

Texas State Plan

Texas Technology Access Program
Texas Center for Disability Studies
The University of Texas, at Austin

Attachment 1: Basic Information

Name of Lead Agency:	The University of Texas at Austin
Name of Applicable Division and/or Subdivision of Lead Agency:	The Texas Center for Disability Studies The University of Texas at Austin
Address of Lead Agency:	4030-2 West Braker Lane, Suite 220 Austin, Texas 78759
Name and Title of Certifying Representative for Lead Agency:	Rochelle R. Athey Associate Director, Office of Sponsored Projects
Address for Certifying Representative:	The University of Texas at Austin Office of Sponsored Projects PO Box 7726 Campus Mail Code A9000 Austin, Texas 78713-7726
Telephone for Certifying Representative:	512-471-6448
E-Mail for Certifying Representative:	atheyrr@mail.utexas.edu
Name and Title of Program Director:	Penny Seay, Ph.D., Executive Director
Address for Program Director:	Texas Center for Disability Studies University of Texas at Austin 4030-2 W Braker Lane, Suite 220 Austin, TX 78759
Telephone for Program Director:	512-232-0745
E-Mail for Program Director:	pseay@mail.utexas.edu
Name of Implementing Agency:	Same as Lead Agency
Name and Address of Applicable Division and/or Subdivision of Implementing Entity:	
Name and Title of Program Director	Same as Lead Agency

Lead Agency and Implementing Entity

Since 1992, as designated by the Governor of Texas, the Texas Center for Disability Studies at The University of Texas at Austin has served as the lead agency for the Texas Assistive Technology Act Program. The Texas Technology Access Program is directly responsible for carrying out the goals and activities of the program to increase awareness about assistive technology and to increase the likelihood that individuals are able to get and use assistive technology. The program provides information about assistive technology (what is available, how much it costs, where to get it, and resources to help pay for it) by providing a toll free phone number, an accessible web site, accessible publications, and staff at The University of Texas, as well as in six demonstration sites across the state.

In 1992, the Governor designated The University of Texas at Austin as the lead agency for the Statewide Assistive Technology Program for the state of Texas. The University's Texas Center for Disability Studies is directly responsible for conducting and overseeing the activities of the Statewide AT Program, which is called the Texas Technology Access Program (TTAP). Since 1992, TTAP has provided Texans free access to information and referral services, an accessible web site, and publications in accessible formats on extensive topics related to disability rights, laws, policies, and funding opportunities for assistive technology (AT).

The mission of TTAP is to increase the provision of, access to, and funding for assistive technology for Texans of all ages and all 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 University of Texas at Austin will continue to serve as the lead agency responsible for the Statewide AT Program, and TTAP will continue or begin programs to accomplish this mission.

The University of Texas at Austin is a public, four year, nationally accredited comprehensive institution of higher education. Because the university is not a state agency dedicated to specific programs that promote limited activities or serve limited populations, TTAP will have the flexibility to assist individuals with AT needs across the lifespan and in any environment or for any purpose. This flexibility also means that access to TTAP programs will not be limited by eligibility criteria such as income, age, type of disability, or the reason that an individual needs AT. Despite being located near the center of the state of Texas, the TTAP 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 demonstration and lending centers that are operated through subcontracts with other agencies. Currently, TTAP operates six centers in the state, and ten new centers will be developed in the next year.

TTAP employs, and will continue to employ, a diverse staff of educated and motivated professionals with technical expertise in the field of AT. With a collective 120 years of AT and disability-related experience among six current staff, TTAP will provide Texans with access to expertise that addresses AT needs in all areas of life, with particular emphasis on education, employment, information technology (IT) and telecommunication, and community living. TTAP 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.

TTAP has a fourteen-year history of established relationships with public and private entities in the state. Specifically, TTAP staff members participate on boards, advisory councils, workgroups, committees, and commissions that address the needs of Texans with disabilities across the life span with agencies such as: the State Department of Education, State Department of Health and Human Services, Department of State Health Services, State Department of Aging and Disability Services, and the State Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services. TTAP will continue these activities, and provide training and technical assistance to the above agencies and other entities within the state. TTAP also will work with these agencies and others on new and ongoing initiatives in the state 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.

TTAP will conduct many of its activities via subcontractors throughout the state. This will ensure that programs are available locally to individuals with disabilities through regional centers.

In addition to the advisory council described in attachment 3 of this plan, TTAP 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, TTAP will utilize consumer focus groups to seek specific guidance on many of its programs and services.

