

2019 Annual Report

Washington Assistive Technology Act Program (WATAP)



Technology for Independence



This report is available in alternative formats by request.

Thank you!



WATAP thanks our dedicated staff who continue to represent our organization with professionalism and leadership. We also owe a great deal of thanks to our partners whose collaborative efforts have helped us to extend our reach across the state. And last but not least, we offer a big thank you to our Advisory Council members for their on-going work and dedication.

Partners 2019

- 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 2019

- Krista Buldger - Consumer Representative
- Mario Eiland - Representative from the Department of Services for the Blind
- Reginald George - Consumer Representative
- Sandy Goodwick - Consumer Representative
- Petra Heppner-Nelson - Representative from Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Kimberly Meck - Representative from the Centers for Independent Living
- Heather Meares - Consumer Representative
- Lee Olsen - Consumer Representative
- Andrew Pettersson - Representative from the Workforce System
- Tyler Schrenk - Consumer Representative
- Bill Youngman - Representative from the Division of Vocation Rehabilitation

About WATAP

The Washington Assistive Technology Act Program (WATAP) is located at the University of Washington Center for Technology and Disability Studies (UWCTDS), within the Center for Human Development and Disability. Our work is supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Community Living (ACL) (#1901WAATSG) and other funding sources. WATAP has served Washington State since 1994, providing resources, services, and expertise to persons who face challenges related to disability and aging. We help in the selection and use of assistive technology (AT) to help make tasks easier or possible in school, at work, at home, and in the community. 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.

Building Capacity

Training professionals continues to be a core program for WATAP and in 2019 we delivered trainings to 499 participants across the state. We provided intensive training to support the professional development for Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) case managers, employment specialists, and community rehabilitation providers, reaching 190 participants this fiscal year. A series was offered at each of 6 locations- Kennewick, Lacey, Mt. Vernon, Spokane, Tacoma, and Vancouver. The series topics were (1) Introduction to Assistive Technology, (2) Assistive Technology for Transition, and (3) Mobile Technologies in the Workplace. Consistent with preceding years, WATAP's trainings for DVR were designed to build competencies, promote the consideration of and proper matching of AT, and explore case studies and best practices.

Outreach in the Community

In late August, WATAP joined forces with the Northwest Universal Design Council on an installation at the Seattle Design Festival Block Party. The installation was titled "Doorway to Inclusion" to promote low- and high-tech innovations which support inclusive and independent living. We had over 1000 visitors to our installation, including many who had family members who already use or could benefit from AT. WATAP's own Advisory Council member, Tyler Schrenk (pictured to the right), joined us on one day and brought his "salesman's sampler" of smart home technologies to demonstrate with visitors.



2019 Activity Highlights

Device Demonstrations: 300 demos

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

Device Lending: 339 devices

238 individuals tried devices at home, work, or school to make an informed decision before purchasing. An additional 7 individuals were able to borrow for accommodation, professional purposes, or as a loaner during repair.

Telecommunications Distribution: 115 devices

56 individuals obtained devices for telecommunication and internet purposes through the iCanConnect WA program totaling \$92,774.

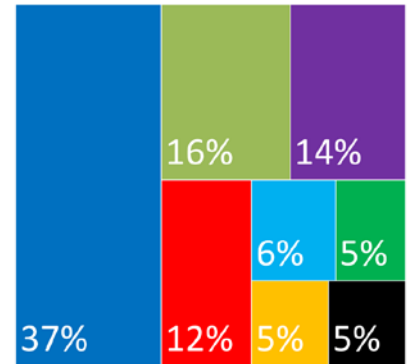
AT Financing: 99 loans

99 individuals obtained affordable financing for AT through our community partner, the Northwest Access Fund, totaling \$481,251.

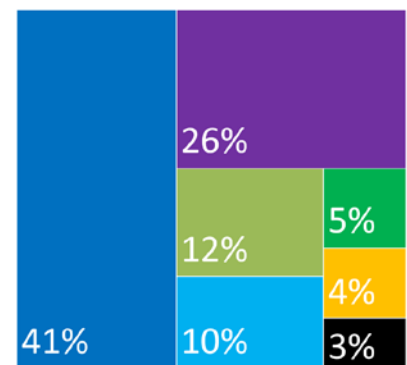
Device Reuse: 4727 devices

3295 individuals received hearing, durable medical, daily living, and other equipment at a cost savings of \$3,745,551 through our reuse partners and AT Exchange.

Demonstrations by Category
300 Total

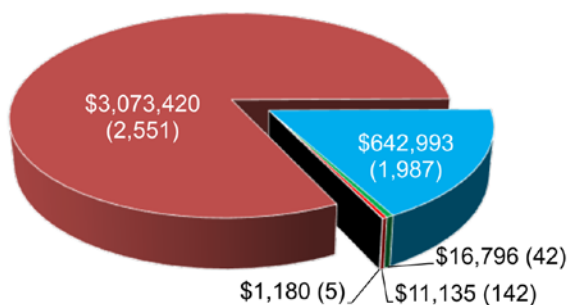


Devices Loaned by Category
339 Total



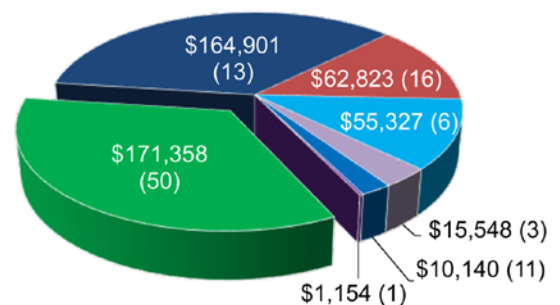
Cost Savings & Number of Devices Reused
by Category

\$3,745,524 Total Cost Savings; 4,727 Devices



Loan Amounts & Number of Devices Financed
by Category

\$481,251 Total Loan Amount; 100 Devices



COLOR LEGEND

- Computers and Related
- Learning & Cognition
- Vehicles & Modification
- Daily Living
- Mobility & Positioning
- Vision
- Environmental Adaptations
- Recreation & Sports
- All Other Categories
- Speech Communication

Stories of Achieving Success and...

