

find it necessary to come back to this step in the process for further documentation and/or clarification. No matter which funding sources are being approached for obtaining AT, it is vital to demonstrate and document the need. The following is a list of supportive materials that are often essential in documenting these needs:

- Physician's prescription for the AT devices and/or services, and often a letter of medical necessity.
- For Medicare, Medicaid and other medical/health-related sources, there must be a determination of "medical necessity" to receive authorization for assistive technology. It is strongly recommended, and usually required, that the physician also write a letter substantiating this medical necessity.
- Letters of medical necessity from the other licensed health care professionals involved in the case (physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, AT profession, etc).
- Detailed explanation of the individual's functional skills and capabilities without the AT device or equipment and how these will be improved with the requested AT device or equipment.
- Photograph of the individual, if it helps to demonstrate the need.
- A video may be required to demonstrate the person's capacity to use the device.
- Literature concerning the specific AT device with specifications as they pertain to this individual.
- Specifications of the AT device or equipment including cost, features, and a catalog picture or photograph.

At this point in the funding process, obtain prices for the AT devices and/or equipment identifying vendors or where it can be purchased. This can be very important because the funding source will always be concerned with the cost of the device, and because the identified dealer of the equipment may be able to help you along in the process. Some funding sources, such as Medicare and Medicaid, ONLY purchase equipment from designated Durable Medical Equipment (DME) dealers that have completed the approval process and appear on the "approved vendor" list. If you plan to approach Medicare or Medicaid, you may have to locate such a dealer.

Step 3: Determine if an alternative device will meet the need.

Is there an alternative device or equipment that will function equally as well?

Based on past funding approvals and denials for assistive technology, there may be a need to determine if any alternative devices that would also meet your need(s). Investigate these alternatives BEFORE applying to any funding source. Be as prepared as possible in order to make the process easier.

When reviewing requests, all funding sources will determine if the charge for the AT devices and/or services is reasonable and at a customary or typical rate. Also, the funding source may have to be convinced that the assistive technology is cost effective. To determine if a request is reasonable, consider the following questions:

Guiding Questions

- What AT device and/or service will achieve the targeted level of functioning?
- What professionals are available who can help justify the medical necessity for the AT device (if pursuing medical related source)?
- Is there a case manager or program coordinator assigned to the case? How can one be secured?
- Where can the AT be obtained?
- How much does it cost? Can it be rented?
- Can the equipment manufacturer or local vendor provide any special assistance?
- What additional services are needed, such as training, follow-up and maintenance of the device.

Is there a way to borrow, make or fabricate this device or equipment?

- Can it be borrowed from ABLE Tech's short-term equipment loan program?
- Do the benefits of the device or equipment outweigh the expense?
- Is there a less expensive device or service that meets the individuals need(s) just as effectively?
- Does the device or equipment serve the same purpose as the equipment that is already available to the individual?

If possible visit an AT demonstration center, in order to compare the features of similar devices. If there are no alternative devices that can be found that will meet the particular need, be sure to have that fact well documented. Remember, do not let the cost of the assistive technology prevent selecting the most appropriate AT device or adaptation. This process of matching the technology to needs is crucial to the successful use of AT once it is acquired.