# Technology-Purchasing

1. Like all client purchases, technology or accessories should only be purchased for clients if all the following criteria are met:
   1. Failure to obtain this equipment will stop a client’s progress toward their vocational goal and a full explanation is in the client’s case file.
   2. A discussion of options for obtaining the device has been held and a search for comparable benefits or services is documented in the case file
   3. Supervisor approval is obtained
2. All items under $1,000 may be authorized without completing a technology recommendation. However, there must be sufficient justification in the case note for the authorization to be approved.
3. A completed [[Technology Recommendation Form](https://idb.blot.im/](https://idb.blot.im/at-overview) is required for any technology purchase costing $1,000 or more. This is the cost threshold established by IDB accounting. This form must be placed in the case management system as a case note. This form may be completed by a VRC, VRT, center instructor, RTS, or client unless the client is a center or YATP student. If the client is a center or YATP student, they will work with their Technology Instructor to complete the recommendation form. The form will be reviewed by the VR Program administrator during the authorization approval process within the case management system.
4. All accounting rules for obtaining and documentation of quotes must be followed for all items costing $1,000 or more.
5. The VRC may authorize the purchase of a basic software maintenance agreement or other warranty as part of the recommendation. Any maintenance agreement beyond this initial instance is the responsibility of the client  6. Because off-the-shelf solutions generally provide greater sustainability and the lowest long-term cost of ownership for the client, off-the-shelf and mainstream solutions are preferable to specialized solutions. Therefore, staff and clients will explore off-the-shelf, mainstream, and open-source solutions before looking at specialized software and devices. However, there will be occasions where a specialized device will provide a significant advantage to efficiency and productivity. The reasoning behind this decision will be clearly outlined in the technology recommendation.

## Laptop Purchases

If a client requires a laptop and is a post-secondary student, the student should purchase the computer through the college at a discounted rate. If a client requires a laptop and is not attending a college where the computer could be purchased through the college for a discount, it can be purchased through one of the below sources:

* [Computers for the Blind](https://computersfortheblind.org/application/) [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com/s?k=Windows+laptop+256GB+SSD+16GB+RAM&crid=5PEYKFR2YNFM&sprefix=windows+laptop+256gb+ssd+16gb+ram%2Caps%2C229&ref=nb_sb_noss_2), or a state vendor.
* [Apple for Government](https://www.apple.com/r/store/government/)
* other vendor authorized by accounting department

Minimum Specifications: 256GB Solid State Hard Drive (SSD), 16GB RAM. Refurbished computers are acceptable options. This should be sufficient for most clients learning to use a computer with JAWS or another screen reader. If a client needs additional AT such as switches or dictation software, more RAM, or a faster processor may be necessary. Because data can be stored on removable media, a 256GB SSD hard drive should be sufficient for nearly all clients.

## Purchasing Used Equipment

* Purchasing refurbished computers or tablets from a reputable seller is acceptable.
* If purchasing a used access technology device from a school or other entity. The seller should provide at least 2 but preferably 3 listings for the same device from a re-sale site such as eBay or Blind Bargains or statements from retailers who sell the device to establish fair market value.

## Loaner Pool Procedures

* Laptops will no longer be available through the loaner pool.
* Items will be made available for a period of 1 month.
* There are no extensions.
* Clients will not have the ability to install apps on loaner iPads.
* The staff person completing the loaner request form is responsible for ensuring that a completed Acceptance of Loaner Equipment Form is signed by the client and filed in the case management system. This staff person is also responsible for making sure that the equipment is returned by the due date.
* Clients must remove all files from devices before returning. IDB will not be responsible for client file backup or migration.
* No client with an overdue device will receive another device until all overdue items are returned.

## Technology Skills Assessments

Any counselor, VRT, RTS, or center instructor may complete a technology skills assessment. The following options are available to meet different needs.

The Post-Secondary Readiness Tech and Communications Assessment can be found at:

<https://iowadeptblind.wufoo.com/forms/postsecondary-readiness-assessment/> Additional assessment tools will be shared.

## Technology Demonstrations

A demonstration is defined as showing a client access technology of various types to educate the client on available access technology options. Because there is a great deal of information online regarding access tech technology that clients can research, all technology demonstrations will be performed in Des Moines at IDB unless there is a need for the demonstration to happen at a worksite or school.

## Technology Training Requests

Any request for technology training must:

* Be directly related to the client’s vocational goals.
* Must involve the use of access technology. Clients wishing to learn computer skills or applications without the use of braille, or a screen reader can attend classes online, at workforce centers, community colleges, or other locations.

For clients who choose to use ZoomText or built-in screen magnification without speech or braille, VRTs will set up and provide basic training on the use of ZoomText. Once a client is able to adjust the ZoomText settings, they will be able to participate in any mainstream computer skills training class they choose.

## Training Resources

All technology training will be performed in Des Moines at IDB unless there is a need for the training to happen at a worksite, school or other site outside of IDB.

IDB lead small group training and virtual technology training

IDB will host small group trainings at the agency’s location in Des Moines. Community Based Trainings will be held in communities outside of Des Moines for groups of clients upon request by the Counselor or VRT.

Virtual Training Options

All clients will have the option to participate in the online and virtual trainings:

* [NVDA Productivity Bundle](https://www.nvaccess.org/product/nvda-productivity-bundle/) This bundle contains our popular electronic training material, plus telephone support.
* [Clusive Online Access Technology Training](https://clusiv.io/courses/) VRCs may authorize these courses for their clients when they serve to meet their vocational goal. It is strongly encouraged that a client work with a VRT to gain basic skills before participating to promote the successful completion of these courses.