

TECHOWL— TECHNOLOGY FOR OUR WHOLE LIVES

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Almost 24% of Pennsylvanians have a disability. TechOWL is a resource for Pennsylvanians of all ages and all disabilities to discover and get assistive technology (AT) solutions.

TechOWL, the statewide AT program for Pennsylvania is funded, in part, by the federal Assistive Technology Act. The main office, at the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University, works with a network of regional AT resource centers throughout the commonwealth.



[go to Table of Contents→](#)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

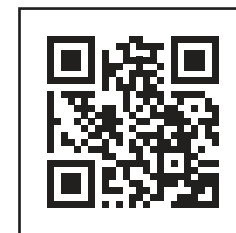
◇ Device Lending/Borrowing _____	<u>3</u>
TECHOWL SOLUTIONS _____	<u>3</u>
◇ Demonstration _____	<u>4</u>
TECHOWL SOLUTIONS _____	<u>4</u>
◇ Device Reuse _____	<u>5</u>
TECHOWL SOLUTIONS _____	<u>5</u>
◇ Access to Telephone and Advanced Communications _____	<u>6</u>
TECHOWL SOLUTIONS _____	<u>6</u>
◇ Training _____	<u>7</u>
TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS _____	<u>7</u>
◇ Information and Technical Assistance _____	<u>8</u>
TECHOWL SOLUTIONS _____	<u>8</u>
◇ TechOWL Updates _____	<u>9</u>
◇ Technology for Our Whole Lives _____	<u>10</u>

TechOWL
Institute on Disabilities
at Temple University
College of Education and Human
Development
1755 N 13th Street, Room 411S
Philadelphia, PA 19122
Voice: 800-204-7428
TTY: 866-268-0579
Fax: 215-204-6336
Email: TechOWL@temple.edu



College of Education
and Human Development

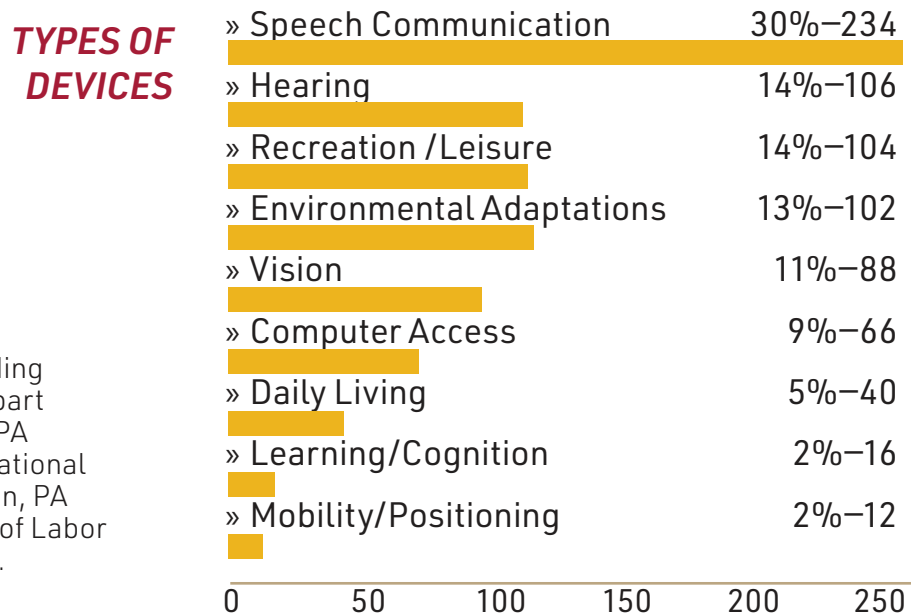
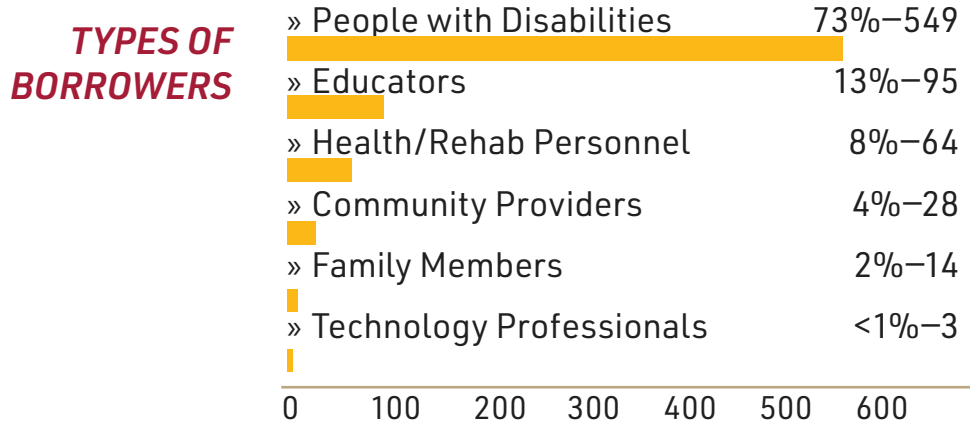
Institute on Disabilities



