



# Nebraska VR Report

2017-2018

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**Tobias Orr**

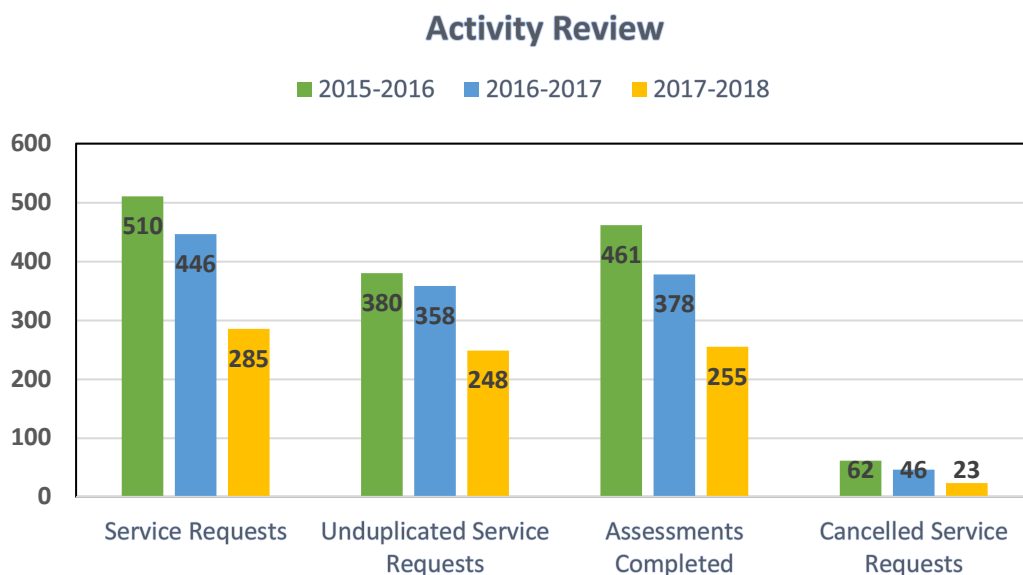
*Director*

**Brooke Harrie**

*Program Coordinator*

## SERVICE REQUESTS AND ASSESSMENTS

The following report includes analysis and comparisons of Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP) and Nebraska VR (NE VR) service program data for the last three fiscal years (FY 2015-2016, 2016-2017 and 2017-2018). 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 308 service requests during the last fiscal year, however 23 of those were ergonomic and 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 number of service requests for NE VR staff has been removed from all data.



During FY 2017-2018, the total number of service requests received was lower than the previous two years. This reduction in numbers is due to NE VR going into an Order of Selection (OOS) status taking only priority 1 cases starting January 2018 and then closing all priority groups in April of 2018. ATP has continued to work with NE VR clients with active cases with the majority of the cases being under the job retention category during OOS and needing some type of assistive technology (AT). ATP has established a process for working with clients in Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), which includes individuals in Project SEARCH, and this has increased the number of clients referred to ATP from this population. ATP is working with Pre-ETS by doing informational assessments, loans and demos of equipment as well as funding coordination services if needed to help the client identify other possible funding sources to purchase the needed technology. Due to the lower number of service requests, NE VR Technology Specialists have been taking cases with other ATP programs to help out, such as iCanConnect and the Education Program. There was also 1 full time NE VR Technology Specialist that retired last year. The program currently has 1 Program Coordinator/Technology Specialist in Omaha, 1 Technology Specialist in Kearney, 1 Technology Specialist in Lincoln, 1 Technology Specialist in Columbus and a Technology Specialist in Scottsbluff who is only part time NE VR.

There were 5 priority cases this fiscal year. A case is determined a priority if the client is at immediate risk of losing their job, they are failing a class or if they cannot start a job until their 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 37 cases this year with more than 1 service request. The number of cases with duplicate service requests dropped from 19% last year to 13% this year, showing the number of clients with complex AT needs declined. This year there was a range of one to four service requests per referral. The number of cancelled service requests decreased this year, dropping from 10% to 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, 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 and the case will be closed as complete by the Technology Specialist.

The chart below (continues on next page) reflects the number of assessments completed by AT category for the past three fiscal years for NE VR clients only. Due to a lower number of service requests this year, fewer assessments were completed. 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. Cognitive aids were about one-fourth of the technology assessed for this fiscal year, with Worksite AT being a close second.

