KANSAS
KEEP

Qualified Education Service Provider Handbook

For Kansas Education Enrichment Program (KEEP)

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Introduction

Thank you for your interest in participating as a Kansas Education Enrichment Program (KEEP) Qualified Education Service Provider (QESP). As a service provider for students using KEEP dollars at your place of business, you'll be helping Kansas families further children's education.

This handbook has been created to welcome you to KEEP and provide you with information about the program, getting started, and support resources that are available to you as a Qualified Education Service Provider. The handbook also provides important information about how your organization can help ensure all KEEP funds benefit Kansas families and students
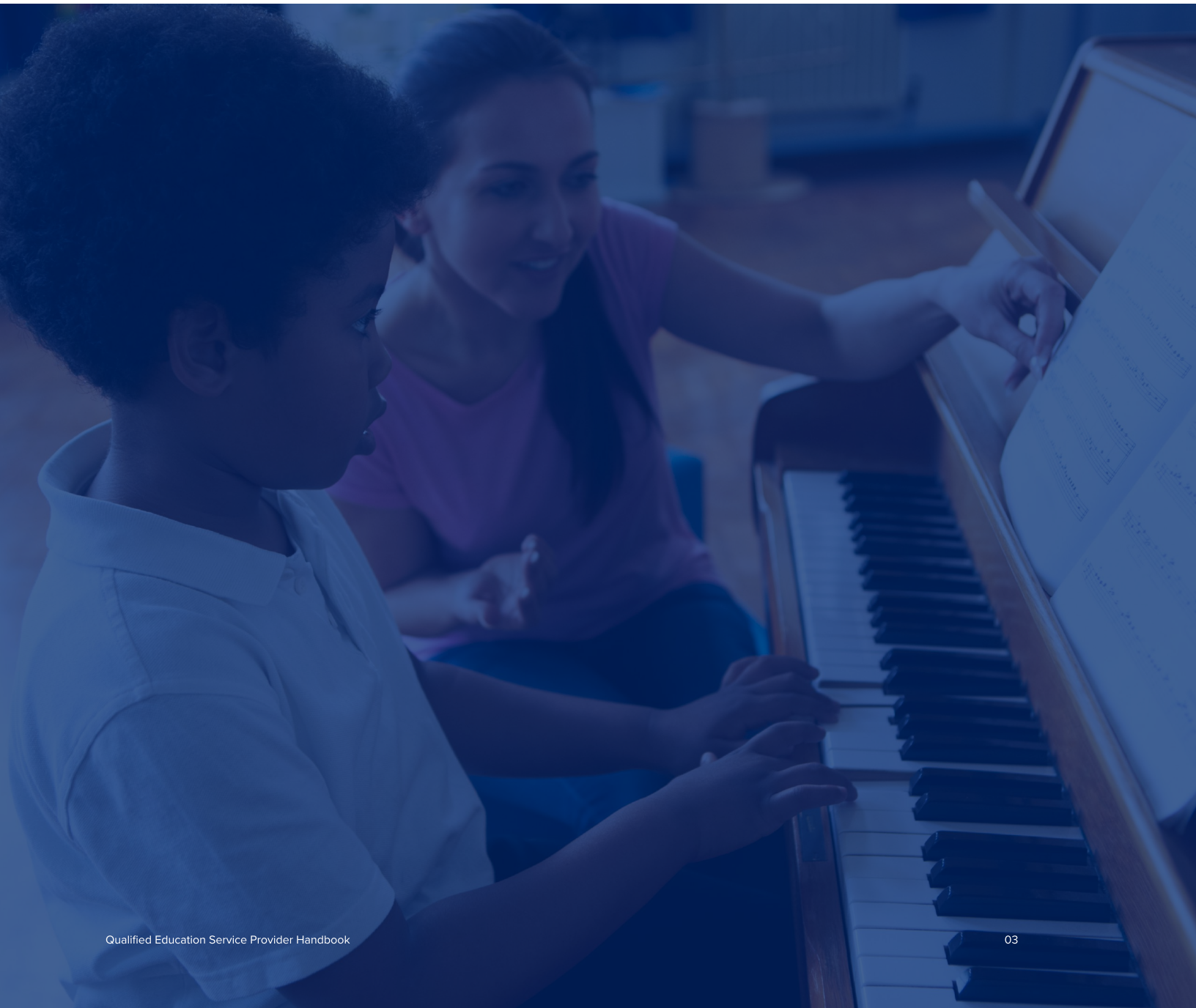
Program Overview

What is Kansas Education Enrichment Program (KEEP)?