TechOWLpa.org

DEVICE LENDING/BORROWING

753 PEOPLE BORROWED 768 DEVICES through our free lending library. These devices are loaned to people with disabilities of all ages and to those who support them, so they can make informed decisions.*



*Device lending is funded in part through the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, PA Department of Labor and Industry.

TECHOWL SOLUTIONS

Lauren uses a wheelchair, but concern for her health caused her doctor to order her to spend less time in her wheelchair and more time in a prone position. Lauren was worried that this would make it difficult to access the tablet

ATRCs HELP DEVICE BORROWERS DETERMINE WHAT TO TRY, AND ALSO PROVIDE SUPPORT DURING A LOAN PERIOD.

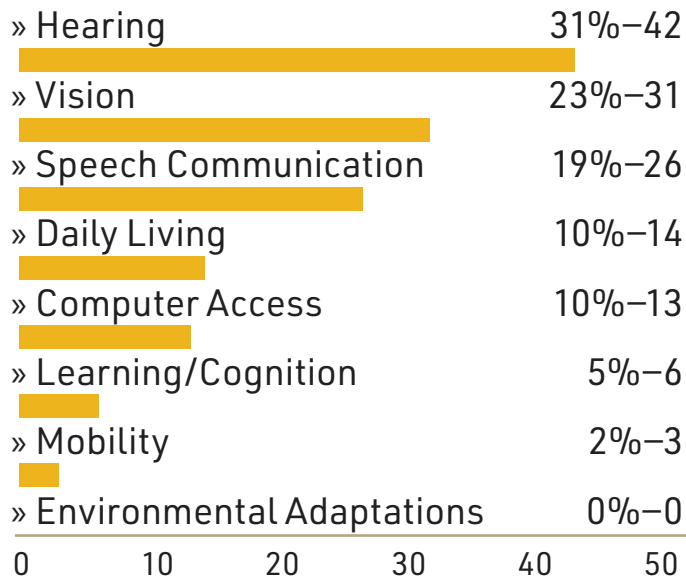
she needs to do her job, putting her continued employment at risk. She contacted her **local Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC)** and borrowed a Levo tablet stand, which helps her to use the tablet while seated

or prone. Lauren says that Levo stand has made it possible for her to keep her job and also follow her doctor's orders.

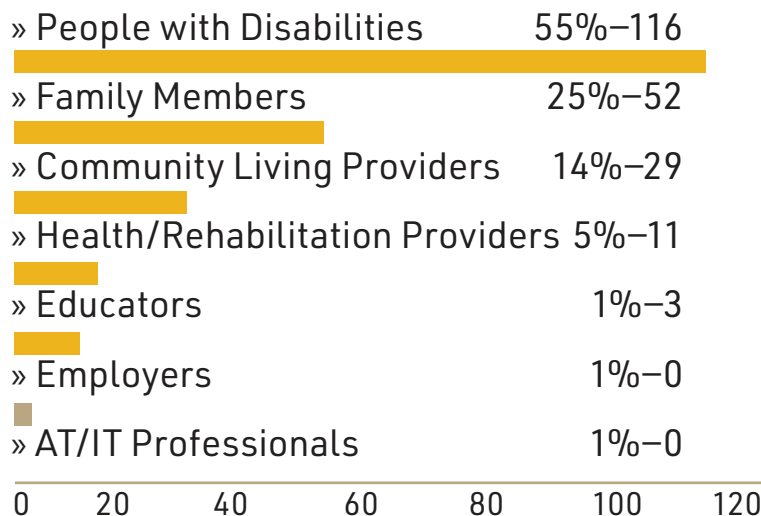
DEMONSTRATION

135 DEMONSTRATIONS conducted by qualified personnel provided hands-on experiences of AT devices to **211 PARTICIPANTS**.

TYPES OF DEVICES



TYPES OF PARTICIPANTS



TECHOWL SOLUTIONS

Jennifer had been using a mouth stylus to type on her computer, and it was suggested that she try software that would type her words for her as she spoke. At first, she was reluctant because she had tried this years ago with an older

