**JOSEPH KOHN TRAINING CENTER**

**PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK**

**Thank you for your interest in the Joseph Kohn Training Center (JKTC), operated by the New Jersey Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired! We are excited to have you here. This packet has been compiled to give an overview of the JKTC, program, to discuss expectations, and provide a summary of program guidelines.**

**SETTING**

**Training in JKTC takes place in a co-ed setting. Consumers must be 18 years or older to attend. A security guard is present 24 hours a day. There is a rolling admission and the number of enrolled consumers can vary. The JKTC is a residential site, with separate dorms for men and women. Commuting students also attend the program and consumers have the option of being a resident or a commuter. Training includes instruction related to blindness skills, and is provided in a variety of classroom, field, and seminar settings. Some groups and seminars are offered in a virtual format. At this point, due to the pandemic, the center is only offering an in-person commuter program and a virtual program.**

**STUDENT PARTICIPATION**

**The training will be in different durations for different students. It can be 2 weeks, 6 weeks, 12 weeks, 20 weeks, or in other time periods. The length of the program is customized to meet the needs of the learner. The planned program end date is subject to change. The graduation date will be ultimately decided by instructors based on student's progress.**

**JKTC classes start daily at 9:00 AM and end at 4:00 PM. In-person training is offered Monday-Thursday. On Fridays, programming will be offered in a virtual format for all students. Consumers are expected to participate in all scheduled activities.**

**INSTRUCTIONAL AREAS**

**Instruction at JKTC is offered in a variety of areas. These include**

* **Activities of Daily Living (ADL)**
* **Braille/Communication Skills**
* **Career Exploration**
* **Keyboarding/Technology**
* **Orientation and Mobility**
* **Physical Fitness and Health**

**In addition to these areas, regular group classes will be offered in the following areas:**

* **Job Seeking Skill Development**
* **Soft Skills Training**
* **Technology Trends**
* **Self-Advocacy and Disability Rights**
* **Community Services and Resources**
* **Physical Fitness and Health**
* **Social Work Issues**
* **Circle of Bell Ringers**
* **Adjustment to Vision Loss**

**As students enter the second half of their program, they will begin their participation in the REACH Program. This program focusses on guiding students as they independently complete projects related to their specific career goals.**

**THE WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM**

**Near the end of the JKTC training program, consumers will participate in a community-based work experience. This is held outside of JKTC at worksites throughout the local community. Consumers will meet with the work experience coordinator to determine appropriate worksite placements. They will then work with a job coach as they participate in these worksite experiences. This final phase of the program generally lasts for four weeks.**

**INDEPENDENT APARTMENT**

**Residential students can have an opportunity to spend one week in the independent apartment at JKTC. This one-week experience will generally occur during the last four weeks of their program. When participating in the independent apartment, students will be given a budget for the week. They must develop a weekly menu, go shopping to buy the needed groceries, prepare their meals, and maintain a clean apartment. While doing this, they must also follow their daily program schedule. At times, based on the needs and abilities of an individual, an alternate independent experience may be arranged.**

**AT HOME ASSIGNMENTS**

**For two non-consecutive weeks in a a consumer’s program, they will be asked to remain at home as they complete a variety of “at-home assignments”. These assignments will be related to skills that have been taught in the program and that are appropriate for the individual. Virtual assistance will be available if needed during the weeks that the student is at home. When students return to the program, their accomplishments will be reviewed.**

**PROGRESS REVIEWS**

**Progress Reviews are held at various intervals throughout an individual’s participation at JKTC. Instructors that have worked with a student are in attendance at these reviews.. Additionally, a consumer’s vocational rehabilitation counselor (VRC) will also attend. During these reviews, a student’s progress in all instructional areas will be reviewed and next-steps will be discussed. At-Home Activities will also be emphasized. Consumers will be encouraged to take an active role in these reviews. With the consumer’s permission, family members and/or other persons are welcome to attend.**

**ACTIVITIES**

**JKTC training requires participation in a variety of physical activities including activities that may sometimes be strenuous. Training may be challenging, demanding, or stressful. Examples of activities include walking, climbing steps, crossing streets, walking on uneven surfaces, and exiting other vehicles. Additional activities include preparing food, cooking, and using household cleaners. Some** **activities may require exposure to warm or cold temperatures, ice, snow, and rain. Training may also involve physically demanding activities, such as brisk walking, visiting parks, and using gym equipment. All activities can be modified based on individual needs.**

