FOR TEFA FAMILIES

HOW TO PLACE TEFA ORDERS THAT GO THROUGH: 5 COMMON ROADBLOCKS AND HOW TO FIX THEM

We read six months of posts in the largest TEFA groups to find the most common reasons orders don't go through. Each section starts with a parent's post, followed by the marketplace rule behind it and the fix.

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★ **READ TO THE END →** Page 2 ends with ***the one thing TEFA will not pay you back for***, and ***what to do if you already paid.***

THE FIVE COMMON ROADBLOCKS, AND THE FIX FOR EACH

1. TECH CAP: STAYING UNDER $180 WITH TAX

"$185 with tax, still says over the limit."

The 10% tech limit, $200 on a $2,000 award, counts tax AND shipping. A $185 tablet plus 8.25% tax comes to $200.26. **The fix:** stay under $180 per device, and check the wallet's remaining tech balance before you order.

2. ITEM STATUS: CONFIRMING THE EXACT ITEM

"Ordered a printer six times, cancelled all six times."

The state approves vendors and the marketplace approves items, so a printer from an approved store can still be an unapproved item. **The fix:** message the vendor through the marketplace, ask "is this exact item approved for TEFA," and order ones they have confirmed.

3. INVENTORY: OUT-OF-STOCK REORDERS

"Amazon items keep getting rejected."

When the vendor can't fill an order, the marketplace cancels it instead of holding it. **The fix:** order again in a few days, or pick the same item from a second listed vendor.

4. INSTRUMENTS: BUNDLING WITH LESSONS

"Why can't I get a guitar?"

Some music vendors have instruments approved only as part of a lessons bundle, so an instrument ordered by itself can be cancelled. **The fix:** buy the lessons and the instrument together, and keep the instrument at or under the $1,200 cap.

5. WALLET: CONFIRMING FUNDS AND THE ACCOUNT SETTING

"Approved and funded, but the wallet says $0."

Homeschool awards load in one payment after you opt in. Private-school awards load in three parts (Jul 1, Oct 1, Feb 1) and go to the school first. One parent who switched to homeschool found $0 in the wallet because the account was still on the private track. **The fix:** confirm the setting in the portal before you order, and go by the wallet balance.

The order that goes through has the right setting in the portal, enough of a balance, an item the vendor confirmed in writing, a price under $180 if it's tech, and the lessons included if it's an instrument.

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WHAT THE MARKETPLACE RULES ACTUALLY SAY

Quoted from Odyssey's help center and the state's families page. Parents report that support replies faster when you cite the rule.

The Rule	How it applies to your order	The Source
All approved purchases and tuition payments are completed through the Odyssey platform.	Buying the same item at a store or on your own Amazon account is not reimbursable.	Odyssey help center
Technology (laptops, tablets, desktops, monitors, headphones, printers, calculators, hot spots, software) shares one limit of 10% of the award.	$200 total on $2,000. Tax and shipping count. Every device this year comes out of the same $200.	State families page; Odyssey
Musical instruments carry a $1,200 price cap per instrument, outside the tech limit.	A $1,300 keyboard cancels; a $990 one goes through if the vendor is listed.	Odyssey help center
Therapies are payable only when not covered by Medicaid, CHIP, or the child's private insurance.	Ask the provider "is this billable to any coverage we have" before booking.	Odyssey help center
Homeschool award paid in one installment after opt-in; private-school award paid 25/25/50 on Jul 1, Oct 1, Feb 1.	Homeschool families can spend the full $2,000 at once; private-school families see the balance arrive in three parts.	Odyssey help center

IF AN ORDER STILL DOESN'T GO THROUGH, SEND SUPPORT THESE FOUR THINGS

The order number, the item's exact name and price with tax, the wallet balance at the time, and the rule you believe applies, for example "a $990 instrument, under the $1,200 cap, from a listed vendor." Send it through the marketplace support form.

PAID BEFORE YOU WERE FUNDED? HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN GET BACK

> **TEFA cannot pay you back for anything you paid yourself.** Odyssey's rule is one sentence: "It is against program rules to refund TEFA funds directly to parents." Refunds only move from a school back to Odyssey and into the child's wallet, and only with the school's help. Fee confirmations can't be reversed, and there is no reimbursement for tuition, books, or sessions paid before the award came through.

What you can do: if you already paid tuition to the school, ask the school to bill TEFA only for what's still owed and to refund you the overlap themselves. This is the school's decision and parents report some schools do and some schools don't. If therapy or tutoring has already started, keep the provider and move the next sessions to marketplace orders. Anything else paid out of pocket will stay out of pocket.

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Sources: support.withodyssey.com (purchase rules, instrument cap, $1,200 since October 2026; therapy coverage, tutor certificate, payment timing, mid-year enrollment); educationfreedom.texas.gov/families (10% technology limit); 2,578 posts from the two largest Texas TEFA parent groups on Facebook, March 16 to Sept 19, 2026.

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