



# Protection & Advocacy Project

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## What are the Benefits of Assistive Technology?

Assistive technology encompasses devices and tools designed to enhance the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. The benefits include:

- **Improved Independence:** Enables individuals to perform daily tasks with greater autonomy, reducing reliance on caregivers.
- **Enhanced Quality of Life:** Facilitates participation in activities and environments that might otherwise be inaccessible, leading to increased satisfaction and well-being.
- **Sense of Empowerment:** Provides individuals with greater control over their environment and decisions, boosting confidence and self-esteem.
- **Improved Social Participation:** Supports engagement in social interactions and community activities, fostering connections and reducing feelings of isolation.
- **Reduction in Barriers:** Addresses physical, sensory, and cognitive challenges, making tasks and environments more accessible.
- **Flexibility and Adaptability:** Allows individuals to adapt to various situations and environments, promoting versatility in daily life.
- **Self-Advocacy Skills:** Empowers individuals to express their needs and preferences effectively, leading to better outcomes in various settings.
- **Stress Reduction:** Alleviates physical and emotional stress by simplifying tasks and reducing dependency on others.
- **Enhanced Personal Growth:** Encourages skill development and personal development, contributing to overall growth and fulfillment.
- **Perception of Inclusion:** Promotes a sense of belonging and acceptance in various environments, enhancing social integration.

These benefits are supported by findings from the Workforce and Technology Project, based on survey results provided by service providers and participants to assess the impact of assistive technology on individuals' lives.

For more information on these reported benefits, visit our website at <https://www.ndpanda.org/resources/assistive-technology> to watch our new video.



# ND Protection and Advocacy Workforce and Technology Project

## What is P&A?

P&A is an independent state agency that is charged with asserting the legal rights of people with disabilities. P&A operates in a manner which is consistent with the belief that people with disabilities have the same legal and constitutional rights and guarantees as every other American citizen.

## What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive technology (AT) is any item, piece of equipment, software program, service, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.

## Project Funding

Income for the project is being pooled from 3 different funding sources. These sources include the ND Department of Health and Human Services, ND State Council on Developmental Disabilities, and ND Protection and Advocacy.

Throughout the past couple of years, the human service delivery system has seen a new level of challenges with workforce shortages, including the recruitment and retention of staff to provide critical front-line work to support people with disabilities. This requires a system, which was already stressed in many ways, to find innovative and creative ways to ensure that the support and services needed to meet client needs is done in new ways. Exploring the use of technology within home and work settings is a significant need and one that the state of North Dakota is now embarking on.

In collaboration with various partners, P&A is spearheading a taskforce to explore innovative technology practices and address the barriers related to access, affordability, and acceptability.

**Plan for Sustainability :** Currently the use of technology within the service delivery is at its beginning stage in North Dakota. Through recent contacts with the state of Minnesota, Protection and Advocacy is aware that this concept can be implemented. The intent through this project is to establish billing avenues through Medicaid or waived services to ensure sustainable use without the barrier of funding.

## Our Goals

- Show Benefits Of AT
- Help Individuals Maintain Their Independence
- Keep Individuals In The Least Restrictive Environment
- Reallocate Staff To Alleviate Workforce Shortage
- Create Pathways For Funding

## Our Mission

**Research Technology** - Research technology-based practices that could create independence and decrease dependence on caregiver needs within the services delivery system. Showcase the benefits of assistive technology.

**Establish Pilot Project** – Four pilot projects have been established with individuals who are willing to explore and establish options to use technology to address workforce needs within the system and to create independence for individuals with disabilities.

**Research Funding** - Research and create pathways for funding for technology assessments, purchasing of technology, and sustainability of technology use through Medicaid or our current waiver structure.

**Conduct Cost-Benefit Analysis** - Conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the use of technology by the pilot project providers to further analyze the long-term benefits or barriers of the use of assistive technology.