

FY2022 Annual Report

DakotaLink

Technology Solutions for Life's Limitations



The United States Congress created the Assistive Technology Act (AT Act) in 1998 and reauthorized it in 2004. This legislation provides funding to 56 AT Act Programs, one in each state and U.S. Territory, that provide greater access to assistive technology. DakotaLink, established in 1992, is South Dakota's A.T. Program. DakotaLink activities include supporting alternative financing programs (AFP) for A.T., A.T. device reutilization, Short-term A.T. device loans, A.T. device demonstrations, training, technical assistance, and public awareness.



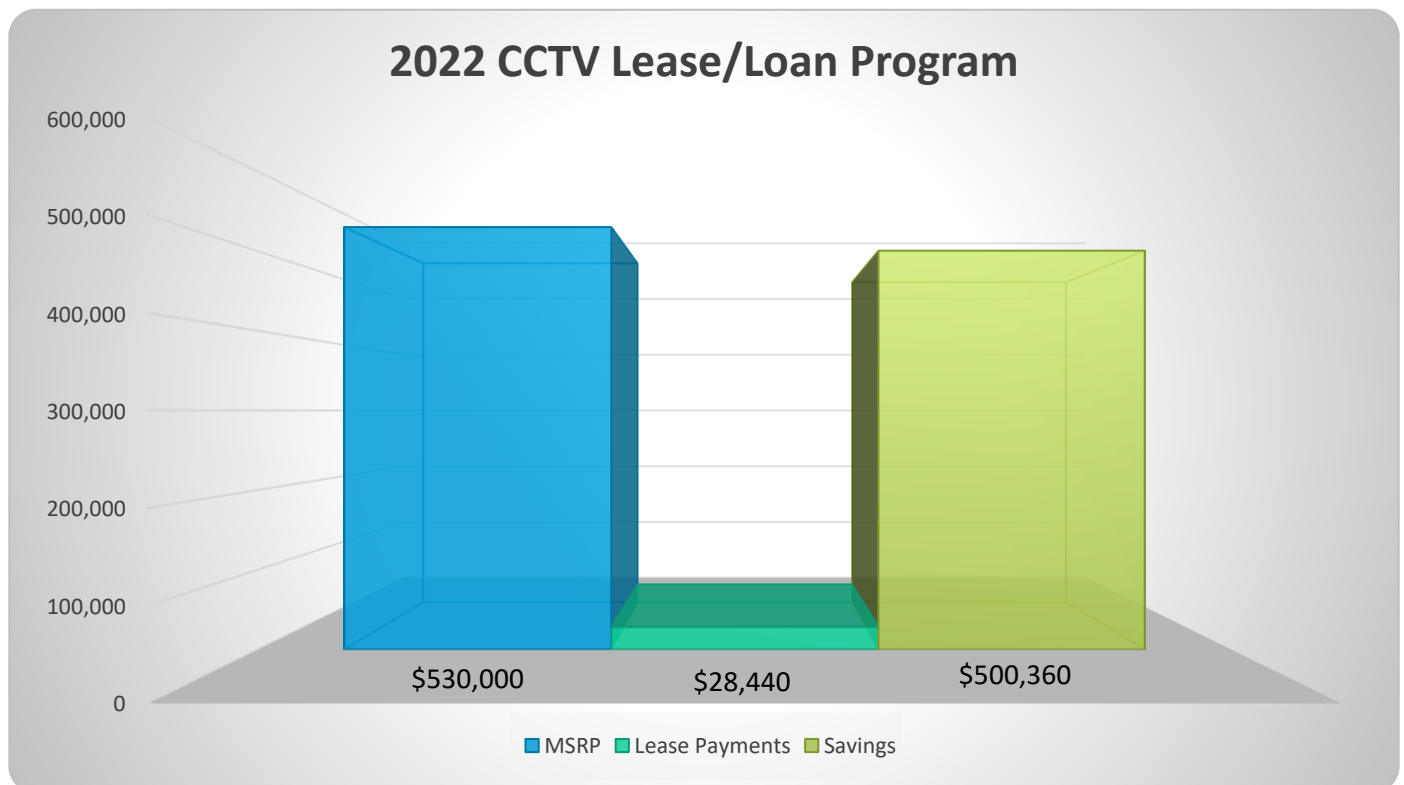
We have offices in Sioux Falls, Brookings, Aberdeen, and we have a storefront in Rapid City.

