

Questions and Answers

National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program

1. Are there costs that the NDBEDP will not cover?

Yes. Please see “NDBEDP Certified Program Expenses” for a list of expenses that are reimbursable and those that are not.

2. Does the NDBEDP reimburse for the cost of cables, switches, clamps, and adaptive accessories necessary to use the distributed equipment?

Yes. The reasonable costs of cables, switches, clamps, and adaptive accessories will be reimbursed by the NDBEDP if they are necessary for the consumer to use the equipment distributed. Personal accessories that facilitate or enable other life functions are not reimbursable (e.g., a wheelchair to facilitate mobility).

3. Are the costs of alerting devices reimbursable?

Yes. The reasonable costs of alerting devices such as flashing lights are reimbursable when they are necessary to use the equipment distributed to make telecommunications, Internet access, or advanced communications accessible to low-income individuals who are deaf-blind. Assistive lighting that is used separate and apart from the distributed equipment is not reimbursable.

4. Are the costs for batteries or upgrades reimbursable for equipment that was not distributed by the NDBEDP?

Yes. The NDBEDP will reimburse for batteries or upgrades on previously distributed equipment (hardware, software, applications, etc.) as long as these are reasonable and necessary to make telecommunications, Internet access, or advanced communications accessible to low-income individuals who are deaf-blind.

5. When an equipment recipient moves to another state, which state certified program will be responsible for the upkeep of the equipment?

When an equipment recipient relocates to another state, the former state’s certified program will no longer be responsible for upkeep of the recipient’s equipment, nor will it be permitted to seek reimbursement for maintenance of such equipment no longer in use within the former state. In such cases, upon the request of the recipient, the former state must transfer the recipient’s account and any control over the distributed equipment to the new state’s certified program. The certified program in the state where the recipient relocates then will be responsible for the cost of upkeep of the distributed equipment. If the recipient needs new equipment after relocating, the recipient will be permitted to apply for such equipment in the new state.

6. Will there be a searchable national database that certified programs can use to determine if program applicants have received NDBEDP equipment in another state?

No, not for the NDBEDP pilot program. However, the FCC may consider the need for such a database to become a part of the permanent NDBEDP as we evaluate feedback from the pilot program. In addition, as noted above, when a recipient relocates to another state, upon the recipient's request, the certified program must transfer the recipient's account and any control of the distributed equipment to the new state's certified program, so that the individual need not reapply.

7. Could one person receive two identical pieces of equipment?

Yes. With appropriate justification (such as one for home and one for residential school housing), one person may receive two identical pieces of equipment; it is within the certified program's discretion to determine how it will distribute equipment.

8. Do NDBEDP equipment recipients have a right to newer, better, or upgraded equipment when it becomes available?

No. However, each NDBEDP certified program has the discretion to determine whether it will provide newer, better, or upgraded equipment, with the reasonable costs of such upgrades and replacements being reimbursable. Because NDBEDP funding is not unlimited, certified programs may want to consider carefully how best they can use their limited funding to distribute equipment to the largest number of low-income individuals who are deaf-blind.

9. Will the NDBEDP provide reimbursement for an inventory of loaner equipment which would be available for use when program distributed equipment is being repaired?

Yes. Reasonable costs for an equipment loan program, to be used when previously distributed equipment is being repaired, are reimbursable, but a loan program is not required.

10. Can a certified program charge a client for damage to NDBEDP equipment, caused by the client's negligence?

The NDBEDP rules neither require nor prohibit certified programs from charging a client for negligent damage to distributed equipment.

11. Can the NDBEDP certified program pay for a portion of a piece of equipment in conjunction with another program?

Yes, as long as the equipment is covered by the NDBEDP program rules and partial payment for the equipment is noted as part of the reimbursement request in reports to the FCC and/or TRS Fund Administrator.