KEEP is a $50 million dollar 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 benefit per eligible student to pay for a variety of educational goods and services that promote educational learning recovery and facilitate academic enrichment opportunities. Beneficiaries can spend their award in an online education marketplace at www.keep.ks.gov that offers a variety of approved educational goods and services.

Who is Merit?

The State of Kansas has partnered with Merit International, Inc. to administer the KEEP. Merit will serve as the program management and verified credentialing platform for participating families and service providers by connecting parents and guardians with education services from verified education service providers.

Who may participate in KEEP?

KEEP is available to K-12 students.

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

Qualified Education Service Providers (QESPs)

What is a Qualified Education Service Provider (QESP)?

A Qualified Education Service Provider is a business, organization, or individual that provides goods or services eligible for purchase or reimbursement by KEEP, has successfully applied to participate in the program, and transacts all program-related business through the KEEP app.

Participation in the education marketplace for qualified vendors is free. There are no application, administrative or transaction fees for education providers participating in the marketplace.

If your organization offers a qualifying program or service, you may apply to be listed as a QESP. Your organization will be listed in the online KEEP Education Marketplace, where parents and guardians can search for your organization and the services you provide.

Who is eligible to be a QESP?

To be approved to provide services allowable under KEEP, all services being offered must be reflective of the provider/organization's primary business. Individuals providing services should have a background (education and/or experience) consistent with the educational program provided. KEEP providers must primarily serve individuals ages 5-18 and demonstrate experience providing educational programs for the age group. All services may be offered online. The service provider must be located within the Unites States, and in-person service providers should be within Kansas or bordering states.

Life skills, health, holistic development, counseling, consulting, therapy, and social emotional programs are not allowable educational activities. Childcare, including nanny services, are not allowable expenditures under KEEP.

List of eligible education goods and services

The following goods and services are eligible for purchase or reimbursement with KEEP funds. KEEP funds cannot be used for tuition or fees to a public or private educational institution, dual-enrollment courses or for-credit classes of any kind. The student cannot earn credit from a secondary or post-secondary institution for the activity/class. Please contact qesp-help@keep.ks.gov with any questions concerning goods/services eligibility.

Camps

Items allowed	Items not allowed
• Day, overnight, and online camps are allowed.	• Sports camps
• The primary purpose of the camp must be for subjects that are related to academic/school curriculum.	• Driving school
• Examples include Music camps, arts camps, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Agriculture, Math) camps, English, Reading, History, and Personal Finance/Financial Literacy.	• Camps for non-academic subjects such as personal hygiene, self-care, self-esteem
• 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.	

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

This includes:

- The purchase of an instrument or instrument rental fees 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.
- 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

Items will be limited to those purchased in an online store set up by Merit through one of these types of approved vendors. Curriculum must meet Kansas State Department of Education standards for educational materials.

- School supply / office supply vendors
- Technology provider stores

A form will be available for parents and guardians to make requests for additional items to be added to currently approved online 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

Qualified Education Service Provider Application Process

What do I need to provide in the QESP application?

Before completing an application, please note that you will need to submit the following information about yourself and your organization or business including:

Personal Information Required

- Full contact information for yourself and your organization

- Your government-issued ID (state-issued driver's license or state-issued identification)

- Proof of employment (signed letter on organization's letterhead)

Professional Information Required:

- Your organization's license number, 501c3 number or TIN

- A description of your organization and the services it provides

- The services your organization will provide, a description of each, and how the services will be delivered including face-to-face or live online delivery

- Grade levels to be served in KEEP

- The region(s) your organization will serve in KEEP

- Customer invoicing information

- The price range of services

- Your organization's logo (not required)

- See additional required documents by program-type in **Appendix A** of this handbook

What are the steps to becoming a QESP?

Step 1 : Complete the application process online at www.keep.ks.gov.

    a. Upon approval, you will receive an email from help@merits.com alerting you that an organization has been created for you on the Merit platform and that you have been assigned an Admin role.

    b. Once you have accepted this email invitation, you will be directed to create your Merit account.