2022 Activities

Alternative Financing

State Financing Activities that allow consumers to obtain Assistive Technology at reduced costs.

DakotaLink administers a long-term lease/loan program for the South Dakota Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired that provided 212 South Dakotans closed-circuit televisions (CCTV's) in 2022. The Income-based program provided equipment to 79 participants leased at \$30.00 per month. There were 110 people who met the financial need and only paid a \$50 deposit. CCTV's are approximately \$2,500 on average. We have a Database that also tracks all this information. In addition to this information, the database is where we track all the monthly payments that people send us. This allowed individuals with deteriorating vision access to the equipment they might only use for a short while, saving these mostly senior citizens **\$500,360**.



CCTV Lease Agreement

A \$50.00 deposit is required for all units. The deposit may be paid in a total sum or in \$10.00 monthly payments until the required amount is received. The deposit will be refunded when the unit is returned to DakotaLink if the unit is in good condition and includes all necessary components of the CCTV.

Lease payments of \$30.00 per month are required unless other arrangements are made. Payments may be made monthly or for up to one year in advance. Advance payments will be returned in the event one can no longer use the machine. The monthly lease payments remain in effect unless one's financial status changes and personal finances affect the ability to pay for the monthly lease costs. CCTV's will be repossessed after three consecutive months of missed payments. Payments are due by the 15th of each month.

Alt fund Success Spotlight

DakotaLink provided a Merlin CCTV to MM and trained her and her daughter on all of its functionality. She had an older model Merlin with a TV for a display, so the training was brief as the controls were very much the same, just in slightly different positions. As this was a loan, MM only paid the \$50 deposit to loan the unit from the CCTV program. If the loan was not an option, she would likely not have been able to receive a new CCTV for her use. Upon following up with her daughter via phone, she reported that MM was very happy with the new Merlin and had no questions or issues and pleased we were able to waive the monthly payment due to her financial circumstances.

DakotaLink provided an Acrobat Ultra LCD CCTV to a Veteran with a \$50 deposit and a monthly \$30 fee so that he could independently read and pay his bills, mail and read the newspaper. Without the device, the veteran had to have someone else help him with those tasks and is very happy to be independent with these needs.

