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Fall 2016

Job Corps Disability Support Newsletter

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). Led nationally by the Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy, NDEAM celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities and educates about the value of a diverse workforce inclusive of their skills and talents. The 2016 theme is “#Inclusion Works” reflecting the important role disability plays in workforce diversity. The use of a hashtag is intended to encourage groups to post images and stimulate discussion on social media about the many ways “inclusion works.”



Job Corps Centers Participate in NDEAM

Each October, Job Corps centers are encouraged to conduct/participate in NDEAM activities. Some previous examples of center participation include:

- ▶ Miami held a variety of activities to celebrate NDEAM including a special musical performance by “Sons of Mystro”, two violinists with learning disabilities.
- ▶ Fred G. Acosta celebrated NDEAM with a variety of activities to engage their students and promote disability awareness. Staff and students were challenged to take on a disability and reflect on their own experiences of having that disability for a day.
- ▶ Ottumwa held a variety of NDEAM activities including a presentation by Vienna Hoang, Assistive Technology Specialist, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, on how assistive technology (AT) impacts options for learning, living, and working for persons with disabilities.



Students from Fred G. Acosta JCC participate in awareness activity during NDEAM event.

NDEAM (cont'd)

What Can Your Center Do To Celebrate NDEAM?

- **Hold a discussion:** NDEAM presents an opportune time to discuss the topic of disability employment with students; one easy way to do so is to use the [What Can YOU Do Campaign](#) ideas and materials.
- **Create a display:** NDEAM is a great time to freshen up bulletin boards. Start by putting up this year's NDEAM [poster](#), which is available in both English and Spanish. Include materials with positive images featuring people with disabilities in various community and employment settings.
- **Organize an assembly:** Another option is to hold an assembly addressing the topic of disability employment, with content tailored as appropriate for age. Such an assembly might feature guest speakers from local disability service organizations and/or people with disabilities in various professions willing to talk about their jobs, interests and experiences.
- **Implement "soft skills" training:** Interpersonal skills, such as teamwork, decision-making and communications, are critical for success in all occupations and industries. During NDEAM or anytime, you can address this gap with [Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success](#) — a series of interactive, hands-on activities to help youth prepare for employment, regardless of their interests or intended career paths.
- **Engage student leaders:** Job Corps student leaders might invite a local community leader with a disability to a meeting or assembly to speak about his or her experiences including what s/he did to overcome obstacles and barriers in employment and life.

Common Mistakes in Monitoring and Tracking the Center Applicant File Review Process

The Applicant File Review (AFR) process encompasses more than just the clinical team reviewing applicant files, which is a large responsibility in and of itself. It also requires that each center carefully and methodically track and maintain clear documentation about the receipt, movement, and final disposition of each and every applicant file that is assigned to the center in whatever format that applicant file takes (i.e., e-folders, paper files, etc.). Failure to do so has significant implications, potentially for the individual applicant, the center, and the entire Job Corps program at-large as personally identifiable information is at-risk, civil rights issues can become a concern, and policy compliance may come into question. So, it is critically important that each and every applicant file be appropriately tracked and monitored from the time it arrives on center until there is a final disposition on the application.

AFR Process Quiz

1. Who is the gatekeeper of applicant files?
2. How many calendar days does the center have to make a decision on the applicant file (i.e., recommend denial, enroll, etc.)?
3. What should happen if the center needs a brief extension?
4. If the Admissions Counselor (AC) calls and says an applicant is in the hospital, the center should send the file back to the AC.
Yes, No, Never

** Answers to quiz are at end of article*

Common Mistakes in Monitoring and Tracking the Center Applicant File Review Process (cont'd)

In order to avoid the pitfalls that might occur in tracking and monitoring applicant files, let's review some of the more common mistakes that have been observed:

- **Issue:** Not all of the required components listed in the PRH are being maintained in the log.
Fix: Review Appendix 107 for required components and edit center log to match. Centers are encouraged to use the sample *Center Applicant File Review Log* which can be found on the Job Corps Disability Web site.
- **Issue:** Final dispositions are not clearly stated or fully explained. For example, "File returned to AC," but no explanation as to why the file was returned to the AC.
Fix: Ensure that an explanation accompanies the disposition so that ANYONE reading it knows exactly what occurred with the file. A best practice would be to use the *Return to AC Cover Memo* which can be found on the Job Corps Disability Web site and maintain a copy in records.
- **Issue:** All of the individuals who reviewed the file outside of the Wellness Department are not listed on the log.
Fix: List all staff who reviews the file on the log (e.g., if the Academic Manager reviews the file, then they should be listed on the log as having reviewed it).
- **Issue:** Log entries are deleted after an applicant has either been enrolled or a file has been returned to the AC.
Fix: Maintain an ongoing record of log entries in order to have an appropriate historical record of the applicant file review process. It is suggested that the center maintain 2-3 years' worth of data although the center may start a new log each Program Year.
- **Issue:** There is no date associated with a final disposition or that a final decision was made on the file or the disposition on the file was left blank.
Fix: Ensure a final disposition date is part of the log; otherwise, there is no way to tell if the center is completing the applicant file review process within the required 30-day time period.
- **Issue:** There are applicant files in review beyond the 30 days.
Fix: Request an extension from the Regional Office Program Manager if additional time is needed to review a file. This should be done in writing and the written response should be maintained.
- **Issue:** The center is not following its AFR Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and/or its SOP is not in alignment with PRH requirements.
Fix: Ensure that your SOP reflects PRH requirements and then ensure that those procedures are the ones that are actually being implemented on center. Centers are encouraged to use the Sample AFR SOP on the Job Corps Disability Web site.

