

LRS CHAPTER 4, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & GUIDANCE MANUAL

	Part	Name	Effective Date
	412.04	Rehabilitation Technology – General	*2/13/2023**
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 2 CFR 200.407			

I. DEFINITION

“The term ‘rehabilitation technology’ (RT) means the systematic application of technologies, engineering methodologies, or scientific principles to meet the needs of and address the barriers confronted by individuals with disabilities in areas which include education, rehabilitation, employment, transportation, independent living, and recreation. The term includes rehabilitation engineering, assistive technology devices, and assistive technology services.” Sec. 7 (32) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; 29 U.S.C. 705 (32).

II. SCOPE OF SERVICES

A. Rehabilitation technology services may be provided when an agreed upon competitive integrated employment goal has been identified on an IPE and such rehabilitation technology is necessary for the consumer to participate in planned vocational rehabilitation services and subsequently enter gainful employment.

Rehabilitation technology services can be provided as part of trial work experiences or when the consumer is in eligible status, if required for assessing the feasibility of an employment goal.

LRS can provide the following rehabilitation technology services:

1. Rehabilitation Engineering
 2. Assistive Technology Services
 3. Assistive Technology Devices
- B. Provision of Rehabilitation Technology is not contingent upon consumer participation in the cost of such services. Rehabilitation Technology (RT) is exempt from an exploration of comparable services/similar benefits. However, if an exempted service is known to be readily available from an alternative source at the time the service is needed to accomplish a rehabilitation objective in the consumer’s IPE/Plan, the Counselor must use that source.
- C. Counselors should provide guidance and counseling to consumers encouraging responsible ownership behavior and routine maintenance to ascertain increased longevity of their Assistive Technology device (AT).

- D. If the consumer expresses a possible need for Assistive Technology or if the Counselor determines that a need may exist, the Counselor may choose to complete the Rehabilitation Technology Screening form (RS-34).
- E. Routine maintenance (including repairs and replacement parts) will not be provided once the consumer is employed. Regional Managers may approve exception upon request.

III. REHABILITATION ENGINEERING

- A. Rehabilitation engineering services are provided only by licensed professional engineers or engineers supervised by a licensed professional engineer.
- B. A rehabilitation engineer's services should be considered when any of the following apply:
 - 1. The service includes design or modification of a product.
 - 2. The problem is complex.
 - 3. Available equipment is very costly.
 - 4. Safety and materials strength are vital factors.

IV. ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Assistive Technology Services directly assist an individual in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. This can include any of the following:

- A. Evaluation/assessment of the needs of the consumer, including a functional evaluation of the consumer in their customary environment.
- B. Services related to selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, or replacing assistive technology devices.
- C. Services related to coordinating and using other therapists and interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs.
- D. Services related to training or technical assistance in the use of assistive devices for the consumer, or where appropriate the consumer's family.
- E. Purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices by individuals with disabilities.
- F. Training or technical assistance for professionals (including individuals providing education and rehabilitation services), employers, or other individuals who provide services to, employ, or are otherwise substantially involved in the major life functions of individuals with disabilities.

V. ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVICES

An Assistive Technology Device (ATD) is any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified or customized, or fabricated, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. The counselor is responsible for reviewing with the consumer, LRS guidelines for using assistive technology purchased by the agency, as outlined under the IPE/Plan. Counselors may authorize an AT assessment, attain recommendations from the appropriate professional(s), or use professional judgement, when warranted (See Chapter 5 for approved vendors).

Examples of assistive technology devices include, but are not limited to the following items:

- A. Aids for Daily Living are self help aids for use in activities such as eating, bathing, cooking, dressing, and toileting.
- B. Augmentative Communication devices are devices that provide a means for expressive and receptive communication for persons with speech disorders.
- C. Computer Adaptations include items such as output devices (voice, Braille), alternate access aids (head sticks, light pointers), alternate keyboards, switches, or special software that enable a person to use a computer.

