

LRS CHAPTER 4, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & GUIDANCE MANUAL

	Part 412.07	Name Home Modifications for Accessibility	Effective Date *May 2, 2022**
	Authorization Federal Register, Volume 81, Department of Education, 34 CFR 361, Part VI, State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program, §361.48, §361.50, §361.52, §361.53, §361.54 and 2CFR 200.407		

I. *DEFINITIONS

Contractor: An experienced licensed individual or company providing expertise and oversight in the construction or renovation of a building. Contractors often hire other individuals called subcontractors to oversee or complete work on specific elements of a project. State of Louisiana Contractors Licensing Law & Rules & Regulations: https://lslbc.louisiana.gov/wp-content/uploads/blue_book_08012021.pdf

Electronic Aids for Activities of Daily Living (EADL). This technology has grown from the older, modular Environmental Controls technology that was unitized. EADL's may use the Internet of Things (IOT), radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags, or other remote controlled features that may be controlled via the internet. (An example of an EADL is a digital camera at the front door, linked to a wheelchair or bed-mounted cell phone and an electronic door lock release to allow home entry.)

Home Access/Modification Assessment¹

The Home Access Modifications Assessment is a comprehensive evaluation to determine the individual's needs for access in his or her home environment, including his or her procedures for completing activities of daily living, equipment used, assistance needed, etc. Barriers in and moving between each of the following areas are identified by the evaluator as the individual is observed moving about the home: entry access, bathroom, bedroom, kitchen, living area, laundry, and parking area. Adaptive equipment may be recommended, as well as structural modifications.

The home modification assessment must determine whether a home modification is necessary and to assess what the most cost effective and lowest cost solution would be to meet the consumer's needs.

Home Modification Services for Accessibility can be provided when such services are necessary to enable an eligible consumer to attain or maintain competitive integrated employment. Accessibility refers to the design of an environment to ensure "direct access" (i.e. unassisted).

¹ *Must be completed by a Rehabilitation Engineer, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, and/or Assistive Technology Professional (ATP).*

Liability Insurance: Insurance coverage held by a contractor that protects them against claims for damage to a person or property. Proof of Liability Insurance coverage is required by all contractors who provide services to the state and must meet the minimum requirements as specified by LA Office of State Procurement (OSP)
<https://www.doa.la.gov/doa/osp/>.

Ramp: A sloped surface, with a slope no greater than 1:12 (one inch of rise for every 12 inches of run) that allows a gradual transition between two levels of ground or building. A ramp is a more accessible alternative to steps allowing access to those with a mobility impairment. Ramps can be constructed of many materials both indoors and out. Ramp characteristics are defined by Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended (ADAA) accessibility guidelines. https://www.ada.gov/2010_regs.htm

Vertical Platform Lift: Purpose-built equipment designed to lift a person with a mobility impairment who is unable to safely navigate a set of stairs or an incline. Unlike an elevator, there is no shaft or enclosure. Vertical platform lifts are available in both indoor and outdoor models. They are used in applications where a ramp would be prohibitively expensive or impractical. They also can be removed if no longer needed which makes them an attractive option if the consumer is renting or leasing their residence.

Stair Lift: An electronically powered lifting device designed to move a person with a mobility impairment between levels of ground or buildings. Stair lifts are available as seated lifts with a chair built in or as platform lifts on to which one can roll a wheelchair. These lifts attach to the stairs or wall and are a way to provide access when an elevator or platform lift would be impractical. If a person is a wheelchair occupant, stair lifts require the ability to transfer, and leave the wheelchair on the floor of departure on the stair lift.

Structural Home Modification: Construction work done to modify an existing home that involves the repair, modification, removal or addition of one or more load bearing elements of the home or changes to the home's infrastructure such as plumbing, electrical, or HVAC (Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems, includes any permanent changes made to the home. A structural modification is something that causes a permanent change or addition to the physical structure of the home. Examples of this type of modification include permanently installed ramps, widening of doorways, or the installation of a roll-in shower. Whenever plumbing and electrical changes must be made to accommodate equipment or modifications, the changes are considered structural. Moving a commode three inches to one side is structural, while installing an Americans with Disabilities-height commode would not necessarily be considered structural. Equipment that is easily removed is not included in this category, even when small repairs must be made to the home to return the house to its original condition. An example of this type would be the addition of grab bars when no modification is required to the walls. Many times, the home must undergo some structural modification to allow equipment to be used. For example, a lift that mounts to the ceiling requires that the ceiling be reinforced. This is a structural modification.

