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Table of Contents

Sl#	Title	Page#
1.	Project Narrative - Attachments -----	3
2.	APR_Year_2_Exec_Sum_Narrative_Workplan_Budget_H235E190004.pdf -----	4
3.	Project Narrative - Signed 524B Coversheet -----	24
4.	APR_Cover_Sheet_Signature_H235E190004.pdf -----	25
5.	Grant Performance Report (ED 524B) Cover Sheet - Revised 2015 -----	27
6.	Executive_Summary_H235E190004.pdf -----	29
7.	Grant Performance Report (ED 524B) Project Status Chart - Section A - 1 -----	31
8.	Grant Performance Report (ED 524B) Project Status Chart - Section A - 2 -----	32
9.	Grant Performance Report (ED 524B) Project Status Chart - Section A - 3 -----	34
10.	Grant Performance Report (ED 524B) Project Status Chart - Section A - 4 -----	36
11.	Grant Performance Report (ED 524B) Project Status Chart - Section A - 5 -----	38
12.	Grant Performance Report (ED 524B) Project Status Chart - Section A - 6 -----	39
13.	Grant Performance Report (ED 524B) Project Status Chart - Section A - 7 -----	40
14.	Grant Performance Report (ED 524B) Project Status Chart - Section B & C -----	42
15.	Budget_and_Budget_Narrative_H235E190004.pdf -----	43
16.	Additional_Information_H235E190004.pdf -----	48

Project Narrative - Attachments

Title : Attachments

Attachment:

File :

- 1 [APR_Year_2_Exec_Sum_Narrative_Workplan_Budget_H235E190004.pdf](#)

U.S. Department of Education
Grant Performance Report Cover Sheet (ED 524B)

Check only one box per Program Office instructions.
[X] Annual Performance Report [] Final Performance Report

Executive Summary

PR/Award #: H235E190004

The Braille Excellence for Students and Teachers (BEST) Grant annual report provides information indicating the extent to which the BEST project met its goals during Project Year 1. The Project is focusing on three goals that help to promote the BEST grants' primary focus to increase opportunities for TVIs working in rural communities and secondary focus to increase the knowledge of TVIs, intervention specialists, general educators, paraprofessionals, and transcribers in obtaining and creating accessible documents thereby increasing equitable access to braille materials in inclusive settings.

Goal 1: Enhance the competency of preservice and inservice educators, paraprofessionals, and others to provide braille literacy instruction and support across all academic areas including Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM).

Goal 2: Enhance the competency of both pre-service and inservice educators, paraprofessionals, and others to efficiently and effectively acquire and create braille materials.

Goal 3: Educators and others will be able to apply strategies learned in the BEST project trainings and other activities to more effectively manage the braille needs of their students through the support of followup technical assistance or resources.

Some highlights from the first six months:

- 1) Nine training activities have been completed in goals 1 and 2 and nine more are scheduled before the end of the first grant year.
- 2) Three local braille production centers were set up in high-need school districts/agencies and staff for each center were trained on the operation of equipment and software. One center was placed in the targeted Appalachia/rural region.
- 3) Technical assistance (TA) is being provided by highly qualified consultants to educators who are producing braille for students and transcriber

candidates who are in the process of completing their certification.

Specialized TA is also being provided to the Grafton Braille Service Center at Grafton Correctional Institution.

- 4) A Virtual Communications Platform (Microsoft Teams) to support the learning community for a virtual peer-to-peer network. Attendees have ongoing access to training materials and recordings as an option to review content and continue professional growth. Participants can also engage in conversations with other participants within the Teams channel or ask follow-up questions to the trainer.
- 5) Through collaborative work with the Ohio TVI Consortium, grant activities are supporting TVIs in rural areas by offering specialized training to expand their braille knowledge and implementation while in school and post graduation, thus supporting them in bringing a new level of expertise in areas of the state that are typically underserved.

BEST collects data on each grant activity keyed to a project objective, and then WordFarmers, the grant external evaluator, compiles, analyzes, and interprets the data to determine the effectiveness of the activity and suggests options for improvement and continued growth for the current project year and upcoming Year 3 activities. Additionally, WordFarmers initiated a longitudinal study to extend over the course of the remaining 4 years of the grant for the purpose of (1) to investigate how BEST project participants make use of BEST courses and technical assistance to obtain the skills and expertise needed to fulfill current job responsibilities and to achieve career objectives and (2) to investigate participants' perceptions of the impact, quality, relevance, and usefulness of their BEST experiences and the alignment between their perceptions and BEST project goals.

While the COVID pandemic impacted the delivery method for BEST trainings and technical assistance, educators found the BEST activities to be of the same high quality, relevance, and usefulness as previous years. BEST continued to be responsive and deliver support to educators in Ohio as well as some participants in other states through various virtual meeting and learning platforms. Educators increased competencies in braille production, braille instruction, and braille across STEM and language arts. Accordingly, educators have implemented their learning into their educational practices both in online, hybrid and in face-to-face learning environments.

The grantee has the capacity to continue activities and wishes to continue to receive the NCC award.

Narrative

Section A. Substantial progress towards completion of goals, objectives, and outputs with funds awarded in FY 2020.

1. Describe program activities, outputs, and products (toolkits, curricula, conferences, etc.) completed from October 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021.

With the funds awarded in 2021, the AT&AEM Center at OCALI has made significant progress towards the completion of the goals and objectives outlined in the scope of work for our Braille Excellence for Students and Teachers (BEST) grant. We have completed conference activities, professional development sessions, and created many opportunities for technical assistance. We have also established a peer-to-peer support network through Microsoft Teams, which has allowed the participants of our activities continued access to training materials. In November of 2020, OCALI hosted our annual conference, OCALICON, focused on enriching the lives of people with disabilities. Due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, OCALICON took on a virtual format this year- OCALICONLINE. This year the BEST grant provided registration to attend OCALICONLINE for 40 university students studying to be Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TVIs). Our work supported increased access to content sessions on braille literacy and braille assistive technologies (AT). A total of 409 participants attended ten sessions on these topics across the three days of OCALICON, with three of those sessions being networking sessions.

OCALICON was our largest event this year, however, we also demonstrated substantial success with a total of ten professional development (PD) sessions offered between October 1st, 2020 and March 31st, 2021, with nine completed. The one session that was not completed was cancelled due to low registration related to the COVID-19 pandemic as explained in Section 5. Our PD opportunities included one-day virtual training workshops via Zoom, multi-day virtual training workshops via Zoom, and online learning opportunities designed with a range in rigor and time commitments to meet the varied needs of professionals. The list below includes the ten trainings that were offered:

- A. Duxbury (four-day virtual training)
- B. Duxbury Lunch and Learns (X3 sessions)
 - a. Transcribers Notes
 - b. Tables
 - c. Line Numbered Text
- C. Braille Formatting (one-day virtual training)
- D. BrailleNote with Google (one-day virtual training)
- E. BrailleNote with Keymath (one-day virtual training)
- F. Creating Accessible PDFs (two-day virtual training)

- G. STEM Braille Strategy Smackdown (cancelled due to low attendance)
- H. Using Macros and Templates to Produce Large Print, Braille, and Electronic Text (four-day virtual training)

For each of the PD sessions, Microsoft Teams, a platform to support the learning community for a virtual peer-to-peer network, was used to connect with class participants and the instructor after the training for questions or clarifications, and to share and store resources for future use. Since the grant serves the state, and Ohio has more than 1000 districts, technology permissions vary across districts. We continue to explore other options in an effort to best meet the needs of a variety of educators, from multiple school districts, offering varying degrees of access to the various learning management systems. The BEST grant team continues to explore Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Canvas for future use.

This year's grant activities have also included both long- and short-term technical assistance (TA) and established three local braille production centers (LBPCs). As of March 31st, 2021, staff in the AT&AEM Center have provided 102.3 hours of BEST grant TA across Ohio. The hours are calculated on three targeted areas of support: (a) support to braille transcribers, (b) establishing and continued operation of LBPCs, and (c) braille production support for Grafton Braille Service Center at Grafton Correctional Institution. We have continued to provide access to and promote the [BEST TA Portal](#), as well as the [BEST website](#) that was built in October of 2020.

