

84.224B ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACT NATIONAL ACTIVITIES
Section 6 of the AT Act of 1998, as amended
PL 10864

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SEC. 6. NATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL- In order to support activities designed to improve the administration of this Act, the Secretary, under subsection (b)--

`(1) may award, on a competitive basis, grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements to entities to support activities described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (b); and

`(2) shall award, on a competitive basis, grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements to entities to support activities described in paragraphs (3), (4), and (5) of subsection (b).

(b) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES-

`(1) NATIONAL PUBLIC-AWARENESS TOOLKIT-

`(A) NATIONAL PUBLIC-AWARENESS TOOLKIT- The Secretary may award a 1-time grant, contract, or cooperative agreement to an eligible entity to support a training and technical assistance program that--

`(i) expands public-awareness efforts to reach targeted individuals and entities;

`(ii) contains appropriate accessible multimedia materials to reach targeted individuals and entities, for dissemination to State assistive technology programs; and

`(iii) in coordination with State assistive technology programs, provides meaningful and up-to-date information to targeted individuals and entities about the availability of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services.

`(B) ELIGIBLE ENTITY- To be eligible to receive the grant, contract, or cooperative agreement, an entity shall develop a partnership that--

`(i) shall consist of--

`(I) a lead agency or implementing entity for a State assistive technology program or an organization or association that represents implementing entities for State assistive technology programs;

`(II) a private or public entity from the media industry;

`(III) a private entity from the assistive technology industry; and

`(IV) a private employer or an organization or association that represents private employers;

`(ii) may include other entities determined by the Secretary to be necessary; and

`(iii) may include other entities determined by the applicant to be appropriate.

(2) RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT-

`(A) IN GENERAL- The Secretary may award grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements to eligible entities to carry out research and development of assistive technology that consists of--

`(i) developing standards for reliability and accessibility of assistive technology, and standards for interoperability (including open standards) of assistive technology with information technology, telecommunications products, and other assistive technology; or

`(ii) developing assistive technology that benefits individuals with disabilities or developing technologies or practices that result in the adaptation, maintenance, servicing, or improvement of assistive technology devices.

`(B) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES- Entities eligible to receive a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement under this paragraph shall include--

`(i) providers of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices;

`(ii) institutions of higher education, including University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service authorized under subtitle D of title I of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 15061 et seq.), or such institutions offering rehabilitation engineering programs, computer science programs, or information technology programs;

`(iii) manufacturers of assistive technology devices; and

`(iv) professionals, individuals, organizations, and agencies providing services or employment to individuals with disabilities.

`(C) COLLABORATION- An entity that receives a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement under this paragraph shall, in developing and implementing the project carried out through the grant, contract, or cooperative agreement coordinate activities with the lead agency for the State assistive technology program (or a national organization that represents such programs) and the State advisory council described in section 4(c)(2) (or a national organization that represents such councils).

(3) STATE TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE-

(A) TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE EFFORTS- The Secretary shall award a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement to an entity to support a training and technical assistance program that--

`(i) addresses State-specific information requests concerning assistive technology from entities funded under this Act and public entities not funded under this Act, including--

`(I) requests for information on effective approaches to Federal-State coordination of programs for individuals with disabilities, related to improving funding for or access to assistive technology devices and assistive technology services for individuals with disabilities of all ages;

`(II) requests for state-of-the-art, or model, Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, policies, practices, procedures, and organizational structures, that facilitate, and overcome barriers to, funding for, and access to, assistive technology devices and assistive technology services;

`(III) requests for information on effective approaches to developing, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining activities described in sections 4 and 5 and related to improving funding for or access to assistive technology devices and assistive technology services for individuals with disabilities of all ages, and requests for assistance in developing corrective action plans;

`(IV) requests for examples of policies, practices, procedures, regulations, or judicial decisions that have enhanced or may enhance access to funding for assistive technology devices and assistive technology services for individuals with disabilities;

`(V) requests for information on effective approaches to the development of consumer-controlled systems that increase access to, funding for, and awareness of, assistive technology devices and assistive technology services; and

