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# **Illinois Assistive Technology Program**



**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

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## **Mission Statement**

**IATP's mission is to provide Illinoisans of all ages with disabilities and health conditions greater access to assistive technology devices and services so that they may enhance their independence and participation in all aspects of life.**

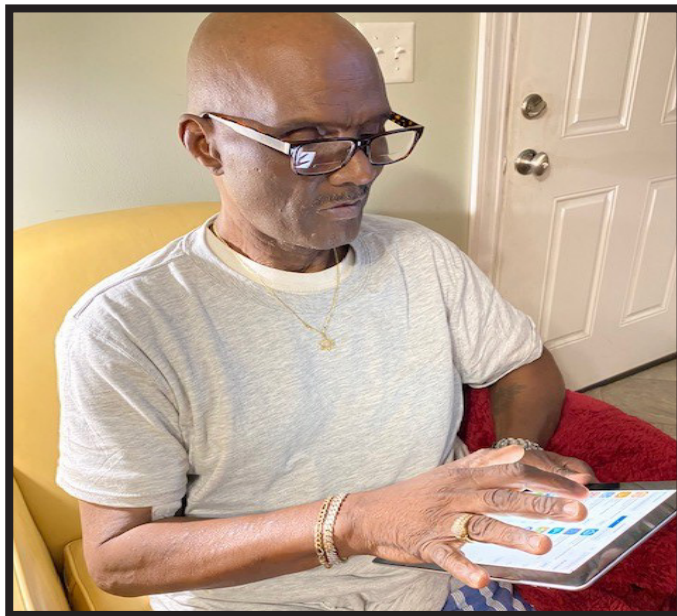
## **COVID 19**

**As the world adjusts to living through a pandemic, IATP continues to safely serve our customers through new and innovative means. We adhere to all CDC and Illinois state guidelines and modify our services as needed.**

## REUSE

**IATP's Reuse Program provides assistive technology and durable medical equipment to people of all ages with disabilities who can't afford to purchase new. The recipient may keep the equipment for as long as needed. When it is no longer being used, we ask that it be returned so that others in need may also benefit from the program. The Reuse Program accepts assistive technology and durable medical equipment that is lightly used and in good working condition. The equipment is checked for safe operation, sanitized, and then made available to others. The equipment can be borrowed on a short term basis for a temporary need or as an open-ended loan that can be kept until no longer needed.**

**In FY20, 638 Illinois consumers received 875 pieces of assistive technology through our services resulting in a savings of \$232,962.**



"My name is James and I'm a disabled Vietnam Veteran. Before COVID-19, I was able to get out of the house and visit my family and church friends. As a result of the pandemic, I lost the opportunity to socialize with my loved ones. When I contacted IATP and explained the isolation I was experiencing, they were eager to help. IATP provided me with an iPad, as well as training to learn how to use it. My iPad has allowed me

to maintain close connections with my family and friends. I'm able to attend church virtually and fellowship with my church friends as well. I also have access to social media and can keep up with my grandchildren. I'm so grateful for IATP and their genuine care for seniors. Thank you!" ~ James

***IN MEMORY OF JAMES (1951 - 2020)***

# DEVICE LOAN

**IATP's Device Loan Program provides short term (5 week) loans of assistive technology to individuals with disabilities, family members, professionals and others. The devices are used at home, for education and employment, and for community participation. The program allows potential technology users the opportunity to try out devices to ensure that it is a good "fit" prior to purchase, to use as a back up while a device is being repaired, or to use while awaiting funding. In FY20, a total of 1,506 devices were loaned to 1,197 borrowers.**

**A grant through the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) made it possible to purchase additional devices that are dedicated to Illinois school districts. Of the 1,506 devices that were loaned to customers in FY20, 753 devices were provided to 165 school districts in 57 Illinois counties.**



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## SUCCESS

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John has been a registered nurse for 40 years. He was born with some facial paralysis, causing an inability for one eye to close on its own. As time went on, his overall vision continued to deteriorate. He was devastated to learn that the strength of his glasses could no longer be increased. His job requires him to review medical charts and he was concerned he would no longer be able to perform his work and thus lose his employment.

