

# ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY – ADAPTIVE COMPUTER & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

## Scope of Service

### Program Purpose

Ability KC assistive technology services provided through the Adaptive Computer and Communication Technology (ACCT) Program offer evaluation and training designed to help individuals with disabilities identify and use assistive technology tools that will increase their independence, productivity and function.

The ACCT Program's assistive technology services provide opportunities for individuals of all ages to work with specially trained staff to facilitate their participation in work, school or home. Assistive technology strategies and tools help improve the functional abilities of individuals with physical, sensory, cognitive or communication limitations as they relate to:

- Participation and success in the classroom
- Acquiring new work skills
- Productivity
- Communication and interaction
- Knowledge of vocational/community options
- Independence at home and in the community
- Access to leisure

Focus is always on the unique goals of the person receiving services – while considering their motor skills, positioning, vision, cognition, communication abilities, and medical conditions that may be progressive in nature.

The mission of Ability KC is to serve people with disabilities, but services focus on the strengths, abilities and choices of the people we serve, not the disability.

## Scope of Services

Individuals who participate in the ACCT Program explore assistive technology tools relating to their unique objectives and needs. ACCT staff are specially trained in the area of assistive technology through continuing education and educational backgrounds in related healthcare professions. Guidance is provided through education and hands-on experience to explore options that address the needs of the individual participant. ACCT program staff maintain current knowledge in this field by presenting on regional and national levels in the area of assistive technology. Program staff also teach at the university level on assistive technology topics within their respective professions.

Individuals receiving services through the ACCT Program may identify objectives in one or more area. ACCT Program services include evaluation and training for the following:

- Computer Access: Individuals may participate in the exploration of alternative methods for computer access when use of a standard keyboard or mouse is difficult, slow or non-functional.
- Written Communication: Technology tools are examined if an individual has difficulty with the motor skills of writing or a learning disability limiting writing success.
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication: Equipment, strategies and techniques are explored with individuals whose verbalizations cannot be understood or who are nonverbal.
- Learning Difficulties: Participants who identify or demonstrate difficulties with learning may determine tools or compensatory techniques that maximize their learning style.
- Access to Leisure: Through adaptive gaming & adapted computer access, individuals are introduced to methods to adapt previous activities or enjoy new areas of interest.
- Computer Workstation Ergonomics: When individuals identify repetitive strain injuries or postural discomfort that may be affected by work at a computer workstation, ergonomics and positioning education is provided and, if applicable, incorporated during job site visits. Equipment trial use and recommendations may include office furniture and adapted keyboards.
- Home Modification & Electronic Aids to Daily Living: For individuals who have difficulty with the physical control of their environment, alternative methods for controlling lights, appliances and audiovisual equipment are explored. Methods to maximize safety, independence and quality of life are considered for the individual as well as their family and care providers.



- **Training:** Individualized training is provided when equipment use, compensatory techniques or skill development is needed. Training goals are developed collaboratively to meet individual needs and to maximize the features of the tools and ensure effective and ongoing use. Equipment set-up and training are often provided in an individual's natural environment.
- **Assistance to Locate Funding and Acquire Equipment:** Correspondence with payer sources, advocacy and referrals to community agencies and organizations is provided as part of the general evaluation and training process. The length of time until equipment is received varies. Loaner or rental equipment may be acquired within 1–2 weeks of service. The wait time for purchased equipment varies dependent upon the payer source and equipment needed. Wait time is discussed on an individual basis at the time of the evaluation. ACCT staff are particularly sensitive to turnaround time for individuals with progressive diseases.

The following services are also available through other departments within Ability KC:

- Aquatics
- Case Management
- Driver's Evaluation and Training
- Education Specialist
- Employment Services
- Neuropsychology/Psychology
- Nursing
- Occupational Therapy
- Patient Representative
- Peer Mentoring
- Physiatry
- Physical Therapy
- Social work
- Speech and Language Pathology
- Therapeutic Recreational Specialist

If Ability KC does not directly offer a service needed by someone participating in our program, we will make every effort to locate and refer to another community agency that does.

