



KANSAS

KEEP

Parent & Guardian Handbook

For Kansas Education Enrichment Program (KEEP)

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Program Overview	4
KEEP award distribution	4
Qualifying for a KEEP award	5
The Education Marketplace	6
Applying for KEEP	7
Award Acceptance and Account set up	9
Using KEEP funds - The KEEP Claims App	14
Steps for using the KEEP Claims App	15
Approved goods and services	20
Responsibilities of Participant	22
Appendix A	23

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Kansas Education Enrichment Program (KEEP). As a parent or guardian of students enrolled in KEEP, you'll provide diverse and enriching experiences that help accelerate their education and development.

This handbook has been created to welcome you to KEEP and provide information about the program, getting started, and the support resources available to you as the parent or guardian of a KEEP award beneficiary.



Program Overview

The Kansas Education Enrichment Program (KEEP) Overview

KEEP is a program approved by the State Finance Council, as recommended by the SPARK Executive Committee, to support Kansas families and children recovering from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on learning. KEEP provides qualifying parents and guardians with a \$1,000 award per eligible student to pay for a variety of education goods and services that promote educational learning recovery and facilitate academic enrichment opportunities. Beneficiaries can spend their award funds in an online education marketplace that offers a variety of approved educational goods and services.

KEEP is not a loan or grant. If awarded, applicants are beneficiaries of KEEP funding.

KEEP Award distribution

Awards will be issued to those who qualify based on applicants whose income is 300% or less of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

Eligibility may be expanded in future funding rounds depending on availability of remaining funds.

Beneficiaries have 12 months from the date of receipt to purchase goods and services through the KEEP Education Marketplace.

2023 Poverty Level Guidelines

Poverty Guidelines, 48 Contiguous States (all states except AK and HI)

Household/Family Size	Income	300%
1	\$14,580	\$43,740
2	\$19,720	\$59,160
3	\$24,860	\$74,580
4	\$30,000	\$90,000
5	\$35,140	\$105,420
6	\$40,280	\$120,840
7	\$45,420	\$136,260
8	\$50,560	\$151,680
9+	Add \$5,140 for each extra person	Add \$15,420 for each extra person

Qualifying for a KEEP award

KEEP is available to students who are Kansas residents between 5 (as of August 31, 2023) and 18 years of age (as of May 31, 2024) that are enrolled in a K-12 program. KEEP awards are also available for students with disabilities through the age of 21 and students above 18 who are still in high school, with proof of active school enrollment in a K-12 program

There are no fees to participate in KEEP or to use the platform and app

KEEP is free, there is no cost to participate. There is no application fee or charge to access and use the platform and app.

Participating families/guardians may enroll multiple students in KEEP

Parents and guardians can enroll multiple students in their households. A separate dashboard is provided for each student and lists the available, pending, and spent funds. KEEP award funds may only be used for the student assigned to that individual account.

Students in shared legal custody or foster care

- In shared legal custody cases, only one parent or guardian can submit an application to receive an award for the student. No student may be used to determine eligibility in more than one family.
- Students in foster care are eligible for program enrollment regardless of their guardian or custodian's income. Required documentation includes a letter from the Department for Children and Families or Foster Prevention Service Provider verifying the name of the student and the date of the placement or custody paperwork signed by a government or court official.

The Education Marketplace

Qualified Education Service Providers (QESP)

A database of Qualified Education Service Providers is available to parents/guardians looking for places they can use their student's program funds. This is known as the Education Marketplace, and can be accessed at www.keep.ks.gov/marketplace. The providers found in this marketplace have submitted applications to participate in the program, which were reviewed and approved by Merit for services or goods they provide that would qualify for reimbursement in this program. However, these service providers may display additional programs or items on their websites that are not program-approved. If you have questions about whether a service offered by a QESP in the Marketplace is reimbursable, please reach out to help@keep.ks.gov.

Families are urged to use providers found in the Education Marketplace. Merit will review requests to approve providers not included in the Marketplace, but there is no guarantee that all providers will be approved to participate in KEEP. Reimbursement for expenditures can be made only to providers reviewed and approved by Merit.

Requests for additional service providers

If there is an organization that you would like to submit a claim for that is not in the Marketplace, you can submit their information during the claims process for consideration.

Merit will reach out to the service provider and attempt to qualify them and validate your claim.

Please note, if you choose to submit a claim for a Service Provider that is not pre-approved, there may be a longer claims processing time as all providers must be validated before claims can be processed for them.

Applying for KEEP

Introducing KEEP partner [Merit](#)

The State of Kansas has partnered with Merit International, Inc. to administer KEEP. Merit will process both parent/guardian and service provider applications to the program, coordinate with service providers to validate all claims submitted for reimbursement, and provide all needed support services for both parents/guardians and service providers involved in the program.

Complete and submit an application

Visit the KEEP Application Page at www.keep.ks.gov

All Parents and guardians must complete an online application to determine whether their child is eligible to receive the KEEP award. Eligibility is based on household income, Kansas residency, and whether the student is enrolled in grades K-12 in Kansas. Income verification documents are a required part of the application unless the child is in the foster care program or enrolled in SNAP benefits. In the case of these students, different documents are required. SNAP beneficiaries must provide their SNAP benefit letter. Students in foster care will need to provide a letter from the Department for Children and Families or Foster Prevention Service Provider verifying the name of the student and the date of the placement or custody paperwork signed by a government or court official.

