

Maryland Department of Disabilities
Assistive Technology Program
MDTAP



2021 Annual Report

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OUR MISSION

To enhance the lives of all Marylanders with disabilities, older Marylanders, and their families by helping support access to assistive technology (AT) devices and services.

OUR TEAM

LEADERSHIP

Lori Markland, Executive Director

AT TEAM

Denise Schuler, AT Specialist

James Whitney, AT Clinician

Nora Walker, AT Assistant

IT ACCESSIBILITY STAFF

Andrew Drummond, Director of IT Accessibility Policy & Programs

Stephen Polacek, IT Accessibility Evaluator

FINANCIAL LOAN PROGRAM

Tanya Goodman, Program Director

Michelle Watson, AT Loan Administrator

OUR COUNCIL

Sama Bellomo

Sarah Calhoun

Gabriel Rubenstein

Melissa Day

Jeanne Dwyer

Matt Hackert

TobyLarue Haynes

Betsy Hein

Kristen Patterson

Matthew Peeling

Jessica Salmond

Shoshana Shamberg

Monica Simonsen

Alfred Sonnenstrahl



Proclamation

From the Governor of the State of Maryland

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AWARENESS DAY APRIL 14, 2021

WHEREAS, Marylanders may use assistive technology devices and services to live independently and to participate more fully in their lives, families, and communities; and

WHEREAS, the Maryland Assistive Technology Program provides services that include notification and short-term loans of assistive technology devices, demonstration of devices to inform customer device making, and financing services to help individuals purchase or obtain assistive technology through a variety of initiatives; and

WHEREAS, assistive technology refers to any item, piece of equipment, or product used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities or older adults; and

WHEREAS, assistive technology plays an important role in fulfilling the promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act by enhancing the lives of people with disabilities and increasing access to educational and employment opportunities alongside their peers without disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the availability of assistive technology in the workplace promotes economic self-sufficiency, enhances work participation, and is critical to the employment of people with disabilities and older adults.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, LAWRENCE J. HOGAN, JR., GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND, do hereby proclaim APRIL 14, 2021 as ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AWARENESS DAY in Maryland, and do commend the observance to all our citizens.



Given Under My Hand and the Great Seal of the State of Maryland
this 14th day of April
2021

Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.
Governor

Robert K. Anderson
Lt. Governor

John C. Winkler
Secretary of State



SECRETARY'S STATEMENT

Assistive Technology (AT) has the power to leverage individuals with disabilities into greater opportunities for employment, education, and community living. It can provide access, choice, and empowerment. The Maryland Assistive Technology Program ensures that constituents statewide can engage with AT through regional and community AT device libraries, through virtual and in-person consultations with AT professionals, and through direct, ongoing support from our AT staff. This free service of the state is critical to ensuring that Marylanders with disabilities have the opportunity to explore AT options for all of life's needs, providing needed financing to support the purchase of equipment, and ensuring that individuals, professionals, and service providers have access to the most current, relevant assistive technology to make informed decisions to improve independence.



Carol Beatty, MD
Secretary of Disabilities

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The Maryland Department of Disabilities Assistive Technology Program (MDTAP) is aimed at ensuring independence for all Marylanders with disabilities by increasing opportunities to access assistive technology (AT) in the home, school, and at work. On the heels of the ongoing pandemic, we established new and improved ways to support our consumers, expanding access to virtual consultations, shipping AT statewide, establishing Community AT Libraries, increasing assistive technology donations for the High-Tech AT Reuse Center, and building a robust & relevant series of assistive technology webinars that highlighted topics including AT to combat social isolation, accessible gaming, accessibility features in Chromebooks, and so much more.



Lori Markland, MDTAP
Executive Director

MDTAP continues to ensure access to assistive technology across the state - a key pillar of our work in 2021 included building partnerships with agencies and organizations to improve direct services and impacting policy development to improve AT access. We hope you take a few moments to explore our current projects and all our program data right here in our 2021 Annual Update! And stay tuned to our website, www.mdtdap.org, or follow us on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Where It's AT blog, YouTube, TikTok) as we plan for another year of great accomplishments!

AT DEMONSTRATION & LOANS

MDTAP conducts short term loans and comprehensive demonstrations of AT devices to help constituents make informed decisions about long term device procurement, and to serve as short-term or interim technology.