## Program Admission Criteria

Services are designed for children and adults who experience a disability that impacts their education, employment or interaction within the community, and who might reasonably be expected to benefit from ACCT Services. The assistive technology evaluation may be used as a forum to explore the individual's expected benefit from services, since individuals may not have had prior exposure to the equipment and strategies introduced. Ability KC is committed to serving a diverse clientele and does not restrict acceptance for services due to sex, creed, race, religion or cultural background. We request that information be forwarded by the referring agency before beginning services. This information will be used to develop an individualized plan of services and includes: relevant medical history, psychological information, social information and summary of previous services and supports.

- Program participants must have a disability that impacts their functional abilities and present no physical danger to themselves or others.



- Medical information and other pertinent referral information (i.e. psychological, educational, employment) is requested by Ability KC. The referring agency's authorization, in addition to relevant prescriptions and referrals, should be received at Ability KC prior to the initiation of services.
- Persons receiving training must have previously completed an ACCT evaluation to determine equipment selection based upon an informed decision making process. The evaluation will also be used to establish skill level base lines as a tool for designing individual curriculums.

## Referral Procedures

People interested in services are encouraged to call or visit Ability KC before beginning a program. We will provide a tour of the facility, talk about an individual plan of services and introduce staff. The Employment Services Department does not require that people be screened prior to acceptance for services. We rely on sponsoring agency knowledge of our programs and services to ensure appropriate referrals. Program length will vary depending upon the goals of the person receiving services and the sponsoring agency representative. Average program lengths have been established to guide the initial authorization for services, but may be modified to meet individual needs.

Referrals may be made by the person requesting services, family members, state or community agency personnel, physicians, insurance case managers or other health care providers. Depending upon an individual's needs, the evaluation and training services may be provided at our facility or at the individual's home, workplace or classroom – either in-person or through telehealth options.

Scheduling of most services may be handled through a phone call to the Admissions Representative who will arrange a start date.

## Service Philosophy & Delivery

Services at Ability KC are driven by the active participation of the person receiving services or, as appropriate, a family member or advocate of their choice. A primary team member coordinates activities outlined in the plan to ensure that efforts are integrated and directed towards the outcomes targeted. This coordination includes regular communication with the person receiving services, sponsoring agency representatives, staff providing services and others identified by the person receiving services. This is usually in the form of frequent, informal conversations and periodic formal meetings. Revisions to the plan may be initiated as a result of this communication.



Written reports are sent to the sponsoring agency representative or medical team at specified progress points throughout the program and at the completion of services. People receiving services are encouraged and supported in developing their own plan of action as a result of services. This collaboration will occur during the evaluation process and throughout training.

Discharge will be arranged when all parties agree that targeted outcomes have been accomplished or when additional services are no longer desired.

Typical service hours are 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM Monday – Friday. If circumstances necessitate services outside of these hours, this may be reviewed and provided on a case by case basis.

ACCT services are most commonly reimbursed through vocational rehabilitation, medical insurance, community agencies, state programs, school districts and employers. The payer source is identified at the time of referral and typically correlates with the reason for referral (i.e. work activities, medical necessity, etc).

Any program-related costs to an individual are identified at the time of intake/referral or prior to ordering equipment (if they will be responsible for a portion of the payment).

Ability KC staff are not employed or compensated by any manufacturer or provider of equipment or services. Recommendations for a specific piece of equipment and/or manufacturer are provided solely based upon their history of customer support, equipment reliability, durability and feature options that are appropriate for an individual's needs.

Contact with all persons served in the ACCT Program is attempted at three and twelve months after discharge from regular services in order to assess the customer's satisfaction and the long term impact of services.

**For more information, please contact the Admissions Department at: (816) 751-7748**



[www.abilitykc.org](http://www.abilitykc.org)