



CNIB Specialized Technical Equipment Program Program Manual

A program to provide consumer products and assistive technology to Albertans with significant vision loss.

Equipment funding is supported by a grant from the Alberta Aids to Daily Living Program, Ministry of Health.

Effective April 1, 2016

CNIB Specialized Technical Equipment Program (STEP)

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CNIB Specialized Technical Equipment Program (STEP)

About CNIB

CNIB (legal entity name "The Canadian National Institute for the Blind") is a registered charity, passionately providing community-based support, knowledge and a national voice to ensure Canadians who are blind or partially sighted have the confidence, skills and opportunities to fully participate in life.

To do that, our dedicated specialists work with people of all ages in their own homes, communities or local CNIB offices - providing the personalized rehabilitation support they need to see beyond vision loss, build their independence and lead the lives they want.

In addition to our community-based services, we also work hand-in-hand with Canadians who are blind or partially sighted to advocate for a barrier-free society, and we strive to eliminate avoidable sight loss with world class research and by promoting the importance of vision health through public education.

Specialized Technical Equipment Program (STEP)

STEP provides consumer products and assistive technology to Albertans who are blind, partially sighted and deafblind. This equipment is necessary in maintaining one's independence within the community. Eligible equipment is identified in the STEP Approved Product List (STEP APL).

Consumer Products

Includes the low tech and low vision aids. Items under low tech include large print phones, talking calculators, talking blood pressure monitors, braille watches and many other items. Items under low vision include magnifiers, loupes, monoculars, binoculars and other items.

Assistive Technology

High tech equipment which includes CCTV's, software, GPS, Optical Character Recognition equipment.

Deafblind Products

Deafblind items include vibrating watches, large print or braille clocks with vibrators, alerting systems, FM systems and communication devices.

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1.0 General Eligibility

Individuals must:

- have a valid Alberta Personal Health Number (PHN);
- be a permanent resident of the Province of Alberta; and
- meet residence and clinical eligibility as identified below.

1.1 Residence Eligibility

Benefits are provided to eligible Albertans residing in a variety of residence types:

a) **Home Living**

Albertans residing in their own home, apartment, condominium or other independent living option. Residences may be privately owned, rented or leased.

b) **Supportive Living**

Includes many different types of settings such as senior's lodges, retirement communities, personal care homes and group homes.

c) **Hospital**

If the individual is a patient in a hospital, benefits may only be authorized as part of the discharge plan as defined by commonly accepted hospital practice.

d) **Long Term Care Facility**

Includes nursing homes and auxiliary, sub-acute hospitals.

1.2 Persons not Eligible

Individuals may not be eligible to receive benefits under STEP if they are eligible to receive comparable benefits under:

- Department of Veterans Affairs (Canada);
- Workers' Compensation Board (WCB);
- Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Act/Criminal Injuries Compensation or a Private Insurer; or
- Non-Insured Health Benefits Program (NIHB) Health Canada.

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1.3 Clinical Eligibility for Equipment

Consumer Products

Albertans are eligible for approved low technical equipment and low vision aids under STEP if the visual acuity in both eyes with proper refractive lenses is 20/70 or less with the Snellen Chart or equivalent, or if the greatest diameter of the field of vision is severely restricted.

Assistive Technology

Albertans are eligible for approved assistive technology under STEP if the visual acuity in both eyes with proper refractive lenses is 20/200 or less with the Snellen Chart or equivalent, or if the greatest diameter of the field of vision is severely restricted.

1.4 Deafblind Eligibility for Equipment

Consumer Products

A CNIB client is eligible for approved consumer products under STEP if the visual acuity in both eyes with proper refractive lenses is 20/70 or less with the Snellen Chart, or equivalent, or if the greatest diameter of the field of vision is severely restricted; and severe to profound hearing loss that is 71 decibels or greater in both ears. Persons who are deafblind must provide an updated audiology exam.

Assistive Technology

A CNIB client is eligible for approved assistive technology under STEP if the visual acuity in both eyes with proper refractive lenses is 20/200 or less with the Snellen Chart, or equivalent, or if the greatest diameter of the field of vision is severely restricted; and severe to profound hearing loss that is 71 decibels or greater in both ears. Persons who are deafblind must provide an updated audiology exam.

Deafblind individuals wishing to access STEP are encouraged to go through the Deafblind Services Coordinator, so that appropriate assistance can be arranged to ensure they meet the criteria of STEP. If a deafblind applicant is successful, an intervenor will be requested as needed.

2.0 Cost-Sharing Policy

STEP is a cost-share program. Clients and STEP share the cost of approved benefits received through the program. Low income clients may be cost-share exempt. Cost-share clients must cost-share on all items and pay 25 percent of the cost of benefits to a maximum yearly (based on a benefit year July 1-June 30) contribution of \$500 per family/household. Clients are responsible for all additional costs resulting from an upgraded product choice. Additional charges resulting from

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an upgraded product choice do not count towards the \$500 STEP cost-share maximum.

