



PENNSYLVANIA
TECH ACCELERATOR

**Supports Coordinator
Training Series
Training #5
2026**

**Technology-Related
Services, Waiver Policies,
and Resources for
Technology Acquisition**

Trainer

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State of the States
In Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities



Pennsylvania Tech Accelerator Partners



Office of Developmental Programs
Office of Long-Term Living



Institute on Disabilities



State of the States
In Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

KU CENTER ON
DISABILITIES



Technology First Systems Change



Technology First began as a movement but has transformed into a “framework for systems change where technology is considered first in the discussion of support options available to individuals and families through person-centered approaches to promote meaningful participation, social inclusion, self-determination, and quality of life.”

Tanis, 2019



Technology Solution

An innovation applied in the environment to address a mismatch in cultural , social, or contextual demands

- The term is an umbrella term (captures, mainstream, assistive, and enabling technologies)
- The term technology solution allows for the inclusion of multi-functional and diverse technologies
- The term implies a person-directed and goal-oriented approach to the identification, acquisition, and on-going training of technologies
- The term supports the development of solutions to eliminate the mismatch between the person and environment
- The term allows for the inclusion of emerging and future technologies not yet identified to be supported through policy and practice

Home- and Community- Based Service Definitions Vary Across States

- **Adaptive aids or equipment (EAA)** - Adaptive aids or equipment are products, systems, and/or machines used to help people perform activities of daily living (ADLs).
- **Assistive technology (AT)** - Assistive technology is any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.
- **Companion care** - Companion care provides social and emotional supports to an individual through digital or technology platforms.
- **Durable medical equipment (DME)** - Equipment and supplies ordered by a health care provider for everyday or extended use.
- **Electronic or remote monitoring/supports** - Electronic equipment used to support a person from a distance for residential or in-home supports.
- **Enabling technology** - Equipment and/or methodologies that, alone or in combination with associated technologies, provide the means to support individuals' increased independence in their homes, communities, and/or workplaces.
- **Environmental accessibility aids (EAA)** - EAA are physical adaptations to a home that are necessary to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of the individual.
- **Personal emergency response system (PERS)** - Personal emergency response systems or personal safety monitors directly connect an individual to an emergency responder or organization. These include life alerts, medical alerts, or fall monitors.
- **Smart home technology** - Home equipped with network-connected products for controlling, automating, and optimizing functions such as temperature, lighting, security, etc., either remotely or by a separate system within the home.
- **Telehealth, telemedicine, or telecare** - The use of telecommunications and information technology to provide access to health assessment, diagnosis intervention, consultation, supervision, and information across distance.
- **Video conferencing service or training** - May be termed virtual delivery of service or teleservice. Service that provides real-time video communications, including audio, to enable users to share information of the user's choosing.
- **Wearable technology** - Technology devices intended to remain on the user's body.



Supportive Technology

Supportive Technology (ST) is defined as any piece of equipment, device, or product that is used to acquire, improve, or maintain functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

ODP waivers can fund two types of ST:

Type	Definition
Assistive Technology (AT)	Assistive Technology is technology used by individuals with disabilities in order to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible.
Remote Supports (RS)	Remote Supports allows an off-site direct service provider to monitor and respond to a person's health, safety, and other needs using live communication, while offering the person more independence in their home



Remote Supports in PA



Remote Supports include the following:

- Staff who monitor and respond to the participant's needs
- Technology utilized in the home and community that is monitored by the staff
- Technology utilized for two-way real time communication
- Equipment necessary to operate the technology
- Costs for delivery, installation, adjustments, monthly testing, monitoring, maintenance, and repairs to the technology and equipment necessary to operate the technology
- Training for the individual, family, natural supports, and any support professionals that will assist with the use of the equipment initially and ongoing as needed

- Approved service within all four ODP waivers (Consolidated, P/FDS, Community Living, and Adult Autism)
- Previously a sub-component of AT service, now a standalone service category



Performance-Based Contracting



Pay-for-Performance (P4P) providers added incentive payment to providers that deliver high-quality and cost-efficient care. P4P measures will be available for the use of remote and support technology and other areas.





