

# Technology Funding and How to Get It

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Pennsylvania  
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# Agenda

- Overview of the Office of Developmental Programs
- How technology is funded through the Office of Developmental Programs
  - Waivers
  - Base Funding
- Service definitions and types of technology funded
- Additional Resources
- Questions



# Overview of the Office of Developmental Programs (ODP)



# What is ODP?

- ODP is one of many state government offices within the Department of Human Services (DHS).
- ODP has responsibility over the system of services for people with developmental disabilities.
- The mission of ODP is to support Pennsylvanians with developmental disabilities to achieve greater independence, choice, and opportunity and live Everyday Lives. ODP seeks to continuously improve an effective system of accessible services and supports that are flexible, innovative, and person-centered to recognize and support dignity for all Pennsylvanians.



# Who is eligible for ODP services?

Individual must have a diagnosis of one of the following:

- Intellectual Disability
- Autism
- Developmental Disability
  - High probability of resulting in an Intellectual Disability or Autism – Age 0 through age 8
  - Medically Complex Condition – Age 0 through 21

Individual must also have adaptive skills deficits in three or more areas of major life activity: self-care, understanding and use of language, learning, mobility, self direction and/or capacity for independent living based on an assessment of adaptive functioning.

# Everyday Lives



*Everyday Lives* VALUES IN ACTION

- 1 Assure Effective Communication
- 2 Promote Self-Direction, Choice and Control
- 3 Increase Employment
- 4 Support Families throughout the Lifespan
- 5 Promote Health, Wellness, and Safety
- 6 Support People with Complex Needs
- 7 Develop and Support Qualified Staff
- 8 Simplify the System
- 9 Improve Quality
- 10 Expand Options for Community Living
- 11 Increase Community Participation
- 12 Provide Community Services to Everyone
- 13 Evaluate Future Innovations Based on Everyday Lives Principles
- 14 Promote Racial Equity



pennsylvania

# Office of Developmental Programs Funding

# Base-Funding



## Mental Health Intellectual Disability Act of 1966

State funded

County Mental Health/Intellectual Disability programs determine eligibility and decide how the funding is used.

- County programs are required to use some of this funding to pay for some services.
- May be used to support people who are not eligible for waivers and those who are on the waiting list to receive waiver services.



# Waivers

- Consolidated Waiver
- Community Living Waiver
- Person/Family Directed Support Waiver
- Adult Autism Waiver
- Adult Community Autism Program

Federal and State funded

County Mental Health/Intellectual Disability programs determine eligibility for the waivers.

# ODP's Waivers – Annual Limits

| Waiver                           | Consolidated | P/FDS                                                                                               | Community Living      | Adult Autism Waiver |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Annual Limit on Services         | None         | \$47,000                                                                                            | \$97,000              | None                |
| Excluded from annual limit (Cap) |              | Supports Coordination and Supports Broker                                                           | Supports Coordination |                     |
| Employment                       |              | Additional \$15,000 for Supported Employment, Advanced Supported Employment, or Benefits Counseling |                       |                     |



# Supports Coordinators and Individual Support Plans

Most people who are determined eligible for services through ODP will receive Supports Coordination services.

- Locate, coordinate, and monitor needed services and supports. This can include services and supports that are not funded through the ODP.
- Help individuals plan for the life they want to live.

The individual and their team discuss the individual's needs and explore options to meet those needs.

- If a service paid through ODP is identified, it will be added to the Individual Support Plan for authorization.



# Covered Technology and Service Definitions



# Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology is an item, piece of equipment, or product system, acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve a participant's functioning or increase their ability to exercise choice and control.



# Assistive Technology – Electronic Devices



**Electronic devices** to meet a communication or prompting need or to enable individuals to independently control devices and appliances in their home and community.

- Examples of electronic devices include: tablets, computers, and electronic communication aids.
- Applications for electronic devices that assist participants with a need identified are also covered.



Avaz AAC



SoundingBoard



Proloquo2Go AAC

# Assistive Technology – Determining the Need



## Determining the need for services:

- How will the item increase, maintain, or improve the individual's functioning?
- Has the individual used a device in the past to address a similar need?
  - If yes, what worked well with this device? What didn't work well with this device?
- Have free lending programs been explored for new devices or apps? These programs allow individuals to borrow and use a device or app for a short period of time at no cost.
  - [Borrow – TechOWL \(techowlpa.org\)](http://techowlpa.org)
  - [PaTTAN - Short Term Loan](#)
- Is the device cost effective?



