



Nebraska VR Report

2021-2022

Tobias Orr

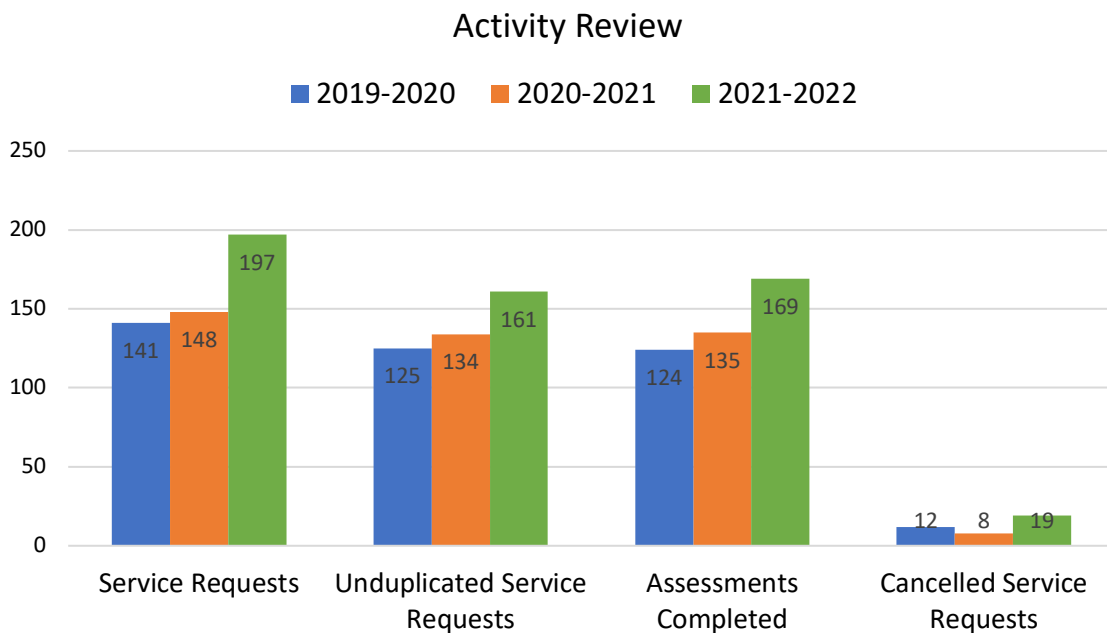
Director

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 2019-2020, FY 2020-2021 and FY 2021-2022). 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 246 service requests during the last fiscal year (FY) however 49 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 for a total of 197 VR client referrals in FY 2021-2022.



The total number of service requests has continued to increase the past couple of years, but is still lower than before Order of Selection (OOS) and the COVID-19 pandemic. This year the priority 2 category was opened and priority 3 cases were served off the waiting list so this has aided in the increase in referrals. VR has also hired staff to fill many vacant positions throughout the state, keeping ATP staff busy with completing 49 VR staff ergonomic assessments. ATP staff continue to work a hybrid work schedule consisting of 2 days a week in the office and working at home the rest of the week. NE VR Technology Specialists continue to be flexible, and they are able to complete meetings and assessments by whatever method is most convenient for the client including via phone, virtual, or in-person while taking all the necessary safety precautions.

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 resource coordination services. The ATP team of NE VR Technology Specialists has remained consistent this past year. The program supervisor is located at the Omaha West VR office and there is a technology specialist at the Omaha Downtown ATP office as well as at the Kearney, Columbus, Lincoln and Scottsbluff VR locations. The team remains busy throughout the year with referrals and now meets monthly via Teams to staff cases, discuss program updates and meet with vendors to learn about new technology.

There were a total of 9 priority cases for FY 2021-2022. This is up from the 8 priority cases during the 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 25 cases this year with more than 1 service request which is about 13% of the total service requests. This is up significantly from 8 cases with multiple service requests last year, which was just 5% of referrals and 10% the year before that. The number of cancelled service requests has gone up as well to 19 cases cancelled this year or about 10%, up from 5% last year. Service requests are 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. A total of 169 assessments were completed for the 197 service requests as of September 30, 2022. Assessments may not have been completed for the service request because the referral was cancelled (19 total) or the referral was just recently received and the assessment is scheduled, but not completed before the end of the fiscal year (the other 9 service requests). 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 26% of the technology assessed for this fiscal year, with worksite AT and vehicle modifications coming in as the second and third most assessed for technology.

ASSESSMENTS BY ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY CATEGORY

AT CATEGORY	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
ADL Equipment	11	3	7
Bathroom/Laundry Modification	1	6	3
Bicycle	2	1	0
Cognitive Aid	48	61	44
Communication	2	6	6
Computer (hardware/software)	1	3	3
Entrance Modification	4	3	5
Ergonomics	2	5	14
Hearing Devices and Accessories	3	2	10
Information Only	5	1	5
Lift Repair	0	1	0
Mobility Device	8	6	5
Mobility Device Repair	0	0	1
Other	1	0	0
Other Home Modifications	1	0	4
Prosthetic/Orthosis	0	2	0
Ramp	2	1	3
Vehicle Modification	19	14	26
Vehicle Modification Repair	2	0	4
Vision Device	0	0	1
Worksite AT	12	20	28
Total	124	135	169

This is the fifth year for the ATP bicycle program, however no referrals were received this year. This continues however to be a low-cost option 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 VR staff implementation trainings and also working one on one with new NE VR staff that are hired when they are referred to ATP 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 and county. This year ATP has seen referrals from all parts of the state, even offices who had few or no ATP referrals in previous years. It is great to see all teams actively working with ATP and clients receiving consistent services and supports throughout the state.

