

# Unlocking Possibilities: How AT Act Programs Expand Access and Empower Lives



Kathrine Crowley  
Deputy Director  
California Foundation for  
Independent Living Centers/  
Ability Tools  
[Kathrine@cfilc.org](mailto:Kathrine@cfilc.org)

Jeannie Krull, MS/CCC-SLP, ATP, CAPS  
Executive Director  
AT3Center  
ATAP  
[Jeannie.krull@ataporg.org](mailto:Jeannie.krull@ataporg.org)



[at3center.net](http://at3center.net)  
[ataporg.org](http://ataporg.org)

# Speaker Disclosures


## Financial


- Kathrine Crowley receives a salary from CFILC and Jeannie Krull receives a salary from ATAP.


## Non-Financial

- None to disclose

# Learning Objectives

1. Identify the four core services provided by state Assistive Technology Act Programs and their role in supporting individuals with disabilities across the lifespan. 

2. Explain how AT Act Programs use innovative approaches to increase access to assistive technology for education, employment, and independent living as people age. 

3. Apply knowledge of AT Act Programs to connect individuals with appropriate assistive technology tools, services, and resources within their communities. 

# Today's Schedule

---

**What is AT-It's bigger than you think!**

---

**The AT Act**

---

**AT Act Programs**

---

**Innovative State Examples**

---

**Closing & Questions**

---



# What is Assistive Technology? & Who is it for?

# Assistive Technology in 2026

- Nearly 40 Years of AT Evolution
- Now AT is an ecosystem that supports functional capability across the lifespan
- Yet misunderstandings persist
- The reality: AT serves anyone navigating changes in vision, hearing, memory, mobility, fatigue, speech, or behavioral health (and more!), regardless of age and whether they identify as "disabled."
- The [21st Century AT Act \(2022\)](#) anchors AT in lifespan access and cross-disability reach, defining both the technology and its beneficiary population in functional terms.



# Definition of AT

- **ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY**—The term ‘assistive technology’ means technology designed to be utilized in an assistive technology device or assistive technology service.
- **ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVICE**—means **any** item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.
- **ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICE (abbreviated)**—means "any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device," encompassing evaluation, acquisition, customization, coordination with therapies and education plans, instruction for the individual and their support network, training for professionals and employers, and, critically, "expanding the availability of access to technology, including electronic and information technology, to individuals with disabilities" (clause G).

# AT is...

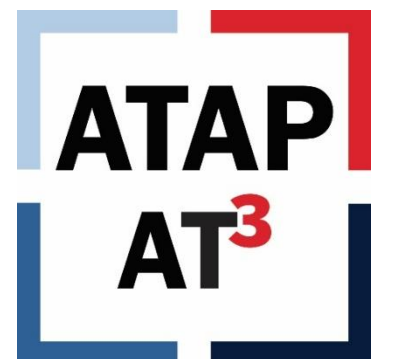
defined by

**what it does**

in improving, maintaining, or increasing the functional capabilities of the person

VS

**what the device is**



# The Assistive Technology Umbrella-1



The Legal definition of AT is inherently broad enough to include all of this technology **AND MORE**, including technology that has not been invented yet!!

- 1. Speech Communication** such as dedicated speech generating devices, mainstream tech with apps, low tech picture boards, accessibility features and other access devices, etc.
- 2. Vision**-magnifiers, mobile devices with apps, software, talking devices, large print keyboards, etc.
- 3. Hearing**-amplified telephones, alerting systems, video communication with ASL, personal hearing systems, etc.
- 4. Home Modifications**-ramps, grab bars, walk-in showers, etc.
- 5. Environmental Controls**-smart home devices (i.e. smart speakers, sensors, smart plugs, cameras, thermostats, door openers, TV controls, smart deadbolts, remote shades, etc.), built-in accessibility features, and other access devices, etc.
- 6. Communications Technology**-telehealth, remote monitoring, care companions, social isolation, built-in accessibility features, mounts and access devices for mobile phones for communication, as well as the connectivity to run the devices, and more.

# The Assistive Technology Umbrella-2

The Legal definition of AT is inherently broad enough to include all of this technology **AND MORE**, including technology that has not been invented yet!!

