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

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Attachment 1: Basic Information

Name of Lead Agency: Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals

Name of Applicable Division and/or Subdivision of Lead Agency: Not Applicable

Address of Lead Agency: P O Box 629, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0629

Name and Title of Certifying Representative for Lead Agency: Dr. Fred Cerise,
Secretary, Department of Health and Hospitals

Address for Certifying Representative: P O Box 629, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0629

Telephone for Certifying Representative: 225.342.9503

E-mail for Certifying Representative: fcerise@dhh.la.gov

Name and Title of Program Director: Donna Thompson, Executive Management Officer

Address for Program Director: P. O. Box 629, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-0629

Telephone for Program Director: 225.342.2476

E-mail for Program Director: dthomps@dhh.la.gov

Name and Title of Program Contact: (if different from Program Director) Not applicable

Address for Program Contact:

Telephone for Program Contact:

E-mail for Program Contact:

Name of Implementing Entity: Louisiana Assistive Technology Access Network

Name of Applicable Division and/or Subdivision of Implementing Entity: Not
Applicable

Address of Implementing Entity: P O Box 14115, Baton Rouge, LA 70898/3042 Old
Forge Road, Suite D, Baton Rouge, LA 70808

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Name and Title of Program Director: Julie M. Nesbit, ATP

Address for Program Director: P O Box 14115, Baton Rouge, LA 70898/3042 Old Forge Road, Suite D, Baton Rouge, LA 70808

Telephone for Program Director: 225.925.9500

E-mail for Program Director: jnesbit@latan.org

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:

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Attachment 2: Lead Agency and Implementing Entity

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.

2.1A Identification and Description of Lead Agency if an Implementing Entity is not Designated

An Implementing Entity is designated as described below.

2.1B Identification and Description of the Lead Agency if an Implementing Entity is Designated

The Lead Agency for the Assistive Technology Act grant is the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH). DHH has been the lead agency for the AT state grant program under both the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act and the Assistive Technology Act (AT Act) since designated by the Governor at the inception of the program. DHH certifies the assurances in Part II. The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) is the state-run entity that protects and promotes health to ensure access to medical, preventive and rehabilitative services for all citizens of the State of Louisiana. This includes a service system that provides information, training, and leadership in the development of a comprehensive array of individualized supports and services to people with disabilities. DHH is dedicated to fulfilling its mission through the direct provision of quality services, the development and stimulation of services of others, and the utilization of available resources in the most effective manner. DHH provides many services for individuals with disabilities of all ages across the state, and is in the process of implementing Governor Kathleen Blanco's plan for community-based long-term supports and services in the state.

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.

The Implementing Entity for the Assistive Technology Act grant is the Louisiana Assistive Technology Access Network (LATAN). LATAN has been the implementing entity for the AT state grant (herein referred to as the Statewide AT Program) Assistive Technology Act grant since designated by the Governor in 1994. LATAN has provided program services over the years, according to the requirements of the AT Act current at the time. Services to Louisiana citizens have included free access to information and referral, an accessible website, a quarterly newsletter, and publications in accessible formats on extensive topics related to disability rights, laws, policies, funding opportunities for assistive technology, types of assistive technology and its benefits for various populations. LATAN has also provided public awareness presentations, training

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and technical assistance, and an assistive technology loan program funded by a grant under Title III of the AT Act of 1998, with a matching grant from DHH.

The mission of LATAN is to assist individuals with disabilities to achieve a higher quality of life and greater independence through increased access to assistive technology as part of their daily lives. Over the next three years, under the Assistive Technology (AT) Act, as amended, LATAN will continue to serve as the implementing entity responsible for the Statewide AT Program, and will continue or begin programs to accomplish this mission.

The Louisiana Assistive Technology Access Network is a private, non-for-profit organization, directed by a Board of Directors of which the majority are individuals with disabilities or family members. LATAN was incorporated in 1994 for the purpose of implementing the Statewide AT Program AT Act, its staff having been with the program while within the DHH agency for the first two years. In 2004, LATAN was awarded the Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organization's (LANO) Seal of Excellence for successfully completing the Louisiana Standards for Excellence Voluntary Certification Program. The Louisiana Standards for Excellence are based on fundamental values such as honesty, integrity, fairness, respect, trust, responsibility and accountability. LATAN's programs and services, management, and financial practices were examined in-depth before certification was awarded last year, the first year of certification in Louisiana.

Over the last fourteen years, LATAN has demonstrated its 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. Program activities are designed with input from a diversity of individuals with disabilities across the state, as well as service providers, and agency representatives, and LATAN's focus groups and AT User-majority Advisory Council and Board of Directors, as well as feedback from service participants assure that it will remain consumer-responsive.

Because LATAN is not a state agency dedicated to specific programs that promote limited activities or serve limited populations, LATAN will have the flexibility to assist individuals with assistive technology across the lifespan and in any environment or for any purpose, including education, employment, telecommunications and community living. This flexibility also means that access to LATAN programs will not be limited by eligibility criteria such as income, age, type of disability, or the reason that an individual needs AT. Despite LATAN's state office being in the south central part of the state, LATAN will make its programs available statewide through a toll-free number, an accessible website, conducting activities in all regions of the state on a periodic basis, and the use of space operated by local collaborating public and private agencies. The LATAN main office being in Baton Rouge, Louisiana's capital city, gives access to state offices and agencies for collaboration and coordination in policy work, and for program implementation.

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LATAN employs individuals with skills and expertise needed to implement specific program activities, and, because of its not-for-profit status, is not limited by available positions in state agencies. When operating under the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1988, LATAN hired, and sometimes contracted with, assistive technology specialists and disability organizations to operate regional centers. When the AT Act of 1994 focused the required activities on systems change and advocacy activities, LATAN hired policy and funding specialists. In order to implement the three-year plan under the AT Act of 1998, as amended, LATAN will hire and/or contract with assistive technology and other program specialists with the specific expertise needed for each program.

During the first year, part of the program development was identifying the additional staff needed for activities and bringing them on board. This will continue in Years Two and Three. Being consumer-directed and consumer-responsive are values of importance to LATAN that are born out in its staffing, as well as on its Board, as mentioned above. On the ten-member staff currently are two individuals with disabilities who use assistive technology, three individuals with children who use assistive technology, and two individuals with a parent and other family members who use assistive technology. Two staff members have been with the AT program since its beginning and each have fourteen years of providing AT services. Another staff member has been with LATAN for seven years. Staff members have varying degrees of expertise, some with specific populations, such as people who are aging, and people with spinal cord injuries. One staff member currently holds an Assistive Technology Practitioner credential from the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America. Other staff members have computer support training and experience, and personal experience using assistive technology. LATAN will ensure that the skills of its staff remain current by providing them with training opportunities throughout the three years covered by this state plan.

LATAN has a fourteen-year history of established relationships with public and private entities in the state, including those in the field of assistive technology and those who serve individuals with disabilities throughout the state. Specifically, LATAN participates on boards, advisory councils, workgroups, committees, and commissions that address the needs of Louisianians with disabilities across the life span with agencies such as: the State Department of Education Louisiana Assistive Technology Initiative, the Department of Rehabilitation Services, Medicaid, the Bureau of Community Supports and Services, the Disability Supports and Services System Consumer Task Force, the DHH Housing Task Force, the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs, the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs, the Developmental Disabilities Council, the Statewide Independent Living Council, and the Louisiana Rehabilitation Council.

In addition, LATAN has been most fortunate in being able to collaborate with many disability organizations because we are a consumer-directed organization ourselves. Some of these organizations are the Louisiana Arc, United Cerebral Palsy, Traumatic Brain Injury/Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund, centers for independent living, councils on aging, and Families Helping Families. LATAN will continue these collaborations, and provide training, technical assistance and public awareness activities to the above

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agencies and other entities within the state. LATAN will also work with the agencies mentioned above and others on new and ongoing initiatives in the state to address AT needs of individuals with disabilities. These collaborative efforts will increase LATAN's capacity to conduct a program addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities in education, employment, telecommunications, and community living. These initiatives are described in more detail as a part of "Coordination and Collaboration" in attachment 8, and within the descriptions of the various required activities.

