



MonTECH

IMPROVING LIVES WITH TECHNOLOGY

An Access and Functional Needs Resource

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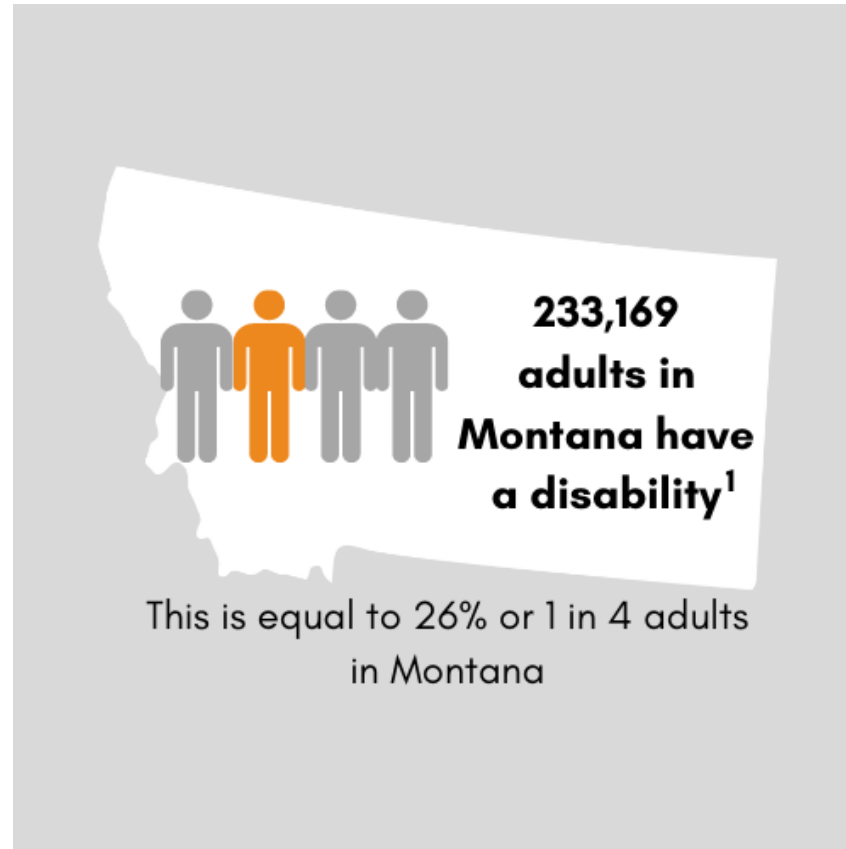