Cost share example: In a situation where a cost-sharing individual chooses and is recommended by the Authorizer for a CCTV priced at \$6,000, they are responsible for 25 percent of the \$5,000 (up to a maximum of \$500 per family) plus the \$1,000 upgrade difference between the price maximum for STEP (\$5,000) and the actual cost of the equipment (\$6,000).

Cost-share exemption is available to clients whose taxable income (line 260 of the most recent income tax return) is:

- \$20,970 or less for a single person;
- \$33,240 or less for a family with no children; or
- \$39,250 or less for a family with children.

You are eligible to receive cost-share exemption if you have current Cost Share Exemption status under the Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL) Program, or if you receive assistance from one of the following government assistance programs:

- Income Support Program;
- Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH);
- Alberta Adult Health Benefits (AAHB);
- Child and Youth Support Program; or
- Children Services (minors in foster care).

The CNIB bases cost share exemption eligibility on the same parameters as the Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL) Program. To assess cost share eligibility and permit the release of information between CNIB and AADL for this purpose, clients must apply to AADL for AADL Cost-Share Exemption status and complete the Consent to Disclose AADL Cost-Share Exemption Status form (attached as Appendix I) and the STEP Consent to Release of Personal Information Form.

Clients are not eligible to apply for cost-share exemption if they are:

- A new or returning resident from outside Canada, who has not yet resided in Alberta for 12 consecutive months;
- Exempt from paying income tax for religious, charitable or communal reasons; or
- A foreign student temporarily residing in Canada.

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2.1 Temporary Cost Share Exemption

Temporary cost-share exemption is available for clients who do not qualify for cost-share exemption but due to recent change in circumstances will experience financial hardship if required to cost share.

Eligibility is based on the average gross monthly income before deductions for the three months prior to the date of application. Clients applying for temporary cost-share exemption must include proof of the last three months of gross income.

If approved, temporary cost-share exemption remains in effect from the time of approval until the end of the benefit year, June 30. If the need continues to exist, the client will need to apply for cost-share exemption for the new benefit year.

3.0 STEP Approved Product List (APL)

The STEP APL (as posted on the AADL website) includes all consumer products, assistive devices and deafblind equipment inclusive to the program. The STEP APL identifies generic categories, descriptions and price maximum, and quantity/frequency limits.

Price maximums reflect the maximum amount available under STEP. If an individual chooses and is recommended by the Authorizer to exceed the price maximum, they are responsible for paying the upgrade difference.

CNIB shall only fund equipment up to the maximums as specified in the STEP APL that is approved by the Province, as may be amended by the Province from time to time.

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4.0 Quantity Limits

Benefits will be provided as outlined in the STEP APL. Quantity limits as identified on the STEP APL will be observed in dispensing of consumer products and assistive technology.

The maximum benefit per eligible Albertan within each benefit year (July 1-June 30) under STEP is \$8,000, except for individuals who are deafblind where the maximum benefit is \$12,000.

Applicants who have not received any equipment from STEP will be given priority over those with second requests.

Participants in the Assistive Technology - High Tech equipment portion of STEP will be permitted to apply for two (2) pieces of equipment in a five-benefit-year period as long as the requests are from different device categories. Applicants may only apply for one (1) piece of Assistive Technology - High Tech equipment within a benefit year.

4.1 Replacement

A piece of assistive technology and/or consumer product is only replaced when there is a substantial change in the visual condition of the client with a result in change of need, or if STEP has assessed that the current piece(s) of equipment is no longer economically repairable. This is not for upgrading existing equipment.

4.2 Benefit Appeals

Individuals wishing to appeal visual acuities, quantity/frequency limits or the maximum benefit amount per benefit year allowed must write a letter to the Coordinator of STEP regarding their request.

1. The Coordinator of STEP reviews the submitted request and will respond within 5 business days of receipt.
2. If unresolved, the request will be sent to the Executive Director of CNIB for review, and again a response should be provided within 5 business days of receipt.

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5.0 Ownership and Responsibility

The CNIB retains full ownership of all recyclable equipment (as identified on STEP APL by *Note*); therefore, the equipment is not for resale and must be returned to the nearest CNIB office for recycling under the following conditions:

- When an individual no longer needs it;
- If the equipment has been replaced;
- If the individual moves out of Alberta; and
- If the individual becomes ineligible.

Individuals will be asked to complete and sign the Ownership Waiver Form for Recyclable Equipment at time of receipt of equipment (Appendix B).

5.1 Individual Responsibility

The client, or their trustee or guardian, is responsible for ensuring the reasonable care and maintenance of the equipment. CNIB is not responsible for replacement of equipment that is lost, stolen or damaged due to misuse. CNIB recommends that the equipment be added to home insurance or tenant's insurance policies.

