AT Act Data Brief

USING AT ACT DATA TO UNDERSTAND, PLAN, AND IMPROVE PROGRAMS

CATADA
THE CENTER FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT DATA ASSISTANCE

A National Data Summary of State Assistive Technology Programs: Fiscal Year 2021

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended (AT Act) authorizes grants to support programs that increase knowledge about, access to, and acquisition of assistive technology (AT) devices and services for individuals with disabilities and older Americans. These programs include 56 statewide AT programs that provide device demonstrations, device loans, device reutilization, training, technical assistance, public awareness, and assistance with obtaining funding for AT.

Statewide AT programs are required by law to collect data on their activities and provide annual progress reports to the Administration on Community Living in the US Department of Health and Human Services. This report is a compilation of data from these programs for FY 2020 and contains information about the activities of the statewide AT programs.

INTRODUCTION

State and Territory Assistive Technology Programs (AT Programs), authorized under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, focus on improving the provision of AT through comprehensive, statewide programs that are consumer-responsive. The goal of these programs is to increase access to and acquisition of AT through an integrated set of state-level activities and state leadership activities.

Section 4 of the AT Act provides 56 formula grants, administered by the Administration on Community Living, to support an AT Program in each state, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The 2004 reauthorization of the AT Act required a common set of activities to be provided by all AT Programs (with some limited exceptions) to create consistency among grantees. Required state-level activities include state financing and device reutilization that support acquisition of AT, and short-term device loans and device demonstrations that support access to AT. Required state leadership activities also support access to AT. This includes training, technical assistance, public awareness, information and assistance, and coordination and collaboration activities. All the state-level activities and the major state leadership activities will be described in greater detail later in this brief.

AT Programs are required to serve people with all types of disabilities, of all ages, in all environments, and to provide a wide array of activities to meet AT needs. Programs must also serve family members, service providers, educators, therapists, employers, health and rehabilitation professionals, AT vendors, procurement officials, and other interested parties throughout all versions of the law. Section 4 of the AT Act requires specific data reporting on services provided via the required state-level and leadership activities (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020). These data, found in the Annual State Grant for AT Progress Report submitted by all 56 grantees, are the source used in this brief.

What is Assistive Technology (AT)?

AT is any item, piece of equipment, or system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is commonly used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

(Source: AT Act of 1998 as amended, 29 USC §3002)

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES FLOW: How Consumers Access Information About and Acquire AT Devices

The AT Act authorizes state leadership and state level activities designed to provide an integrated continuum of AT services for people with disabilities and older adults. The service flow begins with the individual learning about AT through public awareness, training and information and assistance; then exploring AT through device demonstration and/or borrowing AT to try-out and make informed decisions about what AT will work best. When the individual has made an informed decision, the individual can acquire AT for little or no cost through reuse programs or, if eligible, through financial loan programs or other financing options available. Each activity within the continuum provides critical access or acquisition to AT.

ACCESS

PUBLIC AWARENESS & TRAINING → INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE → DEVICE DEMONSTRATION → DEVICE LOAN

ACQUISITION

DEVICE REUSE → STATE FINANCING

Section 4(c) of the AT Act requires the governor to designate a public agency as the lead agency for the State AT Program grant. The governor may also designate an implementing entity, separate from the lead agency, and that entity is responsible for carrying out the Section 4 activities. An implementing entity does not need to be a public agency and almost all are non-profit organizations. A state/territory either has a Lead Agency alone or has both a Lead Agency and an Implementing Entity. The pie chart below shows the 56 AT programs by type of agency responsible for carrying out Section 4 activities (either lead agency or implementing entity if the state/territory has one).

As Figure 1 shows, AT programs fall into:

- 13 non-profits (23%) including: 7 non-profit stand-alone AT programs and 6 who have AT program as part of a larger non-profit such as an Independent Living related entity, Easter Seals, or a Disability Advocacy entity such as a Protection & Advocacy agency.
- 21 public higher education agencies (38%) including: 15 University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs) and 6 other programs within a public university.
- 22 public state/local agencies (39%) including: 14 Vocational Rehabilitation agencies and 8 other state/local agencies such as DD Council, Disability, Administration, and Education agencies.

