



## **Summit on Assistive Technology Reuse and Emergency Management for FEMA Region IV**

***Successful Strategies, Innovative Partnerships, Futures Planning***

**April 27 and 28, 2011**  
**Georgia Tech Hotel and Conference Center | Atlanta, Georgia**

### **REPORT**

#### **Meeting Goals**

1. To define the role of reusable assistive technology (AT), including, but not limited to, durable medical equipment) in disaster planning, response, recovery and mitigation for people with functional needs.
2. To identify the infrastructure needed to develop and implement a rapid response system for delivering assistive technology devices and services to meet the needs of people with functional needs affected by disaster.
3. For each participating state: To develop a sustainable network for addressing the AT needs of people in disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation.
4. For each participating state: To develop achievable action steps for participants and other key entities to meet these goals.

#### ***Background***

A national meeting on the role of assistive technology (AT) reuse in response to emergencies and disasters was held in Washington, D.C., in March of 2010, and the FEMA Region IV Summit was a further step toward addressing the emergency management issues facing people with functional needs who use AT. This Summit was convened by the Pass It On Center, the national technical assistance center for AT reuse, a project supported by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, and administered by the Georgia Department of Labor – Tools for Life (Georgia’s Assistive Technology Act Program). Additional financial support for participant travel was provided by RESNA’s Catalyst Project.

The directors of the Assistive Technology Act Programs in the eight states that comprise FEMA Region IV – Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee – were invited to nominate delegates involved in AT reuse and/or emergency response. Although response to weather-related disasters prevented the attendance of some delegates, each state was represented among the 60 participants (including the AT Act Program directors from Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and South Carolina).

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**Wednesday, April 27, 2011**

Joy Kniskern, Principal Investigator, Pass It On Center (PIOC), and Amy Goldman, Manager, PIOC's Emergency Management and AT Reuse Initiative, and Director of Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology, welcomed the group and reviewed the objectives of the Summit. Ms. Kniskern noted the range of devices and aids that function as assistive technology and reviewed the activities considered to be reutilization: device loan, repair/refurbishing, exchange, reassignment, recycling and the definitely-not-recommended activity of remanufacturing to specifications other than the manufacturer's intent. She emphasized that PIOC promotes *safe, effective and appropriate* reuse to serve the uninsured, the underinsured and others who may experience delays in obtaining AT.

Amy Goldman provided background on the origin of the Pass It On Center for those not familiar with the Center and the AT Act Programs, explaining the PIOC resulted from the confluence of several factors: the reauthorization of the Assistive Technology Act in 2004 and the inclusion of reuse as one of the mandated activities, the New Freedom Initiative with its emphasis on cost-effective delivery of services, the tenure of John Hager, a champion for AT at the U.S. Department of Education, and the disproportionate impact of Hurricane Katrina on people with functional needs. In 2006, the Rehabilitation Services Administration awarded three-year grants to twelve programs engaged in AT reuse and funded for five years a national technical assistance resource, the Pass It On Center. AT reuse is a required activity for the AT Act Programs in each of the 50 states and six territories. In addition, many nonprofit organizations engage in AT reuse. The Pass It On Center's resources and assistance are available to all ([www.passitoncenter.org](http://www.passitoncenter.org)).

## **Introductions**

All participants introduced themselves and explained their roles and expectations. (See Appendix A for a complete list of participants.)

## **Disasters: Sharing Experiences**

Three panels provided context for the conference by addressing actual experiences, the impact of those disasters on individuals with disabilities, and the role of AT and AT reuse.

### **Panel I: Flooding**

#### **Moderator – Carol Page**

*Director, South Carolina Assistive Technology Program*

#### **Juli Gallup**

Assistive Technology/Traumatic Brain Injury Advocate  
Disability Law and Advocacy Center of Tennessee

#### **Roger Robb**

Advocate Specialist  
Georgia Council for the Hearing Impaired, Inc. (GACHI)

#### **Kimberly Warren**

Director of Community Services  
Goodwill Chattanooga

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Juli Gallup spoke about the 2010 Tennessee flooding that resulted from 14 to 19 inches of rain in a 36-hour period. She noted that the problem was exacerbated by the lack of coordination in the management of dams throughout the state. Half of the state was flooded for nearly a week. She noted the need to educate emergency response workers about the importance of evacuating AT with the user – not leaving it behind and thinking that you have saved the person's life when you've just inadvertently deprived the user of independence.

Roger Robb described the trauma of having his home west of Atlanta flooded without warning. Like many other suburban homeowners nowhere near a flood zone, he had no insurance coverage for the incident, but a friend from Georgia Emergency Management Agency gave him pointers to navigate his way through the bureaucracy to obtain assistance. Roger is working with the deaf community to better prepare them to deal with disasters.