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Understanding Technology Acquisition

Framing of the Resources

1. **Affordability** – economically accessible for acquisition and maintenance
2. **Availability** – supply and demand
3. **Accessibility** – design, location, and/or use with out barriers or discrimination
4. **Accommodation** – making adjustments for equal participation
5. **Acceptability** – attitude and motivation for use



AT Act Programs

According to the 21st Century Assistive Technology Act 'Assistive Technology' means technology designed to be utilized in an assistive technology device or assistive technology service.

- A device means any item, piece of equipment, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.
- A service is any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.



ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (AT) SERVICES FLOW

How do you access information about and acquire assistive technology devices for yourself, family members, or clients to enhance life, work, and play?

Access

Information & Assistance

Contact your State Assistive Technology Program for more information on AT devices and usage.



Device Demonstration

AT professionals will demonstrate different devices according to your particular needs.



Device Loan

You can borrow devices to try at home, school, work, or play.



Reutilization

Acquisition

You can acquire the desired device. Some gently used devices may be acquired at little or no cost.



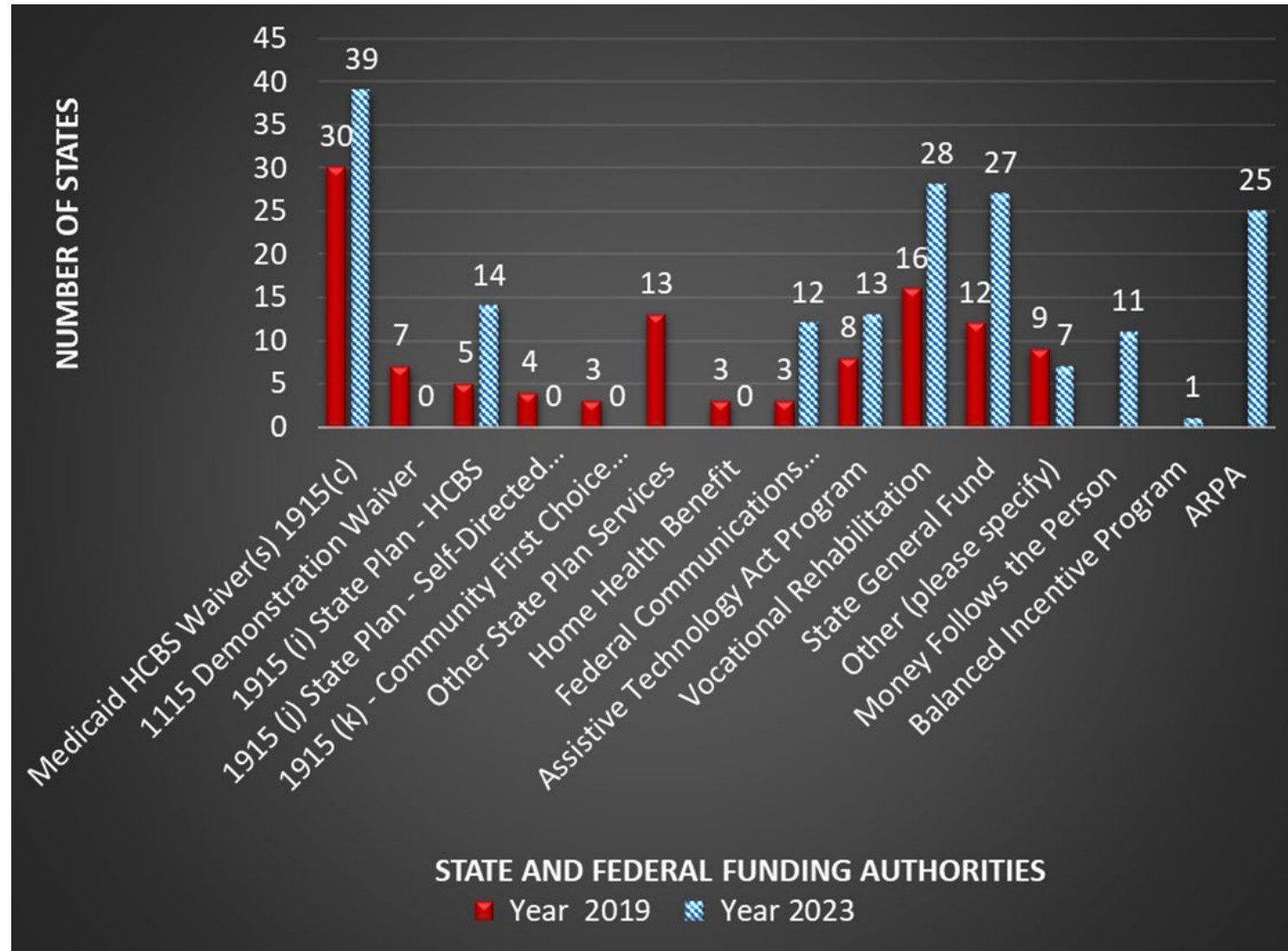
State Financing

Other financing options are also available. Contact your state AT program to learn about all your options.

