

IRC HANDBOOK

2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR



NEW MEXICO SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND & VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Instructional Resource Center

1-800-437-3505 • WWW.NMSBVI.K12.NM.US

NMSBVI IRC HANDBOOK

New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Mission:

As a leader and unifying entity in the field of educating students birth through high school who are blind or visually impaired, NMSBVI is a statewide network of services that ensures all students who are blind or visually impaired will become independent productive members of their communities by identifying and providing quality education and collaborating with students, families, and partners to provide outstanding training, resources, and support services.

What is the NMSBVI IRC?

The New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NMSBVI) Instructional Resource Center (IRC) serves as a statewide lending resource for APH Federal Quota Fund Braille and large print textbooks, as well as other specialized equipment used by students with visual impairments. With its large, on-site inventory, the IRC makes available for loan an array of textbooks in Braille and large print for use by students being served in their community educational settings across New Mexico. In addition, Braille writers, supplies, and a multitude of other specialized equipment that supports infant to adult students can be borrowed by school districts. APH materials are requested by the school districts/teachers of students with visual impairments through the IRC. Ordering APH Federal Quota Fund materials through the IRC is at **no charge** to the school district or the student. At the current time, over 1,000 students are served in various educational settings all over New Mexico. They include students deemed legally blind by federal guidelines, as well as those with visual impairments that impact their day-to-day educational needs.

Have you heard of American Printing House for the Blind (APH) Federal Quota Funds?

APH Federal Quota Funds are based on a federal law called the *Act to Promote the Education of the Blind*, passed by Congress in 1879, which recognizes that students who are blind or visually impaired require special materials to access the school curriculum. The law is very inclusive in regards to eligibility; there is NO chronological age requirement. It includes all public-school students who are blind/visually impaired, as well as infants and toddlers in early intervention programs, students in parochial and private schools, students who are homeschooled, and adults in qualifying agencies. Eligible infants and preschool children can be registered if they are enrolled in a formally organized, regularly scheduled educational or training program and have a written education plan. Each school district is responsible for reporting the number of students who are blind/visually impaired that are in attendance on the first Monday of each January.

NMSBVI has been designated as the agency responsible for overseeing the APH Quota account funding for the state of New Mexico. Congress sets aside funds every year so that schools can order APH materials

for students who are blind or visually impaired. Funds are allocated based on a national census of students who meet the ***federal definition of blindness, have an educational program that meets the guidelines, and have a written educational plan (IFSP or IEP.)*** The funds can **only** be spent for items available at the American Printing House for the Blind and can **only** be used to purchase items for qualifying students. APH materials support all age ranges from infants to adults, and may support the core curriculum or the expanded core curriculum.

The APH Federal Quota Census Program – APH Registration:

The APH federal census identifies students in schools or other educational agencies and helps to give a national count of students who qualify as “legally blind” under federal guidelines. ***It is the responsibility of the school district or agency serving the student to register the student.*** The census is conducted annually and is emailed to Special Education Directors at each agency or school district beginning in early November. The census counts the number of students who are blind/visually impaired **in attendance in that school district on the first Monday of January**. Students can **only** be registered during this time each year. This census is very important, because the number of students reported determines how much money Congress puts into the account for each state. ***Students who are not registered during the census become ineligible to receive APH educational materials through the quota fund. Instructions for filling out the registration form can be found on the NMSBVI web site (www.nmsbvi.k12.nm.us) under “APH Federal Quota Census Program”.*** If you have questions regarding eligibility or registration, please do not hesitate to contact Mary Vaughn, IRC Supervisor, at 800-437-3505 ext. 4438.

