
LIFE SPIN

ASSISTIVE DEVICES PROGRAM HANDBOOK



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to Pro Bono Students Canada for their support of LIFE*SPIN.
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This publication may be cited as follows:
Assistive Devices Program Handbook (London: March 2022)



Low Income Family Empowerment
Sole-Support Parents Information Network

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P.O. Box 2801
London, ON N6A 4H4



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INTRODUCTION

This 15-page document is a plain-language summary of the official ADP manual, a legal document, which is more than 100 pages long. Our summary is intended to guide you through the process of accessing funding for assistive devices and does not constitute legal advice. The program provides funding for numerous assistive devices listed here: <http://www.ontario.ca/page/assistive-devices-program>.

ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING

Are you eligible for financial assistance to buy an assistive device?

To be eligible, you must:

- Not be covered for the same device through WSIB or Veterans' Affairs
- Have a valid Ontario health card
- Live permanently in Ontario
- Have a long term physical disability or physical condition requiring the use of an assistive device for six months or longer
- Have a primary diagnosis of a medical condition other than a learning disability`
- Not require the assistive device only for any one of: school/education, employment, recreation or sports

Additional Requirements for People in Long-term Care or People Needing Home Oxygen

- If you live in a long-term care home (nursing home), the home has to agree to accept the device that you are applying for
- If you need Home Oxygen, you must have a physical disability or condition requiring the use of home oxygen therapy for 90 days or longer.

Amount of Funding

If your application is successful, the program will pay 75% of the approved price for the equipment or supplies. You pay the other 25%. If you will have difficulty in coming up with your 25% share, we have provided a list of organizations which provide financial assistance to help you pay your portion of the price of the device or supplies.

Exception to the General 75%/25% Split

If you receive financial assistance from any of the following programs, the program will cover the whole cost of the assistive device:

- Ontario Works (OW)
- Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP)
- Assistance for Children with Severe Disability (ACSD)

If you have money in a Henson Trust, and you get ODSP, based on the above, the person holding the Henson Trust money does not have to spend any money to buy the assistive device. However, money from the Henson Trust may be needed to buy accessories, upgrades, or other features (see next paragraph).

Accessories, Upgrades and Other Features

Whether you pay 25% or 0%, you have to buy your own accessories, upgrades, or other features. The Assistive Devices Program does not provide money for these additions. The Vendor or the Authorizer should be able to tell you what ADP will pay, for and what it will not pay for.

Release of Information About Previous Funding

The program will not release information about previous funding, unless you fill out and sign and send in a form called Release of Information About Previous Funding (which is available on the ADP website). Information regarding funding previously paid will only indicate whether and/or when you received funding assistance.

Charitable Organizations

The following are charitable organizations which will contribute funds to the 25% portion of the device that you will be required to pay.

March of Dimes

To receive funding from the March of Dimes, you must have a physical disability that requires the use of an assistive device. You must also be in financial need, 19 years of age or older, and a permanent resident of Ontario. To apply visit:

<https://www.marchofdimes.ca/en-ca/programs/am/adp/Pages/Assistive-Devices-Apply.aspx>

Easter Seals Ontario

Easter Seals Ontario helps families with the cost of equipment which is required by children and youth with a physical disability. Only children and youth who are registered as Easter Seals Ontario clients may apply for the Equipment Funding Program. To find out how to register, visit: <https://services.easterseals.org/equipment-funding/register-your-child/>

The War Amps

The Child Amputee (CHAMP) Program supports children in Canada (under 18) who are born missing a limb or who have lost a limb due to an accident or medical cause. To learn more, visit: <https://www.waramps.ca/ways-we-help/child-amputees/>

AUTHORIZERS AND VENDORS

These are important people in the ADP process. The Authorizer physically assesses you, and makes a decision on whether or not you need a device covered by the ADP. The Vendor sells you the assistive device, and any accessories, upgrades or other features.

Authorizers

An authorizer is an individual who is registered with the ADP to assess people who would like to apply to receive funding from the program for an assistive device.

