Celebrating Value and Talent

National Disability Employment Awareness Month



#NDEAM
dol.gov/odep

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

October 27, 2026





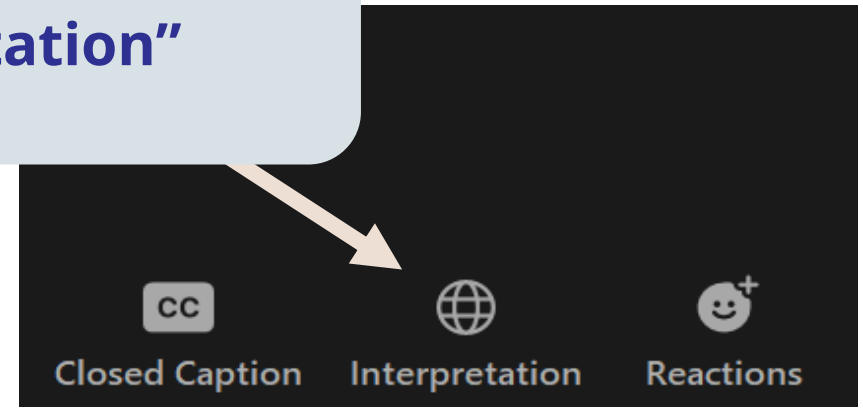
Technology in Employment

Interpretación en español / Spanish interpretation

Oprima el botón marcado "Interpretation" (el globo) en la parte de abajo de la pantalla. Seleccione "Spanish"

Click the "Interpretation" (globe) button on the bottom of the screen. Select "Spanish."

haga clic "interpretation"



Clic "Spanish"