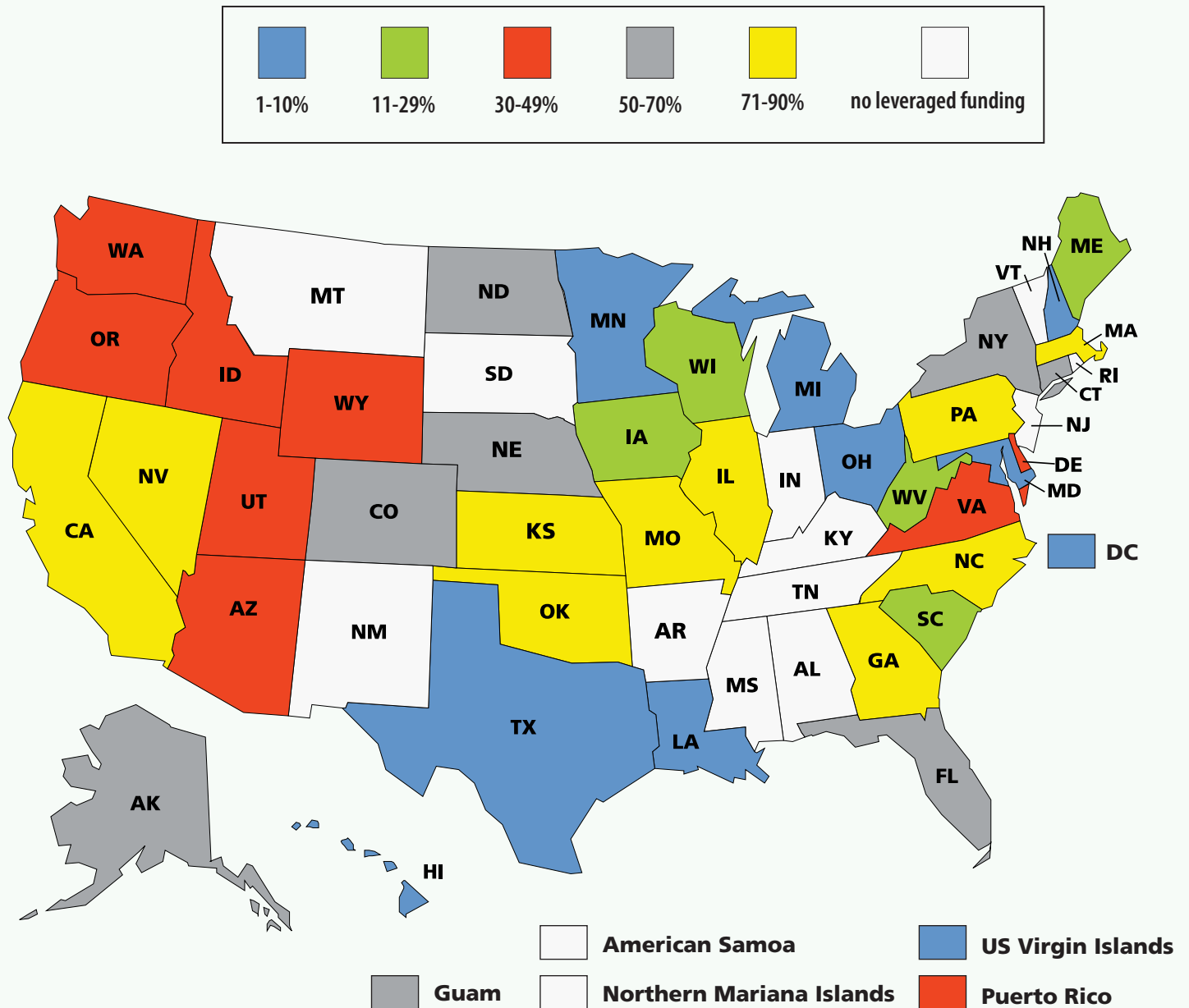**Figure 1: Percentage of State AT Programs by Lead/Implementing Agencies**
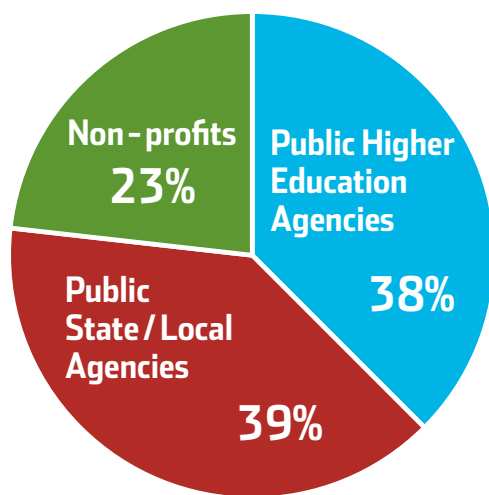
LEVERAGED FUNDING

Leveraged funding is frequently secured by state AT Programs and is used to expand and maximize services. In FY 2021, state AT Programs leveraged $34.2 million from federal, state, local, and private sources. These dollars were used to supplement $29.4 million in Section 4 AT Act formula grant funding for FY 2021, and to expand program reach in all AT Act-authorized activities. This brief highlights almost $65 million in savings and benefits delivered by state AT Programs in FY 2021 to over 463,000 service recipients.

State AT programs range from having 0% to 87% of their total funding come from leveraged sources. The color-coded map below demonstrates the percentage of leveraged funding out of the total funding a state AT program receives. Programs are grouped into the following percent ranges: 1-10%, 11-29%, 30-49%, 50-70%, and 71-90%. Programs with no leveraged funding are not represented by a color. To view the exact leveraged funding amounts for each AT program, **please go to the Key Summary Tables on the CATADA website** and select the Federal and Leveraged Funding category.

Figure 2: Map Representing the Percentage of Leveraged Funding by State AT Program

Legend: 1-10% (blue), 11-29% (green), 30-49% (red), 50-70% (gray), 71-90% (yellow), no leveraged funding (white)

American Samoa (white), US Virgin Islands (blue), Guam (gray), Northern Mariana Islands (white), Puerto Rico (red)

1–10%	11–29%	30–49%	50–70%	71–90%	No leveraged funding
District of Columbia	Iowa	Arizona	Alaska	California	Alabama
Hawaii	Maine	Delaware	Colorado	Georgia	American Samoa
Louisiana	South Carolina	Idaho	Connecticut	Illinois	Arkansas
Maryland	West Virginia	Oregon	Florida	Kansas	Indiana
Michigan	Wisconsin	Puerto Rico	Guam	Massachusetts	Kentucky
Minnesota		Utah	Nebraska	Missouri	Mississippi
New Hampshire		Virginia	New York	Nevada	Montana
Ohio		Washington	North Dakota	North Carolina	New Jersey
Texas		Wyoming		Oklahoma	New Mexico
Virgin Islands				Pennsylvania	N. Mariana Islands
					Rhode Island
					South Dakota
					Tennessee
					Vermont

Device Demonstrations

Device demonstrations compare the features and benefits of a particular AT device or category of devices for an individual or small group of individuals (U.S. Department of Education [ED], 2011). Device demonstrations allow individuals and groups to make informed choices about an AT device prior to acquiring it. Along with providing demonstrations, AT Programs are required to offer comprehensive information about state and local AT vendors, providers, and repair services.

