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July 28, 2006

Edward Anthony, Acting Commissioner
Rehabilitation Services Administration
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Potomac Center Plaza, Room 5025
Washington, D.C. 20202-2800

Dear Acting Commissioner Anthony:

Enclosed herein please find the official signed copy of the FY2006 amended and updated Minnesota State Plan for Assistive Technology submitted by the Minnesota Assistive Technology Advisory Council and the STAR Program, the lead agency for the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended. This submission of the State Plan includes:

Part I with Attachments 1 through 11
Addendum to Part I
Part II – required signed assurances
Certification regarding lobbying, and
Minnesota's response to the GEPA provision (Section 427)

Much of the AT Plan remains intact from when it was originally submitted. Please note the following substantive changes.

- Attachment 3: State Advisory Council. This attachment was revised on 3/6/06 and previously approved.
- Attachment 4: Measurable Goals. A data collection system was not available to establish a baseline in year one, so we will establish the baseline during year two of our state plan.
- Attachment 5: State-level Activities. We added two reutilization resources, mentioned the reuse conference we plan to hold in 2007, added two device loan resources, addressed cooperative buying program and made minor changes to the device demonstration section.

- Attachment 6: Comparable Support. Added a comment about Minnesota's Alternative Finance Program.
- Attachment 8: State Leadership Activities. Added comments about transition activities and a collaboration update.
- Attachment 11: Allocation and Utilization of Funds. Changed allocation to reflect the change in FY06 dollars and anticipated allocation.

An electronic version of this transmittal letter along with Part 1, the Addendum and the GEPA provision has been sent to Jeremy Buzzell. We respectfully request approval of this amended Minnesota State Plan for Assistive Technology at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Dana B. Badgerow
Commissioner

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

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

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

(a) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making of any Federal grant, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal grant or cooperative agreement;

(b) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal grant or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form - LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions;

(c) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subgrants and contracts under grants and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

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

NAME OF APPLICANT State of Minnesota	PR/AWARD NUMBER AND / OR PROJECT NAME Department of Administration
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE Dana B. Badgerow, Commissioner	
SIGNATURE	DATE

Minnesota GEPA (Section 427) Provision

The Minnesota STAR Program will take necessary steps to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, all programs and services provided by STAR as described in the State Plan for Assistive Technology. Specifically, STAR will ensure equitable access regardless of gender, race, national origin, color, disability or age and will implement the following activities to address potential access barriers:

1. All print materials will be available in alternative formats (e.g., Braille, large print, electronic text, and audio) and available in languages other than English as needed. Materials will be developed with due consideration of cultural diversity issues along with literacy demands and other factors critical to ensuring usability by a diverse audience.
2. All meetings or events will be held in facilities that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act Architectural Guidelines and communication accommodations (e.g., real time captioning, sign language interpreters, other language interpreters, FM system) will be provided as needed.
3. All Web based information will comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 to ensure accessibility to a wide variety of individuals with diverse information processing needs.
4. All information and marketing materials regarding services and programs outlined in the state AT plan will be distributed through various outreach efforts designed to reach diverse segments of the public such as individuals on fixed incomes, individuals with disabilities, seniors, rural residents, and residents from diverse cultural backgrounds. Examples of outreach efforts include statewide public announcements, as well as, contacting faith-based institutions and various community organizations and advocacy groups that represent or work with diverse populations that may experience barriers to information access.
5. Steps will be taken to minimize financial barriers to gaining information about or participating in state plan activities include: providing multiple methods of contact through our toll-free phone number, state relay services and e-mail; providing materials such as our funding directory at no-cost; distributing free informational materials through state agencies and community organizations such as the public library; posting information on our Web site; providing referrals to the state's alternative financing program and other funding resources.

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

Attachment 1: Basic Information

Name of Lead Agency: Minnesota Department of Administration

Name of Applicable Division and/or Subdivision of Lead Agency: Minnesota STAR Program

Address of Lead Agency: Room 200, 50 Sherburne Ave, St. Paul, MN 55155

Name and Title of Certifying Representative for Lead Agency: Dana B. Badgerow, Commissioner

Address for Certifying Representative: Room 200, 50 Sherburne Ave, St. Paul, MN 55155

Telephone for Certifying Representative: 651/201-2566

E-mail for Certifying Representative: dana.badgerow@state.mn.us

Name and Title of Program Director: Charles D. Rassbach

Address for Program Director: Room 309, 50 Sherburne Ave, St. Paul, MN 55155

Telephone for Program Director: 651/201-2298

E-mail for Program Director: chuck.rassbach@state.mn.us

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

Address for Program Director: N/A

Telephone for Program Director: N/A

E-mail for Program Director: N/A

Name of Implementing Entity: Minnesota STAR Program

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

Address of Implementing Entity: Room 309, 50 Sherburne Ave, St. Paul, MN 55155

Name and Title of Program Director: N/A

Address for Program Director: N/A

Telephone for Program Director: N/A

E-mail for Program Director: N/A

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

Address for Program Director: N/A

Telephone for Program Director: N/A

E-mail for Program Director: N/A

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:

In 1987, then-governor Rudy Perpich formed the Governor's Advisory Council on Technology for People with Disabilities, to help Minnesotans with disabilities improve the quality of their lives through the use of assistive technology. With the passage of the federal Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1988 (also known as the Tech Act), Minnesota received one of the first federal grants from the National Institute on Disability Research and Rehabilitation (NIDRR) designed to help states "develop programs for individuals with disabilities...utilizing new technologies and to enhance the ability of the Federal Government to provide states with technical assistance and funding for model demonstration and innovation projects."

As a result of this grant, Minnesota established the STAR Program in 1989. Since that time, STAR has been working to provide Minnesotans with a statewide, consumer-driven and responsive network of resources related to assistive technology. The program has focused on educating consumers, family members, professionals and others about assistive technology devices and services. STAR has also provided Minnesotans with free access to information and referral services, technical assistance on a variety of AT and disability-related subjects. STAR has an accessible Web site and has built a statewide capacity for AT delivery. With a Braille embosser and audio equipment in house, STAR offers assistance to state agencies and others as a provider for materials in alternate formats.

The mission of the STAR Program is to increase access to and the acquisition of assistive technology for Minnesotans of all ages and disabilities through a variety of comprehensive activities and services available statewide. Over the next three years under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended, the STAR Program will continue its responsibility for Minnesota's statewide AT Program and will build on already established programs and begin new programs where there are service gaps to accomplish this mission.