Kimberly Warren described the role of Goodwill Chattanooga in responding to the "Nashville" flooding that really encompassed much of the western half of the state. Many people had been evacuated without their power chairs or electric beds. Kim pointed out the need to identify resources for replacement durable medical equipment. She noted that a major part of the response challenge is transportation, the logistical problem of getting devices to the people who need them.

Juli described the impact of Katrina refugees on Tennessee and how much all of the responding organizations learned from the experience. She emphasized the need for building the partnerships with state emergency management agencies and the FEMA VOAD liaison to facilitate response when the disaster happens.

### **Panel II: Hurricanes and Tornadoes**

#### ***Moderator - Dorothy Young***

*Director, Mississippi Technology Act and Reuse Program*

#### **Brett Cone**

Emergency Coordinator  
Mississippi Dept. of Rehabilitation Services

#### **Nancy Duncan**

Executive Director  
Disability Resource Group

#### **Margaret Richardson**

Program Coordinator, Office of Public Health Preparedness  
South Carolina Dept. of Health and Environmental Control

#### **Susan Watson**

Chief Operating Officer  
United Cerebral Palsy of Mobile

Dorothy introduced the panel by noting that Mississippi had been suffered tremendous damage in tornadoes the previous night and that this panel is very timely. The panel divided its discussion into four parts: (1) Nancy Duncan shared the experience from a person with disability and also a family member's

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perspective of hurricanes and tornadoes; Margaret Richardson addressed networking in South Carolina; Susan Watson from Mobile discussed resources and how to acquire assistive technology, and Brett Cone addressed the role of a support entity in emergencies.

Nancy discussed the fact that people with disabilities often depend on others for critical needs. She has been blind for 15 years and she depends on someone else to drive for her. She described being in the path of a tornado without a driver available – a blind person sheltering in a closet with her six-year-old with Asperger's and a two-year-old. She explained that she has had to cope with several weather emergencies without the usual driver or sighted assistant. She emphasized the need for means of communication and multiple alternative plans for people with functional needs.

There was discussion about the need for people with disabilities to have close connections with friends or a church or to put themselves on a registry for emergencies. After the Katrina problems, some have become even more reluctant to evacuate when they should. Brett noted that they sometimes send a team that includes a medical professional to encourage people to evacuate before a hurricane. Marcie Roth from FEMA stated that part of preparation should be moving people from the liability side of the ledger to the asset side – minimizing the problems that they are going to encounter.

Susan Watson from Mobile described the massive needs after the storm surge from Katrina left many people in her area homeless and without their AT. She described the impromptu efforts of going to shelters to assess needs, then acquiring devices from other organizations and neighboring states. In the process her organization discovered the VOAD and learned about the roles of faith-based organizations in disaster response. These experiences contributed significantly to their planning and collaboration efforts after Katrina. They have collected the equipment needed for shelters in advance. The motto is now “just one storm away.”

Margaret Richardson from South Carolina talked about preparation through networking. South Carolina has over 40 agencies networked at the state level for response. They have mapped roles and responsibilities in advance, and those organizations have developed drills to test their ability to respond as planned.

Brett Cone stressed the need for communication and advance agreements, because it's too late to plan when the disaster occurs

### **Panel III: Winter Storms and Other Hazards: Earthquakes, Fires, Nuclear Incidents and Toxic Spills**

**Moderator – Joy Kniskern**

**Bedarius Bell, Jr.**

State Coordinator, Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing Services  
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services

**Chris Brand**

President and Chief Executive Officer  
Friends of Disabled Adults and Children (FODAC)

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### **Stephan Mambazo**

Emergency Preparedness Social Worker  
Bureau of Professional and Support Services  
Alabama Department of Public Health

Stephan framed disaster response in a different way. He noted that emergency preparedness needs an “all hazards” approach, emphasizing that people should not limit their thinking to tornadoes, fires, ice storms, flooding, hurricanes, tsunamis and earthquakes. He reminded the group that disaster response includes events like Columbine and domestic violence. He reminded people to think about other reasons why a person would be in crisis and need assistive technology. People who have disabilities are disproportionately victims of domestic violence and other criminal activity. He emphasized preparation for all forms of emergencies and disaster and especially formalizing cooperative agreements in advance.