Step 2 : Create a Merit Account

Using your new account, you can access your custom dashboard and choose to connect a bank account to your Merit account

Step 3 : Familiarize yourself with the obligations of QESPs

1. Approved students and families will begin receiving their beneficiary award to spend with QESPs.

    a. When a parent/guardian submits a claim for your services, you will receive an email from Merit indicating that claims are pending in your dashboard.

    b. Services provided by/for family members do not qualify for reimbursement.

    c. You must review and validate or reject receipts/invoices submitted by parents/guardians within 10 days of receiving the email. Timely action allows faster claim payment.

    d. These funds are only authorized to be used for approved goods and services. It is your responsibility to alert Merit if a refund is issued to a parent/guardian that used KEEP funds to pay for an item or service. Merit will work with the parent on returning the funds to the State of Kansas. It is also your responsibility to report any suspected fraud, waste, or abuse.

    e. You must notify Merit if your services or program offerings change to remain in the marketplace and ensure compliance with state regulations.

    f. You are free and welcome to post/advertise about your status as a KEEP Qualified Education Service Provider so that people are aware they can spend their award with your organization. Please see the resources available to you at www.keep.ks.gov/qesp-toolkit.

    g. You should inform Merit if you have any questions or concerns or want to change your marketplace listing.

    h. Please use the qesp-help@keep.ks.gov email address for all communications.

Have the KEEP/Merit customer satisfaction contact information readily available:

Please familiarize yourself with the KEEP Help Center at help.keep.ks.gov which contains resources and additional how-to's and guidance.

What if my QESP application is denied?

Applications may be rejected due to missing or incomplete information about your organization or administrator. If your organization or business application is rejected because it was submitted with missing, incomplete, or incorrect administrator information, you may reapply at www.keep.ks.gov upon verifying the accurate completion of all fields.

Can I be disqualified as a QESP?

An organization or business that does not comply with the program requirements, responsibilities, or regulations may be disqualified as a Qualified Education Service Provider.

The appeal process for denial or disqualification

If your organization, business, or individual receives a notice of rejection or disqualification as a QESP, you may appeal the decision by completing the Appeal Form at www.keep.ks.gov/qesp-appeal.

QESP Onboarding Process

1 To access your dashboard, visit app.keep.ks.gov. Double-check that your browser has not re-directed you to a Parent account. Click on the **Link with Merit** button as shown below.

