AT Act Data Brief

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

CATADA
THE CENTER FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT DATA ASSISTANCE

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

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 2020 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 21,533 device demonstrations in FY 2020. Speech and communication was the largest category, comprising 18% of all demonstrations. Nine additional device categories comprised between 1% 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	3,821	18%
Mobility, seating	3,668	17%
Daily living	3,192	15%
Vision	3,175	15%
Learning, Cognition	2,119	10%
Computers and related	1,919	9%
Hearing	1,790	8%
Vehicle modification and transportation	802	4%
Environmental adaptations	731	3%
Recreation, sports, and leisure	316	1%
TOTAL	**21,533**	**100%**

As illustrated in Table 2, individuals with disabilities (47%) comprised nearly half of those participating in device demonstrations in FY 2020, followed by family members, guardians, and authorized representatives (27%). AT demonstrated to consumers was primarily used for community living (67%), education (24%), and employment (9%).

ACCESS | ACQUISITION

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

Table 2: Number of Individuals Who Participated in Device Demonstrations

Type of Individual	Number of Participants	Percent
Individuals with disabilities	18,374	47%
Family members, guardians, and authorized representatives	10,849	27%
Representatives of education	4,157	11%
Representatives of health, allied health, and rehabilitation	3,209	8%
Representatives of community living	1,441	4%
Representatives of technology	735	2%
Representatives of employment	631	1%
TOTAL	**39,396**	**100%**

Discovering Built–in Android Apps

Melvin was having difficulty reading text on objects at work. His vocational rehabilitation counselor contacted the North Dakota AT program for assistance. Over a Zoom videoconference, program staff demonstrated some assistive technologies for Melvin and his mother. They showed Melvin how to use the free, built-in Android TalkBack feature on his phone for reading text aloud.

Through North Dakota AT's virtual demonstration, Melvin also learned about the Android Claro ScanPen app, a free app that takes pictures of text and reads it aloud. ScanPen works especially well on objects, and can even read some handwriting.

By the end of the demonstration, Melvin was testing the app with objects in his apartment, and ScanPen was accurately reading the text aloud. Melvin and his mom were delighted. "Now he can read text messages [from work] and everything on his phone, his TV screen, store flyers, coupons, you name it." Melvin's mom shared. "This was a phenomenal lesson. It was clear."

Opening New Doors

Bernard's family was concerned that he could not hear the doorbell ring when he was home alone. Bernard's caseworker at his local Area Agency on Aging referred him to an occupational therapist (OT) from the Disability Advocates of Kent County, a Michigan AT program subcontractor. In addition to assessing the doorbell, the OT correctly anticipated that Bernard might want to test a Pocket Talker, a hearing device that amplifies sound and reduces background noise. When testing the Pocket Talker, Bernard reported, "I can hear so much better now!"

The OT recommended a strobe light for Bernard that would flash when someone rang the doorbell. The OT also noticed that Bernard was watching TV with the volume turned up very high, and recommended the TV Ears headset, which makes TV audio clearer and reduces background noise. During the follow up visit, Bernard tried the TV Ears and was able to hear his television, even at a low volume. "I love it," Bernard shared.

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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 2020, 56 AT Programs reported providing 24,454 short-term loans of 37,210 AT devices to individuals or entities. Forty-five percent of borrowers were individuals with disabilities, the largest group to whom devices were loaned, followed by family members, guardians, and authorized representatives (19%), and representatives of education (17%). 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	11,094	45%
Family members, guardians, and authorized representatives	4,726	19%
Representatives of education	4,248	17%
Representatives of health, allied health, and rehabilitation	3,097	13%
Representatives of community living	604	3%
Representatives of technology	468	2%
Representatives of employment	217	1%
TOTAL	**24,454**	**100%**

Devices for speech and communication (18%) and mobility and seating (18%) were the most common types of AT devices loaned in FY 2020, followed by computers and related (17%) and devices for daily living (13%). Six additional device categories accounted for the remaining 35% of the device loans made (see Table 4). Seventy percent of device loans (n=17,185) 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 (19%), 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 (54%), education (40%), and employment (6%).

