

# 2018 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) is a keystone for individuals with disabilities and others with functional needs to learn, work, live, and play. We are grateful to WATAP's dedicated staff who provide our services with professionalism and leadership. We want to recognize that we can not do it alone and we owe a great deal of thanks to our partners whose collaborative efforts have helped us extend our reach to serve individuals with disabilities across the state. And to our Advisory Council members, big thanks for their on-going work and dedication.

## Partners 2018

- Aging & Long term Services Administration, Department of Social and Health Services
- Bridge Disability Ministries
- Department of Services for the Blind
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Hearing, Speech, and Deafness Center
- Northwest Access Fund
- Perkins School for the Blind
- Special Education Technology Center
- State Independent Living Council
- Timberland Regional Library System
- San Juan Island Library
- 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 2018

- John Bresko - Representative from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Krista Buldger - Consumer Representative
- Mario Eiland - Representative from the Department of Services for the Blind
- Francisco Felan - Representative from the Division of Vocation Rehabilitation
- Sandy Goodwick - Consumer Representative
- Kimberly Heymann – Representative from the Centers for Independent Living
- Daniel Lindberg - Consumer Representative
- Lee Olsen - Consumer Representative
- Andrew Pettersson - Representative from the Workforce System
- Kamran Rasul - Consumer Representative
- Tyler Schrenk - Consumer Representative



# About WATAP

WATAP is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living (ACL) (#1801WASGAT). We provide a comprehensive continuum of AT services, programs, resources, and expertise to all Washington residents with disabilities, or who have functional needs, and their families and circles of support, across the lifespan. Our statewide services start with information and assistance, move through device demonstration and short-term device loans to assist in better decision-making, and lastly provide the opportunity to obtain AT from our device reuse partners or with help from our state financing programs. Wrap around services to professionals and the community include training, workshops, and technical assistance.

## ***Training***

Training professionals is a core program for WATAP and this year we delivered trainings to 773 participants to increase knowledge, skills, and competencies in AT devices and service delivery. In 2018, WATAP completed a two-year endeavor with the Aging & Longterm Support Administration (AL TSA) to provide training throughout the state. 310 frontline staff from AL TSA, WA Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), Home & Community Services (HCS), and other Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) programs and



community partners serving older adults and persons with disabilities participated in half-day workshops where they employed creative thinking in finding AT solutions to meet the functional needs of older adults and those with disabilities. This year, WATAP also provided training to 96 content creators and IT managers located at various departments at the City of Seattle. The trainings covered the core steps for creating accessible new documents, and best practices for addressing and prioritizing accessibility for existing hard copy and electronic documents.

## ***Matched Savings***

In addition to affordable financial loans (see next page), the Northwest Access Fund provided 1:1 matched savings accounts (Individual Development Accounts) to help those in greatest financial need acquire AT they could not otherwise afford. Savings goals were reached by 14 individuals, who obtained 31 devices with \$29,353 in funds distributed.

# 2018 Activity Highlights

## Device Demonstrations: 268 demos

439 individuals participated in hands-on demonstrations that focused on exploring AT options and features with guidance from an experienced specialist.

## Device Lending: 363 devices

257 individuals tried devices at home, work, or school to make an informed decision before purchasing. An additional 12 individuals were able to borrow for accommodation, professional purposes, or as a loaner during repair.

## Telecommunications Distribution: 148 devices

83 individuals obtained devices for telecommunication and internet purposes through the iCanConnect WA program totaling \$118,157.

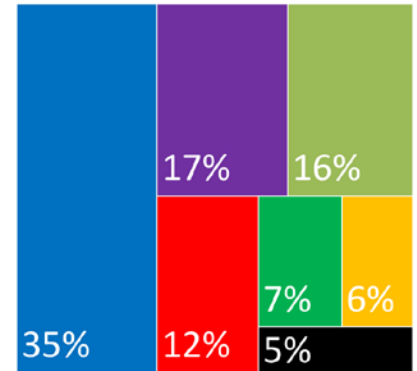
## AT Financing: 114 loans

114 individuals obtained affordable loans to purchase AT through our community partner, the Northwest Access Fund, totaling \$530,276.

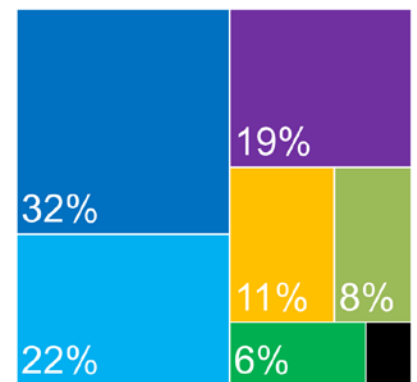
## Device Reuse: 4351 devices

2943 individuals received hearing, durable medical, vision and other equipment at a cost savings of \$3,188,379 through the Evergreen Reuse Coalition and WATAP AT Exchange.

