



# Guide to certifying a disability for STAP Application Form 3906

Information in this guide is a summary of public information available at the locations listed in the footnotes.

This guide was created by disabled Pathways and Texas Adaptive Communication Devices. Texas Adaptive Communication Devices is a registered STAP vendor.

For help, or for additional applications, contact Heather Burdeaux at [heather@staptx.com](mailto:heather@staptx.com) or (832) 731-6235.

Updated 7/21/23

## **What is STAP?**

The Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program (STAP) provides funding for adaptive communication options to individuals who have a disability effecting access to phone communication.

## **How is it funded?**

The Texas Universal Service Fund is a surcharge on all telecommunication services to enable all residents of the state to obtain the basic telecommunication services. Funds for the program are collected by the telecommunications service providers and remitted to the Public Utility Commission.<sup>1</sup>

## **How are the funds distributed?**

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) manages the distribution of funds allocated for STAP. Funds are distributed by issuing a voucher with a category of funds<sup>2</sup> that align with the individual's disability documented on their application. This voucher can be used to purchase items through registered STAP vendors.

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<sup>1</sup> 16 Tex. Admin. Code § 26.401 (2023)

<sup>2</sup> "Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program – Vouchers and Value Amount." *Texas Health and Human Services*, accessed 20 April 2023, [www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/services/disability/dhhs/specialized-telecommunications-assistance-program-stap/stap-equip-values-auth-equip-voucher-values.pdf](http://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/services/disability/dhhs/specialized-telecommunications-assistance-program-stap/stap-equip-values-auth-equip-voucher-values.pdf).

## Who is eligible for STAP funds?

Individuals who meet these definitions:<sup>3</sup>

**Blind**—Vision loss of 20/200 or less (or field angle vision of less than 20 degrees) in the better, unaided eye.

**Visually impaired**—Vision loss severe enough to interfere with telephone use even with corrective lenses.

**Deaf**—Unaided severe-to-profound hearing loss resulting in the inability to benefit from telephone amplification.

**Hard of hearing**—Hearing loss severe enough to necessitate the use of amplification devices to hear oral communication over telephone lines.

**Weak speech**—Inaudible speech that substantially limits a person's ability to use a standard telephone

**Speech impaired**—Inarticulate speech that substantially limits a person's ability to use a standard telephone. (Additional documentation is required if you are requesting an anti-stuttering or a speech generating device.)

**Upper mobility impaired**—A physical impairment that substantially limits a person's ability to grip, lift, or hold a handset, or dial a telephone.

**Lower mobility Impaired**—A physical impairment that substantially limits a person's ability to get to the telephone because of extreme shortness of breath or because the person's ability to walk is limited or nonexistent.

**Cognitively impaired**—A physical or mental condition that substantially limits a person's ability to dial a series of numbers or interpret information to the extent necessary to use a standard telephone.

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<sup>3</sup> "Form 3906, Application for Specialized Telecommunication Assistance Program (STAP)." *Texas Health and Human Services*, accessed 20 April 2023, [www.hhs.texas.gov/regulations/forms/3000-3999/form-3906-application-specialized-telecommunications-assistance-program-stap](http://www.hhs.texas.gov/regulations/forms/3000-3999/form-3906-application-specialized-telecommunications-assistance-program-stap).

## How to apply for STAP funds

1. Print out Form 3906, Application for Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program (STAP)<sup>4</sup>
2. Fill out page 1 attesting that you: <sup>5</sup>
  - a. Are a Texas resident
  - b. Are at least 5 years old
  - c. Have a disability that effects using a phone
3. Select a Device category on page 2-3.
4. Get your disability certified on page 4 by one of these:<sup>6</sup>
  - Licensed physician
  - Advanced practice registered nurse
  - State-certified teacher of special education
  - State-certified teacher of blind and visually impaired
  - State-certified teacher of deaf and hard of hearing
  - State-certified teacher of speech impaired
  - Licensed social worker
  - License optometrist
  - Licensed audiologist
  - Licensed hearing aid fitter and dispenser
  - TWC vocational rehabilitation counselor
  - HHSC contracted Independent Living Specialist
  - ODHHS-contracted outreach STAP specialist
  - ODHHS-approved specialist working in a disability-related field
5. Mail pages 1-4 with original signatures (no fax or digital signatures) to HHSC with proof of Texas residency.