2 Follow the steps to log in with the email and password you created when you signed up to be a service provider.

QESP Onboarding Process
(Continued)
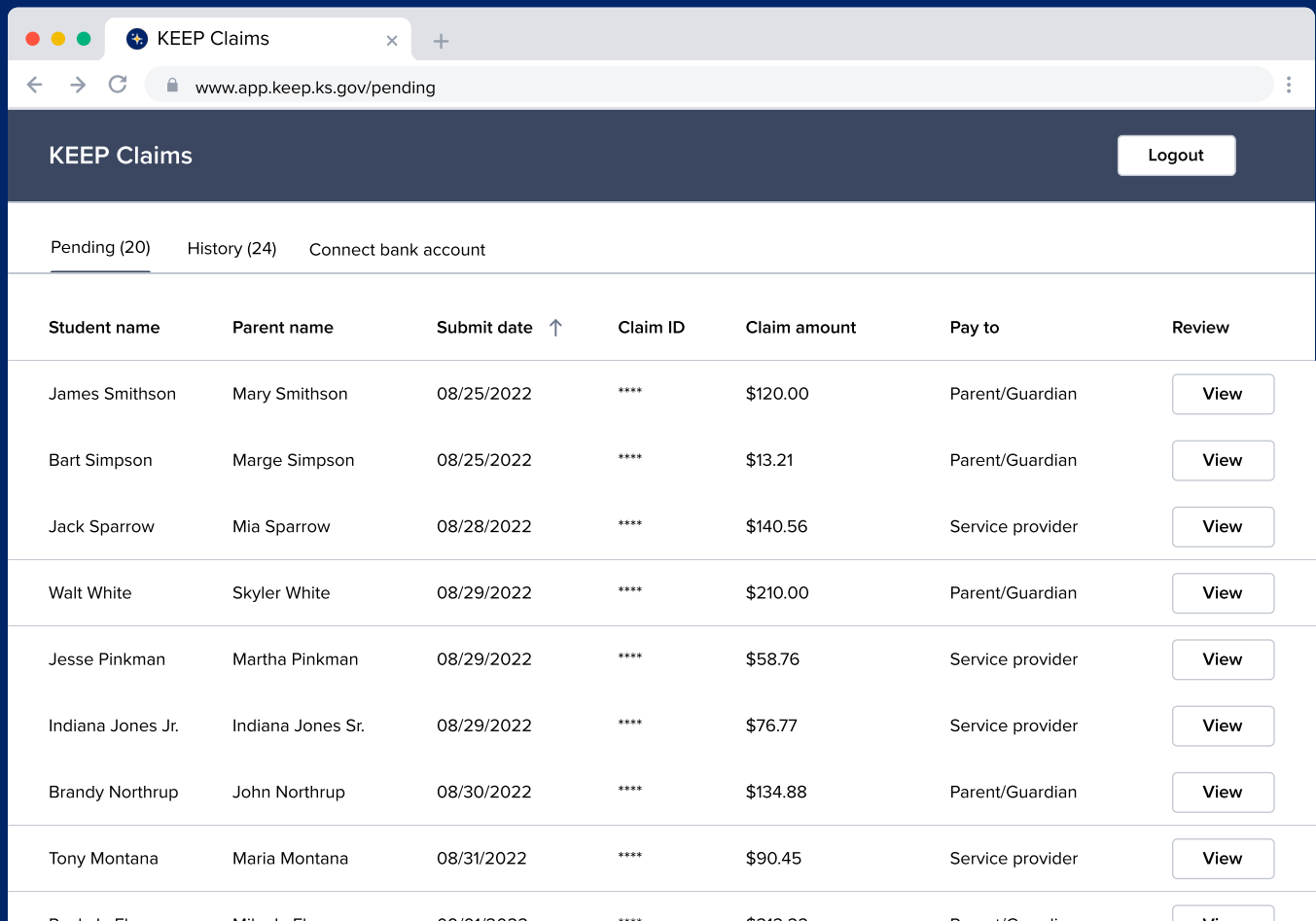
3   If this is the first time you are logging in to your provider portal, you will be asked to give permission for the portal app to connect with your organization.
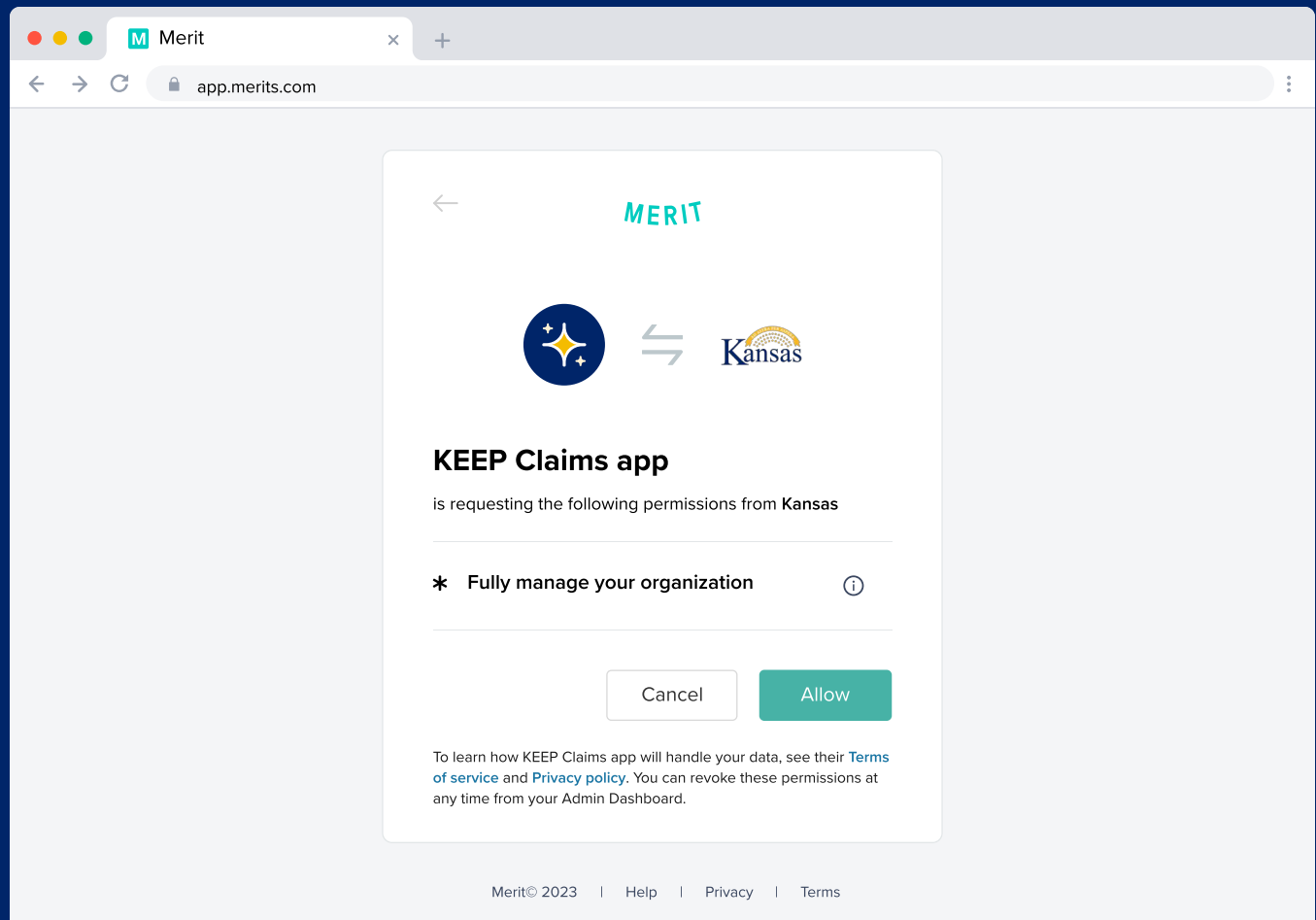
QESP Reimbursement & Payment Processing

