



# MassMATCH

## 2013 Annual Report

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission  
Commissioner Charles Carr  
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## Executive Summary

### **MassMATCH FFY13 Statistics**

- 558 assistive technology (AT) devices were loaned by MassMATCH partners to state residents. AT device loans allowed people to test drive devices or fill a short-term equipment need.
- 329 people learned about assistive technology at device demonstration events. 117 referrals were made to additional resources.
- 91 individuals with disabilities borrowed equipment from the Long-Term Device Loan Program (which is available for devices valued under \$500). The program is run in partnership with Easter Seals and saved consumers a total of \$30,286.
- 207 durable medical devices were refurbished through the Wheelchair Reuse program, saving consumers \$191,498 over retail.
- Get AT Stuff, the New England “Craig’s List” for AT, completed 19 exchanges, saving Massachusetts residents \$52,685 over retail.
- The Massachusetts AT Loan Program provided \$1,255,601 in financial loans to 76 borrowers. Most loans were made to purchase vehicle modifications.
- 778 people were trained on AT topics.
- 993 people received information and assistance services.
- Over 337,000 people were reached through public awareness activities including Websites.

### **MassMATCH Highlights**

- MassMATCH continued funding to two AT Regional Centers in partnership with Easter Seals in Boston and United Cerebral Palsy-Berkshire in Pittsfield. The Centers provide a variety of AT services to persons with disabilities of all ages.
- MassMATCH helped pilot “*REquipment*,” a durable medical equipment (DME) reuse program in the Boston area. Coordinated by the Boston Home, *REquipment* provides adults, children, and families swift access to gently-used DME (such as wheelchairs, scooters, and standers). Start-up funding was obtained from the Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family Foundation, Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, and MRC (MassMATCH hosts the Website and provides administrative office space).
- The AT School Share (ATSS) initiative welcomed an AT program in Rhode Island that works with multiple school systems in southern Massachusetts. ATSS is a network of schools and school systems created for the sharing of AT devices, knowledge, and expertise. A total of 3 new school entities joined ATSS in FFY13.
- The Wheeled Mobility Clinic—run by the Dept. of Developmental Services (DDS), MRC and Stavros Center for Independent Living—continued successfully in Amherst. The Mobility Clinic serves individuals with seating and positioning issues who rely on wheeled mobility but are not clients of the DDS. (MassMATCH is currently exploring avenues and partners for expanding these essential services to the greater Boston and Worcester areas.)

## *Introduction: Meeting the Requirements of the AT Act of 1998, as amended*

MassMATCH is one of 56 state initiatives federally funded through the AT Act of 1998 as amended in 2004. It stands for the Commonwealth's initiative to “Maximize Assistive Technology (AT) in Consumer's Hands,” and its goals are to improve awareness of and access to assistive technology for people with all kinds of disabilities, of all ages, and for all environments. The 2004 AT Act amendments specifically call for improving access to AT in the areas of education, employment, community living, and IT and telecommunications.

The AT Act of 1998, as amended does not directly pay for AT devices. Instead the emphasis is on funding initiatives that create better access to affordable and appropriate equipment. Each state is required to carry out the following:

### **State-level Activities**

- State finance systems (for individuals to affordably purchase AT)
- Device reutilization programs (to exchange, repair or recycle used equipment)
- Device loan programs (for short-term trials of equipment)
- Device demonstration programs (to see and try out equipment)

### **State Leadership Activities**

- Training (with a portion focused on transition assistance)
- Technical Assistance (with a portion focused on transition assistance)
- Public awareness, information and assistance
- Coordination and collaboration (among entities responsible for AT policies, procedures and/or funding of AT devices/services)

In addition, states must have an advisory council to provide consumer-responsive, consumer-driven advice on the design, implementation, and evaluation of all state-level and leadership activities funded by the AT Act grant.

In FFY13, MassMATCH continued all previously established state-level and state leadership activities, and also helped expand access to free, gently-used, durable medical equipment (DME) in the greater Boston area. *REquipment* is the new initiative, a pilot project of The Boston Home through start-up funding from the Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family Foundation, Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, and MRC. *REquipment* was created to provide access to gently used equipment by the families and individuals who need it. Learn more at [Coordination & Collaboration](#) below.

## State-level Accomplishments

### **1. State Financing: The Mass. Assistive Technology Loan Program**

The Massachusetts Assistive Technology Loan Program is an Alternative Financing Program (AFP) established with funds from the federal government, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and private funds. It is an interest buy down and loan guarantee program enabling individuals with disabilities and families to access affordable credit to purchase AT. The program is administered by Easter Seals of Massachusetts, and Sovereign Bank (now Santander) is the program's lending partner.

To be eligible for a loan, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- They must have a disability or represent someone with a disability. For example, a parent might submit the application for a child with a disability.
- The devices being sought must be used primarily to increase the independence of someone with a disability.
- Applicants must have been Massachusetts residents for the past six months.

The program allows eligible individuals to borrow between \$500 and \$25,000 for program-guaranteed loans. In addition, there is no upper loan amount for loans provided directly by Sovereign Bank without a program guarantee. The interest rate is negotiated every twelve months (during FFY13 it was 3.75%). Loan terms are based on the expected life of the needed item, from three years for computers to seven years for adapted vans. Guaranteed loan terms may be customized to meet an individual's repayment needs.

### **Loan Applications**

For FFY13 the AT Loan Program loaned \$1,225,601 to 76 borrowers, another 28 applicants were approved but chose not to take out a loan. The AT Loan Program loan approval rate was 70%.

**Table A: AT Loan Program Approval Rate**

FFY13 Loan Applications	Number	Percentage
Approved	104	70%
Denied	44	30%
Total Processed	148	100%

75% of the approved loans were made to applicants with incomes at or below \$25,000 per year.

**Table B: Number of Loans and Approval Rate by Applicant Income**

Applicant Annual Income	\$15,000 or Less	\$15,001 to \$30,000	\$30,001 to \$45,000	\$45,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$75,000	\$75,001 or More	Total
Number of loans	15	19	11	7	5	19	76
% of loans made	20%	25%	14%	9%	7%	25%	100%

To ensure that assistive technology loans are accessible to the Massachusetts disabilities community, Easter Seals contracts with more than 20 access sites across the state to provide outreach, marketing and individual assistance with completing AT Loan Program loan applications (when necessary). These access sites include independent living centers, elder organizations, disability-specific organizations, AT providers and rehabilitation facilities. Additionally, AT Loan Program brochures and informational materials have been translated into six languages to reach people with disabilities from under-served and unserved communities.

