



Nebraska VR Report

2019-2020

Tobias Orr

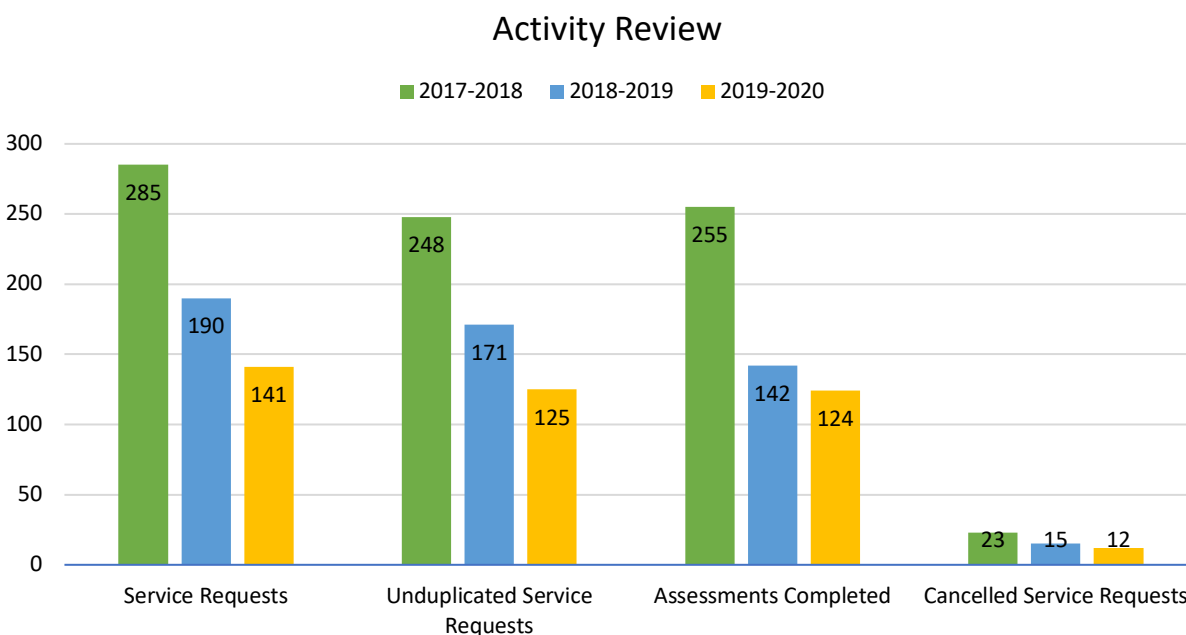
Director

Brooke Harrie

Program Supervisor

SERVICE REQUESTS AND ASSESSMENTS

The following report includes analysis and comparisons of Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP) and Nebraska VR (NE VR) service program data from the last three fiscal years (FY 2017-2018, 2018-2019 and 2019-2020). The chart below is an overview of service requests received during this time, as well as the unduplicated service requests and assessments completed. ATP received a total of 161 service requests during the last fiscal year (FY) however 20 of those were ergonomic or worksite assessments for new and existing NE VR staff. In order to accurately report on the number of service requests received and assessments completed for NE VR clients, the service requests for NE VR staff have been removed from all data.



During FY 2019-2020, the total number of service requests received was lower than the previous two years. The fewer service requests can be attributed to NE VR being in an Order of Selection (OOS) status since January 2018 as well as the COVID pandemic, which resulted in NE VR and ATP staff working from home the majority of 2020. NE VR Technology Specialists have been able to complete assessments by whatever method is most convenient for the client including via phone, Zoom, or in-person while taking all safety precautions, including wearing the appropriate PPE and maintaining social distancing. This has been a learning experience for everyone, but the job continues to get done despite the challenges from the pandemic and the health and safety of everyone continues to be a top priority.

As groups of Priority 1 cases have been released from the waiting list, ATP has seen individuals from these groups being referred over a couple of months later typically once their IPE is completed. It is anticipated that more service requests will be received from NE VR as more and more individuals are taken off the waiting list and/or priority group categories open. ATP has continued to work with NE VR clients with active cases as well as individuals served through job retention and transition aged youth through Pre-Employment Transition Services

(Pre-ETS). Individuals who are interns through Project SEARCH are included under Pre-ETS and ATP Technology Specialists continue to be active in working with the various Project SEARCH sites throughout the state. Despite NE VR being unable to fund AT for individuals in the Pre-ETS program, ATP continues to be a resource for this group offering services that include consultations, loans/demonstrations of equipment through AT4ALL, Reuse and funding coordination services. In January 2020 a new NE VR Technology Specialist was hired in the Omaha area. Her name is Maddie Piittmann and she is licensed as an Occupational Therapist (OT) and has been a great addition to the team. Maddie's office is located at the downtown ATP office and the VR Title 1 Program Supervisor was then able to move out to the West VR office allowing both VR locations in Omaha to be covered by ATP staff. ATP Technology Specialists throughout the state remain at other VR sites including Kearney, Columbus, Lincoln and the Scottsbluff office.

There were a total of 5 priority cases for FY 2019-2020. This is down from having 9 priority cases last fiscal year. A case is considered a priority if the client is at immediate risk of losing their job, they are failing a class in school or if they cannot start a job until their assistive technology (AT) need is met. Priority cases are assessed within 5 business days versus a standard NE VR case where the Technology Specialist has 30 days to complete the assessment. The number of unduplicated service requests reflects the number of clients with significant disabilities that required several different AT services in order to prepare for, obtain and maintain employment. There were 16 cases this year with more than 1 service request. About 11% of cases had more than one service request this year which is consistent with 10% and 13% the last two years. The number of service requests this year ranged from one to three per individual referred. The number of cancelled service requests has remained consistent at about 8%. Service requests were cancelled for a variety of reasons including the needs of the client being met by another source, client determined they did not want or need services, duplication of service requests, client did not maintain contact or the referral being inappropriate as the technology requested was not related to the individual's disability. A case is only cancelled by ATP if the assessment is not able to be completed. If the assessment is completed with the client, even if the recommendations are not obtained, a report with information on the recommendations will be submitted to NE VR staff and the case will be closed as complete by the Technology Specialist.

