



## Admissions and Enrollment Policies

Arizona Charter Academy is a free public charter school and admission into Arizona Charter Academy is not limited based upon race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, gender, income level, disabling condition, proficiency in the English language, immigration status, or athletic ability. ACA enrolls all eligible pupils that submit a timely application and does not deny a student admission unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity or the student has a prior or pending expulsion from another school A.R.S. 15—184(A), 15-184€ and 15-184(i)

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The most up to date Admissions and Enrollment Timeline can be found on our Enrollment Page of our ACA Website [HERE](#).

## **Admissions and Enrollment Process**

Enrollment of a student is different from admission of a student. When a school admits a student, it offers the student a spot at the school; the student can decide to accept the spot and attend the school or not.

Although a public charter school may offer admission to students upon submission of an application, before a student may be enrolled in and attend school, schools must obtain certain documentation from each student's parent or guardian.

When a school enrolls a student, the student is indicating his or her intention to attend the school and be included in the school's student count.

Homeless students are exempt from the obligation to produce the records normally required for enrollment

## **Admissions and Enrollment Process**

### **Part 1: Application for Admission**

Applications can be completed online at [www.azcharter.com/apply](http://www.azcharter.com/apply) or picked up in the ACA Enrollment Center. If eligible for the lottery, you will be contacted with information on the Open Enrollment lottery dates.

Applications for admission must be completed within our Open Enrollment period to be eligible for the lottery. Applications completed after the Open Enrollment deadline will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis behind applications completed during the open enrollment period.

*Note: Arizona Charter Academy can determine a student ineligible if they have been expelled from another educational institution or are in the process of being expelled from another educational institution.\**

### **Part 2: Offers of Admission or Waitlist**

Families will receive an email and/or phone call from ACA if and when an offer of admission is extended to their child. Please contact the enrollment center if you have any questions concerning the initial offer of admission. Offers will be sent to accepted students and waitlist numbers will be available to families not offered positions.

Acceptance of an offer of admission does not constitute official enrollment. Offered applicants will receive instructions on enrollment to finalize their enrollment at the school. Parents must

complete enrollment by the deadline to be officially enrolled. An enrollment will not be considered complete until all paperwork is completed in accordance with state law.\* Failure to submit by the school's deadline could result in non-enrollment of the student.

Acceptance of the offer of admission and submission of required documents complete the enrollment process. By submitting the required documents, the student is indicating his or her intention to attend the school and be included in the school's student count. The following documents must be provided within 30 days of offer of admission in order for enrollment to be deemed complete:

- Copy of Birth Certificate or other proof of age and identity as described below\*
- Custody paperwork (if applicable)
- Special Education Records (if applicable)
- Proof of Arizona Residency (signed form and documentation)\*
- Home Language Survey (PHLOTE) (required by the State)
- Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Student Media Release
- Race/Ethnicity Data Collection Form (required by the State)

The following documents must be submitted prior to 1<sup>st</sup> date of attendance, but are not required to submit prior to, or as a condition of enrollment:

- Proof of immunization, or evidence of a statutory exemption \*

\*Student is entitled to enrollment even if documents are unavailable when:

-The student is in foster care.

-Defined as "Homeless or Temporarily Housed" under the McKinney-Vento law {42 U.S.C. 11302}

\*Other reliable proofs of age or identity:

Other reliable proof of the pupil's identity and age, including the pupil's baptismal certificate, an application for a social security number or original school registration records and an affidavit explaining the inability to provide a copy of the birth certificate; or

A letter from the authorized representative of an agency having custody of the pupil pursuant to a juvenile court proceeding, certifying that the pupil has been placed in the custody of the agency as prescribed by law.

\*Proof of Residency

As with all public schools in Arizona, charter schools are required to obtain and maintain verifiable documentation of a student's Arizona state residency upon enrollment.A.R.S. §15-

828(A)(1)-(3).<sup>3</sup>The Arizona Department of Education has prepared Residency Guidelines available for review at <http://www.azed.gov/policy/files/2017/06/revised-residency-guideline-2017-1.pdf>. Residency documents are different from citizenship or immigration documents. Schools *may not* request or require documentation regarding a student's citizenship or immigration status in connection with enrollment or at any other time.

