

# Training 8-1:

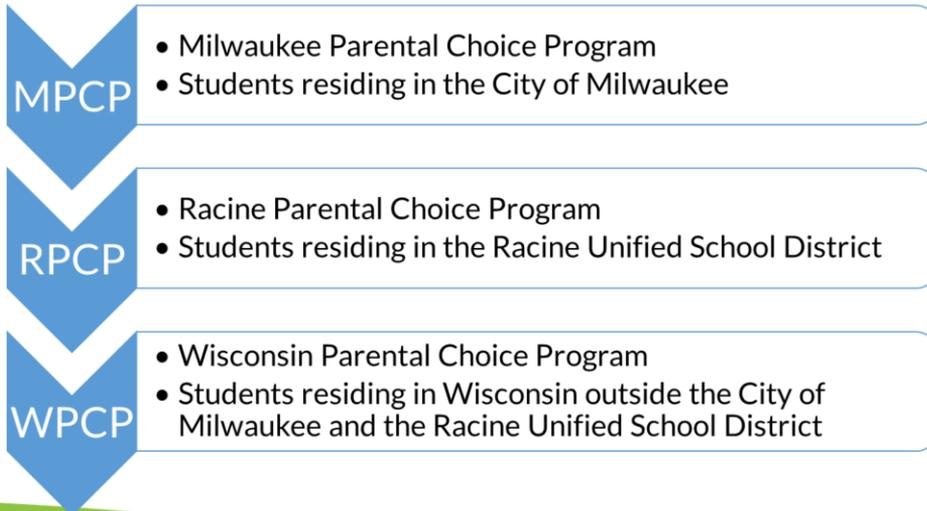
## Application Process Overview



Welcome to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's training module on the Private School Choice Programs. We will refer to the Private School Choice Programs as "Choice" or "Choice program" throughout this training. The Choice program is governed by Wis. Stat. §§ 119.23 and 118.60, as well as Wis. Admin. Codes ch. PI 35 and 48. Provisions of this training module are subject to statutory and rule changes.

This training module will discuss the Choice payment process, the pupil count reports, and the enrollment audits.

# Private School Choice Programs



There are three Private School Choice Programs in Wisconsin.

What program a student may apply is based on where in Wisconsin a student resides.

Students who reside in the City of Milwaukee, should apply to the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. The Milwaukee Parental Choice Program is abbreviated as MPCP.

Students who reside in the Racine Unified School District, should apply to the Racine Parental Choice Program. The Racine Parental Choice Program is abbreviated as RPCP.

Students who reside in Wisconsin, but do not reside in either the City of Milwaukee or the Racine Unified School District, should apply to the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program. The Wisconsin Parental Choice Program is abbreviated as WPCP.

The applicant will be required to provide documentation showing that he or she currently resides at the address on the application.

# Online Parent Application Completion

- The online parent application must be completed by one of the following:
  - Parent
  - Legal Guardian
    - Student that is 18
    - Foster/kinship care parent or case worker
- In this presentation, we will use the term “parent” to refer to either the parent or legal guardian

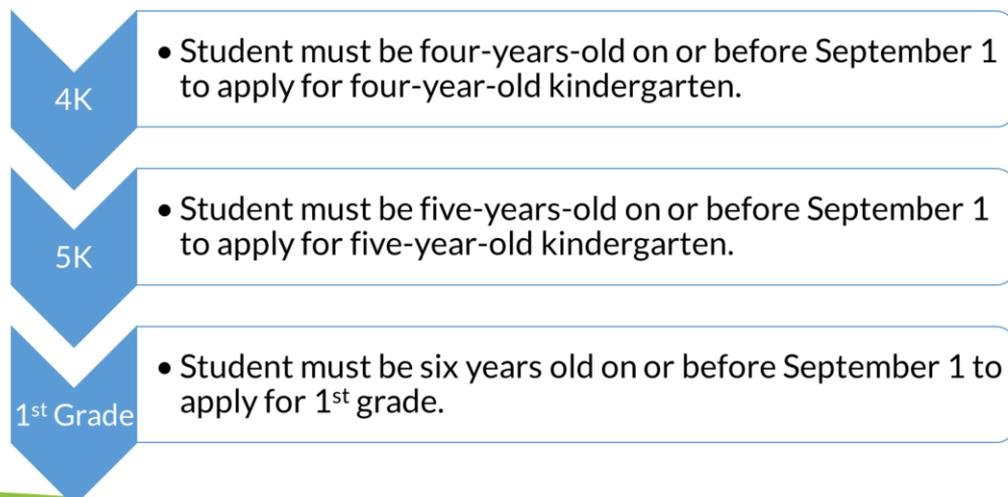
The online parent application must be completed by either the parent(s) or the legal guardian(s) of the student with the authority to make educational decisions for the student. The online parent application will include all parents and legal guardians who reside in the household with the student.

