

# ANNUAL REPORT

**2021**

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our 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. To achieve this, we offer numerous assistive technology programs and services to learn about and try AT devices, financial loans to purchase AT, training, technical assistance, and a variety of contracted services including professional AT evaluations.

## **ADVISORY COUNCIL**

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## DEMONSTRATION

IATP's vast Demonstration Center showcases a variety of assistive technology in areas that include vision; daily living; communication; hearing; mobility; toys; sensory room; computer access; 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 suit their needs. In FY21, **654** demonstrations were provided to **1,615** 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.

***Rodney and his father visited IATP's Demonstration Center to see what kinds of accessible toys and switch activated devices were available for learning and recreation.***

Rodney had so much fun that they spent most of the afternoon exploring and playing with the extensive inventory of items on display. Many of Rodney's favorites were available through the Reuse program and loaned to the family. The joy on his face speaks for itself.



## REUTILIZATION

IATP's Reuse Program provides assistive technology and durable medical equipment to people with disabilities of all ages who cannot afford to purchase new. The recipient may keep the equipment for as long as needed. When no longer in use, we ask the borrower to return the equipment so that others in need may 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. Items can be borrowed on a short-term basis for a temporary need or as an open-ended loan kept until no longer needed.

In FY21, **894** Illinois consumers received **1,241** pieces of assistive technology through our services resulting in a savings of **\$291,455**.



***I am thrilled with my walker!*** It has made such a difference in my life! The fact that the brake must be applied in order to move keeps me much steadier. My falls have been much less frequent. I am so grateful to have received the U-Walker. Thank you.



### ***The IndeeLift has made our lives a million times better.***

Dottie, (soon to be 100) is prone to falling, and getting her to her feet required a call to the fire department. The IndeeLift, enables us to get her safely to her feet unassisted without fear of injury.



## NOTES OF GRATITUDE

*We just wanted to say thank you for your kindness, patience, understanding and enthusiasm. We can tell you genuinely care for your clients by the joy expressed when they find their voice. It is very encouraging to know others care about the well-being of our child.*

*This process has been an amazing one. Spending time seeing her growing and confidently using the "talker" has been most enjoyable. I never felt pressure or negativity at all. In fact, I feel genuine warm hearted smiles over email and phone calls. My worries were always put to ease with nothing but the most positive outcome in sight.*

*Again, thank you so much for your patience and understanding.*

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*Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. I truly don't know what we would have done without your loan program while we were waiting on Luke's device approval. It was an absolute godsend!*

## DEVICE LOAN

IATP's Device Loan Program provides short-term loans (5 weeks) of assistive technology to individuals with disabilities, family members, professionals, and others. The devices can be used at home, for education and employment, and for community participation. The program allows potential technology users to try out devices to ensure they will be a good fit before purchase, to use as a backup while a device is being repaired, or to use

while awaiting funding. In FY21, a total of **1,520** devices were loaned to **1,238** borrowers.

A grant through the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) made it possible to purchase additional devices dedicated to Illinois School Districts. Of the **1,520** devices that were loaned to customers in FY21, **691** devices were provided to **182** school districts in **57** Illinois counties.



## IATP ATLOAN\$

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 **53** applications were reviewed in FY21 resulting in **8** approved loans for a total of **\$151,201**.

### SUCCESS - THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

*Sonya and Rick are familiar with IATP's Financial Loan Program and have used it multiple times over the years to purchase modified vehicles and other assistive technology.* They recently purchased a new home and in order to make it accessible for Sonya they made modifications such as widening doorways and remodeling a bathroom in the lower level with a roll in shower. To make the home totally functional, they once again decided to utilize the IATP ATLoan\$ Program to fund the purchase of a home elevator. The elevator has provided Sonya with access to their entire home. More information on the IATP ATLoan\$ Program is available on the Financial Loans for AT webpage, [www.iltech.org](http://www.iltech.org).



## VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION EVALUATION / FAST TRACK

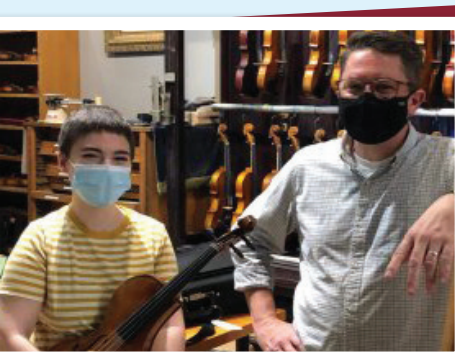
Assistive Technology Specialists (ATS) provide assistive technology evaluations, training, and technical support to customers in the home, school, or workplace. After a vocational counselor makes a customer referral, ATS staff identify assistive technology needs and provide recommendations for home modifications or training on adaptive technology and software. In FY21, staff provided **230** evaluations and **261** 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. The ATS will trial assistive technology, software, and other devices with the customer during an evaluation. If the technology is appropriate, the customer may keep it on the evaluation day, eliminating delays waiting for the equipment to be ordered and delivered. In FY21, the Fast Track Program provided **3,260** devices to **538** customers saving the state **\$229,230** in equipment costs.

### SUCCESS – MEET VICTORIA

***Victoria is a classically trained musician who plays the viola. Due to a childhood bone deformity, she has limited range of motion in her arms and wrists.***

She has never been able to reach the upper registers, also known as “the heavens,” thus limiting her ability to fully master the



viola. Luthier Noah Scott of Seman Violins was able to construct a unique instrument by eliminating one of the upper bouts and narrowing the thickness of the neck, allowing Victoria to literally reach new heights in her playing. Victoria is a student at Illinois State University where she will graduate with a degree in stringed orchestral music. She plays in the University orchestra and teaches children stringed instruments. After

graduation, she plans to make a living teaching stringed instruments.

## 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 age 3-21 students throughout Illinois. In FY21, the IATP team traveled to **46** counties and **133** schools to conduct **42** AT evaluations and **135** AAC evaluations. These evaluations resulted in increased participation, productivity, and learning opportunities for students.

## SUCCESS – MEET RILEY

*Say hello to our friend Riley, a 5-year-old girl with the medical diagnosis of Cri du Chat syndrome.*

Riley has a strong desire to interact and communicate with others; however, her diagnosis hinders her ability to communicate easily and effectively.

Riley has extremely limited verbal speech. Many times Riley becomes frustrated when trying to communicate with others because they are unable to interpret what she is trying to say.

Through the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) grant, Riley was seen for an evaluation. An IATP Speech-Language Pathologist/ Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Evaluator spent time trialing different AAC systems and communication software with Riley. She responded the best to a communication device with 36-buttons displayed. She needed a 36-location keyguard to assist with more accurate button hits due to her fine motor deficits. With this system, Riley was able to independently express her needs and wants, share personal information for safety purposes, direct an activity, make preferred choices, and request recurrence of an activity. Riley loved having a “voice” and being understood by others.

This AAC system has the flexibility to grow with Riley as her language skills develop. It will ultimately provide Riley with an endless avenue to vocabulary and language learning while giving her the means to communicate the necessities of daily living. She thoroughly enjoyed using this device to communicate with others and explore the endless vocabulary. She is currently borrowing the communication device through IATP’s Device Loan Program to ensure that it is the best fit for her.





## 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 FY21, IATP's Education Liaison attended **1,233** individualized student meetings in person, by phone and Zoom to assist students, families, and schools. She was an advocate on the student's behalf in **175** school districts in **88** Illinois counties to help ensure their educational plans and supported their access and learning needs.

## SUCCESS – MEET IONA

***Iona, who just turned 6 years old is working hard on her Augmentative Communication device with help from her sister Bea who is her twin.*** She is a student at New Berlin Elementary.

