

LOUISIANA COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF

Service Provision Manual*

*Subject to change with 30 days' notice to
contractors. Revised 04/2022

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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 Legislature, is to:

- Promote, coordinate, and facilitate accessibility of all public and private services to persons who are d/Deaf, DeafBlind, hard of hearing through informing, educating, and advising businesses, industries, and other sectors on effective communication and the needs of d/Deaf, DeafBlind, and hard of hearing individuals to promote and ensure accessibility to public services.
- Serve as advocates for the needs and rights of d/Deaf, DeafBlind, and hard of hearing people
- Collect information concerning deafness and provide for the dissemination of this information.
- Develop and implement a statewide program to insure continuity of services for d/Deaf, DeafBlind, and hard of hearing people
- Inform, educate, and advise d/Deaf citizens, parents, and families of the availability of programs and services for d/Deaf, DeafBlind, and hard of hearing 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.
- Establish, administer, and promote a statewide program to standardize interpreting services for those who are d/Deaf, DeafBlind, or hard of hearing.

MISSION

The mission of the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf is to engage, empower, and enrich the lives and opportunities of Louisiana's d/Deaf, DeafBlind and hard of hearing people through the implementation and provision of services relating to accessibility- 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.

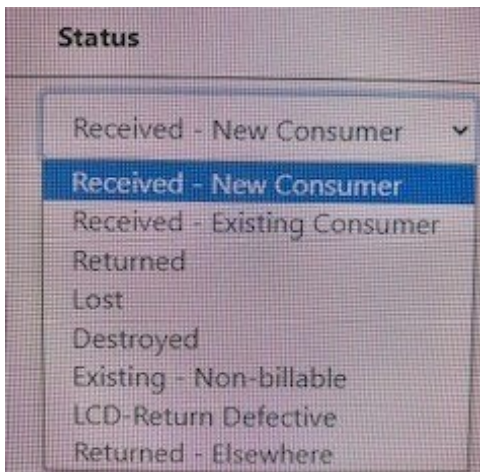
TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT ACCESS PROGRAM (TAP)

ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

Individuals must provide documentation of hearing loss, or combined hearing and vision loss (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 unique equipment piece per household. Exceptions may be approved by LCD staff.

REGIONAL SERVICE CENTER RESPONSIBILITIES



LCD Online Database Equipment Key

- Received- New Consumer-
New LCD Consumer receiving equipment
- Received -Existing Consumer-
Existing LCD Consumer receiving equipment
- Returned-
Equipment is in the possession of RSC and no longer with the consumer
- Lost-
Equipment is unable to be located by consumer
- Destroyed-
Equipment is beyond repair due to various circumstances
- Existing- Non-billable-
Equipment was received by consumer in time frame in which RSC is unable to charge LCD
- Returned elsewhere-
Equipment for consumer was returned to RSC outside of primary location

TAP Cont.

Equipment Acquisitions – Regional Service Center (RSC) staff are responsible for ensuring that available equipment is maintained in stock for distribution to consumers. RSC coordinators will anticipate consumers' needs, and notify LCD staff of equipment needs based on available inventory on a quarterly basis and per methods established by LCD. Upon receipt of LCD equipment order at RSC location, the RSC TAP coordinator will verify the make, model, and serial number of each amplified or adaptive device received and input all aforementioned data for each equipment type into the LCD Consumer Database as "available inventory" for verification against order by LCD staff.

**If any equipment is received by RSC staff and is defective due to manufacturing, the equipment must be logged into the database as "LCD-Return Defective." RSC should notify LCD upon realization of defect.

Issuing Equipment to a New Consumer – 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 consumer and verify eligibility through appropriate supporting documentation, which includes: proof of identity (including SSN), residency, and hearing loss and/or speech disorder. Consumer information must be entered into the LCD Online Database online in order to apply, and copies of all verification documents must be uploaded to the appropriate areas. Equipment must be provided directly to the consumer 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. Paper application forms may **NOT** be mailed to consumers without LCD prior approval.

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. The RSC will provide training on use of all equipment distributed to the consumer on the same day equipment is issued. A copy of the Condition of Acceptance form must be given to each consumer for their records.

****RSC staff issuing equipment to a new LCD consumer shall log all information into the LCD Online Database, per the appropriate Model and Serial number, under "Received- New Consumer."**

Issuing Equipment to an Existing Consumer – Prior to issuing new equipment to an existing consumer, the RSC will verify the consumer is not requesting duplicate equipment. If consumer requests duplicate equipment, RSC staff will take action to secure loaned equipment before issuing new equipment, or obtain written statement from consumer for lost or destroyed equipment.

****RSC staff issuing equipment to an existing LCD consumer shall log all information into the LCD Online Database, per the appropriate Model and Serial number, under "Received- Existing Consumer."**

TAP Cont.

Equipment Returns – Any equipment may be exchanged for replacement due to regular wear and tear with no obvious signs of abuse. Equipment should be returned to the RSC to determine if a problem can be corrected or if it requires replacement.

