


LRS CHAPTER 4, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & GUIDANCE MANUAL

 LOUISIANA WORKFORCE COMMISSION <small>The Department of Labor</small>	Part 412.08	Name Motor Vehicle Modifications	Effective Date *June 29, 2020**
	Authorization Federal Register, Volume 81, Department of Education, 34 CFR 361, Part VI, State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program, §361.45, 361.46, 361.48, 361.50, 361.51, 361.52, 361.53, 361.54 and 2 CFR 200.407		

Motor vehicle modification services may be provided when an agreed upon competitive integrated employment goal has been identified on an IPE and such motor vehicle modifications are necessary for the consumer to participate in planned vocational rehabilitation services and subsequently enter or retain gainful employment.

I. SCOPE OF SERVICES

A. Motor vehicle modification services include the following:

1. Assessment - The assessment provides an evaluation of a consumer’s potential to drive a motor vehicle, determination of the type of modifications needed so the consumer can drive or ride safely, with recommendations for vehicle selection and driver training.
2. Vehicle modifications - Vehicle modifications are mechanical or structural changes to a passenger car, van, or other motor vehicle that permit an individual with a disability to safely drive or ride as a passenger. This includes mechanical or electrical devices added to a standard motor vehicle to control the accelerator, foot brake, turn signals, dimmer switch, steering wheelchair, and/or parking brake. It includes wheelchair lifts, ramps and van conversions. Vehicle modifications also include wheelchair or scooter loading devices which mount on the roof, in the passenger area, or in the trunk or other storage areas of a car, van, or other motor vehicle.
3. Driver training - Training provides instruction, including use of a driver simulator and behind-the-wheel training, needed for safe operation of a modified vehicle.

B. Timeline for Vehicle Modifications:

1. LRS will provide vehicle modifications costing over \$5,000 if the consumer is within one (1) year of being employment ready. If the consumer is not within one year of employment readiness and vehicle modifications are needed, an exception from the Director must be requested.

2. LRS will consider second vehicle modifications if:
 - a. The consumer is employed and it has been six (6) years since the first vehicle modification were completed with LRS assistance; or
 - b. Modifications to a vehicle are required as the consumer's disability has changed.
- C. Participation in the Cost of Services, Comparable Benefits, and Cost Effectiveness
1. Provision of motor vehicle modifications is not contingent upon consumer participation in the cost of services.
 2. Motor vehicle modification services are exempt from an exploration of comparable services/similar benefits. However, if an exempted service is known to be readily available from an alternative source at the time the service is needed to accomplish a rehabilitation objective in the consumer's IPE/Plan, the Counselor must use that source (including manufacturer's rebates).
 3. LRS will assist with the most cost-effective vehicle modifications that meet the consumer's transportation and/or driving needs including public transportation or vehicle leasing.
- D. Additional Criteria for Assistance with Vehicle Modifications:
1. Valid Driver's License/Permit – Required if the modification is made to enable the consumer to drive the vehicle or documentation of successful completion of a driver assessment or applicable pre-licensing training requirements for the consumer, provided by an approved LRS provider.
 2. Ownership of vehicle must be in the consumer's name, spouse's name, parent's name, or legal guardian's name before any modifications are actually started.
 3. Proof of liability insurance for vehicle being modified must be documented. If modifications are being completed on a vehicle that is part of the vendor's new vehicle inventory, coverage is provided by the vendor.

II. LIMITATIONS

A. LRS will not purchase any of the following:

- Vehicles for consumers. (Note: It is highly recommended that Counselors advise consumers to delay purchasing a vehicle until they have participated in the assessment and reviewed the results with their counselor.)
- Modifications to a vehicle, if the individual owns another vehicle that would meet transportation needs.
- Modifications to vehicles which do not meet the requirements of the Louisiana State Motor Vehicle Inspection.
- Modifications for driving a vehicle when the individual is not capable of driving with reasonable safety due to the limitations of the disability, as indicated by a Driver's Assessment Report, with which LRS concurs.
- Modifications to a van or to a truck if, with or without modification, an automobile would satisfy the consumer's need for transportation.
- Standard equipment or customary optional equipment that is ordinarily available when purchasing a new vehicle.

