Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources

Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources (WATR) is authorized under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as reauthorized in 2004 (AT Act). The AT Act allows for funding to programs that provide greater access to assistive technology. WATR was established in 2005, and it is one of sixty AT Act programs, with one in each state and territory. WATR activities include device demonstrations, loans, training, technical assistance, information, and assistance. WATR activities also facilitate device acquisition through device reuse and a financial loan program.

Device Reuse

Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources reuse program provides infrastructure opportunities for individuals to exchange, sell, and recycle lightly-used assistive technology throughout the state of Wyoming. Sale profits allow WATR to buy, update, and maintain new assistive technology devices.

“...The personnel at WATR are professional and always respond quickly to requests for loan or purchase. I appreciate the opportunity to provide technology services to my students through the excellent loan program with a large variety of items to trial."

Information and Assistance

WATR provides information regarding assistive technology devices and services, funding, and other disability related topics by email, to walk-in visitors, on the website, through the toll-free number, at disability conferences, and through various publications. WATR publications reach over 1300 residents per month through DispATch, WATR’s e-newsletter. Additional publications include WATR Waves, an assistive technology magazine for AT users and professionals.

Device Financing

Wyoming Technology Access Program (WYTAP) is a collaboration between Wyoming Institute for Disabilities, Wyoming Independent Living, and First Interstate Bank of Laramie. The specialized financial loan program offers interest buy-down for individuals who want to purchase assistive technology with an extended pay-back period.
Device Loans

WATR device loans offer a wide variety of assistive technology for Wyoming residents interested in borrowing a device for trial. WATR loans devices at no-cost to individuals, school districts, employment agencies, hospitals, and others interested in trialing assistive technology.

2017 Device Loans 677 Devices to 253 Borrowers

Training and Technical Assistance

Between September 2016 - May 2017, the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities offered UW ECHO in Assistive Technology as a component of UW ECHO in Education. Now in its third year, this network has continued to build capacity for assistive technology in education, health, and disability services. The network utilizes an interdisciplinary team of individuals working in specific related areas, connecting weekly to learn more about assistive technology and best practices for their own settings. By 2017, 8,047 individuals had received training.

In addition to the ECHO in Assistive Technology network, WATR provides in-person and distance training and technical assistance both in person and throughout the state.

Device Demonstrations

WATR arranges customized device demonstrations focusing on potential solutions on an individualized basis. By providing an opportunity for individuals with disabilities, caregivers, professionals, employers, or anyone with a curiosity about assistive technology to see a wide range of devices, WATR provides a valuable service to the community.

A local school district borrowed an iPad with communication apps and a GoTalk device for short term loan.

“It is wonderful to be able to borrow a device and iPad with apps to share with the team...after experimenting with the apps, we came up with one that is meeting our student’s needs. Thank you!”

2017 Device Demonstrations by Type of Participant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Participant</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rep of Technology</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep of Community</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep of Employment</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep of Health, Allied Health, or Rehabilitation</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep of Employment</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep of Health, Allied Health, or Rehabilitation</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Member or Guardian</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual with Disabilities</td>
<td>49%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

A kindergarten student was able to use WATR resources to create a valentine using braille text for a classmate who is visually impaired.

“Thank you so much for helping my child create a valentine for a classmate who is visually impaired. We appreciate all of your organization, personal assistance, and time! My child really enjoyed this activity and is so excited to give the card to her classmate at the party!”
Wyoming Accessible Educational Materials Clearinghouse coordinates the requests and provisions of accessible educational materials for eligible Wyoming students with print disabilities. Through a contract with the Wyoming Department of Education, the clearinghouse works with districts to meet the requirements of the 2004 Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. WATR assists with the provision of AT devices and strategies to access digital and specialized formats.

In 2017, WATR launched a collaboration with the Wyoming State Libraries system. The project goal is to increase availability and access to assistive technology devices and support for library patrons. Assistive technology tool kits are on display at libraries across the state.

Wyoming’s iCanConnect program provides communications technology free of charge to low income people of all ages who experience both vision and hearing loss. This program distributes communications equipment to qualified individuals and provides equipment installation, training, and support to help recipients make the most of this technology.

The Mission of Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources (WATR) is to provide evidence based information about assistive technology devices and services to maximize individuals’ participation in life activities.

The Mission of the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND) is to assist individuals with developmental and other disabilities and their families by promoting and supporting full community inclusion, community membership, independence, productivity, and social participation. WIND will continue to improve outcomes for individuals in the areas of health and wellness, education, early intervention, employment, and assistive technology. WATR is a core program of the Wyoming UCEDD (University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities), dedicated to improving independence, productivity, and social participation through the consideration and use of assistive technology.