Assistive Technology to Support Living Independently

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Visit us online at alphaonew.org

Alpha One - Who we are

Our Vision
As the result of Alpha One's endeavors, Maine will be a model for the nation in enabling people with disabilities of all ages to live independently.

Our Mission
Alpha One, Maine's Center for Independent Living, directed by and for people with disabilities, is committed to providing the disabled community in Maine with information, services and products that create opportunities for people with disabilities to live independently.

Alpha One - Our Services

Personal Assistance Services
  – Consumer Directed
Transportation
  – Adaptive Driver Evaluation
Recreation
  – Open Waters (Adaptive Scuba diving)
  – Rink Link (Adaptive Ice sports program)
Adaptive Equipment
  – Renegade Wheelchairs
Other
  – Maine affiliate for New England ADA Center
Alpha One - Our Services

Housing
- Access Design (Architectural Accessibility specialists)
- Home Retro
- Critical Access

Financing
- mPower (Maine’s adaptive loan fund)
- Personal Finance Skills Training
- Title 7 part b

Independent Living Services
- Information & Referral
- AgrAbility
- Hear in Maine
- Independent Living Assessment and Skills Training
- Homeward Bound

Learning Objectives

How assistive technology can be essential in assisting
• Children, adults and seniors who strive to maintain life in the community
• adults and seniors who want to transition out of a nursing facility

Learn about examples of assistive technology solutions to address
• independent/personal communication
• home safety
• personal care/medical management
• home access
• community access

Assistive technology resources and funding options

What is Assistive Technology?

- **Assistive or Adaptive Technology (AT)** commonly refers to “...products, devices or equipment, whether acquired commercially, modified or customized, that are used to maintain, increase or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities...” according to the definition proposed in the Assistive Technology Act of 1998.

- **AT Products** can enable people with disabilities to accomplish daily living tasks, assist them in communication, education, work or recreation activities, in essence, help them achieve greater independence and enhance their quality of life. AT devices can help improve physical or mental functioning, overcome a disorder or impairment, help prevent the worsening of a condition, strengthen a physical or mental weakness, help improve a person’s capacity to learn, or even replace a missing limb.
What is Assistive Technology?

- **AT Services** support people with disabilities or their caregivers to help them select, acquire, or use adaptive devices.

  Such services include functional evaluations, training on devices, product demonstration, and equipment purchasing or leasing.

Computers/Tablets/Smartphones

Hardware, software and apps have changed how we live and work. These products can help an individual with a disability in an almost endless variety of ways. These can include handy tools built into the smartphone that the consumer carries with them,

Because the hardware products can easily be adapted for a person with limited hand function, visual loss, or hearing impairment they can greatly enhance independence for the person with a disability

Examples of apps

- Magnifyer
- Money Reader

Examples of AT for Independent & personal communication

- Tablets – big and small, priced from $100 to $600. Many applications (see MeCite.org). Voice/finger/knuckle/nose/stylus in a hand cuff, touch and drag. Light weight. Accessories include attachable keyboard. Internet, e-mail, calendar, camera, social media, games, movies, etc. Switch devices are also compatible.

- Go Talk – Basic augmentative communication devise

- Bluetooth Headset – requires limited arm range of motion/hand function to “pick up/hang up phone”. Hands free while talking. Can program frequently called numbers, scroll on voice command.
Independent & personal communication

- Essence Pro – Augmentative Communication Device and Windows 7 based computer in one.
- Access via - Touch-screen, on-screen keyboard, keyboard and mouse, visual and auditory scanning, 1-, 2-, or multi-switch pointer. By Prentke Romich Company. Can program conversation writing screens with pre composed phrases or questions. Example – Personal care related needs, volunteer activity related needs.

Software/hardware to access a standard computer
- Tobii PCEye - Eye Control on your PC with your eyes - activates an on screen keyboard
- Dragon Naturally Speaking – voice activated software
- Screen reader products for blind or visually impaired

Large Button phones – visual impairment and dexterity issues

Hands Free Remote Controlled Speakerphone

Voice Over phone – amplification along with voice conversion to text for individuals who are hearing impaired.

AT and home safety

Adaptive switches can activate a number of things
- power door openers, Lifeline Unit, power wheelchair and more
- Pad switch
- Sip & puff
- Leaf switch

Placed in best location in wheelchair or in bed.
AT and home safety

Home Automation (Smart Home, and others) - control lighting, thermostats, security systems, monitor appliance such as a furnace, close circuit TV. This is an "off the shelf product." Control from an iPad or smart phone.

Environmental Control Systems - voice or switch activated. Control appliances, lighting, temperature and comfort.

AT for Visual Impairment

Floor Magnifier

AT for Visual Impairment

Large Button Remote

MonoMouse CCTV (available for use with TVs and computers)
**AT for Visual Impairment**

- Liquid Leveler - (emits an auditory signal when filled)
- Currency/ bill identifier

**AT in the Kitchen**

- Ring pull can opener
- Jar Opener
- Neon knife guards

**Personal Care/Medical Management**

- Medication management - $2.00 to $400.00
- Low tech to high tech
- Phillips Lifeline offers auto dispensing product
Personal Care/Medical Management

- Sonic Alert - alarm clock: Hearing impairment
- CamelBak: Independent drinking system
- Super Pole: Transfer aid

Personal Care/Medical Management

Freestanding and Ceiling Track Lift Systems: consumer can operate independently or by the care giver. Ceiling tracks can curve, make right and left turns, and go from room to room. Sling types vary depending on consumer need or comfort.

