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AT Act Data Brief

Using AT Act data to understand, plan, and improve programs

A National Data Summary of State Assistive Technology Programs: Fiscal Year 2015

INTRODUCTION

State and Territory Assistive Technology Programs (hereafter, AT Programs), authorized under Sec. 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, most recently reauthorized in 2004, 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 state-level activities and state leadership activities.

The AT Act provides formula grants, administered by the Administration on Community Living in the Department of Health and Human Services, 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. This report provides a national summary of AT program outcomes for FY 2015.

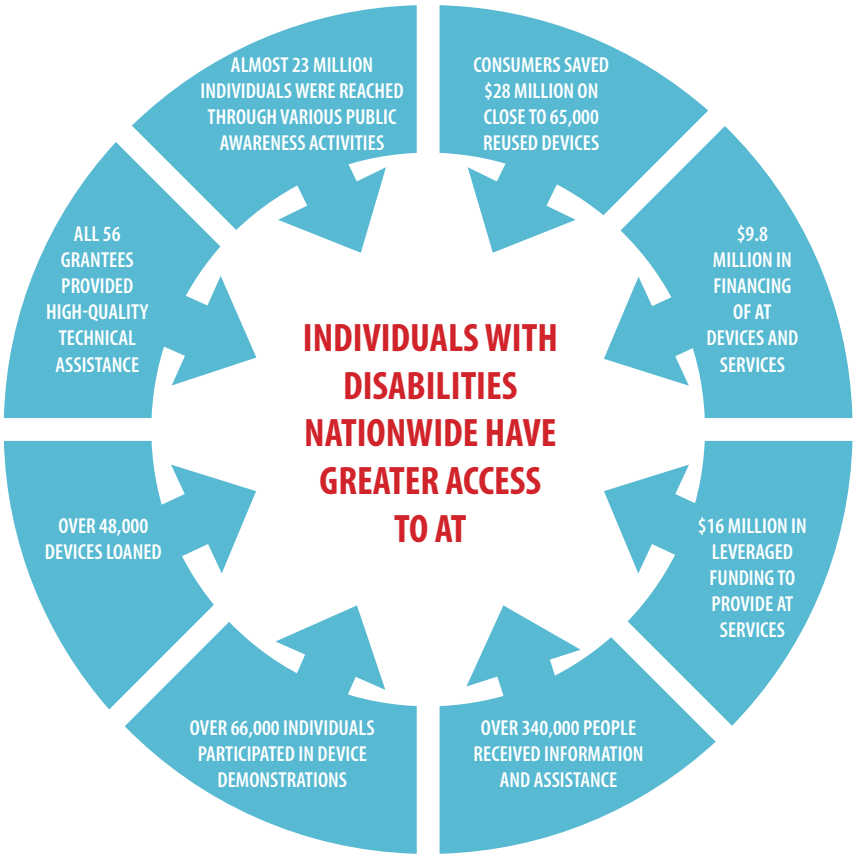
The 2004 reauthorization of the AT Act required a common set of activities to be provided by all AT Programs (with some limited exceptions) to create consistency among grantees. Required state-level activities include state financing activities, device reutilization programs, device loan programs, and device demonstration programs. Required state leadership activities include training and technical assistance, public awareness and information and assistance activities, and coordination and collaboration. All the state-level activities and the major state leadership activities will be described in greater detail later in this report.

AT Programs are required to serve people with all types of disabilities, of all ages, in all environments, and 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). 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, are the source used in this report.

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)

AT PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS RESULTING IN POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES



STATE-LEVEL ACTIVITIES

DEVICE DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS

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 provide comprehensive information about state and local assistive technology vendors, providers, and repair services.

During the most recent reporting period, FY 2015, 55 AT Programs conducted device demonstrations as part of their state-level activities. Daily living was the largest demonstration category, comprising 19% of all demonstrations. Most AT areas are well covered by device demonstrations, with six additional areas comprising between 10% and 15% of all demonstrations (see Table 1).

