

Department of Education
AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND
Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Request

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For carrying out the Act to [promote] Promote the Education of the Blind¹ of March 3, 1879,
[\$30,431,000] \$25,431,000. (*Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2019.*)

NOTE

Each language provision that is followed by a footnote reference is explained in the Analysis of Language Provisions and Changes document that follows the appropriation language.

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Analysis of Language Provisions and Changes

Language Provision	Explanation
¹ ...to Promote the Education of the Blind	The name of the Act of March 3, 1879 is included to clarify the appropriation language reference.

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Appropriation, Adjustments, and Transfers
(dollars in thousands)

Appropriation/Adjustments/Transfers	2018	2019	2020
Discretionary:			
Appropriation	<u>\$27,431</u>	<u>\$30,431</u>	<u>\$25,431</u>
Total, discretionary appropriation.....	27,431	30,431	25,431

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Authorizing Legislation
(dollars in thousands)

Activity	2019 Authorized	2019 Estimate	2020 Authorized	2020 Request
The Act to Promote the Education of the Blind (20 U.S. C. 101 et. seq.)	<u>Indefinite</u>	<u>\$30,431</u>	<u>Indefinite</u>	<u>\$25,431</u>
Total annual appropriation		30,431		25,431

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Appropriations History (dollars in thousands)

Year	Budget Estimate to Congress	House Allowance	Senate Allowance	Appropriation
2011	\$24,600	\$24,600 ¹	\$24,600 ²	\$24,600 ³
2012	24,600	24,551 ⁴	24,551 ⁴	24,505
2013	24,505	24,505 ⁵	24,508 ⁵	23,223
2014	24,505	N/A ⁶	24,456	24,456
2015	24,456	N/A ⁶	25,000 ⁷	24,931
2016	24,931	25,431 ⁸	24,931 ⁸	25,431
2017	25,431	25,431 ⁹	25,431 ⁹	25,431
2018	25,383	26,431 ¹⁰	25,431 ¹⁰	27,431 ¹⁰
2019	25,431	28,431 ¹¹	30,431 ¹¹	30,431 ¹¹
2020	25,431			

¹ The level for the House allowance reflects the House-passed full-year continuing resolution.

² The level for the Senate allowance reflects Committee action only.

³ The level for appropriation reflects the Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (P.L. 112-10).

⁴ The level for the House allowance reflects an introduced bill and the level for the Senate allowance reflects Senate Committee action only.

⁵ The levels for the House and Senate allowances reflect action on the regular annual 2013 appropriations bill, which proceeded in the 112th Congress only through the House Subcommittee and the Senate Committee.

⁶ The House allowance is shown as N/A because there was no Subcommittee action.

⁷ The level for the Senate allowance reflects Senate Subcommittee action only.

⁸ The levels for House and Senate allowances reflect action on the regular annual 2016 appropriations bill, which proceeded in the 114th Congress only through the House Committee and Senate Committee.

⁹ The levels for the House and Senate allowances reflect Committee action on the regular annual 2017 appropriations bill.

¹⁰ The level for the House allowance reflects floor action on the Omnibus appropriations bill; the Senate allowance reflects Committee action on the regular annual 2018 appropriations bill; the Appropriation reflects the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (P.L. 115-141).

¹¹ The levels for the House and Senate allowances reflect Committee action on the regular annual 2019 appropriations bill; the Appropriation reflects enactment of the Department of Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act, 2019 (P.L. 115-245).

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American Printing House for the Blind

(Act to Promote the Education of the Blind, 20 U.S.C. 101 et seq.)

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2020 Authorization: Indefinite

Budget Authority:

<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$30,431	\$25,431	-\$5,000

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Act to Promote the Education of the Blind authorizes an annual appropriation for the American Printing House (APH) for the Blind to produce and distribute educational materials adapted for students who are legally blind and enrolled in formal educational programs below the college level. The APH, located in Louisville, Kentucky, has received Federal support under this Act since 1879. Materials produced by APH include textbooks in braille and large type, educational tools such as braille typewriters and computer software and hardware, teaching aides, including tests and performance assessments, and other specialized supplies. State educational agencies and programs serving persons who are blind may order materials free of charge up to the amount of funds allocated to each State for educational materials. Approximately 75 percent of the appropriation is used to cover the cost of producing these educational materials. The APH uses the remainder of the appropriated funds to conduct research and to provide advisory services to professional and consumer organizations.