SERVICE REQUESTS BY VR OFFICE

VR OFFICE	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Columbus	19	20	23
Fremont	0	0	19
Grand Island/Hastings	6	10	21
Kearney	29	27	20
Lincoln	27	24	32
Norfolk/South Sioux City	12	11	11
North Platte	6	3	7
Omaha Downtown	10	18	17
Omaha Pre-ETS	17	21	8
Omaha West	15	11	23
Scottsbluff	0	3	16
Total	141	148	197

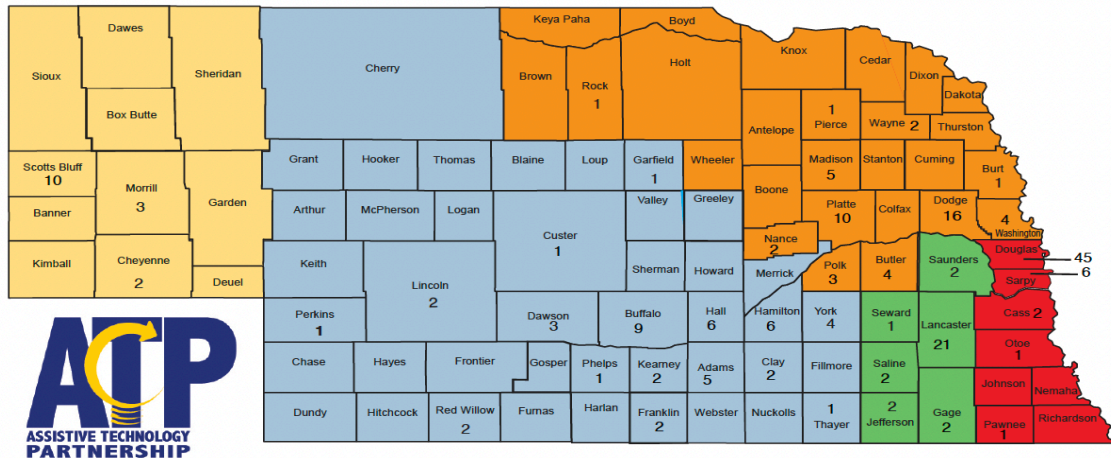
UNDUPLICATED SERVICE REQUESTS BY VR OFFICE

VR OFFICE	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Columbus	17	20	18
Fremont	0	0	15
Grand Island/Hastings	6	8	18
Kearney	27	25	14
Lincoln	23	24	32
Norfolk/ South Sioux City	11	10	11
North Platte	6	3	7
Omaha Downtown	8	12	13
Omaha Pre-ETS	16	20	7
Omaha West	11	9	16
Scottsbluff	0	3	10
Total	125	134	161

ASSESSMENTS COMPLETED BY VR OFFICE

VR OFFICE	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Columbus	17	17	18
Fremont	0	0	12
Grand Island/Hastings	4	10	20
Kearney	27	24	16
Lincoln	24	21	28
Norfolk/ South Sioux City	6	10	8
North Platte	6	3	7
Omaha Downtown	10	17	15
Omaha Pre-ETS	16	19	8
Omaha West	15	11	21
Scottsbluff	0	3	16
Total	124	135	169

SERVICE REQUESTS BY ATP SERVICE AREA



2021-2022 Nebraska VR Service Requests by ATP Service Area: 197

48

Kearney

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

49

Columbus

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

15

Scottsbluff

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

55

Omaha

1313 Farnam Street, 68102
(877) 713-4002

30

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 five years. All recommendations made by Technology Specialists are related to the client's disability and job goal. The following three 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 for the last four years. Individuals with physical disabilities were the second largest group referred to ATP and included diagnoses this year such as ALS, back injury, Transverse Myelitis, Arthrogryposis and Polio. This was followed by spinal cord injuries and then hearing loss/deafness as the third and fourth highest disability categories. The chart below shows the primary disabilities that were reported.

