

Disability Rights Nebraska

Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities

This is basic information and does not constitute legal advice.

How to Pay for an Assistive Technology Device or Service

What is assistive technology?

Assistive technology is a device or service that helps a person with a disability to function independently at home, work, school, and the community.

Assistive technology device

An assistive technology device is an item or piece of equipment that helps a person with a disability to “increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities.”

Assistive technology service

An assistive technology service directly assists a person with a disability to choose, acquire, or use an assistive technology device. This may include:

- An assistive technology evaluation
- Providing an assistive technology device to a person with a disability through a purchase or lease option for assistive technology equipment
- Selecting, designing, fitting, customizing, adapting, applying, maintaining, repairing, replacing, or donating assistive technology devices
- Coordinating therapies, interventions, or services for use with an assistive technology device
- Providing training or technical assistance about the assistive technology device to the person with a disability and others if appropriate
- Providing training or technical assistance for professionals, such as teachers, employers, etc.
- Expanding the availability of access to technology, such as electronic and information technology to people with disabilities. *Assistive Technology Act of 2004* Sec. 3002 (3), (4), & (5).

How do I know what assistive technology I need?

To find out what kind of assistive technology you need, you may wish to apply for an assistive technology evaluation. The evaluation will help you determine what your needs are and what assistive technology devices and services can help you function more independently in your everyday life. To apply for an assistive technology evaluation, contact the **Assistive Technology Partnership** nearest you.

Lincoln

3901 N 27th Street; Ste 5
Lincoln, NE 68521
Phone: 402-471-0734
Toll Free: 888-806-6287
Fax: 402-471-6052

Omaha

1313 Farnam on the Mall
Omaha, NE 68102
Phone: 402-595-1923
Toll Free: 877-201-4141
Fax: 402-595-1919

Kearney

315 West 60th St; Suite 300
Kearney, NE 68845
Phone: 308-865-5349
Toll Free: 800-683-6699
Fax: 308-865-5322

Scottsbluff

1517 Broadway, Suite 131
Scottsbluff, NE 69361
Phone: 308-632-1332
Fax: 308-632-1392

Columbus

3020 18th Street; Suite 2
Columbus, NE 68601
Phone: 402-564-3225

How can I get assistive technology funded in Nebraska?

After you know what kind of assistive technology you need, you can consider different ways to pay for it. Some ways to pay for assistive technology include the following:

Medicaid

The Nebraska Medicaid Program is funded by the State and federal governments to provide medical services for people who cannot afford to pay for *medically necessary* services. To apply for the Nebraska Medicaid Program, you may contact your caseworker or your nearest Health and Human Services office or download application forms at <http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/med/medprog.htm>. The types of medically necessary services that Medicaid may pay for include:

- Durable medical equipment, orthotics, prosthetics, and medical supplies when they are medically necessary and prescribed by a physician
- Medical supplies and equipment if you receive home health care services

- Eye glasses, hearing aids, and other medical supplies for children up through age 20 through Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Testing (EPSDT)

Prior authorization may be required for devices and services to be covered. The device or service must be medically necessary. You will need a prescription from a doctor. You will also need to ask your doctor to write a Letter of Medical Necessity to ensure the payment of your device or service.

If Medicaid pays for you to be in a nursing facility or intermediate care facility for people with mental retardation (ICF/MR), the facility must provide you with necessary assistive technology devices and services. If a doctor prescribes an assistive device or service for you, it must be included in your individual care plan. The facility must also train you on how to use the device and it must pay for any repairs to the device.

Appeal Rights

If you are denied a medically necessary device or service through Medicaid, contact Nebraska Advocacy Services (NAS) for assistance in appealing the denial. You may reach NAS at:

Disability Rights Nebraska
 134 S. 13th Street, Suite 600
 Lincoln, NE 68508
 Phone: 402-474-3183
 Toll Free: 800-422-6691
 Fax: 402-474-3274
 Website: www.disabilityrightsnebraska.org
 E-mail: info@disabilityrightsnebraska.org

Medicaid Home and Community Based Waivers

Nebraska offers waivers to people with disabilities to allow them to live in community-based settings instead of institutions or nursing facilities. The following chart generally shows the assistive technology that may be funded by various waivers:

Name of Waiver	Specialized medical equipment and supplies	Environmental accessibility adaptations to home	Personal Emergency response system
Aged & Disabled Adults and Children	√	√	√

Home and Community-Based Waiver Services for Children with Developmental Disabilities		√	
---	--	---	--

Medicare

Medicare is federally-funded health insurance for people aged 65 and older, persons receiving Social Security Disability payments or railroad retirement payments based on disability, and people with end stage renal disease. People who meet these Medicare eligibility requirements may also be enrolled in Medicare Advantage HMO. An HMO usually requires prior authorization for payment of assistive technology. Assistive technology may be funded through Part A and Part B of Medicare.

