

December 13, 2011

DIRECTIVE:	JOB CORPS INFORMATION NOTICE NO. 11-37
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TO: ALL JOB CORPS NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF
ALL JOB CORPS REGIONAL OFFICE STAFF
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER DIRECTORS
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER OPERATORS
ALL NATIONAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT CONTRACTORS
ALL OUTREACH, ADMISSIONS, AND CTS CONTRACTORS

FROM: EDNA PRIMROSE
National Director
Office of Job Corps

SUBJECT: Assistive Technology (AT) Resources for Students With Disabilities

1. Purpose. To inform Job Corps centers about the availability of AT resources for students with disabilities.

2. Background. About 20 percent of Job Corps students disclose that they have a disability, and it is suspected that many more students do not disclose or have a disability that has not been diagnosed. Many of these students could benefit from AT. AT, such as pencil grips, talking calculators, screen readers, and specially designed keyboards, provide students with disabilities access to all areas of the Job Corps program, and helps them live independently and perform the essential functions of their jobs after Job Corps. Access to AT can help reduce the disproportionately high unemployment and underemployment of persons with disabilities. AT can also help bridge the gap between a person's physical and cognitive abilities and the training or job requirement. Many challenges for students with disabilities in and after Job Corps can be eliminated by using AT alone, or in combination with other types of accommodations.

The Assistive Technology Act of 1998 defines AT as "any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities." More generally, AT is any type of technology that is used to help a person perform a task that might otherwise be difficult or impossible to complete.

AT is more than equipment; it involves a problem-solving process that identifies solutions to challenges. Depending on the person's disability and the specific training or job requirement, there is a range of possibilities from simple, little-to-no cost solutions (no-tech/low-tech) to more technical, specialized AT (high-tech).

Examples of how AT could benefit a student in Job Corps include:

- Student with a reading disability uses a reading pen or optical character recognition software with voice output features to allow for independent access to written content while the area of deficit continues to be remediated.
- Student with epilepsy, diabetes, high-/low-blood pressure or muscular skeletal conditions uses a safety harness in construction trades that use ladders.
- Student with specific learning disabilities, Asperger's syndrome, autism, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), or emotional disturbances use behavioral graphing charts to track and graph their behavior each day in the classrooms giving them specific target level goals to achieve.
- Student with math calculation disabilities (dyscalculia) may use measuring cups, measuring spoons, old milk cartons, and other manipulatives to provide them with visual representations of what the fractions really mean.
- Student with traumatic brain injury (TBI), ADHD, or learning disabilities may require day planners to help them with their organizational skills. Some centers incorporate the student handbook into a spiral bound day planner with a calendar, address/phone book, conversion tables, and other reference guides.

According to AbleData (see contact information below), which manages a database of the types of AT available, there are at least 36,000 AT products in 20 categories. This includes computer applications such as alternative input devices like voice recognition; transportation and mobility aids that help individuals move from one place to another; and communications aids, which can be used in addition to or replacing the human voice. There are also architectural aids that reduce physical barriers by making changes to an individual's home, school, or work place, including ramps, elevators, lifts, and special door handles, as well as prosthetics and orthotics, which can enhance or replace body parts.

3. Resources. The following resources can be used to secure funding for AT, learn more about AT, or try different types of AT.

Funding Sources

Although the costs of AT vary greatly, most are inexpensive, and there is a wide range of resources to help pay for them. Information about funding sources is provided below.

State Assistive Technology Programs

The State Assistive Technology Programs, funded by the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, provide device loan, reutilization, demonstration, and financing support for AT purchases. A complete list of state contacts can be found at:

<http://resnaprojects.org/nattap/scripts/nattapcontacts.pl>.

Social Security Administration

The Social Security Administration's (SSA) Ticket to Work Program, an employment program for people with disabilities who receive benefits from the SSA, can be used by One-Stop Career Centers to provide funding for AT when: One-Stop Career Centers and other entities are designated as an Employment Network (EN) by SSA; and Social Security disability beneficiaries designate the One-Stop Career Center as their EN. More information about the Ticket to Work Program can be found at: <http://www.chooseworkttw.net/>.

Individuals who receive or could qualify for Supplemental Security Income because of a disability can use a Plan to Achieve Self-Support (PASS) to purchase AT if the person is pursuing an employment goal. Information about PASS plans can be found at:

<http://www.ssa.gov/redbook/eng/ssi-only-employment-supports.htm#3>.

Medicare or Medicaid

Under certain conditions, AT may be funded through Medicare or Medicaid which can be combined with other private funding sources, including private health insurance. For information about Medicaid eligibility and a link to state Medicaid programs visit:

<https://www.cms.gov/medicaideligibility/>.

Vocational Rehabilitation

State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies can help clients attain the AT they need to meet the employment goals stated in their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). A list of state VR programs is at: <https://askjan.org/cgi-win/TypeQuery.exe?902>.