During the FY 2021 reporting period, 56 AT Programs conducted device demonstrations as part of their state-level activities. State AT Programs classify device demonstrations into 10 device categories. There were 21,640 device demonstrations in FY 2021. Speech communication was the largest category, comprising 23% of all demonstrations. Nine additional device categories comprised between 3% and 17% of all demonstrations (see Table 1).

Table 1: Number of Device Demonstrations by Device Type

Type of AT Device	Number of Demos	Percent
Speech communication	4,963	23%
Vision	3,658	17%
Daily living	2,834	13%
Mobility, seating	2,284	11%
Computers and related	2,160	10%
Learning, Cognition	1,981	9%
Hearing	1,281	6%
Vehicle modification and transportation	1,063	5%
Environmental adaptations	762	3%
Recreation, sports, and leisure	654	3%
TOTAL	**21,640**	**100%**

Family Matters (Montana)

As a person ages or their illness progresses, sometimes AT and adaptive equipment needs to change, too. MonTECH's team works hard to make sure individuals have access to the best supports at each phase.

This year, 32-year-old veteran J.P. visited MonTECH with his wife and caregiver. J.P. has frontal temporal dementia and his wife helps with his care. MonTECH was determined to provide any equipment that might make life sweeter or more comfortable for them. MonTECH conducted a demonstration at their lab in Missoula and determined that J.P. needed loans for simple communication devices, universal cuffs, cup holders, mounts, and a temporary, more supportive wheelchair. J.P., his wife, and their young son were able to join a camping trip with extended family with the use of MonTECH's Emma X3 All-terrain Wheelchair and a wide camp cot. J.P.'s participation was important to the whole family – MonTECH was grateful to be able to provide equipment to support them on their special weekend together.

ACCESS				ACQUISITION	
PUBLIC AWARENESS & TRAINING	INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE	DEVICE DEMONSTRATION	DEVICE LOAN	DEVICE REUSE	STATE FINANCING

As illustrated in Table 2, individuals with disabilities (51%) comprised over half of those participating in device demonstrations in FY 2021, followed by family members, guardians, and authorized representatives (24%). AT demonstrated to consumers was primarily used for community living (65%), education (27%), and employment (8%).

Table 2: Number of Individuals Who Participated in Device Demonstrations

Type of Individual	Number of Participants	Percent
Individuals with disabilities	19,166	51%
Family members, guardians, and authorized representatives	9,131	24%
Representatives of health, allied health, and rehabilitation	3,894	11%
Representatives of education	3,022	8%
Representatives of community living	984	3%
Representatives of employment	664	2%
Representatives of technology	461	1%
TOTAL	**37,322**	**100%**

Speaking with Confidence and Humor (Colorado)

After undergoing a total laryngectomy that left her with no voice, E.K., a 71-year-old ICU nurse, was referred for an Augmentative Alternative Communication (AAC) evaluation by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. In her role as a nurse, Ms. K. relied on her voice for immediate communication with doctors, other nurses, and patients. After a comprehensive AAC evaluation and device trials, Ms. K. found that the Wego 7A by TalkToMeTechnologies supported her communication in several different ways. Through training with her Speech and Language Pathologist, Ms. K. learned to use the pre-set word buttons to build novel responses in a conversation, ask and answer questions, and support her social interactions. She uses the keyboard with word prediction as a different strategy to type novel messages. For more predictable communication interactions, Ms. K. customized her device with pre-stored personal and professional phrases to use in a job interview, or to convey her wry sense of humor.

Searching for employment has been Ms. K.'s priority. While waiting for the perfect nursing position, Ms. K. has successfully worked with local food delivery services, communicating regularly with customers, restaurant staff, and her employers using her AAC device. When asked how her AAC device has impacted her daily life, smiling, she uses her AAC device to reply, "I can order food in a drive-thru, and be funny too". Regarding returning to her career, Ms. K. emphatically demands, "I can do everything I used to be able to do, except talk."
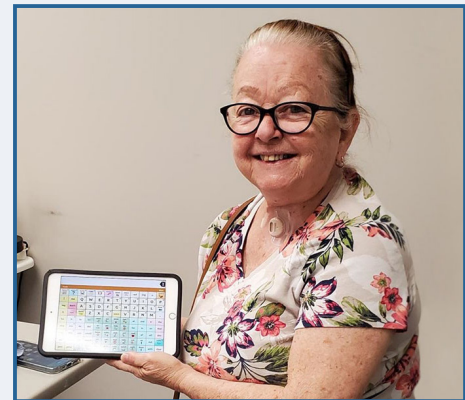
ACCESS				ACQUISITION	
PUBLIC AWARENESS & TRAINING	INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE	DEVICE DEMONSTRATION	DEVICE LOAN	DEVICE REUSE	STATE FINANCING

Device Loans

Device loan programs allow AT consumers and professionals who provide services to individuals with disabilities to borrow AT devices for use at home, at school, at work, and in the community. The purpose of a device loan may be to assist in decision-making, to fill a gap while the consumer is waiting for device repair or funding, to provide a short-term accommodation, to facilitate self-education by a consumer or professional, or to provide other training (ED, 2011).