# TRANSPORTATION

**The JKTC emphasizes independence and prepares consumers for life in a vocational setting where they would be responsible for their own transportation. Similarly, JKTC consumers are expected to arrange their own transportation with support from their VRC and JKTC staff. This includes arrival to and departure from JKTC each week. In addition, consumers are responsible for setting up transportation for any engagements outside of JKTC. This includes medical appointments (dialysis treatments, sick visits, etc.); commute to work sites (when in the Work Experience Program); and any other similar commitments. Consumers can work with their VRC, and with JKTC staff, to explore transportation possibilities. These options can include public transportation, Uber, Lyft, taxi services, or Access Link.**

# INCLEMENT WEATHER AND BUILDING CLOSURES

**In case there is an official closure directive from the State, inclement weather notice, or other unforeseeable circumstances, it may be necessary to close the JKTC immediately. Consumers who are enrolled during this time will need to leave the Center. They should contact their families for transportation help. In addition, JKTC staff will assist with transportation coordination. Consumers should pack their belongings and be ready to depart JKTC right away. Consumers should not return until they check that the JKTC has re-opened.**

# EMERGENCY EVACUATION

**It is possible that an emergency situation may arise that could result in the need to evacuate the JKTC. The JKTC does have a fire alarm, smoke sensors, and a sprinkler system in place. In case of such an emergency, consumers are expected to exit the building immediately. Regular fire drills will be conducted to prepare for such an emergency.**

# HOLIDAYS

**JKTC is a state-run facility and is closed for state holidays. This includes New Year's Day, MLK Day, President's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. JKTC is also closed for a winter break during the end of December. In addition, JKTC may be closed at times for building emergencies, inclement weather, or unplanned state closures.**

**WHAT TO BRING TO JKTC**

**Students coming to enroll in the JKTC program should bring the following items with them, especially if they will be a a resident student at the center:**

1. **Prescription medications. They should be brought in their original bottles or containers and shown to the nurse upon arrival of the program.**
2. **It is essential to bring soap, shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, and other personal hygiene items.**
3. **Comfortable walking shoes. Students may participate in indoor and outdoor mobility lessons and stand during ADL/ kitchen skills instructions.**
4. **A sweater or jacket that can be worn indoors if needed.**
5. **It is necessary to bring weather-appropriate clothes such as Jackets, raincoats, hats, scarves, or gloves as needed since students will be traveling outside for mobility lessons in all types of weather.**
6. **A laundry bag.**
7. **Sunscreen and/or hat for sun protection when traveling outdoors.**
8. **Students may choose to bring digital recorders, small game systems, cell phones, and other valuable electronic items.**

**It must be noted that students are responsible for all personal belongings and valuables, including items in the room, lockbox, locker, or anywhere in the building. Please note cell phones are not allowed during classes unless being used for instructional purposes. Students with any questions regarding these guidelines are encouraged to speak with their case manager, the Residential supervisor, or the JKTC manager.**

PHYSICAL CONTACT

**Training at the JKTC may involve physical contact. For example, consumers may need to touch the hands, arms, or shoulders of a teacher to learn proper techniques. Likewise, teachers may need to touch the hands, arms, or shoulders of a student when offering instruction on proper technique. Such contact is done in a professional manner and the JKTC staff members have received training on appropriate touch. It is possible that other unintentional, incidental, or accidental physical contact may occur with staff or other consumers. In case of an emergency, fire alarm, or the like and there is an urgent need to evacuate the building immediately, consumers may be given physical assistance.**

# NURSING

**JKTC is not a medical facility. Although there is a nurse on site at times, a nurse is not present 24 hours a day. In addition, nurses can only offer limited assistance with medications and treatments. If a consumer feels ill, the nurse will evaluate the person. Ultimately, the nurse, and/or another supervisor may decide that the consumer has to leave JKTC to visit a doctor. Consumers cannot return to JKTC until medical clearance is provided. Consumers who enroll in JKTC are expected to self-administer medications, be in compliance with their doctor's orders, and be responsible for their own health. In emergency situations, 911 will be called.**

# FORMS AND PAPERWORK

**JKTC consumers are asked to read, agree with, and sign a number of forms and paperwork when they enroll in the program. Consumers are given a copy of all forms that they have signed.**

**EXPECTED RULES OF CONDUCT**

**The JKTC offers a vocational training program. As a result, enrolled consumers are expected to follow these work­ related guidelines listed below and should display appropriate professional behaviors.**

