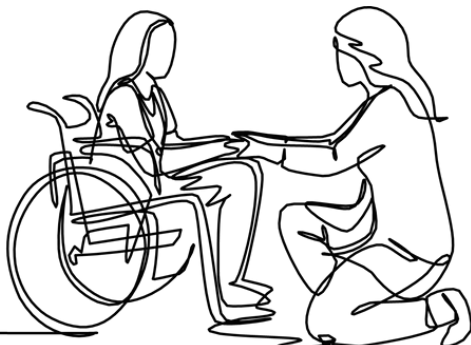
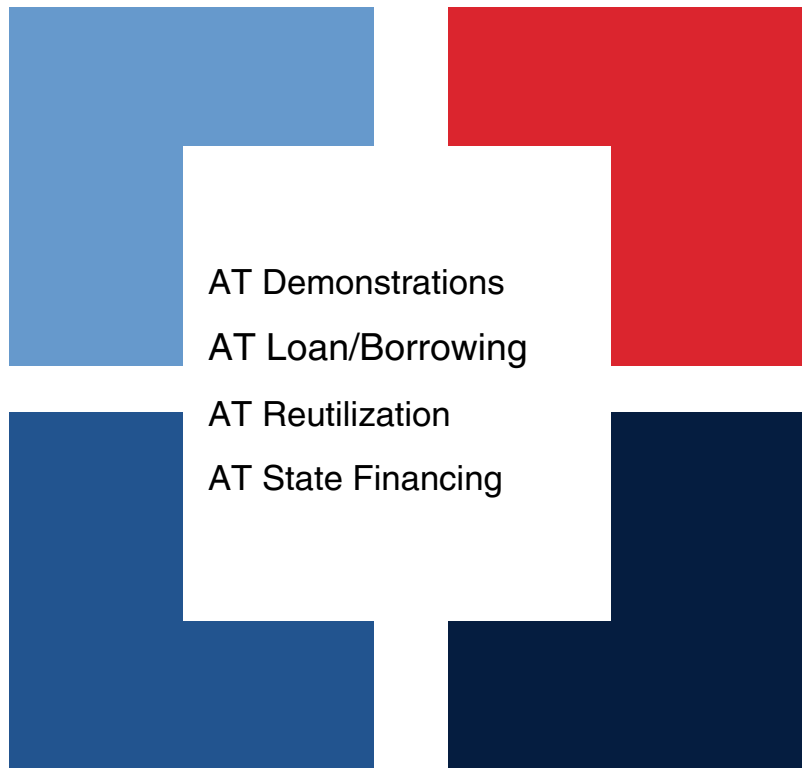




Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs  
FY2022

SMALL FEDERAL INVESTMENT –  
LARGE BENEFITS IN RETURN

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**Mission**

To maintain and enhance a strong, effective, and efficient national network of State and Territory-wide 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 carryout 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 AT. These activities also deliver a large return on investment for the small federal appropriation for this program.

### **Definition of Assistive Technology (AT)**

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 education, employment, and community living activities.

# DEMONSTRATION

**Assistive Technology Demonstration Programs** provide opportunities for people to learn about and become familiar with specific types of AT by comparing and contrasting the functions and features of devices through hands-on exploration. Instruction is provided by knowledgeable AT professionals 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 prevent 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.)*



*In FFY22, **44,919 individuals** participated in **25,720 device demonstrations** conducted by State and Territory AT Act Programs. Projecting a modest \$100 savings realized by just half of the total demonstrations conducted, results in **national savings of \$1.286 million dollars.***



## California



Rogelio, who has limited control of his fingers, hands, and arms, is a consumer of one of California's Device Lending and Demonstration Centers (DLDC). Rogelio, an avid gamer, was able to receive a demonstration of a variety of adaptive gaming controllers, switch kits, joysticks, and mounts that would allow him to control the game through supported head and arm movements. After playing several video games at the DLDC, Rogelio identified the perfect combination of adaptive gaming technology (Evil Controller Thumbstick, the Xbox Adaptive Controller, and the LogiTech Adaptive Switch Kit) that would allow him to get back into gaming.