During FY 2021, 56 AT Programs reported providing 24,943 short-term loans of 38,507 AT devices to individuals or entities. Forty-four percent of borrowers were individuals with disabilities, the largest group to whom devices were loaned, followed by family members, guardians, and authorized representatives (20%), and representatives of education (16%). Table 3 shows a more detailed breakdown.

Table 3: Number of Device Loans by Type of Borrower

Type of Borrower	Number of Device Borrowers	Percent
Individuals with disabilities	10,854	44%
Family members, guardians, and authorized representatives	4,899	20%
Representatives of education	4,028	16%
Representatives of health, allied health, and rehabilitation	3,601	14%
Representatives of community living	818	3%
Representatives of technology	546	2%
Representatives of employment	197	1%
TOTAL	**24,943**	**100%**

Devices for speech and communication (19%) and computer (18%) were the most common types of AT devices loaned in FY 2021, followed by mobility and seating (16%) and devices for daily living (13%). Six additional device categories accounted for the remaining 33% of the device loans made (see Table 4). Sixty-eight percent of device loans (n=16,925) were made to individuals for the primary purpose of decision-making. Other reasons borrowers cited for wanting a short-term device loan included for accommodation (21%), as a loaner during repair/waiting for funding (6%), and for training/personal development (5%).

AT acquired through device loan programs was primarily used for community living (53%), education (41%), and employment (6%).

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Table 4: Number of Devices Loaned by Type

Type of AT Device	Number Loaned	Percent
Speech communication	7,468	19%
Computers and related	7,038	18%
Mobility, seating	6,028	16%
Daily living	5,152	13%
Learning, cognition	4,015	11%
Vision	2,976	8%
Environmental adaptations	2,476	6%
Hearing	1,607	4%
Recreation, sports, and leisure	1,696	4%
Vehicle modification and transportation	51	<1%
TOTAL	**38,507**	**100%**

Walking by Christmas (Louisiana)

At 65, Gerald was hospitalized for eight months due to complications from COVID-19. The hospitalization and medication caused severe loss of muscle mass and weakness. Gerald was able to use the Evolv Standing Frame during rehabilitation sessions in the hospital. The standing frame helped Gerald increase standing time, gain muscle mass, and regain muscle control and balance. He is now able to independently use a walker inside the home, use the bathroom, shave, and brush his teeth. Gerald has a goal to walk by Christmas without a walker. "Thanks to the standing frame we were able to obtain through the Device Loan Program and the great group of therapists, we are confident that Gerald will meet that goal."
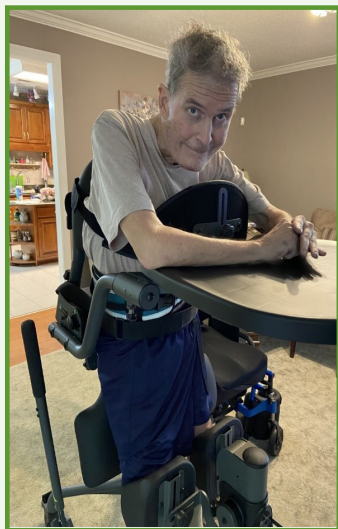
Exploring AT at Work (North Carolina)

Ms. CJ is currently employed with Lowe's Corp. as a Workforce Supervisor in Wilkesboro, NC. Initially, Ms. CJ was concerned about how she would use the keyboard at her job with only one hand. North Carolina Assistive Technology Program staff introduced a few assistive technology options, including a one-handed keyboard, Five Finger Typist software, and speech recognition software. Ms. CJ tested a few options at work. First, she tried the RH Maltron Keyboard, a uniquely shaped, one-handed keyboard that optimizes layout to minimize finger movement by having the more common letters closer to the finger "home position." Next, she borrowed the trial version of Dragon NaturallySpeaking, which allows individuals to create text from their voice, along with a noise canceling headset and microphone. Ms. CJ reported that she loved the technologies and was much more productive at work. She and her employer requested information on how to purchase the items for Ms. CJ to use in her Workforce Supervisor role.

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Device Reutilization Programs

Device reutilization involves transferring a previously owned device from someone who no longer needs it to someone who does. Device reuse falls into two activity categories. The first one, device exchange, usually occurs through an online forum where sellers and buyers can connect. Recycling, refurbishment, and repair (RRR) and/or open-ended loan is the second category. In RRR, devices are typically obtained from individuals who no longer need them, are refurbished, and then provided to new owners.

Open-ended loan programs use the same process as RRR, collecting previously used devices and refurbishing them as needed, and then loaning them to individuals who can use them as long as they are needed. The expectation is that the devices would be returned to the program at some point. For the purposes of this brief, the second category—RRR and/or open-ended loan—will be referred to as device refurbishment.

In FY 2021, 49,502 consumers received a total of 68,061 reutilized devices from 56 AT Programs, resulting in an overall savings of $28.4 million. The most common device reutilization activity was device refurbishment (as described previously). Ninety-eight percent of recipients received devices through a device refurbishment program, saving almost $28 million. Of the services provided through reutilization programs, device refurbishment activities provided the greatest savings to recipients (see Table 5). Daily living and mobility, seating AT comprised 87% of all devices provided through the two reutilization programs. Additionally, these two device types made up 87% of savings totaling over $24 million (see Table 6).

