



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Date: 08/08/06

Raymond A. Carroll
Administrator
Office of Rehabilitation Services
40 Fountain Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Colleague:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) has received, reviewed, and accepted the amendments to your State Plan for Assistive Technology (State Plan) under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended (AT Act). These amendments apply to the second year of your three-year State Plan and are effective October 1, 2006. Based on our review of amendments from all states, this letter provides additional guidance about the implementation of State Plans.

Maintaining an Advisory Council

As you are aware, section 4(c)(2) of the AT Act requires you to establish and maintain an advisory council. A majority of this council must be individuals with disabilities who use AT or family members or guardians of these individuals. The council also must include a representative of the designated State agency, as defined in section 7 of the Rehabilitation Act and the state agency for individuals who are blind, if this agency is separate; a representative of a state center for independent living; a representative of the state workforce investment board; a representative of the state educational agency; and representatives of other state agencies, public agencies, or private organizations, as determined by the state.

RSA acknowledges that members appointed to this advisory council may need to resign or be replaced during the course of implementing your State Plan. As a result, there may be periods during which your advisory council is incomplete. When this occurs, RSA expects you to make an active effort to recruit appropriate new members to remain in compliance with the AT Act.

Use of Funds for State-level Activities

You are reminded that according to section 4(e)(1)(A) of the AT Act, you must spend a portion of your funds to carry out State-level and State Leadership Activities. You should expend funds on all four State-level Activities unless you choose not to conduct a State-level Activity because (a) comparable non-Federal support is available for that activity in accordance with section

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4(e)(1)(B) or (b) your state is invoking flexibility in accordance with section 4(e)(6). If you choose not to conduct a State-level Activity for either reason cited in the previous sentence, you should not expend funds on that activity.

Completing Feasibility Studies of Alternative Financing

State-level Activities include state financing activities to increase access to and funding for AT. This includes conducting an initial 1-year feasibility study of, improving, administering, operating, providing capital for, or collaborating with an entity with respect to an alternative financing system.

Many states conducted feasibility studies of alternative financing systems during the first year of their State Plans but were unable to complete these studies during that year. In some cases, this is because the study began several months after the beginning of the first year of the State Plan, meaning it would end after the beginning of year two. In other cases, the feasibility study is not complete because the methodology or other factors made the study more difficult or time-consuming than anticipated. Regardless of the reason, RSA expects all feasibility studies to be concluded no later than the end of year two of the State Plan. States should be prepared to begin implementing the results of the feasibility study beginning in year 3 of the State Plan.

You are reminded that feasibility studies apply to alternative financing systems only, not to other state financing activities. This does not preclude you from engaging in planning activities for other forms of state financing, however, as long as those activities clearly are intended to increase access to and funding for AT.

Conducting Device Demonstrations

While State-level activities include device demonstrations, not all instances of device demonstration are State-level activities. According to section 4(e)(2)(D) of the AT Act, device demonstrations clearly include activities with the intent of “assisting individuals in making informed decisions regarding, and providing experiences with” AT devices and services. If the intent behind showing devices to an individual or individuals is to create awareness or to train individuals in the use of these devices, these activities should be considered either public awareness activities or training activities respectively. Training and public awareness are State Leadership Activities rather than State-level Activities.

Provision of Assessments or Evaluations

RSA understands that AT assessments and evaluations are in great demand in many states. However, you are reminded that AT Act funds should not be used to conduct direct AT assessments or evaluations for individuals with disabilities as these are not activities authorized under section 4 of the AT Act. The only assessment-related activities authorized under the AT Act are training and technical assistance. According to section 4(e)(3)(B)(i), funds may be used to provide: (1) skills-development training in assessing the need for assistive technology devices and assistive technology services; and (2) training in the importance of multiple approaches to

assessment and implementation necessary to meet the individualized needs of individuals with disabilities.

Therefore, AT Act funds can be used to provide training and technical assistance related to assessment, but not to provide assessments or evaluations themselves. If a Statewide AT Program has the capacity to conduct assessments or evaluations, it should receive payment for doing so from the appropriate non-AT Act funding source.

Completing Measurable Goals

A system to collect data necessary for reporting on your measurable goals (Attachment 4 of the State Plan) was not complete during the first year of your State Plan. RSA anticipates the completion of this data collection close to the beginning of the second year of your State Plan. RSA will require you to use this data collection system and training on its use will be available.

The first period of data collection in accordance with this system will begin upon the system's approval and conclude at the end of the second year of your State Plan, September 30, 2007. You must use the data from this reporting period to calculate a baseline for your measurable goals and set your short- and long-term goals for subsequent years.

Subsequent data collection periods will correspond with the federal fiscal year (FY) from October 1 of each year through September 30 of the next year. You must use this data to determine your progress toward your short- and long-term goals. Training related to these activities also will be available.

Financial Reporting

You are reminded that all FY 2005 grant funds must be obligated by September 30, 2006, and liquidated by December 30, 2006, without exceptions. You must complete an SF-269 "Financial Status Report" for these funds. RSA will provide training related to SF-269s in the future.

If you have questions about these or any other matters, please contact Jeremy Buzzell at (202) 245-7319.

Sincerely,



Edward Anthony, Ph.D.

Delegated the Authority to Perform the Functions of the
Commissioner for the Rehabilitation Services
Administration



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
Department of Human Services
Office of Rehabilitation Services

40 Fountain Street
Providence, RI 02903
401-421-7005 ~ 401-222-3574 FAX
TDD (401) 421-7016 ~ Spanish (401) 272-8090

September 8, 2006

US Department of Education
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
Attn: Jeremy Buzzell
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Potomac Center Plaza, Room 5025
Washington, DC 20202-2800

Re: Transmittal of the Rhode Island Department of Human Services/Office of Rehabilitation Services FFY 2006 Annual Update for the State Plan for Assistive Technology under Section 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 as amended

Dear Mr. Buzzell:

Attached is a revised version of the above FFY 2006 Annual Update for the State Plan for Assistive Technology based on your comments.

If you should have any questions or require additional information, please contact Stephen Brunero, Deputy Administrator, Office of Rehabilitation Services, at (401) 421-7005 ext. 354. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Raymond A. Carroll".

Raymond A. Carroll, Administrator

Attachment 1 – Basic Information:

Name of Lead Agency: Department of Human Services

Name of Applicable Division and/or Subdivision of Lead Agency: Office of Rehabilitation Services

Address of Lead Agency: 40 Fountain Street, Providence, RI 02903

Name and Title of Certifying Representative for Lead Agency: Raymond A. Carroll, Administrator

Address for Certifying Representative: 40 Fountain Street, Providence, RI 02903

Telephone for Certifying Representative: (401) 421-7005 ext. 301

Email for Certifying Representative: rcarroll@ors.ri.gov

Name and Title of Program Director: Stephen Brunero, Deputy Administrator

Address for Program Director: 40 Fountain Street, Providence, RI 02903

Telephone for Program Director: (401) 421-7005 ext. 354

Email for Program Director: steveb@ors.ri.gov

Name and Title of Program Contact (if different from Program Director): Same

Address for Program Contact:

Telephone for Program Contact:

Email for Program Contact:

Name of Implementing Entity: N/A

Name of Applicable Division and/or Subdivision of Implementing Agency:

Address of Implementing Agency:

Name and Title of Program Director: N/A

Address for Program Director:

Telephone for Program Director:

Email for Program Director:

Name and Title of Program Contact: N/A

Address for Program Contact:

Telephone for Program Contact:

Email for Program Contact:

Attachment 2 – Lead Agency and Implementing Entity:

2.1 Identification and Description of the Lead Agency:

The Office of Rehabilitation Services, within the Department of Human Services, has been the lead agency for the Assistive Technology Act program since 1993. The agency has, and will continue to provide the on-going administrative oversight for the AT program, including goal setting, program initiatives, and funding allocations.

The Office of Rehabilitation Services employs the Program Director for ATAP. The position is currently vacant due to the Program Director's recent retirement. ORS is working diligently to fill this position with a qualified individual as soon as possible. In the interim, the ORS Deputy Administrator will oversee the activities of ATAP. ORS has hired a Program Coordinator to assist with the on-going activities of ATAP.

In addition to the Assistive Technology Access Partnership, ORS administers the public Vocational Rehabilitation program, as well as the Rhode Island Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and the Disability Determination Services. Through the Vocational Rehabilitation program, ATAP has been able to provide training to Vocational Rehabilitation counselors regarding the benefits of assistive technology. In addition, ORS contracts with a rehabilitation technology organization to ensure that assistive technology is considered throughout the vocational rehabilitation process.

In addition to the range of support and services that the Office of Rehabilitation Services has and will continue to provide, ensuring that the AT program has been comprehensive, and able to serve individuals with disabilities across all ages and disability types, ORS has, and will continue to enter into subcontracts with community-based organizations, including Independent Living Centers (Ocean State Center for Independent Living and PARI Independent Living Center); an educational center (East Bay Educational Collaborative); a technology-related center (TechACCESS of Rhode Island); and a Center for Excellence in Education (Paul V. Sherlock Center on Disabilities at Rhode Island College). State procurement requirements are strictly adhered to relative to the establishment of any subcontracts.

The model of coordination and collaboration described above, has strengthened the capacity of the AT program, by incorporating the expertise of a variety of professionals in the field of Assistive Technology across a wide range of venues.

Since 1993, Ocean State Center for Independent Living (OSCIL) has provided AT information, referral, public awareness, outreach, training and technical assistance to elders and individuals with sensory impairments. OSCIL brings many years of experience working with adaptive technologies to aid in the increased functioning of individuals with disabilities. For the last seventeen years, OSCIL has been providing assistance in the acquisition of adaptive assistive technology that will increase self-sufficiency in the home and community.