### \*Immunization Exemptions

Every student is required to present proof of official certificate of immunizations. Students may be exempted from the immunization requirements if parents sign an exemption form when any of the following situations exist: 1. Medical Exemption 2. Religious Belief Exemption 3. Personal Belief Exemption

\*\*Please note it is the responsibility of the parent to obtain any and all of the required documents. However, please notify the ACA Enrollment Center if the previous school refuses to give you records. A student can only be fully enrolled if all documents are received within 30 days of offer of admission.

***Please see Open Enrollment Lottery (below)***

***Please see How The Waitlist Works (below)***

***Please see Applications Eligible for Priority Status (below)***

***Please see Capacity Policy (below)***

### **Records Requests**

Records requests may be done on accepted applications for verification purposes. The school needs to verify all state assessments, and general information.

### **Open Enrollment Lottery**

Our Open Enrollment period is NOT first-come, first served. If, for any grade level, the number of applicants exceeds the number of openings, there will be a lottery to determine admission and waitlist numbers. Only applications completed during the OPEN ENROLLMENT PERIOD are included within that lottery pool. Lotteries will be held on February 21st, and results will be available starting February 28<sup>th</sup>.

### **How The Waitlist Works**

When your application reaches the top of the list, and a spot becomes available to you, the school will contact you immediately.

It is not possible for us to determine your child's chances of being offered a spot. Once our classes are full, any spots that open up are the result of student withdrawals. Although we do typically see a number of spots open up before the start of school, we have no way of knowing in which grades spots will open up or how many spots will become available.

It is possible you may move up or down on the list. Don't be too worried if you move down a few spots; this occasionally happens. For example, a 1st grade student is called from the waitlist because someone declined a spot. The 1st grader has a sibling who is #50 on the waitlist for 3rd grade. This sibling must (by law) be given "sibling preference," so she moves

up to the top of the 3rd grade waitlist (or near the top; there may be other siblings ahead of her). Therefore, if your 3rd grade child had started at #49, s/he will now be bumped down to #50.

### Important Note Regarding Acceptance AFTER the Lottery:

Any student that is offered a spot of enrollment as a result of their number being pulled at the top of the lottery is still pending any changes to that grade levels capacity numbers. A number of variables can contribute to the number of available spots we have after the lottery has already been conducted. For example: If a current ACA student ends up being retained in a grade level that would affect the number of available spots and that could bump someone from the accepted list to the first available spot on the waitlist instead.

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<sup>1</sup> See A.R.S. § 15-184(J).

<sup>2</sup> See A.R.S. §§ 15-828, -872.

**Incorrect submission grade policy:** Parents/guardians of the student must submit an enrollment application through the enrollment Portal to be eligible for an offer from ACA. The parent/guardian must apply for the correct grade for the enrollment year to which they are applying since each grade levels waitlist is independent from other waitlists. ACA cannot change the application grade for a student after the original application has been submitted due to AZ Charter laws. If the parent/guardian applies for the wrong grade, the parent must cancel the original enrollment application and apply again for the correct grade and be given a new submission date and waitlist number.

**Duplicate application policy:** ACA does not allow more than one application for an individual student for the same/multiple grades because it is not a fair and equitable enrollment process. If the ACA enrollment center finds a duplicate application for a student, the guardian/parent of the student will be notified to determine which application should be canceled so there is only one valid application.

**Enrollment for Possible Expelled Students/Expelled Students:** A.R.S. §15-184(F) allows a charter academy to refuse to admit any pupil who has been expelled from another educational institution or who is in the process of being expelled from another educational institution. In addition, if the student and family withdrew from their previous school to avoid expulsion, Great Hearts may also cancel the application or rescind the offer of enrollment.

### **Applications Eligible for Priority Status**

The following types of applications are eligible for “Priority Status”, and in the following order:

1. Current student in same school.
2. ACA Faculty/Administrator/Staff child or grandchild (full-time, benefits-eligible)
3. Applicants with siblings attending.
4. Newly accepted student siblings.
5. Board member child or grandchild
6. Confirmed rollover applicant from the previous school year

7. Non-prioritized Open Enrollment applicants (by original lottery number)
8. Non-prioritized Post Open Enrollment applicants (by first come first served)

Please Note: Any false statement on an application, including but not limited to falsely indicating priority eligibility, may result in revocation of enrollment or offer of enrollment.

### **Sibling Priority Policy**

Sibling priority only applies when the incoming applicant has a sibling that is officially enrolled or currently attending the same school to which the applicant is applying.

