Identification of Assistive Technology Loan Programs in Ohio

Report by the Assistive Technology & Accessible Educational Materials Center
Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence

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Introduction

OCALI's (Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence) Assistive Technology and Accessible Educational Materials (AT & AEM) Center staff conducted a three-part study to: (1) locate and survey Ohio AT lending libraries, (2) identify AT professional development opportunities available to Ohioans and (3) identify how individuals learn about AT lending library resources. Additionally, methods to disseminate and market the information in a variety of accessible formats to targeted stakeholders is provided. The questions answered from the three-part study included:

● What types of AT devices and supporting services are available in AT lending libraries across the state?
● What regions and populations are served at the various AT lending libraries?
● How do patrons learn about lending libraries?
● What types of AT training opportunities are available to Ohioans?

Methods

Surveying the practices and services of AT lending libraries was the first part of a mixed method study used to identify various AT resources available across the state to support those needing and delivering AT services. The second part of the study identified AT professional development opportunities available to Ohioans that could be used to develop state and local AT capacity. The final component looked at ways people learn about AT lending libraries in order to guide marketing efforts when sharing the information collected through this study.
Part one of the report describes the procedures the AT&AEM Center staff used to identify AT lending libraries for inclusion in the survey, the instrument and procedures used to collect the information, and the methods used to analyze the data. It concludes with a brief discussion of the study limitations. Similarly, part two describes the process of identifying AT professional development opportunities and part three describes the survey process used to determine how AT lending library services are located by users to help inform marketing strategies for both lending libraries and professional development.

Part 1- AT Lending Library Survey

Participants
Various focus group activities were used to identify lending libraries across the state. Participants included current AT users, family members, service providers and relevant stakeholders in meetings hosted by 2 agencies, the Ohio Self Determination Association and Arc of Ohio for a total of 4 different meetings. The OCALI AT&AEM Center hosted another fact-finding event which included participants from Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), Arc of Ohio, AT Ohio, representatives from the OCALI Transition Center and Autism Center, as well as families and consumers from across the state. Participants included individuals with racial and/or ethnic minorities and those from underserved and Appalachian regions of the state (Gallia, Scioto and Adams counties). Two additional meetings were hosted by the OCALI AT&AEM Center including the Ohio AT Network which is comprised of the 16 regional AT points of contact (ATPOC) and the Collaborating Partners in Assistive Technology (CPAT) group comprised of representatives from the Nisonger Center Toy and Technology Library (UCEDD), AT Ohio (State Tech Act program), a Department of Education State Support Team (SST 11), Ohio State
University Medical Center - AT Clinic, May We Help, Nationwide Children’s Hospital and OCALI.

Table 1 Meetings to Identify AT Loan Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Face-to-Face Meetings to Identify AT Lending Programs</th>
<th>Dates / Meeting Titles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistive Technology Fact-Finding Sessions</td>
<td>6/6/17 - Arc of Ohio Regional Meeting with SSA’s and parents. Coral Grove, OH (SSA meeting). South Point, Ohio (Parent meeting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6/16/17 - Arc of Ohio Training Conference. Columbus, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7/17/17 - Arc of Ohio Regional Meeting with advocates and parents. Stow, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8/14/17 - Project Steps Toward Independence and Responsibility (STIR) Graduate Quarterly Meeting - conducted by the Ohio Self Determination Association. Lewis Center, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCALI Invited Fact-Finding Session</td>
<td>8/25/17 - OCALI. Columbus, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistive Technology and Accessible Educational Materials (AT &amp; AEM) Network Meeting at OCALI</td>
<td>9/1/17 - OCALI. Columbus, Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating Partners in Assistive Technology</td>
<td>9/14/17 - OCALI. Columbus, Ohio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Beyond meetings with stakeholders, various other methods were employed to gather information about AT lending libraries in Ohio. A question asking respondents about AT lending libraries was included in the survey used for The Assessing Assistive Technology Service Delivery in the Ohio County Board of Developmental Disabilities System grant. That survey was sent to the 88 County Boards of Developmental Disabilities.