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF DEVICE DEMONSTRATIONS BY DEVICE TYPE

Type of AT Device	Number of Demos	%
Daily living	8,233	19
Mobility, seating	6,688	15
Speech communication	6,325	14
Vision	5,683	13
Computers and related	5,126	12
Learning, cognition	4,584	10
Hearing	4,483	10
Environmental adaptations	1,167	3
Recreation, sports, and leisure	1,093	3
Vehicle modification and transportation	389	1
TOTAL	**43,771**	**100%**

Looking at Table 2, we see that individuals with disabilities (47%) comprised almost half of those participating in device demonstrations in FY 2015, followed by family members, guardians, and authorized representatives (24%).

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WHO PARTICIPATED IN DEVICE DEMONSTRATIONS

Type of Individual	Number of Participants	%
Individuals with disabilities	30,997	47
Family members, guardians, and authorized representatives	15,724	24
Representatives of education	8,143	12
Representatives of health, allied health, and rehabilitation	6,313	9
Representatives of community living	2,769	4
Representatives of employment	1,623	2
Representatives of technology	1,002	2
TOTAL	**66,571**	**100%**

Individuals who participated in device demonstrations were surveyed by AT Programs about the main purpose of the AT device for which they attended the demonstration. In FY 2015, community living was listed as the most common purpose (69%), followed by education (22%) and employment (10%).

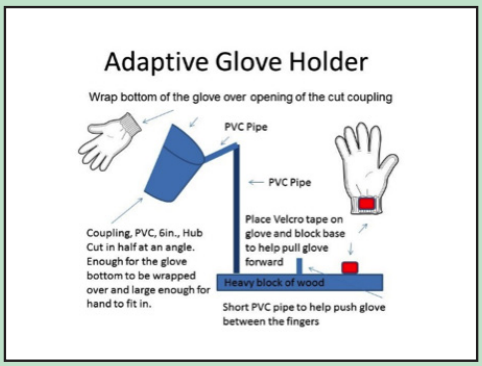
For AT Program purposes, education is defined as participating in any type of educational program. Community living includes carrying out daily activities, participating in community activities, using community services, or living independently. Employment means finding or keeping a job, getting a better job, or participating in an employment training program, vocational rehabilitation program, or other program related to employment. Lastly, information technology/telecommunications is defined as using computers, software, websites, telephones, office equipment, and media.

Return on Investment

66,571 individuals participated in 43,771 device demonstrations conducted by state AT Programs. Projecting a modest $100 savings realized by just half of the total demonstrations conducted results in national savings of over $2 million.

Device Demonstration Anecdotes

NORTH CAROLINA



In North Carolina, AT Program staff worked with an individual who had only one hand and needed to put on a glove at his work station to return to work. AT Program staff came up with various solutions including creating an adaptive glove holder from PVC pipe, a wood block and Velcro tape or using a sock aid to put on the glove. Based on these ideas from the State AT Program, the woodworking team at the community rehabilitation provider created a solution. The individual successfully used the device at the AT Center and on the work floor enabling him to return to his job. A second device was made so the demonstration center of the State AT Program had a device to demonstrate and loan out to others.

MISSOURI

Virginia, who lives in southwest Missouri, had developed both vision and hearing loss over the years that made it increasingly difficult for her to effectively communicate with her husband of many years. In search of a solution to address this barrier, Virginia and her husband visited the Missouri AT Program's demonstration center located in the Southwest Center for Independent Living. The trained staff at SWCIL introduced Virginia and her husband to assistive listening devices and allowed them to compare and contrast several different ones. Assistive listening devices provide amplification and block out background noise and improve the ability of people with mild to moderate hearing loss to hear. Virginia felt that an assistive listening device would be effective for her and purchased one. As a result of learning and obtaining her device, Virginia said: " I gained some of my independence back by being able to hear."

DEVICE LOAN PROGRAMS

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 provide self-education by a consumer or professional or to provide other training (ED, 2011).