QESPs play a decisive role in the integrity of KEEP by ensuring that Kansas award funds are used exclusively to support students. You are responsible for carefully reviewing all claims before approving them, and working with the Merit customer support team to resolve any questionable account activity.

There are two ways for you to be paid: parents/guardians can choose to pay for goods or services with their own personal funds and submit a receipt for reimbursement to themselves in the KEEP app, or they may submit a claim in the KEEP app with an unpaid invoice for goods or services that will be paid with their KEEP funds, directly to you. QESPs set up as direct-pay only will have invoices paid automatically once the claim is processed, and will be marked as a Preferred Vendor in the KEEP Marketplace. In order to be a direct-pay provider, you must connect your bank account in the KEEP app.

KEEP Claims   ×   +

www.app.keep.ks.gov/pending

KEEP Claims   Logout

Pending (20)   History (24)   Connect bank account

Student name	Parent name	Submit date ↑	Claim ID	Claim amount	Pay to	Review
James Smithson	Mary Smithson	08/25/2022	****	$120.00	Parent/Guardian	View
Bart Simpson	Marge Simpson	08/25/2022	****	$13.21	Parent/Guardian	View
Jack Sparrow	Mia Sparrow	08/28/2022	****	$140.56	Service provider	View
Walt White	Skyler White	08/29/2022	****	$210.00	Parent/Guardian	View
Jesse Pinkman	Martha Pinkman	08/29/2022	****	$58.76	Service provider	View
Indiana Jones Jr.	Indiana Jones Sr.	08/29/2022	****	$76.77	Service provider	View
Brandy Northrup	John Northrup	08/30/2022	****	$134.88	Parent/Guardian	View
Tony Montana	Maria Montana	08/31/2022	****	$90.45	Service provider	View
Paula LaFleur	Mike LaFleur	09/01/2022	****	$212.22	Parent/Guardian	View

1   Your provider dashboard will have **Pending claims, History**, and **Connect bank account** options. Now you are ready to review claims.

QESP Reimbursement & Payment Processing
(Continued)

2 The first time you log in, you will want to connect your bank account so that payments can be made directly to your business for claims.

- Click on the third tab option "**Connect bank account.**"

- Fill out your **routing** and **account number**. Then, click "**Submit.**"

- You will see a success page indicating your bank account has been successfully connected.

QESP Reimbursement & Payment Processing
(Continued)

3 Back in the Dashboard, click "**View**" to see the details of a claim waiting for review.

- Check the details of the claim, including the attached receipt, to ensure that claim information matches the records you have for this student.

