



Kentucky Assistive Technology Service (KATS) Network 1-800-327-5287

Fact Sheet 5 – Assistive Technology & Older Kentuckians

An estimated 5 million people over 65 have age-related difficulty with daily life functions. Cooking, bathing, dressing, getting out of bed, carrying groceries and housework can be affected by the normal process of aging. Changes in vision, hearing, mobility and dexterity may be the result of accidents or debilitating diseases, such as Alzheimer's, Arthritis, Macular Degeneration and etc. The following types of assistive technology can enable people to remain independent. They will also allow individuals to live in their own homes by increasing the safety of the home environment.

Devices that may be helpful can include:

- Emergency Alert Systems
- Shower Chairs
- Special Fasteners
- Crutches
- Hearing Aids
- Lift Chairs
- Wheelchairs
- Communication Devices
- Magnifiers
- Reaching Devices
- Walkers
- Canes

Adaptations in the home that may assist with daily living can include:

- Grab bars in bathtubs
- Ramps
- Easy access refrigerators
- Easy gliding Hardware
- Enhanced Lighting
- Adjustable kitchen shelves
- Easy-to-grab handles
- Handrails on outside steps
- Pull cords for audible alarm

Financial Help

Funding for mobility devices such as wheelchairs, walkers, canes and now Aug Com devices may be obtained as they clearly fill a medical need. Outlines below are programs that might be able to assist in purchasing these devices

Medicare, Medicaid and Private Insurance

Anyone over 65 who is eligible for social security or railroad benefits qualifies for Medicare. If you do not qualify for social security, you may voluntarily sign up for Medicare for a monthly fee. Since Medicare will only pay for 80% of expenses, and will not pay for emergency alert systems, hearing aids, and home modifications, other sources must be found to supplement their coverage. Items covered by Medicare, such as wheelchairs, often have restrictions on cost, models and types that can be purchased. There are many special private insurance programs that are specifically designed as Medicare supplements. Some of these programs include Medicaid or private insurance plans can help fill the gap. For example, Medicaid offers a program such as the Home and Community Based Waiver, which provides some home adaptation along with other services. Also home health services provide durable medical equipment along with other services to enable individuals to stay in their homes.

Department of Aging and Independent Living

The Department of Aging and Independent Living services offer a homecare program that is contracted through the area developmental districts for older adults. Some of the services available include home modification and personal care. For more information on this program and other services, contact The Division of Aging Services at (502) 564-6930.

Veteran's Administration

Veteran's Administration offers a program for making the home accessible. Financial amounts are based on the disability. For more information and eligibility requirements on this program and other services, contact VA at (800) 827-1000.

Special Equipment Fund

The MR/DD special equipment fund is restricted to persons with mental retardation or a developmental disability, which occurred before the age of 22. The fund can provide assistance when other possible sources of funding have been exhausted. For more information, contact the Special Services and Equipment Fund at (502) 564-7722 and ask for your local Comprehensive Care Center.

Loan Programs

The Kentucky Assistive Technology Loan Corporation provides an affordable choice to individuals to purchase their own assistive technology with a low interest loan. For more information, contact Sarah A. Richardson, at (877) 675-0195 or visit their website at katlc.ky.gov/

Private Organizations

Private organizations that may provide assistance include the Arthritis Foundation, the American Cancer Society, local lions clubs and other organizations that can supply durable medical equipment. Also, your local churches and other organizations may be able to provide financial assistance for assistive technology (See "Organizations and Websites that Help Older Kentuckians" below for contact information).

The KATS Network

The KATS Network provides information and referral services about funding sources as well as information about assistive technology services and devices, available publications and mail-order catalogs. The six regional assistive technology resource centers are available for consultation, technical assistance, demonstrations and short-term equipment loans. For assistance, call the KATS Network Coordinating Center at either Toll Free - (800) 327-5287 or (502) 429-4484 or visit their website at www.katsnet.org

Organizations and Websites that Help Older Kentuckians

Administration on Aging
Washington, DC 20201
(202) 619-0724
www.aoa.gov/eldfam/eldfam.asp

Alzheimer's Disease & Related Disorders
Assoc - Louisville Chapter
3703 Taylorsville Rd Suite 102
Louisville, KY 40220
Toll Free - (800) 272-3900 or
(502) 451-4266
<http://www.alz.org/kyin/>

American Association of Retired Persons
601 East St. NW
Washington, DC 20049
(800) 687-2277
www.aarp.org/

American Cancer Society
701 W. Muhammad Ali Blvd.
Louisville, KY 40201
(502) 584-6782
www.cancer.org

Association of Older Kentuckians
400 Old Vine St. Suite 203
Lexington, KY 40504
(800) 200-3633 or
(606) 225-9913

OFB/Independent Living
Attn: Gay Pannell
400 East Main Street, Suite 302
Bowling Green, KY 42101
(800) 222-1215

KY Occupational Therapy (KOTA)
P.O. Box 21502
Louisville, KY 40221
(888) 987-KOTA (5682)
www.kotaweb.org/

Department for Aging and
Independent Living
275 East Main St. 3W-F
Frankfort, KY 40621
(502) 564-6930
chfs.ky.gov/agencies/os/dail/

National Council on Aging
1901 L Street, N.W.
4th floor
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 479-1200
www.ncoa.org/index.cfm

Other Information Resources

- Benefits Checkup helps thousands every day to find programs for people ages 55 and over that may pay for some of their costs of prescription drugs, health care, utilities, and other essential items or services. This site is available at www.benefitscheckup.org/
- The Center for Communication and Consumer Services- A source of information on Aging at www.aoa.gov/
- Elder Care Locator at www.eldercare.gov
- FIRSTGOV for Seniors at www.seniors.gov
- KY Lions Club website at www.kylions.net
- Resource Directory for Older People is a database of information about national and state-level organizations that serve older adults and geriatric professionals is available at www.nia.nih.gov/resource

