

# The Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund

## Frequently Asked Questions and Answers



Special Education and Title Services Team

An Equal Employment/Educational Opportunity Agency

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## **WHO MAY ACCESS THE KANSAS DEAF-BLIND FUND?**

Students (ages birth through 21 years) who currently are certified deaf-blind by the Kansas Deaf-Blind Project based on the criteria from the Kansas Deaf-Blind Census and/or have severe significant disabilities included on the December 1 Child Count Data may access the fund until it is depleted. Students who receive homebound services from the local education agency also **ARE** eligible to receive deaf-blind funds. Students who are home schooled and do not receive services from the local education agency **ARE NOT** eligible for deaf-blind funds.

The following categories of students will be considered **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 to their neighborhood school districts;
- students who have a suspected vision loss and a documented hearing loss, and who need services of an ophthalmologist or optometric evaluation; and
- students who have a suspected hearing loss and a documented vision loss, and who need services of an otolaryngologist (i.e., ENT) or audiological evaluation.

## **WHO MAY APPLY FOR THE KANSAS DEAF-BLIND FUND?**

The Special Education Director/Administrator may apply for the Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund. The Special Education Director/Administrator also has the authority to assign a designee who may access the Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund. This is applicable for children birth through two years of age. Parents **MAY NOT APPLY** for the Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund. Special Education Directors/Administrators, or their designees need to ensure their districts, interlocals, special education cooperatives, or education service centers have their districts included in the directory, and themselves, need to be an authorized user through the KSDE Authentication process.

## **HOW MUCH FUNDING MAY BE REQUESTED FOR A STUDENT FOR THE KANSAS DEAF-BLIND FUND?**

Applications will be approved up to \$4,500.00 maximum per student, per school year 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, software, etc.), (2) consultation, and (3) evaluation. Descriptions for each funding category are as follows:

- **Assistive Technology.** The Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund monies may be used for high or low technology, which enables a student with deaf-blindness including those students with severe disabilities to participate in educational programs and activities with their

nondisabled peers. The technology must reflect evidence-based practices for students who have deaf-blindness and/or severe significant disabilities. Some items for which costs may be reimbursed include: computers, prone standers, side layers, hearing aids, glasses, computer peripherals, augmentative communication devices, micro switches, and/ or software. **A picture from a catalog (screen shot) and a written description of the items being requested MUST BE uploaded to the digital application form.** (Refer to authenticated application for Deaf-Blind Fund.)

- **Consultation.** The Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund monies, relate to funding priorities, KSDE Board initiatives, and evidenced-based educational practices for students who have deaf-blindness, including those students with severe significant disabilities, may be used to provide technical assistance to the student's staff members or family members. The consultant who is being requested **MUST BE**, qualified, certified, or licensed. The consultation that is provided **MUST BE** based on evidenced-based instructional practices for students who are deaf-blind and/or students with severe significant disabilities. Inservice training, pre-service training, workshops, or conferences **ARE NOT** considered part of consultation under this category. **The consultant's resume or curriculum vita, and including a description of the consultation that will be provided MUST BE uploaded on the digital application form.** (Refer to the authenticated application for the Deaf-Blind Fund.)
- **Evaluation.** The Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund monies 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 may be requested for recertification on The Kansas Deaf-Blind Census. (Refer to the above description on who may access The Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund.) Assistive technology, adaptive equipment, educational evaluation(s) also may be requested. Evaluations other than audiological or ophthalmological **MUST BE** based on evidenced-based practices (e.g., assistive technology, augmentative communication, adaptive equipment, etc.) for students who are deaf-blind and/or students with severe significant disabilities. **Only one evaluation per fiscal year may be requested.** The evaluator's name, degree, and other identifying information **MUST BE** uploaded on the digital application form. Evaluation requests other than audiological, ophthalmological must include a description of the evaluation on the digital application form. (Refer to the authenticated application for the Deaf-Blind Fund.)

## **WHAT ITEMS OR SERVICES CAN NOT BE USED FOR ACCESSING KANSAS DEAF-BLIND FUND?**

It is important to remember, the Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund is a fund of last resort. It is intended to assist LEAs off-set costs for specialized equipment, consultation, and evaluation that often are required for educational purposes.

The Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund does not reimburse for direct services, batteries, duplicative items (unless there are a complete and clear reasons as to why there is a need for two items), URL lifetime subscriptions, guarantees, warranties, insurance, iPads (up to the age of 4 years), home accommodations (unless the student needs items for education or program plan), iPhones, Large Screen TVs, Movie Projectors, or other electronic devices. The fund will not pay for items if the student graduated, drops out of school, or is home schooled without receiving services from the LEA. More importantly, the items or services that are requested must be grounded in evidence-based practices.

The consultant who is providing technical assistance must not be in the position of receiving direct services, and/or must not be a staff member providing consultation services for the district. Additionally, inservice training, pre-service training, workshops, or conferences are not considered consultation.

Any items requested that are not described in the categories of eligible expenditures may be approved at the discretion of the Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund Education Program Consultant in consultation with the Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund Assistant Director.

## **WHEN IS THE EARLIEST A KANSAS DEAF-BLIND FUND APPLICATION MAY BE SUBMITTED?**

A Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund Application for a student who currently is certified on The Kansas Deaf-Blind Census will be accepted in the application window from **April 17, 2023 to July 31, 2023**. Any applications received after the window closes will be placed in a pending file.

All Deaf-Blind Fund applications will be reviewed for approval during the collection window. Again, the collection window **opens April 17, 2023 and closes July 31, 2023**. Priority student applications will be reviewed first. Priority students are:

- a. Children, birth two years of age.
- b. Students who are leaving a segregated school or facility and are returning to the student's neighborhood school.
- c. Students with documented vision loss; with a suspect hearing loss.
- d. Students with a documented hearing loss; with a suspect vision loss.

