



Housing and Services
Resource Center

Smart Home Accessibility Solutions for Falls Prevention and Aging in Place

Katie Clark Wheeler, Administration for Community Living (ACL)

July 19, 2026



Housing and Services Resource Center

acl.gov/HousingAndServices #HousingResources





Poll #1

How familiar are you with smart home technology and its uses for accessibility, falls prevention, and independent living?

- *Very familiar* with the topic
- *Somewhat familiar* with the topic
- *Familiar* with smart home technology and/or assistive technology but not for accessibility purposes
- *Eager to learn* about smart home technology



Poll #2

To what extent does your organization currently work with your state Assistive Technology (AT) program?

- *Close working partnership* with your state AT program (e.g., formal agreement or integration of AT into falls prevention services)
- *Established relationship* (e.g., routine cross-referrals or a way to coordinate on complex situations)
- *Informal relationship* (e.g., occasional referrals or ad hoc exchange of resources)
- *Minimal or no contact*



Agenda

- Opening
- State AT Programs and Smart Home Technology
- WellWise AT Strategies and Programs
- Facilitated Dialogue
- Closing

Disclaimer: ACL and the HSRC do not endorse any specific products or brands.



Presenters

- **Bora Lee**, Program Director, Utah Assistive Technology Program,
- **Nichole Baker**, Chief Services Officer, WellWise Services
- **Miro Dunham**, Assistive Technology Specialist, WellWise Services AAA



State AT Programs and Smart Home Technologies

Safety, Independence, and Quality of Life Through AT

Bora Lee, Ed.D, CPACC

Director

Utah Assistive Technology Program



Emma Eccles Jones College of Education & Human Services
Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice
UtahStateUniversity®

Smart Home Technology Is Assistive Technology

Definition

Assistive Technology (AT) is any item, device, software, or system that helps individuals maintain or improve independence, safety, and participation in daily life.

Goal	Traditional AT	Smart Home AT
Medication Management	Pill Organizer	Automated Medication Dispenser
Emergency Response	Alert Pendant	Voice Assistant with Emergency Calling
Communication	Large-Button Phone	Voice-Activated Communication
Home Awareness	Flashing Doorbell	Smart Video Doorbell
Memory Support	Reminder Notes & Calendars	Smart Speaker Reminders

Examples of Assistive Technology



Smart Home Technology in Action

Supporting Daily Life Through Assistive Technology

Safety	Health & Wellness	Communication	Daily Living	Caregiver Support
Motion-Sensor Lighting	Medication Reminders	Video Calling	Voice Assistant	Remote Monitoring
Fall Detection	Health Monitoring	Smart Doorbells	Smart Appliances	Automated Alerts
Smart Locks	Emergency Alerts	Captioned Communication	Environmental Controls	Care Coordination

Outcomes

- ✓ Reduced Risk
- ✓ Better Health Management
- ✓ Greater Social Connection
- ✓ Increased Independence
- ✓ Enhanced Caregiver Support
- ✓ Improved Quality of Life

Why This Matters

Older Adults Face Growing Risks

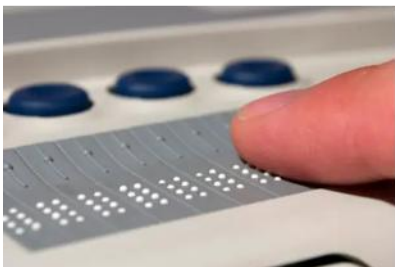
- Nearly 1 in 4 adults age 65+ falls each year
- Falls are a leading cause of injury-related hospitalizations
- Many older adults want to remain in their homes and communities
- Family caregivers are providing increasing levels of support

Challenges	AT Opportunity
Falls & Injuries	Motion-Sensor Lighting
Medication Errors	Automated Reminders
Memory Changes	Voice Assistants
Social Isolation	Video Calling & Smart Displays
Caregiver Shortages	Remote Monitoring
Transportation Barriers	Virtual Support Tools

