

# ANNUAL REPORT

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**2022**



# IATP

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ILLINOIS ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM



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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 to 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.

## ■ DEVICE LOAN

IATP's Device Loan Program provides 6-week loans of assistive technology devices to consumers, family members and professionals for use at home, school, work and in the community. Loans are used to assist in decision making, evaluations, as backups when equipment is being repaired and other short-term needs. Device inventory is updated regularly to ensure that consumers have access to the most current technology. In FY22, a total of 2,107 devices were loaned to 1,489 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 2,107 devices that were loaned to customers in FY22, 1,828 devices were loaned to 309 school districts in 70 Illinois counties.

**FY22**

**2,107**  
Devices loaned to  
**1,489**  
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Of the 2,107  
devices loaned  
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to **309** school  
districts in **70**  
Illinois counties

**“The Device Loan staff at the Illinois Assistive Technology Program are phenomenal!** The services they render are extremely helpful to parents as they make important decisions about appropriate communication tools for the child(ren) with special needs. These services are also vital for the students as they can test several different assistive technology devices to determine comfort levels and customization options.

The staff went above and beyond to support my non-verbal, Autistic son, Grant,

during the Winter Break Holiday as his device was broken and locked at school. Although the staff member was off during this holiday time, knowing the importance of a nonverbal child needing communication, she did not hesitate to process my application and overnight a newer version of Grant's AAC device so that he could effectively communicate with us during the holiday season.

We are appreciative of the services IATP renders in providing a voice to the voiceless. This is such a wonderful program and from



the look on Grant's face with his loaned device, he approves, too!" We appreciate you.

– Dr. Ginger Grant-Del Valle

## ■ REUTILIZATION

IATP's Reutilization Program accepts donations of assistive technology and durable medical equipment that is no longer needed or used by its original owner and makes it available to a person who can't afford to purchase new. The recipient may keep the equipment for as long as needed.

In FY22, 965 Illinois consumers received 1,452 reused devices resulting in a savings of \$340,395.



After Libby was involved in a car accident, her family coordinated with the Reutilization department at IATP to gather equipment that had been donated by others in the community. As she continued to progress and regain her strength, her needs changed. Reuse was able to switch out her wheelchair for a walker and eventually her walker for a cane. Our program allowed her family to obtain durable medical equipment without having to pay out of pocket for equipment that was only utilized for a short period of time.

**FY22**

**965**

**Illinois consumers  
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**\$340,395**

Becky has Macular Degeneration. She visited IATP to try to find a device that could help with the severe loss of her central vision. She trialed the IrisVision Live, which is a virtual reality headset powered by a smart phone in the front. She began to cry as she looked up and could read the time on the wall clock. She went from item to item, in absolute disbelief that she was able to see and read for the first time in years. The device was available through Reuse and Becky was able to take it with her that same day. She contacted us following her visit to let us know how much her quality of life had improved. She now recognizes faces, can read to her grandson, watch her granddaughter play sports and so much more.







## ■ 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 FY22, 699 device demonstrations were provided to 1,429 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.



**FY22**

**699**

**Device  
demonstrations were  
provided to**

**1,429  
participants**

## ■ IATP ATLOANS

### IATP ATLOANS\$

*We make independence affordable.*

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 39 applications were reviewed in FY22 resulting in 7 approved loans for a total of \$149,342.

**FY22**

**39** Applications were reviewed resulting in

**7** approved loans for a total of

**\$149,342**

I was in need of a different van as my disability was giving me more issues with transferring from my chair to the driver's seat. I knew about and have dealt with Illinois Assistive Technology Program during my employment with LINC Inc. As we all know, adapted vans are very expensive. I spoke to my church about some possible assistance. My church graciously took up a collection and made a match donation, which resulted in a down payment.

With the down payment and great interest rates and terms that the IATP ATLoan Program offers, I was able to afford a 2017 Pacifica. I have an adaptive van and it allows me to help people with disabilities or able-bodied people get to doctor's appointments, the grocery store, or just a picnic at a park.

Thank you so much IATP for helping me help others as well as myself to live independently.



*IATP would like to congratulate Violette for receiving the 2022 Governor's Volunteer Service Award in the Senior Category for Region 5 – Southern. This award recognizes individual volunteers through a statewide program that highlights the importance of volunteerism and community service in the state of Illinois.*

## ■ WORK INCENTIVES PLANNING AND ASSISTANCE

IATP is one of three 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 (DHS/DRS). The program helps individuals receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) make informed choices about employment.

