

Background:

The Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) offers specialized telecommunication equipment and assistive technology devices to qualified applicants as a solution to their communication needs through the Technology Assistance Program (TAP). Virginia residents who participate in TAP must meet income eligibility requirements (for equipment at no cost) and fall into one of the following categories:

- Deaf
- Hard of Hearing
- Person with difficulty speaking
- Both a hearing and vision loss
- Veteran (with honorable discharge) or National Guard member with hearing loss
- Surviving spouse/child with a hearing loss of a veteran killed in active duty

Applications are approved for qualified applicants on a first-come, first-served basis and dependent on the availability of program funds. Equipment is assigned to qualified individuals for a 30- day trial period giving them an opportunity to determine if selected equipment meets their needs. If it does, they retain ownership, if it does not, a return or exchange can be requested. Applicants are eligible to reapply every 4 years for new equipment.

TAP provides assistance to all residents of Virginia by way of contracted Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialists. The state has been divided into 8 regions with each region having at least one D/HH Specialist (see map below).

Policy Statement:

VDDHH will require information as to the nature of the applicant's disability, family size, financial status, residency, and veteran status (if applicable).

Policy Details:

Applicants eligible to participate in the program shall meet the following requirements:

1. Certification as deaf, hard of hearing, hearing-disabled/visually disabled, deaf-blind, or speech-disabled by a VDDHH outreach specialist or other appropriate agency or government representative.
2. A completed and signed TAP application
3. Proof of residency in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
4. Proof of family's gross income.
5. Copies of Power of Attorney or Guardianship documents at the request of VDDHH when the application signature is not the recipient of the device(s).

TAP Procedures:

1. Virginia resident submits TAP application and required documentation to the VDDHH central office.
2. D/HH Specialist completes intake assessment.
3. Equipment is distributed to applicant on a 30-day trial basis.

4. After the 30-day trial, if the equipment meets the applicant's need, they retain ownership. If the equipment does not meet the applicant's needs, they are able to exchange or return their equipment. All accepted equipment will receive a one (1) year warranty provided by VDDHH.

5. After 4 years, a renewal application can be submitted by the applicant for new equipment.

Forms:

Current year TAP Application Packet

Consumer Intake Form

Equipment Assignment Form

Commonwealth Voter Registration Certification

Reference:

Technology Assistance Program Policy – December 2022

Approved: Eric Raff, Director

Effective Date: