

National I&R Support Center

Webinar: Assistive Technology Act Programs: Improving Access to AT for People of All Ages

April 23, 2019

On behalf of the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD) and the National Information & Referral Support Center, a project of NASUAD, I would like to welcome listeners to today's webinar on Assistive Technology Act Programs: Improving Access to AT for People of All Ages.

Let me cover a few housekeeping items before we get started.

The slides, audio recording, and transcript from today's webinar will be posted to the NASUAD website within the next several days. Please visit the National I&R Support Center project on the NASUAD website, and see our webpage on monthly calls. This weblink is also posted in the chat box for your reference.

All of our listeners are on mute during the webinar to reduce background noise. But we welcome your questions and comments through the Q&A function available on your screen. Please feel free to submit your questions at any time during today's presentation, and we'll address questions following the presentation.

We also have real-time captioning for today's webinar. On your screen, you should see a Multimedia Viewer Panel on the bottom right where the captioning will appear. You can minimize this panel or have it open, it will not block the slide presentation. You may need to enter your name and organization, and click submit, in order to view the captioning in the media viewer.

Assistive Technology Act Programs increase knowledge of and access to assistive technology (AT) devices and services for people with disabilities and older adults. Programs support a continuum of AT services, from public awareness and information and assistance to loans and reuse programs. Today's webinar will help us learn more about the Assistive Technology Act, state programs and services, ways that AT can be useful to individuals across the lifespan, and how you can help connect individuals to programs in your states.

I'm delighted to welcome presenters from the National Assistive Technology Act Technical Assistance and Training Center, or AT3 Center. Marty Exline is Director of the Center, and Amy Goldman is a Technical Assistance Specialist at the AT3 Center. One of our original presenters wasn't able to make it today, but I'm really pleased to have Marty and Amy join us. Now I will turn it over to our presenters to get us started.

Yes that is right I just wanted to make sure that you can hear me okay.

Yes we can.

Great. I see the captioning working. We are really happy to be here. One of the things we really want to do is to help everybody understand the

services of the state and territory assistive technology act program and hopefully be able to utilize those more for the people that you work with. The things we want to talk about today and to cover, the first thing we want to do is just touch on what technology is and then run through some of the categories of assistive technology. After that, Amy is going to share more specifically the types of services and activities that are offered by the state assistive technology act program. Then after that I will close by just talking a little bit about collaborations between state assistive technology programs and state aging agencies.

Other services that some of the state assistive technology programs offer and then hopefully to answer any questions that you have. So on the screen is of course the definition of assistive technology. This is a definition that you find in the Federal Assistive Technology Act. It is in a lot of state statutes as well. This is the definition that you will find in a lot of the home and community-based waiver programs in terms of assistive technology service.

It's just any device, piece of equipment, or product system whether you get a commercially in a store or off the shelf, or is modified or customized, that is used to increase, enhance or maintain the functional capabilities of somebody with a disability. Assistive technology services is anything that can help a person either choose what device works best for them to actually get the device through funding or other source and then if they needed assistance on how to use the device. So you can go to the next slide. So I just wanted to run through obviously there are hundred thousand different kinds of assisted technology devices that people need in terms of about 10 different categories from vision devices there all types of course of manual magnifiers, video magnifiers, electronic magnifiers, that can magnify an entire page for somebody with low vision. A variety of devices for somebody who is blind. Then in terms of hearing devices they're all types of personal amplification systems. In addition to hearing aids of course there are other devices and systems that people can use to engage in face-to-face conversation or other devices like vibrating alarms to help wake somebody up who maybe has, is deaf or has a hearing disability. Speech communication, there are all sorts of dedicated speech generating devices. As well as a lot of apps on tablet devices now that can help actually verbalize what somebody is trying to say if they are unable to actually speak it. Learning, cognition and development there all sorts of memory aids, reminder apps. There are all types of medication reminders and those kinds of devices. In terms of cognition or memory aids. Mobility, seating and positioning: obviously there are all sorts of walkers, scooters, manual and power wheelchairs. There other types of mobility devices also. Its go ahead and jump to the Next slide. the daily living devices are all over the board. There are all types of devices for meal preparation and eating, the smart home hubs when somebody is wanting to access those, some states have those available and some in demonstration programs that Amy will talk about. Adaptive telephone equipment and everything that would help somebody with a disability live independently. In terms of dressing or personal hygiene or bathing or home maintenance or any type of activity that deals with daily living. Then environmental adaptations can include ramps, accessible environmental controls, wheelchair lifts

