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Phoenix Job Corps Success Story

Yuri entered Phoenix Job Corps on October 10, 2011 and exited as a completer on February 12, 2013. Yuri, adopted from a Russian orphanage when he was 4 years old, has faced many challenges in his young life.

When he first applied to Job Corps, his documentation was so complex that the applicant file review committee was leaning toward recommending denial, but through completing the applicant file review process, the center staff saw that he met the admissions criteria and should be enrolled.

Following enrollment, center supports (e.g., case management, reasonable accommodations, and ongoing communication among staff and with Yuri) ensured that Yuri had full access to the Job Corps offerings. Frequent communication and ongoing review of his individual needs, allowed Yuri to not only succeed, but to excel! How did it all work?



Yuri, a successful completer at the Phoenix JCC.

Yuri’s documentation indicated that he had multiple disabilities. The disability coordinator arranged a reasonable accommodation committee (RAC) meeting to discuss his accommodation needs. RAC members included the health and wellness manager, academic manager, managers from most other areas on center, and Yuri. Yuri arrived with a smile as big as the Grand Canyon and a friendly hello; not what was expected based on the documentation that preceded him.

“Yuri brought nothing but joy and pleasure to all staff and students who were with him during his enrollment.”
- Nancy Dean, HWM, Phoenix JCC

During the RAC, an accommodation plan was created. Yuri was provided accommodations to support him in all areas on center including behavior-related accommodations such as a time out/break area, positive behavior supports, and cues/redirection. He was also provided preferential seating to limit visual and auditory distractions. Accommodations to help with instruction and assignments were provided to include breaking assignments into smaller sections, increasing wait time for response, and providing extended time. He was also provided with testing accommodations.

Additionally, a case management plan was created for Yuri to provide additional support for him throughout the center. As part of this plan, center staff assisted Yuri with applying for vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. Some of the VR-provided services included obtaining an updated evaluation, tutoring, a job coach, assistance with housing, help navigating the transit system, and assistance with job placement.

Yuri earned his high school diploma, completed the retail sales career technical trade, earned a related certification, and was hired by a local supermarket. He received many “Student of the Week” awards, always had a smile for everyone, and never missed classes or was absent without official leave. Well liked by all his peers, Yuri was always eager to help other students and staff. A strong **team** approach ensured his success during his Job Corps enrollment and post-enrollment. Ms. Dean reminds all Job Corps center staff that “everyone has the capability to succeed if we develop their abilities based on their strengths rather than focus on their weaknesses.”

Thanks to Nancy Dean, HWM, Phoenix JCC, for sharing Yuri’s success.

Avoiding the Pitfalls: Applicant File Review Process

Now that applications for enrollment are being processed again, it is a perfect time to review the center's applicant file review standard operating procedure to ensure that it is in alignment with Job Corps policy and legal requirements. Doing so lessens the likelihood that the center's applicant file review team will encounter a process pitfall that can result in an applicant file being returned to the center for additional review or paperwork completion. Three commonly encountered process pitfalls are:

- ▶ **Pitfall** - Using outdated or incorrect forms to document a recommendation of denial of an applicant's file.
 - ✓ **Solution** – Visit the Job Corps Disability website within JC Community to obtain current forms and/or check with your regional disability coordinator and/or regional health specialist to verify you are using the correct forms and documents.
- ▶ **Pitfall** – Failing to consider reasonable accommodations for an applicant who did not request an accommodation but who did provide documentation of a disability.
 - ✓ **Solution** – Ensure that any applicant who either requests or provides documentation of a disability is engaged in an interactive reasonable accommodation process to discuss possible accommodation needs. The individual can refuse to accept the accommodations, but be sure to document discussing and offering specific accommodations on a Reasonable Accommodation Request Form if one is not already present in the file.
- ▶ **Pitfall** – Completing and submitting both a health care needs and a direct threat assessment with the applicant file.
 - ✓ **Solution** – Only submit either the health care needs or the direct threat assessment when recommending an application for denial and sending the applicant file to the regional office for review.

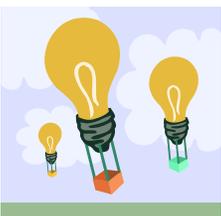


Current forms needed when recommending denial during the applicant file review process:

- ▶ Center Recommendation of Denial Form (Program Instruction 11-16)
- ▶ Individualized Health Care Needs Assessment Form (Appendix 610)
- ▶ Individualized Direct Threat Assessment (Appendix 609)
- ▶ Accommodation Recommendation of Denial Form (only when an accommodation request includes accommodations that have been determined to be unreasonable by the center director)

**** Remember, if you have questions regarding how to complete any portion of the file review process or related to a specific applicant file, please contact your regional disability coordinator for process-related support and your regional health specialist for clinically-related support. ****

Promising Practices



Boxelder: The disability coordinator recently obtained assistive technology devices for a carpentry student through VR and Dakota Link. Once the student completes Job Corps and is employed for a specific period of time, all loaned assistive technology devices will become the property of the student.

