Oklahoma ABLE Tech is the statewide Assistive Technology Act Program located at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma. ABLE Tech is funded through the Administration for Community Living of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which is made possible through the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 as amended in 2004 (ATA 2004).

**OUR MISSION:** To improve access to and acquisition of assistive technology (AT) for individuals with disabilities of all ages.

ABLE Tech provides AT through comprehensive statewide programs and services: Device Demonstrations, Device Short-Term Loans, Device Reutilization, and State Financing Activities.

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**Oklahoma ABLE Tech**

**A Great RETURN ON INVESTMENT**

**FFY 2020 FEDERAL INVESTMENT:** $469,038

**SAVINGS & BENEFITS FOR OKLAHOMANS:** $7,110,171

In 2020 ABLE Tech focused on altering existing programs, policies, and procedures to assist the program in succeeding in the wake of COVID-19. With more desk-time, ABLE Tech effectively and efficiently planned to transition from in-person demonstrations and trainings to virtual. Staff was able to apply for additional grants, and some were awarded! Additionally, the desk-time allowed the team to create digital/on-demand resources across programs, including service and training videos, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) documents, an update of online resources (AT Discovery), and the development of guidance documents to support the various special education service models (in-person, virtual, and distance) providing direction on AT Device/Service Contingency Plans for Oklahoma schools as well as support for professionals in the workforce arena.

Overall, FFY 2020 brought many challenges, but ABLE Tech turned them into new opportunities to provide AT devices and services to individuals with disabilities and those who serve them statewide.

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**State Contracts**

ABLE Tech maintains coordination and collaboration efforts that provide funding to help enhance the opportunities for individuals to access and acquire assistive technology.

- **OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**
- **OKLAHOMA ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOUNDATION**
- **OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES**
- **SOUTHWEST ADA CENTER**
- **OKLAHOMA HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY**
An AT device is any piece of equipment or device used to improve the capabilities of people with disabilities. An AT service directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an AT device.

**State Level Activities**

**Device Demonstrations** result in informed decision-making about which AT will and will not meet an individual’s disability needs and prevents wasted expenditures on ‘mismatched’ AT. For example, if an agency/individual explores two electronic magnification devices and decides that one costing $2,000 is perfect – they have potentially saved another $2,000 by knowing the other device they explored would not meet their needs (avoided purchasing to only find the device was not a good match).

11,318 individuals participated in 6,105 device demonstrations conducted by Oklahoma ABLE Tech in FFY 2020. Projecting a modest $50 savings for each demonstration conducted results in a statewide savings of $305,250.

**Device Short-Term Loans** result in informed and accurate AT purchasing decisions especially in unique contexts like a classroom or workplace. When a school or employer can borrow a device and make sure it will allow the individual with a disability to be successful, they save money by avoiding ‘incorrect’ purchases. Device short-term loans also allow individuals to remain functional while a device is being repaired, preventing costly loss of wages, lost school days, or the need for increased community living supports.

2,601 device short-term loans were made to individuals or agencies with 2,601 devices borrowed from Oklahoma ABLE Tech in FFY 2020. 2,469 loans were made for the purpose of helping individuals make a decision about AT. Using an average savings of $1,000 per loan with more than one device associated (at least one device was rejected as being a match and a second one was borrowed) results in statewide savings of over $2,469,000.

132 loans were made for the purpose of serving as a repair or while waiting for funding, to provide a short-term accommodation, and/or to conduct training, self-education or other professional development activity. Projecting a minimum $10 per day rental fee for the average loan period of 42 days, results in a total savings of $2,524,440.

**Device Reutilization** programs support the reuse and exchange of durable medical equipment (DME) and AT that is no longer needed or used by its original owner. Recipients usually obtain equipment at significantly lower cost or no cost.

Reuse efforts include retrieval, refurbishment, repair, and reassignment of DME. 1,069 individuals received 1,375 reused devices for a total savings to Oklahomans of $427,605.

Exchange efforts include the transfer of AT devices from person to person. 762 individuals received 11,899 exchanged devices for a total savings to Oklahomans of $261,919.

1,811 Oklahomans acquired 13,294 reutilized devices through Oklahoma ABLE Tech in FFY 2020 for a total of $689,524.

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**State Financing** programs help individuals purchase/obtain needed AT through a variety of initiatives.

Financial loan programs provide Oklahomans with affordable, flexible borrowing options statewide. Through ABLE Tech’s alternative financing program in FFY 2020, 186 borrowers obtained financial loans funding 338 devices totaling $883,532.

ABLE Tech also provided 136 smoke alarms and specialized alert devices for a total of $7,425, making the total for State Financing Activities equal $890,957.