LRS will purchase the necessary evaluation, computer and computer adaptation required as an accommodation. Computers, if required to accommodate a consumer's disability, are considered to be assistive technology devices; otherwise; they should be considered to be occupational equipment.

- 1. The Counselor should document the following:
 - a. The reason that a consumer cannot utilize computers available through a comparable benefit, if available, such as computer lab, computer available at place of work, etc.
 - b. The need for any special adaptive equipment such as software or specialized keyboard.
 - c. How setup of equipment, any training needed to use the equipment or software purchased, and on-going technical assistance will be provided.

D. Wheelchairs and Other Seating Systems

1. Wheelchairs

- a. A wheelchair can be purchased if the Counselor determines that it is needed to achieve an employment goal on an IPE/Plan. However, wheelchairs or powered and/or manual mobility systems will not be replaced if less than five (5) years old.
- b. The Counselor must obtain a prescription from a licensed physician and an assessment from an occupational or physical therapist.

2. Other Seating Systems – can include specialized office seating and similar devices.

Seating and positioning assessment services can only be provided by occupational or physical therapists licensed to practice in Louisiana.

E. Aids for Persons with Impaired Vision include items such as magnifiers, Braille or speech output devices, eyeglasses and canes.

Eyeglasses:

1. If vision, with best correction, does not result in any serious functional limitations (i.e. mobility, communication, etc.), then the purchase of prescribed eyeglasses/contact lenses is regarded as physical restoration and therefore, is subject to financial need under current policy.
2. If, with best corrections, significant functional limitations exist, then prescribed eyeglasses/contact lenses should be regarded as assistive technology. Medical verification of functional limitations is generally found on medical eye reports.

3. *LRS shall not authorize or provide services for:

- a. General routine visual examinations on a recurring basis, or
- b. General routine maintenance or repair of existing eyeglasses or other corrective lenses or visual devices.

NOTE: Conditions of the eye that are correctable to normal vision (20/20) by ordinary eyeglasses or contact lenses do not constitute a physical or mental impairment for purposes of vocational rehabilitation services eligibility.**

4. See Purchasing Guidelines for Rehabilitation Technology regarding purchasing eyeglasses.

F. Aids for Persons with Impaired Hearing include items such as hearing aids, text telephones, and visual alerting systems. (See Section 412.05)

G. Orthotic and Prosthetic Services

1. The Counselor must obtain a prescription from a licensed physician and attach it to the AWARE case record.
2. Counselors are not required to obtain competitive price quotes for orthotic or prosthetic services. A written price quote must be obtained from the Orthotist/Prosthetist and can serve as the actual assessment.
3. See Purchasing Guidelines for Rehabilitation Technology regarding purchasing Orthotic and Prosthetic Services.

H. *Conditions Requiring Continuous Treatment

1. The VR program may pay for services consisting of multiple treatments or sessions upon:
 - a. Receipt of a prescription or recommendation for continued services from a qualified medical or health care provider; and,
 - b. Determination made by the eligible individual's Counselor, that continuation of the services may reasonably be expected to contribute to the eligible individual's achievement of his or her employment outcome.
2. The VR program may terminate services consisting of multiple treatments or sessions whenever;
 - a. Continuation of the services fails to produce satisfactory progress toward meeting the purpose for which they are being provided; or,
 - b. There is a determination that the need for continued services is an ongoing health maintenance need.**

Resources:

UNO, Training, Resource, and Assistive-Technology Center, Lakefront Campus, P.O. Box 1051, New Orleans, LA 70148, (504) 280-5700 (voice and TTY); Fax (504) 280-5707.

LATAN has regional staff who can provide information, training and hands-on demonstrations of specific devices to help determine the needs of the consumer.