For parents that are separated or divorced, if one parent has the authority to make educational decisions for the student, that parent would complete the application for the student. If both parents have the authority to make educational decisions for the student, the parents may determine which parent would complete the application for the student.

A legal guardian includes a student who is at least 18 as of the time he or she applies for the Choice program. In the case of a foster or kinship care student, the foster or kinship care parent or case worker is considered the legal guardian.

In this training, we will use the term “parent” to refer to either the parent or legal guardian. The parent must apply using the Online Parent Application. If the parent needs assistance with completing the Online Parent Application, they should contact one of the schools they are applying to. The school may help the parents but only the parent may submit the Online Parent Application.

## Age Requirements



In addition to the residency requirements just mentioned, applicants must meet the age requirements for the Private School Choice Programs.

Students ages 4 through 20 on or before September 1 are eligible to apply for the program. A student who is 21 years old at the time of application or as of September 1, whichever is later, is not eligible for the program.

A student must be at least four-years-old on or before September 1 of the school year for which they are applying to be eligible for four-year-old kindergarten under the Choice program.

If a student is applying for five-year-old kindergarten, the student must be at least five on or before September 1.

Lastly, if a student is applying for first grade, the student must be six on or before September 1.

Please be aware there is no early admittance option for the Choice program that would allow a student to qualify for the Choice program if they do not meet these age requirements.

# Income Requirements

	Residency	Income * (New students only)
MPCP	City of Milwaukee	300% of the Federal Poverty Level
RPCP	Racine Unified School District (RUSD)	300% of the Federal Poverty Level
WPCP	In Wisconsin, but not in the City of Milwaukee or RUSD.	220% of the Federal Poverty Level

In addition to the residency and age requirements, applicants may be required to meet income requirements in order to be eligible to participate in the program.

A student that either participated in any Choice Program in the previous school year or was on the waiting list for the same Choice program in the previous school year is considered to be continuing in that program and does not have to meet the income requirements. Additionally, an MPCP student who participates in the MPCP in September and reapplies to the MPCP for the same school year after September would be considered a continuing student.

Generally, all other applicants (referred to as “new students”) must meet the program income requirements. Please note, the income of married parents is reduced by \$7,000 when determining eligibility.

The income limits for each program are available on the Choice Student Applications webpage: <https://dpi.wi.gov/parental-education-options/choice-programs/student-applications>.

# Prior School Year Attendance Requirements

	Residency	Prior School Year Attendance
MPCP	City of Milwaukee	None
RPCP	Racine Unified School District (RUSD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Applying for K4, KG, 1, or 9 grade; OR</li> <li>•In the prior school year:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Attended a public school in Wisconsin; OR</li> <li>•Attended school in another state; OR</li> <li>•Was not enrolled in school; OR</li> <li>•Participated in any Choice program (MPCP, RPCP or WPCP); OR</li> <li>•Was on the waiting list on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday in January for the Choice Program the pupil is applying to; OR</li> <li>•WPCP only – was on waiting list due to the district level cap</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
WPCP	In Wisconsin, but not in the City of Milwaukee or RUSD.	

All students, new and continuing, applying to the Racine or Wisconsin parental choice program must meet **one** of the following prior year attendance requirements:

- The student is applying for four or five-year-old kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup> grade or 9<sup>th</sup> grade; or
- The student attended a public school in Wisconsin in the prior school year; or
- The student attended school in another state in the prior school year; or
- The student was not enrolled in school in the prior school year (For example, the student was homeschooled for the entire prior year or was three years old and not enrolled in school in the prior year.); or
- The student participated in any Choice program in the prior school year; or
- The student was on the prior year waiting list for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday in January for the Choice program the pupil is applying to; or
- For the WPCP only, the student was on the waiting list due to the district level cap in a previous school year

For information on the general eligibility requirements for the Choice programs, please see the Frequently Asked Questions and Parent Brochure, which are available on the Choice Student Applications webpage <https://dpi.wi.gov/parental-education-options/choice-programs/student-applications>. This information is available in English and Spanish. Please also see the Student Eligibility and the Application Grade or Prior Year Requirement bulletin at <https://dpi.wi.gov/parental-education-options/choice-programs/student-applications-processing>.