The chart on the next page reflects the number of assessments completed by AT category for the past three fiscal years for NE VR clients. Due to a lower number of service requests this year, fewer assessments were completed. A total of 124 assessments were completed for the 141 service requests as of September 30, 2020. Assessments may not have been completed for the service request because the referral was cancelled, inappropriate or the referral was just recently received and the assessment is scheduled, but was not completed before the end of the fiscal year. Service requests received from NE VR staff are categorized to reflect the type of AT recommended by the Technology Specialist. Recommendations are based on the most cost-effective solution that will assist the client in meeting their individual education or employment goal. The type of AT most commonly assessed for has consistently been cognitive aids, which includes technology such as reminder systems, tools for learning and apps to help manage work and life. Cognitive aids were about 39% of the technology assessed for this fiscal year, with

vehicle modifications and worksite AT coming in as the second and third most assessed for technology.

ASSESSMENTS BY ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY CATEGORY

AT CATEGORY	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
ADL Equipment	14	7	11
Bathroom/Laundry Modifications	9	2	1
Bicycle	4	2	2
Cognitive Aids	58	64	48
Communication	7	1	2
Computer (hardware/software)	27	4	1
Entrance Modifications	4	1	4
Ergonomics	9	2	2
Hearing Devices and Accessories	18	6	3
Information Only	4	2	5
Kitchen Modifications	1	0	0
Lift (Interior and Exterior)	2	2	0
Lift Repair	0	0	0
Mobility Device	11	5	8
Mobility Device Repair	2	2	0
Other	0	0	1
Other Home Modifications	5	2	1
Prosthetic/Orthosis	0	0	0
Ramp	2	1	2
Vehicle Modifications	34	11	19
Vehicle Modifications Repair	2	1	2
Vision Device	0	0	0
Worksite AT	42	27	12
Total	255	142	124

This is the third year for the ATP bicycle program and 2 referrals were received. This continues to be a low-cost solution for NE VR clients throughout the state when addressing transportation issues. Transportation is a major barrier for many NE VR clients who are trying to go to work. This program partners with local bicycle shops who donate used bicycles and parts. The ATP Technology Specialist in Lincoln is then able to use his expertise in this area to properly fit a bicycle to an individual for safety and comfort, as well as save money.

The ATP Program Supervisor and Technology Specialists continue to work on educating all NE VR staff about ATP services and how the process works by discussing this at ATP Team Tours, attending NE VR team meetings, presenting at new staff implementation trainings when they are held and also working one on one with new NE VR staff that are hired when they are referred to NE VR for their ergonomic assessment. The three charts found on the following pages reflect service request activity by NE VR office/team. These charts are followed by a map of Nebraska showing the service requests statewide by ATP service area in each county.

SERVICE REQUESTS BY VR OFFICE

VR OFFICE	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Columbus	24	31	19
Fremont	5	0	0
Grand Island/ Hastings	23	6	6
Kearney	40	16	29
Lincoln	59	40	27
Norfolk/ South Sioux City	18	13	12
North Platte	14	6	6
Omaha Downtown	20	11	10
Omaha Pre-ETS	41	64	17
Omaha West	26	3	15
Scottsbluff	15	0	0
Total	285	190	141

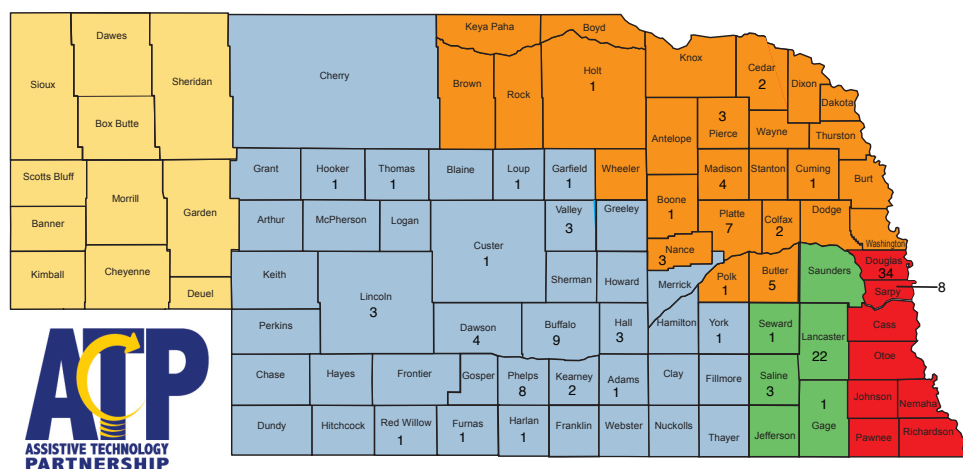
UNDUPLICATED SERVICE REQUESTS BY VR OFFICE

VR OFFICE	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Columbus	21	29	17
Fremont	5	0	0
Grand Island/ Hastings	19	6	6
Kearney	31	14	27
Lincoln	54	37	23
Norfolk/ South Sioux City	16	13	11
North Platte	14	4	6
Omaha Downtown	17	6	8
Omaha Pre-ETS	41	59	16
Omaha West	20	3	11
Scottsbluff	10	0	0
Total	248	171	125

ASSESSMENTS COMPLETED BY VR OFFICE

VR OFFICE	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Columbus	18	19	17
Fremont	5	0	0
Grand Island/ Hastings	18	3	4
Kearney	34	13	27
Lincoln	55	34	24
Norfolk/ South Sioux City	17	11	6
North Platte	12	4	6
Omaha Downtown	20	11	10
Omaha Pre-ETS	40	46	16
Omaha West	22	1	15
Scottsbluff	14	0	0
Total	255	142	124

SERVICE REQUESTS BY ATP SERVICE AREA



Nebraska VR Service Requests:141

42

Kearney

315 W. 60th Street, Suite 300, 68845
(877) 713-4002

30

Columbus

3100 23rd Street, Suite 5, 68601
(402) 276-4811

Scottsbluff 0

505A Broadway, Suite 500, 69361
(877) 713-4002

42

Includes 1 Pottawattamie County (Iowa)

Omaha

1313 Farnam Street, Suite 305, 68102
(877) 713-4002

27

Lincoln

3901 N. 27th Street, Suite 5, 68521
(402) 471-0734, (877) 713-4002

DISABILITY

Disability is a category that has been reported on for the last 3 years. All recommendations made by Technology Specialists are related to the client's disability and job goal. The following 3 charts show the primary, secondary and tertiary disabilities reported to NE VR by the client and then listed on the ATP referral form. The number of unduplicated service requests are included in this list so each client and their diagnoses are only listed once. Cognitive disabilities including Intellectual Disability, Dyslexia and learning disabilities were the primary diagnoses of the individuals referred to ATP both this year and last year. This was followed by individuals with Spinal Cord Injuries and physical disabilities, which this year included diagnoses such as Arthritis, Arthrogryposis, back injuries, Fibromyalgia and Polio. The chart below shows the primary disabilities that were reported.