AT Ohio and Goodwill Easter Seals Miami Valley Assistive Technology Services, provided lists of AT lending libraries that had been identified in the past. This list included several public library-based programs that had been infused with AT equipment funded through AT Ohio.

Additionally, the Toy Library locations (http://usatla.org/USA_Toy_Library_Association/Toy_Library_Locations.html) website was consulted to identify programs in Ohio. Each of the programs identified through these avenues were contacted to verify existence of an AT lending library program (AT devices, medical equipment, toys, etc.).

Partner agencies were sent a Media Kit which consisted of the URL survey link and a brief write-up of the project suitable for posting on Twitter, Facebook, a Blog, website or an electronic newsletter. The purpose of sharing the Media Kit was to leverage the audience of our partner agencies in order to identify additional AT lending programs throughout Ohio. Agencies requested to post the survey link included the following: ARC of Ohio, Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI), OCALI Assistive Technology and Accessible Educational Materials (AT&AEM) Center, Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities (OACB), Ohio
Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD), Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council), Ohio School Speech Pathology Educational Audiology Coalition (OSSPEAC), Ohio Occupational Therapy Association (OOTA), State Library listserv and the Toy & Technology Library associated with the Nisonger Center.

**Instrumentation**

The lending library survey consisted of four separate sections with a total of 31 questions. Section one consisted of demographic data such as the name of the loan program and contact information. Section two asked questions related to who can use the program, what types of AT are provided and what regions are served. The third section consisted of questions about the procedures for borrowing equipment, whether fees were required and if there was a membership process. The fourth section offered the respondents an opportunity to add any additional responses they desired and also asked if they knew of other AT lending programs other than their own.

Most questions were multiple choice and required either a single response or multiple options could be selected. There were also a couple of short-answer questions when further information was required such as the regions served.

**Data Collection**

Over 170 agencies were identified from the sources mentioned above. Several were part of a shared system of resources and many others could not be verified either because they no longer offer such items or were no longer in existence. All in all, 65 agencies throughout Ohio were identified as having some sort of AT lending program including AT devices, medical equipment, toys and/or sporting equipment. If the program could be verified via an online presence or through a phone conversation
with a representative from the program, an email address was obtained to whom the survey link was sent. Forty-seven agencies participated in the online survey. Those that did not complete the survey upon email request received up to three follow-up phone calls. Some of those libraries agreed to complete the survey either online or over the phone. A few additional libraries participated because they heard about the survey via one of the website postings, social media, listserv contact, or by word-of-mouth. If after the third attempt, no confirmation of a lending program could be made, their information was not included in the final list.

**Data Analysis**

The data was reviewed by the AT&AEM Center team to determine completeness of responses and trends in aggregate responses. Once all data was compiled and organized, an invited Advisory Team was convened to review project findings. The invited team consisted of: a family member of an individual with DD; AT users; and representatives from state agencies, local providers, and experts in the AT community. The project findings were reviewed with the team and they were then given an opportunity to provide additional input. Utilizing the data obtained from the online and phone surveys and the advisory team, responses were sorted into three groups: AT Lending Libraries, Medical Equipment Lending Libraries, and Adaptive Toy Lending Libraries. Brief descriptions of each are shown in Table 2.
Table 2 Types of Loan Programs in Ohio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistive Technology Lending Libraries</td>
<td>Communication devices, AT for curriculum-based needs, computer access equipment, mobile devices, some recreation and play, switch access equipment, AT for low-vision/blindness, AT for hard-of-hearing/deafness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Equipment Lending Libraries</td>
<td>Seating and positioning equipment, mobility equipment, activities of daily living equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive Toy Lending Libraries</td>
<td>Adapted toys, recreational items, switches and switch access equipment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data from the 65 agencies was then put into a table format, an interactive map, and finally a spreadsheet document to show various examples of how the information could be displayed and sorted. Although the table format, “Ohio Lending Libraries – Table” (Appendix A) is not sortable, it offers a way to view the information by region and type of library. This document is also accessible to screen readers and other types of assistive technology interface devices. Additionally, the information was entered into an interactive map to demonstrate how the data could be represented in a graphical format [Ohio Lending Libraries - Map](https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?ll=41.27547393459367%2C-83.31652580000002&z=8&mid=1VmVwH7iiAc-CxRnzaRnwCalmHVVMQBl).

