



**NEW MEXICO SCHOOL FOR THE
BLIND & VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

Instructional Resource Center Handbook

Revised January 2014

What is the NMSBVI IRC?

The Instructional Resource Center (IRC) at New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NMSBVI) serves as a statewide lending resource for Braille and large print textbooks, as well as other specialized equipment used by students with visual impairments.

Each year, books and equipment from the IRC are loaned to schools for use by qualifying students, and then returned to the IRC to be used again by other students. This stretches educational dollars used to purchase these expensive items, and makes more textbooks available to students in a timely manner for use in their local educational agencies.

What is the New Mexico Repository?

As a part of the effort to make more books available to schools, and to help local educational agencies stretch their special education dollars, NMSBVI voluntarily houses the New Mexico Repository (NMR).

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.

How Can My School Participate in the NMR, and What If We Need the Books Back?

Schools are invited to participate in the NMR effort, and are reminded that success of the NMR depends on participation of school districts and agencies in New Mexico willing to make available books which they have purchased and are not currently using for their own students.

The NMR will store complete sets of Braille and large print textbooks with a copyright of up to ten years, depending on shelf availability. Please contact Ruthie Ford, IRC Materials Librarian, at (575) 439-4437 **before mailing books to be added to the NMR inventory**, to determine if the books can be shelved at the NMR.

Ownership of NMR textbooks remains with contributing schools, but the books are stored at NMSBVI. Together the IRC and NMR inventories help make more textbooks available for loan to agencies that need them. When textbook requests arrive at the IRC, both inventories are checked to see if the book can be loaned.

In instances where the owner of a book requests the return of their book, the following steps will be followed:

- ✓ If the book is out on loan to another school at that time, 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.
- ✓ When the NMR receives the returned book, it will be shipped back to its owner and the title will be removed from the NMR listing.
- ✓ If the borrowing school fails to return the book to the NMR within two weeks after a written request is made, the book's owner will be given information about how to contact the district borrowing the book.
- ✓ The book will then be withdrawn from the NMR inventory.

Schools who contribute books will be notified if books are lost or overdue. The book's owner will determine whether or not to charge the school district involved.

Information shared from the NMR will include only information about the book and the borrowing agency. No student information will be provided by NMSBVI. The missing books will also be withdrawn from the NMR inventory.

NMSBVI is not responsible for replacement costs for any books lost or damaged from the NMR inventory.

What is a Supplemental Registration Form?

A Supplemental Registration (SR) Form is a form submitted by each student's Local Education Agency (LEA) that documents a need for special format materials or services for a student with a visual impairment.

All students must have a current Supplemental Registration (SR) Form on file with the IRC before books or other items can be loaned. This includes students who are **also** registered during the annual American Printing House (APH) Federal Registration, which will be discussed later

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 Education Act (IDEA) guidelines.

SR Forms must be completed annually (in September). When submitting SR forms, the student's LEA is asked to verify they have on file with their agency all required documentation proving the student's need for special format materials as required under IDEA.

This form helps the IRC locate students who may have moved during the summer, or who may have items checked out through a different agency. If a new student arrives at a school during the year, or transfers from another school district or agency, a new SR Form can be submitted at that time.

A copy of the SR form can be found on the NMSBVI webpage under the "Instructional Resource Center" section.

What Is the APH Registration?

The American Printing House (APH) Registration, conducted annually and identifying students in schools or other educational agencies the first week in January, helps give a national count of students who qualify as "legally blind" under federal guidelines. These numbers are used to compute the amount of federal quota dollars allocated for each state.

The APH registration counts students attending educational agencies during the federally-mandated period the first week in January, and students can **only** be registered during this time each year. Using this national count, federal quota funds are set aside through the American Printing House for the Blind in Louisville, KY for purchase of books and supplies for eligible students.

What Are Federal Quota Funds And How Are They Used?

The federal Act to Promote the Education of the Blind was enacted by Congress in 1879. The law established funding, known as APH Quota funding, used to provide specialized educational materials for students who meet the federal definition of blindness. NMSBVI has been designated as the agency responsible for administering the program in this state.