OSCIL has extensive knowledge and experience in the wide range of assistive technology that is available to enable individuals having disability to lead independent lives. As a Center for

Independent Living that promotes consumer involvement at the Board and staff level, many staff at the Center know first-hand the benefits of assistive technology in their lives. This professional as well as personal perspective on the benefits of assistive technology allows OSCIL to assist consumers to know what adaptive device may be beneficial, where to purchase the technology, and how best to train the individual on its use. In addition, OSCIL relies on the expertise of our Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants (COTA) to conduct assessments and provide recommendations on the specific type of equipment that will best suit a person's needs.

OSCIL's expertise in adaptive assistive devices has been a key factor in providing the community living option for individuals with severe disability. Assistive technology has made it possible for people who were residing in nursing homes to have the option to return to their own homes and communities. Over the last five years over 50 individuals who were once in area nursing homes are now living in the home environment of their choice because of the benefits of assistive technology. Over the last five years over 500 individuals have been kept out of an institutional setting because of installation of adaptive home modifications and the acquisition of assistive technology.

OSCIL's Deaf Services are recognized statewide for their significant contribution to assist in addressing barriers to independence. In the Deaf community assistive technology has enabled many families to live safely and enjoy the freedoms that many hearing people appreciate. OSCIL's staff person, who utilizes sign-language as her major mode of communication, as well as OSCIL's COTAs play a major role in providing services to the Deaf

community that are professional and yet extremely user-friendly and accessible to this community.

TechACCESS of RI has been a significant contributing partner to the Assistive Technology Access Partnership since its inception in 1993, and continues to meet the needs of people with disabilities through its varied activities and collaborations.

Through its work with the other ORS/ATAP subcontractors and collaborations with other state agencies and community-based organizations, TechACCESS has been responsible for maintaining the statewide ATAP Information and Resource Center which provides information and resources to the public; a tri-annual newsletter reaching over 3,500 consumers, family members, and service providers; weekly AT demonstrations; and an adaptive computer lab which provides an opportunity to the public to try out computer-related technologies. Additionally, TechACCESS has coordinated the ATAP Assistive Technology Conference with the other ATAP subcontractors and disability agencies to foster public awareness and increase professional skills in the area of assistive technologies for home, school, work and community.

TechACCESS of RI, as a subcontractor of the Assistive Technology Access Partnership for Rhode Island, has operated the ATAP Demonstration Center since the inception of ATAP. The demonstration program is staffed with expert, experienced professionals including speech/language pathologists, occupational therapists, individuals with ATP (Assistive Technology Practitioner) certification, educators, and several assistive technology users who have had many years of experience with blind/low vision technologies and hearing technologies.

TechACCESS also utilizes licensed/certified consultants who have specific expertise in seating and position and assistive listening devices. The Staff is not only knowledgeable about the wide variety of devices and their applications at home, in school, at work and in the community, but they are also able to assist individuals with making informed AT choices. The staff participates in ongoing vendor trainings several times a year to keep abreast of the newest technologies, and the close relationship with many local and regional vendors enables the staff to obtain the newest equipment available for self-training and demonstration. TechACCESS plans to expand the existing staff to include an additional communication specialist, an additional low vision specialist, and a general AT practitioner.

East Bay Educational Collaborative (EBEC) has, and will continue to provide services to children and youth statewide. East Bay Educational Collaborative is one of four regional education centers established legislatively to provide professional development, curriculum development, alternative learning programs, and parent support for eight local school districts in the East Bay region of the state. EBEC has been an ORS/ATAP subcontractor since 1995, employing the ATAP Children and Youth Specialist. The ATAP Children and Youth Specialist has advanced training in speech and language pathology, as well as being certified by the Rhode Island Department of Education as a teacher assistant trainer. She has also completed her assistive technology certification from California State University, Northridge (CSUN). The ATAP Children and Youth Specialist conducts professional development for teachers in elementary and secondary education, as well as AT assessments for students with disabilities. In addition, the AT Children and Youth Specialist maintains a demonstration center and device loan program for children and youth.

The Sherlock Center has provided program evaluation services for ATAP. In addition, staff have conducted the program's comprehensive satisfaction study. The Sherlock Center will continue to refine and implement Assistive Technology Competencies for elementary and secondary educators in Rhode Island school districts.

The Sherlock Center on Disabilities at Rhode Island College is one of 62 centers in the United States that has been designated by the United States Department of Health and Human Services as a "University Center for Excellence on Disabilities". University Centers were/are created by federal legislation (most recently continued in 2001). University Centers are described in that federal legislation as having the unique mission of providing training, technical assistance, project coordination, information dissemination, and research in a wide range of disability topics. University Centers are federally mandated to leverage core Center funding with state funds, grants, and other sources to address unique training, service coordination, and research needs that exists in the state in which each Center exists. The fact that Centers are housed at universities provides the mechanism for providing College credit and/or professional development units for training and project activities.

The Sherlock Center has over 10 years of experience in assistive technology instruction for educators, and has strong ties to education, families, and family-centered communities. Housed at Rhode Island College, the Sherlock Center is well prepared to identify, design, develop, and deliver training in assistive technology content and strategies to pre-service students, in-service professionals, and families.

In order to ensure that people with disabilities have access to a device reutilization program, ORS/ATAP has entered into a subcontract with the PARI Independent Living Center. PARI Independent Living Center is a non-profit, private organization established more than 30 years ago to provide a wide range of services to people with disabilities of all ages. As a community-based organization with a Board of Directors made up of a majority of people with disabilities, PARI is responsive to the needs of the disability community. More than a decade ago, consumers requested a location to drop off unneeded medical equipment and purchase medical equipment at reduced prices. PARI responded by creating the PARI Affordable Assistance Technology Program, or the PAAT Program to fulfill this need. This device reutilization program allows those who could otherwise not be able to afford and acquire much needed equipment to become more independent; and it greatly improves the quality of their lives. As described in Attachment 5, ORS/ATAP is working to find methods and resources to expand the nature of this program.

Attachment 3 – Advisory Council:

3.1 Membership of the Advisory Council

The Rhode Island Council on Assistive Technology (RICAT) was established in 1993 to provide advice and input to ATAP. According to the Council's approved By-laws, total membership is twenty-five. Currently, there is one vacancy on the Council, for which recruitment is underway. The current percentage of consumers and family members equals fifty-six percent (56%). The current membership is as follows:

Flo Adeni-Awosika – Person with a Disability

Kerri Cicione - Parent of a child with a Disability

Kevin Cronin – Person with a Disability

Harry Dunbar – Person with a Disability

Margaret Dunning - Person with a Disability

Patricia Feeley – Person with a Disability

Richard Gaffney – Person with a Disability

Margaret Hoye – Person with a Disability

Jeanne Panarace – Person with a Disability

Robert Perrello – Family Member of a Person with a Disability

Charles Pollock – Person with a Disability

William Robinson – Person with a Disability

Jill Waller-Blaney – Person with a Disability

Kim Wennermark – Person with a Disability

Edmund Zuromski – Family Member of a Person with a Disability

John Benevides – Citizens Bank

Phyllis Meloro –Education Specialist, Office of Special Populations, Representative of RI
Dept. of Education

Kathleen Fresher-Samways – Professional

Emily Lennon – Meeting Street School

James Litvack – Representative of State Independent Living Center, PARI

Joseph Murphy – Office of Rehabilitation Services, Vocational Rehabilitation

Adrienne Varner – Representative, Rhode Island Department of Health

Ying Sun – Professor of Bio-Engineering, University of Rhode Island

Lorna Ricci – WIA Representative, Human Resources Investment Council (HRIC)

In addition, ATAP subcontractors regularly attend meetings (but cannot vote). They include:

Judith Hammerlind-Carlson, Linda Beaupre: TechACCESS of RI

Lisa Labitt: East Bay Educational Collaborative

Lezlee Schaffer: Ocean State Center for Independent Living

Allen Parent-Wetmore: PARI Independent Living Center

Elizabeth Dalton: Sherlock Center

The Administrator of the Lead Agency (ORS) - Mr. Raymond A. Carroll, and the ATAP Program Director – To Be Announced - are ex-officio members of the Council.

3.2 Structure and Operation of the Advisory Council

(a) RICAT meets at least four times per year, but may meet more often if required. The Executive Committee, which is comprised of the Chair, Vice Chair, and Chairs of standing committees, meets prior to each regular RICAT meeting, generally one week in advance. Standing committees meet on a schedule determined by committee members, based on required activities. Ad hoc committees meet as needed to accomplish their work. While RICAT meetings are always conducted in person, the various committee meetings may be conducted in person, electronically, via teleconferencing, or a combination of formats.

A typical RICAT meeting agenda includes review and approval of previous minutes, a report from the Chair, a report from each committee, report from the ATAP subcontractors, report from the Program Director, any "special issues" for discussion/consideration, and "roundtable."

(b) RICAT leadership consists of an elected Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, and the Executive Committee. Membership, Legislative, and Communications are standing committees. A new standing committee – Partner Support – was recently approved by the Council. Bylaws will be revised to reflect this addition. Ad hoc committees have been devoted to Bylaws, Program, Alternative Finance, and State Plan. The RICAT Chairperson appoints all Committee chairs; if necessary, a Committee chair may be removed by a quorum of the full Council.

(c) The decision-making process originates with issues raised at a RICAT meeting by the

Chair, the Program Director, or any member of RICAT. Thorough discussion of the issue occurs; if further research is needed, or if a quorum is not present, the issue is continued to the next regular meeting. On the other hand, if an issue is fully discussed, and a quorum present, majority vote will constitute passage/rejection of any motion. In the event of a tie, the Chair casts the deciding vote.

Much of RICAT's work and planning also occurs at the committee level.

The Executive Committee serves as a steering committee, responsible for providing direction to RICAT, making recommendations to ATAP staff and partners, proposing Bylaws changes, discussing issues of special importance prior to Council meetings, and developing meeting agendas. The Executive Committee helps to develop specific annual objectives for the standing committees.

The Membership Committee has the ongoing responsibility of nominating appropriate individuals to RICAT, in accordance with the Bylaws. As a basis for nomination, this committee conducts membership outreach, provides membership information, and interviews prospective RICAT applicants. In addition, the committee may review regular member attendance. Each year's outreach, nomination, and successful membership process provide the basis for the following year's plan of activity.

