

FY2025 Annual Report



Technology Solutions for Life's Limitations

The Assistive Technology Act (AT Act), originally enacted by the United States Congress in 1998 and reauthorized in 2004, was further updated in 2022 as the 21st Century Assistive Technology Act. This legislation provides funding for 56 AT Act Programs, one for each state and U.S. territory. In South Dakota, the Department of Human Services serves as the lead agency, with DakotaLink, established in 1992, acting as the implementing organization.

DakotaLink oversees a comprehensive array of services designed to enhance access to assistive technology (AT) for individuals with disabilities. These services include:

Supporting alternative financing programs

Facilitating AT device reutilization

Offering short-term AT device loans

Conducting AT device demonstrations

Delivering training and technical assistance

Promoting public awareness initiatives

This report highlights DakotaLink's achievements, challenges, and future strategies under the framework of the 21st Century Assistive Technology Act.

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DakotaLink Offices Throughout South Dakota



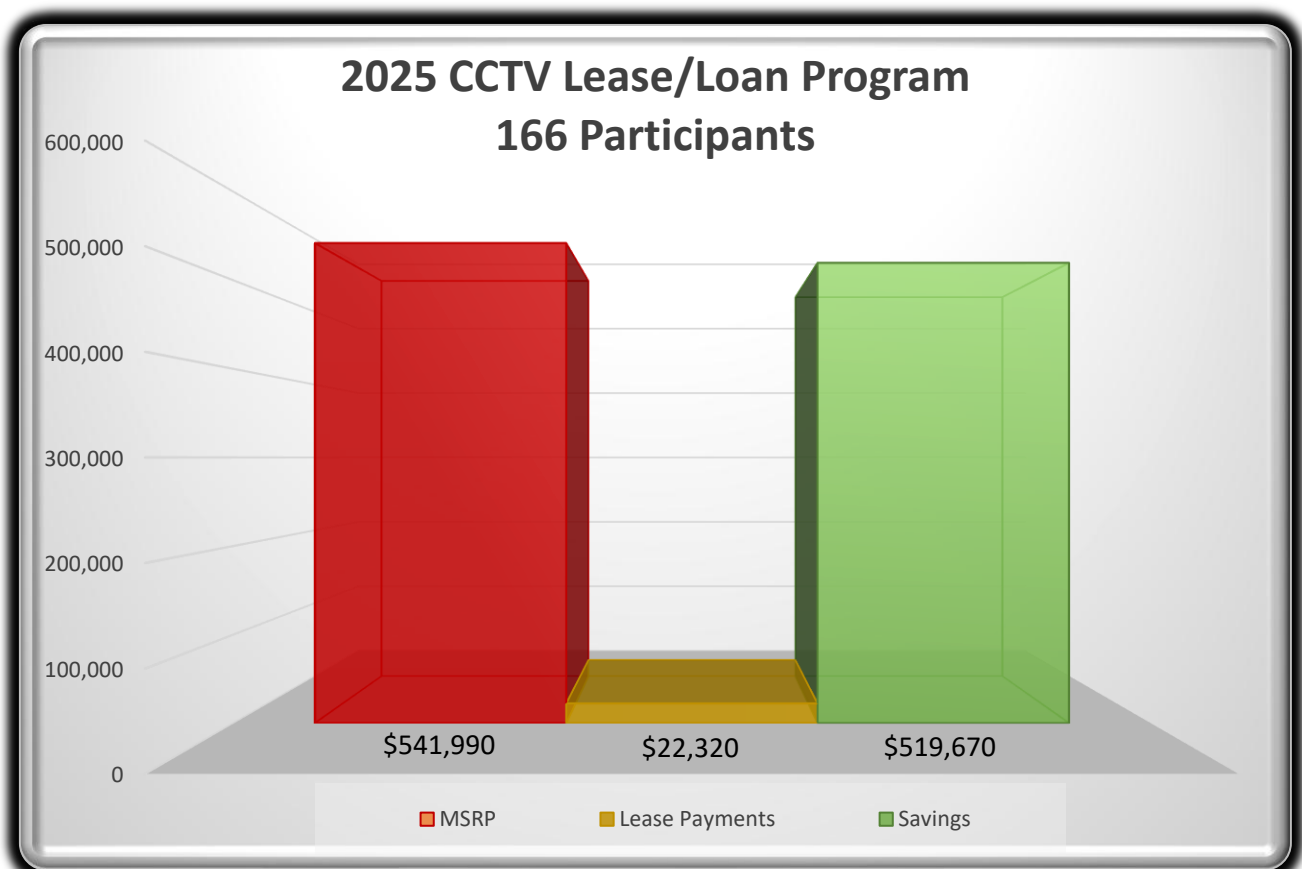
DakotaLink operates from offices in Sioux Falls, Brookings, Aberdeen, and maintains a storefront in Rapid City.

