Catholic Charities Disabilities Services	
Agency Standard and Procedure	
Standard Category	Administration
Standard Title	Assistive Technology, Environmental Modification, and Vehicle Modification Services Provided to Individuals Enrolled in the OPWDD HCBS Waiver
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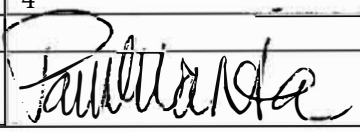
Approved by: Paula Warika, Executive Director	

Standard:
Catholic Charities Disabilities Services (CCDS) recognizes the value of creating modifications to a person's home or vehicle that assists them to remain living in the community.

CCDS will contract with New York State to manage these modifications. In so doing, CCDS will abide by all appropriate rules and regulations and will, to the extent possible, ensure that these modifications are appropriately constructed and that the individual and their family are satisfied with the result.

This standard describes service documentation for Assistive Technology (AT), Environmental Modification (E-mod), and Vehicle Modification (V-mod) services provided to Individuals enrolled **in** the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities Home and Community Based Services Waiver.

Individuals who reside in non-certified home and community-based settings may qualify for AT, E-Mod, and V-Mod services funded through the OPWDD HCBS Waiver. Individuals who reside in certified home and community-based settings (i.e., supervised, or supportive Individualized Residential Alternatives (IRAs) or Family Care Homes) do not qualify for E-Mod or V-Mod services but may qualify for AT services if it is demonstrated that the service is not directly related to the provision of Residential Habilitation services and not included in the provider's Residential Habilitation rate.

Prior Authorization and Authorization of Services:

- AT, E-Mod and V-Mod services require prior authorization by the DDRO. A Notice of Decision (NOD) will be issued by the DDRO regarding the approval or denial of a request for AT, E-Mod and V-Mod services.
- AT, E-Mod and V-Mod service limits may not exceed $15,000 per individual, per service, per calendar year without additional review and prior authorization by OPWDD and DOH.
- **The DDRO will not authorize any project or purchase initiated or completed before DDRO or** OPWDD prior authorization.
- AT, E-Mod, and V-Mod services are expected to be one-time only expenditures. Replacements, repairs, upgrades, or enhancements made to previously approved existing devices, equipment

or modifications may be paid if documented as an assessed need in the Life Plan and approved by the DDRO through the complete service request review process.

Definitions:

1) Environmental Modifications (E-Mods): physical adaptations to the individual's home that are necessary to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of the individual or that enable the individual to function with greater independence in the home without which institutionalization and/or a more restrictive and expensive living arrangement would be required.

2) Vehicle Modification (V-Mods): physical adaptations to the individual's vehicle that are necessary to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of the individual or that enable the individual to function with greater independence.

3) Assistive Technology (AT): an item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or to improve the functional capabilities of the individual, and/or enhance an individual's independence in performing activities of daily living (ADLs), instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) and health-related tasks. AT is also a service that directly assists an individual in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device or piece of equipment.

Procedures:

1) **Vendors**
   a) CCDS will establish a list of approved vendors. These vendors will typically be expert in one or more areas including the installation of fences, ramps, bathrooms, ceiling track lifts or the modification of vans. Vendors will be approved based upon the recommendation of the CCDS Project Manager, or designee, with the approval of the Executive Director or designee. Vendors will be approved based upon past work performance on E-mods or a successful application and review of references. Potential vendors will be recruited by various means including but not limited to the use of the agency web site.
   b) Vendors may be removed from the approved list based upon the recommendation of the Project Manager, or designee, and approved by the Executive Director, or designee. Recommendations for removal may be made based upon poor work performance, failure to meet time lines, or behavior of the vendor or vendor staff that is not in keeping with the values or culture of the agency. A warning may be issued to the vendor if it is believed that any problems can be corrected. If a vendor is removed from the approved list, the vendor will be informed in writing.