Demonstrations by Category  
268 Total

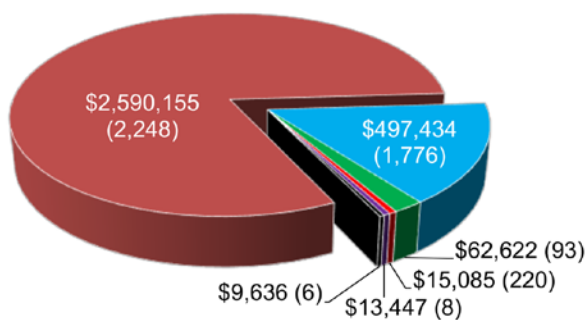


Devices Loaned by Category  
363 Total



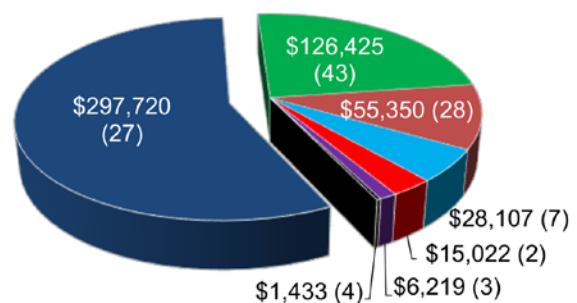
Cost Savings & Number of Devices Reused  
by Category

\$3,188,379 Total Cost Savings; 4351 Devices



Loan Amounts & Number of Devices Financed  
by Category

\$530,276 Total Loan Amount; 114 Devices



COLOR LEGEND					
Computers and Related	Hearing	Vehicles & Modification			
Daily Living	Learning, Cognition	Vision			
Environmental Adaptations	Mobility, Positioning	All Other Categories			
	Speech Communication				



# Stories of Achieving Success and...

## **Device Loan**

Elsa, who is now 6, has cerebral palsy and has limited mobility and is mostly non-verbal. She and her mother came to WATAP in October 2017, when Elsa was 5 years old, to look at communication options. It was during her first visit when it was

casually mentioned that Elsa wanted to go trick or treating for the first time on Halloween. They were shown a Big Mac Red Switch and they quickly saw that this would be an easy and quick solution for this year. Elsa's

mother recorded a simple message, "Trick or treat," and held the switch at the side of Elsa's head and Elsa quickly learned to activate the switch with her head. Elsa borrowed the switch from WATAP, dressed up as a donut for her first Halloween, and had a great time. Because the switch is light-weight and simple to use, Elsa borrowed the switch again for Halloween in 2018, along with a mounting arm so she could hit the switch with her hand. She was a beautiful mermaid this year and had lots of fun along with all the other children trick-or-treating.



## **Device Demonstration**

"T" is a 48-year-old man with a history of progressive multiple sclerosis. T contacted WATAP to help him to achieve his personal goals of improving voice volume output, using a telephone and any devices that might provide improved access to music, books, environmental controls and movies. Through a WATAP AT Specialist, T was provided a demonstration of a voice amplification system and a digital assistant (Amazon Echo) with WiFi switch controllers. (con't)



# Empowering People

Significant improvement was noted with initial trials of a voice amplification system and he was able to combine this to successfully operate Amazon Echo Show and the switch controllers and expressed high levels of excitement in being able to successfully complete even the simplest independent activities. After the demo, T was able to borrow the devices and after it was determined these were good matches, T was provided an Amazon Echo Show and two wireless interface switches to control a fan and a table lamp with funding from a private MS foundation fund. He uses Echo to correctly answer questions, movies of interest, see favorite music lyrics, make a phone call, read books and activate the switch interface for operating his room fan. T stated that the equipment had significantly improved his quality of life. To quote T, “she’s like my new best friend.”

## ***Device Reuse***

Over a period of seven years, Bridge Disability Ministries Meyer Mobility Center, a device reuse partner of WATAP, has provided equipment to “Vera,” who was paralyzed in the lower half of her body as a result of a car accident at the age of 20. In the beginning Vera was provided an electric prone stander and an ultralite sport wheelchair. Later, as her needs changed, she was fitted to another ultralite chair better suited to her current living and employment situation. Next, she was provided a stander she could use to transfer herself out of her wheelchair and then pump herself up into a standing position, which gave her greater independence and more opportunity to improve her circulation and strengthen her leg muscles. This year, 4 years after her last visit, Vera returned with a husband and a two-year old son. She was in need of a newer ultralite chair as the last chair she was provided was wearing out. She is grateful to everyone who had donated the equipment that Meyer Mobility Center refurbished and provided to her. Device reuse is the only way Vera could afford the mobility equipment she needed to live independently and fully over these past 7 years and she trusted the Center to provide her with what best suited her needs.

## ***State Financing – Affordable Loan Program***

When Wesley lost the use of his arms and legs in his early 30s, he was not sure where his life would take him, or even if he would be able to live at home as steps up to the front door meant that he could not enter or leave the house. As the date approached for Wes to leave the hospital, his parents struggled to find a way to make the home accessible so that Wes would not be forced to move into a nursing facility. They did not have enough savings and previous credit issues prevented qualifying for a traditional bank loan. Then they heard about WATAP’s partner, the Northwest Access Fund, and decided to apply. The family were approved for a affordable loan that did not put a strain on their finances. They were able to have the necessary home modifications completed for Wes to successfully transition from hospital to home. They are grateful that Wesley has a more ‘normal’ existence instead (*con’t*)

# Empowering People

of living in an adult home or unable to leave the hospital. The home modifications have made this family's life significantly easier and more enjoyable.

## ***State Financing – Telecommunications Distribution Program***

Lucille is 92 years old and has significant hearing and vision loss. When she first came to WATAP, she was no longer able to make phone calls, watch TV, and read printed material which made her feel very isolated. Through WATAP and the iCanConnect program, Lucille was provided demonstrations of several types of devices and after a full evaluation, it was determined that a Google Home smart speaker would best suit her needs. She was not only provided the device through the iCanConnect program, but also received training on how to use the device. Lucille uses Google Home to make phone calls to family and friends, listen to music, the radio, and the news, keep up with her favorite sports teams, and set alarms and reminders. She is delighted to be able to once again independently contact loved ones and keep up with current events.



**W** UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON  
Center for Technology and Disability Studies

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*CTDS Leadership*

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