PRIMARY DISABILITY REPORTED

PRIMARY DISABILITY	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
ADD/ADHD	25	19	11
Asthma/COPD	1	2	0
Autism	12	13	5
Brain Injury (TBI/ABI)	7	7	6
Cognitive (Intellectual/SLD/Dyslexia)	33	51	42
Cerebral Palsy (CP)	16	9	7
Diabetes	3	0	2
Down Syndrome	1	2	2
Emotional/Mental Health	16	4	3
Hearing Impairment	29	10	4
Heart Disease	2	1	0
Hormonal Disorder	1	0	0
Hydrocephalus	1	1	0
Lyme Disease	1	0	0
Multiple Sclerosis (MS)	9	3	3
Muscular Dystrophy (MD)	7	4	3
Parkinson's Disease	1	0	0
Physical Disability (Arthritis, Arthrogryposis, back, amputation, Charcot Marie Tooth, Club foot, DDD, fibromyalgia, Polio, Transverse Myelitis)	36	15	15
Seizures/Epilepsy	6	2	0
Speech Impairment/Delay	4	4	3
Spina Bifida	6	6	1

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Spinal Cord Injury (Quadriplegia/Paraplegia)	21	14	15
Stroke	9	3	2
Vision Impairment	1	1	1
Total	248	171	125

This past year approximately 40% of individuals referred to ATP identified both a primary and secondary disability. Cognitive disabilities and physical disabilities were tied for the most common secondary diagnoses reported; followed by emotional and mental health diagnoses. Diagnoses are reported in the order in which they are listed on the ATP referral form, typically by severity or what causes the most barriers to employment for the individual. The following chart shows the secondary disabilities that were reported.

SECONDARY DISABILITY REPORTED

SECONDARY DISABILITY	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
ADD/ADHD	1	9	1
Asthma	4	0	1
Autism	2	6	0
Autoimmune Disease	0	2	0
Brain Injury (ABI/TBI)	0	0	3
Cancer	1	0	1
Cognitive (Intellectual/SLD)	23	16	11
Diabetes	5	1	1
Emotional/Mental Health	23	7	7
Hearing Impairment	9	0	6
Hydrocephalus	0	2	0
Hypertension	1	2	0
Hypothyroid/Hyperthyroid	0	2	1
Kidney/End Stage Renal Disease	0	1	0
Multiple Sclerosis	0	1	0
Obesity	3	0	0
Physical Disability (ALS, back, Arthritis, Fibromyalgia, Scoliosis, Carpel Tunnel)	25	12	11
Seizures/Epilepsy	2	0	1
Shaken Baby Syndrome	1	0	0
Speech Impairment/Delay	1	7	4
Spinal Cord Injury (Paraplegia/Quadriplegia)	0	7	2
Vision Impairment	2	2	0
Total	103	77	50

Of the 125 unduplicated service requests, 20 or about 16% of individuals had at least 3 diagnoses. This shows that the individuals being referred to ATP from NE VR continue to have significant disabilities resulting in barriers to employment that are requiring AT assistance. The chart below shows the tertiary disabilities that were reported.

TERTIARY DISABILITY REPORTED

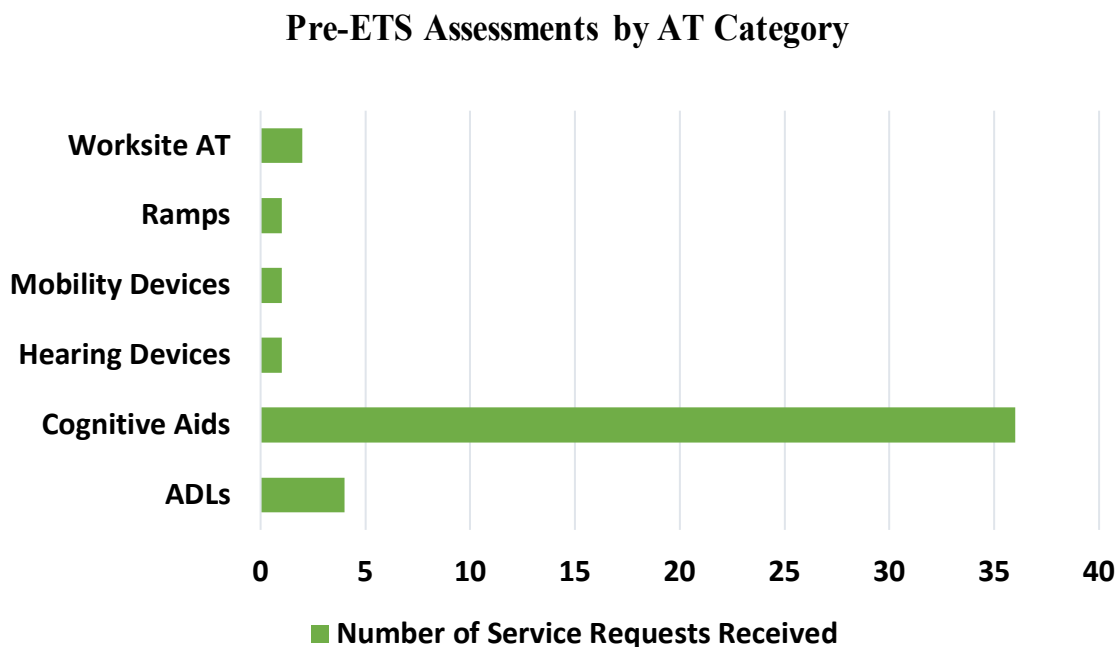
TERTIARY DISABILITY	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
ADD/ADHD	1	1	1
Brain Injury (TBI/ABI)	4	1	0
Cognitive (Intellectual/SLD)	2	4	0
Diabetes	5	1	0
Emotional/Mental Health	6	4	5
Epilepsy/Seizures	1	2	1
Hearing Impairment	4	1	0
Hypothyroid/Hyperthyroid	0	1	1
Kidney Disease	1	0	0
Migraines	0	2	1
Obesity	0	0	1
Physical Disability (back, balance, obesity, hypertension)	9	7	5
Respiratory	0	0	1
Sleep Apnea	1	0	0
Speech Impairment/Delay	2	2	4
Vision Impairment	1	0	0
Total	37	26	20

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

This is the third year that Pre-Employment Transition Services or Pre-ETS is being reported on. Project SEARCH also falls under the Pre-ETS category and is included in this section. These numbers were also included in the number of service requests reported on initially.