**State Leadership Activities**

These programs support efforts that include instructional training, information and assistance (I&A), public awareness and technical assistance activities. Data is specifically collected on training and I&A.

3,200 individuals received in-person/virtual training on topics including: AT devices and services, funding, and Information and Communication Technology Accessibility (ICTA), or a combination of any/all of the above.

12,460 individuals received I&A via phone, email, or other virtual platforms in FFY 2020.
Coordination & Collaboration

SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS

Partner Centers
ABLE Tech has increased partnerships statewide for all core program activities, including Device Demonstration and Short-Term Loan, Device Reutilization, and Financial Loans. 16 AT demonstration and loan sites allow Oklahomans the opportunity to touch, try, and borrow AT devices to improve independence in the community, school, and workplace. Device Reutilization partners are now located in central and rural locations and provide drop-off and pick-up sites for reuse and exchange items donated to the program. Financial Loan Program partners assist ABLE Tech in processing low-interest loans that provide needed AT to Oklahomans with disabilities.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Accessibility
Through an ongoing Access for ALL contract with the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), ABLE Tech partnered with the Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development (OOWD) to create a 5 Star Rating Rubric. This initiative assists all Workforce Centers in a certification process that will ensure both physical and programmatic accessibility statewide.

Workforce Centers will use the rubric as a strategy to show gradual, measurable progress towards the goal of full accessibility. This initiative seeks to provide service equity to job seekers with disabilities in helping them secure quality employment. This is a positive outcome of the Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and can positively influence statewide policy.

Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation High Impact and Innovative Assistive Technology (HIIAT) Grant Awarded
ABLE Tech was one of four AT Act Programs awarded a Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation High Impact Innovative Assistive Technology (HIIAT) Grant award for $75,000. The project entitled “#Oklahoma4Ramps,” involved installing portable/temporary ramps, thresholds, and accessible pathways to assist individuals living with paralysis in exiting/entering their homes more independently.

COVID-19 slowed down the project, but inventive planning allowed the project to continue. ABLE Tech resumed no-contact equipment installations to finish out the grant year by recording and posting equipment training videos online and converting hard copy forms to digital formats. Mid-project survey results showed that the installation of ramps, pathways, and thresholds led to an increase in the number of times individuals living with paralysis left their homes, an increase in physical independence, and a decrease in negative moods and stress. ABLE Tech is thankful to the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation for the opportunity to serve Oklahomans with disabilities in this way!

Oklahoma Selected as an Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) Cohort State
Oklahoma was selected to participate in the 2020-2024 Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) Cohort, and ABLE Tech is leading the team! Oklahoma is one of seven states chosen from a competitive field of applicants, who will receive four years of support and technical assistance from the National Center on AEM to improve access to literacy and educational opportunities for individuals across the lifespan. The core state-level AEM leadership team includes representatives from the Oklahoma State Department of Education, the AIM Center at the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Liberty Braille, Decoding Dyslexia, and ABLE Tech.

An Interagency Collaborative has also been developed and includes representatives from early intervention (SoonerStart Early Intervention Program), various school districts (Byng, Norman, and Union Public Schools), higher education (Tulsa Community College and Southwestern Oklahoma State University), the State Department of Career and Technology Education, the Oklahoma Parents Center, and the Department of Rehabilitation Services. ABLE Tech looks forward to advancing a state system of accessibility for individuals with disabilities from early childhood through postsecondary education and employment.

Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Grant Awarded
The Oklahoma Assistive Technology Foundation (OkAT)/ABLE Tech was one of 357 organizations receiving $187.3 million in awards. These funds will allow OkAT/ABLE Tech to offer additional, affordable financial products and services that meet the unique needs of economically underserved communities.

Specifically, OkAT was awarded $350,000 in Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Financial Assistance (FA) funds and $150,000 in CDFI Disability Funds (DF)-FA for a total of $500,000 through the U.S. Department of Treasury. These funds will be deployed over the next three full fiscal years. The FA funds will be used for the Financial Loan Program to implement new products (expanding the micro-loan product and implementing a home modification product). The DF-FA funds have the flexibility to be used for products to individuals with disabilities in general.

Special Education Resolution Center (SERC)
Nine Special Education Due Process hearings were resolved by the Special Education Resolution Center - keeping state dollars in the classroom educating students. Due Process proceedings can cost the state an average of $300,000; therefore, resolved hearing requests saved Oklahomans approximately $2,700,000.
Spotlight on Success

Device Demonstration – EDUCATION
Christian, a 7-year-old from Cleveland County, receives speech therapy through Moore Autism Center, device demonstration partner of ABLE Tech. He was introduced to an iPad with the communication app, Proloquo2Go, for communicating his needs.

