

## A National Data Summary of State Assistive Technology Programs: Fiscal Year 2023

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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 2023 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.



# 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 2023 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 31,731 device demonstrations in FY 2023. Speech communication was the largest category, comprising 24% of all demonstrations. Nine additional device categories comprised between 3% and 18% 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	7,486	24%
Vision	5,656	18%
Daily living	4,480	14%
Mobility, seating	3,374	11%
Computers and related	3,035	10%
Learning, Cognition	2,644	8%
Hearing	1,431	4%
Vehicle modification/transportation	1,238	4%
Recreation, leisure	1,235	4%
Environmental adaptations	1,152	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31,731</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Back to School with Renewed Independence (Colorado)



Francesca was a sophomore in college when she was struck by a cyclist on campus. After the accident, Francesca was hospitalized and received a preventative operation. Due to surgical complications, Francesca was left completely blind and with permanent anoxic brain damage.

After relearning to talk, walk, and navigate the world, she returned to school. She had tried using other programs in the past but found their commands too difficult to memorize. Her clinician was able to find and demonstrate J-Say, a novel software that integrates Dragon with JAWS and makes the verbal commands

easier to learn. Francesca finished the semester with excellent grades on top of publishing a story in the school's literary magazine. Francesca stated, "My work with the Colorado Center for Inclusive Design & Engineering Clinic and the tools they taught me to use have made it possible to be independent again and get back to school."



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As illustrated in Table 2, individuals with disabilities (50%) comprised half of those participating in device demonstrations in FY 2023, followed by family members, guardians, and authorized representatives (24%). AT demonstrated to consumers was primarily used for community living (62%), education (28%), and employment (10%).

**Table 2: Number of Individuals Who Participated in Device Demonstrations**

Type of Individual	Number of Participants	Percent
Individuals with Disabilities	26,197	50%
Family Members, Guardians and Authorized Representatives	12,903	24%
Health, Allied Health, Rehabilitation	5,065	10%
Representative of Education	4,308	8%
Representative of Community Living	2,003	4%
Representative of Employment	1,468	3%
Representative of Technology	785	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52,729</b>	<b>100%</b>

## An Intergenerational Teaching Moment (Illinois)

Arlys learned about the Illinois Assistive Technology Program (IATP) when a representative from IATP presented to the assisted living facility where she resides. During the presentation, Arlys became aware of IATP's free programs and services for people with disabilities and health conditions in Illinois. Arlys later arranged a tour of the IATP Demonstration Center for her granddaughter, Madison, and Madison's friend, Jess, an Occupational Therapy student. Arlys thought it would be beneficial for the younger generation to learn about assistive technology devices and how the devices can help people with disabilities.

In the Demonstration Center's Smart Home kitchen, Arlys discovered tools that would increase her access to items in the cupboards, adaptive shelving options, and improve her ability to open bottles and jars unassisted. IATP staff were happy they were able to acquaint Arlys' family and friends with the different types of assistive technology, and that Arlys was able to find something that would help her continue to be as independent as possible in her home.



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# Device Loans

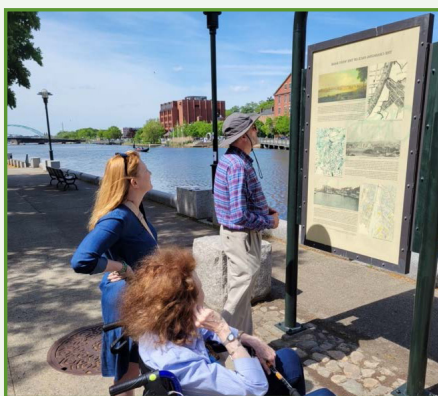
Device loan programs allow AT consumers and professionals who provide services to individuals with disabilities to borrow AT devices for use at home, at school, at work, and in the community. The purpose of a device loan may be to assist in decision-making, to fill a gap while the consumer is waiting 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 2023, 56 AT Programs reported providing 31,344 short-term loans of 50,951 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 (18%), 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	13,791	44%
Family Members, Guardians and Authorized Representatives	5,745	18%
Representative of Education	4,952	16%
Health, Allied Health, Rehabilitation	4,178	13%
Representative of Community Living	1,585	5%
Representative of Technology	798	3%
Representative of Employment	295	1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31,344</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Sight - Seeing in Style (Rhode Island)



A consumer contacted a local provider because her mom was visiting from South Carolina for her birthday. The consumer's mom needed a mobility device to help her access the consumer's condominium complex here in Rhode Island, and to help her go sight-seeing. The consumer called Ocean State Center for Independent Living (OSCIL) and was able to pick up a loaner transport chair for her mother to use during the trip. Both mom and daughter were so happy to be able to spend time together sight-seeing.





