

2019

A Year in Review



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The State of EdChoice

As we approach our quarter-century anniversary next year, we wanted to take a moment to share with you some of the incredible successes we've recently experienced.

Over the past two years, nine states enacted new educational choice laws, bringing our total number of programs to 68 programs in 29 states. More than half a million students are able to access vouchers, tax-credit scholarships or education savings accounts—our preferred choice program—across the country.

There's no question our legislative work is opening doors to thousands of students each year, but I'm equally proud of the work we do to study school choice and to help key audiences understand why we need to continue expanding educational opportunity across the United States.

To that end, we hosted 44 trainings with 1,300 attendees in 2019. Of those trained, 100 percent gave us an A or B, and 96 percent said they were better equipped to advance educational choice. We were unable to provide in-person trainings for much of 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, but we look forward to continuing this work in the future.

Last year, EdChoice published 16 major research publications and engaged in 376 other research-related activities and services, including external publications, conference papers or posters, fiscal notes and public speaking engagements in front of legislators and at various conferences.

This year, we launched a national monthly data tracker using Morning Consult to survey more than 2,000 respondents each month, and we are standing up a Fiscal Research and Education Center to operate alongside our Legal Defense and Education Center, which launched in 2018.

When we rebranded as EdChoice in 2016, our mission was clear: advancing full and unencumbered educational choice as the best pathway to successful lives and a stronger society.

That means providing more families with access to the schooling types they want, not just the ones they can afford or to which they are geographically assigned.

We've made progress, but our work is not without its challenges—both systemic and ideological.

It's hard sometimes to believe that there remain those who would thwart educational freedom to preserve an outmoded bureaucracy, but that threat is still very real. And so we will continue, with resources from our supporters and the strength of our team, to spread the word that our K-12 system will neither be equal nor fair until we knock down barriers to entry for every student.

Our founder Milton Friedman once said that “the true test of any scholar’s work is not what his contemporaries say, but what happens to his work in the next 25 or 50 years.”

Next year, we turn 25.

As we look back, we have a lot to be proud of as we continue Dr. Friedman’s legacy of educational choice. But the true test of our work will be decades from now, when choice is not something families have to fight for but something they can expect in K-12 education.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert C. Enlow". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Robert Enlow
President & CEO

LEGAL DEFENSE & EDUCATION CENTER

The EdChoice Legal Defense and Education Center is led by our longtime Vice President of Legal Affairs. The center's core services include litigation review and legal brief writing, and a growing number of state, national and international partners regularly seek LDEC's guidance on legal aspects of school choice policies. More than half of LDEC's work is concentrated on legal analysis and partnership building.

This year has been truly outstanding when it comes to our legal work.

We still face challenges to programs passed at the state level, and we will continue to defend those programs and any new ones. But we also have much to celebrate now that the U.S. Supreme Court has struck down so-called Blaine Amendments aimed at preventing public dollars from flowing to faith-based private schools.

In late June, the Court issued its landmark ruling in *Espinoza v. Montana Dept. of Revenue* affirming the constitutionality of school choice and the right of parents to choose where and how their children are educated, as well as to receive state funding to help them access learning options other than public school.

EdChoice played a role in the case from its outset back in 2008 when our team began working with Montana state partners to craft the legislation that eventually would become the law at issue in the *Espinoza* case. It took seven years, but EdChoice—then the Friedman Foundation for Education Choice—helped get the job done. We also filed three amicus briefs—one at the state level and two with the Supreme Court—in the case.

The rest, as they say, is history.

There now exists a much clearer path to school choice in those states that had Blaine Amendments in place,



and the Court knocked down a key argument that opponents often use to attack choice. These two sentences from the opinion in *Espinoza* sum up the ruling:

“A State need not subsidize private education. But once a State decides to do so, it cannot disqualify some private schools solely because they are religious.”

FISCAL RESEARCH & EDUCATION CENTER

Following up on the success of our Legal Research and Defense Center, we are pleased to announce we will be bringing another center online at the end of 2020: the EdChoice Fiscal Research and Education Center.

Led by our Director of Fiscal Policy and Analysis, this center will include publications and robust databases of information related to school staffing, school funding and the fiscal effects of school choice.

EdChoice has been leading the way on fiscal analysis this year, most notably during the coronavirus pandemic.

The U.S. Department of Education and other national groups utilized our trilogy of COVID-19 fiscal blog posts to help inform their discussions and decisions, and our COVID-19 fiscal analyses were widely used by state partners to show how private schools play an important role in K-12 education in reducing fiscal pressures on public K-12 school systems.

We look forward to expanding our reach with the new Fiscal Research and Education Center and continuing to build our legal efforts under the Legal Defense and Education Center, as well. These two centers represent some of our most important work on the topics we are often called upon to help with at the state and national level.



WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

Our mission at EdChoice is to advance full and unencumbered educational choice as the best pathway to successful lives and a stronger society. We believe that families, not bureaucrats, are best equipped to make K-12 schooling decisions for their children, and we work at the state level to educate diverse audiences, train advocates and engage policymakers on the benefits of high-quality school choice programs.

RESEARCH AND THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

When it comes to researching educational choice programs, EdChoice is the premier organization in the movement. Our internal research team and network of Fellows work to ensure the public, media and policymakers have accurate information on the performance and effectiveness of educational choice programs across America.

Our work includes:

- Surveying voters' opinions and awareness on K-12 education and educational choice topics
- Identifying long-term trends in the private school sector and collecting data on current school capacities and growth potential
- Providing national and state-focused perspectives on other educational issues affecting matters of educational choice
- Analyzing fiscal effects of educational choice programs and new proposals
- Assessing the effects of choice on students and families as well as schools and taxpayers
- Incubating new ideas that will spark a dialogue online and in statehouses

TRAINING AND OUTREACH

At EdChoice, we believe that education is a local matter and that successful efforts to enact educational choice policies must have local leadership. We work with local partners to help identify stakeholders who will organize and build a constituency for educational choice, and we offer opportunities for them to receive training about the issue and how to advocate for it.

