during the required dates.

DPI does **not** recommend utilizing rent receipts as a residency document to determine if an applicant resides at the address on the application at the time of application. Rent

receipts are not recommended because rent receipts often can be handwritten documents and may not contain the required elements such as parent name, date, and/or an address that matches the application or school district verification document.

- 5e.\_\_\_\_ **Governmental correspondence.** Examples include a property tax bill, Supplemental Security Income “SSI”, Wisconsin Works “W2” Cash Benefits, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families “TANF,” Food Share “Food Stamps,” United States Postal Service (USPS) letter or Housing Assistance letter. A USPS change of address letter could be used if the address on the application is the new address. An additional example is a license plate renewal postcard from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. Printed statements from Access.gov can be used as residency support if the statement includes a date that shows it meets the date requirement explained in 8 and the parent name. Documents sent from a third party provider for a government agency, such as a loan service provider for governmental loans, are not considered governmental correspondence.
- 5f.\_\_\_\_ **Letter from Service Organization for Homeless Individuals.** Homeless individuals may identify a location for their residence if it is an identifiable location which could conceivably serve as a temporary residence. A homeless family may provide a letter on the organization’s letterhead from a shelter for the homeless or from a private or public organization providing services for homeless individuals that is signed and dated by a representative of the organization indicating the family lived at the location during the required dates as explained in 8.
- 5g.\_\_\_\_ **Properly completed [Alternative Residency Verification form \(Form PI-PCP-51\)](#)** for situations where 1) the student is not living with his or her parent or guardian or 2) the parent(s) does not have one of the residency documents in 5a-5f or 5h and someone else living at the address on the application is able to provide one of the residency documents listed in 5a-5e for the family. The form should be fully completed, including being signed by the household occupant and the parent/guardian. Additionally, the documentation from the household occupant and parent must be provided with the form.
- 5h.\_\_\_\_ **Safe at Home card.** If a family is participating in the Safe at Home program through the Wisconsin Department of Justice, the school may obtain the Safe at Home card (card) from the parent and complete the items found under number 8 of the “Residency Documents” section in the Residency Documentation Bulletin.
- 5i.\_\_\_\_ **Other.** If the school uses a document that is not identified above, the school must ensure the residency document contains the name of a parent on the application and an address that matches the application and the school district verification document. Additionally, the school must ensure the documentation obtained shows the applicant resides at the address on the application at the time of application. As a reminder, residency documentation is reviewed by the school’s external auditor as part of the Enrollment Audits to ensure it contains the parent name and matches the address on the application and the school district verification document. If it is later determined an applicant did not reside at the address on the application, the student may be determined ineligible for the Choice programs.

6. \_\_\_\_\_ Residency Documentation Contains Parent Name: The residency documentation must contain the parent name on the application. The DPI's guidance is that the first and last name of the parent on the residency documentation should match one of the parent's names on the OAS Application Verification screen. See the Parent Name Match section of the Residency Bulletin for additional guidance. See 9 for information on allowed corrections if it does not match.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Matching Address: The law requires that the address on the application and school district verification documentation match the address on the residency documentation. See the Matching Address Components section of the Residency Documentation Bulletin for DPI's guidance on this topic. See 9 for information on allowed corrections if it does not match.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Required Date: Determine that the residency documentation in 5, except for the Safe at Home card, includes a date between three (3) months prior to the start of the open application period in which the application was received and the end of the open application period in which the application was received. The allowed dates are identified in the OAS Application Verification screen. If a lease agreement with a term is obtained, the date the application is received must fall within the term of the lease. The start date of a month to month lease must be dated between three (3) months prior to the start of the open application period in which the parent submits the online application to the school and the end of that open application period.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Received During Open Application Period & Allowed Corrections: If no documentation with a parent name on the application and an address was received during the open application period, the application is ineligible. If documentation with a parent on the application and an address was received but did not comply with all of the requirements, it may be corrected. See the "Corrections to Residency Documentation" section of the Residency Documentation Bulletin for additional information on when the residency documentation may be correctable.