During the most recent reporting period, 55 AT Programs reported providing short-term loans of AT devices to individuals or entities. Individuals with disabilities were the largest group to whom devices were loaned (40%), followed by family members, guardians, and authorized representatives (20%). Please refer to Table 3 for a more detailed breakdown.

Seventy-three percent or 26,567 device loans were made to individuals for the primary purpose of decision-making. Other reasons consumers cited for wanting a short-term device loan included for accommodation (13%), for training/personnel development (9%), and as a loaner during repair/ waiting for funding (5%).

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF DEVICES BORROWED BY TYPE OF BORROWER

Type of Borrower	Number of Device Borrowers	%
Individuals with disabilities	14,487	40
Family members, guardians, and authorized representatives	7,142	20
Representatives of education	6,281	17
Representatives of health, allied health, and rehabilitation	4,766	13
Representatives of community living	2,152	6
Representatives of technology	1,070	3
Representatives of employment	534	1
TOTAL	**36,432**	**100%**

Devices for speech communication (17%) were the most common AT devices loaned in FY 2015, followed by learning and cognition (16%), and computers and related devices (16%). Six additional device categories accounted for 4% to 14% each of the device loans made (Table 4).

Over half of surveyed consumers (57%) who received a device loan cited community living as the primary purpose for which they needed an AT device. Education was the second most common purpose (38%), followed by employment (5%).

TABLE 4: DEVICES LOANED BY TYPE

Type of AT Device	Number Loaned	%
Speech communication	8,133	17
Learning, cognition	8,068	16
Computers and related	7,776	16
Daily living	6,875	14
Mobility, seating	6,509	13
Vision	3,647	8
Environmental adaptations	3,256	7
Hearing	2,396	5
Recreation, sports, and leisure	1,868	4
Vehicle modification and transportation	98	<1
Total # of Devices Loaned	**48,626**	**100%**

Return on Investment

36,432 device loans were made to individuals or agencies with 48,626 devices borrowed from short-term device loan programs. Estimating an average savings of $1,000 per loan with more than one device associated results in national savings of well over $12 million. Projecting a minimum $10 per day rental fee for the average loan period of 35 days results in national savings of almost $3.5 million for devices borrowed for accommodation or training.

Device Loan Anecdotes

OKLAHOMA

Patton, an 8-month old boy from Cotton County has bilateral hearing loss and wears hearing aids. This young boy is active and wanted to play with a toy that would make puppies move and stop through an on/off switch. However, the switch was inaccessible to this boy due to his age and lack of hearing/understanding. His mom was aware of switch adapters and requested one through Oklahoma AT Program's Device Short-Term Loan program. An AirLink Cordless Switch allowed the boy to control a toy easily. As he plays now, he is very proud of himself. His mother has seen how the switch allows him independence and reinforces his confidence.

GUAM

Lee, a resident of Hagatna, came to the Guam AT Program to explore options to help his mother, who is a wheelchair user, safely navigate over stairs. After receiving a device demonstration, a device called the Garaventa Stair Trac seemed like a good match to what he was looking for. Lee requested to borrow the device on a short-term loan. The short-term loan allowed Lee and his family an opportunity to try a solution for their mother in their family home before making the financial commitment. Lee and his family were very grateful, as these AT solutions are rather costly. Moreover, Lee and his sibling had the opportunity to assess their mother's comfort level in using the device, which was an important factor.

DEVICE REUTILIZATION PROGRAMS

Assistive technology reutilization involves transferring a used device from someone who no longer needs it to someone who does. Device reuse 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.

In FY 2015, 50,706 consumers received a total of 64,617 reutilized devices from all 56 AT Programs, resulting in an overall savings of $28 million. As Table 5 shows, mobility, seating, and daily living AT were the vast majority of AT devices provided through reuse programs (85% of all devices).