### **ASSESSMENTS BY ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY CATEGORY**

<b>AT CATEGORY</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
<b>ADL Equipment</b>	26	26	14
<b>Bathroom/Laundry Modifications</b>	15	12	9
<b>Bicycle</b>	-	-	4
<b>Cognitive Aids</b>	128	91	58
<b>Communication</b>	7	5	7
<b>Computer (hardware/software)</b>	27	29	27
<b>Entrance Modifications</b>	17	13	4
<b>Environmental Controls</b>	1	0	0
<b>Ergonomics</b>	30	21	9

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<b>Hearing Devices and Accessories</b>	35	24	18
<b>Information Only</b>	9	9	4
<b>Kitchen Modifications</b>	3	0	1
<b>Lift (Interior and Exterior)</b>	8	4	2
<b>Lift Repair</b>	2	2	0
<b>Mobility Device</b>	34	23	11
<b>Mobility Device Repair</b>	0	0	2
<b>Other</b>	6	3	0
<b>Other Home Modifications</b>	9	4	5
<b>Prosthetic/Orthosis</b>	0	1	0
<b>Ramp</b>	0	1	2
<b>Vehicle Modifications</b>	51	57	34
<b>Vehicle Modifications Repair</b>	5	0	2
<b>Vision Device</b>	1	1	0
<b>Worksite AT</b>	47	52	42
<b>Total</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>255</b>

A new bicycle program was started this past year at ATP. It was identified by NE VR staff that transportation is a major barrier for clients to be able to obtain and maintain employment. A low-cost solution identified was riding a bicycle and partnerships were formed with local agencies who donated used bicycles and parts. A NE VR Technology Specialist has the skills to repair and refurbish bicycles and is also able to fit them properly to the person for safety and comfort. This program has provided clients dependable transportation with very little expense to NE VR.

The following three charts reflect service request activity by NE VR office/team. In the past it was identified that the same NE VR staff from each office were referring to ATP, while others were not. This was due to some teams having only 1 staff person taking AT cases as well as lack of knowledge of ATP and how to refer. The ATP Program Coordinator for VR Title 1 and the NE VR Technology Specialists have worked hard to inform all NE VR staff about ATP services and how the process works by presenting at team meetings, new staff implementation trainings and presenting information when meeting one on one with new NE VR staff during the ergonomic assessment.

### **SERVICE REQUESTS BY VR OFFICE**

<b>VR OFFICE</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
<b>Columbus</b>	37	31	24
<b>Fremont</b>	8	7	5
<b>Grand Island/ Hastings</b>	61	45	23
<b>Kearney</b>	90	81	40
<b>Lincoln</b>	85	90	59

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<b>Norfolk/ South Sioux City</b>	35	31	18
<b>North Platte</b>	34	27	14
<b>Omaha Downtown</b>	71	64	20
<b>Omaha Pre-ETS</b>	-	-	41
<b>Omaha West</b>	60	56	26
<b>Scottsbluff</b>	29	14	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>285</b>

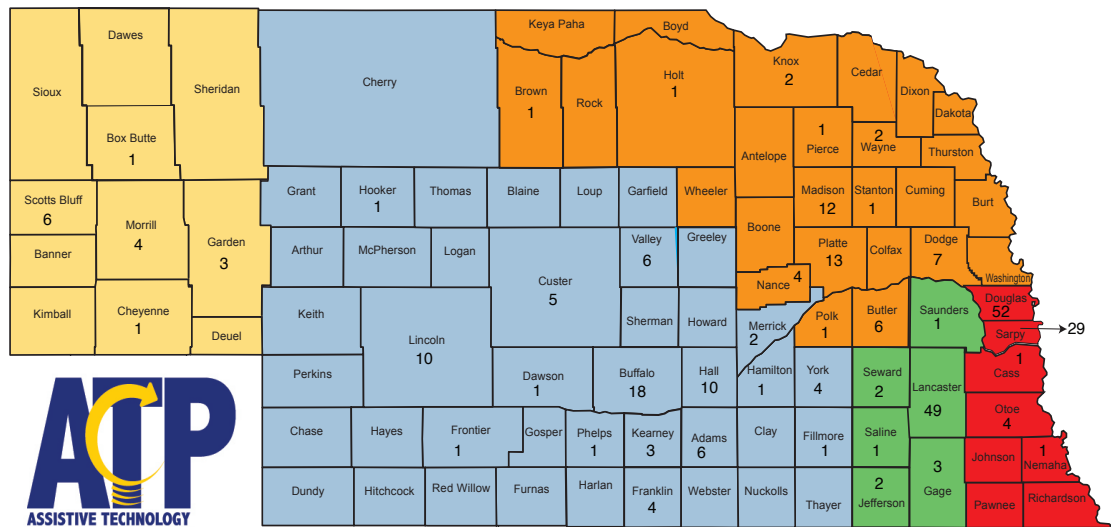
### **UNDUPLICATED SERVICE REQUESTS BY VR OFFICE**

<b>VR OFFICE</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
<b>Columbus</b>	37	28	21
<b>Fremont</b>	6	5	5
<b>Grand Island/ Hastings</b>	49	38	19
<b>Kearney</b>	68	64	31
<b>Lincoln</b>	71	77	54
<b>Norfolk/ South Sioux City</b>	29	26	16
<b>North Platte</b>	24	21	14
<b>Omaha Downtown</b>	47	48	17
<b>Omaha Pre-ETS</b>	-	-	41
<b>Omaha West</b>	31	39	20
<b>Scottsbluff</b>	18	12	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>248</b>