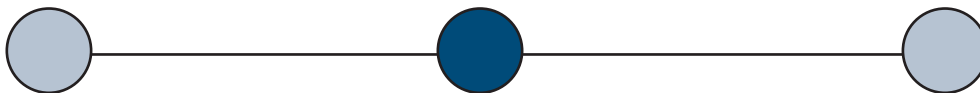
His eye doctor mentioned IATP and John headed over to learn about the programs that were available. After seeing the vision equipment in the Demonstration Center, John took advantage of the Device Loan Program where he could borrow equipment for a five week loan to use in his home and work environment. After trying six different magnifying devices, John was able to make an informed decision regarding the most suitable equipment for his needs. He still works at the hospital thanks to the equipment he learned about at IATP.

John sent IATP a letter saying that we had given him something that he hadn't had in years and that was HOPE.

# DEMONSTRATION

IATP's large eclectic Demonstration Center showcases a variety of assistive technology in areas that include vision, daily living, communication, hearing, mobility, an accessible bathroom, kitchen, office and more. Device demonstrations are personal appointments conducted by a knowledgeable staff member that provide an opportunity to learn about possible AT solutions, and compare and contrast different AT devices, their features, and possible benefits. The goal of the Device Demonstration service is to provide the potential user with the information they need to make informed choices about what will best meet their needs. In FY20, 459 demonstrations were provided to 1,112 participants.

The Center also provides guided tours for individuals, families, service providers, students, businesses, and civic groups interested in learning more about assistive technology and possible solutions. In FY20, tours were given to 213 individuals and small groups interested in exploring the large inventory of assistive technology on display.







**As a direct lender, IATP offers consumer installment loans to assist qualifying applicants in purchasing needed assistive technology for daily living, education, employment, community living, sports and leisure, health related needs, and limited home modifications. A total of 36 applications were reviewed in FY20 resulting in 8 approved loans for a total of \$68,549.**

## **NOTES OF APPRECIATION**

IATP's ATLOAN\$ Program received a call from KM, an elderly gentlemen who just lost his wife to cancer. KM described himself as a large man over 6-foot tall and over 300 pounds. He indicated he cannot sleep lying flat due to lung issues and said, a man his size "cannot sleep sitting up in a chair".

KM's fifteen-year old therapeutic bed was broken and the cost of repair was almost equal to the cost of a new bed. He said he was lost without his wife who "did everything" and was very fearful of ending up in a nursing home all alone during the COVID-19 pandemic. He had done his research on purchasing a new bed but had no idea how to go about applying for a loan and he said he doesn't do computers.

The ATLOAN\$ Program Manager took KM's application over the phone and faxed documents back and forth through the office of his apartment complex.

The ATLOAN\$ Manager spoke with the vendor who agreed to supply free delivery and setup. KM says he can now sleep easily, not only because he has a proper bed but he no longer worries about ending up being isolated in a nursing home especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Worth noting: Someone anonymously contacted a local community non-profit organization in KM's area and they paid off his loan. He was extremely grateful to have made only one loan payment on his own.**

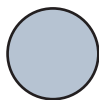
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"I just wanted to let you know how your organization helped my family! Today our mother used the stair lift, and there was not any struggle to move her feet up the stairs! She didn't crawl up the stairs on her knees, and no rug burns on her body! After so many years of her struggling up the stairs, today was a piece of cake! Thanks again!" ~ Theresa

# VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION EVALUATION / FAST TRACK

**Assistive Technology Specialists (ATS) provide assistive technology evaluations, training and technical support to customers in the home, school or in the workplace. After a customer referral is made by a vocational counselor, ATS staff identify assistive technology needs and provide either recommendations for home modifications or training on adaptive technology and software. In FY20, ATS staff provided 164 evaluations and 173 technical assistance sessions to customers.**

