The Kansas State Deaf-Blind Fund: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Special Education and Title Services

An Equal Employment/Educational Opportunity Agency

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WHO CAN ACCESS THE KANSAS STATE DEAF-BLIND FUND?

Students (ages birth through 21 years) who currently are certified deaf-blind (including students with additional disabilities) identified on the Kansas Deaf-Blind Census and/or who are included on the December 1 Child Count Data can access the fund until it is depleted. Students who have severe intellectual disabilities, including those students with additional disabilities may apply on January 1\textsuperscript{st} of the school year. Students who receive homebound services from the local education agency also \textbf{ARE} eligible to receive deaf-blind funds. Students who are home schooled and do not receive services from the local education agency \textbf{ARE NOT} eligible for deaf-blind funds.

The following categories of students will be considered \textbf{priority candidates} for funding:

- students who have current deaf-blind certification;
- children birth through 2 years;
- students who have exited or will be exiting from the state hospital schools or segregated schools and classrooms to their neighborhood school districts;
- students who have a suspected vision loss and a documented hearing loss, and who need an ophthalmological or optometric evaluation; and
- students who have a suspected hearing loss and a documented vision loss, and who need an otolaryngological (i.e., ENT) or audiological evaluation.

HOW MUCH FUNDING CAN BE REQUESTED FOR A STUDENT THROUGH THE KANSAS STATE DEAF-BLIND FUND?

Applications may be approved up to $3,000.00 maximum per student, per fiscal year (July 1-June1) until the total amount of the fund has been depleted or encumbered.

WHAT ARE THE PRIORITY AREAS FOR FUNDING?

Priority areas for funding are; (1) assistive technology (including adaptive equipment), and (2) consultation, and (3) evaluation. Descriptions for each funding are as follows:

- \textbf{Assistive Technology.} The Kansas State Deaf-Blind Fund may be used for technology, which enables a student with deaf-blindness (including those students with severe disabilities) to participate in educational program and activities with their nondisabled peers. The technology must reflect evidence-based practices for students who have deaf-blindness and/or severe disabilities. Additionally, requests can be made for adaptive equipment (e.g., prone standers, wedges, etc.). Some items for which costs may be reimbursed include computers (only over 4 years of age), adaptive equipment, hearing aids, glasses, augmentative communication devices, micro switches, and/or software. \textbf{A url for an item and/or an uploaded description of the item that is being requested MUST BE described on the DB Fund electronic application form.}

- \textbf{Consultation.} The Kansas State Deaf-Blind Fund, which relate to funding priorities, KSDE Board initiatives, or evidenced-based educational practices for students who have deaf-blindness, (including those students with multiple disabilities) may be used to provide technical assistance to the student’s staff members or family members. The consultant who is requested \textbf{MUST BE}, qualified, certified, or licensed. The consultation \textbf{MUST BE} based on evidenced-based instructional practices for students who are deaf-blind and/or students with multiple disabilities. Inservice training, pre-service training, workshops, or conferences \textbf{ARE NOT} considered part of consultation. \textbf{A description of the consultant’s resume or vita MUST BE uploaded on the DB Fund electronic application form.}

- \textbf{Evaluation.} The Kansas State Deaf-Blind Fund may be used to reimburse districts for the cost of vision and / or hearing evaluations for students who are suspect of being deaf-blind. Either a
hearing or vision evaluation can be requested to certify or recertify the student for the Kansas State Deaf-Blind Census. Assistive technology, adaptive equipment, educational evaluation(s) also can be requested. Evaluations other than audiological or ophthalmological MUST BE founded on evidenced-based practices (e.g., assistive technology, adaptive equipment, etc.) for students who are deaf-blind including students with multiple disabilities.

Only one evaluation per fiscal year may be requested. The evaluator’s name, degree, and other identifying information MUST BE described. The consultant’s resume or vita may uploaded on the DB Fund electronic application form (this is optional).

WHEN IS THE EARLIEST A KANSAS DEAF-BLIND FUND APPLICATION CAN BE SUBMITTED?

A Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund Application for a student who currently is certified on the Kansas State Deaf-Blind Census will be accepted in the application window from April 1 to June 30 of the fiscal year. Any applications received after the window closes will be placed in a pending file.

HOW ARE KANSAS DEAF-BLIND FUND APPLICATIONS ARE SELECTED?

Applications WILL NO LONGER BE REVIEWED FOR APPROVAL ON A FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE BASIS. Students who do not meet the priority criteria will be selected using a random selection method. Students whose applications are submitted after the closing date will be placed in a pending file. As funds, become open, the application that is first in the pending file will be notified.

All Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund applications will be reviewed for approval after the collection window closes. Again, the collection window opens April 1 and closes June 30 for each fiscal year.

CAN STUDENTS WITH SEVERE DISABILITIES AND WHO ARE NOT DEAF-BLIND APPLY?

Yes. A Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund Application for students who are not deaf-blind, but have severe intellectual and multiple disabilities may be submitted NO EARLIER THAN JANUARY 1 of the fiscal year and who is not certified on the Kansas Deaf-Blind Census. The entire Kansas State Deaf-Blind Fund usually is encumbered by early spring. Typically, limited or no funds are available by the end of the funding cycle.

IF MY STUDENT’S APPLICATION WAS DISAPPROVED LAST YEAR, MAY I RESUBMIT IT FOR THE NEXT FUNDING YEAR?

New applications must be submitted for individual students during each fiscal year, including applications that were approved, but not funded. If funding is not available when the application is received, the application will not be held until the following year. A new application will need to be submitted (without exception).