Devices for speech and communication (24%) and computers and related (16%) were the most common types of AT devices loaned in FY 2023, followed by mobility and seating (15%) and devices for daily living (13%). Six additional device categories accounted for the remaining 44% of the device loans made (see Table 4). Approximately 74% of device loans (n=23,099) were made to individuals to assist with decision-making. Other reasons borrowers cited for wanting a short-term device loan included for accommodation (18%), for training/personnel development (4%), and for use as a loaner during repair/waiting for funding (5%).

AT acquired through device loan programs was primarily used for community living (55%), education (40%), and employment (5%).

**Table 4: Number of Devices Loaned by Type**

Type of AT Device	Number Loaned	Percent
Speech, Communication	12,428	24%
Computers and related	8,360	16%
Mobility, seating	7,577	15%
Daily living	6,802	13%
Learning, Cognition	4,852	10%
Vision	3,713	7%
Environmental adaptations	2,803	6%
Recreation, leisure	2,613	5%
Hearing	1,718	3%
Vehicle mod/transportation	85	<1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50,951</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Adapting Technology for Every Age (Kansas)



Assistive Technology for Kansans (ATK) staff has an ongoing relationship with a first-grade girl who was born with hydrocephalus and other neurological disabilities. She started her AT communication experience with a Big Mac switch and a switch-operated squealing pig toy at the age of 19 months. Everyone learned she had a lot to say, and she progressed through a range of communication devices that she borrowed from the Western AT Site and the ATK Device Loan System.

When she was six, the team progressed to eye gaze access. She borrowed a PC Eye Mobile from ATK. She was able to read books, play with dolls, and participate in interactive games. ATK staff arranged for two vendors to trial devices. After borrowing one device for a few weeks, her parents and the school team agreed it was time to fund through private health insurance. The AT specialist provided documentation of all the communication devices she had used and progressed past. The initial request was denied but the team prevailed on the second request. She now uses a TD I-13 with partner window in back and the Daessy mount. She uses TD Snap and Communicator, and other communication software she knew from previous devices. She now generates original messages, engages in class discussions, asks and answers questions, and describes her feelings. She has mastered operational tasks such as volume, pausing/unpausing, and page navigation.



# 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 2023, 66,462 consumers received a total of 93,356 reutilized devices from 56 AT Programs, resulting in an overall savings of \$38.2 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 \$37 million. Of the services provided through reutilization programs, device refurbishment activities provided the greatest savings to recipients (see Table 5). Daily living, environmental, and mobility, seating AT comprised 92% of all devices provided through the two reutilization programs. Additionally, these three device types made up 92% of savings totaling over \$35.1 million (see Table 6).

AT acquired through device reutilization programs was primarily used for community living (97%), and was also used to support education (2%) and employment (1%).

## Minor Adjustments, Major Improvement (Alabama)

At his 6-year-old birthday party, Maverick broke his leg while playing with his friends. For eight long weeks, Maverick couldn't put any weight on his leg. His parents began looking for a child-sized wheelchair, knowing he would need it to manage first grade. They couldn't find one anywhere. During their search, they found the "We Share" project at Goodwill Gulf Coast, a reuse project of Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. Because child-sized medical equipment is scarce, "We Share" staff got to work; they found a small adult wheelchair that had potential to meet Maverick's needs. They adjusted the wheelchair's height to keep it as low to the ground as possible, and made a few tweaks to brakes, upholstery, and arm rests, which made the chair like new. The final touch was an elevating leg rest so that Maverick could keep his leg straight out. Maverick was able to ride through the holidays in style!



