



PROJECT NEWS

ATK hosts KS TAP annual training in Wichita

Assistive Technology for Kansans (ATK) and the Kansas Telecommunications Access Program (TAP) welcomed 45 participants representing all twelve TAP demonstration centers serving Kansans across the state to the annual training on March 9, 2017 in Wichita. TAP partners include LINK, Hays; Three Rivers Independent Living, Wamego; MidAmerica Alliance for Access, Kansas City, KS; Prairie Independent Living (PILR), Hutchinson and Dodge City; Independence, Inc., Lawrence; and ATK's five AT access sites located in Oakley, Salina, Topeka, Wichita, Parsons as well as the affiliated site in Garden City.

Stuart Jones, TAP Coordinator, demonstrated new telecommunications equipment available to KS TAP customers including modeling how to set up demonstration telephones and signalers so consumers could actually try an accessible phone for vision, hearing, mobility, or cognitive supports. Stuart noted, "The experience gives consumers a better idea if an accessible telephone is right for them or for someone they know."

ATK staff and demo partners learned about new devices that meet the needs of people with physical disabilities who need voice control or switches to make a telephone call. Telecommunications is a changing field so TAP

provides smartphones to eligible consumers who may use them to text, email, instant message, FaceTime, SKYPE, or even make a call.

Each demonstration center was provided with new equipment to demonstrate to KS TAP recipients that will increase individual choice during the decision-making process.

Sheila Simmons, ATK Coordinator, said, "The annual training gives ATK staff the opportunity to meet with our statewide demonstration partners. We really value having local contacts so people can learn about accessible telephones from people in their community. Our demo partners increase the reach of the TAP project and provide the boots on the ground local support when people need help troubleshooting their equipment."

Kansas TAP provided services for 917 individuals from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016. Kansas residents with existing telephone service and income below \$55,000 per year qualify for free equipment if they also have trouble hearing, seeing, speaking, remembering, walking, or holding a telephone. For more information regarding the KS TAP program, please visit our website at <http://atk.ku.edu/ks-tap>.

Sara Sack, ATK and TAP Director, said, "It's easy to forget how isolated a person can be when a traditional telephone doesn't work for them. This type of isolation can negatively effect their health and outlook on life. Through our demonstration partners and the five AT Access Sites, people are able to try out phones that meet their needs and get help learning how to set them up and use them. All of sudden you're back in touch with family, friends, and no longer alone."

For more information about Kansas TAP, visit our website at <http://atk.ku.edu/ks-tap>

In the picture, Stuart Jones, TAP Coordinator is assisted by an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter during the training day.