

# Rehabilitation Services: Rehabilitation Technology Services

## Chapter 14

- 14.00 **Rehabilitation Technology** is 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 that include education, rehabilitation, employment, transportation, independent living and recreation. The term includes rehabilitation engineering and assistive technology. [Reference: 2014 Amendments to the Rehab Act of 1973]
- 14.01 **Rehabilitation Engineer (RE)** means a consultant qualified to conduct an evaluation of an individual's rehabilitation technology needs and serves in an advisory capacity.
- 14.02 **Scope of Services**
1. DVR shall provide appropriate rehabilitation technology services including consultation with a RE that is necessary for the applicant or eligible individual to participate in DVR services, assessments or achievement of an employment outcome. Prior to providing repairs to rehabilitation technology, DVR shall determine whether maintaining equipment or replacement is appropriate.
  2. The counselor will inform the individual that rehabilitation technology services are available. The counselor shall discuss all relevant policy pertaining to the provision of these services including the individuals' responsibilities and participation in the services.
  3. Consultation services are available through a contract for DVR customers. This contract specifies standards for services. Consultations are required for all building, worksite, customized wheelchairs, and vehicle modification services.
  4. The counselor will initiate all rehabilitation technology assessments, consultations and services by referring the individual to the RE Technician and provide applicable case notes, medical reports and relevant evaluations as requested by the RE. The counselor may use the [Rehabilitation Engineering Referral Checklist/Tool](#) for RE referrals.
  5. Based on the assessment, the RE will submit a detailed report to the counselor. The report will outline the most cost effective and appropriate rehabilitation technology and services to achieve the desired result to support an employment outcome. The counselor may consult with the RE and request additional information and technical assistance. The counselor will utilize the rehabilitation technology report in the context of the IPE to determine whether the recommendations are appropriate and justifiable for the individual to achieve an employment outcome.
  6. The counselor has the responsibility to discuss costs of insurance, maintenance and repairs so that individuals understand their responsibilities.
  7. Any modification of the rehabilitation technology recommendations must be approved in writing by the RE. Changes should not be made to the recommendations without discussion with the RE.

8. If the individual needs changes after a recommendation has been provided or implemented, the counselor will work with the RE and individual to revise the recommendation of rehabilitation technology as necessary.
9. Once rehabilitation technology services are approved and authorized by the counselor, the RE will coordinate the work with the vendor(s) according to the established timeline. They will conduct necessary inspections to ensure the work is provided in compliance with the specifications and payments. [Reference Section 14.09]
10. Rehabilitation technology services must be completed and the referral closed before the individual's case record is closed.
11. The counselor is responsible to ensure that the individual is an active participant in every aspect of the vocational rehabilitation process including the provision of rehabilitation technology consistent with informed choice. [Reference Chapter 4, Section 4.03]
12. The counselor is encouraged to explore comparable benefits to the degree that it does not delay services or reduce the quality of rehabilitation technology services.

#### 14.03 Building Modifications

1. Building Modifications consist of alterations to homes, condominiums, apartments, and worksite facilities for the purpose of accessibility for individuals with disabilities. DVR will provide modifications that provide an accessible environment, consistent with the Florida Accessibility Code for Building Construction, and comply with local and state building codes.
  - a. [Home Modification Consumer Acknowledgement Form](#): Informs the individual of their responsibilities regarding cooperation with the vendor and agreement to the specifications for recommended home modification services. This form will be completed by the RE and the individual prior to authorization of services.
2. DVR may provide a limited range of residential architectural modifications if the modifications are required to achieve the employment outcome of an approved Individualized Plan for Employment and the modifications can be made with conformance to all applicable codes.
3. DVR will provide modification services for accessibility to a bathroom and a bedroom. Modifications to other areas such as living rooms are limited to doorways, unless further modification is justified by the individual's employment needs.
4. DVR may provide modifications to the kitchen if the individual is the primary person who prepares food. DVR will provide a single access route through the most ideal location. If a second route is required for emergencies, an additional access route will be provided or an egress window, whichever is more appropriate. Guidelines for an alternate route include situations in which:
  - a. No other resident or person typically present is available or physically capable of assisting or carrying the individual to safety; or