DATA SNAPSHOT



- ▶ Devices Demonstrated: 85
- ▶ Device Loans Conducted: 132
- ▶ Number of devices loaned: 193
- ▶ Number of devices borrowed in order to make an AT decision: 164

"I have nothing but good to say about MDTAP. Thank you for all that you do!"

-Nancy V, Loan Recipient



RECIPIENT HIGHLIGHT

In 2013, Debbie lost sight in her right eye. In early 2021, she suffered a detached retina in her left. That year, she had three surgeries, ending with the insertion of a scleral buckle and silicone oil in her left eye to save what vision remained.

Debbie has worked for the same firm for 30 years. Following her surgery, she could only work in the office for a brief period. "I was unable to see the computer or safely navigate my way around unfamiliar places. I was going stir crazy sitting at home, paying my family and friends to be my eyes so I could continue to earn my paycheck while working remotely" she tells us. Debbie connected with Hoover Low Vision Rehabilitation Services at GBMC, and after overwhelmingly positive experiences working with their staff, she was referred to MDTAP.

With the help of AT Clinician, James Whitney and AT Specialist, Denise Schuler, Debbie borrowed and tried a number of devices to support her in the workplace. "Denise also provided invaluable information on disability rights, ride share opportunities and guidance on the documentation required by my employer to return to the office to work.", Debbie says. She felt pushed to stop working following the loss of her sight, and utilized these resources to advocate for her guaranteed return to the office.

"The equipment I continue to use from MDTAP has been paramount in me being able to do my job" says Debbie. "Being able to borrow these visual aids from MDTAP has afforded me the opportunity to keep working and not have to spend thousands of dollars on equipment.... Thank you from the bottom of my heart! "

AT FINANCIAL LOANS

The Assistive Technology Financial Loan Program (ATLP) helps Maryland residents with disabilities and their families qualify for low-interest loans to buy equipment that will help them live, work, and learn more independently.

DATA SNAPSHOT



- ▶ Approved Loans Made: 25
- ▶ Total Applications Received: 68
- ▶ Total Value of Loans: \$644,719

My heroes are Ms. Goodman and Maryland TAP!"

-Jeanette D, Loan Recipient



RECIPIENT HIGHLIGHT

Ayanna was becoming increasingly frustrated with the unreliability of her transportation options. She's a wheelchair user, and found it difficult and arduous to get where she needed to go consistently.

After an especially discouraging experience, waiting over twelve hours for transportation to and from a 15 minute appointment, only to end up heading home after dark along inaccessible sidewalks, Ayanna and her mother decided to find a better way. They reached out to Ayanna's DDA Coordinator, who suggested they contact MDTAP. Ayanna's mom spoke with ATLP Director, Tanya Goodman, who lead them through the application process, and before long, they were approved for a loan to purchase their own accessible van. "Ms. Goodman was so very understanding and extremely helpful in the entire process", she says. Now, Ayanna can safely and reliably get where she needs to go every day.

AT REUSE & RECYCLING

Gently used Assistive Technology is collected via donation, sanitized, refurbished and made available for free to those who can't otherwise afford it.

DATA SNAPSHOT



- ▶ Devices Refurbished/ Repaired: 236
- ▶ Low Cost/Free Devices Provided: 358
- ▶ Total Savings to Consumers: \$556, 441



REUSE PARTNERS:

- Lollipop Kids Foundation
- Equipment Connections for Children
- Loan Closet of Howard County



RECIPIENT HIGHLIGHT

B is a high school student who has a malignant, progressive brain tumor. She was having difficulty with her wheelchair breaking down and needed help.

B worked with someone from the Transportation department within the school district, who contacted two different Physical Therapists, one of whom reached out to the Lollipop Kids Foundation (LKF)- one of MDTAP's partners in reuse. LKF provides free, refurbished equipment through their loan closet. LKF was able to obtain a power wheelchair and arrange to have it delivered to the high school via a local wheelchair vendor. Power wheelchairs can cost upwards of \$10K and usually take six months or more to get into the hands of students when insurance is billed.

Just two weeks after this process began, B is independent with her mobility in her wheelchair!