7. **Learning, Cognitive, Developmental, Behavior Health Technology**-wandering tech (i.e. GPS, alarms systems (analog/smart)), mobile devices and apps (i.e. scan & read), wearables, software, educational tools, memory devices and reminder systems (i.e. medication management systems-analog/smart), robotic pets, etc.
8. **Daily Living Technology**-PERS and fall detection systems, medication management systems (analog/smart), smart devices for living (i.e. wearables, toothbrushes), tech for eating, toileting, dressing, robotics, etc.
9. **Vehicle Modifications & Transportation Tech**-ramps, driving controls, seat assist, etc.
10. **Recreation, Sports and Leisure Tech**-adapted gaming tech, gardening tools, etc.
11. **Mobility, Seating, and Positioning**- wheelchairs, exoskeletons, access controls, Durable Medical Equipment, etc.
12. **Computers and Related**-includes mainstream tech such as computers, tablets and other mobile devices, software, all access methods (i.e. mouth joystick, eye-gaze, onscreen keyboards),
13. **and More!!!**

**NOTE:** Assistive technology wears many hats; a single device often fits into several different categories depending on how it's used.

# Who is Assistive Technology For?

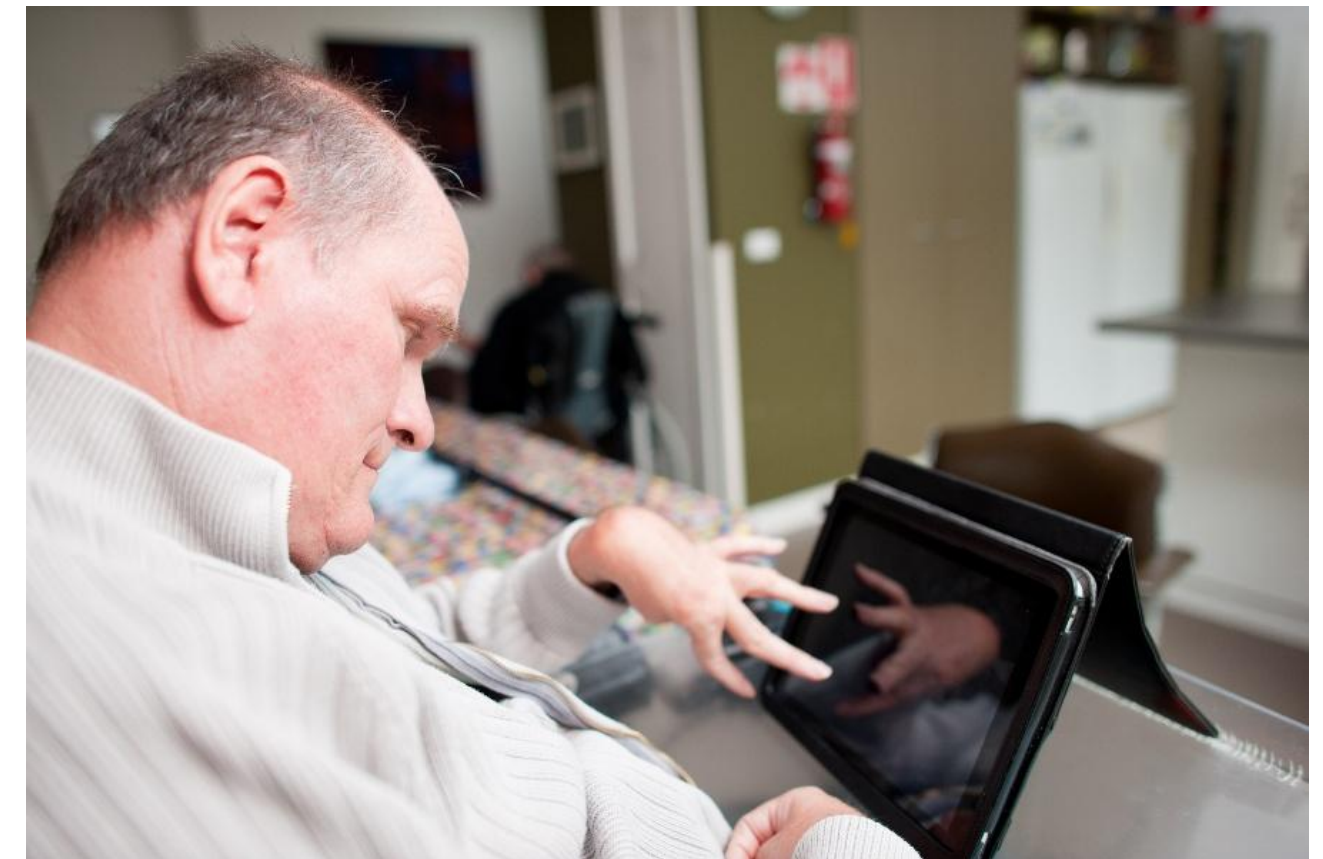
- **People with Disabilities**
- **Older adults and those Aging into Disability**
  - "Underrepresented population" to include "older individuals" and "youth with disabilities aging into adulthood."
  - To "increase access to and acquisition of assistive technology addressing the needs of aging individuals and **aging caregivers in the community**."
  - Requires State AT programs to collaborate with the State agency under the **Older Americans Act**
- **Temporary, Intermittent, and Progressive Conditions**
- **People Who Do Not Yet Identify as Disabled**
- **Support Networks**
  - AT services include instruction for caregivers, family members, guardians, and advocates, and for professionals, employers, and others substantially involved in the major life functions of individuals with disabilities .

