



2015

Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs
Small Federal Investment – Large Benefits in Return

AT Demonstration

AT Loan / Borrowing

AT Reutilization

AT State Financing

OUR MISSION

To maintain and enhance a strong, effective and efficient national network of Statewide Assistive Technology Programs which enables individuals with disabilities, service providers and others to learn about, access, and acquire assistive technology (AT) needed for education, employment, and community living.



Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs Small Federal Investment – Large Benefits in Return

All 50 states, 4 US territories, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico receive formula grant funding under the Assistive Technology (AT) Act of 2004. These 56 grantees are required to carry out a continuum of specified state level and state leadership activities that promote the ability of people with disabilities to know about, have access to, and ultimately be better able to obtain assistive technology (AT). These activities also deliver a large **return on investment** for the small federal appropriation for this program.

Definition of Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology (AT) is any item, device, or piece of equipment used to maintain or improve the functionality of people with disabilities, allowing them to be more independent in recreation, education, employment, and daily living activities.

AT Demonstration

Assistive Technology Demonstration Programs

provide opportunities for people to learn about and become familiar with specific types of AT. These programs compare and contrast the functions and features of AT devices through hands-on exploration. Knowledgeable AT professionals provide instruction in a product neutral environment that does not favor one company or manufacturer.

Device demonstrations result in informed decision-making about which AT will and will not meet an individual's disability needs and prevents wasted expenditures on "mismatched" AT. For example, if an agency/individual explores two electronic magnification devices and decides that one costing \$2,000 is perfect – they have potentially saved another \$2,000 by knowing the other device they explored would not meet their needs (avoided purchasing to only find the device was not a good match.)



DEMONSTRATION



In Nebraska, a student experiencing a learning disability needed a way to monitor time spent on various tasks in a hospital laundry job as part of a school-to-work transition program. Staff at the State AT Program provided an on-site demonstration of a TimeTimer (countdown timer) and the student was able to experiment with its features to determine how it supported his work productivity. The demonstration turned into a loan and the student utilized the device on the job until equipment arrived to use permanently. This device demonstration and loan made it possible for the student to be successful on the job.

66,571 individuals participated in **43,771 device demonstrations** conducted by State AT Programs in FY15. Projecting a modest \$100 savings realized by just half of the total demonstrations conducted results in national **savings of over two million dollars.**



In North Dakota, a young man who is deaf, along with several members of his support team, visited the State AT Program for a demonstration of AT for hearing. Several devices were demonstrated including cell phones and apps for video relay service; devices to alert him to cell phone alarms, calls, and alerts during sleep; and other alerting devices for important sounds in the home environment. Through careful consideration, he decided to rent an alerting system and was able to determine what cell phone and video relay service app would best support his needs. Once the rental was completed, he was able to find funding to purchase the equipment. Due to the success he found with all these devices, the young man is now ready to take steps to move out of his parent's home for a more independent life.



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, see <https://vimeo.com/135875621>. 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.



AT Loan / Borrowing

DEVICE LOAN / BORROWING

 In Colorado, a young man with cerebral palsy had severely limited ability to interact physically and verbally with others. His team borrowed a low tech communication device from the State AT Program. For the first time, he could consistently access a language-based system mounted to his wheelchair with a head switch. With the device, this young man who previously couldn't talk and express himself immediately showed his abilities. He learned to navigate the device, calling people by name, indicating when he needed a break, when he wanted a turn, and which student should go next in classroom activities. He was so adept with this simple device, his team began investigating a more sophisticated unit to better meet his abilities. Data documenting his ability to use the low tech system will help justify insurance coverage of a more sophisticated device, saving his family thousands of dollars. Without the device loan program, this young man might never have been able to demonstrate his true abilities.



Assistive Technology Device Loan / Borrowing Programs

allow individuals to borrow devices for a limited time period for use at home, school, work, etc. Device loans allow borrowers to try out devices in their own environments to determine if it will meet their needs before a purchase is made. Device loans also can provide loaner AT while a device is being repaired, while a consumer is waiting for funding approvals, or to use for training or professional development purposes.

Device loans result in informed and accurate AT purchasing decisions especially in unique contexts like a classroom or workplace. When a school or employer can borrow a device and make sure it will allow the individual with a disability to be successful, they save money by avoiding "incorrect" purchases. Device loans also allow individuals to remain functional while their device is being repaired, preventing costly loss of wages, lost school days, or the need for increased community living supports.