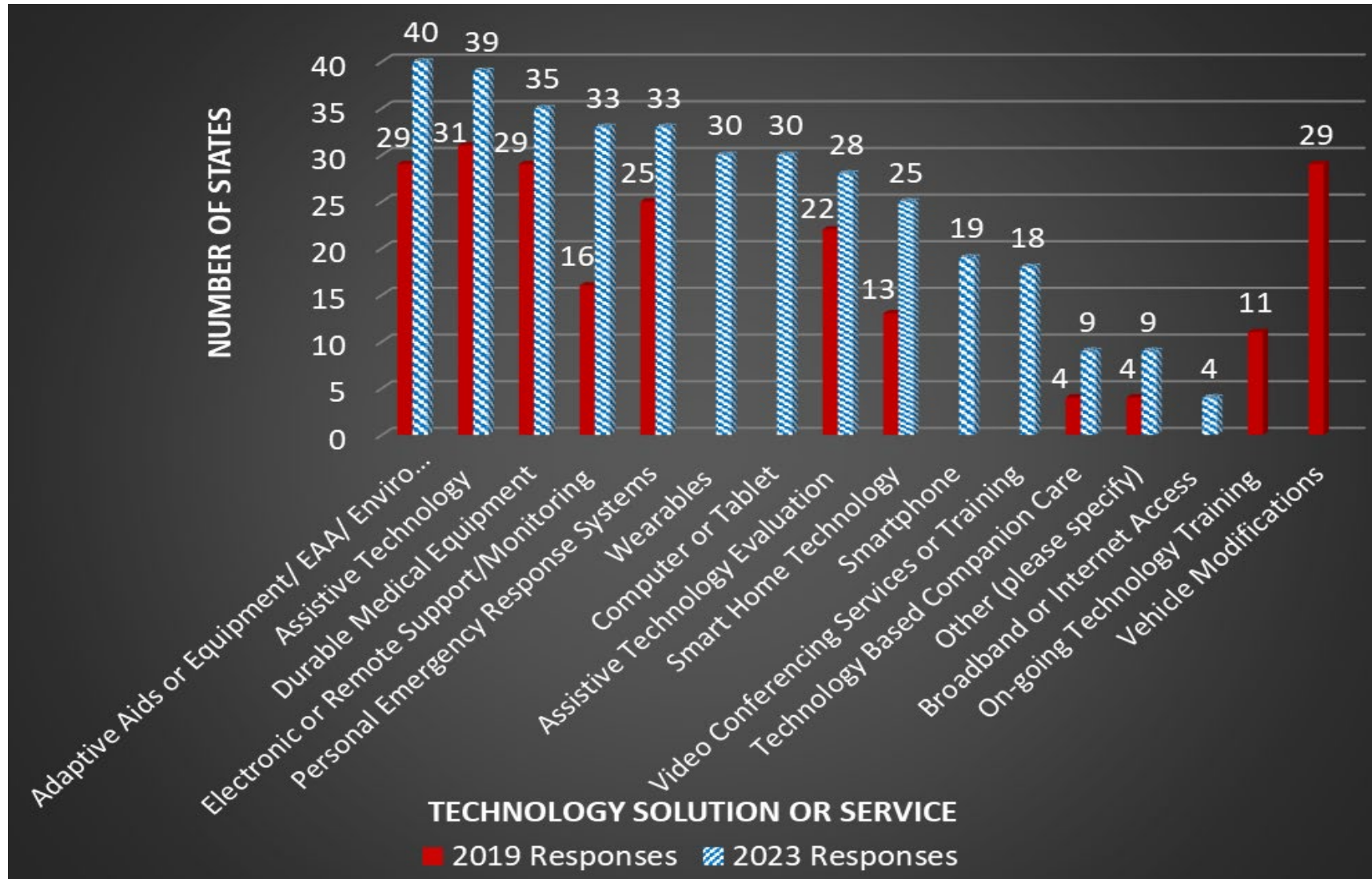


Find your local AT program
<https://www.at3center.net/stateprogram>

Affordability – Technology 2.0 Report



Affordability – Technology 2.0 Report continued



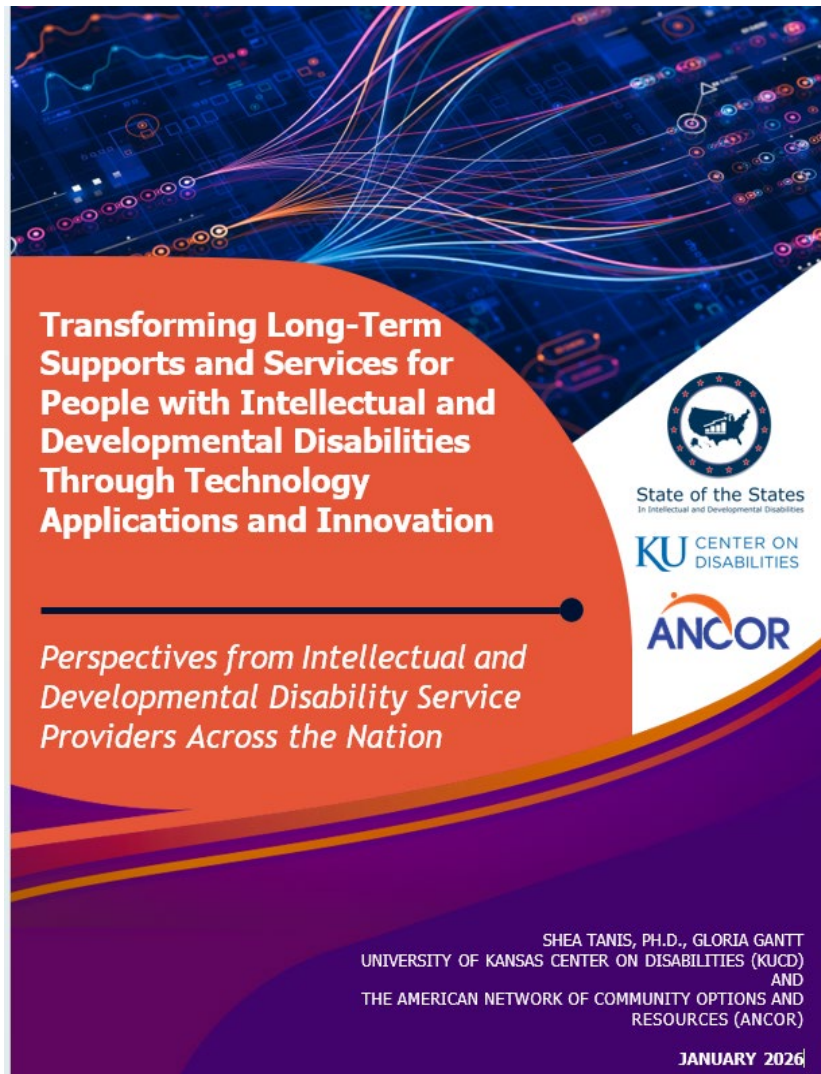
Affordability – PA Waiver Changes

Consolidated Waiver:	Community Living and P/FDS Waivers:
The \$10,000 lifetime limit on Assistive Technology is replaced with a \$3,000 annual limit.	There is no longer a general limit on Assistive Technology. Generators still have a \$5,000 lifetime limit.
If you need more than \$3,000 in Assistive Technology in a year, you can request additional funding through the variance process.	Assistive Technology is included in your overall annual waiver service limit: \$47,000 for P/FDS Waiver and \$97,000 for Community Living Waiver.
Generators still have a \$5,000 lifetime limit. This amount is separate from the \$3,000 annual limit.	

