

A National Data Summary of State Assistive Technology Programs: Fiscal Year 2018

by Daria Domin and John Shepard

Issue No. 11 • 2019

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 2018 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, 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 (Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs [ATAP], 2011). Section 4 of the AT Act requires specific data reporting on services provided via the required state-level and leadership activities (ATAP, 2011). 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. The service flow begins with 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 an informed AT decision has been made, gently used AT can be acquired for little or no cost through reuse programs, financial loan programs or other financing options available. Each activity within the continuum provides critical access or acquisition to AT.



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 2018 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 38,709 device demonstrations in FY 2018. Daily living was the largest category, comprising 19% of all demonstrations. Nine additional device categories comprised between 1% and 15% of all demonstrations (see Table 1).

Table 1: Number of Device Demonstrations by Device Type

Type of AT Device	Number of Demos	Percent
Daily living	7,350	19%
Mobility, seating	5,759	15%
Speech communication	5,295	14%
Vision	5,258	14%
Computers and related	4,580	12%
Learning, cognition	3,787	10%
Hearing	3,694	10%
Environmental adaptations	1,329	3%
Recreation, sports, and leisure	1,242	3%
Vehicle modification and transportation	415	1%
TOTAL	38,709	100%

A Stethoscope Opens Up a Career Path

J is a high school student who has profound deafness. He is pursuing an EMT course through his local community college, and needed a specialized stethoscope in order to hear clearly.

J worked with the Nebraska AT Partnership and the AT4ALL website to compare different stethoscopes until he found a ThinkLabs One Digital Stethoscope that was compatible with his cochlear implant. Unfortunately, Nebraska VR was unable to fund the AT equipment recommended. However, through ATP funding coordination, as well as financial contributions from J and his family, J was able to purchase the stethoscope he needed.

J plans to become a Certified Emergency Medical Technician. After graduation from high school, he will continue his training to become licensed as a paramedic. His stethoscope will allow him to succeed as he trains for and enters this career.

As illustrated in Table 2, individuals with disabilities (41%) comprised nearly half of those participating in device demonstrations in FY 2018, followed by family members, guardians, and authorized representatives (23%). AT demonstrated to consumers was primarily used for community living (66%), education (23%), and employment (11%).

Table 2: Number of Individuals Who Participated in Device Demonstrations

Type of Individual	Number of Participants	Percent
Individuals with disabilities	29,448	41%
Family members, guardians, and authorized representatives	16,999	23%
Representatives of education	10,358	14%
Representatives of health, allied health, and rehabilitation	8,213	11%
Representatives of community living	4,057	6%
Representatives of employment	2,479	3%
Representatives of technology	1,005	>1%
TOTAL	72,559	100%

Independence and Access to Devices

"T" is a 48-year-old man with a history of progressive multiple sclerosis. T contacted the Washington Assistive Technology Act Program (WATAP) to help him achieve his goals of improving voice volume output, using a telephone, and accessing devices that might provide improved access to music, books, environmental controls, and movies.

Through a WATAP AT Specialist, T was provided a demonstration of a voice amplification system and a digital assistant (Amazon Echo) with WiFi switch controllers. Significant improvement was noted with initial trials of the voice amplification system, and he was able to operate Amazon Echo Show and the switch controllers. T was excited to complete even the simplest independent activities using this technology.

After the demo, T was able to borrow the devices. After it was determined these were good matches, T was provided an Amazon Echo Show and two wireless interface switches to control a fan and a table lamp with funding from a private MS foundation fund.

T now uses Echo to correctly answer questions, identify movies of interest, see favorite music lyrics, make a phone call, read books, and operate his room fan. T stated that the equipment had significantly improved his quality of life. To quote T, "She's like my new best friend."



ACCESS

PUBLIC
AWARENESS
& TRAINING

INFORMATION
& ASSISTANCE

DEVICE
DEMONSTRATION

DEVICE
LOAN

ACQUISITION

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 2018, 56 AT Programs reported providing 32,353 short-term loans of 49,721 AT devices to individuals or entities. 39% of borrowers were individuals with disabilities, the largest group to whom devices were loaned, followed by representatives of education (20%), and family members, guardians, and authorized representatives (19%). 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	12,545	39%
Representatives of education	6,592	20%
Family members, guardians, and authorized representatives	6,281	19%
Representatives of health, allied health, and rehabilitation	4,677	14%
Representatives of community living	1,197	4%
Representatives of technology	582	2%
Representatives of employment	479	>1%
TOTAL	32,353	100%

Heath: Feeding Himself with Obi

Being fed by his parents at home wasn't a big deal for Heath. As a fourth grader with cerebral palsy, he was used to it. But being fed at school in front of his peers? "It was just really weird having other people watching me while I was getting fed by an adult," he explained.