2. Describe the most significant program outcomes from October 1, 2020, to March 31, 2021.

As illustrated in Section A(1) of this report, the BEST grant team in the AT&AEM Center at OCALI, were very productive with grant activities and product development during the first two quarters. The following list includes highlights of the most significant accomplishments or outcomes from October 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021:

- A. Ten training activities were planned, and nine training activities were completed, targeting two main goals: *(1) Enhance the competency of preservice and in-service educators, paraprofessionals, and others to provide braille literacy instruction and support across all academic areas including Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), and (2) Enhance the competency of preservice and in-service educators, paraprofessionals, and others to efficiently and effectively acquire and create braille materials.*

Each professional development (PD) session was evaluated by external evaluators based on observations and attendee feedback, specifically in

the areas of quality, relevance, and usefulness. Of the nine sessions completed 100% of the trainings equaled or exceeded a 6 with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high) on each of the three measures: quality, relevance and usefulness. The highest score for quality was 7.9, with the lowest being 6.7. In the area of relevance, a high score of 8 was achieved, with the lowest being 6.85. Finally in the area of usefulness of the PD, 8 was the highest score reported, with the lowest score being 6.9. The consistently high scores illustrate the significant success of the PD sessions in providing quality training that was relevant and useful to participants. Previous grant reports for the current project year indicated lower percentages ranging within the 90s. These percentages were calculated from the individual training raw scores that were converted into percentages and then averaged to obtain the final percentage rating for quality, relevance, and usefulness. This previous data was reported in error and was not an accurate calculation of the intended performance measures. The intended measure was to review the raw data scores ranging from 2-8 and determine the percent of those scores that were equal to or above a 6. When using this method to calculate the data all trainings during this grant exceeds 6, as reported. Because all scores were within our project target of 6, this totals 100% of grant activities within the project year as meeting the performance measure.

- B. Three local braille production centers (LBPC) were set up in high-need school districts/agencies for the purpose of increasing the ability and capacity to produce incidental braille for students. Staff for each center were virtually trained on the operation of equipment and software. One underlying focus for each goal within the grant is to *ensure that educators and students in Appalachian and rural areas are benefiting from grant products and activities*. One of the three LBPCs was placed in an Appalachian/rural region in Ohio.
- C. A total of 102.3 hours of technical assistance (TA) was provided by highly qualified consultants. The total TA was broken down as follows: a) 3.5 hours of TA to five transcriber candidates who were in the process of completing their certification, b) 7.25 hours of TA for Grafton Braille Service Center at Grafton Correctional Institution and finally, c) 91.55 TA hours for educators who are producing braille for students and districts who were selected to receive the LBPCs previously mentioned. Additionally, participants had access to the BEST TA Portal where requests for technical assistance can be made to the AT&AEM Center's braille consultants. Between October 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021, the

page was accessed 61 times, with 49 unique page views and 18 entries for technical assistance requests.

- D. Microsoft Teams has been set up as a virtual communications platform. In order to encourage ongoing engagement and follow-up for grant event participants, Microsoft Teams is being used to support the learning community for a virtual peer-to-peer network. Attendees have ongoing access to training materials and recordings as an option to review content and continue professional growth. The recordings are available only to participants of the respective trainings. A total of 18 recorded training sessions have been made available to participants in Microsoft Teams. Sessions are recorded and posted from each day of a training. As a result of offering multi-day trainings, the number of videos exceed the number of completed activities. By keeping the videos separated by each training day, attendees can return to specific recordings to continue or refresh their learning. Additionally, 59 resource documents in total were provided by the instructors for the participants to support the sessions. In addition to providing continued access to resources and training recordings, participants can also engage in conversations with other participants within the Teams channel or ask follow-up questions to the trainer.
- E. The BEST longitudinal study was also launched during this time. The longitudinal study has two major aims: (1) to investigate how BEST project participants make use of BEST courses and technical assistance to obtain the skills and expertise needed to fulfill current job responsibilities and to achieve career objectives and (2) to investigate participants' perceptions of the impact, quality, relevance, and usefulness of their BEST experiences and the alignment between their perceptions and BEST project goals. Six interviewees participated in Zoom interviews in October and November 2020. These base-year surveys established the interviewees' demographic backgrounds and historical involvement with BEST PD and TA. Four interviewees had extensive experience with BEST services over a period of several years and two interviewees were relatively new to the BEST project. An evaluator coded the interviewees' responses and grouped them according to themes. Analysis of the responses suggests that the interviewees found BEST project services to be high in quality, relevant to their professional activities, and useful toward accomplishing their professional objectives. Comments from interviewees who had engaged in BEST online courses suggest that remote instruction might be an effective addition to BEST project offerings even after the pandemic is over. The interviewees who had participated in

BEST professional development for several years demonstrated a pattern of engagement with BEST courses in which they repeated one or more times courses that they had already completed. This appears to be connected to a phenomenon that will continue to be tracked: a system to support rigorous content delivery adapted to the professional circumstances of BEST's target audience. In February 2021 the evaluator issued a comprehensive report of activities and findings for the longitudinal study's base-line year.

3. Describe the most significant program activities, outputs, products and outcomes anticipated between April 1, 2021 and September 30, 2021, particularly in the areas listed above. Indicate the degree to which the goals and objectives in the work plan for the current year are expected to be met by September 30, 2021.

The following reflect the most significant program activities, outputs, products and outcomes anticipated between April 1, 2021 and September 30, 2021.

- A. There are nine additional training sessions scheduled on topics related to braille literacy instruction across all academic areas including science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), reading, and writing. One previously cancelled training session was rescheduled, STEM Braille Strategy Smackdown. The STEM Braille Smackdown session will help teachers problem-solve current STEM access issues and then plan purchases through FQ funds of supporting materials for STEM. This has been rescheduled for Year 3 of the grant and is reflected in the Year 3 Work Plan. Dancing Dots Music Software has been revised to Music Braille Instructional Strategies in order to provide a training with a broader scope. The training will focus on strategies that any attendee can implement without requiring specific software.
- B. Technical assistance (TA) activities will continue by the BEST grant highly qualified consultants and will be available for educators who are producing braille for students and transcriber candidates who are completing their braille transcriber certification. TA will also be provided to the Grafton Braille Service Center at the Grafton Correctional Institution as needed and requested. We are planning to develop a QR code linked to the TA portal URL that will be included in our lab loans and other items shipped to TVIs to provide additional marketing of the TA portal.
- C. Outreach to the two Ohio universities (Shawnee State University and Ohio State University) Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI) preparation programs will continue with training activities provided by BEST consultants to the students of the Shawnee State University program in June of 2021, and for the students of the Ohio State University program in September of 2021. The trainings will focus on assistive technologies for students who are blind or visually

impaired, as well an introduction to AT&AEM Center resources that support TVIs such as BEST professional development and how to obtain accessible educational materials (AEM). Additionally, a recorded training is being provided to Shawnee State University on creating accessible documents that support access to instructional content for students who are blind or visually impaired.

- D. Through collaborative work with the Ohio TVI Consortium at Shawnee State, grant activities will continue to support TVIs in rural areas by offering specialized training to expand their braille knowledge, skills, and implementation while in school and post graduation, thus supporting them in bringing a new level of expertise in areas of the state that are typically underserved.
- E. Finally, online asynchronous learning opportunities are also being developed to support practitioners in the field who need immediate information or support for troubleshooting. During this project year, two videos have been added, Large Print and Braille Templates and Macros for Productivity. Additional videos are currently in development for this project year, including Tips and Tricks for Local Braille Production Centers as well as Creating Accessible PDF Documents. The resources are developed in segmented videos to allow for quick and easy viewing. Asynchronous learning opportunities will continue to be added to the series to further increase learning opportunities. These resources are posted on our [BEST Grant website](#) as a collection of On-Demand Tips and Tricks Videos.

Our anticipated outcomes are to obtain equal to or greater than 6 on a scale of 2-8 participant evaluation rating for quality, relevance, and usefulness for at least 90% of the training sessions. A baseline target number of participants for each training session has been projected based upon the training content and anticipated need. Educators from Appalachian and rural areas have been set as a priority and are anticipated to account for a set percentage of participants based on the training or activity. Some activities/resources have a vetting process established, such as the on-demand webinar series, Tips and Tricks, etc. to ensure high quality products and activities are available to participants. A vetting panel has been established to review each resource on quality, relevance, and usefulness. Additionally, the BEST grant Advisory Team discusses and reviews all activities and products. WordFarmers will continue to provide external evaluation of the entire project.

4. Describe the non-COVID related challenges, opportunities, and emerging issues encountered to date (October 1, 2020-March 31, 2021) or anticipated during the remaining portion of this fiscal year April 1, 2021 to September 30, 2021, as well as your plans for overcoming challenges and taking advantage of opportunities. Indicate how RSA might be of assistance.