, and those kinds of devices. Vehicle modifications can be anything from hand controls, to adaptive shoulder and seatbelts. Then all types of computers and related equipment like voice recognition systems for somebody who cannot use a keyboard but, has the ability to type using the voice alternative keyboards and pointing devices for somebody who cannot use a traditional keyboard. Then there is an awful lot of different types of adaptive recreational equipment. Whether it's somebody played a game or gardening equipment or anything along those lines. So actually I'm going to go ahead and let

Amy go into talking a little bit about assistive technology act and what kinds of activities are available through the ATA.

Sure thanks Marty. I will talk a little bit about the authorizing legislation that started as being called technology-related assistance for individuals with disabilities act. People call that the Tech Act for short. There were some substantial retooling of it in 1998 and we started calling it the A-T act. The most recent amendments were in 2004 so it's a little bit overdue. But, uh, basically what we are able to talk about is a national program that actually we are proud to say works very well. So without getting into the weeds too deeply I just wanted to mention that this will include the state ATS programs that we will spend the bulk of our time talking about. The protection and advocacy systems for assistive technology. So you may be familiar with the disability rights affiliate in your state. They also get a small amount of money under the A-T act to do their protection and advocacy. They help make sure people are getting the AT that they need. And of course our center the AT3 Center is also funded under this piece of legislation. Next slide. so what are the state AT Act programs meant to do. There are 56 of them. One in every state and territories. So when we say state AT programs it's really shorthanded, it does include DC, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Northern Mariana's and etc. There are 56 programs. You will hear me talk about the range of things that they have to do. You should also know that the territories and their little money, well under \$200,000 and even the most populous states only get well, I know Pennsylvania is, I'm based in Philadelphia and our allocation is only about \$800,000. So when I go through these activities and the mandates you will understand we have quite a large charge and not necessarily a large federal allocation. In any case the lot is very, very prescriptive. It says that the states in almost all cases must spend the majority of what they receive for activities that help people access and acquire AT. Those activities we will get into a little bit more depth with them shortly. They are device demonstration, device lending, device reutilization and state financing. So typically at least 60% of the funds that a state gets are focused on implementing those activities. The remainder is supporting what we call state leadership activities which are training and technical assistance as well as some public awareness. Next slide please. So every state is charged with serving everybody within their state who can benefit from the services. So all people with disabilities, seniors who are experiencing functional limitations and we know seniors do not always say that they are a person with a disability and they just cannot do things as well as they used to. All rural people, all urban people, all races and ethnicities etc. That is a big charge. It is particularly important to us that you guys will hear this webinar because it is "just-in-time" information,

it is hard to reach all of the people in our state so your assistance in helping connect people who just cannot do things

as efficiently or as well or as easily as they used to to our programs which might help them find the tools that can help will be a great advantage. There are no referrals necessary and most of the services are free. So let's look a little deeper.

Assistive technology demonstration program. In our lingo I demonstration is an experience where somebody who is knowledgeable in assistive technology and not a vendor can help compare and contrast two or more products within the same category and give a person with a disability a hands-on opportunity to learn about that equipment. So, it is way more than a show and tell. Although many of the states have demonstration centers that you can do a tour. It is not really in our lingo a demo until an individual

has been supported by a knowledgeable A-T professional in learning about the equipment so the bottom line is that that individual can make an informed decision about whether or not the AT device or devices that they have seen will help. So again the bottom line here is making a decision. The Next slide please. so and this is often following a demonstration. A person says well I think this can help but I would really like to try it out in my own environment. So our state programs have lending libraries of equipment. Now again it is a challenge given the fact that our federal funds are limited and there is so much daily growth and change in the technology world. But, uh, certainly these are great opportunities for people to borrow stuff for a short-term, usually 30 days. So they can try out the device to see if it will work before they make a purchase. Again we're hoping here that the borrower can make a decision. We do not care if the decision is oh, that is not going to work for me-- to us that is a great outcome. That they have been saved from doing an inappropriate purchase. So device loans in addition to helping people make a decision can be used if a person is a user of AT but their device is being repaired. Or they know