MonTECH (Montana's AT Program) arranged for a trial of Obi, a robotic feeding companion. Heath's multiple test drives of Obi showed he was able to use Obi to eat independently. Coupled with mom Jenny's research about the health benefits of self-feeding, the Montgomerys were able to pursue funding for an Obi for Heath.

Now Heath's Obi allows him to eat independently at school, at home, and in restaurants. Heath's classmate confirms the cool factor: "We think it's just really awesome that Heath can eat by himself without his mom."



Devices for computers and related devices (18%) were the most common types of AT devices loaned in FY 2018. This was followed by speech communication devices (17%) and devices for learning and cognition (15%). Seven additional device categories accounted for the remaining 50% of the device loans made (see Table 4). 67% of device loans (n=21,702) 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 (18%), as a loaner during repair/waiting for funding (7%), and for training/personnel development (7%).

AT acquired through device loan programs was primarily used for community living (64%), education (30%), and employment (6%).

Table 4: Number of Devices Loaned by Type

Type of AT Device	Number Loaned	Percent
Computers and related	9,044	18%
Speech communication	8,331	17%
Learning, cognition	7,320	15%
Daily living	6,215	12%
Mobility, seating	5,711	11%
Vision	5,228	11%
Environmental adaptations	3,367	7%
Hearing	2,306	5%
Recreation, sports, and leisure	2,147	4%
Vehicle modification and transportation	52	<1%
TOTAL	49,721	100%

Jonay: Eye - Gaze Success

Jonay is a teenage girl who is quadriplegic and uses a wheelchair. She is non-verbal and did not have a functional way to communicate with her peers, teachers, and family members using conventional words. Due to her medical condition, Jonay has limited movement of her hands and fingers and cannot operate a standard computer or communication device.

The loan bank at the Colorado AT program allowed Jonay and her family to borrow three different eye gaze devices for a diagnostic trial. Eye gaze devices allow people with limited mobility to use eye movement to convey their thoughts. The family determined that a Tobii i-12 with eye gaze technology and customized larger buttons and a smaller screen would meet Jonay's needs and still be accessible for face-to-face interactions.

For the first time, Jonay was able to make requests for food and drink, and to share her basic wants and needs. Her family members said: "Thank you for giving this teenager a way to get her teenage words out into this world and to say things that are on her mind! The possibilities are limitless. We are now meeting to explore options to fund the device for use every day at school and at home."



ACCESS

PUBLIC
AWARENESS
& TRAINING

INFORMATION
& ASSISTANCE

DEVICE
DEMONSTRATION

DEVICE
LOAN

ACQUISITION

DEVICE
REUSE

STATE
FINANCING

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 2018, 59,149 consumers received a total of 70,673 reutilized devices from 55 AT Programs, resulting in an overall savings of \$28 million. Mobility, seating, and daily living AT comprised 87% of all devices provided through reuse programs (see Table 5).

The most common device reutilization activity was device refurbishment (as described previously). Ninety-seven percent of recipients received devices through a device refurbishment program, saving over \$26 million. Of the services provided through reutilization programs, device refurbishment activities provided the greatest savings to recipients (see Table 6).

AT acquired through device reutilization programs was primarily used for community living (95%), and was also used to support education (3%) and employment (2%).

Table 5: Device Reutilization Summary by Device Type

Type of AT Device	Number of Devices	Percent of Devices	Total Savings	Percent of Savings
Mobility, seating	35,162	51%	\$18,573,549	70%
Daily living	24,701	36%	\$4,828,233	18%
Environmental adaptations	4,477	7%	\$951,203	4%
Computers and related	1,603	2%	\$452,930	2%
Hearing	566	1%	\$249,101	1%
Speech communication	471	1%	\$711,849	1%
Learning, cognition	467	1%	\$83,329	<1%
Vision	630	1%	\$429,207	2%
Recreation, sports, and leisure	410	1%	\$294,195	1%
Vehicle modification and transportation	45	<1%	\$90,853	<1%
TOTAL	68,532	100%	\$26,664,449	100%



Table 6: 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	57,233 (97%)	68,532 (97%)	\$26,664,449	95%
Device exchange	1,916 (3%)	2,141 (3%)	\$1,411,324	5%
TOTAL	59,149 (100%)	70,673 (100%)	\$28,075,773	100%

Locating AT Post-Hurricane Matthew

In August 2018, 17 months after Hurricane Matthew hit North Carolina, the North Carolina Assistive Technology Program (NCATP) got a call from NC Emergency Management regarding two hurricane survivors needing AT and durable medical equipment. The survivors needed a manual reclining wheelchair, a standing lift, an electric hospital bed, and a lift chair. Both individuals lived in the Roberson County area (a very rural portion of NC).

