



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the *Empowering Parents* program?

The *Empowering Parents* program provides eligible families with grant funds for use towards eligible education services and devices to help students recover from the learning loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible purchases include computers and technology, internet access, instructional materials, tutoring services, and educational services and therapies through approved vendors in the *Empowering Parents* online marketplace.

Who is eligible for the funds?

ALL Idaho students Kindergarten through grade 12 are eligible regardless of whether they attend a public school, private school or are homeschooled. Awards will be prioritized based on the parent or guardian's adjusted gross income, starting with eligible families earning \$60,000 per year or less.

How will this program help students?

COVID-19 disrupted student learning across the state. As parents and guardians try to help their students recover from this learning loss, Idaho students need access to additional supports necessary to meet their individual learning needs. *Empowering Parents* allows families to purchase the educational resources most likely to help their children succeed academically.

How much will eligible families receive?

Each eligible family will have access to \$1,000 per eligible student, with a maximum award of \$3,000 per family.

What can I buy for my student?

Participating Idaho families can use funds from their *Empowering Parents* account through the *Empowering Parents* online marketplace to purchase:

- computer hardware, internet access, or other technological devices or services that are primarily used to meet a participant's education needs;
- textbooks, curriculum, or other instructional materials, including educational software and applications;
- fees for national standardized assessments, advanced placement examinations, examinations related to college or university admissions, or industry-recognized certification examinations;
- therapies, including but not limited to occupational, behavioral, physical, speech-language, and audiology therapies; and

- educational programs offered for a fee or pursuant to contract by a school district, public charter school, or career technical education program to nonpublic students.

Can I get reimbursed for educational expenses purchased outside of the platform?

Reimbursements are not available through this program. All awarded funds must be used in the *Empowering Parents* online marketplace

How will parents or guardians be able to apply for the funds?

Parents and guardians can apply for an award by filling out the application available through the *Empowering Parents* website (empoweringparents.idaho.gov). Once an application has been submitted and eligibility confirmed, the awards will be made. Funds will be deposited electronically into the parent or guardian *Empowering Parents* account. Families will be provided instructions on how to log into to their *Empowering Parents* account to access and use the funds. The state of Idaho has contracted with Odyssey to manage the *Empowering Parents* accounts.

When will I know if I'm approved?

Awards will be announced in three waves, with families with adjusted gross incomes of \$60,000 or less being funded first. The first award notices to families with an adjusted gross income of \$60,000 or less will be made within 30 days of a complete application being submitted and accepted. Additional awards will be made based on individuals with adjusted gross incomes up to \$75,000 followed by any remaining funds being awarded to individuals with adjusted gross incomes of \$75,000 or above. Awardees will receive an email at the email address used to create their *Empowering Parents* account through Odyssey as soon as the award has been made.

If I receive a grant, how long do I have to spend the funds through Empowering Parents online marketplace?

Applicants receiving *Empowering Parents* awards will have 24 months to spend the funds through the *Empowering Parents* platform. Any unspent funds will be returned to the State of Idaho.

How will this work if my child lives in a split household?

In joint custody cases, the first parent or guardian to submit an application will receive the award for the student. No student may be used to determine eligibility in more than one family. Parents may be asked to verify legal custody of the child.

How much is being spent on this program?

\$50 million of the Coronavirus Relief funds is available for the program. It is estimated approximately 16,000 awards will be made to eligible Idaho families.

What is being done to prevent fraud?

All vendors integrated into the *Empowering Parents* online marketplace platform will have been pre-approved. Families will be able to use grant funds to acquire materials from the approved vendors. This

ensures compliance and transparency, as well as, streamlines the processing time for requests. The *Empowering Parents* platform automates the tracking and reconciliation of all the purchases, so there will be no work required by the parents to submit receipts or expense reports when selecting from these vendors. Eligible families will have their adjusted gross income and dependents verified through the Idaho Tax Commission based on their 2021 filing. Families may need to provide additional information verifying their eligible student grade if they cannot be verified through Idaho public school records.

How do providers of such services as tutoring, therapy, and courses connect to be paid by parents through the Empowering Parents system?

Service providers will be required to complete an online form and register with Odyssey. Once a service provider has been approved, they will receive instructions on how to set up their accounts to receive payments.