

The Assistive Technology (AT) Act – Summary

The Assistive Technology (AT) Act began in 1988 as the Technology-Related Assistance Act, or Tech Act (U.S. House of Representatives, 2004). It was the first federal law supporting technology for people with disabilities. The law recognized that technology helps people live, learn, work, and participate more independently.

The Act provided funding for states to create programs that help people find and use assistive technology. By 1995, every state and U.S. territory had received funding to set up an AT program.

How the Tech Act Helps States

The Tech Act gives federal funding to states so they can make assistive technology more available. Each program helps people of all ages and disabilities find, fund, and use devices and services at home, school, work, and in the community.

Major Updates

- 1994 – Focused on changing systems to make AT more available and required partnerships with Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agencies.
- 1998 – Renamed the Assistive Technology Act. Emphasized maintaining statewide programs, public awareness, device demonstrations, and funding help.
- 2004 – Created stable, formula-based funding and required specific services like demonstrations, loans, and training.
- 2014 – Administration moved to the Administration for Community Living (ACL) under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Today

Every state and territory now has an Assistive Technology Act Program that helps people find, try, and afford technology that supports daily life, education, work, and independence.

Assistive Technology for Kansans (ATK)

Assistive Technology for Kansans (ATK) is the state's Tech Act program. It is managed by the University of Kansas Life Span Institute in Lawrence and funded by the Administration for Community Living. ATK partners with local organizations to provide training, device demonstrations, and funding assistance. ATK operates six regional Assistive Technology Access Sites that help Kansans live, learn, work, and participate more independently.