LATAN may subcontract with existing agencies to provide services, especially to more remote locations. LATAN is in the process of negotiating with three agencies in the northwest part of the state, Families Helping Families of Northwest Louisiana, New Horizons Independent Living Center, and Bossier Council on Aging, to collaborate for the implementation of the first assistive technology demonstration center in the area. The extent of subcontracting by the implementing entity will depend on the outcome of the specific program activities designed and developed during the second year. DHH as the Lead Agency will have no additional subcontracts under this State Plan.

In addition to the advisory council described in Attachment 3 of this plan, and in addition to LATAN's consumer-majority Board of Directors and staff, LATAN will ensure that its program is consumer-responsive by seeking direct feedback from those who access the program, either through on-site interviews with participants or follow-up surveys. Additionally, LATAN will continue to utilize consumer focus groups to seek specific guidance on many of its programs and services.

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.

There will be no change in the Lead Agency or Implementing Entity for this grant.

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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.

During the three years of this state plan, the LATAN Advisory Council, which was initially appointed February 22, 2005, will provide consumer-driven, consumer-responsive advice to the state for planning, implementation, and evaluation of the activities of Louisiana's Statewide Assistive Technology Program.

In discussing the original make-up of the Advisory Council, the LATAN staff and board opted to form six (6) regional focus groups that would each have a representative on the main body of the Advisory Council. Due to the difficulty in the actual implementation of this structure in Year One, and because of the loss of people with disabilities in certain areas of the state due to the hurricane disasters, the make-up and organization of the focus groups and Advisory Council will change in Year Two. The regional focus groups, formally organized to represent Louisiana geographically through bodies representing each area, will only continue in the areas with sufficient interest and input to be effective. Informal focus groups will be convened in other areas of the state to be sure of input statewide. Such groups will be convened on the sites of other disability organizations and agencies, such as Councils on Aging, Families Helping Families, Centers for Independent Living, and Mayors' Commissions. AT-users and family members of AT-users on the Advisory Council will be chosen from interested individuals in a manner that will assure the geographic diversity needed, with two representatives chosen from each of the six regional areas.

In developing the state plan, implementing activities, and evaluating measurable goals, the Advisory Council and focus groups provide these important benefits:

- Bringing a broad range of minds and experiences to the table;
- Serving in a capacity similar to a statewide focus group in providing useful input, suggestions and critical analysis;
- Providing greater access to local contacts throughout the State;
- Providing an objective evaluation of LATAN activities and their effectiveness;
- Providing needed input from the rural and small town perspective;
- Acting as a statewide system of advocates who are prepared and willing to mobilize on policy issues;
- Providing assistance in increasing public awareness of LATAN and its activities;
- Providing needed input on identifying additional resources;
- Recruiting new individuals to assist LATAN in the future and develop their leadership skills; and
- Assisting with developing new programs.

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The Advisory Council had thirteen members initially. However, due to the devastating disasters faced by many of our people, and the lack of time available to work on the Advisory Council, we currently have only eleven, having lost our two members from the southeast area of the state. In Year Two, the Advisory Council will increase to eighteen members, with twelve being AT-users or family members of AT-users. In Year Two, twelve members, 67% of the Council, will be individuals with disabilities who use AT or families of individuals with disabilities who use AT. These twelve members will represent the six areas of the state, two from each area. The center of Louisiana's population has shifted from the southeast area to the south central area. The remaining six members of the Council represent agencies, including: the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (which includes Services for the Blind), Center for Independent Living, Department of Education, the State Workforce Investment Board, Medicaid, and the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs. Although one of the agency representatives has disabilities, he will not be counted toward the majority membership of people with disabilities and family members. Other agencies may be added as needed for implementation of the plan; however we will always keep the AT-user majority on the Council by adding new members as necessary.

Members of the Advisory Council who are assistive technology users include, Mattie Wilson, who is also the parent of an AT user, and co-chair of the Council; Wallace Johnson, Program Coordinator for Families Helping Families of Southwest Louisiana; and Wayne Jones.

Family Members of assistive technology users on the Advisory Council are June Street, Supervisor, Programs for Students Who Are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Department of Education; and Lisa Robinson, Parent Facilitator, Families Helping Families.

State Agency Representatives on the Council are Mitch Iddings, Advisory Council Chair, an AT user, Independent Living/Durable Medical Equipment Specialist, New Horizons Independent Living Center, representing the Center for Independent Living; Janice Fruge', Program Consultant, Louisiana Department of Education, Division of Special Populations, representing the Department of Education; Pete Darling, Workforce Specialist, Governor's Office, Louisiana Workforce Commission, representing the Workforce Investment Board; John Schweitzer, Assistive Technology Program Coordinator, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, representing the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation; James Phillips, Durable Medical Equipment Program Supervisor, Louisiana Medicaid, representing Louisiana Medicaid; and Mary Tonore, Director, Home and Community-Based Services, Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs, representing the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs.

Members of the Advisory Council live in parishes throughout the state to ensure representation from both rural and urban areas of Louisiana. Similarly, the membership reflects the racial diversity of the state, as it includes representatives of the two most prominent groups in Louisiana: African-American, and Caucasian individuals. Less than 4% of the population belongs to other ethnic groups, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. However, efforts will be continued to recruit other ethnic groups as members of the focus

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groups and representatives to the Advisory Council. Members who use AT use a variety of devices, such as mobility devices, vision aids, hearing devices, augmentative communication devices, and computer adaptations.

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

The Advisory Council was established to provide consumer-responsive, consumer-driven advice to the State for, planning of, implementation of and evaluation of activities carried out through the grant, including setting the measurable goals set out in the Act.

Members of the Advisory Council become part of the council in two ways: agency representatives are appointed by their respective agencies, while consumer representatives are volunteers solicited through networks of disability organizations and councils throughout the state, and who represent their area of the state. All members are expected to serve a term to coincide with the length of LATAN's state plan.

The Advisory Council is led by a chair who has been elected by the members of the Council. A similarly elected vice-chair serves in the absence of the chair. The Advisory Council itself will determine the need for subcommittees on a case-by-case basis and will elect members of any proposed subcommittees. Council decisions are made either through consensus, or if consensus cannot be reached, by member vote. LATAN's Advisory Council has adopted operating principles and procedures, which ensures the participation of focus group members in the planning process.

Subsequent meetings during the planning phase were held in the state's capital city. Meetings during Year One were held in central Louisiana, affording the most beneficial travel accommodations for the members. Future meetings will be held around the state to the extent feasible and desired by the members. LATAN's staff makes the meeting room arrangements, develops materials for information packets for members, and ensures site and material accessibility. The chair of the LATAN Advisory Council and the LATAN director or designee together set the agenda for Council meetings to ensure that council members are informed about state AT issues, and to provide the opportunity for input and feedback from Council members. Meetings may feature presentations and guest speakers who will be selected based on the input of Council members. Staff of the Statewide AT Program will update the Advisory Council on the activities of the program, share recent data with the members, and present any planned initiatives so the Council can provide input. The chair will facilitate discussion throughout the meeting to gain input and provide guidance in planning program activities. Staff records minutes of the meetings.

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Attachment 4: Measurable Goals

LATAN will establish a baseline for each of the goals 4.1 through 4.7 during year two of the State Plan and will submit after year two an amendment identifying the long-term goal and short-term goals set to improve upon this baseline during year three of the State Plan. This baseline will be established by using a data collection instrument and procedures to be determined by Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) after the State plan process has been completed.

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.

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- 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:

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- 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.

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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.

During the three years of the State Plan, LATAN will continue to operate its reduced-interest, fixed-rate, and extended-term assistive technology loan program. The statewide loan program is available to people with disabilities of all ages and income levels in Louisiana. All types of assistive technology devices and services are eligible for loans. Loans range from \$500 to \$50,000. Interest rates are prime rate +1% or prime rate +2%, depending on the type and amount of the loan. Terms of the loan vary between one year and seven years. In Year Two LATAN will investigate the possibility of lowering the interest rate by negotiating with our current banking partner, with credit unions, and with other banking institutions.

