

RFT FAQs

Here are some of the most common questions asked about the RFT and the processes therein to receive transportation Services from Akron Public Schools.

WHAT IS AN RFT?

An RFT is a Request For Transportation services form. This form is for students attending approved Charter and Parochial Schools in grades KG – 8th. This form should not be completed for students attending Akron Public Schools, including high schools.

If your student is in high school, they would need to contact Merge Freeman (mfreeman@apslearns.org or 330-761-2961) for a high school RFT form that allows the student to receive a Metro bus pass.

The RFT is considered a legal contract/application for transportation services between a guardian and Akron Public Schools. The RFT must be completed and signed by a legal guardian. For alternate transportation, the RFT must be completed and signed by the alternate party.

HOW DO I QUALIFY FOR TRANSPORTATION SERVICES?

You and your student/s must legally reside within the Akron School District. A legal guardian must have a student attending a qualifying school that has requested transportation services. The student must be over 2 miles from the school of attendance. School of attendance must be under 30 minutes travel time – not including expressways. Akron Public Schools must have received a completed RFT with all necessary documentation to process.

Please note, if a student has an IEP that requires transportation services, the school of attendance/educating entity must provide the transportation services – not Akron Public Schools. All students must be able to ride, unaided, on a yellow school bus for transportation services.

WHAT TYPE OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES ARE OFFERED?

A student will receive one of 3 types of Transportation services – A yellow Akron Public Schools bus, a contracted service provider bus (Petermann), or payment-in-lieu for transportation services. This does not include van services.

WHERE DO I GET THE RFT FORM?

All qualifying schools have received a copy of the form for distribution to their parents no later than April 1st of the previous school year. You may go to the school directly, to Akron Public Schools located at 10 N. Main Street, Akron, OH 44308, online at www.akronschools.com – business affairs, documents, or you may call (330) 761-2738 and request a form be emailed to you. We can physically mail a form to you, however, due to postal services, it can take up to 15 days to arrive. The school of attendance may also choose to put the form on their website for downloading. Please ask your school if they do this.

WHEN MUST AN RFT BE COMPLETED?

Any time there is a change in address, school, guardianship, at the time of the new school year, and throughout the year if you wish to start and/or change transportation services. An RFT **must** be completed **every school year**. **We do not assume** a student will be attending the same school at the same residence with no changes in guardianship. **All RFT must be in 4 weeks prior to school starting** in order to be processed before school is in session. Anything turned in after that point may have a 10-15 day delay in being processed, not including

holidays and weekends. Akron Public Schools will not accept any change of address, school, and/or guardianship information over the phone. An Update/New Student RFT must be completed and returned with necessary documentation.

WHO NEEDS TO COMPLETE AN RFT?

Any legal guardian requesting transportation services for their student/s attending an approved charter or parochial school – including payment-in-lieu services. A school should not be completing and/or signing the form for the guardian. It is not the school requesting the transportation services, it is the guardian.

A school is not required to return the completed RFT with necessary paperwork to Akron Public Schools. As the guardian is requesting transportation services for their student, it is the guardian's responsibility to return the completed RFT with necessary paperwork to Akron Public Schools.

ARE THERE DIFFERENT TYPES OF RFT?

Yes! In order to assist our community, we have created 3 distinct types of RFT forms –Updated/New Student, Renewal With **No** Changes, and Alternate Transportation.

WHICH FORM SHOULD I USE?

Updated/New Student – This is the form most generally used. Please note that everyone is considered “new to transportation services” every school year as it is a new school year. This is the form that is also used if the student has moved, had a change of guardianship (custody documentation will be required), and/or a change in school. If a student transfers to another school and then returns to the former school, they are considered new to transportation services. Also, if you requested transportation services one year and then skipped a year, you are considered new to transportation services. If you are transferring from Akron Public Schools to a charter or parochial school, your student is considered new to transportation services.

Renewal With No Changes – This form is only to be used if there are absolutely no changes of any kind. This means the student HAS NOT moved, HAS NOT changed schools, and HAS NOT changed guardian. This is for students attending the same school they attended in the previous school and still reside at the same address with the same guardian.

Alternate Transportation – This form is to be used *along with* an Updated/New Student RFT. The guardian must complete the Updated/New Student RFT. The Alternate Transportation form is to be completed by the alternate **residential** party that the student would be receiving transportation services to and/or from. Alternate Transportation will not be considered to business and/or daycare services. Alternate Transportation is at the sole discretion of Akron Public Schools. Alternate Transportation is not guaranteed nor is Akron Public Schools required to provide alternate transportation services. Alternate Transportation is considered a form of courtesy transportation as we are not legally required to provide this service. Please see below for more information.

WHAT IF I DO NOT WANT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES?

Akron Public Schools is required to provide transportation services to Charter, Parochial, and Non-Public schools that have requested transportation services. In order to maintain compliant with ODE standards, we require to show that you were offered the service. You will need to complete an RFT **and** initial or make a checkmark next to the “I am opting out of all transportation services” section. By accepting this, it will also include payment-in-lieu service, meaning you will not receive a stipend check even if you qualify for such. Should you change your mind during the course of the school year, you may always re-apply for transportation services. If you choose to re-apply, you will need to complete a new RFT and turn it in with necessary documentation.

