

Multnomah County
Aging, Disability & Veterans Services Division
Safety Net Program

Special Medical Needs Program Policy Guidelines

Purpose: The Special Medical Needs Fund assists clients of the ADVSD network with the purchase and repair of durable medical equipment or medically-related items not covered by Medicaid, Medicare, or another ADVSD program or community resource that are medically necessary to maintain health and independence. Durable medical equipment for the purposes of this program may include dentures, or any item prescribed by a doctor for a specific and identifiable medical need that with normal use would be expected to last at least 12 months.

Access to this program is contingent upon availability of limited funds. If demand exceeds capacity/budget, ADVSD reserves the right to limit or terminate program services.

Eligibility:

To be eligible for assistance, an applicant must be a resident of Multnomah County (to meet the residency requirement, the applicant must have continuously lived in Multnomah County for at least sixty days prior to the request and have the intent to remain a resident of Multnomah County indefinitely) and:

1. Must be a resident of Multnomah County (to meet the residency requirement, the applicant must have continuously lived in Multnomah County for at least sixty days prior to the request and have the intent to remain a resident of Multnomah County indefinitely).
2. Must be a client of the Aging, Disability & Veterans Services network. This includes all programs within ADVSD (e.g. Long Term Care, Adult Protective Services, Oregon Project Independence). Individuals 60 years or older, or with a long term disability determination through Social Security or Veterans Administration (70% or greater rating) are presumed to be clients of the Network.
3. **All other community resources must be explored before accessing this fund.** Assistance is limited to items or services not covered by Medicaid, Medicare, another ADVSD fund or community resource, or that a third party is required to provide.
4. The request for special needs must be a part of an overall plan for stabilizing the applicant's situation and minimizing the need for further assistance. The primary criteria for evaluating a Special Medical Needs funding will be the extent to which the Special Medical Needs request will stabilize the applicant's circumstances and prevent a substantial decline in health in the immediate future. **If the client is not currently at this level of risk, it is unlikely the request for Special Medical Needs funding will be approved.**
5. Must have limited income and resources:
 - For a single person – income less than 300% of SSI limit and assets less than \$2000 excluding the value of one vehicle, the home when used as a principal residence, and a prepaid funeral plan.
 - For a married person- a spouse's income and resources will be considered in making an initial eligibility determination as compared to Medicaid waived services eligibility rules.
6. Financial need for assistance in paying for durable equipment is not based solely on meeting the income or resource qualifications above, but by comparing the client's and spouse's income with regularly recurring expenses such as rent,

utilities, health insurance premiums, out of pocket medical expenses including past medical bills, and food. A “reasonableness” standard will be applied by ADVSD Program Staff in assessing financial need that may result in assistance being approved at less than the requested amount or by making assistance contingent on the applicant paying a portion of the cost of the requested item. Generally, an applicant will not be expected to contribute if discretionary income is less than \$200 per month.

7. ADVSD does not recommend vendors for Special Medical Needs. Currently we do not have contracts with vendors for this program. Applicant chooses the vendor. Vendor must be willing to bill ADVSD upon service completion.

8. Applications are reviewed on a first-come, first-served approach, while focusing on those with greatest risk of medical decline first. More applicants will be eligible than funds available.

Application procedures:

1. Assist the client in completing a Special Medical Needs application. A signed copy of the application should be retained in the client’s file for a period of three years. The electronic version of the application should be e-mailed to advsd.safetynet@multco.us. Faxed applications will not be accepted unless the county e-mail system is down and the need is urgent.
2. Supporting documentation should be scanned and e-mailed whenever possible. When necessary to fax, use 503-988-6199.
3. Assistance is limited to the following amounts:
 - a) No more than \$1800 for dentures and related costs
 - b) No more that \$300 for the cost of eye glasses (may include eye exam)
 - c) No more than \$2000 in total assistance in any 12 month period.
4. All durable medical equipment (DME) purchases and most other special medical needs requests require a letter from a medical professional to document medical necessity. Letters should be specific to the item or service being requested and include relevant diagnoses. In addition to a letter from a medical professional, applications must describe the need for the item and the risk the applicant faces without it.
5. All payments through the Special Medical Needs fund will go directly to the vendor providing the product or service and not to the client. When the applicant’s request is approved, ADVSD will fax (or email) a guarantee of payment to the vendor. This guarantee requests that the vendor send us an invoice and W9 upon service completion.

Unless prior arrangements are made, invoices must be received within sixty days of approval or the authorization will be withdrawn.

Details regarding certain types of common requests:

Beds

Certain types of furniture like a bed or chair may be considered medically necessary without a doctor's note. Community Warehouse should be accessed for this need before considering purchase of a new bed. Access fee and delivery charge can be requested from this program if applicant has financial need and no other resources for pick-up/delivery. If delivery is not available from Community Warehouse on or close to the date of appointment, ADVSD may be able to arrange delivery through contracted service.

Eyeglasses

Because there are other resources that are available, this program will likely not approve requests for eyeglasses until other resources are explored first.

New Eyes (glasses for those in need)

www.new-eyes.org/us-voucher-program/

Oregon Lions Sight & Hearing Foundation

www.olshf.org/assistance-eyeglasses-hearing/ or 971-270-0203

Prescriptions for eyeglasses serve as medical documentation of need, however, due to limited funds we will also consider all circumstances and the applicant's description of need in determining eligibility. If client's health coverage does not include an exam, that cost can be considered. Please be sure to obtain a quote from the vendor. Some vendors offer exams at low cost to those with limited incomes.

Dentures

Obtaining dentures can be a costly and lengthy process, especially if the applicant requires teeth extracted prior to being fitted for dentures. The maximum financial assistance for these procedures is \$1800 from this program. Applicants may need to pursue additional resources to cover the entire cost. Price-shopping is encouraged.

The applicant must submit a quote for all services. The applicant should provide a personal statement about their need (this can be captured in the application under "Circumstances of Request" or presented as a separate letter). A letter from a medical professional is optional, but may be helpful in determining severity of risk.

Applications are reviewed on a first-come, first-served approach, while focusing on those with greatest risk of medical decline first. More applicants will be eligible than funds available. The more information we have the more accurately we can assess the request.

Other dental needs are not considered by this program (cleaning, exams, crowns, root canals, e.g.). Extraction of an infected tooth (which can be a medical emergency) may be considered, but many times this is covered by insurance.

Hearing Aids

Because there are other resources that are available, this program will likely not approve requests for hearing aids until other resources are explored first.

Starkey Hearing Foundation

www.starkeyhearingfoundation.org/programs#/hearnow or 800-328-8602

Oregon Lions Sight & Hearing Foundation

www.olshf.org/assistance-eyeglasses-hearing/ or 971-270-0203

Program may cap the number of applications at any given time due to limited funding and waitlists may or may not be created.