



2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Independence is priceless. | *We make it affordable.*

MISSION

WE OFFER PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES CUSTOMIZED LOANS, FINANCIAL COACHING, AND OTHER RESOURCES TO PROMOTE ACCESS TO ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY, INDEPENDENCE, FINANCIAL RESILIENCE, AND LIFE OPPORTUNITIES.

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DEAR FRIENDS OF NORTHWEST ACCESS FUND

2019 saw us embark on a strategic planning process that engaged community stakeholders, our board members, and our staff in deep conversations around Northwest Access Fund's programs and services, our areas of strengths and areas for growth, and how we might best meet the needs of our community. It was an honor to have so many share their thoughts and experiences with us and to help us in envisioning how our focus on the financial and economic lives of people with disabilities in Washington and Oregon could create a greater impact for our clients and our community.

For over 15 years, Northwest Access Fund has provided an affordable option for people with disabilities to secure the assistive technology (AT) they need to thrive in our communities. We have funded a huge range of technology, including hearing aids, braille devices, computers, tablets, wheelchairs, adapted vehicles, and home modifications for accessibility. We have born witness to the profound impact of AT to promote independence and foster inclusion.

As the disability community already knows, AT can be life-changing, but it can also be very expensive. Gaps in insurance coverage, government programs, and grant programs leave individuals and families to pay for AT out of pocket. Other systemic barriers mean that many people with disabilities often have low or fixed incomes due to a lack of employment opportunities, have high monthly expenses directly associated with their disability like prescription drugs and medical bills, and further many do not have opportunities to save due to income and asset limits associated with needed public and medical benefits. These barriers can not only prevent people from acquiring AT but also jeopardize overall financial stability and resilience.

Through our strategic planning process, we recognized that we could and should do more to support people with navigating these complex financial and benefits systems. Over the past years we have expanded our programs to include tailored financial coaching—providing support, information, and resources relevant to people with disabilities in order to help people address financial barriers that can prevent them from living the lives of their choosing. In 2019, we deepened our coaching services and expanded our lending beyond AT to help our coaching clients afford crucial expenses, such as security rental deposits, car repairs, or employment certifications that promote independence, financial resilience, and life opportunities.

This expanded focus couldn't have come soon enough. As I write this letter in 2020, I am grateful that we have been able to respond quickly to our community's needs during these uncertain economic times to address financial barriers, weather financial uncertainty, and secure needed resources and technology. We couldn't do this work without our supporters—thank you all.

With gratitude,

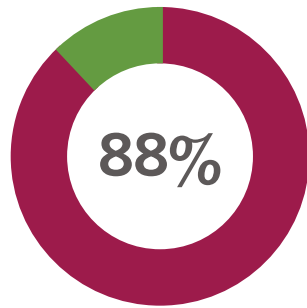
Emerson Sekins, Executive Director

A WORD FROM OUR CLIENTS

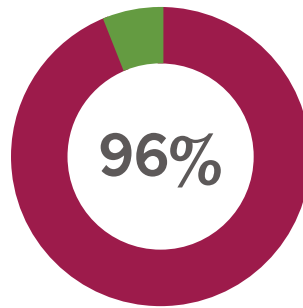
WE SURVEYED 94 LOAN CLIENTS. THEIR RESPONSES SHOW WHY YOUR GIFT MATTERS.

100%

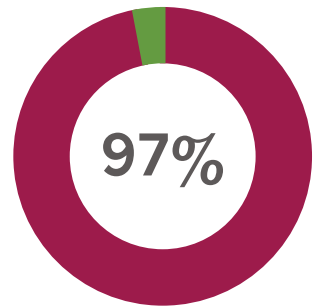
WOULD RECOMMEND a Northwest Access Fund loan to others who need help paying for assistive technology (AT)



Say their AT improved their independence



Use their AT daily (85%) or weekly (11%)



Say the AT they purchased improved their quality of life



MODIFICATIONS TO MAKE A HOME

Dave purchased a home in December, but he was not able to move in until he made

modifications for wheelchair accessibility. In the meantime, he still had to pay rent on his apartment, so he wanted the home modifications quickly. Getting a home loan had been stressful, and he had spent his savings on the house. Dave wasn't excited to apply for more funding, but he didn't want to pay for the modifications with

his credit card and "be paying them off forever." He contacted Northwest Access Fund as well as a few other organizations, but he says Northwest Access Fund was the most receptive. "I couldn't have made the house accessible without the external help."

With his home modification loan from Northwest Access Fund, Dave installed a ramp, replaced the carpeting with hard-surface floors, widened doors, and installed a roll-in shower. Dave says, "without the help and the modifications, I wouldn't have been able to live by myself—and that's my main goal, to be self-sufficient for as long as I can."

LEARN MORE

Apply for a loan or subscribe to our newsletter

email: info@nwaccessfund.org | website: nwaccessfund.org | phone: (206) 328-5116



NORTHWEST ACCESS FUND

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

554

Devices Funded

Households served with active loans or one-on-one financial capability services.

143

Loans

New loans to purchase assistive technology and afford crucial expenses.

294

Financial Coaching Sessions

Given to 148 people with disabilities

OUR PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

OUR FOCUS

75%

of households served are considered low income.

