



AccessCAREERS Projects: Increasing Career Success for People with Disabilities

Careers
Academics
Research
Experiential Education
Relevant Skills

DO-IT at the University of Washington has, since 1992, worked to increase the participation of individuals with disabilities in postsecondary education and employment through direct work with students who have disabilities; professional development for faculty, teachers, service providers, and employers; and information dissemination. DO-IT, which stands for Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology, has been recognized for its efforts through several awards including the 1995 National Information Infrastructure Award in Education and the 1997 Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring; and the 2001 AHEAD (The Association on Higher Education and Disability) exemplary program award for helping people with disabilities succeed in postsecondary education and careers.

AccessCAREERS, which stands for Careers, Academics, Research, Experiential Education, and Relevant Skills, is a DO-IT program that focuses on successful career preparation for individuals with disabilities. *AccessCAREERS* activities encourage and prepare individuals with disabilities to enter challenging careers and create a model for a continuum of services from K-12 through postsecondary levels. *AccessCAREERS* serves to:

- increase the knowledge and understanding of students with disabilities about academic programs, employment skills, and career opportunities in challenging fields such as science, technology, and business.
- increase the participation of students with disabilities in work-based learning experiences to develop job skills and prepare for careers.

- improve the knowledge and skills of parents, educators, advisors, counselors, and employers about the capabilities and needs of students, interns, and employees with disabilities so they are better equipped to support these individuals in academic and employment settings.

What AccessCAREERS Offers Students With Disabilities

Career planning and preparation should occur throughout your academic studies. You do not need to settle on one area to pursue right away, and you can change directions. But, be sure to prepare for the long run—for your lifelong career or multiple careers. *AccessCAREERS* can help you with this preparation through presentations, workshops, meetings, and one-on-one guidance. DO-IT staff can help you:

- learn about opportunities in challenging fields, such as business, engineering, mathematics, and technology.
- develop self-determination, self-advocacy, and work-readiness skills.
- learn about rights to accommodations and how to determine appropriate academic and job accommodations.
- understand when and how to disclose your disability in school and job settings.
- learn how to use computers, electronic communications, and Internet resources to increase your independence and productivity while pursuing a career.
- access campus and community career development services and activities.
- access campus and community resources for academic and employment support.
- develop a support network of other students with disabilities and adult mentors.

DO-IT staff can also help high school and college students participate in work-based learning experiences such as internships, cooperative education, job shadowing, service learning, independent study, and informational interviews.



What **AccessCAREERS** Offers Employers

With assistive technology and reasonable accommodations, people with disabilities are often highly qualified to enter the workforce; yet they too often remain part of an underutilized labor pool. Internships and other work-based learning programs can give you, your employees, and students a chance to experience working in a diverse environment, implement different worksite accommodations, and “test each other out.” *AccessCAREERS* can help you and your employees:

- understand the potential contributions, legal rights and needs of employees with disabilities.
- find and secure work-based learning participants with strong qualifications.
- learn about accommodations and assistive technologies that can increase productivity and independence of individuals with disabilities on the job.
- gain assistance through on-site consultation to identify and obtain necessary job site accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

What **AccessCAREERS** Offers Educators

The number of students with disabilities entering and completing postsecondary education has increased dramatically in the last decade, yet people with disabilities are still underrepresented in the employment arena. Faculty members, counselors and advisors can prepare students with disabilities to overcome barriers to employment by insuring that academic and career programs are inclusive. *AccessCAREERS* can give you and your staff:

- information about various types of disabilities and accommodations.
- an overview of new and expanding opportunities for students with disabilities in business, technology, engineering, mathematics, and other challenging fields.
- strategies to recruit and support students with disabilities in specific academic programs.

- knowledge about assistive technologies and other accommodations that can help level the academic and work site playing field for people with disabilities.
- an understanding of the importance and availability of work-based learning experiences for students with disabilities.

What **AccessCAREERS** Offers Parents

With the tremendous impact of technology on all career fields, the options for your child have grown enormously. Transitions within the academic setting and to a work setting are exciting, yet challenging, for both you and your child. *AccessCAREERS* can improve your ability to provide knowledgeable and effective support during these transitions. Our training and information can help you:

- learn about new and expanding opportunities for students with disabilities in business and technology fields.
- learn about assistive technologies and other accommodations that can help level the academic and work site playing field.
- understand the importance and availability of work-based learning experiences.
- understand Social Security and other government programs available to assist your child.
- understand your role in helping your child grow up to be an independent, self-advocating, career professional.