# Assistive Technology – Evaluations

An evaluation of an individual's need for Assistive Technology is covered through any of the following:

- Assistive Technology service
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Language Therapy

If an item costs \$750 or more and will be purchased through the Assistive Technology service, an independent evaluation by a professional must be completed.



## Assistive Technology – Limits

There is a lifetime limit of \$10,000 per individual for all Assistive Technology.

- If additional funding is needed for Assistive Technology, the variance process can be used to request the funding.

No more than one replacement **electronic device** is allowed every 5 years.

Examples of items that cannot be covered by the waivers:

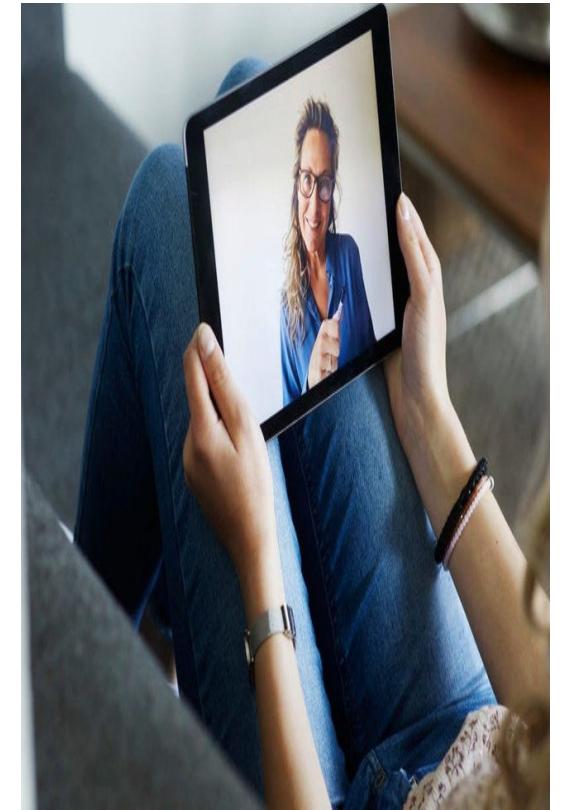
- Assistive technology covered through Medical Assistance such as durable medical equipment and hearing aids for youth under 21 years of age
- Recreational or exercise equipment

# Remote Supports

Remote Supports involve the use of technology that uses two-way real time communication in the individual's home or community that allows awake staff from an agency who is offsite to monitor and respond to the individual's health and safety needs.

Interaction with a professional occurs as needed as part of remote supports but is not the main function of the service.

Remote Supports is used during periods of time that direct services are not required.



# Remote Supports – What is Included

Remote Supports include:

- Staff who monitor and respond to the individual's needs;
- The technology utilized in the home and community that is monitored by the staff;
- The technology utilized for two-way real time communication (if different from above);
- The equipment necessary to operate the technology; and
- The costs for delivery, installation, adjustments, monthly testing, monitoring, maintenance and repairs to the technology and equipment necessary to operate the technology.

# Remote Supports Technology

Technology devices are:

- Installed in the person's home
- Worn by the person (and/or)
- Carried by the person (ex. smart phone)

**Staff that work for the Remote Supports agency monitor these devices and respond to the person's safety needs utilizing details in the Individual Support Plan.**

Examples include:

- Door sensors
- Window sensors
- Stove sensors
- Water sensors
- Pressure pads
- GPS tracking watches
- Smart phones/tablets/laptops

[Supportive Technology – MyODP](#)

# Remote Supports – Implementation Plan and Limits

The Remote Supports provider must complete a Remote Supports Implementation Plan. The plan must include:

- How the individual's rights, including their right to privacy, will be protected.
- How the individual's health, welfare, and safety needs will be met.
- The training individuals and other designated persons will receive.
- How Remote Supports are more cost-effective than other waiver services.

