

# Assistive Technology Partnerships and Resources: COVID and Beyond

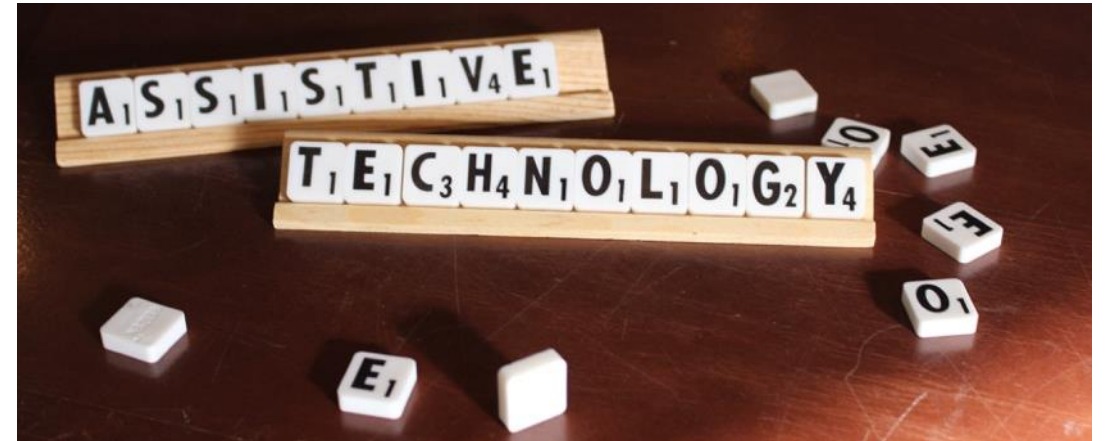
Advancing States 2020 HCBS Conference

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# Welcome!

- Introductions
- Assistive Technology Definition
- AT Program Services
- AT Partnerships
- Assistive Technology Toolkit
- AT and Social Isolation
- Questions/Comments



# What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive Technology is defined as any piece of equipment, product system, or service used to increase, maintain, and/or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities or limitations (PL 108-364).

Assistive Technology can range from low-tech to high-tech depending on the need and implementation.



# AT Act Programs Overview

There are 56 AT Act Programs (all states and 6 territories)

- State Level Activities Include:
  - State Financing
  - Device Demonstration
  - Device Loan
  - Reutilization (Reuse)
- State Leadership Activities Include:
  - Information & Assistance
  - Training and Technical Assistance
  - Public Awareness



# AT Partnerships

Partnerships are common among AT Act Programs and other entities:

- ADRCs, AAAs
- CILs
- State Departments of Aging;
- State Medicaid Agencies
- State and Local Education Agencies
- Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies
- Other State and Community Entities



# Enhancing Partnerships: AT Toolkit

- Understanding Your Organization's AT Needs, Capacity and Resources
- Understanding AT Devices and Services
- Developing an Effective Collaboration Plan
- Resources
- Next Steps



# Examples of New AT Partnerships in the Time of COVID

- Connecticut Stay Connected
- Wyoming Tech2Connect
- North Dakota Assistive



# Connecticut Stay Connected Program Objective

To connect individuals with disabilities, aged 18 or older, a disability or adults 60 years of age or older to the most appropriate Assistive Technology (AT) to foster improved engagement and connection with family, friends, their community and medical providers during this pandemic when many of us are staying home to stay safe.



# Partner with Community Based Organizations

- **Funded by the Administration for Community Living**
- **CT's 5 Area Agencies on Aging (connect and administer programs for Older Adults age 60 years of age or older)**
- **CT's 5 Centers for Independent Living (connect and administer programs that help persons with disabilities)**
  - **These agencies already offer Information, Referral and Assistance as a core service**
- **3 CT Tech Act Project AT Partner agencies – to conduct virtual AT consultations and training on recommended technology**

# Success Story

- **Scenario:** Consumer is the primary caregiver for her husband who has a variety of medical conditions. She limited time away from home due to concerns for his well-being. She loved the idea of using a drop-in feature with video to check in on him when she was out of the house or even in another room
- **AT Consultation** conducted by phone > **Recommendation:** Amazon Echo Show 10”  
**Funded by:** The National Family Caregiver Program.
- **Results:** He has the Amazon Show positioned so he can see it from his bed. Family sends photos for the running slide show, he can watch videos, listen to music and use his voice to make phone calls to family or in an emergency. His wife can “drop in” on him and see how he is doing and speak with him.