# Income Verification

**Parents may use one of the following income determination methods:**

- **Department of Revenue (DOR) Method:** Parents provide their social security numbers or taxpayer identification number and have the DOR determine whether the student is income eligible for the Choice program; or
- **Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Method:** With this option, the school will verify that the student meets the income requirements based on documentation provided to the school. Parents answer a series of income questions in the Online Parent Application and then provide income documentation to the school(s) as directed in the application during the open application period.

Income eligibility for the Choice program is verified one of two ways. The parent decides which option to use.

One option is to select the Department of Revenue income method in the Online Parent Application and provide the parent(s) social security number(s) or taxpayer identification number(s). The Department of Revenue will determine if the student meets the family income limits.

Please note depending on when the application is submitted, the Department of Revenue may use tax information from the prior year or from two years prior. A document entitled Department of Revenue (DOR) Income Determination Method FAQ explaining the Department of Revenue income verification process is available on the Choice Student Applications webpage: <https://dpi.wi.gov/parental-education-options/choice-programs/student-applications>. Please review this document to determine if using the Department of Revenue income verification method is the best income verification option for a family.

The second option the parent will answer a series of questions in the Online Parent Application to determine the parents' prior year income. If this option is selected, the school is required to verify the amounts entered into the application. Once the application is complete, an email will be sent to the email address used to log-in with the list of documents that must be provided to all the schools selected in the application. These documents could include tax forms and benefits statement from the prior year.

# Open Application Periods

Each school selects its open application periods from the following options: If the last day of a MPCP or RPCP open application period falls on a weekend, the last day is the following Monday.

MPCP	RPCP	WPCP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1<sup>st</sup> Weekday in Feb-20</li><li>• Mar 1-20</li><li>• Apr 1-20</li><li>• May 1-20</li><li>• June 1-20</li><li>• July 1-20</li><li>• Aug 1-20</li><li>• Sept 1-14</li><li>• Oct 1-20</li><li>• Nov 1-20</li><li>• Dec 1 - Jan 7</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1<sup>st</sup> Weekday in Feb-20</li><li>• Mar 1-20</li><li>• Apr 1-20</li><li>• May 1-20</li><li>• June 1-20</li><li>• July 1-20</li><li>• Aug 1-20</li><li>• Sept 1-14</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1<sup>st</sup> Weekday in Feb – 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday in April</li></ul>

School year specific dates can be found on the top of each program school list

Students may apply to a Private School Choice Program only during a participating private school's open application periods.

Each Private School Choice Program has different open application periods, which are listed in these tables. For the MPCP and RPCP, if the last day for any of these open application periods falls on a weekend, the final day of the open application period is extended to the following Monday. The last day of the December-January application period may be earlier depending on the date for the 2nd Friday in January. Please also note that the April open application period for the MPCP and RPCP may end on a different end date than the WPCP open application period. See the School Verification of Application section of the Application Process Bulletin at <https://dpi.wi.gov/parental-education-options/choice-programs/student-applications-processing> for the specific open application period dates for upcoming school year.

Schools participating in the MPCP or RPCP may choose all or some of the open application periods listed here.

Schools participating in the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program must accept applications during the open application period listed under WPCP.

A parent must apply online and provide the required residency and income information, if applicable, during the same application period. For example, a parent that submits the online application for the MPCP on February 2 must provide the residency and income documentation, if applicable, to all schools that they applied to by February 20th.

Please note that although parents may access the Online Parent Application between the open application periods, the parent can only submit an application to the school during the open application periods.

## Participating Schools & Grades

- A list is available on the Choice Program website with:
  - The private schools registered for each program
  - The grades available for Choice students at each school
  - Each school's open application periods

A list of the private schools registered for each program, the grades each school has available for Choice students, and each private school's open application periods are available in advance of the school year on the Choice Student Applications webpage <https://dpi.wi.gov/parental-education-options/choice-programs/student-applications>. The list is generally available by February 1<sup>st</sup>.