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.

The TTAP Advisory Council was formed based on the requirements as outlined in the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 as amended. The Advisory Council has 14 members, of which 6 are Agency representatives, 7 are individuals with disabilities, and 1 are family member of a person with a disability. The Advisory Council members are as follows.

Agency Representatives from:

- DARS Blind Services
- DARS Rehabilitation Services
- Texas Workforce Council
- Independent Living Center Lubbock
- State Workforce Investment Board
- Texas Education Agency

Consumers with a disability from:

- Houston
- San Antonio
- San Antonio
- Edinburg
- Tyler
- Austin
- El Paso

Parent of a family member with a disability

- Angleton

Structure and Operation of the Advisory Council

Agency representatives were solicited through their respective agencies. Consumer members were solicited through disability advocacy organizations and Independent Living Centers. Selection was based on assistive technology use and knowledge, geographic location, and ethnic diversity.

The Advisory Council will meet twice a year and have ongoing communication through an Advisory Council Internet mailing list and an Advisory Council Web site. The Council is moderated by a staff member of the TTAP. Prior to Council meetings questions to be discussed and accompanying background material will be posted on the Council's Web site and Internet mailing list. Updated information on programs, services and new program implementation will also be posted to the Council's Web site. The Council meetings will be facilitated by a member of the TTAP staff. A formal agenda will be posted on the Council's Web site prior to Council meetings and the meetings will follow the agenda. Council members will have opportunities throughout Council meetings to provide input and feedback on all issues discussed. Since the Council serves an advisory role no voting procedures are utilized for decision making purposes. Advisory Council advises the TTAP on the development and Implementation of the State Plan, program evaluation and other issues as requested.

Ad Hoc committees may be formed to work on specific issues requiring additional exploration and research.

Council terms for consumer members will be serve two-year terms.

Involvement of State Advisory Council

The TTAP Advisory Council met once prior to the submission of the State Plan. The Council provided input and advice on each area of State Level and State Leadership Activities and on the establishment of measurable goals. The Council will meet twice annually and review implementation of the plan and have the opportunity to suggest additional measurable goals and amendments to the Plan. The TTAP Web site and Internet mailing list will provide the Council with ongoing information regarding the implementation of the Plan, and allow ongoing Council participation between meetings.

Measurable Goals

TTAP will establish a baseline for each of the goals 4.1 through 4.7 during year two, and will submit after year two an amendment identifying the long term goal and short-term goals set to improve upon this baseline during years two and three of the 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.

Short-term goal for Year 4:

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 Education as a result of the assistance they received.

Goal for Improving Access to AT in Employment

Short-term goal for Year 4

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 as a result of the assistance they received.

Goal for Improving Access to AT in Community Living

Short-term goal for Year 4:

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.

Goal for Improving Access to IT and Telecommunications

Short-term goal for Year 4:

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 Information Technology as a result of the assistance they received.

Goal for Improving Acquisition of AT in Education

Short-term goal for Year 4:

Short-term goal for Year 3:

Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percentage of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed State financing activities or reutilization programs and obtained an AT device or service for Education who would not have otherwise obtained the AT device or service.

Goal for Improving Acquisition of AT in Employment

Short-term goal for Year 4:

Short-term goal for Year 3:

Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percentage of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed State financing activities or reutilization programs and obtained an AT device or service for Employment who would not have otherwise obtained the AT device or service.

Goal for Improving Acquisition of AT in Community Living

Short-term goal for Year 4:

Short-term goal for Year 3:

Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percentage of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed State financing activities or reutilization programs and obtained an AT device or service for Community Living who would not have otherwise obtained the AT device or service.

State-level Activities

State Financing Activities

The Texas Technology Access Program is concluding a one-year study, using multiple strategies, to determine the need for state financing activities. The study focuses on a variety of financial activities including a financial loan program, cooperative buying program, individual development account program, last resort fund program and an assistive technology leasing program.

The Texas Technology Access Program will determine the need for, and design of, an appropriate statewide financing activity, the capacity of the individuals with disabilities to afford and/or utilize such a program, and the state's capacity for designing, developing, implementing, financing and maintaining a state financing program. There will be special emphasis on the needs of Texans with low incomes that need assistive technology and the potential benefit of such a program in helping build assets and/or establishing or re-establishing personal credit.