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6.0 Recycling of STEP Equipment

STEP is an environmentally conscious program, which means that a client may be offered a recycled piece of equipment that is in excellent condition. All Assistive Technology - High Tech equipment provided through STEP remains the property of the CNIB and is on extended loan to the client for as long as it is needed. When the equipment is no longer required or needed, it should be returned to the nearest CNIB office. These items are refurbished and reused when returned by participants who no longer need them (i.e. CCTVs, Brailleurs).

Individuals will be offered suitable recycled equipment, as available, at a reduced cost. The reduced cost will be determined by a number of factors including:

- Cost of repairing the equipment;
- Overall condition of the equipment (scratches, dents, etc.); and
- The year and model of the equipment.

By using recycled equipment, a client's cost-share payment will be reduced compared to the purchase of new equipment. If a client chooses not to accept recycled equipment, the client's application will be withdrawn. Recycled equipment will be tracked by serial number as documented on the CNIB database. Recycled equipment will not be covered by warranty unless indicated at the time of purchase.

All recycled equipment remains the property of the CNIB. Clients will be asked to sign a Confirmation of Receipt of Recyclable Equipment letter (Appendix B) documenting that the equipment was received in satisfactory condition and acknowledging that the equipment remains the property of the CNIB.

All recyclable equipment may incur the following costs:

ITEM	COST
Repair Costs Labor	\$90.00/hour
Repair Costs Parts	if applicable
Extended Warranty	vendor invoice
Shipping & Handling	if applicable
CNIB Administrative Cost	\$100.00\item

* Individuals who cost-share will pay 25% of the total recycle cost.

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7.0 Buy Out Option for Equipment

All recyclable equipment provided through STEP remains the property of the CNIB. Persons who leave the province and wish to keep the equipment will be given the option to purchase it, at a price assessed by STEP to reflect the equipment's fair market value.

STEP uses the following formula to assess fair market value:

- If a cost share amount has been paid for the equipment, this amount will be deducted from the initial equipment cost before the fair market value is assessed;
- Equipment being purchased within the first twelve (12) months will be depreciated by 35 percent of the initial purchase price; and
- After the first year, the equipment will be reduced by an additional 10 percent for each subsequent year (i.e. Year 2 - 45 percent; Year 3 - 55 percent, etc.).

Buy out monies are deposited to the separate interest bearing bank account used by the CNIB for STEP funding pursuant to its grant agreement with AADL.

8.0 Staff and Volunteer Requests through STEP

CNIB staff and volunteers who meet STEP eligibility must go through the same application and assessment process as all other eligible Albertans. Review Committee members requesting access to STEP must remove themselves from the selection process.

All other policies as indicated in the STEP manual will apply. Staff and volunteers are encouraged to schedule appointments with the appropriate Authorizer to ensure that it will not conflict with their work commitments.

Staff and volunteer requests for limited quantities of high tech equipment (i.e. CCTV, Computer Access Large Print Software, etc.) will go through the same application process as all other applicants.

For those staff who are Authorizers and who are making a request for equipment and/or visual aids, their assessment will be completed by an appropriate designated staff person.

Staff and volunteers are reminded about respecting the policy on confidentiality in processing applications for all individuals.

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9.0 Assessment/Authorization Procedures

Individuals who meet the STEP eligibility will be recommended for benefits following an assessment/authorization process.

9.1 Consumer Products

a) Low Technical Equipment

Individuals wishing to access low technical equipment must clearly state their need to an Authorizer. The Authorizer ensures that the equipment appropriately meets the clients' needs. For a listing of approved Authorizers see Appendix A

b) Low Vision Aids

Following a referral from an optometrist, ophthalmologist or general practitioner (GP), individuals are evaluated at one of the following:

- i) A low vision clinic by a Low Vision Specialist. Low vision aids are recommended and follow-up is performed by a CNIB Low Vision Specialist. Please call the nearest CNIB office for further information on low vision clinics.
- ii) CNIB's regional offices in Calgary and Edmonton or in the individual's home by the Low Vision Specialist with the appropriate low vision aid given and further follow-up provided if required. The Regional Offices can be reached at: Edmonton (780-488-4871) and Calgary (403-266-8831). Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday.
- iii) CNIB's satellite offices in Red Deer, Medicine Hat, Grande Prairie and Lethbridge or in the individuals home by the Low Vision Specialist with the appropriate low vision aid given and further follow up provided if required.

9.2 Assistive Technology

All individuals requesting assistive technology must complete an application form (Appendix D) following their assessment with an Assistive Technology Specialist. For specialized equipment, the assessment may need to be completed by the Coordinator of Deafblind Services or Orientation & Mobility Specialist. Individuals are evaluated at one of the following:

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- CNIB's regional offices in Calgary and Edmonton. The Regional offices can be reached at: Edmonton (780-488-4871) and Calgary (403-266-8831). Office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday.
- CNIB's satellite offices in Red Deer, Medicine Hat, Grande Prairie and Lethbridge when Assistive Technology Specialists are available.

All applications, except for the Deafblind Communicator, are then submitted to the Assistive Technology Review Committee (the "Committee") for evaluation. The Committee reviews and assesses applications based on a number of criteria (see Appendix E for the Committee's Terms of Reference).

