

Washington Assistive Technology Act Program 2015 Annual Report



Technology for Independence



This report is available in alternative formats by request.

Thank You

Assistive technology empowers people to achieve their goals and overcome barriers to independently learn, work, live, and play. Individuals, family members, and support providers can access assistive technology devices and services through WATAP's programs. 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 reach individuals with all types of disabilities across the state.

Partners

- Washington Access Fund
- Bridge Disability Ministries
- Hearing, Speech, and Deafness Center
- Timberland Regional Library System
- Special Education Technology Center
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Department of Services for the Blind
- Office of Deaf & Hard of Hearing
- 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
- State Independent Living Council
- Washington Education Association

Advisory Council

Community Representatives

- Sue Ammeter
- Julie Peddy
- Aditya Ganapathiraju
- Kamran Rasul
- Kenny Salvinni
- John Lemus
- Eric Rae

Agency Representatives

- John Bresko, *Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction*
- Naomi Namekata, *Department Services for the Blind*
- Vicki Gilleg, *Division of Vocational Rehabilitation*
- Kimberly Heymamn, *Centers for Independent Living*



Program Activities

About WATAP

WATAP provides assistive technology (AT) resources and expertise to all Washingtonians with disabilities, their families, and their support network. WATAP is funded through a grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living (ACL #90AG0023-02-00 and #1601WASGAT) to assist in making decisions and obtaining the technology and related services needed to live, work, learn, and play.

WATAP points the way to assistive technology solutions through comprehensive and statewide programs including:

- Device Demonstration
- Short Term Device Loans
- Device Reuse and Exchange
- Alternative Financing
- Training for Professionals
- Workshops
- Technical Assistance
- Information and Assistance

2015 Activities

Device Demonstrations: 191 demos

With guidance from experienced AT Specialists, 352 individuals participated in demonstrations focussed on exploring personal needs for assistive technology.

Alternative Financing: 62 loans

Through the Washington Access Fund, individuals obtained low-interest loans totaling \$255,664 to purchase the AT they need for everyday life.

Device Lending: 497 devices

Through short term loans, 276 individuals tried devices in the environments where they will be used and 33 were able to borrow for accommodation.

Device Reuse: 3,399 devices

Through the Evergreen Reuse Coalition, 2,408 individuals received hearing, durable medical, and vision equipment at a cost savings of \$1,903,224.



Collaboration & Coordination

Activity Highlights in 2015

Assistive Technology Training

WATAP conducted trainings around the state for 577 participants. A series of five separate training topics were conducted through a contract with DVR for 326 VR counselors, community rehab professionals, and other DVR employment partners. The trainings included hands-on learning labs with assistive technology to help individuals gain and maintain employment.

Technical Assistance for Community Services

WATAP staff provided resources, best practices, and insight into the development of the AT Option a part of Community First Choice Options program being implemented in Washington State. Their involvement lead to policy development that will provide consumers with professional collaboration when acquiring assistive technology to increase independence.

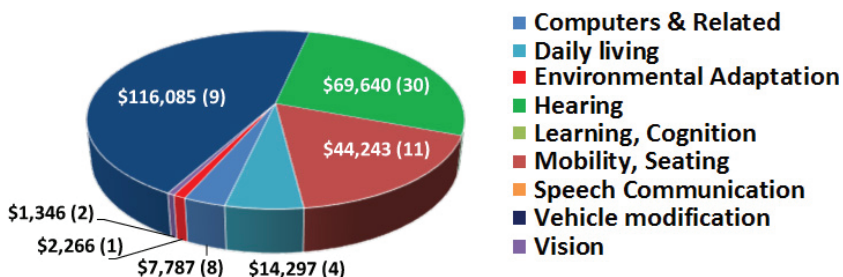
Individual Development Accounts

In addition to low interest loans, the Washington Access Fund provided Individual Development Accounts for purchasing assistive technology. These matched savings accounts help those in greatest financial need acquire AT they couldn't otherwise afford. Savings goals were reached by 28 individual, who obtained 56 devices with \$52,510 distributed.

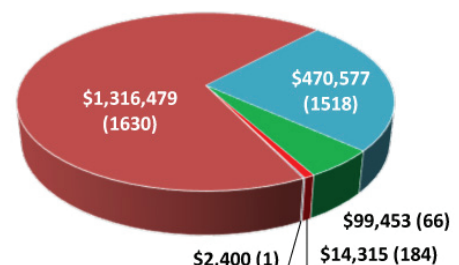
Ergonomics Training & Demos

WATAP began statewide training on ergonomics for Department of Services for the Blind staff. The training involves hands-on learning opportunities for DSB staff to identify ergonomic solutions for their health and safety as well as that of their clients. In this first year of the contract, two trainings were conducted for 27 staff members. Additionally, staff members were able to sign up for personalized demos of equipment after the trainings.

