



# Introduction to the 2024 Education PAL Cohort

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# What Is the ED PAL Cohort?

Simply stated – it is an in-depth learning opportunity for AT Act Programs to establish either a meaningful relationship, collaboration, or partnership with their respective State Education Agency (SEA) by advancing both the knowledge and skills needed to provide assistive technologies (AT) in a timely manner for children/students receiving services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

# Why Is the ED PAL Cohort Being Offered Now?

1. Newly Released AT Guidance from the US Department of Education States the Following Purposes:

- Increase understanding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's (IDEA's) assistive technology (AT) requirements,
- Dispel common misconceptions regarding AT,
- Provide examples of the use of AT devices and services for children with disabilities,
- Highlight the different requirements under Part C and Part B of IDEA.

2. Section 4 of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century AT Act States New Federal Partner Collaboration Language with State Agencies (Education, VR, Medicaid)

# How Will The ED PAL Be Structured?

A series of webinar and coaching sessions are planned to target one or more areas to improve core AT-related programs and services for students with disabilities being served under IDEA.

State Level and State Leadership activities of the AT Act align perfectly with the supports that are needed for students to function more independently and participate more fully – making progress towards academic standards and working towards competitive, integrated employment.

# What Are the Webinar Topics?

## 1. CDC Self-Assessment Toolkit – Allyson Robinson

- Guided interactive experiential opportunity to examine both strengths and weaknesses of existing programs to determine an AT Act Program's readiness to partner with a SEA. The answers discovered through this process will guide an AT Act Program in developing and making progress toward goals that result in a more successful relationship/collaboration/partnership with their SEA/LEA.

## 2. Communication/Advocacy Efforts/SLATE – Gayl Bowser

- Through education and advocacy efforts are known to help remove attitude, knowledge, practice, and policy barriers that may prevent SEAs, LEAs, and even AT Act Programs from more fully serving students with disabilities. Effective communication strategies and ongoing value can be gained from joining a professional AT learning community such as the State Leaders of Assistive Technology in Education (SLATE).

# What Are the Webinar Topics? (cont.)

## 3. Understanding Key Laws that Govern the Provision of AT Devices and Services in Birth-3 and K-12 Settings – Angela Standridge & Shannon Paige

- Critical federal laws protect students with disabilities in educational settings – IDEA, Rehab Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, Every Student Succeeds Act, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century AT Act as well as state education laws, administrative codes, policies and procedures need to be identified and understood when supporting AT in education. Collaborating with both SEAs and LEAs in the implementation of these state and federal laws with fidelity is within the scope of practice for AT Act Programs. This session will support both student success and long-term outcomes, as well as meet LEA and state obligations.

# What Are the Webinar Topics? (cont.)

## 4. Quality Indicators for Assistive Technology (QIAT); Resources and Transition - Brian Wojcik

- An overview of the 8 areas of the QIAT that are important to the development and delivery of AT devices and services: Consideration of AT Needs, Assessment of AT Needs, AT in the IEP, AT Implementation, Evaluation of Effectiveness of AT, AT in Transition, Administrative Support for AT, and AT Professional Development.

## 5. AT Device Inventory for Students (Demonstration/Short-Term Loan); Pediatric Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Reutilization – David Baker

- Participation in this webinar will provide information on the types of education-related AT devices needed in an AT Act Program's inventory to provide demonstrations and short-term loans for students with disabilities. Attendees will also learn about the importance of pediatric DME being available for students who need it to attend and function in the school setting.

# What Are the Webinar Topics? (cont.)

## 6. Digital Accessibility – Lyssa Prince

- Attendees will learn how Digital Accessibility help bridge the gap between the physical AT devices people use and digital environments like the internet, mobile apps, or digital documents. Also discussed will be how the timely provision of access to digital environments in educational settings is relevant to providing a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

## 7. How to Fund Parts C and B of IDEA – Allyson Robinson

- IDEA states that the LEA must ensure the provision of AT devices and/or services to a student with a disability if required as a part of the child's special education, related service, or supplementary aids and services. This session will share information and examples of multiple ways to fund needed AT for students with disabilities.



# What Are the Webinar Topics? (cont.)

## 8. Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) and AT – Cynthia Curry

- An educational material can be designed to be accessible for a learner with a disability from the beginning, or it can be converted to another format that meets the student's functional needs. The goal is that the student can use educational materials for learning or assessment in general education. This session will provide the basics of understanding accessible educational materials (AEM) as related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

# Partnerships Create Successful Outcomes

Strong relationships/partnerships/collaborations between SEAs/LEAs and AT Act Programs provide:

1. Greater impact and positively change the learning landscape for students with disabilities better than either could do on their own.
2. Knowledge, skills, and competencies in the areas of AT, AEM, and digital accessibility to provide better/higher quality:
  - **Information and Assistance** to parents, educators, related service providers and administrators.
  - **Public Awareness** about programs and services available.
  - **Education/Training** for applicable audiences to assist on all topics covered.

# Partnerships Create Successful Outcomes (cont.)

- **Device Demonstrations** of AT that help an IEP Team to make an informed decision.
- **Device Short-Term Loans** of AT to assist an IEP Team in decision-making.
- **Alternative Financing** (Systems to provide and pay for AT through purchase or lease options, or acquisition of/or payment for needed AT).
- **Reutilization** of gently used donations of pediatric durable medical equipment (DME) with an appropriate match for children's use at home and at school.

# About ATAP

The Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (ATAP) facilitates the coordination of state and territory assistive technology (AT) programs nationally to maintain and enhance a strong, effective, and efficient national network of state and territory wide AT programs. As part of this mission and effort, ATAP also provides technical assistance and support to its members through the Assistive Technology and Training Technical Assistance (AT3) Center.

The AT3 Center provides training and technical assistance for all AT Act Section 4 State and Territory AT Programs to support quality implementation of state-level and state-leadership activities.

ATAP and AT3 both support national assistive technology internet sites that make general AT information available to the public and other stakeholders. To learn more visit us at

<https://ataporg.org>

<https://at3center.net>