

**RULES
OF
TENNESSEE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

**CHAPTER 1220-04-10
DISTRIBUTING ASSISTIVE TELECOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT TO QUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS
WITH DISABILITIES**

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1220-04-10-.01 DEFINITIONS.

- (1) "Act" refers to Chapter 417 of the Public Acts of 1999, now codified at Tenn. Code Ann. § 65-21-115.
- (2) "Applicant" means a person who applies to the Tennessee Public Utility Commission for a device to assist with communication through the basic telephone network.
- (3) "Qualified Applicant" is a person that because of a disability cannot use the basic telephone network effectively without the use of an assistive communications device.
- (4) "Assistive Communication Device" means special equipment that permits individuals who have a disability to communicate effectively over the telephone network.
- (5) "Commission" means the Tennessee Public Utility Commission.
- (6) "Lifeline" means a telephone assistance program that reduces the monthly telephone charges for qualified persons.
- (7) "Provider" means a telecommunications service provider or a competing telecommunications provider as defined by Tenn. Code Ann. § 65-4-101 whose annual intra-state gross receipts are greater than five million dollars (\$5,000,000).
- (8) "Recipient" means the person whose application for an assistive communications device has been granted by the Commission.
- (9) "TDAP" or "Program" refers to the Telecommunications Devices Access Program administered by the Tennessee Public Utility Commission.
- (10) "TDAP Coordinator" refers to the individual employed by the Commission to manage the Program.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 65-2-102 and 65-21-115. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed November 22, 1999; effective February 5, 2000. Amendment filed February 24, 2000; effective May 9, 2000. Repeal and new rule filed December 5, 2006; effective February 18, 2007. Administrative changes made to this chapter on April 27, 2018 pursuant to Public Chapter 94 of 2017; "Tennessee Regulatory Authority" references were changed to "Tennessee Public Utility Commission," "Authority" references were changed to "Commission," "Authority Director" references were changed to "Commissioner," and "Chief" references were changed to "Director." Amendments filed November 1, 2019; effective January 30, 2020.

1220-04-10-.02 FUNDING FOR THE TENNESSEE RELAY SERVICES/TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVICES ACCESS PROGRAM.

- (1) Contributions collected by the state emergency communications board from the telecommunication providers will fund the purchase of assistive communication devices for Tennesseans with disabilities, and other equipment that may be necessary to implement the Act, and in addition, cover the necessary administrative costs (including outreach activities) of the Commission to administer the Program.
- (2) The Commission may create a reserve fund for the Program that will not exceed one million dollars (\$1,000,000) within any given fiscal year, including the contributions for that fiscal year.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 65-2-102 and 65-21-115. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed November 22, 1999; effective February 5, 2000. Amendment filed February 24, 2000; effective May 9, 2000. Repeal and new rule filed December 5, 2006; effective February 18, 2007. Administrative changes made to this chapter on April 27, 2018 pursuant to Public Chapter 94 of 2017; "Tennessee Regulatory Authority" references were changed to "Tennessee Public Utility Commission," "Authority" references were changed to "Commission," "Authority Director" references were changed to "Commissioner," and "Chief" references were changed to "Director." Amendments filed November 1, 2019; effective January 30, 2020.

1220-04-10-.03 MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.

- (1) All applicants must be residents of the State of Tennessee.
- (2) A qualified applicant shall have a disability, as verified by a care giver licensed to practice in the state of Tennessee, such that the person cannot use the basic telephone network effectively without the use of an assistive communication device.
- (3) Only one assistive communication device per household will be awarded through the Program unless there are persons in the same household with different adaptive needs. The TDAP Coordinator may then determine the need for more than one assistive communication device.
- (4) Because the demand for assistive communication devices may exceed the supply, the Commission will award the assistive communication devices on a first come basis. Priority, however, will be given to those applicants with the greatest physical and financial and/or social need. Such factors as described below shall be used to evaluate an applicant's physical, financial and social need for the assistive communication devices:
 - (a) The receiving of federal or state public assistance (i.e., Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, Food Stamps, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Federal Housing/Section 8 or Low Income Heating, etc.);
 - (b) Applicants whose total gross family income is less than 125 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines;
 - (c) The presence of any serious physical, medical, and/or cognitive condition, as verified by a care giver licensed to practice in Tennessee, that may present a life threatening situation (i.e., heart condition, stroke, severe depression, epilepsy, etc.);
 - (d) A qualified applicant living alone;
 - (e) Applicants who are under the age of 18 years who are able to use assistive communication devices for at least emergency purposes and who are frequently left in charge of the household or alone;