### **ASSESSMENTS COMPLETED BY VR OFFICE**

<b>VR OFFICE</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
<b>Columbus</b>	28	27	18
<b>Fremont</b>	7	6	5
<b>Grand Island/ Hastings</b>	53	29	18
<b>Kearney</b>	78	69	34
<b>Lincoln</b>	81	85	55
<b>Norfolk/ South Sioux City</b>	31	29	17
<b>North Platte</b>	30	20	12
<b>Omaha Downtown</b>	65	61	20
<b>Omaha Pre-ETS</b>	-	-	40
<b>Omaha West</b>	60	46	22
<b>Scottsbluff</b>	28	6	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>255</b>

## SERVICE REQUESTS BY ATP SERVICE AREA



### Nebraska VR Service Requests: 285

74

#### Kearney

315 W. 60<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 300, 68845  
(308) 865-5349, (800) 683-6699

51

#### Columbus

3100 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 5, 68601  
(402) 564-3225

15

#### Scottsbluff

505A Broadway, Suite 500, 69361  
(308) 632-1332

87

#### Omaha

1313 Farnam Street, Suite 305, 68102  
(402) 595-1923, (877) 201-4141

58

#### Lincoln

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

## DISABILITY

A new category being reported on this fiscal year is disability. All recommendations made by NE VR Technology Specialists are related to the client's disability. The number of disabilities reported to ATP by NE VR staff on referrals ranged from 1 to 6 diagnoses per client. The following 3 charts show the primary, secondary and tertiary disabilities reported to NE VR by the client. An additional 7% of NE VR clients reported 4-6 diagnoses showing the clients that NE VR and ATP are serving have very complex needs related to a vast range of disabilities.

## PRIMARY DISABILITY REPORTED

PRIMARY DISABILITY	2017-2018
<b>ADD/ADHD</b>	25
<b>Asthma</b>	1
<b>Autism</b>	12
<b>Brain Injury (TBI/ABI)</b>	7
<b>Cognitive (Intellectual/SLD/Dyslexia)</b>	33
<b>Cerebral Palsy (CP)</b>	16
<b>Diabetes</b>	3
<b>Down Syndrome</b>	1
<b>Emotional/Mental Health</b>	16
<b>Hearing Impairment</b>	29
<b>Heart Disease</b>	2
<b>Hormonal Disorder</b>	1
<b>Hydrocephalus</b>	1
<b>Lyme Disease</b>	1
<b>Multiple Sclerosis (MS)</b>	9
<b>Muscular Dystrophy (MD)</b>	7
<b>Parkinson's Disease</b>	1
<b>Physical Disability (Arthritis, back, amputation, Charcot Marie Tooth, Club foot, DDD, fibromyalgia, Polio)</b>	36
<b>Seizures/Epilepsy</b>	6
<b>Speech Impairment/Delay</b>	4
<b>Spina Bifida</b>	6
<b>Spinal Cord Injury (Quadriplegia/Paraplegia)</b>	21
<b>Stroke</b>	9
<b>Vision Impairment</b>	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>248</b>

## SECONDARY DISABILITY REPORTED

A total of 103 cases or 42% of the clients referred to ATP this fiscal year reported having a secondary disability. The chart on the following page shows the secondary disabilities that were reported.

<b>SECONDARY DISABILITY</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
<b>ADD/ADHD</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Asthma</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Autism</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Cancer</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Cognitive (Intellectual/SLD)</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Diabetes</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Emotional/Mental Health</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Hearing Impairment</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Hypertension</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Obesity</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Physical Disability (ALS, back, Arthritis, DDD, Fibromyalgia, Scoliosis, Carpel Tunnel)</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Seizures/Epilepsy</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Shaken Baby Syndrome</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Speech Impairment/Delay</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Vision Impairment</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>

### **TERTIARY DISABILITY REPORTED**

A total of 37 cases or 15% of the clients referred to ATP this fiscal year reported having a tertiary disability. The chart below shows the tertiary disabilities that were reported.

<b>TERTIARY DISABILITY</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
<b>ADD/ADHD</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Brain Injury (TBI/ABI)</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Cognitive (Intellectual/SLD)</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Diabetes</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Emotional/Mental Health</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Hearing Impairment</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Kidney Disease</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Physical Disability (back, balance, obesity, hypertension)</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Seizures/ Epilepsy</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Sleep Apnea</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Speech Impairment/Delay</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Vision Impairment</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>37</b>

