
Assistive Technology and Supported Employment

What is Assistive Technology (AT)?

Assistive Technology is any item, piece of equipment, or system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functioning of a person with a disability. Many people call it AT. Examples of AT devices include:

- computers and specialized software
- communication devices, including tablets
- adaptive switches
- audio books or books in other formats
- auditory equipment
- standing devices and gait trainers
- specialized transportation equipment like adapted buses, lifts, and ramps

AT also includes services that help people get or use an AT device. For example:

- an evaluation to figure out what AT is best
- buying, leasing, adapting, or repairing AT
- training for the person using the AT, staff, or others, like employers



What is supported employment?

Supported employment is a service that helps people with disabilities get and keep a job in the community. The supported employment service has specialists who work with you and make sure you have the help you need to do the job.

What services can I get from supported employment?

Supported employment services include:

- Evaluations or counseling to see what job is right for you
- Help finding a job
- Job training
- Long term supports, like a job coach
- Help talking to the employer
- Learning how to use transportation

Where do I work if I get supported employment?

Supported employment services help you work in a place where people without disabilities work, like businesses, schools, or government agencies. You may work on your own, with a job coach, or on a job crew.

What is the difference between supported employment services and vocational rehabilitation services?

You get vocational rehabilitation (VR) services from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). VR services help people with disabilities get or keep a job **but** the service ends when the job goal is reached.

Supported employment services are through the Minnesota Department of Human Services. The big difference is that you can get supported employment services for many years or as long as you work.

Some people get help from both services, but you can't get the same service at the same time from both. If you are eligible for VR services, you have to use those first before your waiver (see below) will pay for supported employment services.

For [more information about VR services](#), go to www.LawHelpMN.org.



→ Click on *Disability*

→ Click on *Disability and Employment*

Who pays for supported employment services?

Most people who get supported employment services are on Medical Assistance and get services through home and community-based waivers, like:

- Developmental Disabilities (DD) waiver
- Community Alternatives for Disabled Individuals (CADI) waiver
- Community Alternative Care (CAC) waiver or
- Brain Injury (BI) waiver

If you get supported employment services through a waiver, you get the services as long as you need them.

What if I am not on a home and community-based waiver?

If you are not on a home and community-based waiver you may be able to get supported employment services through Moving Home Minnesota. To get services through them, you have to be on Medical Assistance and you have to be moving back to the community after being in an institution like a nursing home.

If you get supported employment through Moving Home Minnesota you can only get the service for up to 360 days.

How do I apply for a waiver?

If you have questions about how to apply for a waiver or Moving Home Minnesota, call the Disability Linkage Line 1-866-333-2466 (toll free) or do a live chat over the internet by going to MinnesotaHelp.info and click on Questions.

If I get supported employment services, who pays for the AT?

Different places may have to pay for the AT you need to work. Some examples are:

- Your health plan, like Medical Assistance
- Waivered services
- VR Services
- The supported employment service provider
- The employer

How do I know who should pay for the AT?

Often it depends on the reason you need the AT. For example, Medical Assistance or another health plan may be the best source to pay for a standing wheelchair because you will need the wheelchair for more than just

work. Medical Assistance and health plans should pay for medical devices and devices that you need to complete your activities of daily living. This would include devices like standing wheelchairs, walkers, and communication devices.

What kinds of AT should VR services pay for?

If the device you need is not covered by Medical Assistance or your health plan, VR services may pay for the device. VR services can provide almost any kind of AT so long as you need it in order to get or keep your job.

This can be things like:

- Devices to help you communicate
- Smartphone/tablet applications for memory, organization, video recording
- Wheelchairs or accessories
- Prosthetics and orthotics
- Modified vehicles
- Modified workstations

What AT does the employer have to provide?

Most employers have to provide reasonable accommodations at work. This means making changes so someone with a disability can function at the job. The reasonable accommodation can't be an undue burden for the employer (like cost too much money) or create a fundamental alternation (like changing things in a big way). A reasonable accommodation could include AT. Most accommodations do not cost very much money. Your employment specialist or job coach can help you ask for an accommodation from the employer.

What kind of AT does the supported employment service provider have to give me?

The supported employment service is responsible for work related evaluations and training. This could include evaluations for AT and training to use AT. The supported employment service may also have to provide a person with a disability a reasonable accommodation just like the employer. The supported employment provider may need to provide AT as a reasonable accommodation.

If you get supported employment through Moving Home Minnesota, you may be able to get some additional AT that is not covered by waivers, like tools, clothing and equipment that you need for the job.

Can I use my waiver to pay for AT at work?

You can use your waiver to pay for AT that you use at work. Try all of the other resources first because most of the waivers have limits on how much money you can spend on AT. If your waiver is your only resource, you and your employment specialist should talk with your county case manager. Waivers can pay for AT that helps you access your environment or communicate in the community.

Does the work site have to be accessible?

Yes. If it is not accessible in some way, talk to the employment specialist or your job coach first. They can help talk to the employer about how to make the work place accessible.

Are there any other resources to help me get the AT I need?

If you get Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or would be eligible for SSI if you didn't count your income from work, you may be able to use a PASS plan to help you pay for the AT you need. A PASS plan lets you set aside the money you earn in an account to save for the AT. You use the SSI money to pay for your living expenses.

A PASS plan can be used to pay for a lot of different things as long as it helps you get or keep a job. You can use a PASS plan to pay for big things, like a modified vehicle or ramp on your home. You can use a PASS plan to pay for smaller things like a note taker or computer.

To find out more about [PASS plans](#) and other work incentives go to <http://mn.db101.org>.



- Click on *Programs* on the top menu
- Click on *Plan to Achieve Self Support (PASS)*

What if I don't know what AT will help me at my job?

You can get an evaluation to see what AT will help you. The evaluation could be done through the supported employment provider, vocational rehabilitation services, or an outside evaluator who has experience with AT. Some larger employers may have staff that can help evaluate also.

How can I contact the Minnesota Disability Law Center?

The Minnesota Disability Law Center provides free legal help to people with disabilities in Minnesota. Contact us at:

Metro: (612) 334-5970
TDD: (612) 332-4668
Toll Free: 1-800-292-4150

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Minneapolis, MN 55401-1780

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To find your local legal aid office by county go to www.lawhelpmn.org/resource/legal-aid-offices

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