Chris Brand spoke about FODAC’s role in providing durable medical equipment and medical supplies in disaster response. Transportation and distribution is a major challenge and he described lessons learned: Make sure that the devices are assembled, configured, cleaned and ready to be used. Determine what people on the ground need and pack it in a convenient form. FODAC did this in response to the Haiti earthquake, literally taking orders for needs from existing clinics and packing trucks with those needs. FODAC has become involved with FEMA and the regional VOAD, making them aware of the available resources.

Bedarius explained the Vocational Rehabilitation agency became involved in emergency preparedness through the passion of an individual administrator. He explained the need for accessible communication is a major factor in serving communities with sensory impairments. He explained how their initiative has grown into one of major cooperation among agencies and organizations to assist people with disabilities in recovery from disasters

***Thursday, April 28, 2011***

**Break-out Sessions: Preparation for More Effective Response:  
Using Personal Experiences (and Those Shared by Panelists) to Identify Needs,  
Opportunities, Issues and Potential Partnerships**

***Moderator: Carolyn Phillips***

***Preparation – What to do before the emergency***

*Facilitator: Amy Goldman, Recorder: Martha Rust*

***Response – What to do when the emergency happens***

*Facilitator: Jim Cook, Recorder: Connie Freier*

***Recovery – Getting back to “normal” after the emergency***

*Facilitator: Joy Kniskern, Recorder: Trish Redmon*

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**Mitigation** – Actions to reduce or eliminate risk for people with functional needs

Facilitator: Carolyn Phillips, Recorder: Barclay Shepard

During these sessions, participants discussed the assigned topics and prepared to debrief their work in the afternoon session.

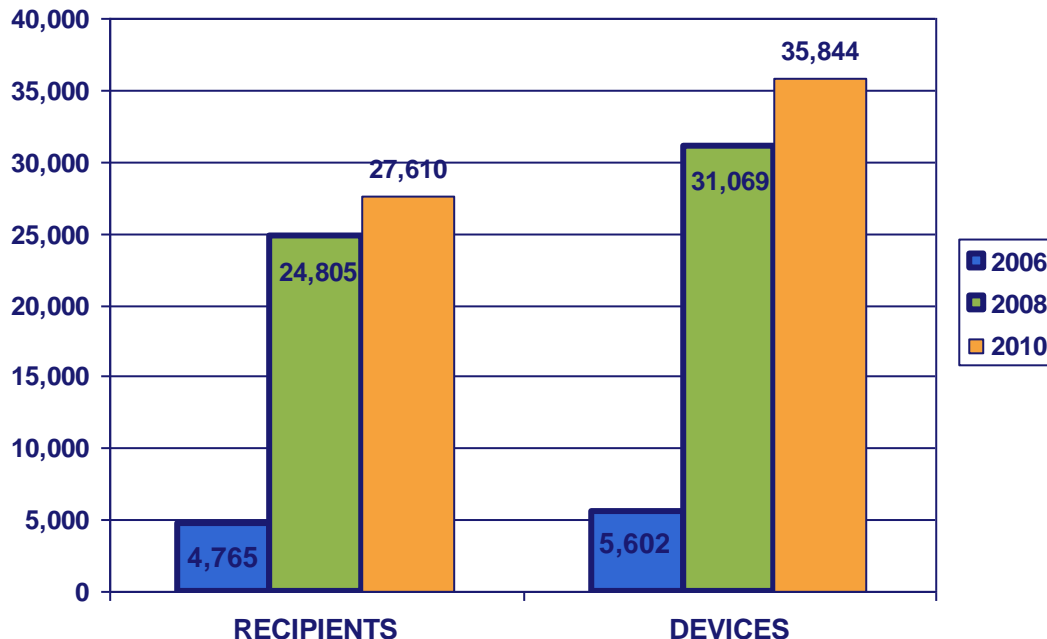
### Assistive Technology Reuse: An Overview and Review of the Data Joy Kniskern and Carolyn Phillips

Joy and Carolyn presented a brief overview of assistive technology reuse, and then reported the 2010 reuse data collected from the AT Act Programs by the National Information System for Assistive Technology (NISAT). The statistics show a dramatic growth in reutilization since reuse became a mandated activity of AT Act programs. Of the reporting states and territories, 36 reported device loan programs, 44 refurbishing/reassignment and 33 exchange programs. Twenty programs engage in all three reuse activities and 19 others engage in two reuse activities.

Many other (non-AT Act) organizations engage in reuse activities. The Pass It On Center website hosts a database for all reuse programs in the states and territories. At this point, 199 programs are profiled in the Locations Database. Of those, 116 programs engage in reassignment activities, 98 in refurbishing, 53 in exchange, 58 in both reassignment and refurbishing, 21 in reassignment and exchange and 17 in refurbishment and exchange.

