

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROJECT GUIDELINES/FAQ's

1. WHAT IS THE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FUND?

The Assistive Technology (AT) Fund is a component of the Assistive Technology Project. The goal of the AT Project is to increase the availability and use of Assistive Technology for persons with developmental disabilities.

The AT Fund was established by the New Mexico Department of Health in 1998 to support the Participatory Approach philosophy that all persons, regardless of their degree of disability should have access to Assistive Technology and other supports that would help the individual participate more actively physically and communicatively in daily activities and in achieving individual goals.

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

2. WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE AT FUND?

Any person residing in New Mexico who has a developmental disability (DD) is eligible for the AT Fund. Funds are distributed each fiscal year on a first come first serve basis until the fund is exhausted. Emergency requests will be considered throughout the year. Individuals who have not accessed the fund in previous years will be given priority.

3. WHO CAN APPLY TO RECEIVE THESE FUNDS?

If the individual needs assistance in applying, any individual who is a member of the person's IDT or personal advocate may apply for funds on behalf of the individual. It is not necessary that the individual receive funding from the NM Waivers. Those submitting applications are encouraged to remember that other sources of funding should be explored before applying for ATF monies. The ATF is not meant to replace any other means of funding such as personal or family funds, Medicaid, Medicare, DVR, etc.

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

4. WHAT AMOUNT IS FUNDED PER YEAR?

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

5. WHAT TYPES OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY MAY BE FUNDED?

The first criteria for funding is that the item requested will be used in a functional activity. These activities include, but are not limited to, participation in mealtime, personal care, communication, recreation and mobility.

6. WHAT TYPES OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY WILL NOT BE FUNDED?

- Items that are not used in a functional activity will not be funded.
- 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.
- Supplies used primarily for therapy services will not be funded.
- No more than \$10.00 worth of batteries to power AT devices will be funded.
- No more than \$50.00 worth of film and film development for photo-based communication systems will be funded.

7. WHAT INFORMATION IS NEEDED ON THE APPLICATION AND WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO PRESENT THIS INFORMATION?

In the first section of the application for Assistive Technology funding, the applicant fills in the following:

- Name, address and birth date of the consumer who is seeking AT funding
- Name and phone number of the contact person, the person that should be contacted if there are questions about the application. This is the person to whom the payment check will be sent and the person who will order the equipment. This is also the person who will be responsible to return receipts for the items funded.
- Federal tax I.D. or social security number of the contact person completing the application.
- Name and address to whom the check should be made payable if other than the contact person.

In the second section of the application the applicant describes alternative funding options that have been explored.

In the third section of the application, the applicant explains why the individual needs the specific item(s) of AT requested AND specifically how they will be used by that individual. This section is the **plan** that describes why and how the AT is needed. This information will identify **what functional activities** will require the support of the AT requested and **in what environments** it will be used.

In the fourth section of the application, the applicant should develop an itemized list of requested items including:

- The name and cost of the equipment
- The shipping and handling charges (no tax) for delivery of the equipment
- The total amount of money requested.
- Indicate the source for supplemental funding, if the total exceeds the \$250.00 available from the AT Fund.

8. 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.

9. WHAT IF I AM UNCERTIAN OF WHAT TO ORDER?

An Assistive Technology device kit is available to loan to the therapist. The kit is comprised of a variety of devices and switches. Therapists are encouraged to borrow the kit in order to help identify the most appropriate AT device.

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

A check will be mailed to the contact person listed on the application (usually the provider). Funds may be used only for the requested and approved items. The contact person orders the equipment requested and delivers the item to the individual.

11. WHAT HAPPENS IF THE APPLICATION IS NOT APPROVED?

If the application is denied, the designated contact person will be notified.

12. WHY DO I NEED TO 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 Fund 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 Fund. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

13. 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 as these applications will be considered first when additional funds become available in the new fiscal year. In addition, information from these un-funded applications is processed and may assist to identify the unmet needs of individuals for Assistive Technology, encouraging additional funding for this project.

14. WHO SHOULD I CONTACT REGARDING MY APPLICATION?

Therapy Services Coordinator, at (505) 841-2913, 1-800-283-8415 or email us at AT.Coord@state.nm.us.