Supplemental Registration Form

ALL STUDENTS MUST HAVE A CURRENT SUPPLEMENTAL REGISTRATION (SR) FORM ON FILE WITH THE IRC BEFORE ANY ITEMS CAN BE LOANED. (This form can be found on the NMSBVI web site under “VI Resources,” “Instructional Resource Center,” “Supplemental Registration Form.”) This includes students who are **also** registered during the annual APH federal census registration. The difference between the SR form and APH registration is that the SR form identifies **all** students in the state of New Mexico receiving services from NMSBVI, including those who qualify as legally blind under **federal** guidelines **as well as** those who qualify for services under Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) guidelines. SR forms must be completed and returned to the IRC annually in September. This form helps the IRC locate students who may have moved or who may have items checked out through a different agency. If a new student arrives or transfers from another school district during the school year, a new SR form can be submitted at that time. When submitting SR forms, the student’s LEA is asked to verify that they have on file with their agency all required documentation proving the student’s need for special format materials as required under IDEA. This documentation would include an eye report from a licensed eye care specialist or neurologist, and a current functional vision evaluation.

Which Students are Eligible for APH Federal Quota Funds?

In order for students to be eligible for registration in the Federal Quota Program, they **must** meet the following requirements:

- Students must **meet the definition of blindness** – central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting lenses, or a peripheral field no greater than 20 degrees. This diagnosis is determined by a doctor, who provides a written eye report. The eye report must be within the last three years, except in the case of a student who has no vision (NIL) there is no date limit. Or.....
- Students must **function at the definition of blindness** – which indicates blindness due to a brain injury or dysfunction. A student whose visual performance is reduced by a brain injury or dysfunction may be considered blind for educational purposes when visual function meets the definition of blindness as determined by an eye care specialist or neurologist. Students in this category manifest unique visual characteristics often found in conditions referred to as neurological, cortical, or cerebral visual impairment.
- Students must be enrolled in a formally organized public, private, or non-profit educational program below college level.
- They must be enrolled with the registering school or agency on the first Monday in January.
- There is no chronological age limit for eligibility.
- Adults must be receiving a minimum of 20 hours per week of instruction in an educational program below college level. For these purposes, an adult is a student over school age as determined by state law.
- There must be a written individualized educational plan for each student registered. This is a verification that the student is in a formally organized educational program and the written plan reflects the need for specialized materials due to a visual impairment.
- **MOST IMPORTANT – Registrations MUST be submitted by the deadline listed in the APH instructions!!!**

What about the students who do not meet federal guidelines but have a visual impairment that adversely affects learning?

These students may still need to have adapted materials in order to succeed in the classroom. They are covered through provisions in IDEA based on educational needs for individual students. Visual impairment, including blindness and partial sight, means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely impacts a student's educational performance. These students are eligible to receive items already shelved in the NMSBVI IRC as long as they have a current Supplemental Registration (SR) Form on file. This supplemental registration is also done through the student's home school district. Although NMSBVI cannot purchase **new** materials for non-APH qualifying students, books and kits that have been returned to the IRC can be loaned if available. As long as funds are available, the IRC will honor any reasonable and legitimate request for materials and equipment approved by the designated contact person in each district.

Designated Contact Person

Each school district or agency has one designated contact person. Materials transactions and all questions regarding requests are processed through this contact person. The contact person is responsible for requesting, receiving, disbursing, and returning all borrowed items. This person may be the special education coordinator, the agency administrator, or another person designated by the school district. Each request must be approved and signed by the designated contact person. After an order has been placed, questions often arise, even during summer months! It helps tremendously to have a phone number where the contact person can be reached both during school and during the summer months.

How to Order Materials:

- ➡ An **Equipment, Material & Supply Order Form** (*available on the NMSBVI web site under “VI Resources”, “Instructional Resource Center and New Mexico Repository”*) is received by the Instructional Resource Center, either by fax, snail mail, email, or hand-delivered. Request forms must be filled out completely and legibly and must include:
 - The qualifying student’s name, the school district and address
 - The requesting teacher’s name
 - The item description, catalog number, page number, and price as found in the APH catalog
 - The **district’s contact person** must approve and sign the form. (*Each school district has a designated contact person*, contact your local administration to find out who your contact person is.)
- ➡ IRC staff will perform a search for the materials to see if the items are available from the IRC inventory. If so, the item will be shipped the same day or the next day. If not....
- ➡ The item will be ordered from APH. When it arrives at NMSBVI IRC, it will be added to the inventory and shipped to the requesting district.
- ➡ The requesting school district will receive a fax from the IRC regarding the status of the order, and again when the items are shipped.
- ➡ A packing slip will be enclosed with the order.
- ➡ If the IRC does not receive news to the contrary within 10 working days, we will assume your district received all items. If packages are not received in a timely manner, please notify the IRC immediately!

