Institute on Disabilities
Pennsylvania's University Center of Excellence in
Developmental Disabilities at
Temple University

Pennsylvania’s Initiative on Assistive Technology (PIAT)
Annual Performance Report
May 1, 2001-April 30, 2002

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BUDGET NARRATIVE

PERSONNEL

Principal Investigator - Diane Nelson Bryen, Ph.D. will spend 5% of her time on this project. As Executive Director of the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University, the lead agency for Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology, Dr. Bryen has ultimate responsibility for the overall direction and coordination of the project. She is responsible for interaction with the University in negotiating and securing continuing support for the project. She supervises three staff with full or partial project responsibilities (Administrator, Project Director, and Evaluation Coordinator).

Administrator – Lisa Matz will spend 5% of her time in the preparation of budgets and fiscal reports, management of subcontracts, communication with University Grants Management, and other activities related to the budgetary and fiscal management of the project. Additionally, she is responsible for the practical management of all project personnel (time-keeping and tracking, creation/modification of positions,assuring performance reviews, etc.).

Project Director - Amy S. Goldman will spend 55% time on the project. In addition to having responsibility for the direction and coordination of the project, she is directly responsible for the day-to-day operations of PIAT. She supervises full and part-time staff members, and coordinates the activities of other Institute on Disabilities staff members who relate with the project.

Evaluation Coordinator – Allison Carey will spend 5% of her time on evaluation components of PIAT, including analysis of the Consumer Survey and impact/outcome/satisfaction evaluations of training, equipment loan program, and information and referral activities.

AT Activities Coordinator - Sandra McNally will spend 25% of her time assisting in the implementation of training and outreach activities, including demonstrations and exhibits.

Training Coordinator – Janice Knuth will spend 65% of her time coordinating and implementing initiatives that have components related to public awareness and training. Emphasis is placed on the development of training programs and materials that are sustainable and/or amenable to replication. In addition, she will be responsible for providing individual assistance to consumers in obtaining funding for assistive technology, providing case development and referral to legal advocacy resources as well as to the Pennsylvania Protection and Advocacy, Inc. (PP&A), preparing materials describing resources for obtaining assistive technology, and conducting training in funding.
Administrative Coordinator – Clementine Thaxton will devote 90% of her time in the provision of clerical and logistical support for all project activities. This includes bookkeeping/record keeping, coordination of printing and dissemination efforts, arrangements for special events, facilitation of program/material accessibility, etc.

I & R/Special Projects Coordinator – Carol Kann will spend 30% of her time on PIAT. She is responsible for the completion of activities related to the maintenance of a comprehensive and accessible system of information and referral and in conjunction with Ms. Knuth, serves as the Assistive Technology Resource Center contact for southeastern Pennsylvania. Ms. Kann will also coordinate the provision of technical assistance to state entities regarding Section 508, as requested.

Assistant Project Director – Virginia Del Sordo will spend 50% time on the project. Ms. Del Sordo provides extensive support to enhance assistive technology capacity in centers for independent living and other nonprofit agencies who are our "Assistive Technology Resource Centers" (ATRCs), in order to assure regional, consumer-responsive assistive technology-related services. She participate in a variety of Advisory Councils and committees each quarter to promote and coordinate assistive technology activities (e.g. PA Transition Coordinating Council) and is a gubernatorial appointee to the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council.

Policy Analyst – Susan Tachau provides 15-20 days/month in activities relating to interagency coordination, including: building coalitions with other disability organizations around issues of assistive technology; drafting and tracking legislation regarding assistive technology; preparing or arranging for testimony on assistive technology and related issues; and educating policymakers on the potential and scope of assistive technology and the mandates of PIAT.

Dissemination – Lisa Sonneborn is supported 5% FTE to assist in the development and distribution of materials in print and alternate formats.

University Training Coordinator – Dr. Rosangela Boyd is supported 5% FTE for activities related to the Collaborative Studies in Assistive Technology course sequence, including activities to put or maintain one or more of those courses "on-line">

Dissemination Assistant – Ginger Delallo is supported 5% FTE to assist in the provision of accessible and usable dissemination products.

Graduate Assistant (extern) – Lesley Newcomb, a 2nd year masters student in speech pathology, returns to PIAT this year. She will spend 20 hours/week in information and referral, dissemination, evaluation, and data collection activities.

Student Worker – The student worker will assist in clerical and other duties.

CFY: AAC activities – A speech-language pathologist with augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) experience and expertise will provide assistance (5% FTE) in responding to requests for information and technical assistance in this area.
Evaluation Assistant – Betty Robichaw will spend 5% of her time on activities related to data entry and analysis as part of PIAAT’s evaluation efforts.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Fringe Benefits - Fringe benefits have been calculated at the University's standard approved rate of 32% for all full-time personnel and 8.5% for part-time personnel. Fringe benefits include: FICA, retirement, life insurance, tuition remission, dental/vision/prescription, welfare fund, workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, post-employment benefits and health insurance.

TRAVEL

Travel (staff in- and out-of-state) - In-state expenses are incurred as project staff visit the ATRCs and travel throughout the state to conduct training, promote awareness of assistive technology, provide support and technical assistance, and supervise contracted activities. Project staff also incur travel costs as they participate in meetings with state agency personnel, legislators, and other stakeholders. Distance from the eastern to western and northern to southern borders of the state frequently necessitates expenses related to overnight accommodations and/or air travel. Out-of-state travel expenses are required to enable project staff to attend meetings sponsored by the RESNA TA Project. These meetings are related to the federal goals of the Assistive Technology Act (AT Act). Project staff also travel to Washington, D.C. and to other states for significant meetings, regional collaborations and relevant conferences related to assistive technology. This line includes transportation, lodging, and other per diem expenses, in accordance with federal reimbursement guidelines for travel.

SUPPLIES

Supplies - General project office supplies as well as supplies and materials related to training and public awareness activities are supported through this line. Purchases in this line will include replacement of computer access equipment as needed. Supplies for alternate formats (disks, Braille paper, audiotapes) are included in this line.

CONTRACTUAL

WebAIM - A new subcontract with this project on web access will provide for continued development on the WAVE, a nationally-acclaimed evaluation tool for checking website accessibility and 508 compliance.

Assistive Technology Resource Centers: SWPA, CRI, LIFT, UCPA Capital, URS, TRIPIL, North Central, UCP NE, Easter Seals - There are nine subcontracts to select organizations which, in addition to PIAAT "central", serve as Assistive Technology Resource Centers (ATRCs), responsible for specified counties and assisting PIAAT in implementing a statewide program. Major activities include public awareness, information and referral, advocacy, training, and serving as the local link to Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library. One subcontractor receives additional dollars for the implementation of the Recycled Equipment Exchange Program.
SWPA). Variations in awards are based on numbers of counties served. Of the nine subcontracts, five are centers for independent living and 4 are private, non-profit disability organizations.

OTHER

Consultant Travel - This line covers travel of consultants for statewide training events and other project activities. Also included are travel expenses related to facilitating the participation of individuals with disabilities or family members in a range of project activities and other training opportunities.

Consultants - Consultants are utilized for a number of activities relating to the infrastructure of PIAT as well as the execution of project activities including efforts related to Section 508 (e.g. a strand at PIAT's statewide conference related to Electronic and Information Technology access). Consultants are used to assure program accessibility for all project activities (e.g. sign language interpretation; Braille transcription services). Personal assistance to facilitate participation in project activities will be funded through this line. Where people with disabilities or family members are used as trainers or presenters, this line includes payment of a stipend for services rendered to the project.

Telecommunications - This item is requested to cover telephone charges for PIAT staff, maintenance of two 800 numbers (one for voice and one for TTY). Conference calling, teleconferencing, and other distance learning approaches are increasingly used as alternatives to face-to-face meeting and training, and present particularly efficient ways to improve state-wide and outreach to rural areas.

Duplicating/Printing - This line will cover the costs of printing brochures and other materials as part of PIAT's public awareness campaign, correspondence, and targeted mailings. General duplicating expenses, including those related to I&R responses, are included. Other initiatives that incur duplicating/printing costs include the quarterly listing of recycled equipment and monthly updates, conference announcements, funding resources, training materials, and training curricula.

Postage - Postage will be required to cover the costs of dissemination of resource directories, training announcements, funding guides, public awareness materials, as well as materials requested through the I&R system.

Training/Meeting Expenses - This line covers training and meeting expenses such as rooms and audiovisual rental, incurred as a part of statewide trainings and meetings, special conferences (e.g. statewide conference).

Conference Registration/Membership - This line covers the registration of staff at events where they are attendees, as well as those where they are exhibitors and presenters. This line also covers membership fees associated with a variety of activities.
**Facilities Management** - This line covers University charges for repairs and temporary or permanent changes to room set-up and physical plant. This line will also be utilized for making minor changes to PIAT office space to assure accessibility, as needed.

**INDIRECT**

**Indirect** - Indirect is calculated at 10% on all lines. In accordance with Temple University policy, indirect is excluded from equipment and the portion of each subcontract in excess of $25,000.
Part II: Project Summary

Introduction

This year, Pennsylvania’s Initiative on Assistive Technology (PIAT) found the program facing continuing increases in demand for information and referral, advocacy, training, and other technology-related assistance, while coping with reduced federal funds. This is likely to be a continued challenge, as PIAT’s reputation for providing quality technology-related assistance increases yearly and our federal support declines once more. With the state budget threatened by short-falls estimated at more than a billion dollars, concerns about the continuation of state support grow as well.

During this project year, the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University pursued a variety of opportunities (either as the primary applicant or in partnership with other entities) that would provide dollars to support continuing assistive technology-related efforts. These have included a “Steppingstones” technology grant in partnership with the School District of Philadelphia (federal; lead applicant; pending); Research Institute on Assistive Technology for People with Cognitive Disabilities (federal funds; partner with Brain Injury Association; funded); Title III Alternate Financing Program (federal funds; lead applicant; funded); contract with the Mid-Atlantic ADA Information Center for activities related to electronic and information technology access in education settings (federal funds; contract with TransCen, Inc. begun 10/1/01) and a subcontract with “Families First” (early intervention initiatives funded through the City of Philadelphia 0-2 program). A contract with the Commonwealth Library System to assess the outcomes of assistive technology grants provided to public libraries, negotiated during the last report period, was implemented. It should be noted that the Institute on Disabilities was invited to participate in the RFP for that contract because it is the lead agency for the Assistive Technology Act in Pennsylvania. Similarly, designation as the lead agency under the AT Act is the justification for an interagency agreement with the PA Department of Labor and Industry, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation under which the Institute on Disabilities continues to operate Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library. While the Institute on Disabilities has been successful in competing for and obtaining other funding (both state and federal), these funding sources tend to specify a particular population (e.g. infants and toddlers); topic (e.g. E&IT in education settings); or a set of activities other than the “core” activities (e.g. advocacy, information and referral, public awareness, training, and technical assistance) designed to improve access to assistive technology for individuals with disabilities under Title I of the Assistive Technology Act. Thus, it is increasingly difficult to maintain a program that has a single focus (assistive and accessible technology) and is statewide, cross-age, and cross-disability—features that have made Pennsylvania’s Initiative on Assistive Technology unique in the Commonwealth.
Structure/changes

This section describes the present structure of the project, unanticipated changes incurred this year, changes planned for 2002-03 to accommodate funding changes, terminology used in this report, and highlights of accomplishments during the twelve months since the previous performance report (May 1, 2001 – April 30, 2002, except where otherwise noted).

- The lead agency for Pennsylvania’s Initiative on Assistive Technology is the Institute on Disabilities, Pennsylvania’s University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at Temple University. The Institute on Disabilities provides administration (including oversight of 10 subcontracts during 2001-2002), supervision, planning, development, and evaluation for the project.

- Staff located at PIAT “central” at the Institute on Disabilities conduct statewide project activities, including public awareness, information and referral, individual and systems advocacy (including funding and policy development), training and technical assistance, and coordination of subcontracted activities. PIAT “central” staff also serve as the regional Assistive Technology Resource Center for the five-county southeastern Pennsylvania area. References to “PIAT staff” in the body of this report indicate those individuals who are employees of the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University.

