

Disability   
**Communications**  
 Fund  
*Access for All*

# Funding Priorities

The mission of Disability Communications Fund (DCF) is to serve as an educator, convener and resource that works collaboratively to ensure communications access to people with disabilities in California.

DCF supports programs and technology that benefit **communication and information access needs** of Californians with disabilities.

For examples of successful projects please visit our [DCF What We Fund page](#).

Priority	Description
<p><b>1. TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF AT AND AAC EXPERTS</b></p>	<p>Based on past experience, there appears to be a lack of professionals (specialists &amp; general care providers) able to support communication needs of individuals with disabilities.</p> <p>Disability Communications Fund (DCF) supports projects that <b>build</b> an organization's <b>capacity to provide services through the training of professionals</b>.</p> <p>The goal of this priority is to expand the availability of professionals trained in Assistive Technology (AT) and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) tools and strategies. Training can be provided – by the applicant or for the applicant, and may include sending staff to conferences.</p> <p>Projects should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use an existing &amp; tested curriculum, or</li> <li>• Include the development of a curriculum. The curriculum should be documented in a way that facilitates ongoing sharing of knowledge and best practices.</li> </ul> <p>Given other available public sources of funding, the trainings we support should focus on <b>no/low tech</b> (low cost, low maintenance, not mechanically complex or electronic,) and <b>mid-tech</b> systems (electronic or battery operated, some complex features, may require some training).</p> <p>This priority intentionally focuses on the training of professionals. They have the potential to impact the life of many individuals over the course of their career. Therefore, hands-on application of the curriculum involving individuals with disabilities and/or family members as part of the project is useful, but should not be the focus of the project.</p>

Priority	Description
<p><b>2. FACILITATING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION</b></p>	<p>Disability Communications Fund (DCF) supports organizations in the <b>collection and evaluation of data</b> on a service or target population for the purpose of documenting best practices, gap analysis, or advocating for systemic changes. This may include pilot and trial programs prior to seeking government funding.</p> <p>DCF also wants to encourage the <b>development and testing of new technologies and services</b> that benefit individuals with disabilities. If proven successful, this has the potential to improve the quality of life far beyond the initial project participants.</p> <p>Grantees need to publicly share the results of their project in one of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article/paper,</li> <li>• Presentations, or</li> <li>• Open sourcing (making specifications of a device, app or program available for public use or modification).</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. BUILDING NETWORKS AND REPLICATING SUCCESSFUL MODELS</b></p>	<p>Disability Communications Fund (DCF) wants to foster <b>collaboration and exchange</b> among stakeholders serving the communication needs of Californians with disabilities, so that best practices can be shared and redundancy is avoided.</p> <p>DCF supports organizations in <b>sharing successful programs or models</b> with one or more partners. One of the collaboration partners needs to be designated as the primary applicant/grantee. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of the partners involved is required.</p> <p>The project should share best practices, adapting them to geographically, demographically or culturally different settings, as needed. It is not a requirement that the program or model to be shared was previously funded by DCF, however, organizations applying need to be able to clearly demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the project/model has been successful,</li> <li>• The need for and benefit of replication,</li> <li>• That the organization has the capacity to support the replication, and</li> <li>• Prospective partner organization(s).</li> </ul> <p>DCF also supports projects that improve or expand existing <b>stakeholder and professional networks</b> (California-wide or regional), or intent to establish new networks. Network building may include information collection, outreach, identifying &amp; piloting network activities, and implementation of a long term network strategy.</p>