AT acquired through device reutilization programs was primarily used for community living (96%), and was also used to support education (3%) and employment (1%).

Table 5: Number of Recipients, Devices, and Savings by Type of Reutilization Activity

Activity	Number (Percent) of Device Recipients	Number (Percent) of Devices	Total Savings to Recipients	Percent of Savings to Recipients
Device refurbishment	48,726 (98%)	66,841 (98%)	$27,779,475	98%
Device exchange	776 (2%)	1,220 (2%)	$650,629	2%
TOTAL	**49,502 (100%)**	**68,061 (100%)**	**$28,430,104**	**100%**

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Table 6: Device Reutilization Summary by Device Type

Type of AT Device	Number of Devices	Percent of Devices	Total Savings	Percent of Savings
Mobility, seating	35,125	52%	$19,892,751	70%
Daily living	23,925	35%	$4,780,035	17%
Environmental adaptations	3,689	5%	$980,521	3%
Computers and related	2,066	3%	$616,042	2%
Vision	955	1%	$726,036	3%
Learning, cognition	690	1%	$128,776	<1%
Speech	611	1%	$867,170	3%
Recreation, sports, and leisure	409	1%	$148,127	1%
Hearing	385	1%	$90,903	<1%
Vehicle modification and transportation	206	<1%	$199,743	1%
TOTAL	**68,061**	**100%**	**$28,430,104**	**100%**

Shopping Independently (Washington)

Linda has limited mobility due to pain from chronic back issues and arthritis. She had been using a walker inside her apartment but has had difficulty travelling from her front door to the mailbox. Linda did not typically have the stamina to manage the uphill grade to the entrance of the local grocery store, or to cross the busy street before the traffic light changed. Linda came to the Meyer Medical Equipment Center, operated by Washington AT Program's device reuse partner, Bridge Disability Ministries, hoping to find a free or low-cost solution that would work for her fixed budget. Linda and the Center staff determined that a small (but powerful) electric scooter that could fit in her apartment would work well. The Center delivered the scooter to her home and helped adjust it to fit her body. On the first try, Linda was able to use the scooter to get up the hill, cross the street at the traffic light with time to spare, and enter the grocery store, which she had been unable to visit for months! Linda looks forward to using the scooter to regain her mobility and independence.

And the Band Played On (Kansas)

The best part of marching band is being at the games! At least that's what Addie tells us. Addie received a power assist wheelchair from AT for Kansans Reuse so she could keep up with her friends at school. Band students must cross a parking lot to get to the band building. Now, Addie can keep up when friends race up an incline to the cafeteria to grab lunch. She can also ride the school bus more easily, so she never has to miss the away games!

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State Financing

State financing activities assist individuals with disabilities to acquire AT through 3 types of programs:

1) Financial loan programs that provide cash loans that borrowers can use to purchase AT
2) Other financing activities that directly provide AT
3) Additional financing activities that allow consumers to obtain AT for a reduced cost

Financial loan programs can include low-interest loan funds, interest buy-down programs, revolving loan funds, loan guarantees, or other cash borrowing options. Other programs use external funding provided to the AT Program by another agency, and directly provide that AT to eligible recipients. These programs are frequently limited in focus, only providing a particular type of AT (such as telecommunications), are restricted to individuals with a specific kind of disability, or require that individuals be eligible for a specific funding source (such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, vocational rehabilitation, or Medicaid).

State financing activities that reduce the cost of AT include cooperative buying programs, equipment lease programs, and device design and fabrication programs. Funds authorized under the AT Act of 1998, as amended, cannot be used to purchase AT devices or services directly for individual consumers (ED, 2011).

CASH LOAN PROGRAMS

Thirty-three state AT Programs reported data on financial loans made. These programs issued 796 loans for AT devices, totaling $8,423,340. The average annual income of loan recipients was $48,841, and the national average interest rate was 4.2%.

Out of 796 loans issued, 14% were made to applicants with annual incomes of less than $15,000, and another 21% were made to applicants with annual incomes between $15,001 and $30,000. The overwhelming majority of total loan dollars issued (67%) was for vehicle modification and transportation technologies, averaging $22,704 per loan. Hearing AT ranked first in number of devices financed, averaging $2,536 per loan. For a more detailed breakdown of loans by device type, see Table 7.

Table 7: Types and Dollar Amounts of AT Acquired with Financial Loans

Type of AT	Number of Devices Financed	Device Percent	Dollar Value of Loans	Dollar Percent	Avg. Loan Amount
Hearing	610	56%	$1,546,689	18%	$2,536
Vehicle modification and transportation	248	23%	$5,630,534	67%	$22,704
Daily living	69	6%	$259,179	3%	$3,756
Mobility, seating and positioning	60	6%	$479,118	6%	$7,985
Environmental adaptations	38	4%	$348,876	4%	$9,181
Vision	33	3%	$90,046	1%	$2,729
Computers and related	14	1%	$13,479	0%	$963
Recreation, sports, and leisure	8	1%	$52,022	1%	$6,503
Speech communication	4	0%	$2,397	0%	$599
Learning, cognition, and developmental	1	0.09%	$1,000	0%	$1,000
TOTAL	**1,085**	**100%**	**$8,423,340**	**100%**	**$7,763**

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OTHER STATE FINANCING PROGRAMS THAT DIRECTLY PROVIDE AT

Twenty-four states reported data on other financing activities that resulted in the acquisition of AT devices and services. In FY 2021, these programs served 8,068 individuals and provided 15,162 AT devices. Hearing, computers and related devices, and vision devices comprised of 79% of the technologies funded. Computers and related devices made up 36% ($2,424,610) of the total value of AT provided ($6,774,681), and 45% of total devices funded. For a more detailed breakdown, see Table 8.