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Table 4: Number of Devices Loaned by Type

Type of AT Device	Number Loaned	Percent
Speech communication	6,581	18%
Mobility, seating	6,527	18%
Computers and related	6,361	17%
Daily living	4,816	13%
Learning, cognition	4,302	12%
Vision	3,152	8%
Environmental adaptations	2,338	6%
Hearing	1,950	5%
Recreation, sports, and leisure	1,112	3%
Vehicle modification and transportation	71	<1%
TOTAL	**37,210**	**100%**

A Big Picture Perspective

John was born with some facial paralysis that made it difficult for him to close one eye. Over the course of his 40-year career as a registered nurse, John's vision has slowly deteriorated. John's nursing job requires him to review medical charts to help prepare patients for surgery, so he was devastated when he learned that his prescription eyeglasses could no longer help him see.

Fortunately, John's doctor told him about the Illinois AT program (IATP). "It was like a breath of fresh air. I had hope again," John said. "They showed me different devices that could help me." John borrowed vision equipment from the IATP Device Loan Program, which enabled him to continue working in surgery.

Now, John uses a special software for his computer, a camera that can project the image of documents on a larger computer screen, and a big keys keyboard. He wrote a letter thanking IATP, saying that the moment he visited the program, he had something he hadn't had in years: hope.

Eating Lunch with Obi

Natalie values her independence at the Orchard Farms School in St. Charles, Missouri. At school, it can take longer for Natalie to eat lunch than her peers. As a result, Natalie stays in the cafeteria for too long, and falls behind in class. Natalie's educational support team had been looking for creative ways to help Natalie keep up with her school tasks.

Natalie and her support team consulted with the Missouri AT program about assistive technologies that could potentially help Natalie. The Missouri AT program recommended Obi, a robotic dining device that helps people feed themselves independently by activating one switch. Now, with Obi, Natalie can eat lunch independently, socialize with her peers without an aide present, and return to class on time to complete her classwork.

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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 2020, 38,692 consumers received a total of 65,638 reutilized devices from 53 AT Programs, resulting in an overall savings of $22.8 million. The most common device reutilization activity was device refurbishment (as described previously). Ninety-six percent of recipients received devices through a device refurbishment program, saving almost $22 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 88% of all devices provided through the two reutilization programs. Additionally, these two device types made up 86% of savings totalling almost $19.6 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	37,512 (97%)	53,258 (81%)	$21,991,563	96%
Device exchange	1,180 (3%)	12,380 (19%)	$907,865	4%
TOTAL	**38,692 (100%)**	**65,638 (100%)**	**$22,899,428**	**100%**

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

Table 6: Device Reutilization Summary by Device Type

Type of AT Device	Number of Devices	Percent of Devices	Total Savings	Percent of Savings
Daily living	29,343	45%	$4,339,201	19%
Mobility, seating	28,316	43%	$15,260,612	67%
Environmental adaptations	3,881	6%	$895,801	4%
Computers and related	1,402	2%	$504,773	2%
Vision	1,191	2%	$591,539	3%
Hearing	442	1%	$126,040	1%
Speech	409	1%	$760,827	3%
Learning, cognition	386	<1%	$82,003	<1%
Recreation, sports, and leisure	211	<1%	$95,377	<1%
Vehicle modification and transportation	57	<1%	$243,255	1%
TOTAL	**65,638**	**100%**	**$22,899,428**	**100%**

Sharing Back

Ciara, a local Mobile County resident, donated her military veteran husband's durable medical equipment to the Mobile Goodwill Easter Seals We Share Program, a partnership with the Alabama AT Program. Ciara graciously gave several high-quality medical items, including an electric wheelchair in excellent condition.

Mr. C, the chaplain for the Mobile Police Department, called the We Share Program to get an electric wheelchair for a local police officer who was injured in the line of duty. They were able to get the wheelchair and deliver it directly to the officer. Through the Alabama AT program, Ciara learned that Mr. C took the wheelchair to the injured officer, so she sold the accessible van to the Mobile Police Department for the injured officer's use!

