

FAQs Related to the APH Quota Funds Annual Census and FERPA Parental Release of Information Requirement

Many questions have been asked about the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) program, and the requirement for FERPA parental release of information signatures for the Federal Quota Program. Below are those questions with answers to help aid in the understanding of this process. We appreciate your efforts to help ensure as many students as possible who qualify for the APH Federal Quota program can be included.

1) What is the APH Federal Quota Program?

- a) There are limited sources for specialized materials for use with children who are blind.
- b) The US Congress funds production of educational materials for students who are eligible as legally blind by the American Printing House for the Blind.
- c) Funding is allocated annually based on individual student information.

2) What is the Annual APH Census?

- a) Each year local school districts and WCBVI collect, compile, and submit information to APH regarding the students identified as meeting Federal Quota eligibility.
- b) All information reported is considered confidential under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
- c) Specific information is reported for each eligible child to allow the federal release of funds to each state through the APH Quota Funds process.
- d) Wisconsin receives approximately \$300 for each eligible student.

3) Why do we have to do this?

- a) In order to release personally identifiable information (*PII*) for Federal Quota registration purposes, the *PII* must be secured as required by FERPA and IDEA.
- b) *PII* must be shared with APH and the federal government in order to register students for the Federal Quota and we cannot share this *PII* without this required permission.

4) Why is written consent required?

- a) Consent to release child's personal data is necessary to inform parents of the process and their right to refuse release of the data.
- b) Non-consent to release child's personal data means the APH funds for that student will not be available to the school district, and the district will need to purchase educational materials from APH from local resource funds.

5) What information will be collected?

- a) Child's name, birthdate, school district and grade placement.
- b) Primary reading medium and visual function/visual acuity range.
- c) The information is not shared outside the APH Census process.

6) How do I receive the APH FERPA forms?

- a) If you need forms, you can download them from <https://www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us/resources/aph/>

7) What happens to the information collected?

- a) Wisconsin has two Ex Officio Trustees (Dan Wenzel – WSBVI Account, and Dawn Soto – Statewide and Private School Accounts) and it is their job to oversee the APH Census and the expenditure of accounts.
- b) The Ex Officio Trustees have the responsibility to submit accurate student information in a secure manner.
- c) LEAs, Special Ed. Directors and local TVIs compile the data requested by the APH Census. These data are reported directly to the WI APH Census Coordinator.
- d) APH retains the information for accountability purposes in obtaining US Congressional funds and allocating those funds to the states for materials purchase.

8) How do I submit the APH FERPA forms? Is APH requiring the signed forms to be filed in a state office?

- a) Signed permission forms are not kept by APH or WCBVI. APH has given guidance that it is the responsibility of the Ex Officio Trustees in each state ensure districts secure and retain permissions. Please retain the original in your district office.
- b) Districts retain the form for their records and indicate on the APH Census form that parental consent has been received.

9) Parental signatures are best obtained at annual IEP meetings when the reasoning behind them can be thoroughly explained (and the parent is actually there to sign!). This means it might take one year to obtain signatures depending on when the IEP's are due. Is this allowable?

- a) We realize the difficulties of requiring signatures. States are not given alternatives and only students with parental consent will be able to be included on the Census.
- b) Quota eligible students who are not enrolled in the Census will not be eligible to receive Federal Quota materials through the Educational Services Center (ESC) at the Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (WCBVI). As always, districts may continue to purchase APH materials for their students who are not on the Federal Quota Census.

10) What if the family doesn't sign this form, will my student get Quota materials still?

- a) Only students with parental consent to share their personally identifiable information (PII) will be able to be included on the Census.

11) What if a student moves? What if my student ages out of the APH system?

- a) If a student has moved out of your district, please let the APH Census Coordinator know by emailing aphcensus@wcbvi.k12.wi.us.
- b) If you know the district they have moved to, or if they have moved out of state, please indicate as such.
- c) If your student ages or graduates out prior to each year's January Census, you do not need to register them. In this case, please email the information to alert the APH Census Coordinator at aphcensus@wcbvi.k12.wi.us

12) Can I have the forms in Spanish?

- a) Yes, absolutely! Please request any other language translation as well.
- b) Please make requests for forms in other languages to the APH Census Coordinator at aphcensus@wcbvi.k12.wi.us.
- c) All available forms are posted on the WCBVI website at <https://www.wcbvi.k12.wi.us/resources/aph/>

13) What happens if my student is their own guardian now?

