

**ALABAMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
**Special Education Services**  
**ASSIST Funding Support Plan for**  
**IV. DEAF/HARD of HEARING, and/or VISUALLY IMPAIRED**

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**Introduction**

There are approximately 96,429 public school children receiving special education services (SES) in the state of Alabama. Due to local education agency (LEA) Individualized Education Program Team decisions regarding student's area of exceptionality, many students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (HOH), and/or Visually Impaired (VI) are declared eligible for special education and related services under a variety of other exceptionalities. Other exceptionalities used are: Multiple Disabilities, Developmental Delay, Intellectual Disability, Other Health Impairments or Speech or Language Impairment. The 2019 Alabama Child Count lists 1,494 students receiving SES under the exceptionalities of Deaf- Blindness, Hearing Impairment, and Visual Impairment.

Special education students with sensory issues involving sight and/or hearing with high-needs costs are not always evenly distributed throughout the state. The uneven distribution of children with high needs generates an excessive expenditure demand for certain LEAs in our State.

**The Deaf/HOH and/or VI Support Plan**

The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) will reserve funding from Other State-Level Activities to support students with HOH and VI needs. All services must be provided in accordance with 20 U.S.C. 1400, et.seq.,(P.L. 108-446) IDEA, Part B, and the Alabama Administrative Code. Services requested will be monitored by the ALSDE.

**Criteria**

1. Consultations, assistance, training, and conducting assessments must be completed by a highly skilled professional in the area of Deaf/HOH and/or VI.
2. LEAs Should Consider the Following Guidelines for Professionals in Case Preparation:
  - Schedule all parts of the Deaf/HOH and/or VI evaluation with the LEA.
  - Conduct a parent interview.
  - Conduct an interview with school personnel who interacts with the child.
  - Observe the child in both a structured and unstructured school environment or natural setting.
  - Disseminate appropriate questionnaires to the parent and school personnel.
  - Provide consultation feedback to both the family and the LEA.
  - Provide a written diagnostic summary to the LEA that includes summative information of the family history, interviews, and observations conducted, and provide analysis of assessment results and evaluation information.
  - Develop a plan of support for the Deaf/HOH and/or VI student
  - Provide the report and plan to the LEA within 21 days of the evaluation.

Criteria for LEA Participation:

An LEA is eligible to complete an ASSIST funding application for Deaf/HOH and/or VI on behalf of any child, ages 3-21, with a current IEP, who also meets the predetermined criteria in the definition of deaf-blindness, hearing impairment, and/or visual impairment and is currently receiving special education services.

Criteria for LEA Use of the Application Funds for ASSIST, IV. Deaf/HOH and/or VI

1. Allowable expenditures include, but are not limited to:
  - Highly skilled credentialed professionals that are specifically trained in the area of Deaf/HOH and/or VI.

- Contracted services specific for the child with a disability who is in need of additional Deaf/HOH and/or VI supports and interventions.
- 2. The application for ASSIST funding, IV. Deaf/HOH and/or VI is used only to provide Deaf/HOH and/or VI support documented in the application for a specific child with a disability that exceeds the average cost of typical Deaf/HOH and/or VI supports and interventions. ALSDE SES reimbursement per evaluation, per child, including any travel cost incurred, may not exceed \$2,000.00.
- 3. If the trainer requires travel costs, it is the responsibility of the LEA to pay costs using the LEAs rates, rules, and regulations, or the State's rates, rules, and regulations regarding travel. It will be the responsibility of the LEA to determine and account for travel costs and to negotiate for services rendered. Any transportation costs not specific to the Deaf/HOH and/or VI support services outline in the application is considered an unallowable expense.
- 4. An LEA submitting a claim under this provision of IDEA shall be prepared to provide supporting documentation related to the Deaf/HOH and/or VI supports the specific student with a disability received.

Documentation:

The LEA may also be required to submit supporting documents and have available for review in the statewide electronic portal the current *Notice and Eligibility Decision Regarding Special Education Services* form and the IEP relating to the submitted application.

Application for ASSIST Funding, IV. Deaf/HOH and/or VI Award Status Timelines, Procedures, and Notification:

The procedural timelines for ASSIST fund application, IV. Deaf/HOH and/or VI are as follows:

- 1. An LEA may submit multiple student applications for students with a disability that may benefit from additional Deaf/HOH and/or VI supports and interventions in the LEA's jurisdiction.
- 2. The application for ASSIST funds, IV. Deaf/HOH and/or VI cannot be used for expenses incurred for the identified evaluations in prior years or funded by an alternate funding source.
- 3. All applications received will be reviewed by staff of the ALSDE within 15 days to determine if the unique qualities of the child(ren) related to occurrence, intensity of, and diversity of services are in excess of the typical high-needs child with a disability that needs additional Deaf/HOH and/or VI supports and interventions. An award notification will be sent via email to the LEA after an approval of the application is granted.

**Please complete and return the Application for ASSIST funding via email to:**

[speced@alsde.edu](mailto:speced@alsde.edu)

**ATTENTION FISCAL TEAM**