## How a Parent Applies

*Step 1: Complete the Online Parent Application.*



*Step 2: Go to the school and submit income documentation, if applicable, and residency documentation.*

All steps must be completed during the open application period in which a parent applies.

During the open application period, the following steps must be completed.

First, the parent must complete the Online Parent Application. Print screens of the Online Parent Application are available on the Choice Student Applications webpage <https://dpi.wi.gov/parental-education-options/choice-programs/student-applications>.

Second, the parent must go to all of the private schools selected in the Online Parent Application and provide income documentation, if required, and the required residency documentation.

Late or incorrect documentation may result in an ineligible application, therefore it is important for the parent to provide the required documentation by the end of the open application period. Applicants to the WPCP must provide their documentation to all schools where they apply by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday in April. Applicants to the MPCP or RPCP must provide documentation by the end of the open application period that they apply. For example, if the parent applies during the February open application period, the supporting documentation must be provided to all of the schools where they applied by February 20<sup>th</sup>.

## Information Required to Complete the Online Parent Application



- Email Address
  - Confirmations and notifications will be sent to the parent's email address.
- Income Information, if any students are new to the program.
  - Students continuing in the program are not required to meet the income requirements.
- School Names and Addresses
  - Students may apply to more than one school. Parents must bring the required residency and income documentation to each school.

In order to complete the Online Parent Application, a parent will need an email address that he or she regularly uses. Important information including confirmations and notifications will be sent to this email address.

The parent will need their income information, such as their tax forms, if one of their students are new to the program.

The parent will also need the names of the private schools they wish to apply to. A parent may apply to more than one school. If more than one school is selected in the application, the parent will need to bring residency and income documentation, if applicable, to each private school.

## How to Log-In

### New Online Parent Application Users

- First time applicants for any Choice program.
- *Register using an email address and password.*

### Returning Online Parent Application Users

- Prior year online applicants for any Choice program.
- *Sign-in as a returning user using the address and password from last year.*

If a parent is new to the Online Parent Application, the parent will need to register using their email address and create a password.

Parents that applied to any of the programs last year using the Online Parent Application should sign-in as a returning user with their email address and password from last year. If the parent forgot their password, they can use the “Forgot your password?” link on the sign in page.

If the parent no longer has access to their email address but remembers their email address and password from last year, he or she can log in and change the email address for their account.

Returning users who do not remember the email address that they registered with or who no longer have access to their email account, may set up new login information. The Online Parent Application will identify if the student is new or continuing in the program even if different log in information is used.

## Parents Need to Verify Their Email Address

- Parents will need to verify their email address the first time an email is used for the Online Parent Application
- The parent will need to go into their email account and verify their email address before the parent can log into the Online Parent Application

Parents need to complete a verification of their email address the first time they use an email for the Online Parent Application. The parent will enter their email and password for the Online Parent Application. If the email account is being used for the first time in the Online Parent Application, the system will generate an email that is sent to the parent's email address. The parent will then need to go into their email account and complete the verification steps. The parent can then return to the sign in screen for the Online Parent Application and sign into the application.

## Parent Confirmation Email for Application Submission

- Parents will receive confirmation of their application submission. The confirmation will include:
  - A list of all schools applied to;
  - A list of all supporting documentation that must be provided;
  - The dates by which the documentation must be provided to the school.
- Parents will be required to provide the applicable documentation to *each school* they apply to during the school's open application period.

After the parent completes and submits their application, the parent will receive a confirmation email that will list all schools where the parent applied, the documentation that must be provided, and the dates by which the documentation must be provided to the school.

Before the end of the open application period, the parent must go to all private schools to which they applied and provide residency and income documentation, if applicable. A list of the allowed residency documentation is available on the Choice Student Applications webpage <https://dpi.wi.gov/parental-education-options/choice-programs/student-applications>. The confirmation email will also include the list of permitted residency documents.

# Who Conducts the Random Selection

MPCP

- Schools conduct the random selection.

RPCP

- Schools conduct the random selection.

WPCP

- The Department of Public Instruction will conduct the random selection.

Students must be accepted on a random basis if more eligible students apply than spaces available at the school. Please note, schools may limit the number of seats available for Choice students.

Random Selection is conducted as follows:

Under the MPCP and RPCP, the individual schools conduct the random selection. The random selection must be open to the public so parents may attend.

