




Title:	Vehicle Modification
Procedure #:	80-VR-25-01
Policy Reference:	80-VR-25 "Rehabilitation Technology"
Legal Reference:	ORC §3304.15, §3304.16; OAC 3304-2-59, 3304-2-52, 3304-2-56, 3304-6-01 through 3304-6-03; 34 CFR 361.5(c) (45), (55), (56); 34 CFR 361.48
Effective Date:	January 2, 2023
Approved:	Kevin L. Miller, Director 
Origin:	Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation and Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired
Supersedes:	VR-25-01-01 (2/15/2021)
History:	VR-25-01-01 (04/30/18)
Review/ Implementation	Begin Review – 01/22/24 Implement Revisions By – 07/29/24

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to provide direction for vehicle modification in accordance with appropriate federal (e.g., Code of Federal Regulations [CFR]) and state law (i.e., Ohio Revised Code [ORC], Ohio Administrative Code [OAC]) Governor directives and executive orders, other governing agency (e.g., DAS, OBM) policy or guidance, and/or Executive Director expectations.

Refer to the AWARE Manual for more detailed instructions regarding the management of cases in AWARE.

Refer to the "Vocational Rehabilitation Vehicle Modification Manual" for requirements and instruction for retail dealers and individuals.

II. APPLICABILITY

This procedure applies to VR Staff and VR Contractors.

III. DEFINITIONS

Refer to "Vocational Rehabilitation Definitions" (80-VR-99.A).

Automotive Adaptive Equipment – any device, mechanism, or equipment designed to enable an individual with a disability to operate a passenger car.

Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist (CDRS) – a person who has obtained the necessary knowledge base and experience in the field of driver rehabilitation to successfully acquire and maintain certification to measure a person's ability to safely operate a vehicle, teach that individual to operate the equipment, and prescribe or specify the automotive adaptive equipment necessary to permit an individual with a disability to drive safely and independently.

Driver Rehabilitation Specialist (DRS) – a person certified by The Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists or its equivalent, or a driver rehabilitation specialist supervised by a CDRS, who measures a person's ability to safely operate a vehicle, teaches that individual to operate the equipment, and prescribes or specifies the automotive adaptive equipment necessary to permit an individual with a disability to drive safely and independently.

Formal Recommendation – a Vehicle Modification Specification provided by a CDRS, or DRS that includes specific recommendations for a vehicle modification.

Retail Dealer – a business who modifies or facilitates modification of a vehicle for an individual with a disability.

OOD Designee – for the purpose of this procedure, a designated VR Staff responsible for review and approval of all vehicle modifications.

Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) – means the original automotive manufacturer producing the vehicle such as Ford, General Motors, and Fiat Chrysler.

Passenger Car – any motor vehicle that is designed and used for carrying not more than nine (9) persons and includes any motor vehicle that is designed and used for carrying not more than 15 persons in a ridesharing arrangement.

IV. PROCEDURES

A. General

1. VR Staff or VR Contractor shall review and follow direction in Section A. “General” of the “Rehabilitation Technology” policy (80-VR-25) prior to continuing with guidance in this procedure.
2. OOD shall not purchase a vehicle in whole or in part but may purchase automotive adaptive equipment and motor vehicle modifications in whole or part, for an individual as long as the vehicle is titled to the individual, parent or legal guardian, spouse, and/or sibling. In addition, the following conditions must be present:
 - a. personal transportation is required to meet the employment outcome specified on the individual’s individualized plan for employment (IPE) (refer to “Individualized Plan for Employment” [80-VR-08-01]); and
 - b. other modes of transportation (e.g., public transportation) that would enable the individual to effectively meet the employment outcome as stated in their IPE are not available.

B. Requirements for Vehicles and Planning Discussions

1. OOD shall not purchase a new or used vehicle, in whole or in part, for an individual nor shall OOD pay for any required repairs on a vehicle purchased for the purpose of a vehicle modification.
 - a. OOD will not purchase extra options that are not included with the vehicle (e.g., back-up camera, remote car starter).

