

WHAT IS THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY EXPENSE FUND?

The Assistive Technology Expense Fund (ATEF) was established by the New Mexico Department of Health in 1997 to support the Participatory Approach philosophy. This philosophy promotes the concept that all persons, regardless of their degree of disability, can participate in daily activities and achieve individual goals. For persons with disabilities this may require access to Assistive Technology that supports physical and communicative participation.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE ATEF?

The purpose of the ATEF is to encourage the development of low-tech and light tech augmentative communication systems, environmental access, mobility systems and other functional Assistive Technologies **that are not covered by other funding sources and cannot be funded by other means.**

WHAT AMOUNT IS FUNDED PER YEAR?

The ATEF will fund up to \$250.00 per individual per fiscal year. Funds may be used only for the requested and approved items.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE FUND?

- Must be a resident of the State of New Mexico
- Must have a documented diagnosis of Developmental Disability

WHO CAN APPLY TO RECEIVE THESE FUNDS?

If the individual needs assistance in applying, any member of the IDT may apply for funds on behalf of the individual. It is not necessary that the individual is currently receiving services funded by the DD Waiver.

If the individual has an Occupational (OT), Speech (SLP), or Physical Therapist (PT) on their interdisciplinary team, the appropriate professional should be consulted regarding the types of Assistive Technology (AT) will most likely to meet the individual's needs. Therapists or others who initiate application to the ATEF should consult and coordinate with the individual and other Team members regarding AT needs and priorities, often through the ISP meetings.

WHAT ARE THE FUNDING CRITERIA?

- The AT item requested must be utilized in a functional activity.
- The AT item requested must have a specific adaptation or feature that assists in compensating for a disability.
- The item requested must be Assistive Technology. All technology is not Assistive Technology. If the item is used by non-disabled persons in a similar way and for a similar function, the item may be denied.
- The AT item requested must assist the individual to:
 - meet an ISP Outcome, or...
 - increase functional participation in employment, community activities, activities of daily living, personal interactions or leisure activities, or...
 - increase the individual's safety during the functional activity.
- Materials or services to fabricate custom AT items are eligible for funding.

WHAT TYPES OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY WILL NOT BE FUNDED?

- Items that are not used in a functional activity.
- Items intended to prepare a person for functional activities are not appropriate for this funding source.
- Items used primarily for sensory stimulation are not appropriate for this funding source.
- Materials designed to teach a skill, including educational software will not be funded.
- Supplies used primarily during therapy services or directed primarily toward a therapeutic outcome (e.g. increasing range of motion) during other than therapy times will not be funded.
- Items that can be funded through, personal funds, Medicare/Medicaid/Salud, DVR, the school system, or other funding sources will not be funded.
- No more than \$20.00 worth of batteries to power AT devices will be funded.

WHO DECIDES IF MY APPLICATION IS APPROVED?

ATEF applications are reviewed by the NM DDSD, Clinical Services Bureau (CSB). ATEF applications are generally reviewed by the Clinical Consultant (SLP, OT, or PT) most closely associated with the types of AT items being requested. The Clinical Consultant may consult with the contact person listed on application to help clarify any questions related to the

application and/or to request any additional information needed to make a determination for funding.

IS THERE AN APPEALS PROCESS IF MY APPLICATION IS DENIED?

Yes. Applications are considered on an individual basis. It may be more difficult to determine if some requests meet the ATEF criteria for funding given the explanation of need and proposed plan of use for an individual. If an application is denied, the contact person will be consulted regarding the reason for the denial. The justification for the denial may be appealed in writing by requesting a CSB Team Review of the application. The CSB team will consist of at least three CSB members. The contact person will be notified of the final CSB decision by phone or in writing within 30 days of the appeal.

TIPS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION.

- Please fill in **all** requested information on the form.
- The contact person will be the individual contacted regarding the status of the application and any questions regarding the application.
- The check is made payable to the contact person. That individual is responsible for ordering equipment and returning all receipts. The check cannot be made payable to a company directly or to any individual that is not family/guardian or on the IDT.
- Please provide an explanation of need and the proposed plan for AT use. This should include: a very general background of the individual (diagnosis and functional limitations pertaining to the request), why the individual would benefit functionally from the requested AT, a brief description of previous trials with related AT (if applicable), why the requested item(s) would be more beneficial than possible alternatives (if applicable), and how the AT would be utilized by the individual. This information should identify **what functional activities** would require the support of the AT requested and **in what environments** it would be used.
- Please include a copy of catalog or web pages for items requested whenever possible.
- Indicate the source for supplemental funding if the total exceeds the \$250.00 available from the ATEF.
- Remember to total the Shipping and Handling charges for each source and include these in the request. The ATEF can not pay for any taxes charged.

WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT THE APPLICATION?

The funding year starts July 1. Applications may be submitted beginning May 15, six weeks prior to the new funding year. Money is awarded early in the year and may be exhausted quickly.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT REGARDING MY APPLICATION?

Please contact Josie Gallucci- AT Coordinator, at (505) 232-5726 or josephine.gallucci@state.nm.us

IF THE APPLICATION IS ACCEPTED, HOW IS THE EQUIPMENT PURCHASED AND DISTRIBUTED?

A check will be mailed to the person identified on the application form as “Make check payable to” (usually the same as the Contact Person). Funds may be used only for the requested and approved items. If the specific AT requested is no longer available or has changed in price by the time the check is received, please contact the Therapy Services Coordinator for instructions. The person who receives the check orders the equipment requested and is responsible for returning all receipts.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T SEND IN MY RECEIPTS?

Receipts reflecting purchase of the approved items must be submitted for audit purposes. **Due to changes in the budget/audit process no future applications will be considered for an individual until the current receipt(s) have been received.** The AT Project is required to have receipts as proof of purchase for every approved application request in order to ensure the ongoing funding of the Assistive Technology Expense Fund. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

WHAT IF THE FUND HAS ALREADY RUN OUT OF MONEY?

If the fund has already run out of money, the provider can and is encouraged to submit an application. These applications will be considered first when additional funds become available in the new fiscal year. In addition, information from these unfunded applications is processed and may assist to identify the unmet needs of individuals for assistive technology, encouraging additional funding for this project.