1. **Consumers are expected to respect the property, space, and person of all consumers, staff, and guests. Aggressive or confrontational behavior is not acceptable.**
2. **Consumers should use appropriate language. Profanity is not professional and will not be tolerated.**
3. **Consumers should not access or present inappropriate material either in hard copy or electronic copy.**
4. **Consumers should not engage in any intimate or sexual act at the center. This includes inappropriate touching, and similar actions. Staff may redirect such behavior.**
5. **Consumers are expected to be neatly dressed, groomed, and wear shoes. Clothing with offensive language or images is not permitted. Staff will notify consumers who are inappropriately dressed.**
6. **After classes end at 4pm, consumers can engage in leisure time. Consumers who leave JKTC must sign out at the front desk and notify staff. Consumers who leave JKTC must return to JKTC before 10:00 PM. When consumers are outside of JKTC, they are responsible for their own safety. If, for some reason, a consumer will not be returning by 10:00 PM, they must call the center and speak directly to a residential staff member. If, even after speaking to the residential staff member, they are unable to return to the center by 11:00 PM, they will not be permitted to return until after 7:00 AM the following day.**
7. **Quiet hours in JKTC are from 10:00 PM to 6:00 AM. During this time, there should not be loud talking, noise, or music. At other times, if consumers are loud, disruptive, or play music too loudly, staff will advise them.**
8. **Consumers are responsible for their own personal property. JKTC and CBVI are not liable for lost or stolen property. Consumers who lose items must immediately report those missing items to the JKTC security guard.**
9. **Consumers are responsible for their own dorm room keys and must return keys at the front desk prior to leaving at the end of the week. Commuter students must return their assigned locker keys at the end of each day prior to leaving the center.**
10. **Consumers are expected to make their beds daily and keep their rooms clean. Food is not permitted in dorm rooms and should be consumed in the cafeteria.**
11. **Consumers should not enter other consumers' dorm rooms. This includes the independent apartment (unless it is for a planned social event). Everyone is welcome to meet and socialize in the common areas.**
12. **Consumers' families and friends can visit JKTC as long it is not disruptive. Visitors should ideally visit after classes. They do need to sign in with the guard. Access will be limited to the first- floor lobby and cafeteria. All visitors must leave the center by 10:00 PM.**
13. **Consumers are expected to put their cell phones on silent during classes, groups, meetings, and other activities.**
14. **Possession or use of firearms, explosives, or other weapons is strictly prohibited and the authorities will be notified. Possession or use of illegal narcotics or other illegal controlled substances is prohibited.**
15. **JKTC is a smoke-free site; smoking is not permitted onsite or in the parking lots at any time. Also, consuming alcoholic beverages or having alcoholic beverages is not permitted on JKTC premises.**
16. **When on trips organized by JKTC staff, consumers should continue to follow these same policies. They should be respectful, professional, and safe. Consumers should bring their canes during JKTC trips. In addition, when on trips, those JKTC consumers who order alcoholic beverages at restaurants should use best judgment and cooperate with staff.**

**We, at JKTC, are committed to providing a safe, healthy environment at all times for both consumers and staff. If, for any reason, a consumer feels threatened or uncomfortable in any way or if they witness a behavior exhibited by either staff or consumers that is felt to be inappropriate, it is the consumer’s right and responsibility to report this behavior. These concerns will be addressed in a discrete, respectful manner. If a consumer wishes to report an incident that they feel jeopardizes the well-being or safety of self or of another person, this should be reported to the program manager.**

 **Susan Engstrom, Program Manager**

**Susan.engstrom@dhs.,nj.gov**

 **(862)763-0843**

**You can also contact:**

1. **Mr. Charles P. McKenna**

**Assistant Division Director**

**Charles.mckenna@dhs.nj.gov**

**(973)-648-4300**

1. **Mr. Kevin Harris**

**Program Compliance and Improvement**

**Kevin.harris@dhs.nj.gov**

**(973)6428-7416**

**Thank you for your cooperation with this.**

**CORRECTIVE ACTIO**

**JKTC has zero tolerance for behaviors that can affect the safety or well-being of self, other consumers and/or staff members. A consumer who is disruptive to the program, violates policies, behaves in a combative or threatening manner, does not attend classes regularly, or displays similar behaviors will face consequences for such behaviors. At times, depending on the situation, it may be necessary to offer a modified training program or a program suspension. In certain cases, it may become necessary for a consumer to discontinue the program entirely. In all situations, the consumer's VRC will be updated throughout the process.**

**JKTC strives to offer a quality program for all consumers. The program is designed to teach necessary life skills and to meet the specific needs of each individual we serve. Consumers will be encouraged to reach their highest potential as they develop and achieve goals related to career planning and independent living.**

**Thank you for your interest in the Joseph Kohn Training Center. We look forward to working with you as you move forward on your path to success!!**

**Respectfully,**

**The Joseph Kohn Training Center Staff**