



Guidelines for Device Placement

Ability Connection is making assistive technology more accessible to individuals with disabilities by providing different types of technology to individuals who can live with more independence with its use. Our Technology Initiative gives individuals with disabilities the opportunity to receive assistive or therapeutic equipment at no cost.

Enabling Communication is a branch of the Technology Initiative of Ability Connection that gives individuals a voice by providing equipment and a suite of augmentative communication software to individuals with communication-related disabilities. These assistive technology items will be awarded to deserving individuals based on a competitive application process. Devices are awarded on a quarterly-basis.

About Ability Connection:

Ability Connection has been providing the very highest quality care and support to children and adults with all types of physical and intellectual disabilities for over 60 years. For more information about Ability Connection, please visit our website at www.AbilityConnectionTexas.org, www.Ability-ConnectionNewMexico.org or contact us at (888) 999-1898.

Eligibility Requirements:

Placement from the Enabling Communication branch of Ability Connection's Technology Initiative, individuals must:

- Have a documented disability that adversely affects or prevents functional verbal communication
- Provide documentation or report from a Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP) that states the equipment and software will benefit the individual
- Be at least 4 years old (however, there are no maximum age limits)
 - o Children under 4 years old should refer to the Ability Connection Tech for Tots Program
- Live in one of the following regions in Texas or New Mexico:
 - o North Texas (Greater DFW Metroplex & surrounding)
 - o East Texas (Tyler, Longview, Lufkin & surrounding)
 - o Northwest Texas (Wichita Falls & Amarillo)
 - o Central Texas (Greater Austin, Waco, San Antonio & surrounding)
 - o Gulf Coast (Greater Houston Metroplex & surrounding)
 - o West Texas (Greater El Paso Metroplex, Lubbock, Midland, & Odessa)
 - o New Mexico (Statewide)

Eligibility Requirements (continued):

- If selected, individuals must be present at the awards presentation and agree to participate in a required training/orientation (1 hour required; additional training available at no cost)
- If selected, individuals/families must be willing to participate in follow-up questionnaires/surveys
- Veterans with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

Application Requirements:

Only original applications will be accepted. For children under 18 years of age, a parent or guardian must complete and sign the application. Applications are available for download online at www.AbilityConnectionTexas.org, www.AbilityConnectionNewMexico.org, or www.Tech-Initiative.org.

In addition to the application, **Ability Connection requires a report from the individual's speech therapist (licensed Speech Language Pathologist)** to be included as an attachment that includes the following information:

- Diagnosis of a physical, developmental or acquired disability that adversely affects or prevents functional verbal communication for a child, teen or adult. Please include any additional diagnosis, as well as information regarding gross motor, fine motor, vision, hearing, or auditory processing disorders. Please indicate whether the individual uses any mobility equipment.
- The individual has the fine motor ability to access a device with communication software
- List augmentative communication devices that the individual is currently using or has tried (include the name of the device and number of choices on the device). Also state why the requested device is a better choice for this person.
- The speech therapist will provide follow-up therapy incorporating the requested communication device.
- The individual has no behavioral issues that could result in a damaged device.
- Signature and license number for the therapist completing the report is required.

Individuals are strongly encouraged to also provide a letters of support from other therapists, special education teachers, or professionals that lists additional information on why the individual will benefit from this technology, including:

- A statement that specifies the requested device with communication software is an appropriate communication device for the individual to use to communicate at home and in the community (including school and work, as applicable).
- A statement regarding why this individual should be placed with a device and the difference he or she believes it will make in the individual's life.
- If you choose to include a photo as an attachment to the application, please include only one. Photos will not be returned and will be considered property of Ability Connection.

Device Placements:

Recipients of devices through Ability Connection's Technology Initiative must understand and agree to the following:

- The device is property of Ability Connection and cannot be sold or transferred to another individual; the device must be returned to ACT if the individual is unable or unwilling to use it, or if he/she outgrows its usefulness.
- The individual (or parent/guardian) must sign a waiver of liability upon receipt of the device as well as a photo release for publicity purposes.
- The parent (or guardian), individual or speech therapist must agree to provide all necessary device operating updates and software updates.
- Damages to the device or charges incurred through its use are the sole responsibility of the recipient.

Sponsorship:

The Enabling Communication program of Ability Connection is made possible by support from Circle K. For nearly 20 years, Circle K has been committed to helping people with disabilities in the communities where they live and do business. This tradition of caring has raised millions of dollars to support top-level organizations that deliver important programs that help people. The financial support provided by Circle K enables Ability Connection to deliver vital programs for children and adults with disabilities, such as the Enabling Communication Program.