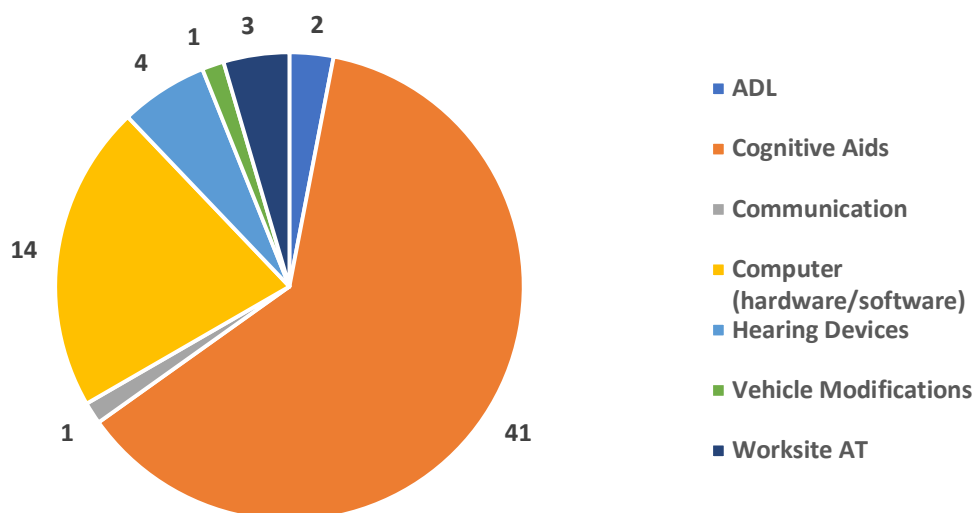


## PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

This is the first year of reporting on the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) program. Last year Project SEARCH was reported on, but since Project SEARCH individuals also fall under the Pre-ETS category, those individuals were included in this section. These numbers were also included in the total number of service requests reported on initially.

Technology Specialists presented about the NE VR/ATP partnership 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 before the OOS took place. In these rare cases, NE VR was able to purchase recommendations for the clients. However, with the majority of the Pre-ETS referrals received, information only assessments were completed where the Technology Specialists were able to demonstrate and loan equipment to the clients from the AT4ALL website. The clients were also provided with the cost and information on where they could purchase the equipment on their own as well as resources to help with funding if needed. A few Pre-ETS clients who applied for funding coordination by completing a Service and Device Application with ATP were able to get funding assistance for assistive technology through the Enrichment Foundation Grant or Independent Living Part B funding. The graph below shows the specific technology that was recommended for the 66 Pre-ETS clients who were assessed.

Pre-ETS Assessments by Assistive Technology Category

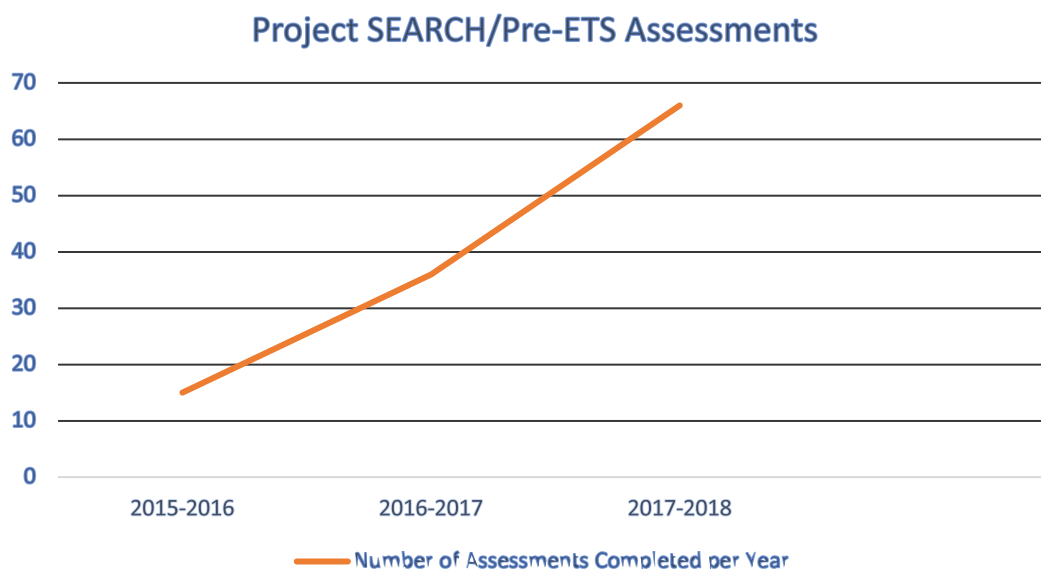


A total of 73 service requests were received under the Pre-ETS category. Of those 73, a total of 21 were identified as being a Project SEARCH intern. The Pre-ETS referrals had great follow through with 66 assessments being completed and only 4 referrals being cancelled as 3 did not maintain contact and 1 declined services. Three of the Pre-ETS referrals received are new and have not been assessed yet. The follow through from this population can be attributed to NE VR staff providing contact information for the parents if needed as well as school contacts

so assessments could be completed onsite at school as well. The chart below shows the total number of Pre-ETS referrals by VR office throughout the state.

