


LRS CHAPTER 4, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & GUIDANCE MANUAL

 LOUISIANA WORKFORCE COMMISSION <small>The Department of Labor</small>	Part 412.20	Name Occupational Tools, Equipment, Licensing, Personal Computers and Tablets	Effective Date *December 9, 2021**
	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. OCCUPATIONAL TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

- A. A Counselor can purchase a maximum of \$4,000 of occupational tools and/or equipment for a consumer to enter into or maintain employment.
- B. The Counselor must:
 - 1. Determine the need for the tools and/or equipment; and
 - 2. Determine that the item(s) is being purchased for the sole use of the consumer; and
 - 3. Review with the consumer, LRS guidelines for using occupational tools and equipment purchased by the agency, as outlined under the IPE agreement of understanding during the planning process; and
 - 4. Determine that the item(s) is essential for the consumer’s successful employment.
- C. The Counselor should:
 - 1. Contact prospective employer, trade unions, and/or others to help determine what tools and/or equipment are required for employment.
 - 2. Purchase only those tools and/or equipment of the quality and kind regularly required for the chosen occupation/trade/profession.
- D. Regional Managers are delegated authority to make exceptions to the maximum amount listed in I.A. above.

II. OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING

- A. An occupational license is any license, permit, or other written authority from a state, city, or other government unit that must be obtained in order to practice an occupation.

- B. LRS can assist with the following to assist the consumer in obtaining occupational licensure:
- cost of preparatory courses and/or materials needed to prepare for any examination required for licensure
 - cost examination(s) or registry(ies) required to obtain licensure
 - cost of professional licenses required to practice the consumer's profession

III. COMPUTERS AND TABLETS

A Counselor can purchase a maximum of \$2,000 for computers or tablets required for a consumer to participate in training, enter into, advance in, or maintain employment. Following the guidelines for occupational tools and equipment (as outlined above), a Counselor can consider purchase of a computer or tablet when the consumer is unable to utilize computers provided through comparable benefits (such as a computer lab available for students at their school, office computers, etc.) and the equipment is not provided by the educational institution or employer. *The purchase of a personal computer or tablet, any software or peripherals required (webcams, microphones, speakers, keyboards, headsets/earbuds) and any training needed to operate the computer in order to successfully participate in training or employment can be purchased in adherence with minimum requirements issued by the school the consumer is attending, or the laptop/desktop standards issued by the State's OTS office, at the website below:

<https://www.doa.la.gov/doa/ots/services-we-provide/computers/> **

- A. The Counselor should document the following:
1. The reason that a consumer cannot utilize any available comparable benefit.
 2. How setup of equipment, any training needed to use the equipment or software purchased, and on-going technical assistance will be provided.
- B. Upon purchase and delivery, the laptop or tablet becomes the personal property of the consumer and should be used solely by the consumer.
- C. The consumer is responsible for maintenance and/or repair of any computer equipment or tablets purchased by LRS.
- D. LRS will not pay for or enter into a contract for cellular/data/internet services on behalf of a consumer. The consumer will be responsible for provision of such services.
- E. LRS will not purchase extended warranties on any items.

- F. LRS will not purchase multiple devices to accomplish the same task. Only one computer/laptop or tablet will be purchased. In the event that a device is stolen, lost, or damaged in an event beyond the consumer's control, an insurance report, or police affidavit documenting the loss will be required and reviewed by the counselor to determine if the device can be replaced. If covered by an insurance policy, LRS will only cover the consumer's deductible.
- G. All tablets should be purchased with a protective case capable of withstanding being dropped. Consumers should be advised that the device must be maintained in the case.
- H. Tablets may be no newer than one generation earlier than the most currently available model.
- I. LRS will not purchase upgrades of current equipment or replace current equipment with newer types of devices as long as the existing equipment still meets the functional needs of the consumer in relation to their planned goals.
- J. Once the consumer is employed, LRS may only consider providing computers, tablets, or software when the following are met:
- the requested items are required 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). This should be documented in writing and signed by the employer.

IV. PURCHASING GUIDELINES FOR OCCUPATIONAL TOOLS, EQUIPMENT, LICENSING, AND PERSONAL COMPUTERS

- A. The Counselor must use form RS-14 form to determine the consumer's ability to participate in the cost of occupational tools, equipment, licensing, and personal computers. (Refer to Part 411, Financial for further information.)

The only exception is in the costs of a Small Business Enterprise. In this instance, the consumer must make a minimum cash contribution of 20% ¹ of the total transaction. (Refer to Part 412.19, Small Business Enterprises for further information.)

- B. The Counselor must also apply all Agency policy/procedure relative to use of comparable services and similar benefits. (Refer to Chapter 4, Part 410, Comparable Services and Similar Benefits)

- C. The Counselor must allow the consumer informed choice.

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.

2. 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 Contract website: https://wwwcfprd.doa.louisiana.gov/OSP/LaPAC/eCat/dsp_eCatSearchLa.gov.cfm)

3. If the Counselor chooses not to use the State Contract to purchase the item(s) and the item/or total of all the items exceed \$5,000.00, the Counselor or the Counselor's Associate must:

- a. Obtain quotes from at least three local vendors. (If fewer than three vendors are available, obtain quotes from only available vendors.)
- 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 quote, then the Consumer need not participate in the cost of services for the purchase of occupational tools, equipment, or personal computers.

¹ SSI/SSDI recipients are exempt from the 20% cash contribution

- 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. Telephone quotes are not acceptable
- f. Give the vendor a time limit for submitting a price quote.
- g. The Counselor or Counselor's Associate should include at least the following information as part of the request for a price quote:
 - (1) Any features, drawings, and performance specifications.
 - (2) Indicate the award as "all or none" or "as a package" if multiple items are involved.
 - (3) Request for warranty information.
 - (4) Date by which item(s) must be delivered.
 - (5) A request to include delivery and set-up costs (if applicable) in the price quote.
 - (6) Any particular specifications, for example: the specification could require that the vendor is located within 25 miles from the consumer's domicile to facilitate any adjustments, repairs, etc., that could be required after delivery.
 - (7) The closing date for receipt of the quote.

D. 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). See Chapter 4, Part 411.1 for further instructions on Secondary Approval requirements.

- 1. 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.
- 2. If the services are considered to meet the definition of Assistive Technology Services (Part 412.04), and the cost of the service exceeds the fee listed in the Purchasing Guidelines for Rehabilitation Technology schedule for Occupational Equipment, the Counselor must provide a written rationale in AWARE Case Notes for the excess costs, obtain approval of both the District Supervisor and the Regional Manager, and then submit the case record to the Program Coordinator for Rehabilitation Technology and the Director for approval as an exception.

V. METHOD OF PAYMENT

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

- A. The provider must provide a bill/invoice in order to receive payment. If the provider/vendor does not have a billing invoice, the provider can use LRS' form RS-22, Billing 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 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.