This successful demonstration led to the family receiving an iPad device loan for six weeks from ABLE Tech. The family has since acquired one to allow Christian to communicate and demonstrate his sense of humor spontaneously.

Device Short-Term Loan – EDUCATION
Jacoby, a first-grade student at Woodward Public Schools, has a vision impairment and is learning to read braille fluently. He loves to attend school with his peers and enjoys being independent.

NewView Oklahoma, through a partnership with ABLE Tech’s Demonstration and Short-Term Loan Program, has been able to provide him resources he otherwise may not have had. He has more learning opportunities now and is gaining confidence.

Device Reuse – COMMUNITY
Bertalene of Oklahoma City received a threshold ramp from ABLE Tech’s Device Reutilization Program, which improved her independence and mobility getting in and out of her home. Her daughter stated, “Previously, we had to move multiple pieces of furniture before mom could leave our home. Now, mom can get outside, down the threshold, and into a wheelchair-accessible vehicle with ease.”

Free, gently-used durable medical equipment (DME) is available through a partnership with ABLE Tech and the State Medicaid Agency, the Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA).

Device Exchange – COMMUNITY
Amy of Sayre received an adapted baby crib from ABLE Tech’s Device Exchange Program to help her care for her child.

“This crib will assist me in being able to care for my baby, move him, change him, interact with him. I can be an independent mother again and care for my child safely,” Amy said.

State Financing – EMPLOYMENT
Vicki of Ponca City contacted the financial loan program offered by ABLE Tech through a partnership with the Oklahoma Assistive Technology Foundation to purchase needed hearing aids.

Vicki said, “My quality of life is so much better! I can hear my sweet little grandkids without asking them continuously to repeat themselves.” The hearing aids also assist Vicki in her employment by helping to hear clients and co-workers better. She also notes she is not missing calls or texts on her cell phone anymore since it alerts her through the hearing aids.

Accessibility Training – EMPLOYMENT
ABLE Tech provides training on information and communication technology (ICT) accessibility. Like the other programs at ABLE Tech, the pandemic moved these activities and events online without missing a beat. Since March, ABLE Tech has focused on smaller, more interactive remote training and larger webinars; this format will continue for the foreseeable future.

Participants have responded well. Here are some comments about a few of the workshops:

“I felt that the training was hands-on and great at walking through what can often be tedious processes.”

“It was excellent. It was relaxed, informative, and engaging!”
Oklahoma ABLE Tech
A GREAT RETURN ON INVESTMENT
FFY 2020 Federal Investment: $469,038
Savings & Benefits for Oklahomans: $7,110,171

Oklahoma ABLE Tech – PARTNERS

• ALZHEIMER’S ASSOCIATION - OKLAHOMA CHAPTER, Oklahoma City, 405.319.0780
• THE CHILDREN’S CENTER REHABILITATION HOSPITAL, Bethany, 405.789.6711
• HANDICAPPED VEHICLE SALES & SERVICES, Tulsa, 918.622.8400
• HEARING LOSS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, CENTRAL OK CHAPTER, Oklahoma City, 405.717.9820
• INDIAN NATIONS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS - AREA AGENCY ON AGING, Tulsa, 918.579.9477
• KIAMICHI ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT OF OKLAHOMA, Wilburton, 918.465.2367
• MOORE AUTISM CENTER, Moore, 405.735.8478
• NEWBY-VANCE MOBILITY, Guthrie, 405.743.4212
• NEWVIEW OKLAHOMA, Oklahoma City, 405.521.4880 Tulsa, 855.811.9699
• OSU – DEPT OF COMMUNICATION SCIENCES & DISORDERS, Stillwater, 405.744.6021
• PATHWAYS THERAPY CENTER, Tulsa, 918.712.7868
• THE SCHOLL CENTER, Tulsa, 918.508.7601
• SOONERSTART EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM, Oklahoma City, 405.271.8333
• STILLWATER MEDICAL CENTER – STILLWATER EYECARE, Stillwater, 405.743.4212
• UNITED ACCESS (MOBILITY), Oklahoma City, 888.939.1010

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• BRIAN SARGENT, Reutilization Site Coordinator
• AMY WOODS, Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant
· $469,038 federal investment in Oklahoma ABLE Tech
· Close to 31,613 direct service recipients
· Over $7.1 million in savings and benefits
· That's $15.16 for every federal dollar invested
· Over $1.8 million in leveraged funding
· That's $3.87 leveraged for every federal dollar invested

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This publication is available in alternative formats; please call 800.257.1705 (v/tty) for more information. ABLE Tech is funded through the the Administration for Community Living of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and maintains coordination and collaboration efforts with partners throughout the State of Oklahoma. This publication does not necessarily reflect the position of the policy of ACL/HHS, and no official endorsement of the material should be inferred.