All applicants must provide documents that show proof of residency and declare which school their student attends in Kansas. If a student is beyond the age of 18, proof of enrollment in a Kansas school will also be required.

Once an application has been submitted, the parent or guardian will receive an email confirming that it has been received and is under review. If the application is approved, an award email will be sent with further instructions. If an application was rejected, an email will be sent with an explanation.

Special application circumstances

In 2022, my spouse and I filed Married filing separately and are still married.

Each parent or guardian should submit pages 1 and 2 of their 2022 tax return.

My child was not claimed on my 2022 tax return.

The person claiming the child should apply for these funds and submit the 2022 tax return (pages 1 and 2) in order to determine eligibility for this program.

In 2022, I did not file a 1040 tax return.

The state of Kansas requires that a 2022 tax return (pages 1 and 2) be submitted in order to determine eligibility for this program.

I filed “Married, filing jointly” or “married, filing separately” in 2022, but my former spouse and I are now separated/divorced.

Fill out the application with your current household size (parent and dependent count).

Submit pages 1 and 2 of your 2022 tax return as filed.

I am claimed as a dependent on my spouse’s taxes.

Submit the 2022 Tax Return where both parents are listed (one as parent, one as a dependent).

In 2022, there was a death in my household, resulting in a change of income.

Submit pages 1 and 2 of your 2022 tax return as filed.

I don’t have a copy of my 2022 Tax Return.

Contact your tax preparer or tax preparing software for a copy of 1040 (pages 1 and 2).

Contact the IRS for a copy of the [tax transcript](#).

Award Acceptance and Account set up

Merit account - Accepting award and setting up student's account

After income and supporting documentation verification is complete (this entire process may take up to two weeks), qualifying parents and guardians will receive two emails from Merit to get started using their awards.

Once an application is approved, the parent or guardian will receive two emails.



1

Read Email #1

This email, from KEEP, is the official award notification. This email will contain rules and information for using the program as well as a link to the KEEP claims app, where parents/guardians will log into view their student's balance and submit claims.

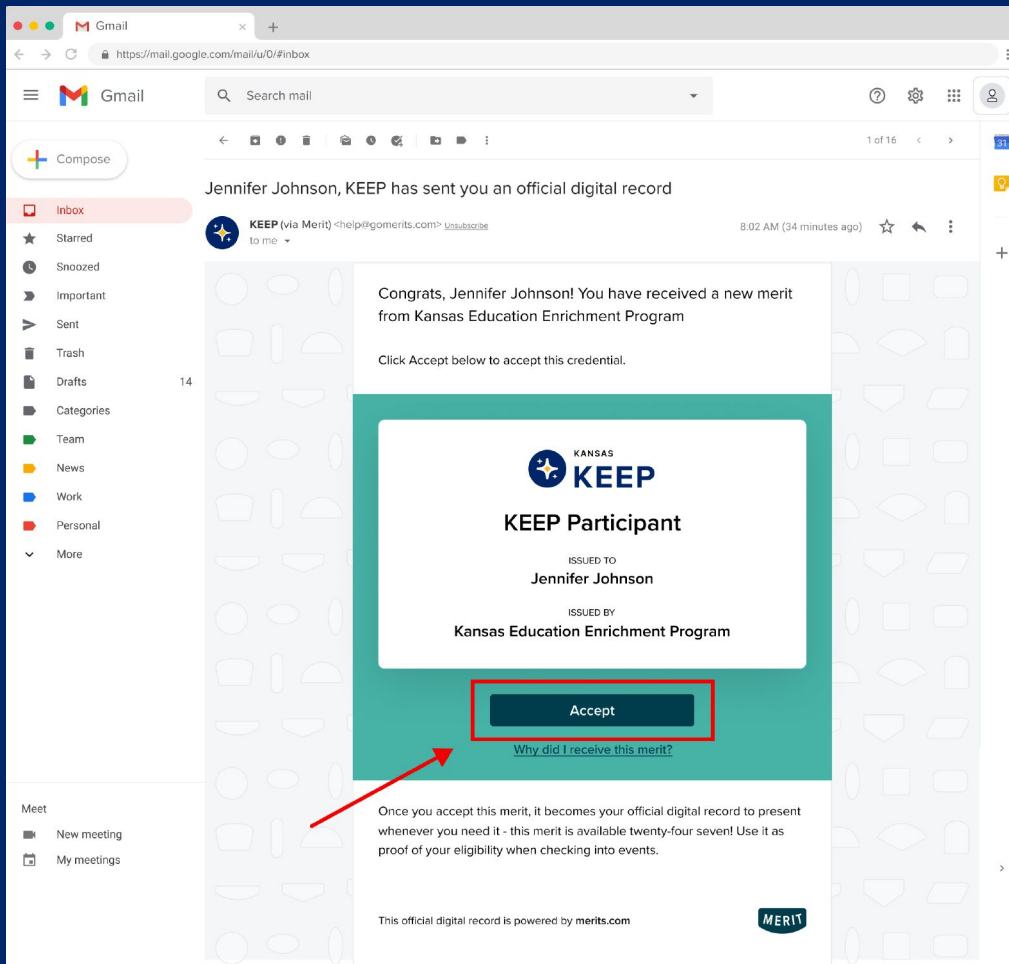
Before they are able to access the award, a secure username and password must be created, which is the purpose of Email #2