Funding amounts are based on the number of eligible students attending schools and other educational facilities the first Monday of each year. Based on the national count, federal funds are allocated for each state to help with educational needs.

Although NMSBVI can purchase equipment and textbooks through this account, no actual money is ever received by NMSBVI.

These funds can only be spent for items available at the American Printing House for the Blind in Louisville, KY and can only be used to purchase items for qualifying students. As long as funds are available within a given year, the IRC will honor any reasonable and legitimate request for materials and equipment approved by the designated contact person.

These items are loaned to districts for that student's use. After the student has finished using the books and equipment, the items are then returned to the IRC where they can then be loaned for any student who has a current SR Form on file, regardless of whether they are eligible for APH Quota funding or qualify under IDEA.

It is the responsibility of the school district or agency serving the student to register their student for services. APH registration forms will be mailed to special education directors at each agency or school district before the end of the calendar year, along with registration instructions. Registration forms must be returned to the NMSBVI APH registrar no later than the date listed in the packet.

Further information regarding APH registration can be obtained by contacting Beth Lyle, APH Registrar, at (575) 437-3505, Ext. 3076.

Which Students Are Eligible For 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 so contracted that the widest diameter of such field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees. This is established by a diagnosis by a doctor (see eye report form). This eye report must be within the last three years, except in the case of a student who has no vision (NIL). In that case, an eye report that states “NIL” can be used no matter the date.
- A new category, **FUNCTIONS AT THE DEFINITION OF BLINDNESS**, also may qualify your student for APH funding. This category indicates blindness due to 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, nonprofit 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 respective 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 because the student has a visual impairment.
- **Most important—Registrations MUST be submitted by the deadline listed in the APH packet of information.**

Are All Students With a Visual Impairment Legally Blind?

Not all visual impairments create situations that qualify as legal blindness, but some of these students still need to have adapted materials in order to succeed in the classroom. These students are eligible to receive items already shelved in the NMSBVI IRC.

When a student has a visual impairment that impacts learning, the student is covered through the provisions in IDEA. However, unless the condition qualifies as an APH category, aid is only available at the local level.

Examples of non-APH qualifying students include those who may need to begin learning compensatory skills such as Braille literacy or mobility skills that need to be in place if their vision declines. Some students in transition may need large print textbooks. Other non-qualifying students may have conditions that give inconsistent vision that impacts concept development, movement, and other areas of development.

Please note, however, that under APH rules, students diagnosed with CVI or other brain injury conditions which cause them to function at the level of blindness may be eligible for APH quota funding if such determination is made by an eye care specialist or neurologist. These students must be registered during the January APH registration process.

Students served under IDEA as students with a visual impairment qualify by different criteria than students who qualify for APH Quota funds. While APH Quota criteria strictly adhere to the federal guidelines for legal blindness, IDEA has a much broader definition based on educational needs for individual students. Visual impairment, including blindness, means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness. (34CRF 300.7(15))

IDEA ensures that all children with disabilities have Free and Public Education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment and independent living. Visual impairment, including both partial sight and blindness, is listed as a disability that meets the criteria for service under IDEA. The definition of visual impairment, including blindness, means impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance.

What Role Does the IRC/NMR Play in Providing Textbooks and Equipment?

The IRC and NMR have a large selection of Braille and large print textbooks and other equipment that schools and other educational agencies can borrow to help meet students' needs. These items are purchased from the American Printing House for the Blind through use of APH Quota funds or have been made available through NMR contributions.

New Mexico students with a visual impairment who do **not** qualify for APH Quota funds can still use materials from the IRC/NMR shelves, as long as they have a current Supplemental Registration (SR) Form on file at NMSBVI. Although NMSBVI cannot purchase **new** materials for non-APH qualifying students, re-used books and kits from the shelves can be loaned if available.

Since the IRC and NMR carry many previously-loaned items on the shelves, agencies are invited to request books and other items for their students with visual impairments through the IRC before purchasing from their own funds.

If the requested textbooks or equipment items are not available on the shelves for APH Quota students, IRC staff will purchase these items through APH Quota funds if possible.

