**AT Demonstration**

**AT Loan / Borrowing**

**AT Reutilization**

**AT State Financing**

**OUR MISSION**
To maintain and enhance a strong, effective and efficient national network of Statewide Assistive Technology Programs which enables individuals with disabilities, service providers and others to learn about, access, and acquire assistive technology (AT) needed for education, employment, and community living.
All 50 states, 4 US territories, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico receive formula grant funding under the Assistive Technology (AT) Act of 2004. These 56 grantees are required to carry out a continuum of specified state level and state leadership activities that promote the ability of people with disabilities to know about, have access to, and ultimately be better able to obtain assistive technology (AT). These activities also deliver a large return on investment for the small federal appropriation for this program.

**Definition of Assistive Technology**

*Assistive Technology (AT)* is any item, device, or piece of equipment used to maintain or improve the functionality of people with disabilities, allowing them to be more independent in recreation, education, employment, and daily living activities.
**AT Demonstration**

**Assistive Technology Demonstration Programs**

provide opportunities for people to learn about and become familiar with specific types of AT by comparing and contrasting the functions and features of devices through hands-on exploration. Instruction is provided by knowledgeable AT professionals in a product neutral environment that does not favor one company or manufacturer.

Device demonstrations result in informed decision-making about which AT will and will not meet an individual’s disability needs and prevents wasted expenditures on “mismatched” AT. For example, if an agency/individual explores two electronic magnification devices and decides that one costing $2,000 is perfect – they have potentially saved another $2,000 by knowing the other device they explored would not meet their needs (avoided purchasing to only find the device was not a good match.)

80,096 individuals participated in 49,056 device demonstrations conducted by State AT Programs in FFY17. Projecting a modest $100 savings realized by just half of the total demonstrations conducted results in national savings of $2.4 million dollars.

---

**Demonstration**

A woman with muscular dystrophy and her family came to the North Dakota AT Program demonstration center to find AT solutions to access her phone, computer, and home environment. She could not let anyone in her front door without leaving it open nor could she independently access any appliance, TV, fan, or light in her home. After experiencing demonstrations of several alternative products to address her changing needs, she was able to purchase some of the demonstrated AT through the ND Telecommunications Equipment Distribution program. The North Dakota AT Program continues to work with her on obtaining other devices through the Assistive Last Resort Program and Medicaid waivers.

**Demonstration**

As a participant in a hands-on workshop conducted by the New Mexico AT Program, John tried out several different bicycles suitable for people with mobility disabilities. He was able to find an adaptive bike that worked for him and, thanks to a fundraising campaign, he was able to raise the money to obtain it. Now John is able to use his bicycle as a means of transportation and to stay healthy.

**Demonstration**

The Virginia AT Program collaborates with several Employment Service Organizations (ESOs) and the state vocational rehabilitation (VR) program to provide hand-held smart devices for demonstration with VR clients with autism. An ESO employment specialist demonstrated a variety of device features and apps to assist an individual with autism meet his employment goals. With features identified based on the demonstration, a device trial followed with positive employment outcomes. The VR program will purchase the equipment for the individual.

**Demonstration - TN**

Greg is an individual with nerve damage that limits his ability to use a computer for an extended period without experiencing severe pain. One of the Tennessee AT Program’s regional centers demonstrated a variety of alternative pointing devices and voice-control options for the computer. Through the reuse program, he was able to obtain a laptop, specialized software and an adapted mouse, providing Greg independence and the ability to seek employment.
AT Loan / Borrowing

**Assistive Technology Device Loan / Borrowing Programs**

allow individuals to borrow devices for a limited time period to use at home, school, work, etc. Device loans allow borrowers to try out devices in their own environments to determine if a device will meet their needs before a purchase is made. Device loans also can provide loaner AT while a device is being repaired, while a consumer is waiting for funding approvals, or to use for training or professional development purposes.

Device loans result in informed and accurate AT purchasing decisions especially in unique contexts like a classroom or workplace. When a school or employer can borrow a device and make sure it will allow the individual with a disability to be successful, they save money by avoiding “incorrect” purchases. Device loans also allow individuals to remain functional while their device is being repaired, preventing costly loss of wages, lost school days, or the need for increased community living supports.

37,239 device loans were made to individuals or agencies with 52,374 devices borrowed from short-term device loan programs operated through State AT Programs in FFY17. Using an average savings of $1,000 per loan with more than one device associated (at least one device was rejected as being a match and a second one was borrowed) results in national savings of over $15 million. Projecting a minimum $10 per day rental fee for the average loan period of 35 days, results in national savings of almost $4.2 million for devices borrowed for accommodation (while a device is repaired or while waiting for funding) or for training since the device did not have to be rented for these purposes.

**DEVICE LOAN / BORROWING**

Faced with the challenge of not being able to read due to progressive vision changes, former Governor William “Bill” Sheffield came to the Alaska AT Program hoping to find a device that would magnify images onto a monitor. After trying out several different devices, he borrowed one from the device loan program and is successfully reading the newspaper and the correspondence he receives.

Avery is a high school senior with limited use of his arms and hands. Avery’s teacher came to the Arizona AT Program to borrow computer access solutions to find one that would work. The wireless alternative mouse works like a regular mouse except head rather than hand movements control the mouse pointer.

As Avery said, “Before, I couldn’t use the computer to play games because of my hands. This has also made me feel more independent when doing schoolwork rather than having someone doing it for me.”

Devion is a co-founder of a large-scale garden operation with bees, goats, chickens, an orchard, and sweet corn. She is an Army veteran who experiences chronic pain from injuries to her spine, shoulder, knees, and feet along with PTSD. Devion borrowed several types of ergonomic and long-reach gardening tools from the Iowa AT Program. After the trials she was able to decide on the devices that would work best. Additional supports enabled her to find funding to procure the devices that enable her to produce more goods.