Transfer Assist Device: A device designed to help a person with a disability transfer safely between surfaces or environments. Transfer Assist Devices can be portable or permanently mounted to a wall or ceiling and can be powered electrically or manually. They range in complexity from a simple board for sliding across the gap between a wheelchair and a bed to ceiling lift systems with a track for transporting the person throughout the home. Examples: Hoyer Lift, Sit-to-stand aids etc.

Workers' Compensation Insurance: An insurance policy held by a contractor that has employees. Worker's Compensation Insurance protects workers from injuries that occur while on the job. Proof of Worker's Compensation Insurance coverage is required by all contractors who provide services to the state and must meet the minimum requirements as specified by LA Office of State Procurement (OSP).**

II. HOME MODIFICATION SERVICES

Home modification services for accessibility can be provided when such services are necessary to enable an eligible consumer to attain or maintain ***competitive integrated**** employment. Accessibility refers to the design of an environment to ensure "direct access" (i.e. unassisted). ***The home modification assessment must determine whether a home modification is necessary and to assess what the most cost effective and lowest cost solution would be to meet the consumer's needs. Aesthetic issues can be considered only if they do not increase the cost of the project.****

A. Home modification services can be provided only when a specific employment goal has been identified on an active IPE/Plan. ***The scope of each project will vary by the individual and his or her particular circumstances. Typically, LRS will provide modifications to allow safe entry and exit from the home and modification to the bedroom and bathroom areas to allow independent personal hygiene to prepare for work. When other modifications are done, it is to support those areas above (entry, exit, bedroom and bathroom). Kitchen modifications will be provided as determined necessary and limited to the items in the chart below. The scope of the home modifications provided may increase if the consumer plans to work from home. In this case, the additional modifications need to relate directly to the work being performed in the home. Following are some modifications and equipment that may be recommended for consumers:****

1. External and Internal Modifications

HOME MODIFICATIONS	
External Modifications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One ramp or wheelchair lift at one entrance • One widened door at one entrance • *Threshold ramp at the entry door • Parking pad to allow for safe exit from a vehicle

- Most cost effective pathway from parking area to home entrance
- Automatic door opener
- Replacement door hardware**

Internal Modifications:

- Widened doors within the areas of the home used by the consumer *to prepare for work**
- One ceiling mounted lift
- The following kitchen modifications only:
 - 40 inch clearances between base cabinets, walls, and protrusions
 - 30 x 48 inch clear floor space for forward or parallel approach to appliances
 - Accessible controls (no grasping or twisting needed - example: lever handles on faucets)
 - 30 inch section of counter 34 inches high
 - Knee clearance underneath sink/range/cooktop/oven for forward approach
 - Pantry shelves between 48 and 15 inches high (modifications will not be used to refurbish the kitchen with all new furnishings)
- One (1) accessible bathroom. *Examples include grab bars, raised toilet seat, accessible sink; access to toilet; shower bench seat, roll-in shower.
- Lift to aid in transfers into wheelchair and access to the bathroom.
- Accessible interior path to bedroom and bathroom, may include flooring, stair lift, etc.
- LRS will not remodel, renovate, or provide significant additions to bathroom modifications or kitchen modifications, such as replacing appliances, cabinets, etc. See [Limitations](#)

2. Prior to the referral for a home modification assessment, the Counselor must:

- Establish that the home to be modified is the primary residence of the consumer.
- Obtain written assurance from the consumer that he/she intends to stay in the residence to be modified for the foreseeable future.
- Determine if the consumer has received structural home modifications through LRS in the past.
- This information should be provided on the referral form in the narrative description.
- Discuss with the consumer the limitations on the provisions of home modifications as outlined in the procedures and provide the consumer with the "Home Modification Consumer Fact Sheet".