The Committee reviews applications three times per year with deadlines on May 31, September 30, and January 15. Applicants will be notified 6 to 8 weeks after the review process is completed. Applications submitted in May or September that are not successful remain active until January. This means applicants are not required to re-apply unless their circumstances change or they wish to alter their application forms.

Applications for the Deafblind Communicator can be submitted to the STEP Administrator throughout the year. The STEP Administrator and the Coordinator of Deafblind Services determine which applications are successful.

The Assistive Technology Specialist will make an appointment with each approved applicant to have the equipment delivered and installed. These commitments must be met within 30 days of approval or the applicant's request will be withdrawn from the current review period.

10.0 CNIB Sales and Service Requirements

STEP Release of Information Form

Clients will be asked if they wish to participate in quality monitoring and program improvement feedback. If so, a STEP Release of Information form is to be signed by the client upon receipt of their equipment purchase. This applies to all purchases from low vision, low tech, deafblind and assistive technology. This form provides the client's consent to participate in quality monitoring and program improvement operated by Alberta Health, which may include telephone, mail, or web-based surveys. This form only needs to be signed by the client once within a benefit year.

Registration of Equipment

As a requirement for warranty & service, the CNIB will maintain a register of the serial number and date of equipment provided to clients. This register will be maintained as part of the STEP file.

On receiving the equipment, the client may be required to complete a mail-in card to be eligible for warranty.

Shipping Charges

The client is responsible for all mailing charges during warranty and out of warranty service.

Out of Warranty Equipment

The client is responsible to arrange for servicing and to cover the costs of the repairs for the equipment.

It shall be the responsibility of CNIB staff to provide assistance to the individual in obtaining service for the equipment.

10.1 Statement of Account

CNIB STEP must provide every client with a statement of account for equipment purchased. The statement of account must clearly identify the STEP contribution, the cost-share portion (if applicable), and any upgrade charges.

10.2 Returns

All merchandise must be returned within thirty (30) days from date of purchase with original packaging, in good condition and with sales receipt. All refunds must be approved by the appropriate CNIB staff.

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APPENDIX A – AUTHORIZERS

The following individuals have been approved as Authorizers for STEP.

NORTH

R. Dadhwal	STEP Administrator
S. Low-On	Specialist, Assistive Technology
M. Enica	Assistant, Assistive Technology
C. Heard	Specialist, Low Vision

SOUTH

R. Dadhwal	STEP Administrator
S. Allen	Specialist, Assistive Technology
R. Dadhwal	Assistant, Consumer Products and Assistive Technology
D. Duchak	Assistant, Low Vision
J. Gust	Specialist, Low Vision/Client Services
I. Jogiat	Assistant, Consumer Products and Assistive Technology
L. Liu	Specialist, Low Vision
B. Short	Coordinator, Client Services

Appeals

J. McDonald	Executive Director
R. Dadhwal	STEP Administrator

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APPENDIX B – RECYCLE EQUIPMENT FORMS

OWNERSHIP WAIVER FORM FOR RECYCLABLE EQUIPMENT

As _____ (client's full name), (referred hereto as "the client") is eligible for the following benefit under the CNIB Specialized Technical Equipment Program (STEP):

(referred here to as "the equipment")

It is acknowledged and agreed by the client, or on behalf of the client, THAT:

- The equipment will be on loan to the client and that it will be the property of the CNIB.
- Any individual leaving the Province of Alberta must return the equipment to the CNIB.
- The equipment will be returned in a reasonable state of repair to the CNIB or its authorized agent when requested, or when it is no longer required.
- For those clients who pay a cost-share or upgrade charge in respect to receipt of this equipment, these monies are **not** refundable.

The client, their family, trustee or guardian are responsible to ensure the reasonable care and maintenance of the equipment, and will be responsible for replacement of equipment that is lost, stolen or damaged due to misuse. The CNIB STEP advises that the equipment be added to client's home insurance or tenants' insurance policies.

Dated _____, 20____

Witness

Client or Designate on behalf of Client

NOTE: The client fee consists of 25 percent of the cost of the benefit, up to a maximum contribution per family per benefit year of \$500.00. For a client leaving the Province of Alberta, the equipment will be appraised and the client will be given the choice to purchase.

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CONFIRMATION OF RECEIPT OF RECYCLABLE EQUIPMENT

Day, Month, Year

Mr. John Q. Public
12345 - 67 Avenue
Edmonton, AB, T6K 4Z4

Dear Mr. Public:

Re: Confirmation of Receipt of Recyclable Equipment

The CNIB STEP recently made arrangements to provide you with the following item:

<u>Equipment</u>	<u>Serial Number</u>
CCTV	XFG6758943

Once you have received the equipment and are satisfied that it is in good condition, please **date, sign, and return the duplicate copy of this letter** to our office in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided.