**Table C: Point of Origin of Applications**

FFY13 Applications	Number
Access Sites	14
AT Loan Program Directly	136
Total	150

**Loan Type and Purpose**

50% of the loans granted were preferred interest (greater than prime) with interest-buy down only and 50% were preferred interest with both interest buy-down and loan guarantee (extending credit to applicants who would not otherwise have been approved by the lender).

The highest loan amount made in FFY13 was for \$59,989. The lowest loan amount was \$502.

**Table D: Loans Made by Loan Type**

Loan Type Approved	Number	Percentage of Total Loans Made
Interest Buy-Down only	38	50%
Interest Buy-Down + Loan Guarantee	38	50%

Broad ranges of AT and AT services are allowable under the AT Loan Program. The loans are commonly used to help purchase modified vehicles, adapted computers, computer software, durable medical devices and portable ramps. In addition, the AT Loan Program offers funding for assistive technology services to help people determine which device may be right for them.

These services help people locate and purchase items, train them on their use, and provide maintenance and repair.

As the following table demonstrates, in FFY13 84% of the total amount financed went to vehicle modifications and transportation needs. 8% went to environmental adaptations. 7% was loaned for the purpose of hearing devices and services.

**Table E: Number and Value of Loans Made by AT Device/Service Type**

Type of AT Device/Service	Number of Devices Financed	Total Value of Loans	% of Amount Loaned
Vision	0	0	0%
Hearing	19	86,510	7%
Speech communication	0	0	0%
Learning, cognition, and developmental	0	0	0
Mobility, seating and positioning	5	19,394	<2%
Daily living	0	0	0
Environmental adaptations	7	88,246	7%
Vehicle modification and transportation	42	1,059,209	84%
Computers and related	3	2,242	<2%
Recreation, sports, and leisure	0	0	0
Total	76	\$1,255,601	100%

**FFY13 Loan Defaults and Net Losses**

The default rate for the AT Loan Program is 3.94%. In FFY13 there were 4 loans in default, 3.74% of all active loans. The net dollar loss to the program was \$35,050. Overall, there were 103 active loans with a net value of \$853,711.

**AT Loan Program Customer Satisfaction**

31 of 76 loan recipients provided feedback on their satisfaction with the loan program. As the table below demonstrates, the vast majority were highly satisfied or satisfied with the program.

**Table F: Customer Satisfaction**

Customer Rating of Services	Number of Customers	Percentage of Responders
Highly satisfied	24	77%
Satisfied	3	10%
Satisfied somewhat	1	10%
Not at all satisfied	3	3%
Sub total (responders)	31	
Non-respondent	45	
Total	76	
Response Rate	41%	

***AT Loan Program Success Story:***

***Not just a loan, also dignity...***



Several years ago "Abbas" came to the United States seeking relief from persecution. In his home country in the Middle East, Abbas suffered a brutal assault that caused him serious permanent disabilities. Fleeing this abuse, Abbas left behind his life savings, but thankfully not his family. He now lives in western Massachusetts with his wife and five children--three of whom have autism.

Abbas learned of the Mass. AT Loan Program (MATLP) from the Stavros Center for Independent Living, an MATLP access site. Abbas uses a power wheelchair and he and his children attend frequent appointments, relying on public transportation. With Stavros staff, he discussed his transportation challenges as well as his need for ramp access to his home. Abbas and his family could not afford to purchase an accessible vehicle, and a solution for ramp access needed to be obtained as quickly as possible.

Stavros referred Abbas to Easter Seals-MA in Boston (which administers the MATLP for MassMATCH) and Abbas explained his circumstances to MATLP Director Leo Tonevski. Bankruptcy meant he'd been denied numerous vehicle loans, and his life, he said, felt like a continuous crisis. Leo listened, understood, and made a strong impression on Abbas, "Having



dealt with discrimination, hate crimes, and injustices that have affected my family, all of a sudden we're dealing with Easter Seals. Now there is an organization that truly cares about us!"

Leo was able to draw on two MassMATCH programs to help Abbas. First, Abbas applied to the MATLP to purchase a van that is compatible with his power wheelchair. And next he applied for the Long Term Device Loan Program to purchase two portable ramps for use accessing his home in Springfield (the ramps are each valued under \$500, making them eligible). Despite his poor credit rating and limited SSI income, Abbas was approved for a low interest loan to purchase an accessible van through the MATLP. "Easter Seals" Abbas says, "is totally humane, totally caring, and color blind. This is one organization that believes in their mission."

Unfortunately after getting approved, Abbas's medical issues prevented him from using his wheelchair or purchasing his van. However, AT Loan Program staff further impressed him by offering to put his loan on hold until he is mobile again. "It wasn't just helping me in the process," Abbas notes, "it was the tone of the voice, the professionalism and the speed of the process. Easter Seals changed the quality of my life for me and my family and gave us peace of mind -- the greatest gift anyone can give. If every organization was the same as Easter Seals, our society would be a better place."

## **2. Device Reutilization: GetATStuff, Long-Term Device Loan Program, Wheelchair Reuse Program**

### **GetATStuff.org**

www.GetATStuff.org is the website of the Assistive Technology Exchange in New England. GetATStuff's goal is to put AT that is currently not being used into the hands of someone who can benefit from it. The exchange offers a free "classified ad" so people can buy, sell, give away, or post their need for equipment (on the website we call it a "virtual AT porch sale").

MassMATCH joined with the AT Act programs of Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont to create GetATStuff. The site is designed to serve New Englanders, but residents in neighboring states may post as well. Users may sort postings by geography and/or device category or keyword.

In FFY13 there were 19 completed exchanges, saving consumers an estimated \$52,685 over retail. Additionally there were 245 new users registered, 3546 hits to the website, and 284 requests for contact information (contacts between posters and respondents).

**Table G: Community Participation between FFY07 and FFY13**

Activity	FFY07 (02/07- 09/07)	FFY08	FFY09	FFY10	FFY11	FFY12	FFY13
New Users to Register	183	283	290	264	270	274	245
Hits to Listings	687	3,580	4,229	4,735	4,982	4,547	3,546
Items Posted for Sale/Free	65	75	106	137	143	173	99
Items Posted as Needed	18	23	39	38	21	20	27
Completed Exchanges	1	23	27	15	33	45	19

The equipment category with the highest number of postings “for sale” or “as needed” was mobility, seating and positioning.