The Department of Administration is the lead agency for the statewide AT Program in Minnesota. The STAR Program (an agency within the Department) is directly responsible for conducting and overseeing the activities of the statewide AT Program and will assure that these programs will be accessible regardless of income, age, type of disability, or the reason a person might need AT. Located in the accessible Department of Administration Building in St. Paul, the STAR Program will make its programs available statewide through a toll-free number, an accessible Web site, conducting

activities in all regions of the state on a periodic basis and the use of regional centers that are operated through subcontracts.

The STAR Program employs three dedicated individuals with technical expertise in the field of AT and disability-related experience. The executive director has over 30 years experience in the field of working with people with disabilities and assistive technology; the program and development coordinator (AT certificate through CSUN) has extensive experience in managing an assistive technology program for a non-profit vocational rehabilitation facility, conducting AT assessments, conducting individual and group training, and managing an equipment loan program; and the administrative assistant has over 30 years of state employment experience that includes working with people with disabilities and assistive technology. The STAR Program will ensure that the skills of its staff remain current by providing them with training opportunities throughout the three years covered by this state AT plan.

The STAR Program since its inception has established relationships with public and private entities in the state. STAR staff members participate on boards, advisory councils, workgroups, committees, and commissions that address the needs of Minnesotans with disabilities. Some agencies include: the Minnesota Department of Education, the Secretary of State's Office, the Minnesota Department of Human Services, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, the Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities, the Minnesota Disability Law Center, State Services for the Blind, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Ombudsman's Office, the Developmental Disabilities Council, the Minnesota AT Loan Network, the Minnesota Regions AT Collaborative and the Minnesota Council on Disability. STAR will continue working with and providing training and technical assistance to these agencies and other entities within the state. STAR will also work with these agencies and others on new and ongoing initiatives to address the AT needs of individuals with disabilities. These initiatives are described in more detail as a part of "Coordination and Collaboration" in attachment 8.

STAR will conduct some of its activities through subcontractors throughout the state. This will ensure that programs are available locally to individuals with disabilities. STAR will issue Request for Proposals (RFPs) to establish (or continue) both device demonstration centers and for device loan programs in all parts of Minnesota. The entities chosen must have expertise in various specific areas of disability to help assure that the needs of a broad variety of consumers and professionals are met. In the past five years alone, STAR has subcontracted with about 40 different agencies in the amount of over \$736,000 to help assure that assistive technology devices and services are delivered to Minnesotans. Areas of emphasis for some of those subcontracts include: device loan, device demonstration, mobile outreach clinics, AgrAbility, recreation, accessibility and communication, non-profit AT services, AT advocacy, vocational, outreach to non-English speaking populations, AT device recycling, education, AT for adults who are elderly and have a disability and computer access.

In addition to the AT Advisory Council described in attachment 3 of this plan, STAR 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, STAR will use consumer focus groups, when needed, to seek specific guidance.

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

Not applicable.

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

Not Applicable

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

Not Applicable

Attachment 3: State Advisory Council

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

Minnesota established its AT Advisory Council to meet the 2/22/05 requirements of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended. On September 23, 2005 RSA granted Minnesota a conditional approval of its AT Plan due to not meeting the requirements of Section 4(c)(2) of the AT Act, as amended. Minnesota has worked diligently to meet full compliance and added a member from the Governor's WorkForce Development Council (Minnesota's state workforce reinvestment board) to its advisory council in February 2006. This addition addresses the AT Plan deficiency.

Since the original AT Plan was submitted, one member resigned and another died. Two new members with disabilities were added to replace them. STAR's Advisory Council currently has 15 members. Eight of the at large members (53%) are individuals with disabilities who use AT. For confidentiality reasons, council members have asked STAR to not include their names in this document. Three members of the council have multiple disabilities that are reflected in the breakdown by disability type provided below:

Disability	# of Council Members
Blind/Low Visual Impairment	5
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	1
Physical	5

In accordance with the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended, STAR requested a representative be appointed to the council from each of the five required state agencies. Appointed members from the five agencies are listed below:

Agency	Representative
Department of Education	Joan Breslin Larson
State Services for the Blind	Dave Andrews
Centers for Independent Living	Pam Parson
Department of Employment and Economic Development (Rehabilitation Services)	Ray Griffin
Governor's Workforce Development Council	Acting Commissioner Ward Einess with Kimberley T. Peck, Director of Rehabilitation Services/Workforce Development Division, as his designated representative.

In addition, the council also has two other members from the community at large:

Name	AT/Disability Experience
Jennifer Giesen	Minnesota Disability Law Center and member of the National Assistive Technology Technical Assistance Partnership (NATTAP) Steering Committee.
Bob Johnson	Thirty years experience developing, contracting, and implementing community based employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

During the three years covered by this state AT plan, the AT Advisory Council will provide STAR with consumer-driven, consumer-responsive advice for planning, implementing and evaluating state plan activities funded through the federal grant.

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

Meeting Structure: The AT Advisory Council has met eight times (2/29/05, 5/3/05, 7/12/05, 8/16/05, 10/25/05, 1/24/06, 4/18/06 and 7/18/06). Meetings, which run from 9:00 am until 3:00 pm, usually take place in an accessible conference room at the Administration Building where the STAR office is located. STAR staff oversees meeting arrangements by reserving the conference room, sending out the agenda and meeting minutes and compiling documents for the meeting to ensure that materials are accessible. The Council plans to convene quarterly on the third Tuesday of the month.

Leadership and Rules of Order: The members have elected a chair and vice chair. The chair and the STAR Program executive director plan the agenda jointly. The chair runs the meetings using a modified version of Robert's Rules of Order.

Decision Making and Operational Policies: The Council adopted operational policies on how to contribute to council meetings. These operational policies are provided as an addendum to this state plan.

Council Appointment: The following steps were taken to ensure that the AT Advisory Council was composed of a representative group of consumers, family members, and professionals that reflected Minnesota's population at large. First, STAR met with the state demographer. STAR then used the demographer's geographic breakdown of population by disability for age, race/ethnicity and disability type to determine the qualifications of council members. Next, we sought applications by publishing a notice in the State Register (1/18/05), running an article in our newsletter (7,200 statewide circulation), posting notices on our listserv and Web site, issuing public service announcements and through word of mouth. When the application period ended on 2/1/05, STAR had received about 35 inquiries and 26 applications. The Department of

Administration staff met on 2/2/05 to evaluate the 26 applications for the at-large members of the Assistive Technology (AT) Advisory Council. The Commissioner of Administration then appointed the council members who met the spirit of the AT Act.

Attachment 4: Measurable Goals

A data collection system was not available to establish a baseline during year one, but we will establish a baseline for each of the goals listed below in sections 4.1 through 4.7 during year two of our state plan.

