



Fact Sheet

Arizona's Empowerment Scholarship Accounts Make the Grade

Q: Is there an education program that can:

- ✓ Save money
- ✓ Increase student funding, and
- ✓ Change lives for the better?

A: YES! It's called the Arizona Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) program.

Known more informally as education savings accounts, Arizona's ESAs take part of what the state would have spent covering the cost of a student's education in a K-12 public school and instead deposit that money into a personalized account that allows the child's family to use the funds for tutoring, educational therapies, private school tuition, curriculum materials, and other teaching tools.

Students, taxpayers—and even public schools—gain from Arizona's ESA program.

More than 6,400 students benefitted from Arizona's ESA program in the last year alone.

- ✓ Special needs students accounted for nearly 60 percent of ESA participants.
- ✓ More than 800 children whose parents serve on active duty in the military or have fallen in the line of service participated in the ESA program.
- ✓ Hundreds more ESA participants came from the foster care system, Native American reservations, and failing schools.

ESAs are saving Arizona taxpayers money.

- ✓ Arizona ESAs give participant families an average of roughly \$6,100 per child each year (for non-special needs, non-kindergarten students) to help meet their educational needs.
- ✓ In comparison, taxpayers spend more than \$10,100 per public school pupil in Arizona.
- ✓ This means that on average, ESAs are generating thousands of dollars of taxpayer savings for every child enrolled.

Arizona's ESA program increases per pupil funding available to public schools.

- ✓ ESAs increase *per pupil public school* spending by redistributing state and federal dollars back to remaining public school students each time a child opts out of public school and into an ESA.
- ✓ From state sources alone, ESAs redirect over \$600 *per participant* back to remaining public school students for teacher pay and other operational uses.
- ✓ ESAs give more than 2,200 families of special needs students with severe disabilities each over \$25,000 a year to better meet their children's unique needs without putting pressure on district budgets to comply with federal rules.

States looking to establish or improve their ESA programs should look to Arizona as an example. Arizona ESAs make the grade—not just for students and taxpayers, but for public schools, too.

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The Public School Benefits of Education Savings Accounts: The Impact of ESAs in Arizona
goldwaterinstitute.org/az-esa/