If you are working or have a job offer, you may be concerned about what will happen to your benefits. A Community Work Incentives Coordinator (CWIC) can help you understand the process and inform you about work incentives such as the extension of Medicaid or Medicare benefits while you work.

### FY22 WIPA

**672**

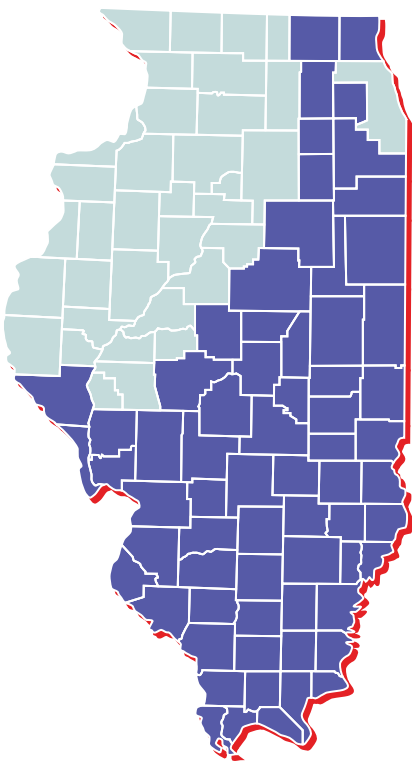
**Referrals**

**148**

**Benefits Analysis**

**293**

**Information  
Packets**



### WIPA SERVICES TERRITORY

#### **IATP's Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program Serves the Following Counties Represented in Purple:**

Alexander, Bond, Calhoun, Champaign, Christian, Clark, Clay, Clinton, Coles, Crawford, Cumberland, De Witt, Douglas, DuPage, Edgar, Edwards, Effingham, Fayette, Ford, Franklin, Gallatin, Greene, Grundy, Hamilton, Hardin, Iroquois, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Jersey, Johnson, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, Lawrence, Livingston, Logan, Macon, Macoupin, Madison, Marion, Massac, McHenry, McLean, Monroe, Montgomery, Moultrie, Perry, Piatt, Pike, Pope, Pulaski, Randolph, Richland, Saline, Sangamon, Shelby, St. Clair, Union, Vermilion, Wabash, Washington, Wayne, White, Will, Williamson



## ■ VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ASSESSMENT / FAST TRACK

Assistive Technology Specialists (ATS) provide assistive technology assessments, training and technical support in the home, school, or workplace. After a vocational counselor makes a customer referral, ATS staff identify assistive technology (AT) needs and provide recommendations for home modifications or training on adaptive technology and software. In FY22, staff provided 296 assessments and 227 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 evaluation day, eliminating delays waiting for equipment. In FY22, the Fast Track Program provided 3,433 devices to 521 customers saving the state \$139,008 in equipment costs.

**FY22**

**296**

**Assessments**

**227**

**Technical Assistance Sessions**

**FY22 Fast Track**

**3,433**

**Devices to**

**521**

**customers**

**Saving the state**

**\$139,008**

**in equipment costs, through bulk purchasing**

Israa is a 19-year-old who resides with her family in Chicago. She is a recent high school graduate, and in the fall of 2021 will begin attending classes at Harold Washington College where she will complete training to become a special education teacher. At the age of six, Israa was diagnosed with cone-rod dystrophy, a rare eye disorder that affects the cone cells of the retina. Israa says that she had limited access to assistive

technology when she was a high school student, and the AT assessment she completed with an IATP ATS was her first. She received equipment from the Fast-Track Program including a laptop computer pre-installed with the ZoomText magnifier and reader, a portable digital magnifier, a portable CCTV with optical character recognition, a digital recorder to assist with notetaking, a large print high contrast graphing scientific calculator with audio output,

and a desk lamp with varying brightness and color settings. Israa also received follow-up training services from IATP to help get her started with all of her new technology.