About **AccessCAREERS**

AccessCAREERS is a series of projects and activities that helps prepare students with disabilities for careers and increase their representation in work-based learning experiences. Specific projects and activities include the following:

AccessCAREERS/K-12

Funded through the Department of Education, Office of Special Education & Rehabilitative Services, Office of Special Education Programs (grant #H324M990010) and the National Science Foundation (cooperative agreement #HRD0227995), *AccessCAREERS/K-12* focuses



on increasing the participation of high school students with disabilities in work-based learning programs. *AccessCAREERS/K-12* works with students with disabilities, their parents, teachers, counselors, and employers to facilitate successful transitions to postsecondary education and employment.

AccessCAREERS /Postsecondary

Funded through the Department of Education Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (grant #P116D990138-01) and the National Science Foundation (Cooperative Agreement #HRD0227995), *AccessCAREERS/Postsecondary* is directed toward postsecondary students with disabilities pursuing careers in business, science, mathematics, engineering, and technology. Assistance with employment preparation skills and accessing work-based learning experiences are the two primary elements of *AccessCAREERS/Postsecondary*. Through presentations, training, videos, and printed materials targeted to faculty, counselors, and employers, *AccessCAREERS/Postsecondary* serves to increase the levels of recruitment, support, and employment of individuals with disabilities.

High School/High Tech

DO-IT partners with the City of Seattle and Seattle Public Schools to sponsor the High School/High Tech program in Western Washington. This program has been funded in part by the U.S. Department of Labor (grant #E-9-4-1-0087). High School/High Tech provides high school students with disabilities exposure to technology-related careers. To learn more about High School/High Tech programs nationwide, visit <http://www.dol.gov/odep/programs/high.htm>.

DO-IT Show and Tell

DO-IT Show and Tell, funded by Visio and The Boeing Company, acquaints youngsters with people who have disabilities and way cool technology. The project helps children develop positive attitudes and perceptions of people with disabilities, develop problem-solving skills, and experience how people with disabilities use computers and perform day-to-day tasks. During the

visits to first grade classrooms, a presenter with a disability shares information about his or her disability, sets up problem-solving activities in which the children participate, answers questions, and demonstrates technology.

Educational Materials

Many useful resources are available through DO-IT's *AccessCAREERS* website at <http://www.washington.edu/doiit/Careers/>. In addition, DO-IT makes available the following materials.

DO-IT Publications

The following publications are available at no charge from DO-IT.

It's Your Career: Work-Based Learning Opportunities for Students With Disabilities emphasizes the importance of preparing for employment with good academic preparation and transferable job skills. The benefits and types of work-based learning experiences for postsecondary students are detailed in this publication.

Finding Gold: Hiring the Best and the Brightest increases awareness about the contributions of individuals with disabilities, dispels common myths about accommodations, and highlights resources available to employers who wish to recruit and hire individuals with disabilities as interns or permanent employees.

Access to the Future: Preparing Students with Disabilities for Careers shows how to provide an accessible postsecondary career services office for postsecondary students with disabilities. The publication includes tips on working with employers and implementing accommodation strategies.

Learn and Earn: Tips for Teens encourages secondary students with disabilities to include work-based learning experiences in their career planning and academic preparation. This publication details the types of work-based learning, helps students identify their team players, and outlines community and scholastic resources.



Learn and Earn: Supporting Teens outlines ways in which parents, teachers, and mentors can encourage and support secondary students with disabilities in pursuing work-based learning experiences and career preparation activities.

DO-IT Videos

Videos are available to accompany each of the publications described above. Videos may be freely viewed online at <http://www.washington.edu/doit/Video/> or purchased in DVD format and include: *It's Your Career* (13 minutes), *Finding Gold: Hiring the Brightest and the Best* (7 minutes), *Access to the Future: Preparing Students with Disabilities for Careers* (14 minutes), *Learn and Earn: Tips for Teens* (13 minutes), and *Learn and Earn: Supporting Teens* (13 minutes), among other titles.

DO-IT Training Materials

The following comprehensive DO-IT training notebook may be accessed online at <http://www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/Training/> or purchased from DO-IT.

Career Development and Students with Disabilities

This presentation and resource material helps staff and employers in cooperative education, internship, and other work based learning programs accommodate participants with disabilities. It includes the DO-IT publications and videos *It's Your Career*, *Finding Gold: Hiring the Best and the Brightest*, *Equal Access: Universal Design of Computer Labs*, *Working Together: People with Disabilities and Computer Technology*, and *World Wide Access: Accessible Web Design*.

About DO-IT

DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking and Technology) serves to increase the successful participation of individuals with disabilities in challenging academic programs and careers such as those in science, engineering, mathematics, and technology. Primary funding for DO-IT is provided by the National Science Foundation, the State of Washington, and the U.S. Department of Education. *AccessCAREERS* projects have been sponsored

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