



**ILLINOIS  
ASSISTIVE  
TECHNOLOGY  
PROGRAM**



**2014 ANNUAL REPORT**

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The ILoan Program is a direct lender that provides financial loans to individuals with disabilities in Illinois and their families. Eligible borrowers can use the loans to purchase assistive technology (AT) for daily living, vehicle modifications or limited home modifications.

ILoans are also available to reduce or eliminate barriers to employment. These loans can be used to purchase AT as well as office equipment or other items for employment, self-employment, home based employment or telework.

Credit Builder Loans are available to eligible individuals with no credit or extremely poor credit as a way to improve their credit rating while acquiring needed assistive technology.

A total of **90** applications were reviewed in FY 2014 which consisted of **66** AT loans and **24** Employment loans. The ILoan Program approved **9** AT Loans totaling **\$77,592** and **2** Employment Loans totaling **\$21,678** providing **\$99,270** to Illinois residents, helping them reach their employment and independent living goals.

As of June 30, 2014, the ILoan portfolio consisted of 104 active loans with an outstanding balance of approximately one million dollars.

## SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT



*"I have to tell you I am so thankful for you. I love my car. I can't believe it's mine. This program is truly a blessing. I have been spreading the word. I never thought I'd be a person with a disability. Programs like yours bring hope and independence to people living day to day with personal struggles. You have been such a huge blessing and a pleasure to work with." ~ Ebony*



# DEVICE LOAN

IATP's device loan program provides free loans of assistive technology devices for use at home, school, work and in the community. Borrowers include individuals with disabilities, family members, professionals, school districts, therapists and representatives of health and rehabilitation agencies. The devices can be borrowed for a 5 week period and are used to ensure compatibility before purchase, for evaluations, as a back-up when equipment is being repaired, and other short term needs. In FY 2014, **1,923** devices were loaned out to **1,401** individuals.

## SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT

In April 2014 Laura Pearse borrowed an iPad for her son Hunter. Hunter is a three year-old boy with Cerebral Palsy who is unable to communicate. When the Pearse family received the iPad, Hunter immediately picked it up and started communicating through the Proloquo-2-Go app. During the trial, Hunter was having so much fun with the iPad, he fell asleep while using it.

Laura took a picture and sent it to the agency saying, *"I attached a picture of Hunter who loves this iPad so much, he fell asleep with it. Thank you so much for the opportunity to borrow this item."*



### 1,923 DEVICES BORROWED BY CATEGORY

178	67	1010	32	91	122	26	161	236
Vision	Hearing	Speech	Learning	Mobility	Daily Living	Environ. Adap.	Computers & Related	Recreation

# AT REUTILIZATION

IATP's Reutilization Program is a web based "classifieds ads" service that connects people who no longer need assistive technology with a person who needs it but cannot afford it. Individuals with disabilities and their families can buy, sell, search or donate equipment on the website or by contacting the agency. Most items are available at no charge or at a fraction of the purchase price. The number of reutilized devices in FY 2014 was **415**, saving consumers **\$450,000**. The largest percentage of reutilized devices were in categories of speech, daily living and computers.

## SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT



Pat is an individual with spinal neuropathy and a 3rd recurrence of cancer. She was in need of an accessible vehicle to transport her to her frequent doctor appointments. The family savings had been depleted by medical bills to the extent that their home was lost as a result of foreclosure. Shortly after contacting IATP, they received an accessible van that had been donated to the reutilization program. Pat no longer has to rely on public transportation to get to her appointments and has been able to visit her daughter (who lives 2 hours away) for the first time in years.

*"I love this van. God bless you for changing my life and giving me independence. Words can't express the gratitude I feel." ~ Pat*

### 415 DEVICES REUTILIZED BY CATEGORY

73	6	82	12	55	80	6	5	76	20
Vision	Hearing	Speech	Learning	Mobility	Daily Living	Environ. Adap.	Vehicle Mods	Computers & Related	Recreation

# VR OPEN ENDED LOANS

The Open Ended Loan Program enables customers of the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) to borrow and trial assistive technology devices. When it is determined that those devices are appropriate, the customers keep them for ongoing use towards their vocational goals. The program eliminates the disruption, delays and potential loss of employment that occurs when loaned equipment would otherwise need to be returned. The program also eliminates the need for DRS Counselors to purchase assistive technology devices that may not prove useful. In FY 2014, the Open Ended Loan Program provided **584** devices to DRS customers saving the State of Illinois nearly **\$60,000**.

## SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT

**Rusty is a service manager with a company that offers car reconditioning as one of their services. His responsibilities include checking inventory and ordering parts. His 10 year old laptop computer could not enlarge the font enough for him to read information on the screen. He was evaluated by an Assistive Technology Professional who recommended a desktop loaded with Zoomtext Magnification Software, a 24" external monitor and a CCTV. These supports allowed Rusty to be successful in his job and in his home.**



# Demonstration

Located in Springfield, IATP's 9 room demonstration center offers a wide variety of assistive technology devices showcased in areas that include a kitchen, bathroom, computer access, vision, daily living and sensory room. Guided tours of the center provide hands-on exploration of the latest technology, as well as low tech solutions and resource information. In FY 2014, **254** individuals toured IATP's demonstration center.

Device demonstrations allow participants the opportunity to compare features and benefits of devices, enabling them to make an informed decision about whether a device would or would not meet their needs. This year, **247** individuals participated in **241** device demonstrations in both the demonstration center and at alternative locations. Of the **241** demonstrations, **109** fell under the category of vision.

## SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT

*“A Speech Language Pathologist told me about IATP as I was preparing for the Technology for Teachers course. When I visited the agency, I was overwhelmed by the amount of technology available. I realized the potential of Benedictine pre-teachers touring the facility and learning the different ways that technology can be used, not only in the classroom, but for all society.*”

*I was able to plan a special field trip of IATP for our evening class. It was very gracious of Krystal Connolly to provide a tour after regular hours. The class of 14 students was amazed by the overall availability and benefits of assistive technology, not only for use in the classroom, but for the general population. They were to choose one type of technology that was on display, elaborate, research, and reflect on the use of this technology in the classroom. It was obvious from the results of this assignment how much was learned.” ~ Dianne*



# Training

Training sessions are provided to interested parties that include individuals with disabilities, parent groups, educators and students. These informational presentations cover topics such as Aging and Technology, Funding Technology and Digital Media Accessibility. IATP can also design workshops specifically for individuals or organizations. One on one product specific training is also available to consumers. During FY 2014, IATP conducted **63** trainings impacting **950** individuals.

## SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT

Isabel is a first grader with Cerebral Palsy. She was evaluated by one of IATP's Assistive Technology Specialists who recommended an alternate keyboard, trackball and Co:Writer software. Co:Writer is a word prediction program that helps students with writing by suggesting words as letters are typed, thereby saving keystrokes.

The school borrowed a laptop with the software along with the Bigkeys keyboard and Bigtrack trackball to make the laptop more accessible for Isabel. During the training she worked on an assignment for her class and wrote a story about camping with her family using Co:Writer. She learned how to use the equipment and the software very quickly and the school personnel who were trained along with her were very happy with her ability to use it.

Following the very successful five week trial of the equipment and software, the school purchased a laptop, the Bigkeys keyboard with a keyguard and the Bigtrack trackball.



# Evaluation & Training

Assistive Technology Specialists (ATS) provide assistive technology evaluation, training and technical support to customers at home, school or in the workplace. After a customer referral is made by a Vocational or Home Services Counselor, ATS staff identify assistive technology needs, provide recommendations for home modifications and/or training on assistive technology and software.

Services include:

- Assistive technology evaluations
- Home modification assessments
- Individualized product training
- Follow up services
- Recommendations for the most appropriate assistive technology for adults and children with disabilities

In FY 2014, Assistive Technology Specialists conducted **281** evaluations and **107** technical assistance sessions with customers throughout the state of Illinois.

## SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT



Bob has worked as a sports writer for the past 25 years. In July 2012, Bob suffered a heart attack that resulted in complications including an aneurysm and shower strokes. Bob's family, his employer, and the community all rallied around him as he began the long road to recovery. Through extensive therapy Bob was able to regain most of his fine motor skills, but he was left with a visual impairment that made it very difficult for him to do the one thing that was essential to his job, read newsprint.

In October of 2013, Bob was ready to return to work on a part-time basis. Through the DHS-DRS Bureau of Blind Services, Bob was referred to IATP for an assistive technology evaluation. Bob was paired with a 24 inch CCTV and a handheld video magnifier, both of which made it possible for him to once again view schedules and team rosters which are generally printed in extremely small fonts. The portable video magnifier has turned out to be an ideal tool for Bob when he is covering sporting events in the field or working outside of his office.

# AAC & AT Assessment

IATP provides augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) and assistive technology (AT) assessments to any school district in the state of Illinois at no charge. This service is made possible through a grant that was awarded by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

The program includes:

- Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC) Assessments
- Assistive Technology (AT) Assessments
- Training on AAC & AT Devices

In FY 2014, **94** evaluations were conducted with the following breakdown of services:

- **57** AAC Evaluations
- **35** AT Evaluations
- **2** Combination AAC/AT Evaluations

Evaluations were conducted in:

- **49** School Districts
- **67** Schools
- **34** Counties in Illinois

**Shown at right are IATP's Speech Language Pathologists setting up a communication device for an evaluation.**



IATP employs two Educational Liaisons to work with and educate both families and schools to bring both sides of the table together for the educational benefit of the student. This free service is available to all families who have a student with any disability in the state of Illinois. In FY 2014, IATP staff attended **413** IEPs in **152** Illinois School districts.