The NISAT data shows 99.5 percent of surveyed recipients were satisfied or highly satisfied with their reused devices.

### GROWTH IN AT ACT PROGRAM REUTILIZATION ACTIVITIES



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### COST SAVINGS FROM AT ACT PROGRAM REUSE ACTIVITIES (2010)

Exchange	Refurbish/ Reassign	Open-Ended Loan	TOTAL
<b>\$2,826,996</b>	<b>\$13,355,432</b>	<b>\$1,795,618</b>	<b>\$17,978,046</b>

#### **Access and Functional Needs in Emergencies**

**Marcie Roth**, Director, Office of Disability Integration and Coordination (ODIC),  
Department of Homeland Security/FEMA

Ms. Roth spoke on *Planning for the Whole Community: Integrating and Coordinating the Access and Functional Needs of Children and Adults with Disabilities in Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery; Before, During and After a Disaster*. She explained the meaning of her presentation title as understanding and meeting the true needs of the entire affected community.

- Engaging all aspects of the community (public, private, and civic) in both defining those needs and devising ways to meet them.
- Strengthening the assets, institutions, and social processes that work well in communities on a daily basis to improve resilience and emergency management outcomes.

She emphasized that the population of people with disabilities is not evenly distributed and that areas with disproportionate numbers of people with disabilities face even greater challenges.

The motto of ODIC is “baking it in, not layering it on” – practicing inclusion in the emergency management process. Key principles include:

- **Equal Access** – People with disabilities must be able to access the same programs and services as the general population. Access may include modifications to programs, policies, procedures, architecture, equipment, services, supplies, and communication methods.
- **Physical Access** – People with disabilities must be able to access locations where emergency programs and services are provided.
- **Access to Effective Communication** – People with disabilities must be given the same information provided to the general population using methods that are understandable and timely.
- **Inclusion** – People with disabilities have the right to participate in and receive the benefits of emergency programs, services, and activities provided by governments, private businesses, and nonprofit organizations.
- **Integration** - Emergency programs, services, and activities typically must be provided in an integrated setting (alongside individuals without disabilities)
- **Program Modifications** - People with disabilities must have equal access to emergency programs and services, which may entail modifications to rules, policies, practices, and procedures.

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- No Charge - People with disabilities may not be charged to cover the costs of measures necessary to ensure equal access and nondiscriminatory treatment.

She addressed the issue of placing people with functional needs in special needs shelters. Most of them do not need to be there, and placing them there creates a potential resource problem for those who do need those services. Instead, functional needs support services need to be integrated into general population shelters. Ms. Roth noted that, "The whole community benefits when we plan to meet the access and functional needs of people with disabilities in emergencies and disasters. This is because families can stay together, natural support systems are preserved, acute medical conditions can be prevented or reduced and medical providers can focus limited emergency care resources on people with medical needs requiring skilled medical care inclusive of nursing supervision."

### Earthquake Preparedness

**Jim Cook**, *Coordinator, Pass It On Center Initiative on Emergency Management and Assistive Technology Reuse*

Jim spoke briefly about the Great Central States Shake Out, the 11-state earthquake drill for the New Madrid Seismic Zone, scheduled for this day. He shared information about what everyone should do in the drill and in the event of an actual earthquake, and what steps people with disabilities, especially those in wheelchairs who cannot follow the prescribed "drop, cover and hold on" instruction, should take. Summit participants were then given an opportunity to practice dropping to the floor, crawling under a table and holding on until instructed that the drill was over.

### Preparing for AT Needs in Advance of a Disaster

**Julie Nesbit**, *President and Chief Executive Officer, Louisiana Assistive Technology Access Network (LATAN)*, and **Jamie Landry Karam**, *Program Director, The AT Marketplace and Computer Reuse, LATAN*

Although not in Region IV, Julie Nesbit and Jamie Karam were invited to share their experience. After the ordeal of Katrina, much has changed in Louisiana and Julie and Jamie, and LATAN, have been a part of the change and a resource for other programs.