The lending programs were identified with colored icons to show the type of lending program as indicated in Table 3 below. A sample of this interactive map is shown in Figure 1. This map allows for regional searches and tailored listings based on the needs of the user to view lending programs available in a specific region of the state (Figure 2). This is just one example of how the information may be shared.
Figure 1. Ohio AT Lending Libraries.

Figure 2. Ohio AT Lending Libraries, Zoomed in on Columbus Area.
As yet a third way to represent the information from the lending libraries, an Excel document, “Ohio Lending Libraries – Spreadsheet” (Appendix B) was created to show regional representation of the information in a list format. The data was pre-sorted into the 6 OACB Regional Support Network areas of the state with an additional category of statewide lending libraries. This list can also be sorted by library type or other categories as needed.

Limitations
This part of the study involved identifying and then surveying AT lending libraries within the state of Ohio. While many sources were used to locate AT lending libraries in Ohio, it is likely the list is not all inclusive. Additionally, some agencies did not participate in the online survey although their programs could be identified online.
Part 2 - Identification of AT Professional Development (PD) Opportunities

Participants
Three AT&AEM Center staff participated in the search and development of the list of professional development offerings. Because the AT&AEM Center at OCALI is a state-wide professional development and technical assistance center, there was already a good bit of in-house knowledge about various agencies that provide AT professional development regularly.

Instrumentation
An online spreadsheet was used to gather the raw data and was shared among three OCALI staff members while the list was being curated.

Data Collection
PD was defined by the curators as anything that would assist individuals in developing more knowledge about assistive technology devices, processes or services so limitations were not placed on just face-to-face trainings. Initially, all resources known by the curators was entered into the spreadsheet. Then, a comprehensive Internet search was conducted and any additional professional development offerings were added to the list. To identify additional AT training programs in Ohio, information was collected from email advertisements, websites, listservs and AT vendors. Agency or training event titles and/or topics were collected along with the host agencies, date and locations, website links, cost and continuing education unit availability. Assistive Technology online certification and master’s programs were also obtained.
Data Analysis

Once all the data was compiled, it was reviewed by the AT&AEM Center team and a focus was placed on agencies that were not only known to provide current PD, but also those that consistently provide high-quality training over a number of years. The information curated was categorized and entered into a Google Spreadsheet, “AT Training Events in Ohio” (https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1GAvw89PXyz-Ag-GfMv3ki8_eVm_RxRFTxX_I9OviE/edit#gid=102772353) as follows: Face-to-Face, Agencies that Offer Webinars, Online Learning, YouTube Channels, Newsletters/Blogs/Listservs/Websites and Online AT Certification/Master’s programs. Categorizing the resources on a spreadsheet allows for sorting based on variables such as cost, type of offering, or agency name. The spreadsheet was also provided in a separate Excel Document “AT Training Events” (Appendix C). Table 5 shows the number of training events in Ohio based on type.

Table 3. AT Training Events in Ohio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of AT Training Event</th>
<th>Number of Agencies or Offerings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agencies That Offer Face-to-Face AT Training</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agencies That Offer Webinars</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Learning (modules/courses)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube Channels</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsletters/Blogs/Listservs/Websites</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online AT Certification/Master’s Programs</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to webinars on various AT topics such as quality indicators in AT, AT tools for specific disabilities, AT apps, and workplace modifications to name a few, there are a number of AT vendors who regularly offer webinars on their individual products. These companies are vendors of specific augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) products (i.e. Prentke Romich Company, Tobii DynaVox, Saltillo) and specific AT products such as Ablenet, Inc., Attainment Company and Don Johnston. Some of these companies offer free webinars, while others require subscription based online membership. Since most AT and AAC vendors offer webinars on their products, it was decided that the list would be too numerous to include them all. However, knowing that AT and AAC vendors offer these resources is important information to share with the DODD staff who are supporting AT implementation.

