



VENDORS OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Expectations for Best Practices

Assistive technology devices may be obtained or purchased from medical equipment dealers, manufacturer representatives, private sales agents or non-profit agencies. Assistive technology devices:

- May have been recommended through a professional assessment
- May be consumer selected as a result of an equipment demonstration/loan
- May have been selected from product literature or a website

Providers of assistive technology products and services are expected to meet the criteria outlined in this document.

Qualifications of Vendors

Vendors must have sound knowledge of anatomy, physiology, disabling conditions and disease processes relevant to the technical aspects of the equipment they provide. In order to gain and maintain this knowledge, vendors will regularly engage in self-guided study and/or attend courses, seminars, trade shows, and other continuing education activities.

Sound knowledge can be defined as having the educational background, professional or personal experience or a combination thereof to provide comprehensive information and services to the consumer. This may be in the form of formal education, professional certification or in-depth training by a product manufacturer.

General Responsibilities of Assistive Technology Vendors

- Gather comprehensive background information about the individual's disability, functional limits and needs, as well as the individual's goals related to assistive technology.
- Explain the **range of options** that could meet the **needs of the consumer**, including free technology, no-tech to high tech options, commercially available technology or custom-fabricated technology.
- Be transparent regarding the scope of products, services and manufacturer relationships.
- Remain objective when providing comparisons of the technology options.
- Use appropriate tools and measurements to assure proper fit and function of the equipment.
- Provide delivery, fitting and adjustment of equipment.
- Provide complete instruction of proper use.
- Provide maintenance and repair information, including who can provide these services and who pays for these services.
- Provide information about when the consumer may be eligible for an equipment update from a funding source, where applicable.

Vendors Will Base their Recommendations Solely on Meeting the Customer's Needs, in the Most Cost-Effective Manner

Vendor Responsibilities - Financing Process

- Inform the consumer or payor of services about what the exact costs will be related to the recommended technology. In addition, a vendor shall provide clear information about any co-payments, etc., when applicable.
- Provide clear information about funding options available for the equipment.
- Provide information about reimbursement requirements through insurance or third-party payers.
- Obtain prior authorizations or other required approvals for purchase when needed before ordering equipment.

Vendor Responsibilities - Purchasing Decisions

- Provide the equipment being recommended (or similar equipment) for demonstration or trial use whenever possible.
- Provide referrals to other users of that piece of equipment to obtain peer feedback, if available.

Vendor Responsibilities - Ongoing Support and Service

- Provide clear information about their ability to provide long-term service and support for equipment, whether at the vendor or manufacturer level.
- Maintain knowledgeable and qualified staff to provide training.
- Maintain an adequate inventory of replacement parts in order to provide timely service or repair, if applicable.
- Provide a loaner device, if available, or assist with location of a loaner device if repairs are needed.
- Provide a written estimate of cost and time required for repair work, if applicable.
- Provide clear information about the equipment warranties and response times for services.
- Maintain adequate levels of professional liability insurance and/or product liability insurance, if appropriate.

This document was created using source material from the Iowa Assistive Technology Program.

Agencies throughout the State of Wisconsin collaborated in this effort, including:

Center for Deaf-Blind Persons
DWD-Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
IndependenceFirst
DHS-Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired
DHS-Office of Resource Center Development
UW Stout-Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute

Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Goodwill Industries of Southeastern Wisconsin, Inc.
Milwaukee County Department on Aging
DHS-Office for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
UW Milwaukee-College of Health Sciences
WisTech

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Partially funded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, Medicaid Infrastructure Grant CFDA # 73.968, WI Department of Health Services/Pathways to Independence

June 2009