## Alaska

Jo, a 61-year-old woman from Anchorage, Alaska, left a voicemail with the Assistive Technology of Alaska (ATLA) stating she has agoraphobia and does not leave the house, check phone messages, or even speak to people. She asked if a specialist would contact her about any potential assistive technology that might help her be more independent. ATLA's AT specialist contacted Jo and learned she also experienced multiple traumatic brain injuries and visual impairments. In addition, she needed minor health monitoring, but due to her agoraphobia, she rarely left her home for doctors' visits. The AT specialist organized a kit full of demonstration items, such as digital magnifiers, an iPad to access brain games, Facebook, Facetime, Apple Pay, health monitoring devices for blood pressure and oxygen monitoring, and low-tech AT for creating large-print lists. Through an in-home device demonstration, the individual discovered a digital magnifier with an angled screen was the easiest to view so she could resume her love for reading, arts and crafts, and painting. Additionally, ATLA set up the iPad with Facetime, Facebook, Lumosity, Apple Pay, and talking Bible scriptures. Using the iPad, she realized she could communicate with family and friends, engage in brain exercises, and access bible scripture without leaving the house. The individual was also wiring money to her daughter monthly, which cost \$20 each time. The Apple Pay app helped her avoid this fee. And finally, the health monitoring devices allowed her to track her blood pressure and oxygen levels without leaving her home. All of the devices were available and provided through ATLA's Techability program.



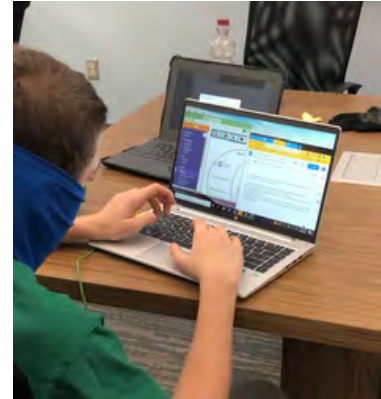
## New Mexico

Jonte had a stroke, and in addition to decreased strength on her right side, she lost her ability to speak clearly. Jonte's family member called the New Mexico Assistive Technology Act Program (NMTAP) looking for tools to help her communicate more easily with her family, doctors, and anyone she might speak with. Jonte uses a smartphone to text message. Since Jonte is literate and proficient with her smartphone, we agreed to try speech communication tools with an iPad. After trying several different devices, the AT Specialist and Jonte decided on AssistiveWare's Proloquo4Text's Application. Staff worked with Jonte to set up contact information and short messages for Jonte to use with her doctors.



## Connecticut

Connecticut State Assistive Technology Act partner agency, EASTCONN, worked with a student with a learning disability with encoding challenges. The student received a demonstration of a Google extension called "Co:Writer Universal." In addition, a 'topic dictionary' was created in the extension, which provided the words on the subject he was writing about in the word prediction window based on his phonemic spelling. After the demonstration, the student used the extension with an authentic writing assignment. He could write complete sentences to answer questions with the words spelled correctly. After writing the sentences, they were read aloud to him, and he could edit them independently. When the student completed his assignment, he stated, "My science teacher is going to be amazed at my full sentences and correct spelling!" The student stated that this tool would "definitely be helpful" for him when he is writing.



# LOAN/BORROWING

**Assistive Technology Device Loan/Borrowing Programs** allow individuals to borrow devices for a limited time to use at home, school, work, etc. Device loans allow borrowers to try out devices in their own environments to determine if a device will meet their needs before a purchase is made. Device loans can also provide loaner AT while a device is being repaired, while a consumer is waiting for funding approval, 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.*



*In FFY22, **43,347 devices** were borrowed from short-term device loan programs operated through State and Territory AT Act Programs. Assuming an average savings of \$1,000 per device loan, and keeping in mind multiple items are often borrowed to find a solution, we calculate **a national savings of \$16.76 million**. In addition, assuming a minimal \$10-per-day rental fee for the average device loan period, we project **a national savings of \$2.63 million for devices borrowed to meet a short-term need** (since these devices did not have to be rented).*



## Washington



Stacey, a full-time student at Wenatchee Valley College, has limited hand mobility and dexterity due to past treatments for chronic illnesses and injuries. During the COVID pandemic, when her courses moved online, Stacey set up a makeshift office at home, requiring her to use her computer several hours daily. It soon became apparent that using a standard mouse was debilitating. So she reached out to the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation to seek any resources that may be available to help. She was able to enroll in a career plan/contract with DVR while she pursued work in the Information Technology field. Through DVR's partnership with the Washington Assistive Technology Act Program –WATAP - and with the help of her rehab counselor and regional assistive technology assessment practitioner, she tried an adjustable desk and chair, Dragon Naturally Speaking, an Anker Mouse, and a Sculpt keyboard. In particular, she could borrow the Anker Mouse over the summer to ensure that this was the correct mousing product for her and that it would not further damage her hands and wrists and would be comfortable to use for long periods. DVR provided all of the ergonomic equipment she tried so that she could thrive in her home setting. Stacey received her Associates of Applied Science Degree in the summer of 2022. Her next chapter began in the fall of 2022 as she started her Information Technology and Administration Management bachelor's degree program at Central Washington University. Stacey says that she is flourishing because of organizations such as WATAP and DVR and is grateful for their help and support.