MonTECH is a free lending library and training resource for adaptive equipment

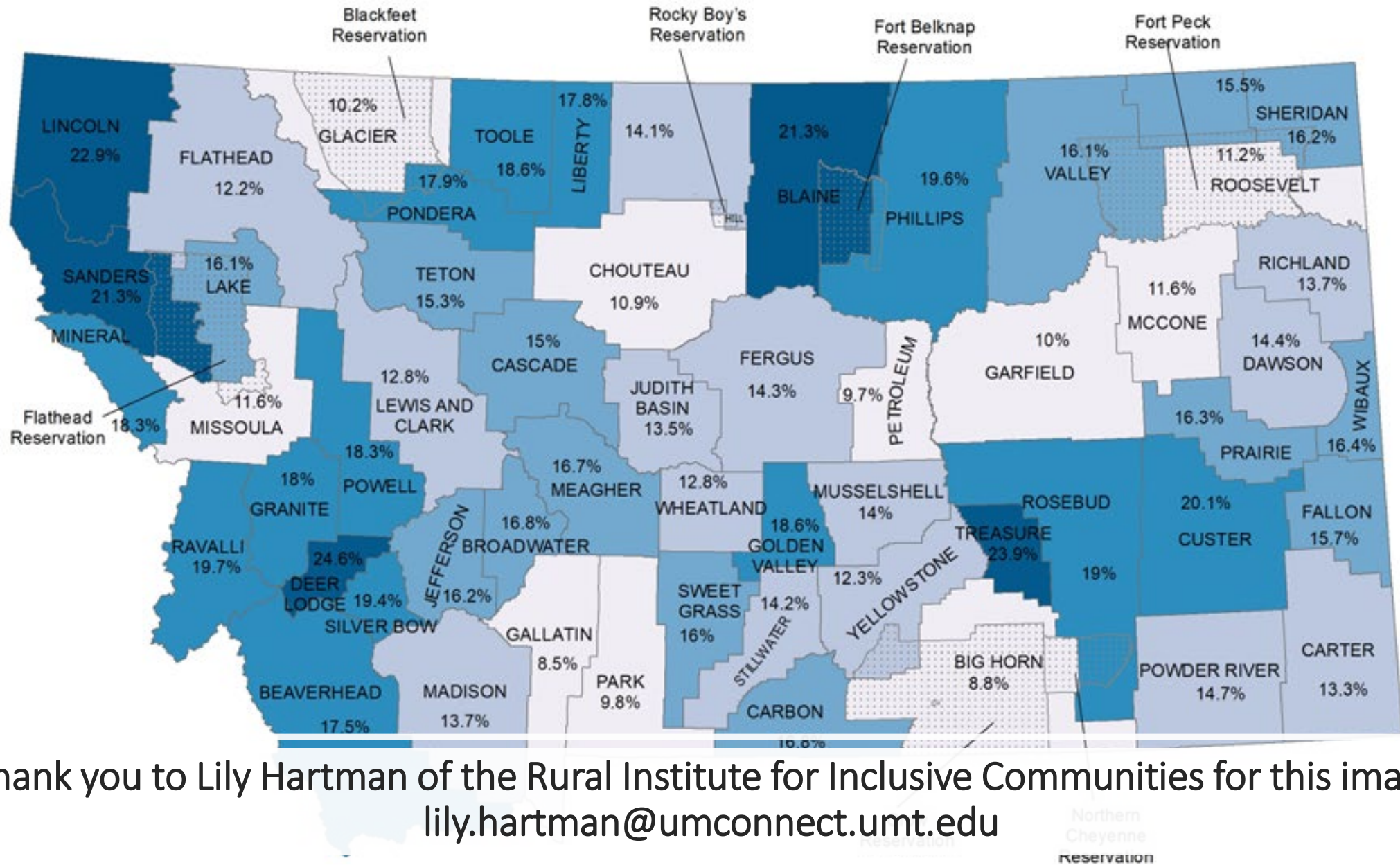
We serve every Montanan, all ages and abilities.

We are federally funded by the Administration for Community Living under the U.S. DHHS.

Why is MonTECH part of this conversation?



<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/impacts/montana.html>



Thank you to Lily Hartman of the Rural Institute for Inclusive Communities for this image.
lily.hartman@umconnect.umt.edu

People with:

- Physical and/or intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD)
- Chronic illness
- Socioeconomic barriers (low income, transportation, internet access)
- Limited proficiency in English

Also, those living in institutional or congregate-living settings (including group homes), older adults, young children, and pregnant women

Muddying the Water...

- Many people don't identify as disabled, or having these needs
- Some emergency managers on the ground may subscribe to a narrower definition



People with AFN are disproportionately affected by disasters

- Poverty affects the ability to prepare, evacuate, and recover; 28.3% of Montanans with disabilities live below the poverty level*
- They are more likely to be left behind due to inaccessible messaging, transportation, shelters, and food distribution
- “...the mortality rate of the disabled population is two to four times higher than that of the non-disabled population in many disaster situations.”

Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction, UN.org

* https://centerondisability.org/ada_parcs/utills/counties.php?state=MT&table=38&colour=1

What do Montanans with AFN need when facing an emergency/disaster?

- A personal evacuation plan
- An emergency bag/kit that addresses their specific needs
- A support network/contacts



But regardless how much or how little planning they've done, they need notice – as early as possible