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2025 Activities

DakotaLink's Long-Term Lease/Loan Program

In partnership with the South Dakota Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired, DakotaLink administers a long-term lease and loan program designed to increase access to assistive technology for South Dakotans. For 2025, the program facilitated access to closed-circuit televisions (CCTVs), serving 166 participants. Through the program's income-based leasing model, 104 participants received the use of a CCTV at no cost. The other 62 participants leased equipment at a subsidized rate of \$30 per month, resulting in lease revenue of \$22,320. The average cost of a CCTV has risen to approximately \$3,265 MSRP in 2025, highlighting the program's value in providing affordable access to essential assistive technology. Notably, the program delivered significant financial relief to participants, with total savings reaching an impressive \$519,670 in 2025.



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Lease Payment and Equipment Management

All leased units require a \$50 deposit, which is fully refundable upon the unit's return in good condition. Monthly lease payments are set at \$30, with an option for participants to make advance payments for up to one year.

To ensure efficient program management, a centralized database is utilized to track leases and payments. In cases of non-payment, units are repossessed after three consecutive missed payments.

ANECDOTE

Acrobat CCTV – Improving Visual Access

CJ's SBVI Rehab Teacher recommended her for a CCTV through the State program. I met with CJ at her home to demonstrate a Merlin and an Acrobat, and to assess which device would best suit her needs. We discussed the location where she wanted to use the device. Her preference was to place it on the bar in the kitchen. She also had another location if that did not work.

I told her that I had brought two devices to try and explained how they worked and the size difference between them. CJ indicated a preference for the smaller unit. I set up the Acrobat where she requested and had CJ sit down in front of it. CJ used one of her bills while trying out the device.

I went over the controls of the device, describing their functions. I had her try the device, and she liked the fact that she could see her bill very clearly. I demonstrated the advanced features, along with the self-view and distance-view camera modes. I showed how the camera could be moved to the side if she needed, allowing her to view her recipes on the counter. She was very impressed with these features.

I asked if she wanted me to bring in the Merlin. She said that she really liked the Acrobat and did not need to see the Merlin. She felt this was the better CCTV for her.

CJ appreciated the Acrobat and looked forward to being able to better read her materials.



The Acrobat CCTV

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DakotaLink Assistive Technology Loan Fund

Through the AT Loan Fund, DakotaLink offers low-interest, extended-term loans to individuals with disabilities in South Dakota. This financing option is specifically designed to purchase assistive technology equipment and devices, home access improvements, or vehicle access modifications.

Individuals with disabilities in South Dakota and their family members may apply for loans to purchase wheelchairs, electric scooters, hearing aids, augmentative communication devices, electronic print enlarging devices, and other equipment made for people with disabilities. Individuals submit an application along with relevant financial data. If approved, they can receive funds at a competitive rate (currently 5%). Loans have a minimum amount of \$500 with flexible repayment terms.

During FY2025, there were two applications for the loan program, and both applicants were approved.

ANECDOTE

Low-Interest Loan Improves Mobility/Transportation

TW is an elderly veteran with a disability. He has complex health issues that have resulted in a loss of mobility, and he relies on a power chair to get around. His vehicle was not accessible to him, and his wife's health has also deteriorated; she can no longer drive either. TW applied for our low-interest loan program and was approved for a loan to purchase a wheelchair accessible van. He is now able to live independently and get himself and his wife to appointments, shopping, and entertainment without asking others for a ride. He would not have qualified for financing through any other funding source, so our loan program has made a huge positive impact on his life.