**FY22**

**154**

**Schools in**

**50**

**counties to conduct**

**29**

**AT evaluations  
and**

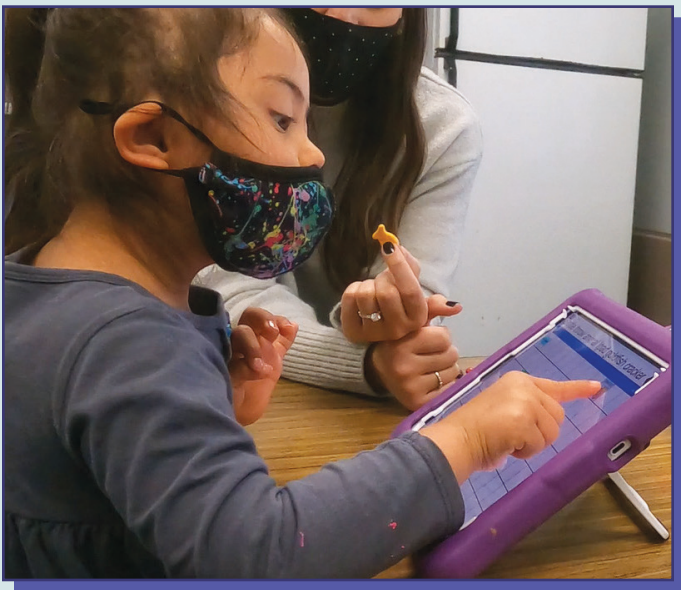
**188**

**AAC evaluations**

## ■ AGE 3-22 EVALUATIONS

IATP provides Assistive Technology (AT) and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) evaluations for students ages 3-22 throughout Illinois through a grant from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

In FY22, the IATP team traveled to 154 schools in 50 counties to conduct 29 AT evaluations and 188 AAC evaluations. These evaluations resulted in increased participation, productivity and learning opportunities for students.



Sophia has only lived in the United States since the summer of 2019. She is the youngest of nine biological siblings whom all were adopted as well. Sophia is a very happy little girl who enjoys dancing and singing. She is very

motivated to interact with her peers but since moving to the United States has struggled with her expressive language skills and has become increasingly frustrated with communication. Sophia's Speech-Language Pathologist referred her to IATP to determine what would be the best communication device that would allow her expressive communication to grow and develop peer relationships. During the evaluation, Sophia quickly showed independence with the 84-location vocabulary. Sophia was eager to use the device to request toys and snacks! The team was excited to begin the 6-week trial process to determine if this communication device will be the best long term choice. Sophia will finally have a way to build peer relationships and share her thoughts and ideas!

Esmeralda (Esme) is a 16-year-old student in the 10th grade. She is a bright, energetic young woman with a passion for writing. Esme is working on several stories which she writes in her spare time, in addition to completing her schoolwork. A C-3 spinal cord injury has presented unique challenges to Esme in the school setting. Voluntary physical movement is only available with her head/neck. She has learned to drive her power chair independently with a head/neck array. Prior to the assistive technology evaluation, the large majority of Esme's written work was produced via a scribe.

Esme is wonderfully articulate with a great command of the English language. This strength was examined in the AT evaluation as a method to produce written work. As she was introduced to a high-end speech recognition program, Esme spent close to four hours in one sitting with a trainer learning the basics as well as several of the higher end commands contained within the program. Her enthusiasm and diligence to learn this program was nothing short of amazing! Esme's incredible support staff at school shared her progress



as she began to use this tool as her primary writing method. Her tremendous work ethic and patience are valuable assets as she continues to master the use of speech recognition. In addition to her schoolwork, Esme is using this tool to continue her personal stories which she one day hopes to

share with others. She will no doubt continue to improve and become a proficient user as she finishes high school and moves on to college.



## ILLINOIS CARE CONNECTIONS

Illinois CARE Connections is a collaborative program with the Illinois



Department on Aging, Community Care Program and Illinois Assistive Technology Program to provide technology to support seniors in Illinois who are in danger of being socially isolated and/or experiencing loneliness. Participation in the program requires a referral from a provider agency.

In FY22, IATP processed and shipped 215 technology bundles to seniors in an effort to help them stay connected to family, friends, and their community.