Our loan program increases acquisition of AT by helping individuals who may not be able to afford to purchase a device outright, but who can over time repay a loan. Because our loan program does not have eligibility requirements, other than the financial ability to repay the loan, individuals who have been denied funding for devices through other programs such as Medicaid, Medicare, vocational rehabilitation, or special education can use our programs to acquire the device. During year two of the State Plan a baseline will be established to determine the percentage of people acquiring assistive technology devices and services through the loan program who would not have been able to acquire them otherwise.

Loan applications are available online, by a statewide toll-free number, in LATAN's office, at all Regions Bank offices, and at various agencies across the state, such as Families Helping Families, centers for independent living, councils on aging, parish libraries, blind services, vocational rehabilitation regional offices, and assistive technology and vehicle vendors. Several of these entities, as well as the LATAN staff, provide technical assistance in helping applicants complete their loan applications. The program also provides information about resources for assessments, assistive technology vendors, and other potential funding sources, which enable the loan applicants to make an informed choice and become good consumers of services.

Once applicants complete the loan application packet, including the type and cost of the assistive technology, they return it to the LATAN office. Loan staff checks the application for completeness, and then forwards the bank application to Regions Bank. The bank either approves or denies the loan, usually within a week, using criteria under this program, such as relaxing the usual requirements regarding delinquent medical bills relating to the disability. If it is approved, the loan is processed and then closed, either at a bank branch near the applicant, at a LATAN office, or at the home of the applicant, if necessary. If the loan is denied, the Loan Review Committee reviews it within five business days, and decides whether or not to guarantee the loan, using special criteria, such as a higher debt to income ratio than would be allowed under a traditional loan, little

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or no credit history, or a lower beacon score. If it is approved for guarantee, the bank processes the loan the same as with a non-guaranteed loan.

An Assistive Technology Loan Advisory Council establishes procedures for the program, and makes policy recommendations to the LATAN Board of Directors. The Loan Advisory Council is composed of a majority of AT users and family members across the state, and meets quarterly to receive program data, make suggestions for improving the program, and report on their committee work, such as outreach. The Loan Review Committee is also a consumer-majority group, and meets within five business days of a loan denial by the bank to determine the disposition of the loan regarding a guarantee. A representative from the Loan Advisory Council will be appointed to serve on the LATAN Advisory Council for the State Plan, as an additional initiative to ensure coordination and collaboration between the Loan Program and State Plan activities, though the programs are already working well together.

During the three years of this grant, LATAN will use a portion of its AT Act funds to supplement funds available from the original Title III grant to cover some of the operating costs of the loan program. LATAN will also continue its outreach to population groups currently underserved by the program, and will look for additional resources to expand the program. It is anticipated that the focus groups and the LATAN Advisory Council will assist in these efforts.

Through an aggressive marketing and public awareness campaign, the population served by the LATAN Assistive Technology Loan Program is predicted to increase, with particular focus on growth of loan placement in the Northwest and Central regions of Louisiana, areas historically underserved by the program. The AT Loan Program will also be looking at partnerships with such organizations as the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry and the Louisiana School Boards Association to determine how best to meet AT needs in the areas of employment and education. Outreach will be increased to individuals using or needing types of devices not currently being acquired sufficiently under this program, such as communication devices and other devices not fully utilizing the loan program. LATAN will identify and partner with non-traditional organizations to determine how best to meet AT loan needs in employment, education, community living, and telecommunications and information technology.

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.

Because of the hurricane disasters endured by Louisiana citizens in Year One that directly impacted the need for recycled devices, Louisiana began a program that was not planned initially for the three years of the State Plan. This program will continue into Years Two and Three. In addition, Louisiana plans to continue to implement two device reutilization programs originally planned and begun in Year One with at least some support from federal AT Act dollars: computer recycling, and a used equipment exchange. These reutilization programs will enable people who could not otherwise acquire used computers and other assistive technology to do so at low or no cost.

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1. Emergency Equipment Distribution Program

Since the AT Act State Plan was developed by the LATAN Advisory Council and approved by the Board of Directors and the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH), the environments in Louisiana has significantly changed. Hurricane Katrina in August 2005 and Hurricane Rita in September 2005 wreaked havoc on people's lives, and on all human service programs in the state, especially those charged with meeting the needs of people with disabilities, most of whom were not prepared to respond to a disaster.

LATAN found itself needing to respond to the assistive technology needs of individuals displaced and devastated by the disasters in a way that was different from the programs that had been originally planned. Even before we entered the new year of funding which began October 1, 2005, and carrying forward Year One of the State Plan, it became clear that some agency needed to come forward and assist people who had to leave their assistive technology behind during and immediately after the storms, and those who became disabled as a result of the disasters.

The program LATAN chose to implement, with input from Advisory Council members, focus groups members, the Board of Directors, other disability-serving groups, and DHH is a recycled equipment distribution program, a program that has been extremely labor-intensive. This came about as we began to investigate two days after the first storm the need for a response from LATAN to the Katrina disaster. LATAN began to receive direct requests for assistance from evacuees and indirectly through shelter staff. LATAN also began to receive numerous inquiries into our equipment needs to address the disaster from AT Act programs across the country. The inquiries, offers of help and requests for equipment lead to a more in-depth investigation of the needs of people with disabilities for equipment. LATAN staff, Board of Directors members, Advisory Council members, and volunteers visited shelters to speak to staff and evacuees and reported their findings. LATAN decided there was a great need and entered into a collaborative agreement with Southwest Louisiana Independence Center and New Horizons Independent Living Center to gather and distribute equipment for people displaced by Katrina.

The next few weeks were full of email requests for equipment, emailed responses from across the country letting us know equipment was on the way, a search for warehouse space at which to take delivery of equipment, a search for volunteers to help with the effort and the opening of a separate LATAN bank account to accept monetary donations.

A flyer and email message was sent out to all LATAN associates and news media statewide announcing the program. Staff, Board members and volunteers went to as many shelters as they possibly could to hand out flyers and cards letting people know about the program. Staff appeared on radio shows to announce the program and ask for equipment, volunteers and donations to support the effort. Donations of equipment began to arrive, requests for equipment began to come in and LATAN staff learned to unload pallets of equipment and deliver requests to Katrina evacuees. Volunteers came

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to LATAN to help with the telephone calls, database and to clean, sanitize and repair some of the donated equipment.

For more than three months, the LATAN staff and one volunteer alone delivered equipment in Baton Rouge, New Orleans, and the immediate area surrounding Baton Rouge, including St. Tammany, Livingston and Ascension Parishes. LATAN's partners delivered equipment in their areas, with LATAN delivering equipment to the partners as needed and available. LATAN staff members worked exclusively on this equipment distribution program for these three months, and continue to support the new program staff.

LATAN's application to the Baton Rouge Area Foundation's (BRAAF) Katrina Fund was awarded \$76,354 for the Equipment Distribution Program to be used from October-December 2005. After receiving the BRAAF grant, we were able to hire a program coordinator, clerical support and a delivery driver. The program coordinator took over the responsibility of scheduling equipment shipments, keeping the database of consumers up to date, scheduling deliveries, scheduling AT assessments by contracted therapists and generally keeping things going. One of LATAN's volunteers and board members is working with USSAAC, a national augmentative and alternative communication association, to help people get assessments and locate communication devices. The clerical support person's job description has evolved into an equipment selection and organizer. She prepares equipment and paper work for the daily deliveries to consumers.

This BRAAF grant for additional staff for 3-months allowed LATAN to use AT Act funding to arrange a year's lease on a warehouse and office from which to run the Equipment Distribution Program and to cover other program expenses. A subsequent BRAAF grant of \$75,000 allowed LATAN to continue the program until September 30, 2006. An application to the Disability Funders Network (DFN) for \$5,000 was funded to purchase wheelchair and scooter batteries, wheelchair cushions and other items to refit donated devices. These DSN grant funds were also used to purchase devices needed that had not been donated. LATAN received monetary donations from individuals, organizations and colleges from across the country. This funding is being used to supplement the \$5,000 in DFN funds to retrofit recycled devices and to purchase a few devices not donated to the program. It is estimated that the annual budget for this program is \$225,000, because of the high cost of renting trucks with lift gates, the cost of gasoline for delivery, the high rent being charged for warehouse space, the need to do some AT assessments, and the hiring of three temporary people to run the program. If the equipment had not been donated, this program would not have worked.