B. Modifications to Used Vehicles:

LRS will provide modifications to a used vehicle only after it has passed an inspection by a certified automotive mechanic, qualified mobility equipment dealer, and/or qualified driver assessment program. In these cases, a report regarding the vehicle's condition, suitability for the anticipated modification, and anticipated useful life of the vehicle must be provided. Counselors are encouraged to contact the AT Program Coordinator for technical assistance when requesting modifications to used vehicles.

C. Repair and Maintenance of Vehicle Modifications

1. If a defect in the modifications to a vehicle is discovered within the period of warranty on the modifications, LRS will require the vendor to repair or replace the modification.
2. LRS will neither repair nor replace motor vehicle modifications damaged by accident, vandalism or fire. Consumers who receive vehicle modification services must arrange for adequate insurance coverage for both the vehicle and modifications.
3. Routine vehicle modification maintenance (including repairs and replacement parts) will not be provided once the consumer is employed. Regional Managers may approve exceptions upon request.

III. EVALUATION OF NEED FOR MOTOR VEHICLE MODIFICATION SERVICES

Consumers who request motor vehicle modification services shall be required to undergo an evaluation of their ability to drive, their driver training needs and/or their vehicle modification needs. The following steps will be taking by the counselor.

A. Obtain a copy of the consumer's driver's license (if assessment includes driving).

1. If currently licensed, the consumer must provide the counselor a copy of the driver's license.

2. First time drivers or expired driver's license:

The consumer will need to provide verification of eligibility for licensure. The consumer must apply for a permit or license renewal with the Office of Motor Vehicles, providing a copy of the permit/license to the counselor. If denied a permit or license for medical reasons, the consumer must obtain a statement from the driver license examiner stating the reason for the denial. If the denial is due to a medical reason, the consumer can be referred for the driver assessment with a driver rehabilitation specialist who can issue a "Class E Temporary Medical Permit" for the driver assessment.

B. Determine if a neuropsychological evaluation is required (if assessment includes driving):

If the consumer has a history of brain injury, cerebral palsy, or other neurological conditions affecting perceptual, perceptual-motor and cognitive capacities, the counselor should authorize a neuropsychological evaluation or obtain available medical/psychological records describing the consumer's current functioning in these areas. In requesting the neuropsychological evaluation, the counselor should indicate that the results will be used as part of the driver assessment process. The psychologist should include statements regarding the consumer's fitness for operating a motor vehicle.

C. Select an Assessment Provider – The counselor will determine which type of evaluation is needed from the four categories listed below, choosing a provider from the Driver Evaluation Chart in Section 513 performing that type of evaluation.

1. Basic - Driver Evaluations for consumers who:

- Can independently transfer in and out of an automobile;
- Able to operate standard OEM (original equipment installed by manufacturer) to operate a vehicle; AND

- Need evaluation to determine if they can drive safely and independently due to functional limitations resulting from a disability.
2. Low Tech - Driver evaluations for consumers who meet at least one of these criteria:
- Are unable to operate standard OEM foot controls;
 - Are unable to transfer in and out of an automobile independently;
 - Have difficulty loading/unloading their wheelchair into a vehicle;
AND
 - For wheelchair users, must be able to independently perform level transfers in and out of their chair (as determined by a face-to-face assessment by the counselor or by a therapist or other medical professional, if needed).
3. High Tech - Driver evaluations for consumers who:
- Appear unable to operate/control a standard steering wheel due to limited upper extremity function (impaired strength, grip, range of motion in upper extremities.
 - Are unable to independently transfer in or out of the wheelchair and will need to drive from their wheelchair (as determined by a face-to-face assessment by the counselor or by documentation from a medical professional, if needed).
4. Transportation Evaluation –Modifications for Transportation Only - Non-driving consumers who:
- Need assistance to transfer in and out of the vehicle and/or
 - Need assistance to load/unload their wheelchair or other mobility aid (as determined by a face-to-face assessment by the counselor or by documentation from a medical professional, if needed).
- D. Obtain a prescription for the driving assessment as required by the selected assessment provider.
- E. Develop an IPE or complete an authorization for the evaluation and for necessary support services needed by the consumer such as transportation, maintenance, or PCA services.
- F. Referral packet and script will be forwarded to the provider who will schedule the assessment.

G. Review the assessment report.

The counselor will review the evaluation/assessment report's recommendations and determine the need for the suggested modifications and driver training.

The assessment report will suggest which vendors are approved for the purchase and installation of the vehicle modifications. If this is not included in the report, contact the assessment provider for this information. The assessment report will also make recommendations for driver training, including the number of hours of the training and any specific recommendations for training providers.