To receive funding from the ADP, you must first be assessed by an Authorizer. So, if you are looking to receive a mobility device, you must be examined by an occupational therapist or physiotherapist registered with the ADP. The ADP will not pay out any money unless the Authorizer has assessed you and provides a report of what you need.

To access a registered authorizer, you can email the ADP at adp@ontario.ca.

With the help of an Authorizer (i.e. occupational therapist or physiotherapist), you have to fill out the ADP application form located here:

[https://www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca/mbs/ssb/forms/ssbforms.nsf/FormDetail?OpenForm&ACT=RDR&TAB=PROFILE&SRCH=1&ENV=WWE&TIT=4821&NO=014-2196-67E](https://www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca/mbs/ssb/forms/ssbforms.nsf/FormDetail?OpenForm&A CT=RDR&TAB=PROFILE&SRCH=1&ENV=WWE&TIT=4821&NO=014-2196-67E).

Your authorizer has to keep the following records:

- Confirmation that the authorizer is in good standing with their regulatory college (e.g. College of Physiotherapists) or professional association
- Complete notes on your initial assessment
- Details of any follow-up visits with you
- Confirmation that the authorizer has offered you a full list of vendors in your community
- A complete copy of your paperwork, signed by the authorizer and sent to the ADP

Authorizers and Health Card Validation System

The ADP seeks to maintain a client's privacy of information, and so information gathered by an Authorizer about you is confidential. However, we want you to know that regulated health professionals who are registered as Authorizers are allowed to access the Health Card Validation system. On page 4, we noted that you must have a valid Ontario Health Card to be eligible for ADP funding. Access to the Health Card Validation system enables the Authorizer to determine if you have a valid Ontario health card, a requirement for eligibility. This is the same process we go through when we go to our doctor or to a clinic funded by OHIP – we give the receptionist our health card, and they check to make sure it is valid.

Authorizers who are members of the following bodies are classified as “regulated health professionals”, and are able to access the Health Card Validation system:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Massage Therapists of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario

Vendors

The Vendor is the person or company which supplies and sells assistive devices. To be a valid Vendor in the ADP, a Vendor has to register with the ADP. Before a Vendor is accepted by and registered with the ADP, they have to complete application papers and satisfy the ADP that their company meets the requirements to be registered with the ADP. We have not provided detail of these requirements here. What is important for you is to know that you are dealing with a Vendor registered under the ADP. Before a Vendor can sell devices that are funded by ADP, the Vendor has to sign an agreement that it will obey all of the rules of the Program that affect Vendors.

How do I find a registered Vendor?

After the Authorizer completes their assessment of you, and decides that you need an assistive device, you have to locate a Vendor who sells the assistive device that the Authorizer has prescribed for you. Your Authorizers must provide you with a list of Vendors in their area. You can probably rely on the list given to you by your Authorizer. However, if you want to be absolutely sure that the company from which you're going to get your assistive device is a registered Vendor, the ADP also provides a vendor list,

organized by specialty and location here, under “Find a vendor and apply”:
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/mobility-aids#section-3>

Vendor Refusal to Supply Device

Even once you have been approved for funding, your Vendor may ultimately refuse to supply the device at the time of delivery. If your Vendor becomes aware of safety or risk factors that may not have been foreseen, or considered by the Authorizer, your Vendor can refuse to provide the device. Your Vendor is not required to follow any special procedure in deciding not to provide the device; they will rely on their reasonable opinion/common sense. While this refusal would be a huge disappointment to you, your Vendor has to protect him/herself against a situation where they knew about a risk and still supplied the device, and you later suffered an injury and wanted to sue the Vendor.

If your Vendor does not see any safety or risk factors at the time of delivery, along with the device, your Vendor will provide you with the manufacturer’s written warranty. As we discussed, that document is required in the event of you wanting a replacement device, or repairs. Because of this, it is very important that you keep that warranty document in a safe location, with any other important papers.

It is probably a good idea to consider and compare more than one Vendor. Vendors may differ in device options/accessories, upgrades, other features, service plans, and price. You may want to take someone with you as you look at the devices’ to help you with the comparison shopping.

To prevent conflicts of interest from arising, your Authorizer cannot also be your Vendor and vice-versa.