**Income Determination-New Student Application Only (Complete 10 or 11 as applicable):**

10. \_\_\_\_\_ Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Income Determination method used.
- 10a. \_\_\_\_\_ Kinship/Foster Care: If the pupil is in kinship care or foster care, the school must obtain support that the student participated in the program. The requirements in 10b-10e of this checklist are not applicable. Documentation that would be sufficient for this is a verification letter showing the child is in the foster or kinship care program, a check/check stub for foster or kinship care, court documents showing placement for foster care students, or a reassessment letter for payment under the kinship care program indicating that the requirements have been met. The verification and reassessment letter must come from one of the contracted agents for the kinship care agency. A list of the contracted agents for Milwaukee is available at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/mcps/contacts>.
- 10b. \_\_\_\_\_ Parent has Income: The income determination is based on the adjusted gross income for all parent(s)/guardian(s) on the application. If a parent on the application received income, obtain the supporting documentation identified on the OAS Application Verification screen and complete the following:
- Determine that it is for 2023 income.
  - Determine that the amount of income received per the supporting documentation matches the information in the OAS Application Verification screen. If the amounts do not match and it is before the end of the open application period in

which the application was received, ask that the parent log back into the Online Parent Application and correct the amount(s). If it is after the open application period in which the application was received, see the “Amounts Match” section of the Income Documentation Bulletin to determine if the application is eligible or not.

- If social security benefits were received, the support must be a 1099. Ensure that the support is for social security benefits and not supplemental security income (SSI). If the parent received SSI and not social security benefits, the parent must log back into the Online Parent Application before the end of the open application period in which the application is received and change the income/benefits received to SSI. If not, the application must be determined ineligible.
- All supporting documentation (tax returns, 1099s, etc) includes the first and last name of the parent for the income type specified on the OAS Application Verification screen. The name must match except for capitalization, spacing, and punctuation. If the parent name is incorrect in OAS, see the Application Verification and Corrections FAQ for information on how to make corrections. If the parent name is incorrect on the Income Documentation, see the Income Bulletin for information on how to proceed.

10c. \_\_\_\_\_ Tax Return Support: If a copy of the 2023 tax return is provided, complete the procedures in 10b and ensure the following:

- The return is the Federal income tax form 1040. Wisconsin tax returns are not sufficient.
- The first two pages of the return are provided.
- The return should be signed and dated, including by both taxpayers if a joint return. However, the application is still eligible even if the tax return is not signed by one or both taxpayers.

10d. \_\_\_\_\_ Parent has No Income: If the parents/guardians did not file a tax return and the income of the parents/guardians is \$0, the parent is required to explain how basic needs were provided and indicate all government assistance received. Ensure the following:

- The explanation of basic needs (food, clothing and shelter) is sufficient to explain how basic needs were provided. Explanations that only indicate the parent provided the basic needs are not sufficient. The explanation must explain **how** the parent provided the basic needs.
- If any government assistance is indicated in the explanation of basic needs, ensure that the program is also identified in the required documentation section of the OAS Application Verification screen.
- Obtain documentation showing 2023 participation in ALL government assistance programs listed on the OAS Application Verification screen. The evidence must be from the assistance provider, show the parent participated in 2023, and include the legal first and last name of the parent/guardian. If the parent name is incorrect in OAS, except for capitalization, spacing, or punctuation differences, see the Application Verification and Corrections FAQ for information on how to make corrections. If the parent name is incorrect on the income documentation, see the Income Bulletin for information on how to proceed.
- If the OAS Application Verification screen indicates the parent received supplemental security income (SSI), ensure the documentation indicates the parent received SSI and not social security benefits. If the parent received social security benefits and not SSI, the parent must log back into the Online Parent Application and change the income/benefits received to social security benefits. If not, the application must be determined ineligible.

- The explanation of basic needs does **not** indicate that the parent received any income (even if cash income). If there is any income identified, the parent must log back into the Online Parent Application and include this income in the Online Parent Application. If the parent has any income and it is after the open application period in which the application was received, the application is ineligible.

10e. \_\_\_\_\_ Received During Open Application Period & Allowed Corrections: If no income related documentation was received during the open application period, the application is ineligible. If income related documentation was received during the open application period that the application was received from at least one of the parents/guardians on the application but it was not the allowed support or was for the incorrect year, the school may be able to correct the application in limited circumstances. See the Income Documentation Bulletin for additional information on when the application may be correctable. An explanation of how applications with missing income documentation may be corrected is in the “Corrections if Income Documentation is Missing” section and an explanation of how applications with missing government assistance documentation may be corrected is in the “Corrections if Government Assistance Documentation is Missing” section.

11. \_\_\_\_\_ DOR Income Determination method used.

11a. \_\_\_\_\_ DOR Income Determination **Not** Already Completed: Enter the social security number(s) or Taxpayer ID Number(s) in OAS if they are not already entered and complete the “preliminary DOR check”.

- If the DOR is unable to find records for the parents/guardians and it is before the end of the open application period, the parent must log back into the Online Parent Application, use the DPI Income Determination method, and resubmit the application. If it is after the end of the open application period, the application is ineligible.
- If records are available, complete the DOR income determination in OAS.

