

Part I: Attachments
OMB Control Number: 1820-0664
Expiration Date: 10-31-2008

Attachment 1: Basic Information

Name of Lead Agency:

Department of Social Services

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

Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

Address of Lead Agency:

25 Sigourney Street, Hartford, CT 06106

Name and Title of Certifying Representative for Lead Agency:

Brenda L. Moore, Director

Address for Certifying Representative:

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brenda.moore@po.state.ct.us

Name and Title of Program Director:

Dawn Lambert, Policy Analyst

Address for Program Director:

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

Arlene Lugo, Assistive Technology

Address for Program Contact:

SAME

Telephone for Program Contact:

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arlene.lugo@po.state.ct.us

Name of Implementing Entity:

Not applicable

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

Address of Implementing Entity:

Name and Title of Program Director:

Not applicable

Address for Program Director:
Telephone for Program Director:
E-mail for Program Director:

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

Not applicable

Address for Program Director:
Telephone for Program Director:
E-mail for Program Director:

Attachment 2: Lead Agency and Implementing Entity

Section 4(d)(2) of the AT Act requires that the State identify and describe the Lead Agency referred to in section 4(c)(1)(A) of the AT Act and, if applicable, the Implementing Entity referred to in section 4(c)(1)(B) of the AT Act. To complete Attachment 2, the State must provide the following:

2.1 Identification and Description of the Lead Agency - Identify and describe the Lead Agency referred to in section 4(c)(1)(A) of the AT Act.

- (i) capacity to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities and their families, guardians, advocates, or other authorized representatives, regardless of their type of disability, age, income level or location of residences within the State, or the type of assistive technology device or service required;

The Department of Social Services (DSS) has been designated by the Governor as the Lead Agency for Assistive Technology in Connecticut. The Department has designated the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services as the program unit responsible for carrying out the responsibilities of the AT Act.

The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, through its Connect to Work Center, will provide the management of the AT Program. The Bureau administers the general Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program in Connecticut, and is housed within the Department of Social Services (DSS), which serves as the Single State Medicaid Agency. The project director will report to the director of the Connect to Work Center.

The Bureau has been the lead for the Tech Act for the past 13 years. In that time, the program has developed substantial expertise and resources in the area of assistive technology. The Bureau's activities have targeted individuals with disabilities across the lifespan, including low-tech kits for both children and seniors. Other agencies request technical assistance from the Bureau in areas such as accessibility for Information Technology development.

The Connect to Work Center has responsibility for assistive technology within the Bureau, which provides a unique opportunity to coordinate with other relevant programs. This Center also has administrative responsibility for independent living services, benefits counseling services, the nursing facility transition program and the development of Medicaid Infrastructure to support the competitive employment of individuals with disabilities. Housing the Tech Act with programs within this structure allows for the coordination of information for individuals with disabilities seeking better integration into their communities and /or employment.

With DSS as the umbrella agency for this project, there are direct linkages between the VR program, the Medicaid agency and the proposed project director. DSS is the agency charged with the coordination of services for adults with disabilities. The Department includes various programs and services that support individuals with disabilities, most notably the Medicaid Program, the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, and the programs that coordinate services for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and for Welfare to Work. Taken together, the appropriate mix of knowledge and skills about intersecting programs comes together in one agency.

- (ii) expertise in assistive technology;

The Bureau has developed substantial expertise in Assistive Technology over the past 13 years. While we have experience a substantial change in staff, a transition plan was put into place to chronicle and disseminate information on AT. The transition plan included hiring an individual with particular expertise in assistive technology to ensure that the technical assistance component is in place as we move forward with the activities of the AT State Plan.

In content areas where the Bureau does not have the specific expertise, multiple resources have been developed that do have specific expertise. The staff of the Bureau know where to find this expertise, and have a long history of providing information, referral and technical assistance services. The Bureau also seeks assistance from staff of the NEAT Marketplace, as their start up funds came from the Tech Act.

- (iii) capacity to conduct a program addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities in education, employment, telecommunications and community living;

The transition plan for the Assistive Technology program included hiring a full time assistive technology expert. The plan was to hire this individual by September 2005, to coordinate the activities of the plan, however, this individual was hired in January 2006. The AT Plan will be implemented with the full support of the AT Council, which includes individuals with disabilities, family members, and representatives from the domains of education, employment, telecommunications and community living.

The AT Council will ensure that the activities of the AT State Plan meet the needs of individuals with disabilities across the lifespan, in each of the domains of interest.

- (iv) ability to coordinate and collaborate with other public and private entities in the field of assistive technology or that serve individuals with disabilities and their families, guardians, advocates, or other authorized representatives throughout the State; and

Connecticut has a strong commitment to partnerships in meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities in the state. Coordination and collaboration have been demonstrated over the past several years with both private and public partners. Examples of these partnerships are provided below.

People's Bank. The Department's capacity for a successful public/private partnership has been demonstrated through the Connecticut Tech Act Loan Fund (CTALF). This fund provides loans for assistive technology devices to individuals with disabilities and families. Administered by People's Bank, the CTALF requires the participation of several partners, including the bank itself, the five Centers for Independent Living in the state, and the Department of Social Services.

Centers for Independent Living. As described above, the successful operation of the CTALF requires a partnership with the Centers for Independent Living. These community-based organizations provide referrals and take applications for the loan fund from individuals with disabilities and family members.

NEAT Marketplace. The New England Assistive Technology Marketplace is a private, non-profit organization that received start up funding from the Connecticut Tech Act. The purpose was to increase access to assistive technology for individuals with disabilities. NEAT provides information on equipment, devices, vendors and manufacturers of equipment.

University of Connecticut, Center on Aging. The University of CT continues to provide research support to the Tech Act.

Department of Education. The Bureau, through the AT program, worked closely with the Department of Education to develop and implement assistive technology guidelines for Special Education.

Southern CT State University (Southern). Southern has expanded use of their adaptive lab for demonstrations and evaluations to consumers of the VR program, regardless of whether the individuals with disabilities are or will be attending SCSU. SCSU is participating in a new Tech Act program that will include AT training using their adaptive lab.

- (v) consumer-responsiveness, as defined in Section 3(8) of the AT Act.

All of the major components of the present system developed out of identified consumer needs, based on written surveys, public forums, group meetings, and other methods of community input. The loan fund was an identified need, as were the demonstration and recycling programs. After the needs were identified, the AT program coordinated the development of a Request for Proposal and worked to ensure that the programs were implemented in response to the identified need.

- (b) identify and describe any responsibilities of the Lead Agency that will be fulfilled through subcontract or other administrative agreement (other than a subcontract or administration agreement with the Implementing Entity).

Not applicable

2.1 Identification and Description of the Lead Agency if an Implementing Entity is Designated – In the case that the Governor designates an Implementing Entity to carry out responsibilities under the AT Act as allowed under section 4(c)(1)(B), an identification of the Lead Agency and certification of the assurances in Part I are sufficient for completing item 2.1.