This Committee conducts an annual review of expiring member terms on the Council, and conducts outreach/nomination for new members as required. In addition, the Committee

responds similarly to unexpected vacancies when they arise.

Information and advocacy are the core functions of the Legislative Committee. Federal and State legislation and policies affecting assistive technology are researched, and brought to the Council. RICAT may then vote to support/endorse such legislation or policy, and take appropriate action. The Legislative Committee may, with RICAT approval, advocate in specific contexts for assistive technology, such as the annual public forums held by the Rhode Island Governor's Commission on Disabilities. This committee's planning is fluid; issues for possible legislative/policy advocacy action may be raised by RICAT members, the public forums, or by state or national organizations. RICAT may also propose the development of new state legislation, based on research and information provided by the Legislative Committee.

The Communications Committee works closely with ATAP subcontractors to increase awareness about the availability of, and benefits of, assistive technology. The Committee offers presentations/demonstrations tailored to the needs of a variety of audiences. These presentations may be offered upon request, or targeted to needs identified by the Committee. Elder groups, and assisted living residents and staff have received presentations. The Committee has also devoted much effort to the design and maintenance of RICAT web pages, which are within the ORS website. During the coming year, the Communications Committee will continue with its efforts to enhance and update RICAT web pages, and offer informational workshops to both consumers and professionals who serve them.

The recently approved Partner Support Committee will assist ATAP in reviewing

subcontractor/partner work plans, measuring fulfillment of work plan objectives, offering technical assistance, and identifying resources which can enhance partners' assistive technology services. Specifically, the Committee will review partner work plans and quarterly reports, make at least one site visit to observe partner activities, offer suggestions to partners and ATAP staff to enhance achievement of objectives, and report to RICAT at each full Council meeting.

(d) RICAT members are recruited through a variety of methods, which include: formal newspaper advertisements; ORS/RICAT website; list serves, web pages, and newsletters of agencies/organizations serving people with disabilities; word-of-mouth. For members representing certain state agencies (Department of Health, Workforce Investment Board, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education), the agency itself is invited to appoint an individual to the Council.

(e) Council meetings are public, in accordance with the RI Open Meetings Law, and are conducted at locations which are fully accessible, and on public transportation routes. Full accommodation is provided, and may include CART, interpreters, large print/Braille, etc. Meetings are conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order. RICAT members can be reimbursed for expenses incurred in carrying out their official duties.

Attachment 4 – Measurable Goals:

4.1 Goal for Improving Access to AT in Education

- Long-term goal:
 - Short-term goal for Year 3: Amend State Plan accordingly.
 - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish a baseline to measure improved access to AT in education.
 - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A – data collection not established

4.2 Goal for Improving Access to AT in Employment

- Long-term goal:
 - Short-term goal for Year 3: Amend State Plan accordingly.
 - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish a baseline to measure improved access to AT in employment.
 - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A – data collection not established

4.3 Goal for Improving Access to AT in Community Living

- Long-term goal:
 - Short-term goal for Year 3: Amend State Plan accordingly.
 - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish a baseline to measure improved access to AT in community living.
 - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A – data collection not established

4.4 Goal for Improving Access to IT and Telecommunications

- Long-term goal:
 - Short-term goal for Year 3: Amend State Plan accordingly.
 - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish a baseline to measure improved access to AT in telecommunication and information technology.
 - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A – data collection not established

4.5 Goal for Improving Acquisition of AT in Education

- Long-term goal:
 - Short-term goal for Year 3: Amend State Plan accordingly.
 - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish a baseline to measure improved acquisition of AT in education.
 - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A – data collection not established.

4.6 - Goal for Improving Acquisition of AT in Employment

- Long-term goal:
 - Short-term goal for Year 3: Amend State Plan accordingly.
 - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish a baseline to measure improved acquisition of AT in employment.
 - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A – data collection not established

4.7 - Goal for Improving Acquisition of AT in Community Living

- Long-term goal:
 - Short-term goal for Year 3: Amend State Plan accordingly.
 - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish a baseline to measure improved acquisition of AT in community living.
 - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A – data collection not established

Attachment 5 – State-level Activities:

5.1 State Feasibility Study

As part of Rhode Island’s State Plan for Assistive Technology under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 as amended, the Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitation Services/ATAP conducted a Feasibility Study to determine if there was a demand for alternate financing to increase acquisition of Assistive Technology by people with disabilities

The Feasibility Study was comprised of three elements:

1. Identify alternative models/approaches and determine “Best Practices” for providing alternative financing through conversations with program administrators in other “small” states (with an emphasis on New England). Identify the potential staffing and other costs associated with administering these alternative financing programs.
2. Conduct exploratory discussions with financial institutions to determine if there is any interest in participating in an alternative financing loan program in Rhode Island.
3. Conduct a Consumer Survey with Rhode Islanders who use (or whose family members use) Assistive Technology to determine their interest in obtaining loans to purchase Assistive Technology devices through an alternative financing program, and determine the relative attractiveness of potential features of such loan programs.

The scope, findings and recommendations of the study are condensed in this Attachment. (Appendix One of the State Plan contains the complete Feasibility Study report.) Since ORS/ATAP considered the validity of the Consumer Survey critical to the Feasibility Study, the most time was focused on it. Considerable time and effort was devoted to ensuring that the questionnaire was as clear and bias-free as possible, and careful attention was paid to selecting targeted respondent populations, since conclusions and recommendation would be drawn from a relatively small sample.

Consumer Survey Methodology and Sampling

The primary purpose of the survey was to determine if Rhode Islanders who use (or would benefit from) Assistive Technology would be interested in alternative financing methods that have the potential to increase their ability to acquire Assistive Technology. Information was gathered from individuals across the State, representing all age groups, income levels and areas of disability. While drawing a true random sample would have been technically preferable, budget and time constraints led to the use of a “convenience sample” of individuals with disabilities who are affiliated with twelve agencies/nonprofit group that serve the Rhode Islanders with disabilities. Following a pre-test, modifications were made to the basic questionnaire, and “Senior Adult”, Spanish language and Braille versions were made available upon request. Respondents were also invited to access the questionnaire over the internet at a site called SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.com).

Summary of Consumer Survey Results

- Who Responded?

Over 320 questionnaires were completed in May and June 2006. Respondent demographics are as follows:

Gender: Sixty percent of respondents are male and forty percent are female.

Age: Over half (51%) are between 22 and 64---the “working age” group; 30% are 65 or older; 13% are 14 to 21; and 7% are children 13 or under.

Employment: Approximately 30% are retired; 27% receive SSI, and 25% receive SSDI; 20% are students; and 16% are working.

Income: Approximately half (49%) report household incomes of \$20,000 or less; 25% have incomes between \$20,000 and \$40,000; 16% have incomes between \$40,000 and \$60,000; and 11% have incomes in excess of \$60,000. Approximate average household income is \$29,000 per year.

- How Do Respondents Compare to the Overall Rhode Island Population?

Compared to the general Rhode Island population, respondents are older, have lower household incomes, are less likely to be employed, and more likely to be female than the population as a whole. This is consistent with national profiles of individuals with disabilities and their families.

- How Do Respondents Use Assistive Technology?

Approximately three quarters (76%) of respondents currently use Assistive Technology and/or have a home or vehicle modification. The vast majority of respondents (81%) report that they own at least some of the Assistive Technology equipment they use. However, 20% report using borrowed equipment, 7% report using leased equipment, and 10% reported another source such as Assistive Technology at another location such as a school or social service agency.

- How Did Respondents Acquire Assistive Technology?

Almost half (49%) of respondents did not try to acquire any Assistive Technology or home or vehicle modifications within the past three years, while 40% did acquire devices or modifications during that period. Interestingly, 10% of respondents tried to acquire devices or vehicle or home modifications but were unable to do so. Among the 40% who did acquire Assistive Technology during this period, many used more than one means of paying for the devices or modifications. Only five percent of respondents had applied for a financial loan to purchase Assistive Technology or to pay for home or vehicle modifications.

- New or Additional Assistive Technology Needs

Slightly over half (53%) of respondents reported needing new or additional Assistive Technology or home or vehicle modifications. The average estimated cost of acquiring the new or additional Assistive Technology was \$8,800; it would take almost \$1.5 million to pay for the

devices and modifications required by the 162 respondents who stated a need for new or additional Assistive Technology. Over one-third of respondents reported eligibility for Medicaid, and another 30% indicated eligibility for Medicare, to pay for acquisition of AT.

- Interest in Alternative Financial Loans

Over one-third of respondents (36%) expressed interest in “an alternative financial loan to pay for Assistive Technology devices or for home or vehicle modification”. Among those who were interested in loans, the features of an alternate financing program that would be most helpful to them were low interest rates, a longer payout period, and no down payment.

- Characteristics of Respondents Interested in Alternative Financial Loans

Respondents who are interested in using Alternative Financial Loans can be described as heavy users of Assistive Technology. Compared to other respondents, they use more categories of devices/modifications, are more likely to have acquired AT or home or vehicle modifications within the past three years, have used more sources of funding, and have greater needs for additional devices and for home or vehicle modifications that are among the most costly Assistive Technology.

Alternative Financing Models Operating in Other States

In addition to the New England states, information was collected from five “small” states (based on size of program) that were currently instituting alternative financing programs or that already had a program in operation where the annual loan volume (FY 2004 and FY 2005) was relatively small.

