

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY

Program Name: Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

Policy Number: VR-8.2-v2

Effective Date: July 1, 2008

Last Revision: September 30, 2021

CHAPTER 8: Assessment Services

Section 8.2: Assessments: Audiology/Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT)

I. Policy Statement

This policy outlines the guidelines for the provision of audiology assessment for applicants/clients with hearing loss and ENT assessment for applicants/clients with disorders of the auditory system. Audiology assessment is provided by a qualified audiologist to assess the extent and presence of hearing loss and prescribe hearing aids, cochlear implants and/or other assistive listening devices (ALDs). ENT assessment is provided by a physician qualified in the disease of the ear and auditory system when symptoms of ear pathology and/or conductive hearing loss are present.

The outcome of these assessments is to diagnose the presence and extent of hearing loss and recommend aids and auditory services that best meet an applicant/client's needs which would enable them to successfully complete their IPE services and achieve employment.

II. Authority

Authority for policies contained in this document includes the following:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), 29 U.S.C. § 3101 et seq.
- Title IV Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 701 et seq.
- State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program, 34 C.F.R. §§:
 - Scope of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities 361.48 (b)(1-2)
 - Comparable services and benefits 361.53 (b)(1)
 - Participation of individuals in cost of services based on financial need 361.54 (b)(3)(i)(A-B)
- A.R.S. §§ 23-502 and 503
- Arizona Administrative Code, Title 6, Chapter 4:
 - General considerations R6-4-201 (A)(1)(a)
 - Diagnostic Study R6-4-203

- Service and provider standards, service authorizations, equipment purchasing, Workers' Compensation R6-4-402(B)(1)(e)
- Economic need and similar benefits R6-4-403 (A)(1)(b)(i-ii) and (B)(2)(b)(iv)

III. Applicability

This applies to applicants/clients who need to complete audiology and/or ENT assessment to progress in the VR program.

IV. Standards

- A. The VR Counselor must provide the service provider with the following referral information:
 - 1. Pertinent background information regarding the applicant/client's disability and vocational objectives, and
 - 2. A specific list of questions regarding the implications of the applicant/client's disability in terms of employment.
- B. Economic need does not apply.
- C. Comparable benefits do not apply.
- D. A comprehensive audiological evaluation must include all six of the following:
 - 1. Audiometry threshold and speech recognition,
 - 2. Tympanometry,
 - 3. Acoustic Reflex testing,
 - 4. Speech-in-noise testing,
 - 5. Otoscope for appropriate audiology management or as a basis for medical referral to specialty physicians,
 - 6. Cerumen management to prevent obstruction of the external ear canal and of amplification devices, and
 - 7. Ear mold(s) or impression(s) as determined necessary when applicable.
- E. If an audiologist cannot diagnose a hearing loss, the applicant/client must be referred for an Auditory Processing Disorder assessment (APD) for additional assessments to gauge APD.
- F. Referrals for an ENT exam must be utilized when an applicant/client has not previously used hearing aids or the primary care physician or audiologist has recommended the exam due to any of the following conditions:
 - 1. Visible congenital or traumatic deformity of the ear,

2. History of sudden or rapidly progressive hearing loss within the last 90 days,
 3. Acute or chronic dizziness,
 4. Unilateral hearing loss of sudden or recent onset within the last 90 days,
 5. Air-bone gap equal to or greater than 15dB at 500, 1000 and 2000 hertz,
 6. Visible evidence of significant cerumen (earwax) accumulation or a foreign body in the ear canal, or pain or discomfort in the ear,
 7. A foreign object in the ear canal,
 8. Pain or discomfort in the ear.
- G. Applicants/clients who are current or prior users of hearing aids may not require a referral to an Otolaryngologist/ENT physician.
- H. Only one assessment is allowed per case.
- I. The Audiology Evaluation Report with accompanying Audiogram and Hearing Aid Recommendation Report must be received by VR prior to proceeding with treatment services.
- J. Refer to Sections 9.2 Treatments-Cochlear/BAHA and 13.5 Hearing Aids regarding corresponding treatment services.

V. Procedure

- A. Refer to IV.A (1-2) above.
- B. Refer to Standard Work, if any.
- C. Refer to the RSA Allowable Services Spreadsheet, Audiology Services Service Specifications (MSP contract), and Section 16.1 Provider Requirements.
- D. For the provision of Audiology Services, the VR Counselor must complete the "MSP New Client Referral Form" (located on the MSP AZVRS State Portal via the Links tab in Libera) to submit the referral to Managed Service Provider (MSP) for service provider selection.
- E. Upon confirmation of service provider selection for Audiology Services, the agency Referral for Services form may be completed with additional pertinent information relating to the client and service provision to be provided directly to the service provider.
- F. For non-contracted service of ENT exams, refer to RSA Contracts Unit for guidance whether the service is to be procured via:
 1. Arizona Health Care Cost Containment (AHCCCS) Fee for Services, or
 2. Other procurement methods, or

3. Direct payment to the client in the form of a CPA.
- G. For the provision of ENT exams, the VR Counselor must complete the agency Referral for Services form.
- H. The VR Counselor must task the Purchasing Technician to create RSA Purchase Authorization(s) for the service(s) listed in V. D or V.G.
- I. The Purchasing Technician must submit the RSA Purchase Authorization for each service listed in V. D or V.G along with the referral information to the provider(s).
- J. Upon receipt of the provider's assessment report, the VR Counselor must review the report for completeness, approve the provider's invoice and process for payment after confirming that the reporting documentation is complete.

VI. Documentation Requirements

The applicant/client's electronic case file must include the following:

- A. Referral information,
- B. RSA Purchase Authorization(s),
- C. Audiology Evaluation Report with accompanying Audiogram and Hearing Aid Recommendation Report, and
- D. ENT assessment report, if applicable.