

## More about **TECHPOINTS**

**TECHPOINTS** began as a general concept that identified points in the rehabilitation process where consideration of assistive technology should take place with individuals being served. The following information provides a condensed description of **TECHPOINTS**, and one component, the **TIPS Checklists**, which present questions that offer a systematic process of considering technology needs throughout the rehabilitation process.

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Consideration of assistive technology resources and services should be a regular part of what any vocational rehabilitation counselor may utilize as they work with persons on their caseloads, regardless of the disability or specific functional capacity. **TECHPOINTS** provides counselors and other staff with an easy to follow reference to help determine when and how technology resources and services could be used with individuals served.

**TECHPOINTS** will not tell counselors what to do, but it will raise questions and offer suggestions that will help to make consideration of technology-related needs a routine part of rehabilitation services.

Determining who may need assistive technology resources or services is one of the important responsibilities of the vocational rehabilitation counselor. Unless the VR counselor recognizes potential AT needs and is open to exploring possible options, it is unlikely that many of the persons served will have access to technology resources and services.

**TECHPOINTS** considers the possible role for technology-related services by looking at;

- the individual,
- environments where the individual is likely to function and then,
- specific tasks and activities that the individual would likely be required to perform.

Using the **TECHPOINTS** approach will help to systematically consider technology options throughout the rehabilitation process. Use of assistive technology should be individually planned and carefully matched with the needs and capabilities of the individual. The Matching Persons with Technology materials that you will be using will help to ensure that this takes place so that appropriate technology solutions are determined.

### How **TECHPOINTS** work

Utilizing a series decision points or critical junctures in the rehabilitation process, **TECHPOINTS** simply show when and how a counselor should consider possible use of AT services. The seven **TECHPOINTS** create a continuous process that looks at an individual's potential technology-related needs, beginning at the start of the rehabilitation process and systematically following that individual throughout his or her rehabilitation.

## More about **TECHPOINTS**

These “points” coincide with regular case service activities to better integrate technology services into the rehabilitation process. **TECHPOINTS** will help counselors decide if technology-related solutions to challenges and problems may be appropriate, and when referral to a technology specialist would be needed.

**TECHPOINTS** is not a cookbook that offers easy solutions or quick fixes by disability or functional limitations. **TECHPOINTS** works by suggesting the right questions to ask; encouraging counselors to think creatively about how someone may be able to complete tasks and activities; and suggesting how to use technology specialists to achieve better outcomes with persons served. **TECHPOINTS** are located in all of the general phases of a vocational rehabilitation process.

### **Referral/Application**

- **TECHPOINT 1** Referral/Application

### **Comprehensive Assessment and Planning**

- **TECHPOINT 2** Assessment/Evaluation
- **TECHPOINT 3** Plan Development

### **Services**

- **TECHPOINT 4** Planned Services
- **TECHPOINT 5** Placement

### **Outcomes**

- **TECHPOINT 6** Tracking and Outcome Documentation

### **Follow-up**

- **TECHPOINT 7** Post-Employment and Follow-up

## **TIPS Checklists - Technology Intervention Preparation Steps**

At each of these **TECHPOINTS** there are **Technology Intervention Preparation Steps**, called **TIPS**, to help the rehabilitation professional identify the challenges and concerns needed to effectively consider technology related options.

The **TIPS Checklists** suggest how assistive technology might enhance services or open up new options and possibilities. **TIPS Checklists** offer a way to think through possible need for assistive technology. Many rehabilitation professionals find **TECHPOINTS** to be very close to how they already explore use of AT possibilities. For others this can be a convenient reminder to better ensure that technology options will not be overlooked.

## More about **TECHPOINTS**

The following four-step process shows how the **TIPS Checklists** help to guide counselors through considering whether AT options are needed.

### **T Technology Concerns**

**First**, determination should be made if AT services seem warranted; general challenges and problems a consumer may face identified; and possible technology concerns or fears noted.