- PIAT subcontracts with five centers for independent living (“CIL’s, consumer-directed, consumer-staffed organizations) and four other nonprofit organizations with assistive technology expertise and a history of being consumer-responsive, to provide for “Assistive Technology Resource Centers (ATRCs)” across the Commonwealth. ATRCs provide outreach and public awareness, regional information and referral (particularly related to the availability of assistive technology services), advocacy, training, and link consumers with Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library. References to “ATRCs” in the body of this report indicate individuals who are employees of the nine subcontracted agencies that assist in the implementation of a statewide program of technology-related assistance.

- PIAT is the state’s contractor for the implementation of Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library, which, with state funding, replaces the Short Term Equipment Loan Program begun with Tech Act Title I dollars. It should be noted that the Interagency Agreement between the PA Department of Labor and Industry, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Institute on Disabilities makes it clear that the decision to contract with the Institute on Disabilities is based on its status as the lead agency for Title I of the Assistive Technology Act. PIAT’s system of ATRCs funded through our federal grant forms the infrastructure for outreach and circulation of devices in the lending library inventory. Over the last two years, PIAT has been able to obtain some
state funds for lending library-related activities implemented by PIAT "central" and its ATRCs, to replace the reductions in federal funds that began in 2000. However, these funds have not replaced the total cost of operating a cross-age, cross-disability statewide infrastructure for assistive technology.

- As a result of PIAT's recommendation to the Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation (PATF), its partner in the Alternate Financing Program for Pennsylvania, the PATF has contracted with ATRCs as "funding assistance centers". This is one more demonstration of the importance of the statewide infrastructure for access to AT that has been built under Title I of the AT Act.

- Patricia Creegan, "consumer liaison", accepted another job within the Institute in late Fall, 2001. A staffing reorganization, taking into account new grants and reduced funding in Title I, has resulted in an existing full-time staff person (Knuth) taking on activities related to assisting individuals in procuring funding for the AT they need (45%FTE) and an additional part-time staff member (McNally) hired to assist in public awareness and training activities (25%FTE).

- A new subcontract to the Pennsylvania Health Law Project has been initiated to provide a web-based clearinghouse to help individuals navigate the maze of Medical Assistance "waiver" programs that may fund assistive technology. (This was originally scheduled for implementation in 2000).

- As a result of recommendations stemming from an Administration on Developmental Disabilities technical assistance site visit, the Institute on Disabilities has consolidated all of its project-specific advisory boards and committees into a single "Consumer Advisory Committee". There is an Assistive and Accessible Technologies subcommittee that is available to provide input and guidance, as requested, to PIAT. Although PIAT's met once during this report period, there is no longer a separate "PIAT Advisory Board".

- The Pennsylvania Protection and Advocacy, Inc. is represented on the Institute on Disabilities' Consumer Advisory Committee and as such, receives ongoing communication about the project's activities.
**Terminology**

Based on 2000 Census data, there are 12,281,054 Pennsylvanians. 10.9% of Pennsylvanians have income below the poverty level. People from racial/ethnic minorities include primarily African-Americans (10%), Hispanic or Latino origin (3.2%), and Asian (1.8%), and comprise a total of about 16% of the population. (Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000). Incidence of disability is estimated at 20% in the US population (approximately 2.4 million Pennsylvanians, although this might be a slight underestimation due to the number of individuals 65 and older [15.6%] in Pennsylvania).

The following are the operational definitions used within Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology's Annual Performance Report. Definitions of "rural", "poor", "limited English proficient", and the identification of underrepresented populations in Pennsylvania reflect the previous work of the Committee on Unserved and Underserved Populations of the statewide PIAT Advisory Board.

**Underrepresented groups:** In Pennsylvania, the following individuals are most likely to be underrepresented and/or underserved in terms of having their assistive technology needs met:

- people served by the mental health system
- people who are deaf or hard of hearing
- people who live in nursing homes
- people who live in other institutions
- people served by the mental retardation system
- older Pennsylvanians
- people who live in rural areas.

Individuals from racial/ethnic/cultural minority groups are included in each of the above groups. It should be noted that information on race and ethnicity is difficult to obtain, due to reluctance of parties to ask for and/or provide this data.

It is also of interest to note that the 2000 Census figures report an institutionalized population of 213,790 in Pennsylvania.

**Limited English Proficient:** Individuals with limited English proficiency may include people with cognitive disabilities (e.g. mental retardation) or learning disabilities that affect literacy and proficiency with written English. Other people with limited English proficiency may include those for whom English is not their first language (e.g. Deaf, other language speakers). In Pennsylvania, linguistic minorities include primarily Spanish-speaking individuals.

**Older Pennsylvanians:** This term is used to describe individuals 65 and older; Pennsylvania ranks second in the country in percentage of people 65 and over (15.6%) and has the third largest number of older people in the nation. In some instances, PIAT text may refer to "older Pennsylvanians" in addition to the more...
inclusive phrase, “Pennsylvanians with disabilities”. This language is used based on information from seniors and service providers in the aging system that, while people 65 and older may benefit from assistive technology to ameliorate the effects of functional limitations associated with age, they may not identify themselves as having a disability.
(Source: U.S. 2000 Census)

Poor: Individuals meeting the federal poverty guidelines are considered poor:

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<tr>
<th>2002 POVERTY GUIDELINES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Family Unit Size</td>
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Rural: The U.S. Census Bureau defines rural as a municipality with a population less than 2,500 and not contiguous to a built-up urbanized area. If at least half (50%) of the residents in the county live in municipalities that fit this description, then the county is considered predominately rural. Based on the 1990 Census (Census 2000 statistics are not available), 42 of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties are predominately rural. Seven counties (Forest, Fulton, Juniata, Pike, Sullivan, Susquehanna, and Wyoming) are 100% rural. Only Philadelphia County has no rural residents. In 1990, 31.1% (3,693,348) of Pennsylvania’s 11.8 million residents lived in rural areas. This makes Pennsylvania the state with the largest rural population. In cases where the county of an affected individual is known, the individual will be counted as “rural” if s/he resides in a predominately rural county.
(Source: The Rural Center, a legislative agency of the Pennsylvania General Assembly and a focal point for rural policy development).

More terminology and abbreviations used in this report:

ATRC: Assistive Technology Resource Center. This refers to the nine subcontracted agencies that, together with designated staff at the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University, serve ten multi-county regions. These subcontracted agencies are referred to in the body of the report, and may be abbreviated as follows:
**URS** United Rehabilitation Services  
**UCPCPA** United Cerebral Palsy of Central Pennsylvania (formerly UCP of the Capital Area)  
**UCPNEPAC** United Cerebral Palsy of Northeastern Pennsylvania  
**CILNCPCA** Center for Independent Living of North Central Pennsylvania  
**LIFT** Life and Independence for Today  
**Easter Seal**  
**TRIPIIL** Tri-County Patriots for Independent Living  
**TRCIL** Three Rivers Center for Independent Living (formerly Center for Independent Living of Southwestern PA)  
**CRI** Community Resources for Independent Living

**CareerLink:** The Commonwealth’s "welfare-to-work" program consisting of "one-stop" centers where all individuals may go "on-line" to learn about employment opportunities and access other relevant information.

**ICAN:** Independence Capital Network. A state-funded source of grants for small businesses (e.g. those not otherwise obligated under the Americans with Disabilities Act) so they may make accommodations and purchase assistive technology in order to employ (or maintain the employment of) a specific individual with a disability.

**LibertyT:** Also known as the Pennsylvania Telecommunications Device Distribution Program (TDDP). Funded through a "line tax" on telephone services, monies are collected by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) under the "relay surcharge" to purchase adapted telecommunications equipment. Presently, the program is limited to those with communication disabilities (e.g. Deaf, hard-of-hearing, speech impaired) and meeting income eligibility criteria. The program is administered by the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) through a contract with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR).

**OVR:** Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, located in the PA Department of Labor and Industry.

**PATF:** The Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation. A private, self-sufficient, non-profit (501 C 3) organization established in 1997 by PIAT for the purposes of administering a low-interest cash loan program. The PATF serves as the "community based organization" partnering with PIAT for the Title III Alternate Financing Program.

**SILC:** Statewide Independent Living Council
Highlights of Accomplishments

A. PIAT supports and advocates for a variety of executive and legislative efforts to improve access to assistive technology, including home modifications and telecommunications devices. Although PIAT does not implement all of these programs or derive program income from them, PIAT promotes all state programs that positively affect access to AT. As a result of PIAT’s efforts, and in collaboration with other advocacy partners, Pennsylvania has a variety of new and continuing state programs that improve access to assistive technology. SFY 01-02 appropriations and the impact of those programs are described below.

The state budget (SFY 02-03) had not been passed by the General Assembly at the time of submission of this report, but given the financial situation, “level” funding would be considered an accomplishment. In some cases, appropriations proposed in Governor Schweiker’s budget is known and reported.

- Independence Capital Network [ICAN]
  Funding Source: State budget
  Appropriation 01-02: $1,061,000
  Administering entity: Department of Labor and Industry, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
  Description: grants to employers whose businesses are not otherwise subject to Title I of the ADA, for the purchase of assistive technology in order to employ or maintain the employment of persons with disabilities.

  During the period June, 2000 – February 2002 (the period for which data are available) the Department of Labor and Industry, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, issued 54 grants to small businesses, ranging from $6000-$30,000 (total=$1,800,000, including grants obligated in late SFY 01, but not actually spent until SFY 02). Employers made accommodations including ramps, electronic doors, accessible restrooms, voice-activated computer software, hand control-equipped forklifts, adapted embroidery machinery and vehicle modifications. Through the ICAN program, these businesses were able to hire or retain 65 employees with disabilities.

  Although PIAT derives no funding through this program, PIAT actively promotes this important state resource for assistive technology in outreach and public awareness activities, including dissemination of ICAN’s informational brochures and inclusion of program materials in PIAT’s display at the annual Legislative Breakfast.

- Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library
  Funding Source: State budget
  Appropriation 02-03: $990,000
  Administering entity: Department of Labor and Industry, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, through a contract with Temple University, Institute on Disabilities.
Description: Cross-age, cross-disability, statewide program for the short-term loans of assistive technology devices.

PIAT and its subcontracted ATRCs form the infrastructure of Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library. In addition, 157 volunteer agencies have been recruited to serve as “local branches” of Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library. Branches are located in 57/67 counties across the state, and include 9 colleges/universities; 19 “generic” libraries; 24 agencies serving seniors; and 12 organizations for people with vision disabilities. Demand for this program averages more than 300 requests/month.

- Telecommunication Device Distribution Program (TDDP), now also known as “LiberTTY”
  Authorizing legislation: Act 34 of 1995
  Funding source: authorized monthly phone line surcharge collected by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC)
  Administering entity: PA Department of Labor and Industry, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, through the Statewide Independent Living Council.

Although PIAT derives no funding through this program, PIAT continues to work vigorously to expand the program to benefit other disability groups. The prime sponsor of the original Act (who is also Majority Caucus Administrator) has drafted an amendment that defines eligible “persons with a disability” as “a person who requires technology to independently access telecommunications services”. This bill was introduced in the House on March 14, 2002, passed out of the Health and Welfare Committee in May, and passed unanimously out of the House in mid-June. The bill is currently awaiting a vote by the Senate.

PIAT provides information about this program as a part of all trainings and outreach, training, and public awareness events. Consumers who may access the TDDP program as a funding source are encouraged to borrow the equipment first through Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library. An increasing number of consumers have received telecommunications devices distributed through the TDDP program, with 1045 individuals (849 during SFY 00-01) receiving 1865 pieces of equipment totaling $420,320.

