

# Colorado Assistive Technology Act Program

Public Law 108-364; Federal Grant number: 2401COSGAT; Administration for Community Living, Department of Health & Human Services

## 2024 Annual Report



At the Center for Innovative Design and Engineering (CIDE), our goal is to improve awareness and availability of Assistive Technology (AT) in education, employment, community living, medical and mainstream technology, information technology and telecommunications.

AT Act legislation specifies several state level activities, including:

- Device loans
- Technology reuse
- Resources for finding and funding AT
- Education
- Technical assistance
- Public awareness

Our work is guided by an advisory council made up primarily of individuals with disabilities who use AT and their family members and key representatives of state agencies.

### Our Work and Focus

CIDE envisions a world where all persons with disabilities and those aging into disabilities are fully engaged in life, without barriers and without boundaries.

### Learn more about our programs:

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## What is the Colorado Assistive Technology Act Program?

The Assistive Technology Act is legislation enacted in 1988 that aimed to increase access to, availability of, and funding for Assistive Technology (AT) – any device, big or small, high or low tech, that helps individuals and their families perform tasks that would otherwise be difficult or impossible.

There are 56 Tech-Act programs across the country that support 50 million Americans. Colorado was one of the first states to receive funding and has been going strong since 1989.



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Borrowing a Tumbleforms Floor Sitter, a switch-adapted LED fan, and a Big Red Switch communication device from the statewide loan bank allowed a toddler with multiple disabilities and communication challenges to interact with her family.

Her mother said: “Assistive Technology has really opened up new horizons for my daughter. She is more interested in playing now and communicating to me more. Seeing her interact with her toys has given me hope for my daughter’s future, and I’m beyond excited to see what lies ahead for her, all thanks to accessing the equipment from the AT loan library.”

## Device Loans in 2024

We offer multiple loan programs serving all ages across the state. Through partnership with Early Intervention Colorado, the Colorado Department of Education, and the AT Network we provide device loans to individuals with disabilities to allow them to trial devices before purchasing.

- After borrowing a device, approximately 60% of borrowers decided not to purchase a device. This combined savings to individuals and agencies was **\$1,885,623** in the 2024 fiscal year.
- **Over 1,600 devices** to individuals, most of whom could not afford AT.
- Our Tech for Tykes program, loaned nearly **900** AT devices to children ages 0-3. These loans had a cost savings of **\$754,431**.
- Our school age program fulfilled **749** AT loans, with a savings of **\$1,131,192**.

## Device Demonstrations in 2024

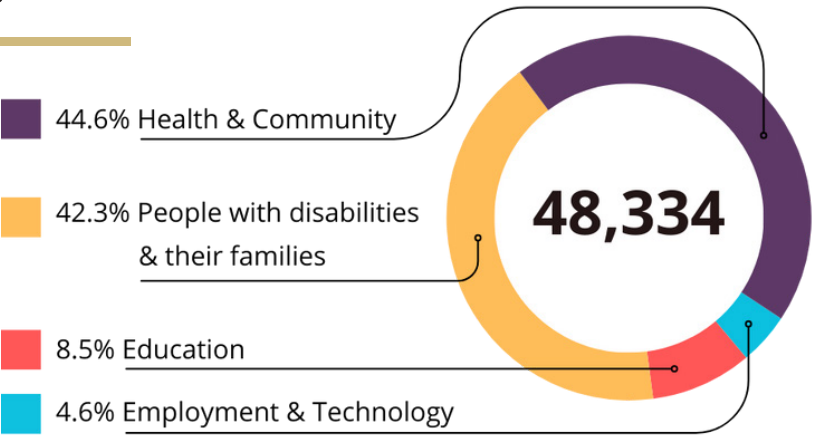
AT professionals at CIDE provide device demonstrations to help individuals with disabilities explore technology options, compare AT types, and make informed decisions about their needs.

- In total, **584 device demonstrations** were conducted for **898 individuals**.
- Over 99% were either highly satisfied or satisfied with the demonstration

## Information & Assistance

The AT Program of Colorado also connected **48,334 individuals** with the information they need about AT devices, services and funding.

Recipients receiving information represented the following groups:



# Statewide Training Impacts



**5,449 participants** attended live and web-based training sessions.

Topics included:

- Emergency preparedness for people with disabilities, their families and caregivers, and HCBS service providers
- Usability and remediation of digital documents, PDFs, and presentations
- Usability of exams such as the GED
- Supporting students with disabilities with the AT they need for a smooth transition from highschool to college or work.
- Employability and Assistive Technology

## AT Device Reuse in 2024

The CIDE AT Exchange program allows individuals who no longer need their equipment to repurpose them for others. This program increases the lifespan of a device, saving money and reducing waste.

- A total of **145 devices valued at \$115,456** were reutilized
- **One hundred percent** of participants reported a high level of satisfaction, attributing their ability to afford the AT solely on this program.

When a young woman expressed an interest in learning to drive a power wheelchair to be more independent, her mother turned to CIDE. After several device demonstrations using various joysticks and switches to control the power wheelchair, a successful solution was identified that worked best for her. Now she is able to achieve her goal of independence getting to her classroom independently and playing on the playground at school.





# Leveraging Coordination & Collaboration (2024 - 2025)

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The Assistive Technology Program of Colorado works with partners throughout the state to ensure timely acquisition and selection of technology, and a higher return on investment:

## **The Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)** - Partner for over 20 years

- Provided 179 DVR client appointments to help individuals get a job using technology.
- Provided worksite accommodation recommendations and computer accessibility training to support 50 individuals in meeting their vocational goals.

## **Colorado Department of Education** - Partner for 27 years


- Partnered on the SWAAAC program (Statewide Assistive Technology, Augmentative and Alternative Communication) with 413 dedicated team members in 83 school districts.
- Served over 115,000 children with disabilities ages 3-21
- Provided 396 instances of technical assistance in 43 districts

## **Colorado Division of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF)** - Partner for 4 years

- Distributed 1,764 backup battery systems across 55 (86%) counties
  - Created systems change, adoption and integration of the backup battery provision and related training and resources into several local and state programs
  - Modeled adopted nationwide
  - Partnered with local utility programs for future collaborations
- Continued the Digital Literacy Pilot Program to empower Medicaid long-term service recipients with foundational technological skills through the support of dedicated coaches.
  - 88.2% of participants reported they could apply what they learned to manage their health,
  - 94.4% appreciated using iPads for training with adapted material to varying learner abilities

## **Early Intervention Colorado** - Partner for 20 years

- Colorado Early Learning: Universal Design and Inclusion Project
  - Assisted Colorado's licensed childcare programs supporting children with delays, disabilities, and differences with adaptive equipment and AT
  - Served 11,000 children
  - Supported 216 childcare programs across 48 Colorado counties to provide more inclusive childcare options
  - Provided online training to 657 participants, small group learning, customized coaching, and monthly topic discussions
- Tech for Tykes Early Intervention program
  - Provided 898 technical assistance consultations with providers and families
  - Trained and supported 81 assistive technology consultants statewide



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