

SOURCES OF FUNDING, GRANTS, FREE STUFF and Continued Education

Prepared by Missouri Statewide Parent Involvement Network (MoSPIN)

Freedom Program – Variety of the United States

<https://usvariety.org/freedom/>

Variety's Freedom Program delivers vital life-changing equipment and services for mobility, independence and social inclusion to individual children and children's organizations.

Together through the Freedom program, we change children's lives by granting items and services that provide independence, mobility and freedom. Grants under the Freedom program are made to individual children and children's organizations.

Covering a wide scope, Freedom grants may cover

- Manual and powered wheelchairs
- Adaptive bicycles and trikes
- Assistance animals
- Hoists and lifts
- Modified vehicle access
- Standing and walking assistance like gait trainers, walkers, standing frames and positioning systems
- Specialized car seating, shower and toilet chairs, and many more

In some states Variety grants Sunshine Coaches, usually 8 to 25 seat coaches to allow schools and groups for children with disabilities to be transported to educational, cultural and sporting events in safety. These coaches are often fitted with wheelchair access.

In some states Variety grants playground equipment. These grants vary from the establishment of a full all-abilities playground to individual pieces of equipment for all-abilities play.

iPad Funding and Accessible Technology:

WonderBabies

www.wonderbaby.org

There's a reason why everyone's talking about iPads. They really can be used as assistive devices for people with disabilities. From GPS apps that help with Orientation & Mobility to high-tech communication apps that take the place of

much more expensive equipment. The iPad is becoming the go-to device for children with special needs. Plus the iPad's accessibility features are remarkable! Yes, iPads really are accessible to users who are deaf or visually impaired. But even if the iPad is much less expensive than some other traditional assistive devices, that doesn't mean they are necessarily affordable. If you're trying to get an iPad for your child, but need help raising money for one, here are five tips that are sure to help:

1. TALK TO YOUR INSURANCE COMPANY
2. ASK YOUR SCHOOL
3. APPLY FOR A GRANT
4. CONTACT LOCAL CHARITIES
5. TRY SOME FUNDRAISING

CforAT The Center for Accessibly Technology

<https://www.cforat.org/>

[https://www.cforat.org/children and teens](https://www.cforat.org/children_and_teens)

Access to technology is a critical component for success in schools. Children who can access information via technology are at an advantage, and can better succeed in school. For kids with disabilities, the need for technology is even greater. Computers with appropriate technology can level the playing field, allowing kids with disabilities to compete fairly with their non-disabled peers. CforAT offers a broad range of services that assist children with disabilities, their families, their teachers and their aides in learning about assistive technology options, and we work to find the right solution for each child.

Services Include:

- School District services
- Assistive Technology Explorations
- Open Resource
- Keyboarding Classes
- Tiered AT Assessments

Missouri Assistive Technology (MoAT)

<https://at.mo.gov/>

MoAT Service Snapshot

In State Fiscal Year 2020, Missouri Assistive Technology enhanced the lives of over 50,000 Missourians with disabilities, family members and professionals. Our programs provided 6,339 individuals with appropriate assistive devices and an additional 17,415 Missourians participated in training, received AT, demonstrated, borrowed devices through our loan program, or received AT guidance.

Missouri Council of the Blind (MCB)

<https://www.moblind.org/>

Our mission is to promote the general well-being of our members and legally blind people in Missouri, and to support or participate in other programs promoting the best interests of legally blind people everywhere.

Missouri Council of the Blind (MCB) Adaptive Technology Grant Program **[MCB Adaptive Technology Program](#)**

Our Adaptive Technology Grant Program provides assistance to individuals wishing to purchase adaptive hardware and software which make it possible for them to use computers etc. Adaptive hardware and software are very expensive when compared to "off the shelf" computers and programs. We believe that it is important for legally blind people to have this opportunity in order to compete on a level playing field with those who are sighted. Applicants for this program are required to pay at least 50% of the cost of the adaptive software and equipment and MCB, if application is approved, pays the remaining portion.

Fun Stuff:

Challenge Air

www.challengeair.com

Challenge Air was created to change the perception of children with special needs through the gift of flight

The Dream Factory

<https://www.dreamfactorvinc.org/>

The largest all-volunteer driven children's wish-granting organization that does not limit its mission to children who have life-threatening illness. The organization believes children with chronic illnesses and disorders also suffer from substantial emotional and physical pain.

Make-A-Wish America

<https://wish.org/>

Together, we create life-changing wishes for children with critical illnesses.

Sunshine Foundation

<https://www.sunshinefoundation.org/>

Sunshine Foundation's sole purpose is to answer the dreams of chronically ill, seriously ill, physically challenged and abused children ages three to eighteen, whose families cannot fulfill their requests due to financial strain that the child's illness may cause.

Children's Wish Foundation International

<https://childrenswish.org/>

Children's Wish Foundation International is a non-profit wish granting organization founded on the premise that seriously ill children regardless of race, color creed, religion, or economic status, are not able to experience a normal, carefree childhood. For these unfortunate children, Children's Wish Foundation International provides an experience of a lifetime in the form of a favorite wish. Children's Wish Foundation will fulfill the favorite wish for any child having a limited life expectancy with medical-science as we know it today. Each wish will be complete while the child is healthy enough to fully enjoy it. The immediate family is included in the wish fulfillment so that the child and family can share in the experience and create happy memories together. Children's Wish Foundation International is committed to making a child's wish come true and will ensure that every project, event and contribution will be directly connected with our mission.