- Alternate Financing Program
  Funding sources: state, federal, private
  Federal funding (NIDRR): $450,000 (Title III grant focused on minority outreach)
  State appropriation 01-02: $250,000 for guarantee funds and general operations; $150,000 as “match” for Title II-funded program
  Private: Individual giving, approximately $6,000
  Administering entity: (for state appropriation) Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, through a contract with the Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation (PATF)
Description: Provides state guarantee funds for low-interest loans for the purchase of assistive technology by Pennsylvanians with disabilities. Additional support for this program has enabled the Foundation to develop new lending partners (now United Bank of Philadelphia, serving southeastern PA; and Sovereign Bank serving the remainder of the state) and reduce interest rate from 8.5% to 4.25% (as a result of buy-down arrangements). As a result of obtaining Title III dollars for two successive years, the Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation, a 501(c)(3) established (originally with Title I dollars) to manage the cash loan program, is fully autonomous. PIAT promotes this program in all of its public awareness, training, and outreach activities, and frequently refers individuals who are seeking funding sources for AT to the program. During this report period, 19 Pennsylvanians with disabilities or their families received loans totaling $213,500 that utilized the guarantee. In addition, two loans totaling $21,850 were approved by a lender without utilizing the guarantee. Thus, the program leverages more than the guaranteed amount in loans to improve access to assistive technology.

- Pennsylvania Access Grant Program
  Administering entity: PA Department of Community and Economic Development
  Description: Provides grants to eligible applicants [redevelopment authorities; municipalities] to help low and moderate income persons with permanent disabilities increase accessibility to their home.

Although PIAT derives no funding through this program, PIAT continues to work to educate the housing “system” and related stakeholders as to the benefit and availability of assistive technology in order to improve home accessibility for Pennsylvanians with disabilities and older Pennsylvanians. PIAT staff worked directly with three consumer groups and redevelopment authorities in drafting their grant application to the Commonwealth. Since the inception of the program, there have been 32 grants awarded to municipalities or redevelopment authorities that work with a total of 36 counties in providing grants to people with disabilities for home modifications.

- Newborn Infant Hearing Screening
  Administering entity: PA Department of Health
  Description: The “demonstration project” funded with state dollars saw an additional 68 hospitals participating in Newborn Infant Hearing Screening (total=94). Each hospital receives a $10,000 mini-grant to help offset some of the costs of the program.

PIAT worked closely with the sponsor of legislation to mandate universal newborn infant hearing screening (and appropriate follow up, including access to assistive technology devices and services) in Pennsylvania. On November 30, 2001, with PIAT staff in attendance, Governor Mark Schweiker signed into law Act 89 of 2001, the Infant Hearing, Education, Assessment, Reporting and Referral Act (IHEARR).
PIAT provided a letter of support for the Commonwealth’s application for federal funds under the Walsh Bill, however, the Department of Health was unsuccessful in this effort. Ironically, even with the passage of IHEARR, it is anticipated that there will be fewer federal and state dollars available to this program.

B. PIAT continues to implement a statewide program of technology-related assistance. Activities such as demonstrations and training increase consumers’ awareness about the scope and potential of assistive technology, and result in an increasing demand for more information and referral regarding devices and services. Provision of information through pre-service and continuing education for educators, allied health, physicians, and other providers improves their ability to assist consumers in appropriate selection and use of assistive technology.

- At least one demonstration or other event has been held in 65 of the 67 counties (all except Lawrence and Wayne counties).
- Events have been conducted in 40 of the 42 rural counties.
- There were 12,365 information and referral contacts to PIAT at the Institute on Disabilities and its ATRCs. 26% of the calls originated from the 42 rural counties. In addition, there were more than 10,060 visits to PIAT’s home page and more than 13,000 visits to the web page for Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library.
- More than 40,217 individuals (compared to 29,969 in the previous report period) received demonstrations/training on assistive technology through 378 (390) different events.
- More than 4100 assistive technology devices were shipped from Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library to 2326 borrowers during the nine months July 1, 2001 – March 31, 2002.
- There were 38 items sold via the Recycled Equipment Exchange Project (REEP), with a dollar value of over $243,300, an increase of more than 40% over the value of items sold last year. In addition to its web location, hard copy of REEP is mailed to over 300 subscribers.

C. Other

PIAT staff have been involved in a variety of activities that promote assistive technology and accessible electronic and information technologies. These include serving on the National Advisory Committee of the Information Technology Technical Assistance and Training Center (ITTATC) (Goldman); serving on the training advisory committee for the national Assistive Technology/Information Technology Infrastructure Study being conducted by RTI (Goldman); participating in hours/days of interviews as part of national studies on access to assistive technology and electronic and information technology (e.g. those conducted by RTI, by ITTATC, and by individual doctoral students from other colleges and universities).
As one of the pre-eminent AT Act programs, Pennsylvania was selected to host a visit of FCC commissioner Abernathy and assist her in understanding issues related to telephony access by people with disabilities other than deafness/hearing impairment (e.g. people who are users of augmentative and alternative communication). An outcome of that meeting, which included people with disabilities, is Commissioner Abernathy’s commitment to facilitate meetings between the telephone industry and the AT industry to address these barriers.

PIAT staff (Goldman) served as a reviewer for Assistive Technology, the official journal of RESNA.

PIAT staff wrote the following chapter, recently published:

PIAT staff (Bryen) wrote the section on disabilities for the new World Book Encyclopedia, and included the federal definition of assistive technology devices and services.
Part III: Project Status

A Word about Format

This progress report reflects work during the third year of the three-year plan prepared for years 8, 9, and 10 of the second extension grant awarded for Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology under section 103 of the Assistive Technology Act and submitted on May 20, 1999. Initiatives and activities are described in each of the four required activity areas and in most of the discretionary activities set forth in section 101 (b) (3) of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998. Relevant text from the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 is in bold.

Part One reflects progress towards the initiatives and activities that have been set to address the assistive technology needs of individuals with disabilities in Pennsylvania. Only those activities that have been a focus of efforts during the report period and which have resulted in some movement toward achievement of the desired outcome are reported. Part Two reviews the involvement of individuals with disabilities of all ages and their families in all aspects of the assistive technology program, including customer satisfaction.

Part One

A. Required Activity: Public Awareness Program

Initiative A.1. Have an electronic link to the National Public Internet Site authorized under section 104(a)(1)[Sec. 101(b)(2)(A)(iii)].

Progress: A link has been made to http://www.assistivetech.net from the institute on Disabilities’ website and 6/9 subcontracted ATRCs, including all but one of the subcontracted ATRCs that have websites. This apparently “dropped off” during a recent revision to the ATRC’s website, but will be re-instated.


Activity 2.2. Disseminate assistive technology-related information to the general public through print and other mass media, and increase the availability of assistive technology-related materials in community settings.

Progress: Displays and information for “take one” tables were available at 4 events, including displays at a community center, a shopping mall and a pharmacy, which reached over 700 people. PIAT staff (Goldman) was interviewed and quoted by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette regarding the implementation of Section 508; that article was also on the newspaper’s website.
PIAT staff also "called in" to a National Public Radio show and provided PIAT's toll-free information and referral number on the air. PIAT staff (Tachau) was interviewed and quoted in a feature article on home modifications in the Philadelphia Inquirer weekend section; it was reported that as a result of that article, the PA Department of Community and Economic Development hired additional staff for their ACCESS grant program. Subcontractors provided radio and television interviews regarding assistive technology, as well as print articles in agency newsletters and local and regional newspapers. A total of 16 media events reached at least two million people.

**Initiative A.3. Development and dissemination of information relating to the appropriateness of, cost of, availability of, evaluation of, and access to, assistive technology devices and services [Sec. 101(b)(2)(A)(iii)(I)(bb)].**

Activity A.3.2. Arrange for an annual "Assistive Technology Awareness Month" proclamation by the governor, with at least ten assistive technology media events promoting access to assistive technology devices and services.

**Progress:** November 2001 was proclaimed by Governor Schweiker as "Assistive Technology Awareness Month". The Proclamation described the important role assistive technology plays in helping people with disabilities live, work, and play in the community of their choice. Additionally, Mayor John Street issued a proclamation for AT Month in the City of Philadelphia that also mentioned the importance of accessible information technology, and announcement of AT Awareness Month and PIAT's toll-free numbers was "up in lights" on the PECO building in Philadelphia on three evenings in November (11/4, 11/11, 11/14). A statewide celebration was held in conjunction with the conference on accessible electronic and information technology ("Doing IT Right"), culminating in an awards luncheon recognizing those who had made significant contributions to improve access to assistive technology in Pennsylvania. A web page was created (http://www.temple.edu/inst_disabilities/piat/aware2001/index.html), containing an events calendar, listing of AT Achievement Award winners, and the text of the proclamations. Information about the conference and later handouts and presentations from the conference were posted at this site. This was the fifth annual AT Awareness Month.

A color poster was developed and over 1000 copies were disseminated across the Commonwealth. The poster illustrates the use of a variety of types of AT by individuals of various ages, disabilities, and ethnic/racial backgrounds.

During November 2001, 48 different assistive technology-related events were conducted by PIAT and its ATRCs, in 32 different counties, reaching almost 8600 participants (more than double the numbers in the previous report period).

**Initiative A.4. Development and dissemination of information relating to the benefits of assistive technology devices and services with respect to**
enhancing the capacity of individuals with disabilities of all ages to perform activities of daily living [Sec. 101(b)(2)(A)(iii)(I)(cc)].

Activity A.4.2: Register PIAT’s web resources with popular search engines (Yahoo, Alta Vista, etc.) to promote access to its web information regarding the benefits of assistive technology.

Progress: PIAT’s home page is registered with 16 search engines. One or more pages within the PIAT site appear within the top ten matches for the keywords “Pennsylvania Assistive Technology” in the popular Google, Alta Vista, Yahoo, Excite, and AOL search engines. As a result, PIAT receives requests from out of state, which are routinely referred to the Title I programs in that state. PIAT’s web site is frequently updated to assure provision of current information.

Usage data indicates that the PIAT main web page received 10,098 visits, compared with almost 4,000 visits in the previous report period. The REEP site received 3437 visits, more than double the number in the previous report period. The web page for Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library received 13,135 visits, compared with approximately 8600 visits in the previous report period.

Activity A.4.3. Disseminate information related to the nature of assistive technology devices and services.

Progress: Based on a sampling of 6-9 months of reporting from subcontracted Assistive Technology Resource centers, approximately 35% (N=2350) of individuals inquiring of the ATRC’s information and referral service received written information as a follow-up to the information provided on the phone. 66% of these (N=1586) were people with disabilities or family members.

Seven of nine subcontractors have agency newsletters that are distributed to consumers, families, providers, contributors, and government officials. For example, CRI has a newsletter that is published six times/year and circulates to 2000 people almost half of whom are consumers and family members. Of these seven subcontractors, four had one assistive technology article published, one had 13 articles, one had seven articles, and one had three articles. Seven subcontractors reported that another agency or organization printed an assistive technology-related story that they had submitted.

PIAT provides staff support to the production of the Newsletter of Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library, which produced two 8-page issues during this report period. Each themed issue features information related to the nature of particular devices (e.g. electronic and information technology access, augmentative communication devices); websites of interest; and information about upcoming training events. Regular circulation is approximately 250. Copies (including past issues) are disseminated in trainings and public
awareness events to relevant audiences and on relevant topics, ranging from AT for seniors, AT for young children, applications of Personal Digital Assistance, computer access, etc. Approximately 3500 current and back issues are disseminated each year.

Six subcontractors reported that at least one assistive technology related story appeared in the print or electronic media. For example, LIFT reported a total of six brief articles about Assistive Technology Awareness Month in several local papers as well as articles on individuals with disabilities using AT. UCP of Central PA reported newspaper and TV coverage of its grants to libraries to install accessible computer workstations, including interviews on a local TV show. TRCIL and Easter Seal each reported two articles in print media; TRIPIL has one article on an individual with disabilities using AT, and URS was interviewed by a local (Berks County) cable TV show about its work as an ATRC.