Barranquitas: A counselor from the local VR center provides staff training on reasonable accommodations in the workplace. This training is provided as part of the annual required all staff disability-related training.

Spotlight on Assistive Technology

Assistive technology devices and mobile applications can benefit individuals with communication difficulties, including students who are hearing impaired/deaf or students who have difficulties expressing themselves verbally or in writing. These technologies vary in the amount of technology and skills needed to use the devices and applications as well as costs. Many students and centers already possess readily available communication devices that can be used as assistive technology tools. Apple mobile devices (iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad), smartphones, Android phones, and computers enable users to download applications (apps) and software that assist with communicating thoughts, ideas, needs, and feelings. Some Job Corps centers have begun implementing advanced technologies such as smart boards and tablets in the classrooms.

Speech Generating Apps



Assistive Chat
Price: \$24.99
Compatible: iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad
Use: Text to talk app allows the user to type words or sentences that the device reads aloud.



Handy Speech
Price: \$29.99
Compatible: iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad, Android phone
Use: Text to talk app allows the user to type words or sentences that the device reads aloud.

Sign language is a useful tool for communicating with an individual with a hearing impairment or those individuals that struggle with expressive language. Unfortunately many of us are not proficient in sign language so downloadable sign language aids, such as the ones listed below, can be very helpful in our attempt to communicate effectively.

Sign Language Apps



ASL Pro
Price: \$2.99
Compatible: iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad
Use: Teaches signs for over 700 words



ISIGN
Price: \$4.99
Compatible: iPhone, iPod Touch, iPad
Use: Animated illustrations teach over 800 signs

Devices for Trades

Below are examples of assistive devices that can accommodate students in the health care trades who have communication difficulties. The talking thermometer and blood pressure monitor (1) announce the readings aloud giving the student the ability to verbally communicate with the instructor or future patient, and (2) provide a visual digital display.



Lumiscope Talking Wrist Automatic Inflation Blood Pressure Monitor
Price: ~\$58
Uses: Displays and announces blood pressure and pulse measurements



Talking Thermometer
Price: ~\$13
Uses: Audio announcement and digital display

E-mail your comments or suggestions to
Carol Abnathy, National Health and Wellness Manager,
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Summer Training Tips

Jumpstart your required annual disability staff training with these ideas . . .

- ▶ Encourage staff to attend upcoming disability training webinars.
- ▶ Invite a speaker from a local university or school district who has a special expertise in working with students with learning disabilities, autism, challenging behaviors, etc.
- ▶ Invite a speaker from a local community organization or agency who you have a relationship with or are trying to build a relationship with such as VR.
- ▶ Pick a topic from the reasonable accommodation process to review with your staff:
 - ✓ How to access accommodation plans
 - ✓ How to implement and regulate the use of specific accommodations and assistive technologies such as the use of headphones or mobile devices
 - ✓ How to provide feedback about students progress during their evaluation of student progress panels
 - ✓ How to refer students you suspect of having a disability
- ▶ Develop a training using material from the Job Corps Disability website; utilize the stereotypes/attitudes and basic etiquette materials to develop a training on awareness and promote a center wide focus, or utilize the wide range of materials under trainings and webinars to focus on a topic that has been challenging for center staff.
- ▶ Work with the center mental health consultant to develop a staff training on the impact of mental health disabilities, how they manifest, and proactive strategies for interacting with students when they present challenging behaviors or emotions



Disability Resources

Autism Spectrum Disorders, Accommodation Suggestions: JAN offers accommodation suggestions for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (<http://askjan.org/media/autism.htm>) and individuals with Aspergers (<http://askjan.org/media/asperger.html>).

Autism Spectrum Disorders, Transition Tools: JobTIPS (<http://www.do2learn.com/JobTIPS/index.html>) is a free online program that helps individuals with spectrum disorders obtain and maintain employment by addressing the social and communication differences that may prohibit someone from successfully attaining gainful employment.

Transition Tools: The Office of Disability Employment Policy in conjunction with the National Collaborative on Workforce Development released the *Youth in Action* tip sheet (<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/youth-development>). Tip sheets promote building independence by outlining steps youth can take as they transition to adulthood. Featured topics include:

- ▶ *Becoming a stronger self-advocate*
- ▶ *Leading your transition planning*
- ▶ *Learning disability history*
- ▶ *Getting involved in volunteering*
- ▶ *Serving on decision-making boards*
- ▶ *Participating in internships and work-based experiences*

Upcoming Job Corps Disability Webinars

504 Plans: June 26th at 11am and 4pm ET

Learning Disabilities: July 18th at 11am and 4pm ET

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