

Constellations

Minnesota's Assistive Technology Act Program Newsletter

Fall 2008 Online Edition Contents

- [STAR Funding Promotes Transition and Reuse Activities in Minnesota](#)
- [Accessing E-Government Services – Compliments and Complaints](#)
- [Seeking Members for the Minnesota Assistive Technology Advisory Council](#)
- [2009 STAR Awards](#)
- [Americans with Disabilities Act Amended](#)
- [Looking for a Job? Use Assistive Technology? Visit your Local Workforce Center.](#)
- [Reserve your copy of the 2008 Assistive Technology Directory](#)
- [STAR Staff](#)
- [Contact Information](#)

STAR Funding Promotes Transition and Reuse Activities in Minnesota

STAR is pleased to announce that funding was awarded this fall to the following organizations for transition and reuse activities in Minnesota.

Transition

Arc Greater Twin Cities received funding for a conference “GetSet! For Transition Preparing for the Adult World” to help parents of middle school and high school students understand the special education transition process and using assistive technology for employment.

Moorhead Senior High School provided training, “Empowering Me Through Transition” with the funding it received from STAR. Topics of the training included verbal and augmentative communication, on the job, and community and home.

A Conference on the Role of Assistive Technology in Transition was provided by PACER Center. Information was provided in three areas: transition and assistive technology, transition and the law, and transition resources.

Reuse (repair, refurbish, reuse, and recycle)

The Ability Building Center, PACTT Program will repair and refurbish assistive technology devices donated to them, before giving the devices to individuals who have a need for the technology.

The assistive technology refurbish/repair project of Arc Headwaters, Bemidji will clean, sanitize and repair donated assistive technology (AT) equipment prior to providing the AT to individuals with disabilities.

Goodwill Industries, Inc/ Easter Seals Minnesota will refurbish wheelchairs used in the Equipment Loan Program to provide individuals with temporary mobility impairments who require assistive technology. Equipment will be available to individuals in Rochester, St Cloud, St Paul, and Willmar.

Minnesota State Service for the Blind (SSB) will upgrade and re-furbish computers for students with visual impairments.

The Special Kids program at Minnesota Computers for Schools will provide computers to student with disabilities or chronic illness.

Project HERO, Moorhead, accepts and redistributes donated assistive technology and other healthcare materials to benefit those in need. Funds from STAR will be used to clean equipment, insure that equipment is in working order, and distribute items to individuals.

United Cerebral Palsy of Central Minnesota, Computers Go Round program will recycle and upgrade computers to make them accessible to individuals with disabilities.

[Back to Contents](#)

[Accessing E-Government Services – Compliments and Complaints](#)

Having accessibility or usability problems with any Minnesota state government Web site or software? Or have you used a state Web site or software that works especially well for people with disabilities? We want to hear about your experiences. To report a problem or highlight an experience, complete the online form at http://www.mnssb.org/MN_EGovt_Access.htm.

[Back to Contents](#)

[Seeking Members for the Minnesota Assistive Technology Advisory Council](#)

Governor Tim Pawlenty's Office seeks five members representing the state's diverse population to serve on the Minnesota Assistive Technology Advisory Council. Statewide representation is needed, especially from Congressional Districts One and Five. This council provides consumer-responsive, consumer-driven advice to the state for planning, implementing, and evaluating the state's AT Plan activities carried out in accordance with the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended (P.L. 108-364). Applicants should be individuals with disabilities who use assistive technology or family members or guardians of individuals with disabilities who use assistive technology. Members will serve a two-year term and attend quarterly meetings in Saint Paul. Approved travel expenses incurred in connection with attending the meetings are reimbursable. If you are interested in applying contact the Minnesota Office of the Secretary of State, Open Appointments by calling 651-215-1440 or emailing open.appointments@state.mn.us or by completing the online application at http://www.sos.state.mn.us/survey/user_survey.asp?nSurvey=111

[Back to Contents](#)

2009 STAR Awards

Do you know a Minnesotan whose dedicated leadership has advanced the use of assistive technology by people with disabilities in Minnesota? Then get ready. STAR will be seeking nominations for its 2009 STAR Awards soon. To learn more, keep checking STAR's Web site (www.starprogram.state.mn.us) or call the STAR office at 651-201-2640 or 888-234-1267 for more information or to request a nomination form. Consumers with a hearing or speech disability may call us through the Minnesota Relay Service at 711 or 800-627-3529.



[Back to Contents](#)

Americans with Disabilities Act Amended

On September 25, 2008, President Bush signed the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-325) into law. When this Act goes into effect on January 1, 2009, it may affect future Supreme Court rulings and prompt changes to some U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) ADA regulations. While disability will still be defined as "...an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities..." the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 affects the interpretation of disability by broadening the list of activities recognized by the EEOC as "major life activities." The Act also includes a second list, which expands upon recognized major bodily functions and instructs the EEOC to revise portions of its regulations that define "substantially limits." In addition, the Act clarifies that an impairment which is in remission or occurs intermittently is still considered a disability if it would substantially limit a major life activity when active. To learn more visit www.ada.gov or www.eeoc.gov.

[Back to Contents](#)

[Looking for a Job? Use Assistive Technology? Visit your Local Workforce Center!](#)

There are forty-seven Minnesota WorkForce Centers located across the state providing free assistance to people looking for employment. Within each WorkForce Center, you will find a staffed Resource Area equipped with computers, printers, fax machine, and TTY. Computer use is free and available for employment-related purposes. Each WorkForce Center Resource Area also has at least one computer with assistive technology including JAWS® screen reading software for people who are blind, ZoomText magnification software for people with vision impairments and NexTalk.net Internet relay service for people who are deaf. Other types of assistive technology available at WorkForce Centers include a Pocket Talker assistive listening device for people who are hard of hearing; and, an OVAC or Optelec ClearView magnification system for increasing font size of printed material. Some WorkForce Centers have an UbiDuo, which lets job seekers who are deaf or hard of hearing communicate by typing messages. The WorkForce Centers offers a variety of free workshops to enhance your job search process. To find out more about upcoming workshops call your local WorkForce Center. Most accommodation requests can be granted within two weeks. Go to www.mnwfc.org or phone 1-888-GET-JOBS to find a WorkForce Center near you!

[Back to Contents](#)

[Reserve your copy of the 2008 Assistive Technology Directory](#)

Be among the first to receive the 2008 Assistive Technology Directory of Funding Resources. This new edition of our popular directory includes information to help you connect with alternative financing, device loan, demonstration, and reuse resources in Minnesota. Need a directory now? Copies of the 2006 Assistive Technology Directory of Funding Resources are available for a limited time. Contact STAR to request or reserve your copy today. Call 651-201-2640, 888-234-1267 (toll-free) or send an email to star.program@state.mn.us.

[Back to Content](#)

All STAR materials are available in alternative formats

This document can be made available in alternative formats, such as large print, Braille, audio tape or disk by calling 651-201-2640 or 888-234-1267 (toll free). Consumers with a hearing or speech disability may call us through the Minnesota Relay Service at 711 or 800-627-3529, or by sending an email to star.program@state.mn.us.

¡FOLLETOS EN ESPAÑOL! STAR ha empezado traducir folletos en Inglés a Español. Actualmente, STAR tiene dos folletos en Español: “Directorio de Recursos de Financiamiento para Tecnología Asistiva en Minnesota” y “El Programa STAR: Un Sistema de Tecnología para Lograr Resultados.

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STARTE reusing assistive technology – visit www.mnstarte.org

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[Back to Content](#)

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[Back to Content](#)