The report will be reviewed with the consumer to ensure understanding and agreement with the recommendations.

H. Driver Training Prior to Vehicle Modifications

Occasionally, the assessment report will recommend training prior to provision of the vehicle modifications. If so, the training must be completed prior to proceeding with the recommended modifications to the consumer's vehicle. This training will usually be provided in the training provider's vehicle.

In cases where the driver training is conducted in the consumer's vehicle, the consumer will be required to provide proof of collision, comprehensive, and liability insurance as required by current LRS policy.

IV. PURCHASING GUIDELINES FOR VEHICLE MODIFICATIONS

A. Informed Choice

The Counselor must discuss with the consumer the LRS approved Mobility Equipment Dealer and Driver Training Vendors and offer the consumer a choice from among these vendors. See Chapter 5, Parts 512 and 513 for lists of approved vendors.

B. Vehicle Modifications

To proceed with vehicle modifications, counselor must ensure the following additional criteria must be met:

1. Valid Driver's License/Permit – Required if the modification is made to enable the consumer to drive the vehicle.
2. Ownership of vehicle must be in the consumer's name, spouse's name, parent's name, or legal guardian's name before any modifications are actually started.
3. Verification that the vehicle meets the requirements of the Louisiana State Motor Vehicle Inspection.
4. Proof of liability insurance for vehicle being modified. The insurer will need to know the cost/value of the modifications before writing an insurance policy; therefore, consumers are advised to insure the vehicle prior to the installation of modifications, as would any vehicle owner. If modifications are being completed on a vehicle that is part of the vendor's new vehicle inventory, coverage is provided by the vendor.

Once modifications are completed, additional coverage for the cost/value of the modifications should be acquired. The Counselor should obtain a document indicating the vehicle to be modified is insured prior to proceeding with modifications.

C. Price Quote Procedures

1. Request quotes from at least three approved vendors if the vehicle modification/or total of all the vehicle's modifications exceed \$5,000.00 (If fewer than three vendors are available, obtain quotes from only available vendors).
2. If the consumer expresses a choice of vendors, the Counselor should obtain the quotes from those vendors.

3. If the Consumer chooses to use the Vendor submitting the lowest quote, then the Counselor need not apply Agency Policy relative to Consumer Participation in the Cost of Services for the purchase of assistive technology devices.
4. If the Consumer chooses to use a Vendor other than the one submitting the lowest quote, then the Consumer must pay the difference in cost between the lowest quote and the quote submitted by the chosen vendor.
5. Obtain written quotes. Telephone quotes are not acceptable for Vehicle Modifications. Give the Vendor a time limit for submitting a price quote, and include at least the following information as part of the request for a price quote:
 - a. Any features, drawings, and performance specifications.
 - b. Indicate the award as “all or none” or “as a package” if multiple items are involved.
 - c. Request for warranty information
 - d. Request estimated timeline for completion of modifications.
 - e. A request to include delivery and set-up costs (if applicable) in the price quote
 - f. Any particular specification.

For example: “the vendor will be responsible for the cost of pick-up and delivery, cost of adjustments, cost of repairs, etc. that could be required after delivery.”
6. Lowered Floor Modifications - A consumer that needs to enter a vehicle in their wheelchair/scooter usually will require a lowered floor conversion in their vehicle.
 - a. One option for consumers is to obtain a vehicle with a pre-existing lowered floor conversion. This option may be available if a vendor is identified by the consumer and the vehicle evaluator that meets the needed specifications and has already been converted with a lowered floor.
 - b. *If the consumer chooses to purchase a vehicle with pre-existing lowered floor conversion, the counselor may choose to pay for, with the prior approval of the Regional Manager, State Office and LWC, the cost for the lowered floor conversion.** This procedure applies

only to a pre-existing package of modifications, such as the Braun Entervan™ minivan or GoShichi™ pickup truck packages, and it must be on a vehicle approved by the lowered floor modification manufacturer.

To exercise this option, Regional Managers will need to receive an exception from the Director and Prior Approval from State Office following a review by the AT Program Coordinator. (This process can save half of the shipping costs of a lowered floor modification and 8 weeks' time savings over the traditional method of shipping an originally manufactured vehicle to a modifier vendor. Because the vehicle is in the inventory of a vendor, it is not possible to get competitive price quotes with this option. Therefore, it will require a special exception.)