This baseline will be established by using a data collection instrument and procedures to be determined by RSA after the State plan process has been completed. A data collection system was not available to establish a baseline, but we will establish a baseline during year two of our state plan. After this baseline has been established, STAR will file an amended Attachment 4 with RSA identifying specific long and short-term goals for improving the baseline during year three.

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 a baseline 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 a baseline 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 a baseline percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for community living as a result of the assistance they received.
 - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A-data collection not established.

4.4 Goal for Improving Access to IT and Telecommunications

- Long-term goal:
 - Short-term goal for Year 3:
 - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish a baseline percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities that accessed IT and Telecommunication devices and related services 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 a baseline percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained through state financing or a reutilization program an AT device or service for educational purposes, which otherwise would not have been possible.
 - 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 a baseline percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained an AT device or service through state financing or a reutilization program for employment purposes, which otherwise would not have been possible.
 - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A-data collection not established.

4.7 Goal for Improving Acquisition of AT in Community Living

- Long-term goal:
 - Short-term goal for Year 3:
 - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish a baseline percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained an AT device or service through state financing or reutilization program for community living purposes, which otherwise would not have been possible.
 - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A-data collection not established.

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

Not applicable

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.

See Attachment 6 of the state AT plan.

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.

Device Reutilization Programs provide for the exchange, repair, recycling, or other reutilization of assistive technology devices, which may include redistribution through device sales, loans, or rentals. Although the STAR program does not currently operate a device reutilization program it has in the past subcontracted a computer recycling program through United Cerebral Palsy of Central Minnesota. During the three years of this state AT plan, STAR will (1) explore the possibility of establishing a reutilization network within Minnesota; (2) establish an equipment exchange Web site; and, (3) contact community colleges to discuss establishing a program for training students to inspect and repair AT devices. These activities are described in detail below.

1. Reutilization Program Network¹

During the first year of the state AT plan, STAR:

- a. Met individually with six agencies that have device reutilization programs to discuss their current services and opportunities for collaborating with similar reutilization programs. We also spoke with several other reutilization programs to better understand their services and determine their interest in discussing opportunities to network and collaborate with similar programs. Examples of current reutilization programs in Minnesota include:
 - Goodwill/Easter Seals of Minnesota provides free loans of medical equipment for up to 6 months. Items are cleaned, repaired and sanitized before each loan. Available items include: walkers, crutches, wheelchairs, transfer benches, and bathtub rails and chairs.
 - Courage Center reutilizes donated hearing aids and batteries, manual wheelchairs in good working condition, power wheelchairs in good working condition (two years old or newer), eyeglasses, Hoyer lifts (must be on wheels), walkers with wheels, computers in good working condition (Mac -

¹ Refers to a group of reutilizations programs interested in coming together, either formally or informally to share knowledge, to discuss barriers to reutilization and explore potential solutions, as well as, provide an opportunity for collaboration.

- newer than 4 years; PC - Pentium III or faster) and, laser printers, scanners, color monitors only, keyboards, mice.
- Hear Now accepts donations of old, used and no longer used hearing aids. Donated aids are sold to a repair lab, and money generated through these sales is used to purchase the aids used in the program's hearing aid assistance program. In 2000, more than 23,000 hearing aids were recycled generating more than \$150,000 to fund the program.
 - Computers Go Round is a program of United Cerebral Palsy of Central Minnesota. This program, which was established with STAR funds, refurbishes donated computers for distribution to individuals with disabilities living in Central Minnesota.
 - PACER Center administers Super Service an online device exchange program that was started through a STAR grant. PACER accepts used equipment in the following categories: ambulation and walking, architectural adaptation, augmentative communication, computer hardware and software, daily living aids, ramps and lifts, recreation and leisure, transportation, and wheelchairs and scooters.
 - MS Society, Minnesota Chapter has an online equipment exchange program specializing in ambulation and walking, bath safety, daily living aids, ramps and lifts, rehab exercise, seating and positioning, transportation, and wheelchairs and scooters.

During year one of its state AT Plan STAR determined that there is an interest in exploring the possibility of establishing a reutilization network in Minnesota for the purpose of sharing knowledge and possibly resources, as well as, connecting with other reuse programs to identify common barriers and possible solutions to help reutilization programs better serve Minnesotans. In May 2006, STAR attended, *Pass it On*, a National conference on reuse of assistive technology sponsored by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation (OSERS), Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) with the assistance of the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society (RESNA). As a result of information gathered at this conference, STAR plans to convene a reuse conference in 2007 with an open invitation to all those in Minnesota with an interest in this topic. During the reuse conference STAR will survey attendees to identify those interested in participating in a statewide reutilization network. STAR will amend its state AT plan to include a summary of the reuse conference including survey results and additional information about the reutilization network, if one is established as a result of this conference.

- b. As a facilitator of reutilization activities in Minnesota during years two and three STAR will:
 - Work to improve statewide access to reutilization services, which may include providing funding to establish services in

areas of the state that lack reutilization programs. Funding for this activity may occur in year two or three and is dependent upon available funds.

- Promote acquisition of used devices through awareness activities via its Web site and newsletter.
- Identify trends regarding equipment reutilization such as popular items, increased needs for specific devices, or lack of reutilization resources. This information will be used for reporting purposes and to plan future state level activities.
- Facilitate sharing of equipment between programs if appropriate. For instance if an agency has an abundance of previously owned walkers, it may wish to donate extra walkers to an area of the state that needs walkers.

2. Equipment Exchange

The STAR program often receives requests from consumers to help them buy and sell used equipment. During the three years of this state AT plan, STAR will help Minnesotans with disabilities gain access to used equipment by establishing an equipment exchange Web site. This Web site will connect buyers and sellers of used assistive technology and will be accessible from any computer with an Internet connection or by calling STAR from anywhere in the state using the program's toll-free phone number.

State level activities planned to implement this service include:

- **Year One** – STAR researched software and technology requirements needed to implement a Web based equipment exchange site. Several AT programs in other states offered to share resources with STAR as outlined in our state AT Plan dated 12/31/2005. Based upon available options and input from its Advisory Council, STAR contracted with AgoraNet to establish a Web-based AT device exchange program. It is anticipated that this site will be online and ready for use by September 15, 2006. In addition, STAR is collaborating with the Kansas AT Act program to promote awareness of its site, ATMatch.com, an online marketplace where donors and sellers can locate buyers for a wide range of assistive technology and durable medical products. STAR published information regarding ATMatch.com in its newsletter and has a link to this site on our Web site.
- Once the equipment exchange site is established, STAR will distribute information about the site to state agencies such as Rehabilitation Services, Department of Human Services and the Department of Education. Information will also be distributed to public libraries and other institutions that provide information to the general public.
- **Years Two and Three:** Individuals using the site will be asked to complete a follow-up survey. The survey will be available online, in print

or alternative format if requested. Survey results will be used to monitor the effectiveness of this site and to make changes to the site if needed.

- **Years Two and Three:** The equipment exchange site will be monitored to track trends including types of equipment routinely purchased or posted for sale and current used equipment needs based upon disability or geographical location. This information will be used for reporting purposes and to provide direction regarding ways to improve this program.

STAR will also use this site to provide additional information regarding assistive technology services such as assessment, training and funding options. Those visiting the site will find links to similar exchange programs to increase their options for buying and selling used equipment. The equipment exchange site will be open to all used AT devices that are in good working condition and meet current technology requirements. Items for sale will be categorized by device function. Individuals using this site will be required to pass through a disclaimer page that explains the terms of the listing and use of the site. Terms include:

- STAR does not inspect items listed and does not warrant the condition of any item listed.
- STAR will not be held liable for outcomes resulting from any transaction made through this site.
- Sales are strictly between individuals and not for use by vendors or distributors. Items will be removed after 90 days; however an individual may re-list an item if desired.

STAR will file an amended state plan at the end of year two. The amended plan will outline the status of the equipment exchange program and identify activities to be conducted during year three.

3. Connect with Community Colleges

Access to equipment repair and servicing is a real need and concern of most AT users. Often a device must be sent back to the vendor for servicing and repair, which leaves the consumer without a device to use—sometimes for a prolonged period of time. There are more than 20 community technical colleges located across Minnesota. The AT Advisory Council requested that during the three years of this state AT Plan STAR contact community colleges to discuss the possibility of establishing a program to train students to perform equipment repairs and/or safety inspections. STAR also hopes that collaborating with community colleges will promote student interest in the field of assistive technology.

During year one STAR:

- Established a list of contacts at the community technical colleges in Minnesota. Some colleges were contacted informally during year one. It is anticipated that more in-depth discussions will take place during year two of this plan. In addition colleges will be invited to the year two reuse conference where AT device service and refurbishment will be discussed.
- If an interest exists in establishing a training program, STAR will help coordinate future meetings with schools to facilitate the process of developing curriculum and connecting potential partners.

At the end of year two, STAR will amend its state AT plan to reflect the status of this state level activity.

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.

Device Loan Programs provide short-term loans of assistive technology devices to individuals, schools, employers, public agencies, or others seeking to meet the needs of people with disabilities. Minnesota's AT Act Program is in the process of developing a statewide device loan program with the intention of complementing and collaborating with existing loan programs throughout the state. In the past, STAR has funded loan programs in parts of the state. Loan programs that have received STAR funding include: Minnesota Assistive Technology Loan Network (MATLN), which loans augmentative and alternative communication equipment and three Assistive Technology Network agencies that loan a variety of devices and serve the Northwest, Northeast and Southwest regions of Minnesota.

PACER Center (which currently has over 2,000 AT items in its Simon Technology Center) has been a source of device loans and information for a number of years. Another resource available to Minnesotans is the Telephone Equipment Distribution Program specializing in telecommunications equipment available to eligible Minnesotans.

Equipment loan programs provide a valuable service by enabling:

- Individuals to try a device in order to make an informed purchasing decision
- Professionals to borrow a device for assessment purposes
- Individuals to borrow a device while their own device is being repaired or while they are waiting to receive a newly purchased device
- AT Trainers to borrow devices for training and demonstration

During the three years of this state AT plan, STAR will work to form a collaborative between existing device loan programs in Minnesota and to create new loan programs in un-served regions of the state. Consumers currently may contact MATLN, PACER

Center, the Telephone Equipment Distribution Program, STAR or one of Minnesota's six regional ATNs² for assistance. Each agency provides assistive technology services that meet the needs of the individuals in their region or statewide.

During year two of its state AT Plan, STAR will facilitate discussion among loan programs in Minnesota to determine opportunities for collaboration among interested programs. Possible collaborative activities include creating a centralized online database of loan equipment to provide consumers with a one-stop resource for locating available equipment statewide. If preferred, consumers could call STAR's toll-free phone number for assistance in obtaining device loan information.

In year one STAR planned and wrote an RFP to establish 7 AT Centers throughout Minnesota for the purpose of delivering AT demonstrations and device loans. STAR will announce the RFP in August 2006 and will award funding in October 2006. It is anticipated that these Centers will expand options for device loans and demonstrations in Minnesota.

Mailing requested loan items provides homebound or rural consumers with equal access to the device loan program; however, costs associated with mailing items can place a strain on loan program budgets. During year two, STAR plans to explore low-cost, no-cost ways to defray costs associated with transporting devices to consumers.

During year one of the plan, STAR:

- Met with representatives of Minnesota's AT device loan programs to discuss current services and to pave the way for future discussions regarding opportunities for collaboration.
- STAR researched the database software needs for providing an accessible online device database.
- STAR consulted with other AT Act Programs with existing AT device loan programs to learn more about their policies, procedures, and data collection methods. This information will be used to identify and avoid potential pitfalls and to establish consistent guidelines for device loan programs participating in the network.
- Met with assistive technology service providers to discuss how to provide adequate training and support to consumers during the loan period to ensure that trial devices are used appropriately. Possible options include establishing a mentorship program and/or providing an accompanying fact sheet with online training resources, as well as, providing vendor and state resource information.
- Did not survey users to evaluate service satisfaction and effectiveness of the device loan network of the AT Centers since it has not yet been established. This activity will be started when the subcontracts for the AT

² The Assistive Technology Network (ATN) is a collaborative of six agencies created by STAR to help assure access to and the acquisition of AT devices and services for individuals with disabilities and their family members, guardians, advocates, and authorized representatives throughout Minnesota.

Centers have been awarded and the Centers are up and running. STAR expects to award these subcontracts early in year two.

- STAR will submit an amended state AT plan outlining the status of this initiative at the end of year two.

Cooperative Buying Program

In a time of limited funding and constrained budgets, cooperative buying programs provide a needed cost saving benefit. Minnesota currently has a state cooperative buying program. STAR had hoped to pass cost savings on to its subcontractors through use of the cooperative buying program to purchase AT devices.

During year one, STAR contacted the cooperative buying program currently in existence in Minnesota to see if it was possible for STAR's subcontractors to purchase assistive technology through this program. Unfortunately, STAR discovered that using the existing state cooperative buying program was impractical at this time due to state policies and procedures. Instead Minnesota will rely on the nation-wide efforts of organizations such as NATTAP and ATAP to negotiate better prices with vendors. STAR will in turn pass those savings through to its subcontractors.

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.