Generally, the grant activities progressed as anticipated from October 1, 2020 to early March 2021. At this writing, we anticipate that no changes will be needed to original grant goals or objectives to meet our current grant obligations.

5. Describe whether COVID-19 has impacted project timelines and training activities and specify what activities have shifted or been postponed.

With the progression and continuation of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the BEST Grant has continued to offer training sessions exclusively in a virtual format, and this will continue through the end of the current grant year, in October 2021. At this point in time many Ohio schools are transitioning back to full time in-person instruction for the first time since the pandemic started. Other schools have chosen to finish out the school year in either hybrid and full virtual models of instruction. Ohio educators were included in the early COVID vaccination program so it is anticipated that most if not all schools will resume full in person instruction in the fall, if the trend in new COVID cases declines. It is also anticipated that some of the state orders for limitations in mass gatherings will also be reassessed and possibly lifted.

The one session, STEM Braille Strategy Smackdown, that was not completed was cancelled due to low registration. It should be noted that the timing of that event coincided with the relatively sudden state-wide COVID mass vaccination program of educators and subsequent move by many schools to change their instructional models from virtual to hybrid or face-to-face instruction. Educators experienced a great deal of change during that time and likely did not have time for professional development activities. This session has been rescheduled to Year 3 of the grant project.

6. Discuss whether COVID-19 impacted outreach and recruitment of participants, retaining participants, or impacted the projects ability to meet its targets. If impacted please describe how the project may be addressing these issues or how the project plans to address these issues.

While the model of instruction used for the BEST grant prior to the pandemic was fully face-to-face training, this necessary switch from face-to-face to virtual training for a year has allowed us to rethink future delivery modules for BEST grant trainings and supports. Many participants have commented on the ease of access that virtual trainings provided. We plan to survey those who participated in BEST activities during the pandemic to determine what type of service delivery best meets their needs going

forward, as well as if there are specific trainings that were more effectively delivered virtually versus face-to-face. Because of the pandemic we were able to develop alternate training modes that can now be leveraged moving forward to possibly better reach participants needs.

Section B. Work Plan

1. Provide a work plan for Year 3 that includes anticipated activities, outputs, products and outcomes, and the timeline for completing them. Highlight any major new work plan initiatives or significant changes anticipated in the next project year. If you submitted a work plan in your application, you may update or modify, as needed.

BEST Grant Work Plan Year 3: 2021-2022 Activities

GOAL 1: Enhance the competency of preservice and in-service educators, paraprofessionals, and others to provide braille literacy instruction and support across all academic areas including Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM).

Objective 1.1 Improve statewide equity in the distribution of high-quality training to preservice and in-service educators, paraprofessionals, and transcribers to support student proficiency in using braille for scientific and mathematical notation, to access STEM.

Performance Measures

1.1.a. Number of participants in training sessions. Measure Type: GPRA, Target: 35

1.1.b. Number of participants who complete the training. Measure Type: GPRA, Target: 35

1.1.c. Number of participants in training sessions from Appalachian and rural regions. Measure Type: GPRA, Target: 5

1.1.d Number of braille STEM sessions completed. Measure Type: Program, Target: 3

1.1.e. Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of quality with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high). Measure Type: Project, Target: 90% at project closure.

1.1.f. Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of relevance with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high). Measure Type: Project, Target: 90% at project closure.

1.1.g. Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of usefulness with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high). Measure Type: Project, Target: 90% at project closure.

STEM Activities	Date
Four-Day Basic Nemeth	June 2022
BrailleNote Touch with KeyMath	February 2022
STEM Braille Smackdown	January 2022
Equatio and MathType Software	September 2022

Objective 1.2 Improve statewide equity in the distribution of high-quality training to preservice and in-service educators, paraprofessionals, and transcribers to support student proficiency in braille literacy for reading and writing.

Performance Measures

1.2.a. Number of participants in training sessions. Measure Type: GPRA, Target: 45

1.2.b. Number of participants who complete the training. Measure Type: GPRA, Target: 45

1.2.c. Number of participants in training sessions from Appalachian and rural regions. Measure Type: GPRA, Target: 10

1.2.d. Number of braille reading and writing sessions completed. Measure Type: Program, Target: 4

1.2.e. Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of quality with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high). Measure Type: Project, Target: 90% at project closure.

1.2.f. Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of relevance with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high). Measure Type: Project, Target: 90% at project closure.

1.2.g. Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of usefulness with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high). Measure Type: Project, Target: 90% at project closure.

Reading and Writing Activities	Date
Three-Day Basic Braille	June 2022
Four-Week Advanced Braille	June 2022
12-Week Blended Braille	March-May 2022
Using the BrailleNote Touch with Google Classroom	January 2022
A Touch of Braille	September 2022
Parapro Instructional Support Techniques	September 2022

GOAL 2: Enhance the competency of preservice and in-service educators, paraprofessionals, and others to efficiently and effectively acquire and create braille materials.

Objective 2.1 Provide high-quality training to preservice and in-service educators, paraprofessionals, and transcribers to understand the value of, and develop competencies in producing accessible source documents for the purpose of creating braille.

Performance Measures

2.1.a. Number of participants in training sessions. Measure Type: GPRA, Target: 15

2.1.b. Number of participants who complete the training. Measure Type: GPRA, Target: 15

2.1.c. Number of participants in training sessions from Appalachian and rural regions. Measure Type: GPRA, Target: 5

2.1.d. Number of sessions completed. Measure Type: Project, Target: 2

2.1.e. Percent of participants who can meet a mastery level post test measure. Measure Type: Project, Target: 85% at project closure.

2.1.f. Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of quality with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high). Measure Type: Project Target: 90% at project closure.

2.1.g. Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of relevance with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high). Measure Type: Project Target: 90% at project closure.

2.1.h. Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of usefulness with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high). Measure Type: Project, Target: 90% at project closure.

Producing Accessible Documents Activities	Date
Creating Accessible MS Word Documents	February 2022
Scanning for Braille, Large Print and Audio	September 2022
Using Microsoft Word Templates and Macros to Produce Large Print, Braille and Electronic Text	March 2022

Objective 2.2 Increase ability of educators and others who support braille users to efficiently and effectively locate ready-made braille and/or use non-visual technologies to provide for the braille needs of persons with blindness.

Performance Measures

2.2.a. Number of participants in training sessions. Measure Type: GPRA, Target: 100

2.2.b. Number of participants who complete the training. Measure Type: GPRA, Target: 100

2.2.c. Number of participants in training sessions from Appalachian and rural regions.

Measure Type: GPRA, Target: 20

2.2.d. Number of sessions completed. Measure Type: Program, Target: 3

2.2.e. Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of quality with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high). Measure Type: Project, Target 90% at project closure.

2.2.f. Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of relevance with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high). Measure Type: Project, Target 90% at project closure.

2.2.g. Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of usefulness with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high). Measure Type: Project, Target 90% at project closure.

2.2.h. Number of participants who obtained positions where braille skills are needed.

Measure Type: GPRA, Target: 2

Technology Activities	Date
Duxbury Braille Translation Software	October 2021
Braille Forum at OCALICONLINE 2021	November 2021
VI/braille AT for Shawnee State TVI cohort	June 2022
Regional AT conference and vendor fair	September 2022
VI/braille AT for Ohio State University TVI cohorts	September 2022
3-Duxbury Lunch and Learn 1-hr focused topics	Dec. '21, Jan '22, Feb. '22

Objective 2.3 Increase the pool of braille transcribers available to provide braille to Ohio school districts, businesses, and other agencies that support students and adults with braille needs.

Performance Measures

2.3.a. Number of participants engaged in TA sessions. Measure Type: GPRA, Target: Minimum of 15 per year

2.3.b. Number of participants from rural and Appalachian areas engaged in TA sessions. Measure Type: GPRA, Target: Minimum of 3 per year

2.3.c. Number of participants who complete the NLS course. Measure Type: GPRA, Target: 2.

2.3.d. Number of participants who obtain positions where braille skills are needed. Measure Type: GPRA, Target: 1

2.3.e. Number of TA hours provided. Measure Type: Project, Target: Minimum of 75 hours per year

Technical Assistance Activities	Date
TA to braille transcriber candidates testing for braille certification	As requested
Provide TA to OSSB, AT&AEM and local school district braille production sites	As requested
TA and training to GBSC as needed	As requested

Objective 2.4 Expand braille production capacities within local school districts and/or vocational and technical education centers.