**Table H: Items Posted for Sale/Donation**

Category	Number
Vision	2
Hearing	0
Speech Communication	4
Mobility, Seating & Positioning	51
Daily Living	28
Environmental Adaptations	6
Transportation and Vehicle Modifications	6
Computers and Computer-related	1
Recreation, Sports, and Leisure	1
Other	0
Total	99

**Table I: Items Posted As Needed**

Category	Number
Vision	1
Speech Communication	0
Hearing	0
Mobility, Seating and Positioning	13
Daily Living	4
Environmental Adaptations	5
Transportation and Vehicle Modifications	3
Computers and Computer-related	0
Recreation, Sports, and Leisure	1
Total	27

**Table J: Cost Savings As Reported By Sellers**

Type of AT Device	Number of Completed Exchanges	Total Estimated Current Purchase Price	Total Amount for which Devices Were Sold	Savings to Consumers
Speech Communication	4	\$7,590	\$0	\$7,590
Mobility, Seating and Positioning	11	\$43,141	\$75	\$43,066
Daily Living	2	\$2,694	\$850	\$1,844
Computers and related	2	\$185	\$0	\$185
Total	19	\$53,610	\$925	\$52,685

***GetATStuff User Satisfaction***

**Most sellers were highly satisfied with the service.**

**Table K: Feedback from Sellers**

Seller Rating of Services	Number
Highly Satisfied	18
Satisfied	1
Non respondent	0
Total	19

**Table L: Feedback from Recipients**

Recipient Rating of Services	Number
Highly satisfied	0
Satisfied	0
Somewhat Satisfied	0
Non respondent	19
Total	19

### **Long-Term Device Loan Program**

The Long-Term Device Loan Program is operated by Easter Seals-MA through a partnership with MassMATCH. The program loans AT devices valued at under \$500 to applicants who demonstrate financial need. The loans are “open-ended” which means that borrowers may use the devices for as long as they need them to live more independently. The program is available to residents of Massachusetts with a disability and family members who are applying on behalf of their relative with a disability.

Easter Seals purchases new devices based on applicant needs. When these items are no longer needed, they are returned and made available to future borrowers.

Due to the high demand for this program, funding priorities are as follows:

#### **PRIORITY ONE**

- Applicants (or parents of children) who require assistive technology for health and or safety reasons.
- Applicants who have recently been discharged from a skilled nursing facility or other institution that require assistive technology for independent daily living.
- Applicants (or parents of children) who require assistive technology as their primary means of communication.

Examples include but are not limited to: portable ramps for primary access to residence, alert notification systems for the hearing impaired, speaking devices, assistive listening devices, grab bars for bathroom access, and lift chairs.

#### **PRIORITY TWO**

- Applicants (or parents of children) in which the assistive technology device will have a significant positive impact on daily living.
- Applicants who request assistive technology device to access on-line support groups.
- Parents of children in need of assistive technology device to support the goals of primary or secondary education in the home.

Examples include but are not limited to: devices with internet capabilities (iPod, iPad), computers with internet capabilities, alternative keyboards, magnifiers, reading pens, and vibrating alarm clocks.

**PRIORITY THREE**

- Applicants who request assistive technology device to gain access to on-line social networking or post-secondary education.
- Applicants who request assistive technology device to gain access to on-line employment listings.

Examples include but are not limited to: devices with internet capabilities (iPod, iPad), and computers with internet capabilities.

In FFY13, the program saved 91 borrowers a total of \$30,286. The program provided computers, vision and hearing aids, mobility aids, and communication devices. The vast majority of devices were provided for priority one needs.

**Table M: Cost Savings to Borrowers**

Type of AT Device	Number of Devices Provided for Long-Term Loan (FFY13 only)	Total Estimated Current Purchase Price (i.e. savings to consumers)
Vision	3	\$1,257
Hearing	43	\$12,553
Speech communication	4	\$1,800
Learning, cognition and development	17	\$6,704
Mobility, Seating & Positioning	19	\$6,848
Daily Living	0	0
Environmental Adaptations	0	0
Transportation and Vehicle Modifications	0	0
Computers and related	5	\$1,124
Recreation, sports and leisure	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>\$30,286</b>

*Long-Term Device Loan Program Performance Measures*

**Table N: Primary Purpose for the Need for AT**

Response	Education	Employment	Community Living	Total
I could only afford the AT through this program	12	3	63	78
The AT was only available to me through this program	1		2	3
The AT was available to me through other programs, but the system was too complex or the wait time was too long	1		5	6
None of the above	0	0	0	0
Non respondent	0	1	3	4
Total	14	4	73	91

*Long-Term DLP User Satisfaction*

**Table O: Feedback from Borrowers**

Recipient Rating of Services	Number
Highly satisfied	11
Satisfied	4
Satisfied somewhat	3
Not at all satisfied	0
Non respondent	73
Total	91

## *Long-Term DLP Success Story*



Sometimes little things can cause big problems, particularly if you use a power wheelchair. For Dawn M., the lip on the front door step of her Taunton home was just high enough to prevent her from taking her power wheelchair out of the house. She could exit with her crutches, but with these she couldn't travel very far. When no help with lifting her wheelchair was available, Dawn spent considerable time inside by herself.

Fortunately a counselor at Independence Associates (her local Independent Living Center) told Dawn about the MassMATCH Long Term Device Loan Program (LTDLP). The LTDLP loans a wide range of AT to help persons with disabilities live more independently, and Independence Associates is a community access site for the program. The counselor helped Dawn fill out the paperwork for the device loan, and later came to her house to take measurements.

Thanks to the LTDLP, Dawn now has a threshold ramp and a three-foot ramp, both on long-term loan. The ramps, she says, have changed her life. "I am so grateful to Easter Seals. Without them, my life would have been lying on the couch." The benefits have also touched her daughters. "My little one loves to go around the lake we live on, but with crutches I couldn't go that far. Now we go out together. Thank you, Easter Seals. You have expanded my children's lives, too."

### **Wheelchair Reuse Program**

MassMATCH supports the work of three organizations to refurbish donated wheelchairs and other durable medical equipment for distribution to individuals with disabilities. These are the Stavros CIL in western Massachusetts, the Boston Center for Independent Living and the Boston Home. Donated equipment is refurbished by the organization and posted as available for free or at low cost on the GetATStuff website. Reuse is another way to provide wheelchairs and scooters to persons who do not have an affordable way to obtain it. It is also a way to capture and prevent the waste of durable medical equipment that would otherwise go unused.

During FFY13, 207 devices were refurbished, saving consumers \$191,498.

## *Wheelchair Reuse Program Success Story*

### *Reuse Serendipity Meets New England Ingenuity*



It doesn't always work out this way, but when it does it belongs in the annual report. Last year, Sonny Di'dio experienced first-hand how dramatically effective DME Reuse can be to keep people mobile. It's a story that shows what's possible when Reuse meets with a heavy dose of old-fashioned New England ingenuity.

In March when Sonny's Invacare power wheelchair broke down, he found he could not get the part he needed through a vendor. Only the whole assembly could be ordered, and at great expense. Sonny is a nurse; his wife is also in health care, so they understand the system. He was in the process of getting approved by his private insurance for a new Permobil chair anyway, a high-end power chair with features that would serve him well. The process to get the new chair, Sonny well knew, would take several months. In the meantime he feared he was stuck.