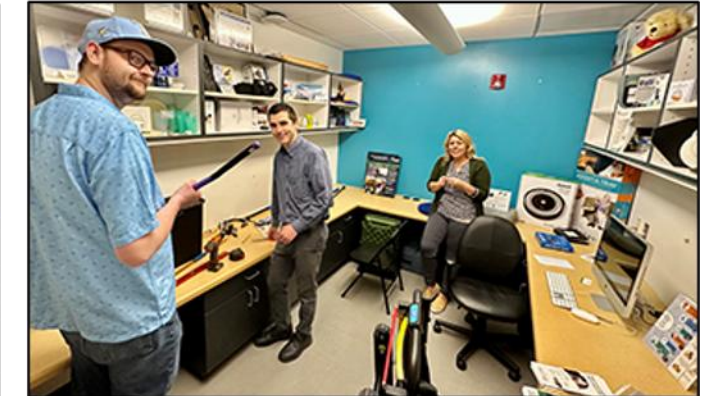
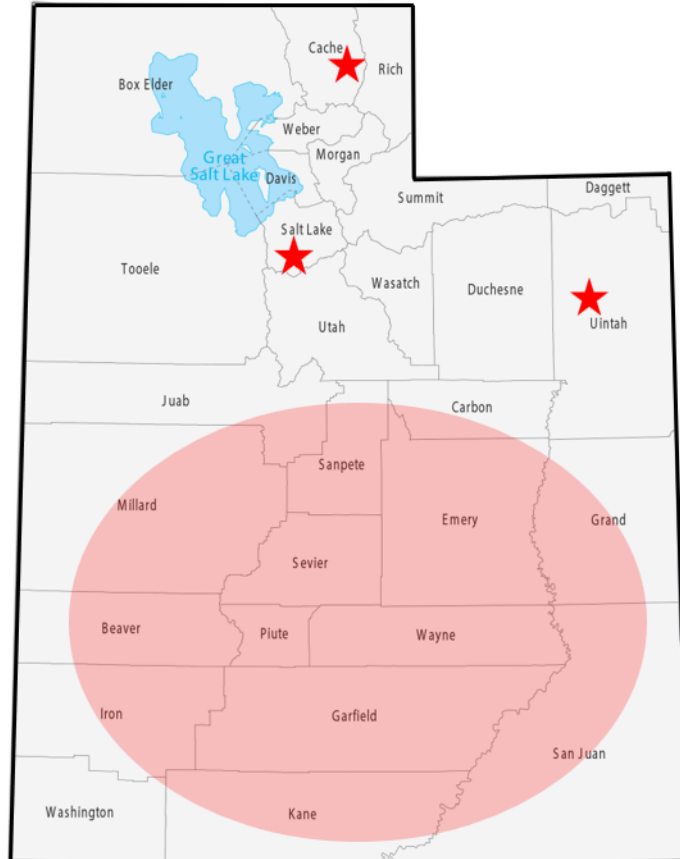
State Assistive Technology Act Programs

Every State and Territory Has an [AT Act Program](#)

Service	What It Does	Why It Matters
Device Demonstrations	Try assistive technology before purchasing	Helps identify the right solution
Device Loans	Borrow devices short-term	Supports informed decision-making
Device Reuse	Provides low-cost equipment	Improves affordability
State Financing Activities	Loans and small grants	Expands access
Training & Technical Assistance	Education and support	Builds confidence and success



Utah Assistive Technology Program (UATP)



Real-Life Example: John's Story

Meet John

Age: 89

After his wife passed away, John faced new challenges:

- Lives alone
- Vision loss
- Difficulty preparing meals
- Fear of crossing busy streets
- Limited social connections
- Wants to remain active and continue golfing

John's Story: Assistive Technology in Action

Challenge	Assistive Technologies Tried
Reading mail and labels	Seeing AI, Smart Glasses
Navigating the community	Be My Eyes, Smart Glasses
Medication management	Voice reminders
Social connection	Voice and video communication, Smart Glasses
Maintaining hobbies	Smart Glasses and smartphone accessibility tools

Outcomes

- ✓ Increased confidence
- ✓ Improved access to information
- ✓ More community participation
- ✓ Continued engagement in hobbies
- ✓ Interested in purchasing smart glasses after borrowing through UATP