She was born with several delays including speech apraxia which is a neurological disorder. Iona has made extreme strides in the years since her birth and they have used IATP for services in several areas. Iona was evaluated for the device she is using, and training was provided for her family and school personnel. She is part of a delightful family who work very hard to get her the services she needs so that she will be successful now and later on in life. They all work hard to ensure Iona is as successful as possible and that she knows and uses her Augmentative Communication Device to give her access into the world in which she lives.



## WORK INCENTIVES PLANNING AND ASSISTANCE

IATP is one of two agencies that administer 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 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.

### FY2021 WIPA ACTIVITIES INCLUDED:

**822**  
REFERRALS



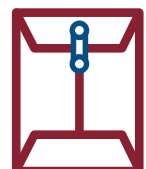
**2,259**  
APPROXIMATE  
SERVICE HOURS



**271**  
BENEFITS  
ANALYSIS



**242**  
INFORMATION  
PACKETS

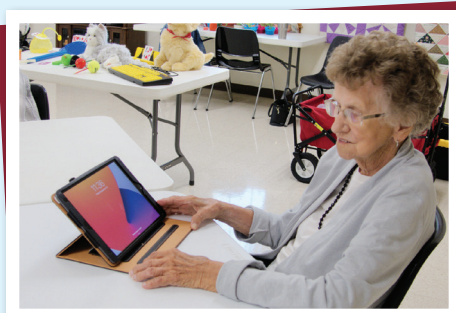


## ILLINOIS CARE CONNECTIONS

Illinois CARE Connections was a collaborative program with the Illinois Department on Aging, Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities, and the Illinois Department of Human Services / Division of Rehabilitation Services that provided technology devices for socially isolated seniors and persons with disabilities in Illinois. Participation in the program required a referral from one of these provider agencies.

In FY21, IATP processed and shipped **3,307** technology bundles to **87** counties in Illinois. Our collaboration with IDoA, DHS-DRS, and DHS-DDD has been a combined effort to help those in need stay connected with family, friends, and their communities.

Through DHS/DDD, an additional **703** individuals with Developmental Disabilities received an iPad or Tablet through a separate CARES Act grant.



A happy recipient of an iPad through the ICC Program stopped into one of the Centers for Independent Living to help instruct other seniors on the navigation basics of their iPads.



Karyn staying active and practicing Yoga with the help of her iPad provided by ICC.



**Paula A. Basta**, Director, IDoA with **Lynette Strode**, ICC Program Coordinator, IATP.

## NOTABLE NUMBERS IN FY21



IATP trained **712** individuals on topics that included AT Products/Services, funding and more. Due to Covid, IATP created new ways to reach people and safely achieve the goals of getting our consumers trained. Zoom and Webex are examples of secure, reliable video platforms that were used for meetings, webinars and online events.



IATP has provided information and assistance on AT Device/Service and AT Funding to **1,107** individuals with disabilities, family members, representatives of education, education, community living, and many more in FY21.



Public Awareness was provided to **24,535** individuals through activities such as TV interviews, radio spots, exhibits, presentations, tours, and assorted mailers. In addition to the above activities, IATP's website has also had **19,539** unique hits to its website.




## PUBLIC POLICY

IATP was the lead agency, partnering with Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities (ICDD) and Equip for Equality on House Bill 2616, now Public Act 102-0660, which amends Illinois law to allow state agencies to acquire assistive technology to address the needs of employees, customers, and job applicants without requiring compliance with the Illinois procurement code. The bill was endorsed by the Illinois Task Force on Employment and Economic Opportunity for Persons with Disabilities. This will allow agencies to acquire assistive technology without unnecessary delays. The written policy currently is the new Public Act, which is available at [www.ilga.gov](http://www.ilga.gov) by searching for HB2616, 102nd General Assembly. Each state agency is expected to implement the new law as written and may adopt its own guidelines and procedures.






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