# Tech2Connect Project

## Collaboration

- Wyoming Center on Aging (WyCOA)
- Wyoming Department of Health: Aging Division
- Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources (WATR)

## Goal:

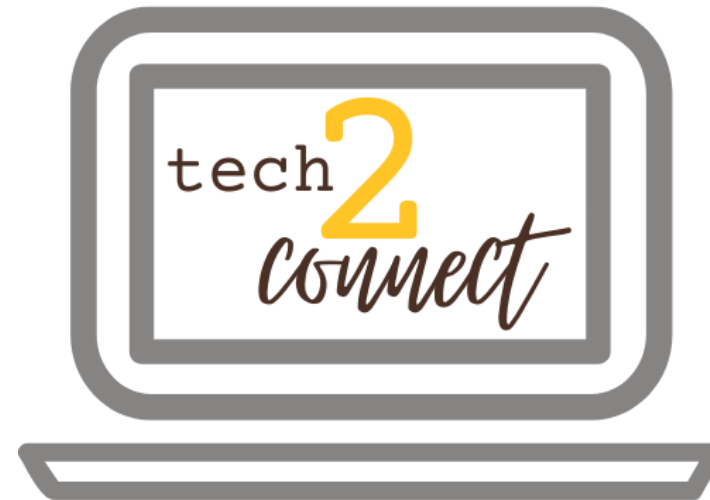
- Decrease social isolation through use of technology
- Increase access to virtual services and resources during COVID-19

## CARES Act Funding

WATR's role is to provide training



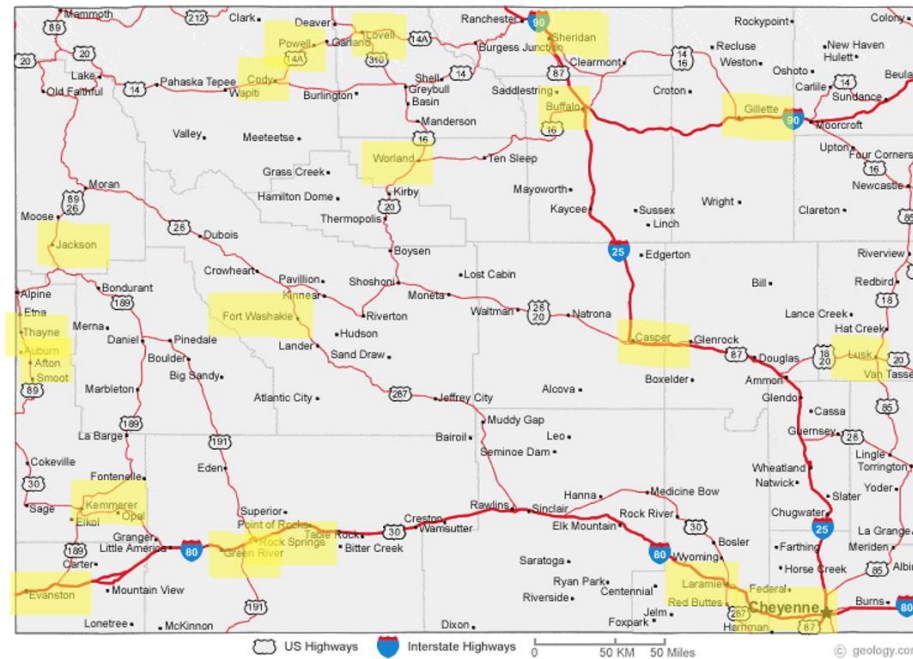
Wyoming Center  
on Aging



# Participants

**30** different applications received

- **18** senior centers
- **4** healthcare organizations
- **3** non-profit organizations
- **3** assisted living facilities
- **1** senior living facility
- **1** tribal health organization