The number of Pre-ETS students referred to ATP has decreased this year by about 41%. There are various reasons for this including the COVID pandemic, school being remote causing difficulty contacting students as well as staff turnover in the NE VR offices. There were a total of 53 Pre-ETS referrals to ATP this year and 7 of those referrals were identified as participating in Project SEARCH. For Pre-ETS referrals, Technology Specialists completed consultations with the students, providing recommendations for equipment or technology that could be helpful given their specific diagnoses and needs for school or work. Equipment could also be provided as a loan or demonstration from our AT4All website to ensure it worked for the individual before they purchased anything. Pre-ETS referrals could also access ATP's Reuse Program as well as funding coordination services to help them with obtaining the AT recommended. It is unknown

how many individuals actually moved forward with purchasing the recommended AT on their own, however some did apply for funding coordination through ATP by completing a Service and Device Application. Of those individuals, many were able to receive funding assistance through the Enrichment Foundation Grant, United Cerebral Palsy grant or loans/grants available through EasterSeals. Technology Specialists presented to NE VR teams about Pre-ETS services and demonstrated equipment to classrooms, small groups and clients individually. A couple of the Pre-ETS clients referred to ATP applied for NE VR services and had IPEs written. In these rare cases, NE VR was able to purchase recommendations for the clients. Below is a graph showing the specific technology that was requested as a need for the 45 Pre-ETS clients who were assessed by ATP. Cognitive aids were the most assessed for technology for Pre-ETS last year and continue to be by far the most recommended AT this fiscal year for this population. Cognitive aids include technology to help an individual complete a task, such as an app or a type of reminder system. Technology for activities of daily living or ADLs were the second highest assessed for AT followed by Worksite AT.

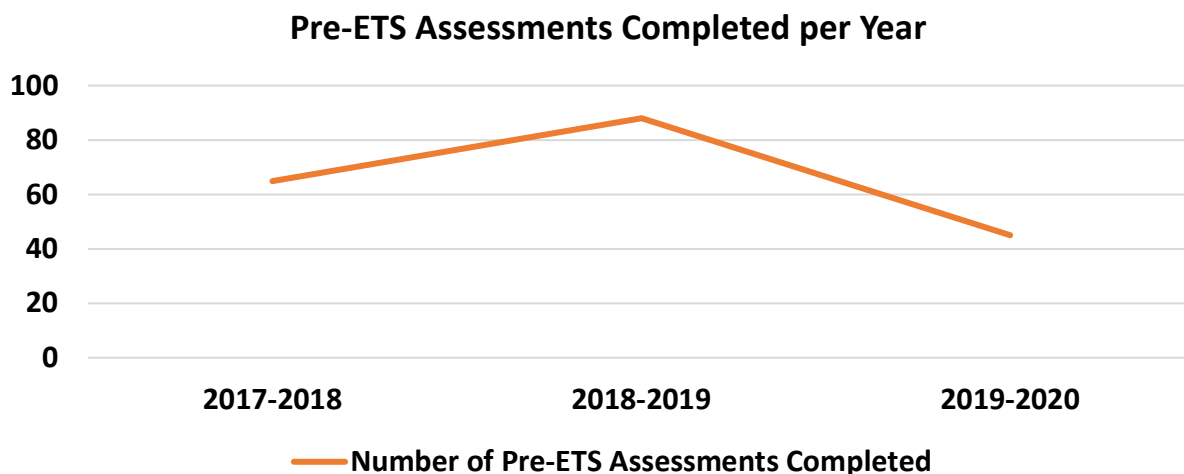


A total of 53 service requests were received that were Pre-ETS cases. However, only 45 of those service requests were assessed. This is due to 8 of the cases being cancelled. Cases are cancelled due to students being unavailable for services, declining services, not following through with contacting ATP for an assessment or duplication of service requests. This is approximately 15% and is up just slightly from the 9% of cancelled Pre-ETS cases from last year. Pre-ETS cases overall have good follow through and the majority of cases are being met with and assessed thanks to the additional assistance also provided by parents, NE VR Pre-ETS staff and school contacts. The chart on the next page shows the total number of Pre-ETS service requests by VR office throughout the state over the past three years.

PRE-ETS SERVICE REQUESTS BY VR OFFICE

VR OFFICE	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Columbus	7	26	8
Fremont	0	0	0
Grand Island/ Hastings	4	4	3
Kearney	0	5	20
Lincoln	11	21	4
Norfolk/ South Sioux City	4	6	3
North Platte	6	0	2
Omaha Downtown	0	0	0
Omaha Pre-ETS	41	64	12
Omaha West	0	2	1
Scottsbluff	0	0	0
Total	73	128	53

The number of service requests and assessments completed for the Pre-ETS population increased for two years, then decreased this past FY. This could be due to schools being closed with the pandemic and students working remote, as well as NE VR losing staff and not rehiring until recently due to budget concerns. Technology Specialists continue to talk with the NE VR teams they serve during team meetings to educate them on the services available through ATP that could benefit Pre-ETS students. This will continue to be a focus in the coming years as it is so important for individuals with disabilities to know the resources available to them, especially at a young age when they are just entering the workforce. The ATP Education and Pre-ETS Programs have also been working together to see how they can partner on cases and educate NE VR staff on both programs to ensure students are getting all the support they need to be successful. The VR Title 1 Program Supervisor also presented to the Nebraska Youth Leadership Council to make them aware of the services and resources available through ATP. The graph on the next page shows the number of assessments completed for Pre-ETS/Project SEARCH referrals in the past three years.



FUNDING

The following two charts summarize and compare the amount of VR Title 1 funds and leveraged funds for assistive technology for the past 3 years. The ATP Resource Specialist researches local, state and federal funding guidelines and eligibility requirements for funding resources that may be available for clients we serve. The VR Title 1 Program Supervisor participates in funding coordination meetings quarterly to discuss potential comparable benefits that may be leveraged for VR Title 1 clients, such as the Enrichment Foundation Grant, Medicaid Waiver and United Cerebral Palsy grants. Towards the end of this FY, VR clients started completing Service and Device applications and a resource letter was provided to them and their VR counselors with additional resources they may qualify for and comparable benefits for them to explore. The charts below show only the amounts authorized between October 1 and September 30 for the last three fiscal years.