Sonny discussed the problem at Stavros, the Center for Independent Living through which he gets his Personal Care Attendant services. Tom Filiault, the DME Reuse program coordinator, suggested they look for the part from among the chairs in the Reuse inventory. Sonny was hopeful this approach would work. In the past he often made repairs this way on his own. Through vendors and insurance, he has found, simply getting a flat tire replaced can take weeks, "And who can go 6 weeks with a flat tire?" With the Reuse inventory he can sometimes find what he needs quickly, including a small part he can't access any other way. "It's one of the reasons I love the program" he says.

This time, however, the inventory came up short. There were no parts he could use to get his Invacare working. That's when Tom realized he also had a Permobil, similar to what Sonny was waiting for, that had just been donated. The problem was it had a controller issue.



Sonny looked the Permobil over and with Tom's help, identified another older model in the inventory that had parts he could salvage. "I made that Permobil work perfectly," he notes with satisfaction. "And it's a really high-end machine."

Eventually Sonny's insurance approved his new Permobil and the vendor delivered the equipment. Sonny returned the reused Permobil to the center, still working perfectly, for the benefit of another future user. In this way the chair came full circle, serving as a backup temporarily while Sonny obtained his new equipment, refurbished to have a second and third life in the process. Usually this is where these Reuse stories end.

While returning the repaired power chair, however, Sonny mentioned to Tom that his insurance had also approved him for a back-up manual chair. They didn't, however, approve him for the power assist wheels recommended by his vendor. Without power-assist wheels, an expensive add-on, the manual chair was functionally useless for Sonny, particularly outside his home. Insurance companies often don't approve back up chairs at all, and they never approve two power wheelchairs. In effect, he was lucky to get a Quickie 2 manual chair. It just wouldn't do him much good.

That's when Reuse serendipity struck again. A short time later Tom was contacted by a man who, remarkably, had a set of brand new power assist wheels that he wasn't using. Tom contacted Sonny right away. "I couldn't believe I was holding these things in my hands," Sonny reflects. "They cost \$11,000 through my vendor. I had them for free. The only thing missing was the right brackets to fit my new manual chair."

Naturally he had a friend weld them.

**Table P: Savings to Consumers**

Type of Device	Number Redistributed	Savings to Consumers
Mobility/seating/positioning	162	189,398
Daily Living	45	2,100
Total	207	\$191,498

**3. Device Loan: AT Regional Centers Short-Term Device Loan Program**

MassMATCH funds two AT Regional Centers to provide a variety of AT services to people who need them. United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) in Pittsfield operates the AT Regional Center serving western Massachusetts, and Easter Seals (ES) in Boston operates the AT Regional Center serving eastern Massachusetts. One of the MassMATCH services they provide is the short-term device loan program.

Short-term device loans offer people with disabilities the opportunity to use equipment up to four weeks free of charge. Short-term device loans serve several functions:

- Consumers use them to “test drive” and learn about equipment before purchasing.
- Employers use them to find appropriate “reasonable accommodations” for employees with disabilities (as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act) and to avoid wasting resources on uninformed decisions.
- Educators use them to integrate their students with disabilities into school activities at the start of the school year as they assess what equipment works best and while equipment is being procured.
- People with disabilities use them to help justify the purchase of durable medical equipment (DME). (Insurance providers often require proof of a short-term trial of the equipment before providing reimbursement for DME expenses, and equipment vendors do not always provide trials or they may have prohibitive fees).

In FFY13 a total of 893 devices were loaned by the AT Regional Centers. As the table below illustrates, the most utilized device loan categories were Computers and Computer-related and Speech Communication. 28% of devices loaned were computer or computer-related technology, and another 19% of devices were related to speech communication.

**Table Q: Devices Loaned by Device Category**

Device Category	Devices Loaned UCP	Devices Loaned ES	Combined	% Total
Speech Communication	53	114	167	19%
Vision	20	99	119	13%
Hearing	15	48	63	7%
Computers and Computer-related	8	242	250	28%
Daily Living	10	82	92	10%
Learning, Cognition, and Developmental	12	112	124	14%
Environmental Adaptation	28	36	64	7%
Mobility, Seating	0	8	8	1%
Vehicle Modifications and Transportation	0	1	1	<1%
Recreation, Sports and Leisure	4	1	5	<1%
Total	150	743	893	100%

Equipment loans are used by a broad range of professionals as well as individuals with disabilities and their families. In FFY13 the AT Regional Centers were particularly effective at reaching individuals with disabilities and their family members (46%), and education representatives (20%).

**Table R: Device Loan Participants by Category**

Participant Category	Devices Loaned UCP	Devices Loaned ES	Combined	% Total
Individuals with disabilities	25	117	142	25%
Family members	45	72	117	21%
Reps of Education	31	81	112	20%
Reps of Employment	0	11	11	2%
Reps of Health, Allied Health, Rehab.	15	49	64	11%
Reps of Community Living	19	9	28	5%
Reps of Technology	0	84	84	15%
Others	0	0	0	0
Total	135	423	558	100%

The vast majority of FFY13 device loan participants used the program to help make a purchasing decision (75%).

**Table S: Loans by Purpose**

Loan Purpose	Devices Loaned UCP	Devices Loaned ES	Combined	% Total
Purchase Decision	109	311	420	75%
Loaner	3	33	36	6%
Accommodation	23	40	63	11%
Other		39	39	7%
Total	135	423	558	100%

**Device Loan Customer Satisfaction and Performance Measures**

97% of borrowers who provided feedback were satisfied with their device loan experience. Most were highly satisfied.

Table T: Device Loan Customer Satisfaction

Customer Rating of Services	Consumers UCP	Consumers ES	Both	Percentage Responders UCP	Percentage Responders ES	Both
Highly satisfied	70	217	287	59%	81%	74%
Satisfied	48	45	93	40%	18%	23%
Satisfied somewhat	1	6	7	1%	2%	4%
Not at all satisfied	0	0	0	0	0	2%
Sub total (responders)	119	268	387			
Non respondent	16	155	171			
Total	135	417	558			
Response rate %	88%	69%	63%			

Most device loan users who provided feedback, and who were borrowing AT in order to make a purchase decision, went on to decide the AT met their needs. As the table below demonstrates, these were 443 of 583 responders (76%). 60 (10%) reported the AT would not meet their needs. And 80 (14%) were undecided.