What “Go Time” can look like for someone with AFN

Credit: Vance Taylor, Office of AFN, Sacramento

Neighbor’s Evacuation Path

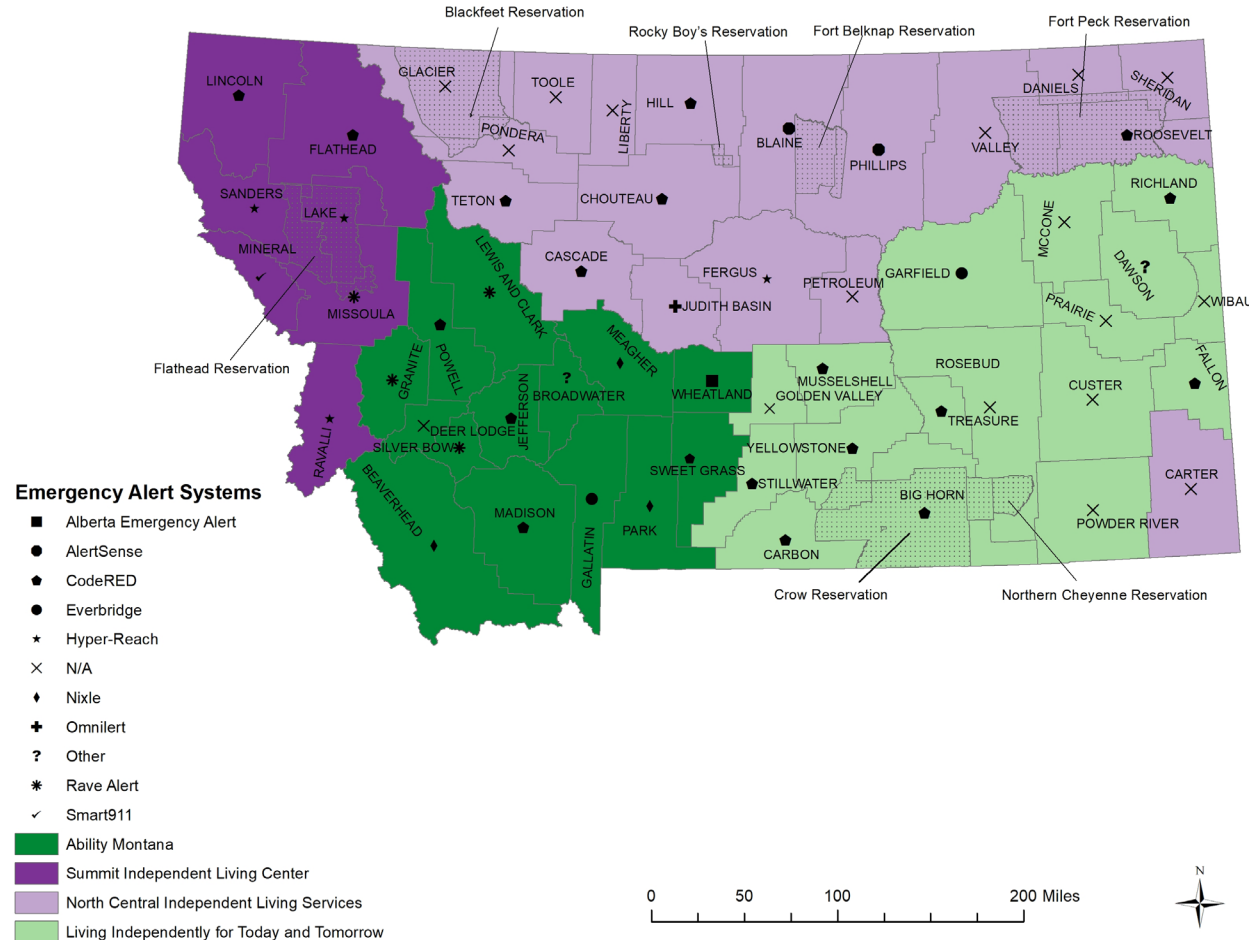
- Packs a bag
- Leaves

Power-chair User’s Evacuation Path

- Calls caregiver
- Waits for them to arrive
- Makes sure bag includes additional necessities (meds, oxygen, personal care items, special dietary needs, etc.)
- Plans for durable med. equip. needs (extra battery, charger, patch kit, leaving PC behind?)
- Waits for specialized transportation

Our Mass Notification Systems Vary County by County

“...currently, in Montana, more than 10 different MNS platforms are being utilized by county and tribal governments” (Hartman, 2023).