### **I Intervention Strategies**

**Second**, possible technology intervention strategies should be reviewed with the person served and AT specialists to determine which options to consider.

### **P Prioritize activities**

**Third**, if technology intervention seems appropriate, actions should be prioritized based on the needs of the individual. Prioritizing the order of technology-related interventions can be very important due to functional capabilities of the individual, service delivery time frames, consumer or employer preferences, availability of funding or other factors.

### **S Steps and actions needed**

**Fourth**, specific steps and plan of action to arrange for the needed technology services should be clearly documented in an individualized plan. This plan should summarize specific actions that should be completed and identify who is responsible to do what.

The following pages contain a copy of each of the seven checklists.

**TECHPOINT 1 - Referral**

**T** Technology Concerns Identified

- Are accommodations needed for the person to participate in the rehabilitation process?
- Does the individual have and difficulties or concerns about performing any “major life activities”?
- Is the applicant presently using technology to perform “major life activities”?
- Would technology enhance, create or eliminate the threat of job loss or affect health for this applicant?
- Would consideration of technology create an opportunity for this applicant that would otherwise not be considered?
- Does the individual appear to have a workable knowledge of assistive technology?

**I** Intervention Strategies

- Separate each problem or concern the individual has mentioned. Where and when does the concern for each task occur? At home, outside the home such as school or work?
- Will more than one environment be affected when this concern is addressed?
- What assistance does the applicant have in performing tasks?
- What has he/she tried in the past that did or did not work in attempting to solve this concern?
- Does the applicant appear comfortable with considering the use of alternate ways of accomplishing tasks?
- Are counselor concerns noted regarding the use of technology that the applicant may not see?
- Have all facts been obtained and information reviewed with a DRS Technology Specialist?

**P** Prioritize activities

- Is there a primary area of concern?
- Are there DRS guidelines to address in considering concerns? Has individual been advised of these guidelines?
- Has a consultation been arranged with AT staff?
- What additional information might be indicated before addressing concern(s)?
- In what order should the concerns be addressed?
- Are there deadlines that must be considered in addressing concerns?

**S** Steps and actions needed

- Complete an assistive technology needs profile.
- Arrange for any necessary accommodations with AT staff.
- Identify immediate technology concerns that must be addressed now
- Will referral for AT services be needed?
- Are time frames set to follow-up on steps that are indicated?
- Has the individual been advised of a time to check on progress toward a solution?
- Have feasible alternatives been considered?
- Is other financial assistance needed to address any technology concerns?

**TECHPOINT 2 - Assessment**

**T** **Technology Concerns**

- Does a person with this type of disability generally need accommodations to complete a vocational evaluation?
- Is transportation a barrier? If so, is there a temporary solution to allow completion of vocational evaluation?
- Would providing technology offer the opportunity to explore vocational goals that would not be considered otherwise?

**I** **Intervention Strategies**

- What technology concerns, if any, need to be discussed with the vocational evaluator? Do these concerns need to be discussed prior to evaluation?
- Is equipment presently being used by the client adequate to complete vocational evaluation?
- Is a technology assessment needed to help determine equipment needs and modifications prior to vocational evaluation (e.g., keyboard )
- Can equipment be borrowed or rented before a purchase is made?

**P** **Prioritize Activities**

- Is there a primary area of concern?
- If there is more than one concern, should any be addressed together? (For example, seating and positioning in a wheelchair might effect use of a computer switch; devices and equipment prescribed for mobility might affect equipment needs for adaptive driving, etc.)
- In what order should the concerns be addressed?
- Are there deadlines that must be considered in addressing concerns?
- What is the impact of these priorities in terms of people, health, money and agency guidelines?
- Are DRS services dependent on this need being met and is this concern essential for employability?