How to Order Books:

- ➡ A **Textbook Request Form** (*available on the NMSBVI web site under “VI Resources”, “Instructional Resource Center and New Mexico Repository”*) is received by the Instructional Resource Center, either by fax, snail mail, email, or hand-delivered. Request forms must be filled out completely and legibly and must include:
 - The qualifying student’s name
 - The ISBN number and copyright date from the **student edition** of the textbook (**not** the teacher’s edition!)
 - Designate the reading medium – Braille or large print

- The ***district's contact person*** must approve and sign the form. (***Each school district has a designated contact person***, contact your local administration to find out who your contact person is.)
- ➡ IRC staff will perform a search for the book to see if the book is available in Braille/large print, and if so where the book can be obtained. The first step is to look at our own IRC inventory to see if we have a copy of the book. If so, it is shipped out, typically the same day or the next day. If not....
- ➡ The IRC staff will do an outside search for the book. If it is available from the American Printing House for the Blind, it will be ordered from them, added to our inventory, and then shipped to the requester. If not....
- ➡ If the book has been Brailled by any agency in the United States, the NMSBVI IRC cannot reproduce it due to copyright laws. The book must be purchased from the agency that originally transcribed the book. The IRC staff will notify the requesting school that the book is not available through the NMSBVI IRC and provide sites for source and ordering information. At this point, it is the requesting school's option to purchase the book from another vender.
- ➡ If the book has never been transcribed, a request can be made to the NMSBVI Braille Production Center to transcribe the book.
- ➡ **Please note that transcription of a textbook can take up to a year. Please order textbooks as early as possible to ensure that students receive books on time.**

Please keep these things in mind when requesting items:

- ➡ Check with the IRC before purchasing items for students. The IRC may be able to fill your needs from the shelves, or purchase items from APH Federal Quota funds for eligible students, saving your school's special education dollars!
- ➡ **Order early!** The beginning of the school year is always chaotic! Ordering early will give the IRC time to fill your order, as well as get in touch with the school contact person if problems or questions arise. Also remember, that textbooks can take extended time if they have not been previously transcribed. The IRC does process orders during the summer as well, so if you know what you will need for the upcoming year, order it at the end of the year to have a better chance of having it available at the beginning of the next year! We work very hard to ensure that books and materials are shipped in a timely manner.
- ➡ Please fill out request forms completely, make sure the student's name is listed, and the contact person signs it. The forms are available on the NMSBVI website and can be filled out on the computer and printed.
- ➡ When ordering from the APH catalog, please use the most current catalog. You can order an APH catalog from their website (www.aph.org) or you can call the NMSBVI IRC (800-437-3505 ext.4493) to request one.
- ➡ **The NMSBVI IRC does not provide recorded textbooks.** These can be ordered directly by your school district or agency from Learning Ally, 800-221-4792, www.learningally.org.
- ➡ Recorded leisure reading can be requested from the New Mexico State Talking Book Library, 800-456-5515, www.stlib.state.nm.us.

Renewing Loans and Returning Materials to the IRC:

All items on loan from the IRC are due back at the end of May of that school year. However, loans can be renewed if the items will be needed for the next year. Remember, all items on loan from the IRC are checked out to the designated contact person for each district. That person is responsible for making sure that all items are returned or renewed. Each February, a list of textbooks and equipment on loan to a school district or agency is mailed to the contact person, along with instructions on how to renew or return items.

For renewal:

- ➡ All items must be renewed **in writing** by faxing the list back to the IRC (575-439-4498) with “Renew” written next to the items to be renewed. The form must be signed and dated by the contact person.