DEVICES

General

The program will absolutely not provide reimbursement for devices purchased before you have been assessed by an Authorizer. For a device to be considered for funding, you must first be assessed by an Authorizer. As mentioned above, an Authorizer is registered with the ADP to assess individuals who would like to apply for ADP funding for an assistive device.

The program has an existing list of products for which it will provide financial assistance. This list is not exhaustive and the program will provide funding for unlisted products, under certain extenuating circumstances. After trying to contact the Ministry of Health and Long Term care to obtain more information about this, we have been unable to determine what such extenuating circumstances might be.

If any of the following elements are present, the program will **not** provide funding for the device:

- It is not deemed to be cost-effective for ADP funding assistance
- It is a common/mainstream product, used by the general population
- Will be exclusively used for therapy or treatment purposes
- Will be exclusively used for a diagnostic or monitoring procedure
- Is a home or vehicle improvement and/or modification
- Will be exclusively used for work, education, or recreation purposes
- Will be used for cosmetic purposes only
- Will be implanted within the body
- Is required for daily self-care activities (such as transferring, dressing, toileting or bathing)
- Will be used to address a safety need
- Is for short-term use

Replacement Devices

When providing funding, the ADP will identify how long your assistive device should remain in good repair, under normal use. This is called the “funding period.” At the end of the funding period, the program will not automatically provide funding for a replacement device. If the purchase of a new device is necessary at the end of the funding period, you will have to send in a new application for funding for a replacement device.

However, if there is a documented change in your medical condition during the funding period and, as a result, your current device is no longer usable, the program will provide funding toward a replacement device. Although the ADP Guide does not detail the process in this situation, we believe that you would have to get a letter from your doctor, or from your Authorizer to document the change in your medical condition, and then, with the assistance of the Authorizer, you would have to file a new application.

Lost or Stolen Devices

The program will **not** provide funding to replace lost or stolen devices under any circumstances, even if theft or loss occurs during the funding period. While this may seem unfair in certain circumstances, e.g. if you have locked up your assistive device with an expensive chain and lock, the ADP document published by the government is clear on this point.

As a result, the program recommends that you purchase insurance for your device. While you would want to discuss this with your insurance agent, you would probably want to buy replacement cost insurance.

Replacement Batteries

The ADP does **not** provide additional funding for the purchase or lease of replacement batteries for a device.

Devices Damaged Through Normal Wear and Tear

The ADP will provide funding to replace a device to a previously funded device that is damaged due to normal wear and tear, both during and after the designated funding period.

The ADP will **not** provide funding to replace devices that are damaged due to misuse or negligence.

To receive funding to replace a device damaged due to normal wear and tear, the following criteria must be satisfied:

- 1. The device can no longer be under warranty (we noted above that the warranty is an important document to be kept in a safe place) AND
- 2. The cost of repairs must be more than one-third of the original purchase price of the device. Presumably, this number would have to be verified by a registered Vendor, probably preferably the Vendor who sold you the device.

If funding for replacement is approved in these circumstances, the funding assistance may be a pro-rated contribution, based on the age of the device, and the designated funding period of the original device.

Application for a replacement device in either circumstance must be submitted to the Program, with the relevant supporting documents. For example, if you are asking for a replacement device due to damage from normal wear and tear, you have to submit confirmation that the device is no longer under warranty (presumably a copy of the warranty you got when your Vendor delivered your device) and a Vendor/manufacturer quotation for repairs, or Vendor confirmation that the device is not repairable).

No Funding for Repairs

While the Program will provide funding for replacement devices in certain circumstances (see above), the Program will never contribute toward the cost of repairs of a device. In some cases, the device's warranty will cover the cost of the repairs, but this depends on the terms of the warranty (This is another reason that you want to keep your warranty in a safe place). Otherwise, you will be required to pay out-of-pocket for repairs (or seek funding from alternative sources/third party organizations).

Personal Health Information

The Vendor must treat all your personal information as confidential. They are responsible for ensuring Canadian privacy laws are followed.

All Authorizers, Vendors, and clinics registered with the ADP, must comply with all Canadian privacy laws.

