How to Obtain Assistive Technology as a Client of Vocational Rehabilitation

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Client Assistance Program (CAP)

- Assists in informing and advising clients and client applicants of all available benefits under the Rehabilitation Act.

- Advocates for individuals in their relationships with the projects, programs, and facilities providing services.
Client Assistance Program (CAP)

- Assists and advocates in pursuing legal, administrative, or other appropriate remedies to ensure the protection of rights.
The Vocational Rehabilitation program provides a variety of services to persons with disabilities, with the ultimate goal to prepare for, maintain, or regain employment.
Applying For VR Services

- The first step is to fill out an application
- You can apply at any VR office
Applying For VR Services

- If you receive Social Security (SSI or SSDI) benefits, you are automatically presumed eligible for services.
- Everyone has the right to apply.
Order of Selection

- The VR program is currently under an Order of Selection

- This means if a VR agency is having problems with their funding, it can put eligible clients on waiting lists for services
Order of Selection

The Priorities:

- Priority 1 – Most significant disability
- Priority 2 – Significant disability
- Priority 3 – All other eligible individuals
Basic Requirements to be Eligible for VR Services

- You have a physical or mental disability

- Physical or mental disability is or results in a substantial barrier to employment

- Need VR services to prepare for, secure, retain or regain employment
Length of Time Your VR Counselor Has to Determine Whether You Are Eligible for VR Services

- **60 days** from the date you applied
- Extensions may be required
Evaluations

Reasons VR may ask you to get an evaluation:

- To prove you have a disability
- To help decide your employment goal and what services you need to reach the goal
Examples of Evaluations

- Medical
- Psychological
- Vocational
- Neuropsychological
- Assistive Technology
Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

- A plan that lists your specific employment goal
- Outlines the services VR will provide
Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)

- Lists the steps you need to take to achieve your employment goal

- You **must** be provided with a copy of your IPE
VR Services Available to You

- Job–related services, including job search and placement assistance
- Educational or training services
- Tutoring
VR Services Available to You

- Eyeglasses and visual services
- Dental Services
- Diagnosis and treatment for mental and emotional disorders
VR Services Available to You

- On-the-job or other related personal assistance services
- Occupational licenses, tools, certifications, equipment, initial stocks and supplies
- Child care services
VR Services Available to You

- Transportation
- Services to the family of an individual with a disability
- Specific post-employment services
What is Assistive Technology (AT)?

AT devices are any item, piece of equipment or system that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities and quality of life for individuals with disabilities.
What are AT services VR can provide?

An AT service is any service that directly assists an individual with a disability to select, obtain and use an AT device.
Examples of AT services include:

- evaluation about needs of a disability, including functional evaluations in the place where the individual will use the AT device;
What are AT services VR can provide?

- selecting or designing an AT device;

- fitting, customizing or adapting an AT device to meet the needs of the client;
What are AT services VR can provide?

- training and technical assistance to people with disabilities about how to effectively use the device; and

- training and technical assistance to people working with a VR client receiving AT (e.g. parent, aide, attendant, co-worker etc.).
Examples of AT Available Through VR:

- Computers

- Alternate keyboards
  - BigKeys, EZ Keys, Zoomtext
  - Large Print Keyboard

- Special Software/Speech Recognition
  - Dragon Dictate
Examples of AT Available Through VR:

- Augmentative Communication Devices
- Modified Work Station
- Hearing Aids or Other Assisted Listening Devices
- Vision Aids
Examples of AT Available Through VR:

- Prosthetic and Orthotic Devices
- Wheelchairs/Scooters/Canes/Crutches
- Adjustable/Hospital/Electrical Beds
Examples of AT Available Through VR:

- Vehicle Modifications

- Home Modifications
  - Ramps, Grab Bars, modify tubs into showers, lower counters, special switches, environmental system control
Examples of AT Available Through VR:

- Memory Tools (watch timer/journaling app)
- Organizational Aids
- Beepers and Audio Tapes
Examples of AT Available Through VR:

- White Sound Machines
- Calculators
- Smart Pen
- Hand Held Audio Reader
Is VR required to let you choose who will provide you with the necessary AT training?

- Client Informed Choice
- Services Provided
- VR Service Providers
Is VR required to buy you the best AT device you prefer?

- The purpose of the federal rehabilitation law is to help individuals with physical and mental disabilities prepare for, obtain, and maintain employment.
Once it has been determined by you and your VR counselor that you need an AT device or service, then a decision has to be made about the appropriate device for you.

Your choice of devices is an important factor for VR to consider.
Is VR required to buy you the best AT device you prefer?

- However, it is not the only factor. Cost is a factor. VR is not required to buy the most expensive device if a less expensive device will be effective in helping you reach your goal.
Is VR required to buy you the best AT device you prefer?

If you prefer one device and your counselor is not agreeing with the device of your choice, you can appeal the decision.
Economic Need considers the financial need of the client and the client’s household to determine the extent of client participation in the cost of vocational rehabilitation services.
## Economic Need Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Size</th>
<th>Monthly Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$3,085.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$4,034.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$4,984.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$5,933.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$6,882.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you do not meet Economic Need and it causes a financial hardship.

- You must take any disability costs into consideration.

- You should subtract any disability costs from your income.
What if your VR Counselor denies your request for an AT Device?

Possible reasons for denial:

- VR states it is not related to your employment goal
- Comparable Benefits
What if your VR Counselor denies your request for an AT Device?

- VR disagrees with your choice of AT claiming some other device will work just as well

- “Cost”
VR’s “written policies may not establish any arbitrary limits on the nature and scope of vocational rehabilitation services to be provided to the individual to achieve an employment outcome.”

34 CFR §361.50(a)
Written Policies Governing the Provision of Services for Individuals with Disabilities

The state unit may not place absolute dollar limits on specific service categories or on the total services provided to an individual.

34CFR§361.50(c) & (d)
Exceptions

- Exceptions can be made for any service.

- Exceptions may be granted for a client for the purpose of meeting that client’s unique rehabilitation needs if that service is necessary for that client’s vocational goal.
Appeals Rights

What can be appealed:

- Being found ineligible for services
- Disagreeing on your employment goal
- Choice of services
Appeals Rights

- Not being provided the AT you require
- Closing your case
- Any decision made by VR that affects your services
Rights of Clients During an Appeal

- Written notice of VR’s decision
- Consultation with client and their representative
- Information about CAP
Ways to Appeal

- Informal Resolution
- Mediation
- Administrative Hearing
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