We have received equipment from thirteen agencies in eight states: Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nebraska and Pennsylvania, and from four individuals living in Missouri, Texas and Louisiana. Initially we received donated warehouse space from a DME provider from New Orleans who evacuated to Baton Rouge. We were able to store wheelchairs picked up by Louisiana Rehabilitation Services from the New Orleans Airport and brought to LATAN. We posted photographs and descriptions of these chairs on our website in an effort to find their owners.

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Volunteers searched missing persons databases and located some owners in states all over the country and unfortunately some who did not survive the evacuation ordeal. However, we need more equipment to meet the continuing needs of people with disabilities and older people.

Of the over 1,000 individuals requesting equipment, over 800 individuals received all of the equipment they requested. Equipment distributed includes manual wheelchairs, power wheelchairs, scooters, shower chairs, tub transfer benches, raised toilet seats, bedside commodes, walkers, crutches, canes, grab bars, hospital beds, geriatric chairs, hoist patient lifts, nebulizers, air purifiers, guernies, communication devices, adapted toys and switches, computers, and a generator. Another 100 have received some of what they needed. They are waiting for power chairs and scooters, hospital beds, ramps, and other devices such as shower chairs that we no longer have in inventory. Over 145 people with disabilities have requested and received computers (sometimes their only access to the community, to work, to school, and to the world). Because of LATAN's partnership with the Capital Area Corporate Recycling Council (CACRC) in our Computer ReUse program, recycled computers were provided by CACRC free of charge to evacuees with disabilities once LATAN certified them as having a FEMA number. LATAN then provided for the pickup of the recycled computers and delivery to the consumers. LATAN has also referred many people to other sources for their needs: for eye glasses to the Lion's Club/Len's Crafter Vision Program, for hearing aids to the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf, for assistive technology for people who are deaf or hearing impaired to the Deaf Action Centers that run the equipment distribution program, for medicine needs to Medicaid, and for vision aids to Project COPE, a program of Affiliated Blind of Lafayette.

In this equipment distribution program, LATAN collaborated to the extent possible with many individuals and agencies, including New Horizons Independent Living Center, Southwest Independence Center, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, Governor's Office of Disability Affairs, Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs, DHH, Louisiana Medicaid, Come and Help, Red Cross shelters, church and other private shelters, and FEMA. Consumers reported that receiving assistance from federal and state agencies, and the larger volunteer groups, such as the Red Cross, was difficult at best, because of all of "the bureaucracy and red tape and forms", and because equipment was not readily available through those sources. Their feedback, usually unsolicited, about the LATAN program was very positive and they commended LATAN for being so responsive, and for responding so quickly. They also appreciated the fact that once they had received a piece of recycled equipment from LATAN, it belonged to them, unlike any equipment that was provided by the Red Cross and FEMA.

As people continue to move from one housing situation to another, they realize the equipment they need to function in a different environment. Because the equipment distribution program is so successful, and because the need continues to be great, Louisiana is planning to continue the program into Years Two and Three. To the extent that funding is available, and the need is still there, LATAN will continue the program as described above. In Year Two, it is anticipated and planned that a program with a

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smaller staff, a warehouse, and donated equipment still in inventory will be implemented. This program will afford LATAN the opportunity to respond quickly in the event of another emergency, and will become the Emergency Equipment Distribution Program. Additional federal and state emergency preparedness and reutilization program funding will be sought to support this program, in addition to the AT Act grant.

2. Computer ReUse Program

During Years Two and Three of the State Plan, LATAN will continue to operate a low-cost computer ReUse program for people of all ages with disabilities in the state, partnering with the Capital Area Corporate Recycling Council (CACRC) to deliver rebuilt computer systems to the doors of Louisiana consumers. These computers are intended to enhance the ability to communicate with the world, to obtain information, to access government and business services and to support skill development and/or academic achievement. LATAN receives the order, arranges the computer system shipment, and afterwards checks to see if the equipment is meeting the needs of the consumer, and to be sure the computer is in working order. Before the order is processed, Computer ReUse staff contacts the person, confirms that the person has a disability through their own self-identification, works with him or her to be sure the assistive technology devices they will be using with the computer is compatible, and that the computer being ordered has specifications sufficient to run specialized software and support any needed AT hardware. A list of potential funding sources for the AT is given to the ReUse consumer.

The current Computer ReUse Package for \$265 includes: A completely refurbished Pentium III computer with monitor, modem, network card, keyboard, mouse, CD ROM drive, 3.5" floppy drive, sound card, speakers, Windows 2000 Professional OS, Open Office Suite, AVG Antivirus, Internet browser, and WinZip. The price includes delivery to the consumer's door, and the technical support mentioned above. These prices cover only the cost of shipping the computer system to the consumer and a \$25.00 handling fee. There is no waiting list for the computers, and delivery is made within a couple of weeks of the completed order. LATAN has been able to leverage a small amount of funding from the Entergy Corporation, and CenturyTel, to partially subsidize the cost of the computers for consumers who do not have the resources to pay the full price. The new partnership with CACRC will continue, because it has been a very beneficial one, and one that will enable LATAN to meet the computer needs of people with disabilities across the state during Years Two and Three of the State Plan.

A resource bank of free and low-cost computer training opportunities across the state is being developed and shared with consumers ordering the computers. Technical support will be provided via the telephone to help with setup and troubleshooting. Consumers will pay for the shipping (included in the price) and any additional software and hardware they need.

The Computer ReUse Program, in Year One, included computers donated to LATAN. These computers were given to consumers who could not afford the other package.

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During the first year of the State Plan, The AT Marketplace program was established, and donated computers will be incorporated into The AT Marketplace “as is”.

Order forms for the ReUse Computer package will be available online, through a statewide toll-free number, and through various public and private organizations across the state, including agencies that fund assistive technology, and organizations that serve individuals with disabilities.

LATAN’s Computer ReUse program will enable people with disabilities of all ages to acquire computers that they would not otherwise have been able to obtain because of the cost, and the need for technical support in setting the system up and locating computer training resources. During year two of the State Plan a baseline will be established to determine the percentage of people acquiring assistive technology devices and services through the ReUse program who would not have been able to acquire them otherwise. In completing the order form, individuals will describe their disability, the activity they desire to be involved in, or the task they would like to accomplish using the computer. They will also indicate for which purpose they will use the computer system, education, employment, telecommunications and/or community living. LATAN is using this model instead of receiving, storing, refurbishing and shipping out used computers because this is the only feasible model given the funding currently available.

During Years Two and Three of the State Plan, as part of the public awareness activities described in Attachment 8, LATAN will implement an outreach plan for notifying people about the ReUse program, especially in underserved areas of the state. LATAN will also continue to identify other resources for used computers, and encourage the organizations, businesses and other entities that have these used computers to enter the available computers in The AT Marketplace. LATAN will also identify additional computer training services across the state, and expand its outreach to populations underserved by the ReUse program. LATAN will continue to leverage foundation and corporate grants and other sources of funding to subsidize consumer costs for the computers. Additional financial resources will be sought to sustain the operational expenses of the program.

3. The AT Marketplace: Louisiana’s Assistive Technology Classifieds

In Years Two and Three, LATAN will continue its statewide database of “recycled” assistive technology resources for the State of Louisiana that was developed in Year One. The AT Marketplace will provide the opportunity for people to acquire assistive technology devices that they otherwise would not have been able to obtain due to cost and/or lack of awareness of and access to the entities that have devices to recycle. The devices will be available for low or no cost. The database will be accessible to even the most remote locations in the state and to all populations for device use in all environments, and therefore will achieve the statewideness required of the recycling program. It will also address the needs people have for device use for the purposes of education, employment and community living. The AT Marketplace will be especially important for rural areas of the state where suppliers and providers are scarce.