**...THIS WILL
...“MAKE ME
MUCH MORE
EMPLOYABLE.”**

software and did not have a good experience. She received a demonstration of the newest

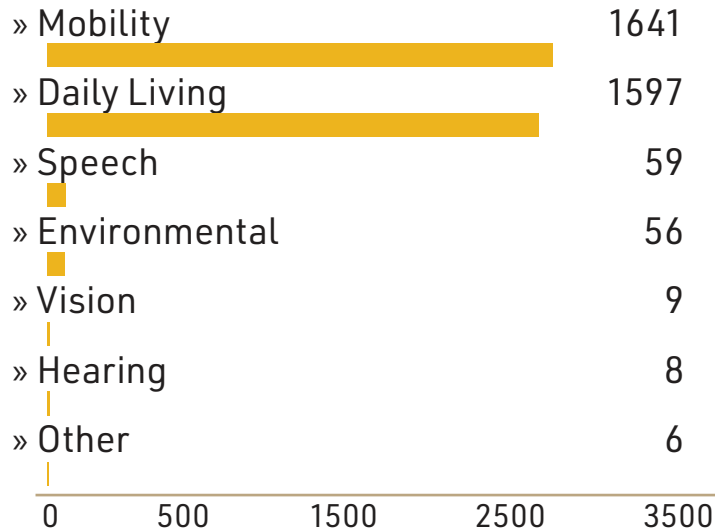
software, using it along with a headset microphone, and was so impressed she decided to pursue getting the software herself. She stated that this will, in her words, “make me much more employable.”

DEVICE REUSE



TYPES OF DEVICES

TechOWL supports device reuse programs that may be a source for “previously-owned” AT devices, often available at a lower cost than buying new—or for free!



Devices acquired — 3376
 People served — 2606
Total savings — \$924,302

TECHOWL SOLUTIONS

Matthew is a young man who has been using a Dynavox Maestro AAC device to communicate for many years. His mother noticed that the device was no longer working properly. She knows that Matthew is eligible to get a new device through insurance and he will eventually need to upgrade, but she also knows that the change would be very difficult for him right now. She was desperate to find another Maestro and contacted TechOWL. Matthew received a Maestro from our reuse program and can now continue to communicate in the way he prefers.



ACCESS TO TELEPHONE AND ADVANCED COMMUNICATION

Through state financing, TechOWL executes programs that allow for free or low cost telecommunication access for qualified Pennsylvanians. "Last resort" mini grants are available when qualified consumers have no other option to fund needed AT.

Free Phones

Telecommunication Device Distribution Program (TDDP) provides free equipment for access to telephone services. Implemented with the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission.

iCanConnect

The National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program in PA-iCanConnectPA helps ensure low income people with combined hearing and vision loss have access to telephone, advanced communications implemented through the Federal Communications Commission.

CreATe Together

This AT fabrication program matches users and makers together and offers ideas for AT solutions not found in stores.



TECHOWL SOLUTIONS

Three-year-old Grody has mobility challenges that make it difficult for him to get around. His physical therapist (PT) reached out to TechOWL because Grody really needed a floor wheelchair that would enable him to play with his sister, and not only were

commercially available floor wheelchairs expensive, but they did also not address his needs. Using the custom recommendations developed by Grody's PT, our AT fabrication team used an existing

