

State of Vermont

Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living
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Agency of Human Services

MEMO

To: Choices for Care Case Management Agencies

From: Angela McMann, LTSS Program Manager

Date: 3/10/2023

Re: Guidance Memo - Assistive Device/Assistive Technology and Home Modification

The purpose of this memo is to provide guidance to Choices for Care case management agencies and program participants regarding implementation of the Assistive Device/Assistive Technology and Home Modification (ADHM) service. Service guidelines, documentation requirements and additional information may be found in the [Choices for Care Program Manual](#).

The ADHM service is intended to provide funding to purchase items that help increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities, decrease social isolation, or foster increased independence. Items covered by Medicare, Medicaid, other insurance, or other sources of funding are not allowable. More information about accessing Vermont Durable Medical Equipment (DME) can be found [here](#).

The Adult Services Division (ASD) recommends an in-home assessment by a qualified professional (Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Aging in Place Specialist, etc.). Assessments and training on the use of ADHM are reimbursable expenses under ADHM.

Only items that meet the definition of Assistive Technology, Assistive Device or Home Modification are allowable.

Definitions

1. An “**Assistive Device**” is defined as an item, whether acquired commercially or off the shelf, which is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities. Such devices are intended to benefit the individual’s identified goals for maintaining their health, safety, wellbeing and independence at home.
2. A “**Home Modification**” is defined as a physical adaptation to the home which is necessary to ensure the health, safety, wellbeing, accessibility and independence of the individual in the home. The adaptation may include, but is not limited to ramps, door

widening, grab-bars and modification of bathroom facilities, etc. for accessibility.

3. **“Assistive Technology”** is defined as any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially or off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional abilities. Assistive technology devices required by individuals with disabilities include hardware and software as well as stand-alone devices.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Under what circumstances would funding be authorized to use funding to purchase the following items?

- Appliances like washer/dryer, refrigerators, stoves – *Only allowable when adapted or specialized for the individual. For example, a front load washer and dryer that the individual will be able to use independently could be allowable. Replacement of broken appliances that will not be used by the client is not allowable. A drawer or under counter refrigerator that allows an individual to access foods and beverages safely could be allowable.*
- Eyeglasses – *Only allowable if not covered under Medicare, Medicaid, or other insurance. Documentation must include how the purchase meets the definition and service requirements.*
- Dentures - *Only allowable if not covered under Medicare, Medicaid, or other insurance. Documentation must include how the purchase meets the definition and service requirements.*
- Hearing Aids *Only allowable if not covered under Medicare, Medicaid, or other insurance. Documentation must include how the purchase meets the definition and service requirements.*
- Ongoing bills for internet to more easily comply with the EVV for ARIS – *Not allowable. This category of items does not meet the service definition.*
- Ongoing bills for internet for telehealth – *Documentation must include how the purchase meets the definition and service requirements, why telehealth is required and utilized by the individual, and must demonstrate that all other funding sources have been explored.*
- Vehicle repairs/maintenance, winter tires, etc. – *Routine maintenance and parts are not allowable. This category does not meet the service definition.*
- Bed bug treatment: [Bedbugs in Rental Units | VTLawHelp.org](http://VTLawHelp.org) – *Does not meet the definition. Not allowable. This category does not meet the service definition.*
- Cleanouts to address hoarding – only a few areas in VT have a hoarding task force. *Documentation must support the use of ADHM for this type of service.*
- Service animal costs-like vet bills/pet food – *Does not meet the service definition.*
- Meal kit subscriptions to increase variety in meals and cut down on food choices that are detrimental to health issues, plus to increase independence in some meal prep or shopping. *Not allowable. This category does not meet the definition of ADHM. Adapted kitchen equipment and utensils that increase independence in food preparation would be covered. Meal kit subscriptions may be covered under alternative programs.*

- Phone and service for people with dementia/cognitive issues (e.g. Jitterbug).
Documentation must support the purchase of adapted equipment that the individual would be able to use and that would increase independence. Ongoing telephone service would not meet the service definition. Free or low-cost services are available for low-income older adults.
 - Rep Payee service with an agency (usually requires a monthly fee) – *Not allowable. Does not meet the service definition.*
 - Other furniture like beds/mattresses (not hospital or adjustable) – *Allowable only when the item meets the service definition and allows for increased independence and/or functional mobility. Not allowable for purchase or replacement of standard bedding or furniture.*
 - Monitoring for med dispensers that require a service (monthly fee) to go with it (Medication dispenser & connected apps | Philips Healthcare) (Hero - A dose of calm for the whole family (herohealth.com)) – *Allowable when documentation supports that the item meets the definition and increases the individual's independence. The participant must be able to use the equipment.*
2. Can ADHM funds be used to pay for repairs to the home (those things not associated with modification for accessibility, but more for safety and quality of life) such as:
- a. chimney repairs
 - b. furnaces,
 - c. floors in bathrooms and in kitchens because of leaks,
 - d. roof
 - e. fixing driveways or maintenance funds for plowing

Utility bills and routine home maintenance, such as painting or roofing, typically fall under "room and board" and are not allowed. Alternative funding sources should be explored.

3. Will ASD provide agencies with a list of "Cannot use ADHM Funds for the following Items list"?
- Approval or denial should be based on a person-centered planning process, and in compliance with the Choices for Care Program Manual. See **Service Limitations** in the CFC Program Manual. Items that do not meet the service definition are not allowable.*
4. What is the process for when it is determined that an assistive device, home modification or assistive technology purchase is not able to be purchased because it does not meet the definition or support the individual's goals?
- Agencies must notify the participant in writing when a purchase request is denied. The letter must include the reason for denial, and the participant's option to submit a variance to DAIL. The Case Manager will follow the established process for submitting a variance to DAIL on behalf of the participant.*