Icing Smiles

<https://www.icingsmiles.org/>

Icing Smiles is a nonprofit organization that provides custom celebration cakes and other treats to families impacted by the critical illness of a child. We understand that the simple things, like a birthday cake, are luxuries to a family battling illness. Our goal is to create a custom cake for the ill child, or their sibling, that provides a temporary escape from worry and creates a positive memory during a difficult time. Memories have magical powers. Long after the cake is gone, the memories linger – memories of the kindness of a stranger, of the art of the design, of the sweet smells of a special treat, of the smiles and laughs, of a normal childhood experience so often stolen from these children. These memories are why we say, "It is so much more than a cake". We are not a bakery, as a matter of fact, Icing Smiles doesn't even have an oven! We rely on a generous team of volunteers spread throughout the U.S. to fulfill our mission.

Free Passes:

U.S. National Park Service

<https://www.nps.gov/index.htm>

America the Beautiful Passes

<https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/passes.htm>

DRC (Disability Resource Community)

Disability Resource Community

The Access Pass is a free, lifetime pass available to United States citizens or permanent residents, regardless of age, that have a permanent disability that can be used at over 2,000 Federal recreation sites across the nation, including National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, and many National Forest lands.

Some foundations to put on your radar:

Danielle's Foundation

Danielle's Foundation

Our mission is to help families gain access to therapies, equipment and other benefits for their children who have Cerebral Palsy or Brain Injuries.

Lindsay's Legacy Foundation

<https://lindsayslegacyfoundation.org/>

No family is prepared for a cancer diagnosis, let alone the journey that lies ahead. We know that it takes a village to truly care for someone on this journey. LLF was founded on providing support when you need it most. Through our BE HAPPY programs we are supporting those in despair. We believe we can make the lives of those suffering a little bit easier.

First Hand Foundation

<https://www.firsthandfoundation.org/>

First Hand provides funding for children whose families cannot afford medical care, equipment, vehicle modifications, or displacement related to care.

Autism Care Today (ACT)

<https://www.act-today.org/>

Autism Care Today is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to raise awareness and provide treatment services and support to families to help their children with autism be able to achieve their full potential.

Doug Flute Jr. Foundation for Autism

<https://www.flutiefoundation.org/>

Our Mission is to help people and families affected by autism live life to the fullest. Our Vision is a world where people with autism lead productive lives where they are included, respected, and actively engaged in their communities. Our Promise is our programs and activities improve the quality of everyday life for people and families affected by autism along seven key dimensions that are critical to living each day fully. We aim to provide a path for education and/or employment during the day; opportunities for physical and social activity outside of work/school; and the tools to be safe, supported, and informed at all times.

Books:

National Library Service (NLS) for the Blind and Print Disabled Library of Congress

<https://www.loc.gov/nls/>

NLS is a free braille and talking book library service for people with temporary or permanent low vision, blindness, or a physical, perceptual, or reading disability that prevents them from using regular print materials. Through a national network of cooperating libraries, NLS circulates books and magazines in braille

or audio formats that are instantly downloadable to a personal device or delivered by mail free of charge.

Bookshare A Benetech Initiative

<https://www.bookshare.org/cms/>

Bookshare makes reading easier. People with dyslexia, blindness, cerebral palsy, and other reading barriers can customize their experience to suit their learning style and find virtually any book they need for school, work, or the joy of reading.

Learning Ally

<https://learningally.org/>

We believe all students should have equal opportunities to learn and succeed. With early student assessment, intervention and accommodations, we can identify and can help prevent learning issues and work with schools and educators to support new and struggling readers. Thus, building a strong foundation for independent, engaged learners who are empowered to achieve socially, emotionally and academically, regardless of background or learning difference.

Mariah Nichols

<https://www.mariahlovesliterary.com/>

Mariah loves literacy

Continued Education:

Perkins School for the Blind eLearning

<https://www.perkinselearning.org/>

At Perkins, we provide unparalleled educational services to children and young adults with blindness, deafblindness and multiple disabilities. We also share our expertise and collaborate with global change makers in the fields of education, business, medicine and policy. This work informs our purpose to prepare our students for the world and the world for our students. We are ever evolving. In addition to educating children on our historic campus in Watertown, Massachusetts, we are constantly creating and delivering new programs that address the most pressing challenges to our population. This agility enables us to maximize our impact on campus, across the U.S. and around the world. As a nonprofit, we are funded in no small part by generous support from those who share our driving belief that all children can learn. Perkins is built on that belief and with continued support, it informs everything we do. While the world has changed since Perkins' founding, our fundamental beliefs have remained constant. Our Core Values guide and inspire our work every day.

The Hadley School for the Blind

<https://hadlev.edu/>

The mission of Hadley is to create personalized learning opportunities that empower adults with vision loss or blindness to thrive - at home, at work, and in their communities. In addition, the mission is to promote independent living skills through lifelong, distance education for individuals who are B/VI, their families and blindness service providers.

The Hadley School for the Blind's Family Education Program

[Hadley Family Education Program](#)

If you have a blind or visually-impaired child, I highly recommend checking out the Hadley School for the Blind's Family Education Program. The courses in the program are free for the family members of B/VI people, and they're offered by correspondence, which is uber-convenient.

Center for Independent Living:

Disability Resource Association (DRA)

<https://dra4help.org/>

The Mission of Disability Resource Association is Personal Empowerment for Persons with disabilities, seniors, and those in need.

Purposes include:

Provide Information and Referral.

Provide Advocacy to reduce social barriers.

Provide Peer Support to increase self-reliance.

Provide Independent Living Skills focused on personal goals.

Provide Transitions from institutions to the community.

Provide access to Affordable Housing in a community of your choice.

DRA operates as a Center of Independent Living serving residents in Jefferson County, metropolitan St. Louis and surrounding counties who meet the criteria of the Americans with Disabilities Act, regardless of age or type of disability.