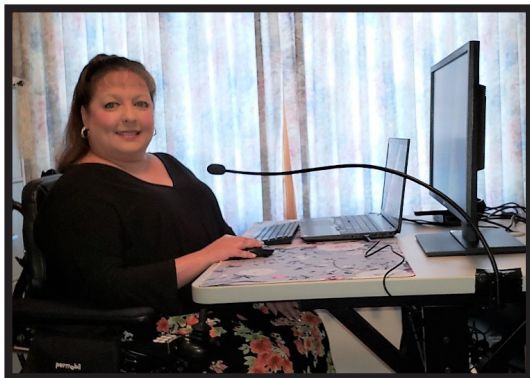
**Fast Track is an open-ended loan program for Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DHS/DRS) customers. During an evaluation, the ATS will trial assistive technology, software and other devices with the customer. If the technology is appropriate, the customer may keep it the day of the evaluation, eliminating delays waiting for equipment to be ordered and delivered. In FY20, the Fast Track Program provided 1,473 devices to 436 customers saving the state \$967,658 in equipment costs.**



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## SUCCESS

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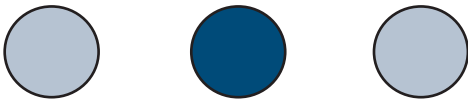
Donna has a rare form of muscular dystrophy that limits her ability to use a standard computer keyboard and mouse. She received an AT evaluation and was provided Fast-Track equipment that has allowed her to become employed from home. She works for a company that matches sign language interpreters who have specialized training with customers in need of medical or technical interpreting services. Donna was paired with the appropriate AT

including voice recognition technology that allows full access to her computer and telephone interface.

Donna wrote, "IATP was instrumental in helping me to secure a laptop and computer accessories for my new work-from-home job. Not only did they accurately assess my disability-related needs, but they also worked with me to pinpoint the best specific equipment and software. IATP staff communication and knowledge has enabled me to be successful at my new job without having to worry about accommodating my disability. Thank you, IATP!"

# AGE 3 -21 EVALUATIONS

**Through a grant from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), IATP provides Assistive Technology (AT) and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) evaluations for K-12 students throughout Illinois. In FY20, the IATP team traveled to 42 counties and 119 schools to conduct 41 AT evaluations and 106 AAC evaluations. These 147 evaluations resulted in increased participation, productivity, and learning opportunities for students.**



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## SUCCESS

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Brody, is a 5-year old boy with a diagnosis of Autism. He is very limited in his overall communication abilities. Brody was referred to IATP for an AAC evaluation in order to provide an effective way to communicate with others. During the evaluation, he demonstrated great potential with a tablet communication device. Brody was able to request his favorite snacks, toys, and even share his name. Up to this point, he had not been able to easily communicate these things with anyone. He showed so much joy when the communication attempt was successful. The team is now in the process of going through a 4 to

5-week trial with the tablet device in order to move forward with the funding process. This personal device will allow Brody's language to grow with him while giving him the ability to communicate with those around him.



Cooper is an 8-year-old boy in the 3rd grade. Cooper enjoys music and watching YouTube videos. He is a social young man with many friends. He works hard at everything he does, and he enjoys going to school. He uses a power wheelchair for mobility that he controls with a joystick. Cooper has difficulty with tasks that require fine motor movements including using a computer. Since he is skilled at using a joystick, we tested a joystick mouse to control the cursor and connected button switches to provide click control. Cooper was able to use these new tools immediately. He navigated to several websites and opened

applications at will. In addition to the mouse we attached a large button keyboard with a keyguard that allowed Cooper to select the correct keys with few mistakes. With word prediction engaged, Cooper was able to reduce his keystrokes and select words from the choices given. As much as he enjoyed these new tools, his favorite was using speech recognition with a headset microphone. Cooper was able to dictate with over 80% accuracy.



# EDUCATION ADVOCACY

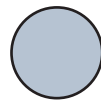
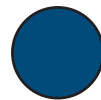
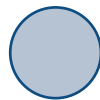
**IATP's Education Liaison works with families, students and schools to provide information, advocacy and support for all students entitled to special education services through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. This free service is available to all families who have a student with any disability in early intervention through college within the state of Illinois.**

**In FY20, IATP's Education Liaison attended 822 individualized student team meetings in person and by phone to assist students and families. She was an advocate on their behalf in 144 school districts in 93 Illinois counties to help ensure their education plans supported their access and learning needs.**

