

NC Division of Services for the Blind Policies and Procedures Independent Living Older Blind

Assistive Technology Instructor Vendors

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Revision history: n/a

The Division of Services for the Blind recognizes that the need for assistive technology instruction for people in North Carolina who are visually impaired, blind or deafblind has grown significantly and is expected to continue to grow. The types of technologies available which enable this population to more fully engage in the community, educational and vocational pursuits as well as to live more independently in their daily lives constantly increases. The Division recognizes that due to the rapid pace of change with assistive technology, the Division may not always have the capacity with current staffing to meet this expanding need. Therefore, Independent Living Rehabilitation Counselors, Social Workers for the Blind and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors may, under the conditions outlined below, hire vendors to help fill gaps in available services. Hiring of vendors rather than utilizing existing staff positions may occur when the wait time to receive services will pose an unnecessary hardship on the consumer's ability to achieve their goals, when a vendor possesses a specific skill set to enable an eligible individual to achieve their goals or according to consumer choice.

Vendors who provide one-on-one assistive technology instruction for DSB consumers are paid according to standard rates which apply to eligible individuals served by Vocational Rehabilitation, Independent Living Older Blind, Independent Living Rehabilitation, Independent Living Services. Rates are paid according to the type of assistive technology and skill level taught. The skill levels are beginner, intermediate and advanced. Vendors who teach technology as part of a teaching team are paid at their regular Daily Living Skills Instructor rate.

The Division also recognizes the need to hire qualified vendors to provide assistive technology services. Therefore, vendors are screened according to standard criteria per type of assistive technology to determine what levels of skill they may be hired to teach, as the chart below demonstrates. All rates are hourly rates. Vendors may also be reimbursed for mileage at the current State rates. Time for travel is not compensated.

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	PC's	Mac	iOS mobile	Android	Braille Technology
Beginner	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25	\$25
Intermediate	\$35	\$35	\$35	\$35	\$35
Advanced	\$60	\$60	\$60	\$60	\$60

A list of vendors and the rates they qualify per category will be maintained in the State office by the Deaf Blind and Assistive Technology Program Specialist.

Skill testing may be conducted in the district offices by Division Assistive Technology Instructors, Assistive Technology Consultants, the Rehabilitation Engineer and Assistive Technology Teachers at the DSB Career and Training Center. All testing must be conducted utilizing standardized criteria. Vendors or potential vendors who do not meet the criteria for any area or skill level may be retested no sooner than 60 days after the initial test was administered. Vendors may elect to only be tested in specific types of technology and only at specific levels. Individuals who elected not to be tested in a specific category or level of technology may be evaluated in that area at any time regardless of when they were evaluated in other areas.

Criteria for the skill levels is maintained by the Deaf Blind and Assistive Technology Program Specialist and will be reviewed and updated annually as needed according to changes in technology.

Application Process

The process for potential vendors to apply to be an assistive technology instructor vendor with the Division of Services for the Blind is:

1. Complete the Assistive Technology Instructor Vendor Application, Assistive Technology Instruction Vendor Application, dsb-8001-ia, and provide it to the Deaf Blind and Assistive Technology Program Specialist. A copy of a photo id must be submitted with the application.
2. If the potential vendor's application is approved, the Deaf Blind and Assistive Technology Program Specialist will assign the potential vendor to the closest DSB assistive technology staff member who is able to test the specific area(s) requested. The vendor will come to a DSB office to be tested.
3. The DSB AT staff member will schedule a mutually agreeable test time with the potential vendor.

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4. The results of testing will determine the training skill levels for which the vendor is eligible to be hired. The Deaf Blind and Assistive Technology Program Specialist will keep a listing of vendors according to what skill levels they are eligible to teach per type of assistive technology.

Vendors who qualify for one or more categories will be required to complete a criminal background check and drug screening. Prior to working with DSB consumers, vendors must sign a confidentiality statement.

Hiring and Evaluating Vendors

The hiring case manager (Independent Living Rehabilitation Counselor/Social Worker for the Blind/Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor) will request that a DSB assistive technology staff member assess the individual's AT training needs. The AT staff member will determine what level of skill training is needed (beginner, intermediate or advanced) and set an approximate number of hours of instruction needed.

The case manager will determine what amount, if any, of the recommended training hours can be provided and complete an authorization for the maximum number of training hours to be sponsored by the program.

The vendor is responsible for submitting written progress reports along with invoices on at least a monthly basis. At a minimum, the invoice must include the consumer name, the vendor name, each date of service and the hours of instruction provided on each date. At a minimum, reports must include the consumer name, vendor name, dates of service, content taught, training outcomes met as well as any additional training needs and suggested hours, as applicable.

If the vendor utilizes all authorized training hours but believes additional training hours are needed, the vendor must document the number of instruction hours requested, the specific skills to be taught and why the skills have not yet been acquired. To approve additional training hours, the initial process is repeated with the AT staff member determining needs and recommended hours and the case manager determining if the program can provide any recommended hours of instruction.

Evaluation Process

Individuals receiving services will be surveyed for feedback on vendor services.