Frank Harden, NCATP's reuse coordinator, contacted individuals across the state to locate the items needed. Within hours, he found a gentleman near Raleigh who had recently lost his wife from a lengthy illness. He wanted to donate durable medical equipment to the NCATP reuse program. The items to be donated were exactly the items needed by the two hurricane survivors.

NCATP arranged for pickup and delivery to the survivors, about 2 hours from Raleigh, and within 2 days of the original request, they had all the equipment they needed.



Brenda: An Adapted Chair Through Device Reuse

Brenda is 17 and acquired a spinal cord injury nearly three years ago. As an underinsured high level quadriplegic, she was discharged from the hospital with only a standard wheelchair. Healthy long-term living would require a motorized reclining wheelchair, and Brenda had no way to get one.

Brenda qualified to receive the type of chair she needed from New Mexico's AT reutilization program partner. Her physical therapist worked with her to operate the adapted chair. She now independently moves around school, her home, and the community.

Brenda wrote a thank you letter to the program: "I won't have to spend as much time waiting, and I'll be able to do other things independently. I really like how there is a cup holder, because I will be able to drink whenever I want." The ability to change positions and drink independently will prevent issues such as pressure sores and urinary infections.

Brenda is pictured getting onto the local para-transit service by herself, for the first time. She is excited that this wheelchair increases her independence, self-esteem, and health.



ACCESS

PUBLIC
AWARENESS
& TRAINING

INFORMATION
& ASSISTANCE

DEVICE
DEMONSTRATION

DEVICE
LOAN

ACQUISITION

DEVICE
REUSE

STATE
FINANCING

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, and
- 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 IDEA, 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-four state AT Programs reported data on financial loans made. These programs issued 908 loans for AT devices, totaling \$7,867,423. The average annual income of loan recipients was \$43,555, and the national average interest rate was 3.89%.

Out of 908 loans issued, 25% were made to applicants with annual incomes of less than \$15,000, and another 25% were made to applicants with annual incomes between \$15,001 and \$20,000. The overwhelming majority of total loan dollars issued (73%) was for vehicle modification and transportation technologies, averaging \$20,551 per loan. Hearing AT ranked first in number of devices financed, averaging \$3,538 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	334	36%	\$1,181,630	15%	\$3,538
Vehicle modification and transportation	281	30%	\$5,774,805	73%	\$20,551
Mobility, seating, and positioning	85	9%	\$315,332	4%	\$3,710
Computers and related	83	9%	\$53,367	1%	\$643
Daily living	69	7%	\$168,755	2%	\$2,446
Environmental adaptations	38	4%	\$263,562	3%	\$6,936
Vision	27	3%	\$72,494	1%	\$2,685
Learning, cognition	10	1%	\$4,753	<1%	\$475
Recreation, sports, and leisure	6	1%	\$32,725	<1%	\$5,454
Speech communication	0	0%	\$0	0%	\$0
TOTAL	933	100%	\$7,867,423	100%	\$8,432



OTHER STATE FINANCING PROGRAMS THAT DIRECTLY PROVIDE AT

Eighteen states reported data on other financing activities that resulted in the acquisition of AT devices and services. In FY 2018, these programs served 3,359 individuals and provided 4,859 AT devices. Hearing, vision, and computer devices comprised 71% of the technologies funded. Environmental adaptations made up 18% (\$677,509) of the total value of AT provided (\$3,722,993), but only 4% 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	1,327	27%	\$393,062	11%	\$296
Vision	1,085	22%	\$822,491	22%	\$758
Computers and related	1,047	22%	\$653,666	18%	\$624
Mobility, seating, and positioning	383	8%	\$210,159	6%	\$549
Daily living	292	6%	\$186,593	5%	\$639
Learning, cognition	236	5%	\$101,974	3%	\$432
Speech communication	207	4%	\$203,723	5%	\$984
Environmental adaptations	191	4%	\$677,509	18%	\$3,547
Vehicle modification and transportation	79	2%	\$460,635	12%	\$5,831
Recreation, sports, and leisure	12	< 1%	\$13,181	< 1%	\$1,098
TOTAL	4,859	100%	\$3,722,993	100%	\$766

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 2018, these other financing activities served 2,190 individuals, and 2,333 devices were acquired at a total savings of \$712,610.