The equipment provided remains the property of the CNIB and is on extended loan to you for as long as you need it. When you no longer need this item, or when you require information on servicing, please contact the nearest CNIB office.

Sincerely,

Equipment Received

Date: _____

Signature

Specialist, Assistive Technology
CNIB

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Cost Sharing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No (identify reason for exemption below)
	<input type="checkbox"/> AADL Ref. Number
	<input type="checkbox"/> Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped
	<input type="checkbox"/> Alberta Adult Health Benefits
	<input type="checkbox"/> Child and Youth Support Program
	<input type="checkbox"/> Income Support
	<input type="checkbox"/> Children Services

This client meets the criteria of STEP and has been asked if he/she is eligible for funding from any other source (DVA, WCB, Educational, insurance companies, NIHB). Funding from other sources makes the client ineligible for STEP funding.

Authorization Signature:

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APPENDIX D – ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY – HIGH TECH APPLICATION



CNIB

Specialized Technical Equipment Program

Assistive Technology-High Tech Application

This document explains the Specialized Technical Equipment Program (STEP) equipment request process. This document has six parts:

- 1) eligibility requirements
- 2) rules and regulations
- 3) instructions on how to fill out the application
- 4) official CNIB STEP application form
- 5) STEP Release of Information Form
- 6) STEP Checklist

Begin by checking if you are eligible for STEP. If you have ticked every box then proceed to part 2. If you are willing and able to follow the rules and regulations, initial and proceed to part 3. Finish up by filling out your application (part 4) and the signing of the Release of Information form (part 5). Complete the checklist (part 6) and send the entire package to the CNIB.

CNIB Calgary - STEP

15 Colonel Baker Place NE
Calgary, AB T2E 4Z3
Phone: 403-266-8831
Fax: 403-265-5029
TTY: 403-264-0105

CNIB Edmonton - STEP

12010 Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 0P3
Phone: 780-488-4871
Fax: 780-482-0017
TTY: 780-482-4089

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Applicant Name: _____

Part 1: Are you eligible?

- Do you have a valid Alberta Personal Health Number?
- Are you a permanent resident of Alberta?
- Do you have visual acuity of 20/200 or less or a field of vision of less than 20 degrees?
- Are you UNABLE to obtain funding from another source such as:
 - Insurance company
 - Motor Vehicle Accident Claims
 - Workers Compensation
 - Department of Veterans Affairs
 - NIHB
- Are you registered with CNIB?

If you were unable to check off any one of the above, you are not eligible to apply at this time.

Yes, I am eligible (initials) _____

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Part 2: STEP Rules and Regulations

- A.** STEP is a cost-sharing program meaning that you are responsible for paying 25% of the item cost, up to a maximum of \$500 per year. This amount is payable before you receive your equipment.
- B.** You are eligible for a cost-share exemption if you receive support from Income Support (IS), Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH), Adult Health Benefit (AHB), or if your household combined taxable income on line 260 of your Notice of Assessment(s) from the Canada Revenue Agency is below
 - a. \$20,970 for a single person;
 - b. \$33,240 for a family with no children; or
 - c. \$39,250 for a family with children.

If you meet the above criteria, you may apply to AADL for AADL Cost-Share Exemption status and complete a Consent to Disclose AADL Cost-Share Exemption Status form. This form will be provided by CNIB to AADL in order to permit AADL to determine eligibility for cost-share exemption status and to release related information to CNIB for this purpose. This form is available through the CNIB office.

- C.** Applicants applying for equipment will be required to be assessed prior to their application being submitted for review. If you are applying for a talking GPS device, you will need to be assessed by an Orientation and Mobility Specialist. If you are applying for a Deafblind Communicator, you will need to be assessed by the Coordinator of Deafblind Services. Applications for the Deafblind Communicator are to be submitted to STEP Administrator for review. All other assessments will be completed by Assistive Technology Specialists.
- D.** You must be committed to setting up an appointment with the Assistive Technology Specialist to have the equipment delivered and installed. These commitments must be met within 30 days of approval or your application will be withdrawn from the current review period.
- E.** You may only apply for one piece of equipment per year. You are eligible for two pieces of equipment in a five-year period as long as the requests are from different categories. Applicants who have not received any equipment from STEP will be given priority over those with second requests.
- F.** STEP aids you in acquiring equipment but does NOT pay for repairs once you receive it. This means that you become responsible for your equipment

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including adhering to all warranties and guarantees. It is your responsibility to understand the manufacturer's terms and conditions.

- G.** If you request computer software, you must have a computer that meets the minimum requirements for the software. You must be willing to purchase or upgrade your computer as required before software is ordered.
- H.** STEP is an environmentally conscious program, which means that you will be offered recycled equipment that is in excellent condition (if available). In this case, cost-sharing is significantly less. If you choose not to accept used equipment, your application will be withdrawn.
- I.** Applications are reviewed three times per year with deadlines on **May 31**, **September 30**, and **January 15**. Please note that specific questions are weighted and scored by the review committee. Scoring is noted on the application. You will be notified 6 to 8 weeks after the review process is completed. Please do NOT contact CNIB for results, we will contact you. STEP benefit year runs from April 1 to March 31. Applications submitted in May or September that are not successful remain active until January. This means you do not need to re-apply unless your circumstances change or you feel you can improve upon your earlier application.