36,432 device loans were made to individuals or agencies with **48,626 devices**

borrowed from short-term device loan programs operated through State AT Programs in FY15. Using an average savings of \$1,000 per loan with more than one device associated (at least one device was rejected as being a match and a second one was borrowed) 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 (while a device is repaired or while waiting for funding) or for training since the device did not have to be rented for these purposes.

DEVICE LOAN / BORROWING

 In Louisiana a young man was having difficulties in his job at a supermarket because of his dyslexia. He not only had trouble reading text at work, but he did not have a driver's license because he could not pass the written test since he could not read the study materials. He depended on others for transportation to work which was a problem. The Louisiana AT Program (LATAN) demonstrated a Smart Reader which can convert text into speech and allowed

him to view the words being read on a screen at the same time. He borrowed the device to study for his driver's test and he passed ensuring that he would get to work on time and keep his job! When he returned the device he let LATAN know he was going to purchase the device so that he could continue his education with a goal of increasing his income and being even more independent.



DEVICE LOAN / BORROWING



In New York, the State AT Program was contacted by the wife of a 36-year old man who had been diagnosed with stage IV brain cancer. He was declining rapidly, and she wanted to be able to keep him at home. Staff was able to loan a hospital bed, commode, and hospital bed table. She was able to maintain him at home until he passed away rather than having him in a hospital or nursing home at much greater financial and emotional expense. She reports that this would not have been possible without being able to borrow the equipment from the State AT Program.



In Missouri, a middle school student with a spinal injury wasn't able to use a keyboard to write her assignments, and the classroom was too noisy for speech-to-text. The school was about to purchase a \$4,500 eye-gaze system, but called the State AT Program to discuss alternative computer access ideas. The AT Program was able to loan an eye-gaze system to the school for a 4-week trial at no cost (the vendor would have charged a \$2,500 rental fee for the same period) and helped the school explore

other computer access alternatives. The school determined that eye-gaze was not effective for the student; instead a mouthstick with a mounted tablet device was effective and cost only \$2,500. The student is now able to independently complete her written work at school. The district avoided a device purchase error of \$4,500 and saved another \$2,500 by borrowing from the State AT Program rather than renting for a total savings of \$7,000.

AT Reutilization



Assistive Technology Device Reutilization Programs

support the reuse of assistive technology that is no longer needed or used by its original owner. Recipients usually obtain equipment at a significantly lower cost or no cost. There are several options for reutilization including reassignment/reuse, device exchange (typically online), and long-term device loans where the borrower keeps the device as long as needed.

Purchasing/obtaining reutilized devices saves agencies and individuals a significant amount of money when compared to buying new devices.

50,706 recipients acquired **64,617 reutilized devices** through State AT Programs in FY15. A total of **\$28,020,737 was saved** by device recipients by purchasing/obtaining reutilized AT instead of new. In addition, 71% of the reuse device recipients indicated that they would not have been able to afford the AT if it were not for the reuse services of the State AT Program. The cost of those individuals being unable to work, learn or live in the community without the AT they need would be immeasurable.

REUTILIZATION



In Oklahoma, the State AT Program operates a reuse program refurbishing devices purchased by Medicaid that has saved the state \$703,733 providing 1,196 pieces of durable medical equipment to 955 Oklahomans. For example, an individual with a below the knee amputation, who did not have insurance and

could not afford to purchase a wheelchair was appropriately matched with a manual wheelchair upon completion of ABLE Tech's application along with a doctor's prescription. This chair allows her more independence within her home and within her community. The chair is easy to fold up and put into the trunk of a care so she can participate in life outside of her home.