Out of all the AT categories, hearing AT resulted in the highest savings to consumers (\$1,891 per device). Devices for learning and cognition (1,172 devices) and vision (524 devices) combined made up 72% of acquired devices. This resulted in moderate savings per device (\$80 for each device for learning and cognition, and \$905 for each vision device). For more information, see Table 9.



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. Amount Saved Per Device
Learning, cognition	1,172	50%	\$161,395	\$67,583	\$93,812	13%	\$80
Vision	524	22%	\$511,712	\$37,307	\$474,405	67%	\$905
Daily living	311	13%	\$22,608	\$10,913	\$11,695	2%	\$38
Mobility, seating, and positioning	244	10%	\$41,840	\$11,184	\$30,656	4%	\$126
Hearing	36	2%	\$70,712	\$2,619	\$68,093	10%	\$1,891
Computers and related	20	1%	\$13,339	\$25	\$13,314	2%	\$666
Environmental adaptations	14	1%	\$20,046	\$2,371	\$17,675	2%	\$1,263
Recreation, sports, and leisure	9	0%	\$700	\$0	\$700	0%	\$78
Speech communication	3	0%	\$2,260	\$0	\$2,260	0%	\$753
Vehicle modification and transportation	0	0%	\$0	\$0	\$0	0%	\$0
TOTAL	2,333	100%	\$844,612	\$132,002	\$712,610	100%	\$5,799

AT acquired through state financing activities was primarily used for community living (61%), education (31%), and employment (7%). Additional data on other state financing programs can be viewed under Aggregate APR data in the State Financing Other table on Catada.info.

Latrisa: AT Devices to Help with Low Vision

Latrisa, a single mom, became partially blind in January 2017. She learned about the Louisiana Assistive Technology Access Network (LATAN), and became familiar with some assistive devices for vision, including an Amigo HD video magnifier and MAGic Screen Reading and Magnification Software.

Latrisa was able to use LATAN's new AT Lease Program to help her to afford the devices she needed to see. She reported that being able to lease the devices allowed her a little freedom, and she was able to get a seasonal job with Amazon because she has this assistive technology.



ACCESS

PUBLIC
AWARENESS
& TRAINING

INFORMATION
& ASSISTANCE

DEVICE
DEMONSTRATION

DEVICE
LOAN

ACQUISITION

DEVICE
REUSE

STATE
FINANCING

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:

- 67% of consumers stated that they could only afford AT through these programs.
- Community living was by far the most common purpose for AT, at 73%.

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.

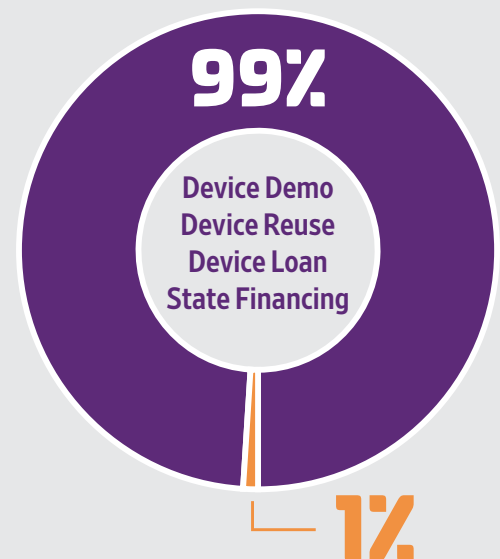
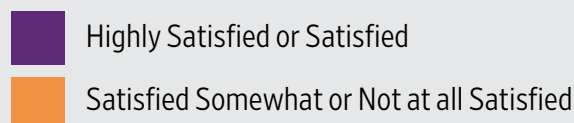
Key data highlights:

- 77% of respondents stated that an AT device would meet their needs, or those of someone they represent.
- 50% of consumers stated that community living was the main purpose for their AT use.

Comprehensive data on aggregate performance measures can be viewed in the [Performance Measures table](#) on [Catada.info](#).

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!**



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 107,658 trainees, 29% were individuals with disabilities, and a close second (23%) were representatives of education. There was a 14% decrease in the number of people trained from FY 2017. More detailed training data can be viewed under Aggregate APR data in the Training table on Catada.info.