TABLE 5: DEVICE REUTILIZATION SUMMARY BY DEVICE TYPE

Type of AT Device	# of Devices	% of Devices	Total Savings	% of Savings
Mobility, seating	31,927	49	$19,468,642	69
Daily living	23,434	36	$4,185,896	15
Computers and related	2,494	4	$623,918	2
Vision	1,483	2	$722,925	3
Hearing	1,347	2	$352,749	1
Environmental adaptations	1,288	2	$384,769	1
Learning/cognition	1,011	2	167,105	<1
Recreation, sports, and leisure	850	1	$183,519	<1
Speech communication	663	1	$1,149,590	4
Vehicle modification and transportation	120	<1	$782,124	3
Total	**64,617**	**100%**	**$28,021,237**	**100%**

The most common device reutilization activity was recycling/refurbishment/repair (RRR). Seventy-one percent of recipients received devices through an RRR program, saving this group over $19 million. Overall, RRR activities provided the greatest savings to consumers out of the services provided through reutilization programs.

TABLE 6: NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS, DEVICES, AND SAVINGS BY TYPE OF REUTILIZATION ACTIVITY

Activity	Number (%) of Device Recipients	Number (%) of Devices	Total Savings To Recipients	% of Savings to Recipients
Recycle/ refurbish/ repair (RRR)	36,205 (71%)	46,817 (72%)	$19,347,290	69
Open-ended loans	10,215 (20%)	12,885 (20%)	$4,802,031	17
Device exchange	4,286 (8%)	4,915 (8%)	$3,871,916	14
TOTAL	**50,706 (100%)**	**64,617 (100%)**	**$28,021,237**	**100%**

Customers participating in the device reutilization program were surveyed about the primary purpose for which AT was needed. Out of the 48,217 respondents, 92% gave community living as the primary purpose, followed by education (6%) and employment (2%).

Return on Investment

50,706 recipients acquired 64,617 reutilized devices. Recipients saved $28,021,237 by obtaining reutilized AT instead of new. Recipients would not be able to afford the AT if it were not for the reuse services of the state AT Programs. The cost of those individuals being unable to work, learn, or live in the community without the AT they need would be immeasurable.

Device Reutilization Anecdotes

WASHINGTON

Tim moved to Washington State after spending a month in the hospital recovering from a major operation. The move was planned in less than a week before his discharge and he had no assistive equipment waiting for him when he touched down across the country. Due to on-going recovery as well as breathing difficulties, Tim's mobility was severely limited. In order to get her father to doctor appointments, the grocery store, or just outside the apartment, Tim's daughter needed to get him a wheelchair quickly. Although Tim would qualify for a wheelchair through the VA, he needed something before the paperwork would go through. Tim's daughter went to the Washington AT Program's reuse contractor, Bridge Disability Ministries, to get a reused wheelchair knowing that it could be returned if he recovered and no longer needed it or got a replacement through the VA. Being a born and raised New Yorker who was abruptly transplanted to the other side of the country was a shock for Tim. Access to the wheelchair within days of his arrival meant that he could get out with his daughter to explore a new city and enjoy his lifelong passion for photography, thus restoring a sense of normalcy to his life.

KANSAS

A preschooler and his educational team requested a prone stander from Assistive Technology for Kansans (ATK). ATK staff worked with the physical therapist to select the correct model and determine the needed supports to fit him so he could safely use the stander. Team members report that obtaining the prone stander provided him with an additional position so he could participate in activities. The standing position improved his circulation and allowed him to bear weight on his legs, which helps hip development. The removable tray with bowl provided him with the opportunity to play and learn from different media. Perhaps the best part from his perspective was that he was at eye level with his peers.

STATE FINANCING

State financing activities assist individuals with disabilities to obtain AT devices and services. Funds authorized under the AT Act of 1998, as amended, cannot be used to purchase AT devices or services directly for consumers (ED, 2011). There are three types of state financing activities provided by the State Grants for Assistive Technology that assist individuals who need AT: 1) alternative financial loan programs that provide cash loans that consumers can then use to acquire AT, 2) other activities that result in AT acquisition, and 3) additional activities that allow consumers to obtain AT devices and services at a reduced cost.