Medicare Part A

Medicare Part A is generally provided at no cost and covers inpatient hospital services, skilled nursing facility services, home health benefits, and hospice care. Under Part A, assistive technology may be funded as medical appliances and equipment or durable medical equipment.

Medicare Part B

Medicare Part B is provided by paying a premium. It covers physician's services, outpatient hospital services, home health services, and other services and supplies. Under Part B, assistive technology may be funded as durable medical equipment, prosthetic devices, and orthotic devices. Medicare Part B will also pay for power wheelchairs and augmentative communication devices.

To have Medicare fund assistive technology, you will need a doctor's written prescription for the assistive technology device or service and it must be medically necessary. You should also consider having your doctor provide a letter of medical necessity. If your provider participates in Medicare, they are required to accept the payment that Medicare gives them for your assistive technology.

Appeal Rights

If you are denied a medically necessary device or service through Medicare, contact Nebraska Advocacy Services (NAS) for assistance in appealing the denial. You may reach NAS at:

Disability Rights Nebraska
 134 S. 13th Street, Suite 600
 Lincoln, NE 68508
 Phone: 402-474-3183
 Toll Free: 800-422-6691
 Fax: 402-474-3274

Website: www.disabilityrightsnebraska.org
 E-mail: info@disabilityrightsnebraska.org

Tricare

Tricare is health insurance for active and retired military personnel and their dependents. Tricare benefits will pay for durable medical equipment as well as prosthetics, including augmentative communication devices. For specific information about Tricare coverage of assistive technology, visit www.tricare.osd.mil/.

United States Department of Veterans Affairs

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) provides medical care to veterans. Veterans can obtain outpatient care including medically necessary equipment at VA Medical Centers.

If veterans are eligible, they may be able to obtain equipment from the “medical benefits package” offered by the VA. Equipment that is often considered assistive technology will be covered under this benefits package, such as durable medical equipment, prosthetics, orthotic devices, hearing aids, environmental control units, eyeglasses, and sensori-neural aids. Veterans may be able to obtain equipment if they can show it is medically necessary.

Veterans may also be eligible for a Specially Adapted Housing Grant that would assist veterans with disabilities in adapting their house to meet their needs. The adaptations would allow veterans to continue to live as independently as possible in their own home.

Veterans who wish to have their assistive technology funded through the USDVA must have medical justification for their assistive technology. A doctor’s prescription and a letter of medical necessity will assist in providing proof of need.

For further information, veterans may contact:

The Nebraska Department of Veterans’ Affairs
PO Box 95083
301 Centennial Mall South, 6th Floor
Lincoln, NE 68508-5083
Phone: 402-471-2458
Fax: 402-471-2491
Website: <http://www.vets.state.ne.us/>

Private Health Insurance

Check with your private health insurance provider to find out if assistive technology is covered in your policy. Your insurance company may require pre-authorization before it will agree to cover your assistive technology. You will need a prescription from your doctor and a letter of medical necessity.

Appeal Rights

If you are denied a medically necessary device or service through your private insurance carrier, contact Nebraska Advocacy Services (NAS) for assistance in appealing the denial. You may reach NAS at:

Disability Rights Nebraska
134 S. 13th Street, Suite 600
Lincoln, NE 68508
Phone: 402-474-3183
Toll Free: 800-422-6691
Fax: 402-474-3274
Website: www.disabilityrightsnebraska.org
E-mail: info@disabilityrightsnebraska.org

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Vocational Rehabilitation assists people with disabilities in preparing for and maintaining employment. Because some people may need assistive technology to do their job, Vocational Rehabilitation can refer individuals to the Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP) to do an assistive technology assessment. The assessment is done at no cost to the individual and will help to determine what assistive technology may be useful to you at work. Your local Vocational Rehabilitation office, as well as the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, may assist you in selecting and obtaining the assistive technology that you need.

