

OKLAHOMA TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMS SERVICES TO THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING, Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)

PURPOSE

The Telecommunications Program of the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services, Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was established by legislation in 1986 as an accessibility program, which distributes equipment such as TTYs, amplified telephones, ring signalers, and other types of equipment to Oklahomans who are deaf, hard of hearing, speech impaired, or deaf-blind, regardless of age or income. Part of the Telecommunications Program is the Senior Citizen Hearing Aid Project, as described on Page 58. Individuals must meet financial eligibility requirements.

CONTACT

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FINANCIAL CRITERIA

- None

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible, a person must:

- Be a resident of the State of Oklahoma.
- Provide verification of:
 - A. Hearing or speech impairment with loss severe enough requiring the use of a TDD or amplifier to use the telephone. The following persons are qualified to verify applicant's disability:
 1. Any physician licensed to practice medicine in Oklahoma
 2. Audiologist
 3. Speech pathologist
 4. Vocational rehabilitation counselor, or
 5. Other individual or agency with records to verify disability.
 - B. Income may be verified with a copy of last year's 1040 tax form, or if one was not filed, a copy of social security checks, disability checks, a statement from applicant's employer, social worker, or social security worker would be acceptable.

AT SERVICES PROVIDED/COVERED

- Information & Referral
- Training for Consumer & Family
- Maintenance & Repairs
- Assessments & Evaluations (Senior Citizen's Hearing Aid Project)

AT DEVICES PROVIDED/COVERED



Aids for Hearing Impaired



Augmentative Communication

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Contact the Oklahoma DRS Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and request an application form.

APPEALS PROCESS

1. Consumers who disagree with a VR Program decision are encouraged to contact the local District Supervisor to attempt an effective resolution of the issue. In the event of a reduction, suspension or cessation of VR services, individuals have a right to a case review by an impartial hearing officer, mediation, and/or assistance from the Client Assistance Program (CAP). (See Section II, Page 11)
2. A request for a fair hearing should be made in writing to your VR Counselor within 30 days of DRS informing you of the decision with which you disagree. The fair hearing will be conducted by a hearing officer within 45 days of the written "Request for a Fair Hearing" by the consumer.
3. Individuals filing a "Request for a Fair Hearing" may request a confidential mediation session to resolve grievances. In the event mediation sessions do not resolve the grievance, individuals retain their right to a fair hearing.

Oklahoma Telecommunications Program (DRS), cont. . .

4. After filing a "Request for a Fair Hearing," the administrative review must be conducted by the district supervisor and concluded within the same 45 days, with the results of the review provided in a written letter. If the review resolves the grievance, the Withdrawal of Request for hearing Form must be completed; otherwise, the hearing will continue.
5. The written decision of the hearing officer including findings and grounds for the decision will be made to the consumer, hearings coordinator, and the director of DRS within 30 days of the completion of the hearing.
6. Individuals may request a review of the hearing officer's decision by the Cabinet Secretary within 20 days of the decision.
7. In the event an individual brings civil action regarding the decision, the final decision either by the hearing officer or the Cabinet Secretary will be implemented pending court review.

ASSISTANCE PROVIDED FOR APPEALS

- The Client Assistance Program (CAP) assists persons with disabilities who are seeking or receiving services from any program funded by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. CAP can:
 - a. advise clients of their rights and responsibilities under the Rehabilitation Act;
 - b. assist clients in communicating their concerns to DRS; and
 - c. represent the individual in the fair hearing process when appropriate and/or needed.
- Additional information concerning vocational rehabilitation and the appeals process can be obtained from the CAP at (405) 521-3756 or (800) 522-8224.

PIECES OF THE PUZZLE

- DRS resources are limited. Applicants may be placed on a waiting list for services.
- Individuals who have an income above the allotted guideline contribute to the program based on a sliding scale. Family income and number of people in the family are used to determine costs for each individual.