Reutilization - SDAT4ALL

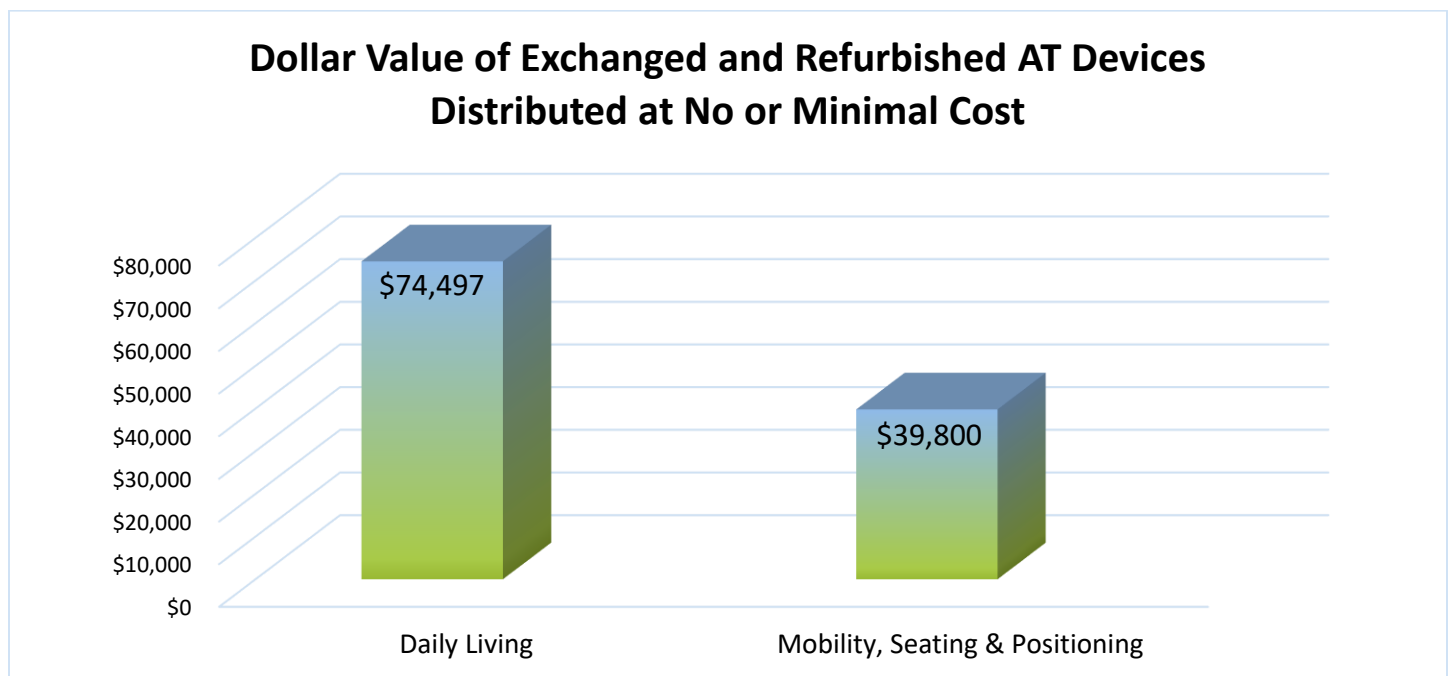


<https://www.sd.at4all.com/> is a web-based resource to borrow, recycle, donate, and exchange Assistive Technology Devices and Durable Medical Equipment.

In 2022, individuals across South Dakota exchanged or recycled 38 devices, from modified vehicles to aids for daily living; most offered at no charge, saving consumers \$112,517 based upon current retail prices.

Any piece of equipment that is brought in and recycled at the MERR program is available to Medicaid recipients only for 90 days at no cost to the consumer. After 90 days that equipment is available to anyone at ¼ of the value as if it were new to a maximum of \$5,000.00. This means the most any consumer would pay out of pocket is \$1,250.00 plus delivery fees.

There is currently approximately \$235,000 worth of devices available through the sd.at4all.com website which allows people to see all of the devices that are available for loan or sale. The number of requests directly from the website continues to steadily increase, but most people contact the program directly to determine the best-suited device they need to purchase or borrow. This also helps in determining if the person requesting is capable of using it effectively.



**Reuse
Success
Spotlight**

A South Dakota Medicaid recipient living in low-income apartments had a nurse who ordered him a power wheelchair and it was the wrong size for him. He didn't have much money and was pretty upset that he waited for the chair for so long and it didn't fit. He contacted the MERR (Medical Equipment Reuse & Recycle) program, we took that chair back into our inventory and replaced it with a different chair that we had custom fitted to him within a few days. He was very appreciative that we could turn this situation around for him as quickly as we did.