Our work includes:

- Sharing “how-to” expertise and promoting EdChoice’s ideas and research
- Grant-making to build new and non-traditional allies
- Building and supporting local infrastructure by investing in coalitions and leaders
- Hosting training conferences for advocate
- Hosting educational meetings, training seminars and town-hall forums

FOCUSED STATE SUPPORT

As educational choice advances in a state, we help partners identify how choice policies can be moved forward and implemented successfully. We are driving the education reform conversation toward full and unencumbered choice for all families

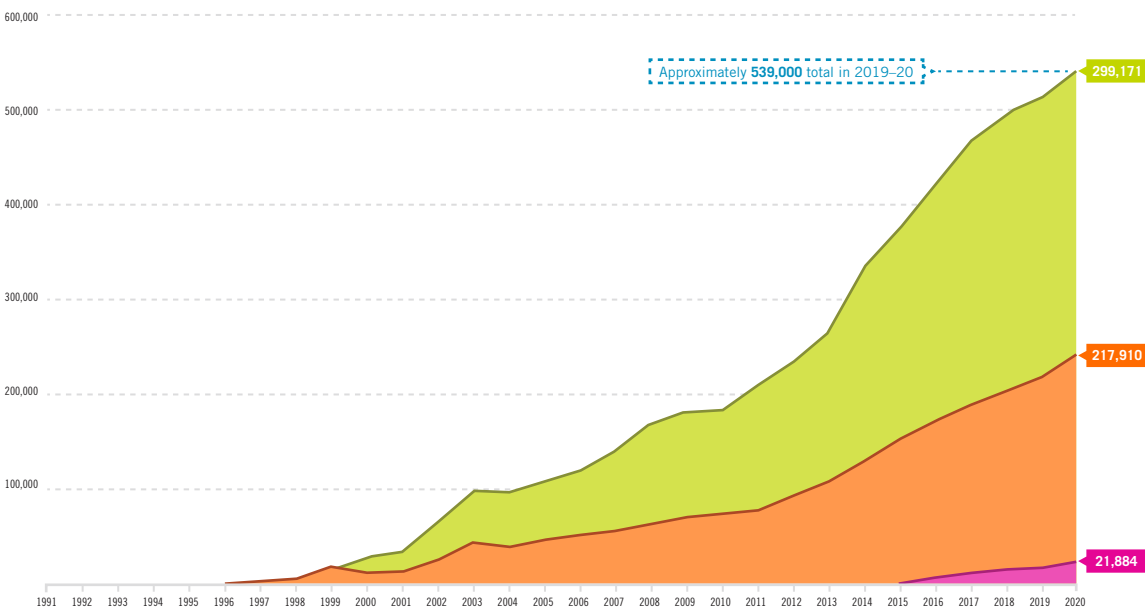
Our work includes:

- Building and working with local coalitions
- Providing ground support for policy and legislation efforts
- Analyzing and offering advice on legislative proposals
- Testifying before state legislatures and provide direct advocacy and legal advice if needed
- Providing grants to support the work of our state partners

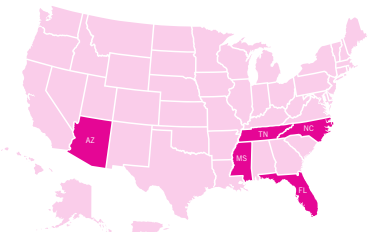
BULLETED LIST OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Our work at the state level has broken down barriers for more than half a million students who are now able to access private schools using vouchers, tax-credit scholarships and education savings accounts (ESAs). At the end of the 2019-20 school year, we project that 1.10% of students in America will be utilizing a private school educational choice program. There are 65 operational educational choice programs in 28 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

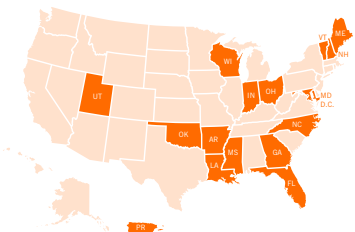
Number of ESAs, Vouchers and Tax-Credit Scholarships



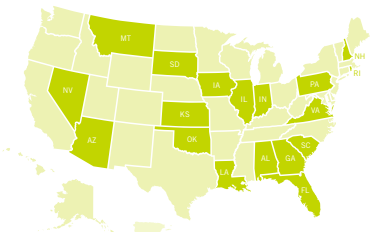
Education Savings Accounts in the United States



Vouchers in the United States



Tax-Credit Scholarships in the United States



Some of our most recent accomplishments include:

- Total public expenditures on private educational choice are more than \$2.9 billion.
- Two new school choice programs were created and four were expanded in the past year.
- More than 95,000 people attended events sponsored by EdChoice in 2020.
- Lawmakers in four states requested our fiscal expertise on school choice legislation.
- Launched the Legal Defense and Education Center to provide support for the many legal challenges we engage in each year to protect school choice programs.

FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

Record-breaking year with more than **\$8.4 million raised through 2,202 donations by 1,613 donors.**

We saw donations from all 50 states plus the District of Columbia.

Increased our Annual Fund donations by approximately **19%**.

Since founding:

EdChoice has also raised more than **\$108 million** through more than **71,836 donations** by almost **20,000 donors.**

HOW WE SPEND OUR RESOURCES

We are committed to maximizing every dollar that comes into our organization and making sure we are spending our resources to advance the cause of educational choice across the United States.

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