Not applicable

2.2 Identification and Description of the Implementing Entity – Identify and describe the Implementing Entity referred to in section 4(c)(1)(B) of the AT Act, if such an Implementing Entity is designated by the Governor.

- o This description must:
 - (a) demonstrate the Implementing Entity's –
 - (i) capacity to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities and their families, guardians, advocates or other authorized representatives, regardless of their type of disability, age, income level, or location of residence within the State, or the type of assistive technology device or service required;
 - (ii) expertise in assistive technology;
 - (iii) capacity to conduct a program addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities in education, employment, telecommunications, and community living;
 - (iv) ability to coordinate and collaborate with other public and private entities in the field of assistive technology or that serve individuals with disabilities

and their families, guardians, advocates or other authorized representatives throughout the State; and

- (v) consumer-responsiveness, as defined in Section 3(8) of the AT Act; and
- (b) identify and describe any responsibilities of the Implementing Entity that will be fulfilled through subcontract or other administrative agreement, including identifying the entities to fulfill these responsibilities.

2.3 Show of Good Cause for Change in Lead Agency or Implementing Entity – If the Governor has chosen to change the Lead Agency or, if applicable, Implementing Entity as allowed in section 4(c)(1)(C) of the AT Act, provide an explanation of good cause for this redesignation.

Not applicable.

Attachment 3: State Advisory Council

3.1 Membership of the Advisory Council - Identify the members of the Advisory Council and each member's designation as an individual with disabilities who uses AT, a family member or guardian of such individual, or a representative of a State agency or other entity.

Connecticut's Assistive Technology Advisory Council (AT Council) will provide guidance in all aspects of the design, development, implementation and evaluation of the state plan.

Connecticut's AT Advisory Council is comprised of 17 members who represent the diversity of the state. Ten (10) members, fifty-nine percent (59%) of the AT Council, are persons with disabilities who use assistive technology or family members of persons who use assistive technology. The remaining seven (7) members are representatives of agencies including: Centers for Independent Living, Department of Mental Retardation, Board of Education Services for the Blind, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Department of Education, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, and the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission, the states' Workforce Investment Board. Although several of the agency representatives have disabilities they will not be counted toward the majority membership of people with disabilities and family members.

Members of the AT Council:

Individuals with disabilities who use AT: Donald James, Armand LeGault, Gary Allen, James Quick, Keith Mullinar, Mary-Ann Langton, Michael Spiteri, Edward Taggart, William Mancini.

Family members of persons who use AT: Tammy Garris.

Agency Representatives: Richard DeLuca, Centers for Independent Living; Linda Goodman, Department of Mental Retardation; David Bergman, Board of Education Services for the Blind; James Donagher, Department of Mental Health and Addition Services; Carolyn Isakson, Department of Education; Michele Jordan, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services; and Alice Carrier, Connecticut Employment and Training Commission, the states' Office of Workforce Competitiveness.

3.2 Structure and Operation of the Advisory Council – Describe the structure and operations of the Advisory Council.

Members of the AT Council become members in various manners. Agency representatives are appointed by their respective agencies. Consumer and family representatives are volunteers solicited through networks of disability organizations and councils throughout the state. All members are expected to serve a three-year term to coincide with the length of the AT Council state plan.

The AT Council is led by a chairperson who has been elected by the members of the council. The AT Council itself determines the need for subcommittees on a case-by-case basis and elects members of any proposed subcommittees. At the chairperson's discretion, council decisions are made either through consensus or by member vote. A liaison is appointed to assure coordination with the Connect to Work Steering Committee. The Connect to Work Steering Committee acts as a governing body for all activities of the Connect to Work Center. The Connect to Work Center (CTWC) is part of the Bureau for Rehabilitation Services and has the lead role in systems change initiatives regarding long-term care systems including employment. The liaison will serve on both the Connect to Work Steering Committee and the AT Council to assure coordination and avoid duplication.

The AT Council meets at least four times per year in person through scheduled meetings. Documents and correspondence are shared electronically between meetings. The AT Council will be supported by staff of the AT program. Staff will make the meeting room arrangements, develop materials for information packets for members, and ensure site and material accessibility. The chairperson of the AT Council and project director together will set the agenda for the AT Council meetings. The Chairperson will solicit input from council members regarding the agenda to assure maximum participation in planning. Meetings may feature presentations and guest speakers who will be selected based on the input of council members. Staff of the AT project will provide status updates on all activities of the project. Delays, barriers, successes and outcomes will be shared with the council. The council will provide guidance in all decisions. The chairperson will facilitate discussion throughout the meeting to assure participation of members. The staff will record minutes of the meeting.

Attachment 4: Measurable Goals

An amended plan will be submitted to RSA once the baseline has been established for Goals 4.1 through 4.7 during the second year. Baseline data will be established by using the data collection instruments and procedures to be determined by RSA.

4.1 Goal for Improving Access to AT in Education

- Long-term goal:
 - Short-term goal for Year 3:
 - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for educational purposes as a result of the assistance they received.
 - 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:
 - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for employment purposes as a result of the assistance they received.
 - 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:
 - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for community living as a result of the assistance they received.
 - 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:
 - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service that meets an IT/telecommunications need as a result of the assistance they received.
 - 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:
 - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percentage of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for educational purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service.
 - 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:
 - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percentage of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for employment purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service.
 - 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
 - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percentage of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for community living purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service.
 - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established

4.8 Additional Measurable Goals -- If applicable, describe any measurable goals that the State has set in addition to the goals established in items 4.1 through 4.7 for addressing the assistive technology needs of individuals with disabilities in the State related to education, employment, community living, and telecommunications and information technology.

There are no additional goals.

Attachment 5: State-level Activities

5.1 State Financing Activities – Describe how the State will implement State financing activities as described in section 4(e)(2)(A) of the AT Act.

- 1. During the three years of this State Plan, Connecticut will expand and improve its AFP program in terms of both efficiency and effectiveness. Efficiency will be improved through revised policy and procedures. Process will also be reorganized. Effectiveness will be improved through strategically linking the AFP with established public and private programs advancing the domains of community living, employment and telecommunication. Strategic target marketing will be an important component of the plan.**

Connecticut's present system

The state of Connecticut's AFP provides loans to individuals with disabilities and their families for the purchase of AT devices and services. This AFP began in 1993 using a combination of Title 1 funds and State Bonding Commission funds. The name of the fund is the Connecticut Tech Act Loan Fund or CTALF. In partnership with the state's AT program, People's Bank established a matching fund for those who apply for the CTALF but whose income is too high to meet the established criteria for access to the program.

CTALF will be administered by staff of Connecticut's Tech Act program, whom of which was hired in March 2006, in partnership with People's Bank and selected non-profit organizations. Funds will be provided to both the bank and the non-profit organizations to cover anticipated expenses attributed to the loan operation. No State plan funds will be allocated to the loan fund balance. Operational components include the marketing/communication plan, the loan application/eligibility process, and the loan servicing process. Currently, Tech Act staff are responsible for the marketing/communication plan while People's Bank resumes responsibility for the loan application/eligibility process and the loan servicing process. People's Bank has expressed interest in continuing the loan-servicing component but does not have a business interest in the loan application/eligibility process. During the first year of this plan, Connecticut will solicit interest from banks and non-profits statewide to determine the most cost effective manner to continue the CTALF operation. This activity did not take place because the issue was resolved. People's Bank expressed interest in continuing with this program if we were able to revise their contract. Their contract should be completed by September 2006. One of the Independent Living Centers will assume responsibility for the application/eligibility process and will work directly with People's Bank to solidify the partnership.