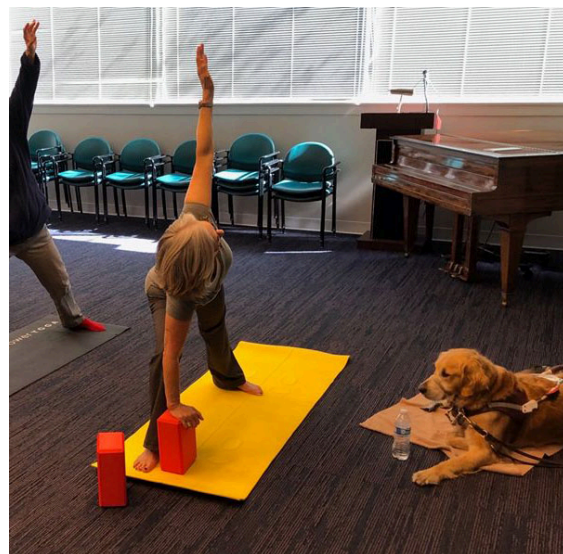
Device Lending

Catherine has combined progressive hearing and vision loss and has received services through the iCanConnect WA program, a program offered in partnership between WATAP and Perkins School for the Blind. She contacted WATAP as she needed to replace her older iPad. She has relied on this iPad for several years for distance communication tasks but was curious whether another device might work better for her. After consulting with one of WATAP's assistive technology specialists, Catherine borrowed a Macbook Pro and the larger screened iPad Pro through WATAP's Lending Library as they both had features she was interested in trying. After 3 weeks of using the two devices at home, she found the iPad Pro to be the best option due to the ease of use. She was also excited that a new iOS update now allows her to use a trackpad with the tablet. Catherine was able to receive the equipment and training through iCanConnect and is using it daily to communicate with friends and family, and for her other telecommunication needs.



Device Demonstration

Camille is very active and enjoys yoga at Blind and Low Vision Yoga Seattle. She had the opportunity to try a yoga mat designed for those with vision challenges, under the guidance of one of WATAP's staff, who also attends one yoga class each week at the studio. WATAP houses this yoga mat with Blind and Low Vision Yoga Seattle's studio specifically so participants can try and use it at every class. Camille found the yoga mat color particularly useful as she could easily see its bright yellow color in contrast to the floor. She really appreciated the mat's raised center line which helped her to orient herself on the mat and in class. She also liked the three-dimensional design, which includes strategically placed raised and depressed features which helped her feel where her hands, feet, and head should be placed for safe alignment in yoga poses. Camille now uses the mat regularly to practice safely and more independently.



Empowering People

Device Reuse

LaKeith is rebuilding his life by overcoming addiction while managing joint and bone pain from a rare condition, SAPHO Syndrome, which makes even small movements difficult. Trips to doctors, grocery outlets, the pharmacy, and to his drug rehab program were impossible without someone to take him. LaKeith came with his case worker to WATAP's reuse partner, Bridge Disability Ministries' Meyer Medical Equipment Center, to look at mobility options to not only help him move from place to place within his apartment but to help him get around the community more independently. He received a "new" power wheelchair and was smiling as he left the Center on a beautiful summer day, heading to the bus stop for his first independent trip home. His power wheelchair has greatly improved his quality of life- LaKeith now makes all of his trips around town on his own. He is very thankful for his newfound independence and is positive about his chances for success.



State Financing – Affordable Loan Program

Arlene and Eric came to the Northwest Access Fund, WATAP's state financing partner, for a loan to purchase a modified vehicle that would accommodate their daughter Evie's wheelchair. The family worked with a local mobility dealer to find a reliable, used vehicle that would provide suitable transportation not only for necessary trips to the doctor but also "to get out to see the sights." Both Arlene and Eric are employed, but significant medical expenses linked to their daughter's disability and other family circumstances contributed to accrued debts and limited savings. The Access Fund's flexible financing was able to accommodate this higher debt-to-income ratio, and the family was approved for an affordable loan. Their new modified vehicle has made a dramatic difference in their day-to-day lives. The affordable loan also allowed room in their budget so the family can work toward other financing goals, including paying off credit card debt and purchasing an accessible home in the coming years.

Burt, a 56-year-old man with Cerebral Palsy, has lived with his brother and sister-in-law in a manufactured home in Pierce County, WA for 18 years. He loves the outdoors, but the wheelchair he uses has limited his ability to go exploring on his own or hiking with his family. He recently found out about the Action Trackchair, an all-terrain powerchair that can handle the rugged Washington terrain. Due to the cost, Burt could not afford this life-changing technology. He applied for financing through the Northwest Access Fund. Burt's SSDI income was sufficient to be approved for an affordable loan, which he is now repaying over 5 years. Today, Burt reports dramatically increased independence and quality of life as a direct result from having the all-terrain powerchair.



Center for Technology and Disability Studies

WATAP Key Staff

Alan Knue, Director

Maria Kelley, Senior Assistive Technology Specialist

Curt Johnson, Assistive Technology Specialist

Naomi Namekata, Assistive Technology Specialist

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Alice Klein, Program Coordinator

Jacob Rourke, Lending Library Assistant

CTDS Leadership

Mark Harniss, Director

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