The same invited Advisory Team for the part one lending library activities was convened to review the professional development project findings and again they were given an opportunity to provide additional input.

Limitations
The AT Training Programs in Ohio are limited to the events and offerings available at the time of this project. These are all subject to change and most of the face-to-face events will have occurred by the time of the writing of this report. However, the agencies listed typically offer ongoing webinars on similar topics throughout the year. Another limitation of this component of the project is that new vendors are continually entering the market while others leave or merge with their competitors so the document will need to be continually updated to remain current.
Part 3 - OCALI Patron Survey - Future Marketing Development

Participants
A library patron survey was administered to gather data to help inform the development of marketing plans for both lending library and PD activities. Participants of this survey were OCALI Lending Library users accessing the library from January 2, 2018 - April 12, 2018.

Instrumentation
Using Survey Monkey, a simple three-question survey was posted as a button on the OCALI Lending Library homepage. The survey asked the respondents (1) to indicate their role (e.g. AT professional, administrator, family member, related service provider, etc.), (2) how they heard about the OCALI Lending Library and (3) their purpose for using the resources such as, looking for books, AT equipment or other resources. Paper copies of the same poll were included in the paperwork that accompanied assistive technology equipment loans.

Data Collection
The survey was available from January 2, 2018 - April 12, 2018. During this timeframe, there were 209 unique user requests from the OCALI Lending Library, of which 158 responded to the survey. Of these 158 responses, 155 completed the two predetermined relevant questions and 75 indicated they were either looking for specific AT devices to borrow or thinking about borrowing AT devices. The other 80 respondents indicated they were looking for materials besides assistive technology-related items.
Data Analysis

In reference to the OCALI Lending Library Patron Survey, only the 75 responses from the individuals who indicated they visited the OCALI lending library with the intent of reserving or exploring AT equipment were used to determine results of how the respondent learned about the OCALI AT Lending Library. Two pie charts were generated. One shows the roles of the individuals who completed the survey and the other shows percentages of how they learned about OCALI’s AT Lending Library.

Limitations

The users surveyed were only those users who accessed the library during the specific timeframe of the survey, chose to click the survey link on the lending library website and responded to the two questions about (1) how they learned about the OCALI lending library and (2) whether or not they are looking for AT resources as opposed to general resources available in the OCALI lending library. Because of these factors, the sample may not have been representative of all lending library users.

Findings - Part 1 - AT Lending Library Survey

In total, 65 AT lending libraries completed the survey. Each provided information about their unique services which were captured and listed in the various appendices of this report.

The regional map of lending libraries shows that most loan programs are clustered around the I-71 corridor stretching from Cleveland through Columbus to Cincinnati which seems to indicate that Appalachian, as well as more rural regions of the state have fewer lending library resources available in close geographic proximity. Furthermore, the type of loan programs available are not evenly distributed across the state. For example, in the Toledo area there are 2 medical equipment loan programs, but no AT lending libraries or adaptive toy lending libraries. The southwest portion of the state near Cincinnati has 3 different AT
lending programs, but no medical equipment or adaptive toy libraries. Despite some
pockets of the state having several options and others having minimal options, the map
shows 10 different programs that offer statewide loans - some of which ship equipment to
any location within the state, with a few shipping equipment at no charge.

Of the 65 lending libraries, a third indicated they provide some type of training related to
assistive technology. Slightly less than a third of the libraries indicated they provide
demonstration services which are defined as showing a user/family/professional how a
specific device works, but not necessarily fitting the device to the user’s needs or
consultative services which may be more specific to matching the device to the user’s needs.
Less than a fifth indicated they provide assessment services. Generally, if agencies provided
assessment services, they also provided additional services such as consultation,
demonstration and training (Table 4).