TABLE 7: TYPES AND DOLLAR AMOUNTS OF AT FINANCED

Type of AT	# of Devices Financed	Device %	Dollar Value of Loans	Dollar %	Average Loan Amount
Hearing	332	44	$1,221,197	25	$3,678
Vehicle modification and transportation	172	23	$2,895,905	60	$16,837
Computers and related	86	11	$81,801	2	$951
Mobility, seating, and positioning	67	9	$181,489	4	$2,709
Daily living	30	4	$124,413	3	$4,147
Vision	29	4	$51,166	1	$1,764
Environmental adaptations	28	4	$260,347	5	$9,298
Recreation, sports, and leisure	3	<1	$4,729	<1	$1,576
Speech communication	1	<1	$641	<1	$641
Learning, cognition	0	0	$0	0	$0
Total	**748**	**100%**	**$4,821,688**	**100%**	**$6,446**

Other State Financing Programs that Provide AT

Sixteen states reported data on other financing activities that resulted in the acquisition of AT devices and services. These programs typically supply AT directly through external funding provided to the AT Program by another agency. With this external funding, these programs are typically limited in focus, only providing AT in one area (such as adaptive telecommunication devices), or only providing AT for those individuals eligible for specific funding (such as IDEA).

In FY 2015, these programs served 2,135 individuals and provided 2,899 AT devices. Over one third (36%) of the total technologies funded were hearing devices. Environmental adaptations constituted 38% ($1,292,599) of the total value of AT provided ($3,375,743), but made up only 11% of total devices funded.

Other State Financing Programs that Reduce the Cost of AT

Eight states reported data on other state financing activities that allowed consumers to obtain assistive technology at a reduced cost. These programs included cooperative buying programs, a vision equipment lease program, and device design and development.

In FY 2015, these financing activities served 2,184 individuals, and 4,089 devices were acquired at a reduced cost. Out of all the AT categories, hearing AT resulted in the highest savings to consumers ($3,435 per device). Speech communication (1,171 devices), learning and cognition (792 devices), and computer devices (590 devices) combined made up 62% of acquired devices. This resulted in moderate savings of $18 (speech communication), $54 (learning and cognition), and $158 (computers) per device.

Individuals with disabilities who received services from state financing activities were contacted about the primary purpose for which AT was needed. Seventy-five percent of respondents cited community living as the primary purpose, followed closely by education (17%) and employment (8%).

Return on Investment

731 borrowers obtained financial loans totaling almost $5 million to buy 748 devices. These loans were made at an average interest rate of 5.53%. Assuming most standard loans would be at a 7% or higher interest rate, consumers have saved considerable expense through access to this lower rate.

State Financing Anecdotes

LOUISIANA

Alex is all smiles on his way to work thanks to the Louisiana Assistive Technology Access Network (LATAN) Financial Loan Program. Alex and his mom applied through the financial loan program for a loan for a modified vehicle so Alex could seek work. The store manager of a local supermarket tells LATAN, "Once I met Alex, I knew right away he would fit in very nicely with our organizational philosophy and that is simply, "treat the customers like family." Alex has a great attitude and is willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done, both qualities any employer would like to have with any employee. Alex is really no different than any other employee and I am sure I will learn more from him than he will learn from me."

DELAWARE

MJ is a high school student and is blind. She was born in Pakistan and did not receive any formal schooling until she arrived in the U.S. as a teenager. When she started high school, she could not even speak English. She received support in school from the Delaware Division for the Visually Impaired and made remarkable progress in a few short years. As she progressed in her education, MJ used various technologies to help her with schoolwork, but was not able to participate in the social side of life without access to social networks. After meeting with MJ, it was clear that a device like an iPhone or iPad would help her interact with her peers using VoiceOver. Delaware AT Program staff spent several hours going through how to use VoiceOver, and MJ borrowed an iPod touch for a trial outside of school. Her family could not afford a monthly phone bill, so the iPod touch provided her with access to many social networks and the Internet. With help from the Delaware AT Program's Borrow to Own Low vision Devices (BOLD) program, MJ was able to get an iPod touch to help in a number of different areas of her young life. MJ also learned how to start advocating for herself and expressed a need for a talking watch with braille option and alarm features which she acquired through the BOLD program.