Consumer Stories

Maine consumers talk about and show the assistive technology they find useful to lead independent lives in the community.

Karen

Robin
Adaptive Driving Equipment and Vehicle Modifications

AT and apartment modification

Accessible entrance systems
- Proxy readers – a card or key chain fob can stay in a wallet or key chain. Simply being in the area of the door will open the door.
Door hardware consultants such as Exactitude, Inc. can assist with set up
http://www.exactitudeinc.com/info.php/info_id=31
Intercom/Buzzer systems – ADA compliance – audio and visual

Power Door openers

AT and home modification

Entrances
Radiant entrances/walkways for snow/ice maintenance

404.2.5 Thresholds. Thresholds, if provided at doorways, shall be 1/2 inch (13 mm) high maximum. Raised thresholds and changes in level at doorways shall comply with 302 and 303

Staircase viewed
AT and access modification
Making accessible entrances
• Accessible route incorporated into landscaping

AT and home modification
Retrofit an existing home
Entrance Before
After

AT and home modification
Accessible bathrooms
• Roll under sink, with easy reach cupboards
• Bathroom with clear floor space
AT and home modification

Accessible bathrooms

- Roll under bathroom sink & drawers
- This step-in shower does not comply. Curb needs to be .5 in. max.

AT and home modification

Accessible kitchens

- Wall mounted oven
- External lazy susan

AT and home modification

Accessible kitchens

- Roll under sink and cooktop
AT and home modification

Accessible kitchens

- Roll under counter tops/sink/cooktop
- Side-by-side refrigerator
- Large pull out drawers instead of cupboards

AT and home modification

Access ideas - Kitchen

- Anti-scald faucet with a single lever and/or extendable faucet
- Stove or cooktop with large visible controls in front
- Mirror to see into pots

AT and home modification

- Door modifications

  - Pocket (sliding) door saves the space needed for a swinging door
  - Offset hinge allows door to open up to an additional 1.5 inches
### AT and home modification

#### Access ideas – Bathroom/Kitchen

Rollout or pull-out storage shelves in cabinets minimize bending.

### AT and home modification

#### Getting up/down stairs

- Stair Glide
- Inclined Platform Lift
- Vertical Platform Lift

### AT and home modification

#### Access Ideas – Common areas

Large enough to accommodate normal furnishings. Allowing for easy maneuvering around them. Flooring that is non-glare or low pile carpet, or polished concrete.
AT and home modification

Access Ideas – Common areas

Window sills about 24” to 30” above the floor allow a view outdoors when seated.

Consumer Stories

Maine consumers talk about and show the assistive technology they find useful to lead independent lives in the community.

How do you and your consumer find the right product?

- What is needed or wanted for independence is as unique as the consumer.
- One size does not fit all.
- When making an investment in AT, you want to have a good idea that it will do what you expect and it will be useful to you.
- There are lots of products created either for a specific need or to meet a generic need. There are a lot of variables.
- What about service after the sale? Buy from a local vendor who will service what they sell.

Good places to start:
- Try a friends – ask them questions about where they got it, did they like the vendor or manufacturer, service issues, satisfaction.
- Shop Around – look at similar products, compare price, service, installation time, your first impressions of the vendor or manufacturer.
**Try-Before-Buy & Assessment Services**

- University of Maine at Farmington - AT collection
  - [http://kcmc.umf.maine.edu/](http://kcmc.umf.maine.edu/)
- Alpha One – 35 years of experience in AT for Independent Living
  - Driver Evaluation Service – OTR/L, Licensed Driver Educator
  - Access Design Services – staff architect
  - AT Assessments – OTR/L’s and ATP’s
  - On-farm Assessments – OT practitioners
  - Job Accommodation Assessments
    - 800-640-7200 x1 or [www.alphasenow.org](http://www.alphasenow.org)
- All Tech (includes former Technical Exploration Center)
  - [www.alltech-tsi.org](http://www.alltech-tsi.org)
- Wheelchair clinics – check with your local hospital

**Favorite Product Resources**

- [www.infogrip.com](http://www.infogrip.com)
  - The best place to find assistive technology, ergonomic & special education products, from alternative keyboards and mice to products for the low vision and blind.
- [www.abilities.com](http://www.abilities.com)
  - Abilities products provide you with solutions for balance, mobility, positioning, play, communication, sensory solutions, fine motor, and body works.
- [www.abledata.com](http://www.abledata.com)
  - “AbleData provides objective information about assistive technology products and rehabilitation equipment”
Favorite Product Resources

- www.independentliving.com
  Independent Living Aids, LLC

- www.lspproducts.com/
  LS&S

- www.goldviolin.blair.com/
  Gold Violin Independent Living

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Favorite Product Resources

- www.flaghouse.com
  FlagHouse is a premier global supplier of equipment and resources for physical education, sports, fitness, and recreation and for health, special needs, special education, sensory integration, and multisensory environments.

