

State: Virgin Islands

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

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### **Attachment 1: Basic Information**

Name of Lead Agency: University of the Virgin Islands  
Name of Applicable Division and/or Subdivision of Lead Agency: Virgin Islands  
Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities, (VITRAID)  
Address of Lead Agency: University of the Virgin Islands  
# 2 John Brewer's Bay, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands 00802-9990

Name and Title of Certifying Representative for Lead Agency:  
LaVerne E. Ragster, Ph.D., President  
Address for Certifying Representative: Office of the President, University of the Virgin  
Islands # 2 John Brewer's Bay, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands 00802-9990  
Telephone for Certifying Representative: (340) 693-1003  
E-mail for Certifying Representative: eragste@uvi.edu

Name and Title of Program Director: Yegin Habtes, Ph.D.  
Address for Program Director: University of the Virgin Islands  
# 2 John Brewer's Bay, St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands 00802-9990  
Telephone for Program Director: (340) 693-1323  
E-mail for Program Director: yhabtes@uvi.edu

Name of Implementing Entity: *same as lead agency*  
Name of Applicable Division and/or Subdivision of Implementing Entity:  
Address of Implementing Entity:

Name and Title of Program Director: *same as lead agency*  
Address for Program Director:  
Telephone for Program Director:  
E-mail for Program Director:

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## **Attachment 2: Lead Agency and Implementing Entity**

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

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

In 1996, the Governor designated the University of the Virgin Islands as the lead agency for the Statewide Assistive Technology (AT) Program for the Virgin Islands. The University's Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities is directly responsible for conducting and overseeing the activities of the Statewide AT Program, which is called the Virgin Islands Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities (VITRAID). Since 1996, VITRAID has provided residents of the Virgin Islands free access to information and referral services, publications in accessible formats, on extensive topics related to disability rights. VITRAID has provided information on laws, policies, utilization of assistive technology and funding opportunities for AT.

The mission of VITRAID is to increase the provision of, access to, and funding for assistive technology for residents all ages and all disabilities through a variety of comprehensive activities and services available across the Virgin Islands, (VI). As the organization responsible for implementing programs authorized under the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act, the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, and now the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended (AT Act), the University of the Virgin Islands, (UVI) will continue to serve as the lead agency responsible for the Statewide AT Program, and VITRAID will continue to enhance programs to accomplish this mission.

UVI is a public institution of higher education, fully accredited by the Commission on Higher Education, of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. The University operates two campuses, one on St. Thomas and one in St. Croix, providing baccalaureate and advanced degree opportunities to the multicultural population of the Virgin Islands, as well as, to students throughout the Caribbean. Its Continuing Education Program has the highest per capita enrollment under the U.S. flag. The University has as a part of its mission statement a commitment to enhancing the lives of the people of the Virgin Islands through "responsive community service". Accordingly, VITRAID will have the flexibility to assist individuals with AT needs across the lifespan in any environment and for any purpose. UVI's core values, include statements of purpose to "*support the community*" through the "*effective use of technology*". As a result, VITRAID programs will not be limited by eligibility criteria such as income, age, type of disability, or the reason that an individual needs AT.

Despite not having central locations on each island, VITRAID will make its programs available statewide through a toll-free number, an accessible website, and by conducting activities in all regions of the state on a periodic basis. The use of regional centers

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operated either directly by VITRAID, or through Memoranda of Agreement with other agencies, will ensure access to all VITRAID programs statewide.

A Community Advisory Council representing relevant government and non-profit agencies, people with disabilities, family members, and advocates, provides guidance to VITRAID in establishing priorities and action plans. The Council provides consumer oversight for all AT Act programs and services. Consumer membership on the Council includes representation of a wide variety of disability groups (deaf, hard-of-hearing, blind, physical and cognitive disabilities) through individuals with these disabilities and parents of children, with such disabilities. In addition to providing representation across all racial and ethnic groups, geographic representation all across the state (Territory) will be ensured.

Membership on the Council includes representation from education, employment, and community living providers, which serves as a natural vehicle for coordination and collaboration among agencies responsible for assistive technology delivery. VITRAID employs, and will continue to employ, a diverse staff of educated and motivated professionals with professional degrees in education, social sciences and business with a combined twenty years of experience in Assistive Technology. The Advisory Council of VITRAID adds a collective 175 years of AT and disability-related experience. This experience includes expertise and experience in the fields of computer technology, occupational therapy, education, management, rehabilitation engineering, therapeutic recreation, and special education. VITRAID is thus equipped to provide the VI with access to expertise that addresses AT needs in all areas of life, with particular emphasis on education, employment, information technology/telecommunications, and community living. VITRAID 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.