11b. \_\_\_\_\_ DOR Determines Application Ineligible: If the DOR determines the family is not income eligible but the parent indicates they are, see the “Applications Determined Ineligible by DOR” section of the Income Documentation Bulletin for information on how to proceed.

### General Review:

12. \_\_\_\_\_ Student Names and Dates of Birth Correct: The student’s first and last name must be the legal name of the student. The student’s middle initial and suffix do not need to be reviewed and no changes need to be made if they are incorrect. Additionally, if the difference is due to spacing, capitalization or the use of a hyphen, no change is required. These differences do not affect a student’s determination of being a continuing student in the Online Parent Application. Review the student’s name and date of birth based on other information available to the school (if available). If the application is incorrect and the student is age eligible for the program, see the Application Verification and Corrections FAQ for information on how to correct OAS.

- If the date of birth is incorrect for students applying to K4, K5 and 1st grade, determine whether the student is age eligible for the grade applying to. The student must have been born on or before the following dates, or the student is ineligible: (a) September 1, 2020, for K4; (b) September 1, 2019, for K5; or (c) September 1, 2018, for 1st grade. Additionally, students may not be 21 as of the date they apply or September 1, whichever is later.

- If the student name or date of birth needs to be corrected in OAS, verify the name and date of birth using an annotated birth certificate, immunization record, or court order. See the Application Verification and Corrections FAQ for additional information.

13. \_\_\_\_\_ Age Eligible for Grade Applying: Determine that the grade the student is applying to is correct for students with a date of birth between September 1, 2018 and September 1, 2020. If it is not correct, determine whether the student is age eligible for the grade the pupil should be in. The student must have been born on or before the following dates, or the student is ineligible: (a) September 1, 2020, for K4; (b) September 1, 2019, for K5; or (c) September 1, 2018, for 1st grade. Please note there are no exceptions to the age eligibility requirement.

#### Verifications:

14. \_\_\_\_\_ Corrections to Application in OAS: If any corrections are required to the application information in OAS, they must be made before completing the verification. See the Application Verification and Corrections FAQ for information on how to make corrections.

15. \_\_\_\_\_ Verification: Complete the verification for the application in OAS. WPCP verifications must be completed by the first weekday in May. MPCP & RPCP verifications must be completed prior to the next application period, prior to completing a random drawing, if required, within 60 days of the end of an application period during which an application is received by the school, or prior to the next count date, whichever occurs first. If the application is not verified in OAS within 60 days of the end of the open application period in which the application was received, the application will automatically be determined ineligible in OAS.

#### Other Requirements for MPCP and RPCP:

*See Appendix A in the Application Process Bulletin for further information on these requirements.*

16. \_\_\_\_\_ Random selection, if needed, must be held prior to the next application period, within 60 days after the end of the application period, or prior to the next count date, whichever occurs first.

17. \_\_\_\_\_ Letter of Acceptance or Denial: Applicants must be notified, via mail or email, whether they are accepted or not accepted in the MPCP or RPCP at the school no later than 60 days after the end of the open application period that the application is received. If an applicant is determined ineligible, the notice of non-acceptance must identify the reasons the application is ineligible. If an applicant is placed on a MPCP or RPCP waiting list, the notice of non-acceptance must identify the applicant's place on the waiting list. Schools are required to retain a copy of the notice of acceptance or denial and all supporting documentation received even if the application is not accepted. Do not destroy the application documentation received by the school. **Schools should retain a copy of all documentation received for an application, even if other information is required to correct the application.**<sup>1</sup>

18. \_\_\_\_\_ Submit accepted applications in OAS: This cannot be completed until after the open application period in which the application is received. Only submitted applications will be available in the count reports. If an application is eligible but the applicant is placed on a MPCP or RPCP waiting list, the school should verify the application but not submit it.

**Other Requirements for WPCP:**

*See Appendix A in the Application Process Bulletin for further information on this requirement.*

19. \_\_\_\_\_ **Letter of Denial:** A WPCP applicant who is determined ineligible must be notified, via mail or email, that the application was determined ineligible and the reasons why the application was determined ineligible. The school must provide this notification no later than the first weekday in June. Schools are required to retain a copy of the notice of denial and all supporting documentation received. Do not destroy the application documentation received by the school. **Schools should retain a copy of all documentation received for an application, even if other information is required to correct the application.**<sup>1</sup> WPCP applicants that are identified as eligible in OAS will receive an email from the DPI after DPI completes the random drawing.