- Changes to Assistive Technology (AT) limits for people enrolled in the Consolidated, Community Living, or Person/Family Directed Support (P/FDS) waivers
- Effective as of January 1, 2026
- ODP webinar on amendments available [here](#)



Provider Identified Resources for Funding



- Fundraising
- Provider Foundation
- External Foundations
- Public/Private Partnerships
- Personal Funds



PA-Specific Funding Resources



Funding Your Assistive Technology

A Guide to Funding Resources in Pennsylvania



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[PATF Funding Your Assistive Technology Guide](#)

DisabilityRightsPA.org DRP DISABILITY RIGHTS PENNSYLVANIA 1.800.692.7443



Assistive Technology: How to Pay for the Device or Service You Need

I. Introduction

Assistive technology is very important to a person with a disability. Assistive technology helps a person with a disability to function more easily in his or her daily life. This brochure is intended to provide information on how to pay for assistive technology in Pennsylvania. This brochure does not list every source of funding but gives you an overview of the most common ways to pay for assistive technology.

II. What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive technology is a device or a service that helps a person with a disability to perform everyday tasks. Assistive technology can be found in the home, workplace, school, institution, and community. Assistive technology helps a person with a disability to become or remain independent. Assistive technology can be low cost or expensive.

AT-2

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[Disability Rights PA: How to Pay for the Device or Service You Need](#)



[PA Tech Accelerator "Funding and How to Get It" Webinar](#)



Availability – Go to the Source



- Direct vendors
 - Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) [Membership Directory - Assistive Technology Industry Association](#)
 - Bridging Apps [BridgingApps](#)



Availability – TechOWL Programs

Get Assistive Technology

Get devices through any of our programs.



Free Special Phone Program

We have a variety of special landline phones and smart devices that we provide to persons who qualify for our program. See if you qualify for the program!



iCan Connect (DeafBlind)

Do you or a loved one have BOTH vision and hearing loss? TechOWL's partnership with iCanConnect provides communication access to Pennsylvanians who qualify as "deaf-blind."



Reused Equipment Program

Do you have lightly used assistive devices lying around? Are you in need of assistive devices? We take donations of lightly used devices and pass them along to people who need them.



CreATe Together (3D printing)

We 3D print and make assistive devices for FREE! With our team of makers, we design new and personalized assistive devices to meet the needs of Pennsylvanians with disabilities.



Paying for Assistive Technology

We will help you connect to funding sources, waivers, and public programs that can help you access the assistive technology (AT) you need. We also offer the Del Sordo Fund, a one-time grant of up to \$400 for AT.



Connect With Tech

We're happy to share that we've distributed all available tablets and supported thousands of Pennsylvanians through this program. Connect with Tech officially ended on May 30, 2025.

Availability – TechOWL DOGS Tool

Devices Offering Great Solutions (DOGS)

Noise Reduction

Tools to block out noise can help you concentrate and relax

About Noise Reduction

Sometimes the sound in the room can be overstimulating. There are many tools available to block out excess noise or provide ambient noise to make you feel more comfortable and relaxed in your environment.

What kinds of tools are there for managing noise?

Noise Cancelling Headphones

Active noise-cancelling technology counteracts environmental noises that are low-to-moderate in volume. It works best on background noise that is repetitive and consistent. It doesn't work well on sudden or loud sounds.

You can choose an on-ear, over-ear, or in-ear (like AirPods) fit for your noise cancellation.

Hearing Protection

Passive noise reduction dampens all sounds. This works better than active noise cancelling technology on sudden or loud sounds.

You can choose an over-ear fit like safety ear muffs or you can use ear plugs.

Sound Absorbing Panels

Foam wedges or acoustic panels can be applied to the walls to control sound in a space. There are also portable room dividers made from these materials.

Related Apps

Choosing your own background noise – whether that is white noise or music – can be helpful. If you do not have a white noise machine, consider apps for ambient sound.

- [Noisli](#)
- [Calm](#)

How can I find out what's new?

Technology changes all the time. To find out about the latest options for these, you can type keywords into a search engine such as Google, Safari, Firefox, or Bing on a computer or tablet. These are the keywords for this type of item:

ear plugs, ear protection, ear defenders, noise cancelling headphones, sound dampening

How do I find out more?