2

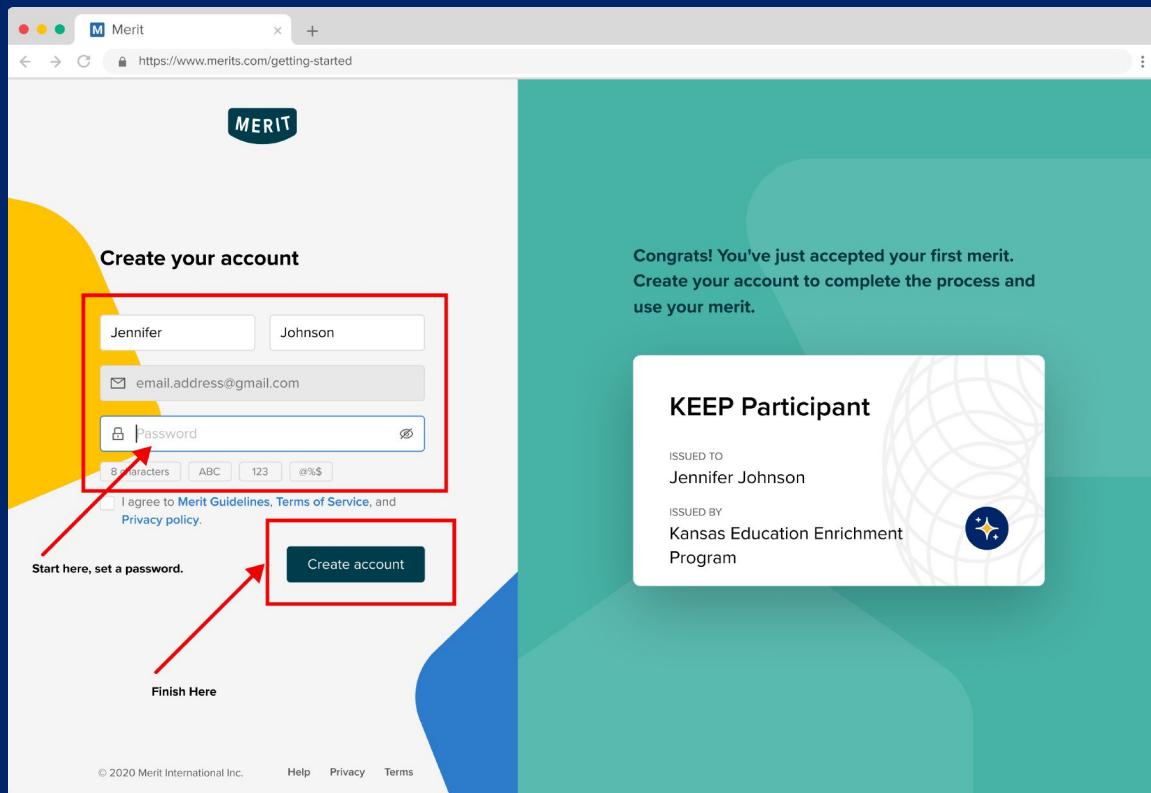
Follow Instructions in Email #2

The purpose of this email is to set a secure username and password for the student's award. Open the and click the "Accept" button. Doing this takes you to a login screen that looks like this where the username is already filled in as the email address provided by the parent/guardian when they applied to the program.

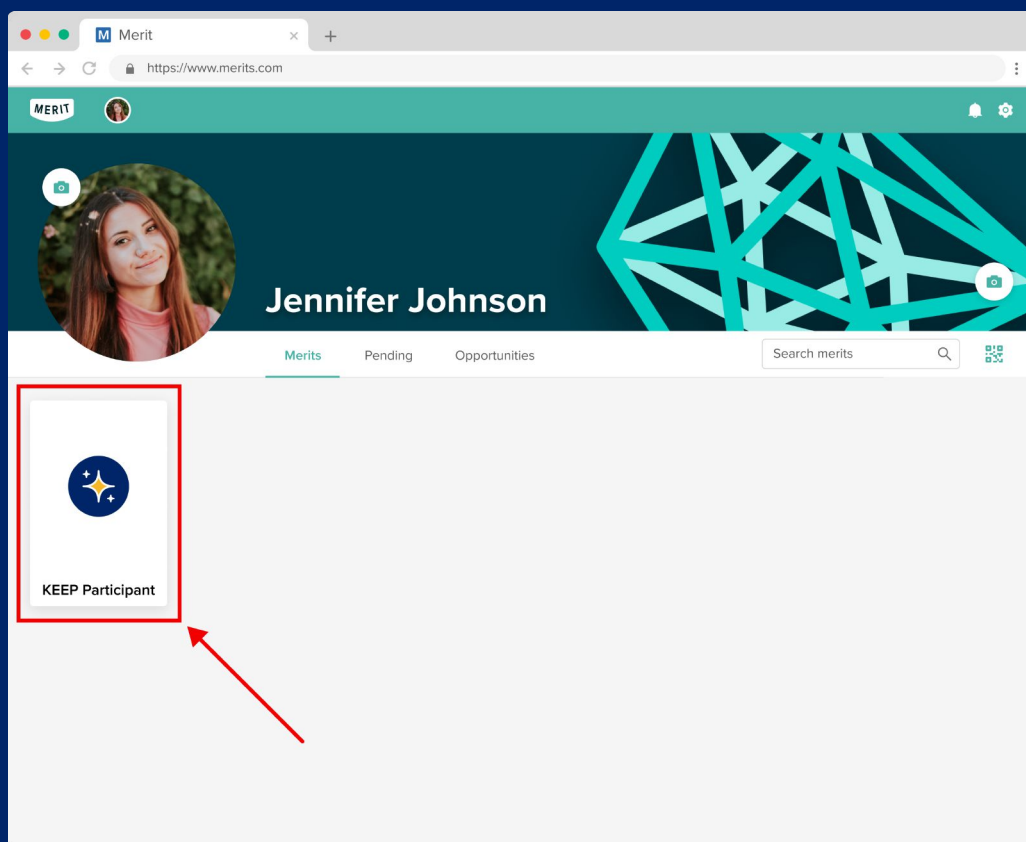
This email, from help@merits.com will look like this:



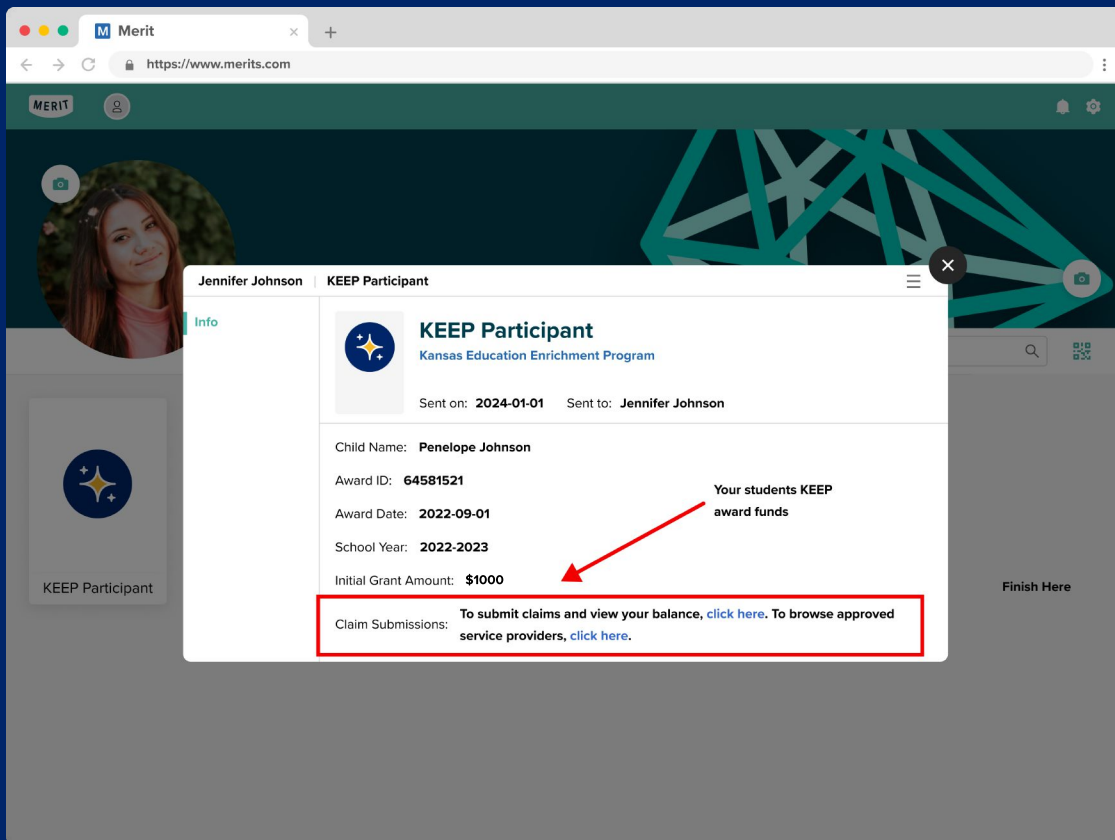
The parent/guardian will now set the password that will be used to log in, accept the terms of service, and click **“Create Account.”** *IMPORTANT* This login experience will not lead the parent/guardian to the KEEP Claims app with the student’s award funds. This step is merely to establish the login credentials that will be used to login to the KEEP Claims app.



The KEEP Claims app can be found at app.keep.ks.gov and in the app stores for Android and iOS. Inside the digital credential created during the account set up step. Click to open the credential key.