AT Reutilization Stories



REUTILIZATION

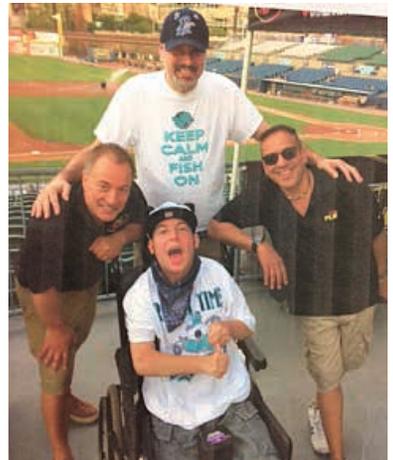


In Illinois, life changed for Mike after incurring a brain injury while living abroad. Once he was stable enough for travel, he was transferred to a rehabilitation facility in the US and his family reached out to the State AT Program requesting equipment to support his return home. The State AT Program was able to take a refurbished hospital bed and Hoyer lift in excellent condition to his home and set them up. A local contractor consulted with the State AT Program’s Rehabilitation Engineering Technologist to get specifications for a ramp to be installed at the entrance of the home. Everything was in place and ready when Mike arrived home preventing a long and expensive stay in a rehabilitation facility. Once home, his therapists borrowed a stander, gait trainer and walker from the State AT Program to assist with his rehabilitation. Mike’s family was so appreciative of the support saying “IATP has been a bright spot in our journey with our son. They offer not only valuable equipment and ideas, but friendship and support during a family’s darkest moments.”



REUTILIZATION

In Connecticut, the State AT Program’s partner agency sells quality used equipment that has gone through a rigorous process to get it back to as close to new as possible. One young man, Jamie, is a wheelchair user who travels quite a bit and is constantly on the go. He wore out various parts of his Quickie2 manual wheelchair, and asked for help. The State AT Program was able to replace his wheels, his upholstery, and install new brakes and repair his footrests. The chair was not covered by insurance any longer, so he had to pay for the parts himself at a savings of \$1,705 thanks to the State AT Program partner agency.



AT State Financing

State Financing Activities help individuals purchase/obtain AT through a variety of initiatives. Financial loan programs provide consumers with affordable, flexible borrowing options. Other programs provide AT directly to consumers at no cost, using dollars from non-AT Act sources, or save consumers money when purchasing AT.

Purchasing/obtaining devices through state financing activities saves agencies and individuals a significant amount of money and may be the only option available to them. Without the program they would go without the AT they need for work, school, or community living.

AT State Financing *continued*

STATE FINANCING

 In rural Pennsylvania, Daniel runs a small lawn mower repair shop out of his home. He received a large monitor and screen magnification software from the State AT Program who administers the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program. This equipment allows him to enlarge the text of emails so he can read messages from his Vocational Rehabilitation counselor and text in online forums where he can find mower parts and compare models and repair techniques with other lawn mower experts. The equipment provided by the State AT Program has allowed him to communicate beyond his small town and keep his business growing.

STATE FINANCING

 In Kansas, the State AT Program collaborated with the United Healthcare Foundation to provide electronic tablets to people with disabilities to teach them digital technology skills needed for employment. Seventy-four of 75 individuals completed the four week workshop and three months later, 14 individuals were employed in part-time or full-time positions. For example, one woman with mental health and memory disabilities set up her own housecleaning service after completing the workshop. She completed a business plan that included social networking to promote her service, sets her schedule and uses electronic reminders to maintain her schedule. At this time she has 12 customers. The program continues to provide a return on investment with gainful employment of participants.



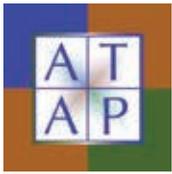
731 borrowers obtained financial loans totaling **\$4,810,778** to buy **748 devices** in FY15. These loans were made at an average interest rate of 5.53%. Assuming most standard loans would be at a 7% or higher interest rate, consumers have saved considerable expense through access to this lower rate.

2,135 recipients acquired **2,899 devices valued at \$3,375,743** from other state financing programs that directly provide AT using external funding sources. **2,184 recipients** acquired **4,089 AT devices with a savings of \$1,596,491** from other state financing activities, such as cooperative buying programs and device lease programs. The vast majority (91%) of recipients indicated that if the state financing activity they used was not available they would not have been able to purchase/obtain the AT potentially resulting in individuals who are unable to successfully work, learn or live in the community.