<b>VR OFFICE</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
<b>Columbus</b>	7
<b>Fremont</b>	0
<b>Grand Island/ Hastings</b>	4
<b>Kearney</b>	0
<b>Lincoln</b>	11
<b>Norfolk/ South Sioux City</b>	4
<b>North Platte</b>	6
<b>Omaha Pre-ETS</b>	41
<b>Scottsbluff</b>	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>

Last year a total of 38 service requests were received for NE VR clients who were participating in the Project SEARCH Program. As the number of those referred who are participating in Project SEARCH has declined, the number of individuals referred to ATP through Pre-ETS has doubled. The number of assessments completed for this population has continued to increase as well over the past 3 years. We anticipate the number of referrals will continue to increase as each NE VR office becomes more educated on the services and supports that ATP can offer to this population. Below is a chart showing the number of assessments completed for Project SEARCH/Pre-ETS referrals in the past 3 years.



## FUNDING

The following two charts summarize and compare the amount of VR title 1 funds and leveraged funds for assistive technology. The ATP Funding Coordinator researches local, state and federal funding guidelines and eligibility requirements for funding resources that may be available for the clients we serve. The VR Title 1 Program Coordinator participates in funding coordination meetings quarterly to discuss potential comparable benefits that may be leveraged for VR Title 1 clients, such as Enrichment Foundation Grant and Part B IL funds. The chart below shows only the amounts authorized between October 1 and September 30<sup>th</sup> for the last 3 fiscal years.

### LEVERAGED FUNDS BY SOURCE

<b>SOURCE</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
<b>Enrichment Foundation Grant</b>	\$40,499.00	\$40,000.00	\$62,927.11
<b>DHHS- A&amp;D Waiver</b>	\$21,564.00	\$20,000.00	\$31,655.03
<b>Part B</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$8,217.88
<b>UCP</b>	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Client Contribution</b>	\$28,329.99	\$16,376.11	\$4,410.94
<b>Total</b>	\$91,392.99	\$76,376.11	\$107,210.96

### AMOUNT EXPENDED FOR AT SOLUTIONS

<b>SOURCE</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
<b>VR Title 1 Funds</b>	\$1,085,024.84	\$970,097.61	\$583,736.43
<b>Leveraged Funds</b>	\$91,392.99	\$76,376.11	\$107,210.96
<b>Total</b>	\$1,176,417.83	\$1,046,473.72	\$690,947.39

Due to NE VR being in the OOS status the majority of the fiscal year, the funds spent on AT were drastically reduced. The VR Title 1 Program Coordinator worked closely with the ATP Funding Coordinator and other Program Coordinators within ATP to identify other funding sources that VR clients may be able to utilize to assist them with obtaining the AT they need. The leveraged funds were much greater than last year as a result. For leveraged funds, this will be the last year for Part B IL funds, with only a few cases possibly showing up in the VR report next year. Every year ATP applies to receive EFG funds, so this assistance should continue, however the amount allotted specifically to VR cases changes each year. Clients are asked to

apply for A&D Waiver if they are Medicaid eligible and are assisted through this process. NE VR staff have been more active in working with employers and asking if they can help or provide the equipment recommended by ATP for their employees. Other funding sources are also utilized and not tracked including the NSTEP Program through the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing that has assisted VR clients with purchasing smartphones and signalers. Client contribution shows that it went down, as it is only tracking cases where clients paid a portion of the cost, not the whole total. In reality, client contribution more than likely increased as some clients ended up paying for the entire cost of their AT needs on their own, but these cases were not tracked. For example, NE VR cannot spend money on Pre-ETS cases so recommendations are made and resources are provided. The clients 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's purchased.

## **DEVICE DEMONSTRATIONS, LOANS AND REUTILIZATION ACTIVITIES**

The AT4ALL database is used to track all equipment demonstrations, loans and reutilization activities. This is the fourth year of data collection of loans for employment purposes. Below are charts comparing demonstration, loan and reutilization activities for the past three years.

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.

### **EMPLOYMENT DEMONSTRATIONS BY ATP SERVICE AREA**

<b>Demonstrations</b>			
<b>Service Area</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
Columbus	9	21	28
Kearney	172	133	76
Lincoln	26	4	12
Omaha	96	102	115
Scottsbluff	1	1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>231</b>

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 VR referrals received, access to online videos and tutorials of equipment as well as clients needing higher tech equipment that is not available on AT4ALL as well as home and vehicle modifications that are not available in the AT4ALL loan library.

### **EMPLOYMENT LOANS BY ATP SERVICE AREA**

<b>Employment Loans</b>			
<b>Service Area</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
Columbus	23	26	12
Kearney	116	70	25
Lincoln	71	89	53
Omaha	69	59	47
Scottsbluff	0	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>138</b>

### **LOANS FOR EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES BY ATP SERVICE AREA**

<b>Loans for Employment Purposes</b>			
<b>Borrower</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
NE VR Client	139	156	78
NE VR Staff	65	41	25
ATP Staff	8	9	8
Employer (not receiving VR Services)	0	1	2
Employee (not receiving VR Services)	17	20	10
Other	50	13	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>138</b>

With the limited NE VR funding this past year, Technology Specialists have really tried to look at alternative resources for NE VR clients to help meet their technology needs. When the equipment is available, Technology Specialists try to reuse equipment that is donated in clean, working condition to help offset the cost of assistive technology. 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 greater focus will be put on making sure all demonstrations, loans and reutilization activities are properly documented by Technology Specialists. The AT4ALL website is going to be updated in the next year, which will also assist with easier and more efficient data tracking.