LEVERAGED FUNDS BY SOURCE

SOURCE	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Enrichment Foundation Grant (EFG)	\$62,927.11	\$57,743.77	\$62,622.51
DHHS- A&D Waiver	\$31,655.03	\$33,848.25	\$34,342.00
Part B	\$8,217.88	\$2,325.00	\$0
Client Contribution	\$4,410.94	\$3,390.50	\$7,707.06
Other Funding Sources (UCP)	\$0	\$0	\$1,000
Total	\$107,210.96	\$97,307.52	\$105,671.57

AMOUNT EXPENDED FOR AT SOLUTIONS

SOURCE	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
VR Title 1 Funds	\$583,736.43	\$105,288.09	\$170,757.11
Leveraged Funds	\$107,210.96	\$97,307.52	\$105,671.57
Total	\$690,947.39	\$202,595.61	\$275,428.68

From the charts on the previous page, a total of 78 projects accounted for the total amount authorized this FY. Of these cases, 40 had VR funding, 9 had client contributions, 23 utilized Enrichment Foundation Grant (EFG) funding, 5 cases were eligible for and used funding from the A&D Waiver Program and 1 received a grant through UCP. This averages out to approximately \$3,543.96 per project. The total amount of funds expended for AT solutions this FY increased slightly from last year despite NE VR continuing to be in OOS and experiencing the COVID pandemic. This could be due to having more service requests for higher cost projects such as vehicle modifications. The amount of leveraged funds also increased as the VR Title 1 Program Supervisor continues to work closely with the ATP Director and ATP Resource Specialist to identify other funding sources that NE VR clients may be able to utilize to assist them with obtaining the AT they need. The last of the Part B IL Funds was utilized last year, so this year that total was \$0. Every year ATP applies to receive EFG funds, so this assistance should continue and is available for individuals with disabilities who live in Douglas or Sarpy county. Other programs such as the HHS Medicaid Waiver Program within ATP have stopped co-funding their projects with the EFG funds. This allows more individuals with no resources at all to be able to access some funds for their AT needs. The past 2 years approximately \$60,000 was set aside in total from the EFG for NE VR clients and if other projects fall through and additional money is available we have tried to use it for NE VR clients if possible. If it is found NE VR clients may be eligible for the A&D Waiver through Medicaid they are assisted through this process as this program could provide additional supports that could benefit many. NE VR staff have continued to be active in working with employers and asking if they can help or provide equipment recommended by ATP for their employees. Another funding source utilized this past year was the ATP bicycle program. Two bicycles were donated and a Technology Specialist with this knowledge was able to get the parts donated in order to fix up each bike specifically to meet the individual need of each person. This is estimated to have saved NE VR a few hundred dollars that was not included in the categories above.

Client contribution went up this FY, more than doubling the total from last year that clients were contributing towards their AT projects. However, please note this total only accounts for clients that paid a portion of the cost, not the whole total. In reality, client contribution was much larger as some clients ended up paying for the entire cost of their AT needs on their own, but these cases were not tracked as ATP did not create the order or authorization. For example, NE VR cannot spend money on Pre-ETS cases so recommendations are made and resources are provided. The client and their family then pay for the AT they feel they need on their own and ATP is not involved in the case at this point, unless they request training on the equipment after it is purchased. Multiple individuals served through Pre-ETS did apply for funding coordination services this year and at least \$22,484.23 of the leveraged funds spent were for Pre-ETS cases showing that this population continues to have a great need for financial assistance when it comes to AT equipment.

DEVICE DEMONSTRATIONS, LOANS AND REUTILIZATION ACTIVITIES

The AT4ALL database is used to track all equipment demonstrations, loans and reutilization activities. This summer, the new and improved AT4ALL website went live. Due to the COVID pandemic, all loans, demonstrations and reuse activities were put on hold for a few months as a plan was developed and cleaning supplies were ordered to ensure all equipment could be handled safely. At the present time, equipment loans, demonstrations and reuse activities are all occurring on an appointment only basis for the health and safety of everyone.

The equipment recommendations made by the NE VR Technology Specialists are based on the most cost-effective solution that addresses the functional limitations that the client is experiencing in school or work. Equipment demonstrations occur with clients when possible to help determine if a piece of technology will meet their needs before something is purchased. Demonstrations are completed by the Technology Specialist and are a hands-on experience with the technology so the client can see how it works to help make a more informed decision. Equipment that is very expensive or that would not be sanitary to let multiple people use is marked for demonstration purposes only and is not allowed to be taken home by the client. Below are charts comparing demonstration, loan and reutilization activities for the past three years.

EMPLOYMENT DEMONSTRATIONS BY ATP SERVICE AREA

Demonstrations			
Service Area	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Columbus	28	0	0
Kearney	76	49	10
Lincoln	12	8	19
Omaha	115	86	15
Scottsbluff	0	0	0
TOTAL	231	143	44

The majority of the equipment found on the AT4ALL website is available to individuals in Nebraska and NE VR clients as a short-term loan. An equipment loan allows the client to have direct access to the technology in their home, school or work environment, typically for up to 30 days. Devices can be loaned to assist with decision-making, provide a short-term accommodation or to serve as a loaner during device repair or while a client is waiting for funding. The number of equipment demonstrations and loans has continued to decrease the past 3 years. This can be attributed to the lower number of NE VR referrals received as well as increased access to online videos and tutorials that do a great job of showing how to use equipment as well as the pros and cons of each device. Equipment on the AT4ALL website is

also fairly dated and there has not been the funding available in the budget to purchase newer equipment the past few years.

EMPLOYMENT LOANS BY ATP SERVICE AREA

Employment Loans			
Service Area	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Columbus	12	4	0
Kearney	25	11	4
Lincoln	53	42	11
Omaha	47	23	25
Scottsbluff	1	0	0
TOTAL	138	80	40

Technology Specialists continue to look for alternative resources for NE VR clients to help meet their technology needs. Technology Specialists try to reuse equipment that is donated in clean, working condition to help offset the cost of assistive technology through the Reuse Program. The equipment could have been donated by an outside source or a past NE VR client who no longer needed or was no longer using the equipment. Sometimes maybe only a battery is needed to get a donated device to work properly, so this small cost may be paid by NE VR instead of purchasing a whole new device. Of all the job tasks of a Technology Specialist, logging demonstrations and loans is something that is often overlooked. A huge focus continues to be put on making sure all demonstrations, loans and reutilization activities are properly documented by Technology Specialists. This year ATP was also a part of creating the policy on VR Recoupment and Vested Interest. ATP may play a small part in these processes and assist with obtaining items that are being recouped if needed. Once items are retrieved, they will then be placed on the AT4ALL website and available for other NE VR clients throughout the state who may need them.

