Michigan’s Assistive Technology Program (MATP) 2019 Annual Report

Alternative Formats are available upon request
We are pleased to share our 2019 Michigan Assistive Technology Program (MATP) accomplishments with you! We work to reach the entire state of Michigan by collaborating with multiple organizations around the state to:

- Manage the Assistive Technology Exchange (ATXchange.org) website
- Provide Assistive Technology (AT) Device Demonstrations
- Offer Short-Term AT Device Loans
- Support the Assistive Technology Loan Fund (MATLF)
- Facilitate AT training, provide public awareness and promote access to AT.

Since 1997, MATP has been a part of Michigan Disability Rights Coalition (MDRC). MATP is funded through the Assistive Technology Act of 2004 and this federal funding comes to Michigan from the Administration on Community Living through Michigan Rehabilitation Services.
In 2019 MATP

- Maintained the ATXchange.org where 18 people made exchanges, saving users $22,638 compared to the price of buying new devices.
- Completed 176 device demonstrations of 961 devices for 238 people.
- Facilitated 23 short-term device loans of 38 types of devices.
- Supported United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) Michigan in making 3 loans totaling $8,220 for the purchase of assistive technology devices through the Michigan Assistive Technology Loan Fund (MATLF).
- Completed 56 training sessions for 1,219 people.
- Reached a wide variety of individuals and organizations through the state of Michigan and beyond through public awareness activities, print materials newsletters, email lists, blogs, social media, and presentations.
- Provided Information and Assistance to help 156 people who contacted the program to find funding options, vendors, assessment providers and other AT resources.
ATXchange.org

The ATXchange.org¹ is a free website available to buyers & sellers to list and purchase used assistive technology devices. The most popular items listed on the ATXchange include wheelchairs, scooters, ramps, and wheelchair accessible vans.

In 2019, people made 18 exchanges of devices, saving consumers $22,638!

This year we had our ATXchange.org brochures translated and were able to offer them in English, Spanish, and Arabic. Additionally, we created and were able to offer large print brochures in all 3 languages. Our brochures went out to multiple organizations and individuals around the state who shared them with potential users of the site.
Device Demonstrations

Michigan’s Assistive Technology Program works with a number of organizations to provide hands-on device demonstrations throughout the state. A trained demonstrator talks with the person, then schedules a meeting with them to compare features and benefits of devices to assist a person who needs AT make an informed decision. The AT Program has an inventory of over 2,500 devices available for demonstration (including apps for tablets and smartphones).
A bar chart showing number of device demonstrations by device type. Daily living devices were the most demonstrated, followed by vision, learning, hearing, environmental adaptations, communication, and mobility.
A pie chart showing the number of device demonstrations by types of participants. Most device demonstrations were for to people with disabilities followed by families, representatives of employment and representatives of rehabilitation.
Demonstration Success Story

A man was referred for a demonstration who was employed doing janitorial work and at times needed to communicate with his employer or even the bus driver who brings him to work. Due to his many disabilities, one of them being extreme hearing loss, he has a very hard time communicating clearly with others. Through demonstration of several communication devices, he learned about an app for his tablet that he could type phrase into and have it spoken. He was excited to find he could save commonly used phrases. During the demonstration, he began using the app. He typed in “I love you Mom” and kept hitting repeat. Upon leaving, the demonstrator said “See you later alligator” to which he replied with his iPad, “After while crocodile” several times all while laughing with a big smile on his face!
**Short-Term Device Loan**

Through MATP’s short-term loans of devices, people can borrow a device they learn about at a demonstration to see whether they will work for them in their home environment—to “try it before you buy it”. In 2019, Superior Alliance for Independent Living (SAIL), Disability Network, Capital Area Program (DNCAP), Disability Network of Oakland and Macomb, and Disability Network Mid-Michigan provided short-term loans at their sites. Devices borrowed included magnifiers, assistive listening devices, telephones, note-taking systems, and medication reminder systems. Most of the devices borrowed were those that take some time to get used to and/or need to be used in different locations or situations to see if they really meet the person’s needs. In this way, MATP’s short-term loans help people to make informed buying decisions. All participants have reported they are satisfied with the short-term loan program, and our community partners, who are excited to offer this resource in their communities.
A pie chart showing types of devices loaned. Vision devices were most often loaned followed by devices for daily living, hearing, learning, mobility, communication, and environmental adaptations.
As she’s gotten older, a woman’s hearing has declined and she had developed macular degeneration. She has difficulty hearing anyone on the phone and this makes scheduling appointments or having general conversation over the phone a struggle. Her friend suggested that she receive an Assistive Technology (AT) demonstration. While speaking with the AT Specialist during the device demonstration intake, the woman shared that she was interested in a telephone with a louder speaker and larger buttons/command keys. She specifically wanted the replacement phone to be mounted in her kitchen as that’s the place where she spends most of her time while at home. The AT Specialist showed her a number of different telephones during the device demonstration and she preferred the phone shown that featured large buttons, a speaker function for hands free capabilities, and light that illuminates when someone is calling. With her excited consent, the AT Specialist assisted Dorothy in borrowing the phone through the Short-Term Loan program. Dorothy was thrilled to get to try the phone out in her home; it was a perfect fit in her kitchen. Dorothy shared: “It was very helpful to be able to use the device before purchasing it. This way I didn’t waste money on purchasing something for myself that didn't work.”
Michigan Assistive Technology Loan Fund

