

## **Legislation Continues Funding For All State ATA Projects**

Judie Lee, IPAT Director

The State Assistive Technology Act (ATA) Projects, such as IPAT in North Dakota, were established with the passage of the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1988. Subsequent changes to the legislation have kept the state programs funded-until now. The elimination of the first nine AT Projects was scheduled to begin in fiscal year 2002, with AR, CO, IL, KY, ME, MD, MN, NE, and UT losing all federal funding. Users of the State ATA Programs made their interests and concerns known to Congress. As a result, the final Labor-Ed-HHS Appropriations bill allows continued funding for the first nine states for one more year.

During this year, key hearings will take place in Washington D.C. to investigate the current AT program and determine a long-term future. The 56 State and Territory Assistive Technology Projects currently increase access to assistive technology through a wide variety of activities specifically selected to best meet the unique needs of each state. This national infrastructure is in place to continue to meet the new and ongoing technology access challenges of the future. As technology changes and evolves, some facts remain the same:

- While technology benefits us all, it is especially useful to people with disabilities or advancing age who want to be productive and independent.
- There is a huge amount of technology "out there." But abundant technology does not necessarily translate to easy access to technology. In fact, for people with disabilities, getting technology is often anything but easy.
- Since 1988, the State AT Projects have helped millions of people with disabilities in their efforts to find, get, pay for, and use technology in their daily lives.
- Hundreds of public and private entities look to the State AT projects for leadership in improved understanding of, access to, and acquisition of AT for the individuals they serve.
- With technology, more people are living independently, working, participating in school, contributing to their community and enjoying recreational opportunities than at any other time in history. Many of you provided input to your Congressional delegates that resulted in the extension of the State AT Projects.

Everyone who benefits from these services appreciates your efforts. Once again, as Congressional hearings take place and new legislation is written, you have an opportunity to provide input that could shape the next Assistive Technology Act.

### **Alternative Electronic Format Hints**

Adapted from: 508 Universe

The conference is scheduled, the legwork is complete and the registrations are arriving, great! One participant has checked the registration form indicating the need for materials in an alternative electronic format, now what? First, find out the type of disk the individual prefers for electronic file storage. Choices are: floppy disks, very common, relatively quick; CD-ROM, holds more information than a floppy and is perfect for multimedia presentations using audio, video and text formats at the same time; and DVD, has more memory, is faster than all others and can hold cinema-type video, audio and text.

Once the file preference is known, prepare the electronic file in a manner that will allow a screen reader to operate. To create this type of electronic file, follow the hints provided:

1. Provide symbols, icons, graphics, tables, pictorials and abbreviations with alternative text options;
2. Convert columns into continuous text;
3. Indicate new paragraphs with use of one tab;
4. Eliminate extra blank lines in your text;
5. Eliminate the use of stylistic factors such as bold type, underlining and special symbols;
6. Provide scripts or captions for audio and visual pieces;
7. Use large print and Braille labels on your disks.

To provide alternative electronic formats to participants most expediently, request that all conference presenters submit their materials electronically. Once the materials are received, review and incorporate the accessibility helpful hints.

### **Voice Recognition Software Update**

The December 2001 issue of the AT KEY Newsletter highlighted a number of voice recognition software programs. Unfortunately, the program by Lerner & Hauspie, L&H Voice Express, has been discontinued due to a buy-out by ScanSoft. The buy-out will result in the production of Dragon Naturally Speaking® 6.0, which brings together the best of both

products, text-to-speech and speech recognition technology. For more information check out, [www.lhsl.com/naturallyspeaking/](http://www.lhsl.com/naturallyspeaking/)

### **Resource Worth Noting**

Know of an elderly person who could benefit from a power wheelchair? Miracle on Wheels is a national program providing power mobility (electric wheelchairs) to senior citizens (65 or older) who are unable to walk due to physical limitations, and are unable to self-propel a manual chair due to upper body limitations. For those that qualify, there is frequently no out-of-pocket expense incurred and no deposit required.

The program is run using local Durable Medical Equipment (DME) providers who set up a "mobility needs" visit in an individual's home, and assist them in completing the qualifying information. When eligibility is determined, the local DME provider will order the power wheelchair, fit it to the individual and provide training on safe use. For more information, call toll free: 800-749-8778, or visit [www.durablemedical.com](http://www.durablemedical.com).

### **Consumer Connection**

Eagle Scout Project Produces a Visitor Guide

Few of life's simple pleasures are more fun than getting away for a day, or even a few hours to take in nature trails, museums and parks. For families with members who have disabilities, these simple pleasures are no less enjoyed; especially when they know in advance that the destination is accessible. It was the 'need to know' that attractions were accessible that prompted Bob Lindquist, to create a visitor guide noting accessibility

Eagle Scout project. The idea for his project was born when Bob, a sophomore at Red River High School, discovered that no such reference existed, so he set out to create one. He researched 45 attractions in the Grand Forks area via phone calls, visits, letters and the Internet. Through his research he discovered what the attraction offered, how much it cost, how to get there, and site accessibility features.

