

# LOUISIANA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF

Service Provision Manual\*

\*Subject to change with 30 days notice to contractors.  
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# INTRODUCTION

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf (LCD), which was organized by ACT 629 of the 1980 Louisiana Legislation, is to:

- Promote, coordinate, and facilitate accessibility of all public and private services to persons who are D/deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing, or those with Speech Disorders.
- Serve as advocates for the needs and rights of deaf persons – collect information concerning deafness and provide for the dissemination of this information.
- Develop and implement a statewide program to insure continuity of services for deaf people.
- Inform D/deaf citizens, parents, and families of the availability of programs and services for D/deaf adults and children at all levels of state and local government.
- Promote the training of interpreters and assist in the establishment of interpreter training programs.
- License interpreters and maintain a registry of approved and licensed interpreters, with the intent of endorsement of obtaining Certification (RID, BEI or other as appropriate).
- Provide all services of the commission to D/deaf people with visual disorders.
- Provide interpreter services to the D/deaf in accordance with rules and regulations adopted by the Commission.
- Establish, administer, and promote a statewide program to provide access to all public telecommunications services by persons who are D/deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing, or those with Speech Disorders.

## MISSION

The mission of the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf is to implement the provision of services relating to accessibility for Louisiana citizens that are D/deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing and/or those with speech disorders. Specifically, assisting in situations where the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 does not or could not apply. Additionally, assisting in situations whereby citizens are not already receiving other similar services or goods such as from the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services or the Department of Veterans Affairs.

In alignment with fulfilling this mission, the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf will not condone nor assist any person or entity with action or services that do not follow the responsibilities and requirements of the ADA 1990. Further, the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf will not condone nor provide equipment and/or services that are not ethically compliant with the statutes and regulations that establish the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf.

This revised Service Provision Manual, formerly the Technical Guidance Manual, is designed to provide service provision guidelines for the collaboration of service delivery between the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf and the Regional Service Contractors in the delivery of accessibility services and goods mandated by ACT 629 of the 1980 Louisiana Legislature and related amendments; and ensure that quality, cost-effective services are delivered to eligible Louisiana constituents in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations.

# TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT PROGRAM (TEP)

## ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

Individuals must provide documentation of hearing loss, combined hearing and vision loss, or a speech disorder (acceptable documentation of sensory disorder may include: Medical Doctor, Audiologist, Speech/Language Pathologist and/or Therapist, Rehabilitation Counselor), proof of Louisiana residency (this may be a valid Louisiana driver license or identification card, utility bill, SSI letter, or face sheet from nursing facility), and Social Security card. Applications for individuals under the age of eighteen require a parent/guardian's signature as agreement of responsibility for loaned equipment.

Telecommunications Equipment Program Process: Telecommunications equipment is loaned upon availability to Louisiana residents with a limit of one per household per equipment. Exceptions may be approved by LCD staff.

## REGIONAL SERVICE CENTER RESPONSIBILITIES

Equipment Acquisitions – Regional Service Center (RSC) staff are responsible for ensuring that available equipment is maintained in stock for distribution to clients. RSC coordinators will anticipate clients' needs, notify LCD staff of equipment needs, and arrange for acquisition of equipment from LCD. Upon issue or return of LCD equipment, both staff from LCD and the local RSC will verify in writing the make, model, and serial number of each amplified or adaptive device being issued or received; and sign and date the verification document.

Issuing Equipment to a New Client – Individuals applying for equipment will be directed to the RSC serving their parish. The RSC may only serve individuals residing within their region. RSC staff will schedule an appointment for the individual to apply, provide required documentation, and provide training on use and care of equipment.

RSC staff will explain the application process to the client and verify eligibility through appropriate supporting documentation, which includes: proof of identity (including SSN), residency, and hearing loss and/or speech disorder. Client information must be entered into the LCD Consumer Database online, and copies of all documents must be uploaded to the appropriate areas. Application forms may **not** be mailed to clients. Equipment must be provided directly to the client or their representative in person and must not be mailed or dropped off, except in the cases of extenuating circumstances whereas prior approval has been given by LCD.

Prior to issuing the equipment, the RSC will inspect all equipment to ensure it is in proper working order and all parts/accessories are included, verify all equipment is tagged "Property State of Louisiana Commission for the Deaf", and enter all equipment information as "Received- New" into the LCD Online Database, to include make, model and serial number in the required fields. The RSC will provide a copy of the Condition of Acceptance form to each client, along with training in the use of all equipment distributed.

