

*Oklahoma's
Assistive Technology Act
Program
800-257-1705*

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***Oklahoma ABLE
Tech is a federal
grant program located
at Oklahoma State
University in
Stillwater.***

***Oklahoma ABLE
Tech serves all ages,
all disabilities, in all
of Oklahoma.***

Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs & 2007 Appropriations for the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended Reported by Linda Jaco, ABLE Tech Director

President Bush's proposed 2007 budget request includes an appropriation for the Assistive Technology (AT) Act of 1998, as amended. The proposed budget requests \$21.3 million for the state Assistive Technology Programs and \$1.0 million for National Technical Assistance and the National Internet Site. The President's proposed budget eliminates funding for the Protection and Advocacy Assistive Technology (PAAT) Program. PAAT was authorized in the recent AT Act amendments. The President's budget proposal does not include a separate appropriation for Title III- Alternative Financing Programs which were provided a one year continuation in the FY2005 budget.

Congress is currently considering appropriations for the AT Act and the House Bi-Partisan Disabilities Caucus, co-chaired by Representatives Jim Ramstad, MN and Jim Langevin, RI who have requested \$30.4 million. The request includes \$23.3 million for state AT Programs; \$1.1 million for National Technical Assistance and the National Internet Site; and, \$6 million for the PAAT program. The request does not include a separate appropriation for Title III-Alternative Financing Programs.

The Consortium of Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) <http://www.c-c-d.org/> proposes funding for the AT Act at the level supported by the Senate in the 2006 appropriations process. ATAP is a member of CCD and co-chairs the Technology and Telecommunications Task Force with Easter Seals, the American Federation of the Blind, and the ARC/UCP Public Policy Collaboration. The CCD requests \$27.8 million for the state AT Programs; \$6. million for PAAT; and \$1.2 million for the National Technical Assistance and the National Internet Site [see CCD Appropriations Recommendations for Fiscal Year 2007 for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Housing and Urban Development and the Appropriation Table by the Fiscal Policy Task Force (March 2006)]. www.c-c-d.org/Fiscal_Policy/200603_Fiscal_Table_FY2007.pdf and www.c-c-d.org/Fiscal_Policy/200603_Budget_Recommendations_FY2007.pdf

Recognizing that a variety of services is the best way to meet the individual needs of people with disabilities, Congress authorized the AT Act amendments in 2004 to require that state AT programs offer an array of services. Congress eliminated separate funding, originally intended as one-time funding, for states to establish financial loan programs and included this responsibility as part of the continuum of services offered by state AT Programs. The AT Act requires state AT programs to engage in state level activities including State Financing, Device Demonstration, Device Reutilization and Device Loan Programs. These activities are further supported by requirements to provide training and technical assistance, information and referral services, and activities to promote coordination and collaboration at the state level to increase awareness of and access to assistive technology devices and services. These programs are interdependent and integral to supporting individuals with disabilities, their families, educators, employers, and other targeted individuals. They enable people to learn about assistive technology, and gain direct access to devices through demonstration, reutilization and loan programs. When individuals use device demonstration

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programs to learn about and compare available technology and borrow devices through the device loan programs to “try before they buy”, they are more likely to acquire the right device increasing the probability of continued usage.

Many state AT Programs have established or are exploring the feasibility of programs such as: cooperative or bulk buying programs; establishing funds of last resort for those who can't afford to take a loan; providing individual funding assistance that provides direct, individual support to assist individuals in finding and leveraging existing funding sources such as Medicaid, vocational rehabilitation, etc. to get the devices and services they need; and, establishing centralized programs that coordinate funding between multiple state and federally funded programs.

ATAP supports funding of the AT Act as authorized by Congress because it enables states to administer and/or support the full continuum of programs. The AT Act sets the minimum state grant award at \$410,000. Currently, 75% of the programs funded under the AT Act are funded below the minimum. Of the 75% of the programs receiving less than the minimum, the average state grant program allotment is under \$370,000. By supporting the AT Act as authorized and increasing funding for the state AT Programs and their collaborators Congress can ensure that the continuum of services is available to consumers in an integrated manner and better enable them to make decisions that meet their needs and life circumstances.

