

# New England Assistive Technology (NEAT) Center

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## **Description:**

The New England Assistive Technology (NEAT) Center at Oak Hill operates under the Connecticut Institute for the Blind/Oak Hill to provide persons of all ages, as well as schools, human service agencies, businesses and health care professionals with access to information, training, products, equipment and to the manufacturers and vendors of assistive technology equipment. NEAT offers space for product demonstrations, expos, classes, computer use, research and equipment restoration. Assistive technology demonstrations are available by appointment at the NEAT Center. A fee is charged after the first 15 minutes. Demonstrations show how assistive technology can impact the lives of persons with disabilities. Demonstrations might include computers with adaptive software, video magnification systems and various pieces of equipment that are designed to increase a person's independence and productivity. Services offered by NEAT are available in English and Spanish.

### *Assistive Technology Consultations and Evaluations:*

NEAT offers assistive technology evaluations in which persons are evaluated for suitable equipment such as electronic magnifiers, scanning and reading machines, portable note takers, bar code readers and computers with special needs adaptive software. The NEAT Center offers evaluation and consultation services for aging in place, computer access and power mobility. It may also include the assessment of alternative access communication devices. Follow-up services are available for assistive technology training. A fee is charged for this service.

### *Computer Lab:*

NEAT features a computer lab with 21 personal computers that has specialized hardware and software, which provides persons with disabilities with alternative means of accessing the computer. The computer lab gives people an opportunity to test alternatives to determine what works best for them. It also helps people to compare products offered by different vendors and to make educated decisions when purchasing products. NEAT's assistive technology specialists are available to help individuals test equipment. NEAT's staff use team approaches to perform personal evaluations to determine the product suitability for consumers. Professionals can lease the computer lab to perform individual assistive technology evaluations to determine the specific equipment, modifications and instructional formats that best meet an individual's needs.

### *Vocational Center for People who are Blind or Visually Impaired:*

NEAT, a program of Oak Hill, has developed relationships with area businesses and is experienced in providing supports for persons with disabilities who work in the community. Qualified staff can help such individuals by identifying their strengths,

providing computer training, enhancing their interview skills, helping to find employment opportunities and identifying transportation options.

*Equipment Restoration Center:*

The Equipment Restoration Center at NEAT sells gently used and reconditioned durable medical equipment at low prices. It also offers short-term equipment rentals and affordable payment plans if necessary. Donated equipment is inspected by qualified technicians, cleaned and sanitized. NEAT works with suppliers of durable medical equipment to ensure that equipment meets high quality standards. NEAT's assistive technology suppliers, practitioners and specialists are available to help consumers test equipment before making decisions on purchases. The purchase of used medical equipment is currently eligible for reimbursement through Medicaid and Medicare. Persons who wish to donate slightly used equipment can arrange to have the equipment picked up by NEAT staff or can drop off equipment at a convenient location. Neat also operates a satellite site in Stratford, CT Oak Hill is a non-profit organization and donations may qualify for a tax deduction.

*NEAT is a Microsoft Accessibility Resource Center:*

NEAT staff can show individuals what is possible with accessible technology solutions that are available on today's computers. These accessibility options and assistive technology products can add to persons' computer skills and proficiency whether they have reduced eyesight, wrist or arm discomfort or hearing loss. NEAT offers free monthly workshops and an overview CD at no charge.

*Lending Library:*

The NEAT Center Lending Library is a service that loans assistive technology devices to paid professional members. Membership is free for individuals who have disabilities and for their family members. Persons who are older than age 65 and who have limitations that result from aging are also eligible for membership. Free membership entitles eligible persons to use the Information and Resource Library and Computer Lab by appointment at no charge. If staff assistance is required a fee is charged. Persons interested in becoming members must complete and submit a membership application form.

The NEAT Center's space is available for meetings, training sessions, seminars, focus groups, beta testing and conferences. Contact NEAT for hourly and daily rental fees.

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## **Eligibility Requirements, Service Areas and Program Year:**

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be a person with a disability or have an interest in assistive technology.

Service Areas:

Statewide

Program Year:  
July 1 – June 30

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### **Contact Information:**

The New England Assistive Technology (NEAT) Center at Oak Hill  
120 Holcomb Street  
Hartford, CT 06112  
Telephone: 860-243-2869  
Toll Free: 866-526-4492  
Email: [info@neatmarketplace.org](mailto:info@neatmarketplace.org)  
Website: [www.neatmarketplace.org](http://www.neatmarketplace.org) and [www.ciboakhill.org](http://www.ciboakhill.org)

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### **Related Information:**

[Connecticut Board of Education and Services for the Blind \(BESB\), refer to page XV – 12.](#)  
[Connecticut Tech Act Project, refer to page XV – 16.](#)