- b. The individual is required to access the primary route through the kitchen or like area.
5. Space contained within the existing roof line and foundation of the home will be considered for accessibility. Additions may be recommended only if the existing structure cannot be modified cost effectively.
6. If the required accessibility can be provided within the existing roofline, but the individual/owner wants an addition, the owner must prepare drawings to scale and specifications for review by the RE.
7. DVR may consider the addition only if the cost is equal to or less than modifying the original space and the accessibility meets the individual's needs. If the cost is more than modification of the original space, and the individual wishes to pay the difference to have the addition, the difference in cost must be paid to the contractor prior to DVR's payment for the project.
8. DVR will not pay for any portion of new construction of stand-alone buildings.
9. DVR will not purchase or modify existing swimming pools, heated pools, jacuzzis, whirlpool tubs or saunas. If a doctor prescribes therapy that requires a pool, jacuzzi, whirlpool or sauna, the counselor will advise the individual in locating an accessible facility which provides the prescribed therapy under the supervision of a qualified therapist or an alternative mode of therapy.
10. Portable rehabilitation technology will be provided for accessibility to rental or leased property, whenever possible. Limited structural modifications for the purposes of widening doorways may be provided when the counselor and RE agree the modifications are justified by the individual's employment and living needs.
11. DVR will not provide modifications to a building that does not meet local and state building codes.
12. Prior to the authorization of any building modifications, the counselor and individual will obtain all necessary approvals from the property owner, homeowner's associations, and any persons with an interest in such variances for the property.

#### 14.04 **Worksite Modifications**

1. **Worksite Modifications** means accommodations to work areas, tools, processes and appliances to increase the accessibility and function at the place of employment.
2. DVR may provide worksite modifications if the accommodations are required to achieve the employment outcome of an approved Individualized Plan for Employment.
3. The counselor will address any concerns of the individual prior to making a referral to the RE. Any identified concerns must be included in the referral information. The counselor will make the employer aware of the scope of the worksite assessment by the RE.

4. If the RE recommends adaptive equipment, products, or worksite modifications, the counselor may request that the employer provide the products or modifications as a comparable benefit.
5. The counselor or employer may utilize the RE to coordinate installation of employer-provided assistive technology.

#### **14.05 Wheelchairs, Scooters and Mobility Aids**

1. Customized Wheelchairs/Mobility Devices consist of wheelchairs and mobility devices that require specialized seating such as customized cushions, tilt/recline systems or control systems such as sip/puff and head controls. Customized wheelchairs require a consultation with an engineer and the use of a vendor with an Assistive Technology Suppliers (ATS) certification.
2. DVR may purchase wheelchairs and other mobility aids that are medically necessary to enable the individual to support his/her employment outcome.
3. For non-customized wheelchairs (DME), the counselor may request consultation from RE. In considering mobility aids, the counselor must take into consideration other activities (e.g., driving, working), as well as accessibility to the home and the environment.
4. For customized wheelchairs, the counselor will consult with the RE for technical assistance prior to purchasing wheelchairs and other mobility aids.

#### **14.06 Computer Purchases**

1. Adaptive Computers consist of hardware, software adaptations or training that increase the accessibility features for input (keyboard, mouse control), output (screen readers, Braille, etc.) or processing (word prediction, etc) of a computer system.
2. DVR may purchase computer hardware, software, and/or services (e.g., installation, training) if it is determined that the individual requires computer equipment or services to support a comprehensive assessment, complete a planned service, or attain an employment outcome.
3. If adaptive hardware or software is required, the RE will provide the necessary specifications to the counselor.
4. Products will be purchased from state contracts when they are available.
5. Adaptive hardware, software, or support services may be purchased from local vendors who can provide the customized systems, training, maintenance and/or technical support. Purchases will be in compliance with state purchasing guidelines.

