

## Chapter 23

### Assistive Technology

**23.1 Authority:** 34CFR 361.5(b)(7), 34 CFR 361.5(b)(8), 361.5 (45),and 34 CFR 361.48(a)(18)

**23.2 Policy**

It is USOR policy that assistive technology devices necessary for a VR applicant/client to engage in assessment activities, extended evaluation, and employment be made available consistent with other policies as outlined in this manual. Rehabilitation technology is the systematic application of technologies, technology methodologies, or scientific principles to meet the needs of and address the barriers confronted by individuals with disabilities in areas such as: transportation, rehabilitation, education, employment, independent living, and communication. It includes rehabilitation engineering, AT devices, and AT services. VR Counselors should maximize the use of AT by obtaining AT assessments from experts such as those employed at the Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT) and/or AT Specialists located throughout the state under USOR contracts with Independent Living Centers (IL). Assistive Technology must be considered at four points in the VR process: during the assessment to determine eligibility, during the Comprehensive Assessment of Rehabilitation Needs, in the development of the IPE, as part of the assessment of the expected need for post-employment services and as part of the reassessment of the need prior to client record closure. Client record documentation should reflect the consideration of AT at each of these points through VR Counselor contact narratives and in the IPE and/or amendments.

**23.3 Financial Need & Comparable Benefits**

Assistive technology devices, other than those necessary for an individual to participate in assessment activities for eligibility and IPE development, are subject to a determination of financial need (See Chapter 8).

**23.4 USOR Assistive Technology Program**

The USOR Assistive Technology Program is set up to help VR Counselors evaluate, train, follow up, and provide AT information and referral (I & R). UCAT's primary focus is on general AT services along the Wasatch Front. However, UCAT supports all IL Centers' AT Coordinators for any specialized tasks that exceed their capabilities or levels of expertise. UCAT may collaborate with the Division of Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired (DSBVI) or the Division of Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) as appropriate. UCAT also serves clients who are not eligible for service by the IL and VR programs. This program includes:

- A. USOR Assistive Technology Program Administration: The Specialized Services Coordinator has overall responsibility for management of the USOR AT Program. He/She monitors IL/AT Program contracts, supervises purchase of AT devices for IL consumers, coordinates AT

purchases for VR clients, supervises AT data collection and service delivery statewide, and coordinates the program with other activities such as the Utah Assistive Technology Program (UATP). He/She oversees operation of UCAT.

- B. The Utah Center for Assistive Technology (UCAT) is the hub of the USOR AT delivery system. It comprises:
1. AT Specialists who provide multi-disciplinary client assessments both at UCAT and at home-/job-sites, demonstration of AT devices, reports of AT recommendations to referring VR Counselors, modification of AT devices to meet individual client needs, design and fabrication of AT devices when needed devices are not commercially available, alternative computer-access assessments, augmentative alternative communications assessments, I & R, support of Utah Augmentative Alternative Assistive Communications and Technology (UAAACT) Teams in the school districts, and follow-up to ensure satisfactory outcomes.
  2. The USOR Occupational Therapist (OT) who provides most of the above services in addition to conducting seating and positioning evaluations and assessments of suitability to use hand controls to drive a vehicle.
  3. Assistive Technology Information and Referral (I&R). Assistive Technology I&R Services are the joint responsibility of several entities: UCAT, Access Utah Network (chartered by the Governor's Council for Persons with Disabilities), Centers for Independent Living (IL) across the state, and IL satellite offices in the rural areas of the state.

**NOTE:** Vendors/providers of AT services must be qualified. Qualification is determined as appropriate to each discipline by license, degree, certification, or other standard set forth by the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA).

### 23.5 Assistive Technology Services

Assistive technology services are available to VR Counselors through UCAT or through contracted or purchased services. These specialists can help the VR Counselor understand how AT may support the process of determining a client's eligibility and VR needs by evaluating whether the client may benefit from AT services as well as the nature and scope of the AT services needed. These services include:

- A. Job-site Evaluation: Assess potential or existing job sites and/or equipment for modifications to support individual client needs.
- B. Home Evaluation: Assess client's residence for accessibility and potential improvements to increase accessibility.
- C. Device Modification: Modify commercial device to suit client needs.
- D. Custom Fabrication: Create device if a suitable commercial device is unavailable.
- E. Augmentative Communication Evaluation: Assess client's communication needs.
- F. Computer Access Services: Evaluate client needs for alternative means to access the functions of computers, including home trials of devices to validate assessments.