- http://webstore.ablenetinc.com/
  AbleNet is an international company and industry leader in providing educational and technical solutions to help children and adults with disabilities lead productive and fulfilled lives. This includes a complete line of communication aids for nonverbal individuals; access aids for all ages and situations; and special education classroom curriculum and software that both enhance and help ensure learning progress

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Favorite Product Resources

- http://www.gimpgear.us/
  Broadened Horizons company provides, “Unique assistive technologies providing independence to disabled wheelchair users with limited or no use of their hands and arms.”

- www.accessitr.com
  Access to Recreation, Inc., provides, “products that give them [customers] the ability to enjoy activities that they once thought impossible. We carry a wide range of products from Fishing Aids to Crochet Aids, Exercise Equipment to Rehabilitation Equipment . . . ”
Funding Options

Cross disability eligibility and broad based AT need

- mPower Adapted Loan Program – Maine residents
  www.mpowerloans.org
- Independent Living Services Grant - $5000 cap – Maine residents
  Call 800-640-7200 (v/tty)

Work related funding

- Worker’s Compensation
- Vocational Rehabilitation
  www.maine.gov/rehab
- www.ssa.gov
  - Plan to Achieve Self Support
  - Blind and work-related expenses/impairment and work related expenses

Funding Options

Communication Funding

- Hearing Aids – Contact Hear In Maine program for resources
  800-640-7200 v/tty
- Telecommunication Equipment Program - adapted phones, TTY’s, etc
  Maine Center on Deafness
  www.mcdmaine.org

Funding Options

Vehicle Modifications Funding

Vehicle Manufacturer Rebate Programs

- Ford
  https://www.fordmobilitymotoring.com/
- Chrysler
  http://www.chryslerautomobility.com/
- Honda
  http://automobiles.honda.com/information/mobility-assistance.aspx
- Toyota
  http://www.toyotamobility.com/
Funding Options

Funding for Specific Groups

- Veterans Administration
  - Funding for service connected and partial service connected disabilities
  - Contact Benefit Information and Assistance
  - [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)
- Section 19 MaineCare funded Personal Assistance Services
  - For community based long-term care program recipients
  - Funding for assistive technology devices and services and home access
  - Call care manager @ Elder Independence of Maine
  - Call care manager @ Alpha One 800-640-7200

- Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired
  - [www.maine.gov/rehab/dbvi](http://www.maine.gov/rehab/dbvi)
- Multiple Sclerosis Society – Financial Assistance Program
  - [www.msmaine.org](http://www.msmaine.org)
- Spinal Cord Injury
  - Travis Roy Foundation grant
    - [http://www.travisroyfoundation.org/grants](http://www.travisroyfoundation.org/grants)
  - Kelly Brush Foundation – Adaptive sports and recreational equipment
    - [http://kellybrushfoundation.org](http://kellybrushfoundation.org)
  - Muscular Dystrophy Association
    - [www.mdausa.org](http://www.mdausa.org)

Funding Options

Home Access Funding

- Subsidized housing – tenants can ask landlord for reasonable modifications and accommodations. Changes are made at no cost to the tenant. Google “how to request a reasonable modification or accommodation.”
- Home Retro Program – Grant $10,000, 80% median income 800-640-7200/v/tty
- Maine Home Repair Network – Community Action Programs (CAPS)
  - [www.mainecommunityaction.org](http://www.mainecommunityaction.org)
- Rural Development – Housing Repair/Rehabilitation Grants and Loans
  - [http://www.rd.usda.gov/me](http://www.rd.usda.gov/me)
- Critical Ramp Access Program – modular ramps, 80% median income 800-640-7200/v/tty
- Community Development Block Grant Funds – Towns determine community needs – ex. Auburn Accessible Housing Program
Funding Options

Miscellaneous

- United States Tax Code
  - Tax deductions available to taxpayers that may be used to offset the cost of assistive technology, such as medical care expenses
- Service Organizations
  - Lions Club, Rotary (Pancake Breakfast, spaghetti supper, etc)

Funding Options

Miscellaneous

- Community Service
  - Fundraiser for an adapted van
  - Bequest in a will that makes funds available for AT in a particular community
  - A band that plays for benefit concerts
  - Crowd Funding – an on-line service that assists in personal fundraising
    - [http://crowdfunding.com/](http://crowdfunding.com/)

Used Equipment

- Alpha One Classifieds
  - [www.alphaonew.com/classified_ads.htm](http://www.alphaonew.com/classified_ads.htm)
- GetATStuff
  - [www.getatstuff.org](http://www.getatstuff.org)
- Uncle Henry’s
- Disabled Dealer – used adapted vehicles
  - [www.disableddealer.com](http://www.disableddealer.com)
- AllTech – Recycle and Reuse Center
- Community lending closets – disability organization, AAA, town office

Disclaimer: The resources provided are for information purposes only. Alpha One does not endorse any individual service or provider. If you find that any information here is incorrect or out of date, please contact us.
Questions - Comments?

Thank you
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