**What is the Assistive  
Technology Act?  
&  
What are Assistive  
Technology Programs?**



# What is the Assistive Technology Act- Definition

The **Assistive Technology (AT) Act** is a federal law in the United States that provides funding to states and territories to support programs aimed at increasing the availability of, access to, and acquisition of assistive technology (AT) devices and services for individuals with disabilities.



# What is the Assistive Technology Act-Purpose

Its primary **purpose** is to help people with disabilities of all ages and those aging into disability to more fully participate in education, employment, and daily activities by providing them with the tools and services they need to live more independently as well as to age in place in the community of their choice.



# What is the Assistive Technology Act-Summary

- Essentially, the AT Act helps states establish programs that:
  - **Increase awareness** of AT.
  - **Provide access** to AT devices through demonstrations, loans, and reutilization programs.
  - **Help individuals acquire** AT through various financing options and support.
  - **Offer training and technical assistance** on the use and benefits of AT to individuals with disabilities, their families, and professionals.

# AT Act Program Structure

## State Assistive Technology Act Grantees

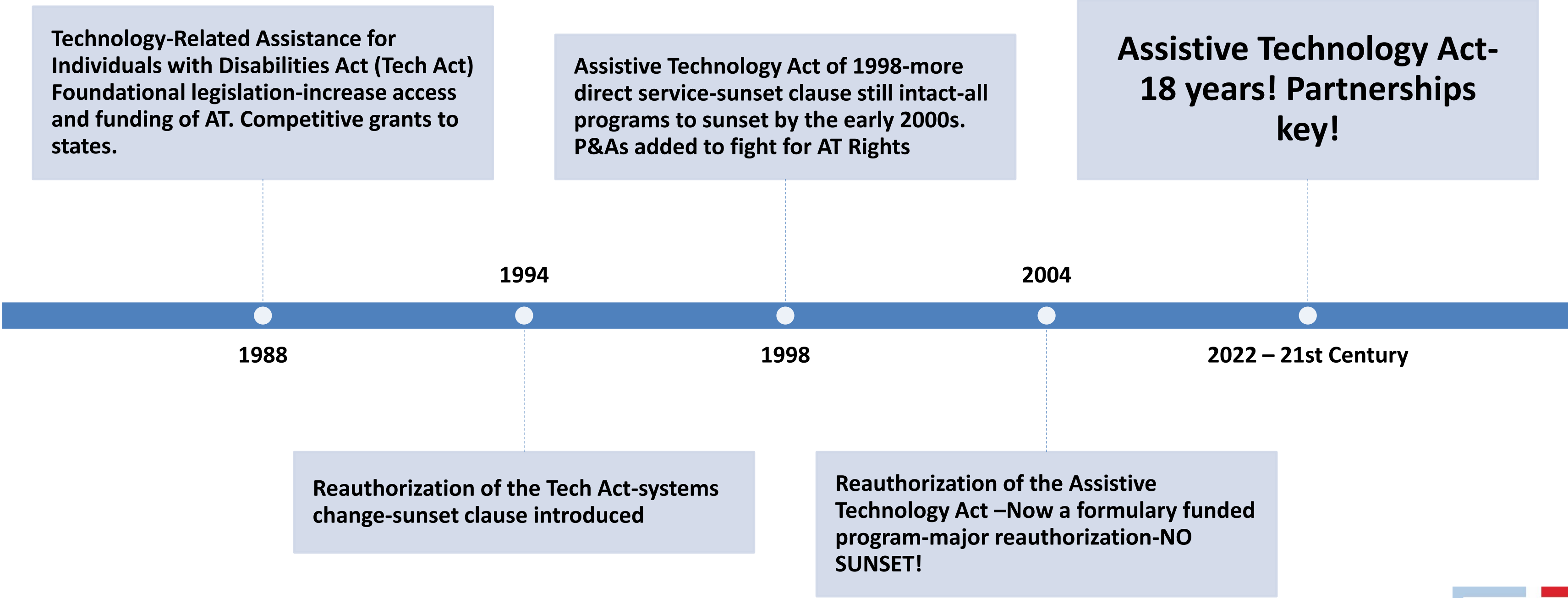
Operate in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and four Territories

