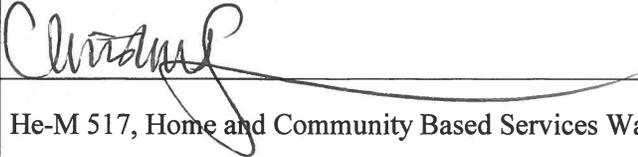


Policy Number	<b>010</b>
Policy Owner	Bureau of Developmental Services (BDS)
Policy Name	<b>Environmental Modification Prior Authorization Requests</b>
From	Christine Santaniello, Director Long Term Supports and Services
Administrator's Signature	
Regulatory and Other Reference(s)	He-M 517, Home and Community Based Services Waiver
Approval Date	July 10, 2017
Effective Date	August 1, 2017; January 1, 2018
Revision History	November 2, 2017
Key Contacts	BDS Finance Administrator, BDS PA Supervisor, BDS Liaisons

**Policy Statement:**

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), BDS develops and maintains policies to describe the requirements for implementing BDS programs and services, ensure compliance with applicable federal/state laws, regulations and requirements, and to support the BDS mission and strategic planning goals.

**Purpose and Intent of Policy:**

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to set forth the criteria and procedure for submitting an Environmental Modification Prior Authorizations Request. Prior Authorizations are to be submitted prior to the start of services as outlined in the policy.

**Environmental Modification:**

Include those physical adaptations to the private residence of the participant or the participant's family, or vehicle that is the waiver participant's primary means of transportation, required by the individual's service plan, that are necessary to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of the individual, or which enable the individual to function with greater independence in the home and community, and without which, the individual would require a more restrictive setting.

Such adaptations may include the installation of lifts, ramps and grab-bars, widening of doorways, modifications to allow for emergency egress and emergency medical and fire response, modification of bathroom facilities, installation of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and other specialized electric and plumbing systems which are necessary to accommodate the individual's medical equipment and supplies and which are necessary for the welfare and the safety of the individual.

Excluded are those adaptations or improvements to the home which are of general utility, and are not of direct medical or remedial benefit to the individual, such as, but not limited to: carpeting, painting, tiling, roof repair, central air conditioning, etc.

Adaptations that add to the total square footage of the home are excluded from this benefit except when necessary to complete an adaptation (e.g., in order to improve entrance/egress to a residence or to configure a bathroom to accommodate a wheelchair). All modifications will be provided in accordance with applicable State and/or local building codes.

Relative to vehicle modification, the following are excluded: those adaptations or improvements to a vehicle that are of general utility and are not of direct medical or remedial benefit to the individual; purchase of a vehicle; and regularly scheduled upkeep and maintenance of a vehicle with the exception of upkeep and maintenance of the modifications. Vehicles that are owned by paid providers of waiver services are not eligible for vehicle modifications. This excludes family members.

For those modifications in an agency owned and/or leased home, they must be characterized as life safety code modifications and/or accessibility modifications and be included as part of the provider rate, as described below.

For individuals with unsafe wandering or running behaviors, outdoor fencing may be provided under this benefit.

### **Environmental Modification Requests may be made:**

An Environmental Modification Request is made when modifications are needed to the individual's home or vehicle to improve physical accessibility, enhance health and safety and/or increase independence both in and outside of the home. For provider owned/leased homes, there are additional requirements that shall be met and outlined in the procedure below.

Waiver funds allocated toward the cost of outdoor fencing for individuals with unsafe wandering or running behaviors generally shall not exceed \$2,500. Waiver funds allocated toward the cost of adaptations or improvements to the home are typically limited to basic builder grade quality.

### **Circumstances under which Environmental Modification Requests may not be made:**

- The requested modification does not fall within the HCBS Waiver service definition outlined above.
- The individual has not yet been found eligible for HCBS Waiver services according to He-M 517.
- The request is not considered an Environmental Modification and is more appropriate to request under the services definition of assistive technology.
- Requests that fall under "general utility."
- Vehicle Modifications for paid providers of HCBS Waiver Services, excluding family members.

### **Procedure for submitting an Environmental Modification Prior Authorization Request:**

1. The area agency must submit the Environmental Modification Prior Authorization Request to BDS at least (30) days prior to the start date of the request.
2. E-Mod PA Request Form: All Environmental Modification Requests shall be made by completing the BDS Environmental Modification Prior Authorization Request Form.
3. Quotes for Service: For modifications totaling \$5,000 or greater, two bids from two different contractors shall be submitted. For those modifications under the threshold of \$5,000, one bid is sufficient. All bids must be reviewed and approved by the area agency prior to being sent to BDS. All bids must include the following detailed information:
  - Cost of Labor – itemized
  - Cost of Materials – itemized
  - Scope of Project – outcome of the project must be clear and include floor plans [when applicable based on the modification type].

3. Life Safety: In the case of a modification that is required for life safety and/or emergency egress from the individual's home, documentation from the local Fire Department stating the required modifications shall be submitted. The documentation from the fire department shall include measurements for windows.
4. Following completion of the Environmental Modification Prior Authorization Request Form, the area agency submits to BDS via E-studio with an e-mail notification to their Liaison and the Prior Authorization Unit, the form and supportive documentation which includes:
  - Quotes for service;
  - Basis/justification for the request, an A-Tech Evaluation if completed and funding source;
  - Current approved service agreement amendment; and
  - Updated BDS functional screen.
5. Requests will be submitted using the following naming convention: R=Region, Individual's first and last initials, date of submission, MOD. For example: R3.SH.4.12.16MOD.
6. For environmental modifications in a provider owned and/or leased home, the provider shall include the cost of the modification as part of the individuals' rate. BDS will work with the area agency regarding the amortization schedule. In most instances, the cost of the modification will be amortized for the year of the PA, possibly up to 18 months (if the modification is completed mid-PA year).
7. Requests will be reviewed by BDS within seven (7) business days from receipt of a completed Environmental Modification submission. Incomplete requests will be returned within seven (7) business days. For approval the Prior Authorization Unit will communicate this to the area agency via email via E-studio. The area agency will then enter the changes into BTS.
8. Final processing in MMIS of Environmental Modification Requests, once approved in BTS, will occur by the Prior Authorization Unit within fourteen (14) business days for all accurate and complete requests. Final notification of the approval/denial will be mailed from MMIS (Conduent Solutions) to the requesting area agency.

#### **Extenuating Circumstances:**

In the event of an emergency that requires an area agency to provide a change in service(s) without a prior authorization in place, the area agency shall submit in writing a request for post approval. This request is to be signed by the area agency Executive Director and submitted to the Bureau Liaison. Final approval will be determined by the BDS Director or designee.