Issuing New Equipment to an Existing Client – Prior to issuing new equipment for an existing client, the RSC will verify the client is not requesting duplicate equipment. If client requests duplicate equipment, RSC staff will take action to secure loaned equipment before issuing new equipment, or obtain written statement from consumer for lost equipment. RSC staff will enter all new equipment information as "Received- Existing" into the LCD Online Database, to include make, model and serial number into the required fields.

Equipment Returns – Any equipment that is malfunctioning should be returned to the RSC to determine if the problem can be corrected or if it requires replacement. Equipment determined to be broken due to normal wear and tear with no obvious abuse will be exchanged. Equipment deemed by the RSC to be in good condition with all parts and accessories included may be issued again. The RSC must return all broken equipment to the LCD office with an itemized list of equipment and serial numbers. RSC staff will ensure the removal of LCD property stickers and any identifying information of the client. Staff must revise the LCD Online Database to reflect the specific equipment has been “Returned.”

Lost/Stolen/Damaged Equipment – Any equipment which is lost, stolen, damaged due to neglect, abuse, or lack of proper care will not be exchanged without written explanation from the consumer. LCD reserves the right to refuse to issue replacement equipment. Staff must revise the LCD Online Database to reflect the specific equipment as “lost” or “destroyed” and upload any written documentation as proof of condition.

Client Confidentiality – In accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), all client information and records are to be kept confidential. RSCs are prohibited from disclosing or making use of client information and records for any purpose not directly connected with the administration of the Telecommunications Equipment Program. In order to receive equipment, clients are required to provide all personal information to be added to the LCD Online Database and to sign the Consent and Privacy Agreement and National Voter Registry Act (NVRA form) as a condition of acceptance. A copy of the Notice of Privacy Practice must be given to the client for their records. RSCs may not require a client to complete or sign any additional paperwork unrelated to the Telecommunications Equipment Program in order to receive equipment.

Client Agreement- RSC staff will print the Consent and Privacy Agreement and Voter Registration documents (NVRA) from the Personal Info page upon completion. Staff will also download and print a copy of the Notice of Privacy Practices form to give to client. Client must check documents for accuracy and sign the Consent and Privacy Agreement page and the NVRA form for their file.

Billing – All information must be entered into the LCD Online Database with copies of supporting documentation as required. An Equipment Summary Report must be printed from database and attached to RSC invoice by the 15th of the following month for payment as outlined in agency contract.

## CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The client is responsible for the following:

- Providing documentation to the RSC so they can determine eligibility.
- Reading, signing, and adhering to all conditions set forth on the Consent and Privacy Agreement form.
- Purchasing rechargeable batteries. The client should not attempt to repair internal parts of any equipment.
- If the client moves out of state, they must return all equipment to the RSC before leaving the state. If the client moves to another location in Louisiana, they are responsible for reporting the new address and phone number to the RSC.

Any problems or questions regarding the telecommunications equipment are to be referred to the RSC for further assistance.

# HEARING AID PROGRAM (HAP)

## ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

The eligibility requirements for this program are listed below. Consumers may be eligible for replacement of aids every five years, with possible exceptions made by LCD office for extenuating circumstances.

- Louisiana residents ages fifty (50) or older.
- Have a hearing loss Pure Tone Average of 40 dB or greater in either ear, which is documented by an evaluation and audiogram performed by an LCD approved Audiologist and/or hearing aid instruments specialist selected by the consumer from a pre-approved LCD vendor list.
- Meet the LCD financial criteria (i.e. no greater than 250% of the 2018 U.S. Department of Health Poverty Level). Acceptable forms of income verification include: employment records (check stubs, etc), Social Security compensation, tax returns/W-2's, unemployment compensation, and other written statements as approved by the LCD office.

## REGIONAL SERVICE CENTER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Regional Service Center will check eligibility requirements for all potential consumers as outlined above and will coordinate all hearing aid program services procedures in accordance with LCD requirements as outlined below. Staff will support LCD office in ensuring all services have been completed within ninety (90) days of consumer's first appointment at center office, and follow all billing guidelines as required.