CONSUMER SATISFACTION RATINGS OF STATE LEVEL ACTIVITIES

Consumers of AT Program services were asked to report their satisfaction with the services they received. Figure 1 shows the responses to consumer satisfaction questions for each of the state activities. As we can see, the vast majority (>98%) of respondents were highly satisfied or satisfied with the services they received in each state activity. Device reuse programs had the highest consumer satisfaction out of all state activities, with 99.4% of consumers highly satisfied or satisfied, followed by state financing (99%). Device demonstration and device loan programs both have customer satisfaction ratings of 98%.

STATE ACTIVITIES PERFORMANCE MEASURES

ACQUISITION PERFORMANCE

Consumers were surveyed about the primary purpose of device acquisition and why they chose to participate in any of the following four programs: state financing services, device exchange, device reuse, and open-ended loans. Sixty-five percent of consumers stated that they could only afford AT through these programs. Eighteen percent said that the AT needed was only available to them through these programs, and 9% responded that the AT was available to them through other programs, but the system was too complex or the wait time too long. Community living was by far the most common purpose for AT (83%) (see Figure 2 for more details).

FIGURE 1:
CONSUMER RATING OF SERVICES

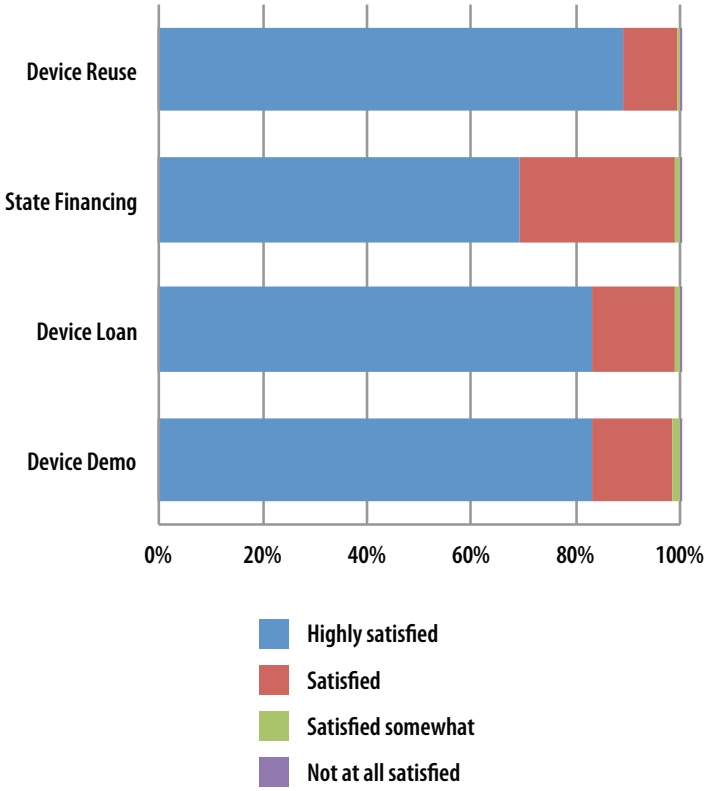
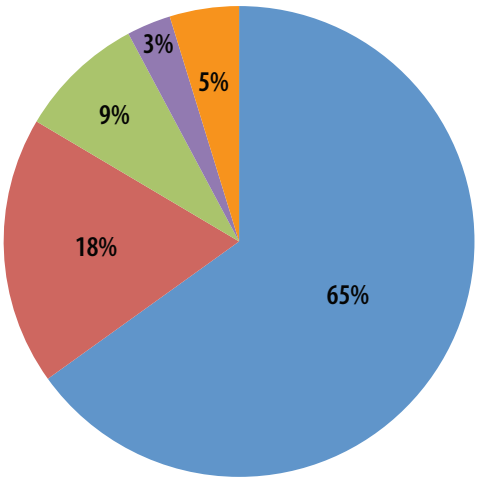