A State Financing program workgroup comprised of members of the Advisory Council, community disability organizations, agency representatives, financial institutions and program staff, will be formed to develop a program model, identify community-based financial partners and community organizations to collaborate with in order to provide a state financing activity. Finally, the workgroup will develop a marketing plan to address outreach and marketing activities.

The State has been working to secure state funding through the state legislative budget process.

Device Reutilization Program

Over the next three years, the Texas Technology Access Program will develop a statewide assistive technology device reutilization program. The purpose of the program is to facilitate consumers obtaining assistive technology devices they would not have otherwise been able to acquire through other sources. The device reutilization program will be comprised of two parts.

The first part of the new device reutilization program will be developed in collaboration with Project Mend, Inc., an organization with an existing medical equipment reutilization program operating in both San Antonio and Houston, Texas. Based on our experience, there is a tremendous need for medical equipment for low income individuals in our state. The TTAP will assist Project Mend in developing and conducting a state-wide needs assessment to determine the need for recycled assistive technology devices in our state.

Project Mend, Inc. provides refurbished equipment through long-term loans to persons with disabilities who meet federal poverty level guidelines. The loan period is set for a period as long as the individual continues to need the equipment.

Items normally available include regular and quad canes, Hoyer lifts, regular and rolling walkers, shower chairs, trapeze bars, forearm crutches, scooters, transfer boards, bedside commodes, electric hospital beds, elevated toilet seats and manual and electric wheelchairs. All items are evaluated, sanitized, refurbished and repaired before being loaned and reutilized. Clients are required to provide a written doctor's prescription and proof of household income to qualify for an equipment loan.

Over the next two years, the TTAP will assist Project Mend to expand geographically to include a third, northern Texas, location and to expand their equipment reutilization selections to include a wider range of assistive technology devices.

The second part of the new device reutilization program is a partnership with the "Assistive Technology for Kansans" program using an Internet "auction" site for reutilization of assistive technology devices. The Internet site, called ATMATCH.com, is an "auction" site that serves as a comprehensive Internet access point for obtaining assistive technology devices and services. Users will find specific assistive technology devices at reasonable prices, post equipment for sale and locate assistive technology resources in Texas and beyond. Assistive technology providers may advertise equipment at the "AT Store" link on the [ATMATCH](http://ATMATCH.com) site. All of these activities will be possible from one Web page. The Web site contains a personal, customizable resource section for users that automatically provides the links or telephone numbers to the Texas Technology Access Program when the user registers. From this same personal page, the user can search for items to buy or can list items for sale.

The site tracks the number of people registered from Texas, the number of items registered for sale, and the number of items acquired.

Device Loan Program

When individuals with disabilities, their families and qualified professionals are able to borrow AT devices and assess them in the individual's normal environments, they are then better able to determine if the devices meet their needs or the needs of individuals with disabilities they are serving. They are then able to make informed choices about what device to purchase or whether to purchase a device at all.

Residents of Texas currently have several source options for borrowing assistive technology devices. These include the Rehabilitation Technology Resource Center (RTRC) at the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS). The RTRC is located in the Division for Rehabilitation Services (DRS) Central Office in Austin and has a wide array of assistive equipment including wheelchairs and aids for communication, daily living, deaf and hard of hearing. The center's entire inventory is available for demonstration, and the majority of items is available for loan to consumers for a period of three weeks. Equipment is loaned to rehabilitation professionals as well as DRS consumers through their counselors. Other individuals or groups may request demonstrations at the RTRC by appointment by calling 512/424-4138. DARS Division for Blind Services can also provide short-term equipment loans to persons with visual impairments through their Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living Rehabilitation Program. For additional information you may call 800/628-5115.

The Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired sponsors the Technology Loan Program to provide assistive technology devices to students with visual disabilities so that they might reach their educational potential. For more information call 512/206-9314.

The Regional Education Service Centers in Texas loan a variety of assistive technology devices to the public schools in their regions so that students with disabilities may try them in educational settings. The following link may be used to locate the regional Service Center in your area.<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/ESC/>.

Over the next three years, the Texas Technology Access Program will develop an assistive technology device short-term loan program designed to bridge the gaps not covered by existing device loan programs. We will also collaborate, as part of the new program, with the existing loan programs to refer individuals to an appropriate loan program.

The Program will work with the agencies that provide assistive technology device loans to develop a system of mutual referral so that consumers will be referred to the appropriate agency to meet their equipment loan needs.