## ***Breakdown by Eligibility***

- Autism (**42 %**)
- Emotional Disability (**12%**)
- Other Health Impaired (**12%**)
- Multiple Disabilities (**11%**)
- Under 5%:
  - Specific Learning Disability
  - Speech and Language
  - Orthopedic Disability
  - Intellectual Disability
  - Developmentally Delayed
  - Deaf/Hearing Impaired, Blind
  - Traumatic Brain Injury

## **SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT**

Lucas is twelve years old and has been supported educationally by IATP for several years. He became an AT user as a result of IEP goals. He has a rare genetic disorder which impacts his cranial structure as well as his hands and feet. It also impacts his learning. Because he has been an AT user from an early age, he has been in a general education class with his peers. He also receives supports from special education teachers. He is very involved in his community and has gone to state for the past two years with the Special Olympics basketball team. Lucas does all the things every 12 year old boy does, including horseback riding and bike riding. Some of his favorite things to do include riding bumper cars, four wheelers, and riding with his grandpa on his motorcycle. AT has made a big difference in his life and will continue to do so as he gets older.



## **413 SCHOOLS SERVED BY TYPE**

16	170	86	133	8
Preschool	Elementary	Middle/Junior High	High School	College

# WIPA

The Work Incentives Planning and Assistance Program (WIPA) is grant 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 SSI/SSDI make informed choices about going to work. In addition to helping customers understand how working will affect their benefits, Community Work Incentives Coordinators (CWICs) explain Social Security Work Incentives, state benefits such as Medicaid, subsidized housing, TANF, food stamps, Worker's Compensation and unemployment benefits.

In FY 2014, the WIPA program received **353** referrals, which resulted in preparation of **209** Benefits Analysis and distribution of **144** Benefits Packets. Long term supports were provided to **418** individuals.

## SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT



**Ricki was referred to the WIPA Program by Mental Health Centers of Central Illinois. At the time, he was receiving SSI and Medicaid. He had concerns about losing his Medicaid coverage due to the high costs for his medications. After consulting with his local CWIC, Ricki learned that he was eligible for the 1619 Work Incentive. His mind was put at ease and he is now working and loving it. He was recently interviewed on a television news station about people with mental illness and employment.**

**Ricki has overcome a lot living with mental illness, but he is gainfully employed, receives a small SSI check each month and his Medicaid is provided at no charge through the 1619 work incentive.**

# Public Awareness / Public Policy

IATP raises public awareness about assistive technology and services provided through the agency by participating in presentations, exhibits, conferences, workshops and other events. Other activities include newspaper articles, brochure distribution, and radio and television interviews. During 2014, **182,715** individuals were reached through public awareness activities.

Phone calls and emails are received daily from individuals with disabilities, family members and service providers in search of information relating to assistive technology devices, services and funding. In FY 2014, IATP staff responded to **2,400** inquiries.

Many consumers go directly to IATP's accessible website ([www.iltech.org](http://www.iltech.org)) to access information about programs and funding options. The number of unique visitors to IATP's website in FY2014 was **39,561**.



Once again, Susy Woods and Phil Milsk have been the face and voice of IATP at the State Capitol. This year, as in recent years, maintaining the state budget has been the biggest challenge. And since this year is also an election year there was not a rush on the part of the legislators to pass any legislation that was viewed as controversial.

Some important legislation was passed that impacts IATP consumers including:

- SB 741 (PA 98-0641) This made changes to Medicaid including clarifying managed care and changing benefits that include restoration of dental care for adults, elimination of prior authorization for more than 4 drugs for people who need psychotic drugs and children with complex medical needs, elimination of only 20 visits for therapies that include speech, hearing, occupational, and physical (although these must meet prior approval), and coverage for kidney transplants for non-citizens with end-stage renal disease.
- (HB 3700 (PA 98-0705) This addresses dyslexia and requires that each school board be given information about screening for dyslexia by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).
- HB 5707 (PA 98-0669) These are anti-bullying bills.
- Governor Quinn's Executive Order regarding Illinois First: this order was issued by Governor Quinn to further implement Employment First signed into law in 2013.
- Federally, President Obama signed into law the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 which is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services in order to succeed in the labor market and match employers with skilled workers in a global economy.

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