Performance Measure

2.4.a. Number of LBPCs set up. Measure Type: Project, Target: 3 per year

Braille Production Center Activities	Date
Select, setup and train three high need school districts/vocational career and technical centers to receive a local braille production center	October/November 2021

GOAL 3: Educators and others will be able to apply strategies learned in the BEST project trainings and other activities to more effectively manage the braille needs of their students through the support of follow-up technical assistance or resources.

Objective 3.1 Develop and improve access to a range of technical assistance and training materials which can support implementation of braille skills learned from training activities.

Performance Measures

3.1.a. Number of participants utilizing resources. Measure Type: GPRA, Target: 15

3.1.b. Number of participants utilizing resources from rural or Appalachian areas.

Measure Type: GPRA, Target: 5

3.1.c. Number of resources developed at the close of the grant project. Measure Type: Program, Target: 9

3.1.d. Percent of resources that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of quality with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high) as measured by a vetting panel. Measure Type: Project, Target: 90%

3.1.e. Percent of resources that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of relevance with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high) as measured by a vetting panel. Measure Type: Project , Target: 90%

3.1.f. Percent of resources that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of usefulness with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high) as measured by a vetting panel. Measure Type: Project, Target: 90%

Activities	Date
Develop and promote a video series on Sourcing Ready-made Braille Materials	September 2022

Manage Project

Activities	
Advisory Team Meetings	December 2021, March 2022, June 2022, September 2022
Evaluation Meetings with External Evaluators	TBD
Contract with Qualified Personnel	October 2021

Activities Projected	Year 3
Trainings	20
Video Resource	1
Other Online Products	0

2. Provide an analysis of the goals and objectives submitted in the grant application. Specifically, indicate whether any goals, objectives, or activities in the work plan represent a change in the scope or objectives of the project. If so, please include the original goal, objective or activity (reference the page numbers in the application), the specific change, and the justification.

The three goals outlined in the grant focus on braille, with each goal targeting a focused and identified need in the areas of knowledge, practice, and equitable access to braille and related technologies. Although each goal has a specific focus, we have universally

targeted Appalachian/rural areas within every goal of the grant to, again, support access to underserved populations.

Goal 1, *Enhance the competency of preservice and in-service educators, paraprofessionals, and others to provide braille literacy instruction and support across all academic areas including Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)*, has a strong focus on braille literacy and includes all academic areas, with a specific intention to include STEM. The goal is intended to teach professionals about best practices in braille literacy and supporting students in accessing the curriculum across all content areas. Activities to meet this goal are composed entirely of professional development (PD) opportunities. There are no changes to the original goals or objectives.

Goal 2, *Enhance the competency of preservice and in-service educators, paraprofessionals, and others to efficiently and effectively acquire and create braille materials*, shifts the focus to increase educators' capacity to both obtain and produce braille for their students. The goal intends to broaden knowledge in areas such as braille transcription and related hardware/software, support the establishment and operation of braille production centers, and provide technical assistance (TA) for certifications related to the production of braille. In order to meet this goal, a variety of grant activities are provided through TA and PD. There are no changes to the original goals or objectives.

Goal 3, *Educators and others will be able to apply strategies learned in the BEST project trainings and other activities to more effectively manage the braille needs of their students through the support of follow-up technical assistance or resources*, is focused on increasing the longevity of the success of the grant and extending attendee knowledge and support. This goal utilizes TA and online resources such as webinars, peer-to-peer support networks, and an online repository for related materials to continue the engagement of attendees and provide continued access to grant materials and information.

In summary, there were no changes to the original goals or objectives; however, due to the pandemic and state restrictions on in-person gatherings, all training activities were delivered virtually. Additionally some activities were delivered over the course of multiple days to accommodate learners needs in the virtual learning environments.

Section C. Budget

1. Provide an estimated budget and budget narrative for Year 3 including a personnel loading chart. (Remember to apply and expend carry over funds carried over first.)

Estimated Budget for Year 3 (2021-2021)

Personnel	\$.00
Fringe Benefits	\$.00
Travel	\$ 4,300.00
Equipment	\$ 13,560.00
Supplies	\$ 16,310.18
Contractual	\$ 71,170.00
Construction	<u>\$.00</u>
Total Direct Costs	\$105,340.18
Indirect Costs	<u>\$ 6589.82</u>
Total Expenditures	\$111,930.00

Budget Narrative for Year 3

Personnel and Fringe

No personnel and fringe costs were requested for this grant, therefore a personnel loading chart was not provided.

Mail/Travel

Estimated Mail/Travel Budget \$4,300

The travel expenses are budgeted for BEST Technical Assistance Consultants travel to school districts and agencies or onsite TA to braille production centers

Equipment

Estimated Equipment Budget \$13,560.00

Purchase three braille embossers for local braille production centers at three high need school districts/vocation career and technical centers.

\$ 4,450.00/each	Braille Embosser
\$ 40.00/each	Shipping Costs

Supplies

Estimated Supply Budget \$16,310.18

Funds are budgeted to purchase:

- Scanning software for training participants
- Duxbury software for training participants
- Software and Supplies for 3 selected Local Braille Production Centers (LBPCs)
- Adobe Pro for computer training lab
- Expansion/replacement/repairs of training lab laptops/cabbage cases if needed
- Tactile Graphics supplies for training participants
- Braille paper for LBPCs
- Video equipment for producing webinars/video resources (microphones, video recording and editing software)

Contractual

Estimated Contractual Budget \$71,170.00

Funds are budgeted to implement the following activities:

- Instructor costs for training courses
- College credit for Ohio teachers completing braille courses
- Costs associated with Braille AT Forum at OCALICON 2020
- Technical Assistant Consultant costs for:
 - 1) TA to braille production centers in districts/agencies
 - 2) TA to braille transcriber candidates
 - 3) TA to Grafton Braille Service Center
- Webinar/Video resource development and accessibility costs (captioning and audio descriptions)
- External Evaluator cost

Construction

No construction costs were requested in this grant.

Indirect Costs

Estimated Budget = \$6589.82 (7.18% Rate)

2. Describe any anticipated deviations from your original Year 2 budget that require prior approval from the Department (see EDGAR 34 CFR 74.25 and 80.30), if applicable, including changes in key personnel, level of effort, or line item modifications exceeding the allowable 10 percent administrative flexibility, or any budget modifications resulting from project objectives or scope changes discussed above.

At this time we do not anticipate deviations from the original Year 2 budget that would require prior approval from the Department. Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, we are continuing our professional development trainings online until face-to-face restrictions are lifted and we

obtain feedback from those who participated in PD over the course of the pandemic as to which delivery method best meets their needs. There are no anticipated changes to project objectives or scope due to COVID that would impact the budget, just potentially minor changes in training delivery.

March 22, 2021

The Educational Service Center of Central Ohio (ESCCO) affirms that we are aware of Federal and state data security and student privacy regulations. We have provided links to our Board Policies, Administrative Guidelines as well as our employee handbook which demonstrate such understandings. Additionally the ESCCO requires all employees to undergo Data Security, HIPAA and FERPA trainings on an annual basis.

<https://go.boarddocs.com/oh/escco/Board.nsf/Public>

<https://www.escco.org/Downloads/2020-21%20ESC%20Handbook.pdf?v=76>



David A. Varda Treasurer/CFO
Educational Service Center of Central Ohio



Project Narrative - Signed 524B Coversheet

Title : Signed 524B Coversheet

Attachment:

File :

- 1 [APR_Cover_Sheet_Signature_H235E190004.pdf](#)

**U.S. Department of Education
Grant Performance Report
Cover Sheet (ED 524B)**

**Check only one box per
Program Office instructions.**

**Annual
Performance
Report** **Final
Performance
Report**

General Information

1. PR/Award #: H235E190004

(Block 5 of the Grant Award Notification - 11 Characters.)

2. Grantee NCES ID#: 3904693

(See instructions. Up to 12 Characters.)

3. Project Title: Braille Excellence for Students and Teachers (BEST)

(Enter the same title as on the approved application.)

4. Grantee Name: FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

(Block 1 of the Grant Award Notification.)

5. Grantee Address:

(See instructions.)

Street: 2080 CITYGATE DR

City: COLUMBUS

State: OH Zip: 43219 Zip+4: 3591

6. Project Director:

(See instructions.)

First Name: Janet

Last Name: Rogers

Title: Director AT&AEM Center

Phone #: 6144100736

Fax #:

Email Address: jan_rogers@ocali.org

Reporting Period Information (See instructions.)