Loan Application/Eligibility Process

As previously stated, Connecticut's Tech Act operates the CTALF in partnership with People's Bank. People's Bank is a diversified financial services company providing commercial, consumer, insurance and investment services. Founded in

1842, it is the largest independent bank in Connecticut with assets of \$11 billion, more than 150 branches and 240 ATMs.

People's Bank provides loan documentation packages with clear instructions for completion to interested consumers. A contact is available at the bank to answer questions. The bank calculates the applicant's income level and determines initial eligibility for the CTALF.

- Applicants whose income is less than 100 percent of the family median income in Connecticut meet initial criteria for the CTALF program.
 - Applicants whose income is less than 100 percent of the family median income but fail to meet established income or credit standards are reviewed on an individual basis by the AT Council.
- Applicants whose income is over the income eligibility level for the CTALF will be considered for a loan through the matching fund partnership program.

Loan application packages include an assessment of disability, an assistive technology needs assessment and a budget worksheet. Loan repayments are based on 50% of discretionary income. Discretionary income is defined as income remaining after all routine expenses such as food, shelter, etc. While loan repayment periods may not be longer than five years, interest rates may range from prime to two under prime in order to establish monthly payments within 50% of the applicant's discretionary income. Loan amounts may not exceed the cost of the assistive technology device or service. For those persons whose payment would exceed 50% of discretionary income after consideration of the two under prime rate, review will be required by the AT Council. While the program does not discriminate against applicants based upon income, credit worthiness is a factor in review.

Loan servicing

The bank provides each borrower with a monthly bill and statement of loan account. Payments are made to the bank which serves as fiduciary for the funds. Past due notices are sent at 15, 30, and 45 days after the payment was due on the CTALF loan. Accounts past due in excess of 90 days may be determined as delinquent. The AT Council and staff send quarterly statements of activity to the State for review.

Marketing/communication plan

Marketing for the CTALF includes visibility on the Tech Act website, awareness through public presentations, notices in newsletters, referrals through the network of independent living centers of the state and referrals through the Vocational Rehabilitation Program at the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS). Approximately 20 loans are closed per year with an additional 10 applications submitted but not closed either due to insufficient information or lack of AT purpose. Of the 20 loans closed per year, approximately 75% are for

vehicle costs including the cost of a vehicle or a modification. The remaining 25% are attributed to costs for accessibility modifications to a home or equipment such as a power wheelchair. The high number of loans for vehicles suggest a large number of referrals from BRS, as BRS policy allows for the funding of vehicle modifications but not for the purchase of vehicles.

Analysis of problem:

Lack of assistance in the application process

As mentioned previously, the bank currently has the responsibility for the loan application/eligibility process. Over 30% of the loan applications are rejected as incomplete during the fiscal year. The bank reports a high number of questions regarding the process and a high level of need for additional assistance with the paperwork. The bank has a high level of financial expertise but they do not have a high level of experience with disability related matters nor do they have expertise with assistive technology. One of the independent living centers will assume responsibility of loan applications and provide 1:1 assistance to applicants seeking clarification regarding AT questions or CTALF process.

Lack of information technology in loan application process

The primary method for distributing existing CTALF loan applications is US mail. Consumers either contact the bank, an independent living center or the BRS to receive an application packet in the mail. While applications are also available on line, the CTALF has not taken advantage of web-based applications. There is evidence that web-based applications increase availability, increase legibility, improve access, and result in a greater likelihood of completion.

Lack of flexibility in payback period

The regulations governing the CTALF have not been revised since the initiation of Connecticut's loan program in 1993. Costs of assistive technology have risen significantly. One example of a significant expense is vehicle costs or modifications. While many banks providing automobile loans to the general public have increased loan payback periods to 10 years, the CTALF continues to offer terms not to exceed five years. As previously mentioned, approximately 75% of the CTALF loans are for vehicles. Short terms of repayment contribute to high default rates. Reconsideration of the five-year maximum payback period appears appropriate.

Lack of diversity in loan structure

Connecticut's CTALF targets persons with disabilities and family members and provides required liquidity for the purchase of needed assistive technology. The interest rates are conservative with respect to the borrower's ability to pay. Connecticut expects to continue very affordable loan rates to individuals. Analysis of the loan fund reflects the fact that the fund balance has been underutilized. Approximately \$700,000 of the balance remains unobligated.

Supporting expansion of the loan fund to support small business owners is attractive for 3 reasons. 1) Small business loans could potentially result in a higher interest repayment; 2) Small businesses may be more at risk for undue financial hardship resulting from accommodations and modifications required to hire someone with a disability; 3) Strategically linking the AFP to employers as well as employees may result in employment outcomes in addition to AT outcomes. Providing low cost funds for necessary accommodations and access may provide necessary liquidity to afford modifications and accommodations and address the barrier of undue hardship.

Lack of action plan on loans in default

Of the applications funded, the default rate is very high. For example, the loan balance presently outstanding is approximately \$800,000. Of the \$800,000, over \$400,000 is past due 90 days. Action on loans in default is required to improve effective money management. The determination of delinquency will be made by the AT Council in collaboration with the Tech Act staff. Delinquency and collection will be implemented by the State as a 'last resort' after consideration of refinancing the terms and conditions or other possible agreement is explored.

Lack of strategic linkages with other programs for persons with disabilities in the State

To date, the AFP has been linked to BRS most often for the purchase of a vehicle or modifications. There are several programs in the State that support and serve persons with disabilities within the domains of employment, education, telecommunication and community living where linkages with the AFP would result in increased access to AT.

Year 1

Objective 1: Create, implement and monitor a web-based loan application and data collection system in collaboration with the AT Council.

- 1.1 Design essential elements of new system aligned with RSA requirements.
- 1.2 Develop RFP consistent with elements determined in 1.1.
- 1.3 Request proposals from the Department of Social Services and/or outside vendors.
- 1.4 Review and select viable proposals.
- 1.5 Monitor creation of system to assure timely completion.
- 1.6 Pilot system and revise as necessary for implementation.

Outcome: Connecticut will have a web-based application and data collection system. September 2006

Status update - Delayed: Connecticut has been in collaboration with AgoraNet, Inc. regarding the web-based exchange and redesigning the Tech Act website to include web-based application. Request for sole source submitted for approval.

Outcome will be achieved by March 2007. Data collection tool not established by RSA.

Objective 2: Review and revise existing loan policy and procedures.