# Technology Requests

- MP3 Players
- Tablets/iPads/GrandPads for loan and or use in a facility
- Computer stations
- Fitbits and Fitbit scales
- Phone cards and/or internet access





- Framework for Technology and Older Adults
- Technology Decision Guide
- Training Older Adults
- Training Videos

## **WATR'S TRAINING**

# North Dakota Assistive Partnerships

- ND Department of Human Services, Aging Services
  - Assistive Safety Device Distribution Services (Senior Safety Program)
  - Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (Specialized Telephone Program)
  - COVID Equipment Distribution Program



# The ND Assistive Senior Safety Program

- Over the Age of 60
- ND Resident
- Not Living in a Nursing Facility
- Priority to greatest economic and social need; Alzheimer's and related disorders, at risk for institutionalization or are residing in a rural area.
- Up to \$300 of assistive technology devices for in-home use, consultation and installation if needed at no cost to the consumer.





# Senior Safety Program- Equipment Examples

- Alerting Devices and Personal Listening Systems for Hearing Loss
- Anti-Elopement Devices such as Wandering Alarms
- Bed Rails; Caregiver Pager Systems
- Emergency Response Systems – for Landline Only
- Grab Bars (stainless steel)
- Medication Dispensers and Reminders
- Shower Chairs
- Adaptive Silverware
- Tub Rails and Tub Transfer Benches
- Voice Amplifiers and Accessories



# Specialized Phone Program

- You meet the income limits and
- You are having difficulty using a standard telephone because of a severe hearing loss, speech impairment, or physical disability (mobility, vision, dexterity, cognitive)



# Specialized Phone Program-Equipment Examples

- Amplified landline phones (corded or cordless) with extra-loud ringers, with large buttons, Talk-Back Features
- Picture phones
- CapTel captioned phones
- SmartPhones with built-in and external modifications
- Ring signalers, such as lamp flashers and bed shakers
- In some cases where warranted:
  - Echo shows for Drop-In Calling
  - Tablets
  - Grand Pad



# ADRC/No Wrong Door Funding Opportunity

## Critical Relief Funds for COVID-19 Pandemic Response- Connection Cart Project

- Purchase and distribute assistive technology devices to long term care facilities and individual residents to help access internet and/or telephone service to increase social engagement and social connectedness to reduce social isolation
- Training on the devices, apps, etc.
- From July, 2020 to Date
  - 1244 pieces of equipment on long-term loan
  - 110 Long Term Care Facilities (basic, skilled, and then assisted living)
- Zoom calls with equipment demos and equipment matching for specific residents



# Critical Relief Funds for COVID-19 Pandemic Response-Sample Equipment

- Tablets
- Tablet Stands-rolling and table top
- Headphones
- Echo Show, Echo Dots
- Hearing Amplifiers
- Speech Amplifiers
- Sanitary covers for microphones and headphones



# Examples of Technology to Address Social Isolation

- Tablets, laptops and accessories like alternative keyboards, stands and mounts.
- Connecting through Smart speakers, digital assistants like Echo Show, Facebook Portal.
- Robots and robotic pets.
- Hearing amplifiers
- Vision magnifiers



# AT3 Center Resources

- To track the latest in AT innovations, devices and activities, one great resource is to follow the AT3 Center on [Facebook](#).
- Another is to subscribe to [AT3 Center News and Tips](#).
- Do you want to find the AT Act assistive technology program in your state? Go to the [Find Your State AT Program Page](#) on the AT3 Center website.
- The [AT3 Center](#) provides training and technical assistance to the 56 state and territory AT Act programs.



# Presenter Contact Information

- Rob Groenendaal, Administration for Community Living
  - [Robert.Groenendaal@acl.hhs.gov](mailto:Robert.Groenendaal@acl.hhs.gov)
- Marty Exline, AT3 Center
  - [Marty.exline@ataporg.org](mailto:Marty.exline@ataporg.org)
- Jeannie Krull, North Dakota Assistive
  - [jmkrull@ndassistive.org](mailto:jmkrull@ndassistive.org)





Questions???