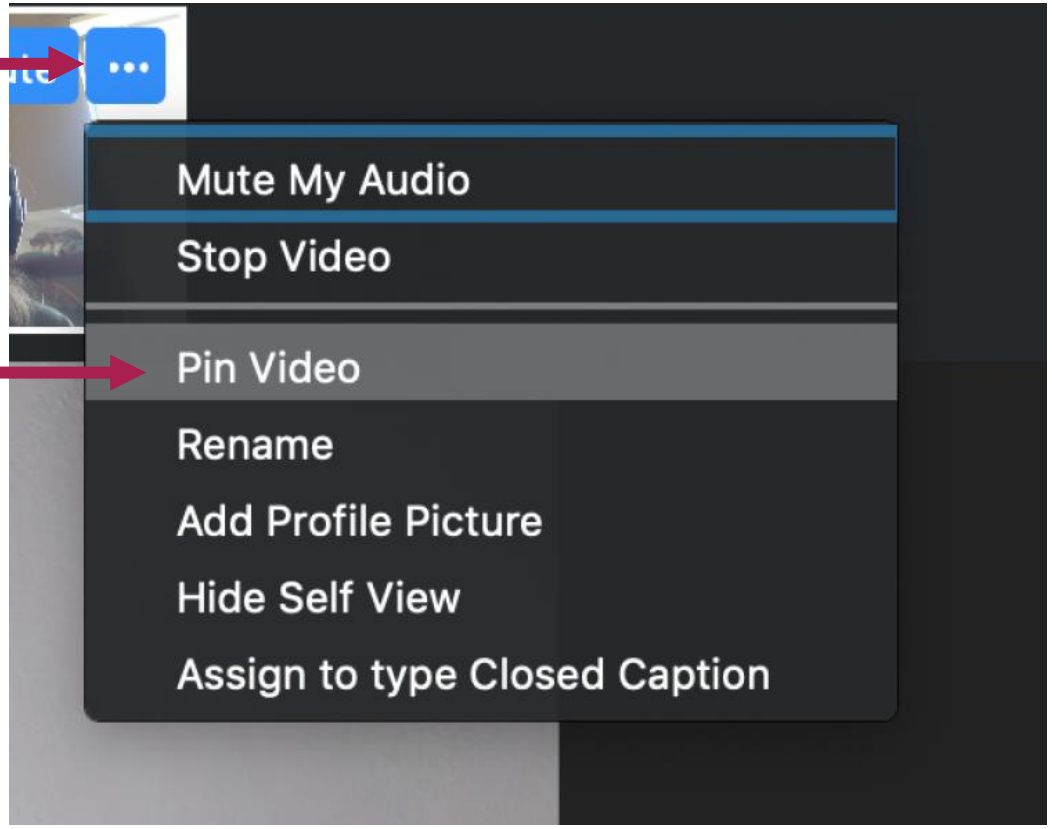


Accessibility

Pinning the ASL Interpreter

Click the three dots on the interpreter's picture

Click "Pin Video"



Accessing captions

Click on the link in the chat to access the real-time caption livestream

NDEAM webinar series is presented by:

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF
Human Services
Developmental Disabilities Services

OREGON
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
Oregon achieves . . . together!

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF
Human Services
Vocational Rehabilitation

COMMISSION
FOR THE
BLIND
BLINDNESS WITHOUT BARRIERS

NDEAM in Oregon

"Oregon reaffirms its commitment to expanding access to good jobs, career pathways, and economic opportunity for all Oregonians, including people with disabilities."

Governor's proclamation

Today's presenters

Moderator

Julie Huber, Employment Specialist
Oregon Department of Human Services Office of Developmental Disabilities

Leadership Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Dacia Johnson, Director, Oregon Commission for the Blind

Panelists

Cheryln Partney, Technology Specialist, Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation
Brian Sacre and Laurie Brooks, Access Technologies, Inc (ATI)

Welcome and introductory remarks



Dacia Johnson

Executive Director
Oregon Commission for the Blind

COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND
BLINDNESS WITHOUT BARRIERS

About the presenters

Laurie Brooks

- *President, Access Technologies, Inc.*
- *BA in Management & Organizational Leadership – George Fox University*
- *ADA Coordinator*
- *Certified Assistive Technology Specialist*
- *Member, Northwest Access Fund Board*
- *Past Chair, Oregon State Rehabilitation Council*
- *Past Chair, Association of Assistive Technology Act Program*

Brian Sacre

- *Prior educator*
- *BS in psychology from University of Oregon*
- *Certified Office Ergonomics Evaluator*
- *Member and Incoming Chair, Oregon State Rehabilitation Council*

Who is ATI?

VISION

A society where all people are valued and respected, and where all people have the knowledge, opportunity and power to improve their lives and the lives of others.

MISSION

To assure that persons with disabilities in Oregon will be able to secure and effectively use assistive technologies.