EMPLOYMENT REUTILIZATION BY ATP SERVICE AREA

Employment Reutilization			
Service Area	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Columbus	0	2	0
Kearney	5	3	1
Lincoln	6	14	4
Omaha	8	9	0
Scottsbluff	0	0	0
TOTAL	17	28	5

The number of reutilization activities has decreased significantly this past year, again due to the pandemic and not getting many equipment donations. In the past, Reuse events were held in the Omaha area to gather large amounts of equipment for the Reuse Program, however due to

the pandemic and staff turnover these events were unable to happen this past year. Reusing equipment continues to be a great option for NE VR clients to ensure the equipment is getting into the hands of individuals who need it quickly and that it is the lowest cost option available. Reuse of equipment for new and existing NE VR staff referrals also happens very frequently, but these numbers were not included in the charts above. Large dollar items such as stair glides, vertical platform lifts and even a standing wheelchair have been donated to ATP in the past year and are available to clients through the Reuse Program.

CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

A satisfaction survey is mailed to each client that works with a NE VR Technology Specialist to follow-up on the services they were provided once their case is complete. Only nine client satisfaction surveys were returned during FY 2019-2020. This is lower than the previous year when 22 surveys were received. A reason for fewer surveys being received could be COVID-19 and delays with the mail. An additional 12 surveys were mailed out in September that were for NE VR and these responses were not yet received. A solution in the future to receive more surveys back may be to try sending surveys out via email and have them completed electronically. This is something the VR Title 1 Program Supervisor will look into for future years. Of the surveys returned, all clients stated they were satisfied in all categories, which is consistent with previous year. Only 1 client chose “Not Sure” in one category and another did not respond to 1 question. Otherwise all answers fell in the “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” categories. If a client ever stated that they were dissatisfied on the survey, the Program Supervisor for the VR Title 1 Program would contact them to get more information on what happened and see if any additional assistance was needed. The table below shows the results of the 9 surveys received back as of October 1, 2020.

CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
1-ATP staff responded in a timely manner.	7	2	0	0	0	0
2-ATP staff explained the process and answered my questions.	7	2	0	0	0	0
3-I was involved in making choices about the equipment/modifications.	6	2	1	0	0	0
4-The equipment and modifications I received met my expectations.	7	1	0	0	0	1
5-I know how to use the equipment and modifications I received.	8	1	0	0	0	0
6-The equipment and modifications have helped me.	8	1	0	0	0	0

PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

1) VR Staff Training

Technology Specialists throughout the state took turns creating email blasts that were sent out to NE VR and ATP staff through Constant Contact each quarter. Each Technology Specialist chose a different AT topic to discuss and provided information on the technology and how it could relate to assisting someone with a disability with work or school. There were links to additional resources and videos included for NE VR staff to learn more about the specific equipment and how it would work. The format of this training allowed NE VR staff to read and explore the material presented when they had the time. This was the second year of completing NE VR trainings this way and the response from staff continues to be positive. The first email sent out this year was in March. David Altman completed this edition and included a great video of a past NE VR client talking about different ADL devices she uses to be independent in her home as well as the ease and benefits of using equipment such as a bidet. The second quarter email blast was completed by Melissa Doles and covered chair toppers. This specific vehicle modification can be a simple solution to help individuals be able to transport their wheelchairs independently. Then in September, right as school started, Maddie Piittmann released the third edition where she discussed different types of software programs that could assist individuals with disabilities with reading, writing and note taking. And the fourth and final edition this year will be sent out in December by Pam Cody covering the BEST Suite: 4 apps in 1, which can help individuals increase their independence by tracking time and energy.

2) Marketing/Public Awareness

The Program Supervisor for the VR Title 1 Program and Technology Specialists have been participating in as much as possible this past year when it comes to conferences and resource fairs throughout the state to continue to educate the public about ATP and the different services and partnerships within the agency. As a result of the global pandemic, many events were canceled or held virtually. However over 12 different presentations or resource booths were still attended by ATP staff this past year and information was able to be relayed to hundreds of people in the community through these activities. Events attended included Pre-ETS and Project SEARCH classroom presentations, Disability Organizations Together Serve (DOTS) Meetings, Eastern Nebraska Transition Conference, disability support groups, Goodwill Pre-ETS Conference, Metro Community College Disabilities Fair and presentations to students in an AT class at UNK and in the NYLC.

3) Continue to Improve Data Collection

ATTIE, the ATP database, has continued to be a huge improvement from the previous database with making data collection for reports easier. However, as things change feedback and suggestions continue to be given to the ATP Director to ensure data collection remains efficient. This year focus was put on Technology Specialists logging their demonstrations, loans and reuse activities in ATTIE. This is often overlooked with busy schedules, however with the pandemic this year fewer activities were occurring as Technology Specialists were meeting with clients virtually and it was easier to show

equipment through a YouTube video or other resources available online. The AT4ALL website was updated and went live this year and the Technology Specialists were trained on how to use it. There continue to be improvements to this site, with data collection being a top priority.

4) Maintain and Improve Communication with NE VR Teams

During this past fiscal year, the VR Title 1 Program Supervisor was able to meet with each team during their team meetings. Due to the pandemic, meetings were held virtually, so other VR Program Directors did not join in on the ATP Team Tours as in previous years. A Power Point presentation was completed with each team and various topics were covered such as updates to the ATP referral form, completing the Service and Device application with each referral for comparable benefits, the new AT4ALL website, and some new technology and apps were also shared. There was time provided to discuss ATP cases and any questions or concerns teams may have about services being provided. The Technology Specialists have also continued to attend VR team meetings with the offices in their service areas to provide updates on their ATP cases and share information on new AT equipment with NE VR staff.

5) Support Project SEARCH

Supporting Project SEARCH sites continues to be a part of the work Technology Specialists complete with Pre-ETS students throughout the year. ATP works closely with all Project SEARCH sites throughout the state to provide AT support and knowledge to interns and staff. Referrals are made through Nebraska VR and Technology Specialists work one on one with the clients for consultations and to provide demonstrations and loans of equipment as needed to help the individual be as successful as possible in their internships. Funding coordination services and equipment through reuse are also available to this population. Technology Specialists attended Business Advisory Council meetings, steering committee meetings, skills/assessment days, open houses and orientation nights. ATP staff were also a part of the Project SEARCH Job Fair Planning Committee in Omaha this past year, unfortunately the event had to be canceled as a result of the pandemic.