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<sup>4</sup> "Form 3906, Application for Specialized Telecommunication Assistance Program (STAP)." *Texas Health and Human Services*, accessed 20 April 2023, [www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/3906.pdf](http://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/3906.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> 26 Tex. Admin. Code § 360.511 (2023)

<sup>6</sup> 26 Tex. Admin. Code § 360.513 (2023)

## What is the Authorized Certifier stating by signing the STAP application?

The official words from Form 3906:<sup>7</sup>

“As the certifier, I attest to the following:

- I am eligible to certify under the provisions of STAP.
- I have personally met with the applicant and have assessed the applicant's disability to determine that he or she is eligible, in accordance with the STAP eligibility criteria.
- I have determined that the applicant will be able to benefit from the specialized telecommunications device recommended above to access the phone network and that the applicant's age or disability does not prevent him or her from using the selected specialized telecommunications device to gain access to the phone network.
- I understand that STAP may request additional documentation from me, the applicant, or other sources to confirm or supplement any information provided on the application, including physician's statements, medical records, or a copy of my license or certificate.
- I understand that if I have violated or if I am suspected of violating any HHS policy or laws related to the STAP, including certifying applicants who cannot access the phone networks with the device requested, that I may no longer be authorized to certify applications, and that if I have committed or am suspected of committing such violations, I may be referred to my licensing agency.
- All information I have provided on this application is valid and accurate to the best of my knowledge.”

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<sup>7</sup> “Form 3906, Application for Specialized Telecommunication Assistance Program (STAP).” *Texas Health and Human Services*, accessed 20 April 2023, [www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/3906.pdf](http://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/3906.pdf).

## Which voucher types are available for each impairment?

Both

- Form 3906,<sup>8</sup> Application for Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program (STAP) and
- Form 3907,<sup>9</sup> Application for Specialized Telecommunication Assistance Program (STAP) Speech Generating Devices

have a list of Voucher Categories as well as what Disabilities they are appropriate for.

For example, on Form 3906, next to the “Two-Way Texting Device” category, disability requirements are listed as “deaf”, “hard of hearing”, or “speech impairment”. (see Illustration 1)

Step 3 – Select Device		
You must meet the established disability requirements for the device requested. <b>Note:</b> These disability requirements are defined in the form instructions.		
<b>HH</b> = Hard of hearing	<b>D</b> = Deaf	<b>SI</b> = Speech impaired
<b>B</b> = Blind	<b>VI</b> = Visually impaired	<b>UMI</b> = Upper mobility impaired
<b>LMI</b> = Lower mobility impaired	<b>WS</b> = Weak speech	<b>CI</b> = Cognitively impaired
Devices with an asterisk (*) may require you to place calls through a relay service.		
Telecommunication Device or Software		Disability Requirements
<input type="checkbox"/>	* <b>Two-Way-Texting Device</b> – A text messaging device with a standard keyboard that sends and receives wireless messages.	<b>HH or D or SI</b>

Illustration 1: Sample from Form 3906 page 2

- The choice of the voucher category can be made by the individual who is applying based on the adaptation that they desire.
- This decision is not a factor in certifying their disability.
- It is the responsibility of the individual who is applying to choose a voucher category that aligns with their disability.
- After the individual receives the voucher, they can contact registered STAP vendors to find choices that are approved for the voucher category.

<sup>8</sup> “Form 3906, Application for Specialized Telecommunication Assistance Program (STAP).” *Texas Health and Human Services*, accessed 20 April 2023, [www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/3906.pdf](http://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/3906.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> “Form 3907, Application for Specialized Telecommunication Assistance Program (STAP) Speech Generating Devices.” *Texas Health and Human Services*, accessed 20 April 2023, [www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/3907.pdf](http://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/3907.pdf).

# Simple steps to help someone access STAP!

1. When you interact with someone who has one of the disabilities listed on page 4, tell them about STAP.
2. Provide a copy of the STAP application and STAP Checklist.
3. Offer to certify their disability – you probably already know which one they have!

This guide provided by a collaboration between