- 2.1 Analyze existing Connecticut regulations and loan fund history.
- 2.2 Explore changes in the financial structure and impact on liquidity of the fund such as increasing the maximum loan period, automating loan repayments, and changing interest rates.
- 2.3 Submit recommendations based on analysis and exploration to AT Council for review.
- 2.4 Modify regulations, loan policy and procedures.
- 2.5 Implement regulations, loan policy and procedures.

Outcome: Connecticut will have revised CTALF regulations, policies and procedures. September 2006

Status update – Delayed: Process to revise CTALF regulations, policies and procedures is still in beginning stages due to amount of time process takes before actual approval can take place. Outcome will be achieved by September 2007.

Objective 3: Partner with community based organization to assure technical assistance with the loan application process.

- 3.1 Design RFP for technical assistance.
- 3.2 Distribute RFP to community-based organizations such as independent living centers.
- 3.3 Review proposals submitted and select vendor.
- 3.4 Fund community based organization and monitor effectiveness.

Outcome: Connecticut will enter into contract with a community-based organization for the provision of technical assistance to consumers in the CTALF application process. September 2006

Status update – On Schedule

Objective 4: Review and modify loan collection process.

- 4.1 Analyze financial data from bank.
- 4.2 Determine appropriate process for accounts due over 90 days.
- 4.3 Implement process and study impact on cash flow and fund balance.

Outcome: Connecticut will have action plans for all loans in default. September 2006

Status update – On Schedule

Objective 5: Establish new loan servicing partnership either with existing bank or new bank.

- 5.1 Design RFP for loan servicing.
- 5.2 Distribute to banks in Connecticut and solicit proposals.
- 5.3 Review proposals and award contract for loan servicing.

Outcome: Connecticut will have a new contract for loan servicing. September 2006

Status update – On Schedule

Objective 6: Continue to create and develop fund for small businesses hiring persons with disabilities to assist with financing access to AT.

- 6.1 Develop regulations policy and procedures.

Outcome: Connecticut will develop regulation policy and procedures. September 2007

Status update – On Schedule

Objective 7: Develop strategic marketing plan for CTALF targeting employment (including persons with disabilities seeking employment and small business owners), community living and telecommunications.

- 7.1 Analyze existing networks for effectiveness and efficiency of reaching target populations.
- 7.2 Explore new networks including ‘high traffic’ locations statewide such as local bank branches, senior centers, medical offices, etc.
- 7.3 Explore linkages with existing statewide 2-1-1 info-line network in the state.
- 7.4 Design web-based promotion coordinated with web-based application described in Objective 1.
- 7.5 Evaluate effectiveness of existing promotional material such as brochures. Revise and produce for target markets.
- 7.6 Produce strategic plan.

Outcome: Connecticut will have strategic marketing plan. September 2006

Status update – On Schedule

Objective 8: Develop and implement evaluation plan.

- 7.1 Design pre and post assessments utilizing tools developed by RSA.
- 7.2 Collect data for baseline assessment and submit to RSA.

Outcome: Connecticut will have a baseline assessment of the CTALF. September 2006.

Status update – Delayed: Data collection not established by RSA.

Year 2

Objective 9: Fully implement and monitor all interventions designed in Year one as described in Objectives 1 through 7 including:

- Web based application system and data collection system
- CTALF regulations
- Partnership for technical assistance supporting consumers accessing CTALF
- Action plans for loans in default
- Partnership with bank for loan servicing
- Small business loan fund
- Strategic marketing plan

Outcome: Connecticut will have a first year status update on implementation of all loan/finance interventions. September 2007

Objective 9: Demonstrate continual improvement in increasing access and acquisition to AT through financing.

- 9.1 Collect and analyze data.
- 9.2 Evaluate effectiveness of implementation.
- 9.3 Modify objectives.

Outcome: Connecticut will document measurable increases in access and acquisition to the CTALF. September 2007

Year 3:

Objective 10: Continue implementation of objectives, data collection, evaluation and revision for continual improvement.

Outcome: Connecticut will document continual improvement demonstrating increased acquisition of AT through data collection. September 2008

5.2 Device Reutilization Program – Describe how the State will implement a device reutilization program as described in section 4(e)(2)(B) of the Act.

Connecticut's present system

New England's Assistive Technology (NEAT) Marketplace's Equipment Restoration Center (ERC) has been operating successfully in Connecticut since 2001. Using the established system of durable medical equipment supplies that currently exists in Connecticut, New England and throughout the United States, the NEAT Equipment Restoration Center gets restored equipment back to the end user at significantly reduced prices. Individuals and organizations make tax-deductible donations of equipment to the

program. Certified technicians on staff at the Equipment Restoration Center restore the equipment. The ERC then acts as both a wholesaler, selling equipment to vendors who have agreed to certain “consumer friendly” terms for resale, and as a direct seller of basic durable medical equipment. At the end of the transaction, the consumer has a broader choice of affordable equipment and the program realizes the revenue that will enable it to continue into the future. NEAT has received over 7,000 requests for information about restored equipment. NEAT has restored and sold approximately 2,700 pieces of equipment from ADL devices to power wheelchairs. Other smaller reutilization sites exist in Connecticut. For example, Hospital for Special Care operates a small site for recycled durable medical equipment.

Analysis of problem

Lack of access at a local level

NEAT has one predominant Device Reutilization Program in the state of Connecticut and does not have a community-based network. The single location is difficult for some persons with disabilities to access given the existing barriers to transportation. Even for those persons who have access to transportation, the distance and time necessary to travel to NEAT may result in a barrier. Creating more local access points for dropping off used equipment should make it easier for people to donate and increase donations. Replicating a similar operation at an additional site in the state will increase the available inventory of used equipment. Used equipment will be sold at a reduced price compared to new equipment. Increasing the inventory of used equipment will create an affordable option across all domains and increase acquisition.

Lack of information

Information regarding the purchase of recycled assistive technology is currently available on the NEAT marketplace website. Other distribution outlets for recycled assistive technology have similar websites or other methods of advertising to targeted markets. Connecticut has an interest in making it easier for persons with disabilities and family members to find recycled assistive technology. An intervention designed to increase acquisition is the establishment of a web-based market system. In 2003, Connecticut Department of Education surveyed school districts across the state. The State received a 39% response rate to questions indicating the districts’ level of interest in loaning or selling AT not currently being utilized by students. 88% of the respondents indicated that they would be interested in selling or loaning AT not currently in use. A higher percentage, 92%, expressed interest in the state taking the lead in the development of the searchable web-based database. The inventory exists within the system. **The need is for an information network to facilitate exchange and increase utilization.**

Similarly, hospitals across the state and other non-profits such as the Multiple Sclerosis Society and independent living centers also have equipment. Independent Living Centers and various other organizations have used assistive technology. By creating a single access point to information including the type of assistive technology, description of

assistive technology, the loan terms, contact information, etc. Connecticut will establish formal linkages between existing supply and demand of AT.

Connecticut has invested a large amount of effort to explore databases established under AT programs nationally and determine the most suitable database for Connecticut. Connecticut has been involved in several meetings with other AT Act programs and AgoraNet, Inc to develop a web-based Exchange that meets all of our needs. Additionally, the Tech Act has taken the lead in organizing the collaborative effort between the New England AT Act programs to create a regional web-based exchange.