For return:

- ➡ All equipment and books loaned for the current school year have a due date of May 31st. Items on loan from the NMSBVI IRC are checked out in the name of the designated contact person, and it is their responsibility to make sure they are returned, even if the student leaves that district. Please do not transfer items to another school district with the student, rather return them to the IRC.
- ➡ Materials and equipment may be mailed to the IRC at no cost if the package is labeled **“Free Matter for the Blind.”** Please note that items shipped in this manner cannot be traced if they are lost in the mail and cannot be considered returned until they arrive and are checked in through the IRC library. However, if you wish, items mailed “Free Matter for the Blind” can be insured for a nominal fee through the U.S. Post Office making them traceable if they should get lost in the mail.
- ➡ A list of overdue items not returned by the first of June will be faxed or mailed to each school district/agency. It is important that items that are not renewed be returned so that these items can be placed on inventory and are available to other school districts and students.
- ➡ Consumable items, such as handwriting and Braille paper, will not show up on your list and do not need to be returned.
- ➡ When returning broken items (such as Braille writers) please include a note stating the problem.
- ➡ All returned items should be mailed to:

**NMSBVI Instructional Resource Center
1900 N. White Sands Blvd.
Alamogordo, NM 88310
ATTN: Lisa Meisch, IRC Materials Specialist**

Things to Remember:

- ➡ Returning items in a timely manner will ensure that more students will be able to reap the benefits of the materials and equipment available through the IRC.
- ➡ If a student leaves a school district, the items on loan through that district should be returned to the IRC. Do not transfer the items to the new district with the student. The new district will be able to request materials and supplies for that student.
- ➡ If your district enrolls a student mid-year, a Supplemental Registration Form will need to be filled out and sent to NMSBVI IRC (even if the previous school filled one out.) Upon receipt of the new SR form, the IRC will accept requests for the student in their new district.
- ➡ If it is determined that a student would benefit from having two Braille writers (for instance, one in the classroom and one at home) the contact person may request more than one, and every effort will be made to fill this request. The responsibility of returning both Braille writers remains with the school district/agency.
- ➡ When returning volumes of Brailled books, please mail all volumes together at one time. Please check for missing volumes prior to mailing to make sure book sets are complete. A book is not considered checked in (and cannot be loaned out again) until **all** volumes of the set are returned.

IRC Handbook and Ordering Forms Online:

1. Go to the NMSBVI website: www.nmsbvi.k12.nm.us/content/irc.htm
 2. Click on VI Resources at the top of the page.
 3. Click on Instructional Resource Center, you will find the forms here.
- ➡ Equipment, Material & Supply Order Form
 - ➡ Supplemental Registration Form
 - ➡ Textbook Request Form
 - ➡ NM Repository Book Form

Finalized forms can be printed, signed, and faxed to NMSBVI IRC at 575-439-4498, or can be filled in and e-mailed as an attachment by the designated contact person (it **must** come from their e-mail address) to LMeisch@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us.

Conclusion:

For more than a century, the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind has been affecting change in the lives of Americans who are visually impaired. Through materials that range from accessible books to fine motor development materials, from braille writing equipment to talking computer products, and an outstanding network of IRC staff and school districts, APH and the Act address the specific learning needs that a vision loss creates. It is the purpose of the Act and its Federal Quota Program to place the most appropriate educational aids, tools, and supplies in the hands and lives of each person who is visually impaired. The NMSBVI IRC staff is dedicated to providing those materials to students throughout New Mexico to allow them every opportunity to be successful in their educational setting.

If you have any questions regarding the APH Federal Quota Funds or the products and services provided by the NMSBVI IRC, or if you have a student with a visual impairment and would like to know if there is

anything out there that could possibly be of benefit to help that student learn, please do not hesitate to call the IRC. We are full of innovative ideas and would be happy to assist you in determining the best approach to learning!

Please feel free to contact us.

Mary Vaughn, NMSBVI IRC Supervisor, Teacher of the Visually Impaired... 575-439-4438

Lisa Meisch, NMSBVI IRC Instructional Materials Specialist... 575-439-4437

Andrew Wilmott, NMSBVI IRC Instructional Materials Specialist... 575-439-4493

You can also visit our website at www.nmsbvi.k12.nm.us.

The NMSBVI IRC is under the VI Resources tab.

The New Mexico Repository

Braille and large print textbooks take up a lot of space! If you are a school district that has ordered Braille and/or large print textbooks for students, and that student is finished with them, do you need a place to store them? Well, we have just the place!