Emergency alert system accessibility considerations

- Do people have to opt-in?
- Is that process physically and electronically accessible? (Montana ranks poorly in broadband availability/quality)
- Are there ongoing campaigns to raise awareness of the need to opt in?
 - Montanans with disabilities moving from one county to another may not realize they need to opt-in to a new mass notification system

Receiving notification of a disaster should not be dependent on a person's ability to self-advocate. Messaging should take a "whole community" approach.



Some ways to help mitigate catastrophic impact on people with disabilities

- Include accessible transportation in planning
- Ensure shelters are accessible
- Craft accessible messaging for alerts and updates
- Assist with replacement of DME, communication devices, and other disability-related needs

Here's where MonTECH comes in:

- Accessible physical and electronic spaces
- Accessible messaging
- Temporary replacement of DME, communication devices, and other disability-related equipment

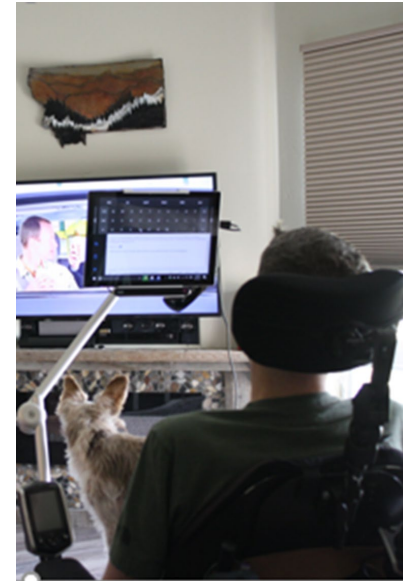


MonTECH Services

- Borrow assistive technology (AT) and adaptive equipment for 30 days or six months
 - Free 1:1 appointments in person or via video call
 - Free accessibility assessments and technical assistance
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What is Assistive Technology (AT)?





Assistive Tech Enhances All Aspects of a Person's Life

What challenges can AT (and MonTECH) help address?



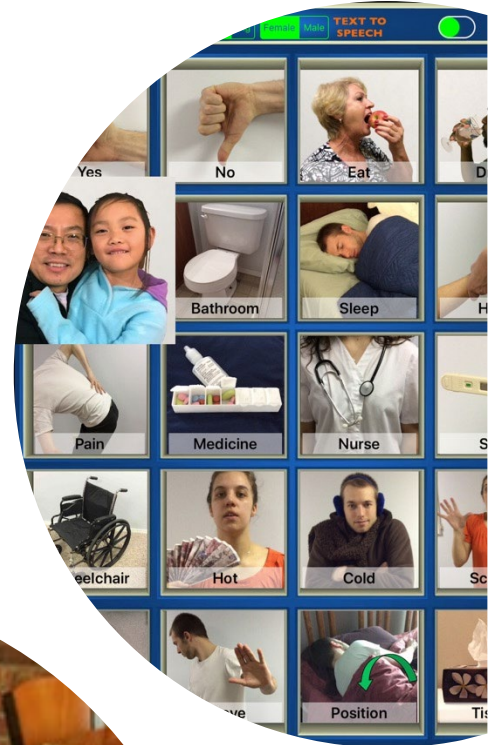
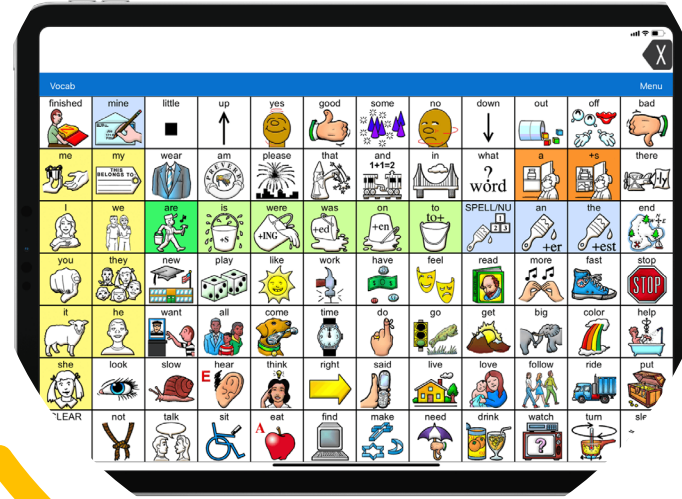
Communication Challenges