7. Reporting Period: From: 10/01/2020 To: 03/31/2021

*(mm/dd/yyyy)***Budget Expenditures (To be completed by your Business Office. See instructions. Also see Section B.)**

8. Budget Expenditures:

	Federal Grant Funds	Non-Federal Funds (Match/Cost Share)
a. Previous Budget Period	107,302	0
b. Current Budget Period	43,445	0
c. Entire Project Period <i>(For Final Performance Reports only)</i>		

Indirect Cost Information (To be completed by your Business Office. See instructions.)

9. Indirect Costs

- a. Are you claiming indirect costs under this grant?
If yes, please indicate which of the following applies to your grant? Yes No
- b. The grantee has an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal Government? Yes No
The period covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement is : From: 07/01/2020 To: 06/30/2021
(mm/dd/yyyy)
The approving Federal agency is : ED Other *(Please specify):*
- The Indirect Cost Rate is : 7.18 %
Type of Rate Provisional *(Please specify):*
(For Final Performance Reports Only): Final Other
- c. The grantee is not a State, local government, or Indian tribe, and is using the de minimus rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) in compliance with 2 CFR 200.414(f) Yes No
- d. The grantee is funded under a Restricted Rate Program and is you using a restricted indirect cost rate that either :
 Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement Complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2)?
- e. The grantee is funded under a Training Rate Program and:
 Is recovering indirect cost using 8 percent of MTDC in compliance with 34 CFR 75.562(c)(2)
 Is recovering indirect costs using its actual negotiated indirect cost rate reflected in 9(b)

Human Subjects (Annual Institutional Review Board (IRB) Certification) (See instructions.)10. Is the annual certification of Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval attached? Yes No N/A**Data Privacy and Security Measures Certification (See instructions.)**

11. Is a statement affirming that you are aware of federal and state data security and student privacy regulations included, with supporting documentation attached? Yes No N/A

Performance Measures Status and Certification (See instructions.)

12. Performance Measures Status

a. Are complete data on performance measures for the current budget period included in the Project Status Chart? Yes No

b. If no, when will the data be available and submitted to the Department? (mm/dd/yyyy)

13. By signing this report, I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that the report is true, complete, and accurate and the expenditures, disbursements, and cash receipts are for the purposes and objectives set forth in the terms and conditions of the Federal award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent information, or the omission of any material fact, may subject me to criminal, civil or administrative penalties for fraud, false statements, false claims or otherwise. (U.S. Code Title 18, Section 1001 and Title 31, Sections 3729-3730 and 3801-33812). Furthermore, to the best of my knowledge and belief, all data in this performance report are true, complete, and correct and the report fully discloses all known weaknesses concerning the accuracy, reliability, and completeness of data reported.

Name of Authorized Representative: David Varda

Title: Treasurer, CFO

Signature: *David Varda*

Date: April 29, 2021

Grant Performance Report (ED 524B) Executive Summary Attachment:

Title :

File :

**U.S. Department of Education
Grant Performance Report
Cover Sheet (ED 524B)**

**Check only one box per
Program Office instructions.**

**Annual
Performance
Report** **Final
Performance
Report**

General Information

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Street: 2080 CITYGATE DR

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6. Project Director:

(See instructions.)

First Name: Janet

Last Name: Rogers

Title: Director AT&AEM Center

Phone #: 6144100736

Fax #:

Email Address: jan_rogers@ocali.org

Reporting Period Information (See instructions.)

7. Reporting Period: From: 10/01/2020 To: 03/31/2021

*(mm/dd/yyyy)***Budget Expenditures (To be completed by your Business Office. See instructions. Also see Section B.)**

8. Budget Expenditures:

	Federal Grant Funds	Non-Federal Funds (Match/Cost Share)
a. Previous Budget Period	107,302	0
b. Current Budget Period	43,445	0
c. Entire Project Period <i>(For Final Performance Reports only)</i>		

Indirect Cost Information (To be completed by your Business Office. See instructions.)

9. Indirect Costs

- a. Are you claiming indirect costs under this grant?
If yes, please indicate which of the following applies to your grant? Yes No
- b. The grantee has an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal Government: Yes No
The period covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement is : From: 07/01/2020 To: 06/30/2021
(mm/dd/yyyy)
The approving Federal agency is : ED Other *(Please specify):*
- The Indirect Cost Rate is : 7.18 %
Type of Rate Provisional *(Please specify):*
(For Final Performance Reports Only): Final Other
- c. The grantee is not a State, local government, or Indian tribe, and is using the de minimus rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) in compliance with 2 CFR 200.414(f) Yes No
- d. The grantee is funded under a Restricted Rate Program and is you using a restricted indirect cost rate that either :
 Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement Complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2)?
- e. The grantee is funded under a Training Rate Program and:
 Is recovering indirect cost using 8 percent of MTDC in compliance with 34 CFR 75.562(c)(2)
 Is recovering indirect costs using its actual negotiated indirect cost rate reflected in 9(b)

Human Subjects (Annual Institutional Review Board (IRB) Certification) (See instructions.)10. Is the annual certification of Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval attached? Yes No N/A**Data Privacy and Security Measures Certification (See instructions.)**

11. Is a statement affirming that you are aware of federal and state data security and student privacy regulations included, with supporting documentation attached? ● Yes ○ No ○ N/A

Performance Measures Status and Certification (See instructions.)

12. Performance Measures Status

a. Are complete data on performance measures for the current budget period included in the Project Status Chart? ● Yes ○ No

b. If no, when will the data be available and submitted to the Department? (mm/dd/yyyy)

13. By signing this report, I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that the report is true, complete, and accurate and the expenditures, disbursements, and cash receipts are for the purposes and objectives set forth in the terms and conditions of the Federal award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent information, or the omission of any material fact, may subject me to criminal, civil or administrative penalties for fraud, false statements, false claims or otherwise. (U.S. Code Title 18, Section 1001 and Title 31, Sections 3729-3730 and 3801-33812). Furthermore, to the best of my knowledge and belief, all data in this performance report are true, complete, and correct and the report fully discloses all known weaknesses concerning the accuracy, reliability, and completeness of data reported.

Name of Authorized Representative: David Varda

Title: Treasurer, CFO

Signature:

Date:

Grant Performance Report (ED 524B) Executive Summary Attachment:

Title : Executive Summary H235E190004

File : [Executive Summary_H235E190004.pdf](#)

U.S. Department of Education
Grant Performance Report Cover Sheet (ED 524B)

Check only one box per Program Office instructions.
[X] Annual Performance Report [] Final Performance Report

Executive Summary

PR/Award #: H235E190004

The Braille Excellence for Students and Teachers (BEST) Grant annual report provides information indicating the extent to which the BEST project met its goals during Project Year 1. The Project is focusing on three goals that help to promote the BEST grants' primary focus to increase opportunities for TVIs working in rural communities and secondary focus to increase the knowledge of TVIs, intervention specialists, general educators, paraprofessionals, and transcribers in obtaining and creating accessible documents thereby increasing equitable access to braille materials in inclusive settings.

Goal 1: Enhance the competency of preservice and inservice educators, paraprofessionals, and others to provide braille literacy instruction and support across all academic areas including Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM).

Goal 2: Enhance the competency of both pre-service and inservice educators, paraprofessionals, and others to efficiently and effectively acquire and create braille materials.

Goal 3: Educators and others will be able to apply strategies learned in the BEST project trainings and other activities to more effectively manage the braille needs of their students through the support of followup technical assistance or resources.

Some highlights from the first six months:

- 1) Nine training activities have been completed in goals 1 and 2 and nine more are scheduled before the end of the first grant year.
- 2) Three local braille production centers were set up in high-need school districts/agencies and staff for each center were trained on the operation of equipment and software. One center was placed in the targeted Appalachia/rural region.
- 3) Technical assistance (TA) is being provided by highly qualified consultants to educators who are producing braille for students and transcriber

candidates who are in the process of completing their certification.

Specialized TA is also being provided to the Grafton Braille Service Center at Grafton Correctional Institution.

- 4) A Virtual Communications Platform (Microsoft Teams) to support the learning community for a virtual peer-to-peer network. Attendees have ongoing access to training materials and recordings as an option to review content and continue professional growth. Participants can also engage in conversations with other participants within the Teams channel or ask follow-up questions to the trainer.
- 5) Through collaborative work with the Ohio TVI Consortium, grant activities are supporting TVIs in rural areas by offering specialized training to expand their braille knowledge and implementation while in school and post graduation, thus supporting them in bringing a new level of expertise in areas of the state that are typically underserved.