(Earn less than 80% of the area median income.)



36%

of FY 2019 loans went to borrowers with subprime, poor, or unscored credit.

LOAN PROGRAM

\$765,863

DISBURSED IN 2019



*Life is good.
No longer stuck
at home—I can see my
grandkids a whole lot more.*

FINANCIAL CAPABILITY PROGRAM



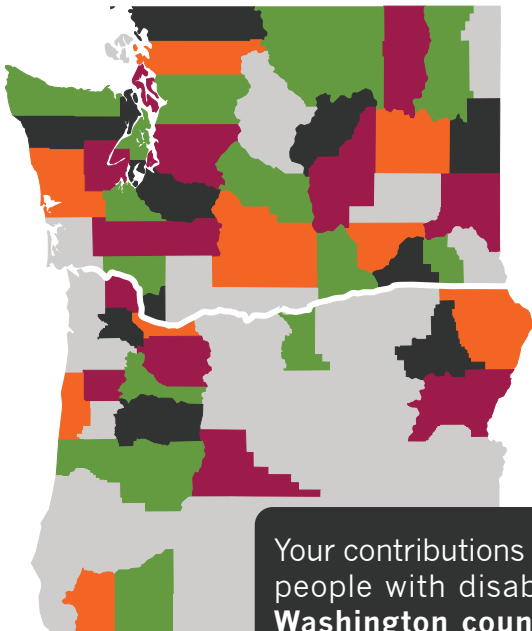
238

Professionals trained on the financial barriers people with disabilities experience.

154

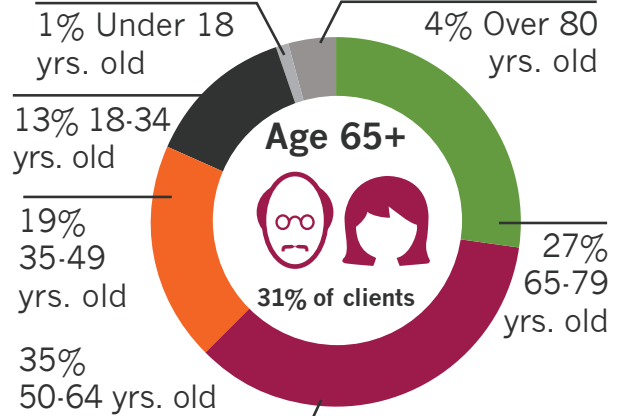
People with disabilities provided with group financial education

OUR REACH

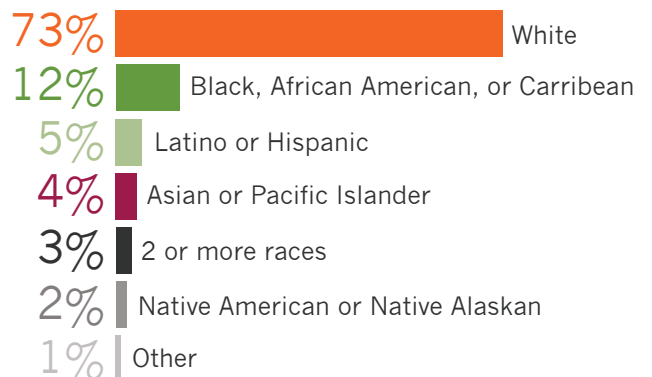


Your contributions helped serve people with disabilities in **29 Washington counties** and **16 Oregon counties** this year.

AGE



RACE/ETHNICITY



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SAVING FOR HER FUTURE



Tara first heard about Northwest Access Found when she was looking to purchase an adapted vehicle. She did not qualify for a loan at the time but got back in touch several years later for financial coaching.

Tara and her financial coach, Megan, created a budget, reviewed her credit report, and researched financial assistance for medical bills she couldn't afford to pay. They filled out Charity Care applications for the medical debt, and Tara "qualified for all

that to be paid off, so that was really great."

Tara was also able to open several savings accounts, first an Individual Development Account and later an ABLE account, that allow her to save without affecting her access to necessary disability and medical benefits. When she started financial coaching, she hadn't given much thought to saving, and "didn't know there was anything out there" to help her save.

"Financial coaching is really great. It shows you where you need to cut back and what you can and cannot afford. People with disabilities and their parents/guardians need these services that can help them save. They don't think they can save any money."

THE NUMBERS

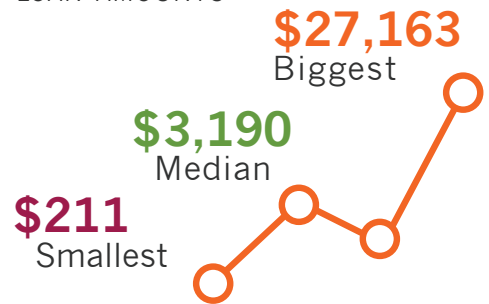
TOTAL DOLLARS LOANED SINCE FOUNDING

\$4,895,120

DEFAULT RATE | **2%**

[The hearing aid] has given me my life back. It is so hard not to hear.

LOAN AMOUNTS



TYPES OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FUNDED

481 ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVICES FUNDED THROUGH ACTIVE LOANS OR WITH MATCHED-SAVINGS GRANT FUNDING.