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After studying several models and programs, LATAN is working with the Delaware Statewide Assistive Technology Program, which has had a successful exchange program for six years. LATAN will be using their model for listing and searching for devices. Delaware has graciously agreed to let Louisiana use their database template, and adapt it for our purposes. LATAN is working with a consortium of other state AT Act programs to continually upgrade the database program. Together we are working on including in the database software application, surveys and other methods of obtaining the data required by the AT Act. A completed survey for data collection and evaluation purposes will be requested from all who use the Marketplace. The database will allow individuals and organizations in Louisiana to list equipment that is surplus to their needs and should increase the rate and efficiency of AT equipment exchange in Louisiana as more people become aware of its existence.

The database will contain a listing of individuals, agencies and other entities for the exchange, rental, purchase, and donation of previously used assistive devices for individuals with functional limitations due to aging or disability, such as mobility aids (wheelchairs, walkers, etc.), listening devices, communication aids, vision aids, adaptive computers, adapted toys and recreational equipment, among other items.

Individuals, agencies and other entities that have assistive technology devices to recycle will enter their devices and the information requested, including category, description, condition and cost of the device into the database. The entry will come to LATAN staff to assure that the item is appropriate for the category selected. The entity posting the item will also be responsible for removing the item once it has been exchanged. LATAN staff will be available to assist with posting and removing an item, and to provide access to the database for those without Internet access. Ninety days after posting, an email will be automatically generated for those items still in the exchange to ask if the item is still available. If not, or if there is no response to the email, the item will be deleted from the database. All transactions for the exchange will be between the entity posting the device and the individual needing the device.

Individuals using The AT Marketplace will search the database of previously owned devices by category of device to find ones that are available, and will discover the cost, description, condition and owner of each device, along with contact information. The individual will contact the owner to arrange for payment and shipping or pick up. Individuals will also be able to list items that they need, and entities that have devices can then contact the individuals directly to recycle their devices, even before posting. LATAN will also become a part of the ATMatch.com, a website, developed by the Kansas program, for the auctioning of previously owned assistive technology devices available across the country, and will provide a link to that site from The AT Marketplace website.

The AT Marketplace's primary objective is to increase acquisition of assistive technology by making devices available at low cost or free without requiring a person be eligible for public funding. The Marketplace will be published and regularly updated on the LATAN website as a resource for citizens with disabilities and service providers, and will also be

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available by calling LATAN's statewide toll-free number to speak to a LATAN staff person.

LATAN has identified some partners for the Marketplace, entities with devices to be recycled. They include nine Councils on Aging, two Families Helping Families (regional centers that provide advocacy, peer-to-peer counseling, and training and technical assistance to families regarding disability issues), two independent living centers, Come and Help (a not-for-profit organization that recycles durable medical equipment), Capital Area Computer Recycling Center, and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Louisiana Chapter. LATAN is in the process of working with each one on what they have available, how it will be listed, and who their contact person is. Other partners that will work with LATAN in getting the word out about the Marketplace, and that will encourage their clients, constituents, providers, and customers to participate include the Office of Elderly Affairs, Louisiana Medicaid, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, the Statewide Independent Living Council, the Department of Education, and the Mobility Depot, a local vendor.

LATAN has received a \$10,000 grant from Baton Rouge Area Foundation to develop the database, including the evaluation component. LATAN also received two contracts from the Department of Health and Hospitals under its Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, totaling \$125,000, which purpose is "To Facilitate the Competitive Employment of People with Disabilities", to begin implementation of The AT Marketplace.

- During each year of the State Plan, more agencies and entities will be invited to become part of the network

In years two and three, LATAN will:

- increase outreach to parts of the state underserved by The AT Marketplace in year one, and
- identify individuals and entities with used equipment to exchange, and enroll them in the program, particularly focusing on scarce equipment and remote areas.
- develop and implement policies that allow vendors to list previously owned, discontinued, or discounted devices

In years two and three, LATAN will implement the plan.

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.

LATAN does not currently operate a device loan program.

LATAN's Advisory Council recommended that since this is a program with little current resources identified in the state, the first couple of years will be spent identifying resources and any device loan programs in existence that are not currently known, identifying gaps in comprehensiveness and statewideness of existing programs, and begin collaboration with identified partners. Device loans, consumers say, will increase their

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ability to make an informed decision about the benefits, usefulness and appropriateness of specific devices borrowed for increasing their self-sufficiency and independence in education, employment, and community living. Providers say that device loans will increase their ability to assist their customers in making an informed decision and selecting the appropriate device, by using these devices in the assessment process.

Specifically, during Year Two of the State Plan, LATAN will:

- explore device loan program models used by other states,
- determine partners and resources needed based on the exploration, and
- develop a plan for implementation during year three.

Once this plan for implementation has been developed, LATAN will submit an amendment to RSA describing the plan.

Potential resources for the device loan program may include the devices listed in The AT Marketplace database. The AT Marketplace database will include, in addition to a list of devices to be recycled, links to and information about device loan programs that exist in the state. This resource will begin in Year Two.

Current loan programs identified thus far that will be in the database include: Centers for Independent Living (New Horizons and Southwest Louisiana Independence Center), Louisiana Career Development Center, LATI Centers (school districts), Easter Seals, and the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Vendors also will be approached to see if they have any devices to loan or rent, or for recycling. LATAN envisions trying to coordinate these existing loan programs and filling in the gaps that exist.

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.

Of the required state-level activities, LATAN focus groups and State Advisory Council members have identified device demonstrations as the highest priority after the Emergency Equipment Distribution Program. Device demonstrations, consumers say, will increase their ability to make an informed decision about the benefits, usefulness and appropriateness of the devices demonstrated for increasing their self-sufficiency and independence in education, employment, and community living. Providers say that demonstrations will increase their ability to assist their customers in making an informed decision when they can try out a device before purchasing it.

Over the years LATAN has provided demonstrations of various types of low and high tech devices. However, without adequate funding to replace expensive obsolete and damaged devices, mostly low-tech devices are demonstrated at conferences, presentations and exhibits, devices typically used for assistance with daily life activities. These low-tech demonstrations will continue. LATAN also provides and will continue to provide high-tech demonstrations with the assistance of vendors and professionals at a couple of

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seminars each year, such as Partners in PolicyMaking and the Assistive Technology Camp for preschoolers.

In addition to these current activities, LATAN is in the process of looking at demonstration program models in other states. A demonstration program for assistive technology will provide opportunities for hands-on experiences with technology. In Year Two, this program will be on-site based, meaning that equipment will be taken out to agencies, consumer groups, provider groups, conferences, exhibits, and other venues so that a wide audience will have access. In Year Two, a plan for a demonstration center will be developed for implementation in Year Three. For a fee for service, providers can use the equipment available in the demonstration program in their training, and to assist individuals they are working with determine what works when they are doing assessments. Consumers have consistently recommended that LATAN have a demonstration capability so they can actually see and try out a piece of equipment (“try before you buy”). Demonstrations will be used with professionals to upgrade their knowledge of the benefits of AT, and the importance of AT supports for the individuals that they serve. This program will give people a chance to broaden their vision of AT and its benefits before they make the often expensive decision to buy a particular piece of AT. Having seen an AT device demonstrated, individuals may then choose to borrow a device from a lending library to try out for a time in their own environments. It is anticipated that some devices for demonstration will be available through The AT Marketplace.

Based on what is learned from looking at models in other states, during Year Two of the State Plan LATAN will develop a device demonstration center, for implementation in Year Three. A baseline for usage of the demonstration program will be established for measuring the percentage of people who accessed device demonstration and made a decision about an AT device or service for education, employment and/or community living as a result of the demonstrations. In subsequent years, the demonstration program will be expanded to populations underserved during the first two years of the demonstration program, and a percentage increase each year will be projected.

Partners identified for a demonstration pilot in northwest Louisiana are the Bossier Council on Aging, New Horizons Independent Living Center, and Families Helping Families of Northwest Louisiana. Specific roles for each will be determined during Year Two. The demonstration program will begin with computer adaptations and communication software and devices, and will expand as funding allows. There will also be available low-tech devices that offer aids for daily living for persons with disabilities as well as people who want to “age in place”, meaning stay in their own homes or communities as they age. The Center will be open to consumers, families and providers.