**FY22**

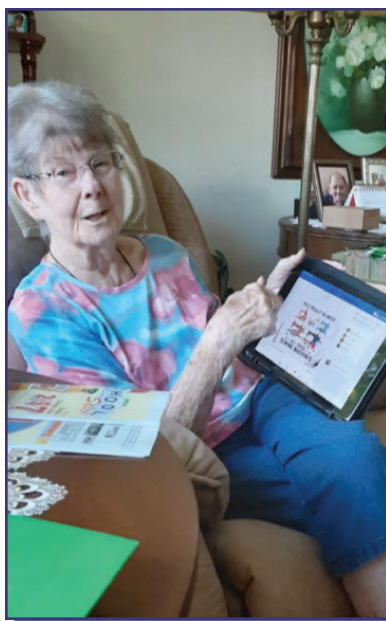
**215**

**Technology bundles processed and shipped to seniors**

### NOTE OF THANKS

My device has given me endless joy. The flexibility of sitting or lying in bed while reading the news and playing games has kept me from being depressed, sad and helpless. I play games until I fall asleep and I wake up doing my devotional online daily. My iPad is a constant companion to me and gives me so much joy.

I thank my care coordinator and all other entities for making sure ALL seniors in Illinois, especially those who live alone have tools to help them feel safe and mentally healthy especially during this time of COVID-19.



Anna Marie is thrilled with her tablet. She uses it to talk with and see her grandchildren on FaceTime.



Ron passes the time by watching old westerns on his tablet. He says he doesn't know what he would do without it.

## ■ 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 FY22, IATP's Education Liaison attended 1,034 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 181 school districts in 72 Illinois counties to help ensure their educational plans and support their access and learning needs.

**FY22**

**1,034**

**Individualized  
student meetings  
attended in person,  
by phone and Zoom**



**181**

**school districts in**

**72**

**Illinois counties**

Daniel Olsen is an extraordinary young man who is beginning college at Blackburn College in Carlinville. Blackburn is a liberal arts college who is starting a program entitled: "Blackburn and Beyond" which is geared for students with development disabilities so they can experience a traditional college program as well as learn some independent living skills. This program will begin with 7 students.

Daniel began receiving services when he was in 5th grade. He has a developmental disability and has a stutter. After the school was taken to mediation,

a stuttering expert was located who provided services to Daniel. Today, he is a talented public speaker.

In high school, Daniel received transition services and learned about programs that would help him as an adult. Because math was always his most challenging discipline, he received homebound services with a math tutor.

Daniel has been an Assistive Technology user for years and sees the value in it helping him be more successful. After a recent AT evaluation, it was determined that Read and Write Gold and Dragon Dictation



software would benefit Daniel as he begins his college career.

Daniel is amazing and many of his outside skills come from his family and his own determination to be successful and take charge of his own destiny by always forging ahead and never thinking he can't do something.



## ■ PUBLIC POLICY

Everything was still held remotely at the Capitol due to COVID in FY22 and session adjourned extremely early (April 8). The reason for this was because the legislative maps were redrawn this year as they are every 10 years after the census is taken. This meant that many people running for office did not know what district they were in until late spring and so the primary was pushed back to June.


### **IATP was instrumental in being the lead on two bills:**


1. SB 3474 was passed and became PA 102-841 on May 13, 2022. IATP was approached by the Treasurer's office to take the lead on this legislation. The bill requires that all parents/guardians be given informational material on ABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience) at the annual IEP meeting each year. The Office of the Treasurer will prepare the material and disseminate it to ISBE which will get it into the hands of the local schools.
2. SB 829 was passed and became PA 102-0817 on May 13, 2022. With this legislation mail ballots can be delivered by electronic submission and voters can mark and verify their ballots using Assistive Technology.

IATP was also part of a public policy initiative that involved several staff members in a new federal/state program that kicked off a 988



number people can use to contact a suicide and crisis lifeline that people can either call or text. It is confidential and available 24 hours a day. These focus groups were spearheaded in Illinois by the Department of Mental Health. Their purpose was to determine the best way to get the information into the hands of a wide variety of people. The focus groups included farmers and people in rural areas, older citizens, minorities, high school students, elementary students, people with disabilities, and more. Mental health issues are at an all-time crisis in the country and it is hopeful that these groups and the ideas they brought forth will make this accessible to anyone who might need help.

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**IATP**  
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This publication was made possible by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living (HHS/ACL). IATP also receives grants from U.S. Social Security Administration (SSA); Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DHS/DRS) and Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD); Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE); and Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the above entities. The information in this report reflects data from State Fiscal Year 2022.