The APH conducts research necessary to develop and improve educational materials in core curriculum areas such as science, mathematics, English language arts, and social studies and adapts testing materials related to these subject areas. APH also conducts research in product areas related to the unique needs of the visually impaired population, such as braille reading, orientation and mobility, and assistive technology. In addition, APH produces special materials in areas such as early intervention and early childhood education, prevocational training, and the functional use of residual vision.

Advisory services provided by the APH include: administration of the Student Registration System, the Louis Database of Accessible Materials, and the Electronic File Repository and Expert Database; National Instructional Partnership activities; and the production of catalogs, brochures, videos, and a wide variety of web-based information. APH also convenes expert advisory committees and focus groups to address specific issues, as necessary.

APH materials are reviewed by a six-member Educational Products Advisory Committee charged with ensuring that all educational materials produced and research undertaken by APH effectively focus on meeting the needs of students who are blind. In addition, a five-member Educational Services Advisory Committee provides oversight and accountability regarding APH's outreach and support services. Both committees are composed of ex officio trustees who are the State officials responsible for administering APH accounts.

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APH materials are distributed to programs serving blind students through allotments of funds to the States. These allotments are based on an annual census (conducted by APH) of the number of legally blind students located in each State, and are provided in the form of credits, which trustees use to order materials from APH. These materials are also available for purchase by the trustees and the general public at <http://shop.aph.org>.

Materials provided through the APH appropriation supplement the various other resources available to the States. For example, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), requires States to provide a free appropriate public education, including appropriate related materials and supplies, to all students with disabilities. In order to meet their responsibilities under the IDEA, many States make additional purchases from APH and other suppliers of materials for students who are visually impaired.

In fiscal year 2018, Federal funding provided through the APH appropriation for educational materials represented approximately 65 percent of APH's total budget of \$42.5 million. Federal grants and contracts from agencies such as the National Library Service for the Blind, Social Security Administration, and Veterans Administration represented another 6 percent of APH's total budget. The remaining 29 percent of APH's budget came from nongovernmental contracts and revenue generated from the sale of unsubsidized products to State and local agencies, direct sales to individuals who are blind, private sector contract sales, corporate and individual donations from the private sector, and interest income from endowments and other investments.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

Fiscal Year	(dollars in thousands)
2015	\$24,931
2016	25,431
2017	25,431
2018	27,431
2019	30,431

FY 2020 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests \$25.4 million for the American Printing House (APH) for the Blind in fiscal year 2020, a decrease of \$5 million from the fiscal year 2019 appropriation and the same as the fiscal year 2019 request. The request would provide substantial resources to support services in each of the three program areas—educational materials, advisory services, and research—while also maintaining the fiscal discipline necessary to support the President's goal of increasing support for national security and public safety without adding to the Federal budget deficit.

APH provides educational aids at no cost to students who are visually impaired, helping to ensure that these students receive the accessible educational materials they need to succeed in school and prepare for college and careers. The materials that are developed, manufactured, and distributed by the APH offer States an additional resource to help provide a free appropriate public education to visually impaired students, as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

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Educational Materials: The request includes \$18.9 million for educational materials, or an estimated \$292 per eligible student. Materials produced by APH include textbooks in braille, large type, and audio recording formats; educational aids such as braille typewriters, raised (tactile) graphics, and computer software and hardware; teaching tools such as tests and performance measures; and other special supplies. APH manufactures these instructional materials for a broad range of academic subjects and grade levels. In fiscal year 2018, 921 distinct educational products were available for purchase with Federal Quota funds. The Quota consists of funds from the APH appropriation (about 70 percent of available funds) in the form of credits that are allocated to States on the basis of the annual census of blind students in each State.