If an item is **not** available from the shelves, or the student is **not** registered for APH Quota funds, the student's Local Education Agency (LEA) will be notified immediately by the IRC, and the LEA will become responsible for purchasing the item.

(Please Note: Students who are not eligible for APH Quota funds cannot receive consumable supplies such as paper from the IRC, since obviously these can't be used a second time.)

How Soon Can I Send Requests?

The IRC has already begun processing requests for the 2014-2015 School Year. The deadline for ordering books and other materials for the 2014-2015 School Year is April 1, 2014. The earlier books are requested, the better the chance is that books will be available to your students by the beginning of school in the fall.

Although we will continue accepting requests after that date, the chance of getting your books in time for the start of school diminishes greatly, especially if a textbook is not already produced in Braille or large print.

Please be aware that transcribers and large print production centers get booked up early in the summer. If a book is unavailable, your staff

will also need to have time to arrange for transcription of the book before going on summer break.

Agencies must use the Textbook Request Form or the Equipment, Material and Supply Order Form when asking to borrow textbooks or other materials from the IRC or the NMR. Both forms can be printed from the NMSBVI website.

After the form is signed by the Local Education Agency's designated contact person, it can be faxed to the IRC at (575) 439-4498 or e-mailed as an attachment to IRC@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us. **Please do not include requests in with boxes of returned items. These orders will not be processed.**

How Do We Request Textbooks and Other Educational Materials?

All requests must be submitted in writing on the appropriate request forms found on the NMSBVI website. After they are completed, they can be e-mailed by your district's contact person or signed and faxed to (575) 439-4498.

Materials transactions and all questions regarding requests are processed through **one** designated contact person in the local school district or agency. This contact person can be the special education coordinator, agency administrator or their designee. The contact person is responsible for requesting, receiving, disbursing and returning all borrowed items.

Requests must be approved and signed by the designated contact person. The name of the student for whom the materials are being requested must be on the request form, and the student must have a current Supplemental Registration form on file with the IRC from the requesting agency.

Questions often come up during the summer months, while many schools are closed. **If the contact person will not be at school during the summer months, please provide us with a number where we can reach them.**

Keep these things in mind when requesting items:

1. Check with NMSBVI before purchasing items for students! The IRC may be able to fill your needs from the shelves, or purchase the items from APH Quota funds for eligible students and you won't need to spend your special education dollars!

2. **Order early!** IRC staff has already begun processing requests for the coming school year. If orders are placed by the April 1 deadline, chances are good that books and materials can be ordered and shipped in time for the beginning of school in the fall if they are already available in Braille or large print. **However, please note that math, science and foreign language textbooks may take longer production time in the event they are not already available.** Ordering early will also give us time to get in touch with school contact persons if we encounter problems finding your books or if we must notify the Local Education Agency (LEA) to purchase or produce the books themselves.
3. Please fill out request forms completely and legibly. Make sure the student's name is listed and the contact person signs the form. It's also important to use the current request forms (available on the IRC section of the NMSBVI website) because the forms have been updated.
4. When requesting textbooks, remember to write down the ISBN from the **student's edition** of the book, not the teacher's edition. This is usually located on the inside of the title page, near the copyright information. Be sure to include the reading medium the student needs, such as Braille or large print.
5. When requesting items listed in the APH catalog, include the catalog number, page number and price on your written request. Please use the most current APH catalog, as catalog numbers and available products change from year to year.
6. If you are asking to borrow higher-cost kits, please check to see if your school district already has one at the school that can be used by more than one student. If there are numerous students registered in different schools within a system, the IRC will attempt to supply more than one kit.
7. Time frames for delivery of materials to the designated contact person vary depending upon whether requested items are on the IRC shelves or whether they need to be purchased. If the designated contact person has any questions regarding orders, please feel free to contact the IRC with questions, but **DO NOT reorder materials.**
8. Recorded textbooks are to be ordered directly by your agency through Learning Ally. They can be reached at 1-800-221-4792.

Their catalog of available books can also be found on their web page, www.learningally.org.

9. Recorded leisure reading can be requested from the New Mexico State Talking Book Library, 1-800-456-5515, or by viewing their web page at www.stlib.state.nm.us.