the AT that they want but they are waiting for funding approval. Lastly professionals can borrow assistive devices to get more familiar with them so that they can do their jobs better. Or for them to use as a context of teaching others about assistive technology. So some of the programs you have to go and pick up stuff some of the programs they get delivered to you, one or two of our very unique programs are using their states interlibrary loans for the delivery of equipment. So that is device lending. Device reutilization and you know yesterday was Earth Day and we like to think that we contribute to efforts to preserve the earth by diverting usable AT from the dump or landfill by providing it to people, other people with disabilities who need it. So, we have activities that help support the reuse of AT if the original owner no longer needs it or can benefit from it. To get that to a new recipient. That may be free or at lower cost. For sure it is lower than buying new products. So some of the activities include refurbishing and that is that a person or family where the device is no longer needed takes the device, brings it or arranges for delivery to one of our reuse centers. That equipment is checked out to make sure it is in good and safe condition. Cleaned up, repaired, then we await for somebody who has that need. It is very interesting, I like to say that there is such a thing as reuse karma. So experiences that I have had where in the morning I get a call that so-and-so mom has died and they need to get the

stair glide out of the house right away. Can we help them do that? They want to donate it and that is great. We will make those arrangements. And then what you know in the afternoon we get a call so and so is awaiting discharge from the nursing home and they need a stair lift. So it is kind of awesome in those kinds of things happen. Some of our programs have exchanges that are often online classifieds. Nowadays we've got a couple of states that actually are doing a Facebook marketplace and in those cases the state program will host either the website or maintain a Facebook page. The state AT program does not touch the item. So ownership is transferred, the state AT program helps communicate the need

to here is the device but they do not touch the device. Then we have open ended device loans and this is where the state AT program keeps a title of the device but they say to the borrower you can keep this as long as you need it. But our expectation is that you return it to our program when it is no longer needed. So, Next slide please. so let me just say that device realization has literally saved millions of dollars every year. It has also been a resource that has been tapped in responding to natural disasters over the last several years. It is also been a resource helping in emergency preparedness by pre-staging used equipment or providing it to shelters in advance of an emergency. Okay. So the fourth if you have been counting, the fourth of the state level activities is what is called state financing. As you might expect from the name these are activities that help people purchase assistive technology or obtain it through a variety of initiatives. There is about 35 state programs that have cash loan programs that provide consumers with affordable, flexible borrowing options. These programs as you might expect are pretty sympathetic to situations where individuals might have compromised credit, particularly when credit has to do with, or the hospital has to do with the hospital fighting with the insurance company. So there is some understanding of those unfortunate situations. The programs also understand that there are individuals who might have no credit. They may never have established any credit. Therefore they are not going to be able to go to a bank and borrow. The terms that are offered through these financial loan programs are often very, very favorable terms. In other words interest rate maybe at prime, which is the interest rate that banks charge the very best customers. For the individuals who have iffy credit, the state financial loan program may decide that they will work with the bank to guarantee the loan. So they say to the lender you know what if Mrs. Jones defaults and we do not think she will but, because you are concerned that she might, we will guarantee the loan. So these financial loan programs for people who qualify, who need to finance assistive technology are really great. It is way less expensive than using their credit card for example. The most popular items that are accessed through financial loans tend to be hearing aids, not surprisingly. Vehicle modifications and home modifications. Some of the other states have other programs and I think Marty will talk a little bit about them where they are actually administering a program with their A-T funds but the dollars that purchase the equipment are from non-AT act sources. Because it is very clear in the A-T act we are not allowed to use these federal funds to directly purchase assistive technology for consumers. Next slide please. so public awareness. Of course you need to do some public awareness for people to find out about those other

wonderful activities. The state leadership activities that in the bucket for at least about 40% of what the state gets. So we call it information and assistance rather than information and referral.