## Wyoming

A Park County, Wyoming resident borrowed an iPad for their child as part of a free tiered assessment with the Wyoming Assistive Technology Act Program. Due to this loan, the student could try, before buying, the iPad with specific communication applications such as Touch Chat HD with Word Power, Proloquo2Go, and LAMP Words for Life. Due to this device and application loan, the child could select the application that worked best for their needs and then work with the Wyoming AT Act Program to acquire that device and application.



## South Carolina

A South Carolina occupational therapist working with a school district called the SC Assistive Technology Program to ask if the program had feeding equipment she could borrow to try with a student with Arthrogryposis. Arthrogryposis causes a person's limbs not to bend. In this student's case, he can not bend his arms, and his mode of self-feeding is to lean down to the plate and lick up the food. He would only eat a little in front of his peers. With the Obi feeding system, he ate much more of his lunch and asked for seconds on the first day. He loves using the device, and took to it immediately naming it "Bread." He was very proud and smiling a lot. The school's AT team felt that the Obi feeding system tremendously increased his self-feeding independence. The school team uses the SC Assistive Technology Program to assist with AT decision-making for students with disabilities. The lending process is easy, and the staff is accommodating and knowledgeable.



## West Virginia

A family was looking for a device to spark an interest in their child learning shapes, colors, and letters. They were also looking for a possible solution to improving the child's independence in feeding himself due to his having low dexterity and an inability to prevent food from falling off the plate. The West Virginia Assistive Technology Act Program demonstrated and recommended the mini lite box and the LiftWare steady to the family. The parents decided to borrow both devices and were excited to give them a trial run. After a thirty-day device loan period, they informed the WV AT Act Program they would purchase the mini lite box since their child enjoyed it and it supported his learning. Overall, they were very satisfied and said they look forward to working with us again as their child's learning and mobility needs change.



# 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 significantly lower cost or no cost. Reutilization efforts include refurbishment (previously owned devices are cleaned, repaired, and/or reconditioned and then provided to new owners) and device exchange (e.g., online classifieds). In some reutilization programs, a device is provided on an open-ended loan basis until the recipient no longer needs it.

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



In FFY22, **59,229 recipients** acquired **88,015 reutilized devices** through State and Territory AT Act Programs. A total of **\$38.3 million was saved** by device recipients by purchasing/obtaining reutilized AT instead of new. In addition, 90% of the reutilized device recipients indicated that they would not have been able to afford the AT or obtain it from other sources if it were not for the reuse services of the State AT Act Program. The cost of those individuals being unable to work, learn or live in the community without the AT they need would be immeasurable.



## Alabama



Three-year-old Merida suffered a severe fracture of her leg as the result of a serious car crash. She was taken to a Mobile hospital, where she had surgery to repair the fracture. The hospital informed her dad that she would not be able to bear any weight on her leg for three months. Because of COVID-19, many items were in short supply. Merida needed a pediatric wheelchair, but they could not find one -- new or used. One of the family's neighbors remembered that Goodwill Gulf Coast had a free Medical Assistance Program called We Share which partners with Alabama Assistive Technology Resource (STAR) and Goodwill Gulf Coast to provide services. Adult-sized items are readily available, but pediatric items are harder to come by. The Goodwill team sent a request to all locations so that everyone could look for the small wheelchair Merida needed. Initially, none were found, but a team member stumbled upon a pediatric wheelchair in another location that would be perfect for Merida. The tires were dry-rotted, and the footrests had no pedals, but miraculously, a recycled pair of matching wheels from another chair and foot pedals that fit were used to repair the chair. "This wheelchair has been such a big help for us and allows Merida to move around on her own while she heals," her dad said. "We are truly thankful for the Goodwill team's help."



## Guam

Matthew is a caretaker for his father-in-law, who has an illness that affects his mobility. Matthew visited Guam Assistive Technology Act Program (GSAT) to inquire about a device that would address his mobility concerns, and meet his needs while undergoing physical therapy. The GSAT had a rollator, via a donation, that helped his father-in-law to his doctor appointments. Since knowing about GSAT services and program, Mathew has referred two people to GSAT and says he will continue to do so because it was a big help in a time of need.