VITRAID has a nine-year history of established relationships with public and private entities across the Virgin Islands. Specifically, VITRAID's staff members participate on boards, advisory councils, workgroups, and committees, which address the needs of residents with disabilities, across the life span with agencies such as: the Department of Education State Office of Special Education, Department of Health Infants and Toddlers Early Intervention Program, Department of Human Services, and the Virgin Islands Board of Elections. VITRAID works with the school districts in the VI on AT-related issues as well. VITRAID also participates in initiatives with organizations such as Independent Living Centers and Work-able, Inc. (an organization specializing in matching persons with disabilities with employers), and will collaborate with these agencies to increase the availability of AT for the consumers they serve. VITRAID will provide training and technical assistance to the above agencies and other entities within the Virgin Islands. VITRAID will also work with these agencies and others on new and ongoing initiatives in the VI 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.

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VIRAID will ensure that AT Demonstration programs are available across the Virgin Islands, as a result of VITRAID entering into Memoranda of Agreement (MOA) for both device demonstration centers and short-term loan programs with the following entities:

- Virgin Islands Public Libraries
- Department of Education, State Office of Special Education (SOSE)
- Independent Living Centers
- Infant & Toddlers, IDEA Part B Early Intervention Program
- Work-able, Inc.
- Department of Human Services, Vocational Rehabilitation
- Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council
- Virgin Islands Family Information Network on Disabilities, (V.I.FIND)

These entities have expertise in various specific areas of disability, which will help to ensure VITRAID can meet the needs of individuals across the lifespan regardless of their type of disability.

VITRAID will operate two equipment re-utilization programs, accessible through any of the Demonstration Center locations at the University, or at each of the cite locations covered by the MOA mentioned above. These collaborative agreements will make for easy access for consumers to tap into AT resources provided through VITRAID across the state (VI Territory). The first program dubbed “TECH TRADE” involves operating general AT equipment exchange activities and the second; “Recycle IT” will operate a computer recycling program. VITRAID will operate the Alternative Financing Program (AFP) through the Virgin Islands Assistive Technology Foundation, (VIATF) described in Attachment 5 of this plan.

In addition to the Advisory Council described in Attachment 3 of this plan, VIATF also 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, VIATF operates through a Community Based Organization (CBO), which represents relevant government and non-profit agencies, people with disabilities, family members, and advocates, which has programmatic decision-making for all services and programs provided by VIATF. This includes prioritizing activities, goals, and objectives and making resource allocations to achieve desired outcomes.

Consumer membership in the CBO includes representation of a wide variety of disability groups (blind, physical disabilities, and cognitive disabilities) through individuals with these disabilities and parents of children with such disabilities.

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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.

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### **Attachment 3: State Advisory Council**

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

During the three years of this state plan, the Community Advisory Council (CAC) of VITRAID will provide consumer-driven, consumer-responsive advice to the state for planning and implementation of the activities of the Virgin Islands Statewide Assistive Technology Program (Statewide AT Program).

VITRAID CAC has fourteen members. Nine members, 64% of the CAC are individuals with disabilities who use AT, or family members of individuals with disabilities, who use AT. The remaining five members of the council represent agencies, including: the State Office of Special Education, Protection & Advocacy, Vocational Rehabilitation, Centers for Independent Living, and Health Services.

The members of the CAC live in counties throughout the Virgin Islands to ensure representation from both rural and urban areas. Similarly, the membership reflects the racial and ethnic diversity of the state, as it includes African-American, Hispanic, and Caucasian American individuals. Members who use AT use a variety of devices, such as computer adaptations, mobility devices, assistive listening, and augmentative communication devices.

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

Members of the CAC become part of the council in two ways: agency representatives may be designated by their respective agencies, while consumer representatives are volunteers solicited through networks of disability organizations and councils throughout the Virgin Islands. All members are expected to serve a three-year term to coincide with the length of Virgin Islands' state plan for AT.

The CAC will be led by a chairperson who has been elected by the members of the council. A similarly elected vice-chair will serve in the absence of the chairperson. An Executive Committee comprised of the chair, vice chair, secretary and the Executive Director of VITRAID serve as the nucleus of the group in terms of determining specific meeting dates and appropriate venues, as well as, agendas. The CAC itself will determine the need for subcommittees, on a case-by-case basis and will elect members of any proposed subcommittees. At the chairperson's discretion, council decisions are made either through consensus or by member vote.

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The CAC will meet in-person three times per year alternating venues to ensure access and statewide coverage of meeting venues. VITRAID staff will make the meeting room arrangements, develop materials for information packets for members, and ensure site and material accessibility. The chairperson of the CAC and the VITRAID director together will set the agenda for GAC meetings, to ensure that council members are informed about state AT issues. Meetings may feature presentations and guest speakers who will be selected based on the input of council members. Staff of the Statewide AT Program will update the CAC on the activities of the program, share recent data with the CAC, and present any planned initiatives for CAC input and directions. The chairperson will facilitate discussion throughout the meeting to gain input and provide guidance in planning program activities. Minutes of the meeting will be recorded by VITRAID staff.

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## **Attachment 4: Measurable Goals**

VITRAID 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 and short-term goals set to improve upon this baseline, during year three and subsequent years 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.