Device demonstrations provide consumers with product information, and an opportunity to ask questions and try devices, as well as, providing general information regarding AT services including assessment, training and funding options. Device demonstrations provide important hands-on experience and information necessary to ensure purchasing the right device. Demonstrations may be held in-center or on-the-road to meet the needs of the consumer. The STAR Program has a variety of AT devices that it demonstrates at conferences, public information fairs, workshops, and AT training or upon request at its office. STAR also provides referrals to other device demonstration programs. Referrals increase the opportunities to see a variety of products in action.

During year one STAR:

- Worked with Minnesota's ATNs and other state AT providers to promote opportunities for device demonstrations by:
 - Facilitating access to devices for demonstration through loans of STAR's devices.
 - Referring requests for demonstrations to an appropriate ATN, AT service provider or vendor.
- Conducted an information outreach campaign utilizing its newsletter, Web site, Directory of Resources, and listserv to distribute information regarding device demonstration programs available in Minnesota. STAR will continue to pursue this activity in year two.

- STAR did not coordinate demonstrations at non-traditional host sites such as public libraries, museums, senior centers, and shopping malls/stores during year one but plans to pursue this activity in year two.
- STAR did not coordinate demonstrations at Minnesota WorkForce Centers but plans to pursue this activity in year two.
- Established a listing of statewide device demonstration events on STAR's Web site to educate Minnesota consumers and professionals of opportunities available throughout the state. STAR routinely contacts vendors, agencies and programs that provide AT demonstrations to request event announcements for posting on STAR's Web site.
- Based upon the number of demonstrations during year one, STAR will work to increase the number of demonstrations in years two and three. With the addition of AT Centers, STAR anticipates a 100% increase in device demonstrations during year two.
- Although STAR did not create and distribute a guide for consumers and professionals outlining things they should consider when purchasing assistive technology, it did publish an article on this topic in its newsletter. This article addressed areas of consideration including the need for a professional assessment, training, support and funding. STAR will continue to work during year two to create and distribute this proposed guide to the AT Centers and AT service providers to give consumers who attend device demonstrations.
- STAR did not establish a blog for users of AT to share their experiences regarding the devices they use. Reasons for not going forward with this activity include lack of staffing and resources. At this time, STAR does not plan to pursue this activity during year two.
- STAR filed the required annual report at the end of year one indicating the status of the activities outlined above and based upon the results of year one will provide a timeline of activities for years two and three.
- STAR will issue an RFP in 2006 to establish 7 AT Centers throughout Minnesota for the purpose of delivering AT demonstrations and device loans.

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.

Minnesota's AT Council recommended that the AT Plan for year one and beyond should include a declaration of comparable support for State-level financing activities. Minnesota has a federally funded Alternate Financing Program (AFP) through its community-based partner, Assistive Technology of Minnesota (ATMn*). Therefore, STAR will not pursue duplicating such financing activities during the next three years. STAR will, however, provide evidence in its yearly report that there continues to be comparable alternative financing for Minnesotans and file an amendment to the state AT plan, if needed.

The Minnesota Governor's Advisory Council on Technology for People with Disabilities, the STAR Program and interested stakeholders created a community based organization to provide statewide activities related to the Assistive Technology Act of 1998. Organized and incorporated as a statewide 501(c)(3) non-profit in 1998, Assistive Technology of Minnesota was identified as the organization that would provide alternative financing for the purchase of assistive technology devices and services. In the early years, 1998-2000, ATMn* was managed under an Executive Loan Agreement with the STAR Program. In 2000, a local foundation provided a grant award of \$10,000 to ATMn* to begin the process of developing a loan program specifically for the purpose of financing AT devices and services. Over the next four years, ATMn* was privatized and continued developing the loan program. Without long-term financial support to operate the program ATMn* realized how important it was to access available federal funding under Title III of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998.

In September of 2003 Assistive Technology of Minnesota (ATMn*) jointly applied with the Minnesota Department of Administration and the STAR Program for federal funds under Title III of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 to ensure long-term funding for an Alternative Finance Program for Minnesotans with disabilities. Concurrently, an application was submitted to the U.S. Rehabilitation Services Administration for funding to support the development of a new program, Access to Telework (loans for the purchase of employment related equipment). The federal government approved both applications. A condition of the award required Minnesota to provide a "matching" share of funds. The federal government awarded \$1,270,981 to develop the Alternative Finance Project referred to as the ATMn* Micro-Loan Program. With the addition of the local match requirement of \$423,660, ATMn*'s Micro-Loan Program will total \$1,694,641 offering a long-term funding solution for the purchase of assistive technology devices and services to Minnesotans with disabilities.

ATMn* is required by the contractual agreement with the State of Minnesota, the STAR Program to raise the required match. To date, ATMn* has raised \$210,000 that was matched by \$630,000 of federal funds for a balance of \$840,000. A portion of the funds, \$100,000 was recently awarded to ATMn* by the 2005 Legislature through a one time

special appropriation to support the required local match. Additional funds for the required local match were provided by foundation, corporate and individual donors. ATMn* will continue fund development activities until the entire balance of the required local match are raised ensuring the federal dollars allocated to Minnesota are capitalized. Securing all the federal and local funds will ensure that alternative financing is available to consumers in need and provide fiscal sustainability for ATMn*'s Micro-Loan Program many years into the future.

With more than \$1 million available for loans, ATMn* continues to provide comparable support for state-level financing activities.

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

Given the substantial amount of funding already in place under the AFP it makes better sense to serve the AT needs of its citizens by using the alternative financing portion of the AT Act grant for the other required activities.

As part of contractual agreement with the federal government, the STAR Program and ATMn* are required to assist all eligible Minnesotans to obtain AT devices and services regardless of their type of disability, age, income level or location of residence within the state. ATMn*'s policies/procedures governing the program require comprehensive access (i.e., that services be provided in a non-discriminatory manner and protect the privacy of all applicants).

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.

The Minnesota Department of Administration has designated the STAR Program to administer the contract with ATMn*. ATMn* operates the AFP independently from STAR. STAR and ATMn* usually meet monthly as part of a collaborative of AT organizations and discuss AFP issues when needed in person. ATMn* provides written reports to the STAR Program on a quarterly basis with details of the loan activities, progress toward program goals and information required by the federal government in the administration and implementation of the AFP.

The STAR Program through its information and referral service promote the AFP, link to ATMn*'s Web site, provide information at education/vendor/AT events and work to increase awareness of the program. Educators have direct access to the information through the State of MN Department of Education Assistive Technology Specialist who leads a Statewide Leadership Team. Dissemination of information through an annual AT conference sponsored by the Education Department ensures that school personnel, case-managers, parents and other professionals have access to the program information. Other

collaborative efforts with vendors, hospitals, clinics, specialty medical personnel and social/rehabilitative counselors assist in increasing awareness of the program.