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Reutilization – NATADS



National Assistive Technology Act Data System (NATADS)

NATADS is a robust, web-based platform designed to document and manage the activities mandated under Assistive Technology (AT) Act grants. This system is instrumental in ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equitable access to the tools and technologies necessary for living, working, learning, and fully participating in their communities.

Key features of NATADS include its support for programs facilitating the borrowing, recycling, donation, and exchange of Assistive Technology (AT) devices and Durable Medical Equipment (DME). By streamlining these essential activities, NATADS enables service providers to optimize resource allocation and enhance program efficiency, ultimately improving outcomes for individuals and families. The end-user interface can be accessed at the following link:

[NATADS User Interface](#)



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Advancing Sustainability Through Device Reutilization

In 2025, South Dakotans successfully exchanged or recycled 75 assistive technology devices, generating \$66,253 in savings for consumers. This achievement highlights our ongoing commitment to promoting both sustainability and affordability through effective device reutilization efforts.

ANECDOTE

Meeting Client Needs through Reutilization

DakotaLink received a donated Acuity 22" CCTV w/ speech from a veteran who passed away and was only able to use it briefly. We received a phone call from JN's mother. His current CCTV was broken and very old. She was looking for a new CCTV for him. I coordinated a time to meet with her friend, who would take the Acuity to JN. JN is extremely excited about receiving a new CCTV. He has a challenging time staying independent without a way to read. He now has a much nicer machine that will serve him well into the future.



The Acuity 22" w/Speech

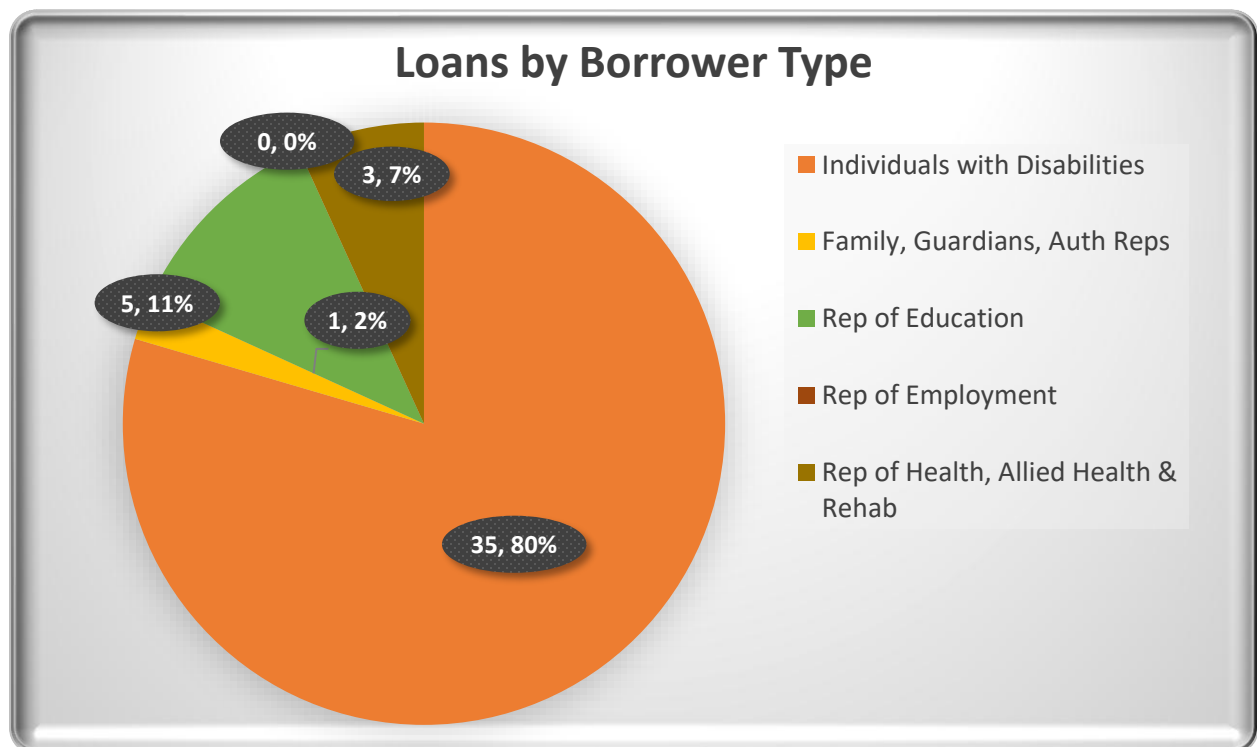
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AT Device Loans