The Medical Equipment Reuse & Recycle Building and Truck and Trailer

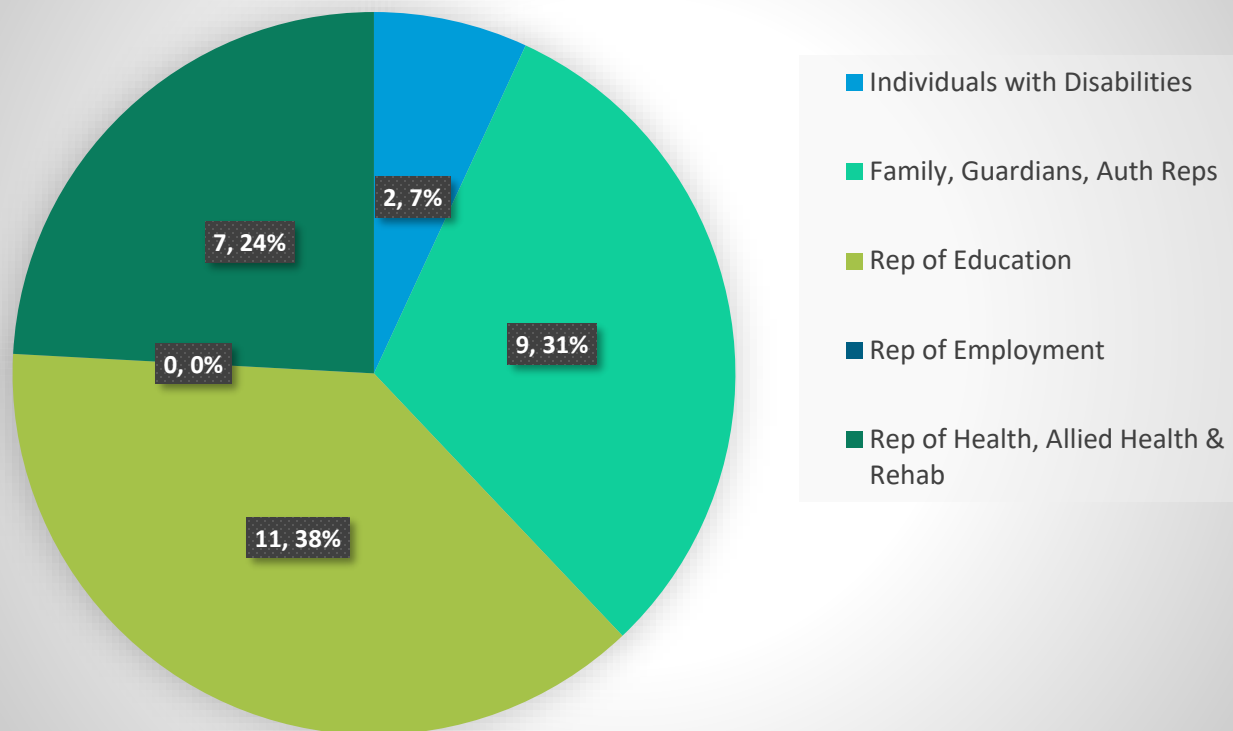


Equipment from The Recycling Center as Well as our HubScrub

AT Device Loans

DakotaLink provides short-term loans of AT devices to assist individuals in decision making, to serve as a loaner during repairs, to provide short-term accommodations, and to conduct training, self-education, or other professional activities. The average loan is for a period of fourteen days. The loan period can be extended depending upon the individual circumstances.

Loans by Borrower Type



Total 29 Loans

Loan Success Spotlight

A 15 year old girl has been working toward expressing her wants and needs using the Avaz app on the iPad! She usually expresses herself with gestures, body language, and facial expression. She is now able to use the device to make requests, give commands, and indicate choices during age appropriate activities, such as playing sports, communicating with teachers, family and friends, and reading a book!