Assistive Technology Defined

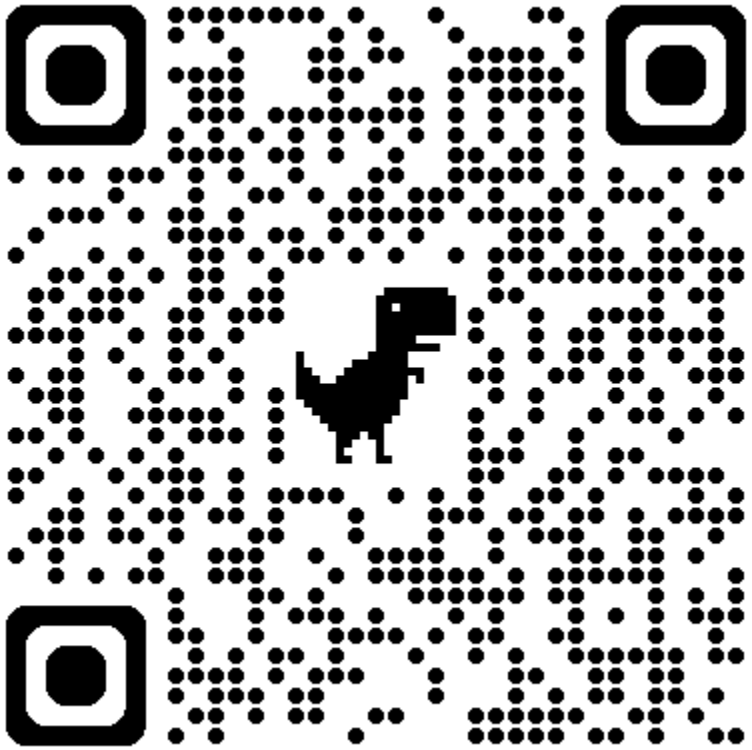


"any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities."

Device Lending Library

- *Free Demonstrations*
- *Borrow for evaluation*
- *Rent for short-term accommodation*
- *Information Resource*

Marketplace



- *New off the shelf DME*
- *Quote for DLL items*
- *Used – recycled equipment from DLL*
- *Used – donations*
- *Used marketplace online*

Fee for Service Activities

Assessments

- *Ergonomic Risk Assessments*
- *Computer Access Assessments*
- *Vision accommodations*
- *Hearing accommodations*
- *Speech Communication Devices*
- *Learning/Cognition*
- *Memory/Organization*
- *ADA Compliance*
- *Any combination of the above*

Trainings

- *All equipment demonstrated and provided from assessments*
- *Speech recognition software*
- *Accessible documents and communications*

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Case Studies and Possible Solutions

Client: Low Vision Un-shopper

“Greg” accepted a job at a big-box retail hardware store in Eugene. It’s been a long search for employment, and Greg is carrying the weight of the disability community on his back as he tries to excel in the company. Greg is both neurodiverse and has progressively worsening retinitis pigmentosa (RP). Currently, he works eight hours a week as the store’s Merchandise Returns Associate, and he’d like to add more shifts as a cashier.



Client: Deaf Cashier

“Mary” lives and works in a Dollar Store in a very small town in Southern Oregon. She’s the most senior member of staff, lasting through several complete turnovers, but she has not been given any opportunities to advance from her stocker position because she is profoundly deaf, so customers cannot get her attention, and management communicates with her via a paper checklist. After a decade of asking, Mary has a chance to show her managers that she is capable of more.



Client: Executive Function Coach

"Tim" has Down's Syndrome, and a family structure that would not accept any limits placed upon him. In high school, he was supported sufficiently and took more mainstream classes than special education course, and his materials were always designed for straightforward understanding. After graduation, the high school wrestling coach offered Tim a promotion to Assistant Wrestling Coach and Equipment Manager, based on his amazing can-do attitude and equipment management experience.



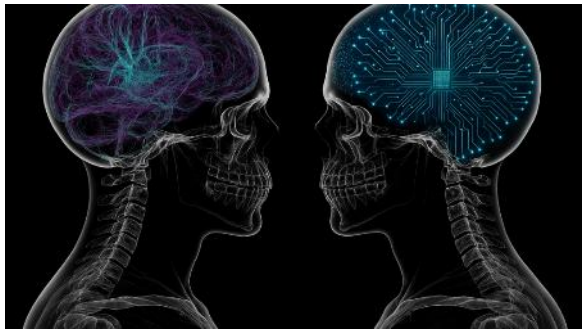
Client: Farm Worker with TBI

Things were going smoothly in “Mitchell’s” life, until one day his dirtbike flew out from under him on a spectacular jump. At first, it seemed like other concussions he’s previously sustained, but this time his short-term memory, reading comprehension, and balance had been significantly diminished. It’s been three years, and things have not improved. He works full-time on a small farm, run by his great uncle, who has aged into disability and needs help running the farm.



Client: Cognitive Prosthetic Guru

A nine-to-five office job is simply not of interest to "Dawn." She found out late in life that she tested right at the edge of functional neurodiversity. Suddenly, her fear of public speaking, sensory overload, and any task requiring sustained focus on uninteresting tasks made more sense to her. Her latest fixation is Big Data, AI tools, and how the algorithms eliminate outliers. Her new consultancy aims to build custom training materials for organizations how this omission negatively impacts people with disabilities.



