

CHAPTER 8775
TELECOMMUNICATION ACCESS FOR
COMMUNICATION-IMPAIRED PERSONS BOARD
ELIGIBILITY FOR SERVICES

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8775.0100 DEFINITIONS.

Subpart 1. **Scope.** The terms used in this chapter have the meanings given them in this part.

Subp. 2. **Applicable median income.** "Applicable median income" means the median gross income in Minnesota as estimated by the Bureau of the Census in the most recent annual announcement of the United States Department of Health and Human Services Family Support Administration, published in the Federal Register. These announcements are incorporated by reference.

Subp. 3. **Appropriate communication device.** "Appropriate communication device" means a communication device that most efficiently allows access to the telephone system by a communication-impaired person.

Subp. 4. **Blind.** A person is "blind" if central visual acuity does not exceed 20/200 in the better eye with corrective lenses or, if greater than 20/200, visual acuity is accompanied by a limitation in the fields of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees.

Subp. 5. **Board.** "Board" means the Telecommunication Access for Communication-impaired Persons Board established in Minnesota Statutes, section 237.51.

Subp. 6. **Communication device.** "Communication device" means a device that when connected to a telephone enables a communication-impaired person to communicate with another person using the telephone system. A communication device includes a ring signaler, an amplification device, a telephone device for the deaf with auxiliary equipment the board considers necessary, and a tele-braille unit.

Subp. 7. **Communication-impaired person.** "Communication-impaired person" means a person determined by the division to be deaf, hearing impaired, hard-of-hearing, or speech impaired as defined by subparts 8, 12, 13, and 20.

Subp. 8. **Deaf.** "Deaf" means the condition of a person whose hearing in both ears is impaired to the degree that the person is unable to understand speech, even when amplified. A deaf person requires use of a telephone device for the deaf to communicate effectively on the telephone.

Subp. 9. **Deaf and blind.** "Deaf and blind" means the conditions of a person who is (1) deaf, severely hearing impaired, or hard-of-hearing, and (2) blind or visually handicapped. A person affected by these conditions requires use of a tele-braille unit or telephone device for the deaf with auxiliary equipment to communicate effectively on the telephone.

Subp. 10. **Division.** "Division" means the Deaf Services Division of the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

Subp. 11. **Economic hardship.** "Economic hardship" means an economic condition or level of subsistence on a household income that is at or below 60 percent of the applicable median income in the state.

Subp. 12. **Hard-of-hearing.** "Hard-of-hearing" means a condition of a person who has a reduced ability to understand speech. Some of the effects of the impairment can be overcome with proper amplification. A person that is hard-of-hearing may require a communication device to communicate effectively on the telephone.

Subp. 13. **Hearing impaired.** "Hearing impaired" means a condition in which hearing in both ears is impaired. These individuals require use of a telephone device for the deaf to communicate effectively on the telephone.

Subp. 14. **Household criteria.** For determining priority when initially distributing equipment or receiving more than one communication device, "household criteria" means the higher priority given for a household having more than one communication-impaired person or for a household with a communication-impaired person living alone.

Subp. 15. **Household income.** "Household income" means the total income of a communication-impaired person and immediate family living in the same residence. The immediate family includes spouse and minor children. The income of a minor child must be included when the dependent minor child is under 15 years of age and residing with the parents or custodial parent. If the communication-impaired person is a minor child, then parents and siblings residing with the minor are immediate family.

Subp. 16. **Income.** "Income" means money received in the preceding calendar year from each of the following sources:

- A. money, wages, or salary;
- B. net income from nonfarm employment as defined for federal tax purposes;
- C. net income from farm self-employment as defined for federal taxes;
- D. income from any social security program;
- E. supplemental social security income;
- F. public assistance or welfare payments;
- G. interest on savings or other investments that pay interest;
- H. dividend income from estates or trusts, or net rental income;
- I. veterans' payments, unemployment compensation payments, and workers' compensation payments;
- J. private or public employee pensions; and
- K. alimony, child support, regular contributions from persons not living in the household, and other periodic income. This definition of income comes from that of the Bureau of the Census and is interpreted according to its standards as published in "Consumer Income," series P-60, No. 156, Money, Income of Households, Families and Persons in the United States: 1985. These standards are incorporated by reference, are not subject to frequent change, and are located in the government publications reference department of the University of Minnesota and in the Minitex interlibrary loan system.