ATRCs used a variety of other methods to disseminate information about assistive technology including the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>ATRC</th>
<th>Number reached</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expos, health fairs, displays at which print materials were available</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>9300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulk mailings</td>
<td>TRCIL</td>
<td>Total 2000+, 1500 consumers/family members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CRI</td>
<td>Total 3900, 2575 to consumers/family members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TRIPIL; LIFT</td>
<td>To consumers (unknown number)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulk mailing, targeted to physicians</td>
<td>Easter Seal</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulk mailing, targeted to IU staff and transition coordinators</td>
<td>CILNCPA</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT displays/materials at other agencies for one week+</td>
<td>TRIPIL, CILNCPA, TRCIL, and Easter Seal</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Device loans to other agencies for demonstration or training</td>
<td>UCPNEPA; TRCIL; Easter Seal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activity A.5.1. Develop, update, and disseminate information regarding state programs related to assistive technology (e.g. Independence Capital Network [ICAN] grants to employers, Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library, Telecommunication Device Distribution Program [TDOP, a.k.a. LiberTTY], Home Modification Programs, Wheelchair Warranty Act).

Progress: PIAT continues to actively disseminate information on state programs, especially the LiberTTY and ICAN program. Because both of these programs have their own brochures at this time, PIAT has discontinued the "fast facts" about these programs in favor of utilizing the programs’ own materials. Revision, maintenance of alternate formats, and dissemination is a collaborative effort between the SILC, OVR, PIAT staff and subcontractors, and the Institute on Disabilities’ dissemination department.

Of the 53 individuals to whom funding technical assistance was provided, 21 individuals who were provided with information regarding LiberTTY program successfully acquired the needed devices (amplified phones, hands-free speaker phones, voice activated phones).

During the period June, 2000 – February 2002 (the period for which data are available) the Department of Labor and Industry, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, issued 54 grants to small businesses, ranging from $6000-$30,000 (total=$1,800,000, including grants obligated in late SFY 01, but not actually spent until SFY 02). Employers made accommodations including ramps, electronic doors, accessible restrooms, voice-activated computer software, hand control-equipped forklifts, adapted embroidery machinery and vehicle modifications. Through the ICAN program, these businesses were able to hire or retain 65 employees with disabilities.

B. Required Activity: Interagency Coordination

Initiative B.1. Appointment to certain information technology panels [Section 101(b)(2)(B)(iii)].

Activity B.1.1. Identify and serve on those committees, councils, or similar organizations of the State, which assist the State in the development of the information technology policy of the State.

Progress: As a result of collaboration between staff (Kann) and the Office of Information Technology, the executive order on web accessibility was revised and reissued on February 28, 2002 (see http://www.olt.state.pa.us/oalt/cwp/view.asp?a=128&q=97863&pp=128&n=1). This policy, which sets the standards for all Pennsylvania government websites,
Activity B.1.2. Participate in the Universal Access Committee of the CareerLink Advisory Group to assure physical and programmatic (including electronic information) access to Pennsylvania's welfare-to-work program.

Progress: Staff (Del Sordo) participated in both the Accessibility Advisory Committee to the Philadelphia CareerLink center and the statewide advisory committee (Accessibility Advisory Group). The statewide group has diminished its activity, reflecting the overall decentralization of the CareerLink network. For example, although the central administration of CareerLink has worked with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to develop a training program on accessibility needs of persons with disabilities, local site managers must schedule the (voluntary) training. Complaints made on the local level (e.g. Workforce Investment Boards, county commissioners) are more likely to drive accessibility than statewide policy as developed by the central CareerLink administration.

Staff (Del Sordo) has been involved with regular meetings of the Philadelphia CareerLink Accessibility Advisory Group, which now includes site managers for all 4 proposed offices and the operator. According to the managers, the ability to meet accessibility guidelines in view of the limited resources available to individual CareerLink sites is problematic.

Initiative B.2. Develop and promote the adoption of policies that result in improved coordination between public and private entities in the application of Federal and State policies. [Section 101(b)(5)(B)(III)(I)(aa)].

Activity B.2.1. Conduct a one-two day workshop in collaboration with the PA Department of Administration, the Governor's Disability Policy Team, and the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Accessibility Initiative to address accessibility of technology used for the delivery of state services (e.g. via web pages, interactive phones, information kiosks) and accessibility of equipment purchased for state employees.

Progress: A two-day conference on accessible information technology was held as part of the celebration of Assistive Technology Awareness Month 2001. "Doing It Right" was attended by approximately 120 individuals, including policy makers (including staff from the Office of Information Technology) web masters, representatives from colleges and universities and others with information technology responsibilities, a bank, disability-related service providers, and persons with disabilities. Topics included issues around 508 policy and enforcement, "tools" for assessing and repairing problems with web accessibility, distance learning and sessions featuring the assistive technologies used for information access. In addition to collaboration with WSC, the NIDRR-funded Information Technology Technical Assistance and Training Center (ITTATC) provided assistance in identifying speakers.
Initiative B.4. Convene interagency work groups, including public and private entities, to identify, create or expand funding options, and coordinate access to funding [Section 101(b)(2)(B)(iii)(II)].

Activity B.4.1. Convene regular meetings of the Telecommunications Device Distribution Program [TDDP] Taskforce (Public Utilities Commission, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Statewide Independent Living Council, PIAT), to develop and implement a strategy to expand the program to include devices for individuals with disabilities other than those presently covered (speech impaired, deaf, deaf-blind, hard of hearing).

Progress: Although PIAT derives no funding through this program, PIAT continues to work collaboratively with other stakeholders to expand the program to benefit other disability groups. With the assistance of PIAT staff (Tachau) the prime sponsor of the original Act (who is also Majority Caucus Administrator) has offered an amendment that defines eligible “persons with a disability” as “a person who requires technology to independently access telecommunications services”. This bill was introduced in the House on March 14, 2002, passed out of the Health and Welfare Committee in May, and passed by the House in mid-June. The bill is currently awaiting a vote by the Senate.

PIAT provides information about this program as a part of all trainings and outreach/awareness events. An increasing number of consumers have received telecommunications devices distributed through the TDDP program, with 1045 individuals (849 during SFY 00-01) receiving 1865 pieces of equipment totaling $420,320.

Activity B.4.4. Increase the inventory of Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library in specific areas of assistive technology that reflect assistive technology devices paid for or otherwise provided through other state programs (e.g. devices available through the Telecommunication Device Distribution Program, devices typically paid for through the Family Caregiver Support Program, devices provided through the Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services) and promote the availability of loans of this equipment.

Progress: PIAT continues to increase the inventory and promote the circulation of items that are paid for or otherwise provided through state programs, so consumers may borrow the device to make sure it meets their needs prior to obtaining their own through the public program.

Activity B.4.5. Participate in a variety of workgroups, boards and committees (e.g. Disability Budget Coalition, Self-determination Housing Project) to promote coordination between the PA Department of Community and Economic
Development, the PA Housing Financing Authority, county-funded home modifications programs, and the low-interest cash loan program administered through the Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation, in order to increase access to residential ramps and other home modifications for Pennsylvanians with disabilities.

**Progress:** Participation in and advocacy with the Disability Budget Coalition (member) and the Self-Determination Housing Project (member, Board of Directors) has resulted in proposed appropriations for several programs in the Commonwealth's 02-03 state budget to improve access to home modifications for Pennsylvanians with disabilities. These include the Pennsylvania Access Grant Program (totaling $1.85 M over three years) that provides grants to eligible applicants (redevelopment authorities, municipalities) to help low and moderate income persons with permanent disabilities increase accessibility to their home. Several ATRCs (LIFT; CILCNPDA) are involved with the program.

Staff (Tachau) participated in training advocates, municipalities housing authorities on the Access Program and other home modification funding sources available through state and federal waivers. Staff (Tachau; Del Sordo) participated in the "Housing Choices 2002" statewide conference, presenting on issues related to home modifications.

**Activity B4.6:** Participate in coalitions to maximize proposed new funding options for access to assistive technology.

**Progress:** Staff (Tachau) continue to work with a coalition of human services advocates to maintain the provision of assistive technology as a benefit under several programs established and financed with Pennsylvania's tobacco funds (Tobacco Settlement Act [Act 77 of 2001]). These programs include Adult Basic Coverage Insurance (subsidized basic health care insurance for uninsured adults age 19 - 64 who have incomes under 200% of the federal poverty level, enrollment to begin late 2001); the Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (Medical Assistance benefits for workers with disabilities, age 16 - 64, who have incomes under 250% of the federal poverty level); and the expanded Home and Community-Based Care program of the Departments of Public Welfare and Aging (alternative to nursing home care for eligible individuals over 60, with income up to 300% of the federal benefit rate). Given the current budget crisis in the state, these programs are vulnerable to reductions in numbers and scope of coverage.

Institute on Disabilities' staff (Bryen, Tachau) have participated in Pennsylvania's planning for services under the Olmsted Agreement. A coalition of advocacy organizations has come together to build consensus around the importance of community inclusion. The first paper, the Community Imperative, was co-authored by PIAT staff (Tachau) and disseminated to the General Assembly, executive branch, and other policy makers and agencies. Successive papers will
include descriptions of specific supports needed in the community for successful inclusion, including assistive technology.

C. Required Activity: Technical Assistance and Training

Initiative C.1. Including the development and implementation of laws, regulations, policies, practices, procedures or organizational structures that promote access to AT devices and services in education, health care, employment, and community living contexts, and in other contexts such as the use of telecommunications [Section 101(b)(2)(C)(i)].

Activity C.1.1. Amend legislation to expand access to telecommunication devices by persons who have physical disabilities (e.g. disabilities other than deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind or speech disabilities).

Progress: See Progress under Activity B.4.1

Activity C.1.3. Promote the development and implementation of a universal newborn infant hearing screening program, through legislation or appropriation, that includes follow-up and the provision of hearing aids and other assistive devices as appropriate.

Progress: PIAT worked closely with the sponsor of legislation to mandate universal newborn infant hearing screening (and appropriate follow up, including access to assistive technology devices and services) in Pennsylvania. On November 30, 2001, with PIAT staff (Goldman) in attendance, Governor Mark Schweiker signed into law Act 89 of 2001, the Infant Hearing, Education, Assessment, Reporting and Referral Act (IHEARR). This law requires all infants to be screened for hearing loss within the first 30 days of birth so they can be diagnosed as soon as possible and linked to appropriate treatment, including assistive technologies.

Activity C.1.5. Provide technical assistance to partners in CareerLink (Pennsylvania's welfare-to-work program) so that all websites and one-stop job centers will be physically and programmatically accessible. (See also B.1.2.)

Progress: As a result of technical assistance to the site manager at the Philadelphia CareerLink site regarding the lack of van accessible parking, there is now van-accessible handicapped parking. Information has been provided regarding guidelines for improving accessibility of print materials, as well as resources for learning about TTYs and other adapted telecommunications equipment (e.g. PA's AT Lending Library).

Activity C.1.6. Provide information and technical assistance in the crafting of new legislation to improve access to assistive technology devices and services as part of comprehensive supports to people with disabilities.
Progress: PIAT staff (Tachau) participated in the coalition working on family support legislation in Pennsylvania. Staff worked with the General Assembly media consultants to produce a video on the importance of consumer-directed family support programs that include assistive technology.

Activity C.1.7. Provide information, technical assistance, and input regarding the scope, benefit, and continuing need for assistive technology devices and services, through comments on proposed regulatory and procedural changes, and through service on other statewide boards and committees.

Progress: Staff (Del Sordo) is a member of the State Interagency Advisory Committee on Transition and the PA Rehabilitation Council, also serving as the Rehabilitation Council’s liaison to the Statewide Independent Living Council. Staff (Tachau) is also member of the Disability Budget Coalition, an influential cross-disability interagency alliance that proposes disability initiatives to the General Assembly. Staff (Bryen; Tachau) also serve on the Planning and Advisory Committee for the Office of Mental Retardation, as well as the coalition addressing community inclusion options for people with disabilities. Staff (Knuth) serve on the Mayor’s Committee for Persons with Disabilities. Other service to boards and committees includes the Maternal and Child Health Advisory Committee in the PA Department of Health, the Self-Determination Housing Project, and the Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation, Concerra (independent benefits contractor for PA Medical Assistance) Advisory Committee among others.