Client: Student of the Year

“Liz” has mobility and speech difficulties due to a lung condition when she was a toddler. She was fortunate to have learned about the process of getting involved in Pre-ETS and has had career counseling since she was 14. Her passion for criminal justice and forensics has made her career goal of forensic detective somewhat obvious. After graduating high school on time and near the top of her class, she is ready for college.



Concerns with AI

- *Outpacing sensible policy – so use AI to vet itself*
- *Slop! – learn to spot it, legislate its identity*
- *Security! – be vigilant of your input and what you share*
- *Trained for agreeability – but it takes correction*
- *Subscription model is incompatible with closing files – will need alternate funding if it cannot sustain itself*

AI's Possibilities in AT

- *More "mind controlled" robotics for mobility difficulties and speech communication*
- *Faster speech communication apps*
- *More accurate visual descriptions for people with low vision*
- *More accurate cuing assistance for soft skills*
- *More independence at home with smarter cameras and communication devices*

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Vocational Rehabilitation

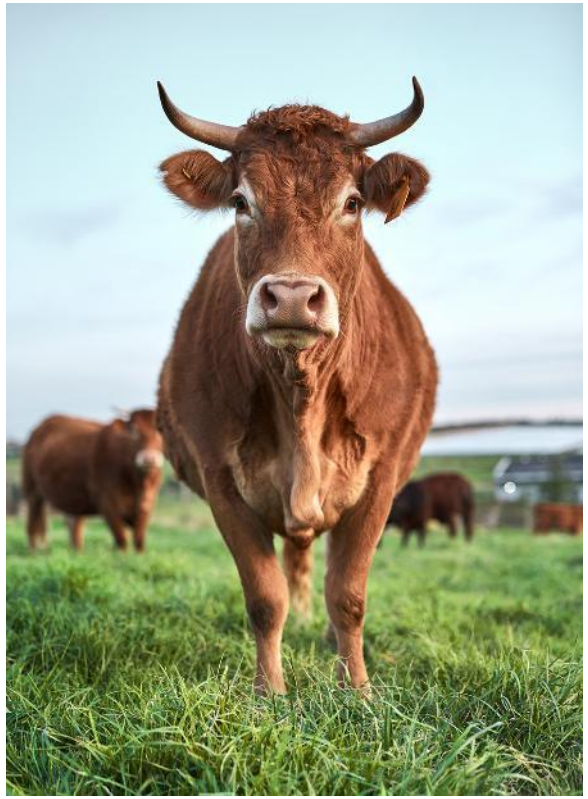
Assistive Technology in Employment

CherylN Partney

In VR for 10+ years

M.S in rehabilitation Counseling with an emphasis in Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Mental Health

Assistive Technology Specialist since 2024



Vocational Rehabilitation

"Assist Oregonians with disabilities to achieve, maintain and advance in employment and independence."