Empowering Through Short-Term Device Loans

DakotaLink serves as a vital resource by offering short-term loans of assistive technology (AT) devices to address diverse needs. These loans support decision-making, device repairs, short-term accommodation, training, and professional endeavors. By enabling individuals to evaluate technology solutions or maintain continuity in their activities, the program helps minimize disruption and maximize productivity. Through its lending services, the program provides tailored, impactful solutions that empower individuals and organizations alike.

In 2025, DakotaLink issued 44 short-term loans, demonstrating a continued commitment to meeting individual and professional requirements. This represents a marked increase from 2024, when 33 loans were provided. The year-over-year change highlights the dynamic nature of community needs and the evolving demand for assistive technology.



Total 44 Loans

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Enhancing Art with AT Device Loans

YS is a pottery instructor at a Fine Arts Center. She has been holding pottery classes for the visually impaired. The weekend of their last class included a display of their artwork. YS borrowed a CloverBook CCTV Magnifier to allow her students to view their pieces in greater detail. Since the CloverBook has dual cameras, they could use the near-view camera to view the pottery, and the far-view camera to view pieces that were hanging on the wall. Access to the CCTV enhanced the art experience for the students.



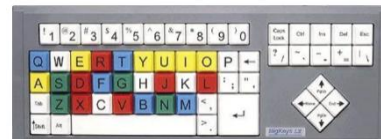
CloverBook Magnifier

Educational Access through AT Device Loans

BS is an educator at a school district. She had a student who needed alternative computer access. She borrowed several devices to trial with her student and determine what devices would work best.

After the trial period, she returned the devices and ordered the keyboard and trackball that provided the most benefit to the student.

Through the device loan program, the school district could trial multiple devices prior to purchase, avoiding spending money on items that may not work for the student.