PRIMARY DISABILITY REPORTED

PRIMARY DISABILITY	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
ADD/ADHD	11	10	4
Asthma/COPD	0	1	0
Autism	5	15	12
Brain Injury (TBI/ABI)	6	8	10
Cognitive (Intellectual/SLD/Dyslexia)	42	34	35
Cerebral Palsy (CP)	7	4	5
Diabetes	2	1	0
Down Syndrome	2	4	3
Emotional/Mental Health	3	8	7
Hearing Loss	4	4	16
Multiple Sclerosis (MS)	3	2	6
Muscular Dystrophy (MD)	3	2	6
Physical Disability (Arthritis, Arthrogryposis, ALS, back, amputation, DDD, fibromyalgia, Polio, Transverse Myelitis and Dwarfism)	15	11	30
Seizures/Epilepsy	0	1	0
Speech Impairment/Delay	3	2	1
Spina Bifida	1	2	4
Spinal Cord Injury (Quadriplegia/Paraplegia)	15	23	20
Stroke	2	2	2
Vision Loss	1	0	0
Total	125	134	161

This past year approximately 41% of individuals referred to ATP identified both a primary and secondary disability. Physical disabilities were the top diagnosis for secondary disabilities reported and included diagnoses such as back injuries, Arthritis, Fibromyalgia, Scoliosis and Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. Emotional/mental health diagnoses were the second highest, followed by ADD/ADHD and cognitive diagnoses, which both had equal totals tying them for third. Diagnoses are reported 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	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
ADD/ADHD	1	7	6
Asthma	1	1	0
Autism	0	0	3
Autoimmune Disease	0	0	1
Brain Injury (ABI/TBI)	3	3	2
Cancer	1	0	1
Cognitive (Intellectual/SLD)	11	13	6
Diabetes	1	1	3
Emotional/Mental Health	7	14	13
Hearing Impairment	6	2	2
Hydrocephalus	0	0	1
Hypertension	0	2	1
Hypothyroid/Hyperthyroid	1	0	0
Obesity	0	0	2
Physical Disability (back, Arthritis, Fibromyalgia, Scoliosis, Carpel Tunnel)	11	8	16
Seizures/Epilepsy	1	0	4
Speech Impairment/Delay	4	2	2
Spinal Cord Injury (Paraplegia/Quadriplegia)	2	1	2
Stroke	0	0	1
Vision Impairment	0	1	0
Total	50	55	66

Of the 161 unduplicated service requests, 35 individuals or about 22% had at least 3 diagnoses. Some individuals working with VR and referred to ATP had 4, 5 and up to 6 different diagnoses listed. 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 on the next page shows the tertiary disabilities that were reported.

TERTIARY DISABILITY REPORTED

TERTIARY DISABILITY	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
ADD/ADHD	1	1	2
Bladder Issues	0	0	1
Cognitive (Intellectual/SLD)	0	1	1
Diabetes	0	1	0
Emotional/Mental Health	5	9	15
Epilepsy/Seizures	1	0	1
Hearing Impairment	0	3	0
Heart Disease	0	0	1
Hydrocephalus	0	1	0
Hypertension	0	2	0
Hypothyroid/Hyperthyroid	1	0	0
Migraines	1	2	4
Obesity	1	0	0
Physical Disability (back, Carpal Tunnel, Arthritis, Fibromyalgia)	5	3	6
Respiratory	1	1	1
Sleep Disorder (Narcolepsy)	0	0	1
Speech Impairment/Delay	4	1	1
Vision	0	0	1
Total	20	25	35

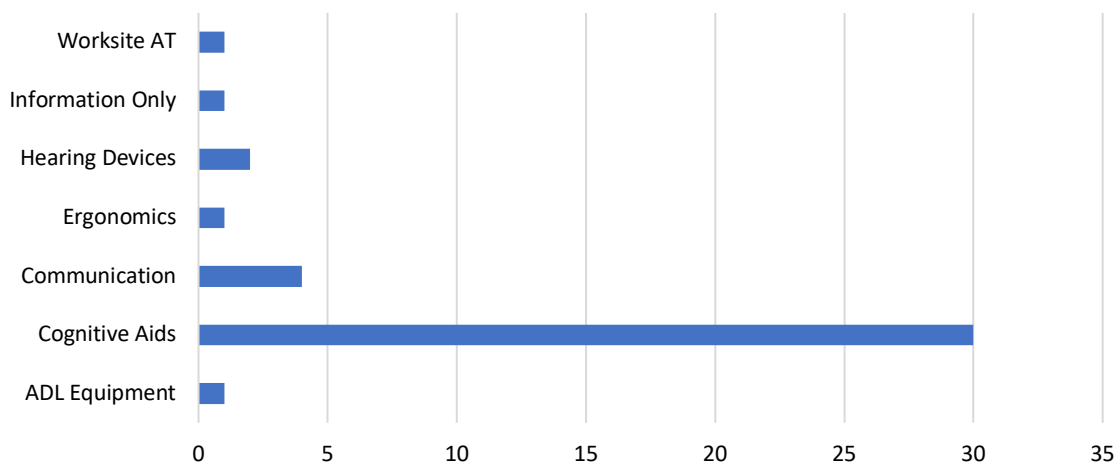
PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

This is the fifth 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 total number of service requests reported on initially.

