



May 15, 2018

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education
156 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of the National Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (ATAP), we **strongly urge you to support the inclusion of \$32 million in the FY 2019 Senate Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations (LHHS) bill for the Section 4 State Assistive Technology Grantees that are a part of the Assistive Technology (AT) Act.** Funding provided through the AT Act for Section 4 State AT Grantees, supports programs that assure people with disabilities have access to and acquisition of the assistive technology services they need to live, work, and attend school in their communities.

We are extremely grateful that the final FY 2018 budget included an additional \$2 million for the entirety of the Assistive Technology Act given the current fiscal environment. While we are very grateful for this increase, this amount allocated across all the sections of the AT Act does not fully fund Section 4 State AT Grantees according to the statute. While we do recognize the fiscal restraints on the federal budget, fully funding Section 4 State AT Act Grantees at \$32 million would allow every Section 4 Grantee to provide the *full* breadth of services intended by the law. **This would mean an additional \$6 million dedicated to Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act above the FY17 Section 4 allocation of 26 million to achieve this minimum level of funding.**

Section 4 State AT Act programs operate in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and four territories and are available for persons with all types of disabilities, all ages, in all environments (education, employment, community living and information technology). State AT programs provide a continuum of services that increase the access to, and acquisition of assistive technology, including state financing activities (such as financial loans, cooperative buy, funds of last resort, etc.), device reutilization (including recycling, repair, refurbishment and device exchange), device loan/borrowing and device demonstration services. While individuals with disabilities, their families and guardians are the primary beneficiaries of services, State AT Act programs provide a wide range of services and supports to other targeted individuals such as educators, employers, health care providers, rehabilitation providers, and technology experts, including web designers, procurement officials and AT manufacturers and vendors. State AT programs provide cost effective services and supports that

improve the lives of people with disabilities and warrant an ongoing federal investment. In FY17 there are still 7 states and the District of Columbia that did not receive a minimum grant amount of \$410,000 as authorized by the AT Act.

The AT Act puts assistive technology in the hands of citizens whose lives and livelihood depend on it. If a total of 32 million is allocated for FY 2019 for Section 4 State AT Grantees within the Assistive Technology Act, it would be well spent and would generate matching investments from states and from the private sector. The current return on investment from Section 4 State AT Grantees, who receive a total federal investment of \$26.4 million of the overall AT Act allocation in FY17, yield a total in savings and benefits of \$65 million. An appropriation of \$32 million, dedicated to Section 4 State AT Grantees, would enable 50 Statewide AT programs, the District of Columbia and the US Territories to receive the minimum grant provided under the statute and yield far greater returns on this federal investment. If you need further information about the AT Act and the programs and services it supports please contact Audrey Busch at Audrey.busch@ataporg.org. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Sincerely,



Audrey Busch
Executive Director
ATAP