

Assistive Technology Newsletter



October 2026: Technology in the Workplace

Assistive Technology Belongs in the Workplace

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), a time to recognize the contributions of workers with disabilities and promote inclusive employment.

Assistive technology (AT) can be an important part of an accessible workplace. The right tools can help remove barriers, support independence, improve communication, increase access, and help employees perform essential job tasks.

AT isn't about changing what a person can do. It's about making sure unnecessary barriers don't get in the way.

What Does Workplace AT Look Like?

Assistive technology can look different for every employee and every job. Examples include:

- **Screen readers & magnification** for accessing digital information.
- **Speech-to-text & voice recognition** for writing and computer access.
- **Alternative keyboards, mice & switches** for physical access.
- **AAC devices & communication apps** to support communication.
- **Captioning & transcription tools** for meetings and conversations.
- **Adjustable desks & ergonomic equipment** for accessible workspaces.
- **Noise-reducing headphones** to support sensory needs and concentration.
- **Timers, reminders & scheduling apps** for organization and time management.
- **Mobility and positioning equipment** for physical access and independence.

Technology Can Support Greater Independence

Technology can also help some workers complete tasks with less direct assistance. Smart technology, electronic prompts, communication devices, task-management tools, and other supports may provide assistance when it is needed while allowing a person to work more independently.

The goal should always be to use technology in a way that supports the individual's choice, privacy, independence, and employment goals.

AT as a Reasonable Accommodation

Assistive technology may also be provided as a reasonable accommodation for an employee with a disability.

A reasonable accommodation is a change to a job, workplace, or the way work is usually done that allows a qualified person with a disability to have an equal employment opportunity.

An accommodation could include specialized software or equipment, an adapted workstation, communication technology, or another AT solution based on the employee's individual needs.

There is no one-size-fits-all accommodation. Employees and employers can work together through the interactive process to identify barriers and determine effective solutions.

Starting the Accommodation Conversation

Asking for a reasonable accommodation doesn't have to be complicated. An employee can let their employer know that a change or support is needed because of a disability or disability-related limitation. You do not need to use the words "reasonable accommodation" to start the conversation.

Be prepared to discuss the barrier you are experiencing and what changes or tools may help. From there, the employee and employer can work together through the interactive process to identify an effective accommodation.

Resources to Explore

- **Job Accommodation Network (JAN)** — Provides free, expert guidance on workplace accommodations, assistive technology, and disability employment issues.
- **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)** — Helps eligible people with disabilities prepare for, obtain, maintain, or advance in employment. May also assist with funding to obtain assistive technology devices needed.
- **ND Assistive** — Helps North Dakotans explore, try, obtain, and learn about assistive technology that can support independence at work and in daily life.
- **Protection & Advocacy (P&A) Employment Resources** — Provides information and advocacy to help people with disabilities understand and protect their employment rights.

AT Tip of the Month

AT doesn't have to be high-tech. A checklist, visual instructions, adapted tool, timer, task organizer, or simple change to a workspace can make a meaningful difference.

Think **AT Forward**. Think access. Think participation. Think independence.