

Environmental Modifications

Definition: Physical adaptations to the participant's primary residence which are necessary to ensure his/her health, welfare and safety, or which enable the participant to function with greater independence. Home is defined as non-government subsidized living quarters; modifications to any government subsidized housing (i.e., group homes or community residential care facilities) are not permitted. Adaptations may include the installation of ramps and grab-bars, widening of doorways, modification of bathroom facilities, etc. which are necessary for the welfare of the participant. Environmental Modifications may also include consultation and assessment to determine the appropriate specifications of the anticipated modifications and follow-up inspections of the completed modification.

The following are examples of possible adaptations that may be done as a part of Environmental Modifications include but are not limited to:

- installation of a ramp to facilitate safe and easy entering and exiting of the home.
- installation of grab-bars.
- porch lift to facilitate safe egress (in certain situations a porch lift can be more feasible and cost effective than extensive ramping).
- widening of interior doorways to allow use of all areas of the home, etc.
- flooring modifications to facilitate propelling of a manual wheelchair (e.g. carpet is replaced with vinyl floor covering).
- modification of a bathroom for independent or easier accessibility and or safety, (e.g. a roll-in shower with grab bars, roll-under sink, etc.).

Please note the following exclusions:

- Adaptations or improvements which are of general utility, and are not of direct medical or remedial benefit to the participant, such as carpeting, painting, roof repair, central air conditioning, etc. are not covered.
- Routine and one-time home maintenance (e.g. siding, repairs/replacement, gutter work, foundation repair, electrical wiring problems, etc.) and is not covered.
- Modifications that add square footage to the home are not covered.
- Financial assistance for any phase of new home construction or major home renovation projects is not allowed.

All services shall be provided in accordance with applicable State and local building codes.

Providers:

Environmental Modification - Consultations can be provided by licensed Occupational or Physical Therapists, Rehabilitation Engineering Technologists, Assistive Technology Practitioners and Assistive Technology Suppliers certified by the Rehabilitation Engineering Society of North American (RESNA), Medicaid enrolled Environmental Access/Consultants/contractors certified by Professional Resource in Management (PRIME).

Environmental Modification- Installation will be determined by the Financial Management Agency.

Arranging for the Service:

When modifications are thought to be needed but before proceeding with bid requests, the **Environmental Modifications Fact Sheet for Those Who Live in Privately Owned or Rented Homes** must be given to the participant and/or representative and signature acknowledging receipt obtained used the **State Funded Community Supports (EM 1)**

Once the participant's specific need has been identified and documented in the Plan and it is determined that Environmental Modification is the appropriate service to meet the need, the scope of the work/specifications must be determined. This should be done in consultation with the participant / representative and home owner and should define the expected modification as clearly as possible. There are two ways to accomplish this task:

1. You can define the expected modifications by meeting with the participant/representative/home owner in the home, reviewing the modifications that are needed, and developing some parameters in writing to provide to the contractors submitting bids. This is a crucial step to ensure that all requested contractor bids are based on similar expectations (e.g. for someone who cannot access their bathroom, the contractor would need to take into account the dimensions of the participant's wheelchair).

OR

2. The expected modifications can also be defined by obtaining an Environmental Modification Consultation by using part of the annual cost limit. An Environmental Modification Consultation is highly recommended when multiple modifications are needed and the participant / representative / homeowner is unsure how to proceed or unable to clearly articulate the specifications. (The cost for the consultation will count against the annual cost limit)

The written specifications must be provided to Financial Management Agency when the Authorization / Request for Environmental Modifications form is completed.

Arranging for the Service:

If the project specifications will be determined using a professional, Environmental Modifications - Consultation should be secured by offering the participant / representative s choice of providers and issuing the **State Funded Community Supports (EM-C)** form which instructs the provider to bill the Financial Management Agency for services provided. The cost of a consultation will vary but would not be expected to exceed \$600.00 per consultation.

When Environmental Modifications – Installation is needed, the **State Funded Community Supports (EM-I)** form should be used. This form instructs the Financial Management Agency that modifications are needed. The specifications for the project must be noted. If a consultation has been secured, the specification from the consultant should be attached. The **MAXIMUM** amount allowed for the Environmental Modification must be included. This will instruct the Financial Management Agency as they seek bids for the project. The Financial Management Agency with assistance from the Case Manager and the participant / representative will secure bids if needed.

The maximum amount allowed for the modification must be added to the State Funded Community Supports Budget Calculator. Under no circumstances may the annual cost limit of the State Funded Community Supports be exceeded. Once the project has been awarded to a contractor, the Financial Management Agency will notify the Case Manager of the actual cost of the project. The maximum amount previously entered into the Budget Calculator should be updated to reflect the actual cost of the modification.

The **Environmental Modification Project Agreement (EM 2)** must be provided to the home owner and signature agreeing to its terms obtained. This form must be sent to the Financial Management Agency.

Please note: If the participant/representative or home owner desires Environmental Modifications above the SFCS maximum amount allowed, they can **privately** contract with and pay the same professional/contractor who is completing the SFCS project. Any additional work funded by the family or other outside resources

cannot be a part of the Authorization/Request for Environmental Modifications. It must be a separate contract between the family and their chosen provider.