BEST collects data on each grant activity keyed to a project objective, and then WordFarmers, the grant external evaluator, compiles, analyzes, and interprets the data to determine the effectiveness of the activity and suggests options for improvement and continued growth for the current project year and upcoming Year 3 activities. Additionally, WordFarmers initiated a longitudinal study to extend over the course of the remaining 4 years of the grant for the purpose of (1) to investigate how BEST project participants make use of BEST courses and technical assistance to obtain the skills and expertise needed to fulfill current job responsibilities and to achieve career objectives and (2) to investigate participants' perceptions of the impact, quality, relevance, and usefulness of their BEST experiences and the alignment between their perceptions and BEST project goals.

While the COVID pandemic impacted the delivery method for BEST trainings and technical assistance, educators found the BEST activities to be of the same high quality, relevance, and usefulness as previous years. BEST continued to be responsive and deliver support to educators in Ohio as well as some participants in other states through various virtual meeting and learning platforms. Educators increased competencies in braille production, braille instruction, and braille across STEM and language arts. Accordingly, educators have implemented their learning into their educational practices both in online, hybrid and in face-to-face learning environments.

The grantee has the capacity to continue activities and wishes to continue to receive the NCC award.

U.S. Department of Education
Grant Performance Report (ED 524B)
Project Status Chart

PR/Award #: H235E190004

SECTION A - Project Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data (See Instructions. Use as many pages as necessary.)1 . **Project Objective** Check if this is a status update for the previous budget period.

1.1 Improve state-wide equity in the distribution of high-quality training to preservice and in-service educators, paraprofessionals, and transcribers to support student proficiency in using braille for scientific and mathematical notation, to access STEM.

Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
		Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
1.a Number of participants in training sessions	GPRA	35	/		5	/	
1.b Number of participants who complete the training.	GPRA	35	/		5	/	
1.c Number of participants in training sessions from Appalachian and rural regions.	GPRA	5	/		0	/	
1.d Number of braille STEM sessions completed.	PROGRAM	3	/		1	/	
1.e Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of quality with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high).	PROJECT		9 / 10	90		10 / 10	100
1.f Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of relevance with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high)	PROJECT		9 / 10	90		10 / 10	100
1.g Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of usefulness with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high).	PROJECT		9 / 10	90		10 / 10	100

Explanation of Progress (Include Qualitative Data and Data Collection Information)

Five training sessions were planned for this objective. BrailleNote with KeyMath was completed, and three other trainings are planned between now and September 30, 2021: 4-Day Basic Nemeth in June, 4-Day Advanced Nemeth in June, and Tactile Graphics in September. STEM Braille Day was cancelled and is being rescheduled for next project year due to low attendance likely due to the Ohio statewide school district educator COVID vaccination program roll out that occurred at the same time - further explanation in narrative.

U.S. Department of Education
Grant Performance Report (ED 524B)
Project Status Chart

PR/Award #: H235E190004

SECTION A - Project Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data (See Instructions. Use as many pages as necessary.)**2 . Project Objective**

[] Check if this is a status update for the previous budget period.

1.2 Improve statewide equity in the distribution of high-quality training to preservice and in-service educators, paraprofessionals, and transcribers to support student proficiency in braille literacy for reading and writing.

Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
		Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
2.a Number of participants in training sessions.	GPRA	45	/		15	/	
2.b Number of participants who complete the training.	GPRA	45	/		13	/	
2.c Number of participants in training sessions from Appalachian and rural regions.	GPRA	10	/		0	/	
2.d Number of braille reading and writing sessions completed.	PROGRAM	4	/		2	/	
2.e Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of quality with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high).	PROJECT		9 / 10	90		10 / 10	100
2.f Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of relevance with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high).	PROJECT		9 / 10	90		10 / 10	100
2.g Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of usefulness with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high).	PROJECT		9 / 10	90		10 / 10	100

Explanation of Progress (Include Qualitative Data and Data Collection Information)

Four training sessions were planned for this objective, with BrailleNote with Google and Braille Formatting completed. Braille Formatting was added as a replacement for the Screen Reader Software Training. With the transition to virtual training during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was determined that currently existing asynchronous trainings provided by screen reader vendors, such as Freedom Scientific would be sufficient information. The link for these trainings is in the process of being developed on the BEST website in a new additional resources tab. 3-Day Basic Braille is planned for June 2021, and Braille Music training is in the process of being planned for September 2021.

U.S. Department of Education
Grant Performance Report (ED 524B)
Project Status Chart

PR/Award #: H235E190004

SECTION A - Project Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data (See Instructions. Use as many pages as necessary.)**3. Project Objective**

[] Check if this is a status update for the previous budget period.

2.1. Provide high-quality training to preservice and in-service educators, paraprofessionals, and transcribers to understand the value of, and develop competencies in, producing accessible source documents for the purpose of creating braille.

Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
		Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
3.a. Number of participants in training sessions.	GPRA	15	/		23	/	
3.b. Number of participants who complete the training.	GPRA	15	/		17	/	
3.c. Number of participants in training sessions from Appalachian and rural regions.	GPRA	5	/		0	/	
3.d. Number of sessions completed.	PROGRAM	2	/		2	/	
3.e. Percent of participants who can meet a mastery level post test measure.	PROJECT		85 / 100	85		92 / 100	92
3.f. Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of quality with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high).	PROJECT		9 / 10	90		10 / 10	100
3.g. Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of relevance with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high)	PROJECT		9 / 10	90		10 / 10	100
3.h. Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of usefulness with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high).	PROJECT		9 / 10	90		10 / 10	100

Explanation of Progress (Include Qualitative Data and Data Collection Information)

There were three training sessions planned for this objective. Creating Accessible PDFs and Using Macros and Templates to Produce LP, Braille and Electronic Text have been completed, and Scanning for Braille, Large Print, and Audio is planned for September 2021. Using Macros and Templates to Produce LP, Braille, and Electronic Text was rescheduled during this grant year as an additional training activity since Macros and Templates to Produce LP, Braille, and Electronic Text Tips and Tricks videos were completed and it was determined synchronous training was needed as a precursor to those videos. The results of the post test for Creating Accessible PDFs indicate that 92.3% of participants reached a level of mastery based on the criteria of scoring 3 out of 5 on a post assessment. While this translates to 60%, PDF accessibility is considered rigorous and complex. Overall data from pre and post assessments indicate growth amongst participants and high scores on quality, relevance, and usefulness.

U.S. Department of Education
Grant Performance Report (ED 524B)
Project Status Chart

PR/Award #: H235E190004

SECTION A - Project Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data (See Instructions. Use as many pages as necessary.)**4 . Project Objective**

[] Check if this is a status update for the previous budget period.

Increase ability of educators and others who support braille users to efficiently and effectively locate ready-made braille and/or use non-visual technologies to provide for the braille needs of persons with blindness

Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
		Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
4.a Number of participants in training sessions.	GPRA	100	/		442	/	
4.b Number of participants who complete the training.	GPRA	100	/		441	/	
4.c Number of participants in training sessions from Appalachian and rural regions.	GPRA	20	/		7	/	
4.d Number of sessions completed.	PROGRAM	3	/		5	/	
4.e Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of quality with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high).	PROJECT		9 / 10	90		10 / 10	100
4.f Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of quality with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high).	PROJECT		9 / 10	90		10 / 10	100
4.g Percent of trainings that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of usefulness with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high).	PROJECT		9 / 10	90		10 / 10	100
4.h Number of participants who obtained positions where braille skills are needed.	GPRA	2	/		0	/	

Explanation of Progress (Include Qualitative Data and Data Collection Information)

Three activities were targeted and five activities were completed for this objective. The activities completed were: a 4-day virtual training series on Duxbury Braille Translation software, the Braille AT forum at OCALICON, and three one-hour long lunch and learn sessions on DBT software. Perky duck was determined to not be a product that required a separate training so that training was rolled into the Braille Formatting trainings in Objective 1.2. Additionally, Perky Duck will be added as an asynchronous training in the Tips and Tricks On-Demand videos during this grant year. The remaining planned activities include: VI/Braille AT For Shawnee University students in June 2021, and VI/Braille AT For OSU University Students in September and the Regional AT Conference and Vendor Fairs is tentatively being considered for September 2021. The trainings for the BEST grant are largely attended by TVIs who are currently teaching students who are blind. The exceptions are the classes we teach for the two Ohio TVI university programs. Data for 2.2.h will be gathered from those programs after students graduate in June 2021 and have an opportunity to engage in job seeking activities.