*Initial changed for anonymity

COOPERATIVE BUYING PROGRAM

The Maryland Assistive Technology Program supports the work of AT Discount Sales & Services, LLC. AT Discount Sales coordinates discounted prices on assistive technology through collaboration with a wide variety of AT vendors. Those discounts are then passed on to organizations, agencies, and individuals purchasing AT.

DATA SNAPSHOT



- ▶ Total entities/people served: 129
- ▶ Total # of devices provided: 6,425
- ▶ Total savings to consumers: \$90,992



"[My student] is thriving in his new school because his world has been expanded at home with the eye-gaze system you have provided. Thank you so much."



RECIPIENT HIGHLIGHT

Joe has macular degeneration, and his eyesight is slowly declining. He first came to MDTAP in October of 2021. "I was not sure what to expect but hopeful that they could help me with watching TV and reading as those are activities I enjoy but was having difficulty seeing to participate", he says. He and his daughter visited the central library, where MDTAP Clinician, James Whitney demonstrated a number of devices. "Mr. Whitney was patient and knowledgeable. He allowed me to take the items home to try for a few weeks. I met with him several times, trying different items, before finding the glasses and magnifier that were the best fit for me." James worked with AT Discount Services to find a significant discount for the AT Joe wanted to purchase. Joe says, "I have been using the TV glasses and magnifier for several months now and can say that the quality of my life has improved so much. Both have been life changing for me. The glasses enable me to see the screen pictures more clearly. The magnifier allows me to read newspapers, magazines, and books. The combination of the magnification and background colors make it easier to read a variety of materials. I have always enjoyed reading and now am able to continue this pastime. I am so grateful to the Assistive Technology Program and Mr. James Whitney."