- Fill in your name at the bottom of the claim for recording the person who reviewed the claim.

Review a claim

Student	James Smithson
Parent/Guardian	Mary Smithson
Service provider number	1234321
Service category	Category name
Description of service	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Dictumst arcu in pellentesque tellus. Eros massa adipiscing id sapien, aliquet.
Is this for a physical good?	No
Date of Service	08 / 20 / 2021
Claim amount	$120
Receipt or Invoice	File name.png

By entering your name you are taking responsibility for the approval or rejection of this claim and its accuracy

Reviewer

Reject   Approve
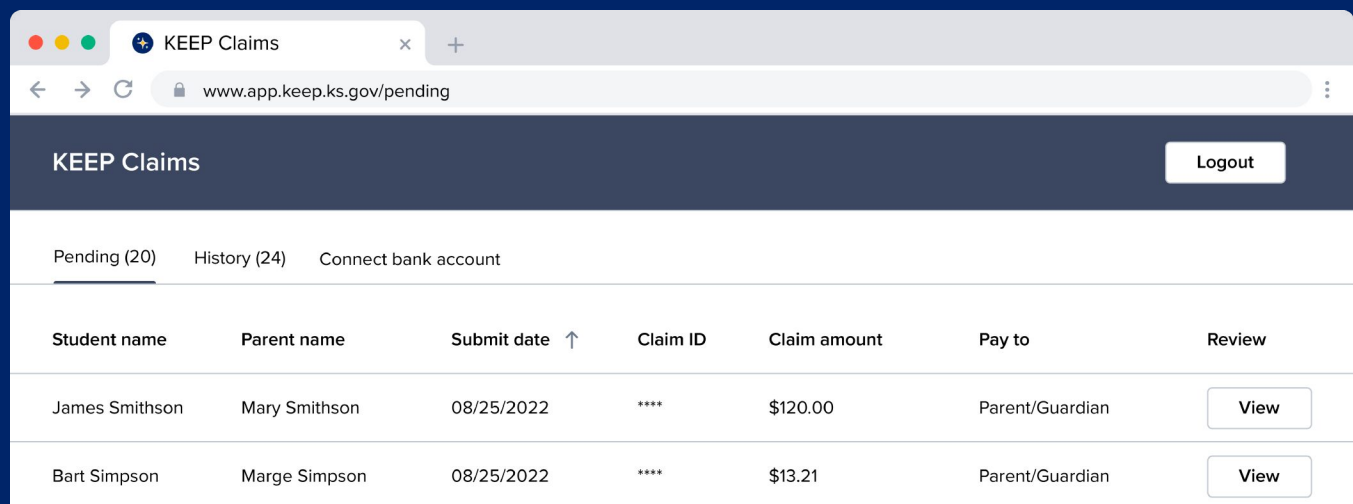
QESP Reimbursement & Payment Processing
(Continued)

- Please review the details within the claim and confirm the following

  - The student is or has been a client.

  - The service category and educational value fits the service or product that was purchased.

  - The claim amount matches or is less than your records of the transaction.

  - If the parent/guardian has paid for the service or item or is on a payment plan that you provided them, the pay to option should be "Pay to Parent/Guardian." If the parent/guardian has NOT paid for the services or items, and you allow invoicing, the pay-to option should be "Pay to Service Provider."

- You may choose to either approve or reject the claim by clicking one of the buttons in the lower right of the screen.

4 In the **History** view, you will have a way of seeing all of the claims your business or organization has approved.

1099 forms will be issued as necessary per current IRS guidelines.

Adding additional invoice and receipt administrators to your organization

To add an additional organization administrator, you will need to login to app.merits.com and select the Organization portal in the top right-hand corner of the page.