They must take reasonable steps to ensure all your personal information

- Remains confidential
- Is secured from theft, loss, unauthorized access, use and disclosure, as well as unauthorized copying, modification, or disposal
- Is retained, transferred and disposed of in a secure manner

The Vendor must advise its staff of these requirements, and must take appropriate action to maintain compliance by staff.

Application Forms

There is a different Application Form for each Device. You only need to complete the form for the Device or supplies which you are applying. Often, the Authorizer will help you to complete the application, because they are familiar with the process.

To access your funding, you must make sure your form is fully completed.

Most ADP forms have the following structure:

Personal Information

- Name, Address, Health Card Number, contact information
- Confirmation of Benefits information (for example, proof that you receive OW, ODSP or ACSD)

Devices and Eligibility

- Information on the Applicant's diagnosis, to be completed by the individual who recommended the device (physician or another prescriber)
- Information on the Device, supplies, or fees for which funding is being requested
- For Devices flagged with ** the make, model and description of the Device must be provided

- The reason for your application, and why you require a replacement (must be completed by the ADP Authorizer or registered clinic member)

Applicant's Consent and Signature

- Your agreement to have your personal information released
- If you are represented by an Agent, their contact information is required. NOTE: we have contacted the Ministry, to find out if there is a process to appoint an agent, but we cannot get anyone to call us back. If you have a power of attorney for finances and health care, those persons have the legal authority to act as your agent.

Signatures

- Signatures and contact details for the prescriber, Authorizer, Vendor, and clinic information (if applicable)

Original Application Forms must be submitted to the Program prior to a Vendor receiving any funding. Each Application Form containing your information is your property Applicant. The Authorizer or Vendor must complete the applicable sections of the Application Form, and forward it to the Program immediately. We understand that Authorizers will often help you complete the application forms, because they have assessed that you have a need for the device, and they want to see your funding approved.

The Application Form must be completed. Incomplete Application Forms, Application Forms that are incorrectly completed, and Application Forms where white-out has been used, will not be accepted.

The completed Application Form must be forwarded to:

Assistive Devices Program
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
5700 Yonge Street, 7th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M2M 4K5

Other Details

A copy of an incomplete Application Form or an Application Form that is incorrectly completed, will be returned.

All application Forms are processed and approved based on the eligibility criteria for each device specific category.

Only if the Application Form is complete, accurate, and follows all the rules, can the application be approved.

If the Application Form is not complete, not accurate, or does not meet the eligibility criteria, the Application Form will be returned for correction, or not approved, and written notification is sent to the Client, Authorizer and/or Vendor, as appropriate.

IMPORTANT: You have to obtain the Device(s) within twelve months after the Authorizer assesses you, or you will have to be reassessed.

If the Program receives the Application Form more than twelve months after the date of prescription, or the Authorizer's assessment date noted on the application, it may no longer be valid.

Invoice Processing and Payment

General

The Vendor may claim payment from the Ministry directly, by submitting the relevant documentation. The Vendor typically should not bill you. If you have to contribute 25% of the price, you will have to pay that money before you get the device.

Payment for Non-funded Equipment, Accessories, Upgrades and Other Features/Services

The Vendor can charge you directly, if you are requesting non-funded equipment, accessories, upgrades, other features or related services in addition to the Device. You are required to cover these costs.

Rebates

If you receive a rebate on a Device, the Ministry will only pay the discounted price, not the original full-price.

Return of a Funded Device – Re-stocking Fee

If a Vendor accepts the return of a Device that ADP has funded, the Vendor must notify the Program and return the funding. The Vendor may charge you a reasonable return or re-stocking fee when they accept returned Device.

Other Details

You must receive the Device(s) before the Vendor submits an invoice for the Device(s).

The Program will only pay for Devices that are approved on the Application Form. The amount paid by the Program is set in Canadian dollars. The Program only provides Funds in respect of those Devices which are listed. Substitution is not allowed.

In order to confirm receipt of the Device, the Program requires an original Client signature, a signature date on, or included with, all invoices on file at the Vendor location, as proof of delivery of Devices to the Client.

Payments to Vendors must be made by direct deposit, using Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to the Vendor's business bank account.