The consumer is required to review the fact sheet, complete and sign the checklist to proceed with the home modification assessment. The signed checklist becomes part of the consumer's record. The consumer receives the fact sheet and a copy of the signed checklist.**

- B. Each consumer who requests home accessibility modification services shall be required to undergo an *on-site, face-to-face assessment** by an LRS approved Rehabilitation Engineer, *Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, and/or Assistive Technology Professional (ATP) (referred to as AT Specialist)** qualified to make such assessments.
1. This assessment will assist the Counselor to determine modifications necessary for the consumer to participate in a plan of vocational rehabilitation services and subsequently attain or maintain *competitive integrated** employment. The *AT Specialist** assessment must submit specifications for the recommended modifications to the Counselor.
 2. *In addition to the evaluation of the specific needs of the consumer, the AT Specialist will evaluate other aspects relevant to the provision of home modifications. This may include, but is not limited to, the structural integrity of the home.**
 3. A copy of the specifications for the recommended modifications will be attached to the AWARE case record to provide a basis for reviewing price quotes submitted to the Counselor.
 4. *Before meeting with the consumer, the Counselor must review/discuss the outcome of the assessment and possible options to determine which modifications, if any, are necessary to enable the consumer to reach the vocational goal, and make the final determination of which recommended home modifications to purchase. The Counselor should seek assistance from a District Supervisor, Regional Manager, or State Office AT Program Coordinator, if needed.
 5. Meet with the consumer to discuss the AT Specialist's recommendation and relevance of the modifications to the consumer's goal in order to determine what home modifications and associated adaptive equipment will be provided, if any. Document the consumer's responsibilities and understanding of the limitations on the provision of the service on the plan.**
- C. Limitations
1. *Only the primary residence of the consumer can be modified.

2. The consumer must obtain written permission from the home owner that they are in agreement with the specifications of the home modification and installation plan and provide it to the Counselor to include in the case record prior to the home modification vendor beginning work.**
3. ***Non-structural, removable modifications, such as bathroom rails, etc., may be provided to consumers residing in rental property.
4. The home to be modified for accessibility must be structurally sound (determined by the contractor submitting the price quote. A statement noting that home is structurally sound and will support the modification should be included on the price quote.)
5. LRS will not remodel, renovate, *repair**, or provide significant additions to an existing structure. For example:
 - a. A wheelchair ramp may be constructed and attached to an existing home; this is not considered a significant addition.
 - b. Extending an existing house by building a new room, such as a bedroom or bathroom, is considered a significant addition and is not permitted.
 - c. Enclosing and renovating an existing open structure, such as a carport, is considered a significant addition and is not permitted.
6. The Counselor must obtain approval from the *LRS Director** or designee to modify any dwelling previously modified by LRS.
7. *The cost of home modifications is limited to no more than \$30,000.
8. LRS does not purchase new homes or participate in new home construction. When a consumer moves to a new home, it is expected they will purchase a home which meets their needs or make the modifications necessary for independence. Non-permanent, recoverable equipment may still be added, if necessary. If clinically verified documentation of medical or safety need, based on a significant change in the consumer's diagnosis and/or functional abilities has occurred since the initial purchase of the home, a home modification may be considered.
9. It is preferred that consumers obtaining a home modification be employed. This helps ensure consumers will not need a second modification if they have to move to find work. If the consumer is ready for work, a home modification can be undertaken as long as it is likely that they will be able to find the type of work they are looking for in the area.