WILL I REQUIRE OTHER DOCUMENTATION BESIDES THE RFT?

Yes! Please see below what you will need.

POR (Proof of Residency) – Proof of residency must be considered current, meaning it has a visible statement or process date within the last 60 days. Proof of residency can be a bank statement, paystub, letter from government agency, computerized billing statement, utility bill or computerized turn on notification, computerized rental receipt, current lease signed by both tenant and landlord, and/or U. S. Postal service change of address confirmation letter. A residency affidavit must be notarized and include a copy of proof of residency for the residential party. Month-to-Month leases must be current within the date requesting transportation services and include a computerized rental receipt.

Birth Certificate – This is suggested if the student is new to the school or has never attended an Akron Public School. Please note that Head Start is not an Akron Public School. The student is entered into an electronic database that the transportation routing system utilizes. A birth certificate assures that we are routing the correct student and have all legally identifiable information needed.

Proof of Custody – This is required for any student not residing with the legal guardian, including agency/court-placed students and/or divorced parents. Per Ohio law, a woman who is unmarried at time of the child's birth is considered the legal guardian until a court of law deems otherwise.

Custody must have a court stamp and judge signature. *A notarized statement **does not** give custody to another individual; it only shows that the notary witnessed the document being signed.* Grandparent Affidavits and Temporary Custody Agreements, once notarized, must be taken to juvenile court. Juvenile Court, located at 650 Dan Street, Akron, OH 44305, offers free legal services every Wednesday, all day, on a first come, first serve basis.

WHAT IS PAYMENT-IN-LIEU?

Payment-in-Lieu (PIL) is used when transportation may be deemed impractical for bus transportation services. This can be due to a variety of reasons including impracticality due to low number of students to transport, location issues, mileage issues, etc.

For a student that is deemed PIL eligible, the guardian will receive a stipend check for transporting their student for the school year. A parent may not arbitrarily choose Payment-in-Lieu over a bus transport if bussing is available. Payment-in-Lieu is at the discretion of Akron Public Schools.

To qualify, an RFT must be turned in with any necessary documentation. Akron Public Schools will review to see if a request meets PIL eligibility. If the requirements are met, the request will be presented at an Akron Public Schools board meeting and approved for payment. A contract will subsequently be sent out to be completed and returned to the Akron Public Schools Transportation Department. The contracts are normally sent out at the end of November, January, and March in the school year. Should the student have been approved and the guardian has not received a contract by this time, it is suggested that the guardian contact the Akron Public Schools Transportation Department at (330) 761-1390.

If this contract is not completed and returned to Akron Public Schools Transportation Department, there will be no stipend issued. Stipend checks are mailed out at the end of the school year, around the second week in June.

Payment-in-Lieu requests must be made prior to November 30th of the current school year or they are subject to being pro-rated. A stipend may also be pro-rated if a student moves and/or changes schools. ODE requires Payment-in-Lieu requests to be made at the beginning of the school year.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR ALTERNATE TRANSPORTATION?

Alternate Transportation is considered a form of courtesy transportation services. Akron Public Schools is not legally required to provide this service and will do so at our sole discretion. There are many factors that must be reviewed prior to accepting an Alternate Transportation request, including, but not limited to, number of students on bus, stop availability, time constraints, etc.

The legal guardian must complete an Updated/New Student RFT with their residential address information.

The legal guardian must provide current proof of residency for their residential address.

A statement must be written requesting alternate transportation from the home residence to the alternate residence. This statement must be notarized and signed by **both** parties.

The alternate address relation must complete an Alternate Transportation Form with their residential information.

The alternate address relation must provide current proof of residency for their residential address.

All paperwork should be turned in at the same time, however, we do realize that changes can occur during the school year that may necessitate late entry.

WHO SUBMITS THE COMPLETED RFT?

The completed RFT with necessary documentation are to be submitted to Akron Public Schools Central Registration/Transportation Department. It is up to the legal guardian to submit this paperwork as they are the one requesting transportation services. **Schools are not responsible for the collection of nor required to submit the RFT with necessary documentation.** If a school chooses to do this, they are responsible for getting the RFT along with all necessary documentation to Akron Public Schools in a timely manner. Akron Public Schools is not responsible for late, incomplete, or misdirected RFT and documentation.

WHERE DO I SUBMIT MY COMPLETED RFT TO?

To Mail

Akron Public Schools
ATTN: Central Registration/Transportation
10 North Main Street
Room TBA
Akron, OH 44308

To Fax: (print student name & school on cover sheet)

(330) 761-3224
ATTN: Central Registration/Transportation

To Email:

rcarroll@apslearns.org

HOW WILL I KNOW IF I WILL RECEIVE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES?

The provider (Akron Public Schools or Contracted Company) is responsible to notify the guardian of all routing information including stop locations and times. Before school starts this information is mailed out. Once school is in session, this information will be given via telephone and/or voicemail message.

Should there be a denial, a letter will be sent from Akron Public Schools to the address provided on the RFT form. This letter will state the reason for denial. If there is a denial due to mileage and/or time constraints, there can be no change in status. For other reasons, please provide necessary information for review and processing.

Akron Public Schools looks forward towards providing excellent service to our Community, Schools, and families.