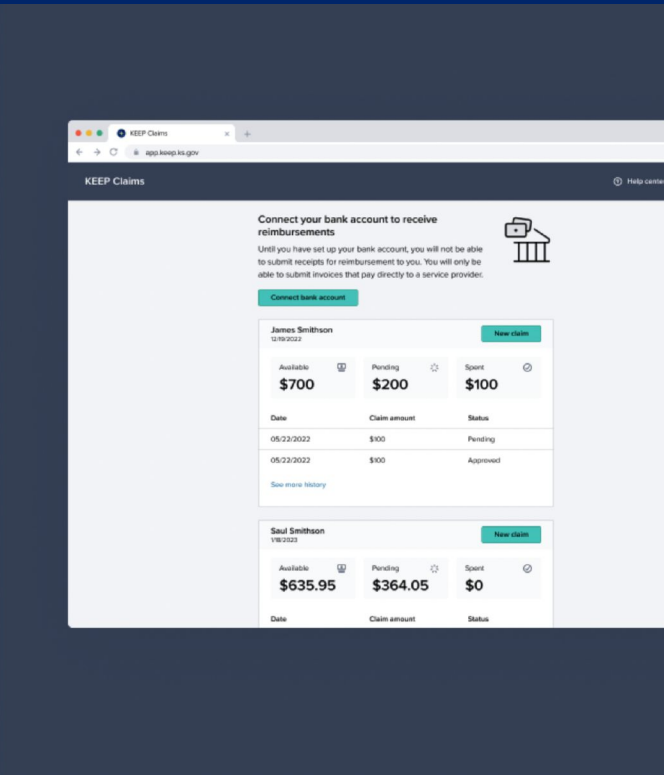
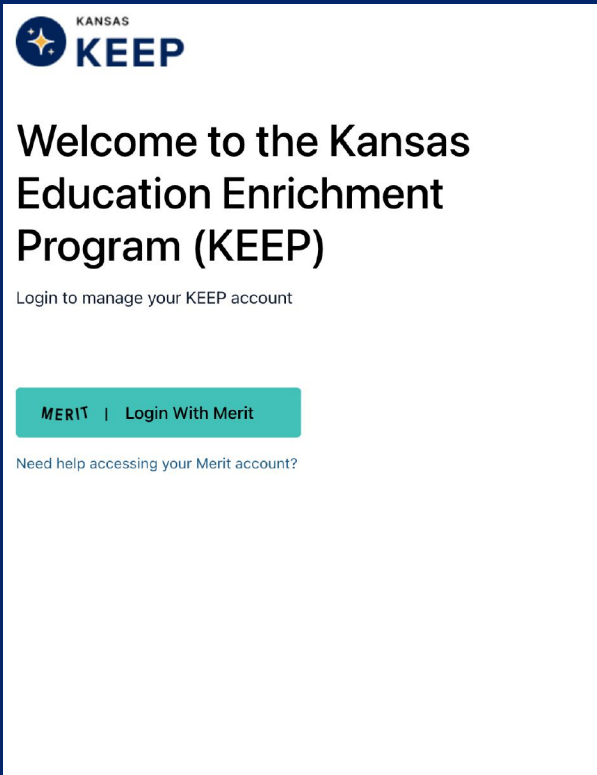
Inside, you will find the details of the award, as well as the link to the KEEP Claims app.



Using KEEP Awards - The KEEP Claims App

What is the KEEP Claims app for?

In order to use a student's KEEP award, the parent/guardian must login to the KEEP Claims app and submit a claim for the item or service they would like to use the funds for.



Where can I find the KEEP Claims App?

Go to the KEEP Claims app at app.keep.ks.gov and enter the username and password created during Step 2 of the process above. There is also a mobile app version of this tool called KEEP Claims app that can be found on both the Apple and Google Play stores.

Steps for using the claims app

Checking a Balance

The student's award balance can be found inside the KEEP Claims app after logging in. The home screen of this app shows a dashboard for each student with their total award balance as well as the amount already spent or pending approval of a claim.

The screenshot shows the KEEP Claims app interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with "KEEP Claims app" and "Logout". Below that, a message prompts the user to "Connect your bank account to receive reimbursements". The main content area displays two student profiles for James Smithson. The 2021 profile shows an available balance of \$700, a pending amount of \$200, and a spent amount of \$100. The 2022 profile shows an available balance of \$635.95, a pending amount of \$364.05, and a spent amount of \$0. Both profiles include a table of claim history with columns for Date, Claim amount, and Status.

Connect your bank account to receive reimbursements

Until you have set up your bank account, you will not be able to submit receipts for reimbursement to you. You will only be able to submit invoices that pay directly to a service provider.

[Connect bank account](#)

James Smithson 2021 [New claim](#)

Available	Pending	Spent
\$700	\$200	\$100
Date	Claim amount	Status
05/22/2022	\$100	Pending
05/22/2022	\$100	Approved

[See more history](#)

James Smithson 2022 [New claim](#)

