

IPAT
April 1, 1999 through May 31, 2000

**An Annual Report for the
Interagency Program for Assistive Technology**

The Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT) offers a wide range of services to support the assistive technology needs of individuals of all ages with disabilities in North Dakota. During the program year beginning April 1, 1999, through May 31, 2000, IPAT increased individual's access to assistive technology by providing technical assistance to 3,554 individuals, demonstration or loan of equipment to 1,721 individuals, training to 8,225 people, collaborated with 38 agencies/organizations for training and/or to increase program/system efficiency and effectiveness, and developed and published 17 new products. IPAT personnel responsible for implementing program activities include 1 director, 4 regional coordinators, and 1 support person.

Judie Lee, Director

Program Structure

The Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT) is building a network across the state that increases access to assistive technology (AT) awareness, information, devices, services, advocacy, and funding for all North Dakotans with disabilities across the life span.

IPAT leads the state in assistive technology solutions for its citizens, through a variety of innovative initiatives carried out by five outreach offices. IPAT is a program of North Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Human Services, and received \$611,675 from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.

Consumer Advisory Committee: The IPAT Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) is made up of 12-15 individuals with disabilities and/or family members representing all ages, types of disabilities, and regions in the state. The CAC provides advice to IPAT personnel, which is vital to assure that the project's goals and activities are responsive to the needs of people in North Dakota.

Commitment to North Dakota

AT Guidelines Disseminated: IPAT, in collaboration with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (DPI) developed "AT Guidelines for Students with Disabilities," "AT Information for Parents and Educators," and provided training on their implementation in the spring/summer of 1999.

In addition, IPAT created a corresponding 18-minute AT policy videotape, "Know Your Rights to Technology in Education" in the fall of 1999.

AT Leadership Institute: The first AT Leadership Institute was held in Medora, North Dakota, through the cooperative efforts of IPAT, Partners for Assistive Technology committee members, and their represented entities. The Institute was held over 4 days in September of 1999 and was attended by 25 service providers and consumers representing all regions of the state and all populations. The purpose of the Institute was to infuse varied systems and geographic regions with trained AT leaders through their participation.

Adapted Equipment Services: Through IPAT's collaboration with the Adaptive Equipment Services program, and their mobile services van, 320 consumers received services ranging from adapted grab bar development to custom seating.

Early Intervention AT Outreach Kits: All eight Early Childhood Intervention programs in North Dakota received AT training on three different occasions and were provided on-going technical support for an additional 6-month period. This happened as a direct result of cooperative efforts between IPAT and the Developmental Disabilities/Infant Development/Part C staff.

North Dakota Hear-O Program: In partnership with IPAT, the AT Help-Line and Quota International, kicked off a hearing-aid recycling program in March of 2000, to benefit North Dakota residents in need of amplification. To date there have been seven trainings held throughout the state on hearing aids, and over 150 hearing aids have been donated for recycling.

Thinking Globally, Acting Locally:

In an effort to build local capacity, IPAT requested proposals for assistive technology projects to be implemented throughout the state. The projects awarded through the CAC selection committee are:

Bismarck Public School System: Teacher & parent training will be conducted in the areas of assistive technology & the implementation of the 'Dynamic Assistive Technology System' will be expanded to include AT modules.

Bismarck and Minot Independent Living Centers: The centers will collaborate to link sites via web cam for training, support, and accommodation information for individuals with disabilities.

KAT Productions: A new video starring North Dakota residents using assistive technology across environments will be produced.

Red River Human Services Foundation: Core training modules will be adapted to serve those individuals with learning disabilities needing to master the information.

Burleigh County Senior Adults Program: Seniors will be trained on basic computer use, e-mail, and Internet access.

University of Mary: The occupational therapy department will expand student experiences to include hands-on adaptive computer device access.

Region Eight Vocational Rehabilitation: An AT Room will be developed where opportunities for training, demonstration, and trial-use of equipment will be available for individuals with disabilities.

Disability Support Services, University of North Dakota: In an effort to promote AT use, post-secondary staff will train and provide specialized software to secondary teachers supporting individuals with learning disabilities.

New Products:

AT Assessment Process: A tool identifying a 9-step process to help match the capabilities and needs of an individual to the characteristics of an AT device or service.

AT Key – IPAT’s Newsletter: Six new issues were developed and an inventory of past and current issues were added to our website – www.ndipat.org

IPAT Key Fact Sheets: A dozen new fact sheets were added emphasizing AT policy and funding topics/information.

Solutions: Assistive technology for People with Hidden Disabilities: A booklet providing ideas for assistive technology solutions addressing difficulties people experience with hidden disabilities related to: memory, attention, confusion, safety, task completion, mood and socialization.

Attorney’s Continuing Legal Education (CLE) Packet: Approved by the North Dakota Bar Association – “Legal Issues Related to Assistive Technology and Special Education.” Packet includes video, book and CLE certificate.

