



Tech Talk

Helping children learn to their full potential

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St. Paul Public Schools
Independent District #625
360 Colborne Street 55102

AT and Transition to a Workplace

Laws Regarding Postsecondary Transition:

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004), local education agencies are responsible for providing assistive technology (AT) to students with disabilities who could benefit from it. Once students finish school, local education agencies are no longer responsible for providing AT. Legislation guiding accommodations in the workplace is not as strict as that provided through IDEA.

not provide the requested documentation, the employer is not required to provide the accommodations.

AT in the Workplace:

AT solutions are job accommodations that enable people with disabilities to improve job performance or perform activities they might not otherwise be able to do. AT solutions are mechanisms to accommodate the needs of employees with disabilities so that they can realize their true potentials.

Employers are not required to provide the exact accommodations requested by employees. Employees may suggest accommodations; the employer may suggest alternate recommendations, which the employee must consider. For employees with disabilities, understanding what they need in order to be productive, and being creative and honest about their strengths and limitations is key.

State vocational rehabilitation (VR) services help adults and youth with disabilities find and succeed in employment. Vocational Rehabilitation services may be included in high school Individualized Education Plans. VR offices work within the community to evaluate client needs, make matches with employers, and offer support for success. If AT is required for success at identified jobs, devices and training may be funded through the VR office.

The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that employers with 15 or more employees provide “reasonable accommodations” to help employees who self-identify as having disabilities perform the essential functions of their jobs, provided that the accommodation does not pose an “undue hardship” to the employer. Undue hardship may relate to the expense or difficulty of implementing AT; it is determined on a case-by-case basis.

Documentation Requirements:

It is the responsibility of the individuals with disabilities to disclose their disabilities to an employer and initiate the process of identifying appropriate AT. The employer has the right to both request “medical” documentation and refuse letters from educational specialists. If the employees do

To learn more about how your child may benefit from transition AT tools, contact your child’s IEP team.

Using AT at Work Tools

Visual Task Analysis

Pictures and words break down the steps of a work task.

Computer Access

An alternate keyboard and mouse can make a computer accessible

Environmental Controls

Switches can be used to access and control objects and appliances in the workplace.



Parent Question

Who can provide assistance to individuals requiring AT tools in the workplace?

In Minnesota, every high school has an assigned vocational rehabilitation counselor who can help students with substantial limitations due to disability get and keep a job. Services are individualized and may include assistance with job placement, counseling, education, employer education, job skill training and AT.

MN Vocational Rehabilitation Services has a Community Partners Program that offers long-term job supports to students with disabilities by partnering with local community rehabilitation providers. These job supports may include a job coach, an employment specialist who assists people with disabilities after they get jobs by providing one-on-one training at job sites. If needed, the support can be ongoing and include training on:

- assistive technology tools;
- job tasks; and
- managing schedule changes, new supervisors, promotions and non-work/life activities that affect work performance

Workplace iPad Supports & Apps

Visual Schedules

- CanPlan-App (Free)
Pictures, Text & Sound
- First Then Visual Schedule App
Pictures, Text & Sound (\$9.99)
- 30/30-iPad App (Free)
Text based with timer

Social Stories & Self Regulation

- Book Creator-iPad App (Free)
- Storykit- iPad App (Free)

Communication

- Sounding Board- iPad App (Free)
Work Based Phrases
- Notes Built-in iPad App (Free)

Transportation

- Transit App-iPad App (Free)
- Metro Transit iPad App (Free)
- Google Map App-iPad App (Free)

Reading

- OCR with Lead Tools (Free)
Scan and Read on the go

Built-in iPad Tools

- iCal Notifications-iPad App
- Timer in Clock App-iPad App
- Reminders-iPad App

Parent Question

What are some AT supports used in the workplace?

Assistive technology supports used by individuals with disabilities in the workplace range from low-tech supports for accessing work equipment to high-tech devices and software that increase work productivity. Specific examples of AT supports include:

- switch access to work equipment and appliances;
- environmental controls;
- adapted driving controls;
- adjustable-height desks;
- ergonomic chairs;
- materials moving carts and lifts;
- assistive listening devices;
- telephone headsets;
- augmentative communication devices;
- ergonomic keyboards;
- trackball mice;
- accessibility features on tablets and computers;
- text and screen readers;
- speech-to-text, word prediction and note-taking software; and
- scheduling and organizational software

- **Postsecondary Resource Guide: Successfully Preparing Students with Disabilities for The Postsecondary Environment by Minnesota State Colleges & Universities** (Pg, 38-40)
<http://www.mnlowincidenceprojects.org/pitechnicalTrainingMaterials.html>
- **Job Accommodations Network** (JAN): <https://askjan.org>
- **Ticket to Work Program**
<https://mn.db101.org/mn/situations/workandbenefits/managing/program2a.htm>

Informational Transition Resources

- **Minnesota Workforce Centers:**
<http://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/workforce-centers/>
- **Family Roles in Post Secondary Planning:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4XHj1v7ApI>
- **Assistive Technology and Transition** (Canfield, T & Reed, P., WATI 2001):
<http://www.transitioncoalition.org/wp-content/originalSiteAssets/files/docs/transitionpacket1224259340.pdf>
- **AbleData:** <http://www.abledata.com>
- **The Reality of Workplace Technology: It's All About the Task:**
http://www.ncatp.org/resources/reality_of_workplace_assistive_t.htm
- **Disability Benefits:**
<https://mn.db101.org/mn/situations/workandbenefits/supports/program2h.htm>
- **Assistive Technology in the Workplace** (American Foundation for the Blind)
<http://www.afb.org/info/living-with-vision-loss/for-job-seekers/for-employers/accommodations-forworkers-with-vision-loss/assistive-technology-2870/12345>