- G. Mobility Evaluation: Provide recommendations for mobility assistance devices, e.g., wheelchairs, walkers.
- H. Vehicle Modification Evaluation: Assess suitability of client for use of vehicle hand controls, including system recommendations and product sources.
- I. Seating and Positioning Services: Assess AT needs for proper seating and positioning of individuals, including recommendations for equipment and follow-up to ensure all purchased equipment is performing and being used properly.
- J. Individual AT Training Services: Provide basic individual training in the use of AT devices.
- K. Technical Assistance: Provide technical assistance to VR and IL Counselors concerning identification, application, product availability and funding options relevant to assistive technology will be provided.
- L. Information and Referral Services: Provide research into AT device and/or service availability to meet a client's needs.
- M. Follow-up Services: Follow-up services are used to assess the outcome of the AT intervention. These can include: ensuring the AT actually fits the need, verifying that the client is trained to use the device, and checking to ensure the device is functioning properly and the client is using it.

### 23.6 Referral for AT Services

- A. The VR Districts local to the Salt Lake Valley (Downtown, Valley West, and South Valley) use the following procedure for referring clients for AT services due to proximity to UCAT. Districts **local** to the Salt Lake Valley fill out UCAT Form 1 AT Referral Form attach it to an email to [ucat@utah.gov](mailto:ucat@utah.gov). UCAT acknowledges the referral by email within two business days with the name of the AT Specialist assigned to the client. VR Counselors should coordinate services directly with the AT Specialist. The VR Counselor will act on the assessment report when received from UCAT coordinating with the AT Specialist on any questions or unclear areas. The report must be included in the client record.
- B. Districts **outside** the Salt Lake Valley fill out UCAT Form 1 AT Referral Form. Southern Utah should send the form to the AT Coordinator covering that area. Other districts should send it to the AT Coordinator in the nearest IL Center to see if that person can provide the needed service. If the services can be provided locally there is no need to involve UCAT. Work with the AT Coordinator to arrange for the needed assessment and act on the assessment report when received following policies in Chapters 10 & 12 of this manual as appropriate. The report must be included in the client record. If the services exceed local capability follow procedures in paragraph A noting in the email that the local AT Coordinator has deferred the client to UCAT.

The most current **UCAT Referral Form 1** is located under "forms" on the USOR staff website.

### 23.7 Hearing Aids

The Following are procedures used by USOR in providing hearing aids for clients:

- A. The VR Counselor shall utilize a recent (within the last 12 months) audiology report from a licensed Audiologist to use in the evaluation of any hearing aid support or purchase. If no recent report is available one may be obtained through referral to a licensed Audiologist through comparable benefits, or if none are available utilizing established CSM rates (refer to CSM Chapter 12).
  - a. In the event that the audiology report indicates suspected medical conditions outside of the scope of the audiologists' practice and where such conditions are pertinent to the treatment of the VR related hearing condition, the VR Counselor will obtain a second evaluation from an otologist or otolaryngologist (ENT Doctor).
- B. Evaluations purchased by VR from a licensed audiologist shall include:
  - a. Audiogram, either American National Standards Institute (ANSI) or International Standards Institute (ISO).
  - b. Characteristics of an instrument that will meet the requirements of the client's problem, including type: body, behind ear, glasses, speech reception threshold, and other information regarding the client's ability to benefit from hearing aids.
  - c. A list of two or more hearing aids which will meet the specifications (brand/model).
- C. Purchase of recommended hearing aids must be based off a valid audiology report which is no more than 12 months old.
- D. Purchase of hearing aids will comply with CSM Chapter 12 purchasing policy and spending approval levels including the need for multiple bids. Hearing aid bids which exceed \$1000 are subject to state purchasing bid policy for a tangible item as outlined in CSM Chapter 12. Each bid should be provided on a separate Form 51a hearing aid offer to sell sheet so that most appropriate and lowest cost services may be secured.
  - a. The two bids should be from two distinct vendors for a comparable product.
- E. When in possession of a recent audiology report that does not contain adequate hearing aid purchase recommendations, or if seeking a second/alternative bids for a comparable product, VR Counselors may consider recommendations and bids provided by a Board Certified Hearing Instrument Specialist (BC-HIS).
  - a. The initial recommendation for a hearing aid must still be prescribed by an audiologist. BC-HIS credentials are not sufficient for a primary assessment or bid without an audiologist conducted and signed report. VR Counselors may accept a

secondary assessment by a BC-HIS, but may only purchase a secondary assessment by a BC-HIS as supplemental material when the required information required is not contained in the initial audiologists' report.