Upon receiving requests, NMSBVI staff will check to see if items are available for loan from the IRC or NMR shelves, or whether NMSBVI can purchase them through APH Quota funds for eligible students. Your district will receive a fax from NMSBVI regarding the status of requested items.

If requested items are available, they will be mailed immediately. If not, the IRC will attempt to order from APH if the item can be purchased through Quota funds or will notify your agency by fax that they must be purchased through your local agency's special education funds.

When shipments are mailed, we also fax or e-mail your district's contact person to notify them of the shipment. Another copy of the packing slip is enclosed in the box with the shipment. If we do not receive news to the contrary from your district within 10 working days, we will assume your district received all shipped items. If you do not receive your package(s) in a timely manner, please call us immediately!

What If the Books I Need Are Not Available?

Books needed in large print or Braille frequently are not available in Braille or large print, especially in cases of new textbook adoptions.

Although, by state law publishers must make available electronic files of the books, it still can take many months (sometimes even up to a year) to get the files "cleaned up" and re-formatted. Science, math, foreign language and other specialized textbooks also may take longer to transcribe.

This process should be done by a trained professional knowledgeable in appropriate formatting methods for large print and Braille, and skilled in providing tactile graphic information.

Some "no source" textbooks can be produced in Braille or large print through the APH ATIC program. Please note, however, that the cutoff copyright date is five years or less in order for the book to be reproduced by them, and they are unable to produce textbooks listed

as state-specific adoptions. In addition, APH ATIC often reaches production capacity early in the spring.

APH no longer asks that schools provide print copies of books to be transferred into Braille or large print. APH will only require print copies of books in rare instances when books are out of print or otherwise cannot be found for purchase.

Instead, school districts and agencies are asked to fax copies of informational pages from their regular print textbooks to NMSBVI so they can be ordered from APH.

These pages include copies of the front and back covers of the book, the title page, and the page containing ISBN and copyright information.

In instances where a book can be considered for ATIC production, the IRC will contact your school or agency requesting information about where your school purchased the regular print books (such as the state textbook repository, etc.) The IRC will also ask that a copy of the table of contents of the book be provided.

If a student is eligible for APH Quota funds, and your agency can supply the required information, every attempt will be made to have these books made into the appropriate format and purchased through Quota funds. Again, ordering by April 1 is important if you wish to receive your books in time for school to begin in August.

If your student is not eligible for APH Quota funds, these “no source” textbooks can be purchased by LEAs directly from APH or by checking the APH website for possible transcribers to contact. Requirements for transcription sources may differ.

The Production Department at NMSBVI may also be available to produce a limited number of books. For further information about this, please contact Sharon Hilton at NMSBVI, (575) 439-4412. Requests will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis, as well as on the type of book and resources available.

What is the Process for Renewing Loans?

All items on loan from the IRC are due back at the end of May of that school year, although loans can be renewed. Each February, a list of all textbooks and equipment on loan to your agency is mailed to your contact person, along with instructions about how to renew or return the items. All items (including all Braille writers and other equipment) must be renewed in writing by faxing the list back to the IRC at (575) 439-4498 with “renew” written next to items you wish to keep. Please sign and date the list at the bottom.

The deadline for renewing equipment and textbooks for the coming school year is April 1, 2014. After that date, they will be considered available for loan to other agencies.

All items not renewed for another year or returned to the IRC will be considered **overdue** by June 1, 2014 and overdue notices will be faxed or mailed to you. If you have a student who needs their books for a longer period of time, please renew the loan by April 1, 2014.

When and How Do I Return Borrowed Materials to the IRC/NMR?

All equipment and books loaned for the current school year have a due date of May 31, 2014. Items on loan from the NMSBVI IRC are checked out in the name of the school or agency designated contact person, and it is the responsibility of the school district to make sure they are returned, even if the student leaves your school district. Please do not transfer items to other school districts when a student transfers!

Braille and large print textbooks and specialized 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 "Free Matter for the Blind" 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.