If you live in the US outside of Pennsylvania, you can find your [state's AT program](#).

If you live in Pennsylvania:

- you could contact TechOWL to work with a specialist. We can meet with you and sometimes demonstrate this equipment. We can also help with different ways to get one for your own.
- you might [borrow](#) this equipment to try out.

Are these in Pennsylvania's AT Lending Library?

YES

- Devices Offering Great Solutions :
 - Over 60 categories of devices like adaptive gaming, pet care, switch access, and more.
 - Identifies devices available for trial through TechOWL's lending library
 - Provides keyword recommendations for further research





Accessibility - Provider Readiness Assessment



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Provider Technology Solutions Readiness Assessment

*A self-administered evaluation for disability and aging
service providers in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*



Made possible through the American Rescue Plan Act and project partners:



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Office of Developmental Programs
Office of Long-Term Living



State of the States
In Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

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Temple
University
College of Education
and Human Development

Institute on Disabilities

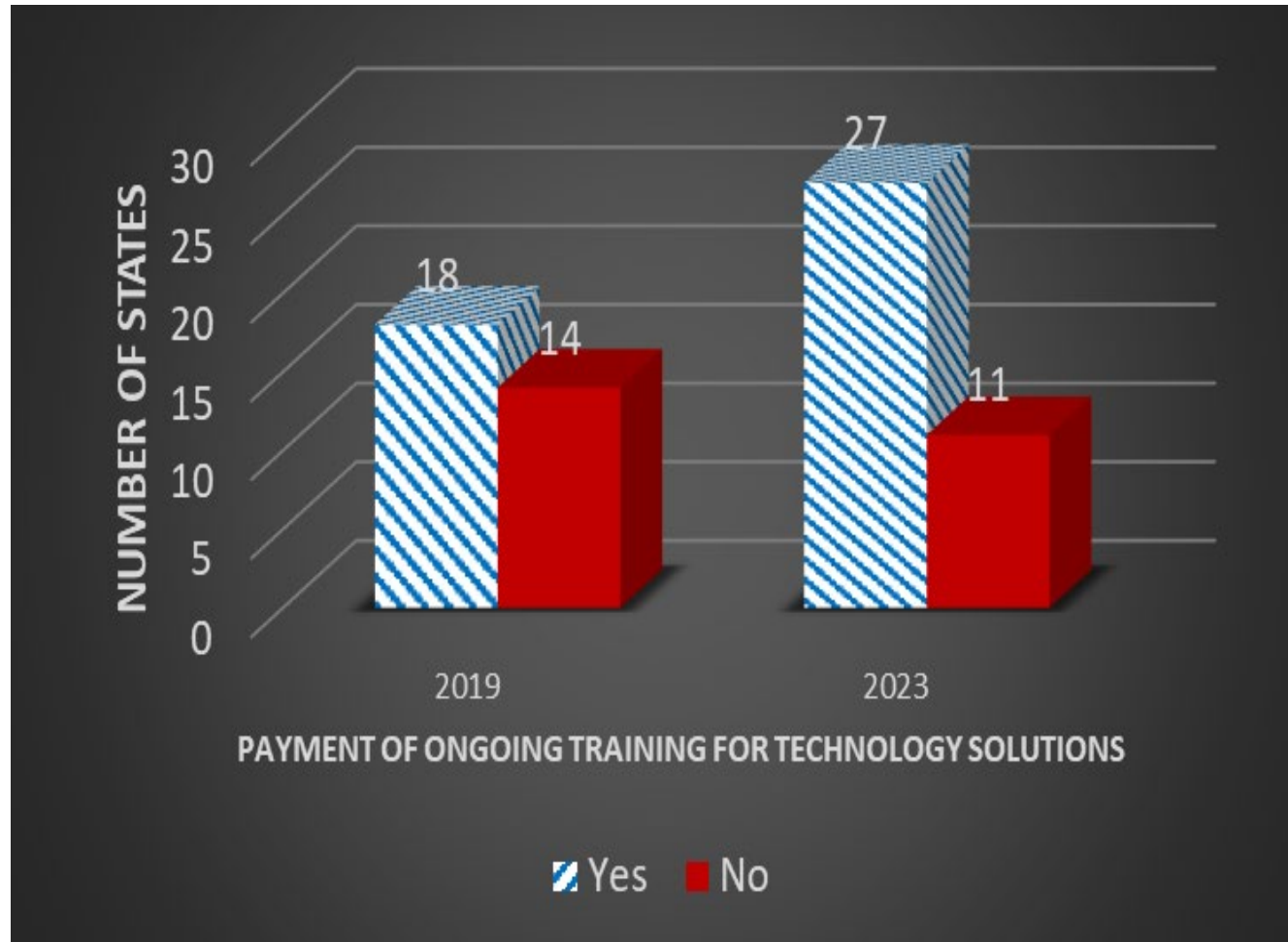
Accommodation – Accessibility Features



- Ask about accessibility features!!!
- CMS required Voluntary Product Assessment Template (VPAT) for all information and communication technology (ICT) procured with federal funds Voluntary Product Assessment Template (VPAT) Information | CMS
- Common cognitive accessibility features
 - Voice activation
 - Haptic activation
 - Screen magnifiers
 - Speech-to-text
 - Simplified layout
 - Plain language content