Of course this has to do with fielding the inquiries that come via phone and email. Some face-to-face but generally phone and email. So if an individual calls and says I need help

and I got this new equipment and I need help in locating the button that makes it louder, that is an example of information and assistance. Somebody calls and says where can I go to get an evaluation, a formal evaluation to find out what assistive technology can help me at work? That is our I & A. Where can I go to get a product demonstration and then we would say well you have got to the right place and we will have to set that up for you. We do some larger scale public awareness things. Many of you are probably familiar with senior affairs. We sometimes have a problem making sure people understand that the equipment out on the table is not take one but rather for them to actually see what assistive technology looks like. Particularly some of the stuff is very eye-catching and people will come up and inquire about the products that they see. Many of our programs have demonstration center tours where you get to see a whole array of equipment for example some of our programs actually are setting up either rooms or a smart house that can be toured to get a look at some of the AT. I know that my colleagues in Illinois that have no challenges with space, the lucky things, they have a variety of rooms set up so you have something that is like a kitchen, something that is like a family room, something that is like an accessible bathroom, that looks at the assistive technology within the setting that it would appear in one's home. Our programs are actually required to make sure that their websites are accessible so that if somebody is using what we call a screen meter. Somebody who is blind that the screen reader can read out loud what is on their website, we have blogs, we have a great blog and you will see that at the bottom of the slide. AT news and tips and we encourage you to go and subscribe at AT3 Center Blog dot com. We encourage you to follow AT3

on Facebook. Many of the individual state programs also have their own social media and Marty will tell you how to find your states assistive technology act program and you can contact them to find out where their website is and what kinds of social media you can follow. Next slide. training and technical assistance again this is one of the activities in the 40%. Training is really something focused on skill building. An example is

training case managers how to identify seniors who can benefit from AT for activities of daily living through checklists and similar tools. You know if you get your staff together and you have a specific skill building idea for training, reach out to your state AT program and see if they can provide that for you. Technical assistance is usually responding to an agency organization that would like assistance with their AT policies and practices. Overstates to this as well. Our states do this as well. I think I mentioned the AT act is pretty prescriptive. Here it specifies that 5% of whatever is budgeted in this area of training in technical assistance needs specifically to address AT and transition. By transition we mean transition a student who is moving from school to adult life. Whether that is postsecondary education or independent living and employment. Transition also

addresses the movement from congregate care settings like nursing homes back to the community. So this is definitely an area where the state AT programs develop partnerships to reach the right audiences who need to have this information about transition. Lastly there is a mandate for training and technical assistance around accessible information and communication technology also called ICT. Again this is aimed at making sure that anybody who is producing documents or for example websites knows how to create those things in a way that is accessible to all people with disabilities. So something for you to think about and ask yourself, is our website accessible, are the materials that we produce accessible and if you are not sure you could ask for some technical assistance from your state AT program.

So Next slide please. so this is what we call our "Flo-Chart" (flowchart). "Flo" being a bit of a pun but I will just walk you through it. So we have a hypothetical person with a disability, Flo is her name. She has a disability and she needs AT. Hopefully she finds out somehow that there is a number or an email that she can contact to get more information about AT. So she calls the helpline and gets more information so now she is focusing a little bit more because she has learned yes there are some products that will help her. So she might ask after she gets the informational materials, she might ask for a demonstration so that she can have that hands-on experience comparing and contrasting some products that can help her with her function

and by the way that is the key way to think about AT. It's not by diagnosis it is by what is it that you need help with in doing a function. So Flo has had a demonstration of some items that can help her with a function. Maybe in Flo's case the function is hearing the television. So Flo asked to borrow the TV listening ears. So she gets the product for a 30 day trial and she likes the product and wants to own it. Then she moves into the acquisition phase. Now something like the TV listening ears, that is one of those as seen on TV products or as advertised in AARP magazine products she might not be able to afford that. It is under \$100 and she might be able to say oh Mother's Day is coming I think I will ask my kids to get that for me. So she gets and acquires a product. If she needed hearing aids perhaps she would need to borrow, take a low interest cash loan to get the hearing aids. So as long as it serves her purposes and she is happy she will keep the products. But, there may come a time when she needs to get a new product. So if there is still life in the old product she may decide to donate it to one of our reuse programs or she might sell it and then it's available for somebody else and then she repeats the cycle. So hopefully this helps you understand how people could discover, access, and be served by the AT program in your state. Next slide. Okay I will turn it back over to Marty.