Louisiana Assistive Technology Access Network (LATAN)

Baton Rouge Office

3042 Old Forge Road, Suite D;

P.O. Box 14115

Baton Rouge, LA 70898-4115

1-800-270-6185 (V/TT)

(225) 925-9500

(225) 925-9560 (Fax)

<https://www.latan.org/>

Shreveport Office

8028 Shreve Park Dr.

Shreveport, LA 71129

(318) 841-1548

ABLEDATA Government funded database of disability-related information/products. <https://abledata.acl.gov/>

VI. PURCHASING GUIDELINES FOR REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY

A. Rehabilitation Technology

Rehabilitation Technology, which includes Rehabilitation Engineering, Assistive Technology Devices, and Assistive Technology Services, is exempt from both exploration of comparable services/similar benefits and application of any budget surplus, except hearing aids¹ that has been identified on the RS-14 (Refer to Part 411). However, if an exempted service, such as an assistive technology device, is known to be readily available from an alternative source at the time the service is needed by the consumer, the Counselor must use those sources.

B. Purchase of Rehabilitation Technology Devices/Services

The Counselor will review the evaluation/assessment recommendations and determine the need for the suggested device(s) and/or service(s).

1. The Counselor must meet with the consumer to outline the specifications the vendor must comply with to meet the needs and choices of the consumer.

A state contract search is not required for consumer purchases. However, if a Counselor chooses to purchase the device or service from a state contract the Counselor is not required to obtain price quotes.

Division of Administration State Contracts website:

https://wwwcfprd.doa.louisiana.gov/OSP/LaPAC/eCat/dsp_eCatSearchLagov.cfm

2. If the Counselor chooses not to use the State Contract to purchase the device or service and the device or service/or total of all the devices/services needed exceed \$5,000.00 the Counselor or the Counselor's Associate must:
 - a. Request price quotes from at least three vendors.
 - b. Quotes cannot be split to circumvent state purchasing regulations.
 - c. Telephone quotes are not acceptable.
 - d. The request for the price quote may be faxed to the vendor and vendor may fax back the quote.

¹Per the Administrative Procedures Act [R.S. 49:953(B)] Louisiana Rehabilitation Services invoked Emergency Rulemaking that placed Hearing Aids under a Financial Needs test effective 12/7/2007.

- e. The price quotes must include the following:
 - i. Any features, drawings, and performance specifications.
 - ii. Indicate the award as “all or none” or “as a package” if multiple items are involved.
 - iii. Request for warranty information.
 - iv. Date by which item(s) must be delivered.
 - v. A request to include delivery and set-up costs (if applicable) in the price quote.
 - vi. Any particular specification relative to consumer choice:
 - vii. 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 require after delivery.
 - viii. The closing date and time for receipt of the quote.
- f. If a consumer chooses a vendor outside the Region when Regional vendors are available, LRS shall limit travel payment to the amount paid for local travel, with the consumer assuming the extra cost. ‘Local’ should be defined as two hours or less travel time.
- g. If the Consumer chooses to use the Vendor submitting the lowest price estimate, then the Consumer need not participate in the cost of services for the purchase of assistive technology devices.
- h. 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.

C. Orthotic and Prosthetic Services

- 1. Participating vendors may charge no more than current Medicare allowable rates (“L” Codes). If the vendor quote exceeds either the Medicare allowable rate or the “maximum fee” schedule listed under VI-C, the Counselor must provide a written rationale for the excess, obtain approval of the District Supervisor and the Regional Manager, and submit a request for an exception to the LRS Director. The Program Coordinator for Rehabilitation Technology is available for technical assistance if the Counselor, District Supervisor, or Regional Manager has questions regarding AT.

Louisiana Worker’s Compensation rates should be used for pedorthic services (specialized foot care orthotics), which were not included in the current Medicare schedule published by the Health Care Financing Administration.

<https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/DMEPOSFeeSch/DMEPOS-Fee-Schedule>

2. Participating vendors must be certified in the service to be provided by either the American Board for Certification in Orthotics and Prosthetics (Alexandria VA) or by the Board for Orthotist/Prosthetist Certification (Baltimore MD).
3. Participating vendors providing Pedorthic services may be certified by the Board for Certification in Pedorthic (Columbia MD) in lieu of either of the above-mentioned boards.
4. The vendor's facility must be accredited by either the American Board for Certification in Orthotics and Prosthetics or by the Board for Orthotist/Prosthetist Certification.
5. The facility of a vendor providing Pedorthic services may be accredited by the Board for Certification in Pedorthic (Columbia MD) in lieu of either of the above-mentioned boards.

