

**A ROADMAP FOR DEVELOPING A DRIVING EVALUATION PROGRAM**  
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Much research and planning should be done by a facility prior to advertising a driving evaluation program and accepting referrals. A solid foundation built around the necessary administrative and medical support is crucial to the successful development of a driving evaluation program. The therapist who wants to become involved in driving evaluation or rehabilitation services should have advanced knowledge and skill to be qualified and prepared to perform a comprehensive driver evaluation by industry approved standard of a care.

The following roadmap is recommended as an orderly method for developing a driving program or for someone transitioning into the role of the driver rehabilitation specialist. Completion of each step should be finished before the first referral for driving is accepted.

1. Examine the demand and the potential need for the service in your area and explore potential referral pathways.

Inquire of any state requirements for a driving evaluation program through the State Department of Motor Vehicles or Department of Driver Licensing ([www.aamva.org](http://www.aamva.org)) such as commercial driving school registration, fulfillment of driving instructor coursework or service provider requirements by such funding programs as the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation or Medicare Wavier Program.

Explore the possibility of obtaining proper liability insurance for the program and/or the evaluation vehicles.

2. Explore membership in the *Association of Driver Rehabilitation Specialist (ADED)* and/or the *American Occupational Therapy Association* and each organization's Listserv and online networking.

3. Obtain, read and study articles, books and chapters in professional books from a bibliography or other literature search provided by various resources such as Adaptive Mobility Services, ADED or AOTA.

Obtain a copy and study the AMA Physician's Guidelines, the AOTA and ADED documents addressing driving as a specialty area.

- 4. Write a form letter to all driving equipment manufacturers and driver education equipment companies requesting brochures or catalogues with updated suggested retail pricing and a dealer list in your area. You can also obtain some information at the manufacturer's website but you still may want to have their brochures for client education. See list in the Adaptive Mobility Services, Inc workshop notebook.
  
- 5. With information received from above resources, begin a resource notebook (in a large three ring notebook) to use for reference and client education.
  - Include all available equipment manufacturers with price list
  - Use dividers so you can separate brochures into specific categories such as hand controls & steering devices or by manufacturer.
  
- 6. Establish acquaintance with several experienced driver rehabilitation specialists who are willing to provide mentorship to you. Be respectful and understanding of his or her time. You must understand someone who does not wish to "help the competition."
  
- Complete a program comparison and profile from facilities or programs in your state or region. Note:
  - the age of the program
  - the structure of their program
  - the number of referrals they have annually
  - The age and disability of clients they see
  - their charges for driving evaluation and driver training
  - do they see new drivers or only experience drivers?
  
- 8. Collect vehicle manufacturer's brochures or download information from their websites so you can become familiar with specific vehicles on the market.
  - collect information on various models and makes of cars, trucks, and vans.
  - shop vehicles for your program and for your clients
  - gain knowledge on vehicles to advise thoroughly & correctly on vehicle selection
  
- 9. Contact **National Mobility Equipment Dealer Association (NMEDA)** for a listing of the members in your area. Visit the manufacturers and vendors's websites. Make an appointment with all of the local or nearby vendors to meet them and see their facility and inventory.

- Ask for hands-on demonstrations
  - Go with specific questions and TAKE NOTES! Be objective! Remember, they are trying to convince you that their product line is the best product.
  - Keep comparison lists of pricing and inventory for future reference
  - Find out what equipment has been tested to acceptable standards
  - Become very familiar with the equipment available in your area.
10. Plan a one-two day visit with a large comprehensive driving program preferably in a setting similar to your own. Expect to pay a consultation fee.
- Go prepared! Don't go until you have done numbers 1 through 9
  - Have a list of specific questions
  - Don't ask "Tell me all about your program" or "tell me how to set up my program"
  - Ask specifically about their billing/reimbursement, vehicles, evaluation tools and procedures.
  - **No question is a dumb question but don't be a sponge.** Learning and growth develop from personal experience with good guidance. Some programs may not be willing to hand over everything about their program.
  - Don't have unrealistic expectations of the visit. You will not walk away from this visit being a qualified DRS.
  - Request, before the visit, if you could observe several evaluations.
  - You should provide the structure for the day. Compiling a list of objectives and sending it to the person prior to the visit would help the DRS in planning the day at their facility.
11. Design the necessary evaluation forms for your program.
- Do not copy from other driving programs' form.
  - Your form must work for you.
  - Don't let a form restrict you or be time consuming.
  - Consider what you want to evaluate and what information you need to obtain from the client.
  - Four suggested sections for an initial driver evaluation report form:
    - 1) Medical/personal history
    - 2) Clinical evaluation
    - 3) Vehicle and equipment assessment
    - 4) Behind-the-wheel assessment
    - 5) Summary and recommendations
12. Write program policies and procedures. Examples of suggested areas are:

- Delineation of the comprehensive driver evaluation process at your site
  - How to receive referrals
  - Requirements prior to appointment
  - Client check-in process
  - Charges, billing codes
  - Prescription writing procedures
  - Handling referral to other services
  - Vehicle Maintenance
  - Procedure in case of being involved in a crash
  - Documentation and communication procedures with HIPAA consideration
13. By now, you should be able to realistically determine the level of evaluation skill for your program. Cost projections for the program can be finalized. A few cost saving hints:
- Explore donations of equipment by manufacturers or local dealers
  - Utilize OT clinical evaluation tools already available
  - Find used or refurbished equipment
  - Seek financial assistance from local service clubs or grant monies
14. Confirm departmental administrative and physician support for the driving program.
15. Obtain professional liability insurance for yourself (in addition to what your employer provides).
16. Begin marketing the program and service.
- Begin planning and providing in-services, in-house first and then in local community to referral sources and agencies.
  - Plan an Open House
  - Mail out to physicians, therapists and other referral sources your brochure and introduction letter indicating when the service will start.