



How to Apply for an ESA as a Military Family

This explains how military families can apply for an ESA, what documents are required, and how common military-specific situations are handled.

Who Qualifies Under the Military Category

Children of active-duty military members stationed in Arizona are eligible to apply for ESA under the military category.

- All children kindergarten and above qualify
- Preschool children with a disability also qualify

On average, students without disabilities receive approximately \$7,000 per year. Funding amounts may be higher for students with qualifying disabilities.

Applying If Your Child Has a Learning Disability

Military families transferring from out of state may still apply under the military category, even if their child has a learning disability.

Important details:

- ESA does not have a combined “military + disability” application
- Families apply under the military category first
- If you later want to use ESA funds for:
 - Therapies
 - Paraprofessional services
 - Assistive technology
 - Additional disability-related services
- the account can be updated to the disability category after approval

Evaluation Requirements

- An IEP, MET, or 504 Plan must be completed in Arizona to qualify under the disability category
- A private evaluation from out of state is acceptable as supporting documentation

Proof of Arizona Residency (This Is Required)

ESA cannot process an application without valid proof of Arizona residency. Key points for military families:

- Proof of residency must be dated within 60 days
- The document must show:
 - The student is a full-time Arizona resident
 - The applicant (parent/guardian) is a full-time Arizona resident

ESA understands military moves can delay paperwork, but applications cannot be approved until residency proof is provided.

Military Orders: What ESA Requires

Your application must include current military orders showing:

1. Name of the service member
2. Student listed as a dependent (and spouse, if applicable)
3. Location of duty station
4. Current active-duty status
5. Branch of service

If your orders do not include all required details, you may submit:

- A signed and dated letter (dated within 60 days)
- The letter must clearly list all five required items above

Once this is provided, ESA can move forward with processing your application.

Documents You Will Need to Apply

For new applicants, be prepared to submit:

- Student birth certificate
- Proof of Arizona residency (dated within 60 days)
- Current military orders or qualifying replacement letter

Incomplete applications will delay approval.

What Happens After You Apply

- ESA has 30 days to review each student's application
- If documents are missing or unallowable:
 - You will be contacted by email
 - You will be asked to submit additional documentation
 - The 30-day review period resets once new documents are submitted

All determinations are sent by email, so check spam folders regularly.

If Something Gets Rejected

Rejections are usually fixable.

- ESA will tell you what document or information is missing
- Respond promptly to avoid delays
- Do not resubmit the entire application unless instructed

A rejection does not mean you are denied...it usually means more documentation is needed.

If you need help navigating ESAs as a military family, please reach out to us at

hello@loveyourschool.org! We'd love to help!