`(VI) other requests for training and technical assistance from entities funded under this Act and public and private entities not funded under this Act;

(ii) assists targeted individuals and entities by disseminating information about--

`(I) Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, policies, practices, procedures, and organizational structures, that facilitate, and overcome barriers to, funding for, and access to, assistive technology devices and assistive technology services, to promote fuller independence, productivity, and inclusion in society for individuals with disabilities of all ages; and

`(II) technical assistance activities undertaken under clause (i);

`(iii) provides State-specific, regional, and national training and technical assistance concerning assistive technology to entities funded under this Act, other entities funded under this Act, and public and private entities not funded under this Act, including--

- `(I) annually providing a forum for exchanging information concerning, and promoting program and policy improvements in, required activities of the State assistive technology programs;
- `(II) facilitating onsite and electronic information sharing using state-of-the-art Internet technologies such as real-time online discussions, multipoint video conferencing, and web-based audio/video broadcasts, on emerging topics that affect State assistive technology programs;
- `(III) convening experts from State assistive technology programs to discuss and make recommendations with regard to national emerging issues of importance to individuals with assistive technology needs;
- `(IV) sharing best practice and evidence-based practices among State assistive technology programs;
- `(V) maintaining an accessible website that includes a link to State assistive technology programs, appropriate Federal departments and agencies, and private associations and developing a national toll-free number that links callers from a State with the State assistive technology program in their State;
- `(VI) developing or utilizing existing (as of the date of the award involved) model cooperative volume-purchasing mechanisms designed to reduce the financial costs of purchasing assistive technology for required and discretionary activities identified in section 4, and reducing duplication of activities among State assistive technology programs; and
- `(VII) providing access to experts in the areas of banking, microlending, and finance, for entities funded under this Act, through site visits, teleconferences, and other means, to ensure access to information for entities that are carrying out new programs or programs that are not making progress in achieving the objectives of the programs; and
- `(iv) includes such other activities as the Secretary may require.
- `(B) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES- To be eligible to receive a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement under this paragraph, an entity shall have (directly or through grant or contract)--
- `(i) experience and expertise in administering programs, including developing, implementing, and administering the required and discretionary activities described in sections 4 and 5, and providing technical assistance; and
- `(ii) documented experience in and knowledge about banking, finance, and microlending.

(C) COLLABORATION- In developing and providing training and technical assistance under this paragraph, including activities identified as priorities, a recipient of a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement under this paragraph shall collaborate with other organizations, in particular--

- `(i) organizations representing individuals with disabilities;
- `(ii) national organizations representing State assistive technology programs;
- `(iii) organizations representing State officials and agencies engaged in the delivery of assistive technology;
- `(iv) the data-collection and reporting providers described in paragraph (5); and
- `(v) other providers of national programs or programs of national significance funded under this Act.

(4) NATIONAL INFORMATION INTERNET SYSTEM-

`(A) IN GENERAL- The Secretary shall award a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement to an entity to renovate, update, and maintain the National Public Internet Site established under this Act (as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of the Assistive Technology Act of 2004).

(B) FEATURES OF INTERNET SITE- The National Public Internet Site shall contain the following features:

(i) AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION AT ANY TIME- The site shall be designed so that any member of the public may obtain information posted on the site at any time.

(ii) INNOVATIVE AUTOMATED INTELLIGENT AGENT- The site shall be constructed with an innovative automated intelligent agent that is a diagnostic tool for assisting users in problem definition and the selection of appropriate assistive technology devices and assistive technology services resources.

`(iii) RESOURCES-

`(I) LIBRARY ON ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY- The site shall include access to a comprehensive working library on assistive technology for all environments, including home, workplace, transportation, and other environments.

`(II) INFORMATION ON ACCOMMODATING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES- The site shall include access to evidence-based research and best practices concerning how assistive technology can be used to accommodate individuals with disabilities in the areas of education, employment, health care, community living, and telecommunications and information technology.

`(III) RESOURCES FOR A NUMBER OF DISABILITIES- The site shall include resources relating to the largest possible number of disabilities, including resources relating to low-level reading skills.