The Minnesota AT Advisory Council issued an invitation to ATMn* to attend a council meeting to share information about the AFP. ATMn* accepted the invitation and told the council about its financing options. The AT Council also discussed at the 8/16/05 meeting offering one of its members to ATMn* as a member of the AFP advisory council so that there is better communication between the organizations.

Attachment 7: State Flexibility

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

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.

This attachment is not applicable to Minnesota's State AT Plan.

Attachment 8: State Leadership Activities

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

Training: Over the years STAR has presented a number of training sessions for state employees, AT professionals, employers and consumers and it will continue to do so over the next three years. Some of these training sessions will be based upon curriculum already established by STAR on relevant AT topics while others will provide training on new and evolving AT trends. Training activities will include:

- Training for education professionals: Schools in Minnesota may contact STAR to request AT training. STAR is a member of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) AT State Leadership Team. As a member of this team STAR serves in an advisory capacity to MDE and assists with planning statewide professional development activities relating to assistive technology such as MDE's annual assistive technology conferences (Charting the Cs and Up to the MN*AT Summer Institute) that provide AT information and training for teachers and professionals statewide. Training sessions range from an overview of assistive technology in the classroom to sessions focusing on the use of specific devices, software, as well as, strategies teachers may use to implement AT into classroom curriculum. Future sessions will be developed on Universal Design in Learning. During year one STAR provided schools statewide with updated information regarding STAR services and training. In year two STAR will also contact charter school representatives to make sure that these schools are aware of STAR training and services.
- Training for employment professionals: STAR works with Rehabilitation Services staff to educate individuals with disabilities and employment professionals on how assistive technology can be used to break down barriers to employment. Training sessions, which are available upon request, cover a variety of topics on AT in the workplace or may be customized to focus on specific AT needs.
- Training for information technology professionals: STAR provides training on creating accessible electronic information technology and Web design on a quarterly basis and technical assistance upon request.
- Training for general public/consumers: Topics include AT and disability awareness, access to information, future trends, and other topics upon request.
- Training for Human Service professionals: STAR is available to provide training to Human Service Agencies on topics ranging from basic AT awareness to funding strategies and state resources.

Technical Assistance: STAR will continue to provide technical assistance upon request over the next three years. The type of technical assistance provided will be determined by future requests; therefore, STAR is unable to describe specific activities at this time. It is likely, however, that STAR will receive requests similar to past requests. Examples of technical assistance provided by STAR in the past include:

- Help America Vote Act (HAVA)—STAR was a member of the Minnesota Secretary of State’s advisory council during the drafting of the Help America Vote Act. Technical assistance included testing accessible voting machine design and providing feedback. STAR also trained the Minnesota Secretary of State’s office and the HAVA advisory council on assistive technology and the important role it plays in providing independence in voting.
- STAR provides technical assistance to a variety of agencies including Minnesota’s Department of Human Services (MinnesotaHelp.info an information and referral Website), Department of Education, and. Agencies may request technical assistance from STAR while designing and creating electronic information and Web pages. STAR tests for accessibility and 508 compliance; provides additional guidance by reporting errors that hinder accessibility and provides information on how to correct the errors.

Transition: STAR will address the transitioning needs of Minnesotans through the following state leadership activities:

- Students--Year 1 – STAR conducted a transition event called Transition Day at the U in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). This event provided transitioning students with access to assistive technology information, demonstration and hands-on training necessary for developing technological and AT advocacy skills that support successful transition. In addition, the camp provided an opportunity for peer mentorship and networking. Thirteen students and forty three adults attended the event. The evaluations stated that the event was valuable to the attendees. At the July AT Advisory Council meeting, members recommended that STAR should sponsor a similar transition event next year.
- Community Living--Year 1 – STAR developed and disseminated information on assistive technology devices, services and funding options that provide opportunities for maintaining or transitioning to community living. STAR included articles called Technology for Transition in its quarterly newsletter *Constellations*. These articles discussed assistive technology that supports the many aspects of transitioning to community living. STAR did not broadcast interviews with community transition experts on *STAR Point*, STAR’s Internet radio program, but plans to as time and technical resources allow in year two. STAR worked with interagency transition teams to ensure that assistive technology was included in the transition planning process. In addition, STAR researched the costs and technology required to hold teleconferences and web conferences, but did not garner the necessary resources to sponsor one or more telephone/web conferences on transitioning to community living. STAR will attempt to use this format to host an open forum to discuss statewide community

- transition needs with consumers, caregivers, advocates and professionals in year two.
- Students/Community Living--Year 2 – STAR will partner with community organizations to offer information and training to individuals with disabilities preparing for academic, employment, or community transition. At the AT Advisory Council's recommendation, STAR will repeat the year one transition activity and explore a wider collaboration of partners relative to the above categories.
 - Students/Community Living--Year 3 – Expand the year two transition activities to include workshops for professionals working with people with disabilities.

STAR purchased assistive technology to provide the transition event participants with hands-on training. During the rest of the year, the equipment became part of the statewide device loan network for use by agencies (schools, workforce centers, VA, county services, regional AT Centers) and consumers.

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.

STAR provides Minnesotans with assistive technology related information through multiple forms of media as outlined below. All STAR materials are available in a variety of formats including Braille, electronic and audio.

Information and Referral: STAR provides information and referral to professionals and consumers locally and statewide through its toll-free phone number, e-mail and in-person at events and trainings.

Newsletter: STAR's newsletter *Constellations* is published quarterly (Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter) and has a circulation of approximately 7,200. Each issue covers a wide range of assistive technology topics such as new products and services, funding resources, tips and strategies, legislative updates, training opportunities and special events.

Web site: STAR maintains a Web site that provides information regarding

- STAR Program mission and services
- Assistive Technology – general information and resources
- Funding strategies and resources – including an online version of STAR's funding directory in English and Spanish
- Statewide resources including information on Minnesota's Assistive Technology Network (ATN), which consists of six Assistive Technology partners serving the Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, Southeast and Central regions of the state.
- A direct link to MATLN (Minnesota Assistive Technology Loan Network) operated by United Cerebral Palsy of Minnesota. The Web site is housed on the STAR server.

- Alternative Financing information and resources including a direct link to Minnesota's alternative financing program ATMn*.
- A direct link to Rehabilitation Engineering & Assistive Technology Service of North America (www.RESNA.org)
- A direct link to Rehabilitation Service Administration
- Online version of *Constellations* (STAR's newsletter) in electronic and audio format
- On-demand Internet radio program (See *STAR Point* description below)
- Information and resources regarding access to electronic and information technology including a Web form for reporting inaccessible Web sites. STAR reviews each report and, if necessary, contacts the agency in question and works with them to improve accessibility of the site.