The New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NMSBVI) Instructional Resource Center (IRC) houses the New Mexico Repository (NMR) for Braille and large print textbooks. This is part of an effort to make more textbooks available to schools and students, as well as help stretch special education dollars.

The NMR inventory of titles consists of Braille and large print textbooks purchased by schools that have used them and then generously made them available to loan for other students in New Mexico. Please note that the NMR can accept only complete textbooks, not worksheets or fictional reading material. Schools are invited to participate in the NMR effort, and reminded that success of the NMR depends on participation of school districts and agencies in New Mexico willing to make books which they have purchased and are not currently using for their own students available to other students who may need them.

The NMR will store complete sets of Braille and large print textbooks with a copyright of up to ten years, depending on shelf availability. **Ownership of NMR textbooks remains with the contributing school.** Together the IRC and NMR inventories help make more textbooks available for loan to agencies for students that need them. When a textbook request arrives at the IRC, staff will search both the IRC and the NMR inventories to see if the book is available to be loaned. If the particular textbook in question has never been transcribed into Braille or large print, the requesting school district must purchase the book with their own funds, which can be quite costly. If the textbook is available through the NMR or the IRC,

it will be shipped to the requesting school. If the textbook is available through another source, the IRC will notify the requesting school district where they can obtain the book.

In instances where the owner of a textbook requests the return of their book, the book will be returned to the owner and withdrawn from the NMR inventory. If the book is out on loan to another school, the borrowing agency will receive a request to return the book to the NMR immediately so it can be returned to its owner. The school borrowing the book will become responsible for locating and purchasing a replacement book for their student. The NMSBVI IRC can assist with this process.

NMSBVI is not responsible for replacement costs of any textbooks that are lost or damaged. The contributing school and the borrowing school will be responsible for determining the course of action in those circumstances.

Please contact the NMSBVI IRC Instruction Materials Specialists before mailing books to be added to the NMR inventory to determine if the textbooks can be shelved at the NMR.

Mary Vaughn, IRC Supervisor, Teacher of the Visually Impaired – 575-439-4438

Lisa Meisch, IRC Instructional Materials Specialist – 575-439-4437

Andrew Wilmott, IRC Instructional Materials Specialist – 575-439-4493

NMSBVI Braille/Large Print Production Department:

The Braille Production Department of NMSBVI has three certified Braille transcribers. To become a certified transcriber, there is a rigorous transcriber's curriculum that must be mastered, and tests to be passed. Once the requirements have been fulfilled, a transcriber's certification is issued. During the summer months, all three transcribers are able to work on textbook requests. During the school year, one of the transcribers is available **only** to transcribe materials for our residential students that attend public school.

Text book requests take priority over all other Braille requests. There is a rigid process that must be followed for the Braille Production Department to take on the transcription of a textbook. Keep in mind, that transcription of a full textbook can take more than a year to complete!

Flow Chart of a transcription request:

- ➡ A **Textbook Request Form** is received by the Instructional Resource Center, either by fax, mail, email, or hand-delivered. ***This form is available on the NMSBVI web site under "VI Resources", "Instructional Resource Center and New Mexico Repository."*** Request forms must be filled out completely and legibly and must include:

- The qualifying student's name
 - The ISBN number and copyright date from the **student edition** of the textbook (**not** the teacher's edition!)
 - Designate the reading medium – Braille or large print
 - The **district's contact person** must approve and sign the form. (**Each school district has a designated contact person**, contact your local administration to find out who your contact person is, or you can contact the NMSBVI IRC.)
- ➡ IRC staff will perform a search for the book to see if the book is available in Braille/large print, and if so where the book can be obtained. The first step is to look at our own IRC inventory to see if we have a copy of the book. If so, it is shipped out, typically the same day or the next day. If not....
 - ➡ The IRC staff will do an outside search for the book. If it is available from the American Printing House for the Blind, it will be ordered from them and then shipped to the requester. If not....
 - ➡ If the book has been Brailled by any agency in the United States, the NMSBVI IRC cannot reproduce it due to copyright laws. The book must be purchased from the agency that originally transcribed the book. The IRC staff will notify the requesting school that the book is not available through the NMSBVI IRC and provide information as to where the book can be purchased. At this point, it is the requesting school's option to purchase the book from another vender.
 - ➡ If the book is not available from any source and has never been transcribed into Braille, a request can be made for Braille Production to produce the book in Braille and/or large print. Once that request is received, the following considerations must be assessed:
 - Is the Braille Production Department working on a project at the time?
 - If so, what is the timeline of the current project?
 - How intense is the current project?