Jamie spoke about *Assistive Technology and Disaster Preparedness for People with Disabilities in Louisiana: Preparing for AT Needs in Advance of a Disaster*. She emphasized that everyone needs to:

- Collaborate with others
- Plan ahead and plan some more
- Prepare documents and materials
- Educate everyone
- Act, participate, respond, assist

Jamie spoke about the need to develop the following and she contributed examples (that are available from the PIOC Knowledge Base):

- State memoranda of understanding (MOUs)
- Therapist MOUs
- Resource Guides
- AT Needs-Decisions
- Pre-Staged Shelter Inventory List
- AT Device Loan and Reuse Inventory Lists

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### **Breaking the Access Barrier to Assist Disaster-Affected Clients**

*Marilyn Self, Disaster Readiness, Atlanta Region, American Red Cross*

Ms. Self's presentation reinforced the points made by Jamie Karam regarding advance preparation and formal agreements among responding organizations. Using three incidents as case studies – the World Trade Center attack of September 11, Hurricane Katrina and the Haiti earthquake – she offered the following “lessons learned”:

- It is most effective for relief organizations to plan and coordinate resources well before the event.
- Develop a process for communicating regarding activities and available in-kind donations during a response.
- Determine and describe, preferably in an MOU:
  - Roles and capabilities of each organization
  - Resources needed and available to share
  - Points of contact and methods of referral
  - Any credentialing, training or background checks needed
  - Fees for service, liability, reimbursement of costs, mutual expectations
- Spontaneous offers can be a real help but may divert trained staff from response roles to work out methods of cooperation.
- Organizations may have unrealistic expectations of or inadequate information about each other.
- Relief organizations need to improve their ability to accept and use spontaneous volunteers and offers from other organizations.

Marilyn offered the following keys to successful partnering for emergency response:

- Advance planning and coordination
- Understanding each organization's role, capacity and resources
- Effective coordination and communication during response re activities and needs – EOC's, conference calls, e-letters
- A pre-determined system for sharing client information and resources – Coordinated Assistance Network (CAN)

### **Opportunities and Issues: Review and Report of Breakout Groups**

*Moderator: Amy Goldman*

Each of the morning breakout groups reported issues and recommendations.

#### ***Preparation***

1. Create a brochure on disaster preparation for people who use AT; use brochure developed in Tennessee as a model (coming soon to the PIOC KB)
2. Provide directions on how the user's AT is operated (e.g., how to put a power chair in “manual mode”)
3. Have an evacuation plan for AT
4. Prepare an e-mail list of key contacts for AT in and out of state (and have PIOC distribute)
5. List of regional points of contact (POC)
6. List of VOADs within the state (for each state, because they differ)
7. Keep paper copies of information

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8. Engage with a “Functional Needs Task Force” to establish relationships so those key people know the AT/AT players
9. Have a “dedicated person” at the state Emergency Operations Center who will focus on AT
10. Learn how your state’s emergency management agency (EMA) works
11. Build in redundancy so that requests are sure to go to the right agency (“no wrong door”)
12. Consider how to participate in/influence your state’s application for part of Homeland Security’s \$10B grant (applications in development now!)
13. Determine how to make the decision about how much AT to stockpile vs. responding in the moment to an individual need
14. Have a collection or drive to develop or maintain your inventory (IF you have storage)
15. Focus on overall awareness of AT reuse (to encourage reuse)
16. Develop a national public service announcement (PSA) for AT reuse (might this be something funded by the Christopher Reeve Foundation?)
17. Use online interactive tools at [www.planitnow.org](http://www.planitnow.org) to create a printed emergency plan for individual or family: include information about how to obtain AT as part of response. Planning: Think low tech. Add messages about items necessary to your health, safety and independence.
18. Train the trainer on low tech adaptations for shelter staff.

### ***Response***

1. Consult your emergency plan.
  - a. Who to call
  - b. Where to meet
  - c. What are each person’s assignments
2. Contact local emergency management officials.
3. Contact your disaster shelters.
4. Build in communication redundancy within your organizations.
5. Contact VOAD to go into disasters shelters and know what is out there: the needs for AT, the people. You might be asked to do something you’ve never done before.
6. Respond to lost DME. Introduce yourself and what equipment you have.
7. Use something that already exists. Connect to faith-based organizations.
8. Meet with organizations and become their loan closet.
9. Have people prepared to back you up.
10. Weekly phone calls to keep up with each other and each group. Very important to take the time and develop and maintain relationships
11. If eligible for reimbursements, keep records of volunteer time and paid personnel time used; seek reimbursement if possible. Create a form for tracking.
12. If selling or donating equipment, keep track of the value of item (e.g. Manufacturer Suggested Retail Price (MSRP). Ask your partners how we can work with them in tracking this value. Helen Baker (AL) reported she uses a form to show the numbers: how many received from certain department, referrals, numbers and values).

Note that credit for these expenditures may go for state’s portion for matching funds, reducing the financial obligation the state has when receiving assistance from FEMA.
13. Call on those who are experienced in disaster.