- a) If a student is an adult (18 or older) and is his/her own guardian, you do not have to obtain parent permission.
- b) In these cases, if the student is subject to FERPA and IDEA, the student will need to provide permission for release of his/her *personally identifiable information (PII)*. Have the student sign the form and then write, “student is own guardian” on the form.

14) Do I need to get this signature from parents every year?

- a) No, parent permission forms do not need to be collected on an annual basis.
- b) Once you have secured the parent permission, it is good until FERPA and IDEA no longer apply, or until a change in guardianship occurs, or a change in educational placement.

15) What if a parent will not sign the form?

- a) If a parent is not comfortable signing the release form, please encourage them to call the Wisconsin APH Ex Officio Trustees (EOT) to help explain the process further.
- b) WI School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Account – Dan Wenzel (608) 758-4925
Dan.Wenzel@wcbvi.k12.wi.us
- c) Statewide Account and Home/Private School Account – Dawn Soto (608) 758-6145
Dawn.Soto@wcbvi.k12.wi.us

16) What if I can't get a FERPA signed by parents because the IEP is not until late spring? If a FERPA signature is not received for a currently eligible Quota student, how will this impact current materials out on loan, including capital equipment?

- a) Please have the FERPA ROI signed immediately or the student cannot be included on the APH Federal Census.
- b) Students who are not registered on the APH Federal Census will need to return APH textbooks, consumables and capital equipment WCBVI. These APH textbooks, consumables and capital equipment are provided through the Federal Quota program and are only available to registered students. Vision Professionals, LEAs and/or Special Education Directors will be contacted when APH materials are required to be returned to the ESC.
- c) As always, LEAs and school districts can purchase any APH materials directly through APH (www.aph.org) for students who are blind or visually impaired but are not registered in this Federal Program.

17) What if I test a student in May and they meet APH criteria and I get the FERPA signed by the parent at the IEP meeting, then I can order equipment, correct?

- a) If your IEP team determines that a child meets WI DPI VI eligibility and the team believes that he/she would be eligible for the APH Federal Quota Registry, please have the parents sign the FERPA signature form.
- b) However, as only Census registered students are eligible to receive materials from APH, your requests cannot be submitted and orders cannot be filled until students are officially registered (on the next Census date).

18) But these are my student's things, why would I have to turn them in to you at the Center?

- a) These APH items are made available to students on the Federal Registry in order to assist the LEAs and school districts as they provide FAPE to their students who are blind or visually impaired.
- b) These items are made available via the Federal Government to be loaned to qualifying students in accordance with the law. See governance below:

From Retention and Disposal of APH Products Purchased with Federal Quota Funds

- APH products purchased with Federal Quota funds remain the property of the respective Federal Quota account and the responsibility of the Ex Officio Trustee.
- Products purchased with Federal Quota funds revert to the inventory of the Federal Quota account when students exit instructional programs or no longer need them.
- It is the responsibility of the Ex Officio Trustee to discard outdated or unusable products purchased with Federal Quota funds.
- In order to better leverage federal funds, products purchased with Federal Quota funds may be loaned to other Federal Quota accounts.

19)Why can you decide how my student gets these things? If it says available through quota funds, then we just get it, right? It's my student's money, right?

- a) Many items are listed as being available on Quota funds and it is the role of the Ex Officio Trustees (EOTs) in each state to determine how to meet the needs of the state. As an Ex Officio Trustee (EOT) of APH, we are "charged with administering the funds allocated to each of our registered students under the Federal Quota Program"
(<http://www.aph.org/advisory/#publications-workshops>).
- b) It is the responsibility of the EOT to determine how those designated quota credits are used to purchase materials to support children and adults in educational programs. APH has many high cost items available to students, which is very exciting! However, the high costs of these items forces the EOTs to create rules and guidelines.
- c) Each Quota eligible student, nationwide, is allocated approximately \$350 per annual quota year. This money is divided to meet the needs of all students in Wisconsin on the APH Quota accounts.

20)Additional questions:

- a) Contact the APH Census Coordinator at aphcensus@wcbvi.k12.wi.us or Outreach Director, Dawn Soto at dawn.soto@wcbvi.k12.wi.us