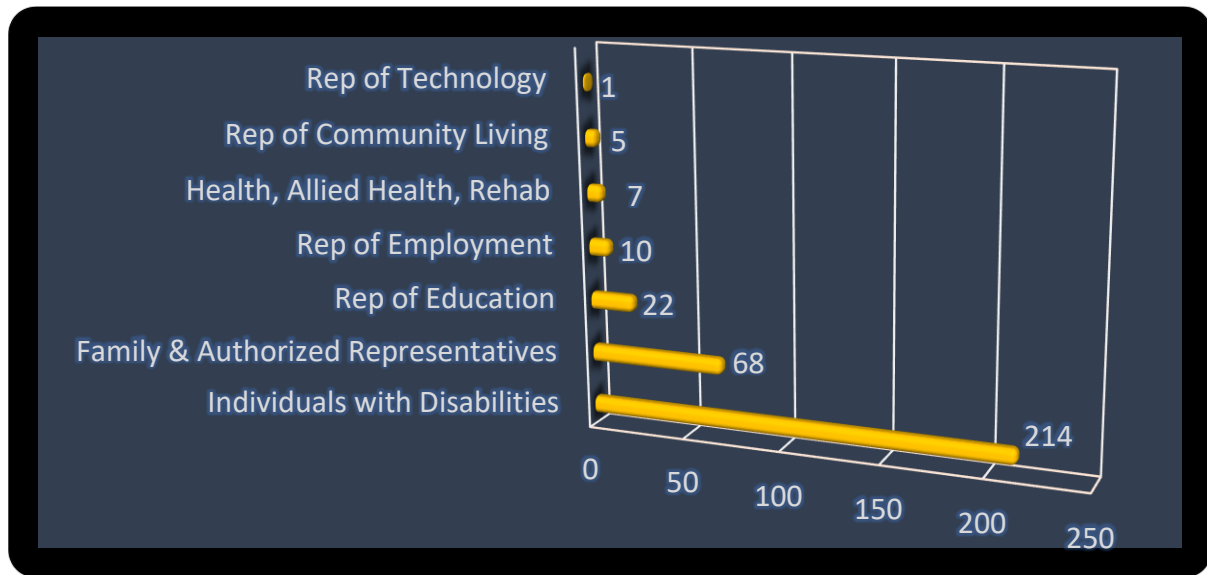
BigKeys QWERTY Keyboard - Colored Keys



Kensington Expert Mouse Trackball

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AT Device Demonstrations



327 Total Participants by Type

Expanding Awareness Through Assistive Technology Demonstrations

In 2025, DakotaLink conducted demonstrations of assistive technology (AT) devices to 327 individuals, a slight decrease from 341 in 2024. These sessions showcased a diverse array of devices, including iPad applications, computer software, low vision aids, and personal body lift systems. Demonstrations were hosted at four dedicated Demonstration Centers, as well as in homes, schools, and workplaces, across South Dakota.

DakotaLink also played a key role in community and educational events, such as Let's Talk Work and Catch the College Wave, where demonstrations were tailored to students, adults, and parents. Positive feedback underscored the program's impact on raising awareness and enhancing accessibility through hands-on, personalized demonstrations.

Through demonstrations and public awareness, individuals in rural or otherwise marginalized communities have increased access to the life-changing benefits of assistive technology.

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ANECDOTE

Harnessing AT in the Workforce

DM is a 46-year-old male with low vision. SBVI referred him for an AT assessment to evaluate a magnifier and a head lamp to help him at his job. I met with DM at his apartment. He stated that he needed a headlamp to provide better lighting at work. He preferred a rechargeable device to avoid purchasing replacement batteries. I demonstrated four different headlamps to him. He selected the one that he felt was the best option. He liked that it had a “hand wave” feature, where he could disable the light by passing his hand over a sensor, and reenable the light with the same gesture.

DM received a Pebble electronic handheld magnifier through SBVI/VR several years ago. He said his Pebble was not working correctly, the clip on the case was broken, and that he could not find the charger for it. I demonstrated the Pebble HD, the Amigo HD, the Ruby XL HD, and the Clover 6. DM felt that the Clover 6 was the best option. He liked that the screen was a little larger than on the Pebble HD or Ruby XL HD, and that the device had touchscreen capabilities.



NightBuddy Headlamp



**Clover 6 HD Handheld Video
Magnifier**

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Training Activities



Empowering Through Assistive Technology Training

In 2025, DakotaLink Technicians provided comprehensive training on assistive technology (AT) devices to 438 individuals, emphasizing personalized and targeted engagement. This is a slight increase over the 424 participants trained in 2024.

These training sessions were delivered through a variety of formats, including individual and small group in-person trainings, individual remote trainings using Zoom and/or Teams, conference sessions, and presentations. These sessions are designed to enhance participants' knowledge, skills, and confidence in using assistive technology. By focusing on tailored approaches, DakotaLink continues to empower individuals and organizations to make the most of the tools and technologies that support independence and accessibility.

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Tailored Training for Diverse Needs

DakotaLink's training sessions are carefully tailored to meet the unique needs of individuals across diverse demographics. Topics covered a broad spectrum, ranging from foundational use of assistive devices to advanced customization of technology to address specific disabilities. Practical application is a central focus, enabling participants to seamlessly integrate assistive tools into their daily lives, enhancing both independence and productivity.

This individualized approach ensures that participants not only learn about assistive technology but also gain the confidence and capability to apply it in ways that transform their personal and professional lives.

Referral Sources: Connecting Individuals to Solutions

DakotaLink receives referrals from a diverse array of sources, underscoring the organization's broad reach and significant impact in South Dakota. These referral channels are critical in connecting individuals with the assistive technology and resources they need to lead more independent and fulfilling lives. Key referral sources include:

TV Campaigns: Public awareness initiatives amplify the availability and benefits of assistive technology (AT), showcasing its life-changing potential. These campaigns effectively reach wide audiences, encouraging individuals, families, and professionals to seek support and solutions through DakotaLink.