Subp. 17. **Resident of Minnesota.** "Resident of Minnesota" means an individual who lives in Minnesota or who has moved to Minnesota and intends to remain in Minnesota.

Subp. 18. **Significant visual impairment.** "Significant visual impairment" means a visual disability that does not constitute legal blindness but which constitutes a substantial handicap to employment or limits the person's ability to live independently, perform self-care activities, or grow and develop.

Subp. 19. **Special needs.** "Special needs" means the needs of an eligible person that may require that the person be given priority when initially distributing the equipment or be given more than one communication device because of severity of communication impairment or presence of multiple disabilities.

Subp. 20. Speech impaired. "Speech-impaired" means a condition that renders a person physically incapable of speaking clearly. The severity of the impairment may vary; however, it renders speech on an ordinary telephone unintelligible or impossible and requires a communication device to communicate effectively on the telephone.

Subp. 21. TACIP. "TACIP" means telecommunication access for communication-impaired persons.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 237.51*

History: *14 SR 848*

8775.0200 PURPOSE AND CONSTRUCTION.

The purpose of this chapter is to develop and implement a statewide program to distribute telephone communication devices to eligible communication-impaired persons for improving access to telephone communications services for communication-impaired persons. This chapter is to be liberally construed to further these purposes.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 237.51*

History: *14 SR 848*

8775.0300 ELIGIBILITY FOR TACIP SERVICES.

Subpart 1. Information provided. On request, the division shall offer to a person an application form developed by the division and a brochure that describes the TACIP eligibility requirements and application process.

Subp. 2. Application process. The applicant shall complete the application form and return it to the division's regional service center for hearing-impaired people. An application may be made by the applicant, the applicant's spouse, or a person authorized by the applicant to act in the applicant's behalf. All documentation must be provided within 30 days of the first interview with the division. The applicant shall provide medical documentation of hearing loss on request.

Subp. 3. Documenting, verifying, and reviewing eligibility. The division shall verify the applicant's household income, age, and access to telephone service, and that the applicant is a communication-impaired person. If the division becomes aware that a condition of eligibility has changed, the division may verify eligibility:

A. Within 30 days, an applicant shall document income or authorize the division to verify the income. The division shall help an applicant or recipient obtain documents that the applicant does not possess and cannot obtain. Information previously verified and retained by the division need not be verified again unless the information no longer applies to current circumstances.

B. The division shall not request information about an applicant for or recipient of TACIP services that is not of public record from a source other than within the division without the applicant's or recipient's previous written consent. The division may request information about an applicant or recipient that is not of public record from the telephone companies by obtaining the applicant's or recipient's previous written consent on an application or redetermination form. The division shall not provide third parties with access to information about an applicant's eligibility status or other case record information without the previous written consent of that applicant or recipient, except when access to specific case information is granted to agencies designated by the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes, chapter 13. Information designated as confidential by the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act may only be made available to agencies granted access under that law and must not be provided to an applicant, recipient, or third party.

C. The division shall inform the recipient of the recipient's responsibil-

ity to report permanent changes in circumstances that affect eligibility within ten days of each change.

Subp. 4. Eligibility criteria. To be eligible for the TACIP program, a person must:

- A. be at least five years of age;
- B. be a communication-impaired person;
- C. be a resident of Minnesota;

D. be a resident in a household at or below the applicable median income in the state, except that a deaf and blind person applying for a telebraille unit may reside in a household that has a median income no more than 150 percent of the applicable median household income in the state; and

E. have or have applied for telephone service and been assigned a telephone number. A person who at the time of application does not have telephone service, but meets all other eligibility requirements, will be declared "conditionally eligible" and, in order to be declared "eligible," must apply for telephone service and be assigned a telephone number.

Subp. 5. Persons not eligible. Persons who are residents of a residential or treatment facility that directly or indirectly receives federal funding and is required to be fully accessible to all residents by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, United States Code, title 29, section 774, and are eligible for and can obtain communication devices through federal provisions are not eligible to receive TACIP services under this chapter.

Subp. 6. Notification of eligibility. Within 30 days of the receipt of the application and the necessary documentation the division shall notify the applicant in writing whether the applicant is found eligible and, if the applicant is denied, the reasons for denial.