The following benefits and draw-backs of various Alternative Financing models were identified:

- States that operate their own “Revolving Credit” funds set their own loan limits, pay-back terms and interest rates, and have greater latitude in evaluating applicants on a case-by-case basis. Credit criteria may be less stringent than those offered by commercial lenders, and loan administrators may work with consumers to put together packages of grants and loans to enable them to obtain Assistive Technology. Many of these States set aside a pool of funds for small, quick turn-around loans, and/or a pool of funds for higher-risk borrowers.
- States that don’t already have an “in-house” lending organization with which to partner are more likely to succeed by partnering with commercial lenders. Loan programs administered by departments of rehabilitation or nonprofit organizations have not generally been successful. On the other hand, states that operate in partnership with commercial lenders have less control over their programs. For example, the bank or

credit union may independently change its lending criteria or policies and procedures, or even cancel the program.

- Some States (especially those that work with commercial lenders) report lower demand for Alternative Financing Loans than originally anticipated. This is attributed to:
 - Limited effort to market or promote the program to consumers
 - High rejection of loan applications due to inability of consumers to qualify for loans
 - Small difference between what they can offer and “commercial” rates doesn’t make enough of a difference to consumer in terms of ability to make monthly payments

Models, Administrative and Staffing Expectations

Despite the drawbacks of working with private lenders, when there is no established state-operated consumer lending agency into which an Alternative Financial Loan Program can be integrated, the most cost-effective and efficient way to establish an alternative financial loan program is to operate in conjunction with one or more commercial lenders. Based on the experience of other States, ATAP expects that operating an alternative financial loan program in conjunction with commercial lenders will require one full-time professional and one half-time office assistant. The major responsibilities of the staff would include:

- Marketing, public relations, community outreach and vendor relations

- Liaison/support for Community Based Organizations and Loan Review Committee
- Liaison with other State programs such as TeleWorks and ATEL
- Counseling and assisting potential borrowers
- Periodic assessments to determine programs are meeting consumer needs

In addition to personnel, other expenses include printing, meetings (with CART recording and other accommodations), travel, telephones and computers. If the State supplies office space as an in-kind contribution, monthly expenses are estimated at \$800 to \$900.

Recommendations

ATAP's consumer survey confirmed the need for additional and alternative funding sources for the acquisition of Assistive Technology devices by individuals with disabilities and/or their families. Obviously, all identified needs cannot be met by ATAP. Available Federal dollars are limited, and Rhode Island, like many states, is experiencing increasing fiscal constraints that impact services to its citizens. Program cutbacks and personnel reductions will play a significant role in shaping ATAP's State Financing System for the acquisition of Assistive Technology.

ATAP has established the following criteria and priorities for an Alternative State Financing System:

1. Focus on Assistive Technology needs that cannot be met through other aspects of the State's ATAP program. For example, although the survey shows a large need for mobility devices, PARI's device reutilization and exchange program should be able to address many of these requirements as consumers, community agencies and donors become more aware of them. On the other hand, the growing demand for modified vehicles and home modifications are not addressed by other specific ATAP programs, though limited funding for these services is available through separate programs of PARI and OSCIL, and increased State funding is not available at this time. Consider developing a program to increase acquisition of modified vehicles by working with private industry to reduce the overall cost to consumers via "bundled" services and financing: vehicle dealerships, van modification product and service vendors, financial institutions, insurers, and the AAA.

2. Focus on increasing access to blind/low vision devices and hearing devices based on the heavy demand among individuals 65 and over, and mindful of demographic projections that Rhode Island's "seniors" will increase by approximately 20% from 2005 to 2015.
 - Currently, Medicare does not cover hearing aids, and Medicaid provides limited financial assistance for hearing aids to a narrow segment of the population. However, Rhode Island currently has two programs that are of value to the hearing-impaired community: ATEL, and the Clinics operated by the University of Rhode Island Department of Communication Disorders. Consider developing a program to increase access to hearing aids and other hearing devices in cooperation with the

University of Rhode Island's Department of Communication Disorders, product vendors, and a "quick loan" program created in cooperation with a commercial lender.

- Consider developing a program to increase access to blind/low vision devices through a Group Purchase Plan, working in conjunction with manufacturers and distributors. (A complementary device reutilization and/or exchange program could also be established.)

To create its initial State Financing System, ATAP will take the steps needed to incorporate the Adaptive Telephone Equipment Loan Program (ATEL) into our "partnership" during Year Two of the State Plan. This will enable ATEL to broaden the range of devices it offers to individuals with hearing impairments, speech impairments, and neuromuscular impairments. In addition, by using ATAP's Federal funds for administrative costs, more of ATEL's existing State allocation will be available to purchase equipment---presently approximately forty percent is available for equipment purchases. With the increase in funding for equipment purchase, ATEL may be able to serve other disability populations, possibly providing computer software to access information for individuals who are blind or who require voice activated software.

If, in the future, increased funds and other resources are available, ORS/ATAP will consider adding programs such as an alternative financial loan program for the acquisition of AT in partnership with one or more commercial lenders.

5.2 Reutilization Program

During the first year of the State Plan, ORS/ATAP has entered into a subcontract with the PARI Independent Living Center in order to expand the capacity of the device reutilization program. Funding provided by ORS/ATAP has enabled PARI to increase program hours and significantly improved the device reutilization program. Increased availability to respond to equipment requests and equipment donations have reduced callbacks and improved equipment recycling sales. During the first year of the State Plan thus far, PARI/ATAP has recycled 297 items and provided the exchange of 40 items with a total projected (estimated) savings of \$145,000.00.

During Year One of the State Plan, PARI/ATAP has begun to track and catalog incoming equipment. The data obtained provides detailed information regarding the types of equipment most often accepted, exchanged and recycled. The majority of PARI's re-utilization program is focused in assistive technology associated with Health, Safety and Daily Living or Seating, Positioning and Mobility.

Data being collected on program users has been expanded to include consumer's age and to determine the reason(s) consumers have decided to use the program. The outcome of the data collection reveals that the majority of the users are the elderly, and they utilize the program as other options are cost prohibitive.

ATAP/PARI is continuing to identify potential equipment sources. Currently, the primary source of donated equipment comes from individuals recycling durable medical equipment. It is

hoped that with increased public awareness of the reutilization program, equipment sources can be expanded. Through direct contact with referring agencies, vendors and facility managers as well as collaboration with the other ATAP subcontractors, and other AT entities it's expected that additional equipment sources will be developed during Year Two of the State Plan.

During Year Two of the State Plan, ORS may enter into a subcontract with Agora-net, (in accordance with State Procurement requirements), a web developer that has been working with AT Act programs in other States, to create an internet-based multi-state AT device exchange program. Rhode Island will be partnering with the other five New England states to minimize the cost of customizing and maintaining the website. The web-based program will enable Rhode Islanders who are looking for specific AT devices to search via the internet to determine if the device is available from a source in one of the participating States; or post a device for exchange or sale to individuals from a participating State. The website is being modified to accommodate the data collection requirements of the AT Act and RSA.

5.3 Device Demonstration

ORS/ATAP has entered into subcontracts with community-based organizations to offer the capability for device demonstration. Since the inception of the AT program in Rhode Island, two device demonstration centers have been operated by ORS/ATAP subcontractors - TechACCESS of RI, and the East Bay Educational Collaborative (EBEC). Each provides device demonstrations on a wide range of equipment to individuals with disabilities statewide at no cost to the individual. In addition, two other ORS/ATAP subcontractors---OSCIL and PARI--- provide device demonstration services free-of-charge for a variety of AT equipment, particularly

mobility devices (canes, walkers, wheel chairs) and devices for daily living. Also, in Year One of the Plan, the ORS/SBVI Assessment Center provided device demonstration services to approximately 120 individuals who visited the Center or were visited by a staff member at their home, school, or place of employment to demonstrate and try one or more devices in their intended setting. These demonstrations and trials enabled the consumer to choose the devices/equipment to assist them in their tasks.

TechACCESS of RI: The ATAP demonstration center at TechACCESS is staffed with experienced professionals, including speech/language pathologists, occupational therapists, persons with ATP (Assistive Technology Practitioner) certification, educators, and several assistive technology users with many years of personal experience with blind and low vision and hearing technologies. TechACCESS also uses licensed/certified consultants with specific expertise in seating and positioning and assistive listening devices. Because the staff is knowledgeable about a wide variety of devices and their applications at home, in school, at work and in the community, they are able to help individuals make informed AT choices. Staff members participate in vendor training sessions to keep abreast of the newest technologies, and a close relationship with many local and regional vendors enables TechACCESS to obtain the latest equipment for demonstration.

While the TechACCESS demonstration center offers a wide variety of devices for individuals of all ages and uses, there are occasions when the staff would like to demonstrate, or the consumer would like to try, other devices that are not currently available at the center. Referrals are then made to agencies where those devices are available or obtained as loans from

equipment vendors or other local or regional AT Centers such as the EBEC/ATAP Demonstration Center, the Sherlock Center Research Library at Rhode Island College, or the NEAT Marketplace (Connecticut). During Year One of the Plan, ATAP and TechACCESS met with staff at the NEAT Marketplace to explore coordinating activities and possibly forming a satellite or regional center. Follow up to the initial meeting has generated ideas for linking programs through the Internet and for providing referrals to consumers. In Year Two of the Plan, ATAP/TechACCESS will identify and assess other demonstration venues operating within the State to determine the feasibility of forming a network to increase the breadth and accessibility of devices available for demonstration to Rhode Island consumers.

ATAP/TechACCESS offers, and will continue to offer, hands-on device demonstrations and hands-on experience with AT devices in an adapted computer lab on a weekly basis. This program enables individuals to come to the center and work with the technologies under the supervision of a staff member. Users identify specific needs, are instructed in the use of the appropriate technology, and allowed to try out multiple devices. These hands-on demonstrations enable individuals to gain actual experience with AT devices and help them make an informed decision by selecting a device that they will not abandon in the future. In addition, ATAP/TechACCESS will continue to provide customized on-site demonstrations, particularly work-place employee/employer device demonstrations, which enable consumers to make better decisions about device suitability and cost/benefit trade-offs.

After reviewing its current inventory of devices, ATAP/TechACCESS has developed short and long-term plans to acquire additional devices that will provide equitable representation

of devices for applications in education, employment, telecommunications and community living environments.

