



A GUIDE TO ACCESSIBILITY ASSESSMENTS

What is an accessibility assessment?

IRIS policy requires an independent assessment if a home modification, vehicle modification or adaptive aid will cost more than \$1,000. This assessment must be completed before the service is added to your plan.

Before the assessment, you will work with your IRIS Consultant to complete an Accessibility Assessment Request Form. The information you provide helps the assessor find solutions to overcome the barriers you identify. The cost of this assessment is paid for with other funds and does not reduce your IRIS budget.

After the assessor visits your home, the assessor will write a report with recommendations for the most cost-effective ways to meet your long-term care related needs as allowed in the IRIS program. After the assessment is complete, you must obtain three written estimates for the service or device so that the reviewers are able to compare costs for the work or items needed.

The contractor you choose is responsible for obtaining all of the necessary permits and following the federal, state, and local rules governing contractors. Request the contractor to provide a copy of their current liability insurance certificate. Providing proof of insurance and obtaining permits are standard practices in the contracting business.

Can't I just tell the assessor what I need?

You may have an idea of what you need before the assessor visits; however, it is important to let the assessors do their job to find the best and most cost-effective solution. Assessors are experienced in determining the best ways to solve health, safety, and independence issues. They can come up with solutions you may not have considered.

What is a home modification?

Home modifications can improve your home for health, safety, or accessibility purposes. Home modifications may mean adding specific equipment or changing features within your home. Home modifications may include:

- Adaptive door bells, locks/security items or devices
- Doors/doorways, door handles/door opening devices
- Medically necessary heating, cooling or ventilation systems
- Shower, sink, tub and toilet modifications
- Accessible cabinetry, counter tops or work surfaces
- Fire safety adaptations
- Specialized floor covering to address health and safety
- Ramps (fixed, non-portable)
- Porch/stair lifts
- Plumbing, electrical modifications
- Faucets/water controls
- Grab bars, handrails
- Adaptive lighting/light switches
- Wall protection
- Other modifications approved by the IRIS Consultant Agency or the Wisconsin Department of Health Services

How are home modifications used?

A home modification may increase your independence or to ensure you have safe access to living areas; equipment within your living area; or adjacent buildings which are part of your home.

What types of home modifications are not funded by IRIS?

- Modifications to increase the square footage or value of a home;
- Modifications to create more than one accessible entrance/exit to a home;
- Modifications designed for socializing; and
- Modifications that are not related to your independence, health, and safety or long term-care related needs.

Who pays for a home modification?

Several funding sources may be available to you. You may only use IRIS funding for goods and services when you cannot find other funding to meet your needs.

Where can I find other funding sources for home modifications?

- Habitat for Humanity (www.habitat.org)
- Kiwanis (www.kiwanis.org)
- Relatives and Friends
- Fraternal clubs, lodges, or social organizations
- Local housing agencies
- Local lumber yards
- Faith communities
- Rebuilding Together (<http://rebuildingtogether.org/>)
- Support groups and diagnosis -specific groups

Who cannot be paid for a home modification/adaptive aid through IRIS?

- Legally Responsible Persons
- Vendors who perform the accessibility assessment
- Relatives
- Legal Guardians

What is an adaptive aid?

An adaptive aid is a control or appliance that assists you with daily activities or controls your environment. It can also be a good or service that assists you to be a part of your community. Adaptive aids may include:

- Lifts, control switches, etc.
- Costs associated with vehicle modification maintenance
- Van lifts, hand controls, equipment modifications for vehicles

This does not include durable medical equipment (DME) that can be obtained through your Wisconsin Medicaid ForwardHealth Card.

THE ACCESSIBILITY ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Before the Assessment

- Work with your IRIS Consultant to complete your Accessibility Assessment Request Form.
- An assessor from an Independent Living Center arranges a time to come to your home and complete the assessment. It is important to answer their call or return their message as soon as possible. Please do not obtain quotes or bids before the assessment.

During the Assessment

- On the day of the appointment, the assessor visits with you and looks at the items you listed as "barriers to independence" on the Accessibility Assessment Request Form ([F-01213](#)).
- The assessor completes a report with recommendations on the most cost-effective way to meet your long-term care needs. They will send one copy of the report to you and one copy to your IRIS Consultant Agency.



After the Assessment

- Meet with your IRIS Consultant to talk about the information in the accessibility assessment report. This is the person to contact with any questions about the process.
- To compare costs, you **must collect three written estimates** for the goods or services recommended in the report. Use the report to help obtain accurate bids for any work you need completed.
- IRIS pays for the most-cost effective solution to meet your long-term care needs, (for example: vinyl flooring instead of marble flooring).
- If you do not have enough funding in your IRIS budget to cover the expense of the work/purchases recommended by the accessibility assessment, then you must request additional IRIS funding through the One-Time Expense process as outlined in the IRIS Policy Manual Section 5.8.

Submitting Your IRIS Plan Update

- Submit three written estimates with an IRIS Plan update for the goods or services recommended in the accessibility assessment report.
- The IRIS Plan is reviewed and processed within 48 hours.
- If your IRIS Plan update is approved, then any work/purchases recommended by the accessibility assessment may begin.