Article written by Deborah Buck, ATAP Executive Director. ATAP is the member organization of state AT Programs funded under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended and represents 53 of the 56 state AT programs funded under the AT Act. www.ataporg.org

Spotlight on Assistive Technology Available in Oklahoma for Short-term Loan and Demonstration

Each quarter ABLE Tech will spotlight one assistive technology device available for demonstration and short-term loan at each of our partner locations. Partner location, contact information and a list of available devices can be found on our website under “Demo Demonstration” and “Device Loan” at <http://okabletech.okstate.edu>.



Dell Laptop



PocketViewer



Weather Alert System for Deaf and Hard of Hearing



Vantage provides augmentative communication

Visual Services, a division of the Department of Rehabilitation Services OKC - Individuals with disabilities can borrow assistive technology that can improve computer access. For example, several individuals in the state have already borrowed a Dell laptop loaded with software, such as JAWS (screen reader), ZoomText (screen enlarger), OpenBook (reads aloud scanned or electronic documents) or WiVik 3 (on-screen keyboard).

Oklahoma School for the Blind, Muskogee OK – The PocketViewer from HumanWare is a portable magnifier that provides up to 7x magnification in color or black/white. Individuals with low vision can read maps, view photos, read labels in stores, and use the writing stand to sign checks or credit card slips.

Oklahoma School for the Deaf, Sulphur OK - Designed for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people, the Weather Alert System warns of hazardous conditions, giving around-the-clock, up-to-the-minute weather information. This system notifies by light and vibration.

Mary K. Chapman Center for Communicative Disorder, University of Tulsa – The Vantage Plus is a powerful and dynamic communication aid.

ABLE Tech Demo & Loan Program, Stillwater OK – the All-turn-it® spinner by AbleNet is a useful inclusion device for the classroom so that students can interact with peers. It has many uses, and is switch activated.



ABLE Tech continues to look for ways to expand its services in the state to improve access for individuals to assistive technology devices and services. Recognizing the excellent service and outreach provided by the Hearing Helpers demonstration room and the Oklahoma Assistive Technology Center, ABLE Tech partnered with both programs to provide an expanded service to the state with increased opportunities for individuals to gain access to assistive technology devices through demonstration and short-term loan.



Hearing Helpers

Hearing Helpers, in collaboration with IntegrIS Third Age Life Center and ABLE Tech, provides the resources for the Faye Donalson Hearing Helpers demonstration room. The Hearing Helpers demonstration room is located in Suite 210 of The INTEGRIS Third Age Life Center, 5300 N. Independence Ave., Oklahoma City. The phone number is (405) 951-8383 and is open daily, except for holidays, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Visit ABLE Tech's website for a complete list of the equipment available <http://okabletech.okstate.edu/loan/hh.html>

INTEGRIS Hearing Helpers is a demonstration room where people can go to learn about devices made to help compensate for a hearing loss. Hearing Helpers demonstration room provides hands-on demonstrations of a number of devices, specifically designed to help the hearing impaired. The services are available to anyone with hearing loss, parents of children with hearing loss, relatives or friends seeking information about helpful devices or gift ideas. Students, or anyone interested in hearing loss and assistive devices are welcome. Trained volunteers will demonstrate items that are commercially available to you. Products include amplified telephones, alerting devices for the phone and door bell, and devices for quiet listening to the TV. These items are appropriate for people of all ages, who have a hearing loss. The purpose of the demonstration room is to assist in decision making about device purchases or utilization. Individuals can test assistive listening devices to determine which products are the most successful for use. Most of the items are available for a short-term loan (6 weeks). The items are not for sale, but if you like what you try in the room, purchase information will be provided. Some of these devices are available free or at minimal cost to Oklahoma citizens with a certified hearing loss through the State Department of Rehabilitation Services. Applications for accessing the service are available at the Hearing Helpers room. Individuals can look these devices over, and try them out with no obligation. Hearing Helpers is not a sales promotional organization, but a useful demonstration and loan program for your convenience.



