

NC DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND POLICIES AND PROCEDURES VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Section:	R
Title:	Rehabilitation Engineering and Technology Services
Current Effective Date:	08/10
Revision History:	Revised 07/97; 02/06; 02/08; 10/09, 11/09

The need for specialized Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Assistive Technology (AT) services has been recognized by the Division of Services for the Blind (DSB), especially for the following groups for individual:

1. Those who have decreased visual acuity but who could benefit from improved illumination and color contrast.
2. Those who can access print through improved magnification or closed circuit TV systems.
Note: Each individual must be evaluated on three different CCTV systems.
Low Vision (On-Line DSB-2007 Evaluation with Video Magnification (CCTV) with instructions)
3. Those who require special guides, jigs, or tactical devices to perform in evaluation, training, or employment.
4. Those who require devices using speech synthesis or Braille output to assist them in accessing certain types of evaluation, training, or employment.
5. Those who are multiply disabled and require specialized home-site or work-site redesign or re-engineering services.

DSB provides these services through several venues and specialized staff. These include the following:

1. The Technology Resource Center, established in 1984, is housed at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (RBC) in Raleigh and provides services to individuals statewide. This Technology Resource Center is equipped with the latest in equipment and technology for use by individuals who are blind or visually impaired such as scanning systems, personal computers equipped with large print, speech, and Braille out put, different types of closed circuit televisions, portable note taking devices, and Braille and text printers. The Technology Resource Center functions as a resource to eligible individuals, parents, employers, school systems, and other interested individuals to acquaint them with available technology and equipment as they relate to potential educational and employment opportunities for individuals who are blind or visually impaired.

Note: When training is requested from the Rehabilitation Center's Technology Center, the Assistive Technology Instructor will need a copy of the equipment order so that training can be more readily planned as stated in the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind policy.

2. A Rehabilitation Engineer works with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, Employment Consultants, individuals, and employers to assist in successfully placing individuals in educational and employment settings and enhancing their ability to live independently. The Engineer is located in Raleigh and provides services to this area, and is also available to assist statewide with difficult and complicated situations such as job modifications.
3. Assistive Technology Consultants are located in the six district offices outside of Raleigh to provide assessment and recommendations for employment settings, Post-Secondary Training requirements, and minor residential modifications. They set-up and install equipment after

purchase, provide introduction to use of the equipment, and provide on-going minor adjustment, updates, and repairs. Their work often requires research and adjustment to locate the best products for the needs of the individual. If the individual needs more intense training in basic skills he/she are referred to the RBC for intense training in keyboarding or software skills training.

4. The State Agency has Assistive Technology Instructors in the offices without close access to the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind, The Assistive Technology Instructor mainly provide instruction to individuals served by Independent Living programs (ILS) and Independent Living Rehabilitation Program (ILR). However, time-limited or short term instruction can be provided to individuals served by the VR program on a job site when no other resources are available and the AT instructors are able to work it into their schedules without delaying instruction to individuals served by ILR or ILS.

The Assistive Technology staff work together to share information and to increase knowledge and awareness of devices for specific needs. The AT staff can only work with individuals who are in referral status, active status, or Post-Employment (PES) status with the VR program, and must be referred through the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. They also work with the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and the Employment Consultants in each office to develop employment opportunities, assist in job placement activities, and identify the possible need for work-site adaptations, modifications and AT needs. They can meet with companies to determine the job accessibility and to make recommendations to companies for modifications if needed.

Needs for AT services will be initially identified in the field services program by the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor. Such needs can include modifications or specialized equipment for use in evaluation, training or employment situation, as well as modifications of the living situation. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor will then refer the case to the Assistive Technology Engineer or Consultant using the Referral for Assistive Technology Services (On-Line DSB-4002at-VR Referral for Assistive Technology Services with instructions). The Engineer or Consultant will identify, access, and describe special or unique requirements and determine possible solutions. A report will be prepared and staffed with the referring Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor as soon as possible. If training is required on the adaptive equipment, the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor may refer the individual to the RBC for the training or to the Assistive Technology Instructors where appropriate.

Rehabilitation technology including telecommunications, sensory aids, and other technological aids and devices for eligible individuals who have an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), who are working toward an employment goal that requires specific technology to attain, regain, or maintain employment and who have the capability to use the equipment, are not subject to economic need requirements. This paragraph expires July 31, 2011.

DSB continues to support the North Carolina Assistive Technology Project (NCATP). Agency staff will continue to cooperate and participate in project activities to heighten awareness and provide comprehensive services as they relate to technology and assistive devices.