

JAN

Job Accommodation Network

Practical Solutions • Workplace Success

Accommodation and Compliance Series

Spotlight Series: Funding Resources

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JAN'S Accommodation and Compliance Series

Introduction

This document summarizes funding search tips and describes some of the most frequent types of organizations and groups that provide funding. For information on specific agencies and organizations, please look in your local area phone directory, specifically in the Blue Pages, for government contacts and the Yellow Pages for other organizations.

Funding Tips for Employers:

Tax incentives are available to employers of individuals with disabilities. These tax incentives help cover the cost of accommodations for employees and equipment to make businesses accessible. Tax incentives available are the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), the Disabled Access Credit (DAC), and the Architectural and Transportation Barrier Removal Deduction. Additional information about tax incentives can be found on [JAN's A to Z: Tax Incentives](#) or by contacting JAN directly. For more information on these tax credit programs, contact a local [Internal Revenue Service \(IRS\)](#) office.

The state of [Minnesota has an Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund \(ERAF\)](#) where small to mid-sized Minnesota employers can request reimbursement for expenses related to providing reasonable accommodations for job applicants and employees with disabilities. The ERAF's purpose is to encourage employment of people with disabilities by reducing any perceived or real financial barriers.

Funding Tips for Individuals:

One source of funding is [Vocational Rehabilitation \(VR\)](#). VR provides a wealth of resources related to employment options for people with disabilities. VR, a state-supported division of services, assists individuals with disabilities who are pursuing meaningful careers. VR assists those individuals to secure gainful employment commensurate with their abilities and capabilities through local job searches and awareness of self-employment and telecommuting opportunities. Start by contacting your nearest VR office.

Many of the funding inquiries that JAN receives deal with assistive technology. Assistive technology is any item or piece of equipment used to increase, maintain, or improve a person's functional capabilities. The cost of some assistive technology can be surprisingly high. Sometimes the best or only way to fund the purchase of assistive technology is by relying on more than one source. Additional funding for assistive technology might include: the U.S. Veterans Administration, the Social Security

Administration's PASS (Plan To Achieve Self-Support) program, your state's workers' compensation program if the disability was caused by a work-related injury, non-profit disability organizations, and civic or service organizations (Lions Club, VFW, Rotary Club, etc.). Some individuals also have success working with local service groups, churches, labor unions, or school organizations to stage fund-raisers in their communities. When searching for funding, be aware of your rights under the law. Also know your specific technology needs. You may need the help of a professional or a cross-disciplinary team of professionals who can assess your needs, suggest an appropriate device, and clearly describe in writing how that device would be effective. Additional public/private funding sources are also available through various resources. JAN's list of funding resources includes:

- [Community Resources](#)
- [Computers](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Food](#)
- [Grants/Loans](#)
- [Housing](#)
- [Insurance](#)
- [Medical](#)
- [Prosthetics](#)
- Specific Disability:
 - [Amputation](#)
 - [Cancer](#)
 - [Hearing](#)
 - [Vision](#)
- [Transportation](#)
- [Miscellaneous](#)

Many states have [Alternative Financing Programs](#) that provide loans to people who need to purchase assistive technology that supports education and employment. The programs provide referrals to help people find funding that can reduce the costs of purchasing assistive technology that best meets their needs. Many of the programs provide financial education that supports people as they take steps to develop positive credit and build their assets through acquiring assistive technology.

Situations and Solutions:

The following situations and solutions are real-life examples of accommodations that were made by JAN customers. Because accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis, these examples may not be effective for every workplace but give you an idea about the types of accommodations that are possible.

An employer wanted to hire several students with disabilities for the summer.

The business was able to use the Workforce Opportunity Tax Credit program to help fund this endeavor.

An applicant who was blind benefited from a screen reader and other assistive technologies to access the computer.

Vocational rehabilitation purchased a computer Braille display and screen reading software. The employer made available text messaging and an interpreter or CART service when needed.

A small business located in the middle of the town's main street wanted to make changes to improve the accessibility of its entrance.

The business received a matching grant for up to \$5,000 to make some of these changes.

A construction contractor wanted to caption its training materials.

The business used the Disabled Access Credit to assist with paying for this change.

A student needed to purchase assistive technology to access all of the features available through an online vocational program.

The student used a loan program specifically for assistive technology devices and services to purchase computer equipment. This alternative financing program was helpful in quickly getting the funds for their purchase.

A small business needed funding assistance to provide qualified interpreters for a newly hired employee.

The business was able to use the Disabled Access Credit to provide this funding.

An arts and crafts store needed funding to help make its property accessible from the parking lot to the entrance.

The business deducted part of the cost toward this parking lot change using the Architectural and Transportation barrier Removal Deduction.

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