Lack of diverse reutilization program

While Connecticut's present program is very effective in the reutilization of durable medical equipment (DME), it is limited in effectiveness of demonstrating access and acquisition of AT beyond DME.

Year 1

Although the State Plan indicated that an AT Coordinator would be hired in September 2005, this was delayed and the AT Coordinator was officially hired during the last week of January 2006. This has caused a significant delay in some of the following activities.

Objective 1: Provide funds and staff support for the expansion of recycling capacity at NEAT or equivalent organization. The expansion will include both the development of an additional site and an increase in capacity to include reutilization beyond DME.

- 1.1 Implement and monitor expansion plans.

Outcome: Connecticut will have expanded capacity for restoration. September 2006

Status update – Delayed. Progress has been made and a location secured - will be completed by March 2006.

Objective 2: Create and implement a web-based searchable database linking persons or organizations interested in purchasing recycled AT with those selling recycled AT in the state. Organizations may include schools, non-profit organizations serving persons with disabilities and/or elders, hospitals, etc.

- 1.7 Complete inventory of all existing AT distribution sites in Connecticut.
- 1.8 Explore existing models including the North Carolina model or web-based markets, modify, replicate as appropriate.
- 1.9 Create policies and procedures for Connecticut's web-based searchable database.
- 1.10 Design RFP and solicit proposals from the Department of Social Services and/or interested organizations.

- 1.11 Award proposal and monitor implementation.

Outcome: Connecticut will have a web-based searchable database for used assistive technology including but not limited to durable medical equipment. September 2006

Status update – On schedule.

Objective 3: Create marketing strategy for web-based market targeting domains of education, telecommunication, employment and community living.

- 3.1 Assess and document existing communication networks across all domains including education, employment, community living, and telecommunication.
- 3.2 Identify strengths in existing network and establish coordination.
- 3.3 Design and produce targeted promotional materials in multiple formats.

Outcome: Connecticut will have a marketing plan for the web-based market targeting the domains of education, employment, community living and telecommunication. September 2006

Status update – On schedule.

Objective 4: Develop and implement an evaluation plan.

- 4.1 Design pre and post assessments utilizing tools developed by RSA.
- 4.2 Collect data for baseline assessments and submit to RSA.

Outcome: Connecticut will have a baseline assessment for all state plan reutilization interventions and an evaluation plan. September 2006

Status update – Delayed - Data collection not established by RSA.

Year 2

Objective 5: Fully implement interventions designed in Year One as described in Objectives 1 through 3, including:

- Additional reutilization site
- Searchable data base to purchase equipment
- Marketing plan for data base

Outcome: Documented status update of progress on all activities. September 2007

Status update – On schedule

Objective 6: Continue to evaluate effectiveness of implementation.

- 6.1 Collect data, analyze and submit to RSA.
- 6.2 Modify objectives to demonstrate continual improvement toward increasing access to AT through reutilization.

Outcome: Connecticut will document measurable increases in acquisition of AT as demonstrated through the reutilization interventions in the domains of community living, education, and employment. September 2007

Status update – Connecticut will establish baseline data for all state plan reutilization interventions. September 2007

Year 3

Objective 7: Continue implementation of objectives, evaluation and revision for continual improvement.

Outcome: Connecticut will document continual improvement through data collection. September 2008

5.3 Device Loan Program – Describe how the State will implement a device loan program as described in section 4(e)(2)(C) of the Act.

Present System: NEAT operates an AT lending library. This service allows professional members to borrow equipment from the Library and bring these items to their facility or to their clients for trial and/or evaluation services. The NEAT AT Lending Library inventory, policy and procedure and loan forms are available on line or in hard copy. Professionals may download the lending paperwork or request a copy to be mailed to them.

AT Lending Library users may borrow equipment for 2, 4, or 6 weeks and longer time spans by arrangement. This allows the professional to evaluate the end user with the equipment and determine which piece of equipment is appropriate for him or her. This service helps the client obtain the correct piece of equipment for their needs.

Borrowed equipment can be picked up or shipped at the expense of the borrower and the borrower assumes all responsibility of the items for loan.

Additional organizations have loan programs that target individuals. Most of these programs offer loans at little or no cost. For example, the Hospital for Special Care operates a loan center where one can easily access durable medical equipment. Independent living centers and disability-specific organizations such as the Multiple Sclerosis Society and Senior Centers also operate loan closets.

Analysis of Problem:

Lack of information

While many organizations have inventory in Connecticut, there is no central information network making it easy to locate what one needs.

Objective 1: Create, implement, and maintain a web-based market linking persons or organizations interested in loaning AT with those who have AT available for loan in the state. This objective is directly coordinated with web-based marketing described as part of the reutilization plan 5.2, objective 2.

- 1.1 Complete inventory and document all existing device loan centers.
- 1.2 All activities are extensions of 5.2 Objective 2 for the purpose of increasing access to AT through equipment loans.

Outcome: Connecticut will have a web-based market place for access to AT available for loan. September 2006

Status update – On Schedule

Objective 2: Design and develop equipment loan program in coordination with other state programs. Programs selected in the assigned domains are as follows:

- Students in transition from high school
 - Adults living in the community on Home and Community Based Services
 - Small Business pilot
 - Telecommunication.
- 2.1 Partner with community-based organization such as NEAT for purchase of inventory and inventory management.
 - 2.2 Create a loan equipment replacement plan to assure retiring of inventory and new technology in program.
 - 2.2.1 Fund equipment plan annually.
 - 2.3 Establish and fund inventory based on needs of programs.

Outcome: Connecticut will have a device loan program coordinated with other programs specific to the domain areas assigned by RSA. September 2006.

Status update – Delayed. Connecticut has made progress by completing a statewide needs assessment of school systems and is partnering with community-based agencies for device loans for adults in the community. December 2006

Objective 3: Develop and implement an evaluation plan.

3.1 Design pre and post assessments utilizing tools developed by RSA.

3.2 Collect data for baseline assessments and submit to RSA.

Outcome: Connecticut will have a baseline assessment for all state plan device loan interventions. September 2006

Status update – Delayed - Data collection not established by RSA.

Year 2

Objective 4: Fully implement interventions designed in Year One as described in Objectives 1 and 2.

Outcome: Documented status update of progress on all activities. September 2007

Status update – On Schedule

Objective 5: Continue to evaluate effectiveness of implementation.

5.1 Collect data, analyze and submit to RSA.

5.2 Modify objectives to demonstrate continual improvement in increasing access to AT through device loans.

Outcome: Connecticut will document measurable increase in acquisition to AT as demonstrated through the reutilization interventions. September 2007

Status update – Connecticut will establish baseline data for all state plan device loan interventions. September 2007

Year 3

Objective 6: Continue implementation of objectives, evaluation and revision for continual improvement.