The Texas Technology Access Program has completed the first phase of developing an assistive technology device loan program designed to meet the needs of persons not served by existing agency loan programs. Since funding is limited TTAP will purchase assistive technology devices that will target a different group each year for the three years of the current State Plan. The first targeted group for year one will be children from birth to age three, year two will be children from age 4 to adult and year three will focus on adults, especially older adults.

The assistive technology device loan will be initiated by going to the TTAP's Web site or by calling the Program's toll free number, 1-800-828-7839 during regular office hours. The loan period will be for either two or four weeks depending on the type of device. A list of available devices will be posted on the TTAP Web site. Some items will require that the person requesting the loan be working with an assistive technology specialist, such as a speech/language pathologist, these items will be identified on the list of devices posted on the Web site. Items will be shipped with free return shipping included. Individuals will complete a form that describes the loan period and return requirements and agree to comply with the Program's policies and guidelines.

The Device Loan Program will be marketed through the TTAP Web site and directly to agencies and programs that serve individuals with disabilities.

Device Demonstration Program

The Texas Technology Access Program will develop a statewide assistive technology demonstration network to provide assistive technology device demonstrations, including opportunities to try out the assistive technology devices, for consumers and their family members, as well as advocates, employers and educators.

Device demonstrations will include an explanation of the function of the device and instruction in its use. There will be an opportunity at each demonstration for participants to try a number of devices so that each individual will be better able to determine the most appropriate device to meet his/her specific needs. Upon the completion of the demonstrations, participants will be given information about further assessment, if required, funding, and assistive technology vendors so they can make an informed decision regarding accessing or acquiring assistive technology devices.

The Program currently has five assistive technology computer access demonstration centers located in eastern Texas community centers. These centers are: Brazos Valley Rehabilitation Center in Bryan; Brazoria County Center for Independent Living in Angleton; East Texas Center for Independent Living in Tyler; Palestine at the Palestine Resource Center for Independent Living; and RISE Independent Living Center in Beaumont. Each center has two accessible computer workstations using assistive technology hardware and software designed to be accessible for a wide range of persons with disabilities. The centers also provide consumers the opportunity to both observe the computer access technology being demonstrated and subsequently try the technology themselves. Additional computer access demonstration centers will be located in Austin at Goodwill Industries of Central Texas, Belton at the Heart of Texas Independent Living Center, Houston at the Houston Center for Independent Living and Dallas at REACH Independent Living Center. Two additional sites may be added in 2007.

The Program also has a general assistive technology demonstration site in El Paso operated by the El Paso Rehabilitation Center. Additional general assistive technology demonstration sites will be located in Dallas with UCP-Dallas, Fort Worth with Easter Seals of Greater Northwest Texas, Houston at UCP- Houston and San Antonio with the Warm Springs Rehabilitation Hospital.

Our staff will provide initial training to the centers and ongoing training and technical assistance as required. The Program will also supply each demonstration center with information about appropriate clinicians and vendors in each respective area to enable demonstration center staff to make referrals for their consumers to area professionals qualified to conduct assistive technology evaluations. The initial selection of assistive technology devices for the demonstration centers will include those technologies most frequently requested. This selection will also be based on the experience of selected demonstration centers operating in other states. The Program will annually broaden the range of assistive technology devices available at each center so as to be able to offer a representative sample of current AT devices available to the public.

Location and contact information for existing and future centers will be available on the TTAP Web site. Demonstrations may be arranged by calling the particular center and scheduling an appointment.

Even with 16 centers providing demonstrations, there will be considerable distance between each site, considering the large geography of Texas. To help address this problem of customer coverage and personal service, the TTAP Web site will also provide information about vendors who provide demonstrations of assistive technology in additional areas of the state as well as provide information concerning vendors able to demonstrate specific AT devices unavailable in the program's demonstration centers.

State Leadership Activities

State Leadership Activities

Training and Technical Assistance Activities

Training

The Texas Technology Access Program will provide training on a variety of AT topics including: AT for persons with cognitive disabilities, AT for older adults, AT in the workplace, computer and information technology access, library access, workplace accommodation and vehicle modification. In addition, the Program will utilize other professionals around the State to provide training as appropriate.