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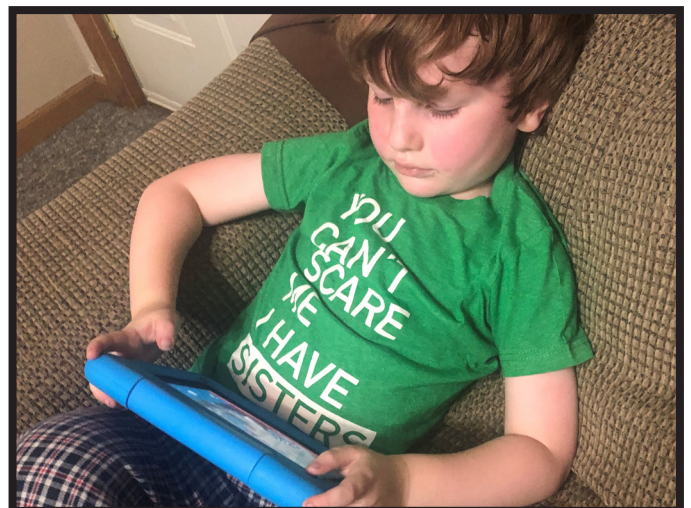
## SUCCESS

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Hudson is four years old and has two chromosomal deletions (one which causes a global developmental delay), low muscle tone, and autism. He is in a small social communication class in school with speech being the primary focus. Hudson has been an assistive technology user since he was in early intervention. He was exposed to sensory and/or interactive books and toys. He also wears a sensory vest to help with focus. He transitioned from elementary sign to using the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) to request objects from adults and then to be

rewarded with those items. He graduated from the paper PECS to the PECS IV, which was downloaded on his iPad. As he became proficient using this, he also began to use a more advanced program. With these technologies, his speech was greatly enhanced in the way he puts words and sentences together and in the way he interacts with others. Hudson uses an iPad with accessibility features that include a touch screen. He has become a proficient technology user.



# WORK INCENTIVES PLANNING AND ASSISTANCE

IATP is one of two agencies that administers the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program (WIPA) grant in Illinois. The grant is funded through the U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DHS/DRS). The program helps individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) make informed choices about employment. IATP provides WIPA services throughout the entire state of Illinois with the exception of Chicago which is covered by the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities.

Individuals who are working or have a job offer, may be concerned about how their employment earnings will affect their benefits. A Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC) can help them understand the process and inform them about work incentives such as the extension of Medicaid or Medicare benefits while they work. Through individualized services and seminars, IATP WIPA staff help ensure individuals have the information needed to make the best choices about their employment and benefits.



Participants at a Work Incentives  
Seminar Event (WISE)

## FY20 IATP WIPA ACTIVITIES INCLUDED:

**1,062**  
Referrals

**2,918**  
Approximate  
Service Hours

**350**  
Benefits  
Analysis

**306**  
Information  
Packets

## NOTABLE NUMBERS IN FY20

**3,854**

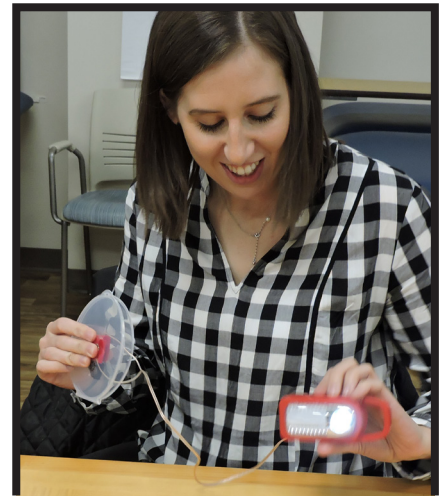
Devices received by consumers through acquisition programs that include Device Loan, Reuse and Fast Track.

**3,448**

Participants who attended events and presentations where IATP provided information on AT and the agency's programs and services.

**1,034**

Individuals who participated in trainings given by IATP staff on topics that include AT Products/Services, Funding, Transition and more.



In FY20, IATP provided Information Communication Technology (ICT) Accessibility Trainings to 113 individuals from diverse organizations statewide. As a result of participating in the ICT training, 107 participants indicated that accessible ICT procurement will be improved and 6 indicated that accessible ICT training will be implemented. This not only increases access for individuals with disabilities but also helps entities comply with legally mandated accessibility requirements.

## CONTACT

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