Home School Solutions

When the COVID-19 pandemic shut down schools in the spring of 2020, Elise, mother of four, found herself managing virtual schooling for all of her kids. One of her children, Max, uses a wheelchair. At school, Max uses a stander throughout the day, which helps him stay supported while standing. However, when Elise requested a stander through her insurance, they denied it for home use. Elise contacted the Virginia AT Program's community reuse contractor for children's durable medical equipment.

The Children's Assistive Technology Service (CATS) was able to provide Elise and Max an Easy Stand Evolve, which offers 60 different standing support positions for Max. CATS's gently used equipment helped Max fully participate in his educational program and be comfortable while learning from home!

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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-five state AT Programs reported data on financial loans made. These programs issued 795 loans for AT devices, totaling $6,373,091. The average annual income of loan recipients was $48,343, and the national average interest rate was 4.1%.

Out of 795 loans issued, 17% were made to applicants with annual incomes of less than $15,000, and another 23% were made to applicants with annual incomes between $15,001 and $20,000. The overwhelming majority of total loan dollars issued (58%) was for vehicle modification and transportation technologies, averaging $19,950 per loan. Hearing AT ranked first in number of devices financed, averaging $2,808 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	551	56%	$1,547,378	24%	$2,808
Vehicle modification and transportation	186	19%	$3,710,736	58%	$19,950
Mobility, seating, and positioning	78	8%	$310,124	5%	$3,976
Daily living	51	5%	$278,173	4%	$5,454
Environmental adaptations	36	4%	$281,804	4%	$7,828
Vision	33	3%	$71,924	1%	$2,180
Computers and related	27	3%	$27,852	<1%	$1,032
Speech communication	12	1%	$39,227	1%	$3,269
Recreation, sports, and leisure	10	1%	$76,593	1%	$7,659
Learning, cognition	3	<1%	$29,280	<1%	$9,760
TOTAL	**987**	**100%**	**$6,373,091**	**100%**	**$6,457**

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OTHER STATE FINANCING PROGRAMS THAT DIRECTLY PROVIDE AT

Twenty one states reported data on other financing activities that resulted in the acquisition of AT devices and services. In FY 2020, these programs served 5,194 individuals and provided 8,240 AT devices. Hearing, computers and related devices, and vision devices comprised of 74% of the technologies funded. Hearing devices made up 21% ($1,010,422) of the total value of AT provided ($4,758,816), and 38% 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
Hearing	3,133	38%	$1,010,422	21%	$323
Computers and related	1,911	23%	$879,207	19%	$460
Vision	1,035	13%	$728,949	15%	$704
Daily living	660	8%	$312,161	7%	$473
Environmental adaptations	451	5%	$908,059	19%	$2,013
Mobility, seating, and positioning	424	5%	$179,400	4%	$423
Speech communication	312	4%	$348,918	7%	$1,118
Learning, cognition	241	3%	$106,438	2%	$442
Vehicle modification and transportation	63	1%	$279,746	6%	$4,440
Recreation, sports, and leisure	10	< 1%	$5,516	< 1%	$552
TOTAL	**8,240**	**100%**	**$4,758,816**	**100%**	**$578**

OTHER STATE FINANCING PROGRAMS THAT REDUCE THE COST OF AT

Nine states reported data on other state financing activities that allowed consumers to obtain AT at a reduced cost. In FY 2020, these other financing activities served 392,231 individuals, and 394,721 devices were acquired at a total savings of $3,968,859. This is a significant increase from FY 2019 as a result of data reported by a single grantee. With schools transitioning to remote learning precipitated by the Covid-19 pandemic, this AT program purchased licenses for remote learning software with the State Education Department causing a potentially one-time significant increase in devices acquired under learning and cognition.

