

REHABILITATION TECHNOLOGY

I. LEGAL AUTHORITY:

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 (P.L. 105-220); 34 CFR 361.5(b)(45); 34 CFR 361.5(b)(7); and 34 CFR 361.5(b)(8).

II. POLICY STATEMENT AND PURPOSE:

Rehabilitation technology must be considered for all applicants or individuals with a disability as a means of ensuring informed choice, enhancing assessment of rehabilitation potential, Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) development, placement in employment, and job accommodations. Therefore, language pertaining to the provision of assistive technology services and/or devices is included in the specific policy sections dealing with those topics and/or processes.

An assessment of the need for assistive technology must be performed by skilled personnel. The assessment must establish how assistive technology devices and services can increase or supplement functional capacity and/or modify environments to accommodate the individual's abilities to work. The provision of assistive technology services should be considered during the evaluation process.

A. Terminology

1. Rehabilitation technology is defined as “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, assistive technology devices, and assistive technology services.” (34 CFR 361.5(b)(45), 34 CFR 361.5(b)(8); 34 CFR 361.5(b)(7))
 - a. Assistive technology service means any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive device including: the evaluation of the individual’s needs including functional evaluation in her/his customary environment; purchasing, leasing, or otherwise providing for the acquisition of an assistive technology device; selection, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, replacing assistive technology devices; training or technical assistance for individuals, and, when appropriate, for family members, guardians, advocates, or authorized representatives of the individual and other individuals (service providers and employers), who are involved in the life functioning of the individual; coordinating and using other therapies,

interventions, or services with assistive technology devices in the rehabilitation planning process.

- b. Assistive technology device means any item, piece of equipment, or product system acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, and used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of an individual with a disability.

Assistive technology devices and services include, but are not limited to, augmentative communication devices, environmental control devices, telecommunication devices for the deaf, sensory and technological aids for individuals with sensory impairments, durable medical equipment, vehicle modifications, as well as computer and other adaptations or customization of equipment.

B. Consideration of Rehabilitation Technology in All Stages of the Rehabilitation Process

An assistive technology device may be required to communicate with an individual in order for the client to make an informed choice about services and service providers throughout the VR process. Even in the initial application process, the client's need to communicate effectively and to exercise informed choice must begin. Examples of appropriate modes of communication include but are not limited to the application of devices as well as services: captioned videos and audio recordings for clients with deficits in receptive communication, and augmentative communication devices (ACDs).

C. Stages

1. During applicant status, Rehabilitation Technology, including consultation with Rehabilitation Technology Consultants, can be used to gain information to assist the counselor in the determination of the rehabilitation potential of the individual.
2. The decision to provide assistive technology services and/or devices is made on a case by case basis and reviewed at each stage of the rehabilitation process as follows:
 - a. The preliminary assessment will include, if appropriate, evaluation by qualified personnel of the possible benefit of assistive technology services and/or devices; and
 - b. The comprehensive assessment will always include an assessment of the necessity for assistive technology services and/or devices to reach the individual's vocational goal/employment outcome.