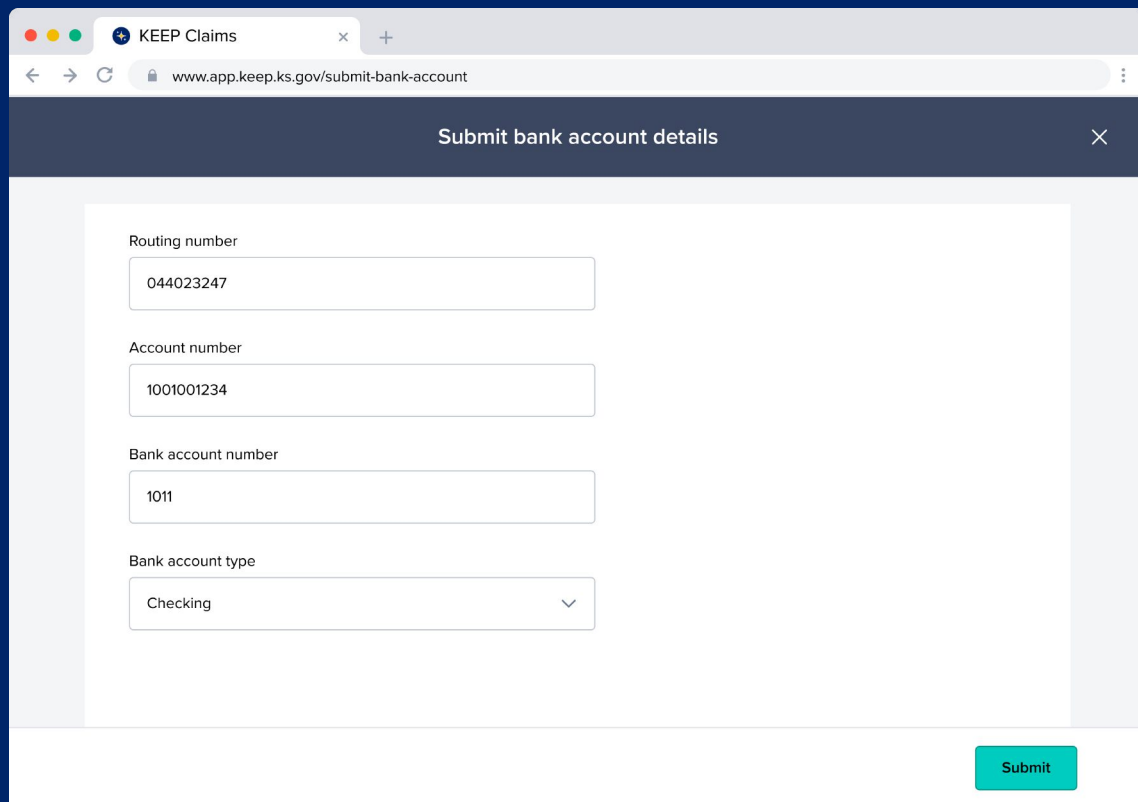
Available	Pending	Spent
\$635.95	\$364.05	\$0
Date	Claim amount	Status
05/22/2022	\$364.05	Pending

The dashboard also allows a parent or guardian to see the history of their submitted claims. When a claim is pending, the amount of funds in the available balance will be decreased by the pending amount. When a claim is declined, the amount of that claim will be restored to the available balance in the dashboard and those funds are still available to spend.

Linking KEEP funds with a bank account

If you purchase an approved item or service with your own personal funds for the student who has received a KEEP award and would like to receive reimbursement for that purchase, you must connect your bank account to the student's KEEP dashboard. This is done when you first log in to the dashboard.

Follow the prompts as illustrated below.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the title 'KEEP Claims' and the URL 'www.app.keep.ks.gov/submit-bank-account'. The page content is a form titled 'Submit bank account details' with a close button (X) in the top right corner. The form contains four input fields and one dropdown menu:

- Routing number:** A text input field containing the value '044023247'.
- Account number:** A text input field containing the value '1001001234'.
- Bank account number:** A text input field containing the value '1011'.
- Bank account type:** A dropdown menu with 'Checking' selected and a downward arrow on the right.

A teal 'Submit' button is located at the bottom right of the form area.

Submitting a claim for a service provider found in the Marketplace

Start by logging in to the KEEP Claims app with the username and password created when signing up for the program. This can also be done using the KEEP Claims app.

From the home screen of the KEEP claims app, click “Submit a claim”.

The student's name will be automatically filled in.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL www.app.keep.ks.gov/submit-claim. The page title is "Submit a new claim". The form contains the following fields and options:

- Student:** Text input field containing "James Smithson".
- Service provider number:** Text input field containing "0000000".
- Is the service provider not currently in the KEEP program?:** A small text label.
- Service category:** A dropdown menu with "Service category" selected.
- Description of service:** A text area with a placeholder "Textarea placeholder".
- Is this for a physical good?:** Radio buttons for "No" (selected) and "Yes".
- Date of Service:** A date picker with "Select date" and a calendar icon.
- Claim amount:** Text input field containing "\$0".
- \$220 remaining:** Text input field.
- Pay to:** A dropdown menu with "Me" selected.
- Upload receipts or invoices (5 max):** A button labeled "Upload a file".
- Disclaimer:** A checkbox with the text: "I attest that the information I have provided in this claim is true and accurate. I further attest that services were not provided by a relative of the awardee, services were rendered by an organization that is licensed, certified, or otherwise credentialed to perform these services. I understand that if I am submitting a claim for a Service Provider that is not already pre-qualified in the KEEP Marketplace, that Service Provider will need to be validated by Merit in order to verify my receipt, which may increase reimbursement processing time."
- Submit:** A blue button at the bottom right.

Please allow **6-8*** weeks after a correct claim submission for reimbursement.

* In the event of holidays, this may delay and extend processing times. Please note that for each student, there can only be one dedicated parent/guardian who can submit claims.

1 Fill in the Service Provider number from the Education Marketplace.

If you do not remember the Service Provider number, return to the Education Marketplace at www.keep.ks.gov/marketplace and search for the Service Provider. You will find the number on their Marketplace tile.

2

Select the Service Category.

Provide a description of the service or item.

3

Provide the Date the Service was completed or the item was purchased.

This should match your receipt or invoice. Services must occur on or after the award date and expires within 1 year of the award date.

4

Provide the claim amount.