FIGURE 2:
WHY CONSUMERS OBTAINED A DEVICE FROM THE STATE AT PROGRAM



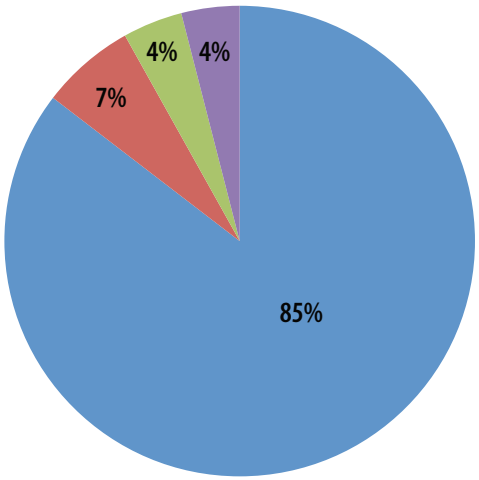
Overall Acquisition Performance Measure	Education	Employment	Community Living
Could only afford the AT through the AT program	3,551	1,207	35,893
AT was only available through the AT program	1,912	447	9,149
AT available through other programs, but system complex/ wait time too long	1,079	411	3,941
None of the these	307	91	1,495
Nonrespondent	1,383	128	1,462
TOTAL	**8,232**	**2,284**	**51,940**

ACCESS PERFORMANCE

Consumers were surveyed about the kind of decisions they were able to make as the result of a device demonstration or device loan, as well as the primary purpose for which these devices will be needed. As the chart below illustrates, these services have overwhelmingly contributed to individuals with disabilities or their representatives making an informed decision about AT.

Eighty-five percent of respondents stated that an AT device would meet their needs, or those of someone they represent. Another 7% of consumers stated that an AT device would not meet their needs (which is still an important decision outcome), and 4% did not make a decision. Community living (64%) and education (28%) were the most commonly reported purposes for AT, as shown in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3:
KINDS OF CONSUMER DECISIONS THE STATE AT PROGRAM ENABLED



Overall Access Performance Measure	Education	Employment	Community Living
Decided AT will meet needs	15,852	5,167	39,115
Decided AT will not meet needs	1,711	390	2,461
Have not made a decision	986	213	1,692
Nonrespondent	1,056	210	1,485
Total	**19,605**	**5,980**	**44,753**

STATE LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES

TRAINING

Training activities are instructional events, planned in advance for a specific purpose or audience. Examples of training include classes, workshops, and presentations that have a goal of increasing skills, knowledge, and competency, as opposed to training intended only to increase general awareness of AT (ED, 2011).

In FY 2015, AT Programs trained a total of 120,483 participants. Education representatives (31%) were closely followed by individuals with disabilities (28%) as the types of individuals who were most likely to receive training. The remaining participant types constituted between 3% and 11% of representatives trained.

Forty-six percent of participants attended trainings about AT products and services, which focused on increasing skills and competencies in using AT, and integrating AT into different settings. Thirty-four percent of participants attended trainings on a combination of any or all of the following topics: AT products/services, AT funding/policy/practice, and information technology/telecommunication access. Trainings on transition were attended by 9% of participants. AT funding/policy/practice and information technology/telecommunication access trainings were attended by 11% of training participants combined.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Public awareness activities include public service announcements, Internet outreach and social networking, 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 determine, and estimates must be reported (ED, 2011).

In FY 2015, AT Programs reached an estimated 22,865,878 people through their awareness activities. Out of the estimated total reached, 43% of individuals were contacted through public service announcements on radio or television, 31% through the Internet, and the remaining outreach activities were distributed among listservs (7%), other print materials (6%), newsletters (5%), other electronic media (5%), and public forums (3%).