### 4.1 Goal for Improving Access to AT in Education

- Long-term goal:
  - Short-term goal for Year 3:
  - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for educational purposes as a result of the assistance they received.
  - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

### 4.2 Goal for Improving Access to AT in Employment

- Long-term goal:
  - Short-term goal for Year 3:
  - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for educational purposes as a result of the assistance they received.
  - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

### 4.3 Goal for Improving Access to AT in Community Living

- Long-term goal:
  - Short-term goal for Year 3:
  - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for educational purposes as a result of the assistance they received.

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- Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

#### 4.4 Goal for Improving Access to IT and Telecommunications

- Long-term goal:
  - Short-term goal for Year 3:
  - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percent of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who accessed device demonstration programs and/or device loan programs and made a decision about an AT device or service for educational purposes as a result of the assistance they received.
  - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

#### 4.5 Goal for Improving Acquisition of AT in Education

- Long-term goal:
  - Short-term goal for Year 3:
  - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percentage of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for educational purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service.
  - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

#### 4.6 Goal for Improving Acquisition of AT in Employment

- Long-term goal:
  - Short-term goal for Year 3:
  - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percentage of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for educational purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service.
  - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

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#### 4.7 Goal for Improving Acquisition of AT in Community Living

- Long-term goal:
  - Short-term goal for Year 3
  - Short-term goal for Year 2: Establish baseline of the percentage of appropriate targeted individuals and entities who obtained devices or services from State financing activities or reutilization programs for educational purposes who would not have obtained the AT device or service.
  - Short-term goal for Year 1: N/A data collection not established.

4.8 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.

None

#### **Summary of Annual Objective Measures and To Be Determined (TBD) Increases**

	Device Loan & Demo Programs			Financing & Recycling Programs		
	<i>Yr 1</i>	<i>Yr 2</i>	<i>Yr 3</i>	<i>Yr 1</i>	<i>Yr 2</i>	<i>Yr 3</i>
Education	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%
Employment	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%
Community Living	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%
IT/Telecommunication	N/A	Baseline	+TBD%	NA	NA	NA

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## **Attachment 5: State-level Activities**

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

Over the three years of this State Plan, VITRAID will conduct the following state financing activity: an Alternative Financing Program (AFP).

**Alternative Financing Program (AFP).** The Territory of the Virgin Islands' AFP will provide loans to individuals with disabilities and their families for the purchase of AT devices and services. This AFP began in 2004 using funds provided to the Virgin Islands Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities under title III of the AT Act of 1998 and is called the Virgin Islands Assistive Technology Foundation or VIATF.

VIATF will not be administered directly by VITRAID. Instead, VITRAID will provide funds to a non-profit Community Based Organization, to operate the VIATF. These funds will be used to defray VIATF's costs for administering the Assistive Technology Foundation, such as a portion of staff salaries, the cost of processing loan applications, and marketing of the program. VITRAID will support the VIATF by marketing it on VITRAID's fully accessible web site, through articles in its quarterly newsletter, and flyers distributed to disability-related agencies and organizations. VIATF will support its own accessible website with information about the AFP and have a toll-free number that Virgin Islands residents can call for information.

The Community Based Organization will operate VIATF in partnership with Banco Popular de Puerto Rico, a commercial bank with locations across the VI that has agreed by MOA to work with VIATF to finance low-interest loans to individuals with disabilities or their families for the purchase of AT. Individuals with disabilities or their families may apply directly for a loan from Banco Popular, or may be referred to Banco Popular by VITRAID, VIATF, or other agencies and non-profits that serve individuals with disabilities. Banco Popular's effort to market the loan program will include merchandising AFP program, as a loan product via Banco popular branch locations across the state, and other in-house marketing media.

Banco Popular (Banco) will review a loan application for the purchase of AT in the same manner it reviews other loan applications. If Banco is unable to provide a loan because of an individual's credit history, or the individual with a disability cannot accept an offered loan because the terms are difficult to meet, the application will be forwarded to the VIATF. VIATF has an application review board that will review the application to determine whether the applicant qualifies for loan assistance. Loan assistance includes both guaranteeing the loan so that Banco will provide it and offering to buy down the interest on the loan so the individual with a disability can afford it. VIATF deposited the funds received in 2004 to begin the AFP in an account with Banco Popular, and these funds are used to provide the guarantee and interest buy-downs.

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VITRAID will ensure that both Banco Popular and VIATF continue to enforce policies which prohibit them from denying a loan to an individual based on race, age, type of disability, type of device needed. However, the sizes of the loans are limited to a minimum of \$300 and a maximum of \$15,000. Further, an applicant may be denied a loan based on credit history or financial consideration other than income, which may limit the applicant's ability to repay the loan. However, because of the guarantee, VIATF will support loans to individuals with credit scores below the standard for typical loans.

VITRAID will work closely with VIATF and Banco Popular to ensure that individuals with disabilities are referred appropriately between the programs. VITRAID will coordinate its activities so that applicants for loans will access device loan or device demonstration programs described in this attachment in order to try out devices before they take out loans to purchase them. Similarly, VITRAID will refer those who access device loan and demonstration programs and are interested in taking out a loan to VIATF and Banco Popular.