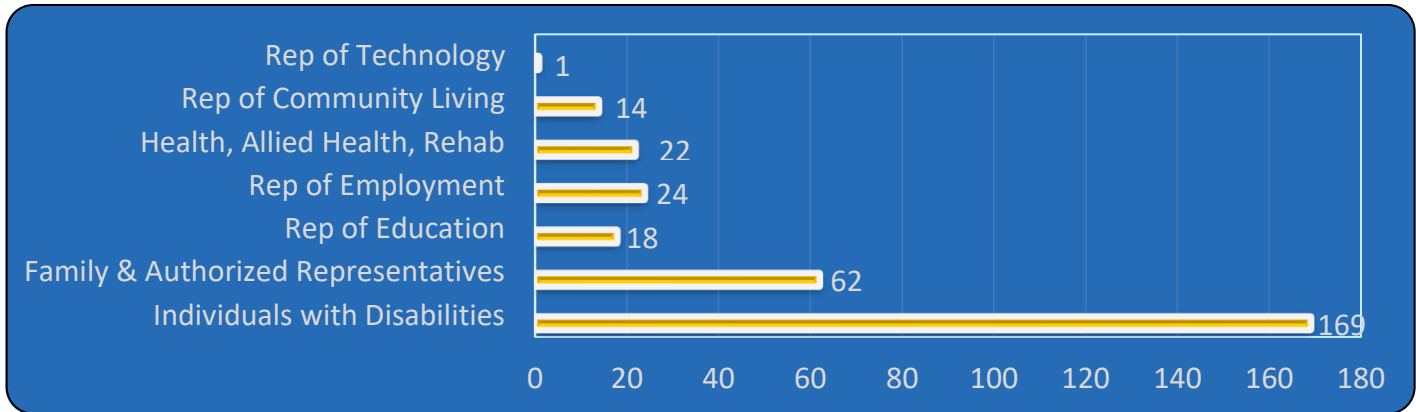


JM is a Vet that needed a hospital bed that would allow him to sit up independently. The hospital said it would be 5 weeks until he would be able to get one from them. He contacted us and with the reuse program, we were able to get him into his home with a temporary hospital bed until his arrived. He was delighted to not have to stay in the hospital for another month.



Electric Hospital Bed

AT Device Demonstrations



310 Total of Participants by Type

Dakotalink provided 310 demonstrations of AT Devices to individuals in 2022. Demos were provided by appointment at four Demonstration Centers located in Sioux Falls, Rapid City, Brookings, and Aberdeen. DakotaLink Technicians also travel to private residences, schools, businesses, and other locations depending upon specific circumstances and individual needs.

Device demonstrations are done almost every day at all locations and on-site at the consumer’s residence, school, or place of business. We do group presentations for many groups throughout the year. These presentations always include demonstrations. If you consider those presentations, then we do demonstrations to thousands every year. Demonstrations include iPad Apps, Computer Software, and Low Vision Devices including Magnifiers and CCTV’s and Personal Body Lift Systems to name a few.

Demo Success Spotlight

We do several 1:1 demonstrations through DRS (Division of Rehabilitation Services) and we had booths for demonstration setup at Let's Talk Work on Feb. 10th, Catch the Wave at Mitchell on Feb. 23rd, the Optometry Conference in Sioux Falls on March 25th and Catch the Wave at STI on March 29th. Let's Talk Work: 50 students, 5 Adults Catch the Wave (Mitchell): 5 Teachers, 19 Students, 10 Parents Optometry Convention: 50 people stopped at the booth Catch the Wave (Sioux Falls): 15 Students, 5 Adults. We often receive excellent feedback from our presence at these events. Since the impact of the pandemic has decreased a great deal, we were able to get out more this year than the previous 2 years.

