Disability Law Center's
Self-Advocacy Materials

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General

This document is designed for people with disabilities. The information is about your legal rights and how to advocate for yourself as a resident in Massachusetts.

Contact us to request this information in an alternative format.

617-723-8455

Funding

DLC receives funding from government grants, private foundations, and individual contributions. For details about our funding and programs, please visit our website:

https://dlc-ma.org

Assistive Technology Resources in Massachusetts

You Will Learn About:

- Definition of Assistive Technology
- Massachusetts State Assistive Technology (AT) Act Program
- Other AT Resources in MA

This document includes general information about legal issues and is intended to be used for informational purposes only. These informational materials should not be taken as legal advice, and do not create an attorney-client relationship. The outcome of any particular matter will depend on a variety of factors. For specific legal problems you would need to contact an attorney.

Assistive Technology

What Is Assistive Technology?

Assistive Technology (AT) is any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether obtained commercially off the shelf, modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Examples of AT include walkers, scooters, wheelchairs, adaptive vehicles, specialized computers and computer software, voice dictation software, ergonomic office set-ups, environmental controls, speech generating devices, electronic devices, hearing aids, cochlear implants, Computer Assisted Real Time Captioning (CART), specialized beds, ramps, and wheelchair lifts.

Things that are not considered AT include: a computer with no special modifications, an in-person sign language interpreter, or a service animal.

What is Assistive Technology Service?

Assistive Technology Service is any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. This includes a clinical evaluation of AT needs, acquiring AT devices, and providing training and/or technical assistance on equipment. AT Services also include the designing, adapting, and maintaining of AT devices.

Massachusetts State Assistive Technology Act

What is the Massachusetts State Assistive Technology (AT) Act Program?

The Massachusetts State Assistive Technology (AT) Act Program empowers individuals across the Commonwealth by expanding awareness of and access to assistive technology devices and services.

The MA State AT Act is part of a nationwide network of 56 state and territory programs funded under the federal Assistive Technology (AT) Act of 2004.

It enables individuals with disabilities, family members, educators, and service providers to access, explore, and acquire assistive technology needed for education, employment, and community living.

In partnership with leading organizations such as Easterseals MA, REquipment MA, and UCP of Western MA, State AT Act programs and services are completely FREE and open to the public. You do NOT need to be a participant of a state agency to obtain these services.

What type of AT Services are available through the MA State AT Act?

- ***Device Loan*** - Borrow AT for a limited period to test and evaluate devices in real-life settings before purchasing.
    - Device Loan Inventory Website https://massability.at4all.com/

- ***AT Demonstration*** - Hands-on opportunities to compare device features and options with expert guidance.
    - Eastern MA ATRC (Boston) Operated by Easterseals of MA; 89 South Street, Boston, MA 02111; 617-226-2640; ATRCboston@eastersealsma.org
    - Central MA ATRC (Worcester) Operated by Easterseals of MA; 18 Chestnut Street, Worcester, MA 01608; 508-751-6495; ATRCworcester@eastersealsma.org
    - Western MA ATRC (Pittsfield) Operated by UCP of Western MA; 75 South Church St., Suite 201, Pittsfield, MA; 413-442-1562; ATRCpittsfield@ucpwma.org
- ***Alternative Financing*** - Financial loan options and non-AT Act funding sources to support affordable AT purchasing.
    - MA Alternative Finance Program (AFP) Operated by Easterseals of MA; 18 Chestnut Street, Worcester, MA 01608; 508-751-6370; afp@eastersealsma.org ; https://massalternativefinance.org
- ***AT Reuse*** - Refurbishing and redistributing gently used equipment and durable medical devices at significant savings.
    - REquipment AT/DME Reuse Program; 508-751-6370; Toll Free: 800-261-9841; info@requipmentma.org; https://requipmentma.org

Other Resources

Where Else Can I Find AT Services in MA?

If you are currently receiving services from a state agency such as, MassAbility, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB), Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH), Department of Mental Health (DMH), or Department of Developmental Services (DDS) - learn more from your case worker about AT services in these agencies.

- Independent Living Centers are always a good place to start with questions about AT and AT services, as well as local equipment options. To find the ILC that serves your community, search https://www.mass.gov/independent-living-centers/locations by city, town, or zip code.
- Reach out independently to either Easterseals or UCP to inquire about further about their AT programs.
- Parents of school-age children with disabilities can contact their local education agency for AT support.
- An employer may also be required to provide assistive technology as a reasonable accommodation to allow an employee to be able to perform the essential functions of their job. For additional information, see the “Employment” section of DLC’s self-help materials at https://www.dlc-ma.org/self-help-guides/ as well as https://askjan.org/topics/tech.cfm.