(Rule 1220-04-10-.03, continued)

- (f) A living situation where there is more than one person requiring an assistive communication device;
 - (g) Other unique circumstances deserving of special consideration that do not meet the above factors; and
 - (h) Applicants who meet the federal and/or state qualifications for the Lifeline Telephone Assistance Programs.
- (5) The Commission may request all necessary documentation needed to confirm information provided by applicants. This documentation may include, but not be limited to, medical statements, copies of the applicant's federal income tax returns, evidence of public assistance eligibility and any other documentation needed to ensure the applicant meets the requirements as specified in the Act and this Chapter.
- (6) Applicants must confirm in their application their ability to utilize an assistive communication device effectively. For those applicants that are not qualified in the use of such equipment, the TDAP Coordinator will provide applicants with information about qualified training.
- (7) The Commission shall furnish application forms to be completed by the applicant or his/her authorized representative.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 65-2-102 and 65-21-115. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed November 22, 1999; effective February 5, 2000. Repeal and new rule filed December 5, 2006; effective February 18, 2007. Administrative changes made to this chapter on April 27, 2018 pursuant to Public Chapter 94 of 2017; "Tennessee Regulatory Authority" references were changed to "Tennessee Public Utility Commission," "Authority" references were changed to "Commission," "Authority Director" references were changed to "Commissioner," and "Chief" references were changed to "Director." Rule was previously numbered 1220-04-10-.04 but was renumbered 1220-04-10-.03 with the deletion of original rule 1220-04-10-.03 filed November 1, 2019; effective January 30, 2020. Amendments filed November 1, 2019; effective January 30, 2020.

1220-04-10-.04 PURCHASE AND DISTRIBUTION OF ASSISTIVE DEVICES.

- (1) The Commission will purchase assistive communication devices under a state contract.
- (2) The TDAP Coordinator shall evaluate applications for assistive communication devices and shall award such equipment only to those applicants who meet the requisite requirements listed in this Chapter. Applicants who fail to qualify shall be notified by U.S. Registered Mail of the reasons for denial. Upon such notification, an applicant may request, in writing, directed to the Director of Consumer Services, an informal conference to reconsider the denial. If the proposed solution is not satisfactory to the applicant, the applicant may file a petition for review with the Commission in accordance with Chapter 1220-01-01.
- (3) Assistive communication devices awarded to qualified applicants are available for their exclusive use as long as they meet the Minimum Eligibility Requirements listed in 1220-04-10-.03.
- (4) The recipient must return the assistive communication devices if any of the following conditions occur:
 - (a) The recipient moves from the state;
 - (b) The recipient loses telephone service permanently;

(Rule 1220-04-10-.04, continued)

- (c) The recipient abuses the assistive communication device;
 - (d) The recipient is found to be using the device for illegal purposes;
 - (e) The recipient no longer requires the device.
- (5) Equipment may be exchanged if a different device becomes necessary because of a change in access needs.
- (6) Stolen or damaged equipment may be replaced. The applicant must provide copies of the appropriate documentation, such as fire department and/or police department reports.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 65-2-102 and 65-21-115. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed November 22, 1999; effective February 5, 2000. Repeal and new rule filed December 5, 2006; effective February 18, 2007. Administrative changes made to this chapter on April 27, 2018 pursuant to Public Chapter 94 of 2017; "Tennessee Regulatory Authority" references were changed to "Tennessee Public Utility Commission," "Authority" references were changed to "Commission," "Authority Director" references were changed to "Commissioner," and "Chief" references were changed to "Director." Rule was previously numbered 1220-04-10-.05 but was renumbered 1220-04-10-.04 with the deletion of original rule 1220-04-10-.03 filed November 1, 2019; effective January 30, 2020. Amendments filed November 1, 2019; effective January 30, 2020.