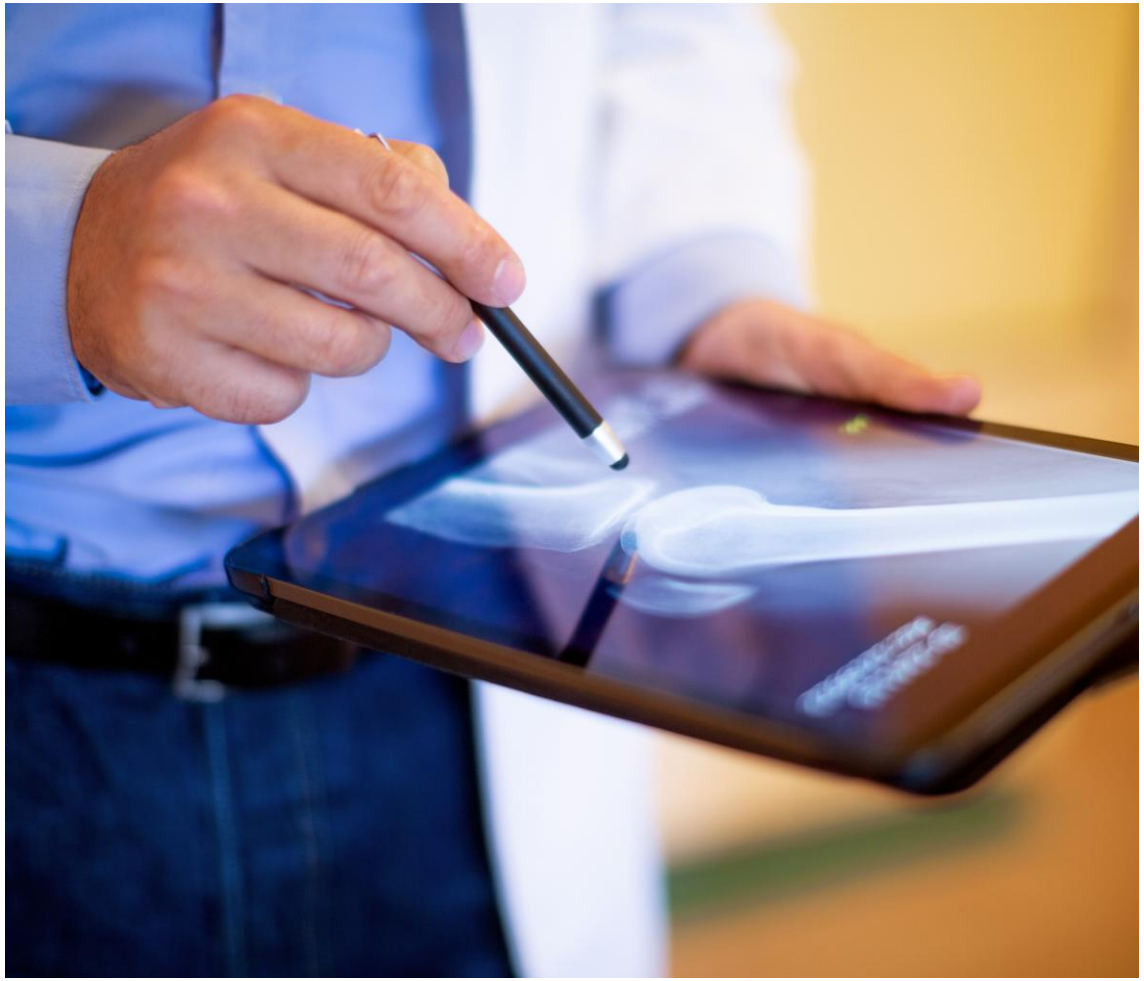
Vocational Rehabilitation Role in Technology

- Evaluate needs of the participants
- Partner with supports
- Referrals if needed
- Plan services
- Coordinate with employer with AT



Vocational Rehabilitation focuses on Assistive Technology related to disability and employment

Workplace accommodations and employer – Provided AT



Decision Framework:

- Can the employer reasonably provide the accommodation?

  This is our first question because employers have responsibilities under the ADA. If the barrier is something the workplace can reasonably fix — like screen magnification, seating, communication supports, or workstation adjustments — we start there.

Questions and discussion

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF
Human Services

NDEAM Webinar Schedule 2026

OCT 6	Lunch and Learn for Business: Celebrating Talent and Transforming Workplaces
OCT 13	Oregon as a Model Employer: Promoting Employment and Career Advancement for People with Disabilities in State and Local Government
OCT 20	What is Ableism and Why it Matters in the Workplace
OCT 27	Technology in Employment
NOV 3	Peer2Peer: An Award-Winning Employment Mentorship Program

More information at **bit.ly/OregonNDEAM**