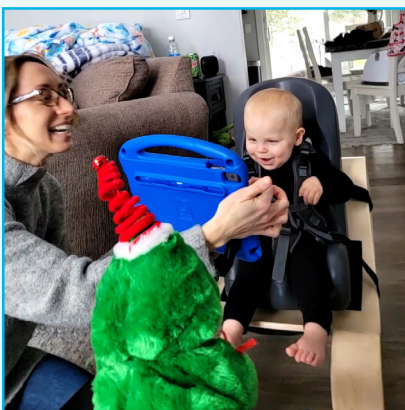
**Table 5: Number of Recipients, Devices, and Savings by Type of Reutilization Activity**

Activity	Number (Percent) of Device Recipients	Number (Percent) of Devices	Total Savings to Recipients	Percent of Savings to Recipients
Device refurbishment	64,017 (96%)	83,976 (90%)	\$36,533,672	96%
Device exchange	2,445 (4%)	9,380 (10%)	\$1,662,289	4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>66,426 (100%)</b>	<b>93,356 (100%)</b>	<b>\$38,195,961</b>	<b>100%</b>

**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	53,742	58%	\$26,556,467	70%
Daily living	30,039	32%	\$7,703,126	20%
Environmental	4,493	5%	\$923,984	2%
Computers	1,777	2%	\$568,418	1%
Speech	1,062	1%	\$1,168,232	3%
Vision	771	1%	\$690,860	2%
Hearing	549	1%	\$179,034	<1%
Rec/leisure	495	<1%	\$172,614	<1%
Vehicle mod	243	<1%	\$155,259	<1%
Learning/cognition	185	<1%	\$77,967	<1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>93,356</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$38,195,961</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Support for a Seating System (Michigan)



A speech therapist with Michigan's Early On Program approached the Michigan Assistive Technology Program (MATP) asking for assistive technology supports for Lennon, an 18-month-old girl with a rare genetic condition that results in low muscle tone. Lennon was just learning how to sit with props. The Early On therapists recommended a Special Tomato Soft Touch with Roller Base device to help Lennon participate in play, socializing, therapies, and eating. The therapist asked if the family could borrow the seating system while they worked on getting the device through their insurance. Early On, the school system, and the Education Lending Library, Alt Shift, could not loan or provide the needed device.

MATP provided the device for open-ended loan while the family pursued insurance funding. Now, Lennon can move around with her brother pushing her, play, interact, and have an upright, safe posture while eating and participating in speech therapy. According to her speech therapist, this seat is "so huge, a support for this family!"

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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-four state AT Programs reported data on financial loans made. These programs issued 766 loans for AT devices, totaling \$11,001,748. The average annual income of loan recipients was \$59,083, and the national average interest rate was 4.25%. Out of 766 loans issued, 14% were made to applicants with annual incomes of less than \$15,000, and another 20% were made to applicants with annual incomes between \$15,001 and \$30,000. The overwhelming majority of total loan dollars issued (78%) was for vehicle modification and transportation, averaging \$30,577 per loan. Hearing AT ranked first in number of devices financed, making up over half of device loans (50%), and averaging \$2,659 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	511	50%	\$1,358,553	12%	\$2,659
Vehicle modification and transportation	282	28%	\$8,622,604	78%	\$30,577
Mobility, seating and positioning	77	8%	\$416,298	4%	\$5,406
Daily living	61	6%	\$177,213	2%	\$2,905
Environmental adaptations	36	4%	\$309,050	3%	\$8,585
Computers and related	22	2%	\$17,058	<1%	\$775
Vision	17	2%	\$49,970	<1%	\$2,939
Speech communication	04	<1%	\$16,115	<1%	\$4,029
Recreation, sports, and leisure	04	<1%	\$24,787	<1%	\$6,197
Learning, cognition, and developmental	02	<1%	\$10,100	<1%	\$5,050
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,016</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$11,001,748</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$10,828</b>





## OTHER STATE FINANCING PROGRAMS THAT DIRECTLY PROVIDE AT

Twenty-eight states reported data on other financing activities that resulted in the acquisition of AT devices and services. In FY 2023, these programs served 14,516 individuals and provided 29,624 AT devices. Computers and related devices and vision devices comprised of 67% of the technologies funded. Computers and related devices made up 26% (\$2,443,400) of the total value of AT provided (\$9,527,012), and 49% 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	14,510	49%	\$2,443,400	26%	\$168
Vision	5,255	18%	\$2,425,788	25%	\$462
Hearing	3,225	11%	\$877,829	9%	\$272
Speech communication	3,167	11%	\$1,140,453	12%	\$360
Daily living	2,239	7%	\$525,234	6%	\$235
Mobility, seating and positioning	591	2%	\$471,695	5%	\$798
Environmental adaptations	380	1%	\$1,216,918	13%	\$3,202
Learning, cognition, and developmental	155	<1%	\$102,254	1%	\$660
Vehicle modification and transportation	55	<1%	\$305,315	3%	\$5,551
Recreation, sports, and leisure	47	<1%	\$18,126	<1%	\$386
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29,624</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>\$9,527,012</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$322</b>