The Oklahoma Assistive Technology Center (OATC) is located at 1600 North Phillips, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Phone: (405) 271-3625, TDD (405) 271-1705 or 1-800-700-6282. <http://www.ah.ouhsc.edu/oatc/>

OATC is dedicated to providing quality assistive technology services to Oklahoman's with disabilities and their families; to providing professional and community education and technical assistance; and to research. Service provision at OATC includes: assessing a consumer's need for assistive technology, providing short-term loan equipment, completing individual requests to public and private funding sources for the purchase of AT, adapting or modifying the technology, and teaching consumers and significant others how to use (or support the use of) and maintain assistive technology devices. Types of AT services provided include: augmentative and alternative communication, computer access, environmental control, positioning, custom seating, mobility, splinting, and supported employment.

ABLE Tech and OATC partner to provide short-term loans from an inventory of eight AmTrykes either in OKC or Tulsa. An AmTryke is a therapeutic tricycle suitable for children approximately 2-8 years old. For years, the AmTryke has benefited and delighted children with disabilities. It gives children the opportunity to experience the fun and independence of riding a bicycle with their siblings and friends. This unique tricycle is hand and/or foot powered. It improves motor coordination, increases self-esteem and is fun to ride. OATC now has the ability to provide a short-term loan of either a regular AmTryke model (ages 3-8) or a toddler AmTryke (ages 2-4). For more information, visit ABLE Tech's website or the AmTryke national program at http://www.ambucs.com/amtryke/what_is_amtryke.aspx.

"**Fire Safety Solutions for People with Disabilities**" is a program designed to create fire safety information that addresses the unique needs of people with disabilities. It is a FEMA sponsored grant given to ABLE Tech and OSU Fire Protection Publications. The OSU Fire Protection Publications office is the largest provider of firefighter training materials and curricula to all fifty states.

ABLE Tech and Fire Protection Publications have combined their expertise to distribute and install free smoke alarms to Oklahomans with disabilities. If you are qualified to participate, you will receive a free smoke alarm that meets your unique needs. A fire safety professional will come to your home and install the smoke alarm and help you design a fire exit plan. The ABLE Tech website provides an application plus fire safety messages for a variety of disabilities at <http://okabletech.okstate.edu/fp> or you may call Oklahoma ABLE Tech toll free at 800-257-1705 Voice/TTY.

Interesting statistics from the smoke alarm program: To date, 284 people have applied to receive a free smoke alarm. Ninety-three applicants are from non-rural areas of the state and 191 are from rural areas.

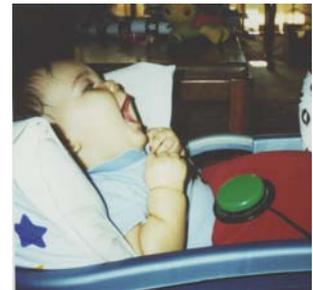
Disability Type: 50% of the applicants are deaf; 29% are hard of hearing; 11% have mobility impairment; 3% of the applicants are blind; and 8% have low vision.

Age (228 out of 284 reported age): 29% of the applicants are between the ages of 60-79; 25% are between the ages of 40-59; 18% are between the ages of 80-100; 17% are between 0-19; and 11% are between the ages of 20-39.

Out of 284 applicants, 68 people or 25% did not have any type of smoke alarm system in their home.