EBEC AT Resource Center: The ATAP Children and Youth Resource Center maintains a number of technology devices within a lab setting. The classroom lab offers a variety of adaptive instructional software, adaptive hardware and devices for students with various disabilities. In addition to device demonstrations, the Children and Youth Assistive Technology Resource Center conducts workshops, vendor demonstrations, device training and software exploration, and houses a lending library for students.

The EBEC AT Resource Center adaptive computer lab has expanded to include multiple keyboards, Dana's, Alphasmarts, Intellikeys, touch windows, sound field systems, headsets/microphones, low tech communication devices, low vision tools and a computer with voice recognition software that the staff can demonstrate and make accessible to students and teachers so they can determine its suitability on an individual basis. EBEC posts its Assistive Technology Inventory on a listserve and website for easy access by all Rhode Island students and educators. The Children and Youth Resource Center has several hundred pieces of technology and keeps accurate records of consumer demonstration and trial usage. During Year One of the State Plan, the Demonstration Center focused more attention on literacy, accessible media formats, blind/low vision devices, and demonstrating devices to transitioning youth in vocational services and Higher Education. Relationships with Students Disability Services Centers at Higher Educational Institutions continue to grow as more students with disabilities benefit from AT devices that enable them to succeed in higher education settings. Connections

are also being strengthened with the Regional Transition Centers to provide device demonstrations for students moving into vocational settings.

OSCIL provides one-on-one device demonstrations to help individuals select the AT devices they need to enable them to achieve and/or maintain independent living. People are given the opportunity to try out and to choose the devices that best meet their needs, from simple dressing aids, to kitchen and bathroom equipment and/or modifications, to safety devices such as flashing strobe door-open alerts and smoke detectors for the hearing impaired. During Year One of the Plan, OSCIL provided AT device demonstrations to approximately 180 people with disabilities, and in most instances, these individuals acquired multiple devices (between 2 and 10) to enable them to live independently. Some device examples are sock aids, reachers, dinner-scoop plates and adaptive cutlery, transfer benches, fixed and rolling shower seats, rolling walkers, stair lifts, vehicle hand controls, and scooters.

The staff of PARI's Affordable Assistive Technology Program (PAAT) also provides one-on-one demonstrations of diverse low-tech mobility and daily living devices, including canes, walkers, wheelchairs, bathroom seats, lift chairs, etc. to enable individuals to try out and select the AT devices that best meet their needs. In addition to size, weight, and fit, other considerations such as comfort and appearance may influence an individual's choice of device, thereby making device demonstration very important in the selection process. During Year One of the Plan, PARI demonstrated over 1,800 devices to Rhode Island consumers.

5.4 Device Loan Program

The Office of Rehabilitation Services/ATAP, as well as the State Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, have developed device loan programs. In addition, ATAP subcontracts with EBEC and TechACCESS to provide device loan services in Rhode Island. The combined program is targeted at individuals who are blind, individuals with deafness, children, and also serves persons with other disabilities. During Year Two of the State Plan, ORS/ATAP will strengthen the connections among these existing programs while seeking to expand their capabilities and impact through outreach to device vendors and including other community based organizations.

During Year One of the State Plan, ORS/ATAP has purchased additional AT devices for the loan program, including adaptive keyboards, computer equipment with blind and low vision access, speech recognition software, and other devices.

During Year One of the State Plan, the ATAP equipment loan program at ORS/SBVI's Assessment Center loaned over 50 items to consumers with disabilities to try for varying periods of time (averaging between several days up to seven months). Individuals used the equipment for school, work or personal needs. In most cases (approximately 98%) the individuals were able to make a decision on what equipment they would purchase or request based on personal experience. In some cases, the individuals kept the piece of equipment until their own equipment arrived, thus enabling them to begin a new job, or complete school assignments on time.

During Year One of the State Plan, ATAP subcontractor TechACCESS has begun identifying agencies that lend AT devices to individuals, and collecting information about their eligibility requirements, types of devices offered, fees etc. Together with the other ATAP subcontractors, TechACCESS will develop a plan to build a Device Loan information network in Rhode Island.

During Year One of the Plan, TechACCESS intended to provide loan devices to individuals with neurological impairments and had obtained 5 devices from granting agencies. Recent staff changes left the agency without a speech language pathologist who is experienced and knowledgeable about speech generating devices. This goal will be put on hold until TechACCESS can hire a SLP who is competent in this area.

Under the ORS/ATAP subcontract, EBEC's AT resource center has also created a device lending program. Educators, therapists and students are able to try Assistive Technology equipment before a purchase is made through their school district and Individual Education Program process. ATAP/EBEC has expanded the Device Loan Program to include multiple keyboards, Dana's, Alphasmarts, Intellikeys, touch windows, headsets/microphones, Sound Field Systems, lowtech communication devices, low vision tools and a computer with voice recognition software for assessment trial. The East Bay Educational Collaborative provides information about its Assistive Technology inventory on a list serve and on its website for easy access for all Rhode Island students and educators. The Children and Youth Resource Center Device Loan Program has several hundred pieces of technology and keeps accurate records of consumer use. During Year One of the State Plan, and continuing during Year Two, the focus

will be geared toward literacy, accessible media formats, blind/low vision and transitioning vocational services and college-bound youth through the use of Assistive Technology. Relationships with Higher Educational Institutions and Student Disability Services Centers continue to grow and expand as more students with disabilities reach college age and continue on to higher education settings. The shift in thinking that all students have the ability to learn in a multiplicity of ways has taken shape in Rhode Island and ATAP can support their efforts by developing these critical relationships and providing opportunities to try out AT devices through the Device Loan program, as well as by providing professional development and training opportunities.

Attachment 6 – Comparable Support:

N/A

Attachment 7 – State Flexibility:

N/A

Attachment 8 – State Leadership Activities:

8.1 Training and Technical Assistance

The Office of Rehabilitation Services provides on-going training and technical assistance to staff on assistive technology devices and services to benefit their customers as they participate in vocational rehabilitation programs. In addition, the Office of Rehabilitation Services has, and will continue to, subcontract with community-based organizations including East Bay Educational Collaborative (EBEC), TechACCESS of Rhode Island, Ocean State Center for Independent Living (OSCIL), and the Sherlock Center at Rhode Island College.

Employment

ORS has and will continue to provide rehabilitation technology services including assistive technology devices and services throughout the rehabilitation process. ORS has and will continue to contract with a rehabilitation technology organization to provide consultation and technical assistance to ORS counselors. On-going training on current AT will be provided. In-service training programs will also be developed and conducted for community rehabilitation programs whose vocational rehabilitation services are purchased by ORS.

ORS has, and will continue to provide training and technical assistance to local One Stop Career Centers (netWORKri) to ensure that individuals with disabilities seeking employment can access job-related information - labor market information, employment opportunities, etc.

ORS/ATAP has purchased adaptive technology (including screen reading software, and assistive listening devices) for the One Stop Career Centers' Resource Rooms. Over the next year, ORS/ATAP will assess the need for updated equipment for these Centers.

During Year One of the State Plan, ATAP/TECHACCESS has met with the Veterans Administration to develop a plan for offering training on computer technology to veterans who need accommodations. The VA personnel are currently reviewing process and procedures. It is anticipated that services will begin during Year Two of the Plan.

Information Technology

ATAP had planned, through its subcontractor, the Sherlock Center, to provide training and technical assistance in the area of assistive technology for information technology. Sufficient resources were not available during Year One of the State Plan, and will not be available during Year Two of the Plan. However, ATAP remains committed to the provision of training and technical assistance to State and other government agencies related to Information Technology access. ATAP will look to implement the goals described below in Year Three of the Plan.

ATAP will determine the extent of knowledge regarding accessible information requirements, techniques, and strategies of information providers. ATAP will determine the capacity of information providers to deliver accessible information technology resources through the internet.

In order to gather and assess current knowledge and skills, ATAP will survey Rhode Island stakeholders to find out their capacities to access and use information technology resources from the internet; identify barriers to full information access experienced by individuals with disabilities; identify information providers' knowledge/skill/weaknesses in accessible internet-related information technology; develop strategies to increase access to information on the internet.

Increase knowledge and capacity of internet information providers regarding accessible information requirements, techniques, and strategies

1. Provide technical assistance regarding internet accessibility requirements and techniques to information providers from Rhode Island state agencies, including state webmaster;
2. Develop information tools regarding internet accessibility requirements and techniques;
3. Distribute information tools regarding internet access to consumers and service & information providers;
4. Provide technical assistance regarding internet accessibility requirements and techniques to information providers from Rhode Island state agencies & private AT service providers.

Review and modify, as needed, the information tools regarding internet accessibility requirements and techniques

Education

ATAP will collaborate with the RI Department of Education (RIDE) Office of Special Populations and the RIDE Assistive Technology Workgroup to develop and present training materials regarding the new Assistive Technology Competencies for Educators.

During Year One of the State Plan, efforts to continue the movement towards implementation of specific assistive technology competencies for Rhode Island educators stalled due to the departure of three key players in the State Department of Education. It is anticipated that Year Two of the State Plan will focus on identifying & defining the most appropriate way for the AT competencies to be integrated into practice at the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE), and on moving forward with specific steps (once identified) toward such implementation. It is also anticipated that once AT competencies are established within the RIDE, this will drive the nature and need for professional development in AT in both pre-service and in-service environments.

Over the next year of the State Plan, the following activities will be conducted.

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| A. Meet with State Education leaders to gain approval for implementation | 07/06 - 10/06 |
| B. Revise and finalize AT Competencies with RI Department of Education | 10/06 - 12/06 |
| C. Present AT Competencies to RI Office of Teacher Quality for approval | 01/07 - 02/07 |
| D. Develop plan for statewide professional development in assistive
technology | 01/07 - 09/07 |

OUTCOMES:

1. A final version of the RI AT Competencies for Educators, reviewed and moving toward implementation by the RI Department of Education.
2. Plan for state-wide professional development of educators to attain assistive technology competence.