Internet Radio Show: Over the next three years STAR will continue to produce and broadcast *STAR Point*, an on-demand Internet radio program. *STAR Point* educates Minnesotans on a broad array of issues related to assistive technology, assistive technology services and legislation regarding access to information technology and accessibility issues. Each half-hour program features experts in their respective fields. Guests to date have included government employees (federal and state of Minnesota), educators, members of advocacy groups, as well as representatives from service providers, vendors and manufacturers. A transcript of each show is posted as an alternative access option.

Publications: Finding the money to purchase assistive technology can be a difficult and time-consuming task. That is why for the past eight years the STAR program has published its *Directory of Funding Resources for Assistive Technology in Minnesota*. This 105 page directory is available to all Minnesotans, agencies and organizations free of charge. Directory content includes:

- General information on assistive technology
- A guide on how to develop a funding strategy
- State and national resources
- Sample letter of medical necessity
- Sample Appeal letter
- Listing of AT and disability related Web sites
- Fact page for each identified provider available to Minnesotans. Each fact page includes a detailed description of the funding provider including who they serve (age, disability, region, etc.) eligibility criteria, as well as, contact information (address, phone number, Web site, etc.)

To date, STAR has given away approximately 10,000 copies of the most recent edition of its funding directory. An updated edition was issued in June 2006. Later in the year STAR will release its funding directory on CD, which will allow Minnesotans to choose a format that best meets their needs. The funding directory is also available online at STAR's Web site in English and Spanish and in alternative formats upon request. Approximately 9,400 visitors have viewed the online directory during the past 12 months.

STAR distributes its funding directory at various events throughout the year such as the State Fair and Charting the Cs, which is an annual statewide assistive technology conference. The directory is also given to a variety of agencies in Minnesota including AT centers, rehabilitation facilities to assist professionals and their consumers during the funding process. The directory may be requested by contacting STAR through its toll free number, Web site or e-mail. During year one STAR expanded its distribution of the directory to include public libraries, senior centers and other public institutions statewide to increase its reach to a diverse group of consumers. By providing this information in one easy to access directory, consumers of all ages, disabilities and needs and professionals statewide spend less time searching for funding resources. Furthermore, by providing consumers and professionals with a comprehensive directory of funding options and resources the likelihood of acquiring needed assistive technology is increased.

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.

Minnesota STAR Program currently collaborates and coordinates with public and private entities that are responsible for establishing policies, procedures, or AT funding. Activities include:

- Serving as a member of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) AT State Leadership Team. This team serves in an advisory capacity to MDE and assists with planning statewide professional development activities relating to assistive technology. STAR participates in developing the annual assistive technology conference (Charting the Cs) and summer AT institute (Up to the MN*AT) that provides AT information and training for teachers and professionals statewide.
- A member of the Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (MN-CCD). This consortium is a broad-based coalition of organizations of people with disabilities, providers and advocates dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities. MN-CCD addresses public policy issues that affect people with disabilities by collaborating with others, advocating, educating, influencing change and creating awareness. STAR attends monthly meetings to discuss issues that impact the lives of Minnesotans with disabilities and participates in work groups to develop AT initiatives in the areas of health care, transportation, employment, education and housing.
- Advisory member to the Minnesota Disability Law Center
- A member of Minnesota Regions AT Collaborative (MNRATC), which is a collaborative of the regional network of AT centers originally created by STAR. The collaborative meets on a bi-monthly basis to discuss what is happening statewide regarding AT. Members of the collaborative work together sharing

- information and, when appropriate resources, to maximize the capacity for AT use within Minnesota.
- Meets on a regular basis with a number of state agencies that work with individuals with disabilities (State Services for the Blind, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services, Rehabilitation Services, DD Council) to discuss disability issues, share legislative planning and funding strategies.
 - Works with MinnesotaHelp.info (www.minnesotahelp.info) to provide networking opportunities with other agencies; shares information to make sure that MinnesotaHelp.info has current information regarding AT services in Minnesota; and, promote awareness of each other's services. MinnesotaHelp.info is an online directory of services designed to help people in Minnesota identify resources such as human services, information and referral, financial assistance, assistive technology and other forms of assistance within Minnesota. The Web site is especially rich in resource information for seniors and their caregivers; people with disabilities and their caregivers; parents and families; and low-income people. STAR distributes information on MinnesotaHelp.info to consumers at various outreach events and MinnesotaHelp.info refers to STAR individuals and professionals in need of AT assistance. In the next year STAR will formalize arrangements with MinnesotaHelp.info to assess their referral protocols to assure seamless services for consumers.
 - Works with Disability Linkage Line a toll-free disability information and referral service (1-866-333-2466) through information sharing and by promoting each other's services. Disability Linkage Line is a single statewide information and referral resource for all disability-related questions. It provides free confidential assistance that links Minnesotans with disabilities to local and statewide resources. A resource specialist answers the call, listens to needs, explores options and provides information. STAR distributes information regarding Disability Linkage Line and they, in turn, refer to STAR consumers and professionals in need of AT assistance. In year one STAR formalized trainings about AT resources for the Disability Linkage Line staff. STAR will also do a joint data analysis with Disability Linkage Line to help assure seamless services for consumers.
 - Collaborating with Medtronic, Courage Center, MCIL and PACER Center on an AT in business awareness exhibit for the National Business Leadership Network Conference scheduled for October 4-6, 2006.

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 2005 legislature appropriated \$150,000 to support the Alternative Financing Program. STAR anticipates that the Minnesota Department of Education will help fund the planned transition camp and the University of Minnesota will provide the space to hold it. The umbrella organizations for the Assistive Technology Network donate salaries and in kind resources for their members so that information and referral services, device demonstration, device loan and other AT-related activities occur.

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 STAR Program is an agency composed of state employees located within the Department of Administration.

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).

Minnesota's AT Council has played an integral role in developing this state AT plan through regular meetings and discussions on its listserv. The Council met four times before the submittal of this plan to set goals and objectives and to provide advice on how activities are to be carried out. Currently, there is one active workgroup focusing on transition with plans for additional workgroups in each of the state level activity areas. Council members are committed to lending their expertise, knowledge and leveraging resources when possible.

Council meetings are held quarterly on the third Tuesday of the month to evaluate STAR's progress toward the established goals and to offer suggestions for improvement and change. The Advisory Council will review and evaluate the state AT Plan's measurable goals giving feedback and guidance to make any needed adjustments.

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).

The State of Minnesota does not support any of STAR's State-level activities with a direct appropriation of state dollars. Other state-funded agencies, such as State Services for the Blind and the Department of Human Services offer demonstration and telephone equipment distribution programs.

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.