Table U: Device Loan Access Performance Measures

Performance Measure	Education		Employ.		Comm. Living		IT/ Telecom.		Totals		
	UCP	ES	UCP	ES	UCP	ES	UCP	ES	UCP	ES	Both
AT meets needs	73	142	0	19	103	92	0	8	176	261	443
AT won't meet needs	11	16	0	2	12	19	0	0	23	37	60
No decision	19	14	0	5	31	11	0	0	50	30	80
Sub total (responders)	103	172	0	26	146	122	0	8	249	328	583
Non respondent	15	0	0	0	33	2	0	3	48	5	53
Total	118	172	0	26	179	124	0	11	297	333	630
Response rate	87%	100%	0	100%	82%	98%	0	72%	84%	98%	93%

## *Device Loan Success Story: UCP-Berkshire*



"Joan" has been a UCP assistive technology client for quite a while. She first learned of the program in 2006 when she was considering going back to college with assistance from Vocational Rehabilitation at MRC. Joan, who has Multiple Sclerosis, was referred to UCP for assistance with computer access. In general she likes to be a "do-it-yourself-er" and troubleshoots on her own where possible. Even still, UCP and the MassMATCH Device Loan program have provided valuable support when she's needed it most.

This past spring, Josh Arico, UCP AT Specialist, was assisting Joan with her computer when she mentioned that lately she'd been having a hard time reading. She'd been relying on a hand-held magnifier, but holding it for as long as she needed was fatiguing, and reading word-by-word was slow going and felt hardly worth it. She told Josh that her last doctor's appointment had confirmed what she'd been suspecting: her vision is now rapidly diminishing. She feared she would soon give up reading altogether.

Josh considered her computer and suggested she try a Pearl scanner. The Short-term Device Loan Program, he explained, would allow Joan to test drive the set up and see if it were comfortable before considering acquiring new equipment. Josh could install the software for trial, and provide the scanner hardware for up to four weeks at no cost.

Joan agreed and found the Pearl to work well for her. Instead of holding a magnifier over her reading material—at just the correct distance for her eyes—she could now lay a book or newspaper on the table and read it magnified on her computer screen. She could also change the font or highlight specific text to return to later. Best of all, she learned that she had a choice between reading the text herself or having the text read aloud to her with the Pearl's synthetic voice. This meant she could listen while sitting at some distance, even while doing something else. With the Pearl, she told Josh, she could read her local papers again and her favorite books.

UCP was able to obtain a Pearl scanner for Joan for long-term use. It's an example of UCP and MassMATCH working together hand-in-hand. As result, Joan knows where to turn as she faces new challenges.

## *Device Loan Success Story: Easter Seals-Boston*



Last spring, Kristi Peak-Oliveira, ATRC Co-Coordinator in Boston, was contacted by a concerned mom on the south shore. Laurie explained that her daughter, Jillian, would be entering the 7th grade that fall, and that her academic self-esteem was low. The school had determined she processes language differently due to a form of dyslexia. For Jillian this explained why she struggles with reading and reading comprehension. For her mom it was information to use to ensure seventh grade went much better than sixth!

Laurie, Kristi saw, was a strong advocate for her daughter. Laurie had had Jillian evaluated for assistive technology and had even purchased her an iPad. The AT evaluation, however, failed to make specific recommendations for apps to use with Jillian and Laurie was now swimming in a long list of options with little direction or support. Kristi was glad she came in to the ATRC.

"This is something we see often," Kristi explains. "Parents buy an iPad and then seek us out for how to use it and for advice about apps. There are hundreds of thousands of apps in the apps store, including over 40,000 education apps for the iPad. It's a lot to figure out."

Through the ATRC's Short-term Device Loan Program, Kristi loaned Laurie and Jillian the ATRC's iPad preloaded with a variety of full-featured apps for trial. Laurie and Jillian were highly motivated to explore the apps they had heard about, those Kristi recommended, and even apps they discovered on the device which piqued their curiosity. "A downside of apps is that they can't be trialed through iTunes. Only 'lite' versions may be available, and they don't show users enough to judge the products. The ATRC's iPad provides an important service."

As result of their visit and the loaner device, Jillian found several tools that are now supporting her academically. Indeed the family feels the iPad is a game-changer for Jillian. This school year, Jillian is using her iPad for taking notes (using Pages, iWordQ, even Sticky Notes) and is no longer struggling to make sense of her own handwriting. Of greater importance, however, is the impact the iPad has had on Jillian's reading. "Finally," Laurie wrote Kristi over email, "she able to read/listen independently to a book that she chooses."

With the Read to Go app, Jillian accesses Bookshare's library of audio books (free to students with print disabilities). She downloads the files she needs or wants at Bookshare, and then follows along with the audio as the app syncs to highlighting text. As result, Jillian now reads for pleasure, and her reading teacher says she's noticed an improvement in her spoken vocabulary in addition to better test scores. "The best thing ever," Laurie wrote Kristi, "has been her asking to stay up later because she is reading the Little House on the Prairie books and is at a good part!"

Jillian's father, Mike, feels that of equal benefit to his daughter have been apps to help her get organized (Jillian uses MyHomework, an agenda app, to keep track of her work). He is also amazed at what these tools mean and will mean for her throughout her schooling. Mike also has dyslexia, and he struggled in the same way she has in school. Now he sees she doesn't have to.

The family's active role, Kristi feels, has helped give Jillian confidence with using the technology. They've also worked with her teachers to create a plan to help Jillian be successful. Her teacher, too, has begun recommending apps for other students with similar challenges, thanks to what she's learned working with Jillian and Laurie. The most important outcome of all, however, is Jillian's improved self-esteem and impressive grades. This year Jillian is pulling down A's!

#### **4. Device Demo: AT Regional Centers Device Demonstration Program**

Device demonstration is the opportunity for an individual or group to see AT in action. It is an essential part of the MassMATCH AT Regional Centers' holistic approach to AT services. Individuals with disabilities, their family members, teachers, human service providers and others come to the centers to learn about new AT products, see how they work, and find AT solutions appropriate to their or their clients' needs, desires, and functional capabilities. Device demonstrations can be for a particular device or multiple device options. Device demonstrations may lead to a short-term device loan, and, perhaps, help with a Mass. AT Loan Program application.

In FFY13, the AT Regional Centers provided a total of 224 demonstrations. As the table below shows, these were primarily for Speech Communication, Vision, and Computers/Computer-related devices.

**Table V: Demonstration by Device Category**

Device Category	Demos UCP	Demos ES	Combined	% Total
Speech Communication	29	23	52	23%
Vision	31	23	54	24%
Hearing	20	6	26	12%
Computers and Computer-related	9	31	40	18%
Daily Living	12	3	15	7%
Learning, Cognition, and Developmental	10	16	26	12%
Environmental Adaptation	7	3	10	4%
Mobility, Seating	0	1	1	0
Vehicle Modifications and Transportation	0	0	0	0
Recreation, Sports and Leisure	0	0	0	0
Total	118	106	224	100%

**Device Demonstration Customer Satisfaction and Performance Measures**

329 individuals participated in device demonstrations in FFY13. Most were people with disabilities and their family members (a total of 221 individuals or 67%). Representatives of education were the next largest category, followed by representatives of community living and health representatives.