John's Story (continued, #2)

Challenge	Potential Technology Solution
Difficulty preparing meals	Voice-controlled smart speaker, talking microwave, smart air fryer with presets, talking kitchen scale, smart plugs with automatic shutoff, medication and meal reminder systems
Safety concerns living alone	Smart speaker with emergency calling, fall detection devices, medical alert systems, smart smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, video doorbells, smart locks, motion-sensor lighting
Limited social connections	Voice-activated calling, video calling devices, Meta Smart Glasses for hands-free communication, smart displays (Echo Show), accessible smartphones and tablets
Difficulty navigating outdoors	GPS navigation apps, wearable navigation devices, smartphone accessibility features, Meta Smart Glasses with AI-assisted wayfinding and object identification

John's Story (continued #3)

Challenge	Potential Technology Solution
Fear of crossing streets	Wearable orientation and mobility technologies (Be My Eyes for real-time environmental information)
Medication and daily routine management	Automated medication dispensers, smart pill reminders, voice assistants with routines, calendar alerts, smart watches with reminders and health monitoring
Reduced confidence after spouse's death	Technology combined with community and caregiver support
Accessing information due to vision loss	Smart Glasses, screen readers, text-to-speech apps, portable video magnifiers, smart speakers
Maintaining hobbies and community participation	Smart Glasses for hands-free information access, smartphone accessibility tools, GPS course navigation apps, accessible transportation apps, voice assistants for scheduling and communication

Opportunities for AAAs to Expand Existing Services

Existing AAA Priority	Technology Opportunity	AT Act Program Support
Falls Prevention	Motion Lighting, Fall Detection	Demonstrations
Home Safety	Smart Locks, Video Doorbells	Device Recommendations
Caregiver Support	Remote Monitoring	Technical Assistance
Care Transitions	Home Technology Assessments	Device Loans
Community Outreach	Smart Home Education	Workshops & Training



Five Actions Your AAA Can Take

Start Small

1. Connect with your [State AT Act Program](#)
2. Include technology in home safety assessments
3. Offer smart home demonstrations
4. Train staff and caregivers
5. Launch a small pilot project

What is one opportunity your organization could pursue in the next year to support aging in place through assistive technology?

Technology is not the goal.

Safety, independence, and quality of life are the goals.