Table 4. Service Provided by AT Lending Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services Provided by AT Lending Programs</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, it was also noted there was a fairly high rate of discontinued AT lending
libraries since 170 programs were identified, but only 65 were found to be currently active
and engaged in loaning AT equipment. The fairly high turnover rate of these lending libraries leads to questions about why the programs were not sustainable and what might be done to increase the sustainability of the current programs if they are, in fact, meeting a regional or statewide need. While outside of the scope of this project, the AT&AEM Center staff because of their relationships with some of these libraries, were able to identify why some of the libraries closed. Closures reportedly occurred most often for two reasons: (1) staff changed and the agency was unable to find suitable replacement staff with the needed expertise, and (2) because the programs typically do not produce revenue, the funds needed to support the program equipment and staff costs were not sustainable. In response to these financial difficulties, some private AT lending libraries initiated a fee-for-service model, however, for many AT users and families this presents a financial hardship and therefore a barrier to needed services.

**Summary - Part 1 - AT Lending Library Survey**

Part 1 of this project set forth to answer the following questions: (1) What types of AT devices and supporting services are available in AT lending libraries across the state? (2) What regions and populations are served at the various AT lending libraries across the state?

(1) A wide range of devices and services are found at the various AT lending libraries across the state. The types of lending libraries are fairly consistent in number with AT lending libraries being the most prevalent (25 identified programs, medical equipment libraries (23 identified programs) and finally, adaptive toy libraries (17 identified programs). Most lending libraries did not provide add-on services such as assistance in the AT assessment process. A few offered one-on-one assistance with the equipment which included some personal setup and instruction on equipment use, however the majority of lending libraries provide the equipment without personalized setup support.
Generally, the lending libraries were found to be clustered around the I-71 corridor leaving Appalachian and rural regions with fewer lending library options. As was mentioned previously, statewide libraries offer support to these areas with some shipping devices to any location in Ohio. Most of the libraries served a wide range of ages however, a few focused only on school-age clients and only a couple focused exclusively on adult populations.

**Findings - Part 2 - Identification of AT Professional Development (PD) Opportunities**

A total of 99 different offerings related to AT training were identified. The vast majority of these offerings were available online. Some were offered face-to-face as well. This study uncovered numerous ways to obtain AT knowledge including traditional face-to-face options as well as non-traditional options such as seeking information from listservs or AT blogs. All in all, there were 9 different types of methods that could be used to further one’s knowledge of AT. Many of the webinars, listservs, online modules, newsletters, blogs and YouTube channels are available for free.

**Summary - Part 2 - Identification of AT Professional Development (PD) Opportunities**

Part 2 of this project set forth to answer the following question: What AT training opportunities are available to Ohioans? A wide range of AT training and learning opportunities were found to be available to Ohioans. These trainings exist not only within Ohio, but are also available nationally. While we were tasked with finding Ohio-specific AT learning opportunities, it is also important to realize that the Internet offers many more virtual opportunities through national organizations that can be easily accessed both in the workplace and at home without leaving Ohio. Many of these national offerings are included in the list. Opportunities found consisted of face-to-face trainings, webinars both real time and archived, online training modules, YouTube videos, newsletters, blogs, websites and AT
certification and master’s programs. Topics found were also quite varied and ranged from AT for accessing the arts, communication strategies and tools, and access to reading and writing. The learning opportunities covered introductory to advanced skill levels so regardless of one’s AT knowledge level, there were numerous options to support continued learning for all. Although most of the trainings are geared toward school-age populations, some were generic enough to cover the lifespan and others were directed more at adult populations. Trainings by vendors are often device specific and consisted of webinars, face-to-face trainings and videos available on dedicated YouTube channels. University AT certification and graduate programs offered more intensive curriculum-based educational programs intended to prepare AT professionals. Many of these programs are online or hybrid programs offering flexibility so currently employed professionals in a variety of fields can participate in the programs.