The number of Pre-ETS students referred to ATP has decreased this past year. There were a total of 40 Pre-ETS referrals to ATP this year and 8 of those referrals were identified as participating in Project SEARCH. For Pre-ETS referrals, Technology Specialists complete 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 works for the individual before they purchase anything. Pre-ETS referrals could also access ATP's Reuse Program as well as resource 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 resource coordination through ATP by completing a Service and Device Application. Of those individuals, some were able to receive funding assistance through the Enrichment Foundation Grant or other loans/grants

available through EasterSeals. Technology Specialists continue to talk with NE VR teams about Pre-ETS services at team meetings and that ATP services could include demonstrating equipment to classrooms, small groups as well as meeting with 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 29 Pre-ETS clients who received a consultation 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 communication was the second highest assessed for AT for Pre-ETS students this year, followed by equipment for hearing loss to help increase independence as these students transition to adulthood.

Pre-ETS Consultations by AT Category

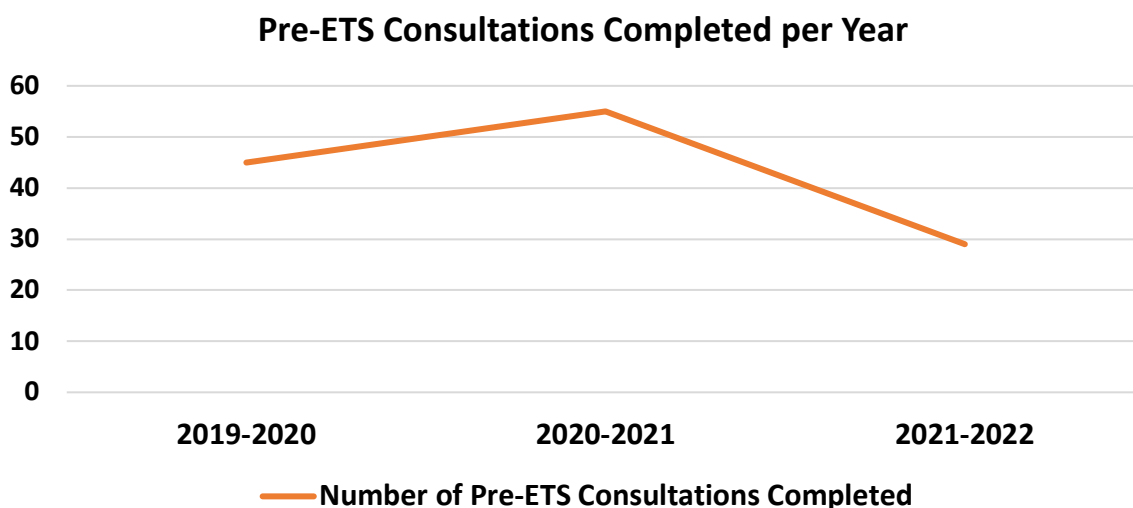


A total of 40 service requests were received that were Pre-ETS cases. However, only 29 of those service requests were assessed. This is due to 11 of the cases being canceled or the referral just recently being received so they are waiting for their consultation appointment to be scheduled. Cases are 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 22.5% and is up from 10% of cancelled Pre-ETS cases from last year. Pre-ETS cases referred during the school year tend to have better follow through than when they are referred at the start of the summer as during the school year teachers often assist with scheduling a meeting. 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	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Columbus	8	10	10
Fremont	0	0	7
Grand Island/ Hastings	3	2	4
Kearney	20	17	1
Lincoln	4	9	7
Norfolk/ South Sioux City	3	3	3
North Platte	2	1	0
Omaha Downtown	0	0	0
Omaha Pre-ETS	12	19	8
Omaha West	1	0	0
Scottsbluff	0	0	0
Total	53	61	40

The number of service requests and consultations completed for the Pre-ETS population decreased this past year. Talking with Pre-ETS staff, referring to ATP tends to be forgotten as caseloads tend to be very high for these staff members. However, referring to ATP and having a consultation complete, even if it is just for education of ATP as a resource can count as one of the 5 categories or services that Pre-ETS staff can provide. Technology Specialists continue to talk with the NE VR teams they serve to remind them of the services available through ATP that could benefit Pre-ETS students. This will continue to be a focus 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 graph below shows the number of assessments completed for Pre-ETS/Project SEARCH referrals in the last 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 three 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. This FY every VR client referred to ATP completed a Service and Device (S&D) application, and a resource letter was provided to them and their VR counselor with additional resources they could potentially qualify for and comparable benefits for them to explore. This next FY, S&D applications are only being required for cases where the recommendations would exceed the Rule 72 VR Cost Containment guidelines, for example when vehicle modifications would exceed \$20,000 or when a home modification is over \$10,000 for a homeowner. 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	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Enrichment Foundation Grant (EFG)	\$62,622.51	\$94,043.70	\$65,054.05
DHHS- A&D Waiver	\$34,342.00	\$0	\$49,000.00
Client Contribution	\$7,707.06	\$25,416.21	\$67,640.42
Other Funding Sources (UCP)	\$1,000	\$0	\$0
Total	\$105,671.57	\$119,459.91	\$181,694.47

AMOUNT EXPENDED FOR AT SOLUTIONS

SOURCE	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
VR Title 1 Funds	\$170,757.11	\$293,151.78	\$467,643.69
Leveraged Funds	\$105,671.57	\$119,459.91	\$181,694.47
Total	\$275,428.68	\$412,611.69	\$649,338.16