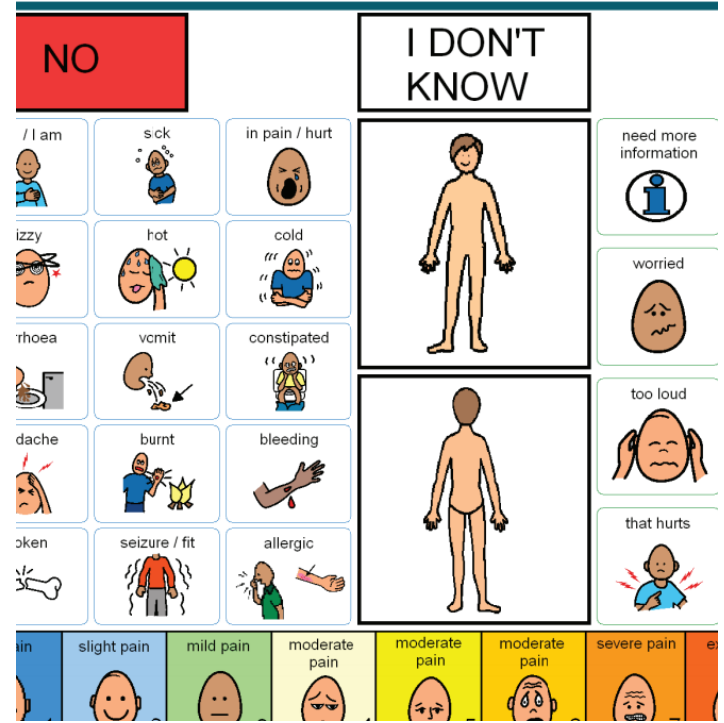
People who use AT to communicate may need:

Replacement iPads and AAC apps

Charge cords

Eye-gaze access devices

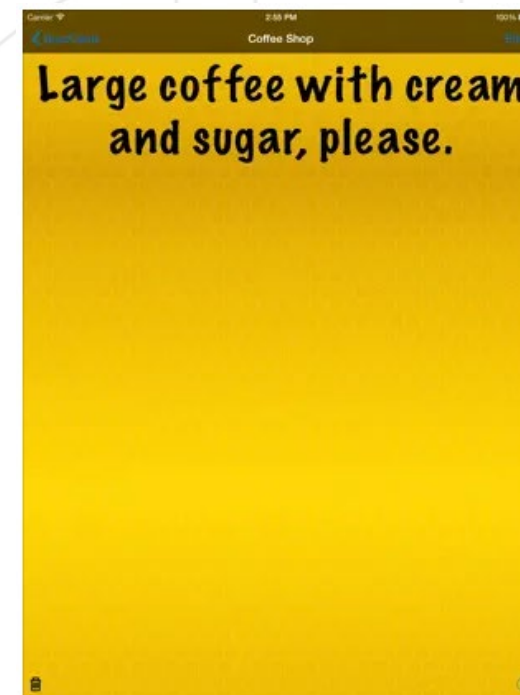
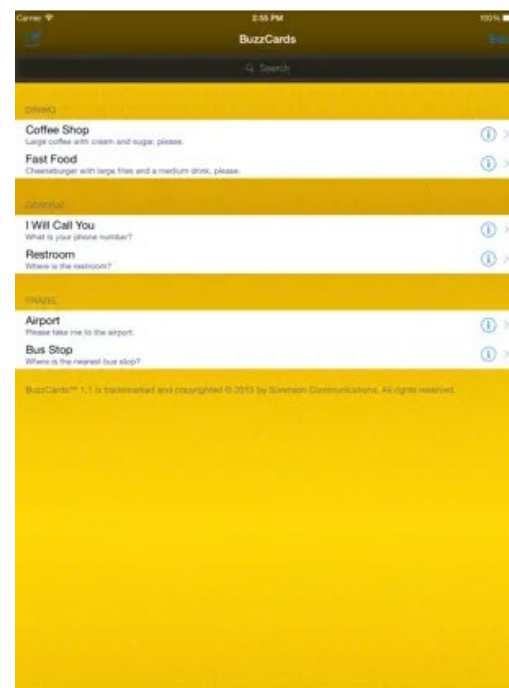