State Departments: Collaborative relationships with government agencies expand access to AT for eligible individuals. By working with departments such as vocational rehabilitation and human services, DakotaLink ensures that those who qualify receive the tools and training necessary to enhance their independence and productivity.

Programs for the Blind and Visually Impaired: Specialized referrals focus on addressing the unique needs of individuals with visual impairments. These partnerships help ensure that targeted solutions, such as screen readers, magnification devices, and Braille displays, are effectively matched with those who need them.

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Veterans Administration: DakotaLink partners with the Veterans Administration to address needs of disabled veterans, such as electronic magnifiers, lifting equipment, home modifications, and training on electronic devices.

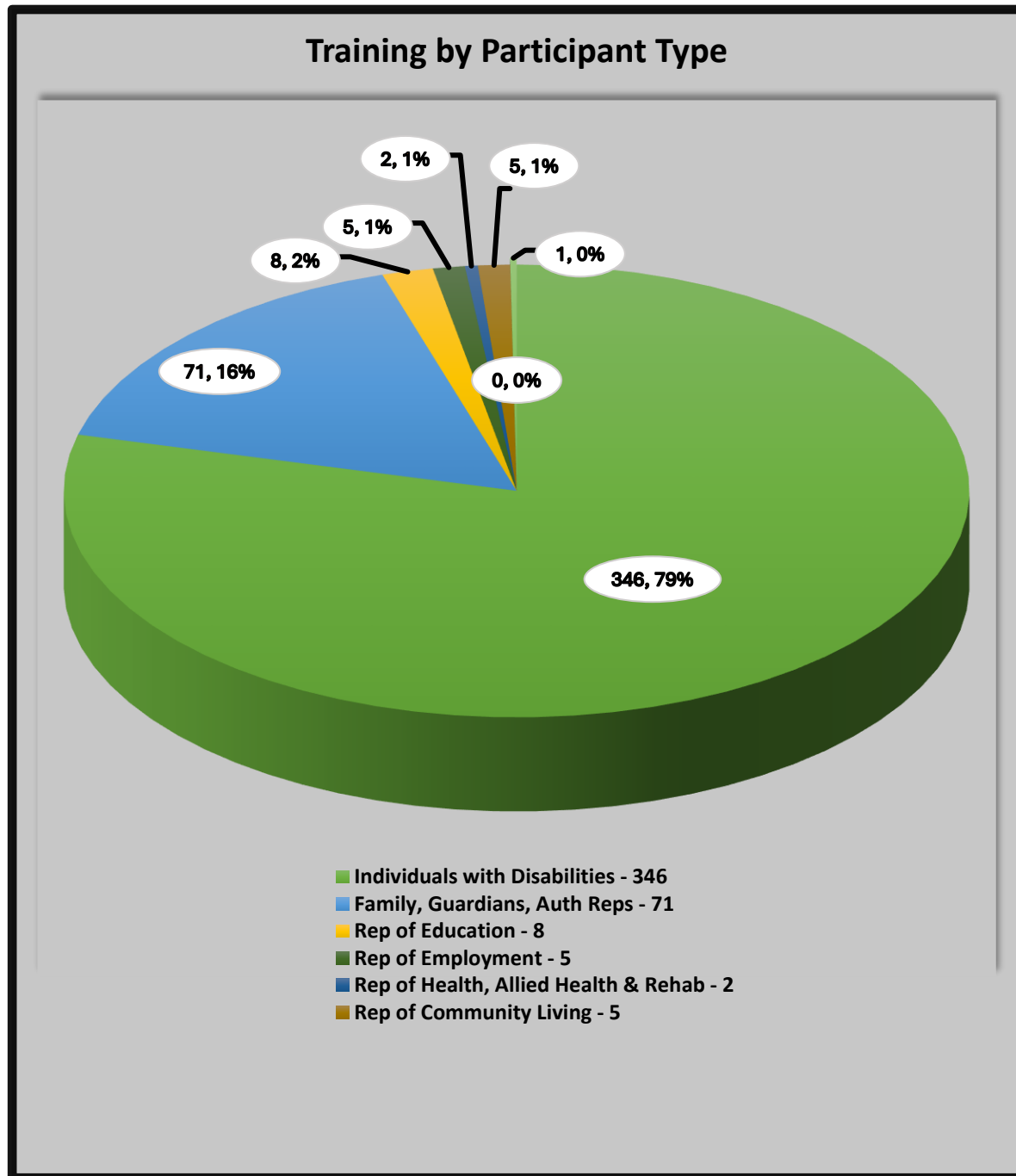
School Districts: DakotaLink services are utilized by school districts for students on IEP or 504 plans who need assistive technology to reach their educational goals. This includes students of all ages.