During the three years of this State Plan, the Program will seek additional opportunities to provide AT training to health care professionals, home care providers, audiologists, speech/language pathologists and AT vendors. Our Web site will list AT training and professional development opportunities statewide

Specific training initiatives will include:

- Collaboration with Knowbility, Inc. of Austin, Texas to provide training to schools and universities, local and state government and non-profits on developing accessible Web sites and accessible Web-delivered services such as distance education through the Air-Texas program. Knowbility, Inc. is a non-profit organization that supports the independence of children and adults with disabilities through accessible information technology. Access to technology is critically important for people with disabilities to succeed in work, in school and in consumer activities.
- Collaboration with The University of Texas at Austin's College of Education and the Texas Region IV Education Service Center to provide training materials to school districts on the consideration of assistive technology in the Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- Providing pre-service training to students at The University of Texas at Austin's College of Education on AT in the IEP and an overview and demonstration of AT in the classroom.
- The United Cerebral Palsy of Texas will provide training to include consumer/parent training sessions with topics such as: Inclusion and Assistive Technology, Funding Assistive Technology, and Home Modifications.

Technical Assistance

The Texas Technology Access Program provides technical assistance on request from agencies, community organizations and schools. Ongoing technical assistance will likely include:

- The Assistive and Instructional Laboratory at The University of Texas at Austin's College of Education. We make recommendations on equipment to purchase, lab design, demonstrations and assignments for classes.
- The Texas Department of Information Resources regarding making information technology and Web-based services accessible.
- Libraries statewide on making online catalogs, computer workstations and other information accessible.
- Texas Workforce Commission's statewide One Stop facilities on making their services and workplace accommodations accessible.

Transition

The Texas Technology Access Program will develop online training materials about AT topics to help promote students with disabilities moving from schools to activities including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation. The Program will also develop online training materials pertaining to the role of AT in the transition of individuals with disabilities from nursing homes and institutions to community living.

Public Awareness Activities

The Texas Technology Access Program will use a variety of methods 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.

The Texas Technology Access Program maintains a Web site that contains information on assistive technology including Texas and national assistive technology vendors and funding resources. The site has undergone a major revision and update during the first year of this plan.

The Program will also develop new brochures about the Program's programs and services and will devote a section of the Web site to highlight progress on our State-Level Activities. In addition, the Program provides a toll-free number for free information and referral services on AT for people of all ages with all disabilities. TTAP staff provides information on the availability, benefits, cost and funding of assistive technology devices and services. Family members, services providers, and others who work in fields related to disabilities or AT may also use this service.

Coordination and Collaboration

The Texas Technology Access Program anticipates a number of possibilities for coordination and collaboration with both public and private entities such as state agencies, disability advocacy groups and AT service providers.

The Program will continue to:

- Act as an AT resource for the state legislature and legislators, providing testimony and comments when requested.
- Serve on committees of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission dealing with Medicaid, consumer directed services and rehabilitation, advocating for increased AT availability, consumer choice and funding.
- Support Texas Education Agency efforts to expand AT in the classroom, including AT for students in transition and to make school Web sites and distance education accessible.

Take part in disaster preparedness planning with state agencies and disability advocacy organizations.

Attachment 11: Allocation and Utilization of Funds

Tracking Expenditures

The University of Texas Office of Accounting records and tracks expenditures and revenues of programs administered through the University. An internal coding system is being developed within the Texas Center for Disability Studies to enable detailed accounting for types of expenditures within the TTAP. State Level and State Leadership Activities under this grant will be coded by type of expenditure. Reports will be generated on at least a quarterly basis to assure that Texas is in compliance with the percentages and budget amounts as per the state plan. It will be the responsibility of the Texas Center for Disability Studies Executive Director to monitor expenses and to work with the federal Program Monitor to make any adjustments necessary.

Proposed Budget Allocations

The following are proposed budget allocations for State Leadership and State Level Activities for Year 1 of the project. These numbers will serve as an estimate only for Year 2 and Year 3 of this State Plan.

Proposed Allocation	Distribution	Total Award Amount
		\$621,949
State Level	60%	\$348,518
State Leadership	40%	\$232,345
<i>Leadership Activities</i>	<i>95% (of 40%)</i>	<i>\$220,728</i>
<i>Transition</i>	<i>5% (of 40%)</i>	<i>\$11,617</i>
Indirect Costs	10%	\$41,086
TOTAL		\$621,949

Within the above manner, TTAP 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 2 and Year 3 of this State Plan.

State Level Activities	Proposed Allocation
State Financing Activities	\$65,000
Device Reutilization	\$75,000
Device Loan	\$100,000
Device Demonstration	\$108,515

State Leadership Activities	Proposed Allocation
Training and Technical Assistance	\$100,000
Transition	\$11,617
Public Awareness	\$50,728
Coordination and Collaboration	\$70,000