### OUTREACH PHASE

The Regional Service Center (RSC) shall be responsible for requesting names from the LCD Hearing Aid Referral List as appropriate, up to the maximum annual amount allotted to their region per contract. Upon receiving the list of names, the RSC shall attempt to contact each consumer up to 3 times by phone and in writing (at least one time should be in written form). If the consumer is unable to be reached within 30 days, the RSC staff shall leave the consumer's name on the list, and document the attempts made and the outcome. The consumer's name shall be left on the list for up to 2 years in the LCD database. For consumers that have been reached, RSC staff shall follow the guidelines outlined in the next section.

### APPLICATION PHASE

- Schedule a convenient time for the applicant's initial appointment and coordinate all necessary arrangements, including interpreting services when applicable.
- Explain the HAP process and requirements to the consumer, ensuring the consumer is prepared for their appointment. Required documentation include:
  - Proof of residency (government issued ID such as a driver's license, electric bill, or other documentation as approved by LCD office).
  - Proof of age (government issued ID such as a driver's license or passport, birth/baptism records, Passport, healthcare facility records, or other documentation as approved by LCD office).
  - Proof of income (employment records including check stubs, unemployment records, Social Security compensation, tax returns, or other written documentation as approved by LCD office).
- Collect all personal information and required eligibility documents. Enter this information and upload supporting documentation, to include: residency, age, and income verification requirements, into the LCD Online Database.
- Provide client with the Notice of Privacy Practices from the Louisiana Department of Health
- Ensure client confirms accuracy of Personal information and signs the Consent and Privacy Agreement while they are in the office, which should be printed from the Personal Info page upon completion.
- Prepare an individual case file for each applicant with copies of signed consent agreement, appropriate HAP tab printed from database, and supporting documentation as listed above.

## MEDICAID PREAUTHORIZATION

In the event a consumer has been preauthorized for eligibility through Medicaid, the RSC will:

- Contact the applicant (via phone or schedule in person) and explain the HAP process.
- Enter all personal information into database (ensuring accuracy) and upload Medicaid preauthorization form as proof of eligibility.
- Print the Consent and Privacy Agreement and Voter Registration documents (NVRA) from the Personal Info page upon completion. Download and print a copy of the Notice of Privacy Practices form.
- Have consumer check documents for accuracy and sign the Consent and Privacy Agreement page and the NVRA form.
- In the event the consumer is not meeting in-person, all documents must be mailed to client. Personal Info page and NVRA should be signed and returned to the RSC.
- Prepare an individual case file for each applicant with copies of the signed agreement and supporting documentation, to include: Personal info page with consent of agreement signature, appropriate HAP tab printed from online database, and Medicaid preauthorization form.

## DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY

- If the applicant **does not pre-qualify** (according to residency, age, Medicaid eligibility, or income verification), notify the applicant, close the file, and maintain copies of documentation.
- If the applicant **does meet the pre-qualification requirements** (benefits, residency, age, income), follow the steps listed below.
  - Provide the consumer with a list of LCD-approved audiology vendors and allow consumer them to select their preferred vendor.
  - Schedule appointment with vendor of applicant's choice, coordinate any necessary accessibility services (i.e. interpreter, applicant's family member, applicant advocate), and provide them notice of the appointment date and time.
  - Inform consumer of the importance of completing the LCD HAP Consumer Satisfaction Survey upon completion of all services. Survey will be provided via print and online by LCD approved hearing aid vendors at follow up visit.
  - Maintain a copy of appointment date/time in the applicant's file.

**Billing** – All information must be entered into the LCD Online Database with copies of supporting documentation as required. A HAP summary report must be printed from database and attached to RSC invoice by the 15th of the following month for payment as outlined in agency contract.

**Important Note:** The RSC is no longer responsible for completing the previous requirements for phases 2 and 3. Beginning September 01, 2020, all determination of eligibility based on audiogram results will be conducted by LCD-approved vendors, to include any follow up appointments necessary. Vendors will be responsible for submitting all documentation and invoices directly to the LCD office according to the guidelines set forth in the Vendor Technical Guidance policy. The LCD office will update the remaining consumer information in the online database when final invoices and documentation have been received. Service Centers should check consumer's file 90 days after initial appointment to ensure completion (to include uploaded audiogram and invoice). Staff should notify the office of LCD if any consumer's have not been finalized within the 90 day requirement.