### A World of Possibility (North Dakota)

A North Dakota family wanted their son Beckett with cerebral palsy to thrive in his school and community. They learned about the Trexo Robotic walker and its ability to help with mobility and independent walking. With this device, he would be able to eventually walk on his own and interact with his peers at his eye level. What's the catch? The Trexo had a \$38,000 price tag and the unappealing prospect of a personal loan with an incredibly high interest rate. Fortunately, the North Dakota Assistive Financial Loan Program was available, and they were able to get a loan with a 2% fixed interest rate with flexible terms. Beckett's mother shared:



"We are thriving here We've taken it to gym class at school twice and the kids are thrilled. When they first saw him upright and walking, their little 10-year-old minds were blown. This machine—it's not only benefiting his body and mind, but socially, he can join in on more with the kids. The kids help him steer, they tag him "it" during play, they slow down just enough for him to graze past their shirts to tag them back, they cheer him on as he—the last one remaining—crosses the finish line. It's transforming his physical skills, but also transforming the kids around him too...They are seeing a world of possibility. The kids would have never believed that Beckett would be able to walk this year, but they now see how possible life can be. It's messy, fragile, sometimes not easy, but also so, so beautiful."



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## OTHER STATE FINANCING PROGRAMS THAT REDUCE THE COST OF AT

Fourteen states reported data on other state financing activities that allowed consumers to obtain AT at a reduced cost. In FY 2023, these other financing activities served 3,880 individuals, and 26,463 devices were acquired at a total savings of \$572,400.

Out of all the AT categories, learning, cognition, and developmental AT resulted in the highest savings to consumers (\$381,125). Learning, cognition, and developmental AT made up 80% of acquired devices. This resulted in moderate savings per device (\$18). 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. Amt. Saved Per Device
Learning, cognition, and developmental	21,282	80%	\$624,372	\$243,247	\$381,125	67%	\$18
Daily living	1,665	6%	\$79,498	\$17,611	\$61,887	11%	\$37
Vision	1,061	4%	\$133,320	\$81,985	\$51,335	9%	\$48
Speech communication	716	3%	\$82,961	\$64,832	\$18,129	3%	\$25
Recreation, sports, and leisure	714	3%	\$18,838	\$11,548	\$7,290	1%	\$10
Computers and related	640	2%	\$14,043	\$2,738	\$11,305	2%	\$18
Mobility, seating and positioning	196	1%	\$47,457	\$12,310	\$35,147	6%	\$179
Vehicle modification and transportation	79	<1%	\$506	\$00	\$506	<1%	\$06
Environmental adaptations	73	<1%	\$12,394	\$7,828	\$4,566	1%	\$63
Hearing	37	<1%	\$1,309	\$199	\$1,110	<1%	\$30
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,463</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$1,014,698</b>	<b>\$442,298</b>	<b>\$572,400</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$435</b>

AT acquired through state financing activities was primarily used for community living (84%), education (11%), and employment (5%).

### Enjoying Life's Simple Pleasures (Missouri)



Every morning since his ramp and deck were installed, Jamall, a 21-year-old resident of Kansas City with cerebral palsy, spends time outside with his dog. This simple pleasure was previously unavailable to Jamall until a Show-Me Loan made possible the construction of an accessible entrance, deck, and ramp that allows Jamall to come and go from his family's home both independently and safely. "He loves being able to go out on his own and down the ramp. It gives him a sense of independence," his mother reports.

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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.