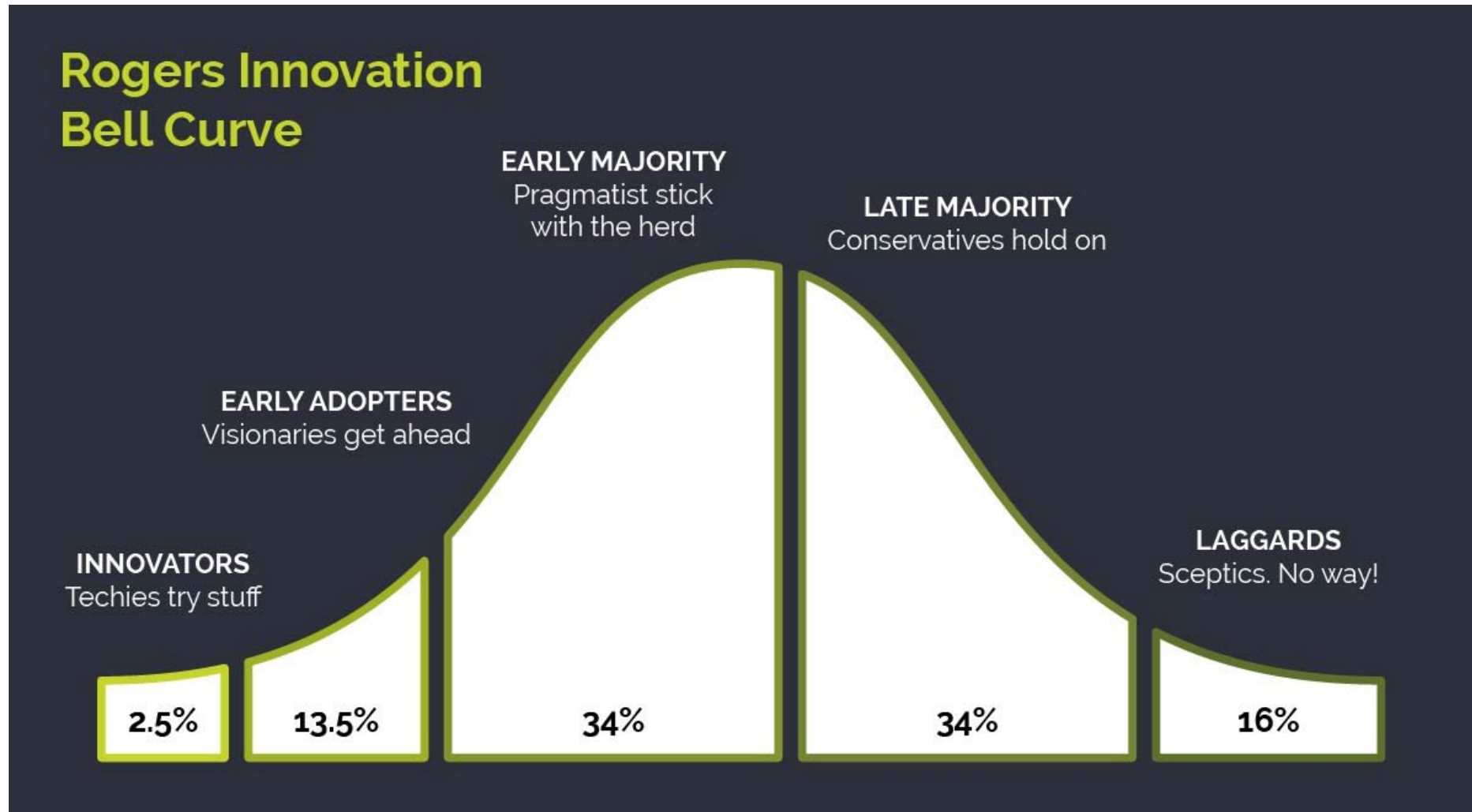
Accommodation - Training



- Adapting the environment for successful utilization of technology solutions
- ADA compliance
- Training of caregivers, direct service professionals, friends, and family



Acceptability – Rogers Innovation Adoption Curve



Acceptability – Technology Solutions Specialists

Android Accessibility Features Settings for Android Devices

Published
November, 2025



HEARING

Live Caption

You can turn on Live Captioning on Android and have a conversation or video automatically written out on the screen.



Live Captions

Real-Time Text

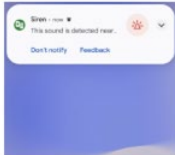
You can send and receive typed out messages during a phone call by turning on Real-Time Text (RTT).

Sound Amplifiers

Sound Amplifier apps can help by making sounds on your device louder.

Sound Notifications

Your Android device can listen for sounds like a fire alarm and let you know when it hears them.

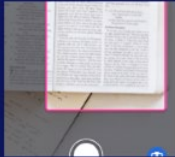


Sound Notifications

VISION

Lookout

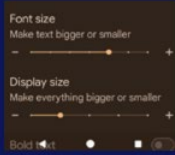
You can use Android's Lookout app to get information about the world around you through your device's camera. Lookout can read labels and describe objects and images.



Lookout

Display Settings

You can make text and icons bigger, make text bold, and adjust colors through the Android Display Settings.



Display Settings

TalkBack

TalkBack is a screen reader you can use with your Android device. TalkBack can read words on your screen out loud, or you can use it with a braille display.

A Pennsylvania Tech Accelerator product made possible by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and the American Rescue Plan Act

Apple Accessibility Features Settings for Apple Devices