Applications for the Deafblind Communicator can be submitted throughout the year. They will be reviewed by the STEP Administrator and the Coordinator of Deafblind Services as they are received.
- J.** Your STEP application is evaluated on the detail and quality of the information you provide, your specific needs, and the number of applicants during each cycle. We encourage you to consult with a CNIB representative if you have any questions.
- K.** Applications are reviewed by a committee made up of your peers. This means you may be asked to sit on the committee at a later date if you receive equipment from STEP.

Yes, I understand the STEP rules and regulations (initials) _____

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Part 3: CNIB STEP Application Instructions

When filling out the application please:

- Print clearly in black ink or type out responses.
- Check over your application to ensure you have filled out every part in detail. Missing information may cause your application to be unsuccessful.
- Check over your application to ensure you have initialed and signed all the necessary sections.
- You may complete this application with the assistance of a family member, friend or caregiver as required.
- CNIB may have volunteers available to assist you in completing this form.

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Part 4: CNIB STEP Application

Applicant Information:

Name: _____ CNIB Client #: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____

Postal Code: _____

Telephone/Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Do you have a valid Alberta Personal Health Number? ____Yes ____No

Male Female

English as a Second Language Yes No

Level of Education Below High School High School
 Post-Secondary

Are you Deafblind? Yes No

Date of last eye examination: _____

Eye Diagnosis: _____

Visual Acuity: _____

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Alternate Contact Person:

Name & Relationship: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Work Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____

Cost Share Exempt:

AISH Recipient Yes No

AADL Cost-Share Exempt Yes No

Income Support Recipient Yes No

Alberta Adult Health Benefits Yes No

Child and Youth Support Program Yes No

Children Services Yes No

Are you eligible for any of the following alternate funding sources?

	Eligible	
	Yes	No
ASVI - Edmonton (Alberta Society for the Visually Impaired)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Board	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Did you have a successful High Tech STEP application in the past?

Yes No

If yes, indicate date received and type of equipment: **(possible 2 pts.)**

DATE: _____ EQUIPMENT: _____

CNIB Specialized Technical Equipment Program (STEP)

Select the device category for this application: **(possible 1 pt.)**

- Closed Circuit TV Reader (CCTV)
- Large Print Software (ZoomText)
- Text to Speech Computer Software (JAWS)
- Optical Character Recognition (OCR) Software (OpenBook)
- OCR Dedicated Device (Eye Pal Vision, Clear Reader)
- Braille Display
- Note Taking Device (Apex, Braille Sense)
- Perkins Brailler
- Talking GPS

Deafblind High Tech Equipment:

- Deafblind Communicator

Name the specific assistive device you are requesting:

CNIB Specialized Technical Equipment Program (STEP)

What kind of supports do you have at home?

- Spouse
- Children
- Extended Family
- Friends
- Community Help
- Caregiver
- I live alone

Do you consider yourself:

- Completely independent
- Mostly independent
- Somewhat dependent on others
- Very dependent on others

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CNIB Specialized Technical Equipment Program (STEP)

Where will you use the equipment? _____

**Tell us a little bit about yourself in the following two questions
(4-7 sentences each): (possible 7 pts.)**

a) What kind of things did you enjoy doing in the past that are challenging to do now? You may include things that are practical, fun, interesting and/or stimulating.

b) What are the main reasons you would like the requested equipment and how would you use it in day to day life? For example, will the equipment help you to better connect with friends and family or to do a certain activity independently?

CNIB Specialized Technical Equipment Program (STEP)

Declaration of Verification & Responsibility

My signature is verification that I have completed this form to the best of my abilities. The contents of this application are an accurate representation of myself and my situation.

I agree to abide by the STEP rules and regulations that are described in this document and the CNIB STEP Manual. This includes returning recyclable equipment to CNIB if it is replaced, I no longer require it, or if I move out of the province of Alberta.

Applicant Signature

Date

Witness

Date

Did someone help you with the application?

Yes

No

Name, Contact Information & Relationship:

CNIB Specialized Technical Equipment Program (STEP)

Part 5: STEP Consent to Release of Personal Information Form

Keeping personal information in strict confidence is a CNIB policy approved by the Board of Directors. CNIB's privacy policy is in compliance with relevant privacy laws. Personal information is only released with your consent or in accordance with applicable privacy laws.

By signing this form, you are giving CNIB permission to release your personal information (your name, contact information and type of benefit received) to Alberta Health, Alberta Aids to Daily Living Program (AADL), which is the funding source for the Specialized Technical Equipment Program (STEP) for the purposes set out below.

