

APH Federal Quota Changes 2024

Frequently Asked Questions and Flow Chart Scenarios

Question 1:

Can you explain what it means that a student meets IDEA eligibility in my state?

Answer 1:

Each state interprets the IDEA definition of blind and visually impaired differently. Your state Department of Education has guidance for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) regarding the state interpretation. Each state has statutes and guidance for LEAs and IEP teams. In Wisconsin, students must be found to be a student who is blind and visually impaired per [PI 11.36\(3\)](#).

Question 2:

Would a home-schooled student, who is eligible under MDB or FDB, and has a plan for education (even for what is allowed for a home school plan at the state level & even if not an IEP) qualify for APH Federal Quota?

Answer 2:

Yes, if a student Meets the Definition of Blindness (MDB) or Functions at the Definition of Blindness (FDB) and has an educational plan recognized at the state level, that student can be registered for the APH Federal Quota Program.

Question 3:

How will the addition of more students impact the APH Federal Quota funding?

Answer 3: The annual Congressional allocation for the APH Federal Quota Program is divided by the number of students who formally qualify nationwide. The addition of students who will now formally qualify will reduce the per student capita amount provided to each state.

Question 4:

What will you do to make sure there is enough funding for all students, can you guarantee my students will have access to funds all year long?

Answer 4: Ex Officio Trustees (EOTs) in each state are appointed by the State Superintendent of Public Education to manage the federal funding set forth in *The Act to Promote the Blind*, which was established by the 45th Congress in 1849. The EOTs have specific guidelines for how federal quota funds are distributed. Federal funds are credited to accounts that are maintained by EOTs in each state. Each EOT oversees a region of the U.S. and can use the funds to purchase products from APH. Some trustees create statewide lending libraries or resource centers from which Local Education Agencies, school districts and other educational institutions can borrow products, as the per capita annual allocations per student has already not been able to provide some materials, such as high cost technology items, for every qualified student. Other EOTs work directly with districts or teachers to purchase products for specific students, agencies or schools. Sharing products, as needed, in a state ensures all students may have access to the products and resources they need. With these current changes, EOTs are currently sharing their cost saving strategies amongst one another in an attempt to maximize available federal dollars.

Question 5:

With the new APH eligibility rules, will the amount available per student be first come, first served? Or will it be a designated amount per student? This will alter how I do my ordering. If it is first come, first served, I need to submit earlier. If it is a smaller amount per student, I will need to rethink what I can order for my higher need students as they will not be able to get all of their supplies via federal quota any longer.

Answer 5: Some states only allow each registered student to order the "per capita" amount annually. This has been approximately \$470/student in recent years. As you know, this wouldn't allow for much to be purchased per student. We rely heavily on our TVIs sending back items that are not being used so that they can be loaned again. This will become even more important moving forward. We know that this may impact what we can provide, and we will be meeting as APH Ex Officio Trustees (EOTs) to determine what some are doing in their states to manage the funds. EOTs have rules to follow, but they have a large degree of independence to ensure dollars are spent appropriately. EOTs all do many similar things to ensure that we can spread the Federal Quota funds further, including providing high-cost loans (only) for items over \$1,000. Some states do not allow TVIs to request APH braille paper and other consumables like braille stickers to be purchased with Federal Quota funds; instead, they require TVIs to obtain those types of consumable materials from their LEAs separately through local funding to reduce overall Federal Quota funds spending. We will be discussing all of the new changes in the coming weeks and months. Up until this point in time in Wisconsin, we have rarely limited purchases, but we may need to implement some policy changes as we learn more and as we watch this unfold.

In some ways you are correct, it may become first come, first served with our quarterly spending. There may come a time when we hit the point in our quarterly spending where we must hold orders, especially with so many

new students who may be registered under IDEA. I have had to hold on allowable purchases in the past when we have been significantly overspent into the next Fiscal Year. While we can overspend into our next annual APH allocation by a certain amount, this increase in registered students will definitely lead to a lower per capita per student amount. Just how much this will impact us in each state is yet to be seen.

FLOW CHART IDEAS:

Scenario 1 Long Version:

If MDB or FDB equals Yes, AND there is an Education Plan of any kind (IEP, state recognized homeschool plan or 504 plan), then Yes the student can be registered for the APH Federal Quota Program.

Scenario 1 Short version:

MDB or FDB = Yes AND Education Plan = Yes then Yes, can be registered

Scenario 2 Long version :

If MDB or FDB equals Yes, AND the student meets IDEA in the state and has an IEP then Yes, the student can be registered for the APH Federal Quota Program.

Scenario 2 Short Version :

MDB or FDB = Yes AND meets IDEA with an IEP = Yes, then Yes, can be registered..

Scenario 3 Long version :

If the student doesn't meet the MDB or FDB criteria, but does meet IDEA in our state and the student has an IEP then Yes, the student can be registered for the APH Federal Quota Program.

Scenario 3 Short version :

MDB or FDB = No

And

IDEA in our state = Yes, with an IEP = Yes, then Yes, can be registered