From the charts on the previous page, a total of 87 projects accounted for the total amount authorized this FY. Of these cases, 78 had VR funding, 9 had client contributions, 3 received funding through HHS A&D Waiver Program and 14 utilized Enrichment Foundation Grant (EFG) funding. This averages out to approximately \$7,463.66 per project. The total amount of funds expended for AT solutions continues to increase each year as the number of referrals rise. This increase in funds spent on AT and the cost per project is due to having more service requests for higher cost projects such as vehicle modifications. Also, the cost of materials for projects and equipment continues to increase due to items being out of stock and workers being hard to find which is driving the cost of projects up. 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. Every year ATP applies to receive Enrichment Foundation Grant (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 few years approximately \$60,000 was set aside in total from the EFG total received by ATP 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, including Pre-ETS students. Next year the total amount that EFG can contribute per project will be \$10,000, up from \$8,000 last year. This increase in cost per project is needed due to the increasing costs to finish a project. Putting more towards each project will result in ATP helping fewer clients, so less EFG funding may be set aside for NE VR allowing ATP to use the funds to help more clients with no other funding assistance available. 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 funding and supports that could benefit many. Of the 3 clients working with NE VR this year who were also eligible for the A&D Waiver through HHS, a total of \$49,000 was contributed towards vehicle modification projects. 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 as well.

Client contribution went up again this FY, more than doubling the total from last year that clients were contributing towards their own 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 that point, unless they request training on the equipment after it is purchased.

DEVICE DEMONSTRATIONS, LOANS AND REUTILIZATION ACTIVITIES

The AT4ALL website is used to track all equipment demonstrations, loans and reutilization activities. We have been using the new AT4ALL website for the past couple of years now and it has continued to be a great improvement. All loans, demonstrations and reuse activities continue to be by appointment only. 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. Hundreds of pieces of equipment are demonstrated, loaned and given away by ATP programs throughout the state each year. Below is a chart comparing demonstration activities for the past three years for each tracked service area, please note these numbers are for the employment program only.

EMPLOYMENT DEMONSTRATIONS BY ATP SERVICE AREA

Demonstrations			
Service Area	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Columbus	0	1	0
Kearney	10	1	0
Lincoln	19	6	11
Omaha	15	34	27
Scottsbluff	0	0	0
TOTAL	44	42	38

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 loans has increased this past year. It was found that equipment on the AT4ALL website was dated, so older items or devices no longer available to purchase were set aside to surplus. Technology Specialists have been putting together wish lists of updated equipment to add to the AT4ALL site and purchasing has begun on some of these items possibly contributing to the increase in loans this past year. On the next page is a chart comparing loan activities for the past three years for each tracked service area, please note these numbers are for the employment program only.

EMPLOYMENT LOANS BY ATP SERVICE AREA

Employment Loans			
Service Area	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Columbus	0	7	9
Kearney	4	6	5
Lincoln	11	12	24
Omaha	25	14	26
Scottsbluff	0	0	1
TOTAL	40	39	65

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. Examples of some of the reuse equipment this year included bath aids, walkers, a bed rail, back and elbow braces and a safety box cutter. A Technology Specialist even fabricated a reaching stick for a client to assist them in their job using materials they had on hand. Of all the job tasks of a Technology Specialist, logging demonstrations and loans is something that can be unintentionally omitted. Properly logging all demonstrations, loans and reutilization activities continues to be something Technology Specialists work on each year. The number of reutilization activities were down last year due to fewer donations being received and receiving referrals for higher cost items like vehicle modifications. 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 saving NE VR hundreds to thousands of dollars each year. Reuse of equipment for new and existing NE VR staff referrals also happens very frequently. Below is a chart comparing reutilization activities for the past three years for each tracked service area, please note these numbers are for the employment program only.

EMPLOYMENT REUTILIZATION BY ATP SERVICE AREA

Employment Reutilization			
Service Area	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Columbus	0	0	1
Kearney	1	2	3
Lincoln	4	8	5
Omaha	0	7	4
Scottsbluff	0	0	0
TOTAL	5	17	13

CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

In past years, a satisfaction survey was mailed to each client that worked with ATP Technology Specialists after their case was completed to follow-up on the services they were provided. Starting in October 2021, a satisfaction survey was created using Constant Contact and began being sent out electronically via email to NE VR clients once ATP services were complete. If a client does not have an email address, a paper satisfaction survey is mailed out. Last year there were 12 responses and this year there were 16 responses using the new process. This is higher than last year, but still fewer responses than we were hoping for. The ATP Associate who sends out the surveys and Program Supervisor met to discuss the process. It was determined that surveys are being sent out once the Associate pays the vendor for equipment purchased, however cases that do not have purchases are not seen by this Associate. It was determined some clients are being missed, so starting October 2022 Technology Specialists will send a To Do in our system to the Associate asking them to send out the client survey once they complete the case. This will ensure all NE VR cases are being sent the survey once their case is finished to help improve the survey response rate next year.