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14. Be aware of your needs prior to the disaster if possible. Match person with what they need. Keep contact information and disseminate contact info.
15. Work closely with Emergency Management and the Red Cross to be more collaborative.
16. Post information in shelters to inform them of your services. Have laminated copies available for people to take with them.
17. Join coalitions with Red Cross.
18. CERT teams (Citizens Emergency Response Team) under the local Office of Emergency Management (volunteer programs that provide training).
19. Goal: Protection of life and property. Get out of recovery phase as quickly as possible.
20. Help people get back to normal. Have the right equipment in the right place
21. Have your agency included in the After Action Review (AAR) . This will help you learn what went well, what did not go well and where the mitigation process starts. Send one representative who is knowledgeable of your program and resources.

### **Recovery**

1. Learn what VOADs do in regard to recovery after a disaster.
2. COOP: Some companies have maps of employees' locations with contact information; after a disaster there is a system to check on them.
3. In Kentucky during last year's state of emergency, only satellite phones worked. Have alternate systems for communication.
4. Purchase portable oxygen generators.
5. Investigate the availability of apps: What to do in an emergency if you have a disability.
6. Strategically locate storage areas with items that are clean and ready to go. Centers for Independent Living (CILs) may be able to provide a list of individuals that know how to get someone to get them; may have a role in preparing individual consumers for emergencies. Explore the possibility of conducting disability awareness training to first responders
7. Remember that FEMA is only called in at the request of the state
8. JIK.com, the website of June Isaacson Kailes, is a great resource for people with disabilities and disaster.
9. New Mexico group that is no longer in existence created flip cards on what to do
10. Create zip lock bag that contains individual information.
11. What should PIOC do in recovery?
  - o Importance of serial number on pc; work with companies to have cards laminated to carry in wallet
  - o Promote the development of universal batteries for wheelchairs and cell phones
  - o Add flip cards to the Knowledge Base (Rebecca Feger from KY will send.)
  - o Maybe PIOC can create a granting for AT needed for recovery (ramps, etc.).

### **Mitigation**

1. Educate the public about mitigation strategies by using public service announcements and press releases in local media.
2. Address the issue of alternative communication needs:

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- Make sure the websites we recommend are accessible.
  - Advocate for alternative/accessible communication
  - Encourage people to sign up with the Weather Channel for telephone alerts when dangerous weather approaches the area.
3. Broadcasters issue print warnings scrolling on the bottom of the screen. Persons who are blind can't see these. The government gives broadcasters access to the airways, so news outlets should do a better job of communicating with people with disabilities, e.g., including Audible warnings not just words on screen: This should be standardized across broadcasters. Send reminders to TV that we need audible warnings in addition to scrolling captions
  4. Transportation/Communicating: Attempt to get people to give the authorities their addresses and where they want to go in case of emergency. Florida will transport individuals one time.
  5. Make sure planning for people with functional needs is a part of the EMA process in each county.
  6. Special Needs Registry of Persons with disabilities with EMA
  7. Each individual should identify circles of support in advance: where to go in your own home, where to go in the neighborhood or where to go out of the neighborhood.
  8. AT Reuse: Identify equipment needs of people with disabilities, both primary and backup equipment.
  9. FEMA Website: 4 things to think about
  10. In the event of nuclear disaster, consider: If equipment is contaminated, equipment can't leave the area. What are we going to do about this? This prevents individuals who use AT from leaving the area with the AT.
  11. More resources are needed for mitigation. Create a larger task force.
  12. Contact major media to talk to a person with a disability or do a press release: Personalize the issue: This is how this type of disaster affects individuals with disabilities. Educate people and/or media.
  13. See Alabama's GET10 Kit:
    - 10 items you need in your preparedness kit
    - 800 numbers
    - important documents
    - items to prepare
  14. Alabama: See brochures for individuals with specific disabilities as Education to prepare for emergencies.
  15. NOD emergency preparedness wheel – customize for each state.
  16. Can go to the Pass It On Center website in the Knowledge Base regarding emergency preparedness.
  17. Policy change needed: FEMA trailers are not accessible. FEMA will not allow people to modify trailers individually, for example, install ramps for wheelchairs.
  18. We need not to blame FEMA, but to involve ourselves in the process...communicate our constituents needs, advocate etc. As leaders, we need to recruit individuals to help us identify needs, and communicate to EMA groups.
  19. Broadcasters: issue warnings on the bottom of the screen. Persons who are blind can't see these. The government gives broadcasters access to the airways, so news outlets should do a better job of communicating with people with disabilities.
  20. Need to communicate about the increased danger of personal harm to people with disabilities and the potential theft of AT (example).
  21. Develop media fact sheets with contact people to interview.

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### **Planning for Your State**

State teams began completing a plan of action steps based on the information conveyed during the Summit. (See State Plan Guidelines in Appendix B.)