Dakota at Home Program: This program connects individuals to resources that address aging and disability needs. DakotaLink and Dakota at Home ensure South Dakotans are informed about AT options that improve quality of life, particularly for seniors and those with mobility challenges.

In summary: In 2025, these referral sources and others facilitated training for 438 participants, reflecting DakotaLink's robust network of support and outreach. This comprehensive approach not only increases awareness but also helps build a more inclusive community where assistive technology empowers individuals to overcome barriers.

By fostering strong partnerships and maintaining a wide referral base, DakotaLink continues to advance its mission of enhancing accessibility, promoting independence, and transforming lives across South Dakota through assistive technology solutions.

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Total of 438 Participants

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Technical Assistance & Collaboration

Enhancing Accessibility, Education, and Engagement

DakotaLink actively participates in Catch the College Wave, an initiative to assist high school students with disabilities transitioning to college. By demonstrating assistive technology, discussing accommodations, and teaching self-advocacy, DakotaLink empowers students to navigate post-secondary education with confidence and independence.

To improve service delivery, DakotaLink uses Survey Monkey to gather feedback, with 83% of respondents ranking their overall satisfaction as Very Satisfied. Direct engagement with referral sources has proven to be effective in addressing the needs of their consumers. Because DakotaLink can work with a consumer from needs assessment, to provision, to training, the referral sources see us as an attractive option to help their consumers meet their goals.

Public Awareness

Promoting the Benefits of Assistive Technology

DakotaLink actively engages in a variety of outreach initiatives, including presentations, expos, and conferences, to educate individuals, families, educators, and professionals about the transformative benefits of Assistive Technology (AT). These efforts are designed to raise awareness and empower communities by showcasing AT's potential to enhance independence and inclusivity.

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Key Elements of DakotaLink's Public Awareness Strategy

Local and Statewide Expos

DakotaLink regularly participates in expos, offering hands-on demonstrations of the latest AT advancements. These events cater to diverse audiences, including students, parents, healthcare providers, and vocational rehabilitation professionals, with customized presentations to meet their specific needs.

Regional Conferences

DakotaLink plays an active role in conferences focused on disability services, vocational rehabilitation, and special education. These events allow DakotaLink experts to share best practices, discuss emerging AT developments, and collaborate with professionals to promote broader access to AT solutions.

Targeted Community Outreach

DakotaLink organizes workshops and presentations to highlight technologies like screen readers, communication devices, mobility aids, and learning technologies (e.g., speech-to-text, text-to-speech, and grammar support). These sessions educate attendees on practical applications tailored to various disabilities.

Social Media

DakotaLink utilizes social media to share stories, educational videos, and resources demonstrating how AT empowers individuals. This fosters greater understanding by highlighting real-life examples of independence achieved through AT.

Through these comprehensive efforts, DakotaLink ensures information about Assistive Technology reaches a wide audience, inspiring individuals and communities to embrace solutions that promote independence, inclusivity, and improved quality of life.

DakotaLink has a resource directory that is on our website:

<https://www.dakotalink.net/at-partners>

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DakotaLink is dedicated to empowering individuals with functional limitations stemming from disability, illness, injury, or aging. Through the innovative use of Assistive Technology, we strive to help each person maximize their potential and achieve greater independence.

For more information, contact DakotaLink at:

Phone: 605-394-6742 (V/TD)

Toll-Free: 1-800-645-0673

Email: atinfo@dakotalink.net

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=dakotalink>

Website: <https://www.dakotalink.net/>

It is an honor and privilege to serve the people of South Dakota. Together, we continue to break barriers, foster inclusivity, and transform lives through the power of Assistive Technology.