ATAP (TechACCESS, EBEC and the Sherlock Center) is providing technical assistance to the RIDE Office of Special Populations in the development of the State's response to the Instructional Materials Accessibility Act in response to the new IDEA mandates and guidelines.

TechACCESS has collaborated, and will continue to collaborate with the RIDE, Office of Special Populations, to develop and present assistive technology training opportunities for educational administrators and teachers regarding assistive technology issues through the continuation of the After School Tech Time Program for students/families, and educators; and collaborate with EBEC to insure statewide accessibility to these programs.

ATAP AT Children and Youth Specialist will participate in Statewide IEP training activities as it relates to assistive technology. This is an on-going activity.

During Year One of the State Plan, the ATAP AT Children and Youth Specialist has participated in the Rhode Island School Improvement Grant (RISIG). This includes technical assistance and support from the AT Resource Center funded by ATAP to Master Teachers. The

expectation is that AT will be incorporated into daily instruction methods. This activity will be continued during Year Two.

The ATAP AT Children and Youth Specialist has, and will continue to provide Assistive Technology/Universal Design Training to educators that support students with: learning disabilities, hearing impairments, low vision, and speech and language impairments.

The training has included such topics as the following:

- Demonstration Electronic text and software
- Computer and related access Smartboard
- Software training for accessibility to computers, reading and writing literacy technology, alternative keyboard device training, and access to recreation play and learning.
- MAGIC Low vision Technology devices and software
- Local District software Kidspiration/Inspiration, electronic text screen readers

The ATAP AT Children and Youth Specialist has, and will continue to participate in RIDE Office of Special Populations School Support Visits in order to monitor Rhode Island School districts for best practices in Assistive Technology services.

Through its advisory council, the Rhode Island Council on Assistive Technology (RICAT), ATAP has established a linkage with the University of Rhode Island's Bio-engineering Department. The University of Rhode Island has an established Assistive Technology Laboratory (URI AT Lab) as part of the Biomedical Engineering Program. The URI

AT Lab has developed a variety of customized AT devices to help individuals with quadriplegia, cerebral palsy, and visual impairment. These devices include a single-switch environmental control system, a voice-activated nurse call system, an ultrasonic proximity switch, a multi-port sip-and-puff switch box, an innovative finger switch, a light activated switch for reducing false triggers due to spasm, a single-switch-controlled computer keyboard and mouse, a light sensor to detect LED indicators for individuals with visual impairment, an adapted piano tuner for individuals with visual impairment, and an automated page turner. The undergraduate and graduates students at the URI Biomedical Engineering Program have worked as interns in the AT Lab to develop these devices. The URI AT Lab has also partnered with Enable Devices (Hastings-on-Hudson, New York) for transferring technologies to industry and developing prototypes into commercial products.

During the next three years, the URI AT Lab will contribute to the ATAP Partnership in the following ways. First, the AT Lab will design and develop unique AT devices that will best enhance the functions of individuals with certain kinds of disability. Second, the AT Lab will adapt and adjust commercially available AT devices to suit the needs of the individuals. Third, the AT Lab will train future biomedical engineers for the AT industry. Fourth, the AT Lab will provide a channel for technology transfer to industry such that the benefits of the innovative, customized AT devices be brought to the general community of AT consumers.

Transition

ORS has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the RI Department of Education, Office of Special Populations to ensure that students with disabilities transitioning from secondary education to post-secondary activities receive necessary services in a timely manner. As part of this MOU, a collaborative services chart has been developed. The process for the provision of assistive technology, devices and services, is described in this chart.

ORS has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the State's three public institutions of higher education (University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College, and the Community College of Rhode Island) to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal access to academic programs and receive the accommodations, including assistive technology, they require.

The ATAP Program Director and subcontractors TechACCESS and EBEC participate in Youth in Transition, a workgroup of Rhodes to Independence, designed to support the identification and inclusion of appropriate AT during transition from school to work.

The ATAP AT Children and Youth Specialist is providing technical assistance to the Regional Transition Centers within the Regional Educational Collaboratives, Parent Transition Specialists and vocational specialists working in the Regional Vocational Assessment Centers funded by the Office of Rehabilitation Services.

During Year One of the Plan, the ATAP AT Children and Youth Specialist has provided a training series to the Parent Training Information Center (PTIC) to impact the continuum of Rhode Island students with disabilities. (Kit training with 8-10 AT kits)

The ATAP AT Children and Youth Specialist provides, and will continue to provide, technical assistance to the Regional Transition Academies: student evaluation, staff development and AT general information.

During Year One, the ATAP AT Children and Youth Specialist has provided workshops and information to the Local Advisory Committees for Special Education and outreach activities for Transition events statewide. This will be an on-going effort.

ATAP/OSCIL Transition Services - Adults with Disabilities

In Year One of the State Plan, ATAP initiated outreach to nursing home facilities, senior citizens and family members regarding the Community Living Option offering assistance to facilitate people with disabilities to move from the nursing home setting to a less restrictive environment.

ATAP/OSCIL's services include assistance in identifying and securing accessible housing, establishing community connections, securing personal care attendant services and other community support services, accessing public transportation, acquiring appropriate assistive technology and securing home safety devices, based on the needs of the consumer.

In Year Two, to enhance the accomplishment of this goal, OSCIL's AT/Community Living Specialist, with the help of other OSCIL staff, will update its Rhode Island nursing home database, identify nursing home contacts for a personalized mailing; develop a letter to be sent that will introduce them to the Community Living Option and its goals; follow up with calls requesting face to face meetings to discuss the program in more detail and respond to any questions or concerns they may have.

OSCIL's AT/Community Living Specialist will also review previously received Requests for Service for nursing transition assistance to identify nursing homes that OSCIL has already worked with during Year One of the State Plan and contact these facilities to schedule meetings with additional key staff to inform them of the program. OSCIL's Program Director will assist with preparations for visits, including development of "talking points" outline for these visits.

ATAP AT/IL Specialist will annually hold at least 3 informational presentations to nursing home staff regarding the Community Living Option, clarifying how the use of community support services, home adaptations and assistive devices can make independent living a viable option for seniors.

Assistive Technology for The Deaf & Hard Of Hearing Communities

During Year One of the State Plan, ATAP/OSCIL is working to raise awareness among Deaf and Hard of Hearing consumers and their families on how AT can remove barriers to independence.

OSCIL's Deaf Services Specialist has, and will continue during Year Two, to administer the Adaptive "Shake-Awake" Smoke Detector Program for individuals who are Hard of Hearing or Deaf, and provide information and referral, home assessments, and facilitate the purchase and installation of these special early warning systems.

ATAP/OSCIL AT Specialist is working directly with individual consumers and their families by assessing need for AT, identifying appropriate AT to meet consumers' independent living goals, assisting with training on utilizing equipment, and providing information on alternate funding sources for the acquisition of AT.

8.2 Public Awareness Activities

Maintain and expand the ATAP Information and Referral Center as a statewide resource for assistive technology information and resources designed to meet the needs of targeted individuals and entities

As part of the State Plan, the ATAP Resource Center at TechACCESS will continue to provide information on assistive technology laws and rights, AT devices, local and regional AT services, and public and private funding to individuals of all ages for all disabilities. General information will be provided on the benefits of AT with respect to enhancing the capacity of an individual to achieve in all areas of life by maintaining a free in-state #800, email address access, and web site with linkages to other AT resources.

Under the State Plan, TechACCESS will continue the ATAP I&R Center and will develop and implement a follow-up procedure to determine the effectiveness of the I&R Center in helping individuals actually obtain the devices and services they need.

The ATAP AT Resource Room is open to the public at no charge. The resource room offers an accessible vendor and services catalog library, AT journals, AT books, videos, and newsletters from other AT resource centers. ATAP will maintain and expand this resource and increase the capacity of resources by 5%. TechACCESS will also insure that the inventory list is user friendly, accessible to all, and available on line.

ATAP'S annual AT conference took place in November 2005. This event will be offered again in Year Two of the State Plan (November, 2006), but during the year, ATAP will assess whether the conference should be held annually or less frequently, or rotated among the New England states.

Due to a staff change, ATAP/TechACCESS was unable to publish the program's Assistive Technology newsletter. During Year Two of the Plan, ATAP will determine the need to publish the newsletter three times per year, and/or whether other methods of information dissemination would be more effective and efficient.

The ATAP AT Children and Youth Specialist has participated in the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) Leadership Institutes to Increase ATAP visibility and promote training opportunities. This has been a successful effort, and may be repeated in Year Two.

The ATAP AT Children and Youth Specialist will promote the Children and Youth Resource Center to all District Special Education Networks using WEB, internet list serve technology, and the Association of Rhode Island Special Educators (ARISE) yearly conferences. This effort is on-going.

ATAP's subcontractor, OSCIL is working to raise awareness among elder consumers and their families on how Assistive Technology can remove barriers to independence.

OSCIL's ATAP Specialist will hold a minimum of four AT presentations annually at senior centers, meal sites, support or social group meetings or events sponsored by other disability organizations such as Self Help for Hard of Hearing People (SHHH), the Arthritis Foundation, and the RI Association for the Deaf. Thirty percent (30%) of these presentations will be presented to culturally diverse populations, including minority and/or underserved individuals, and to those residing in outlying areas of the State.

OSCIL's ATAP Specialist will respond to a minimum of 6 requests annually for AT presentations, exhibits and/or technical assistance from local government and community-based agencies such as the Multiple Sclerosis Society, and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), in order to apprise professionals of the value of AT in supporting aging in

place. Information will be shared on the variety of assistive technology available and where AT can be obtained, including information vehicles such as websites, catalogs and organizations.

During Year One of the State Plan, OSCIL's Information & Referral Specialist, in collaboration with the ATAP and Home Access Specialists, has included AT information, news articles, and human-interest stories in OSCIL's quarterly publication, *Signs of Independence*, which reaches approximately twelve hundred consumers, family members, and service providers. This effort will continue during Year Two, and will include other agency newsletters and informational articles in local newspapers and senior bulletins.