Flow Chart if the NMSBVI Braille Production Department accepts the project:

- ➡ **Two** print copies of the **STUDENT EDITION** of the textbook must be sent to the Braille Production Department.
- (If there is a NIMAC (electronic) file available from the publisher, one print copy may be returned with the Braille version.)
- ➡ The second print copy will be cut apart for scanning.
 - ➡ If the NIMAC file is not available, both books will be cut apart and not returned.
 - ➡ Transcription of the book begins
 - ➡ After transcription of the book is complete, it is then sent to a proofreader.
 - ➡ Needed corrections and/or changes are made and the final product is embossed or printed.

- ➡ These are added to the IRC inventory and then shipped to the requesting school.
- ➡ These books are on loan to the requesting school district until the student that is using them is finished with them, and then they must be returned to the NMSBVI IRC and made available to other students/school districts.

REMEMBER THESE FACTS:

- Braille Production takes on projects on a first come, first served basis. Braille Production can do a maximum of three projects during summer months and two during the school year. **ORDER EARLY!!!**
- Textbooks **ALWAYS** take priority over literary books.
- Even though a Braille translation program is utilized, it is not just a matter of “pushing a button” to complete the translation. The file must still be checked for correct formatting, text that may be missing due to non-transference, and volume divisions and tactile graphics must be made.
- If there are complex tactile graphics that need to be done, ***these must first be made by hand using common, everyday materials (sand paper, textured paper, string, thread, yarn, etc.) A copy is made of the textbook version, cut apart, traced onto the appropriate textured paper, cut out, glued to a blank paper, outlined using thread, string, etc., and then reproduced on thermoform.*** Hopefully, the end result is an acceptable tactile graphic, if not the process is started all over. Tactile graphics cannot be produced by simply copying a picture out of a textbook. ***This is an extremely time consuming process.***
- It can take **up to a year** to complete the transcription of a textbook. **ORDER EARLY!!!**

As time permits, other Braille projects may be accepted. In order to fulfill a request for a Literary book, the publisher **must** be contacted to get permission to reproduce the book before any transcription can begin. There are no NIMAC (electronic) files for literary books, so both print copies of those must be cut apart and scanned if more than one transcriber is used. Once again, the file must be checked for formatting errors and missing text. This is a time consuming process as well. Requests for other Braille materials are considered if there are no other priority projects in progress.

Fulfilling a request to convert a document to Braille is not just merely converting a print file to a Braille file and embossing it. There are many things that must be considered and many steps that must be taken in order to produce a quality product that is functional and meaningful for students. Your request for Braille transcription services is much more likely to happen in a timely manner if you can send in your requests ***as early as possible.*** Transcribers can work on projects during the summer and hopefully have them ready at the beginning of the school year. **Requests are honored on a first come first served basis.**

ORDER EARLY!!!

Contact Information:

- Mary Vaughn ~ NMSBVI IRC Supervisor, Teacher of the Visually Impaired
Phone: (575/800) 437-3505 ext. 4438
email: MaryVaughn@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us
- Lisa Meisch ~ NMSBVI IRC Instructional Materials Specialist
Phone: (575/800) 437-3505 ext. 4437
email: LMeisch@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us
- Sharon Hilton ~ NMSBVI Accessible Materials Manager
Phone: (575/800) 437-3505 ext. 4412
email: SHilton@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us

Please Remember:

Make sure that students are registered during the APH Federal Quota Funds census in January (check with your Special Education director) and have a Supplemental Registration Form (available on line at www.nmsbvi.k12.nm.us) filled out with the IRC or they will be ineligible to receive materials.



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1-800-437-3505 • WWW.NMSBVI.K12.NM.US