

# Chapter 313: Audiology Services and Hearing Aids

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Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation  
Policy and Procedures Manual

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**THIS ENTIRE CHAPTER IS GUIDANCE**

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## Section I. Procedures and Guidelines for Audiology Services and Hearing Aid Purchases

*The following are procedures and spending guidelines are to be used when working with an audiologist or licensed hearing aid dispenser on behalf of a consumer:*

- *To be eligible for assistance with hearing aid purchases, VR supports audiology services and hearing aid purchases provided through a certified clinical audiologist, or if no certified clinical audiologist is located within 25 miles of the consumer's home, a licensed hearing aid dispenser in good standing with the State of Vermont, and a minimum of five years as a VT licensed Hearing Aid Dispenser.*
- *VR may provide up to \$750 toward the cost of one hearing aid and up to \$1000 toward the cost of two hearing aids. VR does not provide assistance for the cost of a hearing exam, fitting fees, or hearing aid follow up fees.*
- *VR counselors must ensure that the consumer understands the recommendations of the hearing examiner regarding the most appropriate hearing devices available. The counselor shall consult with the audiologist or hearing aid dispenser when there are questions.*
- *As a way of minimizing costs to the consumer, VR uses contracted providers who have agreed to provide hearing aid devices at a reduced cost. VR provides contractor information in the consumer decision making process and at any other time the information is requested.*
- *First time hearing aid users must provide verification that they have been evaluated by their primary care physician or an Ear, Nose, and Throat Specialist to ensure the hearing loss is not cause by a temporary injury or reversible medical condition.*
- *VR will not cover damage to hearing aids or provide replacements within 5 years of purchase. Therefore the consumer is strongly encouraged to obtain loss or damage coverage for the hearing aid(s). Information about coverage is available through hearing aid manufacturers, hearing aid providers and audiology practices.*

### **Standards for Exceptions to Hearing Aid Purchase Guidelines:**

- *VR may purchase replacement hearing aids in less than five years if the consumer experiences significant additional hearing loss as verified in writing by a certified clinical audiologist or licensed hearing aid dispenser in good standing with the State of Vermont. The VR Counselor must consult with the Division Director or designee and document the exception in the case record.*
- *The Division Director or designee may grant exceptions to the spending guidelines if:*

- *Comparable services and benefits have been exhausted;*
- *The consumer's resources have been used to the maximum extent possible given the consumer's anticipated income and expenses;*
- *A monthly payment schedule for unmet need would be unrealistic in view of costs related to disability and projected earnings capacity;*
- *The cost of making the exception remains reasonable. Specifically, delivering the service by exception and enabling the consumer to continue in or enter a vocation, will be less costly to the public than not delivering it; or*
- *The consumer is a recipient of SSI or SSDI.*