The timely delivery of textbooks in accessible media formats for braille-reading students is crucial to ensuring that children who are visually impaired have the same access to a free appropriate public education as children without disabilities. In order to address this need, each year APH produces thousands of braille and large print textbooks on demand, including instructional materials featuring tactile graphics. APH issues industry standards for tactile graphics, manufactures and distributes graphics to students across the country, and maintains a Tactile Graphic Image Library in order to increase the variety and lower the cost of pictures and graphics included in accessible educational materials. Tactile graphics are essential for teaching subjects such as geography and geometry. The funds requested for educational materials support APH's production of teaching modules and associated instructional materials in these subjects.

Advisory Services: The request includes \$1.5 million for a variety of activities that support the administration of the educational materials program, including the annual census of students who are blind and visually impaired; the annual meeting of the ex officio trustees; advisory group panels; printing and distribution of catalogs of available materials; and field services such as consultation, in-service training, webinars, and workshops. Other funded activities include the provision of ongoing consumer information and technical support to customers, as well as support and information to staff and teachers at schools around the country.

Projects that would continue to be funded in fiscal year 2020 include:

- National Instructional Partnerships program, webcast product training series (see: <http://www.aph.org/videos/>),
- APH Research Library (see: <http://miguel.aph.org/catalog/CategoryInfo.aspx?cid=152>),
- APH Accessible Media Producers Database (see: <http://louis.aph.org/catalog/CategoryInfo.aspx?cid=152&master=AMP>)

The APH website provides a comprehensive source of specialized information and resources on accessible instructional materials for individuals who are visually impaired. The APH website offers the public convenient access to products, manuals, downloadable catalogs and newsletters, information on training events, online surveys, and online reference services such as the Louis Accessible Materials Database and APH file repository.

Research and Product Development: The request includes \$4.5 million for research and product development focused on innovative educational products for students who are visually impaired. Major research initiatives include the *APH SMART Braille by Perkins*, which is an electronic braille that provides the user immediate feedback through text-to-speech and a screen that

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displays SimBraille and large print of what is brailled. There is an audio and visual component that provides access to non-braille users. APH has also partnered with Orbit Research® and Texas Instruments® to create the *Orion TI-84 Plus Talking Graphing Calculator*, a modified TI-84 Plus with accessibility controls allowing students to participate fully in STEM-related academics. These new products represent major improvements over existing tools and technologies. APH also continues to invest in the development of the file formats, software, hardware, and production infrastructure necessary to produce and deliver braille books through electronic files and e-readers rather than through paper books (see: <http://www.aph.org/research/>).

Product development activities planned for fiscal year 2020 are categorized into 12 content areas: Adult Life, Braille, Core Curriculum, Cortical Visual Impairment, Early Childhood, Emergent Literacy, Low Vision, Multiple Disabilities, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), Tactile Graphics, Technology, and Tests and Assessments.

The request will provide funds for APH to conduct over 350 research projects, including the development of new products for use with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who are visually impaired. Projects are also expected to produce materials for students who are visually impaired with secondary disabilities, equipment to assist students with low vision, materials for braille literacy, classroom learning aids, tactile graphics, and tools to aid in the transition from school to postsecondary educational or job settings.

The request also includes funding for APH's Accessible Tests and Textbooks Department initiative (see: <http://www.aph.org/tests-and-textbooks/>). Goals of this initiative include:

- Providing tests, practice tests, examination administration manuals, and other assessment related materials, including color, large print assessments in high quality accessible media.
- Promoting inclusion of visually impaired individuals in the development of assessments.
- Enhancing the test performance of visually impaired individuals through research, education, and communication.
- Providing textbooks in braille, large print, and digital formats, and developing new and improved methods for producing these textbooks.

Regional Partnerships: The request includes \$500 thousand to continue the regional partnership with the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB) Center for Assistive Technology Training established in early 2019 at \$1 million. The partnership will provide training on the use of education technology to students with vision loss, as well as those individuals that work with students with vision loss, in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

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PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES

(dollars in thousands)