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 2018, a total of 221,175 individuals received I&A. Out of those, 46% were individuals with disabilities and representatives of health, allied health, and rehabilitation. 81% of recipients requested information about specific AT products/devices/services. More detailed I&A data can be viewed under Aggregate APR data in the Information and Assistance table on Catada.info.

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 2018, the 56 grantees reported providing a majority of TA to educational agencies (34%) and community living agencies (26%).

Table 10: Percentage of Agencies that Received Technical Assistance

Percentage of participants that attended trainings by topic	Definition
56% AT products and services	The focus is on increasing skills and competencies in using AT, and integrating AT into different settings.
22% Combination of topics	AT products/services, AT funding/policy/practice, and information technology/telecommunication access.
9% AT funding/policy/practice	Funding sources and related laws, policies, and procedures required to implement and deliver access to AT devices/services.
8% Transition	Education transition (school to work or post-secondary education and Part C to Part B), community transition (institution to community living), and other transitions.
5% Information technology/telecommunication access trainings	Accessible information technology and telecommunications, including web access, software accessibility, and procurement of accessible IT.

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 (ED, 2011). 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 2018:


 **THE ARKANSAS AT PROGRAM** partnered with the University of Central Arkansas Occupational Therapy (OT) Department to provide a student AT training day. During the open training, AT Program staffers gave AT technology tours, demonstrations, and presentations to OT students, faculty, and other attendees. This was a chance for new OT students to view and learn about resources and technologies. About 35 people attended, resulting in positive feedback and requests for future events. AT Program leadership are planning to make this an annual event.


 **COLORADO AT PROGRAM** faculty and staff have been invited speakers at numerous conferences over the last year. The program's executive director presented a live streaming event in Las Vegas at the Consumer Electronics Show. She was able to reach over 200,000 people with information on the value of AT for the aging population. She also presented on software and app accessibility at the Grace Hopper Women in Computing Conference to an audience of over 20,000.


 During FY 2017, the **FLORIDA AT PROGRAM** partnered with a public relations firm to conduct focus groups. The report from these focus groups detailed the need to provide disability-specific information via social media. With the start of FY 2018, the program implemented a new mass media plan to address this need. In May 2018, the program enhanced the plan by adding more graphics to all social media posts. These changes produced 35,271 reaches and impressions.


 The **IDAHO AT PROGRAM** uses both Facebook and Pinterest pages to share information with consumers. On Facebook, followers learn about project services, project events, and new and innovative devices. Pinterest is used to share device information and ideas on mobility, environmental adaptations, recreation, and sports and leisure. The program has over 1,100 followers on Pinterest, and its Facebook posts have reached over 16,798 people around the world.


 The **MAINE AT PROGRAM**'s director appeared on the Maine Calling Show on Maine Public Radio on March 1, 2018. The director explained the impact of AT in the lives of individuals with disabilities, and described examples of AT devices for education, work, and community living. During the call-in section of the radio broadcast, the director answered several questions from callers about AT resources in Maine. The show aired to an estimated public audience of 100,000.

 **NEVADA AT PROGRAM** partner Easterseals Nevada, NV Disability Advocacy and Law Center, and United Way provided outreach to Nevada's Hispanic community to demonstrate what AT is, what devices are available, and how to access the devices. The main focus was on children and how to access services through the school district. The NATE Project (run by Easterseals) was shared as a resource to learn about and try out devices. Outreach occurred through events at three different community centers, and raised public awareness significantly.

 One of the **PENNSYLVANIA AT PROGRAM**'s regional centers (ATRC) has two correctional facilities within its service area that are designated to house individuals with medical conditions. ATRC leadership has been trying for years to reach this underserved population, and was finally invited to attend a transition event for 110 formerly incarcerated individuals, friends, and family to share information about AT services and programs.

 During this reporting period, the **PUERTO RICO ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM** participated in several radio and television interviews to reach areas of the island that were severely damaged by hurricanes Irma and María. In the interviews, program staff shared information about reused AT devices, repair services, and low-cost AT adaptation services. These interviews reached about 15,000 people by radio and over 10,000 by television in communities where people with disabilities needed help with replacing AT equipment that was lost or damaged in the storms.

 **VIRGINIA AT PROGRAM** staff provided an "AT @ Work" presentation at the Virginia Manufacturing Association's conference as a main event. The presentation covered how AT devices/services fit well with the "lean manufacturing" philosophy implemented by manufacturers. Participants were primarily business owners and managers. Staff educated attendees on the benefits of AT, as well as the benefits of hiring qualified Virginians with disabilities.

