

Transcript of Tutorial 3 of the TEPP Presentation

Welcome to the presentation on the Telecommunications Equipment Purchase Program or TEPP for short. This is the last tutorial of three. After completing this tutorial you will have a basic knowledge of the equipment eligible for the TEPP program and the resources or vendors who can provide additional information/assistance.

Remember that the TEPP program is designed to HELP WITH the cost of SPECIALIZED telecommunication equipment needed by an individual with a disability to access basic phone services.

Also please be aware that telecommunications equipment changes and manufacturers may modify, upgrade or discontinue products.

The information provided is generalized in nature and it is NOT intended to replace a comprehensive assistive technology assessment. Equipment needs are highly individual and consumers should be encouraged to work with a service provider who has the experience and background to assist with selecting the appropriate technology.

The following slides will go over some of the more common items the vouchers are used to purchase. Specific brands shown are as examples only and are not an indication of endorsement of the product. You can find a link to the full list in the reference materials.

Each voucher category mentions covering a “base unit”. A “base unit” is defined as a telephone, TTY, or an equivalent device, that can be used to place and receive calls in voice or text format through the Public Switched Telephone Network. Assistive listening devices such as Pocketalker, SoundWizard, or FM (with pre-approval) are also considered as base devices. When a standard base device cannot meet the needs of the user, an expanded definition for “base device” for equipment that uses the Internet for comparable real-time conversations can be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Now we'll go over the equipment eligible under each voucher, starting with the Hard of Hearing and Deaf/Severely Hard of Hearing vouchers, which both cover the same base units and signalers/accessories. The following slides will go over examples of these devices and then explain the differences between the two vouchers.

Hard of Hearing & Deaf/Severely Hard of Hearing Vouchers

One base unit is allowed. Common base units include amplified telephones, TTYs and Personal Amplification Systems that connect directly to the telephone such as a Pocket talker or Sound Wizard, as well as VCO or CapTel Telephones. Other items are listed on the PSC website.

Additional items eligible under the Hard of Hearing & Deaf/severely hard of hearing voucher include telephone accessories such as in-line amplifiers, ringers and signaling devices. Signaling systems are limited to one transmitting unit and up to three receivers (strobe lights, lamp flashers, or paging devices). Other items include a duplex (Y jack) jack or a wireless phone jack. Typically a Hard of Hearing voucher is used for the base unit only.

What's the difference between the HOH & D/SHH Vouchers?

- First, the amplification level. The Hard of Hearing voucher should be used for amplification over 18 decibels but less than 40. If someone needs amplification over 40 decibels, they should apply for the Deaf or Severely Hard of Hearing voucher instead.
- The voucher limit for the hard of hearing voucher is \$100. The limit for the Deaf/severely hard of hearing voucher is \$800. This means that the consumer is responsible for any costs above the voucher limit.
- They also vary in co-payments: the hard of hearing voucher does not have a co-payment while the deaf/severely hard of hearing voucher has a \$100 co-payment. However, as we discussed, individuals may receive assistance with the co-payment if they are financially eligible.

The next two vouchers we'll talk about are for people who are deaf or severely hard of hearing and have a vision impairment.

Severely Hard of Hearing or Deaf AND Low Vision Voucher

For the Severely Hard of Hearing or Deaf AND Low Vision (\$2500) there are pieces of eligible equipment in addition to the list of devices for the Severely Hard of Hearing or Deaf category. This includes the purchase of a TTY with a LVD (Large Visual Display), talking caller id or a large display caller id.

Equipment approved for this category CAN BE VISION BASED in addition to the applicants hearing loss needs.

Severely Hard of Hearing or Deaf and Blind Voucher

The Severely Hard of Hearing or Deaf and Blind (\$7,200) category is specifically for individuals who are deaf and legally blind. Equipment in this category CANNOT BE VISION BASED. The equipment includes the Braille TTY and the Deaf Blind Communicator.

Speech Impaired Voucher

The Speech Impaired category (\$1600) allows up to one base unit. Examples include TTYs, artificial larynx, speech amplification equipment, speech amplified telephones or a non-computer based communication device.

Accessories include speech amplified headsets, duplex or wireless jacks, microphone units or hearing carryover speakers (to be used with a TTY and the relay system).

As you might imagine, the equipment available under the speech impaired voucher category often involves working with a knowledgeable service provider in order to select the appropriate equipment. This is highly encouraged for this category and often the service provider works closely with TEPP to verify if any special requests could be covered.

Mobility Impaired Voucher

The Mobility Impaired Voucher (\$1600) is the only category which allows for the purchase of up to two base units. Base units include voice activated or hands-free telephones or speakerphones. Phones which have a speakerphone in the handset are also included.

Accessories include voice headsets, talking caller id units, duplex or wireless jacks, activation switches and voice dialers.

This category involves specialized solutions and it is strongly recommended that the voucher recipient works closely with a knowledgeable service provider to select the devices needed to access the telephone. Service providers can also bring special requests to the attention of the TEPP administrators on a case by case basis.

There may be unique situations where specialized equipment that is not listed on the approved list may be needed to access basic telecommunications. Equipment not on the list may be covered, but will require preapproval and will only be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Help in selecting equipment is available

The PSC website has a comprehensive list of device demonstration sites and equipment vendors where consumers can receive help with choosing equipment. The URLs are located on the website you accessed this tutorial.

- Some individuals may already know what items are covered and what they would like to purchase with their voucher. They can go directly to the Vendor list and complete an order. Some vendors will do demonstrations or provide in-home setup assistance while others do not.
- Other consumers may need help with choosing the equipment that best meets their needs and will want to work with an agency in completing the order to redeem their voucher. Some but not all of the demonstration sites can sell the equipment.

Selecting appropriate equipment is vital because once a voucher has been used, another application cannot be completed for three years.

Once the consumer has made a decision on what equipment they need to access basic telecommunications, they can then complete the ordering process. Whether or not the order is completed in person or through the mail they will need to provide their voucher and any required copayment to the vendor.

The vendor then will provide or ship the equipment directly to the individual. Most vendors provide for a 30 day trial period.

The consumer should remember that this equipment will belong to them and if it should break after the warranty period it is their responsibility to repair or replace the device. The voucher process is not available to the person until three years have passed.

Quiz Questions:

It is recommended that TEPP voucher recipients work with an experienced service provider to determine appropriate technology. True or false? True!!!

Base devices that use the Internet are automatically allowed. True or false? False.

The hard of hearing and deaf/severely hard of hearing vouchers cover the same base devices and accessories. True or false? True

There is a \$100 co-payment for the hard of hearing voucher. True or false? False.

Which voucher can be used to purchase vision-based equipment: Deaf/severely hard of hearing & low vision or Deaf/severely hard of hearing and blind? Deaf/severely hard of hearing & low vision.

The mobility impaired voucher is the only one that allows for the purchase of up to two base units. True or false? True

Selecting the right equipment is really important because a new application cannot be completed for 3 years. True or false? True

The co-payment is paid to the vendor at the time of the order. True or false? True

We hope you've found these tutorials helpful. Please complete a brief online survey to provide your feedback. The link to the survey is located on the website where you accessed this tutorial.