7. Special consumer requests. Purchases of items by the consumer that are not included in the LRS-funded modifications (i.e. sound systems, custom accessories, etc.) shall be kept separate and apart from the LRS purchasing process.
8. Driver Training - Request price quotes for training from an LRS-approved provider (see Chapter 5, Part 513). Include a copy of the assessment report with the training quote request.

V. PLAN AND AWARE DRAFT AUTHORIZATION

- A. *A Prior Approval request is submitted to State Office via the Exception Request form and once all required approvals are received, State Office will notify the Regional Manager and Counselor to proceed with completing the IPE/Plan.** The completed IPE/Plan should be submitted to the District Supervisor for approval unless Counselor is on Independent Status. Upon approval of the IPE and, if required, any Prior Approval needed, the RCA/Counselor will enter the Authorization(s). *See V.C. below for further instruction on Prior Approval and Chapter 4, Part 411.1 for further instructions on Secondary Approval requirements.
- B. If the total of all items/services on any IPE/ Plan is equal to or greater than \$25,000, it shall be considered "high cost."** In these instances, all Counselors must have the IPE/Plan approved by both the District Supervisor and the Regional Manager.

Exception Requirement: If the cost of any single item or service/device will exceed the Vehicle Modifications fee schedule as listed below, the Counselor must request an exception. This should include:

- a written rationale for the excess in AWARE case notes;
- a completed RT Review Form;
- a completed Exception Request Form;
- obtain review and recommendation by the District Supervisor, the Regional Manager, AND
- submit to the Director for consideration of approval of the exception.

C. Prior Approval

Prior Approval must be obtained prior to purchasing certain goods and services.* This includes motor vehicle modifications or repairs. Assessments needed to determine the necessary motor vehicle modifications required and drivers training DO NOT require prior approval.

A prior approval request must be made to State Office to the Bureau Administrator of the CRP and Employment Services Bureau prior to an IPE being completed and any motor vehicle modifications/repairs being authorized/purchased. ***Upon review and receipt of appropriate approvals, the Regional Manager will be notified of approval/disapproval of the prior approval request and can proceed accordingly.****

VEHICLE MODIFICATIONS	
	MAXIMUM COST
SEDANS	
Passenger conversion only (wheelchair/scooter loader)	\$3,500.00
Driving controls only	\$4,000.00
Driving controls with wheelchair/scooter loading equipment	\$8,000.00
PICKUP TRUCKS and SUVs	
Passenger conversion only with wheelchair/scooter loading equipment	\$16,000.00
Driving controls only	\$4,000.00
Driving controls with wheelchair/scooter loading equipment	\$8,000.00
Driving controls with wheelchair/scooter loading equipment and entry seat system	\$20,000.00
Driver, from a wheelchair	\$56,000.00
VANS	
Passenger conversion only (occupied wheelchair)	\$23,000.00
Driver, transferring to a driver seat	\$32,000.00
Driver, from a wheelchair	\$56,000.00
ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES – DRIVER TRAINING	
Sedan	\$2,000
Van	\$4,000

VI. METHOD OF PAYMENT

Prior to the Counselor/Counselor Associate authorizing payment to the vendor/provider after actual delivery of item(s)/services the following must be met:

- A. The provider must provide an invoice in order to receive payment. If the provider/vendor does not have an invoice, the provider may use LRS' form RS-22 Standard Invoice.
- B. The Consumer must verify that services were secured as outlined on the invoice. The Consumer can either write anywhere on the invoice that the goods and/or services have been received or submit in writing (e-mail acceptable), a note to the Counselor indicating that the goods/services have been received. By doing so the Consumer is requesting LRS to make payments to the provider.
- C. Vendor/Provider submits invoice to LRS for payment as outlined in A-B above.
- D. Counselors are authorized to withhold payment for services until A-C above are received. If there are disagreements or evidence of significant departures from the original agreements then an administrative review of the case will be conducted to determine the appropriate, legal resolution.

VII. EVALUATORS, MOBILITY EQUIPMENT DEALERS, AND TRAINERS

An up-to-date listing of approved Mobility Equipment Dealers, Installers, Evaluators and Trainers can be found in Chapter 5, Vendors Parts 512 & 513. Counselors are encouraged to call the Assistive Technology Program Coordinator for any questions they may have regarding this list.