For those students who are not certified deaf-blind, or do not meet the above listed criteria, funding applications will be returned until the application or conditions for certification are completed. Follow-up correspondence (e.g., emails and phone calls) may be requested by KSDE staff members to answer any questions or clarify information that is needed to process the application. PLEASE NOTE: ALL FUNDING MUST BE INITIATED, PROCESSED, AND APPROVED BY THE STUDENT’S LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY. This also applies to children who qualify and are enrolled in birth through programs. The child’s LEA Director or Designee will need to manage the funds for the students who are receiving birth to three programs.
WHO APPROVES THE STUDENT’S DEAF-BLIND FUND APPLICATION ONCE IT IS SUBMITTED?

Each application is screened to make sure that all appropriate documentation, attachments, and signatures are included. After the initial screening, a student’s application will be forwarded to the Administrators of the Kansas State Deaf-Blind Fund. They will review each application on a case-by-case basis and determine which requests are appropriate for funding. Decisions may be different for each student based upon evidenced-based practices documented in the literature, individual circumstances, alignment with Kansas Board of Education initiatives, and/or available funding.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE STUDENT’S APPLICATION HAS BEEN PROCESSED AND APPROVED?

Once the student’s application has been processed and approved, district contacts will be notified regarding the status of the student’s funding application by the Kansas State Deaf-Blind Fund Assistant. District contacts must wait for approval from the Kansas Deaf Blind Fund Assistant prior to making purchases (no exceptions).

The Kansas State Deaf-Blind Fund operates on an encumbrance/reimbursement system only. The Kansas State Deaf-Blind Fund Assistant will encumber the total amount of the approved items. Once the items are purchased, receipts and invoices need to be uploaded and submitted to the Kansas State Deaf-Blind Fund Assistant who will process the receipts and distribute the reimbursements. PLEASE NOTE: Do not proceed with purchasing items listed on the student’s application until you receive notification of approval from the Kansas State Deaf-Blind Fund Assistant.

CAN A KANSAS STATE DEAF-BLIND FUND APPLICATION BE AMENDED AFTER IT HAS ALREADY BEEN APPROVED?

A Kansas State Deaf-Blind Fund Application may be amended after it has been approved. Go to the appropriate link on the webpage where you can upload the item that you would like to amend. Please be very specific with the title of the file you are uploading. This will help prevent confusion for you and for the KSDE Deaf Blind Fund Staff. There is a tab for all three categories that may be amended. Choose the appropriate tab. The amendment about what is being amended and the amount. The amount of the amended item cannot exceed the original total that was previously approved. If necessary, send the appropriate documentation that is required for the items that is being requested. Once it is received in the office, the amendment will go through the approval process. You will be notified if the amended item is approved or not approved.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE SUBMITTED TO RECEIVE REIMBURSEMENT FOR THE ITEMS LISTED ON THE KANSAS STATE DEAF-BLIND FUND APPLICATION?

All receipts need to be uploaded to the Reimbursement Page for Kansas State Deaf-Blind Fund Request for Reimbursement Form and submitted within 30 days of receipt of the last approved item prior to June 1. ALL REIMBURSEMENTS, INCLUDING INVOICES AND RECEIPTS (NO PURCHASE ORDERS) MUST BE Uploaded NO LATER THAN JUNE 1 OF THE FISCAL YEAR. The Special Education Director of the local education agency or designee must sign the form. If the cost of the items listed on the reimbursement form exceeds what was approved on the approved application, only the amount listed on the original or amended application will be reimbursed. PLEASE NOTE: ANY REIMBURSEMENT FORMS ARE I AFTER JUNE 1 OF THE FISCAL YEAR CAN RESULT IN NON - REIMBURSABLE PAYMENT.
WHAT ARE THE DATES FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS AND REIMBURSEMENT FORMS?

**Application Dates:**
- **April 1** Applications will be accepted for the new fiscal year (window opens).
- **June 30** Applications will undergo the approval process for the new fiscal year.

**Reimbursement Dates:**
- **June 1** Reimbursements **must be received** by the close of business (window closes).

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE EQUIPMENT, TECHNOLOGY, OR MATERIALS PURCHASED WITH THE KANSAS STATE DEAF-BLIND FUND WHEN A STUDENT MOVES OUT OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM?

The student in the educational program must utilize the equipment, technology, and materials that are purchased with the Kansas State Deaf-Blind Fund monies. This means that when a student moves to another educational program within Kansas, the equipment follows the student. The exceptions are as follows:

- If a student graduates, moves out-of-state, or transitions out of a Kansas education program (e.g., LEA, SPED Cooperative, or interlocal) and the equipment is uniquely personalized for the student’s individual physical characteristics (e.g., ear molds, eye glasses, artificial foot orthotics (AFOs), etc.), the technology, equipment, or materials stays with the student. All other items purchased with Deaf-Blind Fund will stay with the district.

- If the equipment, technology, and materials were adapted or personalized for the student’s use (e.g., augmentative communication devices or toy activated switches), the technology, equipment, and materials is up to the local education agency to determine what they would like to do with the equipment, technology, etc. The district could decide to sell the item to the parents at current market value, donate the equipment to agencies with technology loan libraries, give the item to the student. This arrangement needs to be made with the local education agency, the student (if applicable), or the student’s family.

- If the equipment, technology, or materials no longer meets the student’s needs, the local education agency may choose to:
  - use the equipment for another student in the program
  - donate the item to an equipment loan library (i.e. Assistive Technology for Kansans _http://www.atk.ku.edu_)
  - delete it from the inventory of items due to age (e.g., computer doesn’t support the new software programs
  - destroy it if it cannot be repaired
  - aged out of the device