**Loan Amounts & Number of Devices Financed
by Category**
\$255,664 Total Loan Amount; 65 Devices

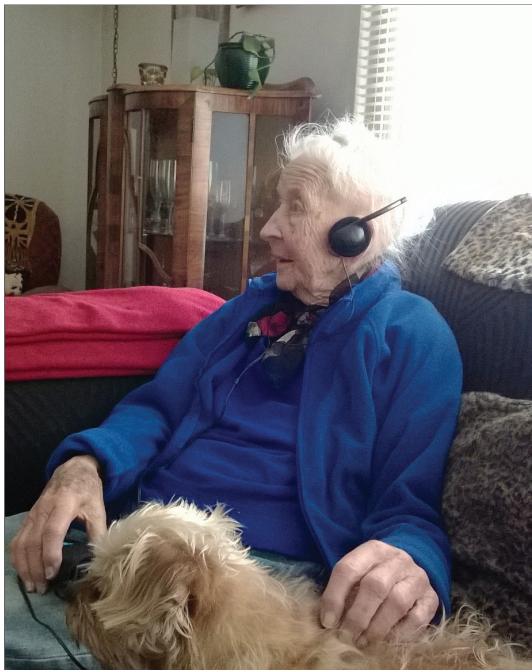


**Cost Savings & Number of Devices Reused
by Category**
\$1,903,224 Total Cost Savings; 3399 Devices



Achieving Success

Device Demonstration



Rose is 98 and had stopped engaging in conversations. She was having a difficult time following along and she also couldn't hear what was happening on TV shows. Her daughter wanted to buy her an assisted listening device and maybe an additional device to amplify the TV. A demonstration was set-up and WATAP staff brought a couple of devices for Rose to try out for face-to-face conversations as well as a TV Ear to amplify the TV. Rose was amazed at how much clearer she could understand people and the TV but she decided that having more than one device would be too confusing. Before making a final decision, she borrowed the Pocket Taker and Comfort Duet to get more experience with them and see if she preferred one over the other.

Short Term Device Loan



Alco uses her Braille Sense U2 every day for checking her email, keeping up on reading, and keeping on top of her life. When her Braille Sense stopped working she knew she would need a loaner to keep up with her correspondences. The vendor said the repair period would be three weeks but they didn't have a rental for short term loan. Alco called WATAP to see if they could help. WATAP was able to lend Alco a Braille Sense U2 for the expected time of repair plus the two extra weeks it actually took for her to get her device back. During that month and a half without her technology, Alco's routine was uninterrupted due to the loaner device.

Empowering People

Alternative Financing

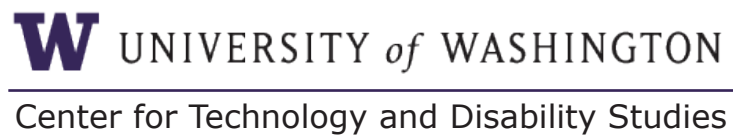


At six years old, Maya was getting too big to lift in and out of their car safely. When her feeding tube got tangled in the seat belt strap and was ripped out her parents never wanted to chance that terrifying moment happening again. Maya was born with Cerebral Palsy and when she was two years old she had a seizure that left her paralyzed below her neck. As she grows older, her assistive technology needs change too. After having difficulty finding financing for a new van because of a sparse credit history, her father, Angel was relieved to find that the Washington Access Fund was willing to take a chance on him which allowed them to purchase a modified van to safely transport Maya and her wheelchair.

Device Reutilization



Being a born and raised New Yorker who was abruptly transplanted to Washington was a shock for Tim. Due to on-going recovery as well as breathing difficulties, Tim's mobility was severely limited and he had no assistive equipment waiting when he arrived. Tim's daughter needed to get him a wheelchair quickly and although he would qualify for one through the VA, he needed something as a stopgap. Tim's daughter went to Bridge Disability Ministries to get a reused wheelchair knowing that it could be returned if he recovered or got a replacement through the VA. Access to a wheelchair within days of his arrival meant that Tim could get out exploring and enjoy his lifelong passion for photography, thus restoring a sense of normalcy to his life.



Washington Assistive Technology Act Program

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