During Year One of the State Plan, OSCIL began development of a new web page "Where to Go for AT". This effort has not yet been completed, however, it is anticipated that during the first quarter of Year Two, the page will be ready to link to the OSCIL and ATAP web sites. To achieve this goal, OSCIL's AT Specialist will conduct fewer presentations, anticipating that the web page will be a more effective tool for information dissemination. Research is continuing. Efforts to confirm website addresses, contacts and vendor/agency services are being increased. Listings will be refined and organized before being included on OSCIL's and ATAP's website.

8.3 Coordination and Collaboration

Since its inception, ORS has instituted a model of coordination and collaboration to implement the requirements of the Assistive Technology Act, which has included subcontracting with community-based organizations. This has enabled the program to maximize the impact of

ORS and the other agencies to effect systems change in the areas of education, employment, health care, and community living.

During Year Two of the State Plan, ORS expects that the ATAP subcontractors will work to strengthen the identity of ATAP as a single entity for the provision of AT Act services in Rhode Island. ORS believes that this will greatly enhance ATAP's ability to have a positive impact on service providers.

In addition, during Year Two, the ATAP subcontractors will work collaboratively with other State agencies and community-based organizations in the following manner.

ATAP/TechACCESS will collaborate with the EBEC Center for Youth and Transition to develop and present training materials to the state's Early Intervention Programs regarding the processes for evaluating, obtaining and procuring assistive technology devices through the state's Medicaid program.

ATAP/TechACCESS and In-SIGHT will be collaborating on a program designed to make technology available for demonstration and training to school age children and youth with significant vision impairments. Financial support has been obtained from the Citizens Foundation and In-SIGHT to put devices in the hands of students for demonstration, training and loan. The first session will be in late August with monthly sessions planned throughout the school year.

The Sherlock Center at RI College and TechACCESS will collaborate to offer an introductory course on *AT in the Classroom* and will begin to develop a series of advanced courses on assistive technology for applications including augmentative communication for teachers and families and AT internships.

TechACCESS will collaborate with the Department of Human Services to review how assistive technology devices and services are reimbursed for individuals birth to 21 and to develop and publish information to clarify and facilitate Medicaid availability and processes.

ATAP subcontractors, TechACCESS and EBEC, will continue to monitor the Special House Commission to promote and develop a comprehensive system of education for visually impaired children by participating on the Advisory Board to insure that assistive technology concerns are addressed and included in planning the agenda for the Rhode Island Vision and Educational Services Program (RIVESP).

Year Two of the State Plan, OSCIL, in collaboration with ATAP partners, will network with other disability-related groups and organizations to promote the value of, and access to, Assistive Technology.

OSCIL's ATAP Specialist will participate in events sponsored by advocacy groups, state agencies, senior groups, Centers for Independent Living, and other disability-related groups to address barriers to obtaining assistive technology.

OSCIL's Program Director and ATAP Specialist will actively participate in monthly meetings of the ATAP partner agencies to help establish smoother access for consumers to obtain AT through Medicaid services and other alternative funding programs.

OSCIL's ATAP, Information & Referral, and Home Access Specialists will encourage consumer representation at public hearings, which emphasize the importance of AT as a solution to independence in the home and community, through targeted mailings, OSCIL's quarterly newsletter, and through personal contacts via telephone, email or home visits. This is an on-going activity.

ATAP will work with the Department of Human Services Early Intervention Programs to consider Assistive Technology devices and services in working with infants and toddlers and their families.

The ATAP/EBEC AT Children and Youth Specialist will provide Assistive Technology information & training resources for Early Childhood Parent Consultants/parents support groups.

The ATAP/EBEC AT Children and Youth Specialist will promote the Assistive Technology resource center(s) to provide professional development to all early intervention case managers and EI staff in an effort to ensure that AT devices and services are considered/provided for all children with disabilities birth to age three as expeditiously as possible.

Attachment 9 – Involvement of Public and Private Entities:

9.1 In order to carry out the activities described in ATTACHMENT 5 – device loan, device demonstration, device reutilization, and the establishment of a state financing system, the Office of Rehabilitation Services has, and will continue to enter into subcontracts with community-based organizations, including TechACCESS of Rhode Island, East Bay Educational Collaborative, and PARI Independent Living Center (in accordance with State procurement requirements). ORS works with these agencies to ensure that the services of ATAP are statewide, comprehensive and meet the needs of all disability groups. This has been the model of the AT program in Rhode Island since 1993, and it will continue to be how the requirements of the AT Act of 1998 as amended will be fulfilled. This model has a far-reaching impact, as the subcontractors, in turn, have linkages with additional organizations through other programs for which they provide services. Also, each of these agencies have either governing boards, or advisory committees allowing for more public involvement, and consumer input. Two of the subcontractors, are, in fact, independent living centers, whose governing boards are comprised of at least fifty-one percent individuals with disabilities.

9.2 N/A

9.3 The Rhode Island Council on Assistive Technology (RICAT) has a long history of close involvement in the activities of ATAP. At each Council meeting, a program report is provided to the membership by the Program Director. The subcontractors also provide information about initiatives that are underway.

RICAT members have had input into the establishment of a state financing system in RI. An ad hoc committee was established to review possible options and make recommendations. This committee may become a standing committee of the Council.

RICAT is participating in statewide Public Forums on the Concerns of People with Disabilities to solicit comments on the State Plan for Assistive Technology. In addition, the Executive Committee of the Council will review draft attachments as they are prepared to offer input on planned initiatives.

The Council will meet at least quarterly to evaluate progress toward established goals and to offer recommendations for improvement and change. A new “Partner Support” Committee of the Council has been established specifically to review the progress towards achievement of the measurable goals contained in this plan; and any adjustments necessary will be made in response to and under the guidance of RICAT.

Attachment 10 - State Support:

10.1 State Support for State-level Activities

The Office of Rehabilitation Services has, and will continue to provide in kind administrative support for the Assistive Technology Access Partnership. This will include office support – office space, telephone, office supplies, etc.

Additionally, it is anticipated that each year, the Office of Rehabilitation Services will provide in kind support for the device loan program for individuals with visual and other impairments which includes storage space, staff time, as well as other administrative support – office space, office supplies, etc.

In addition, ORS/ATAP is leveraging state dollars to implement a state financing system that provides adaptive telephone equipment and adaptive software to individuals whose disabilities impact communication and information access.

ATAP subcontractor, the PARI Independent Living Center receives State funding from the Department of Elderly Affairs to assist low income elders obtain AT devices through the AT device reutilization program.

10.2 State Support for State Leadership Activities

ATAP subcontractor, TechACCESS receives state funds from the Rhode Island Department of Education, Office of Special Populations to provide *The Schools Project*. This program is funded to continue through June 2007. The Schools Project will continue to link with the ATAP Information and Resource Center to provide informational, referral and resource activities to parents and educational/therapeutic personnel especially as it relates to assistive technology for education. The Schools Project will work together with ATAP to sponsor the statewide annual AT conference, and also will provide some funding for TechACCESSORY, the ATAP newsletter, should the decision be made to continue its publication. Funding for the Schools Project also provides opportunities for parents and educational professionals to see devices demonstrated and to practice with technologies through such activities as After School Tech Time for families and educators, training workshops, vendor demonstrations, etc. Schools Project funds also support the technical assistance to school systems developing AT teams and competencies as well as to administrators seeking AT information and assistance. TechACCESS will continue to work on the dissemination of the AT Competencies for RI Educators and will develop training sessions to present them once they are developed.

The Rhode Island Department of Health provides personnel and financial assistance to the statewide ATAP AT conference and will continue this support in FFY 2007.

The Ocean State Center for Independent Living (OSCIL) receives, and is anticipated to receive funds from private donations, local fire departments, and Rotary that supports the provision of AT devices for individuals with disabilities without the imposition of eligibility criteria.

Attachment 11 – Allocation and Utilization of Funds

11.1 Tracking Expenditures: Describe planned procedures for tracking expenditures for activities described in sections 4(e)(2) and (3).

All receipts and disbursements within ORS are recorded within the same web-based financial recording system. We also maintain subsidiary ledgers for individual programs using spreadsheet software programs.

Each expenditure under this grant will be analyzed by the Program Director and the Fiscal Manager to determine the activity to which it pertains. After identifying the activity, the expenditure will be posted to a specific subsidiary ledger that will be organized to arrange the expenditures according to the activity allocation distribution as listed in 11.2. The subsidiary ledger will be reviewed monthly to ensure that expenditures will fall within the prescribed activity allocation distribution for the whole program year.

11.2 Proposed Budget Allocations: Attach a budget containing proposed allocations for activities described in sections 4(e)(2) and (3).




The following are proposed budget allocations for State Leadership and State Level Activities for Year 2 of the program. These numbers will serve as an estimate only for Year 3 of this State Plan.


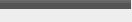
Proposed Allocation	Distribution	Total Award Amount
		\$312,777
State Level	60%	\$168,900
State Leadership	40%	\$112,600
Leadership Activities	95% (of 40%) -	\$106,970
Transition	5% (of 40%) -	\$ 5,630
Indirect Costs	10%	\$ 31,277
TOTAL		\$312,777


Within the above budget, The Office of Rehabilitation Services/ATAP proposes to apportion funds for specific activities in the following manner. However, these numbers reflect a proposal only, and will serve as an estimate only for Year 3 of this State Plan.