### AT Act Programs are housed in either:

- 1) State Government (i.e. - VR, Education, Health) (21)
- 2) University-many are under UCCEDS (21)
- 3) Non-Profit-stand-alone non-profit or under a larger non-profit (14)



# Evolution of the AT Act (1988-2022)



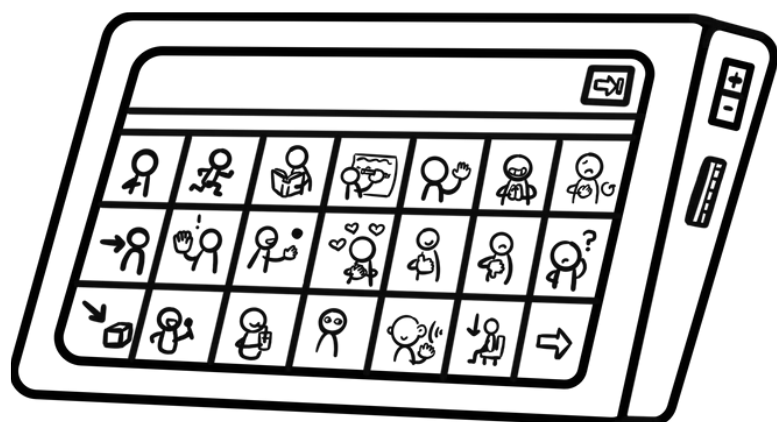
# Important Changes in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century AT Act of 2022

## Federal Partner Collaboration (new language)

Every AT Act Program must attempt collaboration with the following state agencies:

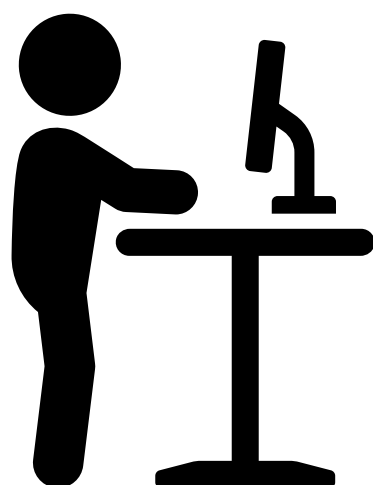
- State Educational Agency receiving funds through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- Vocational Rehabilitation Agency;
- State Medicaid Agencies;
- Any other agency in a state that funds assistive technology.

# Core Services of AT Act Programs



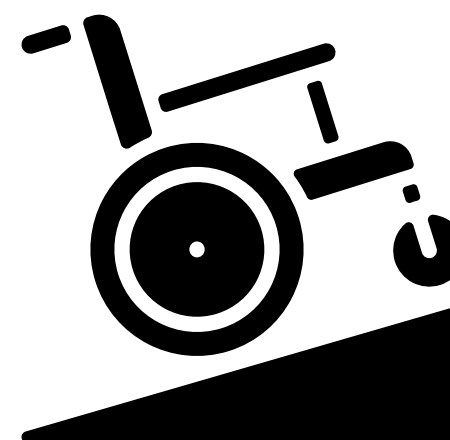
## AT Device Demonstration

See, touch, and try AT devices to help aid you in the decision-making process.



