

Letter to McDowell: Deaf/Blind Services

On August 2, 2018 OSEP released a [Letter to McDowell](#). This letter is related to students who are deaf-blind, interveners, and includes an important discussion around related services. We wanted to take this opportunity to remind districts that the list of related services in the IDEA and the Part B regulations is not meant to be exhaustive and may include other developmental, corrective, or supportive services, if they are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education in order for the child to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). The members of the child's IEP Team must make individual determinations in light of each child's unique abilities and needs about whether the service, such as an intervener, is required to assist the child to benefit from special education. If the IEP Team determines that a particular service, including the services of an intervener, is an appropriate related service for a child and is required to enable the child to receive FAPE, the Team's determination must be reflected in the child's IEP, and the service must be provided at public expense and at no cost to the parents.

The Department of Public Instructions recognizes the value that the role of an intervener plays in the academic progress of a student identified with deafblindness. To demonstrate commitment to the efforts of training highly qualified personnel for students with deafblindness, the DPI has approved financial allocations through the Wisconsin Deafblind Technical Assistance Project (WDBTAP) to support school districts in providing high quality, useful and relevant training for their staff supporting this lowest of low incidence population.

The WDBTAP will reimburse a participant for the cost of the intervener training under specific conditions:

- The individual that will receive training is currently working with a student identified with deafblindness. The student with deafblindness is current on the WDBTAP Deafblind Registry [contact Jennifer Hudson-Stanek if unsure (608)356-2023]

Other conditions:

- Participant must complete and submit an "Intervener Training Scholarship" (attached) or on the WDBTAP website www.wdbtap.wi.gov. This document outlines the parameters of cost reimbursement.

There are a few training options for obtaining national credentialing. The WDBTAP is currently in a position to financially support one of these programs but are looking into offering alternative options at a later date. Currently, the WDBTAP is accessing the Intervener Training Program through Utah State University and is in a position to reimbursement participants at the CEU/Non-Credit level. This comes out to \$150 per credit x 12 credits or approximately \$1800 for the full three semesters.

Utah State University does offer the intervener training program for undergraduate and graduate credit as well. The WDBTAP will reimburse at the CEU/Non-Credit level and the participant is responsible for any costs beyond that base level. (Fall of 2018 Undergrad: \$4500; Graduate:

\$5700). For example, if a participant opts to take the training for undergraduate credit:
Undergraduate cost for three semesters = \$4500 less \$1800 reimbursed by WDBTAP = \$2700
out of pocket after full reimbursement by WDBTAP.

The schooling involves an on line learning platform, they do not meet at a specific time, but they are required to log in weekly. Past participants have reported an average of four hours per week of dedicated time to complete the assignments.

Utah State University enrolls for Fall, Winter and Summer Semesters. A participant can begin the training program at the start of any of these semesters.

For any questions about interveners, intervener training, reimbursement process, etc., please contact the Wisconsin Deafblind Technical Assistance Project at (608)356-2023.