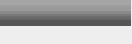

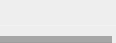



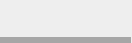

State Level Activities	Proposed Allocation
State Financing Activities	\$15,225
Device Reutilization Program	\$45,000
Device Loan Program	\$50,000
Device Demonstration Program	\$58,675
 State Leadership Activities	 Proposed Allocation
Training and Technical Assistance Activities	\$50,735
Transition	\$ 5,630
Public Awareness Activities	\$38,120
Coordination and Collaboration	\$18,115

Appendix I




1. Are you:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
an individual with a disability or functional limitation		63.1%	202
a family member answering on behalf of a person with a disability		34.1%	109
another person answering on behalf of a person with a disability		2.2%	7
Other (please specify)		0.6%	2
Total Respondents			320
(skipped this question)			0

2. Do you (or does the person with a disability or functional limitation) currently use assistive technology?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Yes (continue with Question 3)		76.2%	244
No (please skip to Question 5)		23.8%	76
Total Respondents			320
(skipped this question)			0

3. What kind of assistive technology do you (or does the person with a disability or functional limitation) currently use? (Please check all that apply.)			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Speech/Augmentative Communication Devices		13.7%	34

Blind/Low Vision Devices, including magnifiers and closed-circuit TV		25.8%	64
Hearing Aids or Other Hearing Devices		23.4%	58
Mobility Devices, including Walkers, Wheelchairs and Scooters		68.5%	170
Daily Living Devices that help with dressing, eating, recreation, etc.		21.4%	53
Environmental Controls or modified switches for lighting, heat, cooling, etc.		7.7%	19
Alternate Computer Access Hardware or Software		23%	57
Workplace or Work Equipment Modification		3.6%	9
Vehicle Modifications such as hand controls or a wheel chair lift		23.4%	58
Home Modifications such as a ramp, roll-in shower or widened doorways		39.1%	97
Other (please specify)		10.9%	27
Total Respondents			248
(skipped this question)			72

4. Do you (or does the person with a disability) own the assistive technology equipment, or is it leased or is it borrowed from an agency, school district, friend, or another source? (Please check all that apply.)

		Response Percent	Response Total
Equipment is owned by the user		81.2%	186
Equipment is leased or rented		7.4%	17
Equipment is borrowed or on-loan		20.5%	47

Other (please specify)		10.5%	24
Total Respondents			229
(skipped this question)			91

5. Do you (or does the person with a disability) currently own or lease a vehicle with a modification such as a wheelchair lift or hand controls?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Yes		19.7%	63
No		80.3%	257
Total Respondents			320
(skipped this question)			0

6. Do you (or does the person with a disability) currently live in a home with a modification such as a stairlift, roll-in shower, or widened doorway?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Yes		31.9%	102
No		68.1%	218
Total Respondents			320
(skipped this question)			0

7. Within the past three years, have you (or has the person with a disability) acquired or tried to acquire any assistive technology devices or to have any modifications made to your home or vehicle?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
I did acquire new devices or modifications		39.7%	127
I did not acquire any new devices or modifications even though I tried to		10%	32
I did not try to acquire any new devices or		48.8%	156



modifications			
Other (please specify) █		1.6%	5
Total Respondents			320
(skipped this question)			0







8. What means or methods were used to pay for (or acquire) the Assistive Technology devices or home or vehicle modifications you (or the person with a disability) acquired during the past three years? (Please check all that apply.)



		Response Percent	Response Total
Medicare or Medicaid paid for the items █		38%	62
Private insurance (e.g. Blue Cross, United Health) paid for them █		25.8%	42
Individual who uses the devices or his/her family paid for them paid for the items myself █		38.7%	63
Government agency or a nonprofit group █		38%	62
Devices or equipment were received as personal gifts █		10.4%	17
Other (please specify) █		16%	26
Total Respondents			163
(skipped this question)			157

9. Within the past three years, have you (or has the person with a disability or a family member) applied for a financial loan to purchase or lease any assistive technology devices or to pay for a home or vehicle modification?


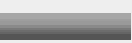

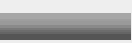

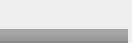





		Response Percent	Response Total
No, have NOT applied for a loan (please skip to question 11) █		95%	304

Yes, and the loan was approved (please skip to question 11)		3.1%	10
Yes, but the loan was NOT approved (please continue with question 10)		1.9%	6
Total Respondents			320
(skipped this question)			0

10. If the assistive technology financial loan application was NOT approved, what reasons were given for turning down the application? (Please check all that apply.)			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Lack of credit history		33.3%	3
Other credit issues or poor credit history		11.1%	1
Insufficient monthly income/Could not afford payments		55.6%	5
Did not have money for down payment		0%	0
Unable to provide collateral or loan guarantee		11.1%	1
Don't know		11.1%	1
Other (please specify)		44.4%	4
Total Respondents			9
(skipped this question)			311

11. Do you (or does the person with a disability or functional limitation) currently need any new or additional Assistive Technology devices or any additional home or vehicle modifications?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Yes (please continue with question 12)		53.4%	171
No (Please skip to question		47.2%	151

14)			
Total Respondents			320
(skipped this question)			0


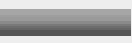

12. What kind of additional Assistive Technology devices or modifications do you (or does the person with a disability or functional limitation) currently need? (Please check all that apply.)			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Speech/Augmentative Communication Devices		10.4%	18
Blind or Low Vision Devices including magnifiers and closed-circuit TV		19.7%	34
Hearing Aids and Other Hearing Devices		14.5%	25
Mobility Devices, including walkers, wheelchairs and scooters		27.2%	47
Daily Living Devices that help with dressing, eating, recreation, etc.		15.6%	27
Environmental Controls or modified switches for lighting, heat, cooling, etc.		8.7%	15
Alternate Computer Access Hardware or Software		24.3%	42
Workplace or Work Equipment Modification		2.9%	5
Vehicle Modifications such as Chair Lifts and Hand Controls		19.7%	34
Home Modifications such as a ramp, roll-in shower or widened doorway		26%	45
Other (please specify)		19.1%	33
Total Respondents			173





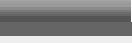

(skipped this question)	147
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13. What is your estimate of the total cost of the Assistive Technology devices and/or home or vehicle modifications needed by you, or the person with a disability? (Please provide your best estimate even if you are unsure.)			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Under \$1,000		16.7%	27
\$1,000 to \$2,500		22.2%	36
\$2,500 to \$5,000		22.8%	37
\$5,000 to \$10,000		12.3%	20
\$10,000 to \$20,000		8%	13
Over \$20,000		17.9%	29
Total Respondents			162
(skipped this question)			158

14. Are you (or is the person with a disability or functional limitation) currently eligible to receive funding to pay for assistive technology devices or modifications under any of the following programs? (Please check all that apply.)			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Medicaid		37.8%	121
Medicare		30.3%	97
Private Insurance (Blue Cross, United Healthcare, etc.)		31.2%	100
School District/Education		7.8%	25
Office of Rehabilitation Services or other State Agency		12.5%	40
Don't know		29.1%	93
Other (please specify)		10.9%	35
Total Respondents			320

(skipped this question)	0
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15. Would you (or would the person with a disability or functional limitation, or a family member) be interested in an alternative financial loan to pay for assistive technology devices or for home or vehicle modifications?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Yes (please continue with question 16)		35.9%	115
No (please skip to question 17)		45.9%	147
Don't know (please continue with question 16)		18.1%	58
Total Respondents			320
(skipped this question)			0

16. What features would be most helpful to you if you wanted to take out an alternative financing loan to pay for assistive technology devices or for home or vehicle modifications? (Please check your FIRST TWO choices only.)			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Low interest rate		78.3%	126
Longer payout period		45.3%	73
No co-signer or guarantor required		15.5%	25
No down payment required		39.8%	64
No need for collateral		13.7%	22
Other (please specify)		5.6%	9
Total Respondents			161
(skipped this question)			159

17. Please tell us about yourself. If you are completing this questionnaire on behalf of a person with a disability, please answer these questions about that person, rather than about yourself.			
		Response	Response

		Percent	Total
Gender: Male		40%	128
Female		60%	192
Total Respondents			320
(skipped this question)			0

18. What is your age?

		Response Percent	Response Total
13 or under		7.2%	23
14 to 21		12.8%	41
22 to 64		50.9%	163
65 or older		29.4%	94
Total Respondents			320
(skipped this question)			0

19. Please describe your employment situation. (Please check all that apply.)

		Response Percent	Response Total
Work full-time		5.3%	17
Work part-time		10.9%	35
Student		20.3%	65
Receive SSI		27.2%	87
Receive SSDI		25%	80
Retired		30.9%	99
Other (please specify)		7.2%	23
Total Respondents			320
(skipped this question)			0

20. Please check the box that is closest to your total household income.

		Response	Response
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		Percent	Total
Under \$10,000		23.5%	67
\$10,000 to \$20,000		25.3%	72
\$20,000 to \$30,000		16.1%	46
\$30,000 to \$40,000		8.8%	25
\$40,000 to \$50,000		7.7%	22
\$50,000 to \$60,000		7.7%	22
\$60,000 to \$75,000		1.4%	4
Over \$75,000		9.5%	27
Total Respondents			285
(skipped this question)			35

21. Please use this space to write your comments or suggestions regarding an alternative financing loan program to help people with disabilities gain greater access to assistive technology in Rhode Island."	
Total Respondents	67
(skipped this question)	
	253


CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Applicants must review the requirements for certification regarding lobbying included in the regulations cited below before completing this form. Applicants must sign this form to comply with the certification requirements under 34 CFR Part 82, "New Restrictions on Lobbying." This certification is a material representation of fact upon which the Department of Education relies when it makes a grant or enters into a cooperative agreement.

As required by Section 1352, Title 31 of the U.S. Code, and implemented at 34 CFR Part 82, for persons entering into a Federal contract, grant or cooperative agreement over \$100,000, as defined at 34 CFR Part 82, Sections 82.105 and 82.110, the applicant certifies that:

- (a) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making of any Federal grant, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal grant or cooperative agreement;
- (b) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal grant or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form - LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions;
- (c) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subgrants and contracts under grants and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the applicant will comply with the above certification.

NAME OF APPLICANT Department of Human Services/Office of Rehabilitation Services	PR/AWARD NUMBER AND / OR PROJECT NAME Assistive Technology Access Partnership H224A060039A
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE Raymond A. Carroll, Administrator	
SIGNATURE 	DATE: July 26, 2006