 The **WEST VIRGINIA ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM** (WVATS) was contacted by the local television station to discuss accessible playgrounds. WVATS partnered with Kanics Inclusive Design Services to provide a two-segment interview about the components of accessible playgrounds and equipment for adaptive play. Equipment from the WVATS loan library was featured in the interview, which was aired across the state twice. Following the broadcasts, loans for adapted recreation equipment increased. WVATS also received more calls about how to adapt certain activities.

ACCESS

ACQUISITION

PUBLIC
AWARENESS
& TRAINING

INFORMATION
& ASSISTANCE

DEVICE
DEMONSTRATION

DEVICE
LOAN

DEVICE
REUSE

STATE
FINANCING

Initiatives from the Field

This section highlights coordination and collaboration of activities among public and private entities responsible for policies, procedures, or funding for the provision of AT devices and services.

COMMUNITY LIVING

The North Carolina Assistive Technology Program (NCATP) received a high-impact technology grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeves Foundation in 2018. These funds have been used to establish the NC RAMMP (Ramp Access Makes Mobile People) program, providing temporary portable ramps for individuals impacted by medical conditions or natural disasters. Policies, procedures, and leveraged funding have been developed ensuring the RAMMP program will continue following the one-year grant funding.



EMPLOYMENT

Over this past year, Assistive Technology Program of Colorado (ATP) has worked tirelessly in meetings with the state's Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to establish a memorandum of understanding (MOU) regarding shared responsibilities and priorities around AT. The AT Program and the DVR have a renewed formal relationship, and will work together to offer education to DVR counselors. The AT Program has already received increased referrals for clients needing AT assessments and device demonstrations as well as requests for training.



The MOU outlines the process of referral for AT services and the responsibilities of both agencies to provide information and resources around AT with regard to device demonstrations, device loans, alternate financing, training, technical assistance, and information and referral. DVR will continue to serve on the AT Coalition, sit on the advisory board for the Colorado Technology Act Program, and collaborate with the AT Program.

EDUCATION

The Illinois Assistive Technology Program (IATP) introduced legislation to address how AT is incorporated into students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). One bill requires that parents and guardians of students with IEPs will be informed about the availability of AT. If the IEP team determines the student does not need AT, parents will be given notification in writing of why that determination was made. They will also be given information about the IATP, including contact information. Additionally, the Illinois State Board of Education is developing guidance on how local districts can record unsuccessful AT trials in the IEP to inform future trials and exploration and support quality AT considerations.



TECHNOLOGY

Oklahoma ABLE Tech provides training and technical assistance on the accessibility of electronic and information technology (EIT) to all Oklahoma state agencies, higher education institutions, and the state's Career and Technology Education system. With the recent changes to federal EIT standards, Oklahoma had to revise its state EIT standards to be in compliance. ABLE Tech worked closely with the Oklahoma Office of Management and Enterprise Services to revise Oklahoma's EIT standards to meet the latest national guidelines for accessibility.



LEVERAGED FUNDING

Leveraged funding is frequently secured by state AT Programs and is used to expand and maximize services. In FY 2018, state AT Programs leveraged \$21.1 million from federal, state, local, and private sources. These dollars were used to supplement \$28 million in Section 4 AT Act formula grant funding for FY 2018, and to expand program reach in all AT Act-authorized activities. This brief highlights close to \$63 million in savings and benefits delivered by state AT Programs in FY 2018 to over 500,000 service recipients.

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

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.

Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (2011, May). History of the Assistive Technology Act. Springfield, IL.



THE CENTER FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT DATA ASSISTANCE

AT ACT DATA BRIEF SERIES | ISSUE NO 11, 2019 | WWW.CATADA.INFO



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This publication is the 11th in a series of AT Act Data Briefs, and has been supported by the Center for Assistive Technology Act Data Assistance (CATADA). CATADA is a collaborative project of the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston, and the Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs. The project described is supported by Grant Number 90ATTA0002-01-00 from the Administration for Community Living. Any opinions reflected herein are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Administration for Community Living.

The authors would like to thank the Assistive Technology Programs for contributing stories for this brief.

Prepared by:

Daria Domin & John Shepard
Institute for Community Inclusion, University of Massachusetts Boston

RESOURCE INFORMATION

Contact and other information on each State AT Program can be found on the new CATADA website under State Program Information. View Key Summary Tables under DATA that provide data on the major AT Act activities by state. This publication is available in accessible digital format on ACL's website and on the CATADA website at <https://catada.info/catada-publications>