For the WPCP, no more than a certain percentage of a public school district membership may participate under state law. The department will complete the random selection for the WPCP.

# Random Selection

- If the number of eligible applications received during an open application period exceeds the number of seats available by grade or the number permitted by state law (WPCP only), a random drawing must be held to determine which applicants are accepted.
- A school **may** give preference to the following in the order of preference listed:
  1. Students who attended the private school under any Choice program during the prior year
  2. Their siblings
  3. Students who attended a different private school under any Choice program during the prior year
  4. Their siblings
  5. Siblings of students who have been randomly accepted to attend the private school under the Choice program who did not attend a private school under any Choice program in the prior year.
- The drawing must continue until all available seats are filled and a waiting list order is determined.

The number of seats available for Choice students may be limited by the school or by state law. If the number of applications received exceeds what is allowed, the school must hold a random drawing.

Wisconsin statute permits schools to give preference to certain pupils. The students that may receive preference are listed on this slide in the order that they may receive preference.

The random drawing must continue until all available seats are filled and a waiting list order is determined. In the MPCP and RPCP, schools may determine if a seat left vacant from a student withdrawal will be filled with a student from the waiting list. If the school decides to take students from the waiting list, the school must offer the seats in the order determined during the random drawing.

Schools that conduct their own random selection can choose whether or not they will apply these preferences. The school must determine which preferences it will use at the beginning of the year, if any, and apply them consistently throughout the year.

The DPI uses these preferences when completing the random selection for the WPCP.

# Parent Notifications of Acceptance or Nonacceptance

MPCP

- Schools must notify each applicant in writing within 60 days after the end of the open application period of acceptance or nonacceptance, including waiting list status if applicable.

RPCP

- Schools must notify each applicant in writing within 60 days after the end of the open application period of acceptance or nonacceptance, including waiting list status if applicable.

WPCP

- Schools must notify each applicant that is not eligible for the program.
- The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) will notify eligible applicants if they receive a seat or are on the waiting list.
- Notifications from DPI will not begin before June and updates to the waiting list may continue throughout the summer and into early January.

A Choice application may only be denied if the student does not meet the residency, income (if applicable), and age requirements (for grades K4, K5 and 1) or there is no space available at the school (i.e. there were more applications than seats available therefore the student would be placed on the waiting list).

Notifications of acceptance or nonacceptance are provided as follows:

For the Milwaukee and Racine Parental Choice Programs the individual schools must notify the parent of each applicant of their acceptance or non-acceptance via mail or email within 60 days of the end of the application period during which an application is received. The school will notify the applicant whether or not they were accepted into the program. If a student is placed on the waiting list, a notice of non-acceptance must be sent to the parent and indicate the student's place on the waiting list. If the school rejects a student application, the notice of non-acceptance must include the reason why the student was not accepted.

For the WPCP, schools will notify the parent of each WPCP applicant via mail or email that their application is ineligible and will not be included in the random drawing after the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday in April but no later than the first weekday in June. The Department of Public Instruction will email eligible applicants. The notification will either indicate that the student received a voucher seat at one of the schools to which they applied or that they are on the program's waiting list. If a seat becomes available at a later date, the department will notify the next eligible applicant on the waiting list via email that a seat is available. Seats may be filled until the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday in January. After that date, no additional applicants will be taken off the waiting list.

## Additional Information

- Parents with questions on the application process should:
  - Click the “Need Help” link in the application.
  - Contact the private school at which they are applying to.
- If the question is a technical issue with the application:
  - Click the “Contact Us” link in the application.

[Parent question slide]

If you are a parent and have questions on the application requirements or process, you can either use the “Need Help” link in the application which provides answers to many frequently asked questions. If you need additional assistance on the process, please contact the private school at which you are applying.

If you have technical questions on the Online Parent Application, please click the “Contact Us” links in the Online Parent Application.

## Questions

Website: <https://dpi.wi.gov/parental-education-options/choice-programs>

Email: [privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov)

Phone: 1-888-245-2732 ext. 3



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If you have any questions about the information discussed in this training, please see the Private School Choice Programs homepage. The left menu bar of the Private School Choice Programs homepage has resources for both schools and parents.

Choice schools may also contact the Choice team at [privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov), or call the toll-free number at 1-888-245-2732, extension 3 with questions.