Of the surveys returned, one client was not sure if ATP staff responded in a timely manner to their case and one client was not sure if they were involved in making choices about the equipment/modifications recommended. All other responses to the satisfaction survey responded positively that they agree or strongly agree. All questions, except question #3, had a strongly agree or agree answer with one not sure. This is at least a 94% satisfaction rate for question #1 and #3 and a 100% satisfaction rate for the other questions. A couple comments from the satisfaction surveys received back include “I just want to say thank you for helping me in a time of need. The computer will go to great use.” and “I can now stock shelves safely without fear of falling as the cart is sturdy.” If a client ever stated that they were dissatisfied on the survey and/or provided their name and phone number asking to be contacted, the ATP 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 on the next page shows the results of the 16 surveys received back as of September 30, 2022.

CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Response
1-ATP staff responded in a timely manner.	9	6	1	0	0	0
2-ATP staff explained the process and answered my questions.	9	7	0	0	0	0
3-I was involved in making choices about the equipment/modifications.	11	4	1	0	0	0
4-The equipment and modifications I received met my expectations.	14	2	0	0	0	0
5-I know how to use the equipment and modifications I received.	13	3	0	0	0	0

PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

1) Quarterly VR Staff Training Emails

Technology Specialists provided trainings to NE VR staff via quarterly Constant Contact emails again this past year. To start the year in January 2022, Melissa Doles worked on an email including information about apps and devices to assist people with hearing loss and included additional links to resources such as the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH) and the Nebraska Specialized Telecommunications Program (NSTEP). In March of 2022, David Altman completed an email that was sent out and discussed reminder apps for Brain Injury Awareness Month. Then in September of 2022, Maddie Piittmann focused her email on reading and writing apps, software and equipment as students were heading back to school. And finally in October 2022, Pam Cody worked on an email with computer short-cuts as well as success stories from clients this year to highlight National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The Constant Contact format allowed NE VR staff flexibility to explore the resources provided as their own schedules allowed.

2) Marketing/ Public Awareness

The VR Title 1 Program Supervisor works closely with ATP marketing staff and has participated in community events and completed presentations this past year to increase the public awareness of ATP and the NE VR partnership. Examples of events attended include Epilepsy Foundations Resource event, OPS Parent Resource Fair, ESU 3 Transition Educators Event and Metropolitan Community College Disability Awareness Month presentation. The Program Supervisor continues to attend various community organizations and partnership meetings with 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, including the Eastern Nebraska Transition Conference.

3) Improvements to Data Collection

The VR Title 1 Program Supervisor continues to share feedback on improvements for data collection in the ATTIE website. Improvements to ATTIE were started and it is hoped that in the future, VR referrals could be electronically sent in and automatically entered in the system. Staff also continue to use the AT4ALL website for logging loans, demonstrations and reuse activities. A new electronic client satisfaction survey was implemented this year in an attempt to obtain increased responses. The electronic surveys were sent via email to any client that provided an email address. If someone did not have an email address, a hard copy of the survey was sent in the mail. This survey was created using the Constant Contact format with the help of Nancy Noha who does ATP marketing and is sent out by a newer associate with ATP, Elizabeth Lamborn.

4) Strengthen working relationships with NE VR Teams

The VR Title 1 Program Supervisor met with all VR teams from September to October 2022 for ATP Team Tours. During the meetings, information from last year's VR report was discussed, as well as updates about the Service and Device applications and ATP referral forms. Information was again shared about holding permission meetings for high-cost cases with VR and ATP before obtaining quotes. The process of sending clients for driver's evaluations before sending over an ATP referral for vehicle modifications was also discussed as there have been a lot of questions about that the past few months. And finally, information was shared on new technology called the JACO Robotic Arm as well as an ATP/VR client success story from last year. Technology Specialists have been attending VR team meetings in their areas to provide updates on ATP cases and information on new AT equipment that could possibly assist NE VR clients. The Program Supervisor continues to meet virtually each month 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

ATP Technology Specialists worked with the Project SEARCH sites to provide services and supports to teachers and interns this year. It was found that multiple sites are not back to holding steering committee meetings since COVID, so this was discussed with Lupe Stevens. There is a Project SEARCH training day coming up on October 27, 2022 that ATP staff will attend. The importance of holding steering committee meetings and inviting the entire team to attend events, including ATP staff, will be discussed as it could greatly benefit the interns by providing an additional resource. Equipment continues to be loaned out to Pre-ETS and Project SEARCH students from AT4ALL.com. If they have an IEP, the student's IEP team are also able to borrow equipment from the Education loan pool at www.education.at4all.com as well. ATP Technology Specialists also presented during mini sessions at each of the Pre-ETS job expos throughout the state and actively participated on many of the planning teams.

6) Promote ATP to Supported Employment Vendors and Clients

This past year the ATP Program Supervisor worked on promoting services to supported employment vendors and clients. Presentations were completed on the services ATP can provide to NE VR clients to various supported employment (SE) providers who work with NE VR. On February 17, 2022 a large group presentation was completed via Zoom to SE service providers and VR staff. The referral form created doesn't seem to be utilized, but more referrals have been received this past year from individuals receiving supported employment services so it seems the necessary conversation is taking place with NE VR staff to ensure a referral to ATP is being made if needed.

