



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Who is eligible?

Any North Dakota resident with a disability in need of assistive technology (AT) may apply for an Assistive Technology Financial Loan (ATFL). Family members or approved representatives living in or out of state may apply on behalf of others as long as the end user is a person with a disability living in North Dakota. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to repay a loan, and the loan must be used to purchase AT devices and/or services.

What is an assistive technology device?

An assistive technology device is any tool or piece of equipment that helps a person with a disability engage in everyday activities.

What are assistive technology services?

Assistive technology services are those activities that directly help an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition or use of an AT device. Services may include evaluating the needs of the person, designing and building a device, training on the use a particular device, maintaining and repairing a device (excluding vehicle maintenance), and/or providing technical assistance for family members, personal care attendants, employers and others specific to device use.

What can be purchased with this loan?

All loans must be used to purchase assistive technology devices and services, including but not limited to:

- Communication systems
- Hearing aids and assistive listening devices
- Assessments
- Home modifications (must own home)
- Computers and disability related software
- Manual or motorized wheelchairs and scooters
- Training to use the AT purchased
- Adapted vehicles
- Low vision devices
- Used AT devices (must have a written evaluation from an AT professional stating device value and condition)
- Electronic daily living aids
- Device repair and warranties

How much can I borrow?

You may request loans in amounts between \$500 and \$50,000. Your ability to repay the amount requested will influence the approval of your loan.

What is the interest rate on these loans?

The rate changes from time to time, but it is typically at 2% above money market savings.

How much time will I have to pay off a loan?

The timeframes for repayment vary because the terms are based on the expected useful life of the particular assistive technology device funded.

What is the loan approval process?

When the ATFL receives your application, it will be reviewed to make sure it is complete. If additional supporting documentation is needed, the ATFL will request it. Once all the necessary documentation is received from you, it will be presented to Alerus Financial, and they will run a credit check. If the bank is confident that you can repay your loan, your application will be approved.

What if I have poor credit?

If Alerus Financial is concerned about your ability to repay the loan, they will ask the ATFL to guarantee your loan. Whenever the bank requests a guarantee, the ATFL Review Committee must meet to review your application and credit status. This Committee takes into account the nature and extent of your credit problems, the dollar amount requested, and then votes on whether or not to approve the loan guarantee. If the Review Committee approves the guarantee, your loan will be processed and a loan agreement will be sent to you. All information you provide will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

What are the timeframes?

The time needed for Alerus Financial to either approve or send your application to the ATFL Review Committee is typically two weeks or less. If the application is referred to the ATFL Review Committee, the committee will meet within two weeks of receiving the referred application and provide a decision.

How do I get the loan documents and the money?

The loan documents will be sent to you by Alerus Financial. Once received, you need to review the loan terms carefully, and then sign and return the documents. Once the signed documents have been received by Alerus financial, a check for the amount of the loan will be sent to you; generally this takes less than two weeks. The check will be made out to both you and the vendor or contractor you identified as providing the needed AT service or device.

What happens if I have trouble repaying my loan?

The ATFL wants you to succeed in repaying your loan, and in maintaining your good credit rating. If you experience unexpected financial difficulties, please contact IPAT for immediate assistance.

What happens if I default (don't pay my loan)?

If you don't repay your loan it will have a negative effect on your credit rating. Your non-payment will be listed on your credit report for seven years and will make it difficult for you to qualify for other loans. In addition, your loan may be sent to a collection agency.

How do I get an application or more information?

You may contact:

- IPAT: 1-800-895-4728 or visit www.ndipat.org
- Protection & Advocacy: 1-800-472-2670 or visit www.ndpanda.org