AT RESOURCES FUNDING GUIDE

This We See Different Funding Resources Guide identifies various sources and resources that you can investigate and explore as prospective funding options. This list is not all-inclusive but can be a good place to begin or expand your funding research.

ORGANIZATIONS

Certain organizations are known for supporting/funding AT.

- Disability-focused organizations operate nationwide to share information and resources on specific disabilities. Quite often these national organizations have state and local chapters.
  - National Multiple Sclerosis Society
  - Muscular Dystrophy Association
  - United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) – educates, advocates, and provides support services to ensure a life without limits for people with a spectrum of disabilities
  - UCP Bellows Fund – A national program operated by UCP that provides funds to individuals with disabilities for assistive technology equipment. Individuals are recommended by UCP affiliates. UCP affiliates submit an application on behalf of an individual to the UCP national office. Applications are reviewed for funding by the Bellows Committee.
  - American Council of the Blind
  - American Foundation for the Blind
  - Cerebral Palsy Guide
- RESNA – Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America
- US Department of Veterans Affairs
- National and local organizations and service clubs.
  - International and national organizations such as Easter Seals, United Way, Lions Club International, March of Dimes, and Kiwanis may have assistance programs for funding AT. Some local and state organizations may also take on a "fundraising project" in specific cases.
  - Local organizations such as Knights of Columbus, local Lions Clubs, and faith-based organizations will often contribute funds and/or organize fundraisers to assist in the provision of AT devices for individuals who live in their areas. A listing of these clubs can be found in your telephone directory and by searching for "local service organizations" for your locale on the internet.
  - Assistive Technology-Related Organizations – alphabetical list

INSURANCE OPTIONS

Medicare, Medicaid, private health or disability insurance, and worker's compensation may pay for some assistive technology. In most cases, a demonstration of medical necessity for the product or equipment and a prescription from a doctor or other professional will be required.

- Medicare – a national social insurance program administered by the U.S. federal government for adults over 65 years of age and younger people with disabilities
  - While Medicare may provide coverage for some assistive technology devices, the scope of coverage is limited. Learn more: www.medicare.gov.
- Medicaid – the U.S. cooperative federal-state health program for certain people and families with low incomes and resources. People served by Medicaid are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents, including low-income adults, their children, and people with certain disabilities.
  - Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
  - Description of State Medicaid Programs
  - An individual who seeks Medicaid funding for AT must generally meet a three-part test:
    - The individual must be eligible for Medicaid.
    - The specific device requested must be one that can be funded by the Medicaid program.
    - The individual must establish that the device requested is medically necessary.
  - Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) – the child health component of Medicaid. It is required in every state and is designed to improve the health of low-income children by financing appropriate and necessary pediatric services.
  - Medicaid Waivers – allows Medicaid to be used for additional services and may cover specialized medical equipment and supplies. Each state writes a plan that defines what types of services will be provided under its Medicaid Waiver Program.
  - Understanding the Medicaid Waiver – a practical guide for families and individuals with developmental disabilities published by the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, Atlanta, Georgia, fall 2006
- Private Insurance – Many private insurance policies will pay for AT services and devices that are deemed to be medically necessary and prescribed by a physician. Coverage varies by carrier and policy terms.

FEDERAL & STATE PROGRAMS

There are a variety of funding options available through federal and state government programs.

- Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services(OSERS) – OSERS supports programs that help educate children and youth with disabilities, provides for the rehabilitation of youth and adults with disabilities, and supports research to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities.
  - OSERS Grants and Funding
  - Department of Education Funding Opportunities and Resources
  - Department of Education Discretionary Grant Application Packages
- The National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research – NIDRR provides leadership and support for a comprehensive program of research related to the rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities.
  - NIDRR Grants and Funding – Through its many programs, projects, and research, NIDRR provides an array of grants and other funding opportunities to serve individuals with disabilities and their families.
- Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) – OSEP is dedicated to improving results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities ages birth through 21 by providing leadership and financial support to assist states and local districts.
  - OSEP Grant Opportunities and Funding – includes IDEA Formula Grants, IDEA Discretionary Grants, Special Education Research Programs, and IDEA Funding
- Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) – oversees grant programs that help individuals with physical or mental disabilities to obtain employment and live more independently through the provision of such supports as counseling, medical and psychological services, job training, and other individualized services

RSA's major Title I formula grant program provides funds to state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies to provide employment-related services for individuals with disabilities, giving priority to individuals who are significantly disabled.

- RSA Grants & Funding Opportunities – includes discretionary grants and scholarships
- Race to the Top Fund – provides competitive grants to encourage and reward states that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform; states are asked to advance reforms around four specific areas:
  - Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy
  - Building data systems that measure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction
  - Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most
  - Turning around our lowest-achieving schools
- Client Assistance Program (CAP) – The purpose of CAP is to advise and inform clients, client applicants, and other individuals with disabilities of all the available services and benefits under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and of the services and benefits available to them under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- State AT Programs – The Assistive Technology Act is intended to promote people's awareness of, and access to, assistive technology devices and services. Under the law, each U.S. state and territory receives a grant to fund an Assistive Technology Act Program (AT Act). These programs provide services to persons with disabilities for their entire life span, as well as to their families or guardians, service providers, and agencies and other entities that are involved in providing services such as education and employment to persons with disabilities.
- Find your state's AT program
- National Assistive Technology Act Technical Assistance and Training (AT3) Center – provides technical assistance to enhance the efforts of the State AT grantees and addresses issues raised by states and other entities through a variety of mechanisms
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) – Every state has a federally funded agency that administers vocational rehabilitation (VR), supported employment, and independent living services. VRS will often pay for assistive technology if the technology will enhance the worker's ability to prepare for, get, or keep a job.
  - Search for Vocational Rehabilitation Services in your state
- Medicaid – the U.S. cooperative federal-state health program for certain people and families with low incomes and resources; people served by Medicaid are U.S. citizens or legal permanent residents, including low-income adults, their children, and people with certain disabilities
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SPECIAL EDUCATION & PUBLIC SCHOOLS