This should also match your receipt or invoice.

In the “Pay to” section, if you are submitting a receipt for something you have already paid for, select “Me” from the drop down menu.

If you are submitting an unpaid invoice, the claim will be paid to the Service Provider, so you must select “Service Provider” from the drop down menu.

5

Click the button to upload an image or pdf of the receipt or invoice.

Check the box to acknowledge the claim submission rules.

6

Click Submit.

Submitting a claim for a service/good not found in the Marketplace

If you are submitting a claim for a service that was performed by a Service Provider that is not currently in the Marketplace, you will use the same process described in the previous section but also need to add some information about the service provider.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL www.app.keep.ks.gov/submit-claim. The page title is "Submit a new claim". The form contains the following fields and options:

- Student:** Text input field containing "James Smithson".
- Service provider number:** Text input field containing "0000000".
- Is the service provider not currently in the KEEP program?:** A link below the service provider number field.
- Service category:** A dropdown menu with "Service category" selected.
- Description of service:** A text area with a placeholder "Textarea placeholder".
- Is this for a physical good?:** Radio buttons for "No" (selected) and "Yes".
- Date of Service:** A date picker with "Select date" selected.
- Claim amount:** Text input field containing "\$0".
- \$220 remaining:** Text below the claim amount field.
- Pay to:** A dropdown menu with "Me" selected.
- Upload receipts or invoices (5 max):** A button labeled "Upload a file".
- Disclaimer:** A checkbox with the text: "I attest that the information I have provided in this claim is true and accurate. I further attest that services were not provided by a relative of the awardee, services were rendered by an organization that is licensed, certified, or otherwise credentialed to perform these services. I understand that if I am submitting a claim for a Service Provider that is not already pre-qualified in the KEEP Marketplace, that Service Provider will need to be validated by Merit in order to verify my receipt, which may increase reimbursement processing time."
- Submit:** A blue button at the bottom right.

Please allow **6-8*** weeks after a correct claim submission for reimbursement.

* In the event of holidays, this may delay and extend processing times. Please note that for each student, there can only be one dedicated parent/guardian who can submit claims.

1

In the Service Provider field, click the link below labeled “Is the service provider not currently in the Kansas program?”

This will allow you to fill in the name and contact information for the service provider. A team from Merit will reach out to try and get that organization validated for participation in KEEP. This can increase the time it takes for a claim to be paid, depending on the response from the service provider. If Merit is unable to validate the service provider or the service/item is not eligible, the claim will be denied and a notice sent to the parent/guardian.

2

Select the Service Category.

Provide a description of the service or item.

3

Provide the Date the Service was completed or the item was purchased.

This should match your receipt or invoice. Services must occur on or after the award date and expires within 1 year of the award date.

4

Provide the claim amount.

This should also match your receipt or invoice.

In the “Pay to” section, if you are submitting a receipt for something you have already paid for, select “Me” from the drop-down menu.

If you are submitting an unpaid invoice, the claim will be paid to the Service Provider, so you must select “Service Provider” from the drop-down menu.

5

Click the button to upload an image or pdf of the receipt or invoice.

Check the box to acknowledge the claim submission rules.

6

Click Submit.

Tips for successful claim submission

Checking a Balance

The student's award balance can be found inside the KEEP Claims app after logging in. The home screen of this app shows a dashboard for each student with their total award balance as well as the amount already spent or pending approval of a claim.

What do I need to submit a claim for reimbursement?

- A receipt is necessary when a service or good has already been paid for by the parent or guardian and the parent or guardian would like to be reimbursed personally.
- An invoice is necessary when a service or good has not been paid for by the parent or guardian and the parent or guardian would like the service provider to be reimbursed.

Please note, not all service providers accept direct pay from KEEP. It is important to check with the service provider ahead of time to determine if direct payment by the parent is required.

The receipts or invoices that are uploaded in the claim process must contain the following information:

- The name of the service provider.
- The name of the student receiving the service.
- The name of the good or service.
- The date the service occurred or will occur.
- The date the good or service was purchased or invoiced.
- The total amount paid or invoiced.

Approved goods and services

The following goods and services are eligible for purchase or reimbursement with KEEP funds. All services may be received online. The service provider must be located within the United States, and in-person service providers should be within Kansas or bordering states. KEEP funds cannot be used for tuition or fees to a public or private educational institution, dual-enrollment course, or for-credit classes of any kind. The student cannot earn credit from a secondary or post-secondary institution for the activity/class.

Approved Services

Camps

Camps must be related to academic/school curriculum. Day, overnight, and online camps are allowed.

Items allowed

- The primary purpose of the camp must be for subjects that are related to academic/school curriculum.
- Examples include Music camps, arts camps, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Agriculture, Math) camps, English, Reading, History, and Personal Finance/Financial Literacy.
- Dance camps/lessons are approved as long as not related to competition/team.
- Transportation to and from camp is covered if it is included with the fee.

Items not allowed

- Sports camps
- Driving school
- Camps for non-academic subjects such as personal hygiene, self-care, self-esteem
- Dance camps/lessons that are related to competition/team.

Classes

Classes can be online or in person. They must be offered by a licensed organization, be related to academic/school curriculum, and have a clearly stated educational value. Classes cannot be used to earn school credits.

Language classes

Online or in person, offered by a licensed organization. Coding can be part of a camp, but not a language class.

