

December 14, 2020

**RE: 2021 FEDERAL QUOTA REGISTRATION OF BLIND STUDENTS**

Dear Superintendent:

Each year, the Ohio Department of Education, Office for Exceptional Children, requests that all Ohio districts participate in the Federal Quota Registration of Blind Students for more information please visit <https://ataem.org/obtaining-aem/federal-quota>. [Eligibility guidelines](#) can be viewed online. This registration provides an allotment of funds to purchase accessible educational materials, including textbooks and equipment, for any registered student. These materials are purchased through the American Printing House for the Blind, Inc. (APH) for more information visit <https://www.aph.org/about-federal-quota/>. The registration process is conducted on behalf of the Department by the Assistive Technology and Accessible Educational Materials (AT&AEM) Center at OCALI at <https://ataem.org/>.

The Department requires the registration of every student **attending** your district who meets the eligibility requirements outlined in this memo. Each registered student generates \$389.39 and will be able to obtain accessible educational materials through the Federal Quota Program.\*

The AT&AEM Center administers the allocation based on the number of registered Ohio students who are legally blind. The cost of braille and large print textbooks and other specialized materials are expensive, so it is important to register each eligible student.

- Please log onto <https://ohioaem.ataem.org> to **complete, download, sign and return** via mail the official **2021 FEDERAL QUOTA REGISTRATION OF BLIND STUDENTS** form by Feb. 12, 2021.
- Registration forms are required even if there are no legally blind students attending your district.
- Retain a copy of the registration form in the student's record along with the parent permission form (nine languages available) at <https://ataem.org/obtaining-aem/federal-quota> and current student qualifying eye report in the event of an audit that requires proof of the student's registration.

This annual registration is **not** a part of the data reporting for EMIS or the deafblind census conducted by the Ohio Center for Deafblind Education. Federal Quota registration is used solely to generate supplemental funds for accessible educational materials for students from APH. Disclosure of this personally identifiable information is authorized under the "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974," 34CFR, Part 99.31, Paragraph (a)(4)(i).

If you have questions regarding these procedures, please contact Kelly Houston or Judy Siens at [fqaemsupport@ataem.org](mailto:fqaemsupport@ataem.org). Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,



Jo Hannah Ward, M. Ed.  
Director, Office for Exceptional Children

cc: State Support Teams

\*The Federal Quota Program is a supplemental program and is not intended to provide all of the materials required by a student. However, the AT&AEM Center pools the allocation so that a requestor can order based on students' needs.

# Online Federal Quota Census Registration Instructions

Superintendents/Directors or their Designee will need to:

1. Log on to the AT&AEM Center Federal Quota Census Registration at <https://ohioaem.ataem.org>.
2. Use your email to sign in.
  - a. If your email does not work, click on "Need an account"
3. The AT&AEM Center will approve new users. (Superintendents can also appoint a designee to have access to registration). If Superintendents/Designees do not see their district or need to change the district they serve, contact [fqaemsupport@ataem.org](mailto:fqaemsupport@ataem.org). An email will be sent upon approval with your login information.
4. Once logged in, you will see your district(s). Click on your district to update students for the 2021 Census
5. There are 4 phases of registration submission:
  - a. *Incomplete:*
    - i. Superintendents/Designees will update student information
  - b. *Pending Review:*
    - i. The AT&AEM Center will review your submission and approve or reject your submission.
      - a. If rejected, the user will receive an email to log back in to correct.
  - c. *Ready for Signature:*
    - i. Superintendent will download, print, sign and mail the original registration form to the AT&AEM Federal Quota Registration of Blind Students, 470 Glenmont Ave, Columbus, OH 43214 via the United States Postal Service. **No faxed or emailed forms will be accepted.**
    - ii. Make a copy of signed registration form.
      - a. The copy should remain on file at the school district
      - b. Parental permission form(s) will remain on file at the school district
  - d. *Completed:*
    - i. Once approved by the AT&AEM Center, the Superintendent will receive an email indicating the district Registration is complete.
6. If you have questions about this process, please contact the AT&AEM Center via the [fqaemsupport@ataem.org](mailto:fqaemsupport@ataem.org) email.

# FEDERAL QUOTA PROGRAM GUIDELINES

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Detailed [Eligibility Guidelines](#) can be downloaded from the AT&AEM Center's website.

Students must meet the federal definition of legal blindness as outlined by the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind: "...central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with best correction; a peripheral field so contracted that the widest diameter of such field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees; or visual performance reduced by a brain injury or dysfunction when visual function meets the definition of blindness as determined by an eye-care specialist or neurologist."

- **Meets the Definition of Blindness (MDB)** - a central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with best correction (using the Snellen chart) or a visual field of 20 degrees or less;
- **Functions at the Definition of Blindness (FDB)** - when visual function meets the definition of blindness as determined by an eye-care specialist (ophthalmologist or optometrist) or other medical doctor such as a neurologist. Students in this category manifest visual characteristics often found in conditions referred to as neurological, cortical, or cerebral visual impairment (e.g., brain injury or dysfunction).

