

Funding Support for Anti-Elopement/Wandering Devices

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Assistive technology (AT) can help stop elopement or the wandering away of people with autism spectrum disorder. AT can be as simple as building a fence. It can be as complex as using GPS tags to locate someone who wanders away and gets lost. AT devices may be expensive. But there is funding support for families and caregivers of people with autism.

Funding Sources

Common funding sources for AT devices include the following programs:

- The Iowa Medicaid Waiver Program has seven waivers in its home and community-based services (HCBS) waiver program.
- National groups include Autism Speaks and ACT Today.
- Local charities in Iowa include Children at Home, the Shayla Bee Fund and the Henry K. Peterson Foundation.

Online crowd-sourced funding—or crowdfunding—is also an option. It offers a new way to raise funds to support a cause or meet a need. This can include raising money to pay for AT devices. Crowdfunding requires access to the Internet, using a computer or smartphone. It relies on social media networking to share news about the fundraising.

Government Funding

The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program provides funding for AT devices. Local police departments can apply for this funding for families and providers. Learn more about this program from Dennis Wiggins at the Iowa Department of Public Safety at dennis.wiggins@iowa.gov or 1-515-725-0311.

Added Support to Stop Elopement and Wandering

Support to stop elopement or wandering can include more than funding for AT devices. Families and caregivers of people on the autism spectrum with wandering issues should get in touch with their local police to learn about other support. This also lets the police know you might need their help if a loved one wanders away.

The best advice from Iowa Compass: don't give up! Get in touch with us for more tips and support. Find Compass online at www.iowacompass.org or call 1-800-779-2001.