Yes thanks Amy. One other thing Amy I do not remember if she mentioned this. A lot of the equipment loan programs and also the recycling programs, most states if you go to their website, will have an equipment loan page where you can actually look through and see what equipment, what devices are available or to borrow for short-term purposes. Amy mentioned a lot of times they might be able to do this for five week or so or 30 days. To see what is available, maybe see a picture of the device, a brief description, maybe a link to a vendor but, it is a great resource for both looking at what types of devices are available

for loan and also a lot of times what is available in terms of re-utilized or devices that have been recycled and are available also. But, the other thing that Amy mentioned is that beyond the programs and activities that she mentioned that almost all assistive technology programs do, they may have other information regarding a variety of programs that either they administer or that they can help out with. So some examples include telecommunications access programs. A lot of state AT programs operate their telecommunications access programs so they provide a range of adaptive equipment for people who have difficulty using the telephone. Whether they are deaf or hard of hearing or in some cases states have equipment available for persons who are blind or have low vision or who might have mobility issues or speech or cognitive issues. Some states also have wireless equipment available, like iPhones and iPads. It varies with each state in terms of what types of equipment is available. Then some states operate their deaf blind equipment distribution programs or what is commonly called as "iCanConnect". Those types of programs for distance communications who are both deaf and considered blind also. Then another example, North Dakota has a possibilities grant. There are a number of dates that have last resort programs so that if there is no other funding source available they may have a funding source that can provide grants for individuals with disabilities or who are aging. In North Dakota's case that is a grant program for low income individuals for assistive technology when they do not have access to other resources. Those grants in North Dakota I believe are up to \$2000. Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Able Tech has a program to provide smoke alarms and alert equipment and adaptive equipment for somebody for instance who is deaf or hard of hearing and cannot hear a smoke alarm. Maybe has a visual alarm or something along those lines. That program actually installs the alarms and houses of persons who are eligible. Missouri's Money Follows the Person Program. In Missouri the Money Follows the Person Program and the state AT program has a collaboration where somebody is transitioning out of the nursing home and the amount that they had available to get their apartment set up or wherever they were going to live maybe wasn't enough to purchase the assistive technology that they needed, it provided some additional funds for assistive technology or home access modifications or vehicle access modifications. Then another example is several states, state AT programs have received grants from the Christopher Reeve foundation. So examples of those both North Carolina and Illinois have grants for short-term loans of portable ramps for people who might need them for a short-term basis. New Hampshire has an open ended loan program for various types of devices for persons living in rural communities. The point here is definitely check with your state program and if you have any questions about possible resources they might be able to help you out with potential resource or program that they might operate and that might provide some funding beyond the activities that Amy mentioned. You can jump to the Next slide. I just wanted to mention there are 35 states that have some type of assistive technology service in their home and community-based waivers. A lot of times states also have a service that specializes in equipment and supplies that sometimes can cover assistive technology in their own home and community based waivers also. I do love the NASUAD State of the States in Aging and Disability that they put out. I think they put it out every two years. It is been a great resource in terms of looking at

what types of devices or what types of services including assistive technology and specialized equipment and supplies are available in state's home and community based waivers. Then jump to the Next slide. Of course assistive technology typically is in the waivers is defined just as it is. The federal definition but, a lot of times in specialized medical equipment and devices and controls are appliances participants to increase their abilities to perform activities of daily living and can also be a resource for helping to provide funding or access to those kinds of devices. Then jump to the Next slide. One of the collaborations I wanted to mention is in 2016 the No Wrong Door Transformation Act to eight of the No Wrong Door states had , it's one of the purposes to increase collaboration through assistive technology programs and No Wrong Door systems. Go ahead and jump to the Next slide. so a lot of partners whether in one of the No Wrong Door states or even states that did not participate in the 2016 grant, established partnerships with their area agencies on aging and aging and disability resource centers, centers for independent living, to provide kind of services to make it easier for areas on aging , for service providers to actually serve the individuals they're working with. Among the things he did is they provided trainings first of all on what state AT services are available in their state and how to access those services. On assistive technology devices, actually what are the devices available and how you actually provide demonstrations for those devices. Then some states were able to provide through collaborations with their departments of aging, some AT toolkits which is basically a group of devices and they kind of range from maybe 20 or 30 devices up to 70 or 75 devices sometimes. To AAA's or to the ADRC's so they could actually provide demonstrations to a person who is aging or to somebody with a disability who needed an assistive technology service that turned out to be a great service. I think that is one thing that a lot of states are engaging in. Moved to the Next slide. so other points of collaboration. As Amy mentioned as far as device loans one purpose is not just to compare and contrast but also on AT devices being repaired while consumers waiting for fundal approval, utilization. Obviously most states AT programs can serve as a contact for collecting the device. Actually that last slide should be programs and opportunities for consumer involvement. So if there is individual, every state has a state advisory council. Individuals with disabilities are one of the slots the states have provided. In terms of somebody who might be interested in serving on an advisory counsel for the state AT program . It might be someone you might feel who is a good individual that could give some great input. That would be another great point of collaboration. Moved to the Next slide. so how do you find your state AT program if you don't know already. On the AT3 Center webpage, there is a finder state directory. It looks like this, there are two drop-down screens and step number one you would select the directory that you want. In most case this would be your state AT program but you can also go down if you're trying to find the email address of somebody say, you want to find a person who is in charge of the device loan program that is all you are interested at the time you can also click on device loan program and it will take you to that person's email address who is a contact for that. But, in step one just click on the drop-down box just choose state AT programs and then in step number two select your state and it will give you the program website , it will give you the