VIATF will help individuals with disabilities obtain AT devices in several ways. First, VIATF will provide loans for AT, such as hearing aids, home and vehicle modifications, and computers. Secondly, the loan application and approval process under VIATF will be efficient, so individuals often will receive loans and purchase AT in an expeditious manner. To facilitate this, a Financial Committee made up of three members meet on a "on call" basis, to review and approve loans. Thirdly, because VIATF will guarantee loans and buy-down interest, loans will often be provided to individuals with disabilities who would not be able to receive conventional bank loans.

Over the next three years, VITRAID will work with VIATF to expand and improve VIATF. Plans for expansion and improvement over the next three years include:

(1) Data since 2004 show that VIATF has not tapped a number of individuals with disabilities who may need AT devices. VITRAID and VIATF will work together to send mailings with brochures and a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) sheet to stimulate additional interest into an untapped segment of the disability community.

(2) VITRAID believes that utilization of the program would increase if potential applicants were provided with consumer credit counseling. VITRAID and VIATF will collaborate to develop a consumer credit counseling program, or contract with a suitable organization already providing such counseling.

(3) Within the last year VIATF will set up operations on the island of St. Croix. Direct mailings will be sent out to individuals with disabilities, as well as, to public and private agencies with access to the disability population, their families, and service

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providers. VIATF will supply brochures for distribution to the Department of Education, Special Education Division; Department of Human Services, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation; the offices of Virgin Islands Family Information Network on Disabilities,

Sea View Nursing and Herbert Grigg Nursing Facilities to get on AT devices and the VIATF loan program into the hands of people with disabilities, their families and all service providers all across the Virgin Islands.

During year one, VIATF and VITRAID began to focus on the island of St.Croix rather than waiting until the third year of activity, as indicated in the preceding paragraph. As a result of this focus, it has been determined that an individual should be hired at least on a part-time basis to be responsible for advertisement on St. Croix in an effort to increase the visibility of the program and hopefully result in more loans on that island.]

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.

Over the next three years, VITRAID will administer directly TECH TRADE, a program that allows individuals to buy, sell, or give away used AT through “want ads.” VITRAID will implement the following revisions to the recycling program it has done over the past two years:

If an individual has an AT device he or she no longer needs and would like to either sell or give away (a “seller”), he or she will contact VITRAID through its accessible web site or a toll free line and request to post an ad in the Island Trader, a free magazine that publishes classifieds. VITRAID will respond to all requests by sending a letter to the seller explaining the terms of the listing, which include:

VITRAID accepts no liability that may result between the transaction of the buyer and the seller

The seller agrees to provide VITRAID with the original price and the sold price of the item and the contact information of the buyer

The seller provides VITRAID with a description of the device along with any special features.

No personal information is listed in the TECH TRADE ad except for VITRAID’s contact information.

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VITRAID may through TECH TRADE inspect equipment, make accommodations and load software as needed by the person with a disability for a fee that may range from \$60 - \$300.

The seller must renew the listing every 90 days or the item will automatically be removed from the list.

Once the seller has provided the appropriate information, the device is listed in the TECH TRADE area of VITRAID's website that is dedicated specifically to TECH TRADE.

Used AT devices will be listed by category and be accompanied by a brief description of the device and the asking price. A hard copy of the listings will be included in VITRAID's quarterly newsletter (Tech Connect), which is mailed to disability-related agencies/organizations and consumers.

If an individual with a disability or family member is looking for a used device (a "buyer"), he or she will contact VITRAID using the same methods as the seller. If a buyer locates a device to purchase, he or she will e-mail VITRAID through its TECH TRADE website or call VITRAID directly. VITRAID will then connect the seller and the buyer. The seller and buyer will negotiate the terms of exchanging the device, including price and delivery (if appropriate), between themselves without any involvement of VITRAID. VITRAID will contact the buyer and seller for a follow-up survey, however.

Anyone in the state will be able to sell or buy an AT device through TECH TRADE, and there will be no limitations on the type of AT device that can be listed in want ads. The program will only be limited by what devices the sellers themselves choose to make available.

Over the three years of this State Plan, VITRAID will work to expand and improve TECH TRADE. Plans for expansion and improvement over the next three years includes working with SRI-Supply Resources, Inc., therapists through Department of Human Services, SeaView and Herbert Griggs' Nursing Homes on a campaign to encourage the individuals with disabilities who have received durable medical equipment through any of these means to recycle this equipment through TECH TRADE. This will increase the selection of equipment available through TECH TRADE.

The segment of device reutilization under VITRAID is "Recycle IT", a device reutilization program that serves as a reclamation center where previous users can drop off devices, and persons with disabilities can claim devices for their use. Devices may be donated (no fees) and given to individuals with disabilities without cost. This applies to computer systems, modems, monitors, printers and any other information technology (IT)

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device, as well as general AT devices, which need minor refurbishing. On the other hand, if computers and IT parts are claimed by an individual who seeks AT not already found on the device; Recycle IT will add the adaptations requested by the person with a disability or a family member acting on their behalf, for a fee ranging from \$60 - \$300. This program is non-restrictive and provides access regardless of gender, race, national origin, color, disability or age.