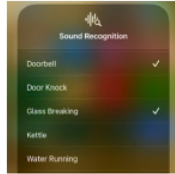
Published
November, 2025



HEARING

Sound Recognition

Your Apple device can listen for sounds like a doorbell and let you know when it hears them.



Sound Recognition

Real-Time Text

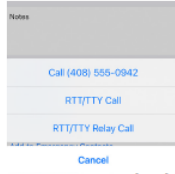
You can send and receive typed out messages during a phone call by turning on Real-Time Text (RTT).

Sound Amplifiers

Sound Amplifier apps can help by making sounds on your device louder.

Music Haptics

With Music Haptics, you can experience music on your Apple device through vibrations, taps and textures.



Real-Time Text (RTT)

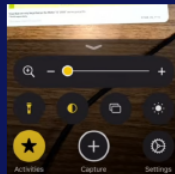
VISION

VoiceOver

Apple VoiceOver will describe what's on your screen, including images and braille.

Magnifier

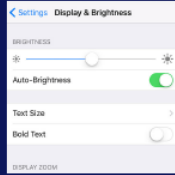
Apple Magnifier uses your camera to zoom in and describe objects around you.



Magnifier

Display Settings

Apple Display Settings let you make text bold, increase contrast, invert colors, and use color filters for color blindness.



Display Settings

Typing Feedback

When you enable Typing Feedback on your Apple device, it will speak letters out loud as you type.

A Pennsylvania Tech Accelerator product made possible by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and the American Rescue Plan Act



Other Training Series Topics

- **#1 The Self-Directed Model for Identifying Technology Solutions for Individual Goal Attainment**
- **#2 Technology Solutions Specialists: Leadership and Peer Mentorship**
- **#3 Accessibility and Why it Matters**
- **#4 Technology Agility, Resilience, and Literacy Training for Users and Professionals**
- **#6 Innovative and Emerging Technology Solutions for Community Living**



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