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Fall 2017

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 (ODEP), NDEAM celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities, including educating and promoting the value of a diverse workforce inclusive of their skills and talents. The 2017 theme is “Inclusion Drives Innovation.” Hiring employees with diverse abilities strengthens businesses, increases competition, and drives innovation.



### 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.
- **Ask a Disability Program Partner to Present:** NDEAM presents an opportune time to discuss the topic of disability employment with students and staff.
- **Create a display:** NDEAM is a great time to freshen up bulletin boards. Start by putting up this year's NDEAM [poster](#), which will be 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.
- **Participate in Disability Mentoring Day:** Disability Mentoring Day promotes career development for youth with disabilities through hands-on programs, job shadowing, and ongoing mentoring. The nationwide observance is the third Wednesday of each October, but centers may choose to host their own events on any day of the month (or year for that matter).
- **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, centers 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.

# NDEAM (cont'd)

## 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:

- **Anaconda:** The center hosted a guest speaker, the President of the Montana Association for the Blind. She talked with students and staff about being in the workforce as a person with a disability.
- **Clearfield:** To raise disability awareness, the Disability Coordinator (DC) and mental health team coordinated efforts with their diversity group to present a simulation on what it was like to be both hearing and visually impaired. They partnered with instructors from the Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind for eye coverings, ear muffs and ear plugs for the simulation.
- **Cleveland:** The center held a Disability Awareness poster contest. Winning posters included topics such as “Why Do We Celebrate Disability Month.” The posters can now be displayed throughout the center to raise disability awareness all year long.
- **Dayton:** Dayton Job Corps SGA hosted a “Who’s Who” trivia of celebrities with disabilities. The student leaders went to each class and read off information about each celebrity’s accomplishments, and the different types of disabilities that they have—keeping the students guessing which celebrities have which disabilities.
- **Little Rock:** The center featured a guest speaker comedian with cerebral palsy who talked about overcoming the obstacles he had to face growing up. Afterwards the students were given an opportunity to “meet and greet” with the speaker and discuss how to stay focused on their goals in life.



Dayton JCC SGA hosted a “Who’s Who” trivia of celebrities with disabilities.

## Reasonable Accommodations in Residential Living

The Reasonable Accommodation (RA) process is a center-wide responsibility. It is important for all staff that will be providing accommodations for students with disabilities to have access to the accommodation plans, as well as an opportunity to provide input and feedback on those plans.

### Residential Staff are an Important Part of the Reasonable Accommodation Process

- Residential staff often have more interactions, and therefore, more experiences with students in an informal setting.
- Residential staff are often very creative in meeting the needs of all students—especially when it comes to de-escalating difficult behavior situations.



# RA in Residential Living (cont'd)

- Residential staff know the structure and task requirements for dorm living and can provide valuable input for identifying needed supports and services in developing accommodation plans.
- Students often feel more comfortable disclosing to residential staff.

## Basic Facts about Reasonable Accommodation

- An **accommodation** is any change to the environment or in the way things are customarily done, that gives a person with a disability an opportunity to participate in the application process, job, program, or activity that is equal to the opportunity given to similarly situated people without disabilities.
- There is no list of accommodations appropriate for a particular condition.
- Instead of focusing on the disability, focus on the abilities of the individual.
- Accommodations are determined on a case-by-case basis focusing on documentation of the disability, functional limitations, strengths, student input, and observations.
- Accommodations are not a crutch, do not get an unfair advantage—they level the playing field so students with disabilities can adequately access and participate in the Job Corps program.
- Job Corps has an obligation to communicate effectively with people with disabilities in a way that enables the individual to be able to both receive and express information (e.g., simplify language, interview face-to-face, interpreters, pictures, technology, etc.).



## Types of Accommodations

### Policy, Program, or Procedure

- Headphones
- Modified schedule
- Access to fitness equipment prior to the training day

### Academic/Work Environment

- Extended time for assignments, tasks, tests
- Provide documents or instructions in alternate format

### Residential Environment

- Provide a lower bunk
- Provide a small refrigerator
- Provide a more private dorm room

## Examples of Functional Limitations and Accommodations for Residential Living

Functional Limitation	Accommodation(s)
Self-care	Provide a mentor or peer buddy; use instructional videos that demonstrate self-care
Sustaining Concentration	Provide checklists; provide prompts or redirects; break down tasks
Responding to Change	Provide information about upcoming changes; provide visual supports such as daily schedules; extra time
Managing Stress/Anxiety	Provide structured breaks; allow the use of phone apps; positive behavior supports (praise when on task)

For more information on accommodating students in the residential environment see the webinar, [411 on Accommodating Students in Residential](#).

# Spotlight on Assistive Technology: Residential Living

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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. Below are examples of AT that could potentially be used in all areas on center (including residential living) to support students with disabilities.



**CanPlan:** This app is a useful way to manage and complete tasks. Students can break activities and tasks into a sequence of steps by using uploaded pictures, videos, and/or audio files. This app is especially beneficial for students that have difficulty performing activities that require following a sequence of steps including students with brain injury, memory deficits, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and cognitive disabilities. It is free.



**Moodlytics:** This app is a useful way to manage moods (ups and downs) simply with text. Students can use emojis, attach photos, journal their feelings, set reminders, set mood goals, and log mood from days passed. The more students log, the better their feedback will be. They can create charts that break down how often they are feeling a certain way. This app is free for Android and iPhone.



**TextGrabber:** This app can be used to break down communication barriers. Students can scan, digitize, and translate books, notes, lists, magazines, computer/TV screens and more. The text can be read using the VoiceOver system feature. It can also translate into 100+ languages. This app is designed for iPad and iPhone and cost \$4.99.

## Center Disability Program Promising Practices

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- **Treasure Island:** The center DC coordinates monthly “Tabling Events” in the cafeteria to raise awareness about disabilities and wellness topics. In July, over 80 students and staff dropped by the event to learn about mental health, disability awareness (including eating disorders), and assistive technology (phone apps to manage certain disabilities).
- **Ramey:** The DC coordinated an "Autism Awareness Month" where the center featured various events and activities throughout the entire month to include banners, brochures, a newsletter, and a performance.
- **Long Beach:** In the dormitories, copies of current accommodation plans are kept in a confidential binder for staff to refer to as needed.
- **Boxelder:** Each year students in the Certified Nursing Assistant trade select a disability and evaluate the center’s physical accessibility by touring the center as an individual with the selected disability. The students complete the *Americans with Disabilities Act Checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal* as part of the exercise.



Autism Awareness Month at Ramey JCC

# Disability Resources

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## **PBIS World (Behavior Support Resource)**

[PBIS World](#) contains links to hundreds of interventions, supports, and resources for a variety of behaviors (e.g., anxiety, impulsivity, lack of social skills, frustration, disorganization etc.).

## **2017 Customized Disability Partnership Tools**

2017 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 and tracking resources and partnerships. This tool should be available during Disability Program Compliance Assessments to document efforts to establish partnerships.

## **Job Corps Information Notice 17-05: Service Animals and Assistance Animals in the Job Corps Program Guide**

Job Corps Information Notice 17-05 was released on August 25, 2017. The guide provides information on ensuring access for service animals and considering requests for assistance animals through the reasonable accommodation process as required by federal disability and nondiscrimination laws and Job Corps policy.

### Upcoming Webinars

- [Preparing for your Disability Program Compliance Assessment](#)
- [Disability Coordinator Orientation Part 2](#)
- [Service Animals and Assistance Animals in the Job Corps Program](#)

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

### Regional Disability Coordinators

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