MATP provides financial support to UCP Michigan’s operation of the Assistive Technology Loan Fund\(^3\) (MATLF). 3 loans were made in 2019, totaling $8,220 for the purchase of assistive technology devices through the MATLF. One of the loans made included:

A man with cerebral palsy, epilepsy, neuromuscular disorder, and cognitive developmental disabilities, age 67, and his sister, who is his legal guardian, had previously used the Michigan AT Loan for a 2003 Dodge Caravan with an electric lift. They were in need of vehicle repairs totaling $3,362.12, so they contacted the program and applied for the loan as co-applicants. The Credit union recommended approval due to the good payment history on the current loan. Then the Loan Committee approved the second MATLF loan for the repairs/related maintenance to get the vehicle running again. The loan was approved with a $108.03 loan payment for 36 months. Through the AT loan, the individuals were able to get back to coming and going from their home to accomplish appointments and other outings.
Learning About AT: Training

AT training is an important service the MATP provides to the public and professionals. In 2019, MATP staff members and contractors provided training to 1,219 people on a variety of topics. During many of these trainings, people with disabilities, older adults, family members and community living professionals learn about assistive technology to help people with disabilities and older adults. These training sessions include large and small groups and presentations at conferences.

1. MATP team member Norm DeLisle provided a Keynote Presentation to Michigan Parents of Children with Visual Impairments MPVI (a family-oriented support organization to parents and students with visual impairments). The presentation was to 104 people - family members, students and professionals. The topic was disability pride including the use of AT as a tool of personal independence and control with the intent of increasing student's access to AT.

2. MATP team members and contractors produced and provided train the trainer sessions on 10 new AT training modules. Modules are short sessions that can be combined for longer sessions. New module topics this year included Personal Emergency Response - in home and mobile, AT for Home Control and Monitoring, Safety in the Kitchen and Bath. 8 Contract organizations received training to provide this training in their communities. An additional 7 modules were produced and will be available in 2020.
Pie chart showing the makeup of training participant training sessions were most often presented to people with disabilities, followed by representatives of community living, representatives of rehabilitation, family members, representatives of employment, others unable to categorize, representatives of education, and representative of technology.
Public Awareness

MATP provided information about AT to nearly 100,000 people through over 30 booths and exhibits at a variety of conferences, expos and other community events. Additionally, MATP staff members provided information via phone and email to 156 people who contacted us.
Social Media

MATP maintains an active and growing Facebook page audience and Twitter following with interesting information about AT, our program's works & information, and ATXchange highlights.

MATP’s Blog

The “MATP Blog: A Feisty Prospective on Tools for Independence” explores a variety of AT topics. Everyone on the MATP team, and at times guest bloggers, contributes blog posts. In 2019, staff posted blog posts on a wide range of topics.
Working with Others to Increase Access to AT

MATP staff members are active within many local and state organizations, workgroups, agencies and policy committees to bring AT to the table and increase access to AT. MATP is focusing on five areas of increasing access to AT. Increasing access to AT through the Medicaid waiver and nursing home transition, pre-employment transition training sessions, Community Mental Health (CMH) System’s Person Centered Plans (PCP), competitive employment through MRS, and increasing Disaster and Emergency Services.

MATP provided funds to the Disability Network/Michigan to increase the capacity of Disability Network staff members around the state to provide information and assistance about AT. The Disability Network AT Leadership Team meets every other month to discuss policy issues, provide technical assistance to each other, and engage in learning opportunities.
Thank you from everyone at Michigan’s Assistive Technology Program! (MATLF)

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1 **ATXchange website**: http://www.atxchange.org

2 **Device Demonstrations**: http://mymdrc.org/assistive-tech/device-demonstrations-loan

3 **Michigan Assistive Technology Loan Fund**: https://www.ucpmichigan.org/assistivetech

4 **Facebook page**: https://www.facebook.com/mymdrc

5 **Twitter**: https://twitter.com/miassisttech

6 **MATP blog**: https://miatblog.org