**S** **Steps and Actions Needed**

- Who will fund the technology?
- Who will do what in addressing concern(s)?
- What is the time frame for addressing concern(s)?
- Has the consumer been involved? Does he/she understand his/her responsibilities?
- When preparing a referral for comprehensive assessment services, such as vocational evaluations, determine if this individual can be evaluated with standard assessment procedures and whether alternate formats or other accommodations are needed.
- If the assessment does not seem capable of providing appropriate technology-related support, then consideration of other options may be necessary.

### **TECHPOINT 3 - Plan Development**

#### **T** Technology Concerns

- Does the individual have a clear vocational objective?
- What challenges does the disability create in working toward the vocational objective?
- Review technology which the consumer currently uses to determine if it can be used in achieving the vocational goal.
- Would technology potentially assist in overcoming these challenges?
- Does the consumer have any concerns about the use of technology in working toward the vocational goal?

#### **I** Intervention Strategies

- Have needs changed in transportation, housing, equipment, or communication? If so, have new technology needs been created in home, community, vocational rehabilitation, school/training, or work environments?
- Is assistive technology necessary for the achievement of the vocational objective?
- Have technology needs been appropriately documented to justify written goals on the IPE?
- Does the client understand how the technology goals relate to the vocational goal?

#### **P** Prioritize Activities

- In what order will technology concerns identified in this status be addressed?
- Other than the client and the counselor, who else should be involved in setting priorities?
- How much time will be needed to carry out technology-related activities?
- Will the goal of employment be delayed if technology concerns are addressed later in the process?
- How will the time needed to achieve technology goals affect the implementation of services (including accommodation for job applications and interviews) or achievement of the vocational goal?
- Does the individual need time to adjust or be trained on the technology or accommodation?

#### **S** Steps and Actions Needed

- Consult with AT staff to determine who should be involved in providing the technology services and what form should their involvement take?
- Is there a plan for completing each step? Who will fund the purchase of the technology?
- Has the client been involved? Does he/she understand his/her responsibilities?
- Before determining vocational goals and objectives remember to consider possible impact of rehabilitation technology.

### **TECHPOINT 4 - Planned Services**

#### **T** Technology Concerns

- What previously unidentified challenges to receiving services does the disability potentially create?
- What technology could potentially assist in meeting these challenges?
- What is the individual's comfort level with technology? Does the individual have any new concerns regarding equipment, modifications, etc., since the last review?

#### **I** Intervention Strategies

- Review IPE to identify possible technology-related services
- Have there been changes in any environment (e.g., home, community, school/training or, work environments)?
- Does the technology being used have any unanticipated negative impacts in these environments?
- Do others involved with the individual have any concerns about technology being used (e.g., instructors, family, attendants, etc.).
- Are assistive technology devices being maintained on a regular basis?

#### **P** Prioritize Activities

- Determine what order technology concerns should be addressed? Are there any critical time constraints?
- If a new technology concern is not met, or if current AT being used is not updated, will this cause a threat to the person's health or the achievement of the vocational plan?
- If so, is immediate intervention needed?

#### **S** Steps and Actions Needed

- Implement technology-related services (if any) identified in the IPE.
- Periodically check on performance to identify possible technology need changes.
- If necessary, arrange for an AT specialist to be available to offer technology-related assistance to school/training site.

**TECHPOINT 5 - Placement**

**T** **Technology Concerns**

- What challenges to searching for and obtaining work does the person's functional limitations create?
- Will any reasonable accommodations be needed for the job application process (e.g., interpreter accessibility, writing aids, transportation, etc.)?
- Does the individual have concerns about the use or potential need for technology in finding or maintaining a job?
- Does the employer have any concerns about accommodations or use of AT?
- Are co-workers aware of accommodations that may be needed?

**I** **Intervention Strategies**

- Involve the consumer throughout the process. Make certain that he/she understand their responsibilities?
- Involve the employer early whenever accommodations or use of AT are anticipated
- Analyze the work environment to identify potential accommodation and AT needs
- Identify specific barriers or potential problems (e.g., restrooms, workstation and equipment needs)?
- Will the present living arrangements change when placement is achieved? How? Will this create new technology needs?