## **EMPLOYMENT REUTILIZATION BY ATP SERVICE AREA**

<b>Employment Reutilization</b>			
<b>Service Area</b>	<b>2015-2016</b>	<b>2016-2017</b>	<b>2017-2018</b>
Columbus	0	0	0
Kearney	0	1	5
Lincoln	23	11	6
Omaha	2	5	8
Scottsbluff	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>

The number of reutilization activities has been consistent the past two years, however the technology donated has been higher cost items that has ended up saving more money than in previous years. This year a Smart Drive system, manual wheelchair, hand controls and vehicle chair topper are just a few examples of the equipment that was donated back to ATP by a past VR client who was not longer able to use it. This equipment alone totaled close to \$14,000. The story of the NE VR client who received this equipment through reuse is available in the success stories at the end of this report.

## **CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEYS**

Every client that works with NE VR Technology Specialists is sent a survey once their case is complete to follow-up on the services received. Fifty-nine client satisfaction surveys were returned during FY 2017-2018. This is lower than the 88 surveys received last fiscal year as a result of the lower number of referrals received. Clients reported between 93% and 100% satisfaction in all categories, which is higher than the 86-94% last year. Changes were made to the survey last year yielding a higher response rate and no questions being left without a response. If a client stated they were dissatisfied on the survey, the Program Coordinator for the VR Title 1 Program contacted the client to get more information or determine if any additional assistance was needed. The table on the following page summarizes the results of the 59 surveys received back.

## CLIENT SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

Questions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1-ATP staff responded in a timely manner.	36	19	0	4	0
2-ATP staff explained the process and answered my questions.	40	18	1	0	0
3-I was involved in making choices about the equipment/modifications.	39	18	1	1	0
4-The equipment and modifications I received met my expectations.	44	12	3	0	0
5-I know how to use the equipment and modifications I received.	46	11	0	2	0
6-The equipment and modifications have helped me.	44	15	0	0	0

## PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

### 1) VR Staff Training

ATP Technology Specialists worked closely with the VR teams in their individual service areas this year. They worked to attend team meetings monthly, or as requested, to provide updates on ATP cases with the team and demonstrate new equipment.

Technology specialists have also been completing training videos on various pieces of technology. The video completed by our Technology Specialist in Lincoln shows vehicle modifications and tells the story of one ATP client. This was presented at the ATP Advisory Council meeting in September and will be sent via email to VR staff to view at their leisure in the near future. The other videos plan to be sent out in the next few months.

### 2) Marketing/Public Awareness/Employment Outreach

The VR Title 1 Program Coordinator participated in various groups and meetings throughout the community to increase public awareness about ATP and the VR partnership. Disability Organizations Together Serve or DOTS is a group that meets monthly where different organizations in the community share about resources for people with disabilities. The Vision Resource Coalition or VRC group meets quarterly and is also a group that the ATP Program Coordinator participates in to promote the iCanConnect (iCC) Program and other services available at ATP. A resource fair took place at Raymond Central High School on 3/21/18 and the VR Title 1 Program Coordinator had a booth and demonstrated various pieces of technology to students, parents and educators. The Hero Up Walkathon in Omaha on 7/28/18 for Jansen's was

also an event that was attended and information was presented by having a resource table. The VR Title 1 Program Coordinator presented to a group of program coordinators at Region V Services in Lincoln on 8/9/18 with the ATP Program Coordinator of Reuse and Education. Equipment was demonstrated and the array of ATP services were discussed with the group at the staff meeting. Various other disability fairs were attended by ATP Technology Specialists in their areas throughout the state.

**3) Continue to Improve Data Collection**

Over the past year, the Program Coordinator and Technology Specialists have become more familiar with ATTIE and how to properly enter information into the system. Changes continue to be made to update the system and feedback is provided to the ATP Director to help improve the system so data collection is as accurate as possible. One example is making suggestions to add new services to properly track Pre-ETS cases that may find funding resources, like the Enrichment Foundation Grant, and be able to track this information. The VR Title 1 Program Coordinator continues to work with Technology Specialists on how to work in ATTIE as changes are made and also work with the AT4ALL database to properly enter loans, demonstrations and reutilization activities. The AT4ALL website is planning to be updated in the next year, which will make it more efficient and easier for clients and staff to use.

**4) Maintain and Improve Communication with NE VR Teams**

The Program Coordinator for the VR Title 1 Program completed team tours this year with the new CAP Director and 4 VR Program Directors. The group traveled to VR offices throughout the state and presented new program updates, answered questions and discussed cases so VR staff all had consistent information. The Program Coordinator presented to new VR staff at Implementation Trainings in Lincoln to ensure new staff starting at VR were aware of ATP services and how to access them for their clients. Technology Specialists also presented at team meetings monthly, or as requested, to maintain communication and a positive relationship with VR staff.