STATE FINANCING

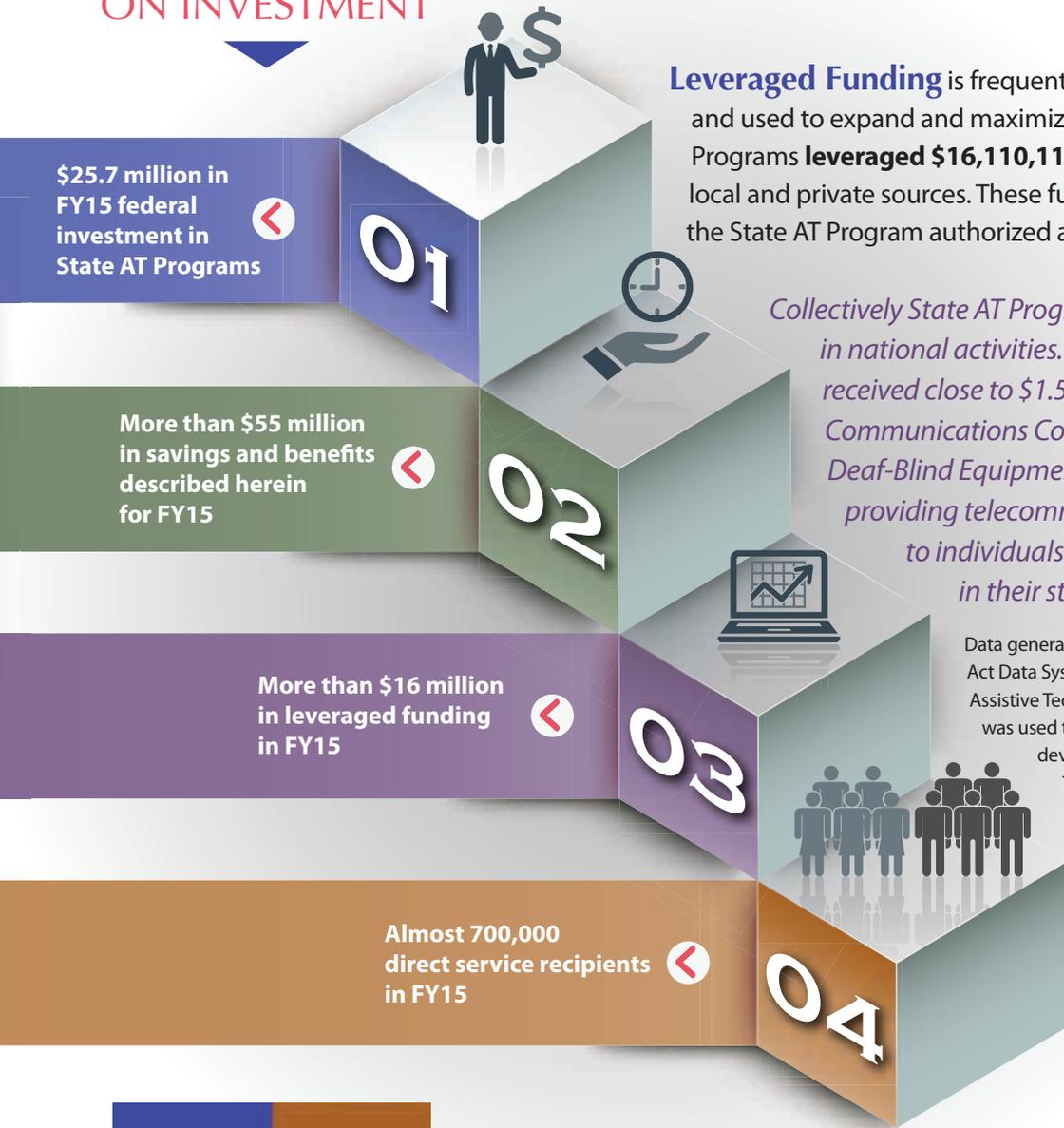
 In Washington, as Angel and his wife waited for an ambulance – they knew they had to get a new car. At six years old, Maya was getting too big to lift in and out of their car and this time her feeding tube got tangled in the seatbelt strap and was ripped out. It was a terrifying and costly situation her parents never wanted to experience again. Maya was born with cerebral palsy and had a seizure that left her paralyzed below her neck. After having difficulty finding financing for a new van because of a sparse credit history, Angel was relieved to find that the Washington Access Fund, a State AT Program contractor, was willing to take a chance on him. With the financial loan, the family was able to purchase a modified van that will transport Maya and her wheelchair and allow her to live safely at home.





Large Benefits in Return

A GREAT RETURN ON INVESTMENT



Leveraged Funding is frequently secured by State AT Programs and used to expand and maximize services. In FY15, State AT Programs **leveraged \$16,110,113** in funding from federal, state, local and private sources. These funds were used to support all of the State AT Program authorized activities.

Collectively State AT Programs are an integral partner in national activities. Twelve (12) State AT Programs received close to \$1.5 million from the Federal Communications Commission to administer the Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program, providing telecommunications access equipment to individuals who are deaf-blind in their states.

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Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs
1 W Old State Capitol Plaza, Suite 100
Springfield, IL 62701

www.ataporg.org