GOALS 2022-2023

1) Quarterly VR Staff Training Emails

Technology Specialists working with NE VR will once again complete a quarterly Constant Contact email discussing assistive technology. The email will focus on a specific device or topic and provide information and videos to train NE VR on assistive technology that is available and may be recommended to assist their clients with work. This form of training continues to be a way to reach more staff and allow them to view the material when it is best for their own schedules.

2) Marketing/Public Awareness

The VR Title 1 Program Supervisor will continue to work with ATP staff and assist with marketing. They will have a presence in the community by attending networking groups and meetings with partnering agencies. The Program Supervisor will also attend public awareness events and complete presentations about services to those who could benefit within the community.

3) Improvements to Data Collection

The VR Title 1 Program Supervisor will continue to share feedback on improvements for data collection within the ATTIE website. Staff will continue to use the AT4ALL website for logging loans, demonstrations and reuse activities. The Program Supervisor will also continue to work on making improvements to the client satisfaction survey and the process to which this is sent out to help increase response rates in the next year.

4) Strengthening NE VR and ATP Partnership

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 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 Pre-ETS and Project SEARCH

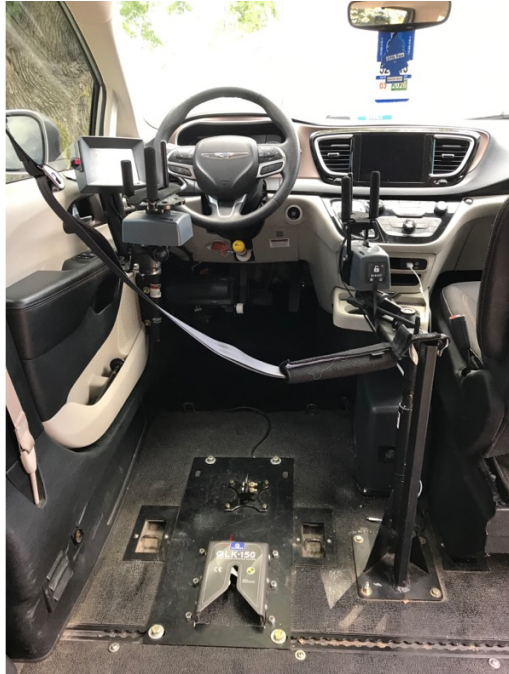
Technology Specialists will continue to focus on and remind NE VR of ATP services available to both Pre-ETS and Project SEARCH clients. ATP staff will continue to work with these students through consultations and helping them identify technology that could increase success in their future vocational endeavors. The various resources available through ATP will be provided to Pre-ETS students including loans, demonstrations, reuse and resource 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) Technology Specialist Training

Technology changes every day and it is tough to always be aware of the latest devices, however this is an important part of our job. Technology Specialists are 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 or at one of our virtual team meetings to benefit the entire group. ATP staff will also continue to attend the mandatory VR trainings and conferences they are invited to participate in.

SUCCESS STORIES

AT for Education



Andy has been working with Nebraska VR for over 8 years. He experiences quadriplegia as a result of an accident and uses a power wheelchair for mobility. He has some wrist movement, but no grasp and no use of his fingers. Andy worked with VR and ATP when entering college for some assistive devices to help with note taking and drawings as he was in a program for architectural engineering. He was able to use his wrist movements and knuckles for typing. Andy is also eligible for the Aged and Disabled (A&D) Waiver program and received services through this program to help with modifications in his home as needed. Modifications were also installed in his vehicle for him to ride as a passenger and have others take him to and from his classes. Andy later switched his major to mathematics and graduated from Metropolitan Community College with this degree. He knew how important it was to have reliable transportation to and from work so Andy completed a high tech driver's

evaluation with the help of Nebraska VR and it was found that Andy could drive independently with an AEVIT, or electronic, driving system. This system would include a joystick and electronic touchscreen system. Nebraska VR assisted with this funding as well as other programs and grants Andy was eligible for including the A&D Waiver Program and the Enrichment Foundation Grant. Now Andy has a fully modified vehicle including a power ramp, wheelchair lock down and AEVIT system so he can drive himself independently and be successful in his position working as a teacher at Metropolitan Community College in the mathematics department.



AT for Job Placement

Josiah was referred to ATP by Nebraska VR. He is diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy and uses a power wheelchair for mobility. Josiah was offered a position working as a cashier at a small convenience store in his hometown. In this position, the computer used to check people out was not accessible to Josiah and various modifications were needed for him to work in this position. Josiah's family helped construct a platform with a ramp behind the counter to raise Josiah up. A power elevating seat feature was also added to Josiah's wheelchair which would raise him up about 12 inches. This lift, along with the platform, would allow him to be able to access the computer screen, change drawer and reach across the counter to hand change to customers. Josiah is able to use a reacher to get higher up items down for customers that are located behind the counter. He was also provided a money counter through the ATP Reuse program to help with counting his money drawer at the end of his shift. These modifications have assisted Josiah in being able to work and be successful in his new position.