Subp. 7. Determination of appropriate communication device. The division shall determine the appropriate communication device for a recipient.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 237.51*

History: *14 SR 848*

8775.0400 PRIORITY FOR INITIAL DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNICATION DEVICES.

Subpart 1. First priority: deaf and blind. The first in priority are those eligible, deaf and blind persons having special needs, experiencing economic hardship, or meeting the household criteria standards.

Subp. 2. Second priority: deaf. The second in priority are those eligible, deaf persons having special needs, experiencing economic hardship, or meeting the household criteria standards.

Subp. 3. Third priority: impaired speech. The third in priority are those eligible, speech-impaired persons having special needs, experiencing economic hardship, or meeting the household criteria standards.

Subp. 4. Fourth priority: hearing impaired. The fourth in priority are those eligible, hearing-impaired persons having special needs, experiencing economic hardship, or meeting the household criteria standards.

Subp. 5. Fifth priority: others without special needs. The fifth in priority are those eligible, communication-impaired persons having no special needs, not experiencing economic hardship, and not meeting the household criteria standards.

Subp. 6. Use of priority system. Initially, the priority system must be used to determine the priority of eligible applicants for receiving telecommunication devices, for example, to establish a waiting list of eligible applicants. Only if allotted program money is insufficient to provide all eligible applicants with needed equipment may the priority system be used to determine which individuals will receive equipment.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 237.51*

History: 14 SR 848

8775.0500 HOUSEHOLDS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SEVERAL DEVICES.

Subpart 1. Deaf. A communication-impaired person who is deaf or severely hearing impaired is eligible for a telephone device for the deaf and a ring signaler.

Subp. 2. Deaf and blind. A communication-impaired person who is deaf and blind is eligible to receive use of a telephone device for the deaf with auxiliary equipment approved by the board and necessary for efficient communication.

Subp. 3. Two or more eligible persons. If a household contains more than one eligible communication-impaired person with various communication impairments, the board or its designee may approve more than one telephone device as necessary for efficient communication.

Subp. 4. Hearing impaired. A communication-impaired person who is hearing impaired is eligible for a ring signaler and amplification device if more than one device is necessary for efficient communication.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 237.51*

History: 14 SR 848

8775.0600 TRAINING AND MAINTENANCE.

The commissioner of human services shall maintain the communication devices until the warranty period expires at which time the board shall decide whether to repair or replace defective units. The commissioner shall provide training, without charge, to first-time users of the devices.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 237.51*

History: 14 SR 848

8775.0700 OWNERSHIP.

Communication devices distributed under this chapter are and must remain the property of the state of Minnesota.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 237.51*

History: 14 SR 848

8775.0800 APPEALS.

Subpart 1. Aggrieved party. An aggrieved party may appeal a decision of the division. An aggrieved party is an applicant:

A. who is determined ineligible for TACIP service under part 8775.0300, subpart 4;

B. who disagrees with the division's determination regarding the appropriate communication device under part 8775.0300, subpart 6;

C. who disagrees with the division's decision regarding priority for initial distribution of communication devices under part 8775.0400; or

D. whose TACIP service is terminated.

Subp. 2. Procedure. Requests for appeal must be made within 30 calendar days of receiving notice of adverse action or, for good cause shown, within 60 calendar days of receiving the notice. Requests for appeal can be made through written, telephone, or face-to-face contact with a designated representative of the Regional Service Center for the Hearing Impaired.

Subp. 3. Conciliation conference. Within 30 calendar days of receiving a request for appeal, a representative of the Regional Service Center for the Hearing Impaired shall meet with the aggrieved party and attempt to resolve informally the matter leading to the appeal. Within ten calendar days of the conciliation conference, the representative shall prepare a written summary of the issues addressed at the conciliation conference and shall send a copy of the written summary to the aggrieved party and to the board.

Subp. 4. Formal hearings. If still dissatisfied after receiving a copy of the conciliation conference summary, the aggrieved party may request a hearing before the board by making written, telephone, or face-to-face contact with a designated representative of the Regional Service Center for the Hearing Impaired. A hearing before the board must be scheduled within 90 days. At the hearing, the aggrieved party may introduce evidence relevant to the issues on appeal. An aggrieved party may be represented by legal counsel or a lay advocate at the hearing.

Subp. 5. Service pending appeal. Termination of TACIP services must be stayed pending an appeal.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 237.51*

History: *14 SR 848*