**Table W: Demonstration Participants by Category**

Category of Participant	Demos UCP	Demos ES	Combined	% Total
Individuals with disabilities	40	96	136	41%
Family members	53	32	85	25%
Reps of Education	17	28	45	13%
Reps of Employment	0	6	6	2%
Reps of Health, Allied Health, Rehab.	13	12	25	8%
Reps of Community Living	25	3	28	9%
Reps of Technology	0	4	4	1%
Others	0		0	0
Total	148	181	329	100%

Of the 577 participants who provided feedback, 437 found AT that met their needs (75%).



**Table X: Device Demonstration Performance Measures**

Performance Measure	Education		Employ.		Comm. Living		IT/ Telecom.		Totals		
	UCP	ES	UCP	ES	UCP	ES	UCP	ES	UCP	ES	Both
AT meets needs	73	142	0	19	103	92	0	8	176	261	437
AT won't meet needs	11	16	0	2	12	19	0	0	23	37	60
No decision	19	14	0	5	31	11	0	0	50	30	80
Sub total (responders)	103	172	0	26	146	122	0	8	249	328	577
Non respondent	15	0	0	0	33	2	0	3	48	5	53
Total	118	172	0	26	179	124	0	11	297	333	630
Response rate	87%	100%	100%	100%	81%	98%	100%	73%	83%	98%	91%

99% of device demonstration customers who provided feedback were satisfied; 73% of these were highly satisfied.

**Table Y: Device Demonstration Customer Satisfaction**

Customer Satisfaction	Consumers UCP	Consumers ES	Both	Percentage Responders UCP	Percentage Responders ES	Both
Highly satisfied	69	97	166	59%	87%	73%
Satisfied	48	11	59	41%	10%	26%
Satisfied somewhat	0	3	3	0%	3%	1%
Not at all satisfied	0	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Sub total (responders)	117	111	228			
Non respondent	29	84	113			
Total	146	195	341			
Response rate %	80%	57%	67%			

## *Device Demonstration Success Story: UCP-Berkshire*



Last winter the AT Regional Center in Pittsfield, operated by UCP-Berkshire, held an AT device demonstration at the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires. UCP Executive Director Christine Singer and AT Assistant Cash McConnell brought a box of AT devices, including durable keyboards, low-vision playing cards, assistive listening devices, and many other examples of assistive technology of potential interest to seniors. Christine and Cash explained the services provided by the ATRC. “At some point in our lives,” Christine emphasized, “we all have or will need to use assistive technology to make our lives easier.”

The devices were used to raise awareness about AT and they were passed around the room to inspire questions from attendees. Christine and Cash also solicited suggestions for what kinds of devices the ATRC should carry for seniors to “see, touch and try.”

One participant, Silvia, who had learned of the AT demonstration through an ad in the Berkshire Eagle, reported that she had driven by the ATRC many times, but had always assumed its services were only for people with disabilities. She was excited, she told them, to hear ATRC services are available to anyone who needs assistance.

Four days later Silvia came in to the ATRC to meet with Cash and learn how to use her new Kindle tablet. While there she had a chance to look at many of the devices in the room and learn about the Device Loan Program. She told Cash that she wished she had known about the ATRC before she’d made her purchase; she would have loved to try out different tablets. Still she was delighted to get help learning to use her Kindle. Cash helped her set up email, explained how the device worked, and gave her tools so that she could navigate it more easily.

Silvia went home empowered to use her new e-reader and happy to spread the word about the ATRC to seniors. She told Cash that it is very difficult for elderly people in the community in need of assistance to ask for help; many live alone, have children far away, or are unable to

leave their homes. She was amazed at the accessibility of the devices and said the ATRC is a “fabulous asset” which will make people’s lives easier.

### *Device Demonstration [and Loan] Success Story: Easter Seals-Boston*



Last June, Easter Seals-Boston was contacted by a family interested in communication options for a loved-one who had sustained a traumatic brain injury. Two years earlier Jim had fallen off his roof while making repairs, and since that time he'd had difficulty with expressive speech (among other disabilities). His mother, Lorraine, and fiancée, Lisa, were referred to Easter Seals by MRC's Acquired Brain Injury program for an augmentative communication evaluation. Lorraine and Lisa were hopeful that a speech generating device would make a big difference for what Jim could express and for his ability to speak without prompting. But they were also worried they would hear from Easter Seals what the speech-language pathologist had concluded at Spaulding Hospital--that Jim's capacity to communicate would no longer improve.

MassMATCH AT Regional Center (ATRC) Co-Coordinator Kristi Peak-Oliveira is also an Easter Seals speech-language pathologist and augmentative communication (AAC) specialist. She met with the family at their home to conduct an AAC evaluation and sensed their anxiety right away. "Jim was slow to respond to me and his mother told me this was not unusual when Jim meets new people. She was very concerned that I would decide he was unable to benefit from any AT for communication." Kristi knew she would not be able to make any decisions that day.

ATRC services include demonstrations of assistive technology (both hardware and software). Because the family was unfamiliar with AT, Kristi demonstrated different types of AAC devices so that Lorraine and Lisa would understand the technology, their options, and how it might help Jim. These included the Go Talk 4+, which is a mid-tech speech generating device with

programmable buttons, and the iPad with different AAC apps pre-installed, including Tap Speak Button, Pictello, Sounding Board, Go Talk Now, and Proloquo2Go. Kristi demonstrated not just how to use the technology, but also how to program messages and otherwise personalize the devices for Jim.

After the demonstration, and based on the results of the evaluation, Lorraine and Lisa borrowed the iPad as well as an adjustable iPad mount for Jim's wheelchair. They also borrowed the Go Talk 4+. Kristi explained that Jim did not have to prove what he could do with the AT all at once, and would have weeks to explore the equipment in his home environment, and with their help. "They went from looking deflated to elated," Kristi reports. "Lorraine said, 'I have to hug you!' She saw that the loan program meant this wasn't just a one-shot deal. And she was incredibly committed to learning and showing what he could do."

Over the course of the loan period, the family learned that the Go Talk 4+ would not work for Jim. The device has buttons with symbols that may be programmed with recorded messages for a user to select and play (i.e. "I am hungry," "I want to go outside" or whatever makes sense to record for that user and their routine). But the Go Talk's buttons required more pressure to activate than Jim could manage. What did work for Jim, however, was the iPad.