Delegates from each state sat together to brainstorm as the group was led through the outline of the state plan.

### **State Teams Report (Five-minute recap each)**

**Moderator:** *Helen Baker, Executive Director, STAR, Alabama's Assistive Technology Resource*

Each state team made brief comments about the issues and possible solutions considered during the plan review.

### **How the Initiative Gets Shaped and Moves Forward**

**Moderators:** *Amy Goldman and Joy Kniskern*

The expectation is that each delegation will return home and broaden participation to create the plan – to encompass AT reuse professionals and programs, EMA representatives, public health, disability advocacy and support groups and other interested parties. The states should begin developing a plan over the next six weeks. In most instances, the state AT Act Program director will take the lead, or designate a person to take the lead, in this activity. The Pass It On Center will schedule a follow-up call with the directors in six weeks.

This Summit will be reviewed for its viability to serve as a model for summits in other FEMA regions.

### **Participant Evaluation of the Summit**

Each participant was asked to evaluate the Summit before leaving. The summary results of these evaluations are presented in Appendix C.

### **DISCLAIMER**

This work is supported under five-year cooperative agreement #H235V060016 awarded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, and is administered by the Pass It On Center of the Georgia Department of Labor – Tools for Life. However, the contents of this publication do not necessarily represent the policy or opinions of the U.S. Department of Education, or the Georgia Department of Labor, and the reader should not assume endorsement of this document by the Federal government or the Georgia Department of Labor.

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**APPENDICES**

- A. Summit Participant List**
- B. State Plan Guidelines**
- C. Summit Evaluation Summary**

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**PARTICIPANT LIST**

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**Nancy Meidenbauer, NTF**

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### **NOTE:**

Invitees who were unable to attend are considered participants in the ongoing initiative unless they elect to withdraw.

# Summit on Assistive Technology Reuse and Emergency Management for FEMA Region IV

## APPENDIX B: STATE PLAN GUIDELINES



### GUIDELINES FOR STATE PLANS FOR AT REUSE IN EMERGENCIES

A state plan is the first step toward a networked national initiative to incorporate the safe, effective and appropriate reuse of assistive technology as solutions, if only temporary, for people with functional needs who are affected by disasters. The following outline and questions may be helpful. Work toward developing a plan that can be incorporated as part of the state emergency management plan under Emergency Support Function 6.

#### I. Preparation

- A. Population of People with Functional Needs and Likely Disaster Scenarios
  - 1. Analysis of the population of people with functional needs by type, concentrated geographic locations (if those exist), needs in the event of disaster
  - 2. Examination of likely disaster scenarios, preparation
    - a) Strategies for forecasting the type of equipment most likely to be needed in event of emergency should be readily available (lists and checklists based on prior experiences).
    - b) Employ a common planning for the assignment of AT to shelters. (See the checklist devised by the Louisiana Assistive Technology Access Network)
- B. Public Awareness: Everyone knows about AT and AT reuse
  - 1. Inclusion: greater involvement of people with functional needs in all phases of emergency management
  - 2. Policies about availability of no-cost used AT in emergencies
  - 3. AT Reuse: Knowledge of existing initiatives in the community
- C. Individual preparedness for people with functional needs
  - 1. Educating people to be prepared to help themselves
  - 2. Emphasizing need to bring AT, chargers and/or batteries with them when evacuating
  - 3. Encouraging AT providers to “having the conversation” about emergency preparedness as part of their responsibility when providing AT to people with functional needs under non-emergency circumstances. For example, at the point of acquisition of a new power chair, the vendor and/or service provider could discuss emergency plans for maintaining power (e.g., being sure to pack the

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charger), labeling the chair (in the event the owner is separated from the chair), retaining important records relevant to the chair in a safe place (e.g., the prescription, warranty and other documents) and options for transport.

### **D. Involvement of AT Professionals**

1. Preparedness should include the development of memoranda of understanding (MOU) with AT-related professionals at the state, territorial and tribal levels in all regions.
2. Agreements or laws should be enacted to ensure licensure portability and to permit volunteers from those professions to assist in matching users to appropriate devices and providing services necessary to assure appropriate use of those devices.

### **E. Communication**

What forms of alternative/accessible communication will be used?

### **F. Continuity of operations plan**

### **G. Training**

1. Emergency management training should include information on AT resources. Training must include all levels of responders. Training on the importance of AT to persons with functional needs should be embedded in training for emergency managers.
2. AT program staff should take appropriate FEMA, Red Cross or other training to quality as working partners in emergency response
3. The education and training of AT-related professionals (occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, and assistive technology professionals), social workers, special educators and others who work with individuals with functional needs should be enhanced to include specific content about emergency management and AT reuse.

