

2016 Annual Report

Washington Assistive Technology Act Program (WATAP)



Technology for Independence



This report is available in alternative formats by request.

Thank you!

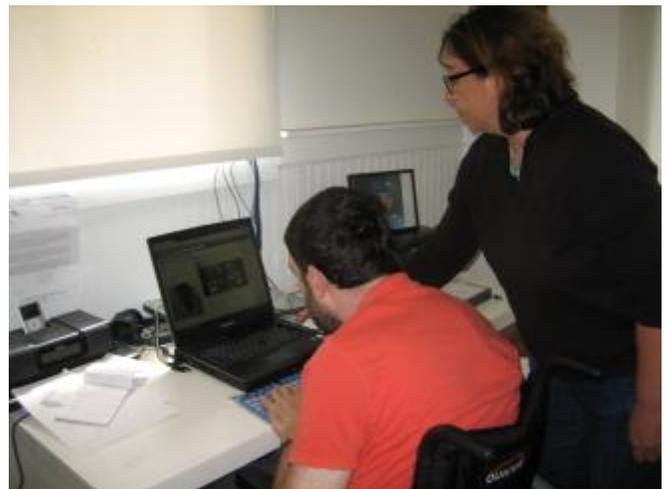
Assistive Technology (AT) empowers people to achieve their goals and overcome barriers to independently learn, work, live, and play. WATAP's programs provide access to AT devices and services for individuals, family members, and support providers. We would like to thank our partners for their on-going work and dedication to the people of Washington State. Collaborative efforts with partners and Advisory Council members have helped us extend our reach to serve individuals with all types of disabilities across the state. And finally, we would like to say a special thanks to our dedicated staff.

Partners

- Bridge Disability Ministries
- Department of Services for the Blind
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Hearing, Speech, and Deafness Center
- Northwest (formerly Washington) Access Fund
- Office of Deaf & Hard of Hearing
- Perkins School for the Blind
- Special Education Technology Center
- State Independent Living Council
- Timberland Regional Library System
- UW Center for Technology and Disability Studies
- UW Center on Human Development and Disability, University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disability
- UW Department of Rehabilitation Medicine

Advisory Council

- John Bresko - Representative from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Krista Buldger - Consumer Representative
- Francisco Felan - Representative from the Division of Vocation Rehabilitation
- Kimberly Heymann – Representative from the Centers for Independent Living
- John Lemus - Consumer Representative
- Sue Porter - Representative from the Department of Services for the Blind
- Kamran Rasul - Consumer Representative
- Eric Rea - Consumer Representative
- Kenny Salvini - Consumer Representative
- Daman Wandke - Consumer Representative



About WATAP

WATAP provides AT resources and expertise to all Washingtonians with disabilities, their families, and their support network. WATAP is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living (ACL) (#1601WASGAT). WATAP points the way to AT solutions through a continuum of comprehensive and statewide programs, starting at information and assistance, through device demonstration and short term device loans to assist in better decision-making, and obtaining AT from alternative means including device reuse and exchange, or alternative financing programs. Wrap around services provided to professionals and the community include training, workshops, and technical assistance.

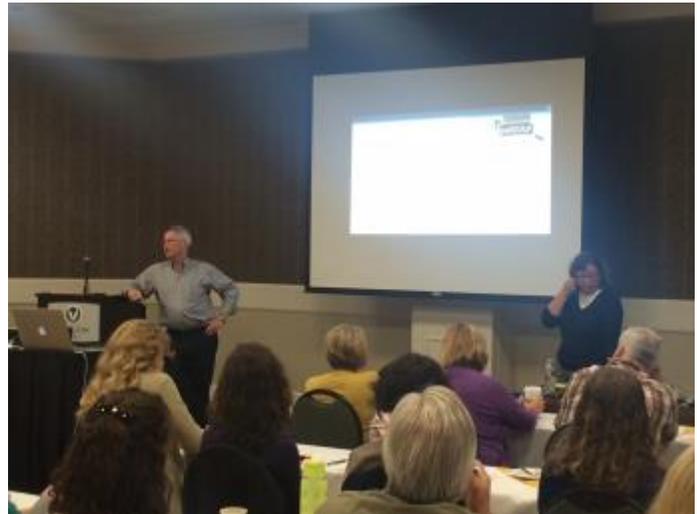
Coordination and Collaboration

Assistive Technology Training

WATAP conducted trainings around the state for 437 participants. The trainings included hands-on learning labs to help individuals gain competency and experience with AT.