10. There are cases where a consumer may need a modification while still in training. It is important the consumer be able to identify that they will be able to find work in the area near the home to be modified.
11. No purchase or modifications to swimming pools, heated pools, Jacuzzis, whirlpool tubs, or saunas.
12. No modifications involving movement or construction of exterior walls.
13. No purchase of whole house or portable backup generator.
14. Home Modification Maintenance - LRS will not participate in the manufacturer's required or routine maintenance of any assistive technology devices or structural modifications. It is the consumer's responsibility to insure and maintain modifications. The Counselor can note manufacture warranty information in the consumer's record if this information is provided.**

III. PURCHASING GUIDELINES FOR HOME ACCESSIBILITY MODIFICATIONS

- A. The Counselor will review the evaluation/assessment report's recommendations and determine what portion LRS can provide to assist the consumer in reaching their agreed upon competitive integrated employment goal.
- B. The Counselor must allow the consumer informed choice.
 - 1. The Counselor must meet with the consumer to review the specifications the vendor must comply with to meet the needs and choices of the consumer.
 - 2. The Counselor/RCA will:
 - a. Request price quotes from at least three vendors if the single home modification or total of all the home's modifications exceeds \$5,000.00 (if fewer than three vendors are available, obtain quotes from only available vendors.)
 - i. Telephone quotes are not acceptable.
 - ii. The request for the price quote may be faxed to the vendor and the vendor may fax back the quote.
 - iii. The price quote must include the following:
 - a) Any features, drawings, and performance specifications.
 - b) Indicate the award as "all or none" or "as a package" if multiple items are involved.
 - c) Request for warranty information.
 - d) Date by which item(s) must be delivered.
 - e) A request to include delivery and set-up (if applicable) in the price quote.
 - f) Any particular specifications. For example: The vendor will be responsible for the cost of pick-up and delivery, cost of adjustments, cost of repairs, etc. that could be required after delivery.
 - g) Quotes cannot be split to circumvent state purchasing regulations.

- h) *Detailed labor and cost estimates.
 - i) If the Counselor has question, they may consult with the evaluator or contractor for clarification.**
 - b. If the consumer expresses a choice of vendors, the Counselor should obtain the quotes from those vendors.
 - c. If the Consumer chooses to use the Vendor submitting the lowest price quote, then the Consumer need not participate in the cost of services for the purchase of home modifications.
 - d. If the Consumer chooses to use a Vendor other than the one submitting the lowest quote, then the Consumer must pay the difference in cost between the lowest quote and the quote submitted by the chosen vendor.
 - e. Price quotes will be requested from approved vendors in Chapter 5, Part 511.
- C. The Counselor must obtain at least the following from the *AT Specialist** and obtain the necessary approvals before the *home modification** vendor begins work for all purchases of home accessibility modifications. Documentation will be attached to the AWARE case record.
- 1. Outline of the work to be done. This could include any features, drawings, and/or performance specifications. (This information is currently provided to the Counselor by the Rehabilitation Engineer or Technology Specialist in the report, detailing the accessibility needs.)
 - 2. Warranty information.
 - a. Product warranty (lift, shower wheelchair or other AT) should be given to the consumer. (The LRS Counselor may want a copy for the case record).
 - b. A written warranty of the work performed and of workmanship or quality of work should be provided by the vendor to the consumer and a copy for the Counselor (to retain in the case record).
 - 3. Date by which the work is expected to be completed.
 - 4. The cost should be an itemized break down, including both material and labor costs.

5. Verification of the vendor's license and insurance. A "certificate of insurance" should be attached to the AWARE case record that covers complete residential construction including excavation, if needed.
6. A copy of the local building permits (if required).

D. Prior Approval

Prior Approval must be obtained prior to purchasing certain goods and services. This includes rearrangement and reconversion cost of any amount such as the construction or modification of client homes or offices required as an accommodation to their disability. Assessments needed to determine the necessary home modifications required DO NOT require prior approval.

A Prior Approval request must be made to State Office *** prior to an IPE being completed and any home modifications being authorized/purchased.

A Prior Approval request is submitted to the State Office *AT Program Coordinator via the Prior Approval for Home Modification** Request form. Upon review and receipt of appropriate approvals, the Regional Manager will be notified of approval/disapproval of the Prior Approval request and can proceed accordingly. *Prior Approval is required prior to completing an IPE with the consumer. Also, if the cost is over \$25,000, OSP approval via the LWC 761 system and Purchase Order number is required prior to completing an IPE. See Chapter 4 Part 411.1 II.b.3**

The completed IPE/Plan should be submitted to the District Supervisor for approval unless Counselor is on Independent Status. Upon approval of the IPE and, if required, any Prior Approval needed, the RCA/Counselor will enter the Authorization(s). *Authorizations of \$25,000 or more will not be entered in AWARE as these will need to be completed in the 761 system.** See Chapter 4, Part 411.1 for further instructions on Secondary Approval requirements.