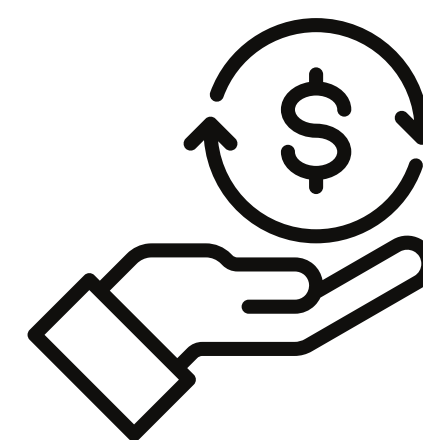
## Short-Term Device Loans

Borrow AT to determine if a device meets your needs before making a purchase.



## Device Reutilization

Receive gently used AT devices and durable medical equipment to use for as long as needed.



## State Financing

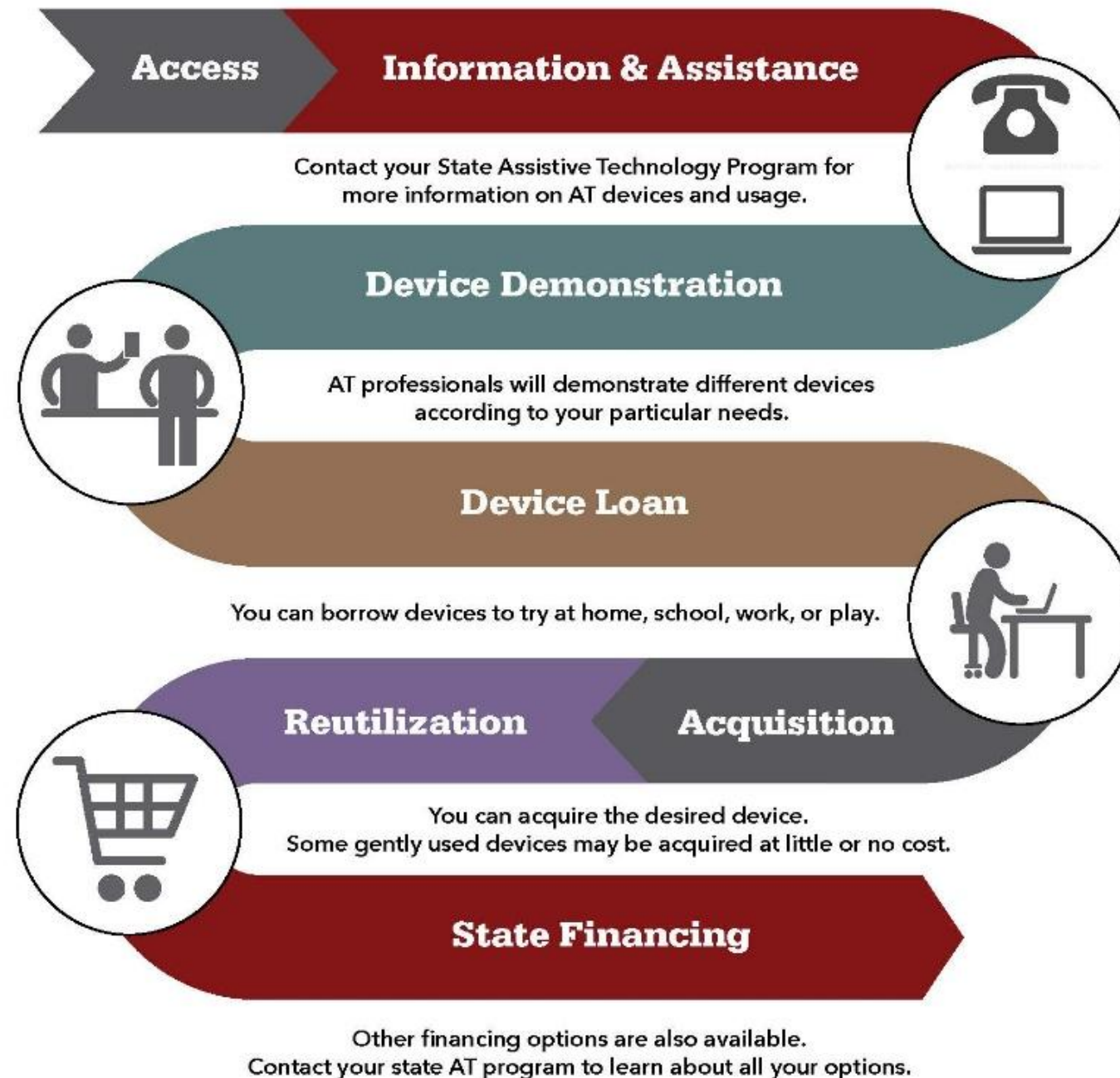
Purchase your own AT device or equipment with various finance options