#### **14.07 Vehicles and Drivers Training**

1. Accessible vehicles means an ADA-compliant, original equipment manufacturer vehicle, or an original equipment manufacturer vehicle subsequently made ADA-compliant prior to delivery, or an existing vehicle as modified to reasonably accommodate an individual's needs.

Provision of accessible vehicles shall be considered only after every other transportation option has been explored and only after it has been determined that provision of an accessible vehicle is the most cost efficient and appropriate approach for the client and DVR. DVR shall not authorize provision of an accessible vehicle when the individual can effectively utilize public transportation and other means of transportation.

2. DVR may provide accessible vehicles and driving training if they are necessary to achieve the employment outcome of an approved Individualized Plan for Employment.
3. Used Vehicle means a vehicle that has been titled and registered to at least one owner or has been used as a demonstration model.
4. Vehicle Modification means any alteration to personal motor vehicles to increase access as either a passenger or a driver. Vehicle modification may include the replacement of an existing modification. All vehicle modifications must include an engineering consultation.
  - a. [Vehicle Modification Consumer Acknowledgement Form](#): Informs the individual of their responsibilities and agreement to terms regarding insurance, maintenance and transportation of their vehicle to the vendor facility. This form will be completed by the RE and the individual prior to authorization of services.
5. Driver Evaluation means an assessment of individuals' abilities to drive a vehicle safely, to determine what training needs exist and if vehicle modification, adaptive equipment or automotive equipment is necessary to enable the individual to drive. A driving evaluation by a qualified driving evaluator will be obtained to determine the individual's functional capacities to drive and need for modifications and adaptive equipment. The driving evaluator and rehabilitation engineer (RE) will produce final specifications for modifications.
6. Driver Training means instruction to teach an individual to drive a vehicle so that the individual will be able to obtain or retain a driver's license. A qualified driver specialist will provide training to ensure the individual's and public safety.
7. When the counselor determines that vehicle modifications may be necessary, the counselor will make a referral to the RE. The RE consultation should occur prior to the selection of the vehicle, or purchase of any Driver Rehabilitation Specialist (DRS) services.
8. A learner's permit or valid driver's license is required for an on-the-road driving assessment. A physician's review/clearance for a driver's evaluation may be required if requested by the evaluator, or if the individual's medical condition is unstable.
9. The counselor may authorize for additional on the road training as determined by the RE in the DRS vehicle before authorizing for any vehicle modifications if:
  - a. The DRS indicates the individual will require high technology driving modification; and/or
  - b. The DRS or RE are unsure of the individual's capability.

10. The DRS's written assessment of pertinent observations and a summary of the individual's abilities will accompany the prescription for adaptive equipment.
11. The DVR will pay for modifications to certain models of vehicles as per the Florida Standards Manual for Vehicle Modification used by Individuals with Disabilities and the Contracted Rehabilitation Technology Service Provider Manual.
12. When a vehicle is considered for a modification, all aspects will be addressed including entry, exit, driving, and transportation. Only modifications that comply with the Florida Standards Manual for Vehicle Modifications will be purchased. DVR will not participate in modifications deemed unsafe by the RE for the individual or the driving public.
13. DVR will only pay for modifications that the trade-in value of the used vehicle to be repaired shall be determined by reference to generally accepted valuation methods. The maximum amount that DVR will expend on repairs for the life of the used vehicle is one and one-half times the trade-in value in the absence of special circumstances.
14. If the individual uses more than one type of wheelchair, DVR will provide securement for one wheelchair. Wheelchair securement as a driver and one additional manual securement for a passenger will be provided for the individual. Any additional securement will be the individual's responsibility.
15. If the individual does not have an emergency communication device (On Star System, cell phone, etc.), an appropriate system will be included in the scope of the vehicle modification. The ongoing charges for the communication services will be the responsibility of the individual.
16. Rear air conditioning and other relevant accessories will be provided for individuals with a prescribed medical need. The individual is responsible for any accessories that are not required for medical or accessibility reasons.
17. The counselor will inform the individual that they are responsible for transportation of the vehicle to and from the vendor facility. Also, they are responsible for maintenance after the parts and labor agreement expires.
18. The counselor and the individual will discuss and determine the costs of insurance, and explore the costs of maintenance and repairs of vehicle modifications to determine if the individual can assume the responsibility for these costs after provision of services.
19. The DRS driving evaluation and/or physician's approval are the determining authority on the ability of the individual to independently drive. If either source determines the individual is unable to drive independently, alternative transportation solutions should be reviewed.
20. When necessary, DVR may pay transportation, lodging, personal assistance services, and subsistence costs for the individual during the final inspection process.
21. A used vehicle must be inspected by an Automotive Service Association (ASA) or Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certified automobile mechanic if deemed necessary by the RE to determine if there is safety concerns.