## Kansas

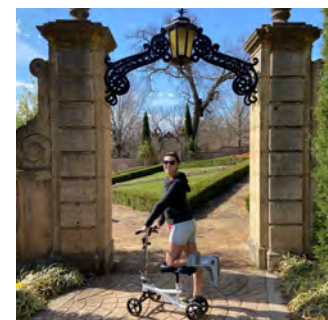


Emersyn, a 9-year-old 4th grader in western Kansas, was diagnosed with "shrunken cerebellum" or Cerebellar Hypoplasia, where the bottom of the cerebellum, just above the spinal cord, is not fully developed. As a result, Emersyn has difficulty with her balance and coordination movement. Her physical therapist contacted Assistive Technology for Kansans (ATK) to borrow a reverse walker. After measurements were identified, ATK provided a loan of a reverse walker with swivel wheels. The loan was successful, and ATK staff found one that fit her in the Kansas Reuse program inventory. Emersyn uses it in her home, school, and community independently. Her physical therapist notes the walker allows her to participate with her classmates without the support of the school staff for balance. Because of the walker, Emersyn can walk longer distances, improving her strength and endurance. School staff also note that the reverse walker with swivel wheels allows her to participate in PE: running races, playing games, and kickball just like her peers. Emersyn's mother states, "The walker was the missing puzzle piece Emersyn needed to be a kid – she can now run and play with her peers in and out of school. She has mastered the walker to the point of almost needing a speedometer to keep her from being Speedy Gonzales. With the walker, Emersyn has the ability to learn, grow and play as she makes her way into middle and high school."



## Oklahoma

Ashton, a student in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program at Tulsa Community College, had foot surgery that prevented her from bearing weight on her left foot. She received crutches from the hospital; however, walking made her significantly fatigued. After obtaining a rolling knee walker through Oklahoma ABLE Tech's Device Reuse Program, Ashton could do her everyday tasks, including field trips to museums, with much greater ease. When reflecting on her experience receiving the rolling knee walker through the program, Ashton commented, "This has made doing everything possible."



# 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.*



In FFY22, **771 borrowers** obtained **financial loans totaling \$7,391,629** to buy **1,049 devices**. Another **10,613 recipients** acquired **22,253 devices valued at \$7,638,420** from other state financing programs that directly provide AT using external funding sources. Another **3,619 recipients** acquired **5,122 AT devices** with a **savings of \$3.37 million** from other state financing activities, such as cooperative buying programs. The vast majority (97%) 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 due to cost or availability, potentially resulting in individuals who are unable to successfully work, learn or live in the community.



## Nevada

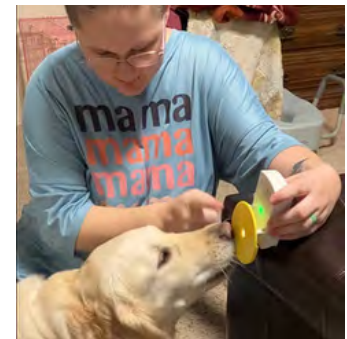


The Nevada AT Act Loan Fund – the CARE Loan Fund - was utilized to purchase a modified vehicle for a woman with osteoarthritis and her daughter living with cerebral palsy. They live in a multi-generational household which includes a grandmother and cousin. Because the family had experienced generational poverty and had no credit history, their record of paying rent was sufficient to qualify for a loan. Because of the relationship, the family established their transportation goals with the Assistive Technology for Independent Living program, which also provided funding for vehicle modifications. This partnership allowed the family to fulfill their goal of having transportation to make doctor appointments, pick up food and attend social activities. When the CARE Loan Fund staff visited them at their home, they sang to the staff and made traditional dishes to share.



## Utah

Anna was preparing to welcome a new baby to her home. In addition to the usual considerations of having a newborn in the house, she had an additional concern: What if she had a seizure when her husband was at work? Anna's service dog, Vixen, responds to seizures, but sometimes when they happen, Anna is unable to speak, making it hard to notify others if she needs additional assistance. She knew a service dog panic button could help, but it was pricey. Once activated, the device alerts three designated people that she is experiencing a seizure. Fortunately, she also knew the Utah Assistive Technology Act Program offers small grants to help people with disabilities, who otherwise cannot afford them, purchase AT devices. Utahans, who fit the income guidelines and do not have other funding options, are eligible for small grants of up to \$500. Anna received the small grant and purchased the device. Anna has trained Vixen to use the panic button. She's also tested the device. "It worked great," she said. "It played the message." The family recently welcomed their new baby girl, Anastasia. They have the assurance that if Anna needs help after a seizure, she will get it — and so will Anastasia.





## Idaho



A young woman needed a loan for an accessible van. Her credit score was below bank standards, given she was young and needed more time to build credit. This woman was also a VR client and worked for the Department of Labor. The Department of Labor loan committee voted to guarantee this loan, but before the loan was processed, the client called back the Idaho AT Act Program to say she had received an additional \$4,000 to put down on the van from her DOL career planner's husband, who rallied his team at work to raise the money. Her local Center for Independent Living director was teaching her to drive. Then the vendor called to say he was putting some extra work into the van and wanted to reduce the price for the client because he wanted her first vehicle to be a great experience. When all was said and done, the loan came out to less than half the original amount approved.