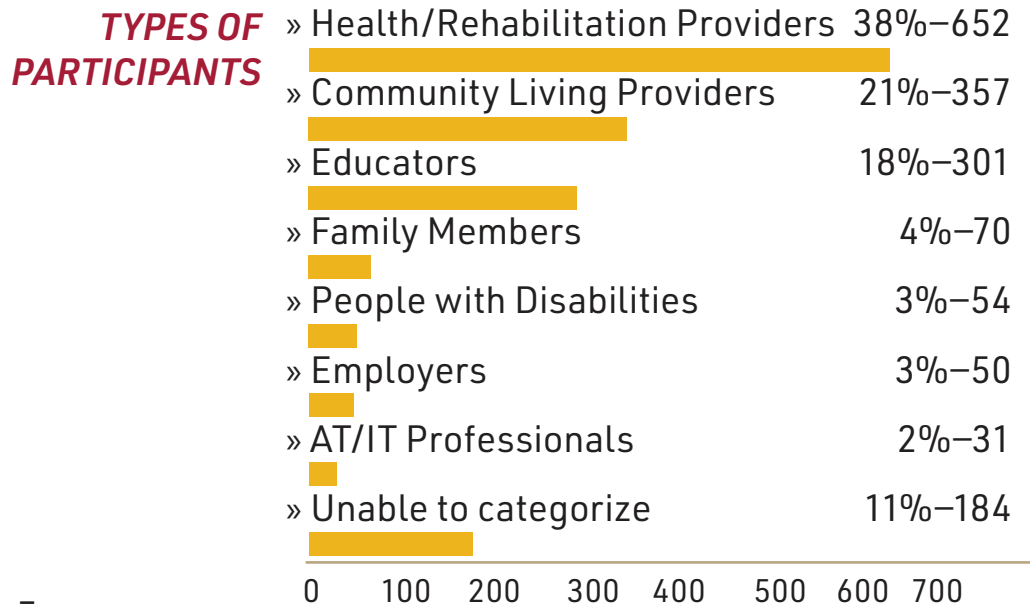
design and made a floor wheelchair that incorporated design elements for stability and support. Typically, this type of wheelchair might cost thousands of dollars, but Grody's custom design project was approximately \$100.

PROGRAMS COMBINED Devices distributed— 405
 People served — 316
 Value————— **\$208,311**

TRAINING



1699 PARTICIPANTS attended our in-depth trainings on AT devices, services and funding for professionals, individuals with disabilities and their families.



TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS

● **ACCESS ABILITIES** was a one-day conference co-hosted by **TechOWL and Apple Education**. This innovative event was split into two sections: in the morning, the team from Apple provided training on computer access and accessible documents as well as the accessible features of their products; and the afternoon consisted of AT “test drives” – several rooms, each focusing on a different area of AT, were available for attendees to explore, assisted by members of the TechOWL team.

● **“AAC IN THE TIME OF COVID-19”** training, directed to service providers and caregivers, was held via webinar and specifically addressed **ways to encourage AAC use for distance communication** to stay connected during these times of prolonged social isolation.

● **“SOCIAL MEDIA ACCESSIBILITY”** was a webinar training conducted during **Disability Pride Month**. This training focused on digital and social media accessibility and cited specific social media platforms, video editing and captioning, image description, and laws round accessible digital information.

INFORMATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

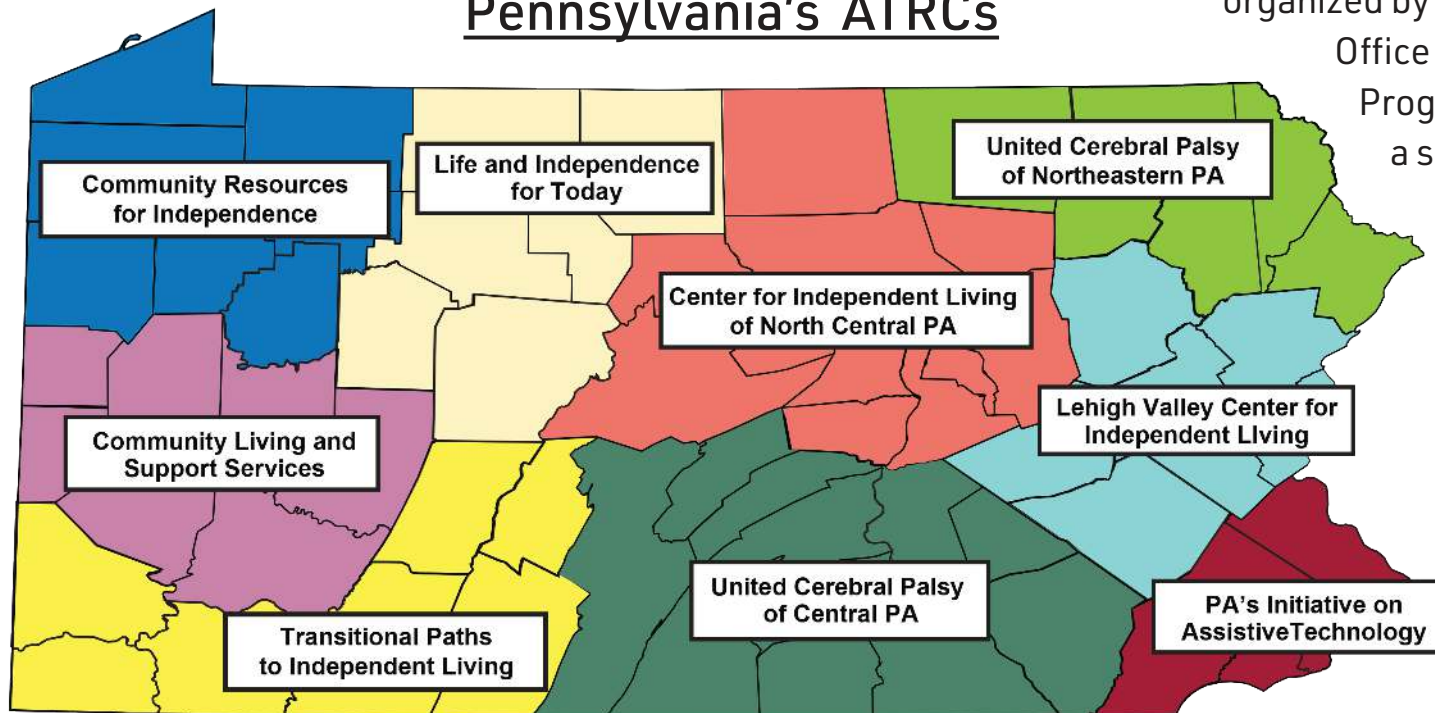
Over 6200 people received information from TechOWL and other ATRCs—Assistive Technology Resource Centers throughout Pennsylvania.