`(iv) LINKS TO PRIVATE-SECTOR RESOURCES AND INFORMATION- To the extent feasible, the site shall be linked to relevant private-sector resources and information, under agreements developed between the recipient of the grant, contract, or cooperative agreement and cooperating private-sector entities.

`(v) LINKS TO PUBLIC-SECTOR RESOURCES AND INFORMATION- To the extent feasible, the site shall be linked to relevant public-sector resources and information, such as the Internet sites of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services of the Department of Education, the Office of Disability Employment Policy of the Department of Labor, the Small Business Administration, the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, the Technology Administration of the Department of Commerce, the Jobs Accommodation Network funded by the Office of Disability Employment Policy of the Department of Labor, and other relevant sites.

(vi) MINIMUM LIBRARY COMPONENTS- At a minimum, the site shall maintain updated information on--

`(I) State assistive technology program demonstration sites where individuals may try out assistive technology devices;

`(II) State assistive technology program device loan program sites where individuals may borrow assistive technology devices;

`(III) State assistive technology program device reutilization program sites;

`(IV) alternative financing programs or State financing systems operated through, or independently of, State assistive technology programs, and other sources of funding for assistive technology devices; and

`(V) various programs, including programs with tax credits, available to employers for hiring or accommodating employees who are individuals with disabilities.

(C) ELIGIBLE ENTITY- To be eligible to receive a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement under this paragraph, an entity shall be a nonprofit organization, for-profit organization, or institution of higher education, that--(i) emphasizes research and engineering;

`(ii) has a multidisciplinary research center; and (iii) has demonstrated expertise in--

`(I) working with assistive technology and intelligent agent interactive information dissemination systems;

`(II) managing libraries of assistive technology and disability-related resources;

`(III) delivering to individuals with disabilities education, information, and referral services, including technology-based curriculum-development services for adults with low-level reading skills;

`(IV) developing cooperative partnerships with the private sector, particularly with private-sector computer software, hardware, and Internet services entities; and

(V) developing and designing advanced Internet sites.

(5) DATA-COLLECTION AND REPORTING ASSISTANCE-

`(A) IN GENERAL- The Secretary shall award grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements to entities to assist the entities in carrying out State assistive technology programs in developing and implementing effective data-collection and reporting systems that--

`(i) focus on quantitative and qualitative data elements;

`(ii) measure the outcomes of the required activities described in section 4 that are implemented by the States and the progress of the States toward achieving the measurable goals described in section 4(d)(3);

`(iii) provide States with the necessary information required under this Act or by the Secretary for reports described in section 4(f)(2); and

`(iv) help measure the accrued benefits of the activities to individuals who need assistive technology.

`(B) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES- To be eligible to receive a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement under this paragraph, an entity shall have personnel with--

`(i) documented experience and expertise in administering State assistive technology programs;

`(ii) experience in collecting and analyzing data associated with implementing required and discretionary activities;

`(iii) expertise necessary to identify additional data elements needed to provide comprehensive reporting of State activities and outcomes; and

`(iv) experience in utilizing data to provide annual reports to State policymakers.

`(c) APPLICATION- To be eligible to receive a grant, contract, or cooperative agreement under this section, an entity shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

(d) INPUT- With respect to the activities described in subsection (b) to be funded under this section, including the national and regionally based training and technical assistance efforts carried out through the activities, in designing the activities the Secretary shall consider, and in providing the activities providers shall include, input of the directors of comprehensive statewide programs of technology-related assistance, directors of alternative financing programs, and other individuals the Secretary determines to be appropriate, especially--

`(1) individuals with disabilities who use assistive technology and understand the barriers to the acquisition of such technology and assistive technology services;

`(2) family members, guardians, advocates, and authorized representatives of such individuals;

`(3) individuals employed by protection and advocacy systems funded under section 5;

`(4) relevant employees from Federal departments and agencies, other than the Department of Education;

`(5) representatives of businesses; and

`(6) vendors and public and private researchers and developers.