VITRAID will help individuals with disabilities obtain AT devices in many ways. First, because the devices are used, sellers usually will offer them for free or at a low price, meaning they are more affordable. Second, individuals with disabilities do not need to meet eligibility criteria to obtain devices from VITRAID. Third, VITRAID will make available devices that are not covered by other private and public funding. Fourth, some devices made available will no longer be manufactured, so the VITRAID is one of a limited source for this device. Fifth, individuals with disabilities often will get devices sooner through the want ads than if they waited for funding from public or private sources.

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.

Over the next three years, VITRAID will operate a short-term AT equipment loan program known as the Assistive Technology Loan Program (ATLP). VITRAID will market the short-term equipment loan program on its fully accessible web site, through ads in its quarterly newsletter, and through flyers distributed to disability-related agencies and organizations.

By allowing individuals with disabilities and professionals to borrow AT devices, ATLP will offer residents an opportunity to try out a device before they buy it and allow clinicians a chance to use a device to assess clients. It will also meet interim needs of individuals with disabilities, whose own devices are being repaired by providing a loaner device.

To operate ATLP over the three years of the State Plan, VITRAID will partner with the following seven state agencies through Memoranda of Agreement (MOA):

1. Virgin Islands Public Libraries;
2. Department of Education, State Office of Special Education;
3. Virgin Islands Developmental Disabilities Council;
4. Work-able, Inc.;
5. Department of Human Services, Vocational Rehabilitation;
6. Independent Living Centers; and
7. Infant & Toddlers, IDEA Part B Early Intervention Program

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VITRAID will provide AT devices to these seven partners while the partners will manage the day-to-day operations of ATLP, as well as collect program data. ATLP as a whole will be comprised of the network of these partners that are located throughout the state.

All of the ATLP partners will accept applications for equipment loans from a person with a disability, family members, advocates, or service providers (e.g. therapist, teacher, rehabilitation counselor). The MOA with these partners prohibit them from denying a loan based on the age, race, type of disability, income, or location in the state, of the applicant. The only reason a loan would be denied is if the device is not in stock. If the device is currently in stock – meaning one of the partners has the device in its inventory and it is not currently being loaned, the partner will provide the device which can be borrowed by anyone that meets the criteria anywhere across the Virgin Islands. If the device is not in stock, the requestor will be put on a waiting list; or, if none of the partners has the device in its inventory, the requestor will be referred to VITRAID, who will refer the individual to the appropriate vendor.

Some devices available for loan may require specialized support for their use, therefore the person requesting the loan will be asked to identify who recommended the device and who will provide support during the loan period. Support persons may include centers for independent living staff, vocational rehabilitation counselors, teachers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, home-health staff, etc. The borrower may request a maximum of two devices at any one time. The length of the device loan is four weeks with a possible extension. ATLP will charge a rental fee for each item based on a sliding scale. In addition, the borrower will pay for shipping costs, where applicable. A renter may choose to pick up and return the device from an ATLP partner in order to eliminate shipping fees. The partners will exchange devices from one location to another so that an individual can pick up the device at the nearest location. The rental and shipping fees will allow VITRAID to sustain ATLP and update the equipment as needed.

Each of these partners will serve the same functions and perform the same operations as explained above, but will specialize in a particular kind of AT to ensure that most types of AT are available for loan. The Department of Human Services Rehabilitation Services and Centers for Independent Living will specialize in software and computer adaptations and adaptive living devices. The Public Libraries, Infant & Toddlers, IDEA Part B Early Intervention Program, and Work-able, Inc. will specialize in devices for those with sensory impairments. The Department of Education, State Office of Special Education and the Virgin Islands, Developmental Disabilities Council will specialize in augmentative communication and software and computer adaptations.

VITRAID recognizes that this short-term equipment loan program will not have the capacity to conduct the program in a comprehensive manner with regard to type of devices, but expects to expand the type of devices offered over the three-year period of the state plan. Devices will be added based on recommendations received from the Advisory Council, the ATLP network and consumer requests.

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Durable medical equipment (DME) will not be included in the loan program because of the prohibitive costs and manpower needs associated with purchasing, storing, shipping, maintaining, and retrieval of DME.

VITRAID's Advisory Council will annually evaluate the comprehensiveness of the program with regard to type of equipment and audiences reached to determine whether the program should be modified. VITRAID will submit an amendment to this state plan based on the results of the Advisory Council's evaluation at the conclusion of year one.

Input from individuals with disabilities, their families, and professionals will be collected through satisfaction surveys to determine to what extent borrowing and trying the AT

devices in their natural environments, to what extent the devices assisted in the individuals learning more about what devices meet their needs, or the needs of those they are serving. Also VITRAID will assess how these experiences assisted them in making informed choices about what device to purchase or whether to purchase a device at all.

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.

As of the writing of this state plan, VITRAID is planning to conduct an Open House activity to kick off VITRAID's Device Demonstration Program. Though VITRAID has much to demonstrate in terms of independent living devices, VITRAID is currently acquiring a number of devices to adequately present a comprehensive approach of demonstrating AT devices, across the range of disabilities.