ABLE Tech Donates AT Assessment Kits to Oklahoma's SoonerStart Early Intervention Program *by Sherril York, Training and Outreach Specialist*

Oklahoma ABLE Tech has partnered with the SoonerStart Early Intervention program to provide assistive technology (AT) assessment kits for use by SoonerStart service providers. The SoonerStart Early Intervention Program is available through the State Department of Education and serves children 0-36 months. The AT kits are to be utilized specifically for assessment for AT consideration. Assistive technology is important for persons with disabilities of all ages, and the earlier the intervention and use of AT, the more independence and quality of life can be improved. Through the use of the AT assessment kits, families can be introduced to AT and increase their awareness of, and availability of devices that benefit infants and toddlers with disabilities in the SoonerStart program. Additionally, the AT kits assist the service providers with resources for assessing the need for assistive technology. During recent months, Oklahoma ABLE Tech, the Oklahoma Assistive Technology Center and the STARS training program provided assistive technology training to SoonerStart personnel. Providers had the opportunity to learn more about the use of assistive technology in support of infants/toddlers and their families.



The AT assessment kits contain a variety of switches, switch accessories and switch adapted toys and devices. Also in the kits are devices for augmentative and alternative communication, computer access, vision, positioning, and early reading. All the devices in the kits are for assessment and in-home demonstration. When devices are needed for extended trial or loan, families and SoonerStart personnel may borrow devices from equipment loan programs, such as the ABLE Tech short-term loan program.

To learn more about this program and to see a list of the devices in each AT assessment kit, please visit the ABLE Tech website at <http://okabletech.okstate.edu/demo/soonerstart.html>. The ten SoonerStart regions are listed as well as the name of the contact person, location, address, phone number and counties served.

Oklahoma AgrAbility Receives New Grant Award

The Oklahoma AgrAbility Project has been awarded a new four-year grant from the USDA Cooperative Extension (CSREES) to continue its work with farm and ranch families impacted by disability issues. The AgrAbility grant process is very competitive and reflects the support of agri-business and agricultural community, as well as, the success and commitment of the AgrAbility Partners. The partners are: Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Service, Langston University-Outreach Programs and School of Physical Therapy, ABLE Tech, and the Oklahoma Assistive Technology Foundation.

The new work plan began April 3, 2006 and reflects the current priorities of the USDA in providing educational programming, engaging in networking that benefits consumers, and direct service in meeting immediate needs in accommodating disability on the farm and linking people to resources. Additional program changes will be implemented as part of the new four-year grant.

More educational programming will be provided that is tailored for a variety of audiences and learning styles. Oklahoma AgrAbility will be providing continuing education opportunities to health care professionals in addressing the rehabilitation, health, and wellness of agricultural workers. AgrAbility will partner with the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services to educate vocational counselors and assistive technology practitioners in assisting farmers with disabilities to return to work. Farmers and ranchers with chronic health issues and/or disabilities can expect to see programming for self-management of arthritis, aging in place, and specialized seminars in financial management of agricultural businesses after disability.

Direct Service

Farming families impacted by disabilities will still be able to receive information and referral services, on-site farm assessments, and technical assistance from Oklahoma ABLE Tech's AgrAbility Specialist. The current AgrAbility Specialist is Carla Wilhite, a registered and licensed Occupational Therapist who has been working exclusively with farming families for the past six years. Carla is familiar with numerous adaptive strategies, assistive technologies, and resources that a farmer may find beneficial for working or living on the farm. She can be reached toll-free at: 888-885-5588 or 405-744-5182.

In response to farm family input, peer support will also be a new direct service feature of the AgrAbility Project. What is a peer advocate? It is a farmer, rancher, or a spouse who has experienced a disability, or caring for someone with a disability, and who feel he/she has adapted well and continue to enjoy life. Trained peer advocates will have the opportunity to volunteer with Oklahoma AgrAbility to provide support and also share their ingenuity in adapting farm activities to accommodate disability.

A select group of farmers, ranchers, and family members will be attending training April 18-19, 2006 to learn how to be a peer mentor. The trainer will be Bob Fetsch, an Extension Educator at Colorado State University. Bob comes from a farming background and has worked with farm families for over 20 years. Topics covered in the workshop include: What is peer support? How can I be better at listening and speaking effectively? How do I make a good referral? If you are interested in learning more about the program, please call Carla Wilhite.