Table 8: Types and Dollar Amounts of AT Funded

Type of AT	Number of Devices Funded	Device Percent	Dollar Value of AT Provided	Value Percent	Avg. Amount Per Device
Computers and related	6,864	45%	$2,424,610	36%	$353
Hearing	3,526	23%	$889,298	13%	$252
Vision	1,676	11%	$972,397	14%	$580
Daily living	952	6%	$360,972	5%	$379
Speech communication	533	4%	$383,736	6%	$720
Learning, cognition, and developmental	455	3%	$229,682	4%	$505
Mobility, seating and positioning	450	3%	$269,523	4%	$599
Environmental adaptations	369	2%	$836,252	12%	$2,266
Recreation, sports, and leisure	277	2%	$59,703	1%	$216
Vehicle modification and transportation	60	<1%	$348,508	5%	$5,808
TOTAL	**15,162**	**100%**	**$6,774,681**	**100%**	**$447**

OTHER STATE FINANCING PROGRAMS THAT REDUCE THE COST OF AT

Ten states reported data on other state financing activities that allowed consumers to obtain AT at a reduced cost. In FY 2021, these other financing activities served 1,800 individuals, and 9,659 devices were acquired at a total savings of $3,899,673.

Out of all the AT categories, learning, cognition, and developmental AT resulted in the highest savings to consumers ($1,127 per device). Devices for learning and cognition (2,862 devices) and speech communication (2,232 devices) combined made up 53% of acquired devices. This resulted in moderate savings per device ($27 for each speech device). For more information, see Table 9.

AT acquired through state financing activities was primarily used for community living (81%), employment (12%), and education (7%),

Table 9: Types and Dollar Amount of AT Devices Acquired

Type of AT	Number of Devices Acquired	Device Percent	Current Retail Price	Sale Price	Savings	Savings Percent	Avg. Amt. Saved Per Device
Learning, cognition, and developmental	2,862	30%	$3,714,694	$490,183	$3,224,511	83%	$1,127
Speech communication	2,232	23%	$395,828	$334,473	$61,355	2%	$27
Vision	1,348	14%	$586,950	$68,179	$586,950	13%	$385
Computers and related	1,196	12%	$65,585	$54,465	$11,120	<1%	$9
Recreation, sports, and leisure	1,112	12%	$85,430	$71,032	$14,398	<1%	$13
Daily living	590	6%	$52,319	$14,273	$38,046	1%	$64
Mobility, seating and positioning	169	2%	$39,641	$13,966	$25,675	1%	$152
Environmental adaptations	111	1%	$12,577	$9,562	$3,015	<1%	$27
Vehicle modification and transportation	28	<1%	$2,633	$8	$2,625	<1%	$94
Hearing	11	<1%	$1,960	$1,803	$157	<1%	$14
TOTAL	**9,659**	**100%**	**$4,957,617**	**$1,057,944**	**$3,899,673**	**100%**	**$1,913**

Sounds Exciting (Kansas)

Fourth grader JD has significant hearing loss in both ears. His parents' insurance does not cover the full cost of hearing aids. JD's mom is a teacher and was not comfortable approaching the school for funding assistance. Assistive Technology for Kansans (ATK) staff obtained $3,500 from private funders to cover the remaining costs of JD's hearing aids. His mom and teacher say he's like a different boy. He tells everyone about new sounds he hears. JD is excited about his progress on his speech with the increased amplification, and he is eager to go to school every day now.

Life – Long Dependability (Oklahoma)

Phil had been working with the Oklahoma Dept. of Rehabilitation Services (OKDRS) and his bank for almost two years to replace his existing modified vehicle that was over 18 years old. He applied for and received a low-interest loan through ABLE Tech's Financial Loan Program. With this loan and support from OKDRS, Phil was able to get the vehicle he needed. Phil shared, "ABLE Tech came through for me when others didn't, and I couldn't be more thankful! Here's to hoping for another life-long dependable truck." The Alternative Financial Loan Program is a great way to supplement additional funding in collaboration with other programs, such as OKDRS. "It was a pleasure to assist Phil in his employment goals by providing funding for his modified vehicle."
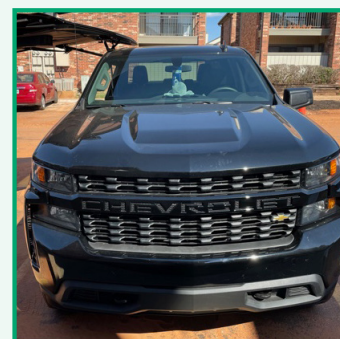
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State Level Activities Performance

ACQUISITION PERFORMANCE

After obtaining services from state AT programs, consumers are surveyed about the primary purpose for the device's use and why they sought out state AT Program services. Consumers are surveyed after they participate in state financing activities, device reuse activities, and/or short-term device loan activities that are not for a decision-making purpose.

Key data highlights:

- 89% of device recipients would not have been able to afford or obtain AT they needed without the State AT Program.
- Community living was by far the most common purpose for AT, at 91%.

ACCESS PERFORMANCE

After participating in a device demonstration and/or short-term device loan for a decision-making purpose, consumers are asked about the kind of decisions they were able to make as a result of these programs, and about the primary purpose for these devices. These services have overwhelmingly contributed to individuals with disabilities or their representatives making an informed decision about AT.