To effectively implement a demonstration program and to model demonstration centers that can be easily replicated, VITRAID will invite constituents from across the disability community including Independent Living Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation, the State Office of Special Education, the Virgin Islands Family Information Network on Disabilities, Work-able, Inc., the Virgin Islands, Developmental Disabilities Council, the VI Alliance for the Mentally Ill, and Infant & Toddlers, IDEA Part B Early Intervention Program to the Open House. Additionally, the Public Libraries, the University of the Virgin Islands' Divisions of Education, Social Sciences and Nursing will be invited to participate and attend the centrally located events, designed to reach persons with disabilities, their families and professionals for whom device demonstrations will be most meaningful.

To ensure continuity of device demonstrations throughout the community, over the course of this state plan, (through Memoranda of Agreement) Assistive Technology Loan Program partners will come online, as demonstration centers as follows:

In year one of this state plan, VITRAID will through collaboration with the Independent Living Centers, focus efforts on ensuring that device demonstrations are available through Independent Living Centers' locations to all individuals regardless of where

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residents live, their type of disability, or their age. How the program will operate will be determined as a result of that collaboration, and VITRAID will submit an amendment describing it when a plan is in place.

In year two of this state plan, VITRAID will through collaboration with the Public Libraries, work to focus efforts on ensuring that device demonstrations are available through the Public Libraries' locations to all individuals regardless of where residents live, their type of disability, or their age. How that program will operate will be determined as a result of that collaboration, and VITRAID will submit an amendment describing it when a plan is in place. In year three, VITRAID will begin implementing its plan for the program begun in year two.

VITRAID has contracted with Torres Foundation for the Blind, who were able to make libraries fully accessible in Trinidad. The best practices utilized by them to make for inclusion across libraries will be of great benefit to VITRAID in our work with the Public Libraries in year two of the State Plan.

In year three of this state plan, VITRAID will try to identify community and faith-based organizations in central and outlying areas of the Virgin Islands that are interested in collaborating to establish a device demonstration program. How that program will operate will be determined as a result of that collaboration, and VITRAID will submit an amendment describing it when a plan is in place.

VITRAID hopes to support these organizations to expand the reach of their demonstrations, to those who cannot come to their centers. VITRAID plans to work with these programs so that, in the event that an individual or group is not able to travel to their center, their staff or VITRAID's staff will pack up any of the AT devices, that can be easily transported to another location and conduct those demonstrations off-site.

Eventually, VITRAID imagines creating a network of these programs that work together across the entire state, and work in collaboration with the VITRAID demonstration centers, to exchange devices and knowledge.

In all of the above plans, VITRAID is committed to establishing conveniently located device demonstration centers that individuals can easily reach. It is also working on plans for presenting device demonstrations that are "mobile" and take place in various locations such as malls that are heavily populated on weekends and holidays. Regardless of how they operate, the demonstration programs will be designed to offer individuals with disabilities, their families, and professionals the opportunity to experience a number of different devices while being guided by experts. Allowing them to compare and contrast different devices will help them to make an informed decision about what device to purchase or whether to purchase a device at all.

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## **Attachment 6: Comparable Support**

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

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

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 Virgin Islands is not claiming comparable support.

## **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.

The Virgin Islands is not utilizing the state flexibility clause of the AT Act.

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## **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 three years of the State Plan, VITRAID will engage in a number of training activities. VITRAID will develop a number of training modules in a number of formats targeted for specific audiences and on specific topics, and anticipates conducting such trainings. The trainings that will be pursued include:

- Training for education professionals (special education teachers, para professionals, speech therapists, occupational and physical therapists, regular education teachers and staff). A number of training sessions have been developed for education professionals, ranging from providing a basic understanding of AT, including AT in the classroom, and training on the use of specific devices. The training will include information for a broad array of disabilities and devices. VITRAID will secure these training opportunities through interagency agreements with the Department of Education; Office of the Insular Superintendents for St. Croix and St. Thomas. Additionally, at the request of any school in the districts, VITRAID staff will train educators on-site at that school. Similar training will be sought through Infants & Toddlers Part B Early Intervention Program and V.I. Family Information Network on Disabilities, so VITRAID may provide free training to parent groups, through collaboration with Community Parent Resource Centers in the VI.
- Training for employment professionals. VITRAID will provide through a collaborative agreement with Work-able; Inc., and the Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) training about AT to all new vocational rehabilitation counselors and to train staff on new devices and updates in AT. This training includes providing a basic understanding of AT and using AT in the workplace. The training is developed to include information for a broad array of disabilities and devices. Training will be conducted at regional DRS offices throughout the Virgin Islands.
- Pre-service training for human service professionals. VITRAID will collaborate with faculty in the Education and Social Sciences Divisions at the University of the Virgin Islands to provide pre-service training on AT to students in education, speech, psychology and social science courses. The training is developed to include information for a broad array of disabilities and devices.

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- Training for Centers for Independent Living. Staff of VITRAID will train professionals and consumers who are involved with centers for independent living throughout the Virgin Islands. Training will include basic understanding of AT, using AT in the community and home, and sources of funding for AT. The training is developed to include information for a broad array of disabilities and devices. VITRAID will offer this training for free in exchange for referrals to VITRAID's other programs and services.