Out of all the AT categories, vision AT resulted in the highest savings to consumers ($980 per device). Devices for learning and cognition (390,413 devices) made up 99% of acquired devices resulting in a modest savings per device of $8. For more information, see Table 9.

AT acquired through state financing activities was primarily used for community living (67%), education (25%), and employment (8%).

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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	390,413	99%	$3,381,756	$84,888	$3,296,868	83%	$8
Speech communication	1,813	<1%	$294,652	$256,415	$38,237	1%	$21
Daily living	1,032	<1%	$58,765	$12,196	$46,569	1%	$45
Vision	563	<1%	$648,081	$96,539	$551,542	14%	$980
Computers and related	277	<1%	$10,127	$4,933	$5,194	<1%	$19
Mobility, seating, and positioning	196	<1%	$26,793	$13,439	$13,354	<1%	$68
Environmental adaptations	197	<1%	$14,992	$10,432	$4,560	<1%	$23
Recreation, sports, & leisure	135	<1%	$21,059	$15,489	$5,570	<1%	$41
Hearing	93	<1%	$15,650	$9,990	$5,660	<1%	$61
Vehicle modification and transportation	2	<1%	$1,305	$0	$1,305	<1%	$653
TOTAL	**394,721**	**100%**	**$4,473,180**	**$504,321**	**$3,968,859**	**100%**	**$1,919**

Creative Adventures

Isabel is a young girl with Cerebral Palsy. Some of her favorite activities involve going out with her mother; just about any daily errand is a fun adventure. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, all of that changed. Because of the virus's risks, Isabel spent most of her time at home, indoors. Even once restrictions were partially lifted, Puerto Rico required that masks be worn in public spaces. Isabel tried many different options, but masking was not tolerable for her.

Isabel's mother contacted the Puerto Rico AT Program (PRATP) to help her find a solution. PRATP's AT Fabrication initiative built Isabel a custom transparent enclosure for her wheelchair, which included a removable, lightweight aluminum frame. The frame was designed to allow Isabel's voluntary and involuntary movements without the cover touching her, which gave her space to look out, move, and use her mother's smartphone on her lap. Soon after installation, fitting, and testing, Isabel and her mother were off running errands, going shopping, and even attending a long-postponed visit to the dentist, all while Isabel remained safe.

An Accessible Van for the Whole Family

Oliver is a 10 year-old boy with Cerebral Palsy. Oliver and his family needed a modified vehicle to help Oliver get to his appointments. Oliver also needed a vehicle that could be adapted and adjusted as he grows. His family set up a "Go Fund Me" page and received $5,000 of donations. Oliver's family also secured a grant for $5,000 and borrowed funds from the Connecticut State AT Program's financing program.

When it was time to pick up the vehicle from the dealer, many people who helped and donated gathered to meet Oliver and his parents. Oliver and his family wanted to thank everyone for making it possible for them to get the modified vehicle. With this new van, Oliver and his parents have a much easier time getting to occupational therapy, physical therapy, and school. Rather than lifting and straining, Oliver can use a ramp to get in the van with his wheelchair.

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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 88%.

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:

- 91% of respondents were able to make an informed decision about matching an AT device to their needs (and avoid purchasing inappropriate devices).
- 61% of consumers stated that community living was the main purpose for their AT use.

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 99.9 percent!

99.9%

Device Demo
Device Reuse
Device Loan
State Financing

.01%

■ Highly Satisfied or Satisfied

■ Satisfied Somewhat or Not at all Satisfied

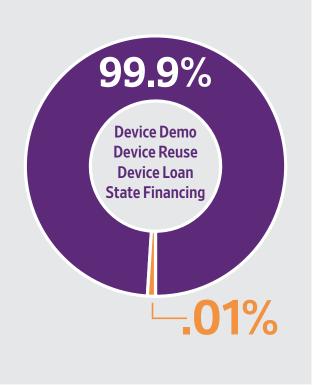| ACCESS | | | | ACQUISITION | |
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State Leadership Activities

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 81,807 trainees, 26% were representatives of education, followed by representatives of health, allied health, and rehabilitation (20%) 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 2020, a total of 187,251 individuals received I&A. Out of those, 45% were individuals with disabilities and representatives of health, allied health, and rehabilitation. Eighty-two 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 organizatons 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 2020, the 56 grantees reported providing a majority of TA to community living agencies (31%) and education agencies (29%). The remaining agency types receiving TA include health, allied health, and rehabilitation (16%), employment (14%), and technology (10%).

