

Customer Spotlight

University of Alaska Anchorage Center for Human Development

In a Nutshell

Leaders at the University of Alaska Anchorage Center for Human Development are expanding thinking around what cultural competency looks like outside of race and culture to include disability. In partnership with AST, they have driven inclusion efforts forward in Alaska and have “built live captioning into every budget that came through the door.” As part of this effort, the Center was nationally recognized with a diversity and inclusion award through the Association for University Centers on Disability (AUCD).

To date, the Center has been able to scale its efforts to serve a broad spectrum of public health messaging and training for the direct service workforce impacting almost 30,000 people. In just one year, an additional 227 individuals received direct training and technical assistance in digital accessibility.

The Challenge

The Center’s leaders recognized a pressing need to deliver more accessible online training to the Alaska community, especially with greater shifts to online and digital instruction. They were facing “a lot of fear of the unknown” around accessibility, the perceived costs and technological expertise many assumed were needed to make proper accommodations. The Center needed a scalable, simple solution to make its events and content accessible.

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It’s fantastic if you or I want to be able to pull up transcripts and be able to read through them. It’s convenient if we want to be able to go back and watch a video on YouTube. But for a person who can’t access this information in any other way, this is critical and lifesaving. I get chills thinking about that. I think about working with our public health team and hearing our Chief Medical Officer for our state say, ‘this work has saved lives, I want you to know that.’”

Holli Yancey

Instructional Design and Technology
Director, University of Alaska Anchorage
Center for Human Development



The Solution

AST has become an essential partner, offering:

- ▶ A time-saving scheduling platform to deliver on access needs quickly
- ▶ Dedicated support from specialized team
- ▶ Different service levels for captioning & transcription to choose from
- ▶ Transparent pricing to match volume and budget parameters

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“Captioning is now our norm and the expectation in virtual environments as a way to include everybody. If I have a disability that happens to also be attached to hearing, if my audio is terrible, if my Internet lags, if English is my second language, if it’s easier for me with the cognitive overload of an online meeting to be able to focus on words, if I need to catch up on what the person said because I missed it, but I know there’s a split-second delay there. Everybody benefits from captioning - not only individuals with hearing differences.”

Holli Yancey

Instructional Design and Technology
Director, University of Alaska Anchorage
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The Results

The Center is providing more equitable and engaging online video, events and experiences with:

Accurate captioning at scale

“When I came across AST, what really stood out was that they could meet the demand for the capacity while also maintaining accuracy. It takes live people like AST’s captioners to do a really good job versus using just machines.”

Seamless scheduling

“Over the years, we watched how AST developed and improved its scheduling dashboard. Now, we can add guidance notes for the captioners if we need to. Having a company that continually invests in improvement helped take that extra workload off of our staff.”

Access to professional, reliable captioners

“The captioners that work with AST have been really fantastic. They communicate well, have an amazing skill level and they’re able to really deliver the product effectively.”

Making captioning & inclusion the norm

“We look at inclusion and equity for individuals with disabilities as being a crucial part of our Center culture. Now that things like captioning are built into our process, people and students who are in our regular audience will go to other places and be surprised when the captioning isn’t just included.”

Useful transcripts

“We don’t only have the embedded captions in our live sessions, but also have a transcript available for our audience members. It’s really nice to be able to have that side-by-side display.”

▶ [Learn more](#) about Automatic Sync Technologies (AST), a Verbit company.