U.S. Department of Education
Grant Performance Report (ED 524B)
Project Status Chart

PR/Award #: H235E190004

SECTION A - Project Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data (See Instructions. Use as many pages as necessary.)**5 . Project Objective**

[] Check if this is a status update for the previous budget period.

Increase the pool of braille transcribers available to provide braille to Ohio school districts, businesses, and other agencies that support students and adults with braille needs.

Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
		Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
5.a Number of participants engaged in TA sessions.	GPRA	15	/		40	/	
5.b Number of participants from rural and Appalachian areas engaged in TA sessions.	GPRA	3	/		4	/	
5.c Number of participants who complete the NLS course.	GPRA	2	/		2	/	
5.d Number of participants who obtain positions where braille skills are needed.	GPRA	1	/		0	/	
5.e Number of TA hours provided.	PROJECT	75	/		102	/	

Explanation of Progress (Include Qualitative Data and Data Collection Information)

There are 3 categories of TA. 1) TA to school districts/agencies producing braille: More than 120 virtual sessions were provided for 91.55 TA hours;. 2) TA to braille transcriber candidates: 3.5 TA hours have been provided to 5 participants, with 2 having completed the NLS course; 3) TA to Grafton Braille Service Center (GBSC): 7.25 TA hours were provided virtually due to continued COVID restrictions.

U.S. Department of Education
 Grant Performance Report (ED 524B)
 Project Status Chart

PR/Award #: H235E190004

SECTION A - Project Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data (See Instructions. Use as many pages as necessary.)

6 . Project Objective Check if this is a status update for the previous budget period.

Expand braille production capacities within local school districts and/or vocational and technical education centers.

Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
		Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
6.a. Number of Local Braille Production Centers (LBPCs) set up.	PROJECT	3	/		3	/	

Explanation of Progress (Include Qualitative Data and Data Collection Information)

An established application process was used to select 3 high-need school districts/agencies. One agency selected was in the grant-targeted Appalachia/rural area. The 3 new LBPC sites have been set up and staff have been trained on the new software and equipment. An additional applicant for an LBPC will also be provided with equipment/software, setup, and training as a result of an embosser that was returned to the AT&AEM Center that was no longer in use. Onsite TA hours for setup and instruction totaled 8 hours.

U.S. Department of Education
Grant Performance Report (ED 524B)
Project Status Chart

PR/Award #: H235E190004

SECTION A - Project Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data (See Instructions. Use as many pages as necessary.)**7 . Project Objective**

[] Check if this is a status update for the previous budget period.

Develop and improve access to a range of technical assistance (TA) and training materials which can support implementation of braille skills learned from training activities.

Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
		Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
7.a. Number of participants utilizing resources.	GPRA	15	/		17	/	
7.b. Number of participants utilizing resources from rural or Appalachian areas.	GPRA	5	/		0	/	
7.c. Number of resources developed at the close of the grant project.	PROGRAM	9	/		21	/	
7.d. Percent of resources that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of quality with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high) as measured by a vetting panel.	PROJECT		9 / 10	90		10 / 10	100
7.e. Percent of resources that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of relevance with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high) as measured by a vetting panel.	PROJECT		9 / 10	90		10 / 10	100
7.f. Percent of resources that equal or exceed a 6 on a measure of usefulness with a range from 2 (low) to 8 (high) as measured by a vetting panel.	PROJECT		9 / 10	90		10 / 10	100

Explanation of Progress (Include Qualitative Data and Data Collection Information)

To promote and improve access to TA and training materials, we have continued to promote the BEST website, launched March of 2020, to our listserv, social media, and participants. The TA Portal, as well as the BEST website have been successful in providing resources with high ratings of quality, relevance, and usefulness to our users. Between October 1, 2020 and March 30, 2021, the TA Portal was accessed 61 times, with 49 unique page views and 18 entries for technical assistance requests. Since all previous in-person trainings (Trainings found in Objectives 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, and 2.2) are now delivered online synchronously due to the COVID pandemic and subsequent state limits on mass gatherings it was determined that the trainings originally identified as online webinars in the 5 year work plan would best serve educators needs if delivered asynchronously. The benefit to educators would be the 24/7 availability providing follow-up support for some of the more challenging synchronous trainings. Asynchronous products in the Tips and Tricks On-Demand section of the BEST website were assessed by a panel of experts to provide feedback on content, accessibility, usability, etc. The panel met on 4-21-21 and provided feedback on video titles, video descriptions, accessibility, branding, etc. Additionally, a survey was sent to a select group to assess quality, relevance and usefulness of the products-

the results of that survey indicated that all three measures were 100%, and that all resources equaled or exceeded a measure of 6 on a scale of 2-8. The following products were developed this project year: Large Print Templates and Macros as well as Braille Templates and Macros. Tips and Tricks for Creating Accessible PDFs and Tips and Tricks for Local Braille Production Centers are planned to be completed during the remainder of the project year. To date, over both project years, 21 products have been developed. These products include: BEST website, 1 peer to peer support network; 1 TA system; 1 resource repository; 3 Creating Accessible Docs videos; 7 Math Braille Conversion videos; 2 Templates and Macros videos; 5 handouts and documents uploaded to repository (one is a zip file with 3 handouts) - for our explanation, 2 are new this year and we have Creating Accessible PDFs and Tips for LBPCs planned. Additionally, synchronous trainings are recorded and made available to registered participants through the virtual platform. Materials and handouts related to the synchronous trainings are also posted with the recordings.

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PR/Award #: **H235E190004**

SECTION B - Budget Information (See Instructions. Use as many pages as necessary.)

Title : Budget_and_Budget_Narrative_H235E190004

File : [Budget_and_Budget_Narrative_H235E190004.pdf](#)

SECTION C - Additional Information (See Instructions. Use as many pages as necessary.)

Title : Additional Information_H235E190004

File : [Additional_Information_H235E190004.pdf](#)



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
BUDGET INFORMATION NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS

OMB Control Number: 1894-0008

Expiration Date: 08/31/2020

Name of Institution/Organization

Education Service Center of Central Ohio

Applicants requesting funding for only one year should complete the column under "Project Year 1." Applicants requesting funding for multi-year grants should complete all applicable columns. Please read all instructions before completing form.

SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FUNDS

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Project Year 5 (e)	Total (f)
1. Personnel			0			
2. Fringe Benefits			0			
3. Travel			4,300			
4. Equipment			13,560			
5. Supplies			16,310.18			
6. Contractual			71,170.00			
7. Construction			0			
8. Other			0			
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)			105,340.18			
10. Indirect Costs 7.18% *Enter Rate Applied _____			6589.82			
11. Training Stipends			0			
12. Total Costs (lines 9-11)			111,930			

***Indirect Cost Information (To Be Completed by Your Business Office):**

If you are requesting reimbursement for indirect costs on line 10, please answer the following questions:

- (1) Do you have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal government? Yes No.
- (2) If yes, please provide the following information:
 Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: From: 07/01/2020 To: 6/30/2021 (mm/dd/yyyy)
 Approving Federal agency: ED Other (please specify): _____ The Indirect Cost Rate is 7.18 %
- (3) If this is your first Federal grant, and you do not have an approved indirect cost rate agreement, are not a State, Local government or Indian Tribe, and are not funded under a training rate program or a restricted rate program, do you want to use the de minimis rate of 10% of MTDC? Yes No. If yes, you must comply with the requirements of 2 CFR § 200.414(f).
- (4) If you do not have an approved indirect cost rate agreement, do you want to use the temporary rate of 10% of budgeted salaries and wages? Yes No. If yes, you must submit a proposed indirect cost rate agreement within 90 days after the date your grant is awarded, as required by 34 CFR § 75.560.
- (5) For Restricted Rate Programs (check one) -- Are you using a restricted indirect cost rate that: Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement? Or Complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2)? The Restricted Indirect Cost Rate is _____ %
- (6) For Training Rate Programs (check one) -- Are you using a rate that: Is based on the training rate of 8 percent of MTDC (See EDGAR § 75.562(c)(4))? Or Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, because it is lower than the training rate of 8 percent of MTDC (See EDGAR § 75.562(c)(4)).