Training Activities



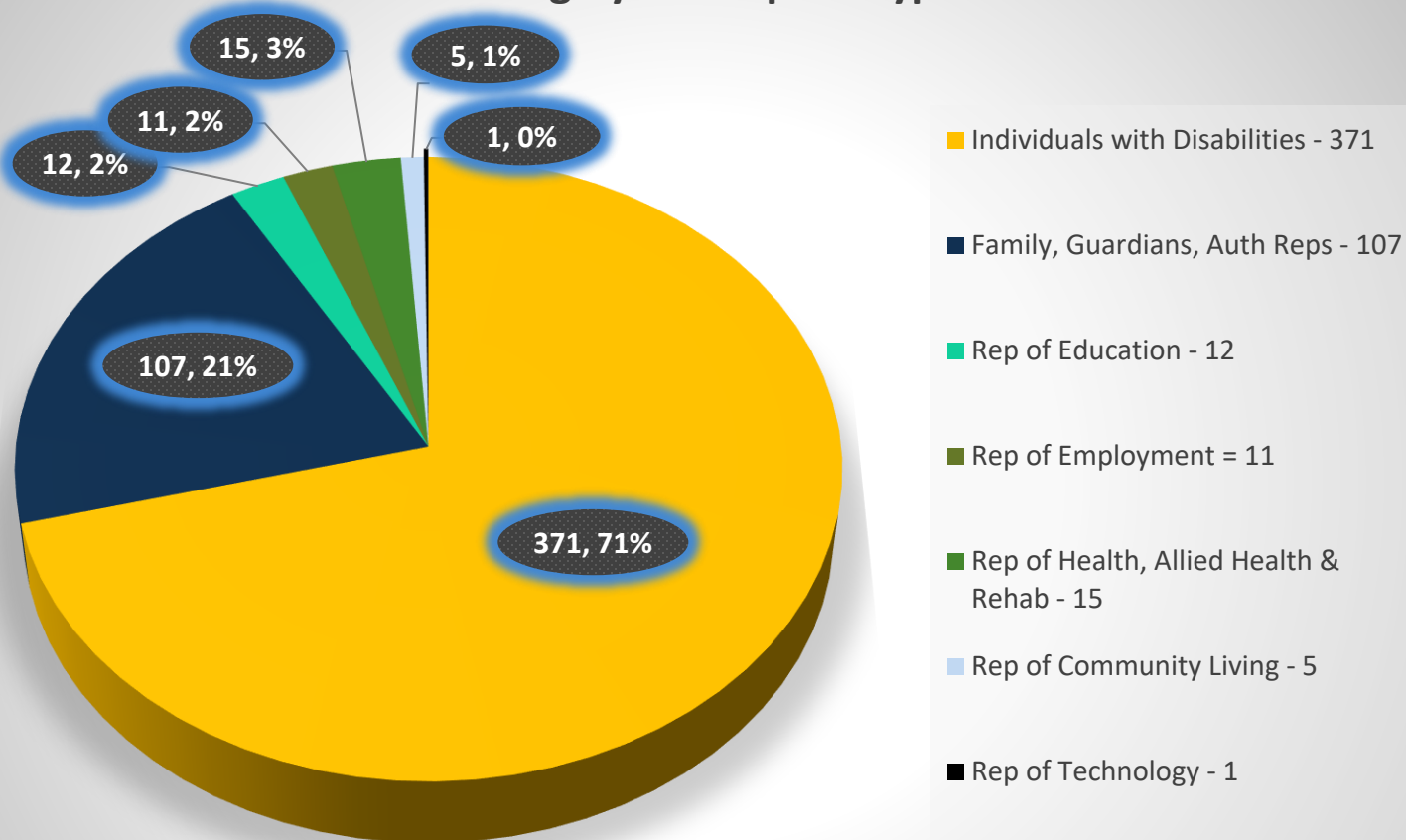
DakotaLink Presenting at a Conference.

In 2022 DakotaLink Technicians provided training on the use of assistive technology devices to 522 individuals across South Dakota. Training activities are instructional events, usually planned in advance for a specific purpose or audience that are designed to increase participants' knowledge, skills, and competencies regarding AT. Such events can be delivered to large or small groups, in-person, or via telecommunications or other distance education mechanisms. In general, participants in training can be individually identified and could complete an evaluation of the training. Examples of training include classes, workshops, conference sessions, and presentations that have a goal of increasing skills, knowledge, and competency. Training and/or presentations intended only to increase general awareness of AT are considered public awareness events.

Referral Types

DakotaLink referrals come from a variety of sources. Our outreach includes television commercials, the program Dakota At Home (<https://dakotaathome.org/>), the Division of Rehabilitation Services, the Department of Social Services, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Telephone Adaptive Device (TAD) program, the Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI), the Deaf Blind Program, the iCanConnectSD program, the Strengthening Families Program, Family Support 360, the Hearing Aid Assistance Program, the Cochlear Implant Program, the Department of Education Office of Special Education, the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program, Independent Living Centers, Disability Rights South Dakota, and the South Dakota Benefits Specialist Network.

Training by Participant Type



Total of 522 Participants

Technical Assistance

The State of South Dakota Bureau of Information and Technology has a List of Standard Assistive Technology and DakotaLink updates this list annually. The software allows for state employees to have access to Informational Communication Technology specifically through the computer with access to email, the Web, and other forms of communication technology. DakotaLink also has an agreement with the Bureau to provide

Public Awareness



It is our pleasure to serve the people of South Dakota.