

Device Reutilization Programs

WHAT IS AT REUTILIZATION?

Assistive technology (AT) reutilization involves transferring a used device from someone who no longer needs it to someone who does. This program is in high demand, allowing individuals with disabilities to obtain devices that they might not otherwise have been able to obtain on their own.

Device reutilization falls into three activity categories. The first one, *device exchange*, usually occurs through an online forum where sellers and buyers can connect. *Recycling, refurbishment, and repair (RRR)* is the second category. In this type of program, devices are typically obtained from individuals who no longer need them, are refurbished, and then provided to new owners. Lastly, *open-ended loan* programs take previously used devices and loan them to individuals who can use them as long as they are needed.

THE DATA

In FY 2011, 31,577 individuals with disabilities received a total of 38,616 reutilized devices from all 56 AT programs, resulting in an overall savings of over \$17 million. The most common device reutilization activity was RRR. Eighty percent of recipients received devices through an RRR program, saving consumers almost \$13 million.

Mobility/seating and daily living assistive technologies were the two most common technologies to be recycled/refurbished/repared (49% and 36%, respectively). Reutilization of these two types of AT provided over \$11 million in savings to recipients. Mobility/seating and computer technologies were the most common types of devices to be exchanged, followed by devices for daily living.

The assistive technology contributing to the most savings (42% of savings for all AT types) under device exchange activities came from vehicle modifications, saving individuals with disabilities across the country over \$1 million. The majority of open-ended loans were provided in the mobility/seating AT category (60%). Overall, RRR activities

served the largest portion of device recipients, and provided the greatest amount of savings, to consumers of all the programs.

CONSUMER SATISFACTION

Ninety-nine percent of recipients who were surveyed about the reuse program stated that they were highly satisfied or satisfied. The vast majority used AT acquired through the reuse program for community living (86%), while the remaining consumers used AT for education (10%) and employment (4%).

Open-Ended Loan Helps Adopted Girl Thrive

The North Carolina Assistive Technology Program provided an open-ended loan of a communication device and wheelchair to a

new parent adopting a child from Uganda. This new parent, Christina, was able to borrow the items for as long as she needed them, and took them with her to Uganda last spring. Two months later, Christina and her new daughter, Mikisa, returned to Charlotte. They continue to use the devices so that Mikisa can increase her strength and explore her new world.



NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS, DEVICES, AND SAVINGS BY TYPE OF REUTILIZATION ACTIVITY

Activity	Number (%) of Device Recipients	Number (%) of Devices	Total Savings To Consumers	% of Savings
Recycle/refurbish/repair (RRR)	25,301 (80%)	30,928 (80%)	\$12,745,444	74%
Open-ended loans	4,934 (16%)	6,124 (16%)	\$2,110,916	12%
Device exchange	1,342 (4%)	1,564 (4%)	\$2,474,173	14%
TOTAL	31,577 (100%)	38,616 (100%)	\$17,330,533	100%

Talking Clock Increases Consumer's Independence

The West Virginia Assistive Technology exchange program provided a talking clock to a blind individual, allowing him to independently find out the time. This device became very useful when his wife/caregiver unexpectedly went to the hospital and was away from home for several weeks. The consumer had become dependent on his wife's prompts and on asking her the time in order to prepare for the day, take medication, know when a radio show was on, etc. The device was a lifesaver. Now that his wife is back home, the consumer continues to use the talking clock to maintain his independence.

Wheelchair Replaced After Devastating Fire

After a fire in their home destroyed Tiffany's wheelchair and most of her family's belongings, the Georgia Assistive Technology program provided her with a refurbished wheelchair. When asked to talk about the impact of the wheelchair on their lives, Tiffany's father stated that "this new wheelchair will help me be able to keep my daughter at home and care for her until my last breath."



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