Select **Settings** on the left-hand menu.
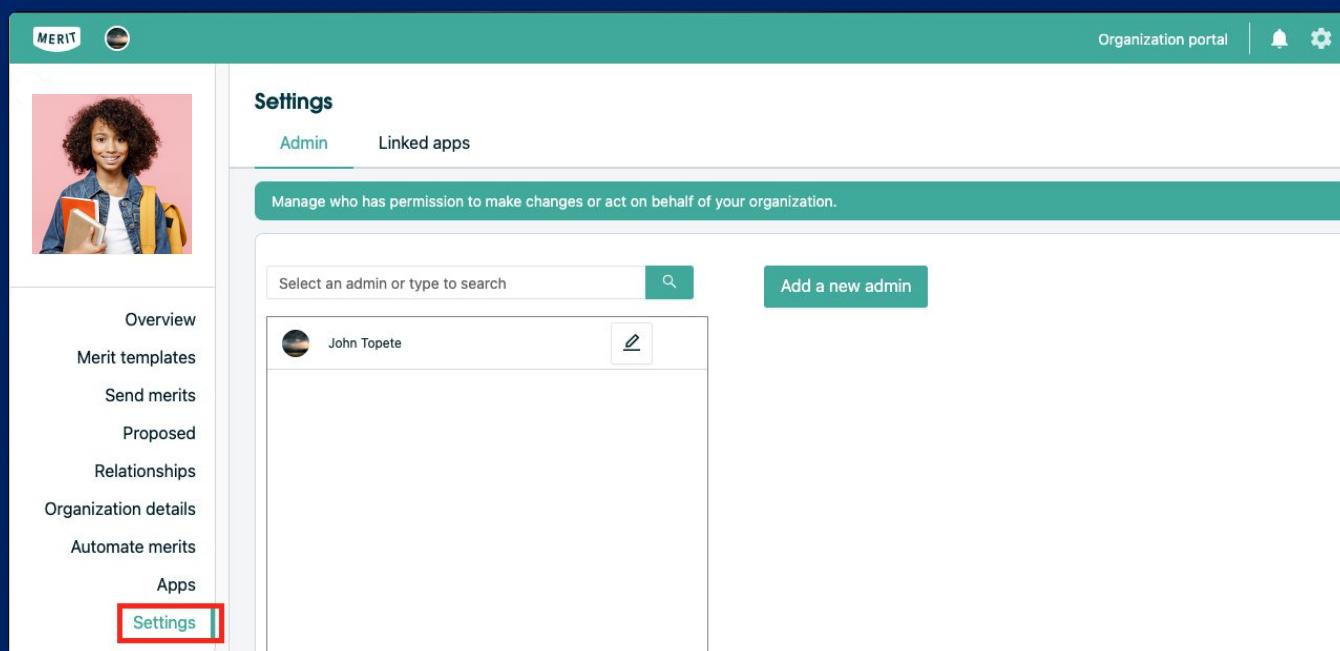
Adding additional invoice and receipt administrators to your organization

(Continued)

Click on **Add a new admin** and enter your admin's email, first and last name, then click **Create admin**.

Your administrator will receive an email inviting them to create an account. Once they select a password, they will be able to log in and process invoices and receipts.

Appendix

A. Additional Required Documentation

QESP Required Documentation

Day Camps	Language Classes	Instrument lessons	Tutoring
• Business Name ◦ Contact Info ◦ Manager Info	• Business Name ◦ Contact Info ◦ Manager Info	• Business Name ◦ Contact Info ◦ Manager Info	• Business Name ◦ Contact Info ◦ Manager Info
• Business License • Relevant Credentials	• Business License • Relevant Credentials	• Business License • Relevant Credentials	• Business License • Tutoring Credentials
• Gov't Issued ID • Check against Nat'l Sex offender Registry	• Gov't Issued ID • Check against Nat'l Sex offender Registry	• Gov't Issued ID • Check against Nat'l Sex offender Registry	• Gov't Issued ID • Check against Nat'l Sex offender Registry
• Website with listed declared services • Price list of declared services • **Location where services are provided	• Website with listed declared services • Price list of declared services • **Location where services are provided	• Website with listed declared services • Price list of declared services • **Location where services are provided	• Website with listed declared services • Price list of declared services • **Location where services are provided
• Service agreement / Policy Handbook • Camp Schedule/ itinerary • **Description of educational value of services	• Service agreement / Policy Handbook • Program Schedule • **Description of educational value of services	• Service agreement / Policy Handbook • Program Schedule • **Description of educational value of services	• Service agreement / Policy Handbook • Program Schedule • **Description of educational value of services
• Registration form	• Sample lesson plan • Sample work completed by student	• Sample lesson plan	• Sample lesson plan • Sample work completed by student

B. Definitions

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.

Relevant Credentials

The service provider can demonstrate qualification with a degree, certificate, license, educational credits, or relevant work experience to the educational program.

Tutor or Tutoring Credentials

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 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.