6) Continue to Provide and Improve Pre-ETS

The VR Title 1 Program Supervisor and Technology Specialists have continued to work closely with NE VR staff on Pre-ETS cases and educating everyone on what services ATP can provide this population. Technology Specialists completed AT consultations with Pre-ETS students, their teachers and family's as well as demonstrations and loans of AT equipment. Some Pre-ETS students also completed Service and Device applications and received funding assistance through different resources provided to them via the ATP resource letter. ATP staff completed more virtual presentations to groups of Pre-ETS students this year about ATP services and AT devices. The VR Title 1 Program Supervisor was also able to be a part of a NYLC virtual meeting to discuss ATP and the resources it could provide for these young future leaders and their families.

7) Technology Specialist Training

Technology Specialists completing at least 5 trainings or webinars was a new goal last year and this was completed quickly by everyone. With the pandemic, more and more trainings are being offered online and at no cost. Technology Specialists were able to attend trainings through multiple agencies including QLI, EasterSeals Crossroads and the VR University trainings. NE VR staff were also included in the VR 101 Trainings offered. Staff enjoyed this training and learning more about the Nebraska VR program and its history. Some staff are past NE VR employees, however for those who are not, it gave them great insight to the work NE VR staff complete daily and how it relates to the assistance we provide the same clients through ATP.

GOALS 2020-2021

1) Quarterly VR Staff Training Emails

Technology Specialists with the NE VR program will continue to provide trainings to NE VR staff via Constant Contact emails quarterly. They will take turns choosing various AT topics to be covered in detail and this will allow NE VR staff to gain more AT knowledge for use with their clients. This format will also allow NE VR staff flexibility and to explore the resources provided as their schedules allow.

2) Marketing/ Public Awareness

The VR Title 1 Program Supervisor will continue to work with ATP marketing staff and participate in community events in order to increase the public awareness of ATP and the NE VR partnership. ATP will continue to have a presence in various community organizations and partnership meetings such as Project SEARCH, Disability Organizations Together Serve (DOTS), Vision Resource Coalition (VRC), community resource and job fairs as well as college and high school conferences throughout the state.

3) Improvements to Data Collection

The VR Title 1 Program Supervisor will continue to share feedback on improvements for data collection in the ATTIE website. Staff will also continue to learn and utilize the new AT4ALL website by logging all loans, demonstrations and reuse activities. Additional data collection improvements are needed when it comes to client satisfaction surveys. The Program Supervisor will work with other ATP staff to try and develop a process to make this survey more efficient, possibly utilizing email or other online survey options to see if response rates increase.

4) Strengthen working relationships with NE VR Teams

During FY 2020-2021, the VR Title 1 Program Supervisor will meet with all NE VR teams at least once in person or virtually to provide program updates and to get feedback on the partnership and ATP services throughout the state. Technology Specialists will continue to attend VR team meetings in their areas to provide updates on ATP cases and information on new AT equipment available that could assist NE VR clients. The Program Supervisor will also continue to meet monthly with the NE VR Program Director of Counseling and NE VR Program Director for Employment Services to

discuss policies, procedures and review cases to ensure consistency is maintained throughout the state.

5) Support Project SEARCH and Pre-ETS

Pre-ETS and Project SEARCH will continue to be a focus for Technology Specialists. ATP staff will continue to work with students through consultations and helping them identify technology that could increase success in their future vocational endeavors. The various resources available through ATP will be provided to Pre-ETS students including loans, demonstrations, reuse and funding coordination. Technology Specialists will also continue to support Project SEARCH students by attending site events and working closely with the staff, students and their families.

6) Educate staff on other ATP Programs and Services

Overall, NE VR staff are educated on what services ATP can offer their VR clients, however it would also be beneficial for staff to be aware of the other programs and services ATP can offer. NE VR will start filling out Service and Device applications to receive comparable benefits through a resource letter and utilize the funding coordination service offered by ATP. The VR Title 1 Program Supervisor and other ATP staff will also work to educate NE VR on the redesigned ATP Education Program, which could benefit some dual Pre-ETS students. Other programs such as the HHS/Medicaid Waiver and the iCanConnect Program will also be discussed on Team Tours to give NE VR staff knowledge of more resources and a better understanding of all ATP can offer.

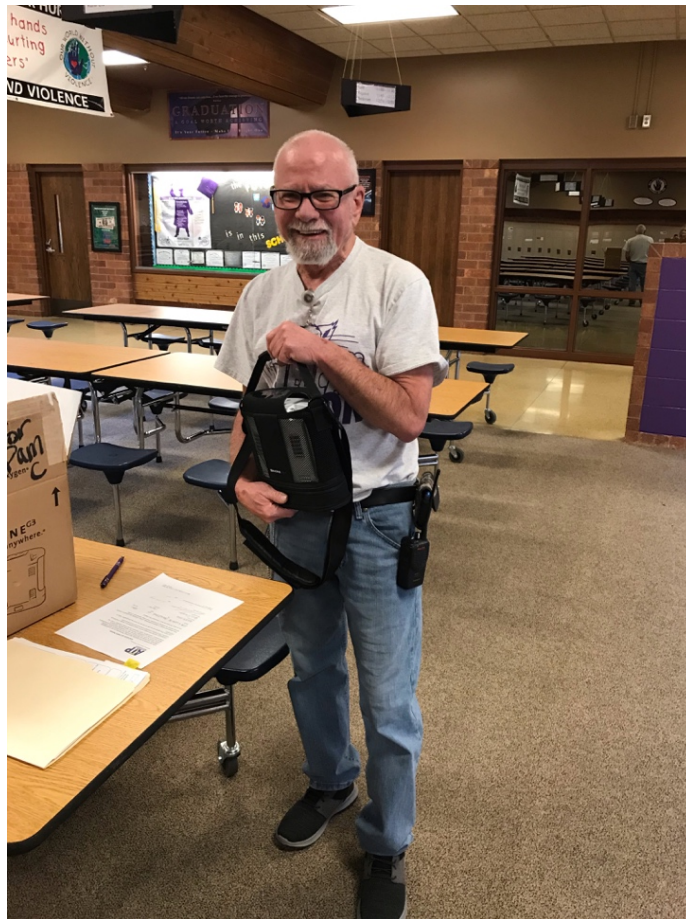
7) Technology Specialist Training

As the world continues to change due to the global pandemic, technology becomes more and more necessary in everyone's lives. Technology Specialists will be expected to stay up to date on technology that is available and how it could benefit NE VR clients in the world of work. It will be a goal for each Technology Specialist to attend a minimum of 5 trainings or webinars about technology or resources available that would benefit NE VR clients. This information will be shared with other Technology Specialists via email to benefit the entire group.