## HEARING AID VENDOR RESPONSIBILITIES

To be eligible to dispense hearing aids for the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf, vendors must be licensed by the Louisiana Board of Hearing Aid Dealers, the Louisiana Board of Examiners for Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, or be a licensed physician in good standing with the Louisiana Board of Medical Examiners and be included on the LCD-approved hearing aid vendor list. Vendors must agree to the following:

- Vendors must be registered with the State of Louisiana.
- To provide a comprehensive hearing evaluation. (If client had a hearing test conducted by one of LCD's approved vendors within 3 months of the application date, their selected vendor may use professional discretion to determine if an additional hearing test is required.)
- To dispense hearing aids (monaural or binaural) that best meet the needs of the consumer and provide a 30 day trial period, which may be extended to no more than 45 days for difficult fits.
- To provide custom ear molds as needed; a 30 day supply of batteries; one hearing aid check (follow-up) at least five (5) days following dispense/fitting.
- To complete and sign the Hearing Aid Vendor Product Information form for each consumer receiving hearing aids.
- To provide Consumer Satisfaction Survey with enclosed envelope to each consumer and/or inform consumer how to navigate online survey on LCD website.
- Vendor will perform hearing aid dispensing services in accordance with LCD requirements in order to serve as a dispenser for the LCD hearing aid program; and to provide all consumer services and invoicing within ninety (90) days of consumer's first appointment with Regional Service Center.
- To provide LCD with invoice for each consumer provided hearing aids and professional services at a rate of \$750 per hearing aid, which includes consumer's evaluation, hearing aid(s), ear molds, batteries, and all professional services (fittings and follow-ups).
- To provide all documentation and invoicing in accordance with the LCD Technical Guidance Manual for Vendors.

## CONSUMER RESPONSIBILITIES

The client shall do the following:

- Keep their scheduled appointment, or notify the RSC if they are unable to keep or need to reschedule, as soon as possible.
- Provide all required documentation to the RSC so they can determine eligibility.
- Read and sign the Consent and Privacy agreement form, and adhere to all conditions set forth in the form.
- Notify the Hearing Aid vendor of any problems with fitting or adjustments. The client should not attempt to repair internal parts of any equipment.
- If the client moves to another location in Louisiana, they are responsible for reporting the new address and phone number to the RSC. LCD expects the hearing aid(s) to last a minimum of 5 years, and replacement prior to five years will only be considered in extenuating circumstances. The client should contact LCD or their RSC with any concerns regarding replacement or repairs if within 5-year time frame.



# INTERPRETING SERVICES (TERP)

When other resources are unavailable, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 has been honored or used to disqualify the responsibility to provide access, the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf provides limited interpreting services to ensure consumers' access to public and private services. Contractors are responsible for adhering to their LCD contract, including Interpreting Services. Assignment sheets must include the following information:

- Assignment Date
- Consumer Name
- Interpreter Name
- LCD Certification status
- Detailed description of assignment (i.e. job interview)
- Actual start and end times of assignment
- Number of hours billed

Billing – Interpreters can bill for portal to portal when the assignment is over 25 miles from current location. The map must be included from interpreter's beginning address to address of assignment. Contractors may bill no-shows and cancelled (<24 hours) assignments as a two-hour minimum of the assigned time, whichever is greater, unless the interpreter is reassigned. Emergencies (not routine after-hours assignments) requiring immediate scheduling after 5 pm and before 8 am, and state-approved holidays (New Year's Day, Mardi Gras, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day) may be billed as a three-hour minimum. Assignments must be documented with a signature by the consumer, interpreter and by a representative with the organization requesting the services, including no-shows.

All information must be entered into the LCD Online Database. The interpreter summary report must be printed and attached to the Regional Service Center (RSC) invoice by the 15th of the following month for payment as outlined in the agency contract.

## INTERPRETING SERVICES MAY BE APPROVED IN THE FOLLOWING REALMS

- Governmental Services – services of state and local government when interpreters are essential to the provision of services (public access) and not otherwise covered (or expressly excluded from) the responsibilities of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
- Medical – emergency medical services ONLY.
- Occupational – those consumer not receiving assistance from other state agencies, such as Louisiana Rehabilitation Services may receive assistance for job interviews, job orientation, and other job-related situations, with the idea that Advocacy for accessibility on the job is the goal.
- Public/Community/Civil Service – Public meetings or functions which provide information considered essential for persons who are Deaf- particularly those of Emergency Management, disaster or weather related incidents.
- Behavioral Health – urgent Behavioral Health Services when other prior contractual arrangements have not been made or otherwise unavailable and provision of service is critical for the mental health of the consumer.
- Other Situations – situations not provided for above, by L.R.S. 46:2361 (Louisiana Interpreter's Law) through L.R.S. 46:2372; other provisions, or where circumstances do not allow for the provision of an interpreter by other sources even if mandated by law, where is needed to protect the Deaf citizens' interest, rights, and privileges. These assignments must have approval from LCD Director before assigning an interpreter.