22. If an individual purchases a used vehicle with adaptive equipment already installed, DVR will not fund the vehicle purchase or any portion related to the adaptive equipment already installed. The counselor will address only the additional items listed on the prescription and items that relate directly to the safety of the individual.
23. In the case of structural modifications (lowered floors and raised roofs) that have been performed by a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) approved second stage manufacturer and the vehicle is being sold as a converted product, DVR will pay for the adaptive portion of the vehicle costs provided the sale of vehicle with modifications had not occurred prior to the authorization by the counselor.
24. If the previous modification is not in compliance with the Florida Standards Manual for Vehicle Modification, DVR may choose not to modify the vehicle. This determination will be made by the RE.
25. The individual is responsible to purchase a suitable vehicle recommended by the RE. This vehicle will be one requiring the most economical modification and meet the transportation accessibility need of the individual. If the individual chooses to purchase another vehicle and this vehicle can be modified safely and effectively to meet the transportation needs, the RE will obtain a written cost estimate for the modification. The individual will be responsible for any additional costs associated with the modification (RE cost estimate – cost of most economical modification = additional costs for which the individual is responsible). The additional funds for which the individual is responsible must be paid to the vendor prior to DVR authorizing any funds.
26. If an individual returns to DVR for subsequent requests for vehicle modification:
  - a. DVR will support the additional modifications if the current vehicle does not meet the individual's employment needs. This may be supplied by documentation of the individual's changing medical condition and/or a report from the RE that the current vehicle and modifications are no longer appropriate.
  - b. If the individual is returning to DVR as a result of an automobile accident in which the vehicle was not salvageable, DVR will only pay for the modifications for which the insurance will not pay. All insurance reimbursements for the value of the equipment must be applied to the modifications cost and paid to the vendor prior to DVR authorizing any funds.
  - c. If the individual has sold a vehicle that was previously modified by DVR and received compensation for the sale of the vehicle, the amount received for the equipment will be applied towards the new modifications.
27. Only work that meets or exceeds the current DVR standards, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards, Society of Automotive Engineers, and other standards established in the industry will be acceptable.