2. Vehicle modifications shall only be provided to an individual actively involved in VR services (i.e., either participating in services, ready for employment, or currently employed) and shall only be considered when it is more cost effective and/or more efficient than the purchase of public or any other mode of transportation per the “Vocational Rehabilitation Transportation Services” procedure (80-VR-11-11).
3. For the purpose of this procedure, vehicle modification only applies to passenger cars (i.e., car or van) and shall meet the parameters below.
 - a. The vehicle shall be one of the following:
 - i. Chrysler Pacifica;
 - ii. Dodge Caravan;
 - iii. Honda Odyssey;
 - iv. Toyota Sienna (2021 or newer hybrid models only); and
 - v. others, as allowed by OOD.
 - b. The vehicle may be new or if the vehicle is used it shall:
 - i. have mileage under 36,000;
 - ii. be less than 3 years old; and
 - iii. have a valid original manufacturer’s warranty.

Note: An exception may be granted to the mileage or year requirements, refer to Section G. for submission and processing.
 - c. Prior to authorizing for the modification of a used vehicle, an inspection report from an ASC certified mechanic, independent of the seller, shall be provided to OOD, by the individual.
 - i. The report by the ASC certified mechanic shall include a completed “Vehicle Inspection Form” (80-VR-25-01.A) indicating the vehicle is in “sound condition.”
 - d. Prior to authorizing for a vehicle modification, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall consult with the OOD Designee, via email, to ood.rehabtech@ood.ohio.gov with the required information and reports outlined in this section.
4. VR Staff or VR Contractors and the individual and, if applicable, their parent or legal guardian, spouse, and/or sibling shall discuss the vehicle modification process using the “Vehicle Modification Acknowledgement” (80-VR-25-01.B). The following, but not limited to items, shall be included in the discussion.
 - a. The individual and, if applicable, their parent or legal guardian, spouse, and/or sibling should not purchase a vehicle with the expectation that OOD will approve a modification prior to all requirements of this procedure being completed. This includes obtaining the modification quotation(s), awarding the project, and completing/signing the “Vehicle Modification Agreement” (80-VR-25-01.C).
 - i. The individual and, if applicable, their parent or legal guardian, spouse, and/or sibling, should check with the retail dealer awarded the project about acceptable trim packages and options prior to making a final purchase.

- b. If the individual and, if applicable, their parent or legal guardian, spouse, and/or sibling, wishes to purchase a used vehicle, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall ensure that they understand that the requirements provided in Section B.3.b. are met.
- c. The vehicle which the individual or, if applicable, their parent or legal guardian, spouse, and/or sibling, is planning on purchasing and the modifications that will be required.
- d. The available retail dealer that can make the modifications.
- e. The timeframe for completion of the modification.
- f. If, at any during the process, the individual and, if applicable, their parent or legal guardian, spouse, and/ or sibling, wants to change the approved vehicle, the VR Staff or VR Contractor must consult with the OOD Designee by sending an e-mail to ood.rehabtech@ood.ohio.gov.

C. Adaptive Driver Evaluation and License and Driver Training

- 1. VR Staff or VR Contractor shall review all proposed vehicle modifications with their VR or Contract Supervisor prior to authorizing for a driver evaluation in AWARE.
- 2. If the VR or Contract Supervisor agrees to move forward with exploring the feasibility of a vehicle modification, a driver evaluation is required to document the individual's needs and ability to operate a motor vehicle.
 - a. The driver evaluation may be conducted as part of the Comprehensive Assessment (CA) process as outlined in "Comprehensive Assessment Procedure" (80-VR-04-01) or later in the VR process (e.g., as the individual is approaching readiness for the modification).
 - b. The evaluation shall be completed by a Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist (CDRS) or Driver Rehabilitation Specialist (DRS). A listing may be found on the Association of Driving Rehabilitation Specialist website (<https://www.aded.net/>) under the "Directory & Services" section.
 - i. Prior to the evaluation, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall contact the CDRS/DRS to determine if a prescription is needed from the individual's treating physician for participation in the driver evaluation.
 - a) A prescription, if required, should include the relevant diagnosis and any other requirements deemed necessary by the CDRS/DRS.
 - b) If necessary, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall work with the individual and, if applicable, their parent or legal guardian and/or the treating physician to obtain the prescription.
 - ii. OOD may require the CDRS/DRS to utilize the "Vehicle Modification Specification" form (80-VR-25-01.D) to document their evaluation.
 - c. VR Staff or VR Contractor shall ask the CDRS/DRS if the individual requires a driver permit in order to complete the evaluation if they do not currently possess a valid driver license.