Vocational Rehabilitation can assist in paying for your assistive technology, but will look to other funding sources that may be available as well. You also may have to pay for part of the cost of your assistive technology based upon your financial resources.

The website for Vocational Rehabilitation is: <http://www.vocrehab.state.ne.us/>.
For more information, contact a local Vocational Rehabilitation office near you.

Columbus

Phone: 402-562-8065
Toll Free: 877-505-0866
E-mail: vr.infocolumbus@nebraska.gov

Norfolk

Phone: 402-370-3200
Toll Free: 800-422-3382
E-mail: vr.infonorfolk@nebraska.gov

Fremont

Phone: 402-727-2900
Toll Free: 888-585-5436
E-mail: vr.infofremont@nebraska.gov

North Platte

Phone: 308-535-8100
Toll Free: 800-272-3382
E-mail: vr.infonorthplatte@nebraska.gov

Grand Island

Phone: 308-385-6200
Toll Free: 800-862-3382
E-mail: vr.infograndisland@nebraska.gov

Omaha

Phone: 402-595-2100
Toll Free: 800-554-3382
E-mail: vr.infoomaha@nebraska.gov

Kearney

Phone: 308-865-5343

Toll Free: 800-262-3382

E-mail: vr.infokearney@nebraska.gov

Scottsbluff

Phone: 308-632-1321

Toll Free: 800-292-3382

E-mail: vr.infoscottsbluff@nebraska.gov

Lincoln

Phone: 402-471-3231

Toll Free: 800-472-3382

E-mail: vr.infolincoln@nebraska.gov

South Sioux City

Phone: 402-494-2265

Toll Free: 877-659-7899

E-mail: vr.infosouthsioux@nebraska.gov

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

The IDEA requires school districts to provide a free and appropriate public education to students with disabilities based on their individualized educational needs. A child's individualized educational needs may include special education and related aids and services including assistive technology.

Assistive technology under IDEA may include an assistive technology assessment, device, or services related to the use or training in using the device. Any special education and related services should be written in your child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) or Individual Education Program (IEP).

For more information about special education and assistive technology, see Nebraska Advocacy Services publication, *Assistive Technology and Special Education*.

PASS Program through the Social Security Administration

Through the Plan for Achieving Self Support (PASS) program under the Social Security Administration, a recipient of Social Security Income (SSI) can set aside some of their income to pay for items or services they need to achieve a specific work goal. The program allows individuals to set aside this money without affecting the amount of their SSI check. A person may choose to set aside money to pay for assistive technology that will help them get to and from work. The money can be set aside in one large sum or in installment payments.

Social Security does not pay for the assistive technology itself, but does allow for the person to pay for their own assistive technology through the PASS program. For more information about PASS, Social Security beneficiaries may contact Nebraska Advocacy Services at:

Disability Rights Nebraska
134 S. 13th Street, Suite 600
Lincoln, NE 68508
Phone: 402-474-3183
Toll Free: 800-422-6691

Fax: 402-474-3274

Website: www.disabilityrightsnebraska.org

E-mail: info@disabilityrightsnebraska.org

Area Agency on Aging

Your local Area Agency on Aging may be able to assist in paying for assistive technology in the form of home modifications and durable medical equipment. There are usually age guidelines to qualify for this assistance. Generally, other resources must also be exhausted before your Area Agency on Aging will be able to assist in funding your assistive technology. For more information, contact an Area Agency on Aging office near you.

Aging Office of Western Nebraska

1517 Broadway, Suite 122
Scottsbluff, NE 69361-3184
Phone: 308-635-0851
Toll Free: 800-682-5140
Website: www.aown.org

Northeast Nebraska Area Agency on Aging

119 Norfolk Avenue
Norfolk, NE 68702-1447
Phone: 402-370-3454
Toll Free: 800-672-8368
Website: www.nenaaa.com

Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging

1901 Court Street
Beatrice, NE 68310
Phone: 402-223-1376
Toll Free: 888-317-9417
Website: www.braaa.org

South Central Nebraska Area Agency on Aging

4623 2nd Avenue, Suite 4
Kearney, NE 68848-3009
Phone: 308-234-1851
Toll Free: 800-658-4320
Website: www.agingkearney.org

Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging

4223 Center Street
Omaha, NE 68105
Phone: 402-444-6536
Toll Free: 888-554-2711
Website: www.enoa.org/

West Central Nebraska Area Agency on Aging

115 N. Vine
North Platte, NE 69101-3902
Phone: 308-535-8195
Toll Free: 800-662-2961

Aging Partners

1005 O Street
Lincoln, NE 68508-3628
Phone: 402-441-7070
Toll Free: 800-247-0938
Website:
www.lincoln.ne.gov/_city/mayor/aging/

Midland Area Agency on Aging

305 North Hastings, Room 202
Hastings, NE 68902
Phone: 402-463-4565
Toll Free: 800-955-9714
Website: www.midlandagencyonaging.org

Assistive Devices Loan Program/Recycled Equipment

AT4All provides a free, on-line listing of assistive technology and computers that are used and distributed for people with a disability. AT4All provides items, such as stair and bath lifts, wheelchairs, bathing aids, scooters, communication aids, adapted toys, accessible homes, and modified vehicles, etc.

AT4All

Toll Free: 888-806-6287

E-mail: AT4all@AT4all

Website: www.at4all.com

Nebraska Equipment Distribution Program

The Nebraska Equipment Distribution Program provides monetary assistance to people who experience deafness, hearing loss, deaf-blind, or a speech disability. People who need financial assistance in purchasing a Teletypewriter (TTY), hearing aids, or a phone amplifier may contact The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Lincoln Office

4600 Valley Rd., Suite 420
Lincoln, NE 68510-4844
Phone: 402-471-3593 (v/tty)
Toll Free: 1-800-545-6244 (v/tty)
E-mail: ncdhh@nebraska.gov
Website: www.ncdhh.ne.gov

Omaha Office

1313 Farnam
Omaha, NE 68102-1836
Phone: 402-595-2509 (v/tty)
Toll Free: 800-545-6244 (v/tty)
E-mail: ncdhh@nebraska.gov
Website: www.ncdhh.ne.gov

North Platte Office

200 South Silber, Room 207
North Platte, NE 69101-4298
Phone: 308-535-6600 (v/tty)
Toll Free: 800-545-6244 (v/tty)
E-mail: ncdhh@nebraska.gov
Website: www.ncdhh.ne.gov

Nebraska Alternative Financing Program

This program provides an opportunity for people with disabilities to obtain low or reduced interest loans to purchase assistive technology devices and services. Loans under this program can range from \$1,500 to \$50,000 and have a reduced interest rate as well as negotiated terms. To learn more about the Nebraska Alternative Financing Program, contact Easter Seals Nebraska.

Easter Seals Nebraska
638 N. 109th Plaza
Omaha, NE 68154-1722
Phone: 402-345-2200
Toll Free: 800-650-9880
Website: <http://ne.easterseals.com>

Lincoln
8055 O St; Ste 119
Lincoln, NE 68510
Phone: 402-483-0240
Toll Free: 888-858-5069

Hastings
2727 W 2nd; Ste 471
Hastings, NE 68901
Phone: 402-462-3031
Toll Free: 800-471-6425

Disabled Access Credit for Small Businesses

Small businesses may be eligible to receive a federal tax credit of up to 50% for money the business spends to make it accessible to people with disabilities. Businesses can receive credit for purchasing assistive technology devices, such as adapted computer equipment, a ramp, etc. The business must spend between \$259 and \$10,250 to receive the tax credit. For more information, contact the Internal Revenue Service at www.irs.gov.

Other Funding for Home Adaptations

Making Homes Accessible Rehabilitation Loan Program

This program is administered by the Nebraska Housing Developers Association and the Assistive Technology Partnership. It is designed to assist existing homeowners who have a disability to make accessibility modifications while remaining in their home. The program includes rehabilitation to address housing quality standards.

Homeownership Opportunity Program

This program is administered by the Nebraska Housing Developers Association and the Assistive Technology Partnership. It is designed so that people with disabilities may become homeowners. This program may include rehabilitation work to make accessibility modifications and address housing quality standards.

People interested in applying for either of these should submit a completed Service and Device Application from the Assistive Technology Partnership. Contact the Assistive Technology Partnership at the phone number and address listed below.

Assistive Technology Partnership
Funding Coordinator
5143 S. 48th Street, Suite C
Lincoln, NE 68516
Phone: 402-471-0734
Toll Free: 888-806-6287