Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired

Rehabilitation Technology Guidance Document

2024

Rehabilitation Technology Services

The Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) Rehabilitation Technology Services are designed to optimize employment and independent living outcomes of individuals with vision impairments, including individuals who also have other disabilities; to provide technical support to DBVI and Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) staff; and to provide rehabilitation technology services to current or prospective employers of persons with vision impairments and those with multiple disabilities.

Rehabilitation Technology Services seeks to increase public awareness of the availability of assistive technology and its proper implementation to enhance the employability of persons with vision or multiple impairments.

Rehabilitation Technology Services creates individualized solutions by employing the most currently available and most appropriate assistive technology, professional techniques and practices.

Rehabilitation Technology Services works cooperatively with other DBVI services and team members to empower those persons with vision and multiple impairments to achieve their greatest possible level of independence.

Rehabilitation Technology Services comprise the following areas of responsibility.

1. Technical Support
   Members of the Rehabilitation Technology Services staff provide technical support to customers, DBVI field staff, VRCBVI staff, college and university professionals, and current and prospective employers of individuals with vision impairments and persons with multiple impairments. Responsibilities in this regard include conducting extensive customer evaluations, developing conceptual solutions, and translating these solutions into effective workstation design or restructuring. Support includes installation of the assistive technology; follow-up with the customer, vocational rehabilitation counselor and employer as needed; and repair or replacement of malfunctioning assistive technology equipment.

2. Consultation
   Rehabilitation Technology Specialists are available for on-site consultation with current and prospective employers of individuals with vision impairments and persons with multiple disabilities as a technical resource where questions exist with regard to the modification of equipment on the work site. The Rehabilitation Technology Specialists conduct proper selection, installation and use of assistive technology.

3. Coordination of Services and Technology
   The Rehabilitation Technology Services staff provides training to agency staff in the effective use of the assistive technology as needed. The Rehabilitation Technology

Services staff researches new assistive devices and technology to remain current on the latest techniques and trends. Rehabilitation Technology Specialists also develop, build, test and implement custom assistive technology solutions where off-the-shelf technology does not exist or is less appropriate.

DBVI Rehabilitation Services work to provide technical resources to various committees and groups as assigned; ensuring that these groups are fully aware of the latest implementation techniques and technology. Members of the Rehabilitation Technology Services staff assist in the development of public information programs designed to acquaint the general public with the abilities of those workers with vision impairments and those with multiple impairments.

Prioritization of Referrals for Rehabilitation Technology Services

The following are the prioritization criteria for use by Rehabilitation Technology Services staff.

1. Individuals receiving Vocational Rehabilitation Services

2. DBVI Personnel Referrals

3. DBVI Operational Team Consultation

4. Individuals receiving services through other DBVI programs

5. Outside Consultations

6. Special Events

The Referral Process for Open Non-VR Cases and for Closed Cases

1. The rehabilitation technology specialists' primary responsibility is to service individuals with an open VR case. Secondary to that may be attention to individuals who have an open RT case on a very limited case by case basis, and only as time permits. Generally, the rehabilitation technology specialists in the regional offices should not spend more than approximately 5% of their time over a one-year time period.

2. When the rehabilitation technology specialist determines that the time necessary for a non-VR case will exceed the amount of time available to give, the specialist provide the case manager with other resources.

3. The contact and referral procedure between the RT case manager and the rehabilitation technology specialist will follow the same guidelines as those for VR Referrals.

4. The rehabilitation technology services staff has no responsibility concerning services to individuals who cases have been closed. When possible, a rehabilitation technician may be available to assist individuals over the phone.

5. On a case-by-case basis, the rehabilitation technology specialists and the IT support specialist may assist an individual who has a closed case with DBVI if:
    a. It is an assistive technology issue;
    b. The individual's employment is in jeopardy;
    c. The staff person has the time;
    d. The assistance is not a long-term, time-consuming repair; and,
    e. The system is delivered to HQ or the regional office and picked up from there

Guidelines for Equipment Recommendations and Customer Informed Choice

1. If a client requests a certain brand or model of computer or other device, the rehabilitation technology specialist must investigate the request to determine if there is a specific reason for the request.

    a. Does this device better meet the needs of the client?
    b. Does this device have a feature no other one has that the client must utilize?
    c. Is this device necessary to complete a particular task?
    d. Is the device (computer) recommended and supported by the college or university which the client will attend?

2. If the answer is yes to any of the above questions, then there is justification for purchase.

3. If none of the above answers are yes, and that the individual simply wants a certain brand of computer because of its name, or it has extended features that are not necessary, the rehabilitation technology specialist does not have to purchase what the individual has requested. If the rehabilitation technology specialist prefers a specific brand or model of a computer or device based on its reliability, compatibility, tech support history, warranty, and cost effectiveness, then the rehabilitation technology specialist may stand behind that recommendation.

4. It is not necessary for the rehabilitation technology specialist to recommend multiple brands and models of computers. Individuals may make an informed choice about whether to go with the recommended equipment or purchase another model instead.

DBVI Technology Tutor Network

Purpose of Technology Tutor Network

Tutorial training may be provided to assist the customer in achieving a vocational goal. This training may be necessary when the customer needs individual instruction in order to develop a specific skill. Tutorial training is usually limited to the development of computer or assistive technology skills needed to achieve educational or vocational goals.

Technology Training Guidelines
DBVI has established minimum requirements for technology service providers with whom the agency contracts to provide technology training to consumers.

Only tutors who have been approved through the DBVI Technology Tutor Network (TTN) and are on the DARS approved vendor list will be used to teach individuals how to use assistive technology and application software.

DBVI may contract with tutors approved by TTN for community-based technology training on the following types of assistive technology and mainstream technology:

a. Large print access systems
b. Speech access systems
c. Braille access systems
d. Braille communication devices
e. Scanners
f. Mobile technology
g. Deaf Blind technology
h. Mainstream operating systems and applications as they interface with assistive technology

Application and Approval:
Individuals seeking to provide on-site technology training may apply to the DBVI Rehabilitation Technology Services Program Director and include:

a. a description of the adaptive devices or software products on which the applicant is seeking approval
b. a description of the operating and application programs the applicant can teach
c. three letters of recommendation describing the applicant's ability to teach and/or expertise in the subject areas

A proficiency interview is required with a representative of the TTN to determine the applicant's technical expertise. References will be required regarding the applicant's teaching experience and skills.

Retaining Approved Status:
Approved status for technology tutors is limited to the specific devices or systems on which the

tutor has qualified. DBVI retains the right to terminate the services of a tutor if the tutor is unable to meet the expectations outlined in these guidelines.

Confidentiality:
The technology tutors must provide assurances that student information will be used only for the purposes of fulfilling the responsibilities of on-site training and that student information will not be released to any other individual, agency, or organization.

Tutor Qualifications
1. Tutors must have the following qualifications:
   a. the ability to train individuals in the use of computers or other communication devices, access programs, and application software;
   b. experience interfacing assistive technologies with computers and application software;
   c. the ability to work effectively with people who are vision impaired;
   d. the ability to communicate effectively orally, in writing, and via American Sign Language, where applicable;
   e. have participated in proficiency interview with a representative of the TTN, including questions on those assistive technology devices, operating systems, and application programs listed in the tutor's application; and,
   f. the ability to configure the assistive technology, interfaced with application software, to a level consistent with the performance requirements of the student.