The need for Environmental Modifications must be documented in the Support Plan and the plan must be approved by the DDSN Waiver Admin Division before services can be authorized.

Monitoring: The plan, which includes Environmental Modifications, should be monitored in accordance with DDSN Case Management Standards.

Reduction or Termination of Services: When the Environmental Modification service is being reduced or terminated the **Notice of Reduction or Termination (SFCS Form 4)** must be used to notify the participant/representative, the provider and the Financial Management Agency. See the Case Management section for more information.

South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs
State Funded Community Supports
Environmental Modifications
Fact Sheet for Those Who Live in Privately Owned or Rented Homes

- Environmental modifications for people served through the SCDDSN’s State Funded Community Supports program are available when there is an assessed need and when the cost of the modification and other services do not exceed the State Fiscal Year cost limit of the State Funded Community Supports program.
- SCDDSN’s policy entitled “Procurement Requirements for Local DSN Boards and Contacted Service Providers” [250-08-DD] must be followed.
- To be eligible for modifications, a privately owned or rented house or apartment must be sanitary, safe, adequately maintained, and architecturally feasible for cost-effective modification methods.
- Routine home maintenance such as cleaning, painting, roof repair/replacement, gutter clearing, pest control, plumbing repairs, water damage repairs, floor repairs, appliance repairs, and yard work are not provided as environmental modifications. These issues are the responsibility of the homeowner or landlord/tenant.
- Modifications are provided only to improve the participant’s safety and functional independence in his/her home. Requests will only be considered for essential modifications, such as an entrance/exit ramp, widening of selected exterior/interior doorways, flooring to facilitate wheelchair movement, alterations to make a bathroom accessible, etc. Environmental modifications may also include consultation and assessment to determine the specific needs and follow-up inspections upon completion of the project.
- Home additions (addition of square footage) are not allowed.
- Should modifications to a bathroom be required, due to significant differences in the framework and flooring support structures used in mobile homes and manufactured housing, conventional ceramic tile showers/floors cannot be provided. The most appropriate and cost-effective solution is a prefabricated accessible shower unit.
- Upgraded and expensive materials and fixtures, such as decorative marble or tile flooring/walls, brass faucets, wallpaper, etc. are not permitted.
- When modifications are not feasible because of architectural, sanitary, or other basic habitability considerations, alternatives such as assistance in securing accessible public housing or another rental dwelling may be offered. After relocating, if there remains a need for modifications, three new written bids must be obtained.
- All (participant, family, others) who live in the home or would otherwise be affected by the completed modification must be in full agreement on what work will be done before the request can be approved. Therefore, the participant (or his/her representative) and other homeowner/landlord must sign an agreement about the modifications before modifications will begin.
- Environmental modifications must be completed by a licensed contractor and comply with all local building ordinances. Three or more written bids must be obtained and the lowest used.
- If unforeseen structural problems or damage are discovered after a modification project has started that resulted from preexisting maintenance neglect, plumbing leaks, improper drainage, or termites, it will be the responsibility of the homeowner/landlord to correct the structural problems or damage before the modifications will continue.
- If any of the outlined specifications cannot be met due to architectural designs, you must notify the Case Manager or Financial Management Agency’s representative immediately.
- The Financial Management Agency’s Name and Contact information: _____

SC DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS
STATE FUNDED COMMUNITY SUPPORTS
ENVIRONMENTAL MODIFICATIONS
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Participant's Name: _____

DOB: _____

The SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, State Funded Community Supports, "Environmental Modifications Fact Sheet for Those Who Live in Privately Owned or Rented Homes" document has been provided to me as the State Funded Community Supports program participant or his/her representative. I have been offered the opportunity to ask questions about the information provided and know that I may contact the Case Management Agency should I have any additional questions.

Signature of Participant or Representative

Date

Printed name of signatory

Relationship to Participant

Signature of Witness

Date

**S.C. DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS
STATE FUNDED COMMUNITY SUPPORTS
Environmental Modifications
Project Agreement**

Participant's Name: _____ **DOB:** _____

Terms:

I understand that the requested environmental modification(s) is/ are being funded with public money.

I have seen and agreed to the specifications for the environmental modification(s).

I understand that only the listed specifications will be provided and funded as part of this project.

I understand that under South Carolina State Procurement Law, if the requested environmental modification project costs more than \$2500.00, the project must be awarded to the lowest qualified bidder.

I agree that I will not request or instruct the provider to change any of the approved specifications after the project is awarded.

I understand that any additional work performed by the provider and/or any work separately negotiated with the provider will solely be my financial responsibility as the home owner.

I agree to work cooperatively with the provider to insure a positive working relationship during the course of the project.

I agree to make the location available during the project should the provider need to take measurements or ask questions to insure modifications will be correct and beneficial.

I understand that I must notify the participant's Case Manager immediately if any problems occur during the project.

I, _____, as owner of the home/location to be modified, have read, understand, and agree to each of the above terms. I also understand that the requested environmental modification project cannot proceed without my signature below.

Signature of Home Owner: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name of Witness: _____

Signature of Witness: _____ **Date:** _____