email addresses for both , the email address for just general information inquiries or for each one of those program activities whether it's financing or device loan or device demonstration . So really it does provide pretty much any contact you need for that state AT program. So if you're looking for more information or want to find a phone number or email address or look over their website that is the way to do it. Go ahead and go to the last slide. If you have any questions for a complete, if you want up copy of the current AT Act statute you can visit the AT3 center website or for the whole list of state AT programs . It's at AT3 Center .net. There is also on the AT3 Center webpage there is an explore AT page and you can also go to it and it goes through and talks about different functional abilities. It has some videos, some information about connections and links to all the different types AT that might be available. If you have any questions about anything that we have talked about then please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Amy and our email addresses are there on the bottom and we will be happy to answer any questions about anything we talked about or any other questions you might have about assistive technology programs. So that is it in terms of what we have. I don't know if you wanted to go ahead and take questions now?

Sure. This is Nanette again from the I & R Support Center and Marty and Amy I want to thank you again so much for joining us in providing such great information. We will see if we have any questions. I also want to thank you for the shout out to the NASAUD State of the States report which is full of wonderful data and participants can find that on our website. Free to reach out for us and at NASAUD if you have difficulty locating that. I just want to share for any listeners who might be planning to attend the AIRS I&R conference coming up soon in Atlanta we do have a whole group of folks from Georgia who are coming in presenting on assistive technology and also doing a demonstration so that should be really nice for anyone who will be at the AIRS conference. We did have a couple of questions about the availability of the slide presentation. Again the recording, slide and transcript will all be available on the NASAUD website and there is a link in the chat box for that. Let me just go through the questions. To start we have one of our listeners ask and this is referring to kind of an early part of your presentation when they were talking about financing or funding for the state AT Act program. "How is the allocation amount determined? Can states ask for additional funding to expand offerings such as a bigger lending library."

Marty I will take this one okay.

Sure.

SO, no, this is a pod of federal money and it is based on a quasi-formula looking at factors like the population and the rural , urban nature of the state. So unfortunately there is no Avenue for additional federal funds under the AT act. However many states have been able to leverage other sources of funding . Particularly state funding. Some programs have been successful in getting allocations through their state

legislature and those have you know ranged from five figures to six figures or more. I think Marty mentioned that some states participate in the iCanConnect program where iCanConnect has agreed to have some of the equipment that is available through their program available for trial through either loans or demonstrations. So yes there are some states that have been very successful in what we say and what we call leveraged funding. But, some states have not depending upon the financial situation of the individual state, the skill of the state in identifying and going after additional money. So I also wanted to mention that every state has a mandated advisory counsel and it is usually through the advice of the advisory Council that the distribution of funds be on or within the 60/40 split can be made. But again, federally at least 60% on those first activities of reused, demonstration, lending, and state financing. And about 40% on the other activities. That is in the federal law. Within that hopefully the states are looking at their performance, some states when it comes time every few years to develop a state plan will actually have a public meeting. But, the key source of advice is usually the Advisory Council. So that is again set in statute. It must be a consumer majority advisory Council and I would encourage you if you are interested in serving on that counsel or learning more about it to reach out to the program director in your state. Marty do you have anything to add on that regard?