1. A “sibling” is defined as an immediate family member of the applicant, or a blended family member of the applicant that resides under the same roof as the applicant.
2. The sibling must be currently enrolled at ACA.
3. If sibling withdraws from the school before applicant is offered enrollment, priority status will be revoked.
4. Once marked as a “sibling” application, these priority applications are ordered by original lottery number.
5. Students with siblings already attending get a higher priority than newly accepted students.
6. Priority status does not guarantee placement.

### **ACA Faculty/Administrator/Staff Child Priority Policy**

1. The employee must be the parent or legal guardian of applicant, or the applicant must live with the employee for at least 50% of the calendar year.
2. The employee is responsible for notifying ACA of their priority status eligibility
3. If employment is terminated by employee or employer before applicant is offered enrollment at ACA priority status will be revoked.
4. Once marked as an “employee” application, these priority applications are ordered by original lottery number.
5. Priority status does not guarantee placement.

### **ACA Board Member Child or Grandchild Priority Policy**

Children of ACA Board Members

1. The board member must be the parent or legal guardian of applicant or the applicant must live with the board member for at least 50% of the calendar year.
2. The board member must be an official, board-approved board member.
3. The board member is responsible for notifying ACA of their submitted application and of their priority status eligibility.
4. If the board member’s service on the board ends before the applicant is offered enrollment at ACA priority status will be revoked.

5. Once marked as a “board” application, these priority applications are ordered by original lottery number.
6. Priority status does not guarantee placement.

## Roll-Over Policy

If your child is not offered a spot for the previous school year, and if your waitlisted application is eligible to rollover to the next school year waitlist, the school will notify you of upcoming open enrollment dates, **the responsibility falls upon the applicant to contact the school to roll their application over.** Roll-over applicants will still need to fill out a current year’s application. It is crucial you do not miss the Roll-Over deadlines set by the school to ensure your child’s application is moved to the next year’s wait list and given the correct priority. **Any applicant that was on the previous year’s waitlist will only receive the roll-over priority if they apply during the posted rollover period.** *(if there are any major changes to content of the application process, all previous years waitlisted applications will be notified of the new application process)*

### ***What happens to my waitlisted application if I roll over to the following school year waitlist?***

If you choose to roll over your eligible waitlisted application/s to the next school year waitlist, your previous waitlisted application/s will remain active for the remainder of the current school year. However, if you receive an offer of enrollment for the current school year after you elect to roll over your application, that application will be removed from the waitlist

Furthermore, applications received after August 31<sup>st</sup> for the current school year are NOT eligible to roll over for the next school year

## Kindergarten Enrollment Policy

Students entering kindergarten for the upcoming school year must be five years old on or before September 30<sup>th</sup> of the current school year.

### **Early Kindergarten Enrollment**

A child who will turn five between October 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> of the current school year, may be allowed to enter kindergarten if the child passes an early entrance screening. **We do have a limited number of spots available in this program.**

## Capacity Policy



The following factors will be considered by Arizona Charter Academy when determining capacity:

- Physical capacity of the school building and classrooms.
- Availability of staff members (i.e. administrators, teachers, other certified employee, classified employees)
- Number of students already enrolled in grade level.

Capacity limits for all opportunities at Arizona Charter Academy are based on physical space and teacher ratios. Therefore, if there is additional physical space on site, Arizona Charter Academy will hire staff to accommodate additional students as needed. Once the physical capacity of the premises is at its maximum, and the staff to student ratios are also at their maximum, no additional students will be enrolled in the relevant class, or classroom.

## **Alternative Language**

Please notify our Enrollment Department at [admissions@azcharter.com](mailto:admissions@azcharter.com) or call 623-302-5718 if you require alternative language documents or an interpreter. All applications and information are available in Spanish [HERE](#).

## **Intent to Return Policy (for returning students only)**

Intent to Return forms are for current ACA students only. In early spring current students do not need to go through our enrollment process, they only need to return their Intent to Return forms by the required deadline in order for their spot to be held the following school year.

Please note: Any current student who plans to return the following school year must fill out Intent to Return paperwork to keep their position. Unless families give notice via in writing (email or paper) that they plan to not return the following year, the schools legally cannot give away their position for that grade, even if Intent to Return paperwork is not filled out.