12. Can the NDBEDP certified program pay for a portion of a piece of equipment in conjunction with another program, and the NDBEDP certified program cover the cost for the associated training?

Yes, as long as the equipment is covered by the NDBEDP program rules and partial payment for the equipment is noted as part of the reimbursement request in reports to the FCC.

- 13. If there is another funding source to pay for equipment, could the NDBEDP cover the costs of related services (such as training) associated with that equipment, even if the NDBEDP does not cover any part of the cost of the equipment?**

No. To be reimbursed, related services need to be associated with the distribution of a piece of equipment that is covered under and paid for, in whole or in part, by the NDBEDP.

- 14. Does the NDBEDP reimburse the cost of providing interpreter or translation services for languages other than English or American Sign Language?**

Yes, interpreter or translation services will be provided when they are needed to ensure effective communication with program clients and to facilitate equipment distribution and the provision of related services that are permissible under the NDBEDP.

- 15. Can the attestations for eligibility determination be made by e-signature?**

Yes, to the extent that such form of signature is recognized as a legally valid signature under applicable federal law or state law.

- 16. How do we determine low-income eligibility when a student who is deaf-blind is not living with his or her family?**

If the deaf-blind student could be claimed as a dependent by another taxpayer (as a qualifying child or qualifying relative), then the certified program should consider that taxpayer's family or household size and income to make an income eligibility determination.

- 17. Can certified programs shift its certification to other entities?**

No. Certification is granted to a single entity in each state that is eligible for reimbursement. While certified programs may contract with other entities to perform NDBEDP-related tasks, ultimately the certified entity remains responsible for ensuring that all NDBEDP-related tasks are performed and is the only entity authorized to receive compensation from the TRS Fund.

- 18. Is there a limit on the amount of money a certified program can spend on each client?**

No, this is within the discretion of the program so long as each amount is reasonable.

- 19. If a certified program does not have enough qualified trainers in-state, can a qualified trainer be brought in from another state?**

Yes. The NDBEDP will reimburse certified programs for a trainer's reasonable travel costs.

- 20. What types of information will be included on the FCC's NDBEDP website?**

In addition to general information about the NDBEDP, the FCC's website will have contact information for the NDBEDP certified program in each state, including (if available) telephone, TTY, videophone, and fax numbers; mail, e-mail, and website addresses. The FCC's Accessibility Clearinghouse may also be updated with information about equipment that makes telecommunications, advanced communications, and Internet access services accessible to individuals who are deaf-blind, available at <http://apps.fcc.gov/accessibilityclearinghouse/>.

21. Are administrative costs capped at 15% of the certified program's annual funding allocation or of the certified program's total reimbursable expenses?

Administrative costs are capped at 15% of the certified program's total reimbursable expenses.

22. Are the costs of renting physical facilities for the distribution of equipment or provision of related services reimbursable?

Yes. The cost of renting physical facilities is reimbursable as an administrative expense, subject to the 15% cap for administrative expenses.

23. How is "income" defined for the purpose of determining income eligibility for the NDBEDP?

"Income" is all income actually received by all members of a household. This includes salary before deductions for taxes, public assistance benefits, social security payments, pensions, unemployment compensation, veteran's benefits, inheritances, alimony, child support payments, worker's compensation benefits, gifts, lottery winnings, and the like. The only exceptions are student financial aid, military housing and cost-of-living allowances, irregular income from occasional small jobs such as baby-sitting or lawn mowing, and the like.

24. How is "household" defined as it is used within the definition of income for the NDBEDP?

A "household" is any individual or group of individuals who are living together at the same address as one economic unit. A household may include related and unrelated persons. An "economic unit" consists of all adult individuals contributing to and sharing in the income and expenses of a household. An adult is any person eighteen years or older. If an adult has no or minimal income, and lives with someone who provides financial support to him/her, both people shall be considered part of the same household. Children under the age of eighteen living with their parents or guardians are considered to be part of the same household as their parents or guardians.