#### **14.08 Equipment, Vendor Selection, Purchasing and Procurement of Services**

1. Durable Medical Equipment (DME) means any product as defined by the Federal Drug Administration, Devices and Cosmetics Act, any products reimbursed under the Medicare Part B Durable Medical Equipment Benefits, or any products reimbursed under the Florida Medicaid Durable Medical Equipment Program (F.S. 400.925). Home medical equipment includes oxygen and related respiratory equipment; manual, motorized, or customized wheelchairs and related seating and positioning, but does not include prosthetics or orthotics or any splints, braces, or aids custom fabricated by a licensed health care practitioner; motorized scooters; personal transfer systems; and specialty beds, for use by a person with a medical need.
2. Used Equipment means any equipment that has previously been sold to an individual or utilized as a demonstration product. DVR will not purchase used equipment or reimburse any portion of costs towards the equipment, where a sale or delivery has occurred prior to authorization of services.
3. Purchases of prescriptive assistive devices for the purpose of medical, developmental, or vocational rehabilitation of individuals are exempt from solicitation requirements and must be procured pursuant to an established fee schedule or by any other method that ensures the best price for the state, taking into consideration the needs of the individuals. Prescriptive assistive devices include, but are not limited to, prosthetics, orthotics, and wheelchairs. For purchases made pursuant to this paragraph, state agencies shall annually file with the department a description of the purchases and methods of procurement. [Reference Florida Statute 257.057(3)(e) and Chapter 10, Section 10.03(1)]
4. If more than one qualified vendor exists within the same or neighboring counties, a quote should be obtained from at least two vendors to ensure competitive pricing without causing undue hardship or delays for services.
5. The counselor will provide the individual with a list of all the qualified vendors that are available.
6. If an individual chooses to use a specific vendor and this vendor is not the lowest bidder, the vendor can be used only if this vendor meets DVR's Standards for Vendor Qualifications. The individual must agree to pay the full difference in cost. The individual will pay the difference in cost to the vendor prior to DVR authorizing any funds.
7. For building modifications that exceed \$35,000, a formal competitive sealed bid is required by State Purchasing. The counselor will send the following documents to the DOE Purchasing Management Services Office:
  - a. Letter requesting assistance in obtaining a formal competitive sealed bid and a pre-bid meeting date;
  - b. Specifications and drawings provided by the RE; and
  - c. List of qualified contractors to be invited to bid.

The State Office of Purchasing invites qualified contractors to a scheduled pre-bid meeting at the individual's home. Following the pre-bid meeting, the RE finalizes the specifications, which are



then sent by the counselor to the Procurement Office. The Procurement Office will award the work according to state purchasing requirements.

9. For vehicle modification, a vendor may only sub-contract work approved by the RE and will be limited to “non-serviceable” items such as structural lowered floors, raised roofs/doors, painting, upholstery and body work. No item that requires any adjustment during installation or after completion may be sub-contracted. If structural modification is sub-contracted, following conditions apply:
  - a. The subcontractor must be registered with National Highway Transportation Safety Administration as an approved “after-market-manufacturer.
  - b. Any transportation of the individual’s vehicle in excess of 25 miles must occur on a flat-bed truck or approved in writing by the individual.
  - c. The individual and the RE must be informed of the nature of the work. Notification must be documented in the case record.
  - d. The final fitting must occur at the primary vendor’s location who must employ a full time technician.

#### **14.09 Inspections and Payments**

1. The RE will verify the safety and function of the modifications and may conduct an in-progress and final inspections to:
  - a. Establish the state of the modification upon completion (removal of debris, operation of vehicle etc.);
  - b. Verify that all equipment/products that DVR paid for are installed;
  - c. Verify that the work meets specified/acceptable standards;
  - d. Verify that the modifications provided the necessary accessibility and function; and
  - e. Ensure that the project is completed per the specifications.
2. In lieu of an onsite inspection, the engineer may utilize the following methods to verify completion:
  - a. Digital pictures from vendor;
  - b. Written acceptance signed by the individual and vendor;
  - c. Communication with individual; and
  - d. Other inspections conducted by qualified individuals such as county inspectors, driver evaluators etc.

3. The counselor will be consulted on any issues that may require generating an authorization.
4. Upon verification that the work completed by the vendor has met the required specifications and function, the engineer will inform the counselor in writing of such and recommend payment. In the event that the work does not meet the required specifications, the engineer will inform the counselor in writing and provide a plan to address the issues.
5. The counselor will authorize payment upon written verification from the RE that the work performed is completed and meets the individual's functional needs.

### **Stevens Amendment**

The Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is an equal opportunity employer. It is against the law for VR as a recipient of Federal financial assistance to discriminate against any individual in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief. The application process used by VR to determine eligibility for services, any subsequent services and the entire VR process are subject to these non-discrimination requirements. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. VR program receives 78.7 percent of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For the 2021 Federal fiscal year, the total amount of grant funds awarded were \$176,836,896. The remaining 21.3 percent of the costs (\$47,860,557) were funded by Florida State Appropriations. Revised October 2021.