

Chapter 315: Home Modifications

Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Policy and Procedures Manual

Revision Date: April 2024

Table of Contents

Section 1:	Definitions	2
Section 2:	General Policy	2
Section 3:	Procedures	2
Section 4:	Spending Guidelines	3

Section 1: Definitions

- A) **Home Modification** is a structural modification of a participant's residence to enable them to safely access and use their home.

Section 2: General Policy

- A) Home modification services may be provided by VR if they are necessary for the participant to achieve an employment outcome in accordance with their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The Division may furnish reasonable and necessary home modifications to enable a participant to do such things as safely enter/exit their domicile, safely access bathroom facilities (including shower or tub) and living areas (including kitchen and bedroom), and safely prepare meals.
- B) Home modifications must be in compliance with local building codes and with the Americans with Disabilities Act's (ADA) accessibility guidelines unless the situation does not permit, and the person agrees to non-compliance in writing. If the domicile is not owned by the participant, written permission of the owner must be obtained prior to doing the modifications.
- C) If a counselor determines home modifications may be necessary, they must consult their regional manager and central office. Competitive bidding is required for all home modifications and counselors must seek guidance on the procedures for bidding. The only home modifications that will be provided are those that safely meet the vocational rehabilitation needs of the participant, without "frills". Although the person's "master" plan may include modifications not needed to reach the vocational goal (e.g., gaining access to the attic, garden, and the second bathroom upstairs), the Division's share shall include only modifications essential to the person's vocational rehabilitation at the lowest cost. This policy must be clearly articulated to the participant, so no misunderstandings develop about the Division's role in the total modifications to the domicile.
- D) Only space to be used by the participant will be modified. For example, a kitchen should not be modified unless the participant is enabled to prepare and clean up after meals.

Section 3: Procedures

- A) After identifying the need for home modifications, the counselor must communicate with their regional manager and central office staff trained in accessibility requirements.
- B) Upon completion of the modifications and prior to initiating payment for the work, the counselor will require the contractor to submit a photo of the completed work with an itemized invoice.
- C) If, for some reason, ADA accessibility guidelines cannot be followed, the waiver form at the end of this chapter must be signed by the participant or applicable other. The

original, signed form will be placed in the case record and a copy will be provided to the person seeking services.

Section 4: Spending Guidelines

- A) The spending guideline for home modifications is \$5,000. The counselor may exceed the spending guideline with the approval of their regional manager. When considering exceptions to the spending guideline, the regional manager must consider the participant's ability to contribute to their services. The participant's contribution must be:
- 1) Reasonable,
 - 2) Based on financial need, and
 - 3) Not so high as to effectively deny the participant a necessary service.
- B) DVR cannot require participants who are SSI or SSDI beneficiaries to provide funding toward their services.

**Home Modification
Waiver of Liability**

This is to acknowledge that I am fully aware of and understand that the modification(s) listed below will not fully meet the accessibility guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Modification:

Ramp _____

Doorway _____

Other(s) _____

Specify: _____

Reason(s) why ADA guidelines cannot be met:

However, I feel the modification(s) will safely meet my needs, I want the work to be done and, although the Vermont Vocational Rehabilitation Division is involved financially, I will hold the Division harmless of liability should the modification(s) fail due to deviation from the ADA guidelines.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

(must be a non-relative and cannot be a Division employee)