Output Measures

	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Distribution of funding:			
Educational materials	\$20,956	\$22,431	\$18,931
Advisory services	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$1,500
Educational and technical research	\$4,875	\$5,400	\$4,500
Regional Partnerships	<u>0</u>	<u>\$1,000</u>	<u>\$500</u>
 Total	 \$27,431	 \$30,431	 \$25,431
Number of eligible students	63,501	64,136	64,777
Average per student allotment (whole dollars)	\$330	\$350	\$292
 Number of services and products provided:			
Products available with Federal funds	1,000	1,000	1,000
Advisory committee meetings	3	3	3
State educational agencies visited	11	14	14
Residential programs visited	6	10	10
Rehabilitation programs visited	4	10	10
In-service training programs and webcasts	9	20	15
Product training presentations and exhibits	100	120	120
Visits to Ex Officio Trustees	20	25	25
Total employees (full-time equiv.)	320	320	313

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in fiscal year 2020 and future years, as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

Goal: Pre-college level blind students will receive appropriate educational materials that result in improved educational outcomes.

***Objective:** Appropriate, timely, high-quality educational materials are provided to pre-college level blind students to allow them to benefit more fully from their educational programs.*

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Measure: From an unrepresentative sample of American Printing House for the Blind trustees, advisory committee members, consumers, and teachers, the percentage who agree that the educational materials provided through the Act are appropriate, timely, and high-quality.

Trustees - Percentage who agree:

Year	Target	Actual: Extremely, Mostly, or Somewhat	Extremely Satisfied	Mostly Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not too Satisfied	Not at all Satisfied
2015	98%	99%	61%	34%	4%	0	0
2016	98	98	75	20	3	2%	0
2017	98	100	67	32	1	0	0
2018	98	97	57	33	7	3	0
2019	98						
2020	98						

Advisory Committee Members - Percentage who agree:

Year	Target	Actual: Extremely, Mostly, or Somewhat	Extremely Satisfied	Mostly Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not too Satisfied	Not at all Satisfied
2015	100%	100%	66%	33%	0	0	0
2016	100	100	91	9	0	0	0
2017	100	100	71	29	0	0	0
2018	100	95	52	29	14%	5%	0
2019	100						
2020	100						

Consumers - Percentage who agree:

Year	Target	Actual: Extremely, Mostly, or Somewhat	Extremely Satisfied	Mostly Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not too Satisfied	Not at all Satisfied
2015	96%	98%	50%	41%	7%	0	0
2016	96	100	45	55	0	0	0
2017	96	98	59	34	5	2%	1%
2018	96	98	58	35	5	2	1
2019	96						
2020	96						

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

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Teachers - Percentage who agree:

Year	Target	Actual: Extremely, Mostly, or Somewhat	Extremely Satisfied	Mostly Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not too Satisfied	Not at all Satisfied
2015	97%	99%	57%	38%	5%	0	0
2016	97	97	58	36	3	1%	0
2017	97	99	59	34	5	1	0
2018	97	96	48	41	8	3	1%
2019	97						
2020	97						

Note: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Additional Information: In 2018, data were collected using a survey instrument designed to measure the levels of consumer satisfaction specified in the objective. The actual data reflect the percentage of respondents who were extremely satisfied, mostly satisfied, or somewhat satisfied that the educational materials provided through the Act are appropriate, timely, and high-quality. There were 172 valid respondents to the 2018 survey, representing a substantial decrease from the 366 respondents in 2016 and the 492 respondents in 2017. APH inadvertently omitted the survey from its monthly newsletter, leading to the decreased number of respondents, with the largest decreases in the number of teachers and professionals working with students. For 2018, the subsets of total respondents are: (1) 36 Ex Officio Trustees, (2) 7 advisory committee members; (3) 114 teachers; and (4) 22 other consumers. The response rate for Ex Officio Trustees was 26% and 50% for advisory committee members.

Objective: *To improve the quality of APH research and product usefulness.*

Measure: The percentage of APH product sales revenue that is from new products.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	22%	18%
2016	22	16
2017	22	17
2018	22	29
2019	22	
2020	22	

Additional Information: This measure was developed to help determine the efficacy of new products developed by APH. The purpose of the measure is to evaluate the reaction of consumers to new products created by the research department, which is determined by measuring the extent to which sales of new products surpass a minimum level of products sold. For fiscal year 2018, a total of \$5.1 million new products (defined as products introduced in fiscal years 2016 and 2017) were sold. Total product sales for fiscal year 2018 was \$17.5 million. New products included the Matt Connect, New Tools to use Functional Vision and Learning Media Assessment (NEWT), Bright Shapes Knob Puzzle, Spinner Overlays, Video Mag HD, and Mini Read Write Stand.