- i. VR Staff or VR Contractor shall follow “Vocational Rehabilitation Transportation Services” (80-VR-11-11) if the individual needs to obtain a driver permit to participate in a driver evaluation.
 - d. If the individual does not possess a valid driver license with the proper endorsements, the CDRS/DRS may recommend driver rehabilitation training (DRT) for the individual to obtain or update their driver license.
 - i. If DRT is recommended, the VR Staff or VR Contractor shall add DRT to the individual’s IPE which shall include an estimate of time for completion, based on recommendations from the CDRS.
 - e. The submission of the “Vehicle Modification Specification” by the CDRS/DRS certifies the individual’s driver competency that the individual possesses a valid driver license with proper endorsements.
 - i. The “Vehicle Modification Specification” certifies driver competency for 12 months.
 - f. If the CDRS/DRS does not recommend that the individual drive (and therefore does not recommend DRT), VR Staff or VR Contractor and the individual and, if applicable, their parent or legal guardian shall explore other transportation options. The Vehicle Modification process discussion stops at this point.
- D. Review of Proposed Modification(s), Obtaining Quotations, Award of the Project, Issuing Authorization, and Final Fitting (Refer to Section D. for Minor Modifications)
 - 1. Once the discussion with the individual and, if applicable their parent or legal guardian, spouse, and/or sibling has been completed, VR Staff or VR Contractor shall request a review of all proposed modifications (including minor modifications, refer to Section E.) by sending an email to ood.rehabtech@ood.ohio.gov for review by the OOD Designee.
 - a. The email shall include details of the proposed modifications and the year, make and model of the proposed vehicle.
 - b. A copy of the email shall be placed in an AWARE Case Note.
 - c. Vehicle modification information shall NOT be added to the IPE prior to award to the retail dealer.
 - 2. Once the OOD Designee reviews the email, determines all required information is documented in the AWARE Case Record, and all requirements are met, they shall proceed as detailed below.
 - a. Complete the “Vehicle Modification Request for Quotation” form (80-VR-25-01.E) and send to the three (3) qualified modification retail dealers selected by the individual and, if applicable their parent or legal guardian, spouse, or sibling.
 - i. Three (3) quotations are not required for minor vehicle modifications (refer to Section E.) per “Vocational Rehabilitation Purchases” (40-FIN-01-06). If this is the case, the individual and, if applicable, their parent or legal guardian, spouse, and/or sibling, shall choose a vehicle modification retail dealer and VR Staff or VR Contractor shall inform the OOD Designee which supplier was chosen, via email, at ood.rehabtech@ood.ohio.gov.

- b. Upon return of the quotations, review and award the modification based on the primary factor of lowest cost, but also secondary factors of shortest distance from the individual's residence and fastest projected completion time.
 - c. The OOD Designee shall complete the "Vehicle Modification Bid Summary" (80-VR-25-01.F). Once completed:
 - i. scan into an AWARE Case Note;
 - ii. send, via email, to the VR Staff or VR Contractor who submitted the request; and
 - iii. send to the retail dealer(s) who submitted the quotation(s).
3. The VR Staff or VR Contractor shall proceed as detailed below.
- a. Complete the "Vehicle Modification Agreement" (80-VR-25-01.C) and obtain the individual's signature and date and, if applicable, the signature and date of their parent or legal guardian, spouse, and/or sibling.
 - b. Once the vehicle has been purchased, obtain copies of the following items and scan into an AWARE Case Note:
 - i. the individual's proof of insurance for the vehicle being modified;
 - ii. the vehicle title or registration; and
 - iii. the individual's driver license with endorsements.
 - c. Add the vehicle modification information to the IPE.
 - d. Create an AWARE authorization to the retail dealer who was awarded the project per instruction in "Vocational Rehabilitation Purchases (40-FIN-01-06).
 - i. Payment shall not be released until the modification and final fitting are completed following guidance in "Submission, Review, and Payment of AWARE Case Services Invoices" (40-FIN-02-02).
4. The CDRS/DRS should, if at all possible, attend the final fitting of the vehicle.