STAR is a member of the Minnesota Department of Education AT Leadership Team that helps plan such activities as Charting the Cs (the premier AT/Education conference in Minnesota) and Up to the MN*AT (MDE's AT summer institute). STAR's partnership with the Department of Education helps assure that the AT Act is represented in these activities.

Attachment 11: Allocation and Utilization of Funds

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

All departments of the State of Minnesota use the same Web based Minnesota Accounting and Procurement System (MAPS) to record and track income and expenditures. A coding system has been developed within MAPS to enable detailed accounting by reporting categories and types of expenditure. STAR will request separate reporting categories for State Level and State Leadership Activities under this grant and will code expenditures accordingly. At any time, a report can be obtained to monitor expenditures to assure that STAR is in compliance with the percentages and budget amounts as per the State Plan. It will be the responsibility of the STAR Director to monitor expenditures on a monthly basis. Indirect costs (less than 5%) are included in the overall budget.

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

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

Proposed Allocation	Distribution	Total Award Amount
		\$397,860
State Level	60%	\$238,716
State Leadership	40%	\$159,144
Leadership Activities	95% (of 40%)	\$151,186
Transition	5% (of 40%)	\$ 7,958
TOTAL		\$397,860

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

State Level Activities	Proposed Allocation
State Financing Activities	\$ 0 (Comparability)
Device Reutilization Program	\$50,000

Device Loan Program	\$100,000
Device Demonstration Program	\$88,716
State Leadership Activities	Proposed Allocation
Training and Technical Assistance Activities	\$56,186
Transition	\$ 7,958
Public Awareness Activities	\$70,000
Coordination and Collaboration	\$25,000

Addendum to Part I
OMB Control Number: 1820-0664
Expiration Date: 10/31/2008

Minnesota AT Advisory Council Operational Policies

Introduction

The STAR Program was established in 1989 as Minnesota's AT Act Project to plan and coordinate AT information and services for the citizens of Minnesota with disabilities. The STAR Program has served as an advocate for federal and state AT policy and legislation, builds AT capacity in state government and helps assure statewide AT services for individuals with disabilities. The Governor's Advisory Council on Technology for People with Disabilities provided direction to STAR. The Governor abolished this council in 2002.

Purpose of the Council

The purpose for the Minnesota Assistive Technology Advisory Council is to provide consumer input to STAR staff in the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of AT device loan and recycling programs, as provided in the AT Act of 1998, as amended.

Membership

The council shall consist of no more than 15 members.

Five members are dictated by Statute:

- One representative of the Centers for Independent Living
- One representative of the State Services for the Blind
- One representative of state workforce reinvestment board
- One representative of Minnesota Department of Education
- One representative of the Department of Employment and Economic Development

Ten members are appointed by the Commissioner of Administration, but must represent Minnesotans in the following areas: geography, ethnicity, types of disabilities, age and users of types of services that an individual with disabilities may receive.

The council will elect its own chair and vice-chair.

Attendance

Member attendance at scheduled council meetings is mandatory. In the event that a council member or designated state agency representative does not attend two consecutive meetings of the council, the member shall be notified in writing of the attendance policy. If the member misses a third consecutive meeting, the commissioner's office will be notified and a request will be made for a replacement.

State: Minnesota

Terms of office for council members

Members serve at the pleasure of the Commissioner.

Participation of Non-Council Members

Participation in council activities and implementation of activities may be extended by the Chair to all individuals, organizations, public or private entities that have an ongoing interest in the use of technology by people with disabilities.

Meetings

The Minnesota Assistive Technology Act Council will meet on a regular schedule as established by the council. Council meetings shall be open to the public.

Quorum

A quorum shall consist of those voting members present.

Written Notice

Written notice of all regular and special meetings of the council shall be provided at least seven days in advance of the meeting.

Sub-Committees

Sub-committees may be established to assist the council in carrying out its duties. The council may delegate the responsibilities of its functions to a committee. Committee recommendations shall be submitted to the full council for review and action.

Sub-committee chairs shall be appointed by the council Chair from among the council membership. A quorum of the sub-committee shall consist of a majority of those present.

Conflict of Interest Statement

This Council may determine that grants will be required to carry out the duties set before it. The process of determining grant specifications, reviewing grant applications and arriving at recommendations must be as free from conflict of interest as possible. A conflict of interest exists when members of the Council participate in the process that results in recommendations relative to funding of projects, while they have a person or financial interest in one or more of the projects. In order to avoid problems in this area, Council members who have a person or financial interest in an application or an organization that submits an application should abstain from participating in the entire process of reviewing and evaluating the applications in which the Council member has a conflict of interest. In this context, "personal or financial interest" means the following:

- The council member or a member of the family is an officer of the applicant organization, serves on a committee that governs the applicant organization, or serves on the Board of the applicant organization.
- The council member or a member of the family is employed by or is paid a consultant fee by the applicant organization.

- The council member or a member of the family will be employed by the applicant organization in any capacity if the application is funded.

Those members of the council who have, or believe they have, a personal or financial interest in any of the applications being considered by the council should abstain from participating in the entire process of reviewing the applications and any and all matters concerning the grant in which the council member has a conflict of interest and should be recorded as abstaining when votes are taken.

Guidelines on How to Contribute at Council Meetings

By Duane Shimpach
Former Chair

Governor's Council on Technology for People with Disabilities

Know Why You Are Here

- Read agendas and materials.
- Plan and prepare by thinking how you can help the meeting to be productive.
 - Think about the information, topic or issues.
 - Think about questions and varying viewpoints.
 - If the topic is a problem, think of solutions and/or how to reduce conflicts.

Be Here on Time

- Get to the meeting before it is scheduled to begin.
- Encourage the Chair to begin the meeting on time.

Stay on the Subject

- Be sure you know what subject is being discussed and the purpose of the discussion.
- If you aren't sure of the subject or purpose, ask for clarification. It will benefit you and benefit the committee/council.

Contribute to Group Cohesion

- Come to the meeting with a positive attitude and an objective to help make the meeting as productive as possible.
- Give your full attention to speakers. Ignore anyone who tries to start a side conversation with you.
- Refuse interruptions by a telephone message unless it's an emergency.
- Challenge, but avoid arguments.
- Control your emotions.
- Ask questions if you aren't sure about something – make sure you understand.
- Do the work of the council during the meetings and not what you'd regularly be doing.
- Disagree fairly. Deal with issues at meetings with people involved, not outside meetings or in cliques.

State: Minnesota

Be Open to the Ideas of Others

- Open-mindedness begets open-mindedness.
- Be willing to listen.
- Respond to others' ideas with comments such as, "I see what you mean," "I understand how you feel," "I hadn't thought of it that way."

REMEMBER: You are the most important ingredient of a productive meeting.