Personal information is collected and used by AADL pursuant to sections 20, 21 22, and 27 of the *Health Information Act* and sections 33, 34 and 39 of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP). Alberta Health may collect personal health numbers as a custodian under the *Health Information Act*. CNIB may collect personal health numbers, for the limited purpose of determining eligibility for the STEP Cost-Share Exemption, as an affiliate of Alberta Health. All personal information that is disclosed to AADL will be protected in accordance with the provisions of the *Health Information Act* and FOIP.

If you have any questions about the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by AADL, you can contact AADL at 10th Floor Milner Building, 10040 - 104 Street NW, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 0Z2; Telephone: 780-427-0731; Fax 780-422-0968.

If you have any questions about the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by CNIB, you can contact STEP Administrator, CNIB Alberta and NWT, 12010 Jasper Ave, Edmonton, AB, T5K 0P3.

I consent to the disclosure of my personal information by CNIB to AADL for the purpose of AADL: (a) determining cost-share exemption status; and (b) conducting quality monitoring and program improvement, which may include telephone, mail, or web-based surveys.

This form has been read to me by: _____

Name of Client (please print): _____

Signature of Client or Guardian

Date

CNIB Specialized Technical Equipment Program (STEP)

Signature of Witness

Date

Name of Witness (please print)

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Part 6: Checklist for completed application

Did you?

- make sure you are eligible to apply?
- read, understand and agree to all the STEP rules and regulations?
- provide up-to-date information about your vision?
- fill out the application to the best of your ability independently or with the help of a friend, family member or caregiver?
- initial and sign all required sections?
- have an assessment with a CNIB Assistive Technology Specialist or Orientation and Mobility Specialist?
- attach your CNIB STEP Release of Information Form? Please check the paragraph indicating whether you are willing to participate in surveys regarding the STEP program for AADL.
- submit the completed STEP package in its entirety to CNIB?

Deadline for Application Reviews:

- May 31
- September 30
- January 15

CNIB Specialized Technical Equipment Program (STEP)

APPENDIX E – TERMS OF REFERENCE: ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Purpose

The purpose of the Review Committee is to facilitate a process for review and prioritization of applications for assistive technology and to make appropriate recommendations to the CNIB STEP for funding of these requests.

Principal Objectives

- To establish a process of prioritization and approval of funding for eligible individuals in a timely fashion;
- To review, analyze, prioritize and recommend applications for funding; and
- To ensure that sufficient information is obtained from the client to facilitate a recommendation regarding the client's request.

Member Responsibilities

- To base their recommendations on sufficient information obtained;
- To make unbiased recommendations; and
- To abstain from the selection process in situations of conflict of interest.

Committee Limitations

- Committee members do not have the authority to make recommendations associated with any form of appeal;
- Committee members make application recommendations only. The type of equipment will be determined by way of assessment; and
- Committee members must adhere to the terms and conditions as outlined in the CNIB Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality policies.

CNIB Specialized Technical Equipment Program (STEP)

Membership

The Review Committee reports to the Coordinator of STEP and is accountable to the CNIB Program and Services Committee.

The Review Committee consists of consumers representing the three age groups (children, working age adults and seniors) as well as the geographic areas within the province.

- The Committee not to exceed a membership of 7, plus 2 staff resources;
- The Committee to select chair;
- Committee members to serve at least one one-year term to a maximum of three years;
- Two new Committee members to replace two existing members every year;
- Vacancies during any term will be filled by the Coordinator of STEP.

Staff Resources

- Act in a resource capacity to the Committee;
- Do not have voting privileges;
- Do not take part in the selection process;
- Coordinates travel requirements if needed;
- Coordinates, distribute agendas and meeting notes; and
- Coordinates and distributes applications and all applicable correspondence.

Meetings

The Review Committee will meet three times per year.

APPENDIX F - RELEASE OF INFORMATION FORM

Keeping personal information in strict confidence is a CNIB policy approved by the Board of Directors. CNIB's privacy policy is in compliance with relevant privacy laws. Personal information is only released with your consent or in accordance with applicable privacy laws.

By signing this form, you are giving CNIB permission to release your personal information (your name, contact information and type of benefit received) to Alberta Health, Alberta Aids to Daily Living Program (AADL), which is the funding source for the Specialized Technical Equipment Program (STEP) for the purposes set out below.

Personal information is collected and used by AADL pursuant to sections 20, 21, 22 and 27 of the *Health Information Act*; and sections 33, 34 and 39 of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP). Alberta Health may collect personal health numbers as a custodian under the *Health Information Act*. CNIB may collect personal health numbers, for the limited purpose of determining eligibility for the STEP Cost-Share Exemption, as an affiliate of Alberta Health. All personal information that is disclosed to AADL will be protected in accordance with the provisions of the *Health Information Act* and FOIP.

If you have any questions about the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by AADL, you can contact AADL at 10th Floor Milner Building, 10040 - 104 Street NW, Edmonton, Alberta T5J 0Z2; Telephone: 780-427-0731; Fax 780-422-0968.