Initiative C.2. Technical assistance and training activities for targeted individuals, including the development of training materials and the conduct of training in the use of assistive technology devices and services [Section 101(b)(2)(C)(ii)(I)].

Activity C.2.1. In collaboration with the Alliance for the Mentally Ill and the Pennsylvania Mental Health Consumers Association, develop a train-the-trainers curriculum on the potential of assistive technology to help people with mental illness and their families.

Progress: Plans were completed for Helping Tools for Pennsylvanians with Disabilities related to Mental Health: A Train-the-Trainers Workshop to be held in May 2002. Based on input from an advisory committee including persons with mental illness and providers from that service system, the Training and Resource Manual was completed, including information on relevant assistive technology devices, specific information on items in the demonstration kit, information on borrowing the kit and other items that may be helpful for persons with mental illness, websites, etc. Research conducted in the course of developing the manual highlighted the dearth of information and resources on the applications of assistive technology to persons with mental illness and related disabilities.
In October 2002, staff (Knuth) and three advisory committee members presented on this initiative at two statewide conferences, the Pennsylvania Occupational Therapy Association Annual Conference (35 participants) and the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill Pennsylvania Annual Conference (7 participants). These sessions emphasized collaboration among occupational therapists, other mental health service providers, consumers, and PIAT in developing and disseminating information about AT. Staff (Knuth) also assisted three advisory committee members in the preparation of a presentation on this topic to be presented at the Annual Conference of the American Association of Occupational Therapists.

Activity C.2.2. In collaboration with early intervention providers and parents of young children, develop a demonstration kit of items relevant to young children with disabilities and their families. The demonstration kit will circulate through Pennsylvania's Assistive Technology Lending Library.

Progress: Participants in the March, 2001 train-the-trainer session on "Helping Tools for Young Pennsylvanians with Disabilities and their Families" received follow up surveys and other contacts to discuss the impact and outcome of the training. Results reveal that participants trained over 120 people in seven different training sessions. One of the participants, an instructor in Occupational Therapy, reported using the information in the courses she teaches at the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia.

A sampling of the circulation of the "Helping Tools for Young Pennsylvanians with Disabilities and their Families" demonstration kits during the 3-month period January-March 2002 indicated five loans of the kits. The demonstration kit housed at PIAT was employed in international and regional as well as local trainings, meetings and exhibits, including International Parent-to-Parent Conference and the regional Child Care Conference. This training model continues to impact on the provision of information about the scope and benefit of AT for specific populations.

As a result of PIAT's growing reputation as a provider of training regarding the nature and benefit of assistive technology for young children and their families, PIAT staff have been asked to provide assistive technology-related training and technical assistance to early intervention providers in Philadelphia. A subcontract has been developed and implemented between the TLC project in Philadelphia and the Institute on Disabilities, to increase capacity of Early Intervention (birth-two) teams to consider and provide assistive technology to infants and toddlers with disabilities. Under this agreement, training has been provided to more than 125 providers and supervisors in the early intervention program; technical assistance has been delivered regarding the AT needs of two infants.
Activity C.2.5. Provide training to providers, caregivers, and seniors on the scope and potential of assistive technology for older Pennsylvanians.

Progress: Thirteen sessions on the scope and potential of assistive technology for older Pennsylvanians were provided by PIAT and its ATRCs in senior centers, nursing homes, and related settings to almost 300 service providers, seniors or their caregivers. On a scale of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), a sampling of responses to session evaluation indicated that participants knew more about assistive technology (average: 4.68); increased their skills regarding accessing AT (average: 4.48); anticipated changing their practices regarding accessing AT (average: 4.13) and felt the information would help them in their life or their profession (average: 4.63).

A probe of the circulation of the "Helping Tools for Older Pennsylvanians and their Caregivers" demonstration kits as sampled during the 3-month period January-March 2002 indicated six loans of the kits. Thus, this model continues to impact on the provision of information about the scope and benefit of AT for specific populations. This figure does not include usage of the demonstration kit housed at the Institute on Disabilities.

Initiative C.3. The provision of technical assistance, including technical assistance concerning how to consider the needs of an individual with a disability for assistive technology devices and services in developing any individualized plan or program authorized under Federal or State law (Section 101(b)(2)(C)(ii)(AA)).

Activity C.3.1. Provide technical assistance to case managers in the mental retardation (MR) system regarding consideration of assistive technology devices and services in the development of individual habilitation plans and individual program plans. (Also see Activity B.3.2.)

Progress: Training and technical assistance was provided to 150 persons with disabilities and services providers in agencies serving people with mental retardation, in six difference training events.

Activity C.3.2. Provide technical assistance to parents of children with disabilities regarding approaches to developing individualized education plans that include assistive technology.

Progress: School-related technical assistance (repeated contacts by telephone, over time, in response to issues pertaining to barriers in obtaining AT) was provided to 10 parents of children with disabilities. Barriers included issues related to the assessment process (including requesting independent evaluations); integration of technology in the classroom; definition of assistive technology as educationally relevant; and including assistive technology in the development of the IEP.
PIAT staff (Goldman) participated with the Education Law Center-PA in the creation of a national training program addressing communication for children with mental retardation and other disabilities, funded by a private foundation. This program addresses models for and entitlement to and funding for the provision of communication intervention in school settings, including assistive technology for speaking, hearing, and writing. The resource guide was completed and piloted with parents and advocates across Pennsylvania, along with a teleconferenced three-hour training session.

Initiative C.4. The provision of technical assistance, including technical assistance concerning how the rights of targeted individuals to assistive technology devices and services are addressed under laws other than this Act, to promote fuller independence, productivity, and inclusion in and integration into society of such individuals [Section 101(b)(2)(C)(iii)(III)(bb)].

Activity C.4.1. Provide individual assistance to individuals with disabilities and their family members regarding their rights to and funding for assistive technology devices and services (PIAT staff; subcontractors). (See also C.3.2.)

Progress: PIAT staff and subcontracted ATRCs continue to provide individual assistance in obtaining assistive technology devices. For this report, a sample of 53 consumer funding assistance requests was reviewed to examine outcomes of individual assistance. The majority of individuals who received assistance were adults 22-64 old, and represented one or more "under-represented" groups (low income, mental retardation, deaf/hard of hearing, institutional residence, etc.). Assistance with funding for home and vehicle modifications (stair glides, van lifts, ramps) and telecommunications devices were among the most frequent requests. Many of these individuals were able to obtain these devices through the LibrERTTY program as a result of PIAT's technical assistance. Most common barriers experienced by recipients of funding technical assistance included eligibility (AT not "medically necessary"), lack of awareness of available programs (e.g. LibrERTTY, Community Services Program for Persons with Physical Disabilities [CSPPPD], Human Services Development Fund [HSDF], Alternate Financing Program), lack of awareness of the appeal process, and absence of or extensive waiting lists for home modifications programs. Successful interventions resulting from technical assistance included the gathering of appropriate documentation to overturn a denial (including empirical data based on trial use of a device borrowed from Pennsylvania's Assistive Technology Lending Library); coordination of a variety of funding sources (including private donations) to combine resources to obtain the needed AT; provision of information on state programs such as LibrERTTY and CSPPPD; intervention with an employer and coordination with Blindness and Visual Services to supply needed AT; and the use of volunteers for labor (e.g. van lift installation). At least one consumer was referred to the Disability Law Project regarding Pennsylvania Medical Assistance's new reimbursement rates for AAC devices, which has resulted in the manufacturer's decision not to be a provider in
Pennsylvania: This case has now been accepted by the Assistive Technology Law Center (Lew Golinker).

Activity C.4.2. Develop a statewide network of lay advocates through the conduct and replication of PIAT Partners training in southeastern and central Pennsylvania.

Progress: The replication (with non-Title I funds) of PIAT Partners in southwestern PA was completed during this report period. The replication in central PA has been delayed while the subcontractor continues its efforts to procure non-Title I funds to complete its obligation.

Activity C.4.3. Maintain a statewide network of lay advocates by providing advanced leadership training and on-going technical support and follow-up to graduates of PIAT Partners.

Progress: Subcontractors replicating PIAT Partners conducted follow up activities with 28 recent graduates of PIAT Partners. Twenty individuals have completed the activities specified in their action plans and have exercised their advocacy and leadership skills during this report period in a variety of activities. These activities include but are not limited to contacting legislators about assistive technology issues; advocating with local government for accessible buildings; conducting training on low tech devices, helping families of children with disabilities get the assistive technology their children need; advocating for assistive technology in school districts, and coordinating a program for 6 college students in special education that includes an introduction to assistive technology. Eight of these graduates have increased their own or their children's use of and access to appropriate assistive technology devices. Graduates report serving on boards (Arthritis Foundation; Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities; county-based advocacy groups) and work at Centers for Independent Living, UCPs, colleges and school districts where they use their knowledge of and interest in AT. Four participants utilized their AT and advocacy skills to accomplish personal goals of obtaining devices for themselves (including electric door openers for their apartment buildings). Two participants have conducted training sessions on AT in the workplace.

The network of advocates for assistive technology also includes graduates of the Institute on Disabilities' version of the nationally recognized leadership training program, Partners in Policymaking. PIAT provided AT training, including information on the scope and benefits, advocacy and funding for assistive technology to approximately 35 parents and persons with disabilities participating in Competence and Confidence: Partners in Policymaking (C2P2) and to 30 parents of young children in C2P2 for Early Intervention.

Five graduates of PIAT Partners participated in the "Advanced Leadership" program of the Institute on Disabilities, along with graduates from C2P2. Support
was provided to Advanced Leadership participants before and during their visit to Washington, DC and meetings with members of the Pennsylvania delegation and staff, in order to prepare them to communicate effectively regarding issues important to the lives of persons with disabilities and their families.

**Initiative C.6.** The enhancement of the assistive technology skills and competencies of individuals who work for public or private entities (including insurers and managed care providers) who have contact with individuals with disabilities [Section 101(b)(2)(C)(iii)(I)].

**Activity C.6.1:** Train the special needs units of managed care providers, especially those providing services under Medical Assistance, regarding the scope and benefit of assistive technology.

**Progress:** One ATRC (CILNCPA) reported training nine social workers and unit managers of a managed care agency regarding including assistive technology in the rehabilitation plan for people with traumatic brain injury.

**Activity C.6.3.** Provide training to increase the assistive technology knowledge and skill of public and private providers of services to people with disabilities.

**Progress:** Sixty-one training events were provided to a total of 1145 public and private (non-health care) providers of services to people with disabilities. On a scale of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), a sampling of responses to session evaluation indicated that participants knew more about assistive technology (average: 4.5); increased their skills regarding accessing AT (average: 4.4); anticipated changing their practices regarding accessing AT (average: 4.1) and felt the information would help them in their profession (average: 4.5).

In addition, the one-credit "Making It Happen" course, a part of the seven-course Collaborative Studies in Assistive Technology series, was offered during this period (15 classroom hours; nine students). Students rate themselves on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (not important; not developed) to 5 (extremely important, adequately developed). Students entered the course with the view that all the stated competencies were important for someone in their profession (e.g. identify variety of resources for funding; describe strategies for including AT in planning; identify resources for AT services and advocacy). Analysis of pre- and post-evaluations of how well the students had developed mastery of competencies indicate statistically significant changes (average increase in score=+1.8 points) and that students had improved competencies upon completion of the course (average 4.1).
Initiative C.7. The enhancement of the assistive technology skills and competencies of educators and related services personnel [Section 101(b)(2)(C)(iii)(II)].

Activity C.7.4. Offer at least one Collaborative Studies in Assistive Technology course on-line or through other distance learning approaches.

