

Clarification of DVR/CDE Cooperative Agreement Regarding Assistive Technology

In January of 1995, the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) developed a Cooperative Agreement, based on the mutual commitment of both agencies to the provision of coordinated transition services, and the ultimate goal of gainful employment. The agreement defines the responsibilities of DVR and Education, provides for efficient and effective utilization of agencies' resources, minimizes duplication, and delineates a basis for continuous effective working relationships between DVR and Local Education Agencies (LEA). The agreement is not binding for LEAs, but is intended as a guide to assist LEAs as they work with DVR.

An area of the Cooperative Agreement on which LEAs and DVR offices have requested clarification is that of **Assistive Technology (AT)**. Particularly, guidance has been requested regarding options for transferring AT with students as they leave the educational system and enter into the vocational rehabilitation system.

Key Points

As DVR and LEAs work together to meet the AT needs of youth with disabilities, it is important to remember that an individual's need for AT may be lifelong, although the youth's emphasis may shift from education to employment as transition planning begins. Transition, and the AT needs required for successful transition, should be considered early in a youth's educational process. To assure effective use of AT in both education and employment, it may be beneficial for the LEA and DVR to collaborate in the following areas as a child nears the completion of school programming:

- assessment for AT
- training on the AT device
- acquisition and maintenance of AT
- the use of AT in transition planning

To this end, the Individual Education plan (IEP) and the Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) should be jointly developed before a youth leaves school. The two plans should be aligned, documenting a youth's vocational goal and the course of action for reaching the goal, including documented timelines. Assistive Technology needs should be identified in these plans.

In the following situation DVR may consider purchasing an AT device from the LEA:

1. A student has been provided an AT device by the LEA
2. The student is ready to transition from school to adult programming through DVR
3. DVR and the student determine that the AT device will continue to meet the needs of the individual in DVR sponsored training or employment
4. The LEA does not wish to retain the device for assignment to another student

Things to Consider

- As a device reaches the end of its useful life expectancy, more consideration should be given to the purchase of new AT as opposed to buying out the older equipment
- If the device's original cost included mounting or adaptation, these are appropriate to include in the original cost, if such mounting will continue to be needed for the individual to utilize the device in the DVR program. The cost of initial training or programming of a device should not be included in the original cost figure.
- Resources derived by the LEA from the sale of AT may be used to purchase additional AT equipment if the local district policy allows for this.
- DVR may require the client or family to complete a financial needs test. If resources are available according to the DVR financial needs document, these will be applied to the cost of vocational rehabilitation services, including AT services.
- AT purchased by the counselor for use by an individual in a training program, trade or business remains the property of the state of Colorado. When items are issued to an individual, written acknowledgement of State ownership must be obtained from the individual receiving the equipment. If an individual's program does not result in a successful rehabilitation outcome, efforts to recover the equipment must be made.
- If the LEA is involved with Senate Bill 101 (Medicaid in the Schools), DVR and the LEA should determine if the local Senate Bill 101 priorities will impact the purchase of AT for youth.

Resources

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