Bob included sites from Ada, MN to Binford, ND and from Walhalla, ND to West Fargo, ND; highlighting state parks, game preserves, boat rides, museums, bowling alleys, and campgrounds. He then gave his research results to The Arc, Upper Valley, which turned it into a 64-page guidebook, A Day Out: A guide to family-friendly places close to Grand Forks. For a free copy, contact The ARC, Upper Valley - PO Box 12420 - Grand Forks, ND 58208. Phone (701) 772-6191; E-mail, [thearc@arcuv.com](mailto:thearc@arcuv.com); or visit [www.thearcuppervalley.com](http://www.thearcuppervalley.com).

Adapted with permission from GF Herald, January 14, 2002 edition

## **FUNDING NEWS**

Writing Effective Funding Requests for Assistive Technology:

Part III

(Information adapted from the New Jersey Assistive Technology Advocacy Center's website: [www.njpanda.org/tarp/index.html](http://www.njpanda.org/tarp/index.html))

The structure and content of funding requests for assistive technology (AT) vary from funding source to funding source; however, many elements are similar. Each report should serve several functions:

1. Introduce and establish the writer's credentials. In most cases, the writer is reporting as an expert. The writer can establish his/her credibility by describing: expertise, licenses, education, current job title, and how long they have been doing this type of work.
2. Establish the relationship with the consumer. Is the report based on a one-time consultation or weekly sessions with the individual over several years? A report will be more effective when it clarifies the nature of the relationship.
3. Educate the reader about the individual's disability. The writer should discuss the person's primary and secondary diagnosis, if any, his or her prognosis, and what complications affect them, and how. Since the person is seeking AT which will overcome the effects of a disability, those effects should be described in functional terms.
4. Describe any evaluations to determine need for AT: Often, evaluations have included trials on one or more pieces of equipment, including the one now recommended. The writer should describe any evaluations, which have lead to the current recommendation.
5. State how the device meets the funding source's criteria. The writer must address whether the requested equipment is medically, educationally, or vocationally necessary.
6. Explain that the recommended device is the fiscally responsible alternative. Remember cost plays a big part in getting the AT one needs. The writer must convince the funding source that they will be spending money wisely. Always approach any argument regarding the cost of an item as a consumer who is well educated and has shopped around.
7. Use the concluding paragraph to restate the main points of the report. All well-written documents end with an effective conclusion; summarizing the preceding information and allowing the writer to briefly restate the case.

For further information regarding report writing including sample reports, please contact IPAT's Policy & Funding Specialist, Jeannie Krull, at 1-701-239-7228 or toll-free at 1-800-265-4728.

### **Mark Your Calendar!**

February 28, 2002

ND Technology Expo  
10:00 am - 5:00 pm CST  
ND State Fair Center - State Fairgrounds, Minot, ND  
Contact: (701) 852-6000 or  
[www.ndtechexpo.com](http://www.ndtechexpo.com)  
March 11, 2002

Adapt a Toy  
9:00 am - 3:00 pm CST Doublewood Inn - Bismarck, ND \$40  
Toy and materials provided, hands-on workshop  
Contact: Joyce or Mike, 800-489-5013

### **IPAT Equipment Expo!**

March 19 & 20, 2002  
3/19 - 1-7pm, 3/20 - 9-noon  
Chieftain Conference Center  
Carrington, ND  
Sponsor: East Central Special Education Unit  
Contact: Joan (701) 947-5015

April 19 & 20, 2002  
University of North Dakota  
Grand Forks, ND  
Contact: Mike 1-800-265-4728

### **IPAT's Annual Report Available(June 2000 - May 2001)**

If interested, call Connie at 1-800-265-4728  
or E-mail; [crawls@polarcomm.com](mailto:crawls@polarcomm.com) and request your free copy today.

### **EQUIPMENT SPOTLIGHT**

IntelliTalk II is an award-winning word processor and authoring tool that incorporates text, graphics, and speech. This software program is ideal for making general curriculum content accessible for students with a broad range of disabilities. It provides pre-



designed activities, templates, and hundreds of pictures to use in activity creation. This program features text-to-speech, the ability to import graphics, and offers an auditory spell checker.

IntelliTalk II is available through the IPAT Equipment Loan Library for a 6 week, no cost trial. Call 1-800-421-1181 to arrange a loan. To purchase from IntelliTools call, 1-800-899-6687 or visit their website. [www.intellitools.com](http://www.intellitools.com). Cost: \$139.95.