Table 10: Percentage of Participants that Attended Trainings by Topic

Percentage of Participants that Attended Trainings by Topic	Definition of Training Topic
46% AT products and services	The focus is on increasing skills and competencies in using AT, and integrating AT into different settings.
31% Combination of topics	AT products/services, AT funding/policy/practice, and information technology/telecommunication access.
10% Information technology/ telecommunication access trainings	Accessible information technology and telecommunications, including web access, software accessibility, and procurement of accessible IT.
9% 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).
4% AT funding/policy/practice	Funding sources and related laws, policies, and procedures required to implement and deliver access to AT devices/services.

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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, FY 2017 was the first year that 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 2020:

▶ In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the **GEORGIA AT PROGRAM** collected and compiled resources for people with disabilities to stay connected, engaged, independent, and safe as our familiar environments rapidly changed. This guide includes over 200 resources with information on virtual platforms, entertainment and recreation, sanitization, speech and communication, and more. We shared this guide in newsletters, on social media, and through other channels from partners across the country.

▶ The **INDIANA AT PROGRAM** produces three popular, widely distributed podcasts: 1) Assistive Technology (AT) Update, 2) Assistive Technology Frequently Asked Questions, and 3) Accessibility Minute. These podcasts draw highly engaged audiences from over 160 countries. In 2020, Feedspot.com recognized AT Update as the #1 AT Podcast in the world. Additionally, the INDATA YouTube Channel has over 2,800 subscribers and features 600+ "Tech Tip" videos with 1.1 million views.

▶ On September 9th, 2020, Public News Service published an online and radio story about how the **MONTANA AT PROGRAM (MONTECH)** uses assistive technology (AT) to help Montana students with disabilities attend school either in person, remotely, or using a hybrid learning model. The MonTECH Program Director and AT Specialist provided comments about plans to increase inventory and offer additional services to meet students' needs across the state. Over 100 media outlets published this story to an estimated audience of 1,177,655 people.

▶ **ALABAMA AT PROGRAM** staff attended the Successful Aging Initiative (SAI), a free, annual event that addresses the needs and concerns of older adults by providing resources to help them make informed decisions, maintain independence, play active roles in society, and improve quality of life. The Alabama AT Program, vendors, and community partners, shared resources with over 600 older adults, caregivers, practitioners, family members, and volunteers. As a result, Alabama AT anticipates receiving more referrals for the reutilization and alternative finance programs.

▶ The **COLORADO AT PROGRAM** participated in the 2020 Denver Metro Regional Science Fair. They demonstrated a power wheelchair with multiple drive modes (e.g. chin-joystick, head-array) and an adaptive Xbox controller with various switch types to over 100 middle and high school students and their guardians. As a result, multiple interested students contacted us to participate in the Center's bioengineering program, future projects, and other activities.

▶ After Maryland shifted to remote work and learning, the **MARYLAND AT PROGRAM** presented a session on AT supports during the Developmental Disability Administrations (DDA) weekly provider resource webinar on June 12, 2020. Our executive director hosted a discussion with DDA leadership and providers, families, and individual clients that focused on using AT to support remote services, reduce social isolation, and continue engaging in needed medical and provider appointments. At least 618 people across Maryland participated.

▶ Over the course of the last year, **NEVADA AT PROGRAM'S CARE CHEST** has professionally produced and released seven short films highlighting our programs and services. The films each feature clients and track their CARE Chest programming use. The films also highlight the community's impact as they donate funds or gently used equipment and supplies for reuse. To date, more than 64,000 people across CARE Chest's service area have watched our films.