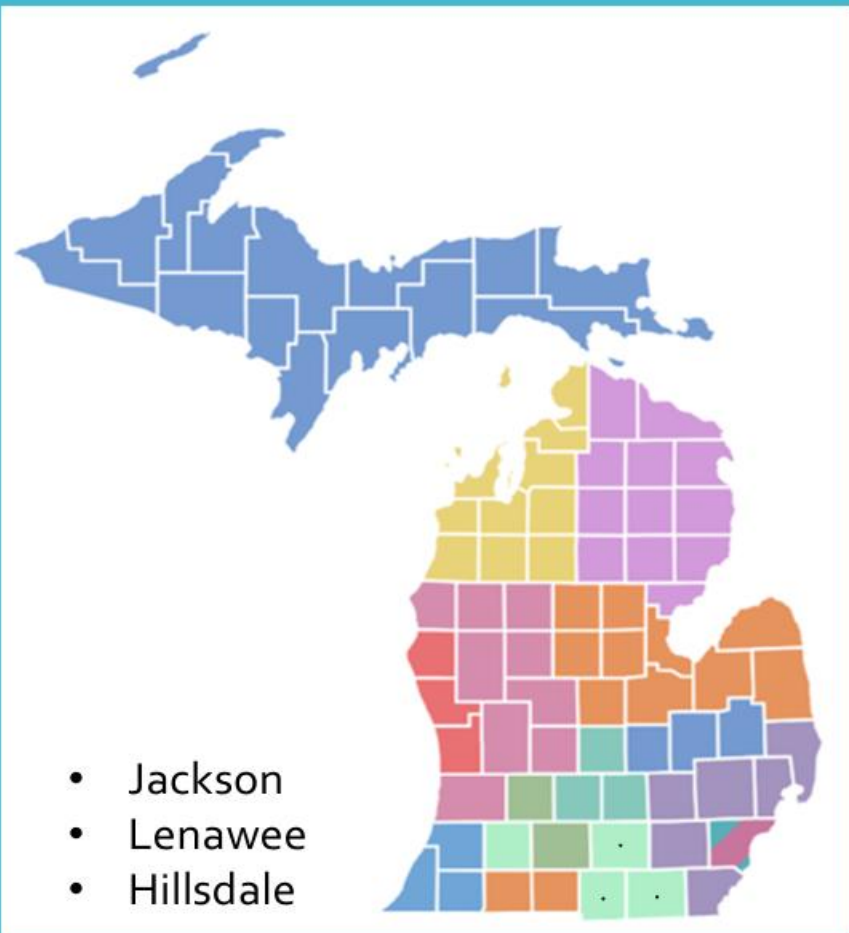
WellWise Services AAA



WellWise Services

Area Agency on Aging

Serving South Central Michigan since 1974
Jackson, Lenawee, and Hillsdale Counties



Mission Statement:

**Supporting older adults,
adults with disabilities and
their caregivers to live
safely and independently.**



Glen Ashlock, MS, ATP, longtime employee and collaborator with:

WellWise Services AAA
Centers for Independent Living (CIL)
The University of Michigan
Michigan Disability Rights Coalition
RESNA

WellWise Services Assistive Technology program began in 2013 with an unusual proposal...“How would you like to become the first Area Agency on Aging in Michigan with an AT program?”

- Part-time AT Manager 2013-2024
- Also supported administrative gaps in grant writing, contract management, and information technology
- Learning curve for the community and stakeholders
- Look outside the aging network for partnerships
- Funding strategy - get creative!

Core Services

Home Safety
Outreach
Community Education & Awareness
Tech Time
Assessment, Service Planning & Training
Aging in Place



WellWise Services
Area Agency on Aging

FALL PREVENTION EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 10TH, 12-1PM
WellWise Services
107 Chicago St., Brooklyn, MI

MONDAY, SEPT. 15TH, 1-2PM
Jackson Co. Department on Aging
1715 Lansing Ave., Jackson, MI

TUESDAY, SEPT. 16TH, 10-11AM
Clinton Senior Center - UCC Church
300 Tecumseh Rd., Clinton, MI

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 17TH, 1-2 PM
Hillsdale County Senior Services Ctr.
320 W. Bacon St., Hillsdale, MI

MONDAY, SEPT. 22ND, 1-2 PM
Adrian First United Methodist Church
1245 W. Maple Ave., Adrian, MI

Stop in to learn!

FALL PREVENTION
*Are you concerned about Falling?
Let us help your balance!*

- ✓ Learn how to get up from a fall & how to fall with as little injury possible.
- ✓ Learn how to assist someone else who has balance challenges.
- ✓ See demonstrations by Physical Therapists on appropriately sizing and using your walker and cane
- ✓ Learn how to reduce fall risk through medication management and home safety measures you can take
- ✓ Free resources and consultations with Options Counselors for home safety recommendations, assistive technology, and other services to help you manage.

Receive recommendations to make adjustments to your cane or walker by a Physical Therapist