- **Returned Equipment (Reusable)** – Equipment deemed by the RSC to be in good condition with all parts and accessories included may be issued again.
 - **RSC staff must revise the LCD Online Database to reflect the specific equipment under the consumer record has been “Returned” and then reentered into the LCD Online Database as “Available Inventory”.
- **Returned Equipment (not for reuse)** – If equipment is broken or obsolete, RSC staff will ensure the removal of any LCD property stickers and any identifying information of the consumer. The RSC must return all broken or obsolete equipment quarterly to the LCD office with an itemized list of equipment and serial numbers. Method of return will be established by LCD.
 - **RSC staff must revise the LCD Online Database to reflect the specific equipment under the consumer record has been “Returned.”
- Lost/Stolen or Destroyed Equipment – Any equipment which is lost/stolen, or destroyed 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... Lost or destroyed equipment due to weather-related events, house fires, or other extraordinary events will be replaced.
 - RSC staff must revise the LCD Online Database to reflect the specific equipment under the consumer record has been “lost” or “destroyed” and upload any written documentation has proof of condition.
- Repeat Consumers – In the event a consumer returns a piece equipment due to unsatisfactory or defectiveness or requests additional equipment since their last RSC visit, the RSC may exchange or issue equipment for a new or different piece, however will not be allowed to bill LCD again if the consumer had already been served and billed to LCD within a **three (3) month time frame.**
 - RSC staff must revise the LCD Online Database consumer record to reflect the specific equipment has been issued as “Existing- Non-Billable.”

Consumer Confidentiality – In accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), all consumer information and records are to be kept confidential. RSCs are prohibited from disclosing or making use of consumer information and records for any purpose not directly connected with the administration of the Telecommunications Equipment Program. In order to receive equipment, consumers 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 consumer for their records. RSCs may not require a consumer to complete or sign any additional paperwork unrelated to the Telecommunications Equipment Program in order to receive equipment.

Consumer 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 consumer. Consumer 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. Only items marked “Received-New Consumer”

TAP Cont.

and “Received Existing Consumer” will be billed according to LCD Fee Schedule. Only one consumer, regardless of quantity of equipment, will be counted for payment.

CONSUMER RESPONSIBILITIES

The RSC is responsible for ensuring that each consumer provides 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 consumer should not attempt to repair internal parts of any equipment.
- If the consumer moves out of state, they must return all equipment to the RSC before leaving the state. If the consumer 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 requirement 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 contacting each consumer on the Hearing Aid Wait List in the order they are submitted. RSC staff must attempt to contact each consumer a minimum of three (3) times by phone and in writing (at least one time shall be in written form with formal RSC lettering). If the consumer is unable able to be reached within 30 days, after various attempts via secondary and referral contacts, the RSC staff shall leave the consumer's name on the wait list, and document the attempts made and the outcome in the LCD Online Database. The consumer's name shall be updated with "Unable to Contact" and will be left on the list for up to three (3) additional months. Once timeframe has passed, and if no contact has been successful, the RSC staff may "Cancel" the entry from the Waitlist. It is advised that RSC coordinators document any "cancel" due to "unable to contact". If the consumer contacts the RSC after the allowable timeframe, they must be added back onto the list as a first come, first serve basis. 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 into the LCD Online Database and upload supporting documentation, to include: residency, age, and income verification requirements. .
- Provide consumer with the Notice of Privacy Practices from the Louisiana Department of Health

HAP Cont.

- Ensure consumer 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

RSC must run each individual from the HAP Waitlist against the Medicaid Database. Only one RSC staff should have access to this database, granted by LCD staff. In the event a consumer has Medicaid and can be verified in database, RSC staff must download a copy of their Medicaid Authorization which preauthorizes eligibility for LCD HAP Program. 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 consumer. 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 vendor name, appointment date/time in the applicant's file in LCD Online Database.

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

HAP Cont.

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 consumers 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 consumer 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. Invoices and supporting documentation should be emailed directly to LCD-HAPInvoices@la.gov

CONSUMER RESPONSIBILITIES

The RSC is responsible for ensuring that each consumer provides 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 consumer should not attempt to repair internal parts of any equipment.
- If the consumer 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 consumer 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.

TERP Cont.

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**

LCD ONLINE DATABASE TRAINING and NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION ACT

LCD Online Database Registration and Training

Each RSC staff member who will need access to the LCD Online database must first undergo a series of trainings, to include Health Information Privacy Practice (HIPAA) and National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), and have their Regional Service Center Director sign off to verify completion. To access the trainings, please visit the [LCD Online Registration and Annual Training Resource Tool](#).

Then click **Log in as Guest**

Go to **Course Listings** at top of page

Scroll down to **Louisiana Commission for the Deaf**

You will see two courses- One is **LCD Annual Training** for all RSC staff to complete; Other is **LCD Resource** which is a library of documents and forms.

Password for both is **LCD!!**

At the bottom of the trainings page you will see a separate website

https://appengine.egov.com/apps/la/LCD/new_user_request which you must follow to upload a signed copy of your user application to verify you have completed the trainings. You will then receive your own username and application via email. These are unique per user, so please save in a private location.

Trainings should be completed annually with verification subject to review by LCD. Due to Health Information Privacy Practice (HIPAA) regulations, it is imperative for Regional Service Centers to discontinue the rights of any and all former employees, regardless of their reason for leaving, within 24 hours of resignation. Please submit an email to LCD Program Manager with the employee's name and resignation date.

Their access will be removed upon receipt of email. In addition, please notify the LCD office of any employee of the Regional Service Center who will be out of work for longer than 30 days consecutively. These employees will have their access suspended and reinstated only upon reentry to work.

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.