D. Computers/Mobile Computing Devices

1. LRS will not enter into a contract for cellular/data/internet services on behalf of a consumer. The consumer will be responsible for provision of such services.
2. The consumer is responsible for maintenance and/or repair of any computer equipment or mobile computing devices purchased by LRS.
3. LRS will not purchase extended warranties on any items.
4. Once employed, the employer should provide reasonable accommodations per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). LRS may consider providing computers, mobile computing devices or software when the following are met:
 - the requested items are required due to the client's disability to enable them to perform the essential functions of their job; AND
 - it is documented that it would create an undue hardship on the employer to provide the needed accommodation(s).

D. Wheelchairs, Cushions, Scooters, and other Seating and Positioning Equipment

Counselors are not required to obtain price quotes for wheelchairs, cushions, scooters, and other seating and positioning equipment. The consumer may choose any LRS-approved vendor who complies with LRS' purchasing guidelines as follows:

1. LRS approved vendors must provide seating and positioning assistive technology devices at a discount of fifteen percent (15%) below each manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP). Vendors must provide a copy of the related MSRP list(s) with each price quote.

2. LRS approved vendors must be Factory Authorized Dealers for each line of equipment to be provided.
3. LRS approved vendors must have facilities to provide service and support for the duration of the warranty period for the equipment to be provided.
4. LRS approved vendors must maintain \$1,000,000 in professional liability insurance. If a vendor modifies, designs, or fabricates equipment, the vendor must maintain product liability insurance.
5. LRS will not replace wheelchairs or powered and/or manual mobility systems if less than five (5) years old.

E. Purchase of Eyeglasses

The purchase of eyeglass frames may not exceed \$125.00. Eyeglass lenses are payable at actual cost.

F. Plan and Draft Authorization

1. Exception Requirement: If the cost of any single item or service/device will exceed the assistive technology services and devices fee schedule as listed below, the Counselor must request an exception. This should include:
 - A written rationale for the excess in AWARE case notes;
 - A completed AT Review Form;
 - 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.
2. The completed IPE/Plan must be submitted to the District Supervisor for approval unless Counselor is on Independent Status. Upon approval of the IPE the RCA/Counselor will enter the Authorization(s). Chapter 4, Part 411.1 for further instructions on Secondary Approval requirements.
3. If the total of all items/services on any IPE/ Plan is equal to or greater than ***\$75,000***, it shall be considered “high cost.” In these instances, all Counselors must have the IPE/Plan approved by both the District Supervisor, and Regional Manager.

G. Method of Payment

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

1. The provider must provide an invoice in order to receive payment. If the provider/vendor does not have an invoice, the provider may use LRS' form RS-22 Standard Invoice.
2. 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 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.
3. Vendor/Provider submits invoice to LRS for payment as outlined in A-B above.
4. 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.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES/DEVICES	
<i>ITEM</i>	<i>MAXIMUM COSTS</i>
Low Vision Aids/Adaptive Equipment	\$8,000
Orthotics and Prosthetics	Current Medicare allowable rate (“L” code)
	https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/DMEPOSFeeSched/DMEPOS-Fee-Schedule
Assistive Technology Services Repairs	\$3,000
Wheelchairs, Cushions, Scooters, and other Seating and Positioning Equipment	15% below MSRP (Manufacturer Suggested Retail Price)
Assistive Technology that meets the definition of and is also used as Occupational Equipment	\$5,000
Rehabilitation Technology Assessments	\$1,200
Other Assistive Technology	\$5,000
Assistive Technology Services not elsewhere identified	\$4,000
Assistive Technology Services – Driver Training	
Sedan	\$2,000
Van	\$4,000
Bioptic Lens Driver Training ²	\$3,750

² No vehicle rental fee associated with the provision of the 30 hours of behind-the-wheel training will be authorized.