

NC Division of Services for the Blind Policies and Procedures Independent Living Older Blind

Mobility Canes Purchasing

Current effective date: 04/17/18

Revision history: None

Mobility canes are considered a vital part of safe ambulation for many individuals who are visually impaired, blind or deaf-blind. Independent Living Rehabilitation Counselors (ILRC's) refer to Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMS) who assess the need for a mobility cane, provide instruction in its use and make recommended cane purchases, including cane tips.

DSB Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists are authorized to immediately provide a cane to a current DSB consumer from existing stock and have the item restocked by the referring counselor when the below procedures are followed. This process will allow individuals to immediately increase their independence, increase retention of skills learned during the assessment and initial instruction and alleviate concerns with immediate hazards encountered when ambulating without the cane. Additionally, COMS will always have access to new equipment for assessing individuals on what cane is needed and be able to provide canes to individuals at the time of instruction.

Programs will purchase canes without regard to income. Purchases are contingent on the availability of program funds.

Procedures:

When the referral to the COMS is made, the referring counselor must have the applicable service on the plan for the purchase of canes. The referring counselor is responsible for ensuring the service is on the Plan at or before the time the referral to the COMS is made. The referring counselor should always plan to budget for the purchase of a cane and tip at the time of the referral.

The COMS determines what, if any, cane and cane tip is needed.

The COMS disperses the cane/cane tip and has the consumer sign a Verification of Items Received form. The form should contain the consumer name, name of staff member who provided the cane, consumer signature, description of the cane, item # and cost. The date on the form should have "loan" written next to it.

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The COMS must promptly provide ordering information to the referring counselor in the case management system and provide the signed Verification of Items Received form to the counselor.

The referring counselor must promptly order the recommended cane/cane tip so the COMS can continue to provide timely services to DSB consumers.

When the cane/cane tip arrives, the counselor must promptly route the purchased item to the COMS to replenish stock available for other consumers.

The counselor dates the previously received Verification of Items Received form and writes "assigned" next to the date. The counselor processes payment for the purchase. The assigned date is entered in BEAM.

Replacements:

A consumer with an open case can receive a replacement cane if a previously purchased cane has been broken, lost or otherwise deemed by DSB to be defective or unable to be used effectively or safely. Replacements may not be purchased more than once a year. Any requests for exceptions must be submitted to the supervisor for review and approval. Independent Living Rehabilitation Counselors will advise consumers of replacement policies when issuing a cane.