

Student STU-09 Priority Guidelines Policy

BACKGROUND

CSF has adopted the definition of “priority guidelines” for EFA students contained in the NHED Technical Advisory, “*Education Freedom Account Enrollment Cap Policy*” issued on July 22nd, 2025. These students, if determined eligible, are not subject to the annual enrollment cap. Students meeting these priority guidelines may apply at any time during the school year regardless of whether the enrollment cap has been met.

The total student award may be prorated depending on the student’s date of enrollment in the EFA program.

These groups include:

- *A student currently enrolled in the EFA program.*
- *A sibling of a student currently enrolled in the EFA program.*
- *A child with disabilities as defined by RSA 186-C:2.*
- *A student whose family income is less than or equal to 350 percent of the federal poverty guidelines.*

POLICY

Priority guidelines mean:

A student currently enrolled in the EFA program;

- A student is considered currently enrolled in the EFA program if the student
 - was enrolled for any portion of the immediately preceding year.
- A student that was not enrolled for any portion of the immediately preceding
 - year shall not be considered an EFA program student.
 - (Please note - A student enrolled in the immediately preceding year but who was found to be ineligible and exited from the program, would not be considered a returning student.)

A sibling of a student currently enrolled in the EFA program;

- A child shall be considered a sibling in the following circumstances:
 - A direct blood or half-blood relative of a student currently enrolled in the EFA program.
 - (Please note - the relative of a student currently enrolled in the EFA program must be living in the household.)
 - An adopted child of parents or guardians of a student currently enrolled in the EFA program
 - A child in the legal custody of parents or guardians of a student currently enrolled in the EFA program.

- An eligible child placed in a New Hampshire Foster home of a student currently enrolled in the EFA program.

A child with disabilities as defined by RSA 186-C:2;

- Pursuant to RSA 186-C:2, a “Child with a disability” means any person between the ages of 3 and 21, inclusive, who has been identified and evaluated by a school district according to rules adopted by the State Board of Education and determined to have a disability.
- Students not enrolled in their resident public school are eligible to be evaluated by their resident school district to determine if they have a disability.
- A disability for purposes of determining priority status differs from a disabling condition under ED800 804.01(f) for purposes of determining differentiated aid.

A student whose family income is less than or equal to 350 percent of the federal poverty guidelines as updated annually by the United States Department of Health and Human Services under 42 U.S.C. section 9902 (2).

- Income eligibility shall be established consistent with the operation of the program prior to the enactment of SB295.

How CSF Determines Household Income

- We use “household income” for the financial qualification to establish that your income is 350% of the federal poverty line or below.
- Household income is the total gross income (AGI), for all adults living in the household. This is different from one’s net income which is the take-home pay after taxes and other deductions are subtracted.

Priority status does not determine whether the student is an eligible student; it determines the order in which an otherwise eligible applicant may be considered for enrollment or funding when the program is subject to a cap or other priority system. An applicant may therefore be eligible even if the student does not qualify for a priority grouping or cannot be offered immediate participation or funding.

Because a priority-status determination is not a determination that the student is eligible or ineligible, it may not be challenged through the internal review procedures in STU-03.

Approved July 25, 2025