Through information and assistance, ATRCs help device borrowers to determine what to try, and also provide support during a loan period. TechOWL's AT experts and qualified professionals have also advised agencies and organizations on specific projects and situations regarding AT.(see TechOWL Solutions)

TECHOWL SOLUTIONS

This year, several TechOWL team members participated in a statewide consortium consisting of representatives from service providers, disability organizations, and people with disabilities who are working together with the goal of having **Pennsylvania designated by the governor as a "Technology First" state**. TechOWL was also asked to participate in a Task Force organized by the Pennsylvania Office of Developmental Programs to work toward a similar goal within their scope of services.

Pennsylvania's ATRCs



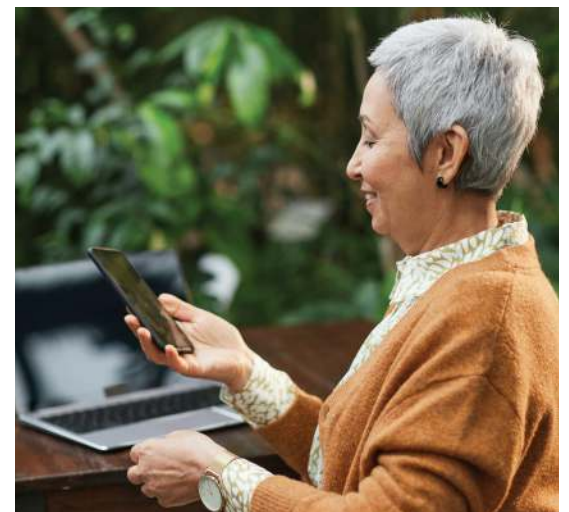
TECHOWL UPDATES

TechOWL has always helped people learn about, discover, try, and get tools and technology to make things easier or possible. Assistive technology in everyday lives— to see, listen, communicate, think, control and move. In mid-March of 2020, TechOWL pivoted.

Can grandma learn to Zoom into church? Can my child learn to learn online? Can I easily connect with friends? Can any person with any disability successfully integrate online technology into our lives? Can we see the doctor, order groceries, get support, and do our work?

These questions dramatically erupted into consciousness in mid-March. TechOWL didn't miss a beat. We continued to do all of our work—from home, and so did most of our AT Resource Centers.

With our living rooms filled with assistive technology, we continued to address the needs of Pennsylvanians with disabilities. TechOWL partnered with PA's Dept of Aging to get and support iPads, Chromebooks and hotspots. And we looked forward—to a time we can be together again.



TECHNOLOGY FOR OUR WHOLE LIVES



TECHOWL 2020

**ACCESS ABILITIES
APPLE EVENT**

**AAC IN THE TIME
OF COVID-19**

**SOCIAL MEDIA ACCESSIBILITY
/DISABILITY PRIDE**

PA "TECHNOLOGY FIRST"

