



Reauthorization of the Assistive Technology Act:

ATAP Recommendations

In preparation for a possible reauthorization of the Assistive Technology (AT) Act, the Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (ATAP) identified the following changes and additions to the current statute. ATAP's suggested changes reflect its position that reauthorization should only refine and strengthen components of the 2004 amendments to the law, rather than make significant changes or program shifts. Below is a list of possible changes ATAP would suggest should a reauthorization come before the 116th Congress.

Changes that must occur to update the law and requested principles to maintain:

- Maintain flexibility, allowing each State program to determine how to spend funds to meet the State's need.
- Maintain the continuum of integrated assistive technology services outlined in the four state-level activities – device demonstration, device loan, reutilization, state financing - that maximize the ability of individuals with disabilities and older Americans across the human lifespan and across the wide array of disabilities, to increase access to and acquisition of assistive technology.
- Increase state minimum allotments from \$410,000 to \$750,000 and from \$125,000 to \$225,000 for territories.
- Replace all the references to Education/Secretary with HHS/ACL and Administrator.
- Delete all expired sections or those no longer applicable.
- Update term accessible “information technology and telecommunications” to “information and communication technologies.”
- Increase minimums for Section 4 grantees.
- Clarify provisions related to implementing entities and original governor designation.
- Clarify the Section 4 grant application is the State Plan for Assistive Technology.
- Clarify 5% transition set-aside is for either education OR community living transition.
- Update annual progress report to align with current data elements collected.
- Revise Section 6 to establish separate TA grant for Section 5 grantees aligned with current practice.
- Update appropriations Section 8 to provide for one appropriation with mandatory percentage allocations for Section 4 and Section 5 each with set-aside percentage for Section 6 TA awards OR require separate appropriations for Section 4 and Section 5 each with set-aside percentage for Section 6 TA awards.
- Eliminate the National Information Internet System and provide this information through technical assistance.

Additional changes the could be made:

- Clarify the prohibition on using AT Act Funding to directly purchase devices through an effort to encourage collaboration between State AT Programs and other public funding sources, such as state Medicaid agencies.
- Clarify long-standing, best practice of how to address surplus assistive technology devices for authorized AT Act activities.
- Allows for carryover grant funds to be reprogrammed to Section 4 award allocations or to Section 6 of the AT Act.
- Supports collaboration between Section 4 State grantees and other state funding sources to maximize availability to access and acquire assistive technology through device demonstration, loan, reuse, and state financing activities.

- Allows for the Administrator to support projects of national significance following the minimum formula award levels for Section 4 and 5 being reached.
- Requires an accessible data reporting system.

ATAP is proud of the services that State AT Programs have implemented since the 2004 reauthorization, and our organization looks to build upon states' achievements for the future. Should you have any additional questions, feel free to contact Audrey Busch at audrey.busch@ataporg.org.