If power is out, they may need a low- or no-tech replacement

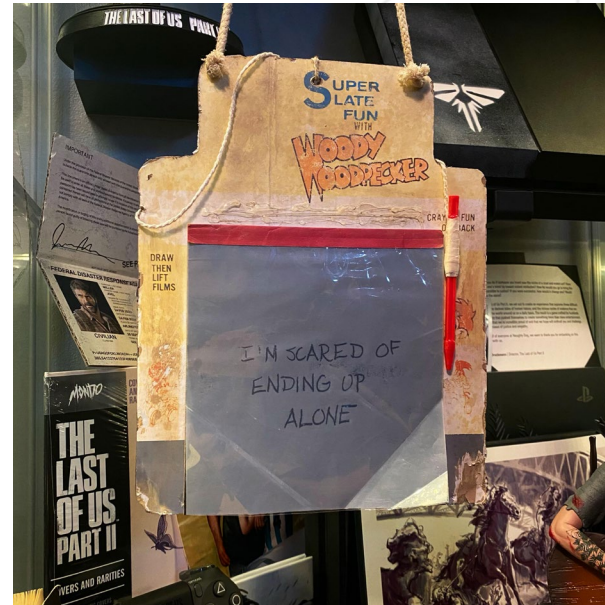


Communication support may be needed, under stressful conditions, by people who normally communicate pretty well



For anyone nonspeaking who can write, you can improvise without utilizing AT

- Try:
 - Dry-erase boards
 - Portable chalk boards
 - Boogie boards

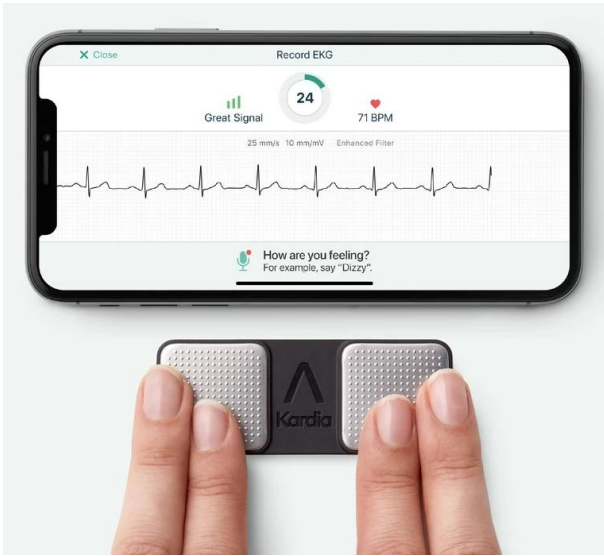


Adapted writing utensils increase the ability to communicate, fill out forms, etc.





AT for Self-care and Activities of Daily Living



Monitoring Health While Sheltering



Medication Management

Transfers and Safety



Managing Stress, Anxiety, and Sensory Overload





Calm and Noise-cancellation in overwhelming environments





Mobility

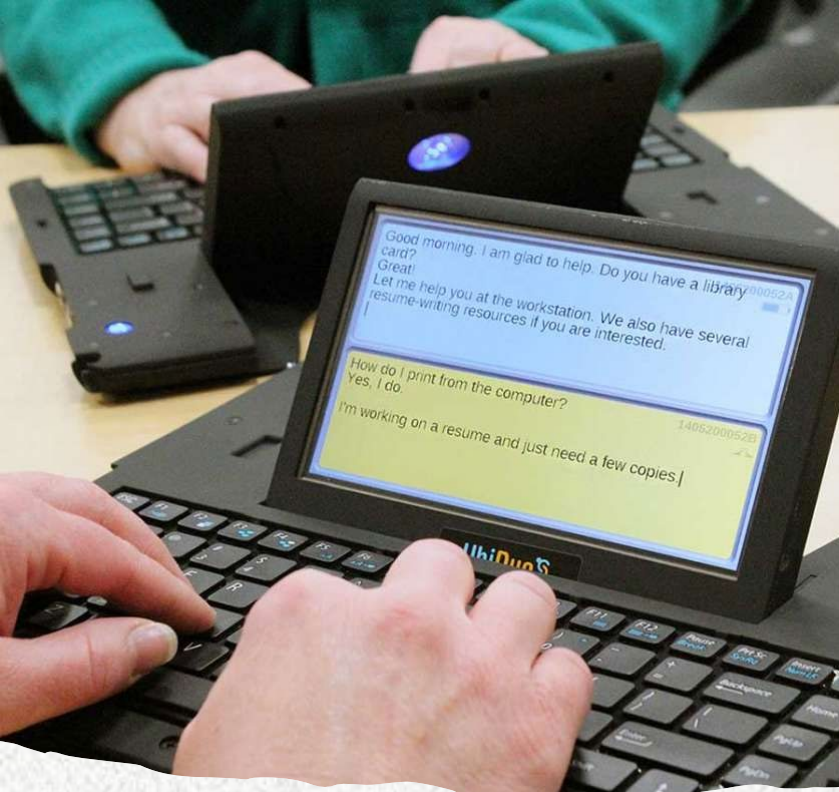
- Wheelchairs, portable ramps, walkers for all ages.