No I think that covers it.

Great, thank you. Actually speaking of some of the other resources that you mentioned one of our listeners is from the Christopher Reeve Foundation and just commented that they are revising their policy to allow past grant recipients to reapply and they will also be opening a new grant cycle in July. So something to look out for.

We are very excited about that. >> That has been a great resource for states, state assisted technology programs to kind of implement some services and programs that they just could not have been able to otherwise.

This is Amy. I was just going to second that emotion. We have states that have done everything from developing a program where they can lend ramps so they have added to their short-term equipment loan program so that people could borrow a ramp perhaps while their permanent one is being built. To exciting events that are being called "maker events." It is sort of back to the roots of assisted technology and seeing what can be constructed that is low-cost. Just a whole range of other innovative programs thanks to the Dana and Christopher Reeve foundation.

Great. We have another question from one of our participants who asked is there a process for a state to learn how to start up a AT lending program?

I will just mention most states have lending programs. So I would certainly contact your state AT program first and see what they have available. I do not know how to answer this question do you have anything to add to this Amy?

Yes actually because of the constraints , the budgetary constraints there is nothing that says that a state cannot have multiple programs so for example in Pennsylvania the state early intervention system that serves infants and toddlers wanted to flesh out or expand the system that would provide equipment to infants and toddlers. So while they did allocate some funds to the state AT act program . The county -based early intervention program , some of them, had their own funds and they wanted to do a startup specifically for their population rather than for example have to compete with, um, the cross age, cross disability nature of the state AT programs lending inventories. So I do have if anyone is interested sort of a list of considerations if you have funds and you are interested in starting a loan program and perhaps you want to do this on your own although I recommend that you at least have a conversation with your state AT program. I do have that list of considerations if you are interested in contacting me.

Thank you. For your answer and also the offer of information are really helpful. We have one more question that is sort of general in nature. It's asking in regards to financing for individuals. "Are there any income guidelines for individuals who might seek financing? Are there any other requirements for example does a person have to have health insurance or other things that make it required for them to ask for financing?"

For the low interest loan programs , no. There are no income guidelines. Obviously one thing they look at is they look at things like just the ability to repay the loan. They will look at the credit history and just the ability for the person to repay the loan. They certainly look at it a lot more generously than a bank or another financial institution would because they understand that folks especially if they are in need of assistance technology they might have, if they do have some issues in the past where they've had some credit problems. Like there is no minimum or maximum income that somebody can make it is just all based on the person's ability to repay the loan.

This is Amy. So first of all you have to remember that this is a loan for assistive technology. So you know if you are going for I don't know a vacation that's not going to be funded through this program even if you are low income person with a disability. This is specifically for assistive technology. The second thing to think about is and this will vary state to state , the maximum amount that you can borrow may vary from state to state. It may also vary based on the individual circumstances. You are not going to be allowed to borrow something that there is no way that you can never repay. Then the other thing is that the states have set up this program typically for the people just within their state. So generally speaking if you live in North Carolina you will not apply to the Pennsylvania program you will apply to the North Carolina program. So I hope that helps. Thank you we did have a couple of questions that came in that are state specific. I want to encourage those attendees to reach out to Marty or Amy directly since your questions really relate to a situation in your state and I think that would be helpful for them to be able to provide you with a more customized answer. Based on where you are located and the program that

is in your state. We are also at the top of the hour. Once again I really want to appreciate Marty and Amy for joining us. I know that there is so much to explore in this area , assistive technology is so critical for assisting individuals and from the state-based programs of course there may be a lot happening within agencies on some of the states have links to the AT3 Center site and resources you have on the site. I want to thank all of our listeners for joining us today and also thank our Captioner as well. Again all the materials from today's webinar will be posted on the NASAUD website within the next few days. I also hope that participants will join us next month. We will actually be continuing a little bit on the same theme but, our webinar in May will focus on home modification with the Home Modifications Resource Center. Join us to kind of dig around a little bit deeper around these topics. So with that I want to wish everyone a very good week and thank you for joining us today. We will close the webinar at this point.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[Event Concluded]