

# ATAP AT<sup>3</sup>

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## Supporting People with Hearing Loss in Group Settings

### Introduction

Senior centers, churches and congregant settings play a vital role in fostering accessible and inclusive environments for older adults. For patrons with hearing loss, assistive technologies can bridge communication gaps and improve their overall quality of life. This guide provides an overview of the tools available, funding options to acquire them, and best practices for implementing these solutions effectively.



# Assistive Technologies Overview

## Hearing Assistance Devices

These devices amplify sound or make communication more accessible for individuals with hearing loss.

| Device                  | Description   | Examples   | Approx. Cost     |
|-------------------------|---|--|------------------|
| Personal Amplifiers     | Portable devices that amplify sound directly into headphones or earbuds.      | Pocketalker Ultra 2.0 (\$150-\$250), Bellman Audio Maxi (\$180-\$250)      | \$150-\$250      |
| Hearing Loop Systems    | Transmit sound via a magnetic field to hearing aids with telecoils (T-coils). | Contacta HLD3 (\$2,000-\$5,000), Listen Technologies (\$3,000-\$10,000)    | \$2,000-\$10,000 |
| FM and Infrared Systems | Wireless systems that transmit sound from a microphone to a receiver.         | Phonak Roger Pen (\$1,200-\$1,500), Williams Sound IR T2 (\$1,000-\$2,000) | \$1,000-\$2,000  |

## Communication Support Technologies

These tools bridge communication gaps in real-time.

| Technology                                       | Description   | Examples  | Approx. Cost                      |
|--|---|---|-----------------------------------|
| Captioning Devices                               | Real-time caption displays for conversations or events.   | Ava App (\$15-\$30/month), UbiDuo 3 (\$2,000-\$3,000)   | \$15-\$3,000                      |
| Speech-to-Text Apps                              | Converts spoken words to text.  | Otter.ai (Free or \$8-\$16/month), Google Live Transcribe (Free)  | Free-\$16/month                   |
| Amplified Telephone                              | Phones with adjustable amplification and tone settings.   | Clarity XLC3.4+ (\$150-\$200), CapTel 2400i (\$75-\$150)  | \$75-\$200                        |
| Video Relay Services                             | Video interpreters for sign language communication.   | Sorenson VRS, ZVRS (FCC-funded, free to eligible users)   | Free                              |
| CART (Communication Access Realtime Translation) | CART involves a stenographer, or steno typist, who translates speech in real-time to written words on a screen, either in person or remotely. | Remote CART: \$120-\$200 per hour.<br>On-Site CART: \$150-\$250 per hour (plus travel expenses for the provider). | \$120-\$250 an hour/plus expenses |

# Alerting and Notification Systems

Alerting systems help individuals with hearing loss stay aware of environmental cues.

| System                  | Description  | Examples   | Approx. Cost |
|-------------------------|--|--|--------------|
| Visual Alert Systems    | Use flashing lights or visual signals for alerts.              | Sonic Alert HomeAware System (\$250-\$400), Bellman Visit System (\$300-\$600) | \$250-\$600  |
| Vibrating Alert Devices | Wearable or standalone devices that vibrate for notifications. | ShakeAwake Clock (\$40-\$60), Smartwatches (\$250-\$500)                       | \$40-\$500   |

# Accessibility Enhancements for Group Activities

These technologies make group activities more inclusive.

| Device                   | Description  | Examples  | Approx. Cost  |
|--------------------------|--|---|---------------|
| TV Listening Systems     | Stream TV audio to hearing aids or headphones.     | Sennheiser RS 195 (\$300-\$400), TV Ears (\$120-\$200)                  | \$120-\$400   |
| Group Microphone Systems | Microphones that amplify speech in group settings. | Catchbox Throwable Mic (\$500-\$800), Shure Microflex (\$3,000-\$5,000) | \$500-\$5,000 |

# Funding Sources

## Federal and State Programs

- **Assistive Technology Act Programs:** Provide loans, demonstrations, and funding for assistive devices.
  - **Resource:** [AT3 Center](#)
- **Medicaid:** Covers devices deemed medically necessary (varies by state).
  - **Contact:** Your state Medicaid office.
- **Veterans Affairs (VA):** Offers free assistive devices for eligible veterans.
  - **Resource:** [VA Hearing Services](#)
- **FCC Programs:** Free devices like captioned telephones through **Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Programs (TEDP)**.
  - **Resource:** [FCC Accessibility](#)
- **iCanConnect:** Free devices and training for people with significant loss of both vision and hearing.
  - **Resource:** [iCanConnect](#)

# Non-Profit and Private Organizations

- **Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA):** Resources and connections to grants.
  - **Resource:** [HLAA](#)
- **Lions Clubs International:** Funding for hearing aids and assistive technologies.
  - **Contact:** Your local Lions Club chapter.
- **Assist2Hear:** Specializes in hearing loop installations and funding support.
  - **Resource:** [Assist2Hear](#)

## Grants and Community Funding

- **Community Development Block Grants (CDBG):** Federal funding for accessibility projects.
  - **Resource:** [HUD CDBG Program](#)
- **Foundation Grants:** Examples include AARP Foundation, Walmart Foundation, and Hearing Health Foundation.
  - **Search:** [Grants.gov](#)

## Device-Specific Subsidy Programs

- **CapTel Telephones:** Free or low-cost captioned phones through state TEDPs.
  - **Resource:** [CapTel](#)

## Fundraising and Community Contributions

- **Crowdfunding Platforms:** Use **GoFundMe** or **FundRazr** for community fundraising.
- **Partnerships:** Approach local businesses and service clubs like Rotary Clubs for sponsorships.

## Tax Benefits and Discounts

- **Tax Deductions:** Individuals may deduct hearing-related expenses as medical costs.
    - **Resource:** [IRS Medical Expenses Guide](#)
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# Implementation Guidelines

## Staff Training

- Train staff to operate and maintain devices.
- Educate on communication strategies for patrons with hearing loss.
- **Cost:** free-\$300 per session (varies by provider).

## Budgeting and Prioritization

- Assess patron needs and prioritize devices that will be most impactful.
- Explore bulk pricing or nonprofit discounts from vendors like Williams Sound or Listen Technologies.

## Accessibility Standards

- Ensure compliance with ADA requirements for assistive listening systems.
  - Consult resources like **Assist2Hear** for ADA-compliant hearing loop installations.
    - **Resource:** [Assist2Hear](#)
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## Using Your State AT Act Program for Support

State Assistive Technology (AT) Act Programs are valuable resources that senior centers can use for guidance, training, and support when implementing assistive technologies. These programs help increase access to assistive devices for individuals with disabilities and older adults.

## Services Provided

- Device demonstrations and short-term loans.
- Training for staff on using devices.
- Help identifying funding sources or low-interest device loans.

## How to Access

- Locate your state's program via the [AT3 Center Directory](#).
  - Borrow devices to test their effectiveness.
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## Sources and Additional Resources

1. [Hearing Loss Association of America \(HLAA\)](#)
2. [National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders \(NIDCD\)](#)
3. [FCC Accessibility Programs](#)
4. [Assist2Hear](#)
5. [AT3 Center](#)
6. [CapTel Captioned Telephones](#)
7. [Grants.gov](#)