Outcome: Connecticut will document continual improvement through data collection. September 2008

Status update – On Schedule

5.4 Device Demonstration Program – Describe how the State will implement a device demonstration program as described in section 4(e)(2)(D) of the Act.

Connecticut's present system for device demonstration

The NEAT Demonstration Center in Hartford, CT is one of the two major components of the NEAT Marketplace. It is a resource to people with disabilities, their families, and the

professionals with whom they work, providing information and hands-on experience with the latest in a wide variety of assistive devices. The NEAT Demonstration Center addresses the needs of professionals and consumers to determine appropriateness of devices prior to purchase.

The NEAT Demonstration Center features:

- Specialized exhibits showing a vast array of state-of-the-art AT equipment
- Workshops and Product Demonstrations provided by experts in the field of assistive technology.
- An information and referral library.
- An Adapted Computer Lab stocked with the latest in software and computer access devices
- An assistive technology lending library

Other demonstration sites for assistive technology in the State of Connecticut include the Regional Education Service Centers, United Cerebral Palsy, Southern Connecticut State University, and Easter Seals. Connecticut plans to build on existing capacity in the community and increase coordination. Demonstration sites will include the capability for both instructional demonstration and ‘hands on’ experience. AT inventories will be shared with MOAs developed between organizations. Technical assistance in demonstrations may also be shared via video conferencing from central sites.

Year 1

Objective 1: Create additional capacity for demonstrating AT.

- 1.1 Complete inventory of all existing demonstration sites in Connecticut
- 1.2 Design scope of RFP and solicit proposals to increase capacity of existing demonstration networks including independent living centers, regional education service centers and Southern Connecticut State University.
- 1.3 Review proposals, select and award contract.

Outcome: Connecticut will have 1 additional comprehensive demonstration site. September 2006

Status update – Delayed. Progress has been made and a location secured - will be completed by March 2006.

Objective 2: Create a demonstration equipment replacement plan to assure retiring of inventory and new technology in program.

- 2.1 Establish and fund inventory based on needs of programs.
- 2.2 Fund equipment plan annually.

Outcome: Connecticut will have an equipment replacement plan. September 2006

Status update – Delayed – due to delay in hiring new staff and increased efforts on the web-based exchange and regionalization – the planning for retiring inventory has begun but is not complete. This will be completed in Year 2, September 2007.

Objective 3: Create marketing strategy for increasing access through demonstrations targeting domains of education, telecommunication, employment and community living.

- 3.1 Assess and document existing communication networks across all domains including education, employment, community living, and telecommunication.
- 3.2 Identify strengths in existing network and establish coordination.
- 3.3 Design and produce targeted promotional materials in multiple formats.

Outcome: Connecticut will have a marketing plan to promote AT demonstration centers. September 2006

Status update – On Schedule

Objective 4: Design and implement evaluation plan for expansion of demonstration centers.

- 4.1 Collect, analyze and submit base line data to RSA.

Outcome: Evaluation Plan September 2006

Status update – Delayed – due to delay in hiring new staff and increased efforts on the web-based exchange and regionalization – the Evaluation Plan has not been completed. This will be completed in Year 2, September 2007.

Year 2

Objective 3: Fully implement interventions designed in Year One as described in Objectives 1.

Outcome: Documented status update of progress on all activities. September 2007

Status update – On Schedule

Objective 4: Continue to evaluate effectiveness of implementation.

- 4.1 Collect data, analyze and submit to RSA.

- 4.2 Modify expansion of demonstration centers to demonstrate continual improvement in increasing access to AT through demonstrations.

Outcome: Connecticut will document measurable increases in access to AT. September 2007

Status update – Delayed - Data collection not established by RSA.

Year 3

Objective 5: Replicate modified demonstration in two community-based sites.

- 5.1 Develop RFP to expand demonstration sites.
- 5.2 Explore video conferencing as a resource in demonstrations.
- 5.3 Identify community-based sites.
- 5.4 Fund sites and monitor implementation.

Outcome: Connecticut will have four demonstration sites. September 2008

Status update – On Schedule

Objective 6: Continue implementation of objectives, evaluation and revision for continual improvement. September 2008

Status update – On Schedule

Attachment 6: Comparable Support

6.1 Source and Amount of Support – Identify the State-level activity for which there is comparable support, the source of this support, the amount of the support, and the project year for which this support is being provided.

*Connecticut will advance all State level activities as part of this State Plan.
This section is not applicable.*

6.2 Comparability -- Demonstrate that this support is comparable in terms of funding and that the activities are comparable in terms of scope.

Not Applicable.

6.3 Coordination and Collaboration – Describe how the State will coordinate activities and collaborate with the appropriate entity, if the comparable funds are provided to, or the activities are conducted by, an entity other than the Lead Agency or Implementing Entity.

Not Applicable.

Attachment 7: State Flexibility

7.1 Activity – Identify each State-level activity the State is choosing not to carry out.

This section is not applicable.

Connecticut will engage in all State-level activities.

7.2 Maintenance of Statewideness and Comprehensiveness – Demonstrate that the Statewide AT Program will continue to be comprehensive without conducting this activity.

This section is not applicable.

7.3 Achievement of Measurable Goals - Demonstrate that the State can reach its measurable education goals, employment goals, telecommunications and information technology goals, and community living goals without conducting such activities.

This section is not applicable.

7.4 Coordination and Collaboration – Describe how the Lead Agency or Implementing Entity will coordinate activities and collaborate with entities in the State that do conduct this activity, if the State chooses not to conduct this activity because another entity already conducts it.

This section is not applicable.

Attachment 8: State Leadership Activities

- 8.1 Training and Technical Assistance Activities – Describe how the State will provide training and technical assistance to enhance the knowledge, skills, and competencies of individuals from local settings statewide, including representatives of State and local educational agencies, other State and local agencies, early intervention programs, adult service programs, hospitals and other health care facilities, institutions of higher education and businesses as described in section 4(e)(3)(B)(i) of the AT Act.

Training and Technical Assistance

General Summary: Connecticut planned to hire an AT Coordinator in September 2005 to oversee training and technical assistance relative to Connecticut's State Plan. The AT Coordinator was hired in January 2006. During the first year, Connecticut began the process of establishing peer networks for technical assistance (known as Tech Mentors). Peer networks will be established through partnering with established consumer organizations such as parents groups, independent living centers, disability specific organizations, and individuals directly. Formal memorandums of understanding or contracts will be established with the consumer organizations detailing a fee for service structure for individuals who have 'real life' expertise with AT. The peer technical assistance will be paid by the AT program and offered as a free option to consumers. This option for assistance will offer an additional choice beyond 'professional expertise' to persons seeking information related to the acquisition of AT. This 'consumer control' oriented model respects the importance and added value of those who use AT and their knowledge about what works and what doesn't. Connecticut will demonstrate that utilizing peer networks is both an efficient use of resources and an effective methodology for offering assistance. The plan will utilize Tech Mentors from parents, to students, to persons with disabilities living in the community in assistive technology training. Tech Mentors will offer expertise relative to the integration of assistive technology in the specified domains of **education, employment, telecommunication and community living**.