A random selection will be applied to determine those students who will receive the approved amount on their applications.

A Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund Application may be submitted for a student with significant disabilities and who is not certified on the Kansas Deaf-Blind Census **NO EARLIER THAN JANUARY 1, 2024**. The entire Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund usually is encumbered by early spring. Typically, limited or no funds are available by the end of fiscal year.

New applications must be submitted for individual students 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 for the following year. A new application will need to be submitted.

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., email, phone call, or fax) 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.**

## **WHO APPROVES THE STUDENT'S DEAF-BLIND FUND APPLICATION ONCE IT IS SUBMITTED?**

Each application is screened to make sure that all appropriate documentation, uploaded descriptions, and award status are included. After the initial screening, a student's digital application is complete, it will be sent to the 1st approver and a second approver. They will review each application on a case-by-case basis and determine which applications are fully approved, partially approval, or disapproved. Decisions may be different for each student based upon evidenced-based practices, individual circumstances, alignment with KSDE 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 a generated award letter. **Contacts must wait until they receive an automated award letter prior to making purchases** or be subject for costs of the items if they are disapproved. Contacts may check on updates to the award status through the KGMS authenticated application program.

The Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund operates on a reimbursement system only. The Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund Assistant will encumber the total amount of the approved items. Once the items are purchased, **receipts or invoices need to be uploaded to the student's reimbursement form**. The Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund Assistant will process the receipts and distribute the reimbursements. **PLEASE NOTE: No purchase orders or purchase authorizations will be accepted.**

## MAY A KANSAS DEAF-BLIND FUND APPLICATION BE AMENDED IF THE STUDENT'S APPLICATION IS ALREADY AWARDED?

A Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund Application may be amended after it has been awarded. Submit a digital amendment form that identifies what is being amended and the amount. The amount of the amended item **may not exceed the original total that was previously approved**. If necessary, send the appropriate documentation that is required for the items being requested. Once it is received, the amendment digital form will go through an 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 AND/OR SERVICES?

All receipts need to be uploaded to the reimbursement digital form and Reimbursement Form. **ALL INVOICES AND RECEIPTS MUST BE SUBMITTED NO LATER THAN APRIL 28<sup>TH</sup> OF THE FISCAL YEAR.** If the cost of the items listed on the digital reimbursement form exceeds what was approved on the original application, only the amount listed on the original application will be reimbursed. **PLEASE NOTE: ANY REIMBURSEMENT FORMS SUBMITTED AFTER APRIL 28<sup>TH</sup> OF THE FISCAL YEAR CAN RESULT IN NON - REIMBURSABLE PAYMENT.**

## WHAT ARE THE DATES FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS AND REIMBURSEMENT FORMS?

### Application Dates:

**April 17, 2023** Digital applications will be accepted for the new fiscal year (window opens). (The opening date will be based on legislature decisions; therefore, the opening date and closing date will be adjusted accordingly.)

**July 31, 2023** Applications will be closed for the new fiscal year (window closes)

### Receipts and Invoices:

Receipts and invoices are due **30 days** after receiving award letter.

### Reimbursement Dates:

Reimbursements are accepted throughout the fiscal year.

**April 28, 2023** Reimbursements **must be received** by the close of business (window closes).

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

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

1. If a student graduates, moves out-of-state, or transitions out of a Kansas education program (e.g., LEA, SPED Cooperative, education service center or interlocal) and the equipment is uniquely personalized for the student's individual physical characteristics (e.g., ear molds, eyeglasses, artificial foot orthotics (AFOs), etc.), the technology, equipment, or materials stay with the student.
2. If the equipment is not personalized (described in item one above) and the student transitions to another program within Kansas, the equipment stays with the student.
3. 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 may be purchased at the current market value from the local education agency. This arrangement needs to be made with the local education agency, the student (if applicable), or the student's family.
4. 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, or
  - donate the item to an equipment loan library (i.e., [Assistive Technology for Kansans](#)).

## WHERE IS THE KANSAS DEAF-BLIND FUND APPLICATION FORM AND INSTRUCTIONS LOCATED?

There are several ways applications for the Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund may be accessed;

- access the KGMS Authenticated Application,
- [Quick Start Guide of The Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund System](#) (2019),
- [Quick Start Guide of The Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund System for Administrators](#) (2019),
- contact Lisa Karney, phone 785.296.6765 (V) or email [lkarney@ksde.org](mailto:lkarney@ksde.org), and/or
- contact Sarah Reed, phone 785.296.4602 (V) or email [sreed@ksde.org](mailto:sreed@ksde.org).

## KANSAS DEAF-BLIND PROJECT AND KANSAS DEAF-BLIND CENSUS

Information about the Kansas Deaf-Blind Census and Registry may be accessed through;

- [The Kansas Deaf-Blind Project](#)
- [The Kansas Deaf-Blind Census](#): contact Marites Altuna, Project Director, phone 913.645.5645 or email: [maltuna@kssdb.org](mailto:maltuna@kssdb.org), and/or Erin Kelly, Deaf-Blind Census and Registry Specialist, phone 913.305.3061 or email: [ekelly@kssdb.org](mailto:ekelly@kssdb.org).

Submit the digital application form with the uploaded documentation following the instructions provided. The student's digital application will be processed once it is received by the Kansas Deaf-Blind Fund Assistant, Consultant and/or Administrator. Award notifications, along with instructions for requesting reimbursement, are included in the KGMS Program for the Special Education Director or designee of the student's local education agency.