Remote Supports limits:

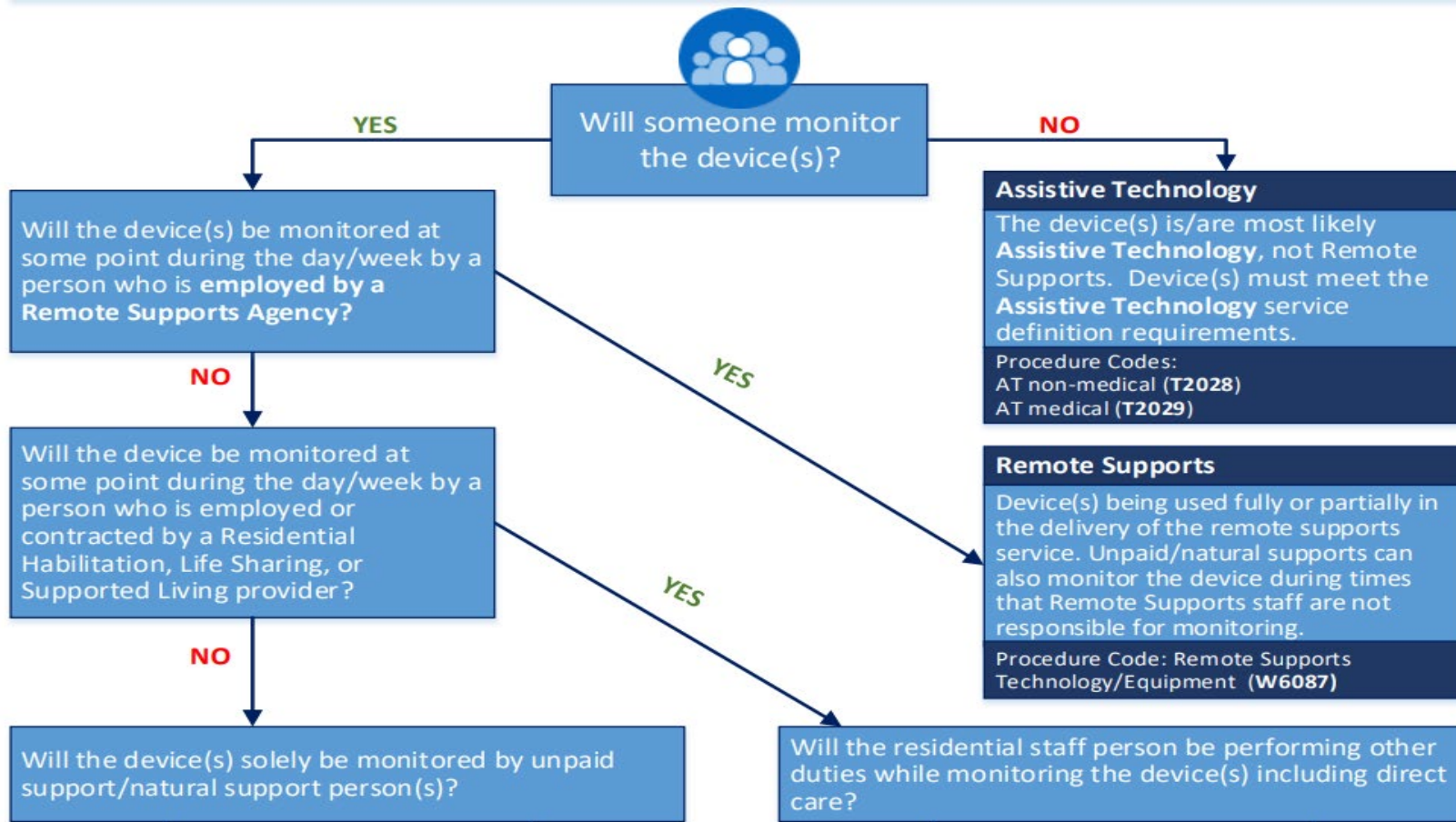
- For individuals age 16 and older.
- Internet services cannot be covered through the waivers.

# Differences Between Assistive Technology and Remote Supports

| Remote Supports Technology                                                                                                           | Assistive Technology                                                               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Technology is monitored partially or fully by paid professionals as part of remote supports to ensure the individual's needs are met | Technology is either not monitored at all or is only monitored by unpaid supports. |
| Can be leased short term or long term.                                                                                               | Can only be leased short-term for specific reasons.                                |

An individual may have both Remote Supports and Assistive Technology on their Individual Support Plan.

# Decision Tree



ODP Communication 24-015

[ODPANN+24-015+Attachment+C+-+Remote+Supports+Device+or+Assistive+Technology+Device+Decision+Tree.pdf \(palms-awss3-repository.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](#)

# Additional ODP Services That Cover Technology

Home Accessibility Adaptations

Vehicle Accessibility Adaptations

Residential Habilitation

Life Sharing

Supported Living

# General Waiver Limits

Waivers cannot pay for technology that other agencies are responsible to cover:

- Schools
- Medicaid/Medical Assistance
- Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Waivers can only pay for technology needed due to the individual's disability.