2) **Development of the Scope of Work**
   a) When a Care Manager (CM) receives conceptual approval for an E-mod from the Developmental Disabilities Regional Office (DDRO), the CM will contact the Project Manager and indicate that the individual and their family prefer that CCDS manage the process of the E-mod.
   b) The Project Manager will negotiate a mutually agreeable date and time with the CM for the Project Manager to visit the home, speak with the individual, family, and begin to design the project. During this visit the Project Manager will discuss with the family,

individual, and, when possible, the CM the typical process of an E-mod, including the bidding and contract approval process, the typical time frames that the family can expect, what the construction will be like, and what warranties might be available. AT, E-Mod, or V-Mod service expenditures must be related to an assessed need, as documented in an individual's Life Plan, and serve to increase, maintain, or improve the individual's independence and meaningful participation in the community with less reliance on paid staff supervision or assistance.

c) Following the site visit, the Project Manager will develop a scope of work which will include a description of the work to be done to complete the E-mod, agency expectation of the selected vendor, and the expected time lines for the completion of the work.

d) Once the scope of work is completed, it will be forwarded to the family and the CM for approval. The family must approve the scope of work in writing before any further action will be taken.

3) Bidding

a) Once the family approves the scope of work, a letter requesting bids to complete the E-mod as described in the scope of work will be sent to at least three approved vendors. Bids will be returned to the Project Manager and will remain sealed until the date for opening as indicated in the request letter.

b) If a vendor requests a "walk-through" of the work site prior to bidding, every effort will be made to accommodate the request. However, the ability to conduct a "walk-through" is not guaranteed.

c) Sealed bids will be opened at a pre-arranged date and time. The bids will be opened in the presence of two CCDS staff.

d) The opened bids will be recorded on a "bid tally sheet." The bids and tally sheet will be copied. The copy will be sent to the CM and the original will be kept in the agency file. The CM then becomes responsible for securing approval from New York State. The successful bidder will typically be the lowest qualified bidder.

4) Vendor Selection

a) If the proposed E-mod is preliminarily approved by New York State, CCDS will receive a contract proposal. The contract will be reviewed, and if acceptable, will be signed by the Executive Director or designee and returned to the DDRO. If the contract is approved, CCDS will be informed that the contract has been awarded and received an authorization letter.

b) Sometime after receiving notice that the contract has been approved, CCDS will receive a payment of 60% of the approved price for the E-mod from the DDRO. When the money is received, the successful bidder will be informed via email that they have been awarded the E-mod. The vendor will then have seven business days to return a signed copy of the terms and conditions of the job. In so doing, the vendor will acknowledge that they must complete the E-mod within 180 days.

c) If the vendor either does not sign the terms and conditions, or informs the Project Manager that they cannot complete the work within 180 days, the Project Manager will request permission from the DDRO to select the next lowest bidder.

5) **Construction**
   a) When the vendor is ready to schedule the project, the family will be notified by the vendor and a mutually agreeable start date will be negotiated. Once that date is established, the vendor will notify the Project Manager.
   b) Any time after the start date is established, the vendor can request a check from the agency (typically 50% of the project cost) to purchase materials. The vendor may either claim the check in person, or have the check mailed. The vendor will then have 180 days to complete the project. The "clock" starts either when the check is claimed or three days after the check is mailed.
   c) At least once during the construction, the Project Manager will check with both the vendor and the family to ensure that the project is running smoothly and there are no problems to be resolved. Additionally, the Project Manager is responsible to address the request of any change orders to be submitted for approval to the DORO.

6) **Conclusion of Project and Final Payment**
   a) At the conclusion of the project, the Project Manager will call and/or *visit* the individual/ family to ensure that the construction is complete and to the satisfaction of the family. If so, the Project Manager will have the individual/family sign the appropriate forms. Upon verification that the family is satisfied, the agency will release the remainder of the funds to the vendor.
   b) Following confirmation of the successful completion of the project, the Project Manager will inform the CM. Additionally, the Executive Director or designee will complete all necessary forms and submit them to the DORO to claim final payment for the project.
   c) As of the date of this latest revision, CCDS will maintain a copy of the individual's Life Plan and the authorization letter. All documentation must be retained for a period of at least ten years from the date of issuance of the final payment through the State Financial System (SFS) to the CCDS.