Indeed when Kristi returned to collect the loaner equipment four weeks later, she found the iPad programmed with displays of custom photographs corresponding to recorded messages. The app they were using was Sounding Board from AbleNet, and the family was incredibly excited. "Lorraine and Lisa ran with it!" Kristi notes, impressed. "They found that the touch screen worked for Jim and that with Sounding Board they could record his voice and take and use their own photos to represent messages."

It also helped that Sounding Board allows users to create messages on the fly as makes sense throughout the day, midstream, while using the software. In the context of his routines, James was motivated to have his own voice on the iPad, and worked hard to speak messages. "Lorraine and Lisa created situations for Jim to be successful with the iPad," observes Kristi, "and the satisfaction he acquired helped motivate him to use it and also to speak more himself. Thanks to the loan program and their hard work, I was able to recommend they receive funding for their own iPad through the Acquired Brain Injury program."

The family says that since using Sounding Board, Jim now make requests, has more control over his environment, and produces more language in general—including speech. His quality of life has improved and his family's quality of life has improved. Indeed, the first message he wanted to record was "I love you."

## State Leadership Accomplishments

### **1. Training**

The AT Act of 1998 defines training activities as “instructional events, usually planned in advance for a specific purpose or audience, which are designed to increase participants’ knowledge, skills, and competencies regarding AT.”

An example of a training activity conducted during FFY13 is the presentation provided by MassMATCH to case managers in the Home Care department of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. It was attended by 12 case managers who coordinate services and referrals for about 1,500 individuals with disabilities each year. They were given information on state and federally-funded AT services—including eligibility, application processes, and waiting lists—that could benefit their clients. The training was given by an AT coordinator with over 12 years’ experience providing and overseeing AT services.

### **Training Topics**

In FFY13, MassMATCH provided training to a total of 778 individuals statewide. Trainings funded by MassMATCH covered a blend of topics to best suit their intended audience.

**Table Z: Number of Training Participants by Topic**

Primary Topics of Trainings	Participants UCP	Participants ES	Participants MRC	Combined
AT Products/Services	0	138	0	138
AT Funding/Policy/Practice	0	0	47	47
IT/Telecommunication Access	0	0	0	0
Combination of any/all of the above	295	211	0	506
Transition	0	44	43	87
Other Topic (specify)	0	0	0	0
Total	<b>295</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>778</b>

### **Transition**

The AT Act of 2004 calls for a portion of each state’s training or technical assistance activities to be related to transition. “Transition related” means the training or assistance provided information to support individuals navigating the transition from school to work or post-secondary education, or from institutions into community living. It may also provide AT information to help people remain in their communities.

An example of a transition-related training activity provided during FFY13 is the training session MassMATCH Program Coordinator Kobena Bonney conducted at the 2013 Employment Matters Conference.” The conference was hosted by the Massachusetts Association of People Supporting Employment First at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, and Bonney’s session topic was “Technology for Employment Success.” Most of the conference participants work with individuals with disabilities transitioning from school to work, and Bonney’s session focused on AT resources provided by MassMATCH to support these to-work transitions. Participants were taught how to access the MassMATCH website, how to use the online inventory to borrow AT devices from the MassMATCH Device Loan program, as well as how to access the GetATstuff.com website (the New England AT Exchange).

### **Training Participants**

Individuals with disabilities were the most common participants of AT trainings in FFY13 and represent 28% of total attendees. They were followed by health representatives (20%) and educators (19%).

**Table AA: Number and Type of Training Participants**

Category of Participants	Trainings UCP	Trainings ES	Trainings MRC	Combined	% Total
Individuals with disabilities	4	75	0	215	28%
Family members	4	13	0	63	8%
Reps of Education	7	109	0	146	19%
Reps of Employment	0	35	0	35	4%
Reps of Health, Allied Health, Rehab.	5	97	47	158	20%
Reps of Community Living	6	41	0	95	12%
Reps of Technology	0	20	43	63	8%
Others	0	3	0	3	<1%
Unable to Categorize	0	0	0	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **2. Technical Assistance**

Technical assistance (TA) is a direct problem-solving service provided by the statewide AT program staff to public or private agencies, groups, or programs. TA helps improve services, management, policies, and/or outcomes and may be a single meeting or involve multiple contacts over an extended duration.

An example of TA provided in FFY13:

MassMATCH Program Coordinator Kobena Bonney conducted a series of accessibility tests on the website of the Massachusetts Housing Registry ([www.MassAccessHousingRegistry.org](http://www.MassAccessHousingRegistry.org)). This is a program of the Citizen's Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA). The Housing Registry lists all kinds of rental housing across the state including information on affordability (public and private, subsidized and market-rate) and accessibility, and helps people find accessible housing. In addition to giving feedback on what worked and what didn't at the site, Bonney provided suggestions on ways to make the site more accessible and useable by individuals with disabilities who use assistive technology.

An example of transition-related TA provided in FFY13:

Bonney also conducted a series of evaluations on a website being developed for use in the Massachusetts' Money follows the Person (MFP) Demonstration Grant Program. This program is a new statewide initiative that enables individuals with disabilities to transition from living in institutions to living in the community. "Money Follows the Person" means that Medicaid funds will pay for not only institutional living, but also the supports needed for individuals to live in community settings. Bonney provided feedback on an accessible Web portal for community "Transition Entities" (where community-living programs will register consumers, and where state agency and Transition Entity staff will monitor program enrollment). As a result of the TA provided, the website and other documents used in the MFP program are accessible and useable by people who use assistive technology.

### **3. Information & Assistance**

MassMATCH provides information and assistance (I & A) through its AT Regional Centers and directly from MassMATCH program staff at the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. Generally I & A activities are responses to individual requests for AT information and assistance. This may be referral assistance to other agencies or entities that can provide the services, products or AT information needed. It may also be assistance with other related disability topics.

In FFY13 MassMATCH provided I & A to 993 recipients. 64% were individuals with disabilities and family member (638 recipients), 16% were representatives of education (159 recipients), 9% were representatives of health, allied health, and rehabilitation (85 recipients), and 8% were representatives of community living (80). Most requests for information were for an AT device or service (595).

**Table BB: Combined I & A Recipients by Category and Types of Assistance Received**

Information & Assistance Recipient Category	Recipients by Assistance Type			
	AT Device/ Service	AT Funding	Related Disability Topics	Total
Individuals with disabilities	190	141	1	332
Family members	175	125	6	306
Reps of Education	96	62	1	159
Reps of Employment	2	0	0	2
Reps of Health, Allied Health, Rehab.	64	20	1	85
Reps of Community Living	40	39	1	80
Reps of Technology	15	0	0	15
Others	13	1	0	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>993</b>

The following charts break down the I & A provided in FFY13 by each point of service (MRC, UCP, and ES).