Four New AT Modules Added: Technology for All: A Guide to Solving the Puzzle; Technology for Toddlers; The Assistive Technology Assessment Process, and Solutions: Assistive Technology for People with Hidden Disabilities.

IPAT Equipment Loan Library

The IPAT Equipment Loan Library provides AT equipment for free, short-term loan to state residents of all ages with disabilities. This meets the need for equipment exploration, trial-use, assessment, and funding justification. There have been 1,423 equipment loans this year, 498 to rural consumers and 925 to

those residing in our cities. The population make-up of equipment borrowers are identified below.

Loan Library Users

Young Child (Part C) – 28 (2%)
Education – 413 (29%)
Vocational Rehabilitation – 398 (28%)
Older Adults – 157 (11%)
Minority – 43 (3%)
Other – 384 (27%)
Total = 1,423

Collaboration with Existing Conferences

IPAT personnel are recognized in the state as leaders in the area of AT and are invited to participate within established conferences to increase awareness and understanding of AT. Over the past year, IPAT has infused AT into 19 existing conferences, impacting 4,076 attendees. A sampling of conferences include: Closing the Gap (International technology in education conference), ND Adult Education, Turtle Mountain Community Wellness, ND Guardianship, ND ADA Affiliates and 911 Emergency Operators.

IPAT Regional Offices

The IPAT Regional Coordinators engage in the following activities to reduce barriers and to build the support systems necessary for individuals to obtain and use AT: training, technical assistance, public awareness activities, product production, recruitment of local consumer involvement, interagency cooperation, and outreach to under-represented populations.

The regional coordinators provided technical assistance services via telephone to over 3,554 individuals. The types of calls and break-out of callers is identified below:

Types of Calls

Funding – 644 (18%)
Equipment TA – 1,018 (29%)
General AT Information – 1,235 (34%)
Referrals – 490 (14%)
Advocacy – 167 (5%)
Total = 3,554

People Calling

Young Child (Part C) – 303 (8%)
Education – 639 (18%)
Vocational Rehabilitation – 837 (24%)
Older Adult – 668 (19%)
Minority – 154 (4%)

Other – 953 (27%)
Total = 3,554

Training

IPAT provided 67 training sessions attended by 4,149 individuals through statewide, regional, and outreach opportunities. The training sessions were conducted in 20 different cities representing 18 counties. A sampling of topics include: AT and housing accommodations, AT assessment process, environmental control systems, alternative telephones and how to use them, augmentative communication and AT at transition. The following illustrates the populations receiving the training.

Young Child (Part C) – 76 (2%)
Education – 422 (10%)
Vocational Rehabilitation – 71 (2%)
Older Adult – 717 (17%)
Minority – 573 (14%)
Other – 2290 (55%)
Total = 4149



Interagency Program for Assistive Technology
1.800.265.IPAT (4728) V/TT
www.ndipat.org

School performance and home relations have improved for a student with attention deficit in Williston, because of an assistive technology device which reminds people to take their medication.

Joan, a young adult working in Minot, who has been considered legally blind since the age of 18, sums up the power of AT in her life – “When I remember what life was like before assistive technology, the feelings of helplessness, the feelings of dependence on others, I would never want to go back.”

Darlene, the daughter of a senior citizen in Wahpeton, located an automated pill dispenser, which enabled her 87-year old father to continue to live independently.

An administrator serving rural western North Dakota states, “We spend too much money and time in pursuit of a diagnosis and too little time and money dealing with the assistive technology needs that the diagnosis ultimately clarifies.”

A number of senior citizens in the Belcourt area with hearing loss, now use alternative telephones after learning about them at an IPAT awareness program.

A special education teacher serving students with learning disabilities in Wing, thanks IPAT for the equipment loan library service.

Karen, a Grand Forks resident with scleroderma, continues working using AT – voice recognition software, an alternative mouse and adapted desk.

A Fargo student with a significant visual loss found success in regular high school classes with the help of a custom magnification system, word prediction program, closed circuit television, and 8x monocular magnifier. “AT has helped me transition into a normal classroom setting where with the use of my AT I can be like everyone else.”

An IPAT workshop prompted the Oakes nursing home to pursue funding of an augmentative communication aid through Medicaid.

A resident of Carrington received a power mobility assessment through the Mobile Services Program.

An adult in Hettinger discovered an augmentative communication device to meet her needs through the assistance of an IPAT coordinator and is pursuing funding via worker’s compensation.

After learning about an automatic door opener at an IPAT Equipment Expo!, a Jamestown consumer with a mobility impairment had one installed in apartment, promoting independence.

A young child in Dickinson with mobility impairments experienced independent, upright standing for the first time when his therapist requested the loan of a standing frame from the IPAT equipment loan library.

Craig, a small grains farmer around the Beach area continues farming with ingenuity and assistive technology after suffering severe chemical burns in a farming accident.