Training and technical assistance for State and local agencies

AT staff will present workshops in coordination with statewide conferences. Training curriculum will also be established for professional development 'on site' for both State and local agencies. Satisfaction surveys will be completed following every training. Technical assistance will be available as a free consultation service. Specific concerns relative to the AT needs of persons with disabilities working with State and local agencies may be referred to the AT Coordinator. The AT Coordinator will advise or make appropriate referrals assuring that needed information is accessible.

Annual Assistive Technology conference: Connecticut plans to coordinate with the annual Assistive Technology conference sponsored by the Bureau of Special Education. The AT Coordinator will present workshops.

Training and technical assistance for Employers

Connecticut will coordinate with local Chambers of Commerce to design, develop and implement an employer-training module. The employment-training module will have three components. The first component will increase awareness on how assistive technology can be successfully integrated into the workplace to support persons with disabilities. The AT Coordinator will also sit on an expert panel at the annual Connecticut Department of Labor Employment Symposium to discuss the integration of assistive technology in the workplace. The second component will be designed to create awareness about the State's activities regarding the alternate financing activities as they relate to small business and loan devices. The third component will provide information, training and awareness regarding available technical assistance.

Training and technical assistance for adult service program providers

Presentations designed to increase knowledge, skills and competencies related to AT and the difference it can make in a persons life will be available at no cost through the AT project. Training will also include information regarding the State level activities assuring that information is linked to AT access points in the State. Free technical assistance will be available for specific AT problems. Additionally, during the first year a case conferencing model has been developed as a form of technical assistance to offer expertise in the areas of Independent living, PCA needs, Benefits information and Assistive Technology for VR Counselors. The AT Coordinator has played an essential role in the development of this model and will participate in the case conference when technical assistance around assistive technology is needed.

Training and technical assistance for early intervention programs

Presentations for early intervention program providers are currently conducted by the Department of Mental Retardation. The AT program will provide training for DMR staff assuring that DMR staff are aware of the AT Act resources and state level activities including consultation. Tech Mentors will be available to provide peer technical assistance to offer parents of young children 1:1 assistance from someone with real life experience regarding the integration of AT into community life for children. The Tech Mentors will be operated through the AT Act as a fee for service model. The fee will be paid by the AT program not the consumer.

Training and technical assistance for institutions of higher education

The AT program will coordinate with Southern Connecticut State University (Southern) for the provision of training and technical assistance for institutions of higher education. Southern is the leading university in Connecticut both in access and acquisition of AT for students. Southern has expressed an interest in partnering with the AT Act to share resources and expertise with other institutions of higher education. Southern will also open their Adaptive Lab as a demonstration center for community members as well as for VR consumers and for training for Tech Mentors. Training opportunities will be available though state sponsored conference workshops.

Training and technical assistance for hospitals and health care facilities

Connecticut's AT program will coordinate with the State's transition program to provide technical assistance and training to hospitals and health care facilities targeting those health care facilities where persons are transitioning to the community. Training curriculum will include learning objectives relative to the types of AT available and the difference AT can make in community living. Training will also include information about State level activities and opportunities for technical assistance available through the AT Act. The AT Coordinator will be available for consultation regarding discharge planning.

Training and Technical assistance for persons moving from institutional facilities to the community and/or living in the community

The Tech Mentor peer technical assistance component is being developed in coordination with independent living centers as well as individuals from the community. The Tech Mentors will be matched with persons moving from institutional facilities to the community and/or living in the community. Tech Mentors will provide one-on-one assistance from someone with real life experience regarding the integration of AT into the transition process. This technical assistance will be coordinated with the State activities including the device loan program.

Training and Technical assistance for students in transition A peer technical assistance component will be developed in coordination with Southern Connecticut State University and the independent living centers. College students or adults using adaptive technology will be matched with students in transition providing one-on-one assistance from someone with real life experience regarding the integration of AT into the transition process. This technical assistance will be coordinated with the State activities including the device loan program. The AT Coordinator is a member of the Statewide Transition Taskforce as well as the BRS Transition Committee. During the first year, a needs assessment of all the transition coordinators was conducted to assess the training needs of their teachers around assistive technology and transition. The results will be developed into Professional Development training for teachers conducted by the AT Coordinator.

8.2 Public Awareness Activities – Describe how the State will provide information to targeted individuals and entities relating to the availability, benefits, appropriateness, and costs of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services as described in section 4(e)(3)(B)(ii) of the AT Act.

Over the next three years, Connecticut will use multiple methods of outreach for increasing public awareness. Outreach will be structured according to the domains to assure that targeted audiences receive the most appropriate messages.

Information and Referral: The toll free INFO-line will continue to provide free information and referral services on AT for people of all ages with all disabilities. Family members, service providers and those who work in fields related to disabilities or AT may also use this service. Staff of the AT program provide information to those who call on the availability, benefits, appropriateness and cost of AT devices and services.

Additional information on resources and devices is available upon request and is often helpful in order for individuals to make a more informed decision regarding AT.

Coordination with partners: Connecticut will coordinate with Birth to Three, Parent to Parent, Independent Living Centers, One Stop Employment Centers, senior centers, and other disability related organizations to assure that information regarding Connecticut's Tech Act project is available to existing networks. Informational brochures will be sent to the designated organizations detailing the State level activities and technical assistance available. The AT Coordinator will be available to attend organizational meetings and present information. Additionally, the development of the web-based environment will provide a single point of access so that all networks can easily access information regarding the program.

Newsletter: Connecticut will distribute a quarterly newsletter that highlights information regarding assistive technology. The newsletter will be distributed both electronically and in hard copy to those who do not have internet access. Existing list serves and mailing lists at Independent Living Centers, Department of Education, disability specific organizations, etc. will be utilized for the dissemination of information. Regular sections of the newsletter will include AT information on Current events around the State regarding AT, website resources, and an update on legislative initiatives. The newsletter will be coordinated with other newsletters on AT to assure that there is no duplication of information.

Web site: As previously mentioned, the development and expansion of Connecticut Tech Act's web environment is an essential component of the three-year plan. The AT Coordinator has invested a significant amount of time and effort in the creation of the group purchase of the AgoraNet, Inc web-based exchange as well as in taking the lead to coordinate the New England Regional web-based exchange. Connecticut plans to incorporate web-based applications into its AT program, including a web-based loan and recycling program as well as web-based applications and referrals for the Tech Mentor Program. Information regarding those programs as well as the demonstration program and loan program will be accessible via the web.

8.3 Coordination and Collaboration – Describe how the State will coordinate activities among public and private entities that are responsible for policies, procedures, or funding for the provision of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services to individuals with disabilities, service providers, and others to improve access to assistive technology devices and assistive technology services as described in section 4(e)(3)(B)(iii) of the AT Act.

Adaptive laboratory at Southern Connecticut State University: Southern Connecticut's adaptive computer lab represents a large State investment. Connecticut AT State plan builds on the existing capacity of the facilities available at Southern to expand the State's activities. Southern has expressed an interest in expanding their program to include other state level activities beyond demonstration for education which is their existing primary focus. Coordination with Southern will provide a cost effective strategy

to multiply the effectiveness of an existing state resource. Southern has agreed to begin by providing use their Adaptive lab for training of Tech Mentors as well as for AT demonstrations to VR consumers and community members.