## INTERPRETING SERVICES THAT WILL NOT BE APPROVED ARE IN THE FOLLOWING REALMS

- Religious – religious assignments are the responsibility of the religious organization, individual, or family.
- Educational – Elementary and secondary education (K-12) programs are the responsibility of the Louisiana Department of Education or the parish school system. Post-secondary academic, vocational, and technical programs are the responsibility of the school, college, or the state vocational rehabilitation program.
- Personal – general day to day activities, such as shopping, recreational, and entertainment remain the responsibility of the service provider, individual, or family.
- **Special consideration provided for Deaf-Blind.**

# SUPPORT SERVICE PROVIDER SERVICES

## ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

The Louisiana Commission for the Deaf (LCD) provides SSP services to Louisiana residents who are DeafBlind as defined by US legislature. Eligible participants will have all the following:

- Central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in their better eye with corrective lenses or a visual field defect such as Usher Syndrome, a genetic disease which causes hearing loss and retinitis pigmentosa (RP). RP causes night-blindness and a loss of peripheral vision (side vision) through the progressive degeneration of the retina.
- Chronic hearing loss so severe that most speech cannot be understood.
- Extreme difficulty in doing daily life activities, participating in social activities, or getting a job on their own.

If an individual cannot have their hearing and vision properly measured, but they have severe hearing and visual disabilities that make it extremely difficult to be independent, they may still be eligible for the program.

Support Service Provider (SSP) services are those delivered by an individual who is trained to provide sighted guide information that is visual, environmental, or social, to a DeafBlind consumer to empower the consumer to live independently. The SSP may provide visual and environmental information via tactile sign language, spoken English, or other methods of communication for persons with deaf-blindness. SSPs work one-on-one with a person who is DeafBlind to facilitate communication and act as a sighted guide for consumer-directed activities in the community. With the provision of SSP services, the DeafBlind are able to fully participate in activities of their respective communities with independence and self-confidence. Contractors are responsible for adhering to the terms of their LCD contract.

Support Service Provider Log must include:

- Support Service Provider Name
- Date of Assignment
- Client's Name
- General description of assignment (i.e. grocery, social, medical)
- Actual start and end times of assignment, including portal to portal if necessary.
- Number of hours billed

## CONSUMER RESPONSIBILITIES

Applicants must register with the SSP statewide program through the appropriate Regional Service Center. Personal Information must be entered into the LCD online database, to include: name, social security number, address, proof of eligibility, and preferred SSP when applicable. Consumers must abide by all state and local agency requirements as defined in written policy and procedures.

## REGIONAL SERVICE CENTER RESPONSIBILITIES

A copy of the Notice of Privacy Practice must be given to the client for their records, and client must sign the Consent and Privacy Agreement printed from the Personal Info tab. Staff must explain policy and procedures with all consumers, to include consumer's allotted hours per month and additional request procedures. Staff will support consumer's in tracking their hours and communicate with both LCD office and consumer if additional hours are needed.

Billing – Assignments must be documented with signatures by both Consumer and Support Service Provider. All information must be entered monthly into the LCD Online Database per consumer with supporting documentation uploaded to required fields. SSP summary report must be printed and attached to Regional Service Center (RSC) invoice by the 15th of the following month for payment as required by agency contract.

# NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION ACT (NVRA)

## NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION ACT (NVRA)

In accordance with the National Voter Registration Act, the staff of the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf and Regional Service Centers will offer assistance for consumers applying to register to vote. Staff and contractors will also document having made this assistance available at application by having the consumer or their representative sign the NVRA declaration form. RSCs must follow all policies, including person-to-person or mail-in procedures as outlined in the NVRA Technical Guidance.

NVRA Training can be found in the [LCD Online Annual Training Resource Tool](#). All new employees (including student workers, volunteers and contract workers) must be trained on NVRA within 30 days of employment. Existing employees must review this training annually. Agency Directors must ensure upon the employee's completion of training that they fully understand their responsibility.