www.WellWiseServices.org
517-592-1974

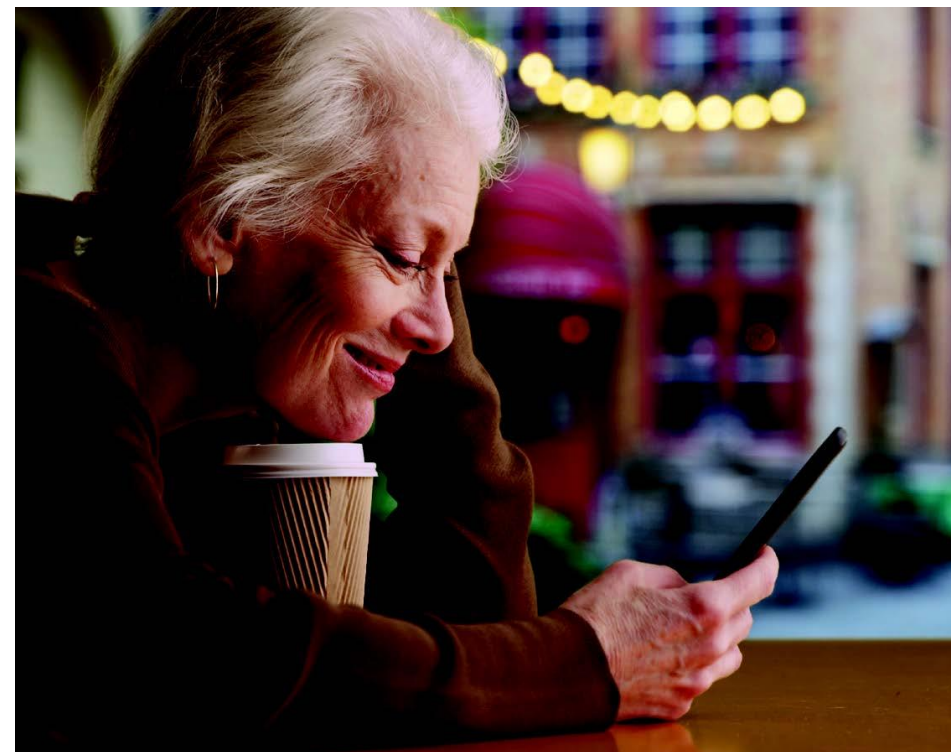
Elara Caring
We care where you are.

UPi
Urban Poling Inc.

ATHLETICO
PHYSICAL THERAPY

3D OPT
PHYSICAL THERAPY

HENRY FORD HEALTH



“Assistive Technology can be low-tech, high-tech, or no-tech. It is always person-centered, because each solution is crafted to meet the individual’s needs.”

Glen Ashlock, MS, ATP



Funding Strategies & Key Partnerships

Home Safety

Private Pay

Older Americans Act

Medicaid

Grants

Donors

Sponsors

Local Businesses

Contracted Providers

Hospitals/Health Systems

Nursing Facilities

Realtors

Service Clubs

Faith Based Organizations

Assistive Technology is:

- ✓ Access
- ✓ Independence
- ✓ Equity
- ✓ Innovation
- ✓ Socialization

Blueprint for Success

Start small and build
Areas of focus
Programmatic experts
Stakeholder input
Fiscal partners & sponsorships
Hit the road for show & tell
Leverage existing service array
Best practices



Do you need help with your
computer, phone, tablet, or other technology?

Whether it is downloading an app, connecting a printer, or
understanding new features,
bring in your device and let us help!

WellWise Services
107 Chicago Street, Brooklyn
First Thursday of every month, 9:30-11:00am

Crouch Senior Center
1715 Lansing Ave, Jackson
Second Monday of every month, 10:00-11:30am

Adrian Senior Center
327 Erie Street, Adrian
Third Friday of every month, 10:00-11:30am

Current Strategies

1. Leverage existing AAA programs for referrals and outreach
2. Partner with contracted providers to host local events and drop-in services
3. Collaborate with local entities for app installation and tutorials
4. Lean on professionals for gap filling and trending needs
5. Development of donor database
6. Demonstrations to service clubs, discharge planners, chambers of commerce, churches, realtor associations, senior centers
7. Private pay structure



Contact Us:

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Nichole.baker@wellwiseservices.org (517)592-1922