1220-04-10-.05 MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR.

- (1) If the assistive communication device is in need of repair, the recipient shall notify the Commission to determine if loaner equipment is available and whether he/she qualifies for such equipment.
- (a) Recipients will not qualify for loaner equipment if it is determined that the original device was damaged as the result of negligence or abuse.
 - (b) In order to qualify for loaner equipment, recipients must contact the TDAP Coordinator and provide some evidence that they will pay for the repair cost of their assistive communication devices.
- (2) The Commission shall maintain a list of locations where assistive communication devices can be repaired. The Commission shall make the final determination as to where the assistive communication devices are repaired.
- (3) It is the responsibility of the recipient to return the assistive communication devices to the repair center, as designated by the Commission, for repair. The cost of the repair, and/or coordination with the TDAP Coordinator, shall be the responsibility of the recipient. Special consideration will be given for repair cost by the Commission for recipients who have special financial needs as listed in 1220-04-10-.03(4)(a)-(h).
- (4) It is the responsibility of the recipient to purchase miscellaneous items, such as paper rolls, for the operation of the assistive communication devices.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 65-2-102 and 65-21-115. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed November 22, 1999; effective February 5, 2000. Repeal and new rule filed December 5, 2006; effective February 18, 2007. Administrative changes made to this chapter on April 27, 2018 pursuant to Public Chapter 94 of 2017; "Tennessee Regulatory Authority" references were changed to "Tennessee Public Utility Commission," "Authority" references were changed to "Commission," "Authority Director" references were changed to "Commissioner," and "Chief" references were changed to "Director." Rule was previously

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1220-04-10-.06 MONTHLY TELEPHONE CHARGES.

- (1) The recipient is responsible for all charges for local and long distance telephone service and any other service charges from the telephone company.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 65-2-102 and 65-21-115. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed November 22, 1999; effective February 5, 2000. Repeal and new rule filed December 5, 2006; effective February 18, 2007. Administrative changes made to this chapter on April 27, 2018 pursuant to Public Chapter 94 of 2017; “Tennessee Regulatory Authority” references were changed to “Tennessee Public Utility Commission,” “Authority” references were changed to “Commission,” “Authority Director” references were changed to “Commissioner,” and “Chief” references were changed to “Director.” Rule was previously numbered 1220-04-10-.07 but was renumbered 1220-04-10-.06 with the deletion of original rule 1220-04-10-.03 filed November 1, 2019; effective January 30, 2020.

1220-04-10-.07 CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION AND NONDISCRIMINATORY STATEMENT.

- (1) All information obtained by the Commission from applicants shall be kept confidential and will not be released to any person or entity without the express approval of the applicant unless such information is necessary for the preparation of reports or audits required under state law.
- (2) Services for the TDAP are provided on a nondiscriminatory basis in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, Section 602 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Title V of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its amendments.

Authority: T.C.A. §§ 65-2-102 and 65-21-115. **Administrative History:** Original rule filed November 22, 1999; effective February 5, 2000. Repeal and new rule filed December 5, 2006; effective February 18, 2007. Administrative changes made to this chapter on April 27, 2018 pursuant to Public Chapter 94 of 2017; “Tennessee Regulatory Authority” references were changed to “Tennessee Public Utility Commission,” “Authority” references were changed to “Commission,” “Authority Director” references were changed to “Commissioner,” and “Chief” references were changed to “Director.” Rule was previously numbered 1220-04-10-.08 but was renumbered 1220-04-10-.07 with the deletion of original rule 1220-04-10-.03 filed November 1, 2019; effective January 30, 2020.