AgrAbility will be taking a "whole farm" approach in addressing disability, impairment, and participation in farming through recommending assistive/adaptive technologies to enhance life and work, promoting farm financial stability, and encouraging successful adaptation and well-being.

Carla Wilhite specializes in rural and agricultural health and has worked with Oklahoma families on facilitating successful participation in agriculture for family members with disabilities and/or health challenges. Carla is familiar with several resources that are available to support return to working or living on the farm. In addition, she spends time educating other health care professionals on the rehabilitation needs of Oklahoma's agricultural community members, as well as developing additional programming and resources for the Oklahoma AgrAbility Project.

Please visit the AgrAbility website at <http://biosystems.okstate.edu/agrability/index.html>. If you would like general information, please call 405-744-2398. If you would like to talk to someone regarding a disability, please call toll-free at 888-885-5588 Voice or send an email to ability@okstate.edu.

Oklahoma ABLE Tech

AA-5-12336

Seretean Wellness Center
Oklahoma State University
1514 W. Hall of Fame
Stillwater, OK 74078

Phone: 800-257-1705 VTDD
405-744-9748 VTDD
Fax: 405-744-2487
I & R: 888-885-5588 VTDD

We're On the Web!
<http://okabletech.okstate.edu>

Oklahoma ABLE Tech

Linda Jaco, Program Director
and Interim Associate Director
of Sponsored Programs for the
OSU Seretean Wellness Center

Milissa Gofourth, Policy/Funding
Coordinator

Sherril York, Training/Outreach
Specialist

Diana Sargent, Administrative
Assistant

Brenda Dawes, AT Project
Specialist and Web Coordinator
Carla Wilhite, AgrAbility
Program Specialist

Jo Anne Pool, SERC Program
Manager

Shannon Esmeyer, SERC
Administrative Assistant

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Resources and ABLE Tech Training Calendar

ABLE Tech Online Resources

- Oklahoma ABLE Tech
<http://okabletech.okstate.edu>
- Oklahoma Equipment Connection
<http://oec.okstate.edu>
- ABLE Tech Alternative Financing Program
and Access to Telework Fund Program
<http://okabletech.okstate.edu/afp>
- Electronic and Information Technology
Accessibility News: www.accessibility.ok.gov
- AgrAbility: <http://agrability.okstate.edu/>
- Fire Safety:
<http://okabletech.okstate.edu/fp/>

ABLE Tech Events

April 10 - OSU-Tulsa Disability Awareness
Week . ABLE Tech presentation and display
of AT.

April 12 – Open House to highlight AT for
Deaf and Hard of Hearing

April 13 – OSU Disability Awareness Week;
ABLE Tech exhibit

April 13 - Presentation, Impact of
Agency's Policies on the Access of AT and
OK funding for AT. OUHSC

April 19 - Project Heart, Cushing, Health
Fair, Exhibit, ABLE Tech info and AT
devices for Seniors.

ABLE Tech Events

April 25 - ABLE Tech Demo Center, Stillwater,
Microsoft Accessibility Training, Accessibility
features of Windows XP.

April 29 - Salt Lake City, UT, AAHPERD
National Conf., Presentation, Integrating
Simple Assistive Technology into Physical
Activity and Recreation Settings.

May 3 - Moore-Norman Tech Center, OKC,
Transition Institute, Presentation, Assistive
Technology and Transition

May 4 - Reed Center, Midwest City, State
Aging Conf., Presentation, Gadgets and
Gizmos to Make Life Easier: What are they and
where can you get them?

May 13 - Senior Center, Stillwater, Microsoft
Accessibility, Training, Accessibility features of
Windows XP

May 17 – OSU Seretean Wellness Center, in
Stillwater, Residential Care Administrators,
Presentation, Simple solutions to increase
independence for everyday living

June 8 – ABLE Tech Demo and AT for
Transition, School for Deaf in Sulphur, Voc
Rehabilitation summer camp.

June 12 – ABLE Tech Demo and AT for
Transition, USAO, Youth Leadership Forum.