## Puerto Rico

A young and active 13-year-old with Spina Bifida used to enjoy a ride-on toy that he could propel with his arms to run and spin around. This toy helped him exercise to develop upper body strength and coordination. When he outgrew this toy, there were no similar alternatives in the marketplace except for expensive hand-powered bikes that required different arm movements, and, most importantly, could not do 360 spins. A hand-powered ride-on vehicle was created and tested through Puerto Rico's Assistive Technology Act Program's AT fabrication initiative and a team of mechanical engineering students at the University of Puerto Rico (UPR). The boy tried the device at a beach-side park with many open spaces, and shot off, running over asphalt and sidewalks, then went off-road over dirt and grass. He was delighted to be able to play with his childhood toy again, and he ran and spun all over the place. PRATP and UPR engineering students also developed an electromechanical pedal pusher controlled by a side-head-tilt movement. The young man plays the piano and takes lessons at school. Even though he can play the piano quite well, having no movement from the waist down means he cannot push the piano pedal to hold the notes while he plays. A switch-activated pedal-pushing device for classical pianos is unavailable in the marketplace. On the first test, he could consistently push the piano pedal while playing to hold the notes when and for as long as he wanted. He and his family were quite happy with these devices that helped increase his access to exercise, recreation, and music, all through the power of AT.

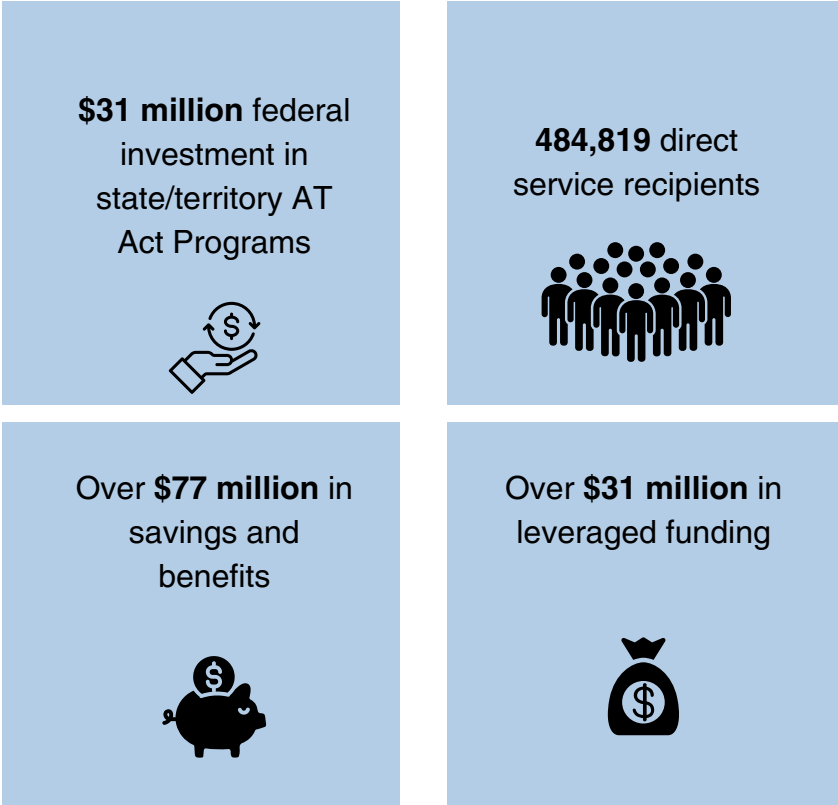




**Leveraged Funding** is frequently secured by State and Territory AT Act Programs and used to expand and maximize services. In FFY22, State and Territory AT Act Programs leveraged \$31 million in funding from federal, state, local and private sources. These funds were used to support all of the State and Territory AT Act Programs authorized activities.

*Collectively, State and Territory AT Act Programs are an integral partner in federal, state and local AT activities. State and Territory AT Act Programs leverage a variety of funding including direct federal dollars for the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program from the Federal Communications Commission along with funding from special education, vocational rehabilitation, health, senior services, and other state/ territory agencies to provide AT services.*

## FFY22: Small Federal Investment – Large Benefits in Return



# THANK YOU

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## CONTACT US



[atapadmin@ataporg.org](mailto:atapadmin@ataporg.org)



<https://ataporg.org>



Washington, DC 20005