Progress: Collaborative Studies in Assistive Technology introduction/overview course was taught on line in both Fall 01 and Spring 02 semesters, with 18 students enrolled.

Activity C.7.6. Increase the knowledge and improve the assistive technology-related practices of educators and other school personnel through course infusion and guest lectures.

Progress: 34 sessions were provided to almost 600 students in education, special education, psychology and other school personnel (other than related services). These included sessions at colleges and universities (Temple University Philadelphia and Ft. Washington campuses, Arcadia University, Holy Family College, Penn State University, East Stroudsburg University, California University, Marywood University, University of Scranton, University of Pittsburgh, and Lock Haven University). Analysis of evaluations from a sample of 7 university-based trainings revealed the following, based on a scale of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree): my knowledge has increased (4.8); my skills have increased (4.6); I will change my practices e.g. I will consider AT more readily (4.4); and the information I learned will help me in my profession (4.5).

Initiative C.8. The enhancement of the assistive technology skills and competencies of technology experts (including engineers) [Section 101(b)(2)(C)(iii)(III)].

Activity C.8.3. Provide mentoring and support to one or more engineering students/semester in the selection, design, and implementation of a project incorporating assistive technology and/or universal design principles.

Progress: Staff (Goldman; Bryen) met with Electrical Engineering students to discuss ideas for senior projects related to the development of products for persons with disabilities.

Initiative C.9. The enhancement of the assistive technology skills and competencies of health and allied health professionals [Section 101(b)(2)(C)(iii)(IV)].

Activity C.9.1. Expand Collaborative Studies in Assistive Technology to include an additional course in Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) so
that more information about best practices in the applications of aided AAC may be presented.

Progress: The majority of students enrolling in the two AAC courses were practicing speech-language pathologists or students in communication disorders and occupational therapists in the graduate program at Temple University. Students rate themselves on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (not important; not developed) to 5 (extremely important, adequately developed). Students entered the courses with the view that all the stated AAC competencies were important for someone in their profession. Analysis of pre- and post-evaluations of how well the students had developed mastery of AAC competencies indicate statistically significant improvements in both the AAC assessment (average increase in score=+1.5 points) and the AAC intervention (average increase in score=+1.6 points) courses.

Activity C.9.2. Provide an overview of assistive technology as part of the Physician and Allied Health Education Program of the Institute on Disabilities.

Progress: Presentations that included a segment on assistive technology were made to 551 participants, including undergraduates in Health Studies, 4th year medical students on rotation in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R), PM&R residents, 2nd year students in a Family Practice course, graduate students in Occupational Therapy, graduate students in Counseling Psychology, students in a high school program for minority students who have expressed interest in medicine or related professions, and elementary school students who have expressed interest in medicine or related professions. Evaluations indicated significant changes in participants’ self-reported knowledge about community resources (including assistive technology) available to people with disabilities.

Activity C.9.3. Provide demonstrations and training events to increase the assistive technology skills and knowledge of health care and allied health care providers.

Progress: Nineteen demonstrations and training events were provided to more than 346 providers or students in health care and allied health care fields, including nursing, occupational therapy and speech-language pathology. These events included presentations at a variety of different colleges/universities, including University of the Sciences, Misericordia College, Philadelphia University, and the University of Scranton.
Required Activity D: Outreach

Initiative D.1. Assist individuals with disabilities in using assistive technology devices and services, including a focus on organizations assisting individuals from underrepresented populations and rural populations...to obtain funding for, access to, and information on evaluation of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services. [Sec. 101(b)(D)]

Activity D.1.1. Identify and recruit at least one local branch/year for Pennsylvania's Assistive Technology Lending Library, from each region, from one or more of the following groups: agencies serving Spanish-speaking customers; agencies serving individuals who are poor; agencies serving individuals with mental health disabilities; agencies serving individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

Progress: The number and diversity of local branches demonstrate increase in each region. 157 volunteer agencies have been recruited to serve as "local branches" of Pennsylvania's Assistive Technology Lending Library. Branches are located in 57/67 counties across the state, and include 9 colleges/universities; 19 "generic" libraries; 24 agencies serving seniors; and 12 organizations for people with vision disabilities. The increase in numbers of "generic" libraries that participate as local branches can be directly attributed to PIAT's activities in evaluating and providing technical assistance regarding the implementation of AT in the Commonwealth libraries. Although rural outreach efforts have been successful, it continues to be difficult to recruit agencies primarily serving Spanish-speaking customers or other minority groups.

Activity D.1.2. Each ATRC will conduct six presentations to county mental health agencies, mental health provider agencies, or consumer groups, over the course of this supplemental period.

Progress: During the report period May 1, 2001-April 30, 2002, there were 26 events reaching more than 750 people, including presentations to county mental health agencies, provider agencies, state mental hospitals and state and local consumer groups.

Activity D.1.3. Each ATRC serving rural counties will have at least one demonstration, training, or other event in each rural county, each year.

Progress: ATRCs have conducted events in 40 of the 42 rural counties, all except Lawrence and Wayne.

Activity D.1.4. Each ATRC will identify racial/ethnic minorities within their counties, identify the organizations that are "natural" sources of support for those
groups, and in collaboration with those organizations, develop and implement a plan for at least one outreach event/year.

**Progress:** CILCNP has developed an interagency agreement with Community Services Group, a family and youth association that primarily serves the African-American community. The agreement includes three planned events, the first of which (a presentation on the scope and potential of AT to the agency board and staff) has been completed at this time. Easter Seal provided a presentation on assistive technology resources to 17 leaders of the African American community and one leader from the Latino community in its region. UGCPA held two public awareness events drawing members of minority communities, including one serving seniors who are African American. At one exhibit, more than 100 of the people were African American, 50 Latino, and ten Asian.

As a result of PIAT’s collaboration with the Alliance of Black Social Workers, several leaders from that organization registered to participate in upcoming training events.

**Activity D.1.5.** There will be at least one presentation on the scope and benefit of assistive technology at a statewide conference that is targeted to each of the groups designated by PIAT as under-represented populations: people who are served by the mental health system, people who are deaf or hard of hearing, people who are served by the mental retardation system, people who live in nursing homes or other congregate facilities; older Pennsylvanians.

**Progress:** During this report period, the focus of statewide presentations was related to persons with mental retardation and/or mental illness. Staff (Knuth; Goldman) provided presentations at the following statewide conferences: Everyday Lives (statewide Mental Retardation conference); National Alliance for the Mentally Ill of PA; and the Dual Diagnosis Forum (mental retardation and mental illness). An exhibit promoting the availability of assistive technology was also provided at the Everyday Lives conference, reaching more than 750 persons.

**Discretionary Activity I: Alternative state-finance systems**

**Initiative I.1: Activities to increase access to and funding for assistive technology devices and services through the establishment of alternative State or privately financed systems of subsidies for the provision of assistive technology devices and services, such as a low-interest loan fund; an interest buy-down fund; a revolving loan fund; a loan guarantee program [Sec. 101 (b)(3)(A)(i)(II)(aa)-(dd)].**

**Activity I.1.1.** Promote the low-interest cash loan program of the Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation to Pennsylvanians with disabilities who require an alternate source for financing assistive technology.
Progress: As a result of obtaining Title III grants in both FFY 01 and 02, the Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation (PATF), the community-based organization operating the Alternate Financing Program, is now a completely autonomous organization. The PATF has also provided additional dollars to the ATRC infrastructure, by subcontracting with each of these organizations as a “Funding Assistance Center”. The Institute on Disabilities provides non-Title III funded support to the program in a variety of ways, including serving as a volunteer Funding Assistance Center and through outreach, public awareness, technical assistance, referrals (112 callers referred to PATF during this report period), and service on the Foundation’s board of directors.

While complete data on the accomplishments of the PATF will be reviewed in the Title III progress report to NIDRR, highlights of activities include the development of a three-panel display, updates to the brochure, and development of an accessible website. The number of loans approved during the PATF’s present year of operation (July 1, 2001-June 30, 2002) is up more than 25% over the previous period. Nineteen of the 21 loans that were closed were held against the guarantee (total=$213,500); two loans (total=$11,237) did not require the guarantee. An additional two applicants were approved, but declined the loan when they were able to obtain other funding. Loan recipients came from 14 counties, from Philadelphia in the southeast to McKean and Elk in the northernmost part of the Commonwealth. The top three categories for loans were to purchase computers (6), home modifications (6) and adapted vehicles (6).

There were three defaults of loans made in 1999 (2) and 2000 (1), of which two required payment of the guarantee (total=$40,700).

Activity 1.1.2. Develop sources of private funds to cover operational expenses of the Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation, to decrease the Foundation’s reliance on federal funds under Sec. 101 of the AT Act.

Progress: At this time, development activities to support the PATF are the sole responsibility of the Foundation itself, and no Title I funds were used in this regard. However, it should be noted that an annual appeal to individuals conducted by the PATF resulted in more than $6,000 in donations.

Activity 1.1.5. Increase the state guarantee each year, so that more loans may be made to Pennsylvanians with disabilities who would not meet criteria for typical commercial loans.

Progress: PIAT staff (Tachau) promote the appropriation of the state guarantee for the PATF through PIAT’s participation in the Disability Budget Coalition and that group’s collective advocacy efforts. During the present report period, the PATF received SFY 02 state funds of $400,000, which included $150,000 match
for the FY 02 Title III program, focusing on outreach to ethnic/racial minorities. The remaining $250,000 is for operation and guarantee.

**Initiative I.2.** The short-term loan of devices to individuals, employers, public agencies, or public accommodations seeking strategies to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act [Sec. 101 (b)(3)(A)(ii)].

**Activity I.2.2.** Assure the consumer-responsive operation of Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library, characterized by timely, quality “customer service”, through the coordinating activities of PIAT “central” and its Assistive Technology Resource Centers.

**Progress:** PIAT and its subcontracted ATRCs form the infrastructure of the state-funded Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library, complemented by the Hiram G. Andrews Center, a program of the PA Department of Labor and Industry Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, which manages the maintenance and circulation of the inventory. In addition to providing partial support for the program through the funding of the ATRCs, Title I funds are also used for evaluation activities. (Note: Data for this section is derived from Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library data covering the period July 1, 2001 – March 31, 2002.) Demand for this service consistently averages almost 300 requests/month.

The program continues to be utilized by Pennsylvanians with disabilities of all ages from across the Commonwealth. During the period referenced above, of those for whom age was reported, 31% were 21 years old or younger; 47% were adults aged 22 to 64; and 22% were older adults aged 65 and older. 15% of the borrowers for whom race was reported were from racial/ethnic minorities. Requests were originated from 52/67 counties.

All borrowers receive a mailed follow-up survey to determine outcomes of and satisfaction with Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library, and 439 individuals returned the survey during this report period. 94% of respondents indicated satisfaction with the program. 60% of consumers felt that the length of the loan period was “just right”. 96% indicated the equipment was in good condition and worked properly, with 96% receiving all parts. 75% reported they had to wait two weeks or less for the equipment, with 6% waiting a month or more. 15% of respondents who borrowed devices for whom a support person was not required indicated they struggled with the device. 74% of those who borrowed devices for whom a support person was required were able to obtain sufficient support. It is clear that lending programs help individuals decide whether or not the device is right for them: 84% of consumers reported the program helped them decide what equipment to get. Almost 75% of borrowers indicated that they either had or intended to obtain the device (or a similar item) after borrowing it, and 19% wanted to try something else.
Activity 1.2.4. Develop private sources of funding additions of assistive technology devices to the inventory of Pennsylvania's Assistive Technology Lending Library.

Progress: More than $28,000 worth of equipment or other contributions (discounts; donation of shipping charges, etc.) was donated from manufacturers/vendors. Individual borrowers contributed more than $500 in response to a follow-up letter asking for a contribution.

Activity 1.2.5. Promote other sources for obtaining assistive technology devices to employers (e.g., the ICAN program).