In addition to setting up a pilot on-site program, LATAN will work to coordinate and collaborate with existing device demonstration resources in the state.

- (1) Louisiana Assistive Technology Initiative (LATI) regional centers. These centers are funded with federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part B dollars, and

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receive these funds through a contract with the Department of Education. The primary purposes of the LATI Regional Centers are (a) to improve the outcomes and results for children and youth with disabilities through the use of assistive technology to access school programs and curriculum; and (b) to increase the capacity of school districts to provide assistive technology services by making training, technical assistance and AT demonstrations available to teachers, therapists, administrators, paraprofessionals and parents throughout Louisiana. Regional and local trainings, including the use of demonstrations, are scheduled through each center.

Demonstrations currently being offered by LATI staff include, but are not limited to: computer access, communication, seating and positioning, vision/hearing, and information technology accommodations. LATAN will be collaborating to make parents aware of these opportunities, and to expand the hours of operation for the purpose of serving additional populations.

- (2) The University of New Orleans Training, Resource and Assistive-technology Center (TRAC) provides device demonstrations for computer access, vision aids and learning disability software, and Louisiana Tech also provides device demonstrations of various types. During Year Two LATAN will approach these groups about the possibility of working with LATAN to provide demonstrations outside of the university setting.
- (3) The Affiliated Blind of Louisiana and the Louisiana Center for the Blind both have demonstrations of various types of equipment, as well as the Deaf/Blind Store.
- (4) During Year Two, LATAN will also work with these entities to determine the feasibility of providing demonstrations outside of these centers.

In addition, in Year Two LATAN will develop a calendar of demonstration centers and events sponsored by these partners and post the calendar on its website and in its newsletter. To the extent feasible, LATAN will develop a database of devices available for demonstration through these three partners.

In addition to a pilot demonstration program and coordinating existing resources, there is considerable interest in the state for LATAN's bringing equipment into existing agencies that serve the disability and aging populations for demonstrations, utilizing AT users in the area and vendors. In this model, LATAN would develop a schedule of a specific type of device demonstration at each site on a rotating basis across the state. The Louisiana Rehabilitation Services is interested in this approach for its regional centers where case managers and clients could attend the demonstrations. Some of the OneStops have also expressed a similar interest, as well as the National Disability Employment Awareness Month Job Fairs. The Families Helping Families Network is also willing to collaborate by hosting demonstrations in each of its regional offices. Some regional libraries are also open to demonstrations. This model of taking the devices around the state and setting them up where people already frequent is being seriously considered as a way to reach out into smaller communities. The feasibility of this model will be studied further during

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Year Two, and agreements with these various groups developed if needed. Vendor demonstrations will be provided to the extent available.

During Years Two and Three, LATAN will continue its search for additional funding sources for implementation and expansion of the demonstration program, including private foundations, and fee for service contracts and/or center memberships for device funders and private practitioners. This will enable LATAN to purchase devices for demonstration in Year Three.

An amendment to the State Plan will be submitted after the studies in Year Two that will delineate specific plans for Year Three.

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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.

Louisiana is not claiming comparable support for any activity.

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

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Attachment 7: State Flexibility

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

Louisiana is choosing to carry out all required activities.

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

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.

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.

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Attachment 8: State Leadership Activities

Training and Technical Assistance, and Public Awareness activities serve to provide consumers, family members, service providers and other interested individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to understand the benefits of assistive technology, what technology is available, the resources to acquire and use the assistive technology, how it can be acquired and utilized in various environments, and in the case of assessment specialists, to assist the individuals they serve in making appropriate choices.

Coordination and Collaboration activities are necessary to provide technical assistance and support for the purpose of developing policies and procedures within public agencies that will increase access to assistive technology in various settings.

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

Over the next two years LATAN will engage in the following training activities.

- LATAN already has developed an “Assistive Technology for Aging in Place” training module targeted for older individuals, their caregivers, and their service providers. The purpose of the AT and Aging Program is to provide training and information to individuals over 50 who need or may need assistive technology, and to the caregivers and providers who work with them. As part of the program, a handbook has been designed to assist older persons, their caregivers, and their providers in their efforts to include assistive technology (including daily living aids) in their daily lives to maintain a high quality of life as their health care and daily living needs change. The handbook is used during training programs and is also available as a resource for professionals in the field and for older citizens and their caregivers. The handbook is created as a guide for older citizens who wish to preserve their independence, autonomy, productivity and dignity, and is intended to provide information about assistive technology, home modifications, and the many service options available to older people in communities across our state. The handbook also identifies agencies, supportive services, funding options and resources pertaining to assistive technology. This AT and Aging program is just beginning, with the Assistive Technology and Aging in Place manual completed, a Power Point training module with highlights from the manual and descriptions of LATAN and assistive technology services available, and an aging exhibit developed. Low-tech aids for daily living and low-tech assistive technology items are displayed and individuals are encouraged to try them out. The focus of the training is to provide AT

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supports that will enable an individual to stay in their own home environments, or to transition from an institutional setting into a more community-based one. There have been three trainings completed, with another one planned for the directors and staff of the Councils on Aging. LATAN anticipates continuing to deliver such trainings upon request during the three years of the state plan. The availability of the training, and the method for requesting training will be publicized through the LATAN website, newsletters, in interagency meetings, and through direct mail and email to agencies serving the aging population. A phone call to the LATAN office, or an email is all that is necessary to request the training.

Technical Assistance

Because LATAN provides technical assistance to agencies and organizations by request, it is difficult to predict the type of technical assistance that will be provided over the next two years.

In the past, LATAN has provided technical assistance such as the following:

- LATAN assisted several state agencies with information about and assistance with designing and troubleshooting accessible websites.
- LATAN assisted with the development of assistive technology services in waiver programs for long-term care.

LATAN anticipates providing technical assistance in a similar manner over the next two years.

Transition

The AT Act requires that LATAN specifically focus on training and technical assistance around transition. This includes transition for students with disabilities who are leaving high school for employment or post-secondary education and transition for those entering or maintaining community living.

During the three years of this state plan, LATAN will utilize the AT for Aging in Place module mentioned above to train older individuals who want to remain in community settings, and their caregivers and service providers, as well as individuals who want to transition out of institutions into the community. Hospital discharge planners will be one population of focus to receive this transition training, and any technical assistance needed.

In addition, LATAN will provide technical assistance to the State's long-term services and supports task force for the development of an assistive technology component to be used with the assessment tool for assessing the functional abilities of people transitioning to community settings from nursing homes and other institutional settings.

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Transition Tech Notes will be developed and disseminated in Year Two to transition coordinators, to the LATI centers that provide technical assistance to transitioning students, and to discharge planners and social workers in nursing homes and other institutional settings.

During Year Three, LATAN will provide technical assistance to school districts, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, and other adult settings in the development of interagency agreements that would facilitate a transitioning student to retain the assistive technology he or she is using when he moves from the school environment to employment, post-secondary education and/or community living.

During year three, LATAN will continue the activities developed in years one and two to reach additional audiences. An amendment to the State Plan after year two will describe the activities in more detail.

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.

