

# Montana

## Assistive Technology

### Resources



## **MONTANA Assistive Technology Resources**

### **Low Vision Montana**

P.O. Box 664

Helena, MT 59624

**Phone:** (406)-444-3159

**Fax:** (406)-444-0266

**E-mail:** [cbriggs@mt.gov](mailto:cbriggs@mt.gov)

**Website:** <http://www.lowvisionmt.org/>

**Contact Name:** Christie Briggs

**Organization Type:** Information Centers, Parent/Family Support, State and Local Organizations

**Disabilities Served:** Visual Impairment / Blind

Low Vision Montana is a non-profit organization that provides options and enhances opportunities for people who have low vision or are blind. The organization has a referral service where individuals can access agencies and community resources that can assist in living a more independent life. Low Vision Montana's mobile unit will house low vision aids that can be evaluated by consumers as well as offer eye exams by professionals. Peer support groups are also coordinated through the organization.

### **Montana School for the Deaf & the Blind (MSDB)**

3911 Central Ave.

Great Falls, MT 59405

**Phone:** (406) 771-6000

**Fax:** (406) 771-6164

**E-mail:** [info@msdb.mt.gov](mailto:info@msdb.mt.gov)

**Website:** <http://msdb.mt.gov/>

**Organization Type:** Schools and School Districts

**Disabilities Served:** Deaf / Blind, Hearing Impairments / Deaf, Visual Impairment / Blind

The purpose of the campus-based education program at the Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB) is to provide, by the use of specialized methods and systems, an education for children who are deaf/hard of hearing and visually impaired that is comparable with the education provided to individuals within the public school system. Their ultimate goal is to help their students become independent and self-sustaining citizens. MSDB provides educational programs for children who are deaf and blind from birth through age 21 and employs trained teachers of the deaf and the blind who are highly skilled, knowledgeable, and experienced in their fields. Staffing also includes a full-time school psychologist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, orientation and mobility instructor, audiologist, and two speech pathologists.

### **Montana Talking Book Library**

1515 EAST 6th AVE. PO BOX 201800

Helena, MT 59620

**Phone:** (406)-444-2064

**Fax:** (406)-444-0266

**E-mail:** [cbriggs@mt.gov](mailto:cbriggs@mt.gov)

**Website:** [http://msl.state.mt.us/talking\\_book\\_library/](http://msl.state.mt.us/talking_book_library/)

**Contact Name:** Christie Briggs

**Organization Type:** Assistive Technology, Disability/Disorder Specific, State and Local Organizations

**Disabilities Served:** Learning Disabilities, Mobility Impaired, Visual Impairment / Blind

The Montana Talking Library (MTL) is a regional library of the National Library Service of the blind and physically handicapped. This is a free service available for eligible Montana residents who are not able to use standard print materials due to a visual, physical, or reading disability. You can receive free mail loan of recorded books, Braille embossed books, and playback equipment. The MTL assists individuals, other libraries, nursing homes, schools, and institutions in providing library services to eligible individuals.

### **Native American Disability Technical Assistance Center**

The University of Montana Rural Institute: Center of Excellence in Disability; Education, Research and Services, 52 Corbin Hall,  
Missoula, MT 59812-7056

**Phone:** (866) 424-3822

**Fax:** (406) 243-2349

**E-mail:** [jclay@ruralinstitute.umt.edu](mailto:jclay@ruralinstitute.umt.edu)

**Website:** <http://aidtac.ruralinstitute.umt.edu/>

**Contact Name:** Julie Anna Clay, Director

**Organization Type:** Advocacy and Law, Assistive Technology, University-Affiliated Programs

**Disabilities Served:** General / Non-disability Specific

The American Indian Disability Technical Assistance Center (AIDTAC) strives to support American Indians and Alaska Natives in their efforts to improve employment opportunities and vocational rehabilitation outcomes wherever they live in the United States. AIDTAC provides information and technical assistance to American Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages that helps their members with disabilities live healthy, integrated lives within their communities.

### **Montana Assistive Technology Program (MATP)**

Kathy Laurin , Project Director

Rural Institute, University of Montana

634 Eddy Avenue, CHC-009

Missoula, MT 59812

**Email:** [montech@ruralinstitute.umt.edu](mailto:montech@ruralinstitute.umt.edu)

**Phone:** (406) 243-5676

**Fax:** (406) 243-4730

**Toll Free:** (877) 243-5511

<http://montech.ruralinstitute.umt.edu>

MonTECH is a program of the University of Montana Rural Institute: Center for Excellence in Disability Education, Research, and Service. We are located on the UM campus in Missoula. We specialize in Assistive Technology (AT) and oversee a variety of AT related grants and contracts. The MonTECH goal is to develop a comprehensive, statewide system of assistive technology related assistance. We strive to ensure that all people in Montana with disabilities have equitable access to assistive technology devices and services in order to enhance their independence, productivity, and quality of life. In pursuit of this goal, program staff work with consumers, service providers, educators, therapists, state agencies, private industry, researchers, legislators, and other interested individuals.

### **State Financing Activities:**

Montana operates a statewide low-interest financial loan program that guarantees loans made by the Community Bank-Missoula, Inc. to people with disabilities who wish to purchase assistive technology.

**Device Reutilization:**

MATP has established a web-based equipment exchange program to connect buyers and sellers of used AT. MATP also provides in kind support for the operation of the Montana Adaptive Equipment Program, which refurbishes and recycles equipment for permanent placement and provides long-term loans of equipment for eligible clients served by the Montana Developmental Disabilities Division.

**Device Loan:**

MATP operates a short-term equipment loan bank. The inventory consists of approximately one thousand AT devices and computer hardware/software products that are available for a thirty-day loan. MATP has developed a web-based system that allows on-line browsing of the inventory as well as the ability to create and manage an account and checkout items. Equipment can also be borrowed by contacting the program through their toll free number, by email, or by visiting the facility. This system also provides an infrastructure that can be used by other Montana programs that wish to operate an equipment loan program.

**Device Demonstration:**

MATP uses the established MonTECH demonstration site at the University of Montana Rural Institute in Missoula. The center includes a number of display areas organized around specific applications. MATP will utilize distance technologies to provide device demonstrations in the underserved locations of the state. MATP has also placed demonstration equipment with the Parents Let's Unite for Kids (PLUK) center in South East Montana. MATP will also contract with other professionals to provide remote demonstration services in order to extend its device demonstration capabilities.

**State Leadership Activities:**

MATP operates an information and referral network, distributes materials about AT to key stakeholder groups, and participates in local and statewide events to promote awareness. Beginning in year two, MATP will publish an annual report in addition to its annual data collection. MATP collaborates with agencies and service providers including tribal organizations to provide needed AT training in the areas of education, employment, community-living and information technology.