# Services Flow of the AT Act Programs

## Handout in Downloads

### ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (AT) SERVICES FLOW

How do you access information about and acquire assistive technology devices for yourself, family members, or clients to enhance life, work, and play?



 Find your local AT program  
<https://www.at3center.net/stateprogram>



# All Activities of AT Act Programs

## State-Level Activities:

Device Demonstrations  
Device Short-Term Loans  
Device Reutilization  
Alternative Financing

## State-Leadership Activities:

Information & Assistance  
Training  
Public Awareness  
Technical Assistance



# California AT Act Program Structure



# California Assistive Technology Centers

- [Independent Living Centers](#)
- [Assistive Technology Exchange Center \(ATEC\)](#)
  - Santa Ana, CA 92705  
714.361.6200 / 714.543.1873 TTY
- [Center for Applied Rehabilitation Technology \(CART\)](#)
  - Downey, CA 90242  
562.401.6813 • 562.803.8892 FAX
- [Central Coast Assistive Technology Center \(CCATC\)](#)
  - San Luis Obispo, CA 93405  
805.549.7420 / 805.549.7424 TTY • 805.549.7423 FAX
- [SDATC San Diego Assistive Technology Center \(UCPSD\)](#)
  - San Diego, CA 92123  
858.278.5420 x120 • 619.282.5133 FAX



# California AT Act Program Restructure

- 3 Device Lending and Demonstration Centers
- 3 Reutilization Centers
- RFA will be released soon!  
– [Kathrine@CFILC.org](mailto:Kathrine@CFILC.org)



A Program of the  
California Foundation for Independent Living Centers



# ND AT Act Program Structure





# North Dakota AT Act Program Demonstration Center-Fargo



North Dakota  
AT Act Program  
Demonstration  
Center-  
Bismarck



nd.at4all.com

**NORTH DAKOTA ASSISTIVE**

WELCOME TO North Dakota ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR ALL!  
Technology to benefit individuals with disabilities

**North Dakota Assistive's Short-Term Equipment Trial Program**

**About**  
North Dakota Assistive has hundreds of assistive technology devices available for short-term loan, so individuals can try AT before purchasing or pursuing funding, to use while their own device is being repaired, to fill a temporary need such as while recovering from surgery, and so that professionals can familiarize themselves with current AT.

These short-term loans are for a six-week period.









**Featured Equipment**

**Pretorian JAZZ Joystick**  
The Pretorian JAZZ Joystick is a compact, desktop joystick specifically designed to allow users who lack fine motor skills to easily achieve both cursor control and switch scanning. It is designed to respond to gross movements while still achieving fine cursor positioning and accurate switch scanning.

Uniquely, this is achieved using Pretorian's renowned analogue joystick which requires very low operating forces (0.5N) and not a switch joystick, which typically have high operating forces.