If you are unsure about how to track or monitor applicant files or any part of the applicant file review process, have difficulty locating sample forms, etc., contact your respective Regional Disability Coordinator for assistance.

Answers to quiz: 1) Records Manager 2) 30 3) Request extension from PM 4) Never

Disability Resources

2016 Customized Disability Partnership Tools

2016 Customized Disability Partnership Tools will be emailed to each center DC in September. This tool is customized for each center (i.e., provides information about disability organizations that are located in the local area) and can be used to begin developing resources and partnerships. This tool should be available during Disability Program Compliance Assessments to document efforts to establish partnerships.

Center Applicant File Review Tracking Form

A sample Center Applicant File Review (AFR) Tracking Form has been developed to assist you with documenting the review of each applicant file. Each center clinician and the Academic Manager (as well as the behavior management staff person on the infrequent occasions s/he is involved) can each sign off on the form and indicate their recommendation which can be stored with the student health record or if recommending denial, stored with the disability and health documentation in the applicant's paperwork. This form may be found on the Job Corps Disability Web site or you may request it from your Regional Disability Coordinator.

Sample Applicant File Review Log

A sample AFR log was released via Program Instruction 16-07 on August 17, 2016. The new sample log has been simplified, but still contains all of the policy-required components. Technical assistance has been built into each of the column headings as comments, providing guidance information regarding the intent and purpose of each field. The sample log is available in Excel format and may be found on the Job Corps Disability Web site or you may request it from your Regional Disability Coordinator.

Sample Applicant File Review SOP

A sample AFR SOP, that includes all AFR process requirements, is available on the Job Corps Disability Web site or you may request it from your Regional Disability Coordinator. Your center's AFR SOP should describe in detail how an applicant file is processed, from the time it is received from the admissions contractor, until the applicant is accepted into the program and assigned a start date, or recommended for denial and a final disposition is made by the Regional Office.

Upcoming Webinars

- Disability Coordinator Orientation
- Disability Program Partnerships
- Bookshare
- Reasonable Accommodation Process

Please check the [Event Registration](#) page on the Job Corps Community Web site for dates/times

Regional Disability Coordinators

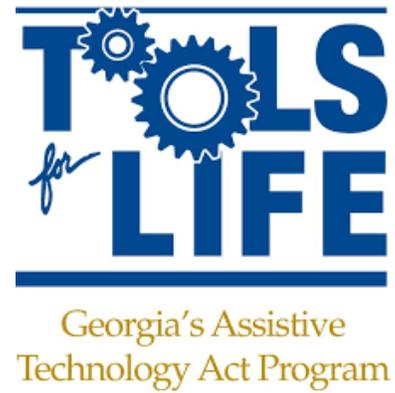
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Spotlight on AT: State AT Programs



Assistive technology (AT) can play a role in education, work, recreation, and independent living. For some people AT is critical to survival, for some it makes life a lot easier, but for all users, AT increases independence and community life.

Every U.S. state and territory has a [State AT Act Program](#). These programs offer training, outreach and professional development to promote knowledge and understanding of how to apply AT in various sectors of society. State programs also offer demonstrations, loans, and the reassignment of used AT. These services are designed to provide users the opportunity to “try before you buy” as well as access to solid technology solutions at an affordable price. Many states are also home to more specialized projects focusing on particular strategies for access to AT or specific uses of AT. Each Job Corps Center should be making contact with your state and/or local AT program(s) to build partnerships that support your students with disabilities.



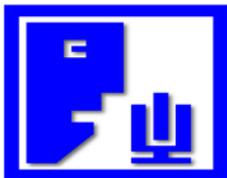
One outstanding example is Georgia’s AT Act Program—[Tools for Life](#). Tools for Life is dedicated to increasing access to and acquisition of AT devices and services for all ages and disabilities. Services include AT device demonstration and loans, training, and AT assessments.



Tools for Life has created an [App Finder database](#). This database is a unique tool that the user can search for apps by disability or multiple disabilities as well as by price ranges and device types. Every app housed in this database has been used and/or tested by one or more members of the Tools for Life team along with peers from across the country including members of other AT Act Programs, physical, occupational and speech language therapists; AT professionals; people with disabilities and other leaders in the disability community.



An example of an app found on the [App Finder database](#) is BugME! Sticky Notes. BugME! Sticky Notes is an app designed to help the user stay organized at work and at home. It uses the flexibility of little notes that pin right to the smartphone or tablet. The user can pin them to a virtual corkboard within the app, and set alarms or alerts. BugMe! Sticky Notes is located in the “Organizational Tools” category on the [App Finder database](#) and can be downloaded to Apple, Android or BlackBerry devices for free.



Another app found on the [App Finder database](#) is DAF Assistant. DAF Assistant can be used by people who stutter to control their speech fluency, slow down speech rate, increase confidence level, and develop good speaking habits. Delayed auditory feedback is used to simulate a chorus effect. DAF Assistant is located in the “Speech” category on the [App Finder database](#) and can be downloaded to Apple devices for \$9.99 and to Android devices for \$4.99.

E-mail your comments or suggestions to:
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