Key data highlights:

- 83% of respondents were able to make an informed decision about matching an AT device to their needs (and avoid purchasing inappropriate devices).
- 60% of consumers stated that community living was the main purpose for their AT use, while 33% said education.

Consumer Satisfaction

AT Program consumers were asked to report their satisfaction with the services they received from four state-level activities. Device reuse, state financing, device loan, and device demonstration programs all received customer satisfaction ratings of 99 percent!

■ Highly Satisfied or Satisfied

■ Satisfied Somewhat or Not at all Satisfied

99%

Device Demo
Device Reuse
Device Loan
State Financing

.1%

ACCESS				ACQUISITION	
PUBLIC AWARENESS & TRAINING	INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE	DEVICE DEMONSTRATION	DEVICE LOAN	DEVICE REUSE	STATE FINANCING

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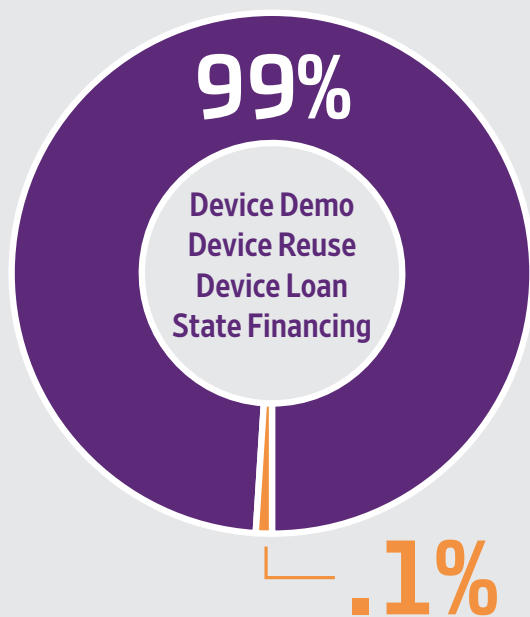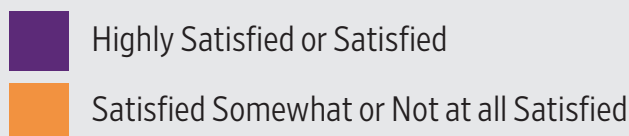
State Leadership Activities

TRAINING

Training activities are instructional events for a specific purpose or audience that are designed to increase participants' knowledge, skills, and competencies around AT. Examples include large or small group classes, workshops, and presentations, and training can be delivered in person or via a variety of distance education mechanisms (ED, 2011).

Out of 98,736 trainees, 26% were representatives of education, followed by representatives of health, allied health, and rehabilitation (17%) and 16% of trainees were individuals with disabilities. View Table 10 for the types of topics that were covered in trainings.

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

Information and assistance (I&A) activities are those in which state AT Programs respond to requests for information or put individuals in contact with other entities. These other entities can provide individuals with information and intensive assistance on AT devices/services or AT funding.

In FY 2021, a total of 242,643 individuals received I&A. Out of those, 24% were individuals with disabilities, 18% were representatives of community living, follow by 17% family members, guardians, and authorized representatives. Seventy-eight percent of recipients requested information about specific AT products/devices/services.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical assistance (TA) is provided by state AT Programs to help public agencies and other organizations improve their, policies, programs and outcomes. As a result of TA and other activities, some AT Programs report improved outcomes with policy, practices, or procedures that resulted in increased access to and acquisition of AT in the state.

In FY 2021, the 56 grantees reported providing a majority of TA to community living agencies (31%) and education agencies (27%). The remaining agency types receiving TA include technology (17%), health, allied health, and rehabilitation (13%), and employment (12%).

Table 10: Percentage of Participants that Attended Trainings by Topic

Percentage of Participants that Attended Trainings by Topic	Definition of Training Topic
53% AT products and services	The focus is on increasing skills and competencies in using AT, and integrating AT into different settings.
24% Combination of topics	AT products/services, AT funding/policy/practice, and information technology/telecommunication access.
11% Information technology/telecommunication access trainings	Accessible information technology and telecommunications, including web access, software accessibility, and procurement of accessible IT.
7% Transition	Education transition (school to work or post-secondary education and IDEA Part C infant and toddler to Part B school aged), or community transition (institution to community living).
5% AT funding/policy/practice	Funding sources and related laws, policies, and procedures required to implement and deliver access to AT devices/services.

ACCESS **ACQUISITION**

PUBLIC AWARENESS & TRAINING | INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE | DEVICE DEMONSTRATION | DEVICE LOAN | DEVICE REUSE | STATE FINANCING

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Public awareness activities provide information on the availability, benefits, appropriateness, and costs of AT devices and services, including a statewide information and referral system. Public awareness activities can include public service announcements, internet outreach and social media, radio talk shows and news reports, newspaper stories and columns, newsletters, brochures, and public forums.

The exact number of people who receive information through these public awareness activities is large, but is often difficult to quantify, and estimates must be reported. Due to the difficulty of quantifying, data for public awareness activities were submitted as anecdotes. The following stories highlight some innovative outreach and awareness efforts conducted by AT programs during FY 2021:

THE ARIZONA AT PROGRAM (AZTAP) developed and implemented a new communication and marketing plan in the last reporting period. The program is now doing the following: a streamlined three-part news and updates email blast four times a year, six training events a year consisting of three thirty-minute lunch and learn sessions on AT devices, two focused trainings on ICT-related topics, and an annual high tech AzTAP Maker event. In addition, AzTAP is doing Facebook social media posting on AT-related topics two times a month and host an annual statewide AT conference. AzTAP also created a new marketing tag line: "AzTAP: Supporting Independence with Assistive Technology."