AT for Self-Employment



Josh is a Veteran of the United States Marine Corps. During active duty he was injured when he fell down a cliff. He experiences a 50% service-related disability and is in constant pain in his wrist, shoulder, knee, ankle, back, and feet. Because of his injuries, he can neither sit nor stand for long periods of time. Josh's work goal is to be self-employed as a gunsmith, working from a shop and office at his home.

Over the years he has built a shop by attending auctions and sales to purchase equipment. He has gradually been purchasing and making the tools he needs to keep costs low and not incur any debt. The 20'x 30' shop is located 60' from his home, where his computer and printer are located, requiring him to walk back and forth 8-10 times per hour when working on gunsmithing jobs (see photo below). Winter weather causes an additional hazard for Josh and his customers.



I evaluated his shop and environment for cost effective accommodations that Josh needs to continue to build his business and eventually be self employed as a gunsmith.

Josh is set up for efficiency of movement and is still evolving as he completes more customer orders. There are three work accommodations that would be beneficial on the road to self-employment:

(1) **Laptop** – In addition to the location of the computer away from his shop, it is 11 years old and it does not have the capacity to utilize his design software and schedule video conferencing. A laptop for his shop will make it possible for him to process orders and invoices with his clients in the shop and not have to go to his home. The laptop is a related need to operate his business, saving the strain on Josh's body walking back and forth to the house every time he needs to use the computer. Videoconferencing will make it possible to meet with customers remotely.

(2) **Printer**

Josh's need for a printer in the shop is twofold. When Josh needs to print, he has to walk to his house, which becomes very labor intensive due to his injuries. His printer also does not work well and will have compatibility issues with an updated computer. A low cost printer in the shop to print designs, orders, and invoices for his customers will meet his needs.

(3) **Anti-Fatigue mats**

Josh has very little matting on any of the concrete floors in his work areas. Concrete is unforgiving on the body. The downward forces of gravity and body weight go into the concrete, which are not absorbed and go right back up into Josh's feet, ankles, knees, hips, back, etc. Anti-fatigue matting absorbs those forces and allows very little force back into the body. Josh needs matting in front of all his workstations. The mats are small (2'x3" and 3'x5') and can be moved

around to other areas as needed. Mat locations are in front of the mill, the belt sander station, workbench, lathe, and the soldering workbench.



“I wanted to pass along the praise that Josh expressed for David Altman, Technology Specialist’s help and for the worksite modifications he received...Josh described that the laptop and the anti-fatigue mats have been life changing. The amount of time Josh saves no longer having to run between his shop and the main house is very, very significant. Josh shared he can video conference, look-up parts, design and fabricate parts strictly in the shop. There has been a noticeable improvement in Josh’s ability to stand now for much longer periods of time then he ever could before and that his level of pain has also decreased.”- Julie Shively, Nebraska VR

AT for Job Retention

Pamela is diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis, late effects of Cerebrovascular Disease and Obesity. She works at Walmart as a greeter and at the self-check-out stations. Due to her diagnoses Pamela was using a manual wheelchair, but it was very old, heavy and she was having trouble pushing herself through the store and becoming easily fatigued. Pamela did not have a vehicle that was able to be modified to transport a scooter or heavy power wheelchair so other options were explored. A lightweight heavy duty power wheelchair was recommended for Pamela. She was able to use this to get around the store easily and assist customers. It was also small and light weight so could be lifted by a coworker into her vehicle to be transported. Pamela also needed some home modifications to make her home more accessible for her to get to and from work including a ramp and garage door opener. These modifications have assisted Pamela in increasing her hours and continuing to keep the job that she enjoys.



AT for Job Advancement

Shortly after birth, Jared was found to have bilateral profound deafness, meaning he could not hear with either ear. He was a candidate for cochlear implants, which would help him to partake in conversations utilizing oral communication on top of sign language. Growing up, hearing has been a challenge he still faces every day. However, while transitioning to college, Jared realized he had a whole new challenge as he chose to enter the medical field. As an emergency medical technician (EMT) and intensive care nurse, using a stethoscope to assess lung sounds, heart tones, and bowel sounds is a crucial part of assessing patients. Unfortunately, Jared found he was unable to hear with a regular stethoscope. Jared was working with Nebraska VR and was referred to Assistive Technology Partnership. His ATP Technology Specialist worked with him on identifying what assistive technology would work best for him. After trialing equipment, the Eko CORE stethoscope was recommended. Nebraska VR was able to assist with funding and the equipment has made a lasting impact as he pursues a career to treat and care for patients. After a one-time download of an app that comes with the stethoscope, all he has to do is turn the stethoscope on and it Bluetooth connects to his phone, which is also paired with his cochlear implant. Having this stethoscope allows Jared to be successful in his chosen line of work and will allow him to continue chasing his dreams despite his disability. While working to grow his experience as a nurse, Jared plans to continue to expand his knowledge by obtaining a paramedic certification and hopes to become a flight nurse/paramedic someday.