Findings - Part 3 - OCALI Patron Survey - Future Marketing Development

As shown in Figure 4, Related Service Providers and K-12 Educators are the greatest users of the OCALI Lending Library. However, over a third of the participants indicated either an “Other” (2) role or no response (25) entered. Other users included administrators (8%), early intervention providers (4%), family members (2.7%) and AT professionals (1.3%)
Figure 4. Roles of those who responded to the OCALI Lending Library Patron Survey

From data shown in Figure 5, we can see the most prevalent way of learning about OCALI’s Lending Library was through Word of Mouth. The next two categories, Shared During Formal Training and Discovered on the OCALI or AT & AEM Website offered the next largest representations for how people learned about this resource.

![Figure 5: How Did You Learn About the OCALI Lending Library?](image)

Summary Part 3 - OCALI Patron Survey to Identify Marketing Strategies

Part 3 of this project set forth to answer the following question: How do patrons learn about lending libraries? Word of mouth conversations, accessing the lending library through the OCALI or AT&AEM Center websites, and learning about the resources through formal training events are the most common ways people learn about AT resources available for loan through OCALI. Translating this information to the DODD audience, these may also be effective ways to share information about AT loan programs throughout Ohio that are available to individuals served by DODD.
Recommendations

The identified project recommendations had a twofold purpose: (1) to develop recommendations for best options/formats for making information about lending programs/libraries and professional development opportunities accessible to a wide variety of users, and (2) to provide marketing strategies and activities about currently available lending library resources and PD events. These recommendations may be used to help develop systems and processes for increasing awareness for people with disabilities, families and service providers of the vast array of AT loan libraries and AT PD activities that already exist and are readily available for use.

(1) In order for information to be accessible to the broadest range of users, it often needs to be provided in a variety of formats. Some may need to view the information in a graphical format, others may need a list format, and still others may need braille or large print to access the information. A format which may be accessible to one person may provide a barrier to another when attempting to access the same information. Offering a variety of formats creates the likelihood that one of the formats will meet the user’s needs. Additionally, formats created should also allow the end user to adjust parameters and obtain necessary information independently, it must be easily accessible by a wide variety of assistive technology interface devices and also designed to accommodate future technologies. The four principles of accessibility (perceivable, operable, understandable and robust) were considered in the development of the documents for this grant project.

The survey results from the lending library survey are provided in several different formats as examples that might be considered for users with a variety of access needs. Formats presented include an accessible chart in (1) MS Word (Appendix 2), (2) Excel...
Spreadsheet (Appendix 3), and (3) a sortable Google Map (https://drive.google.com/open?id=1VmVwwH7iiAc-CxRnzaRwCalmHVMQBk&usp=sharing). A variety of other formats might also be considered including an interactive web-based tool that can sort information based on keywords or regions. One example of such a tool, is OCALI’s online events calendar and directory powered by NEXUS (https://www.ocali.org/nexus). Accessible PDFs, braille ready files (brf) and large print are additional examples of formats that should be considered when providing resources for the widest range of users.

Additionally, it was noted there was a fairly high rate of discontinued AT lending libraries since 170 programs were identified, but only 65 were found to be currently active and engaged in loaning AT equipment. This means that data keeping systems should be flexibly designed and easily modifiable so that information about the loan programs can be updated in a timely manner.

Similarly, the information regarding the AT PD activities should also be provided in multiple formats as was mentioned for the lending libraries. The information could be provided as links to the various agencies who provide AT professional development or if there was adequate funding it could be curated and maintained in real time as events are posted on the various sites. It should be noted that the latter would be extremely time and resource intensive to maintain since these training offerings change frequently.