VITRAID also will customize training for organizations that request training on specific topics or for specific audiences.

VITRAID will sponsor a statewide AT conference every year. This conference will be open to the public and will be attended by a wide range of professionals, parents, and consumers with disabilities. The conference will serve a dual role by providing both public awareness and training, and will be geared to serve the needs of experts and novices alike. At this conference:

- AT devices will be displayed and information will be provided about a wide range of devices to serve the needs of many types of disabilities;
- Experts in areas such as education, recreation, vocational rehabilitation, community living and information technology will provide training sessions on AT issues in their fields; and
- Keynote speakers will provide updates on important AT policies, legislation and best practices/new innovations with regards to AT in the Virgin Islands.

### **Technical Assistance**

Because VITRAID will provide technical assistance to agencies and organizations by request, it is difficult to predict the type of technical assistance that will be provided over the three years of the State Plan. Despite this difficulty in anticipating what requests may arise, VITRAID will provide technical assistance such as the following:

- Through Memoranda of Agreements, VITRAID will assist the library systems of St. Croix and St. Thomas with making its computer systems more accessible to patrons. This will be done through an assessment of their needs, assistance with their procurement of new systems and installation of some devices. This may include; but not be limited to the installation of screen-reader software and other adaptive devices as deemed appropriate and training for staff, on using the systems.
- Through cooperative agreement, VITRAID will work with the University of the Virgin Islands' Office of Student Services on increasing access to the application process at the University. This will be done by exposing the Office of the Registrars' staff to AT for IT solutions designed to include more accessible methods of completing the registration process.

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- Additionally, VITRAID will collaborate with the Student Services Office to expose Division Chairs and faculty across the campuses of the University to AT solutions to making the curricula accessible to individuals with a wide range of disabilities on both campuses.

### **Transition**

The AT Act requires that VITRAID specifically focus on training and TA around transition. VITRAID will collaborate with Work-able, Inc. on this initiative. This includes transition for students with disabilities who are leaving high school for employment or post-secondary education and transition for those entering or maintaining community living. During the first year of this state plan, VITRAID will develop two training modules specifically to address these areas of transition.

- One module will be aimed at providing special educators, vocational rehabilitation counselors, parents, and students involved in transition with the skills and knowledge they need to successfully include AT in all transition planning. Elements of this training also will be infused in the general AT training provided to education professionals and vocational rehabilitation counselors.
- A second module will be aimed at employees of nursing homes and other supported living environments, family members, and consumers with disabilities to provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to successfully include AT in all transition planning. Elements of this training also will be infused in the general AT training provided to centers for independent living.

Elements of both training modules will be infused in the pre-service training for human service professionals described above. The time needed to collaborate on the development of the modules indicated above is more than VITRAID initially projected. The modules are not yet completed as year one is almost completed; but collaborations necessary across the agencies to include their contributions to the transition processes are being pieced together. It is anticipated that by half-way through year two the modules can be completed. It is also necessary to indicate through our collaborations with the State Elections office, VITRAID will be able to develop another module that addresses the usage of Assistive Technology in the voting process. This module will be complete during year two of the State Plan. VITRAID will submit amendments to RSA following year two to specify the results of year two, development for year three, and plans for its implementation.

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.

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Over the three years of the State Plan, VITRAID will utilize numerous approaches (mailings, Internet, exhibits, presentations, and trainings) 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. VITRAID will continue to increase public awareness through development and dissemination of print products and materials and through the provision of statewide information and referral services. VITRAID will develop print and web based materials to respond to specific informational needs of the residents of the Virgin Islands. VITRAID will provide the following public awareness activities:

**Information and Referral.** The toll free info-line provides free information and referral services on AT for people of all ages, with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities, family members, services providers and others who work in fields related to disabilities or AT may also use this service. VITRAID staff will provide information to those who call on the availability, benefits, appropriateness and the cost of AT devices and services. VITRAID staff will mail AT resource and device information in order for recipients to make a more informed decision. A consumer satisfaction survey will be completed via mailings, phone interviews or in person to determine if they are satisfied with the information provided by VITRAID and inquiries will be done to determine if additional information is desired.

**Newsletter.** Tech Connect, the VITRAID newsletter, will be produced and disseminated both in hard copy and on the web site, on a quarterly basis. Regular sections of the newsletter will include AT information on: current events at VITRAID, highlights on AT (which discusses features of specific AT devices), an insert that provides the latest Equipment Loan, TECH TRADE ads, as well as, Device Demonstration features and events.

**Website.** The VITRAID website will feature information on the four State Level Activities of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended, as well as information on other programs, publications, IT Access resources, Legislation, AT resources and electronic links to AT. The website also provides an opportunity for individuals to directly contact VITRAID for purposes of feedback, information and referral, listing for sale items on TECH TRADE and an on-line application for the (VIATF) state alternative financing program.