▶ The **NEW YORK AT PROGRAM** began promoting TRAID Tuesdays in mid-August 2020 on our agency's Facebook page. Each Tuesday, TRAID staff share videos, photos, and write-ups about common assistive devices that people borrow or purchase, but may not know how to use. Staff answer common questions about different equipment in videos so viewers can watch over and over until they feel comfortable and knowledgeable. So far, TRAID Tuesday posts have reached 15,276 people.

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

13

LEVERAGED FUNDING

Leveraged funding is frequently secured by state AT Programs and is used to expand and maximize services. In FY 2020, state AT Programs leveraged $20.9 million from federal, state, local, and private sources. These dollars were used to supplement $29 million in Section 4 AT Act formula grant funding for FY 2020, and to expand program reach in all AT Act-authorized activities. This brief highlights $54.3 million in savings and benefits delivered by state AT Programs in FY 2020 to almost 770,000 service recipients.

OVERVIEW OF HISTORICAL NATIONAL AGGREGATE DATA

FY 2015 - FY 2020 TREND DATA

When looking at trends in APR data over the last 6 fiscal years, there is variability across the 8 key AT activities. Device demos, loans and reutilization have increased and decreased from year to year while state financing has seen a steady increase from FY 2015 to FY 2019. Fairly significant variance has historically been seen for the two other state financing programs because there is a relatively smaller number of grantees reporting this data and reliance on securing leveraged external funding causes a high level of data instability across fiscal years. Please review Table 11 for more information.

Table 11: Trend Data of Key AT Activities, FY 2015- FY 2020

AT Activity	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Device Demonstrations						
# of demos provided	43,771	47,923	49,056	38,709	33,799	21,533
Device Loan						
# of device loans made	36,432	39,970	37,239	32,353	36,198	24,454
Device Reutilization						
# of devices acquired	64,617	79,223	74,205	70,673	78,412	65,638
State Financing (Cash Loans)						
# of loans made	731	842	853	908	945	795
Other State Financing Programs that Reduce the Cost of AT						
# of devices acquired	4,089	3,628	3,735	2,333	7,977	394,721
Other State Financing Programs that Directly Provide AT						
# of devices acquired	2,899	3,426	5,768	4,859	6,256	8,240
Training						
# of participants	120,483	117,220	125,783	107,658	103,182	81,807
Information & Assistance						
# of recipients	340,745	302,687	324,688	221,175	220,912	187,251

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON FY 2020 DATA

State AT Programs reported reduced quantitative data for most AT Act activities for FY 2020 as compared with FY 2019 assumedly due to the COVID pandemic. As seen in Table 12, other state financing programs data increased while all other activity data decreased to varying degrees from 15% to 36%. Some change is normal for all activities, but the pattern for this comparison is more decrease than increase for most activities. Other state financing activities increased with the most significant increase related to pandemic services and new external funding available because of COVID. A comparison of quantitative data points for FY 2019 to FY 2020 for major AT Act activities is summarized in both Tables 11 and 12. It is difficult to make assumptions about what decreases are directly related to COVID versus normal variance.

Table 12: Total APR Activity Data Change from FY19 to FY20

AT Activity	% change from FY 2019 to FY 2020
Device Demonstrations	36% decrease
Device Loan	32% decrease
Device Reutilization	16% decrease
State Financing (Cash Loans)	16% decrease
Other State Financing Programs that Reduce the Cost of AT	4,848% increase
Other State Financing Programs that Directly Provide AT	32% increase
Training	21% decrease
Information & Assistance	15% decrease

CONCLUSION

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

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RESOURCE INFORMATION

Contact and other information on each State AT Program can be found on the CATADA website under State Program Information. Go here: https://catada.info/state.html

View Key Summary Tables that provide data on major AT Act activities by state.
Go here: https://catada.info/at/?report=summary

Aggregate FY 2020 APR data on all State AT activities can be found here: https://catada.info/aggregate-apr-data

This publication is available in accessible digital format on ACL's website and on the CATADA website at https://catada.info/catada-publications