And I do mean 'all ages'





Low Vision



Hearing and Voice Amplification



Connectivity and Remote Access to Information



Is your messaging accessible?

Tools and alternative formats

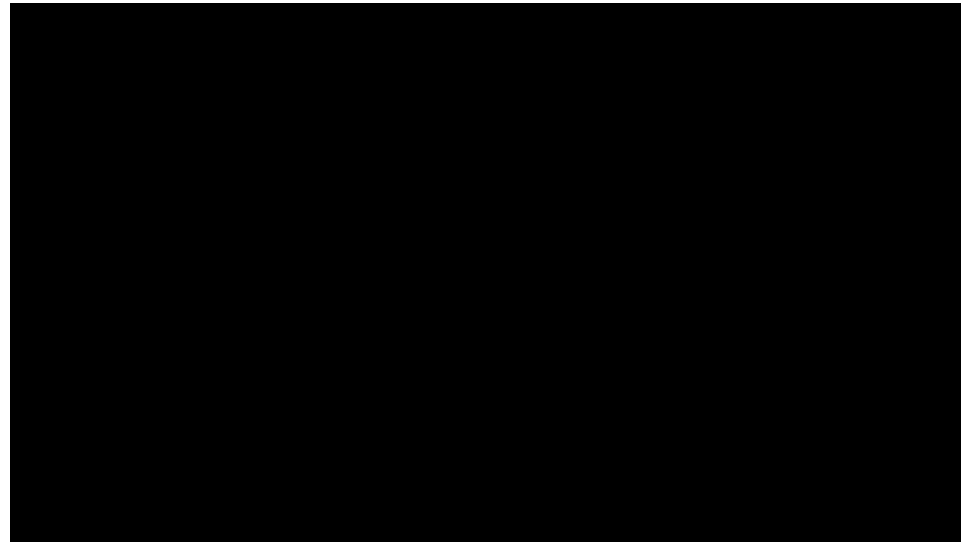


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- Are your Word and PDF documents accessible? (alt. text is important)
 - Planning meetings (Can everyone get in the building? See? Hear?
Need an ASL interpreter?)
- Are your websites accessible to users who are blind or have low vision?
*(Over 32 million U.S. adults have impaired vision,
per the American Foundation for the Blind)*

MonTECH provides free accessibility assessments of physical and online spaces.

Do your messaging videos include captions and audio narration?



Our promo video includes both captions and text narration.
MonTECH Promo Video with Text Narrator, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ahZBXDbd2P8>