For children up to age 21, the public school's special education system can be a primary funding source for AT. The rules governing special education are in the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and in federal regulations. IDEA guarantees eligible children a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Since all special education services, including AT, must be free, a family's income is not a factor.

The child's needs, the services to be provided, and identified assistive technology must appear in a written individualized education program (IEP), also known by different names in different states.

ADVOCACY GROUPS

On the local and national levels there are many advocacy groups that provide assistance to persons with disabilities. Several of these organizations assist with funding for AT devices, home modifications, AT assessments, etc.

Local

- Search by state for options and opportunities
- Central Illinois Access (hosted on Access4All website) – a Peoria, Illinois-based non-profit organization that delivers 2,500 computer systems to Peorians with low income or disabilities who could not otherwise access the internet
- Computer Banc – provides free refurbished computers to children in Illinois with learning disabilities and other disabilities; computers are donated by businesses

National

- AbleData – provides information about assistive technology products and rehabilitation equipment
- Infinitec.org – a joint effort of the United Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Chicago and United Cerebral Palsy Associations, Inc., Washington, DC
- Assistive Technology Act Programs (ATAP) – ATAP was established in 1997 to provide support to state AT Program members to enhance the effectiveness of AT Programs on the state and local level and promote the national network of AT Programs. ATAP facilitates the coordination of state AT Programs nationally and provides technical assistance and support to its members. ATAP represents the needs and interests of the state AT Programs and is the national voice of the AT Programs.

STATE VOCATION REHABILITATION CENTERS

- The Rehabilitation Act was first passed in 1973. Congress, pursuant to Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, gives money to states to provide VR services to persons with disabilities. On August 7, 1998, President Clinton signed into law the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA). P.L. 105-220, 112 Stat. 936. Included within the Workforce Investment Act were the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 (Rehab '98), reauthorizing the Rehabilitation Act through 2003, http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia/act.cfm.
- VR agencies can fund a wide range of goods and services, including "rehabilitation technology," that are connected to a person's vocational goal. Congress has stated that VR services are to enable individuals to maximize employability, self-sufficiency, independence, and integration into the workplace and the community through comprehensive and coordinated state-of-the-art programs.

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION

- Title 38 of the U.S. code provides benefits for veterans of the military. The type of benefits for the disabled varies widely depending on whether the disability is "service related" or "non-service related." For more information, contact one of the many veterans' services organizations or check out the official VA website.
- Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) – a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) program that supports work-ready veterans in competitive jobs and consults with business and industry regarding their specific employment needs; services include job matching and employment supports, vocational case management, work site and job analysis, assistive technology, reasonable accommodations, and ADA regulations compliance

EMPLOYER

There are things that an employer need to do to successfully support his/her workforce with disabilities. In turn, employers who support employees with disabilities may receive tax incentives to help them hire and retain individuals with disabilities

- The Employer Assistance and Resource Network (EARN) is a resource for employers seeking to recruit, hire, and retain qualified employees with disabilities.
- Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) – a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) program that supports work-ready veterans in competitive jobs and consults with business and industry regarding their specific employment needs; services include job matching and employment supports, vocational case management, work site and job analysis, assistive technology, reasonable accommodations, and ADA regulations compliance
- Disability.gov – a federal website containing disability-related resources, the Employing People with Disabilities section includes resources for employers on recruiting, hiring, and retaining people with disabilities; information is available on assistive technology and accommodations, tax incentives, occupational safety, and success stories
- Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) – ODEP provides national leadership on disability employment policy by developing and influencing the use of evidence-based disability policies and practices, building collaborative partnerships, and delivering authoritative and credible employment data. ODEP provides funding for services such as AskEARN and the Job Accommodation Network (JAN). The ODEP website has information for employers on the latest news on disability employment policy, events, resources, toolkits, and contact information for technical assistance support centers such as EARN.
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) program for employers – relevant categories include disabled veterans and vocational rehabilitation referrals.

SCHOLARSHIPS

- College Funding For Students with Disabilities
- List of Disability Scholarships
- Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Grants & Funding Opportunities – RSA awards grants to colleges and universities for providing scholarship assistance to students.

GRANTS

- Grant programs are available from the Office of Educational Technology
- The *Race to the Top* Fund provides competitive grants to encourage and reward states that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform. Through Race to the Top, states are asked to advance reforms around four specific areas:
    o Adopting standards and assessments that prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and to compete in the global economy
    o Building data systems that measure student growth and success and inform teachers and principals about how they can improve instruction
    o Recruiting, developing, rewarding, and retaining effective teachers and principals, especially where they are needed most
    o Turning around our lowest-achieving schools
- Formula Grants are available through the Rehabilitation Services Administration. This agency provides grants to states to support a wide range of services designed to help individuals with disabilities prepare for and engage in gainful employment consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice. See more information from the U.S. Department of Education.