



## **Responses to Vendor Comments on Proposed STAP Equipment / Voucher Values and Authorized Equipment**

**Recommended voucher categories and values and equipment values using the new methodology were posted to the HHSC website on January 5, 2021 for 45 days for public comment. Comments were received by 13 vendors. Comments have been addressed below:**

**Comment:** Six comments received related to the discontinuance of certain equipment.

**Response:** The majority of devices were removed from the equipment list because the same model was combined, the device was discontinued, or a voucher had not been exchanged for that device in more than a year. Rather than list the same model multiple times due to various device sizes, colors, gigabyte sizes, etc., the proposed authorized equipment list consolidates the same make and model of device. This maintains the same level of choices available.

**Comment:** Six comments received related to the reduction of the voucher value for the 2-way texting device voucher.

**Response:** The STAP must establish a reasonable equipment value for a basic device that permits telephone network access. Values are determined by establishing features needed for a basic device, establishing a reasonable value to promote client choice, and other factors such as availability of equipment and ease of use of equipment depending on a person's disability.

Additional features or capabilities of a device that do not relate to telephone network access are not taken into consideration when determining a basic device. The reduction in the Two-way Texting Device voucher is based on a basic device allowing for a profit knowing that vendors must purchase the equipment at full price.

**Comment:** Two comments received stated the two-way texting device voucher value and talks back number dialed with voice dialer (VD) voucher value had inconsistent equipment values.

**Response:** The iPad and iPhone have an equipment value of \$500 and \$625, respectively, under the Two-way Texting Device voucher. The iPad and iPhone have an equipment value of \$420 under the Talks Back Number Dialed telephone and \$205 and \$80, respectively, under the Voice Dialer voucher. Adding the equipment values under the Talks Back and Voice Dialer, the iPad and iPhone have the same equipment value as the iPad and iPhone under the Two-way Texting Device voucher. The voucher value for the Talks Back Number Dialed telephone with Voice Dialer is not based on the iPhone.

**Comment:** One comment received related to considering the current listing of equipment values as the state-mandated selling cost for each model. The proposed changes will make it difficult for vendors to gain trust from voucher recipients on vendor pricing.

**Response:** The authorized device listing lists equipment values, not mandated costs. A vendor exchanging a voucher is eligible for the lesser of the established equipment value, vendor's advertised purchase price, or voucher value.

**Comment:** One comment received requested a 6-month implementation time to allow for the selling of current inventory.

**Response:** Allowing for a 6-month implementation of the new values is not needed since the proposed authorized equipment list is not reducing the devices available on the list. The list is being consolidated by features rather than by model.

**Comment:** Three comments received stated that the reduction in the iPhone equipment value reduces the ability of voucher recipients with a hearing or vision loss from obtaining higher-priced iPhones that have other features to help these population groups.

**Response:** The STAP must establish a reasonable equipment value for a basic device that permits telephone network access. Voucher categories are established based on features for telephone network access. For example, the Two-way Texting Device voucher category is meant for devices that send and receive text messages, not provide captioning features. If an individual needs a captioned telephone, one can be obtained at no cost through the various manufacturers of these phones. For individuals preferring the VoiceOver feature, other telephone options are available that have bigger buttons that repeat the number dialed.

**Comment:** One comment received requested the addition of a charging brick.

**Response:** A charging brick is not covered by this program.

**Comment:** Two comments received provided pricing updates.

**Response:** The list was adjusted based on the RFI, pricing submitted, and manufacturer's website.

**Comment:** One comment received mentioned that the quality of an amplified cell phone was inferior to landline amplified telephones, which should allow for the Bluetooth compatible phone device to be combined with the two-way texting device.

**Response:** Cell phones tend to have a lower amplification than landline phones. STAP offers both landline and cell phone amplified telephones to assist individuals with various degrees of hearing loss. The Two-way Texting Device voucher category is for devices that send and receive text messages. The Bluetooth Compatible Phone device is used with an amplified telephone or amplified cell phone where the user must be able to hear to use the device.