Miro Dunham, AT Specialist

Miro.dunham@wellwiseservices.org (517)938-8709





Facilitated Discussion

Q&A



Calls to Action

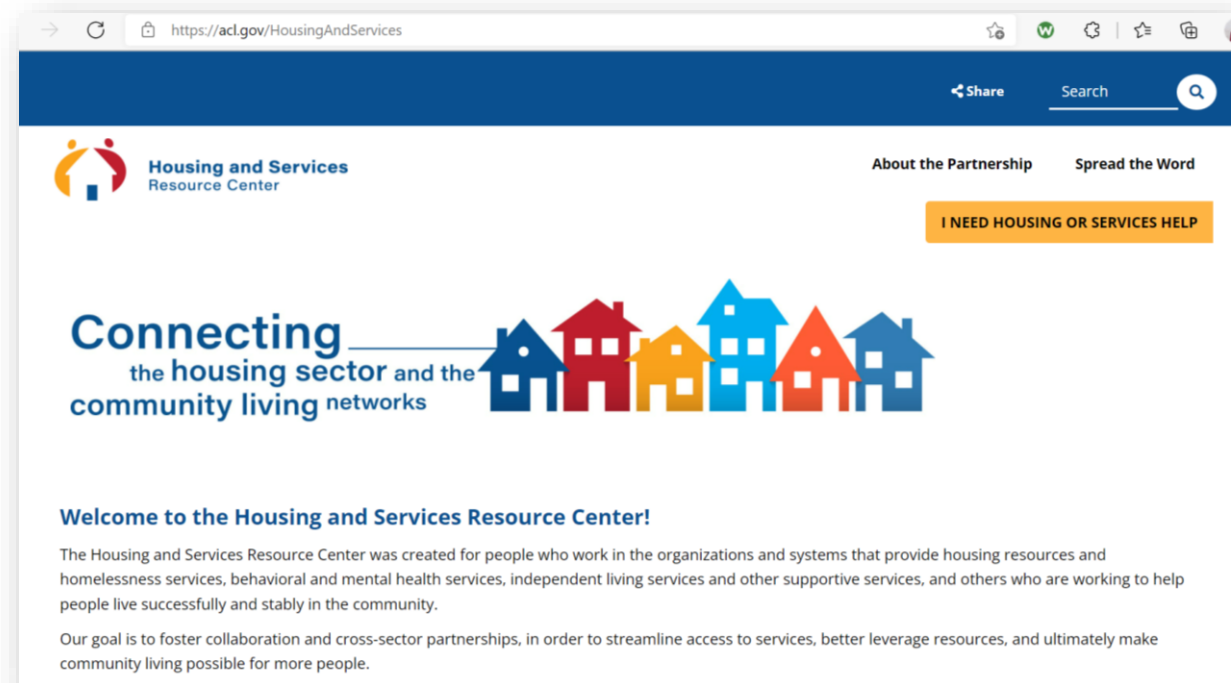
1. Reach out to your state's AT program to learn more about their services and/or explore ways to partner to meet community needs.
2. Explore with your colleagues how to incorporate smart home technology into your existing services and programs, especially home safety and assessment, care transitions, and falls prevention programs.
3. Identify potential funding streams and other community organizations to improve access to smart home devices.
4. Asses how smart home devices can assist individuals with unmet needs during regular care/case management visits



HSRC Website

- HSRC toolkits, program models, resources, webinar recordings, partnership snapshots, and much more!
- Helpful links to resources from our federal partners.

<https://acl.gov/HousingAndServices>





HSRC Offerings on Accessible Homes and Assistive Technology

- On-Demand Videos (ODVs) on Smart Home Devices (Home Mods/AT)
 - Part One: [Smart Home Technology for Individuals with Accessibility Needs](#)
 - Part Two: [The Future of Smart Home Technology for Individuals with Accessibility Needs](#)
- Webinar Recording: [Smart Home Technology Solutions for Individuals with Accessibility Needs \(September 2025\)](#)
- [Accessible Housing](#) resource page
- [Home Modification Information Clearinghouse](#) and [Home Modification Information Network \(HMIN\)](#)

Related resource: [National Falls Prevention Resource Center](#)



Find your AT Act Program



Find the AT Act Program in your state or territory:

<https://www.at3center.net/stateprogram>





Housing and Services
Resource Center

ACL is here to help you and your staff!

Email us at hsrc@acl.hhs.gov

- We want to learn about your **partnerships and innovations**.
- We have **technical assistance** available.
- We welcome subscribers to the **HSRC Listserv** (20,000 and growing).
- Visit the HSRC hub at acl.gov/HousingAndServices.





Acknowledgment



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