If the total of all items/services on any IPE/ Plan is equal to or greater than \$25,000, it shall be considered "high cost." In these instances, all Counselors must have the IPE/Plan approved by both the District Supervisor and the Regional Manager.

E. *Exception Requirement

2. If the cost of any single IPE plan item exceeds the fee schedule as listed below, the Counselor must *request an exception via the Exception Request form. This should include:

- a written rationale for the excess in AWARE Case Notes;
- a completed Exception Request form;

- obtain review and recommendation by the District Supervisor, the Regional Manager, AND
- submit to the Director for consideration of approval of the exception.**

F. ***

IV. METHOD OF PAYMENT

Prior to the Counselor/RCA authorizing payment to the vendor/provider after actual delivery of item(s)/services the following must be met:

- A. The provider must provide an invoice in order to receive payment. If the provider/vendor does not have a billing invoice, the provider may use LRS' form RS-22 Standard Invoice.
- B. The Consumer must verify that services were secured as outlined on the invoice. The Consumer can either write anywhere on the invoice that the goods and/or services have been received or submit in writing (e-mail is acceptable), a note to the Counselor indicating that the goods/services have been received. By doing so the Consumer is requesting LRS to make payments to the provider.
- C. Vendor/Provider submits invoice to LRS for payment as outlined in A-B above.
- D. Counselors are authorized to withhold payment for services until A-C above are received. If there are disagreements or evidence of significant departures from the original agreements then an administrative review of the case will be conducted to determine the appropriate, legal resolution.

*Fee Schedule	
ITEM	MAXIMUM COSTS
External and/or internal home modification to increase accessibility	\$30,000

V. WORKFLOW OVERVIEW

- A. Authorize Home AT Assessment
 Note: Review the Home AT Fact Sheet with consumer and have them sign the checklist at the time you authorize the assessment.

Review available assessment providers with consumer and assist them with selecting an assessment provider. Document informed choice in case note. Assistive Technology vendor will contact the consumer directly to schedule a

home modification assessment. It is best practice for the Counselor to attend the initial assessment when possible, as this will keep the lines of communication open between all parties.

B. Review Home AT Assessment with Consumer

The Counselor should review the results of the assessment with consumer and determine next steps.

C. Obtain Price Quotes

3 price quotes are needed if modification exceeds \$5,000.00. Document consumer's informed choice selection of vendors for the quotes in case note. If fewer than 3 vendors are available, document in a case note and obtain quotes from available vendors.

D. Review Price Quote(s) with Assistive Technology Specialist

Review price quote(s) received from home modification vendor(s) with the AT Specialist to verify that the components included in the price quote are as recommended in the assessment and that the costs are reasonable.

E. Obtain Prior Approval

All home modifications, regardless of cost, require prior approval. Submit a Prior Approval form for home modification to State Office to the AT Program Coordinator prior to an IPE being completed and any home modifications being authorized/purchased. Upon review and appropriate approvals, the Regional Manager will be notified of approval/disapproval of the prior approval request and can proceed accordingly.

F. Obtain Director's Exception Approval, if needed

Director's Exceptions are required for any home modifications exceeding \$30,000.

G. Complete IPE with Consumer

Note: Prior Approval is required prior to completing an IPE with the consumer. Also, if the cost is over \$25,000, OSP approval via the LWC 761 system and Purchase Order number is required prior to completing an IPE. See Chapter 4 Part 411.1 II.b.3.

H. Follow-up

Upon completion of the home modification, confirm that the consumer is satisfied and verify that additional training is not needed. Counselor and/or AT Specialist can meet with the consumer to inspect completed modifications and/or confirm that the specifications were met as needed. Mediate any needed problem resolution/recommend remedial action as needed.

I. Pay Invoice**