### **H. Formalizing relationships**

1. Relationships should be established and formalized between and among government agencies, and nonprofit organizations that serve people with functional needs
2. Relationships should be developed with AT vendors to involve them in meeting the needs for new (or used) equipment and parts in emergencies or disasters.

### **I. Where to get AT and resources**

1. Programs should establish working relationships and sharing protocols with all sources for AT and used AT within the state (and regionally, depending on the scale of the disaster)
2. Partnerships should be established with equipment manufacturers and suppliers to encourage them to provide information at the point of purchase on how and where to donate AT when it is no longer needed

### **J. Drills**

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## II. Response

- A. Staffing
- B. Special needs considerations
  - Backup power sources for recharging AT in shelters
- C. Assessment of needs
- D. Access to AT
  - 1. Develop a simple, available fact sheet that describes AT and resources for obtaining it, including reusable AT. Emergency responders should have tools to determine the location of available AT and know how to communicate needs to trigger movement of equipment.
  - 2. Develop standards that eliminate the shipment of unusable devices to affected areas.
- E. Tracking AT distribution (reporting and user safety)

## III. Recovery

- A. How to recover AT that is no longer needed
  - 1. Modify existing policies to clearly state that used equipment distributed as a part of emergency response is temporary and should not present a barrier to the individual's future ability to obtain (new) equipment that meets his or her needs.
  - 2. AT issued under these conditions should remain with the assignee until it is replaced or no longer needed, without regard to the geographical (re)location of the user.
  - 3. Protocols should be devised for the return of AT (if it is still in good working order to the cache of reusable AT) if or when the assignee no longer needs the item.
- B. How to address usage in NISAT reporting

## IV. Mitigation

- A. After Action Review (AAR): lessons learned, what worked, what didn't, suggestions for improvement

There should be a readily available resource that documents lessons learned to date about access to AT in emergency response and recovery.
- B. New or changed preparation based on AAR

# Summit on Assistive Technology Reuse and Emergency Management for FEMA Region IV

## APPENDIX C: SUMMARY OF SUMMIT EVALUATIONS



### SUMMIT ON AT REUSE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT April 27-28, 2011 Evaluation Form

*Please read the statements below and check the box for your response.*

Content of Summit	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
The conference content was relevant to emergency preparation and response for people with functional needs.	19	5	0	0	0	0
If pursued, the planning proposed at the Summit will provide expanded access to AT for people with functional needs affected by disasters.	16	7	1	0	0	0
The presenter(s):	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
The style of presentation used by the speaker(s) was appropriate for the subject and the group.	15	8	1	0	0	0
The speaker(s) had significant knowledge and/or experience and were comfortable sharing it with us.	16	8	0	0	0	0
The presenters answered my questions.	13	10	0	0	0	1
General Information:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
I liked the site chosen for this event.	18	6	0	0	0	0
The conference planners attempted to meet the needs of participants.	17	7	0	0	0	0
All things considered, the training was excellent.	17	5	2	0	0	0

**Additional Comments:**

- The Pass It On Center is an extremely valuable resource for emergency management coordination. The PIOC is an active group of committed individuals versus a passive technical

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assistance group. We need the PIOC involved in emergency preparedness to help coordinate response efforts with EMA.

- Need to be more aware of keeping to the time / schedule or will lose people at the end or after break. Good save on recouping time at the end. Flexible planning. This conference made me think more than I have about the importance of the summit subject. I like the phrase resources thru relationships. The networking was very valuable.
- Good job Trish! I think that AT Reuse plan for EM will help to further validate the need to enroll AT Reuse and possibly recruit more buy in from state legislators
- Excellent opportunity to hear best practices of other states and to learn more about AT Reuse. Also great opportunity to think about strategies to better incorporate into disaster response
- Thank you all for the hard work that went into this - a great success! We are going home with great ideas and plans
- Great conference! Learned a lot. Loved the small group times to share info across states. Would love to follow up with PIOC to get region 4 info shared regarding possible regional MOU.
- Very well done and I appreciated the diverse group of the presenters and speakers. I would highly recommend the summit to others in Florida or anywhere
- This was the best way I could have thought to spend 8 respite hours. Definitely worth it, learned volumes even for 1 day.
- Need to spell out acronyms more often (e.g. VOAD). Post more resources on website. Need to manage time and the room accessibility could be better it was cluttered. First breakout sessions were not the most helpful. Would have liked to have more info on best practices, if not, model AT Reuse for emergency programs. Good content.
- Really enjoyed it. Good content
- Excellent content and connections with other programs