

The Division of Financial Operations (DFO) is committed to providing supports and services to schools, central and field offices, and all DOE employees.

As part of this commitment, the Teacher's Choice Unit within DFO created the following list of Frequently Asked Questions regarding its program.

TEACHER'S CHOICE: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



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Program Overview

Q. What is Teacher's Choice?

A. Teacher's Choice is a program funded by the New York City Council that provides funds to teachers and other educators for the purchase of educational materials. Funding levels may vary from year to year and among titles.

Q. Do I have any obligations in return for receiving Teacher's Choice funds?

A. Yes. In return for receiving funds, you must spend your entire allocation on qualifying education materials and submit an [Accountability Form](#), along with all original receipts/invoices, to your principal or his/her designee by the due date (see the [calendar of key dates](#) on the [Teacher's Choice website](#)).

Q. Can you tell me how much I will receive this year?

A. Funding is based on your title. To determine your funding level, view the list of [eligible educators](#).

Program Participation

Q. How do I sign up to participate in Teacher's Choice?

A. As long as you are working in an [eligible title](#) as of November 1st, you will automatically receive Teacher's Choice funds this year. See the [calendar of key dates](#) for distribution dates. If you do not wish to participate in Teacher's Choice this year, you must complete a [Request for Non-Participation Form](#) (opt out form) by the deadline.

Q. Can you please exclude me from the Teacher's Choice Program?

A. To be excluded from the Teacher's Choice program you must submit a Teacher's Choice [Request for Non-participation Form](#) no later than the deadline stated on the form. A new form will need to be submitted each year you wish not to participate.

Q. I am working in an eligible title but was staffed from the Absent Teacher Reserve (ATR). Will I receive Teacher's Choice funding?

A. All eligible employees including those in the ATR pool will receive Teacher's Choice funding provided their payroll record within the Employee Information System (EIS) is updated prior to November 1st (i.e., employee's payroll record must include current eligible title and employment status).

Q. How are Teacher's Choice funds issued?

A. Teacher's Choice funds are issued in your regular payroll paycheck on the designated distribution date unless you formally opt-out of the program.

Q. When can I expect to receive my Teacher's Choice funds?

A. Teacher's Choice funds are issued after November 1st, which is the date used to create the file of eligible participants. For this year's distribution, please refer to the [calendar of key dates](#).

Q. Why didn't I receive Teacher's Choice funds as anticipated?

A. Participants serving in eligible titles who are actively employed as of November 1st should have received funds during the initial distribution. In some cases, eligible employees may have been missed because their EIS profiles were not updated to reflect their active employment status as of this date. If you are eligible to receive funds yet were missed during the initial distribution, your principal or his/her designee must send an email to the Teacher's Choice Unit immediately after the initial distribution date to report that you did not receive funds despite your eligibility: teacherschoice@schools.nyc.gov. In the email, the principal must include your name and file number, and verify your eligibility by confirming that you were actively employed and in an eligible title as of November 1st. You will receive your funds in a subsequent distribution.

Q. As a new payroll secretary, how will I know who at my school received a Teacher's Choice allocation?

A. In order to determine who at a school is eligible to receive Teacher's Choice funds, principals or his/her designee are urged to verify the eligibility of each educator at the school. To do this, please follow the [Instructions for Obtaining School Roster](#).

Q. I did not receive my Teacher's Choice allocation last year. Can I still receive it?

A. No. Unfortunately, all missed allocations must be reported to the Teacher's Choice Unit by the employee's principal within the same fiscal year.

Making Purchases

Q. What is the purchasing period for this year's Teacher's Choice program?

A. The purchasing period for each school year is indicated in the [calendar of key dates](#). Please be sure to retain all original receipts/invoices as they will need to be submitted to your principal at the end of the purchasing period.

Q. Are Teacher's Choice purchases tax exempt?

A. All purchases made with Teacher's Choice funds qualify for tax exemption given that they are made on behalf of the DOE. Please refer to the [Teacher's Choice Guidelines and Procedures](#) for details.

Q. Can I contribute my Teacher's Choice funds to my school?

A. You may pool your funds with another participant to make a joint purchase. However, you may not donate your funds to your school. Please refer to the [Teacher's Choice Guidelines and Procedures](#) for assistance.

Submitting Documentation

Q. I have finished making my purchases. When can I submit my receipts to my principal?

A. Provided you were not staffed from the ATR pool, once you have made all of your purchases, you may submit your completed [Accountability Form](#), along with all original receipts/invoices, to your principal or his/her designee at any time after the initial distribution yet prior to the scheduled [deadline](#). Late submissions will not be accepted after the due date.

If you were staffed from the ATR pool, you must wait until the week containing the [deadline](#) to submit all your receipts and [Accountability Form](#) (early submission is not possible). During this week, submit these materials to the principal or his/her designee at the school you are assigned to. If you are not assigned to a school during this week, please email the Teacher's Choice Unit (teacherschoice@schools.nyc.gov) to receive specific instructions on where to submit these materials.

Q. What happens if I did not spend all of my Teacher's Choice funds?

- A.** Unused Teacher's Choice funds must be repaid. Repayment should be in the form of check or money order and should be remitted directly to the participant's principal or his/her designee along with the [Accountability Form](#) and any receipts.

Participants with a remaining balance of \$5.00 or more should provide their principal or his/her designee with a check or money order made payable to the New York City Department of Education. All reimbursed funds collected at the school will be mailed to the Teacher's Choice Unit.

Participants with a remaining balance of \$4.99 or less should provide their principal or his/her designee with a check or money order made payable to the school. These reimbursed funds will be deposited into the school's activity fund.

Q. What if I can't find my receipts and/ or I am unable to submit my Teacher's Choice Accountability Form by the deadline?

- A.** The principal or his/her designee are required to report all non-compliant participants to the Teacher's Choice Unit by the designated deadline (reporting is done via the [Outstanding Accountability Report](#)). In turn all names submitted will be forwarded to the DOE Payroll Unit for a salary deduction; participants are required to repay the DOE for unaccounted for funds. The salary deduction will be reflected in the June 30th payroll of the same fiscal year.