Individual Development Accounts

In addition to low interest loans, the Northwest Access Fund provided Individual Development Accounts for purchasing AT. These 1:1 matched savings accounts help those in greatest financial need acquire AT they could not otherwise afford. Savings goals were reached by 17 individuals, who obtained 29 devices with \$37,522 distributed.



Technical Assistance for Accessible Information Technology

WATAP staff acted as a consultant to the Technology Services Board (TSB) of the Washington State Office of the Chief Information Officer (CIO) to draft a policy around IT accessibility and presented it to the CIO. Policy #188 was signed by the CIO in August and approved by the full TSB on December 6, 2016. The policy requires that the technology and content that WA State services are built on and use will meet an established and testable standard, WCAG 2.0 level AA. The policy also requires that Agencies have an Information Accessibility Coordinator to shepherd the creation and publishing of policies concerning accessibility, processes in place to conform to the policy and a plan to address existing barriers in digital access.

2016 Activities

Device Demonstrations: 305 demos

With guidance from experienced AT Specialists, 430 individuals participated in demonstrations focused on exploring personal needs.

Device Lending: 319 devices

Through short term loans, 194 individuals tried devices in the environments where they will be used and 23 were able to borrow for accommodation, professional purposes, or as a loaner during repair.

Low-Interest Loan: 86 loans

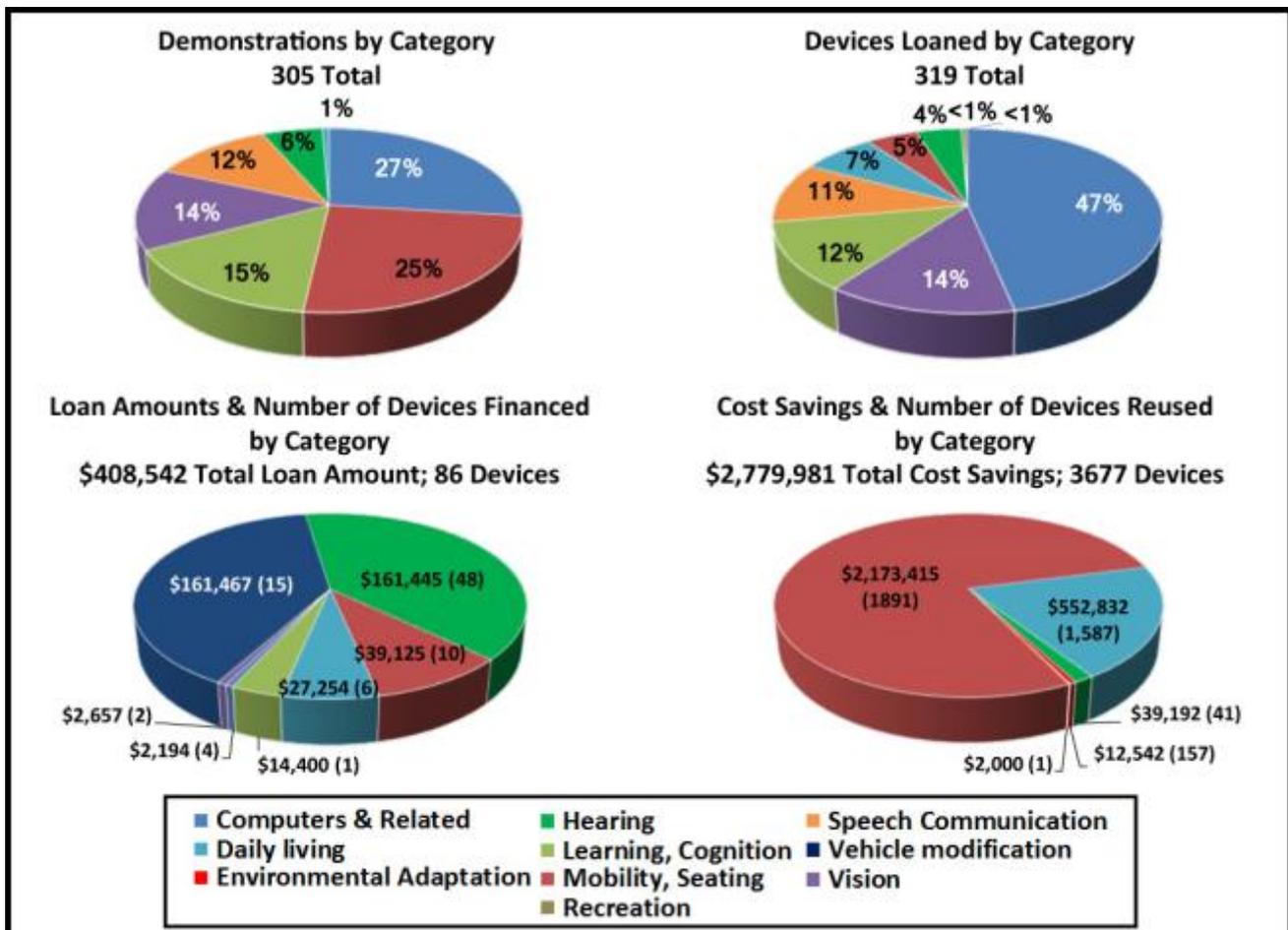
Through the Northwest Access Fund, individuals obtained low-interest loans totaling \$408,542 to purchase AT.