**5) Support Project SEARCH**

The VR Title 1 Program Coordinator and Technology Specialists have continued to work with the Project SEARCH sites in their service areas. ATP staff participate by not only taking referrals for the Pre-ETS clients and providing loans and equipment demos, but also by participating in Business Advisory Council meetings, steering committee meetings for each site, open house and orientation nights, skills/assessment days and also volunteering at the PS job fair each year in Omaha/Lincoln.

**6) Continuation of Workgroup**

The VR Title 1 Program Coordinator has continued to participate in the workgroup created a couple years ago to focus on how to best provide AT support to NE VR clients with WIOA and the new initiatives implemented by VR. This year when the NE VR Program Director of Community Services retired, her replacement attended meetings for a short time, but it was found the NE VR Program Director for Employment Services would be a better fit for the group as she would be filling in for the NE VR Program



Director of Counseling on requests for high cost funding, etc. when she was out, which often includes ATP services. This group meets monthly and discusses cases, policies and works to ensure there is consistency with the partnership throughout the state. Through this group, assistance was provided for creating a process for recoupment of equipment as ATP may be involved with this and tracking the items donated back for reuse.

**7) Establish a Process for Pre-ETS**

This past year, a process was created to accept ATP referrals for Pre-ETS clients. Technology Specialists were trained in how to work with Pre-ETS clients and create specific information only reports for this population. If these clients needed funding assistance, they were directed to our Service & Device application and worked with the Program Coordinator and ATP Funding Coordinator to identify grants and funding that may be available to them. The VR Title 1 Program Coordinator presented with the ATP Director at the statewide Pre-ETS Conference on 12/5/17 to provide information to VR staff on how the Pre-ETS program would work. Technology Specialists have been completing assessments with this population, providing equipment loans and demonstrations as well as presenting on ATP to classrooms in schools and at PS sites.

## **GOALS 2018-2019**

**1) VR Staff Training**

This past year ATP Technology Specialists worked on creating videos demonstrating AT devices. During this process it was identified that almost all equipment out there has similar videos already available on YouTube and other websites online. Starting next year, every quarter the idea is to have Technology Specialists take turns creating an email blast about a certain type of equipment and include information as well as links to videos that have already been made and posted online for VR staff to watch and learn about the different AT equipment. This will provide training to VR staff and also allow them to participate at their own leisure.

**2) Marketing/Public Awareness/Employment Outreach**

The ATP Program Coordinator for the VR Title 1 program 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. This goal will be accomplished by the continued presence of ATP at Project SEARCH and VR events, DOTS, VRC, community resource fairs and presentations to other employers and providers throughout the state.

**3) Continue to Improve Data Collection**

As our database ATTIE continues to improve, the ATP Program Coordinator for the VR Title 1 program will work with the ATP Director to provide feedback and suggestions to improve data collection. The Program Coordinator will work with NE VR Technology Specialists to ensure they are knowledgeable of the database as changes occur and also

work to improve data collection of loans, demonstrations and reutilization activities in the AT4ALL website when it is upgraded in the next year.

**4) Maintain and Improve Communication with NE VR Teams**

During FY 2018-2019, the VR Title 1 Program Coordinator will meet with teams either in person or via video conference at least once to provide program updates and get feedback on the partnership and ATP services. The Technology Specialists will continue to attend VR team meetings monthly, or as their schedules allow, to provide updates on ATP cases and demonstrate new AT equipment for their knowledge when working with clients.

**5) Support Project SEARCH**

ATP staff will continue to work closely with all Project SEARCH sites and provide AT support and knowledge to interns and staff. The VR Title 1 Program Coordinator and Technology Specialists will continue to work one on one with referrals as well as attend Business Advisory Council meetings, steering committee meetings, skills/assessment days, open houses and orientation nights as needed to assist the interns with AT needs so they can be as successful as possible in their rotations and are aware of ATP as a resource in the future.

**6) Continuation of Workgroup**

The VR Title 1 Program Coordinator, the NE VR Program Director for Counseling and NE VR Program Director for Employment Services will continue to meet on a monthly basis to focus on continuing the partnership between VR and ATP and ensuring policies, procedures and cases are handled consistently throughout the state.

**7) Continue to Provide and Improve Pre-ETS Services**

The VR Title 1 Program Coordinator and Technology Specialists throughout the state will continue to work with Pre-ETS clients and promote this resource to NE VR staff. Technology Specialists will complete AT assessments, demonstrations and equipment loans as well as provide resources to clients and their families for funding assistance of AT equipment so the clients can continue to be successful in their educational and vocational goals.