JAZZ Joystick is suitable both for controlling a cursor (Mouse Mode) and also for switch scanning (Switch Scanning Mode). The latter can only be used in grid based AAC devices such as

**Find Items by Category**

 Computers and Related	 Daily Living	 Environmental Adaptations	 Hearing
			

Like every good website, this site uses cookies to deliver its services and manage your account. By using this website you agree to the use of cookies. [I understand](#)

# Online Libraries



# Innovative AT Act Program Examples



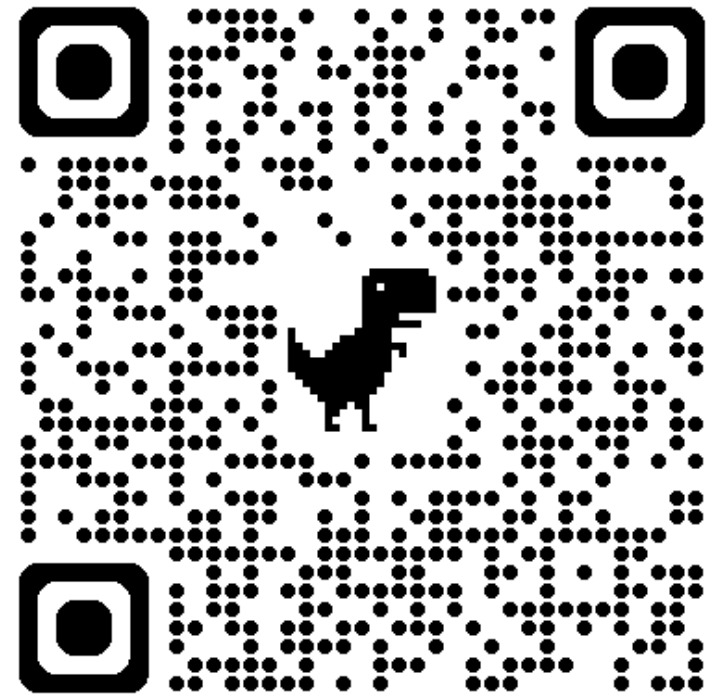
# Easterseals Iowa – Digital Accessibility Training



## New Online Course – Digital Access for Everyone

- **FREE!**
- **Six short modules**
- **Additional accessibility services for a fee**
- **[Training.iowaAT.org](https://www.training.iowaAT.org)**





# Wisconsin Assistive Technology Certification

- Online course content designed for providers and build capacity for the provision of high-quality, consumer-driven, and comprehensive AT services.
  - WisTech Verified ATP Certification (intended for RESNA ATP's)
  - WisTech AT Certification

The logo for ATAP AT3. It consists of the text "ATAP" in a bold, black font above "AT3" in a bold, black font. The text is enclosed in a blue and red border that forms a square shape with rounded corners.

ATAP  
AT<sup>3</sup>

# Nebraska AT Partnership Education Program - Highlights

## AT Cadre

- Intensive Technical Assistance Experience
  - **Group Learning Pathway** – Quality AT Services
  - **Individual Learning Pathway** – working with a coach on individual learning goals
  - **Application Capstone Project** – applies learning in a project to change practices.

## Professional Preparation Partnerships

- Demonstration Video Service- Learning Project
  - Professional Prep Programs borrow equipment from ATP Ed Program
  - Preservice professionals dive deep to learn equipment and develop demonstration videos.
  - Demonstration videos are co-branded with University and ATP Ed Program information and shared widely across the state.





# North Dakota AT Ambassador Program



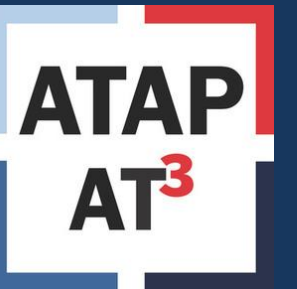
# Minnesota AAC Consideration Kits

---

- Create an easy-to-use AAC Kit for IEP teams
- to consider AAC for students which will:
  - Identify AAC features that enable success
  - Provide data in feature match to identify AAC systems for a possible formal evaluation
  - Provide ideas for engaging students for communication success



# AT Act Program Success Stories



# California Device Demonstration Success Story

---

- “Jonathan” is a social and outgoing individual with Cerebral Palsy, which limits his ability to speak. He had been using a TDI15 for seven years, but it began malfunctioning and became unreliable. Jonathan needed a replacement device that would allow him to continue communicating effectively with his family and support network.
- CART staff provided Jonathan with demonstrations and trials of several speech-generating devices, comparing their features and access methods. The team recommended the TobiiDynavox I16 as the best fit for Jonathan’s needs. CART assisted in submitting a recommendation for insurance funding and supported the setup once the device was approved.
- Jonathan was thrilled to receive his new TobiiDynavox I16 and immediately began using it to communicate with family and friends. He expressed joy and relief knowing he could depend on the device without fear of technical issues. Jonathan thanked CART staff for their support and said he felt empowered to continue expressing himself confidently and independently.