**Table CC: MRC I & A Recipients by Category and Types of Assistance Received**

Information & Assistance Recipient Category	MRC Recipients by Assistance Type			
	AT Device/ Service	AT Funding	Related Disability Topics	Total
Individuals with disabilities	5	4		9
Family members	4	2		6
Reps of Education	7	2	1	10
Reps of Employment	0	0	0	0
Reps of Health, Allied Health, Rehab.	6	1	0	7
Reps of Community Living	2	2	1	5
Reps of Technology	5	0	0	5
Others	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>42</b>



**Table DD: ES I & A Recipients by Category and Types of Assistance Received**

Information & Assistance Recipient Category	ES Recipients by Assistance Type			
	AT Device/Service	AT Funding	Related Disability Topics	Total
Individuals with disabilities	50	2	1	53
Family members	50	2	6	58
Reps of Education	30	1	0	31
Reps of Employment	2	0	0	2
Reps of Health, Allied Health, Rehab.	39	0	1	40
Reps of Community Living	1	0	0	1
Reps of Technology	10	0	0	10
Others	13	1	0	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>209</b>

**Table EE: UCP I & A Recipients by Category and Types of Assistance Received**

Information & Assistance Recipient Category	UCP Recipients by Assistance Type		
	AT Device/Service	AT Funding	Combined
Individuals with disabilities	135	135	270
Family members	121	121	242
Reps of Education	59	59	118
Reps of Employment	0	0	0
Reps of Health, Allied Health, Rehab.	19	19	38
Reps of Community Living	37	37	74
Reps of Technology	0	0	0
Others	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>742</b>

#### **4. Public Awareness**

Public awareness activities are designed to reach large numbers of people. These can include public service announcements, radio talk shows and news reports, newspaper stories and columns, newsletters, brochures, and public forums. MassMATCH.org is also a public awareness initiative.

As Table GG demonstrates (below), in FFY13 MassMATCH reached 337,073 individuals through its public awareness activities. Public awareness was accomplished through a blend of outlets and activities.

**Table FF: Individuals Reached by Public Awareness Activities in FFY13**

Public Awareness Activity	Number of Individuals Reached			
	UCP	ES	MRC	Combined
Newsletters	3,969	11,761	600	16,330
Other Print Materials	2,480	0	7,750	10,230
Listserv	0	0	600	600
Internet Information	2,782	5,449	13,000	21,231
PSA/radio/TV	278,800	0	0	278,800
Presentations/expos/conferences	286	2,025	7,571	9,882
Other	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>288,317</b>	<b>19,235</b>	<b>29,521</b>	<b>337,073</b>

**Table GG: FFY13 MassMATCH.org Usage**

Total Unique Visitors	Average Pages Per Visit	Average Mins. On Website
11,530	3.23	2:36

**Table HH: FFY13 MassMATCH.org Monthly History**

Unique Visitors Monthly	Visits	Page Views
1039	1,274	4,115

## **5. Coordination & Collaboration**

Coordination and collaboration involves working with other entities to improve access to AT devices and services. During FFY13, MassMATCH staff worked to improve access to AT services through the following collaborative efforts:

### **DME REquipment**

In FFY13 MassMATCH collaborated with The Boston Home (TBH), Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL), the Massachusetts Hospital School (MHS), Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, and the Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family Foundation to support better access to free, refurbished, durable medical equipment (DME) in Greater Boston. REquipment is a pilot program coordinated by the Boston Home. It provides a searchable online database of available devices that have been refurbished and/or sanitized by TBH, BCIL, and the MHS. Located at [DMEREquipment.org](http://DMEREquipment.org) (a sub site of MassMATCH.org), the site enables individuals and families looking for wheelchairs, walkers, bath chairs, standers, etc. to find what they need for short or long-term use and obtain it at no cost (a delivery fee may apply). REquipment also accepts donations of gently-used DME.

TBH received pilot funding for REquipment from the Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family Foundation, Spaulding Hospital, and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. Start-up activities included hiring a program coordinator, forming a DME Reuse Council (comprised of multiple stakeholder organizations in Greater Boston), and surveying the needs and interests of prospective consumers. MassMATCH support included developing the REquipment Website and providing administrative office space. DMEREquipment.org launched in December, 2013.

### **AT School Share**

In FFY13 MassMATCH continued its effort to encourage AT resource sharing among Massachusetts schools and school systems. AT School Share (ATSS) has now registered 20 participating school entities. The goal of AT School Share is to create and coordinate a community of schools, districts, and educational Collaboratives to share their unused AT devices and device “know-how”; in this way students will acquire what they need more quickly and districts will be better able to identify and afford the technology that can make a real difference for learners with special needs.

This year ATSS continued to focus on recruiting school entities by emphasizing ATSS as a tool for AT inventory management. This is an unmet need for most schools and an essential first step toward the objective of schools tracking what they have and sharing devices with other participating schools and school systems. Upgrades to the ATSS Website in 2012 have made the site a more robust inventory management tool. In FFY13 an AT program in Rhode Island that works with several school systems in Mass (as well as RI) has joined the ATSS for this purpose. There are now 11 school entities that have uploaded their device inventory to the ATSS system for management.

### ***Forward Thinking***

In addition to activities reported above, in the works for FFY14 are the following efforts:

#### **DDS Mobility Clinic Expansion**

MassMATCH is excited to help support a planned expansion for the Mobility Clinic initiative run through a partnership between MRC and the Dept. of Developmental Services (DDS). The Mobility Clinic serves individuals with seating and positioning issues who rely on wheeled mobility, but could not get served through their local DME vendor, and are not clients of the DDS. The clinic is currently running on a quarterly basis in partnership with Stavros CIL in Amherst. The Aging and Disability Resource Consortium (ADRC) of the Greater North Shore as well as the Center for Living and Working in Worcester have expressed interest in partnering.

#### **DME REquipment**

*REquipment* is a pilot project coordinated by the Boston Home through start-up funding from the Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family Foundation, Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, and MRC.

*REquipment* provides adults, children, and families faster access to gently-used DME (such as wheelchairs, scooters, and standers). *REquipment* is currently seeking funding partners to expand the pilot statewide. At present it serves the greater Boston area only.

### **Model AT Center**

MRC is collaborating with the Dept. of Developmental Services on their model AT Center to serve the Central Mass area. The objective is for the Center to provide wheelchair and other DME fabrication/modification services for DDS clients; the site will additionally provide storage space to expand REquipment beyond Greater Boston. MRC has purchased a lift-equipped van for use by both agencies in their collaborative AT work, including REquipment and the Mobility Clinic (the van will be supplied with tools to make mobile repairs possible for clinic clients). DDS has identified a site and renovations are anticipated to be complete in 2014.

Stay up to date year-round with MassMATCH programs and resources at [MassMATCH.org](http://MassMATCH.org).

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