PUBLIC AWARENESS

TELEVISION

- Feature for WDVM news Assistive Technology Segment

RADIO SHOWS

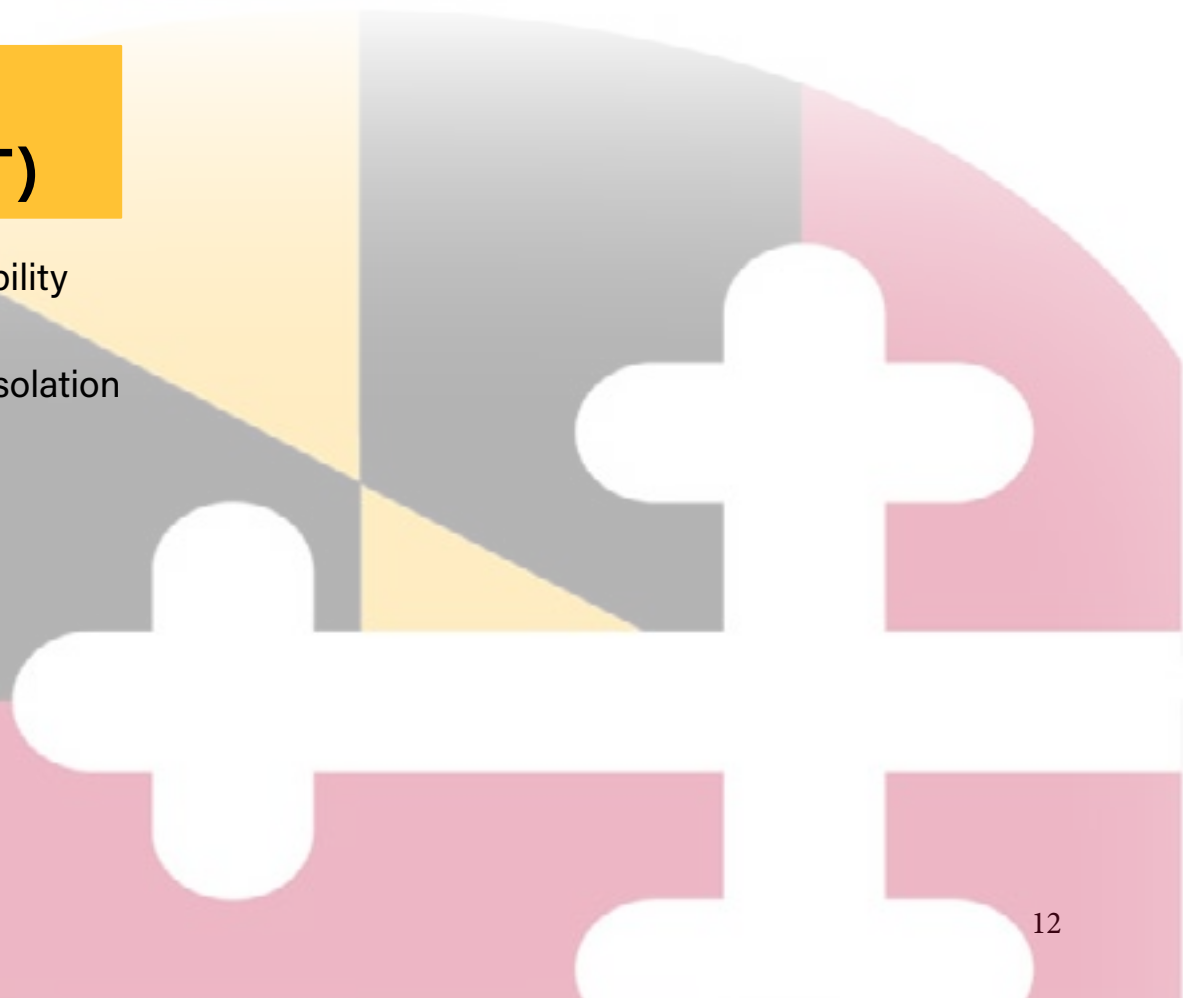
- Interview for Heaven 600 AM Radio

PODCASTS

- Interview for IAM Independence Amplified Podcast
- Feature on the ABCs of Disability Planning podcast

WEBINARS (HIGH-IMPACT)

- Chromebook Accessibility
- AT in Transition
- AT to Combat Social Isolation
- Accessible Gaming
- AT@Work for Seniors



SOCIAL MEDIA



1.8k Followers



759 Followers



1,440 Posts
751 Comments



NEW!

Over 1400 views
910 likes
105 followers



4,850 Views
30 Subscribers
8 New Videos Posted!

TRAINING, PARTNERSHIPS AND I&A

TRAINING

- 851 Training participants

PARTNERSHIPS

- DDA Technology First Initiative
- CASH Campaign of Maryland Financial Capability Awareness Series
- AbleGamers (distributed over 200+ adapted switches)

INFO & ASSISTANCE

- 570 direct consumer contacts

AT LOAN LIBRARIES ACROSS MD

REGIONAL OFFICES & LIBRARIES

CENTRAL OFFICE

Maryland Technology Assistance Program
 2301 Argonne Dr. T-42
 Baltimore, MD 21218
 800-832-4827 (Voice)
 866-881-7488 (TTY)
 mdtap.general@maryland.gov(email)
 www.mdtap.org

EASTERN SHORE

Bay Area Center for Independent Living, Inc.
 909 Progress Circle, Ste. 300
 Salisbury, MD 21804
 443-260-0822
 http://bayareacil.org

WESTERN MARYLAND

Resources for Independence
 735 E. Oldtown Rd.
 Cumberland, MD 21502
 301-784-1774 (voice)
 www.rficil.org

SOUTHERN MARYLAND

Southern Maryland Center for Independent Living
 38588 Brett Way, Ste. 1
 Mechanicsville, MD 20659
 301-884-4498 (voice)

COMMUNITY AT LIBRARIES

IMAGE Center of Maryland (Serving Baltimore City, Baltimore County and Harford County)
 300 E Joppa Rd. Ste. 312 | 410-982-6311 | info@imagemd.org | www.imagemd.org

Independence Now, Inc. (Serving Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties)
 12301 Old Columbia Pike, Ste. 101 | 301-277-2839 | info@innow.org | www.innow.org

Accessible Resources for Independence (Serving Howard and Anne Arundel Counties)
 1406-B Crain Hwy S. Ste. 206 | 410-636-2274 | arinow@arinow.org | www.arinow.org

The Freedom Center (Serving Frederick and Carroll Counties)
 14 W. Patrick St. Ste. 10 | 301-846-7811 | advocate@thefreedomcenter-md.org | thefreedomcenter-md.org