(2) This project also set forth to make recommendations on strategic plans for marketing current and future AT lending libraries and professional development. It was apparent from findings of the previous DD Council Survey, “Assessing Assistive Technology Service Delivery in the Ohio County Board of Developmental Disabilities System” completed by the AT&AEM Center, that many people with developmental disabilities,
families and the county boards providing services were not aware of already available AT resources, including AT lending libraries, both within their regions and statewide. Many also did not seem to be aware of the value of utilizing lending library device trial services as a part of the AT assessment process to help determine the effectiveness of selected devices prior to purchase. Additionally, knowledge of sources for AT professional development opportunities also seemed limited. The AT&AEM Center worked with Krile Communications to develop recommendations for marketing strategies to increase awareness of AT lending programs/libraries and their services for individuals with developmental disabilities, their families and service providers. Those recommendations are as follows:

A. Develop an electronic repository to house AT resources including lending libraries, AT training events and general AT resources:
   - Create an electronic repository that contains a searchable database of AT lending programs, AT training events and general AT resources. The database should be searchable by zip code and/or by zooming in and out on a map to view the closest available resources, trainings and services. The repository should also include a calendar or event listing for webinars and trainings as an alternate means of searching training events. Resources within the electronic repository should be provided in multiple formats to meet the accessibility needs of a wide range of users and the site should be WCAG 2.1 compliant.

B. Develop marketing materials:
   - Develop an electronic media toolkit containing a template press release, template newsletter article (for both print and electronic newsletters), sample social posts and a list of requests that partner organizations and key influencers of the target audience can use to help raise awareness.
   - Develop a small “reference card” that has a QR code and URL with a call to
action to visit the electronic repository database online to find local lending libraries, AT training events and AT resources.

- Included a link on the electronic repository for interested parties to order additional printed “reference cards” for distribution to interested parties.

C. Distribute marketing materials:

- Distribute the electronic media toolkit and “reference card” to the county boards of DD and a variety of education, medical and family advocacy organizations, such as, ESCs, Family & Children First Councils, Adult Day Service providers, AT providers, AT lending programs identified in this report etc. with a request to disseminate the information.

- Distribute a direct mailing postcard advertising the central repository to be sent through county DD boards to all individuals and families in their databases (requires significant financial investment).

D. Contact trade associations (see item 5 below for list of possible partners to approach) and all county boards to request that a link to the central repository be placed on their website and in key electronic and print publications.

- Provide “button” artwork and a URL to allow for easy placement on their sites.

- Utilize existing OCALI and partner organization social media and e-newsletters to “advertise” the database.

E. Participate in educational and AT awareness presentations:

- Present and/or have a display booth at key trade association meetings, such as the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Ohio Library Council, Ohio Association for the Education of Young Children, Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association/Child Care Resource and Referral, Ohio Hospital Association, Ohio Association of Community Health Centers, Ohio School Speech Pathology Educational Audiology Coalition, Ohio
Occupational Therapy Association, Ohio Association of County Boards and the Ohio Academy of Family Physicians, OCALICON, OOD Statewide Conference, School Based Practitioners Summit, and the Ohio Rehabilitation Association to disseminate the reference cards and raise awareness of the availability of the online database.

- Contact Ohio children’s and community hospitals’ medical education coordinators to request Grand Rounds presentations at their facilities to present about the database.

F. Develop and deploy a statewide public relations campaign:

- Develop and distribute a press release statewide.
- Secure interviews with print reporters and bloggers.
- Place experts on TV interviews and radio interviews.
- Utilize Facebook Live opportunities with partner organizations to host interviews.

In summary, many recommendations have been provided within this grant project based on the baseline data gathered regarding AT resources currently available in Ohio. There are a surprising number of resources available that could be leveraged to help develop the capacity of AT service delivery by the county boards of developmental disabilities. The biggest challenge seems to be finding a way to bring together these resources into some type of central repository for ease of access. Currently AT users and service providers need to piece together needed services from a variety of sources which can be time consuming and challenging. Making sure that county boards are aware of these many resources is an additional challenge. Developing a solid marketing plan to share information about the vast array of resources will be critical in the success of developing regional AT capacity throughout the state.