Telecommunications Distribution: 109 devices

Through the iCanConnect WA program, individuals obtained devices for telecommunication and internet purposes totaling \$51,132.

Device Reuse: 3,677 devices

Through the Evergreen Reuse Coalition, 2,577 individuals received hearing, durable medical, and vision equipment at a cost savings of \$2,779,981.



Stories of Achieving Success and...

Device Loan

Tim came to WATAP as part of the iCanConnect program where he was evaluated by one our AT Specialist for telecommunications needs. During his evaluation, he mentioned that his hand-held magnification device was malfunctioning and asked if there was a place he could take the device for repair. Our AT Specialist referred him to an organization that sells and repairs magnification devices, and also let Tim know about WATAP's lending library which has several types of hand held magnifiers he could borrow while his device was being repaired. At the end of the day, not only was Tim evaluated for his telecommunications needs, but he also borrowed a hand held magnifier to help him read his mail and other print items while his own device was being repaired.



State Financing

Through an affordable loan from the Northwest Access Fund, Janet was able to purchase an iPad with accessibility software that helps her to participate in the Foster Grandparents program at Ocean Beach Elementary School, where she has helped many young learners improve their reading skills over the past 11 years. After becoming legally blind 10 years ago, she decided that acting as a “grandparent” for students would take her life in a new direction. She felt that it was important to give back to her community and support children who do not have access to their grandparents or parents. She also teaches them how to interact with people with disabilities and normalizing the use of AT for the youngsters.

Empowering People

Device Reuse

Tom has a history of ear trouble including past surgery which result in him needing a custom earmold. Tom was enrolled in school to become a respiratory therapist but was having difficulty following along because he could not hear in class. The school referred him to the Hearing, Speech, and Deaf Center hearing aid reuse program because he had some financial troubles and could not afford new hearing aids except from a big box store where he would not have had the specialized attention of audiologists. Through the HSDC hearing aid reuse program, Tom was able to get a specially fitted earmolds and two reused hearing aids for \$100 per ear. He is now able to follow along in class and moving forward with his employment goal.

Device Demonstration

Susan contacted WATAP to try iPad communication apps and AAC devices for her daughter. Her daughter was using a communication board, but this device no longer allowed her to keep up with the communication demands needed at school. Unfortunatley, the apps that were demonstrated did not fully meet her daughter's needs, so Susan requested a demonstration of a dedicated AAC device. WATAP did not have in this device in its inventory, so our AT Specialist contacted the vendor representative who agreed to meet with Susan, her daughter, and the AT Specialist. Susan and her daughter were very satisfied with the outcome of the demonstration because it provided them with the opportunity to try a dedicated device that was relatively new to the market. WATAP provided Susan and her daughter the opportunity to compare the advantages and disadvantages of a dedicated device verses communication apps without incurring out of pocket expense. They were able to move forward with choosing the device that would provide the greatest functional independence in school and the community.





Center for Technology and Disability Studies

CTDS Leadership

Kurt Johnson, Director
Mark Harniss, Co-Director

WATAP Key Staff

Alan Knue, Director
Deb Cook, Technical Assistance Coordinator
Maria Kelley, Senior Assistive Technology Specialist
Curt Johnson, Assistive Technology Specialist
Jacob Rourke, Lending Library Assistant
Scott Canaan, Program Coordinator
Yuanyuan Li, Web Computing Specialist
(Key Staff who left WATAP in 2016: Samantha Murphy and Gaby de Jongh)

Washington Assistive Technology Act Program

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