# California Device Loan Success Story

---

- Elissa, an accomplished woman with Cerebral Palsy, has used a speech communication device for over 35 years. A respected speaker at Assistive Technology conferences and an educator for caregiver trainers, she now requires 24/7 care and spends much of her time in bed. She communicates using an Accent 1400, an advanced eye-gaze speech
- After moving to a subacute home last year, Elissa struggled to access her device due to her new setup. A Speech-Language Pathologist and Occupational Therapist recommended a Rehadapt floor mount as the best solution. California's AT Act Program provided a loaner mount, allowing her to communicate while awaiting her own.
- Elissa has since regained her independence, using Facebook, messaging, video calls, and writing. She is thrilled to be working on her autobiography and reconnecting with the world.



# California Reutilization Success Story

---

- Guadalupe was hit by a car while biking several years ago and has struggled with mobility since. She continues to rely on her bicycle for transportation, but her knees have weakened due to osteoporosis and her bike is deteriorating.
- [CIL Berkeley](#) located a Golden Companion Scooter through their reuse program and the AT Coordinator used [The Ability Tools Keep the Wheels Rolling Fund \(KWRF\)](#) to refurbish the scooter. It was reassigned to Guadalupe so she could once again move freely and independently within her community.
- Guadalupe was deeply grateful and relieved to receive the scooter. She expressed how much easier it would now be to get around and participate in daily activities. She thanked CIL Berkeley and the Keep the Wheels Rolling Fund for restoring her independence and improving her quality of life.



# Oregon Success Story

---

- “Paul” lives with advanced macular degeneration and visited the Oregon AT Center looking for solutions to improve his quality of life.
- The team quickly realized his custom desktop magnifier system at home was no longer effective as his laptop had stopped working. They also knew they could help.
- They recently received a refurbished computer which was ready for immediate use. The team went that same day delivered the computer, set it up and added a webcam.
- In his own words, Paul described the impact of this support: “ATI gave me a whole new world by giving me this computer. With the addition of a webcam, together they helped me out to a whole new horizon.”



# Minnesota Success Story

---

- A Minnesota educator shared with us after borrowing an AAC device...
- “Being able to have that device was a game changer for myself and the student. I was unsure of using an eye gaze device with this student, as he has poor head control.
- I didn’t want to jump through the hoops of getting a trial device if it wasn’t going to work.
- As soon as my student figured out how to use the device, he was requesting and talking about a lot of things!”



# Success Story: Sheryl's 'Sassy' Scooter

---

## The Challenge:

- Needed community transportation
- Weather limited independence
- Standard scooter insufficient

## The Solution:

- Combined two funding sources:
  - Financial loan (2% interest)
  - \$2,000 Possibilities Grant (last resort)

## The Result:

- Was able to get to work by herself
- Independence with "Sassy" scooter
- Full community participation



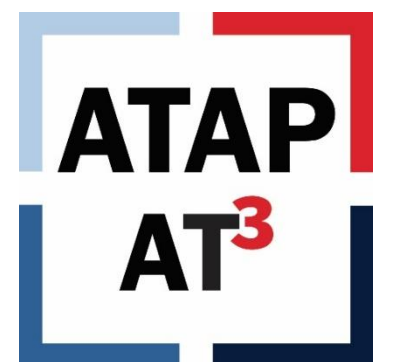
# What Can We Achieve Together?



From North Dakota Assistive

Every person on the planet will either need assistive technology for themselves or they will know someone who needs it. The trick is to build AT awareness, so everyone knows about it before they need it, and **NO ONE** goes without!

This requires a collective effort from all of us who are already familiar with these life-changing solutions!





**Every state. Every territory. Every person.**

**Discover your [local AT Act Program.](#)**



# Ability Tools

ive Techn Network

Ability  
EXPO  
ANGIE  
- 8/24/24  
Ability Tools 1011

Coventry Lab

**Join Ability Tools at the LA Abilities Expo!**

**Come see us at booth 458**



Questions?