10-year old Daniel has a lot to say. He just didn’t have a way to say it. A student in a Kansas City area elementary school, Daniel is non-verbal and has a diagnosis of autism. Daniel’s school district borrowed a speech generating device from the Missouri AT Program to trial with Daniel. He thrived using the device throughout the school day and his world opened up with an abundance of communication opportunities.
AT Reutilization

**AT Reutilization**

**Mr. Jones lost the exterior power scooter ramp for his car during flooding. He is a Vietnam Veteran, Purple Heart recipient and former Green Beret. The Louisiana AT Program was able to secure a scooter ramp for him through their reuse program.**

“Because of the program providing me with a new power scooter ramp for my car, I am able to travel with my scooter to shop in the grocery store, attend concerts and remain an active volunteer in military parades.”

**Assistive Technology Device Reutilization Programs** support the reuse of assistive technology that is no longer needed or used by its original owner. Recipients usually obtain equipment at significantly lower cost or no cost. There are several options for reutilization including refurbish/reassignment and device exchange (typically online) where ownership is transferred and open-ended device loans where the borrower keeps the device as long as needed and returns if no longer needed.

**Purchasing/obtaining reutilized devices saves agencies and individuals a significant amount of money when compared to buying new devices.**

57,782 recipients acquired 74,205 reutilized devices through State AT Programs in FFY17. A total of $29,988,784 was saved by device recipients by purchasing/obtaining reutilized AT instead of new. In addition, 82% of the reuse device recipients indicated that they would not have been able to afford the AT or obtain it from other sources if it were not for the reuse services of the State AT Program. The cost of those individuals being unable to work, learn or live in the community without the AT they need would be immeasurable.

**Maria came to a community partner center of the Washington AT Program carrying her 3-year old son, Eduardo who has cerebral palsy and had outgrown his infant stroller. The center staff showed them what they had in their inventory and the family quickly settled on a very sturdy stroller that would adjust to fit Eduardo for years to come. After a few adjustments, the stroller was provided at no cost.**

**Lisa has a vision impairment and needed assistive technology to efficiently and confidently identify and handle paper money. Through a partnership with the Department of the Treasury, State AT Programs are able to provide access to currency readers for consumers like Lisa. Lisa obtained the currency reader from the Guam AT Program and can keep the device as long as she needs it.**

**A physical therapist obtained a “gently used” gait trainer (at a savings of $2000) from the North Carolina AT Program for a child on her caseload. Originally, the child could only stand with assistance, but after using the gait trainer, she progressed to walking and needed a less supportive style walker. The reuse program provided them another walker (at a savings of $400).**

**A woman contacted the South Carolina AT Program searching for a solution to her vision loss. Her degenerative disease has impacted her ability to do her job which entails a lot of reading. The reuse program was able to provide her with large screen magnifiers for her computer at work as well as smaller handheld magnifiers to help with reading small print. These devices will allow her to do her job and at the same time help her rest her “good eye.”**
AT State Financing

State Financing Activities help individuals purchase/obtain AT through a variety of initiatives. Financial loan programs provide consumers with affordable, flexible borrowing options. Other programs provide AT directly to consumers at no cost using dollars from non-AT Act sources or save consumers money when purchasing AT.

Purchasing/obtaining devices through state financing activities saves agencies and individuals a significant amount of money and may be the only option available to them. Without the program they would go without the AT they need for work, school, or community living.

853 borrowers obtained financial loans totaling $7,665,522 to buy 876 devices in FFY17. 4,357 recipients acquired 5,768 devices valued at $3,836,113 from other state financing programs that directly provide AT using external funding sources. 2,093 recipients acquired 3,735 AT devices with a savings of $1,573,345 from other state financing activities, such as cooperative buying programs and device lease programs. The vast majority (93%) of recipients indicated that if the state financing activity they used was not available they would not have been able to purchase/obtain the AT due to cost or availability potentially resulting in individuals who are unable to successfully work, learn or live in the community.

Blake, who is a nine year old wheelchair user, had to use a manual rather than power wheelchair at home because his family didn’t have an accessible vehicle. Blake’s mom contacted the Kansas AT Program for help. They helped the family identify the appropriate adaptations, and helped raise one third of the van cost through donations. Blake’s mom applied for a financial loan through the program’s alternative financing program to pay for the rest of the van. The family no longer has to pay for specialty transportation and Blake is thriving as he participates in community activities with the rest of his family.

A young woman was in need of a new braille device and when she heard the Oklahoma AT Program talk about their financial loan services she decided to finally trade in her old device and get a loan for the balance for a new device. She was working on building her credit, so this was a great opportunity to work toward that goal too. She uses the device at work for notes and organization as well as accessing the Internet, and for personal undertakings, such as taking minutes for an organization for which she is the secretary.

One word comes to mind when describing this deaf-blind individual – determined. She obtained a Braille notetaker, computer and other AT devices through the National Deaf Blind Equipment Distribution Program administered by the Connecticut AT Program. As she became proficient in Braille, the Connecticut Vocational Rehabilitation program for the Blind hired her to become a trainer for other individuals who are deaf blind.
Leveraged Funding is frequently secured by State AT Programs and used to expand and maximize services. In FFY17, State AT Programs leveraged $21,846,439 in funding from federal, state, local and private sources. These funds were used to support all of the State AT Program authorized activities.

Collectively, State AT Programs are an integral partner in federal, state and local activities. State AT Programs leverage a variety of funding including direct federal dollars for the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program from the Federal Communications Commission along with funding from special education, vocational rehabilitation, health, senior services, and other state agencies to provide AT services.