

FUNDING AGRICULTURAL ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY



Assistive Technology (AT) for use in agricultural settings can look like many different things. The key is how it relates to helping a person overcome barriers related to a disability or long-term health condition.

Examples of Agricultural AT include:

1. **Cab cameras for increasing vision and safety**
2. **Grain bin level indicators to improve independence**
3. **Mobility lifts to restore equipment access**
4. **Ergonomic steps and handrails to aid in safe accessibility**
5. **Automatic takeoffs to aid in milking routines**
6. **Garden seat for accessible and ergonomic gardening**

AT solutions are unique to each person, their disability, and type of agricultural operation. AgrAbility PA provides on-site assessments that help determine what modifications, equipment, and resources are needed to support a farmer returning to or continuing to work in agriculture.

Assistive technology can be anything that helps a person with a disability or functional limitation perform a task.

Definition of Assistive Technology

Any item, piece of equipment, or product system – whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized – that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

[20 U.S.C. Chapter 33,
Section 1401 (25)]



This farmer purchased a side-entry skid loader by applying for and receiving a low-interest loan through the Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation (PATF). This piece of equipment allows for greater accessibility and safety.



This farmer acquired a pull-behind Eco Weeder by applying for occupational support services with the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). This piece of equipment allows the farmer to work ergonomically with less pain.

One of the main barriers to implementing assistive technology on the farm can be the cost to pay for it.

To be successful in obtaining financial assistance:

- 1) Set clear goals
- 2) Explore various funding resources
- 3) Keep records and documentation
- 4) Be persistent and act as your own self-advocate
- 5) Follow-up and ask questions.

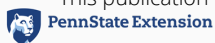
Steps towards funding Agricultural AT include:

1. **Determine** the type of AT for a person's individual needs.
2. **Test** or try out the AT before purchasing (if possible).
3. **Locate** a vendor and obtain the cost or estimate of the AT.
4. **Determine** if there is any alternative AT to consider due to cost or availability without sacrificing function or features.
5. **Assess** how much contribution (out of pocket) can be made towards the purchase.
6. **Identify** funding resources. More than one funding source may be used for an AT purchase(s).
7. **Apply** for funding, follow the process, and keep records and documentation.

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AgrAbility for Pennsylvanians is a statewide partnership between Penn State Extension and UCP Central PA.

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Funding Resources

- State Funding
- Federal Funding
- Private Funding
- Financial Institutions
- Grant Programs

AgrAbility PA does not provide funding for assistive technology.

The staff is available to help a farmer identify solutions, offer support, and assist with finding funding resources.

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