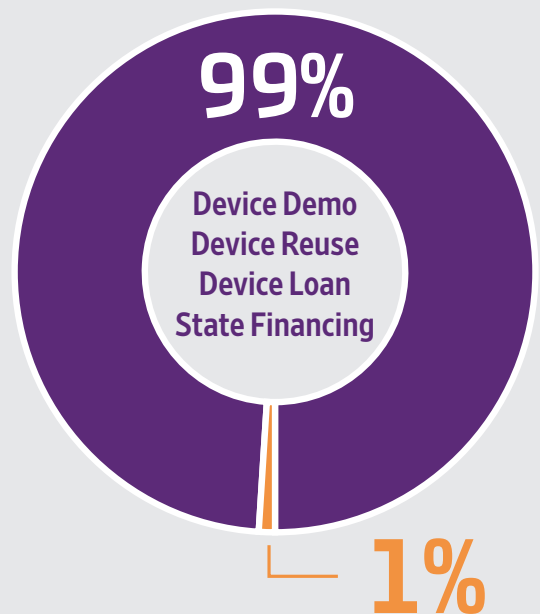
### Key data highlights:

- 89% of respondents were able to make an informed decision about matching an AT device to their needs (and avoid purchasing inappropriate devices).
- 59% 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



# 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 90,295 trainees, 23% were representatives of education, followed by individuals with disabilities (20%), and representatives of health, allied health, and rehabilitation (15%). 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 2023, a total of 203,449 individuals received I&A. Out of those, 33% were individuals with disabilities, 20% were family members, guardians, and authorized representatives, follow by 17% representatives of education. Seventy-five 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 2023, the 56 grantees reported providing a majority of TA to community living agencies (36%) and education agencies (24%). The remaining agency types receiving TA include health, allied health, and rehabilitation (22%), employment (13%), and technology (5%).

**Table 10: Percentage of Participants that Attended Trainings by Topic**

Percentage of Participants that Attended Trainings by Topic	Definition of Training Topic
<b>60%</b> AT products and services	The focus is on increasing skills and competencies in using AT, and integrating AT into different settings.
<b>22%</b> Combination of topics	AT products/services, AT funding/policy/practice, and information technology/telecommunication access.
<b>7%</b> Information technology/telecommunication access trainings	Accessible information technology and telecommunications, including web access, software accessibility, and procurement of accessible IT.
<b>7%</b> 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).
<b>4%</b> 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 2023:

### ACCESSIBLE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS (VIRGIN ISLANDS)



Virgin Islands University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (VIUCEDD) participated in the 3rd annual Disaster Preparedness and Chronic Disease Prevention Expo for seniors and individuals with disabilities. The Governor's ADA Office hosted the event at the University of the Virgin Islands on the St. Thomas and St. Croix campuses. VIUCEDD was one of the event sponsors and participating agencies. Over 260 people attended the expo to learn information and access disaster preparedness resources for older adults and people with disabilities. Participating agencies included AARP, American Red Cross, Department of Health, Chronic Disease Prevention Program, FEMA, VI Territorial Emergency Management, Disability Rights Center of the Virgin Islands, VI Water and Power Authority, the fire department, the independent living centers, Human Services Division of Senior Citizens, VI public broadcasting (WTJX), the telecommunications company (VIYA), VI Transit and others. One of the goals of VIUCEDD's presentation was to expand reach and enroll persons who qualify for their iCanConnect program. They had devices available to provide hands-on experience for participants. This was a high-impact awareness activity because it was broadcasted and aired on the government channel, giving the general population an opportunity to learn about services from all participating agencies.

### CHILDREN MATTER SYMPOSIA (NORTHERN MARINA ISLANDS)



In FY 2023, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marina Islands (CNMI) Assistive Technology Program (ATP) conducted a program overview during the CNMI Children Matter Symposium (CMM) held on all three islands: Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. The assistive technology overview focused on the CNMI ATP's technology demonstrations and available loans. The ATP demonstrated a few of the communication apps used to communicate with people who are Deaf, hard of hearing, or visually impaired. In addition, the ATP exhibit translated program information and resources in Tagalog, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, and Thai with a focus on outreach to the local Asian community, of whom many do not speak English as a first language. After the Saipan Symposia, three parents contacted the ATP requesting additional information regarding the apps they demonstrated.

### ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ABILITIES EXPOS (TEXAS)



Texas Technology Access Program (TTAP) supported two Abilities Expos, one in Dallas in December 2022 and one in Houston in August 2023. Approximately 17,000 people with disabilities, caregivers, and professionals attended the events. TTAP demonstrated a variety of assistive technology tools across all disability types. Participants particularly enjoyed a 3D printer to demonstrate printing augmentative and alternative communication symbols and keyguards and accessible video gaming equipment. Several attendees from the previous years who had since sought our services visited the assistive technology demonstrations and reported satisfaction with their experiences.

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## CONCLUSION

In FY 2023, 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., 2011.

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**

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 2022 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>



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