

No Wrong Door Virginia

How Assistive Technology is Helping Virginians
through the COVID-19 Pandemic



Prepared by No Wrong Door Virginia



Partnership with Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS)

The Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) is a statewide program authorized and funded by the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, (as amended AT Act of 2004). The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) administers Virginia's AT Act program. The Administration for Community Living (ACL) oversees the State Grant for Assistive Technology Act Programs. VATS has been a member of Virginia's No Wrong Door (NWD) since 2019.

VATS and Virginia No Wrong Door (NWD) expanded their partnership to offer several assistive technology (AT) kits to targeted NWD partners including statewide Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and Centers for Independent Living (CILs). VATS and NWD developed three (3) AT kits to meet the unique needs of older adults and Virginians with disabilities. These kits include: Emergency Preparedness, Social Health and Training. VATS and NWD partners are making these practical, accessible, and affordable AT solutions readily available for Virginians in need.

According to the National Institute of Health's National Institute on Aging, older adults are at higher risk for loneliness and social isolation due to a variety of changes in health and social connections. NWD and VATS partnered to receive federal COVID-19 Relief funds to address the health and safety needs of older adults and Virginians with disabilities. Through this collaboration, NWD and VATS purchased AT devices and developed mechanisms to connect these vulnerable populations with AT professionals and equipment to improve social inclusion and minimize the stress associated with loneliness.

Social Health Kit

The first kit created through the NWD and VATS partnership is the *Social Health Kit*. The Social Health Kit includes items that combat loneliness and promote social connections.

Kit Items

- Echo Show
- Facebook Portal
- Webcam
- Wi-Fi Photo Frame
- Phone Tablet Stand
- Wi-Fi Extender
- Soft Fidget Blanket
- Robotic Companion pets
- Artificial Fish Tank
- Natural Sun Light Lamp
- Screen Magnifier
- Dome Magnifying Glass
- Ring Doorbell
- Wyze Camera Outdoor Starter Kit
- Wyze Cam Pan
- UV Sanitizer Wand
- UV Light Sanitizer Box
- Swivel Tray Table with Stand Assist
- Temporal Orientation Clock



Training Kit



The *Training Kit* is a series of videos VATS and NWD collaborated on to address a variety of needs presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first video reviews simple strategies and methods to order food and groceries online. This training goes into detail on the different types of online ordering and the pros and cons of each one. Additionally, VATS is developing several other how-to videos and or trainings to help individuals better understand various technologies including how to create an email, and how-to video chat.

Training Kit: <https://www.nowrongdoortraining.dars.virginia.gov/>

Emergency Preparedness Kit

The *Emergency Preparedness Kit* was created to demonstrate a few affordable and user-friendly technology and assistive technology devices that can help older adults and Virginians with disabilities plan for and develop their own emergency kit. The items in this kit are not an exhaustive list, but a place to begin in creating your own emergency preparedness kit.

Kit Items

- Plug In/ Rechargeable Emergency Flashlight
- Emergency Radio, flashlight, smartphone charger and red beacon
- Solar Charger Power Bank
- Safety Whistle
- Folding Cane
- Touchless Forehead Thermometer
- Battery Operated Can Opener
- Kitchen Jar and Bottle Opener
- Spring Loaded Shears
- Pet Food Storage Container

Social Health Kit Successes

Orientation Clock

During her isolation due to COVID-19, a family noticed a marked decline in an 88-year-old woman's cognition and memory, including her temporal orientation. She was often confused with the day and date as well as the time of day. Her family reported that the COVID-19 pandemic had also significantly altered her normal routine, adding to her disorientation. Through communication with the family, VATS loaned her a digital orientation clock with big, bright letters and numbers. The family reported that the simple device was extremely helpful. After the short-term equipment loan, the family purchased the digital orientation clock. She placed the clock on her kitchen table and she refers to it several times a day. The family reports that she appears less stressed knowing the date and time of day. This equipment helped her develop new routines and give her something to look forward to and develop a consistent routine.