THE HAWAII AT PROGRAM (ATRC) is featured annually in Generations Magazine, a publication for persons over fifty. The magazine is accompanied by a radio program on which ATRC's Executive Director is featured. Both the magazine and the radio show highlight AT for older persons. ATRC explains what AT is and what it is not, and encourages readers and listeners to visit ATRC's facilities to try the various AT devices that are available. The magazine reaches approximately 25,000 subscribers, while the radio program is island-wide, potentially reaching 1 millium uncreased number of inquiries about its services via email and telephone.

THE IDAHO AT PROGRAM (IATP) participated in an Americans with Disabilities Act "pop up" COVID -19 vaccine event in Latah County in July 2021. IATP hosted a booth with information on services and examples of different types of AT including daily living, computer access, recreation, and education. Though face-to-face events have slowed, IATP continues to provide information to consumers through social media, Padlets and other forms of communication.

Attending fewer events in person due to the COVID pandemic, the **MICHIGAN AT PROGRAM (MATP)** began using social media in a new way to raise awareness about the program. Staff created short videos highlighting AT items that are available for demonstration and short-term loan and shared on them on Tik Tok. The first two videos about AT for Gardening reached 16,112 people. MATP plans to continue using Tik Tok and other social media to raise awareness of the program and its services.

The outreach coordinator for the **MONTANA AT PROGRAM (MONTECH)** was determined to reach remote corners of Montana to spread the news about MonTECH's financial loan program. She drafted a press release and sent it to every small-town newspaper she could find contact information for. At least six newspapers with a total circulation of 10,000 readers picked up the story and ran it during the month of June. From Cut Bank to Powder River, Valier to Glacier, news of MonTECH's services was spread in rural, frontier, and tribal communities. This helped reach MonTECH's goal of doubling the number of financial loans made in FY 2021, an important step to getting more Montanans with disabilities the equipment they need to live more independently.

ACCESS			ACQUISITION	
PUBLIC AWARENESS & TRAINING	INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE	DEVICE DEMONSTRATION	DEVICE LOAN	DEVICE REUSE	STATE FINANCING

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▶ **THE NORTH CAROLINA AT PROGRAM (NCATP)** continues to partner with the North Carolina (NC) AgrAbility project serving farmers and gardeners with disabilities and/or medical limitations across NC. In May 2021, NCATP presented at the Agricultural Safety and Health Workshop. Over 100 farmers and family members attended the virtual event where NCATP staff had the opportunity to discuss the overall program and provide virtual demos of various low-tech devices used in farming and gardening that can assist in preventing injuries. Items such as the garden scooter, long handle tools, modified tools, hauling carts, and various applications were discussed. Several farmers and family members asked questions during the session and have followed up with the NC AgrAbility program to obtain more information and assistance.

▶ **THE NEW YORK AT PROGRAM (TRAID)** partnered with the Golisano Center for Special Needs' Fitness Inclusion Network on a "TRAID on the Trails" event. The event allowed individuals to try out adaptive cycles, kayaks, running chariots and other devices. It featured a group walk and roll, which showed people their options and ways to access equipment. The event highlighted the importance of inclusive fitness and active, healthy lifestyles for individuals in the disability community. "TRAID on the Trails" was also part of the official 1st Mile Canalway Challenge event, inviting people to discover and explore activities along New York's canals and trails.

▶ **VIRGIN ISLANDS AT PROGRAM**. For one month in the summer of 2021 a 30-second radio ad featuring services provided by the Virgin Islands iCanConncect program was aired on 103.05FM - The Reef Broadcasting. The Reef Broadcasting is one of the most popular radio stations because it provides a forum for residents to call in and engage in topics that range from politics to healthcare and everything in between. The Reef Broadcasting reaches the U.S. and the British Virgin Islands and down islands in the Lesser Antilles. It is estimated that about 5,000 individuals heard the daily advertisement.

CONCLUSION

In FY 2021, the network of 56 state and territory assistive technology programs reached close to half a million recipients and participants through the continuum of state-level and state leadership activities providing acquisition of and access to critically needed assistive technology devices and services.

State and Territory Section 4 AT Act Programs have empowered individuals with disabilities of all ages to fully engage in education, employment, and community living, propelling their chances to advance socioeconomically and achieve optimal self-sufficiency. State-level and state leadership activities provide a continuum of services that reach a wide variety of individuals and provide access to a broad range of technologies.

AT Programs enable individuals with disabilities, their representatives, and others working with them to make informed decisions about accessing and acquiring technologies. The streamlined process allows consumers to receive information about a device and become familiar with it through loan and demonstration programs prior to making a costly purchase. When consumers are ready to acquire a device, the reuse and state financing programs provide an affordable purchasing avenue.

REFERENCES

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Rehabilitation Services Administration. Annual report to Congress on the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended, for fiscal years 2007 and 2008. Washington, D.C.: Author.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living. (2020). *Assistive Technology Act.* https://acl.gov/about-acl/authorizing-statutes

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RESOURCE INFORMATION

You can find contact and other information on each State Assistive Technology (AT) Program on the CATADA website under State Program Information.

View Key Summary Tables that provide data on major AT Act activities by state.

View aggregate FY 2021 APR data on all State AT activities.

Read this CATADA publication in an accessible digital format on ACL's website and on the CATADA website.