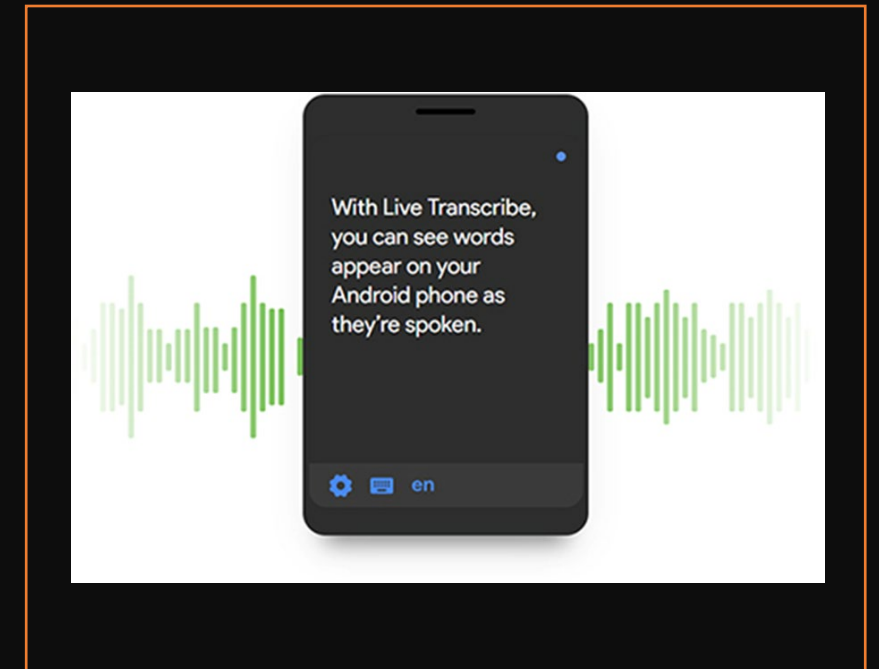
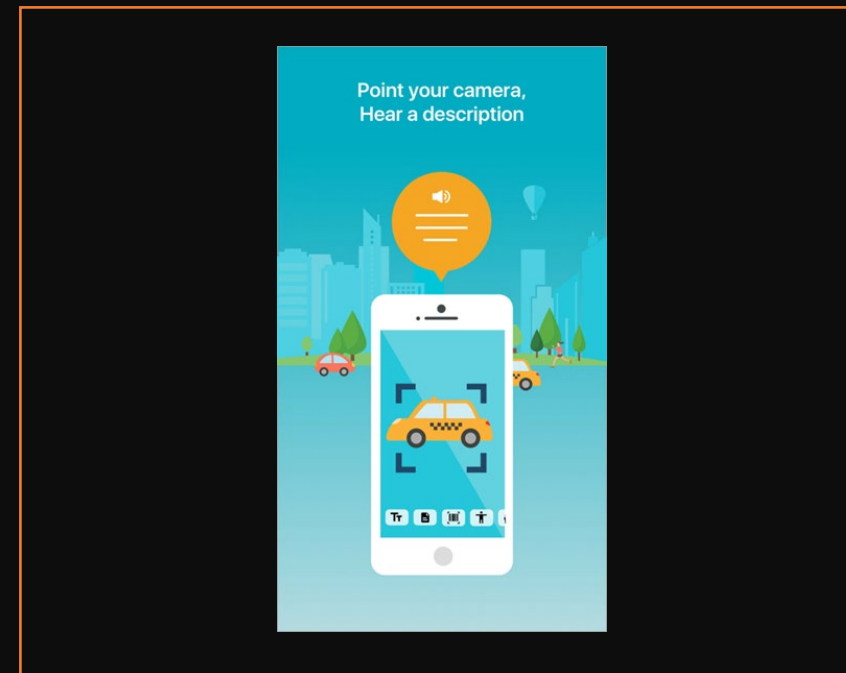
Do people have what they need to access your messaging? Tools to support people with Dyslexia or second-language barriers



MonTECH Shows Off C-Pen Reader: <https://youtu.be/7VhTR-JToKM>

MonTECH can teach folks how to utilize tech already in-hand

- Apps
 - Medication reminders
 - Language translation
 - Vision
 - Hearing
 - Appointment/event tracking
- Built-in accessibility settings
- Built-in touch access, voice access



- No prescription needed.
- Does the borrower have an email?
- Does the borrower have a phone?



Montech@mso.umt.edu • (406) 243-5511 • MT-AT.org



Other Potential Partners and Resources

- [Area Agencies on Aging and Senior Centers](#)
- [Centers for Independent Living](#)
- [Disability Rights Montana](#)
- [Montana Council on Developmental Disabilities](#)
- [The Rural Institute for Inclusive Communities](#)
- [Montana Telecommunications Access Program](#)



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Thank you for your time and attention

MonTECH looks forward to supporting your important work