During the three years of the State Plan, LATAN will provide public awareness activities, including exhibits, presentations, materials dissemination, a quarterly newsletter and an accessible website to increase awareness about the benefits of assistive technology devices and services, the types of AT devices and services available, funding for AT devices and services, and policies related to AT. LATAN's current public awareness activities also include TV and radio talk show interviews, public service announcements, articles in newspapers and agency newsletters, and focus groups, in addition to the activities mentioned above. LATAN will provide the following public awareness activities over the next three years:

Presentation/ Exhibits

LATAN will present public awareness activities to groups requesting them, and will seek out other groups, depending on the time allocated and the need identified by the State Advisory Council, focus groups, and the LATAN staff. Such groups may include public bodies, parish libraries, legislators, university classes, various teacher in-services, Family Service Centers, parish transition teams, discharge planners, hospital staff, employers, and university disability offices. Presentations, demonstrations, and handout materials will also be provided to many disability and interagency groups, such as Families Helping Families, Councils on Aging, the Statewide Independent Living Council, Muscular Dystrophy Association, Down Syndrome Awareness Group, the ARCs, Partners in PolicyMaking, Baton Rouge Head Injury Association, Job Fairs, self-advocacy groups, case managers, and to various conferences in the state, such as the Universal Design for Learning Conference, the Aging and Disability Housing Conference, the Louisiana Rehabilitation Association Training Conference, the Successful Aging in Persons with Developmental Disabilities Conference, and the

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Department of Education weekend workshop for parents. LATAN will also provide public awareness and information dissemination “in-house” with its Board of Directors in their orientation and continuing in-service, and with LATAN Advisory Councils and regional focus groups.

Public Media Interview, Announcements and Articles

LATAN will use public service announcements (PSA) to inform the public, including consumers, about the benefits and uses of assistive technology, as well as about specific LATAN programs and activities. Senator Mary Landrieu recently produced a PSA for the loan program that will be aired during the three years of the State Plan. TV and radio interviews will be utilized, as well as press releases to and articles in the major and community newspapers in the state. In 2005 LATAN was the recipient of a four-hour segment of radio interviews during Community Service Week on a local radio station, which broadcast from the LATAN parking lot. Following that segment once a week for the next year, LATAN will be a guest on the interview segment of the same radio show, to talk about assistive technology and its benefits, as well as the specific LATAN activities. LATAN will make every effort to obtain media coverage at its events, including the announcement of each new activity.

Agency and Organization Newsletters and Websites

Agency newsletters are another avenue for public awareness and information dissemination about assistive technology that LATAN will use during the three years of the State Plan, as well as Chamber of Commerce and other non-traditional websites. We look for opportunities to tell stories, and this year LATAN and one of our consumers were featured in a new publication *imagine Magazine* that is published by the Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations. Agencies and organizations whose media vehicles will be used to place articles include, but are not limited to, Families Helping Families, the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council, Councils on Aging, and independent living centers.

Annual Awards Event

LATAN will host an annual awards event, which brings awareness about assistive technology benefits and the policy issues surrounding access to and acquisition of AT devices and services. The Annual Assistive Technology and Universal Design Awards will recognize individuals who have contributed to increased access to AT. Categories of awards to be presented include: Agency Award: to a Louisiana public agency or individual within an agency that increased access to assistive technology; Business Award: to a Louisiana business that increased access to assistive technology and/or implemented universal design concepts to make their products and services more accessible to all; Citizen Award: to an individual in Louisiana who increased access to assistive technology, or advocated for changes in policies or laws or practices to assure universal access; Consumer Empowerment Award: to an individual or family member in Louisiana who has advocated for self or family member to improve access to environments through assistive technology or universal design; Legislator Award: to a Louisiana U.S. Senator or Representative, or a Louisiana state legislator who sponsors and advocates for passage of legislation that increases access to assistive technology or

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the implementation of universal design concepts; Mayor's Committee Award: to a mayor's committee in Louisiana that increased access to assistive technology, or advocated for changes in policies or laws or practices to assure universal access; Media/Public Relations Award: to an individual or entity that increased awareness of assistive technology through the media or other public relations vehicle; LATAN Volunteer of the Year Award: to a LATAN volunteer that increased access to assistive technology through his or her work with LATAN.

Information and Referral

LATAN's statewide toll free number will provide free information and referral services about AT for people of all ages with all disabilities. Family members, services providers and others who work in fields related to disabilities or AT may also use this service. LATAN staff will provide information to those who call on the availability, benefits, appropriateness and cost of AT devices and services. In addition, for many callers, LATAN staff will mail AT resource and device information in order for them to make a more informed decision, and/or refer them to additional web resources. A consumer satisfaction survey will be mailed to callers within six months following the call to determine if they are satisfied with the information provided by LATAN or if they need additional information. LATAN calls its information and referral service "individual advocacy", because most of the callers have a myriad of issues and questions, and it is not unusual for staff to spend an hour or two on each call helping consumers to identify vendor and assessment resources for the technology they need, and the financial resources to obtain it. Information and referral is an important program at LATAN, and recently LATAN staff have been designated as 'specialists' in various areas of expertise such as Community Living, Education, Health Care, Employment, Housing, Aging, Information Technology and Transition. This emphasis on specialty topics should allow LATAN to give better information to callers regarding AT for various environments, regarding funding resources, policy issues, and other AT resources in the state.

In the three years of the State Plan LATAN will (1) identify additional AT resources in the state and elsewhere; and (2) upgrade the resource database to reflect specific fields for various types of resources. LATAN staff will keep abreast of new and emerging AT devices and services through training and web searches.

During year two, LATAN will also (1) develop a simple means to collect demographic data from callers, especially in regards to disability or functional limitation and geographic area in the state; and (2) develop an evaluation or consumer satisfaction plan for the program. Based on the data collected in year two, year three will see the implementation of an outreach plan targeted to those areas and populations underserved by the program. The specific of that plan will be outlined in an amendment to the state plan after year two.

Newsletter

The LATAN newsletter, *G.R.E.A.T. possibilities*, will continue to be developed and disseminated in hard copy, by email, and on the web site by LATAN staff on a quarterly

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basis. Regular sections of the newsletter will include AT information on: Current events at LATAN, new and emerging AT (which discusses features of specific AT devices), a spotlight on an AT user, policy updates, website and other resources on AT, and a calendar of national, state and local AT-related events. Efforts will be made in year two and three to increase the number of newsletters that can be sent via email in order to reduce the cost of printing and mailing.

Web site

The LATAN website will feature in-depth information on the four State-Level and three State-Leadership Activities described in this Attachment and Attachment 5, as well as information on other programs LATAN is involved with, publications, web accessibility resources, legislation, and AT resources and links. The website also will provide an opportunity for individuals to directly contact LATAN for purposes of feedback, information and referral, listing for sale items on The AT Marketplace, an on-line application for the state alternative financing program, and for the Computer ReUse program. From the website, individuals can access TechNotes (assistive technology information sheets), publications, assistive technology hyperlinks to other sites, a calendar of events, and other information.

Publications

Training materials and publications have been developed and will be disseminated for all types of audiences across the life span on a broad array of AT related issues, such as AT for people with visual impairments or hearing impairments, eating utensils, AT in the workplace, consumer rights, AT for Aging in Place, and funding resources. All assistive technology information sheets, Tech Notes, will be provided free of charge on the web site and made available in any requested alternative format. The AT for Aging in Place manual will be sold for \$25.00 to help defray the cost of printing.

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.

Because coordination and collaboration with public and private entities often is based on emerging, new, or changing policies and procedures, it is difficult to anticipate all of the coordination and collaboration activities that LATAN will undertake over the next three years. In the past, coordination and collaboration involved the proposal of new or changes to current AT policies, providing input on proposed AT policies, and analysis of the impact of current AT policies. LATAN does this by participating on task forces sponsored by state agencies, by being a member of consumer groups, advocacy groups, and disability networks throughout the state, and through independent efforts.

Currently, LATAN is collaborating and coordinating with:

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- The Louisiana Long-Term Care planning groups to provide technical assistance in the development of policies and procedures for transition assessments for long-term supports and services;
- Medicaid Purchase Plan Advisory Council to provide technical assistance in the development of assistive technology services needed by workers with disabilities;
- The Louisiana Assistive Technology Initiative Advisory Panel to provide technical assistance for the continuation of regional centers and for other Department of Education AT initiatives; and
- The Housing Task Force to provide technical assistance in the development of policies that will lead to accessible and affordable housing for individuals with disabilities and older people.
- Emergency Preparedness Collaboratives to assure the needs of people using assistive technology are taken into consideration when planning for and responding to an emergency.
- The Permanent Supported Housing coalition to assure the accessibility of developed housing.

LATAN anticipates coordinating and collaborating on policies in a similar manner over the next two years.

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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.