Instrument and vocal lessons

Instrument purchases or rental fees are approved, as long as the instrument is being purchased either from one of the program's online stores or from a pre-approved QESP. The purchase of sheet music or music books/materials is approved. Choir or band is approved as long as it is not through a secondary or post-secondary public or private school where the student is earning school credit for participating in the activity. Repair and maintenance services are not eligible.

Tutoring

This service must be provided by an individual who is working for a business licensed to provide tutoring services, a licensed teacher, or a licensed online tutoring business.

"Tutor or Tutoring Services" means tutoring provided by a registered tutoring business. Tutor means a teacher licensed in any state; an individual who holds a current, state, national, or regional credential, including state teaching, emergency, and provisional certificates; or an individual providing tutoring services for a qualified tutoring service. Tutors may include Federal Work Study students providing tutoring services in a core subject.

Curriculum materials / School supplies / Technology

The only approved physical goods are from online vendors and instrument/music stores from verified service providers in the Education Marketplace. Curriculum must meet Kansas State Department of Education standards for educational materials.

- School supply / office supply vendors
- Technology provider stores

Tech Items Allowed

Only one large tech item, greater than \$200, may be purchased per student, for example:

- 1 Tablet
- 1 Laptop
- 1 Computer with monitor
(these may be purchased together)

Additional allowable items

(no purchase limit within awarded amount) :

- School supplies
- Textbooks/Books
- Keyboard, Mouse, Trackpad, or calculator
- Other computer equipment (printer, scanner)

Items Not Allowed

- Gaming devices
- Medical devices
- Smartphones
- Sporting goods
- Clothing/shoes
- Food
- Class fees/Tuition fees for online courses.
(Note that online language class tuition is allowed.)
- Anything without an explicit educational reason listed

Requesting additional items

There will be a form in the marketplace for requesting additional items be added to the online store. These items will be reviewed by Merit and the person submitting the request will be notified of the decision regarding adding the item.

Parents and guardians should contact help@keep.ks.gov with any questions concerning goods/services eligibility.

Responsibilities of Participant

Noncompliance, Intentional Misuse of Funds or Criminal Activity

Parents and guardians acknowledge that the falsification, misrepresentation, or omission of any information provided in the KEEP application, supporting documentation, or subsequent information provided by them or their representatives could result in personal liability towards interested parties, such as Merit.

Parents and guardians acknowledge they have not received advance or previous payment for any claims submitted in this program. Any duplicative assistance must be repaid or may be subject to a debt collection action, pursuant to chapter 37 of Title 31, U.S. Code.

Interested parties can enforce and exercise all available legal rights and remedies against parents, guardians, or their authorized representative for non-compliance with these terms and conditions and applicable law.

Such enforcement could include but is not limited to:

1. Full reimbursement of any funds received under this program.
2. Costs related to recovery.
3. Damages.
4. Any other applicable fees.

Parents and guardians authorize Merit and their third-party service providers to validate all information and documentation provided in their application, supporting documentation, subsequent claims, and any other information provided for the execution of this program with the originating institution to validate that my information is correct and accurate.

Termination of award

Awards can be used for 12 months after the date of award, after which the funds expire and are no longer accessible to the beneficiary.

In addition, if an individual is found to be violating the rules for participation in the program, Merit and the SPARK Executive Committee reserve the right to remove that individual from the program and their award will be forfeited.

Appendix A

Parent or Guardian

Means a Kansas resident who is the parent, guardian, custodian, or another person with the authority to act on behalf of the child they seek to enroll in the Kansas Education Enrichment Program (KEEP).

Tutor or Tutoring Services

Tutoring services must be provided by a registered tutoring business. Tutor means a teacher licensed in any state; an individual who holds a current, state, national, or regional credential including state teaching, emergency, and provisional certificates; or an individual providing tutoring services for a qualified tutoring service. Tutors may include Federal Work Study students providing tutoring services in a core subject.

Core Subject

Examples of core subjects include but are not limited to science, English, mathematics, language, reading, writing, government, history, music, or similar subjects. Tutoring may be provided virtually, one-on-one, or in a group setting.

Immediate Family Member

Program funds cannot be used to hire an immediate family member to provide educational services. Immediate family members include a parent, guardian, custodian, sibling or any person with whom the student resides.

QESP

A QESP (Qualified Education Service Provider) is a business, organization, or individual that has successfully applied to participate in the program, and transacts all program-related business through the KEEP Claims app.

School Supplies

"School supply" means an item commonly used by a student in a course of study. The following is an all-inclusive list: (A) Binders; (B) book bags; (C) calculators; (D) cellophane tape; (E) blackboard chalk; (F) compasses; (G) composition books; (H) crayons; (I) erasers; (J) folders; expandable, pocket, plastic and manila; (K) glue, paste and paste sticks; (L) highlighters; (M) index cards; (N) index card boxes; (O) legal pads; (P) lunch boxes; (Q) markers; (R) notebooks; (S) paper; loose leaf ruled notebook paper, copy paper, graph paper, tracing paper, manila paper, colored paper, poster board and construction paper; (T) pencil boxes and other school supply boxes; (U) pencil sharpeners; (V) pencils; (W) pens; (X) protractors; (Y) rulers; (Z) scissors; and (AA) writing tablets.