Nursing facility transition program: The State's Nursing Facility Transition Program will provide an opportunity to coordinate assistive technology with community living for those moving from institutions. Targeted outreach will provide those transitioning with information regarding the AT State level programs. The Nursing Facility Transition Program is administered by the Center which facilitates coordination.

Home and Community based Waiver Programs: Coordinating AT programs with existing waivers will provide opportunities to increase access to and acquisition of AT for those receiving waiver services. Some waiver programs in the State of Connecticut do not presently include AT. Coordinating the acquisition of AT under the AT Act with other programs designed to study the impact of interventions on both increasing independence and on Medicaid expenditures provides an additional opportunity to improve the lives of persons with disabilities living in Connecticut.

Medicaid Infrastructure Grant: Pilot programs designed specifically to coordinate assistive technology with employment will be explored through coordination with the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant. Both the AT program and the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant are housed within the Connect to Work Center at the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services.

NEAT Marketplace: NEAT Marketplace is one of the major centers of activity for the Statewide AT Program in Connecticut. The CT Statewide AT Program will continue to support NEAT as a center for demonstration, loan devices, and recycling.

Independent Living Centers: The independent living centers provide an opportunity to coordinate peer networks (Tech Mentor Program) for technical assistance. The Tech Mentor technical assistance will be a fee for service under the AT program and will be an option for persons with disabilities requiring technical assistance.

Attachment 9: Involvement of Public and Private Entities

9.1 Nature and Extent of Resources – Describe the nature and extent of resources that will be committed by public and private collaborators to assist in accomplishing identified goals.

Public collaborators:

State Agencies: Seven members of the AT Council are representatives of agencies including: Centers for Independent Living, Department of Mental Retardation, Board of Education Services for the Blind, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Department of Education, Bureau of Rehabilitation Services, and the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission, the states' Workforce Investment Board. The State has committed agency staff time to assure coordination and leadership in change. Staff time is an in-kind contribution to the AT Act.

Southern Connecticut State University: Existing resources of the Adaptive Technology lab and the facility will be utilized for the state level demonstration program. Staff of the Adaptive Technology lab will provide technical assistance in their lab. Staff time is an in-kind contribution.

Private collaborators:

NEAT Marketplace: NEAT is a key partner of the Tech Act program in the State of Connecticut. The demonstration facility in Hartford represents a significant investment from the Connecticut Institute for the Blind (CIB). Expertise built over the years, as well as the capacity for demonstrations and recycling, support the advancement of the three-year plan. While the AT program plans to continue funding expansion of the NEAT facility, the program also benefits from the significant investment of CIB which multiplies the impact of the available resources.

Peoples Bank: People's Bank contributes expertise in banking and administration of loan programs at significantly reduced rates compared to those offered to the general public.

9.2 Mechanisms to Ensure Coordination - Describe the mechanisms established to ensure coordination of activities and collaboration between the implementing entity, if any, and the State.

There is no implementing entity.

9.3 Involvement of State Advisory Council - Describe the nature and extent of the involvement of the State Advisory Council in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the activities carried out through the grant, including setting the measurable goals required in section 4(d)(3).

The State Advisory Council (AT Council) is very involved with all aspects of Connecticut's AT project. The design and development of the state plan were completed in collaboration with the Council. A framework to facilitate meetings was created and all

Council members participated, at times breaking into small groups in order to assure input. Drafts of the State's plan were shared electronically so that those who could not attend meetings could read the drafts and offer comments.

The level of involvement of the AT Council in the planning phase of the State plan will continue throughout the implementation and evaluation. The AT Council will guide all elements of activity. Decisions will be jointly made and problems jointly solved. Additionally, several members of the AT Council sit on sub-committee's for various Tech Act programs, such as the web-based exchange and the Tech Mentor program.

Attachment 10: State Support

10.1 State Support for State-level Activities – If applicable, describe how the State will support with State funds any State-level activities described in section 4(e)(2).

State funds are the primary source of income for Southern Connecticut State University. The Adaptive Technology Lab is an exemplary State resource that will be leveraged and coordinated with the State's activities under this three-year plan. While the lab has not been associated with the AT Act to date, this plan represents a new partnership building on the State's investment at Southern. The state currently invests a significant amount of money into the delivery of AT services at Southern.

10.2 State Support for State Leadership Activities - If applicable, describe how the State will support with State funds any State Leadership activities described in section 4(e)(3), if applicable.

The State of Connecticut supports many conferences in the State such as the AT Conference hosted by the Bureau of Special Education. One leadership activity presented in this plan is the presentation of workshops at State sponsored AT conferences. Conference expenses include hotel space, staff time, travel time, etc. The State also supports technical assistance in many of the domains such as employment, education, telecommunication and to a lesser degree in Community living. Technical Assistance includes expenditures for staff time, travel, benefits, etc. The AT program plans to strategically coordinate and build upon what is working. Connecticut expects this strategy to effectively avoid duplication and multiply the impact of the state plan in advancing of assistive technology.

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 state agencies in Connecticut use the same web-based system to track budgets and expenditures. This system, known as CORE, includes coding to allow the agencies to differentiate between programs. A separate program code will be requested for the AT Program, and the program staff will code each expenditure accordingly. Separate codes will be established to facilitate the tracking of State-level and State Leadership expenses.

At any time, a report can be obtained to monitor expenditures to assure that the AT program is in compliance with the percentages and budget amounts developed in accordance with the State Plan. It will be the responsibility of the program coordinator to monitor expenditures on a monthly basis.

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 project.

Proposed	Distribution	Total Award Amount	
		Year 1	Year2
<u>Allocation</u>		<u>\$320,000</u>	<u>\$320,000</u>
State Level	60%	\$172,800	\$172,800
State Leadership	40%	\$115,200	\$115,200
<i>Leadership Activities</i>	<i>95% (of 40%)</i>	<i>\$109,440</i>	<i>\$109,440</i>
<i>Transition</i>	<i>5% (of 40%)</i>	<i>\$ 5,760</i>	<i>\$ 5,760</i>
Indirect Costs	10%	\$ 32,000	\$ 32,000
TOTAL		\$320,000	\$320,000

Within the above budget, Connecticut's AT program proposes to allocate funds for specific activities in the following manner.

State Level Activities	Proposed Allocation	
	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>
State Financing Activities	\$51,800	\$51,800
Device Reutilization Program	\$33,500	\$33,500
Device Loan Program	\$57,500	\$57,500
Device Demonstration Program	\$30,000	\$30,000
State Leadership Activities	Proposed Allocation	
Training and Technical Assistance Activities	\$82,440	\$82,440
Transition	\$ 5,760	\$ 5,760
Public Awareness Activities	\$16,000	\$16,000
Coordination and Collaboration	\$11,000	\$11,000