Progress: Although PIAT derives no funding through this program, PIAT promotes the ICAN program that provides grants to employers whose businesses are not otherwise subject to Title I of the ADA, for the purchase of assistive technology in order to employ or maintain the employment of persons with disabilities. During the period June, 2000 – February 2002 (the period for which data are available) the Department of Labor and Industry, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, issued 54 grants to small businesses, ranging from $6000-$30,000 (total=$1,800,000, including grants obligated in late SFY 01, but not actually spent until SFY 02). Employers made accommodations including ramps, electronic doors, accessible restrooms, voice-activated computer software, hand control-equipped forklifts, adapted embroidery machinery and vehicle modifications. Through the ICAN program, these businesses were able to hire or retain 65 employees with disabilities.

Initiative 1.3. The maintenance of information about, and recycling centers for, the redistribution of assistive technology devices [Sec. 101(b)(3)(A)(III)].

Activity 1.3.1. Develop a comprehensive, statewide, annotated listing of public and private agencies that are involved in some way in recycling, refurbishing, or re-using assistive technology.

Progress: This listing serves as a resource for PIAT staff (e.g., consumer liaison) as well as others seeking to identify sources of "previously owned" assistive technology. Nine per cent of all PIAT I&R calls are consumers or providers looking for second-hand equipment. Equipment most frequently requested included wheelchairs, lifts, ramps, stair glides, and modified vans.

Activity 1.3.5. Maintain the Recycled Equipment Exchange Program (REEP), with circulation in print, computer disk, Braille, and on the World Wide Web. Develop a plan for a subscription basis for hard copy formats, to defray duplication and mailing expenses in later years of this program.
Progress: The quarterly REEP listing is mailed to over 300 subscribers, and is available and updated monthly on the web. There were 38 items sold via REEP (a 45% increase from the previous year), including 15 adapted vans, with a reported dollar value of over $243,000. Other items included powered mobility (11 scooters and power wheelchairs) as well as manual wheelchairs, stair glides, augmentative communication devices, a computer, and ramps. Sales of items involved persons from 18 counties. In addition, 21 items, including four power wheelchairs and a variety of adaptive car seats and other items for children, were donated to consumers in need in eight counties.

In addition to recycling efforts related to REEP, ATRCs provide additional resources for long-term "loans" of equipment and finding new homes for donated equipment. For example, TRCIL's "Into New Hands" program has distributed 80 items to 63 individuals. UCPCPA matched a donated van lift with someone in need who had a compatible vehicle and mobility devices. CILNCPA continues to solicit donations of used devices that it then loans for indefinite periods to consumers in need.

Discretionary Activity II: Demonstrations

Initiative II.1. In collaboration with other entities, demonstrate assistive technology devices in settings where targeted individuals can see and try out assistive technology devices, learn more about the devices, or can be referred to other entities who have information on the devices. [Sec. 101 (b)(3)(B)].

Activity II.1.3. Over the course of the three years covered by this supplement, PIAT "central" and subcontractors will hold at least one demonstration/display in each county, in one or more of the following venues: malls (e.g. "health fairs"), libraries, schools, churches, senior centers. (See also A.2.2.)

Progress: During the three years covered by the Supplement, demonstrations, displays, or other events have been held in all 67 counties.

Activity II.1.4. Conduct demonstrations on the scope and potential of assistive technology and available resources for people with disabilities, their families, friends, and advocates.

Progress: Eighty-four demonstrations were provided, reaching 5566 participants, most of whom were people with disabilities or family members. On a scale of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), results of event evaluations indicate that as a result of the presentation or demonstration, participants knew more about assistive technology (average 4.6); increased their skills regarding accessing AT (average 4.3); anticipated changing their practices regarding considering AT (average 4.3) and believed that the information would help them in their job and/or personal life (average 4.5).
Discretionary Activity III: Options for securing devices and services. [Sec. 101(b)(3)(C)]

Activity III.1. Identify and build relationships with volunteer civic and charitable organizations (e.g. Rotary) as resources for home modifications, assistive technology purchase or long-term loan for consumers, or other program that improves access to assistive technology.

Progress: ATRCs continue to be successful in identifying, developing, and utilizing alternate sources of funding for AT devices and services. LIFT has worked with local foundations for the purchase of devices costing under $1000 for consumers who cannot otherwise afford them. Easter Seal has obtained funding from the Lions Club for the purchase of CCTVs for five individuals. In addition, Easter Seal has also arranged for a local computer store to make used laptops available at large discounts (and sometimes free) to children with disabilities who use computers at school and need one at home. Easter Seal has also made arrangement with two vendors (Optelco [CCTV] and Dynavox [AAC]) to provide additional equipment loans after a loan period from the Lending Library has expired but a decision has still not been made as to the appropriateness of the device. UCP/NEPA received a United Way grant to enable it to provide AT services (including evaluations) for individuals who are not eligible under other programs. UCP/NEPA also obtained funding for additional services from the Lackawanna Human Services Development Fund.

Discretionary Activity IV: Technology-related information. [Sec. 101(b)(3)(D)].

Initiative IV.1. Operate and expand a system for public access to information about assistive technology devices and services, funding sources, and providers. The system shall be part of, and complement the information available through an electronic link to the National Public Internet Site authorized under Section 104(c)(1) [Sec. 101(b)(3)(D)(I)].

Activity IV.1.1. All subcontractors shall establish and maintain an Internet address and accessible website regarding their assistive technology services, regional funding resources, and assistive technology training events. Each website shall be linked to PIAT, Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library, and the National Public Internet Site. Technical assistance will be provided to subcontractors as needed.

Progress: Of the seven websites hosted by 9 subcontractors, all are accessible. All but one of the websites contains the link to the National Public Internet site; this was inadvertently “lost” during a revision of the site and was just discovered. All ATRCs have e-mail addresses. ATRCs reported increasing numbers of visits to their websites, e.g. TRIPIL (500) and LIFT (400).
Initiative IV.2. Develop, compile, and categorize print, large print, Braille, audio, and video materials, computer disks, compact disks, and other materials that may be used in telephone-based information systems [Sec. 101(b)(3) (D)(iii)(I)].

Activity IV.2.5. Maintain a comprehensive, annotated listing of electronic resources on assistive technology.

Progress: Funding publications (see also Activity IV.3.1) continue to be disseminated through the Institute on Disabilities' website, www.temple.edu/inst_disabilities. Two handouts, "Amy's Web Picks on AAC 2002" and "Amy's Web Picks on Assistive Technology and Young Children 2002" were developed and are widely disseminated. A listing of AT vendors, including web sites as available, has been updated.

Initiative IV.3. Identify and classify funding sources for obtaining assistive technology devices and services and the conditions of and criteria for access to such sources. [Sec. 101(b)(3) (D)(iii)(II)].

Activity IV.3.1. Develop, revise, and disseminate "funding fact sheets" and the comprehensive funding manual on new and continuing public and private funding sources for obtaining assistive technology, including the criteria for eligibility, scope of coverage, and appeals process for each source.

Progress: Approximately 15% of the materials mailed as a result of I&R requests were related to funding. Due to staffing vacancies, revisions to the Funding Manual were not completed. However, revisions were made to the "Private Sources of Funding" and the Home Modifications Fast Facts.

Activity IV.3.2. Provide information on funding sources for obtaining assistive technology devices and services and the conditions of and criteria for access to such sources.

Progress: Eight training events focused on solely on funding for assistive technology reached 123 participants. On a scale of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), a sampling of responses to session evaluation indicated that participants knew more about funding for assistive technology (average: 4.6); increased their skills regarding accessing AT (average: 4.0); anticipated changing their practices regarding accessing AT (average: 3.75) and felt the information would help them in their profession/their personal life (average: 4.18).

PIAT staff (Goldman) conducted an audio teleconference regarding Medicare Funding for Augmentative Communication Devices, which reached 75 participants at seven sites across Pennsylvania. All ATRCs received an
audiotape of the training for dissemination to individuals who were unable to participate and as an archival record of the content. Medicare funding for AAC was also the topic of a presentation to the PA Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

**Initiative IV.4. Identify support groups and systems designed to help individuals with disabilities use assistive technology devices and services [Sec. 101(b)(3)(D)(iii)(III)].**

**Activity IV.4.1.** Maintain a service provider directory of those entities providing assistive technology devices and services (fee-for-service), the nature and scope of those services, and the payment sources accepted for the services.

**Progress:** The service provider directory presently contains 735 entries, reflecting providers of assistive technology services across the state and national vendors that provide services within Pennsylvania. The majority of providers are in the areas of computer access, home modification and augmentative communication. As providers become known or relocate (e.g. through reports from borrowers of the lending library who identify their "support person"), the service provider directory is updated by PIAT staff. Availability of qualified evaluators in the area of augmentative communication is still a great need, and a frequently requested service.

**Initiative IV.5. Maintain a record of the extent to which citizens of the State use or make inquiries of the system for public access to information [Sec. 101(b)(3)(D)(iii)(IV)].**

**Activity IV.5.1.** Subcontractors and PIAT "central" will maintain a record of the extent to which citizens of the State use or make inquiries via electronic communication (WWW, e-mail), telephone, written, and in-person contacts, and the nature of such inquiries.

**Progress:** There were 12,385 information and referral contacts to PIAT at the Institute on Disabilities and its ATRCs, approximately the same as the previous year’s total. 29% (more than double the percentage from last year) of the calls originated from 42 rural counties.

Development and implementation of a web-based data collection form has enabled PIAT staff to more easily examine the I&R data collected. The following section is based on the information and referral contacts received by "PIAT central". Analysis of reports reveals the majority (67%) of callers are requesting information about Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library. 11% requested information on funding for assistive technology, including home and vehicle modifications and the purchase of computer equipment. Other callers requested information on acquiring or selling used equipment (13%) and other state programs such as ICAN and TDD/P (5%). A trend towards decreasing
numbers of phone contacts was noted: 86% (compared to 91% in the previous report period) of contacts are via telephone, 1% via TTY, 2% face-to-face, 1% in writing, and about 10% are via e-mail. It is interesting to note that among the e-mail inquiries are callers who previously would have used a TTY.

Most callers received follow up material in print or via e-mail, referral to Internet sites, and/or telephone consultation related to the nature of assistive technology devices and services. Inquiries were most frequently regarding the following types of AT: augmentative communication, computer access, telephones for the hearing impaired, speech amplification, home and vehicle modifications.

Callers represented all age groups, with notable increases in the 6-21 and 22-64 age group and decreases in the 65+ age group, when compared with the previous report period: 0-2 (2% [3%]), 3-5 (6% [5%]), 6-21 (20% [10%]), 22-64 (46% [32%]), 65+ (24% [42%]), and age span (2%). Information was related to assistive technology for persons with a variety of disabilities, with a dramatic shift in the numbers of individuals with multiple disabilities who are contacting this service: sensory disabilities (41% [34%]), multiple disabilities (34% [5%]), physical disabilities (19% [29%]), cognitive and learning disabilities (5% [12%]), and mental health-related disabilities (1%).

A sampling of I&R calls revealed that 24% [23%] of calls were from consumers, 29% [37%] from family members and friends, 35% [27%] from providers, and 12% from other sources including employers, advocates, and government agencies and vendors. 7% [16%] of those sampled had been referred by government agencies, 24% by educational entities, 26% [13%] by service providers, 7% [13%] by vendors whose products are in the Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Lending Library, 6% [9%] by family members or friends, and 17% [6%] through resource directors in which PIAT is listed, including "Learning Disabilities Directory", "United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania", "Housing Resources for the Elderly", "Pennsylvania Resource Council", "Resource Guide for Individuals with Traumatic Brain Injuries" and "National Technology Transfer Center Online". Other referrals came from centers for independent living and other educational institutions.

Discretionary Activity V: Interstate Activities

Initiative V.1. Enter into cooperative agreements with other States to expand the capacity of the States involved to assist individuals with disabilities to...acquire assistive technology devices and services [Sec. 101(b)(3)(E)(i)].