A valid and payable invoice, received by the Financial Management Branch within twelve (12) months of delivery date or service date, will be processed. An invoice with a delivery date or service date more than twelve (12) months prior to the receipt of the invoice by the Financial Management Branch is considered stale-dated.

Appeals and Complaints

Appealing a Program Decision

The Program determines whether to provide funding based on several policies. When the Program receives a complete and accurate Application Form, the Program determines if you are eligible for funding and, if so, the amount for which you are eligible.

You can appeal this decision.

Decisions that you can appeal must relate to a Program decision about your specific application. Examples of decisions which can be appealed include:

- An application that was denied because you do not meet the criteria
- An application denied because you applied before the funding period had expired
- The amount of funding that was approved

The program will not accept appeals:

- On the Approved Price for a Device
- On the decisions or recommendations made by a prescriber, Authorizer or Vendor
- Prepared or submitted by a Vendor or their employee

You have to submit an appeal in writing. You can submit your appeal by mail, or e-mail is acceptable. You can make a verbal appeal, if you have a physical disability that prevents you from writing. An appeal by e-mail or in writing is preferable, because you then have a written record, especially of why you are appealing.

The written appeal must contain the following information:

- Your name
- Your contact information

- Your agent's contact information, if relevant
- Your health card number
- The decision being appealed
- Why you are appealing the decision
- Other supporting documentation, for the Program to review

If the appeal is from someone acting on your behalf, the appeal must include the following information:

- Their name and contact information
- Their relationship to you

If the appeal is being made by someone acting as your power of attorney, they should submit a copy of the power of attorney, to verify their authority to represent you.

The Program will contact you or the person requesting the appeal on your behalf within five working days, to let them know the appeal has been received and will be reviewed. The Program aims to complete all reviews within thirty days. If the review cannot be completed in thirty days, the person requesting the appeal will be notified.

The Program will notify in writing the person requesting the appeal of the results.

If you or the person requesting the appeal on your behalf is not in agreement with the Program's decision, they may submit a complaint to the Program

Complaints

Individuals may submit complaints about the ADP, or specific individuals who are a part of the ADP e.g. the Authorizer or the Vendor.

The Program will review complaints that relate to the Program, including in relation to the following matters:

- Complaints with regard to:
 - ADP policies and procedures
 - ADP operational practices
- Complaints with regard to interactions with
 - ADP staff
 - An Authorizer

- A Vendor or a Vendor of Record for Home Oxygen Services
- An ADP registered clinic, hospital, or transfer payment agency

As some examples

- You could file a complaint against an Authorizer who refused to give you a list of registered Vendors for the device you are applying for.
- You could file a complaint against a Vendor who refused to give you the manufacturer's warranty for your device
- Complaints regarding any Device that is eligible for funding assistance through the Program which may be defective, unsafe, or unreliable.

Complaints about decisions under policy 1000 (this is the government document that we are attempting to compress in this document).

You can submit a complaint in the form of a letter to the Program. The letter can be sent to the Program by mail or e-mail. A verbal complaint may be accepted if the individual has a physical disability that prevents them from writing. Again, a written appeal is preferable, because you then have a written record of what has been sent.

The Program will contact the person requesting the appeal within five working days, to let them know the complaint has been received and will be reviewed. They will also review the information the person complaining has provided, request additional information or documentation, if necessary, ensure the person making the complaint understands the complaints process, and obtain the complainant's consent for use of their information.

The Program aims to complete the review of all complaints within thirty working days of when they are received. If the Program is not able to do so, they will notify the complainant.

The complainant can at any time tell the Program to stop reviewing their complaint.

Next Steps If Your Appeal or Complaint Is Denied

As the decisions made by Ministry representatives are "administrative", and not "legal" decisions, if you are unhappy with the decision, there is no right of appeal through our court process. If your complaint relates to how you have been dealt with by an Authorizer or a Vendor, you could ask the Ministry to de-register that person/company from the list of approved Authorizers or approved Vendors. If you are complaining about an Authorizer, and that person's treatment of you has been especially bad, you could file a complaint with the professional college that the Authorizer belongs to (see above at page 4).