**P** **Prioritize Activities**

- In what order should the identified technology needs be addressed?
- If some of the technology needs are not met, will this delay or jeopardize placement in employment?
- Has the employer indicated a preference for accommodations?
- Make certain that the employer and worker understand their respective responsibilities?

**S** **Steps and Actions Needed**

- Conduct/arrange for a job analysis with one of the technology specialists when accommodations needs have been identified
- Once accommodation needs are determined, responsibilities for costs and funding sources should be clarified.
- Address any concerns that the consumer or employer may have.

**TECHPOINT 6 – Closure/Documentation**

**T** **Technology Concerns**

- Review case notes possible challenges this disability may create in maintaining successful employment.
- Would technology resources/services potentially assist the client in overcoming these challenges?
- Does the applicant have concerns about using technology in any environment?
- Does the employer have concerns about the client using technology on the job?

**I** **Intervention Strategies**

- Is the client meeting job expectations and performing the “essential functions” of the job? If not, why not (e.g., speed, lack of skills, inability to use equipment, etc.)?
- Would technology or accommodations help the client meet performance requirements?
- Can the employer and client pinpoint the task which is creating the problem? What solutions have been tried or considered? Would technology or accommodations help the client overcome the problem?
- Does the company have other employees who may be able to make the accommodation (e.g., a technical person on staff, in-house maintenance, etc.)?
- Are there any anticipated post-employment needs that may involve technology?

**P** **Prioritize Activities**

- In what order should the technology needs identified be addressed?
- Are there any mandatory deadlines that must be met?
- Can the concerns be resolved in a reasonable time frame?
- Is employment in jeopardy if not solved immediately?
- Is there a temporary solution that will work until a more permanent solution is found?
- Other than the employer, the client and the counselor, who else should be involved in setting priorities?

**S** **Steps and Actions Needed**

- Document consideration and use of AT services on appropriate closure forms
- For individuals with extensive technology-related needs, consider if post-employment services beyond the 90 day period will be needed.
- For unsuccessful closures with unmet technology needs, refer the individual to other technology-related programs that may be able to provide assistance.
- Has the consumer been involved? Does he/she understand his/her responsibilities?
- Has the employer been involved? Does he/she understand his/her responsibilities?

## **TECHPOINT 7 - Post-Employment and Follow-up**

### **T** Technology Concerns

- Have any “major life activities” or “essential functions” of the job changed? If so, did this result in a need for change in technology?
- Does the employer have concerns about the use of technology on the job?
- Does the consumer have concerns about the use of technology?
- Would technology potentially assist in overcoming these challenges?

### **I** Intervention Strategies

- Prior to closing any case where technology resources and services have been used, review how these resources should be maintained, repaired, and eventually replaced.
- What are the client’s technology concerns?
- Do they differ from the employer’s concern?
- What caused this concern to be an issue for employment?
- Are any of the technology concerns a direct threat to employment?
- If the health of the client is a concern, would technology intervention be appropriate or useful?
- Will post-employment services be needed or will a new VR case be opened?

### **P** Prioritize Activities

- In what order should the technology needs identified for this status be addressed?
- Are there any deadlines?
- Can the concerns be resolved in a reasonable time frame?
- Is employment in jeopardy if not solved immediately?
- Is there a temporary solution that will work until a more permanent solution is found?
- Other than the employer, the client and the counselor, who else should be involved in setting priorities?

### **S** Steps and Actions Needed

- If technology-related services appear necessary, can the employer and/or client solve the technology concern
- Can employer and client solve the technology concerns with referral to other resources?
- Has the client been involved? Does he/she understand his/her responsibilities?
- Has the employer been involved? Does he/she need to be involved?
- Who will fund the technology or accommodation needed?