**Publications.** Training materials and publications that cover AT information will be developed and disseminated for all types of audiences across the life span on a broad array of AT related topics. All publication materials will be provided free of charge on the web site and will be made available in any requested alternative format.

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**Statewide AT Conference.** As mentioned in item 8.1, VITRAID will sponsor an annual conference in collaboration with partners that provides both training and public awareness on Assistive Technology.

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.

As coordination and collaboration with public and private entities often is based on emerging, new, or changing policies and procedures, it is difficult to anticipate all of the coordination and collaboration activities that VITRAID will undertake over the three years of the State Plan. In the past, coordination and collaboration included working with the Board of Elections under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), to assure accessible voting. It also included the provision of technical assistance and training to the Federation of Teachers Union personnel on AT. These collaborations will continue in addition to the collaborative agreements by MOA as mentioned in Attachment 5 of this plan. Accordingly, at a minimum VITRAID will collaborate with the following organizations:

Banco Popular;

Department of Public Works;

Department of Education State Office of Special Education;

Department of Human Services Vocational Rehabilitation;

Department of Labor;

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Coalition;

Independent Living Centers;

Infant & Toddlers, IDEA Part B Early Intervention Program;

Legislature of the Virgin Islands;

Lutheran Social Services;

Office of the Delegate to Congress;

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University of the Virgin Islands;  
 Virgin Islands Family Information Network on Disabilities;  
 Virgin Islands, Developmental Disabilities Council;  
 VI Alliance for the Mentally Ill;  
 Virgin Islands, Public Libraries; and  
 Work-able, Inc.

VITRAID anticipates coordinating and collaborating with these public and private organizations, for the expansion of information through the VI on Assistive Technology, and drafted MOA during the first year of this plan. The duties of the partnership will be determined as a result of the collaboration and VITRAID will submit amendments describing the collaborative agreements, when each is in place.

[Commentary: VITRAID collaborated with more than half of the agencies named above and is pending signatures to complete MOA and expects to have MOAs signed for ninety percent if not all of the agencies by the early part of year two of the State Plan.]

## **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.

As described in Attachment 5, VITRAID will work with the Virgin Islands Public Libraries, State Office of Special Education, Developmental Disabilities Council, Work-able, Inc., Department of Human Services Vocational Rehabilitation, Independent Living Centers and the Infant & Toddlers Part B Early Intervention Program to implement its Device Loan Program. Each of these partners will provide storage space for AT devices free of charge as an in-kind contribution. They also will provide general administrative support for the program such as office supplies, and telephone, as in-kind contributions.

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.

Not applicable

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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).

Oversight coordination and planning for all of VITRAID activities comes from the VITRAID Advisory Council. As previously noted, critical individuals from AT related public and private agencies serve on the Council and as a result coordination with those agencies is a natural part of all activity planning and implementation. VITRAID personnel are directly responsible for delivery of most of the required state level and state leadership activities. The VITRAID Advisory Council evaluates all programs and services each year at least twice a year through the Executive Director's report. The report is used to identify and plan for program improvement in upcoming years. For purposes of State Plan submission, the VITRAID Advisory Council reviewed, discussed content issues, provided direction and the Executive Board reviewed and approved the document prior to submission.

## **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).

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.

Not applicable. The Virgin Islands will not be utilizing State funds.

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## Attachment 11: Allocation and Utilization of Funds

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

VITRAID utilizes the University of the Virgin Islands Accounting Department, (an internal budget system) which is specifically equipped to track all federal AT Act expenditures. VITRAID will track through the Accounting Department's categorization and delineation of *State Leadership* (40%) fund activities, versus (60%) *State Level* funds, with a breakout of 5% of the State Leadership funds geared towards *Transition Technical Assistance and Training* activities. VITRAID will be able to track expenditures throughout the year and end the fiscal year in compliance with the State Plan for Assistive Technology under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, as amended.

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

<b>Required Budget Allocations</b>	<b>Distribution Percent</b>	<b>Applied to Prior Year Award of \$115,000</b>
State Level Activities	At least 60%	At least \$69,000
State Leadership Activities	No more than 40%	No more than \$46,000
General Leadership	35%	\$40,250
Transition Activity	5%	At least \$5,750
Indirect Costs	0%	0

The following are projected budgeted amounts within the categories of State Level and State Leadership activities for Year Two of the State Plan. It is important to note that the activities within State Level and State Leadership are not independent and separate from one another. As such, it is impossible to accurately attribute certain general expenses to a particular discreet activity. In many cases such budget projections have been equally distributed rather than pro-rated among activities. Expenditure tracking as described in 11.1 above will not provide an audit trail that accounts for actual expenditures in these discreet categories as compared to the projected budget.

	<b>Projected Budget</b>
State Finance	\$5,237
Device Reutilization	\$18,857
Device Loan	\$35,909
Device Demo	\$23,569
<b>State Level Total</b>	<b>\$83,572</b>
General Training and TA	\$13,095
Transition Training and TA	\$2,357
Awareness	\$5,238
Coordination/Collaboration	\$10,737
<b>State Leadership Total</b>	<b>\$31,427</b>

State: Virgin Islands