### **AND**

- Be enrolled in a formally organized public or private nonprofit educational program of less than college level including
  - students who are deafblind
  - students with multiple disabilities who are legally blind
  - students enrolled in regular education or special education programs
  - students in public, private and parochial schools

School-age students must be enrolled with the registering school or agency on Monday, January 4, 2021.

**There is no chronological age limit for eligibility.** The federal law limits registration to persons working at less than college level, but places no restrictions on the ages of eligible students.

- **Adults over 21 years of age** who meet the definition of blindness and are enrolled in instructional programs at less than college level for 20 hours per week of documented intervention.
- **Eligible infants/birth to age three.** An infant can be registered if they meet the following three requirements:
  - Are enrolled in a formally organized (i.e., Help Me Grow Early Intervention, Early Head Start, or attending a licensed early care and educational program), regularly scheduled educational or training program and have a written education plan. An individualized family service plan (IFSP) or any other written plan may be used.
  - Meet the definition of blindness. An infant can be registered with a note from their pediatrician, or any eye care specialist, stating the infant meets the definition of blindness since an actual acuity is impossible to obtain at this age. When the child turns three, a new, official eye report from their eye care specialist (optometrist/ophthalmologist), must be obtained with acuities to determine if they meet the definition of blindness, or from their neurologist if they function at the definition of blindness due to a brain injury.
  - Parent permissions are required for all students in the birth to three age group.
- **Preschool Children, and Homebound Students** who have a written education plan are enrolled in a formally organized program.
- **Eligibility of Students Who Are Home-Schooled** who have a written education plan and meet Ohio's eligibility requirements.

**Please note the following student groups may not be eligible**

- **Students of Armed Services Personnel**
  - The Department of Defense Education Agency (DOD-EA) is responsible for meeting the educational needs of military base school students who would otherwise be eligible for federal quota funds
  - The DOD-EA is allowed to use the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC).

- **Students residing on reservations who receive funding from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)**
  - The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is responsible for meeting the educational needs of students in reservation schools who would otherwise be registered for federal quota funds.
  - The BIA has not coordinated with the NIMAC. For more information, contact [nimac@aph.org](mailto:nimac@aph.org).

## **PARENT PERMISSION**

Each infant, preschool, or school-aged student is required to have a permission form signed by the parent (one time only) to be registered in the Federal Quota program. If a student is an adult (18 or older) and his or her own guardian, you do not have to get parent permission. In these cases, if the student is subject to FERPA and IDEA, the student will need to provide permission for release of personally identifiable information (PII).

Parent Permission registration forms are available in: Albanian, Chinese, English, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Ukrainian. Access these links at <https://ataem.org/obtaining-aem/federal-quota>.

## **REPORTING PROCEDURE**

To protect student identity, the AT&AEM Center encrypts all electronic correspondence with districts and provides a method for districts to return encrypted reporting materials.

Log onto the *2021 FEDERAL QUOTA REGISTRATION OF BLIND STUDENTS* portal at <https://ohioaem.ataem.org> and report **every student who is legally blind and in attendance in your school district or agency as of Monday, January 4, 2021**. Only the **school district of attendance** reports each student who is legally blind. Please note there may be students who could be eligible and **not** be listed in your account. Additional students to review:

- students who have moved into the district within the last year
- students who have a change in their visual acuity

**Superintendent's report using one of the two codes defined above, MDB** - Meets the Definition of Blindness or **FDB** - Functions at the Definition of Blindness.

### **Superintendents must:**

- Verify the eligibility of each student listed;
- Obtain parental permission for each student being enrolled, if not currently on file;
- Check the accuracy of the information provided;
- Update incorrect information;
- Add new students;
- Submit for approval;
- Download, print and sign registration form once approved by the AT&AEM Center;
- Make a copy of the registration form for district records and
- **Mail original registration form** to the AT&AEM Center. The **superintendent's signature** on the completed registration form **verifies the existence** of these records.

Submit the registration form to the AT&AEM Center even if there are no enrolled students who are legally blind.

### **Only the codes listed in the ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES can be accepted**

### **Each district must have the following documents on file for each registered student:**

- **Written education plan**. such as an IEP, a 504 plan, or any other written action plan that verifies the student is in a formally organized education program.
- **Current eye report by an ophthalmologist or an optometrist**. A report from a medical doctor such as a neurologist is acceptable for students classified as 'Functions at the Definition of Blindness.' **FDB** is a category indicating blindness due to a brain injury or dysfunction. The report must be **current within three years (2018 or later)**. Exemptions from the current eye report

regulation include students who are totally blind or whose eyes have been enucleated or who have proven non-changing eye conditions.

- **Signed Parent Permission** form can be found <https://ataem.org/obtaining-aem/federal-quota>.

**SUBMISSION**

**Return 2021 FEDERAL QUOTA REGISTRATION OF BLIND STUDENTS FORM** no later than Friday, February 12, 2021 to: AT&AEM Federal Quota Registration of Blind Students, 470 Glenmont Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43214.