Items mailed "Free Matter" can be insured for a nominal fee through the U.S. Postal Service if you wish, making them traceable if they should get lost in the mail. Further information regarding "Free Matter for the Blind" is available in **US Postal Service Publication 347** or at your local post office.

A list of overdue items not returned by the first of June will be faxed or mailed in June or July. If a patron does not respond to the overdue letter by the end of July, borrowing privileges may be suspended until the account is brought up to date.

Consumable items (such as handwriting and Braille paper) will not show up on your list, and do not need to be returned.

All returned items should be mailed to:

ATTN: IRC Materials Specialist
NM School f/t Blind and Visually Impaired
1900 N. White Sands Blvd.
Alamogordo, NM 88310

Textbooks, Materials and Equipment Use/Re-use Policies:

All currently borrowed items must be returned by June 1, 2013 or renewed in writing by April 1, 2014. Please note the following:

- Items must also be mailed or delivered in person to NMSBVI at the end of the year. **NMSBVI itinerant teachers and early childhood specialists do not transport items.**
- When returning broken items such as Braille writers for repair, please include a note in the box stating the problem.
- When a student leaves your school district, please **do not** transfer items to another district with the child! School districts who originally borrowed the materials can be charged for lost and/or damaged items and future requests can be delayed due to delinquent accounts.
- If a school requests two copies of a textbook, only one will be provided from NMSBVI for each student.
- If it is determined that a student would benefit from having two braille writers to be used for school work (for instance, one at home and one in the classroom), the contact person may request more than one, and every effort will be made to fill this request. However, the responsibility for returning both braille writers will remain with the school district or agency which borrowed the braille writers.
- As funds allow, NMSBVI will attempt to make available higher-cost kits for student use. Priority will be given, however, to using available funds to purchase Braille textbooks as long as they are requested for APH Quota students by the ordering deadline.
- In instances where kits are available in different levels, only the level the student is currently using should be requested. As different levels are needed, they may be requested from the IRC.
- Please mail all volumes of a set of books together at one time in order to ensure that book sets are received at NMSBVI in complete form. Check for missing volumes to make sure book sets are complete before returning them. A book is not considered checked in (and can't be loaned out again) until **all** volumes of the set are returned.

Where Can Schools Purchase Books and Supplies?

One of the best sources for locating supplies, and large print and Braille books is found by accessing the American Printing House for the Blind website database at www.aph.org and clicking on the **Louis** database link shown on the opening APH site.

By accessing the **Louis** database, customers can search by ISBN numbers, titles, keywords and format required. Books listed in the database also indicate the name and telephone number of the agency from which the book can be purchased, along with other important information.

Please note, however, that APH Quota funds can only be used to purchase from APH, even though the **Louis** database may list several other vendor sources. Schools must use their own funds to purchase books from other vendors listed on **Louis**. Information on payment methods, ordering procedures, etc. also can be found by calling the American Printing House at 1-800-223-1839.

Again, we remind you that it is important to **place orders early in the spring to allow for delivery during the first part of the school year, even if you do so from your own budget.**

How Do I Order Tests For My Students?

In past years, NMSBVI has served as the main resource for providing tests for students with visual impairments statewide. However, the state is now requiring test publishers to be responsible for providing the new state-mandated tests in accessible media. Please call your agency's special education director or test coordinator for updated instructions.

Who Can I Call for Assistance?

Staff members at the Instructional Resource Center are available to assist with questions Monday through Friday, including the summer months.

For questions concerning:

Classroom materials or textbook requests— IRC

(575) 439-4437

Production of Braille or large print books— Sharon Hilton,

(575) 439-4412.

ATTENTION:

New IRC Forms Now Online!

Please note that these forms have been recently restructured, and are now available online alongside this handbook, in Word format (www.nmsbvi.k12.nm.us/content/irc.htm):

- Equipment, Material & Supply Order Form
- Supplemental Registration Form
- Textbook Request Form

Finalized forms can be printed, signed and faxed to NMSBVI at (575) 439-4498, or can be filled in by the contact person and e-mailed as an attachment by that same person to IRC@nmsbvi.k12.nm.us.

It is our hope that these options will ultimately help us to serve you better.