SUCCESS STORIES

AT through Reuse

Kevin is diagnosed with severe COPD, chronic Bronchitis and chronic Hypoxemia. He has worked at the Grand Island Public Schools as the assistant janitor for over 18 years. His job requires a lot of walking, which causes him to have great difficulty breathing due to his diagnoses. Kevin was fearful of losing his job and needed a portable oxygen concentrator (POC) to assist with his breathing on the job. His insurance would not cover the cost of this item and other oxygen tanks were too heavy or would not carry the amount of oxygen he would need for an entire workday. Kevin was doing breathing treatments at home at night and using inhalers, but they were not providing the relief he needed. Kevin was referred to ATP and through one of the agency's Reuse partnerships a used POC was found. It was able to be properly sanitized and was provided to Kevin at no cost. He was trained on how to use the device and he is able to continue working in the job that he loves.



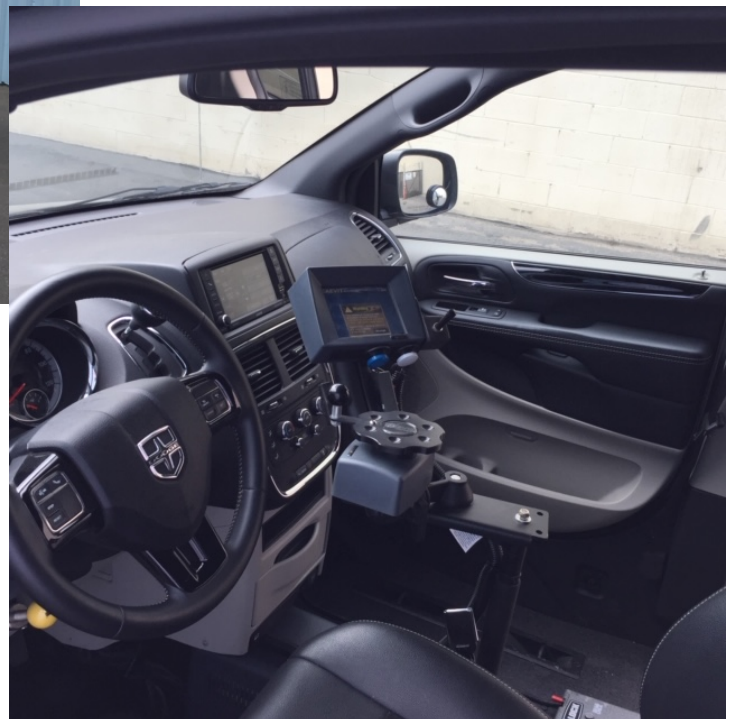
AT for Pre-Employment Transition Services

Koli is a student at Millard North High School. She is diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy and Scoliosis. Koli uses a wheelchair for all mobility and was having trouble completing activities of daily living independently at home. She was especially struggling in the kitchen due to her wheelchair and footrests not allowing her to get close enough to the counter tops or access items in the cabinets or higher locations. She plans to attend college and be out on her own soon and wanted to start improving her ability to be independent. Koli tried many options and found that a stander was able to be ordered to fit her and meet her needs. This was a lower cost option than any kitchen modifications or other home modifications she may have needed. She is now able to reach the sink, freezer, in cabinets and even use the microwave on her own. Koli and her family completed the Service and Device application and funding was found to cover the cost of the stander through the Enrichment Foundation Grant. Not only does the stander provide Koli with increased independence in her activities of daily living and self-care, it also will help reduce her risk of pressure ulcers from sitting in her wheelchair and has many other health and emotional benefits that will increase her success in the future.



AT for Transportation

Mitch was involved in an accident where he suffered a Complete Spinal Cord Injury and now experiences quadriplegia. He was offered a new job in Fremont and he resides in Lincoln, NE. His main barrier for this position was transportation. Mitch completed a high-tech driver's evaluation and an AEVIT (Advanced Electronic Vehicle Interface Technology) Wheel and Lever System was recommended for him with specific measurements to ensure the modifications would meet his needs and allow him to drive safely. Mitch's vehicle was too old and had too many miles on it to install the high-tech system so he started searching for a new vehicle. He utilizes a power wheelchair for all mobility and ended up finding a 2017 Dodge Grand Caravan in California with a full conversion, including a lowered floor, so he could drive his power wheelchair in on the ramp. The vehicle also had an AEVIT system that was installed a few years ago. This vehicle with the modifications was offered at a great price. Mitch purchased the vehicle and ATP and NE VR worked with him for assistance in funding the modifications. The AEVIT system was updated and adjusted to fit him; purchasing this vehicle with the used modifications instead of new helped save a lot of money and time. Mitch will now have reliable transportation and be able to get to work independently.



AT for Job Retention

Gayle has worked at Boys Town for over 21 years. She has had different positions over the years but is current working as an IT Operator. She enjoys her position; however, the majority of the job requires typing and being on the computer. Gayle had a stroke and now experiences hemiplegia on her right side. She has limited range of motion and weakness in her right arm and hand. Gayle was only able to use her left arm to type, which was really slowing her down. She was unable to utilize dictation software due to all the background noise in her office and was referred to ATP by Nebraska VR. Gayle worked with ATP on obtaining vehicle modifications needed to continue to drive herself independently and also worked with ATP on finding a suitable keyboard to help her maintain her job. She was able to try various keyboards from the AT4ALL website and identify that the Matias Half Keyboard would be the best fit for her. This keyboard is a whole keyboard in half the size and allows you to use your left hand only and switch the keyboard to the letters on the other side just by pressing a button. Gayle completed a Service and Device application and was able to get Enrichment Foundation Grant assistance to fund the keyboard since she lives in Douglas county.



AT for Job Placement

Dominic is diagnosed with Spastic Cerebral Palsy and uses a motorized wheelchair for all mobility. He has been working with Nebraska VR and ATP for years while pursuing his Master's Degree in Religious/Pastoral Care. Dominic recently completed his degree and was offered a job as a counselor. When starting his new career, Dominic needed some equipment in order to be successful. Recommendations for Dominic included an adjustable height desk so he could fit his wheelchair underneath and have an ergonomic desk set up, door grips to help him open the doors to his office independently, a wireless headset to allow him to take calls as he has limited range of motion in his upper body to reach the phone and a grabber/reacher for help picking up dropped items. His employer also provided a laptop with Dragon Naturally Speaking software to use for dictation when completing his notes and emails for his position. Dominic really enjoys his job and is able to complete all tasks of his job independently as a result of this equipment.

