

## **State Assistive Technology Act Programs**

State and Territory Assistive Technology Programs (hereafter, AT Programs), authorized under Sec. 4 of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, most recently reauthorized in 2004, focus on improving the provision of AT through comprehensive, statewide programs that are consumer responsive. The goal of these programs is to increase access to and acquisition of AT through state level activities and state leadership activities. The AT Act provides formula grants, administered by the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration, for an AT program in each state, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

### **State-Level Activities:**

#### **Device Demonstration Programs**

Device demonstrations compare the features and benefits of a particular AT device or category of devices for an individual or small group of individuals (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Device demonstrations allow individuals and groups to make informed choices about an AT device prior to acquiring it. Along with providing demonstrations, AT programs are required to provide comprehensive information about state and local assistive technology vendors, providers, and referral services.

#### **Device Loan Programs**

Device loan programs allow AT consumers and professionals who provide services to individuals with disabilities to borrow AT devices for use at home, school, and work, and in the community. These loans are short-term. Although the loan length varies by individual program policy, the average based on FY 2012 data was 42 calendar days. The purpose of a device loan may be to assist in decision making; to fill a gap while the consumer is waiting for device repair or funding; to provide an accommodation on a short-term basis; to provide self education by a consumer or professional; and to provide training (DOE, 2011).

#### **Device Reutilization Programs**

Assistive technology reutilization involves transferring a used device from someone who no longer needs it to someone who does. Device reutilization falls into three activity categories. The first one, device exchange, usually occurs through an online forum where sellers and buyers can connect. Recycling, refurbishment, and repair (RRR) is the second category. In this type of program, devices are typically obtained from individuals who no longer need them, are refurbished, and then provided to new owners. Lastly, open-ended loan programs take previously used devices and loan them to individuals who can use them as long as they are needed.

#### **State Financing**

State financing activities assist individuals with disabilities to obtain AT devices and services. Funds authorized under the AT Act of 1998, as amended, cannot be used to purchase AT devices or services directly for consumers (DOE, 2011). There are three types of state financing activities that assist individuals who need AT: 1) financial loan programs that provide cash loans that consumers can then use to acquire AT, 2) other activities that result in AT acquisition, and 3) other activities that allow consumers to obtain assistive technology at a reduced cost.