E. Minor Vehicle Modifications

1. Minor modifications shall be listed on the IPE prior to authorizing the services as stated in Section F.2.
2. "Vocational Rehabilitation Purchases" (40-FIN-01-06) shall be followed to determine if verbal or written quotations are required based on the proposed cost.
3. Minor modifications include:
 - a. manual hand/foot controls;
 - b. pedal guards;

- c. left foot accelerator;
 - d. mirrors;
 - e. remote switches;
 - f. unoccupied wheelchair/scooter handling device;
 - g. spinner knobs;
 - h. simple extension modifications of secondary controls that allow an individual to grasp, pull, twist, or activate control functions, wheelchair carriers, pedal extensions, shift levers, park brake, turn signals, hazard lights, washer/wiper, ignition, lights, dimmer, seat adjustment, HVAC controls, and door locks; and
 - i. similar items which may be considered by the OOD Designee on a case-by-case basis.
4. OOD is not required to consider the age of the vehicle or mileage limits when an initial request is made for minor modifications to a vehicle.
 5. The length of time between OOD authorizing for minor modifications follows the ten (10) years or after the vehicle accumulates 100,000 miles from the date the retail dealer submits the final invoice for payment to OOD, if previously modified.

F. Replacement Vehicle Modifications

1. An individual is eligible to receive a replacement vehicle modification provided by OOD after ten (10) years from the date the retail dealer submits the final invoice for payment to OOD or after the vehicle accumulates 100,000 miles.
 - a. The replacement modification must be necessary to enable an individual to maintain the employment outcome as defined in the individual's IPE.
2. OOD may consider and grant exceptions to the time and accumulated miles requirements for replacement vehicle modifications addressed in Section F. in the following situations:
 - a. the individual is currently competitively employed; and
 - b. the individual experiences a deterioration of function due to a disability such that the individual is no longer able to safely drive or be transported with the provided level of adaptive driving technology; or
 - c. the individual experiences an additional disability, such that the individual is no longer able to safely drive or be transported using the provided modification; or
 - d. when the high-tech driving system manufacturer recommends a safety upgrade to the driving system and the high-tech integrated driving system is out of warranty and the warranty had been maintained through appropriate maintenance.

Note: Refer to Section G. for submission and processing of exceptions.

G. Exceptions

1. VR Staff shall make requests for exceptions, via email, to the OOD Designee at ood.rehabtech@ood.ohio.gov . The email shall include detailed justification for the request.
2. Upon receipt of an email, the OOD Designee shall review the exception request to verify all information is on file and that the request meets one (1) of the allowable reasons (as noted above).
3. Once the OOD Designee's review is complete and criteria is met, they shall forward on for review and approvals as listed below.
 - a. The OOD Designee shall forward to the appropriate Assistant Deputy Director (ADD).
 - b. The ADD shall forward to the Deputy Director.
 - c. The Deputy Director shall forward to the Director for final approval.

H. Violation

An employee who violates this procedure may be subject to discipline up to and including removal.

FORMS AND ATTACHMENTS

- 80-VR-25-01.A – Vehicle Inspection Form
- 80-VR-25-01.B – Vehicle Modification Acknowledgement
- 80-VR-25-01.C – Vehicle Modification Agreement
- 80-VR-25-01.D – Vehicle Modification Specification
- 80-VR-25-01.E – Vehicle Modification Request for Quotation (RFQ)
- 80-VR-25-01.F – Vehicle Modification Quotation Summary

RESOURCES

- VR Vehicle Modification Manual
- 80-VR-99.A – Vocational Rehabilitation Definitions
- 80-VR-25 Rehabilitation Technology
- 80-VR-08-01 – Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
- 80-VR-04-01 – Comprehensive Assessment Procedure
- Association of Driving Rehabilitation Specialist website (<https://www.aded.net/>)
- 80-VR-11-11 – Vocational Rehabilitation Transportation Services
- 40-FIN-01-06 – Vocational Rehabilitation Purchases
- 40-FIN-02-02 – Submission, Review, and Payment of AWARE Case Services Invoices

FUNDING

Refer to “Standard Expectations and Funding Information for Vocational Rehabilitation Policies and Procedures” (80-VR-98) for Information on OOD’s federal grant funding amounts and percentages awarded by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the Deputy Director, or designee, to review this procedure, on or before, the date listed in the header and, if applicable, make any necessary revisions. The Deputy Director or designee shall document the review as required in “Policy and Procedure Process” (10-ADM-01).