If you have any questions about the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by CNIB, you can contact STEP Administrator, CNIB Alberta and NWT, 12010 Jasper Ave, Edmonton, AB, T5K 0P3.

I consent to the disclosure of my personal information by CNIB to AADL for the purpose of AADL: (a) determining cost-share exemption status; and (b) conducting quality monitoring and program improvement, which may include telephone, mail, or web-based surveys.

This form has been read to me by: _____

Name of Client (please print): _____

Signature of Client or Guardian

Date

CNIB Specialized Technical Equipment Program

Signature of Witness

Date

Name of Witness (please print)

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APPENDIX G – STEP BUDGET
April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017

Breakdown	Amount in Dollars	% of Total Funding
Equipment (STEP portion only)	\$585,000.00	90%
Administration	\$65,000.00	10%
GRAND TOTAL	\$650,000.00	100%

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APPENDIX H – GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST

A CNIB employee who has the specific duty to evaluate, promote, provide, and/or develop the delivery of assistive technology services to persons with vision loss.

AUDIOLOGY EXAM

A hearing test performed by an audiologist.

EYE CARE PRACTITIONER

A physician who specializes in diagnosing and prescribing treatments for defects, injuries and diseases of the eye and is skilled at delicate eye surgery, such as that required to remove cataracts; called also oculist or eye specialist. An Optometrist who specializes in the correction of refractive and low vision conditions will also be included in this definition.

FAMILY

For the purpose of the CNIB STEP, a family is defined by Alberta Health Care Registration.

INTERVENOR

An Intervenor acts as the eyes and ears for deafblind individuals. They are sensitive and skilled at interpreting both visual and auditory information. They assist people with this dual disability to communicate, become more independent, and in some situations assist with activities of daily living. Intervenor provide services via the method of communication preferred by the individual who is deafblind (that may include tactile signing methods, Braille, large print, communication boards, or any other required method). Intervenor are not Interpreters. When Intervenor communicate with the individual who is deafblind, they must convey not only words spoken around them, but also the visual information.

LOW VISION CLINIC

Assesses a person's functional vision and suggests aids that maximize the use of residual or remaining vision. A team of practitioners specializing in low vision, this may include ophthalmologists and/or optometrists.

LOW VISION SPECIALIST

A CNIB employee who has the specific duty to evaluate, promote, provide, and/or develop the delivery of low vision services to persons with vision loss.

PROPER REFRACTIVE LENS

Eyeglasses and contact lenses correct refractive errors by bending (refracting) light as it passes through the lens. The prescription needed to provide the best possible vision is provided by an eye care professional.

SNELLEN CHART

A chart printed in block letters in gradually decreasing sizes, used in testing visual acuity.

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APPENDIX I - CONSENT TO DISCLOSE AADL COST SHARE EXEMPTION STATUS

Consent to Disclose AADL Cost-Share Exemption Status

Section A – Client’s personal information

Title	Last Name	First Name
Mailing Address		
City	Province	Postal Code
Date of Birth (yyyy-mm-dd)	Personal Health Number	

Section B - Consent

I authorize Alberta Health, Alberta Aids to Daily Living (AADL) Program, to release the following information to the Specialized Technical Equipment Program (STEP), which is operated by the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB):

1. Current AADL Cost-Share Exemption status;
2. Whether an application for AADL Cost-Share Exemption has been received by AADL;
3. Status of any pending application for AADL Cost-Share Exemption, if applicable; and
4. Expiry date of AADL Cost-Share Exemption, if applicable.

My personal information, including my personal health number, is used solely for the purpose of determining and verifying my eligibility or that of my child or adult dependent for whom I am the parent, legal guardian, trustee or attorney, for STEP Cost-Share Exemption.

This authorization is valid for the benefit year (July 1 to June 30) prior to the date of signature of this consent, the current benefit year and for each subsequent benefit year for which STEP Cost-Share Exemption is requested.

Personal information is collected by Alberta Health (AADL) pursuant to sections 20, 21, 22 and 27 of the *Health Information Act*; and sections 33, 34 and 39 of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIP). Alberta Health may collect personal health numbers as a custodian under the *Health Information Act*. CNIB may collect

CNIB Specialized Technical Equipment Program

personal health numbers, for the limited purpose of the STEP Cost-Share Exemption, as an affiliate of Alberta Health.

All personal information that is released by me to Alberta Health will be protected in accordance with the provisions of Alberta's *Health Information Act* and Alberta's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

I understand why I have been asked to disclose my personal information and am aware of the risks or benefits of consenting or refusing to consent to the disclosure. I understand that if I wish to withdraw this consent, I may do so at any time by writing to Alberta Aids to Daily Living Program, 10th Floor, Milner Building, 10040-104 Street NW, Edmonton Alberta T5J 0Z2.

Name of Client or Guardian (please print)	Relationship to client if applicable
_____	_____
Signature of Client or Guardian	Date
X _____	_____

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