## SUCCESS STORIES

### AT for Job Advancement

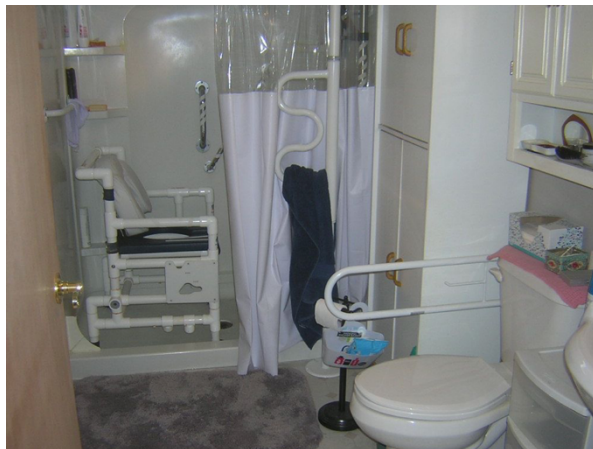


Jordan is diagnosed with arthrogryposis, which results in limited use of his legs, arms and hands and use of a power wheelchair for mobility. He lives in Omaha and works at Alorica as a Caption Specialist. In this position, Jordan relays messages from hearing callers to people who are deaf and hard of hearing by repeating what the speaking caller says so the words can get translated into text for the hard of hearing person. He was working part time as his father had to drive him, which limited the days and hours he could work. Jordan completed a driver's evaluation with the help of Nebraska VR and high-tech vehicle modifications were identified that would allow Jordan to drive safely and independently using the abilities he has in his hands and arms as well as his mouth. Jordan purchased a 2017 Chrysler Pacifica and with funding from Nebraska VR, the Enrichment Foundation Grant and the A&D Waiver Program, which Jordan was eligible for, the vehicle

modifications were able to be funded and installed on his new vehicle. ATP staff worked with vendors and NE VR to obtain quotes and ensure the proper vehicle modifications were recommended and installed for Jordan. He completed the necessary training and is now able to drive to work without having to rely on others. Jordan's goal is to increase his hours at work to full time and work his way off of Social Security benefits with this new freedom.

### AT for Job Retention

Michael is diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and needed assistance with being able to maintain his job as a library aid in his community of Oshkosh. He was struggling with completing activities of daily living independently and had experienced multiple falls from having to stand and step up into the shower, so bathroom modifications were recommended including a barrier free shower and shower chair. He was having trouble accessing his home via a homemade ramp with a steep incline, so a ramp meeting ADA standards was recommended





as an entrance modification. Michael obtained a new power wheelchair through insurance, however he needed a power seat elevation system to be able to complete all job tasks required of him, including putting books away on high shelves. Once he got the new mobility device, he also needed a new bracket in order for him to drive from his wheelchair to and from work independently. These modifications were completed by funding from Nebraska VR and Part B funds. As a result, Michael is able to continue to work in a job he enjoys and live safely and independently in his home.

## AT Through Reuse

Napoleon is diagnosed with diabetes and had his left leg amputated below the knee on 6/5/18 and his right leg below the knee on 7/27/18. Despite this, he insisted on returning to work at Kohl's within only weeks where he has been a store manager for the past 13 years. Napoleon's employer was very supportive and rearranged his office so he could easily navigate the space, however he was having to use a manual wheelchair for mobility throughout the store. After an 8 hour shift, he was noticing pain in his shoulders and hands. A manual wheelchair with Smart Drive system as well as hand controls and a Braun chair topper were recently donated to ATP by a past NE VR client who was no longer able to use the equipment. The manual wheelchair was a perfect fit for Napoleon and the Smart Drive system attaches to the back of the manual wheelchair and works with a wristband to accelerate the manual wheelchair without the individual having to constantly push it. This system would be able to be used in the store while Napoleon is working and would allow him to give the wheelchair one push and it will accelerate him in the chair at that same speed until he tells it to stop by tapping the wristband. He could go up hills, push carts and even drive through different terrains while using the manual wheelchair with this device. The vendor who this equipment was purchased from initially was brought in and completed





training on the technology free of charge. It was found Napoleon's vehicle will fit the Braun chair topper that was donated as well. At the time of the report, we were in the process of getting the hand controls and chair topper uninstalled from the previous client's vehicle and installed on to Napoleon's vehicle as this was the least cost option. The chair topper will load his manual wheelchair on the top of his vehicle so he does not have to disassemble it and load it on his own. This will make transportation to and from work easier and allow him to drive safely and independently so he can continue to work.

## AT For Pre-ETS

Jared is a student at Osmond Community Schools and is diagnosed with profound deafness. He is pursuing an EMT course through Northeast Community College in Norfolk and needed a specialized stethoscope in order to hear clearly. He used the AT4ALL website to borrow different stethoscopes until he found a ThinkLabs One Digital Stethoscope that was compatible with his cochlear implant. Jared is a NE VR Pre-ETS student, so NE VR was unable to fund the AT equipment recommended, however Jared completed a Service & Device application and through ATP funding coordination was able to find funding assistance through Part B funds to purchase a stethoscope like the one loaned to him. Jared and his family were also able to contribute financially to the cost of the stethoscope. He plans to become a Certified Emergency



Medical Technician and after graduation from high school, continue his training to become licensed as a paramedic. The stethoscope obtained will allow him to be successful in this career field as well as the training along the way, despite his hearing impairment.