- Waivers cannot pay for goods and services that a household that does not include a person with a disability would be expected to pay for as household expenses.

Waivers cannot pay for “room and board costs” such as furnishings, food, and clothing.

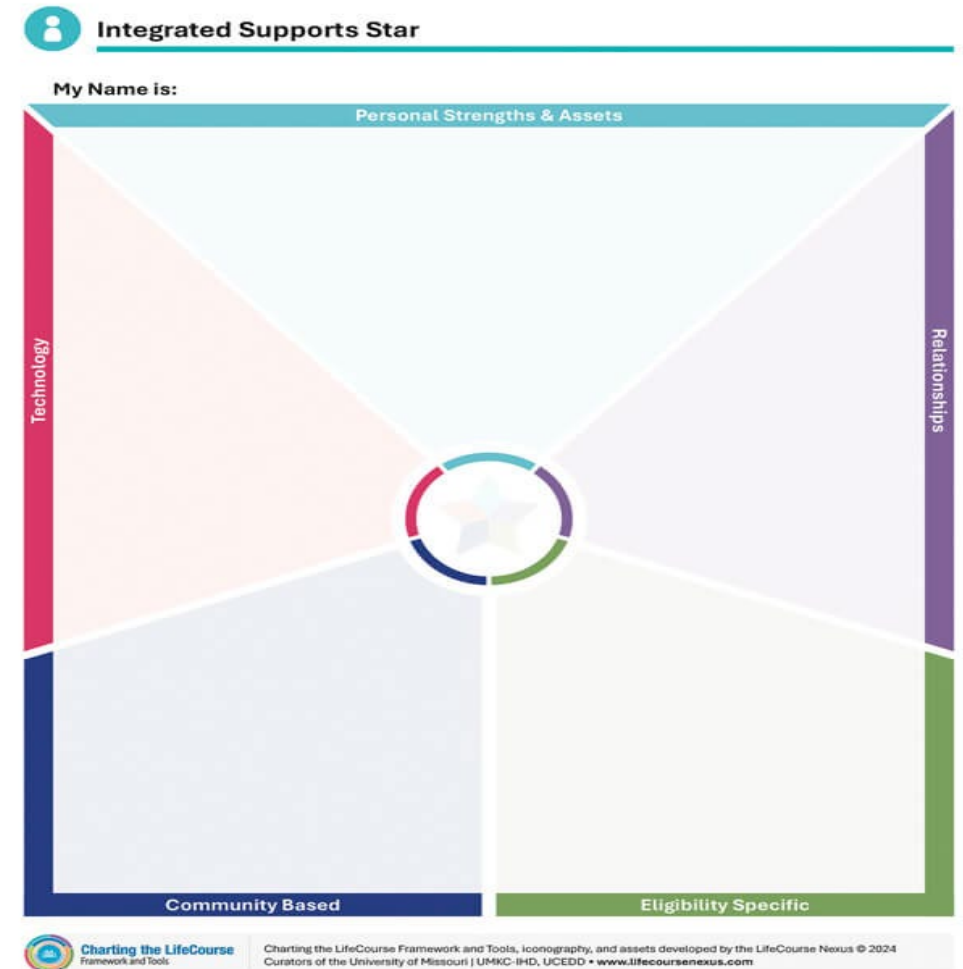
- Waivers funding can be used modify furnishings.

# Tools To Explore Technology and How to Request Technology

LifeCourse Tools ([lifecoursetools.com](https://lifecoursetools.com)) can be used to help anyone think about how technology can be used to help them live the life they want to live through all life stages.

- Does my school provide assistive technology to assist/support me?
- Would assistive technology help me with college or a career?
- How can technology assist me to live as independently as possible?

**If you are already enrolled with ODP, contact your Supports Coordinator to discuss your need for technology.**



# Resources

## Additional ODP Resources

[Supportive Technology – MyODP](#)

[Self Advocates United as 1](#)

[Gold Book 2023 \(palms-awss3-repository.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](#)

[PA Family Network](#)

[Activities, Surveys, Interviews and Visits as Part of the ODP System -Info sheet 2024 \(palms-awss3-repository.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](#)

Just SO (Short-Term) Online Speech Services through TechOWL for ODP consumers  
<https://aaccommunity.net/so-speech-odp/>

[PAAutism.org, an ASERT Autism Resource Guide](#)

# Questions