Robotic Companion Pets

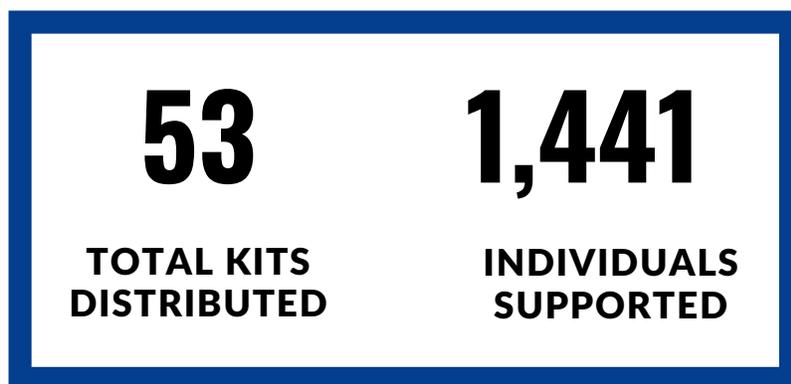
VATS received a referral from a family whose grandmother could not use a standard telephone. Initially, VATS provided a two-week loan of a simplified, large-button picture phone and provided information and resources on where to purchase this equipment. Upon further assessment, the AT Specialist determined that this individual needed additional in-home care supports (referred to the local Area Agencies on Aging or AAAs) and was at high risk for social isolation and loneliness. Through a social health assessment, the AT Specialist was able to determine that this grandmother was lonely. Her dog recently died and her family was concerned with her personal safety (fall risk) and her ability to take care of a pet. The AT Specialist demonstrated and loaned this grandmother, a robotic companion dog. The grandmother liked it and showed it to her grandson who has autism. The grandson does not like dogs due to their sudden movements but he really liked this robotic pet. Not only did this pet help relieve some of her loneliness, but also gave the grandmother and grandson a common bond!

VATS is currently working with Virginia Agencies on Aging's (AAAs) and Centers for Independent Living's (CILs) to make both a robotic dog and cat available throughout the Commonwealth!

Emergency Preparedness Success

The New River Valley Agency on Aging was one of our partners who received an Assistive Technology (AT) Emergency Preparedness Kit from VATS. Upon receiving the kits, the organization was particularly impressed with one of the items. It was the rechargeable/plug in "Weather Ready" LED Energizer flashlights.

The organization was so impressed with the item and saw how beneficial it could be to their community that they began working with one of their local government partners to provide some of the emergency flashlights to older adults in their community. The organization is also changing their emergency kit recommendations to include the rechargeable/plug in flashlight rather than the traditional battery-powered flashlight to ensure their community is prepared.



For more information on Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS), Assistive Technology (AT) Kits/Consultations, contact us:

Website: <https://easyaccess.virginia.gov/VATS>

Phone: (804) 662-9990

Email: nowrongdoor@dars.virginia.gov

Assistive Technology Access at DARS Vaccination Sites

The Virginia Assistive Technology System (VATS) received funding through its partnership with No Wrong Door (NWD) Virginia, to provide assistive technology (AT) services and equipment to help older adults and Virginians with disabilities address access issues with COVID-19 vaccinations, home based services and social isolation in order to participate fully in the community.

VATS supported the June 29, 2021 COVID-19 vaccination site at the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) Greater Richmond Office, by staffing a table outside of the conference room where walk-in vaccines were administered by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH). VATS staff were on site and provided a variety of AT devices for use/demonstration and information on VATS and NWD services. AT equipment included personal listening devices, magnifiers, wheelchairs, rollators, portable canes and an array of equipment to relieve stress and promote a calming vaccination experience (fidgets, weighted lap pads, rocking chair, electronic aquarium, robotic cat and dog). VATS shared information on AT devices and services with vaccine customers and site coordinators. VATS participated in follow-up DARS/VDH vaccination site events for first and second dose administrations. The funding is enhancing the capacity of VATS and Virginia's NWD system to address assistive technology needs of older adults and Virginians with disabilities.



Durable Medical Equipment Program Supports COVID Vaccination Sites

AS OF JULY 2021

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**INDIVIDUALS REPORTED USING
THEIR DME TO ACCESS THE
COVID-19 VACCINE**

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) reached out to VATS adult durable medical equipment reuse partner, the Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment and Endowment (F.R.E.E), to request manual wheelchairs at state run COVID-19 vaccination clinics. Ambulatory people were coming to the clinics, not realizing how far the walk or wait may be, and needed a wheelchair to rest or move through the line safely. VDEM immediately reached out to F.R.E.E. to ask for help. Within 24 hours, F.R.E.E. was able to round up manual wheelchairs between Roanoke, Williamsburg and Richmond F.R.E.E. chapters. VDEM worked with F.R.E.E. on logistics and were able to have manual wheelchairs on site.

A couple days later, FEMA reached out to F.R.E.E asking for 30 wheelchairs for federally operated COVID-19 vaccination sites in Virginia. VDEM reached out again and requested 10 more manual wheelchairs to be used at state vaccination sites in partnership with the National Guard. This is one example of how VATS partnership with the F.R.E.E. Foundation is helping to ensure access to mobility and rehabilitation equipment to support individuals, state, local and federal government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These coordinated efforts are also helping to move forward an Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that VDEM, F.R.E.E. and VATS developed to better respond to the durable medical equipment needs of Virginians during disasters.