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

Information and assistance (I&A) activities are those in which 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 2015, 340,745 individuals were recipients of I&A. Out of the two I&A content areas, information about specific AT products/devices/services was the most common, with 73% of recipients requesting this type of information. Twenty-seven percent received information on obtaining funding for AT. The largest recipient group of I&A was individuals with disabilities (26%), followed by family members/guardians/authorized representatives (25%), representatives of community living (17%), and representatives of education (12%). The remaining recipient types were representatives of health, allied health, and rehabilitation (10%), representatives of employment (5%), representatives of technology (4%), and others (<1%).

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical assistance (TA) is provided by state AT Programs to help programs and agencies improve their services management, policies, and/or outcomes. As a result of technical assistance and other activities, some AT Programs report state improvement outcomes with policy, practice, or procedure improvements that result in increased access to and acquisition of AT in the state.

In FY 2015, the 56 grantees reported providing a majority of technical assistance to educational agencies (31%) and community living agencies (26%).

TABLE 8: PERCENTAGE OF AGENCIES THAT RECEIVED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Program/Agency Type Receiving TA	%
Education	31
Community living	26
Employment	18
Health, allied health, and rehabilitation	13
Technology (IT, Telecom, AT)	12
TOTAL	**100%**

SUMMARY

State and Territory AT Programs have improved the ability of individuals with disabilities to participate fully and productively in education, community living, employment, and other facets of life. 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.

Initiatives from the Field

COMMUNITY LIVING

The Colorado AT Program worked with the Colorado Department of Health and Environment Emergency Preparedness Community Inclusion program to develop a "live" map platform. This online product enhances emergency preparedness, response planning, and resources by making location-based information easily accessible.

Maps include community demographic data, functional characteristics, and resources for emergency managers at the census track level. The map website is used by emergency managers across the state as they develop local emergency preparedness plans. The disability community has also begun to use the maps for planning processes and grant development. The website is updated quarterly, and plans are in the works to map Medicare and Medicaid power-dependent equipment use.

HEALTH, ALLIED HEALTH, REHABILITATION

The Puerto Rico AT Program was involved in successful efforts to amend the Work Accidents Compensation System Law. The amendment provides workers who are disabled on the job with access to AT devices through the State Insurance Fund Corporation, along with AT device repair and replacement. The updated law also increases the funds a worker with disabilities is entitled to receive for home modifications for accessibility.

EMPLOYMENT

Kansas became one of six states awarded with a nationally recognized Farmer Veteran Chapter from the National Farmer Veteran Organization and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Kansas AT Program, Kansas Farmers Union, and Kansas AgrAbility collaborated to recruit potential board members, and to draft the mission and operating principles, which were submitted for review.

As a member of the Kansas Farmer Veteran chapter, the Kansas AT Program has increased visibility and recognition among veterans with disabilities, an underserved population. The award also gives the AT Program access to additional funds for technology, as well as increased contacts among veteran and agricultural organizations across the state.

EDUCATION

The New York AT Program is negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the state's vocational rehabilitation program, ACCES-VR. The MOU will provide AT devices and services to individuals transitioning from school to post-secondary education, training, apprenticeship, and certificate programs. AT devices will also be available for work tryouts and on-the-job training opportunities.

Once the MOU is finalized, the AT Program regional centers will report outcomes on a quarterly and annual basis. After the first year, AT Program staff will work with ACCES-VR staff to develop written procedures for consumers accessing services.

ICT ACCESSIBILITY

Up until recently, Pennsylvania's telecommunication device distribution program was restricted to wired (landline) devices. Staff at the state's AT Program wanted to expand distribution to include wireless devices. The AT Program submitted a proposal and budget for a wireless pilot program to the PA Public Utility Commission (PUC). In July 2015, the PUC approved the pilot project, which will determine the feasibility and costs of permanently offering both wired and wireless telecommunication devices.

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This publication will be made available in alternate formats upon request.

To protect the privacy of the young people involved in these AT Programs, we have changed some names in the stories.