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Measure: The average rating, according to approved criteria on relevance, for a sample of new American Printing House for the Blind products evaluated by an independent panel of qualified experts or individuals with appropriate expertise related to the target audience.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	4	5.8
2016	4	6.0
2017	4	6.1
2018	4	6.2
2019	4	
2020	4	

Additional Information: To determine the average relevance rating, a panel of experts, who are proposed by APH and approved by the Department, reviews a sample of new products developed by APH to assess whether the products: (1) address the needs of individuals who meet the definition of blind or visually impaired; (2) address the needs of blind or visually impaired individuals of any age included in an education or rehabilitation program; and (3) are fully accessible for the intended population. The products are rated using a 7-point rating scale, where 1 equals “does not meet criteria, 4 equals “meets criteria,” and 7 equals “exceeds criteria.”

Panel members reviewed and rated 9 APH products for fiscal year 2018: (1) Echolocation and FlashSonar; (2) Paint by Numbers: Safari; (3) Explorer Bright Ray Kit; (4) NEWT; (5) Spinner Overlays for the Lightbox; (6) Protein Synthesis Kit; (7) Slapstick Math; (8) Bright Shapes Knob Puzzle; and (9) Match it Up Frames.

Measure: The average rating, according to approved criteria on quality of research, for a sample of new American Printing House for the Blind products evaluated by an independent panel of qualified experts or individuals with appropriate expertise related to the target audience.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	4	5.4
2016	4	5.6
2017	4	6.1
2018	4	6.1
2019	4	
2020	4	

Additional Information: The panel of experts annually reviews the underlying research related to a sample of new products developed each year by APH to assess whether data were gathered: (1) through an appropriate method; (2) from a geographically diverse U.S. population; (3) from appropriately qualified individuals (e.g., individuals who possess appropriate qualifications or appropriate learner characteristics); and (4) from an adequate number of sources. The products are rated using a 7-point rating scale, where 1 equals “does not meet criteria, 4 equals “meets criteria,” and 7 equals “exceeds criteria.”

Panel members reviewed and rated 9 APH products for fiscal year 2018: (1) Echolocation and FlashSonar; (2) Paint by Numbers: Safari; (3) Explorer Bright Ray Kit; (4) NEWT; (5) Spinner

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Overlays for the Lightbox; (6) Protein Synthesis Kit; (7) Slapstick Math; (8) Bright Shapes Knob Puzzle; and (9) Match it Up Frames.

Measure: The average rating, according to approved criteria on utility, for a sample of new American Printing House for the Blind products evaluated by an independent panel of qualified experts or individuals with appropriate expertise related to the target audience.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	4	6.0
2016	4	6.1
2017	4	6.2
2018	4	6.1
2019	4	
2020	4	

Additional Information: For this measure, the panel of experts annually reviews a purposefully selected sample of new products developed each year by APH to assess whether: (1) sales of the new products indicate demand; (2) new product indicators, such as field evaluations and other feedback, substantiate that the new product is meeting a need; and (3) the products are considered highly useful for individuals with visual impairments. The products are rated using a 7-point rating scale, where 1 equals “does not meet criteria, 4 equals “meets criteria,” and 7 equals “exceeds criteria.”

Efficiency Measures

Measure: The cost per page to produce color large type textbooks.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	\$0.10	\$0.09
2016	0.10	0.08
2017	0.10	0.09
2018	0.10	0.09
2019	0.10	
2020	0.10	

Additional Information: In fiscal year 2018, the total cost to produce color large type textbooks decreased by 0.6 cents or 6 percent from 9.1 cents per page to 8.5 cents per page, which was favorable to the target of 10 cents per page.

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Measure: The cost per page to produce braille textbooks.

Year	Target	Actual
2015	\$0.15	\$0.15
2016	0.15	0.14
2017	0.15	0.22
2018	0.15	0.27
2019	0.15	
2020	0.15	

Additional Information: The increased cost per page is due to a decrease in demand for braille textbooks coupled with an increase in the expenses associated with converting materials to braille.