Department of Defense/Injured or Wounded Service Members

For injured or wounded service members transitioning to civilian employment, the Department of Defense's Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program can provide an AT assessment and technology to assist in seeking and maintaining employment (<http://cap.tricare.mil>). This free service is also offered as an employment support for several other federal agencies.

General AT Resources

Many AT resources are available in the resources/web resources/assistive technology section of the Job Corps Disability website. A few of these resources are highlighted below:

- State Assistive Technology Programs (see description and contact information above).
- Job Accommodation Network (JAN) – Job Corps has a long standing relationship with JAN that includes providing centers with accommodation suggestions and training through webinars and in-person meetings. JAN offers a searchable accommodations database, and answers accommodation questions by phone or e-mail <http://askjan.org/>.
- ABLEDATA – Maintained by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, ABLEDATA manages an AT database of 36,000 products in 20 categories. The site encourages technology designed for an individual's independence in the workplace and everyday living (<http://www.abledata.com>).

- Alliance for Technology Access (ATA) – There are 39 ATA centers throughout the country that provide assessments for individuals to help identify appropriate AT. Centers include community and national organizations such as Easter Seals and private/non-profit technology support, and assistance centers like New Jersey-based, TECHConnection (<http://www.ataccess.org>).
- Center for Assistive Technology Access (CATEA) – A consortium of college and university professionals offers AT resources by disability or activity (<http://assistivetech.net>).

Job Corps Specific Resources

Job Corps Regional Disability Coordinators provide center staff with AT information through the Job Corps Disability website, webinars, and articles in the Job Corps Disability newsletter.

Job Corps Disability Website

The resources/web resources/assistive technology section of the Job Corps Disability website includes an extensive list of AT resources. Many of the resources included provide information on how to find free, inexpensive or reduced-cost assistive technologies, as well as explore new and innovative tools to meet the needs students on center with disabilities.

Webinars

In 2011, the following webinar on AT was presented, and is available on the Job Corps Disability website in the resources/webinars section.

Assistive Technology Basics

This webinar provides participants with an overview of AT and AT services that are available to assist students with disabilities in the Job Corps program. Presenters provided examples of some low-tech and high-tech AT devices.

In 2011, the following webinars were also presented and while they are not specifically focused on AT, each contains information about AT for specific disabilities.

Learning Disabilities 101

This webinar provided participants with basic information about Learning Disabilities (LD), the types of challenges those students with these disabilities experience, and possible accommodations/AT to help reduce or eliminate these challenges.

Mental Health Disabilities: Accommodations and Supports

This webinar provided information on mental health disabilities and accommodations/AT that can be used to provide access and support to Job Corps students within and outside of the classroom setting.

The following AT-focused webinars are planned for 2012. Regional disability coordinators will notify center disability coordinators when these webinars will be offered, and

this information will also be posted on the Event Registration page in Citrix on the Job Corps Community website.

Assistive Technology for Students with Learning Disabilities

This webinar will discuss the various types of AT that are available for students with learning disabilities.

Assistive Technology for the Career Technical Trades

During this series of webinars, a career technical trade will be selected, and examples of AT for the particular trade will be highlighted.

Newsletter Articles

Several recent AT-focused newsletter articles are available on the Job Corps Disability website in the resources/disability newsletters section, as listed below:

Summer 2011 Newsletter

“Spotlight on Assistive Technology” – Provides basic information about AT and examples of AT that can be used in the nursing trade.

Fall 2011 Newsletter

“Assistive Technology for Welding” – Provides examples of AT that can be used in the welding trade.

Winter 2011 Newsletter (coming soon)

“Spotlight on Assistive Technology” – Provides examples of AT that can be used in the culinary trade.

Regional Disability Coordinator Contact Information

Region	Regional Disability Coordinator	Contact Information
Region 1 – Boston	Lisa Kosh	lisa.kosh@humanitas.com 301-608-3290 ext. 602
Region 2 – Philadelphia and Region 3–Atlanta	Nikki Jackson	nikki.jackson@humanitas.com 301-608-3290 ext. 603
Region 4 – Dallas	Laura Kuhn	laura.kuhn@humanitas.com 602-403-9998
Region 5 – Chicago and Region 6 – San Francisco	Kim Jones	kim.jones@humanitas.com 301-608-3290 ext. 607

4. Action. Addressees are to ensure this Information Notice is distributed to all appropriate staff. As centers develop their accessibility plan (see PRH-6: 6.11, R7 [g]) and identify areas that are in need of or that could be made more accessible with AT, the center is encouraged to

develop an AT bank of supports to enable students with disabilities to work as independently as possible. These supports will then be readily available as an accommodation, if needed, and also serve to enhance the overall accessibility of the center.

5. Expiration Date. Until superseded.

6. Inquiries. Inquiries should be directed to Carol Abnathy at (202) 693-3283 or abnathy.carol@dol.gov.