Assistive Technology Resources for CILs and SILCs

Introduction

Assistive technology greatly enhances independent living for individuals with disabilities. The definition of assistive technology (AT) is any item, device, or piece of equipment or system, whether acquired commercially, modified or customized, that is commonly used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities of all ages.

This fact sheet will describe where to find assistive technology information and services, State AT programs, and examples of AT services offered at a number of CILs and SILCs.

Assistive Technology Databases and Resources

- Explore AT (https://exploreat.net/) – Clearinghouse with information on assistive technology devices and services for education, employment, and community living.
- Assistive Devices for People with Hearing, Voice, Speech, or Language Disorders (https://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/assistive-devices-people-hearing-voice-speech-or-language-disorders) – Assistive devices for people with hearing, voice, speech, or language disorders.
- Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (https://www.tsbvi.edu/resources/1004-overview-of-assistive-technology) – Assistive technology for people who are blind and visually impaired.
- National Federation of the Blind (https://www.nfb.org/resources/deafblind-resources) – Deaf-Blind AT resources.

State AT Programs

State Assistive Technology Act Programs are operating in all 50 states, four U.S. territories, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. These programs are funded under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended (https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-108publ364/html/PLAW-108publ364.htm). 62% of State AT programs have or are planning CIL partnerships. The purpose of these programs is to increase knowledge about, access to and acquisition of assistive technology devices and services for individuals with disabilities and older adults. Each state and territory program serves individuals with disabilities of all ages through device demonstration centers, device loans, device reutilization, training, technical assistance, public awareness, information and referral, and assistance with obtaining funding for assistive technology. Many states have financial loan programs specifically for AT devices and services, including home and vehicle modifications.

You can obtain free assistance and information no matter where you are located. You can locate your state program at: https://www.at3center.net/stateprogram.

State AT Reuse (Used Equipment) Locations

- AT Reuse locations by state (https://pioc.gatech.edu/pioc/reuse_locations.php)

AT Funding Resources and Financial Tools

- Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) AT Resources Funding Guide (https://www.atia.org/home/at-resources/what-is-at/resources-funding-guide/)
- Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (https://www.consumerfinance.gov/practitioner-resources/your-money-your-goals/companion-guides/#anchor_disabilities) – paying for assistive devices

National Rehabilitation Information Center

- National Rehabilitation Information Center (https://naric.com/) – More than 70,000 documents and journal articles, as well as resources, agencies, organizations, and online resources.

Information Guides

- The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Family Guide to AT (https://osepideasthatwork.org/sites/default/files/at_guide_english.pdf)
- OCALI AT Resource Guide for Students (https://www.ocali.org/up_doc/AT_Resource_Guide_2013.pdf)
- The DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology) Center (https://www.washington.edu/doit/) – offers education on technology and accessibility in the classroom and the workplace.
- Gallaudet University Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center (https://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/national-resources/info/info-to-go/assistive-technology.html) – AT information, training, and resources for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.
- LeadingAge Center for Aging Services Technologies (CAST) High-Tech Aging (https://www.leadingage.org/resources/high-tech-aging-improving-lives-today)

COVID-19 and Emergency Preparedness Related to AT

- University of Colorado Denver, Center for Inclusive Design and Engineering – Emergency Preparedness Services (https://www1.ucdenver.edu/centers/center-for-inclusive-design-and-engineering/community-engagement/emergency-preparedness-for-individuals-with-disabilities) – includes many resources, including a 72 hour kit for people with disabilities, how to stay healthy in simple language and much more.
- National Assistive Technology Act Technical Assistance and Training (AT3) Center – Emergency Management (https://www.at3center.net/repository/EmergencyManagement) – contains a compilation of information, resources and archived webinars.
- AT3 Managing Social Isolation, Anxiety and Depression through the Use of Assistive Technology Tools Archived Webinar (https://youtu.be/dA402Fzd-wk) – Webinar materials available at: https://at3center.net/content/EOCONTENTMEDIACENTER/documents/Emergency%20Management/Managing%20Social%20Isolation%20AT3%20Webinar%204.14.20.pdf

Assistive Technology Conferences

- California State University, Northridge's (CSUN) Assistive Technology Conference (https://www.csun.edu/cod/conference) – For over 35 years, the Center on Disabilities has provided an inclusive setting for researchers, practitioners, exhibitors, and end-users to share cutting edge assistive technology knowledge, practical solutions and best practices. In 2019, the conference drew more than 5,000 people, the largest AT conference in the world.
- Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) (https://www.atia.org/atia-2022/) – Over the past 21 years, ATIA has been a community gathering for assistive technology practitioners, teachers, parents and caregivers, persons with disabilities, and more to learn, network and share on the best in assistive technology.
- Closing the Gap (https://www.closingthegap.com/conference/) - The Hagens, parents of a child with disabilities, hosted the first annual Closing the Gap Conference in 1982. Today, Closing the Gap continues to lead the way for special educators, rehabilitation professionals and consumers. The current two-week Closing the Gap Virtual Conference includes pre-recorded sessions, live Q&A's, and virtual exhibits.