Name of Institution/Organization	Applicants requesting funding for only one year should complete the column under "Project Year 1." Applicants requesting funding for multi-year grants should complete all applicable columns. Please read all instructions before completing form.
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**SECTION B - BUDGET SUMMARY
NON-FEDERAL FUNDS**

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Project Year 5 (e)	Total (f)
1. Personnel						
2. Fringe Benefits						
3. Travel						
4. Equipment						
5. Supplies						
6. Contractual						
7. Construction						
8. Other						
9. Total Direct Costs (Lines 1-8)						
10. Indirect Costs						
11. Training Stipends						
12. Total Costs (Lines 9-11)						

SECTION C – BUDGET NARRATIVE (see instructions)

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Budget Narrative: Braille Excellence for Students and Teachers (BEST) Grant**Total Expenditures for 1st half of Year 2: 10/1/2020 – 3/31/2021**

	PY1 Carryover Expenditures Completed	PY2 Expenditures as of 3/31/21
Personnel	\$.00	\$.00
Fringe Benefits	\$.00	\$.00
Travel/Mail	\$.00	\$1,519.15
Equipment	\$3,763.66	\$13,303.68
Supplies	\$280.86	\$10,374.34
Contractual	\$.00	\$.00
Construction	\$.00	\$.00
Total Direct Costs	\$4,044.52	\$41,954.82
Indirect Costs	\$583.31	\$1,490.50
Total Expenditures	\$4,627.83	\$43,445.32

Thirty-nine percent (39%) of the funds allocated during year two of the grant have been expended. Note that this figure does not include the expenditures of carryover funds from the previous grant year. We have completed 9 training sessions and have 7 training/events scheduled with 2 more in the process of being scheduled. Three Local Braille Production Centers have been set up and trained by BEST Technical Assistance Consultants. Two video series are planned and scheduled to be completed by September 2021. BEST Technical Assistance Consultants will continue to provide email, phone and virtual technical assistance and support until the end of the grant cycle.

Personnel and Fringe

No personnel and fringe costs were requested for this grant.

Mail/Travel

PY1 Carryover Funds \$0
 PY1 Expended \$0
 PY1 Remaining \$0
 PY2 Original Mail/Travel Budget \$4,300
 PY2 Expended: \$1,519.15
 PY2 Remaining: \$2,500

The remaining expenses are budgeted for shipping BEST computer lab to participants for the following trainings: Scanning for Braille, Large Print, and Audio; Tactile Graphics

Equipment

PY1 Carryover Funds: \$3,763.66
 PY1 Carryover Funds Expended: \$3,763.66
 PY1 Carryover Funds Remaining :\$0
 PY2 Original Equipment Budget \$13,560.00
 PY2 Original Expended: \$13,303.68
 PY2 Remaining: \$256.32

- Carryover funds from PY1 were expended by purchasing two PC Laptops for TA Consultant and Instructor. Each PC will be equipped with braille technology and software that will allow for virtual delivery of training sessions and technical assistance to school districts, braille production centers, and braille transcriber candidates.
 - Explanation – two PC laptops were ordered on 11/9/20, but due to the pandemic there was a shortage of laptops and the model we had originally ordered was discontinued. Another comparable model was ordered and received on 1/16/21. The invoice was paid on 1/28/21. Due to having to purchase another PC model, the price difference was \$267.32, less than the original cost of \$3,763.66. The remaining \$267.32 was applied toward embosser purchases for the LBPC setups.

Supplies

PY1 Carryover Funds: \$280.86
 PY1 Carryover Funds Expended: \$280.86
 PY1 Carryover Remaining: \$0
 PY2 Original Supply Budget: \$16,062.74
 PY2 Funds Moved from IDC due to rate change: \$773.12
 PY2 Current Supply Budget: \$16,835.86
 PY2 Expended: \$10,374.34
 PY2 Remaining: \$6461.26

- Carryover funds from PY1 were expended by purchasing additional office supplies that include envelopes that accommodate braille size paper and other miscellaneous supplies for training participants, instructors, braille production center staff, and braille transcribers. All carryover supply funds were invoiced and paid on 11/12/20.
- Remaining funds are budgeted to purchase the following:
 - Scanning software for training participants
 - braille paper
 - Software for an additional LBPC setup

Contractual

PY1 Carryover Funds \$0
 PY1 Expended \$0
 PY1 Remaining \$0
 PY2 Original Contractual Budget \$71,170.00
 PY2 Expended \$16,757.65
 PY2 Remaining \$54,412.35

Funds are budgeted to implement the following activities:

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| ○ College credits for Braille course participants | \$ 7,200.00 |
| ○ Instructor costs for Basic Braille course | \$ 2,420.00 |
| ○ Instructor costs for Basic Nemeth course | \$ 2,750.00 |
| ○ Instructor costs Advanced Nemeth course | \$ 2,475.00 |
| ○ Consultant costs for providing TA to braille production centers in districts/agencies | \$13,187.88 |
| ○ Consultant costs for providing TA for certification mentoring, general braille TA | \$13,187.87 |
| ○ Instructor costs for Tactile Graphics | \$1,200 |
| ○ Video Series Development costs | \$ 991.60 |
| ○ External evaluator costs | <u>\$ 11,000.00</u> |

Total \$54,412.35

Construction

No construction costs were requested in this grant.

Indirect Costs

PY1 Carryover funds = 583.31
 PY1 Carryover funds Expended: \$583.31
 PY1 Remaining: \$0
 PY2 Original Budget 7.47% Rate: \$6,837.52
 PY2 Budget Amendment IDC Changed to 7.18%: \$6589.82
 PY2 Budget Amendment - Moved Funds to Supply: \$773.12
 PY2 funds Expended: \$1,490.5
 PY2 Remaining: \$583.31

We anticipate that all funds in these categories will be expended and/or obligated by 9/30/21, We intend to continue our scheduled learning opportunities through online learning options by coordinating events such as asynchronous online courses, virtual technical assistance and training to braille production sites and educators who are serving students who use braille.

Additional Information

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The collaborative partners for the BEST Grant are:

- American Council of the Blind of Ohio (ACBO)
- Assistive Technology and Accessible Educational Materials Center (AT&AEM Center)
- Ohio State School for the Blind (OSSB)
- Shawnee State University (TVI Consortium Project)
- Ohio State University (OSU)
- Ohio Center for Deaf Blind Education (OCDBE)
- Ohio Department of Education - Office for Exceptional Children (ODE, OEC)
- Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD)
- Outreach Center for Deafness and Blindness at OCALI

Several changes have occurred in the staff from the above agencies who were assigned to participate on the BEST grant advisory team. Sarah J. Kelly resigned from OOD and Katie Fredrick has been assigned by OOD as Sarah's replacement. Katie previously sat on the BEST advisory team for several years when she was the Director of the American Council for the Blind of Ohio (ACBO). Vicky Prahin resigned her position as Executive Director of ACBO and was replaced by Shawn Thiel. Jen Govender resigned her position with the Outreach Center for Deafness and Blindness at OCALI to accept a position with the AT&AEM Center as an AEM Specialist. Her seat at the advisory board representing the Outreach Center has now been filled by Heather Herbster. Jen will continue to participate in the BEST advisory team within her capacity as AT&AEM Center staff.

Grant partners represent a wide range of agencies including university programs, state disability agencies, the state education agency, the state school for the blind, and other agencies that support people who are blind/VI. They provide expertise and support in grant project planning and development by serving on the BEST Advisory Team which meets four times a year. All grant activities/resources are vetted through the Advisory Team.

BEST activities are promoted through a variety of outlets including listservs, social media, and website postings. We encourage enrollment of educators across the state and make efforts to schedule activities in advance and with varying dates and times. Some of our participants request accessible formats and BEST provides such formats of all handouts at all professional development activities when needed. Accessible formats of training materials are also posted on the webpage so that participants can later access them. BEST also posts all general information of BEST activities, so that other interested agencies may use the available information to replicate grant activities.

The pandemic continues to impact grant activities mostly in terms of method of delivering training information. All sessions provided were delivered virtually this year due to continued state restrictions. Sessions were often offered over multiple days for a shorter amount of time to accommodate teachers adjustments to the demands of the virtual learning environment. We have generally had adequate time this grant year to make and plan for these adjustments as needed. It is anticipated that grant activities will continue as planned virtually at least for the remainder of this grant year. In the event that Ohio COVID state public health orders are lifted before the end of the grant year all sessions provided will be evaluated for best delivery method of the content and then training methods will be adjusted accordingly. We anticipate that educators will find that some training topics were best offered virtually while

others are better delivered in person. These changes may impact the grant budget. At that time funds may need to be moved to different budget lines in order to account for trainer travel, lodging, participant lodging ,etc. We expect that funds would be available from other budget lines within the grant that were originally planned at the writing of this grant application. The grant facilitators will communicate final decisions and budget modifications using the appropriate forms and procedures as decisions are made.