The Department of Education Louisiana Assistive Technology Initiative (LATI) centers provide training, technical assistance and demonstrations to education professionals, paraprofessionals, related service personnel and families of students in K-12. All of these centers contribute resources, funded by IDEA, that assist in accomplishing identified goals of increased access to AT, and are committed to working with LATAN to reach wider audiences than are currently reached.

Louisiana Answers, a resource center funded under the Aging and Disability Resource Center federal grant, provides an information and referral line and website for elders and adults with physical disabilities. The information includes a list of AT providers. The resource center is a pilot demonstration project that serves one area of the state. However, they are planning to replicate the center in all areas of the state in 2007 with state dollars. This would mean a statewide database with information and public awareness regarding AT along with a myriad of other topics. Louisiana Answers is committed to working with LATAN on this project, which will assist in accomplishing the public awareness activities outlined in this plan.

The Statewide Independent Living Council is committing their newsletter and website as vehicles for the dissemination of information about the benefits of AT, resources for accessing and acquiring AT, and success stories about consumers who use AT.

New Horizons Independent Living Center will commit space in its offices for the pilot demonstration project, and the other nine Families Helping Families have committed to hosting and publicizing demonstrations in their offices. This will assist in accomplishing the access to AT goals.

In Year One, the Baton Rouge Area Foundation committed \$10,000 toward the development and implementation of The Assistive Technology Marketplace, and the Department of Health and Hospitals, through its federal Medicaid Infrastructure Grant has also committed \$125,000 toward the Marketplace. \$15,000 of the MIG contract will be available for use in Year Two. These resources will assist in accomplishing the goal of acquisition of assistive technology for use in education, employment and community living.

The Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council has committed \$3,000 toward the operation of the annual Assistive Technology Camp for preschoolers. Several AT professionals in the state volunteer their time to work with the families at the camp.

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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.

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) has a Memorandum of Understanding with LATAN, and will continue to do so. DHH will submit a quarterly request to RSA for an advance of funds for implementing the program, and the funds will “flow through” to LATAN for program activities.

LATAN will submit quarterly financial reports to DHH with the request for advance, a semi-annual and final report of program activities, and an annual independent financial audit.

DHH and LATAN representatives will meet at the end of each year to discuss the prior year accomplishments, the plans for the next year, and to develop the amendment document to be submitted to RSA.

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 Advisory Council meets quarterly to review and make recommendations for the State Plan. Though most members participate in person, some members teleconference in. The State Plan reflects their deliberations and encompasses their recommendations. Council members helped write and approved the final draft of the State Plan. During the implementation and evaluation phase of the Council’s responsibilities, the Council will meet in-person four times per year at least two weeks before LATAN’s Board of Directors meeting, so that recommendations can be made to the Board. Teleconferencing in will always be an option. Prior to these four meetings, focus groups will meet, and the focus group representative in each area will bring suggestions, needs and concerns to the full Council. The initial meeting of the Council was held in the central area of the State, to increase participation by focus group members, as well as Council members. After the initial meeting, each focus group met to discuss and set program priorities for their area. Recommendations from the groups were submitted to the Advisory Council, which reviewed them and began discussions.

The State Advisory Council met six times in 5-6 hour meetings to provide input into the development of the three-year State Plan. In Year One, the Council met four times, and was very instrumental in LATAN’s continuing to respond to the hurricane disasters. The Council initially began by considering the recommendations of the six focus groups and the LATAN staff regarding the required activities, and then discussed first each measurable goal and then each required state-level and state leadership activity. Goals were discussed at great length over a period of two meetings, assuming a baseline based on the combined knowledge of resources of Council members. Projections for increases

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in years two and three and a long-term goal were agreed upon before the instructions for developing the Plan were approved by OMB. Since the final instructions state that all of the goals for the first year are to establish a baseline, results of the discussion on goals will be held pending identification of the baselines to project increases for years two and three.

In the discussion of each required activity, Advisory Council members reviewed the current status of required activities in the state, reviewed the findings of each of the focus groups regarding that activity, and brought their own experience and knowledge of needs and resources to the table before recommending the form the activity would take in the first year and in subsequent years. The Advisory Council has been very instrumental in designing the State Plan, reviewed the draft before submission, and made the recommendations for amendments for Year Two.

The Council continues to meet, and will meet quarterly, to identify resources for collaborating partners and for other potential funding sources, and will be involved in the implementation of the activities and in the evaluation. Although the exact format for evaluation by the Advisory Council has not been determined, the Council and focus groups will receive regular reports on activities and will be given the opportunity to assist in the improvement of the quality of the programs.

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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).

Beginning July 1, 2006 and carrying over into Year Two, the State of Louisiana will support the State Plan with a \$300,000 line item appropriation to LATAN for “operating costs.” The vehicle of agreement and the exact goals and objectives assigned to the State funds have not yet been determined, but will enable LATAN to achieve program goals outlined in this Plan. The percentage of funds to be used for State-Level Activities has not yet been determined.

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.

Beginning July 1, 2006 and carrying over into Year Two, the State of Louisiana will support the State Plan with a \$300,000 line item appropriation to LATAN for “operating costs.” The vehicle of agreement and the exact goals and objectives assigned to the State funds have not yet been determined, but will enable LATAN to achieve program goals outlined in this Plan. The percentage of funds to be used for State-Leadership Activities has not yet been determined.

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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).

Through the MOU with LATAN, the Department of Health and Hospitals will assure that expenditures will be tracked in accordance with recognized accounting procedures that will provide the detailed information necessary to determine that funds were expended according to the requirements of the AT Act. DHH has reviewed the procedures used by LATAN, and is confident that expenditures will be tracked appropriately and accurately.

LATAN uses spreadsheets to track staff time by program activity in fifteen-minute increments. These spreadsheets are then used to assign personnel expenditures each pay period to the specific activities. LATAN uses a similar system to track other expenditures in that for each disbursement, a coding sheet is completed that identifies the funding source and the program activity for the expenditure. Monthly financial statements currently report expenditures by funding sources and budget categories, and will be expanded to include the required reporting under this Act for each activity under State Level Activities and State Leadership Activities. A standardized report will provide summary data on current expenditure percentages for State Level and State Leadership activities to ensure the required distribution (at least 60% State Level, no more than 40% State Leadership, and at least 5% of State Leadership for transition) is met at the end of the fiscal year. It will be the responsibility of the LATAN Director 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 program. These numbers will serve as an estimate only for Year 3 of this State Plan.

Proposed Allocation	Distribution	Total Award Amount	
		<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>
		\$395,738	\$413,036
State Level	73%	\$237,443	\$303,036
State Leadership	27%	\$158,295	\$110,000
	<i>Leadership Activities (95% of 27%)</i>	<i>\$150,380</i>	<i>\$104,500</i>
	<i>Transition (5% of 27%)</i>	<i>\$7,915</i>	<i>\$5,500</i>
TOTAL		\$350,000	\$413,036

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The following are projected budgeted amounts within the categories of State Level and State Leadership activities. However, these numbers reflect a proposal only, and will serve as an estimate only for Year 3 of this State Plan. Any changes in the above estimates and allocations will be noted in an amendment to the state plan, if necessary. It is important to note that the activities within State Level and State Leadership are not independent and separate from one another. As such, it is impossible to accurately attribute certain general expenses to a particular discreet activity. In many cases such budget projections have been equally distributed rather than pro-rated among activities. Expenditure tracking as described in 11.1 above will not provide an audit trail that accounts for actual expenditures in these discreet categories as compared to the projected budget.

State Level Activities	Proposed Allocation	
	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>
State Financing Activities	\$ 2,000	\$2,000
Device Reutilization Program	\$ 75,000	\$155,000
Device Loan Program	\$ 50,000	\$20,000
Device Demonstration Program	\$110,443	\$126,036
State Leadership Activities	Proposed Allocation	
	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>
Training and Technical Assistance General Activities	\$ 30,000	\$10,000
Transition	\$ 7,915	\$5,500
Public Awareness Activities	\$ 90,380	\$69,500
Coordination and Collaboration	\$ 30,000	\$25,000