Journals on Assistive Technology

- Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology Journal (https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/iidt20)
- RESNA Assistive Technology Journal (https://www.resna.org/Membership/Assistive-Technology-Journal)
- SAGE Journal of Assistive Technologies and Rehabilitation Engineering (https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jrt)
- ATIA Assistive Technology Outcomes and Benefits Journal (https://www.atia.org/home/at-resources/atob/)

AT Research Articles and Tools

- Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) (https://www.atia.org/home/at-resources/research-articles-tools/)

Selected Assistive Technology CIL/SILC Programs and Partnerships

- The Disability Resource Association, a CIL in Jefferson County, Missouri, offers a number of AT services including free adaptive phones; low vision center with free items; short and long-term loans of medical equipment (wheelchairs, walkers, and more); and free home assessments and modifications, including grab bars, ramps and accessible showers (there is currently a waiting list). For more information, view their webpage at: https://dra4help.org/what-we-do/additional-services/.
- The Center for Independence of Individuals with Disabilities (CID), one of 29 Independent Living Centers in California partnered with the Digital Access Project (www.digitalaccessproject.org) to provide consumers internet at home for $10 a month. They can connect individuals with a foundation that pays up to $5000.00 towards vehicle modifications. Their Reuse program through Ability Tools (www.abilitytools.org) offers medical equipment at low cost or no charge for qualified consumers. Their AT Coordinator Team teaches consumers how to utilize assistive technology in the home from low cost simple to complex AT. The CID Reuse program is offering a one-time emergency service for adults who need

Incontinence Supplies (Adult Diapers, Bed Pads, Wipes, and Gloves) dependent on availability. For more information, view their webpage at: https://www.cidsanmateo.org/about.html.

- The Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) of Alaska is managing the Home Accessibility and Enabling Technology Pilot Project which helps Medicaid Waiver recipients receive an evaluation, equipment, and installation of smart assistive technology, so they can be in control of their environment. The aim of this project is to find out how home accessibility modifications and enabling technologies impact participants' lives. Partners include Assistive Technology of Alaska (ATLA), AgrAbility, ALS Association, Literacy, and Home Mods. This pilot project is funded by the Alaska Mental Health Trust and the Mat-Su Health Foundations. More information can be found at: www.atlaak.org/partnering-programs/enabling-technology.
- Southeast Kansas Independent Living (SKIL) Resource Center Inc. operates two of the five AT access sites in Kansas in coordination with their State AT program. Services include assistance with choosing equipment, making assessments, developing accessibility plans, finding funding, advocating for services, making referrals, and providing training. A loan closet offers a variety of switches, adapted toys, learning materials, and adaptive software for trial use. For more information, visit their website at: https://skilonline.com/.
- Mainstream Center for Independent Living's Ramp Program in Arkansas provides access to and from home for people with mobility disabilities. Mainstream coordinates this program with the AT&T Telephone Pioneers and the City of Little Rock Community Development Block Grant Initiative. The ramps are built according to ADA specifications. More details are available at: http://www.mainstreamilrc.com/services.html.
- The AT Program at disABILTY LINK in Georgia partners with their State AT program, Tools for Life, and others to offer an AT demonstration area and a loan closet. Several weekly technology classes provide information about the newest AT, including apps and software. One class focuses on the Deaf population because many people were having issues with some of their technology, and another is geared for young adults because their needs and interests are different than the needs of people in the aging population. More information can be found at: https://disabilitylink.org/assistive-technology/.
- After the pandemic closed many senior centers, one of the most-felt needs was for technology to help seniors and people with disabilities connect virtually with friends, family, and medical providers. The CARES Act made funds available to the Utah Aging and Disability Resource Center to support two Centers for Independent Living; the Area Agencies on Aging; senior centers; and the State AT program, the Utah Assistive Technology Program (UATP), to help alleviate those needs. Loan banks at Roads to Independence and Ability First centers for independent living and UATP included iPads stocked with communication apps that helped seniors connect and were as simple to use as possible. More details can be found at: https://utahatprogram.blogspot.com/2020/07/uatp-area-agencies-on-aging-and.html.

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