Progress: Activities in this area are limited to those related to assistive and accessible electronic and information technologies in education settings, and are funded through the contract with the Mid-Atlantic ADA Information Center. PIAT coordinates this effort. No Title I funds are directly utilized in this regard.
Discretionary Activity VI: Partnerships and cooperative initiatives

Initiative VI.1. Support partnerships and cooperative initiatives between the public sector and the private sector to promote greater participation by business and industry in the development, demonstration, and dissemination of assistive technology devices [Sec. 101(b)(3)(F)(i)].

Activity VI.1.2. Each Assistive Technology Resource Center will arrange for at least four demonstrations of assistive technology/year, to be provided by manufacturers or vendors at no cost.

Progress: Thirty-five vendor demonstrations were facilitated by PIAT and its ATRCs, sixteen of which were held in rural counties. Products ranged from augmentative communication devices, computer access, assistive listening, to vehicle modifications devices, and closed circuit televisions for people with low vision, and were presented by vendors at no cost. They were attended by almost 500 people, almost half of whom were people with disabilities or family members. On a scale of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), a sampling of responses to session evaluations indicated that participants knew more about the devices being demonstrated (average: 4.5); increased their skills regarding those devices (average: 4.7); anticipated changing their practices regarding the devices (average: 4.3) and felt the information would help them in their profession/lives (average: 4.6).

Discretionary Activity VII: Expenses

Initiative VII.1. The state may pay for expenses, including travel expenses and services that may be necessary to ensure access to the comprehensive statewide program of technology-related assistance by individuals with disabilities who are determined by the state to be in financial need and not eligible for such payments or services through another public agency or private entity [Sec. 101 (b)(3)(G)].

Activity VII.1.1. Persons with disabilities or family members of persons with disabilities participating in advisory boards and committees who are in financial need will be reimbursed for expenses incurred by their attendance at meetings and other functions.

Progress: PIAT reimburses consumers who serve on advisory boards and similar PIAT-sponsored activities for expenses incurred by their participation.

Activity VII.1.2. Services (interpreters, Brailling, personal assistance, etc.) will be provided to assure that all activities of Pennsylvania’s Initiative on Assistive Technology are fully accessible to persons with disabilities.
Progress: In accordance with the accessibility policy of the Institute on Disabilities, services are provided to assure that all activities of Pennsylvania’s Initiative on Assistive Technology are fully accessible to persons with disabilities. During this year, PIAT provided or reimbursed disability-related expenses for participants in its activities (e.g. conferences; Advisory Board) including sighted guides, Braille, and personal assistance services.
Part Two: Involvement of Persons with Disabilities

Pennsylvania's initiative on Assistive Technology's activities reflect the involvement of, and are continually shaped by, the needs and experiences of Pennsylvanians with disabilities and their families regarding access to assistive technology. A process of on-going evaluation of customer satisfaction in major areas of activity (e.g. training, technical assistance, information and referral services, equipment lending) provides the impetus for changes (or affirms the need for continuation of present efforts) in operations and focus.

I. PIAT Staffing.
Having people with disabilities and family members of people with disabilities on staff, including in leadership positions, provides the project with unique insights on the value and impact of activities. PIAT continues to outreach to qualified individuals with disabilities when staff vacancies occur. PIAT-funded staff include employees with disabilities (Knuth; Del Sordo), parents of children with disabilities (Tachau; McNally), and siblings of individuals with disabilities (Cregan, Bryen, Carey).

II. Advisory Boards and Committees.
To accommodate reduction in federal funds and as a result of recommendations from the site visitors from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, only one meeting of the Advisory Board was held this year. However, the activities of PIAT are reviewed by the Assistive and Accessible Technologies subcommittee of the Consumer Advisory Council for the Institute on Disabilities and, as appropriate, by the Council in its entirety. As a program of the Institute on Disabilities, PIAT's activities are guided by the Institute's overall five-year plan, which was developed with the Institute's Consumer Advisory Council.

PIAT continually consults with people with disabilities and family members of people with disabilities for suggestions regarding equipment to purchase for Pennsylvania's Assistive Technology Lending Library. Additions to the Library are influenced by consumer demand (e.g. additional copies are ordered of items that generate a waiting list). Evaluations completed after each training session ask for topics for future trainings, and provide a valuable source of information in planning for additional conferences and initiatives.

IV. Consumer Participation as Co-trainers and Presenters.
PIAT believes that the first-person stories of people with disabilities and parents of young children with disabilities are critical in shaping the attitudes and practices of pre-services professionals, practicing providers, as well as policymakers. Accordingly, consumer participation is an integral part of initiatives involving presentations regarding the development of consumer-responsive services and the potential of and access to assistive technology (for example, guest lecturers for Collaborative Studies in Assistive Technology).

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Where consumers provide assistance to project activities, honoraria and expenses are offered (including expenses related to personal assistant services and other accommodations related to disability).

V. Setting Direction: Consumer Questionnaire and other Needs Assessments.
Annually, PIAT collects surveys from Pennsylvanians with disabilities from across the state. This questionnaire reflects on the needs and experiences of Pennsylvanians of all ages in obtaining the assistive technology devices and services they require. Information is used to refine program emphasis or define new activities.

During this report period, 210 Consumer Questionnaire surveys were returned from 44 counties across the state. 59% of respondents were people with disabilities, 13% were a family member of a person with a disability, 15% were staff/professionals including AT service providers, 15% were friends or advocates for a person with disabilities, and 2% were "other". Note that respondents were asked to identify all that apply, resulting in a sum of all categories greater than 100%. The age group of the person with a disability was most frequently 22-64 (56%), with 21% reflecting ages over 65 and 29% under 21. 90% of respondents were white, 8% African American, 1% Latino, and 1% Asian.

In the following sections, data from last year's [00-01] Consumer Survey is reported in brackets, for comparison.

51% [52%] of the respondents need and do not have at least one of the devices in the 12 categories listed on the survey (including "other"). The specified devices for which there was the most unmet need included assistive technology for getting around outside e.g. modified vehicles (18%), communication (14%) [16%]; and for writing (11%) [16%]. The most frequently cited reason as to why the person doesn't have a needed device was "because I can't get it paid for" (83%) [50%]. About 20%, the same as in previous years, reported that they "need to figure out what I need" or "don't know where to get help".

Survey respondents reported on the sources of funding for 601 devices. Most devices that were obtained were purchased with the consumer's own funds or by his family/friends (44%) [37%]. Other funding sources varied in part by the type of device needed. It is interesting to note that in only four of the 12 categories was a third party payer a primary funding source. Devices for communication/telecommunication (N=42) were mostly funded by the Telecommunications Device Distribution Program (29%) although self (11% [42%]), OVR (10% [8%]), and Medical Assistance (10%) were also leading payers in this category. Devices for mobility (N=108) were primarily provided by Medical Assistance (33% [16%]) or private insurance (29% [32%]). Devices for work (N=29) were mostly funded by the employer (41% [33%]) or self (17% [15%]). Devices for school (N=28) were most frequently provided the school/Department of Education (54% [47%]). Devices for getting around
outside (N=38), hearing (N=34) and writing (N=56) were most likely to be funded by the consumer’s own funds (55%, 41%, and 57%, respectively), with OVR the second most frequently cited source of funding in these categories (18%, 27%, and 13%, respectively). The Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services was cited as a source of funding for devices for hearing (11%) yet surprisingly most devices for seeing (N=35) were funded by self (40% [46%]) and private insurance (17%). Devices for personal care were usually funded by self (46% [50%]) or Medical Assistance (20%). Devices to help around the home and for recreation were overwhelmingly purchased with personal funds (71% [54%]; 87% [68%]).

When asked to consider the outcome of the use of assistive technology, 86% [86%] of respondents experienced more independence; 89% [87%] reported increased quality of life, 74% [75%] reported that AT helped them be included in the community, 67% [70%] reported increased productivity, and 55% [62%] were able to maintain/improve their health. In addition, 40% of respondents reported assistive technology assisted in being included in school, 28% [30%] were able to get a job, and 21% [17%] reported being able to get a better job because of assistive technology.

As part of the follow-up to callers to PIAT’s centralized information and referral service, callers (N=87) participated in a telephone interview in which they were asked about the outcomes of the information they received from PIAT. Respondents specified that the information they received from PIAT helped them in many ways, including helping them to know what assistive technology would be useful (79% [57%]); to learn about what assistive technology was available to borrow and try out (61% [65%]); to be more independent (41%); to improve the quality of their lives (36% [33%]); to be included in school and community (36%); to get services to help them use a device (15% [23%]); to do their job better (15%); to find funding sources to pay for devices (12% [35%]); to get an assistive technology evaluation (9% [23%]). Other reported outcomes included getting connected with other services (e.g. vocational rehabilitation services, Free Library for the Blind, Job Accommodation Network, Center for Independent Living) obtaining information on resources for vehicle and home modifications, and learning about training opportunities.

Despite the efforts of Pennsylvania’s Initiative on Assistive Technology, and in the context of a society that increasingly depends upon technology, these reports highlight the persisting need for information about the scope and potential of assistive technology for all life functions, and the continuing need for improved funding options.

The outcome data validate the perception of assistive technology as a necessary support for persons with disabilities.

VI. Customer Satisfaction
PIAT and its subcontractors use feedback from its customers to improve its services and look at those services that are most valuable. Approximately 10% of information and referral callers are sampled and asked to describe satisfaction with customer service and the usefulness of the information. Based on the sample of follow-up surveys to callers to PIAT’s centralized toll-free number, there is uniformly high satisfaction with the quality of the information provided, the courtesy of staff, and the timeliness of the response. Only one participant expressed dissatisfaction with being referred to another entity to obtain funding resources.

When asked how PIAT was most helpful, the majority of respondents said they were sent adequate and informative material and that they received assistance in finding the appropriate assistive technology devices and services. When asked where they would have gotten this information if PIAT were not available, 70% of the surveyed callers indicated that they would not know where to get the information, 13% would have researched on the Internet, 10% would have asked their school system, 5% would have contacted a vendor, and 2% would have asked a friend or colleague.

Comments included: “I was happy to hear that PIAT offers such services to across the age span”; “PIAT staff was very helpful, quick to respond and provided answers to questions”; “I didn’t have to run around to get the information I needed”; “Very convenient service”; “Make the service coordinators more aware so they understand how to refer someone”.

Individuals utilizing Pennsylvania’s Assistive Technology Lending Library are annually surveyed as to their satisfaction with the program. Based on 432 respondents, 94% of Lending Library customers are very satisfied (71%) or satisfied (23%). It is hypothesized that causes of dissatisfaction are related to problems in shipping (reported by 8% of borrowers) or the length of the equipment loan period (reported as “too short” by 31% of borrowers). Comments include “I was disappointed that I was not able to borrow from the Lending Library for an extended period of time”; “I’m glad I can borrow from the Lending Library before I spend my money”.

All training events are evaluated, and the results are incorporated in the report on those activities. While “outcome”, e.g. enhanced knowledge and skill and subsequent improved access to AT for persons with disabilities is arguably a more important measure than “satisfaction”, it is clear that training events are uniformly effective in enhancing consumers’ and providers’ knowledge about AT devices, services, and resources.

PIAT’s subcontractor for the Recycled Equipment Exchange Program (REEP) reports 90% of consumers are satisfied with the services of REEP. It is hypothesized that the 10% “dissatisfied” were disappointed when their item did not sell.
Part IV: Budget Information

At this point, we anticipate no more than 10% of budget funds will be unexpended by the close of the project year. A carryover request will be submitted for these funds.

Modifications to the budget are necessitated by the following:
- unexpended dollars in the personnel line as a result of staff vacancies.
- redistribution of staff time to other activities funded under other sources.

It should also be noted that, from time to time, PIAT will seek to defray expenses by charging for its services or requesting reimbursement for travel expenses when invited to present at statewide meetings. For example, a registration fee will be charged for the statewide conference planned for November 2002, in order to offset certain direct expenses, including but not limited to room rental, meals, and provision of audiovisual equipment for speakers.