



Tips for Assistive Technology Reuse 2014

Most of these tips are anchored in the Indicators of Quality for Assistive Technology Reuse (IQ-ATR) developed by representatives from the national AT reuse community in 2009. The IQ-ATR can be found in report format and as an interactive tool (the Online Program Assessment Tool) on the Pass It On Center (PIOC) website at <http://www.passitoncenter.org>. The tips are supplemented with practical suggestions from program leaders and resources from Pass It On Center's Knowledge Base (KB), Webinar Archive, videos of leaders and facilities on the PIOC You Tube channel and conference presentations. All of these resources can be reached from the PIOC website.

Devise a Sustainability Plan for the Reuse Program

Pursue strategies to sustain the program for the long term, and continue to improve and expand its services. The strategy should be documented in a written plan that addresses diversification of sources of income, strategies for enhancing community support, retention of employees and volunteers, and succession planning for program leadership. Make it a group effort by involving employees and key supporters in developing the plan. Use the IQ-ATR Online Program Assessment Tool in a group exercise to jump-start discussion of needs and opportunities. Watch videos for sustainability ideas from other program leaders.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 2.1

Webinars: Nov. 2011 – Lessons Learned from the AT Demonstration Projects: Sustainability; April 2012 – Fees and the Funding Mix, August 2012 – Medicaid Partnerships, June 2013 – AT Reuse Program Accreditation; Jan. 2010 – Succession Planning

KB: Sustainability Module articles

Videos: NEAT Sustainability, InterConnection Sustainability, MASS Match Reuse Programs – Kobena Bonney describes programs and partners; FODAC Tour Part s 10 and 14

Diversify Sources of Program Income

Multiple small streams of dependable income contribute to sustainability. Be wary of hosting large events that require significant investments of time and money. Here are ideas from programs:

- Walton Options CIL suggests modest contributions from device recipients.
- Project MEND has a \$20 application fee (waived if not affordable) and a partnership model with levels of support ranging from \$20 to \$225.
- Paraquad and FODAC offer device repair services at modest fees.
- FODAC operates a thrift store. Lacking space for that, consider the proceeds from having volunteers host yard or garage sales or a booth at a local flea market on a regular basis.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 2.1

Webinars: Nov. and Dec. 2009 – Diversified Funding Strategies I and II, March 2011 – Making the Business Case for AT Reuse, April 2012 – Fees and the Funding Mix, June 2013 – AT Reuse Program Accreditation

KB: Sustainability – Diversify Sources of Income

Videos: FODAC Tour Part 6 Thrift Store, Walton Options CIL Sustainability and Contributions, CIL Berkeley Sustainability with a Vendor

Partner to Expand Capacity

Nearly all successful AT reuse programs have partners: nonprofit reuse programs, Centers for Independent Living and other agencies. They network with healthcare organizations, commercial suppliers and civic groups. Identify every group that is supportive (or could be persuaded to be supportive) of reuse in the community. Sharing extends the reach of limited resources.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 2.1

Webinar August 2011 – Expanding Reuse through Public/Private Partnerships, Dec. 2012 – Innovative Strategies to Involve DME Suppliers

Need a form, model plan, example or brochure related to some aspect of reuse or operations? Save time. Practice reuse.

Search for the related topic in the Knowledge Base. Programs all over the country have generously donated all types of documents (nearly 600 so far) for re-use. The examples are attached to “articles.” Download the file and use to make a customized version.

Develop a Marketing Plan

Every program needs a comprehensive marketing plan to acquire and sustain community support. The plan should identify target audiences and use the most cost-effective means for reaching those audiences:

- To obtain donations of equipment
- To inform the community about services and to reach potential customers
- To generate additional financial (or volunteer) support to sustain the program
- To show the economic and environmental benefits of the program

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 7.2, 7.3

Webinars: Sept. 2010 - Using Social Media to Extend the Message, April 2010 – Marketing Toolkit; Feb. 2010 - Using Your Program Website for More Effective Communication, April 2012 – Fees and the Funding Mix

KB: Marketing Module for articles, examples from other programs,

Videos: Massachusetts Marketing, NEAT Marketing Parts 1 and 2, InterConnection Marketing

Collect and Use Output and Outcome Data

The program measures output by number of devices distributed, number of devices donated, and number of customers served. Survey participants to determine outcomes: how they use the device they received from the program to participate in work, education or daily living, and the level of satisfaction with devices and services.

- Use the information to plan for unmet needs or greater emphasis in specific categories.
- Include the data in brochures and newsletters.
- Post charts in the facility that tracks the data. Include a request for support.
- Publicize output and outcomes on the website and in a press release to media outlets (newspapers, TV and radio) that serve the area.

References: IQ-ATR 2.2 and 2.3

Resources: Webinar Aug. 2009 – Data Tracking and Inventory

KB: The Power of Capturing Outcome Data

Ensure that Program Facilities Are Accessible

Set an example for accessibility by ensuring that the program’s facility is physically accessible for employees, contractors, volunteers and customers. It should:

- Comply with building codes and other applicable ordinances
- Comply with federal and state laws for physical accessibility
- Take advantage of any opportunities to demonstrate how to make facilities more accessible.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 3.1

Create a Safe and Secure Workplace

Create a safe and secure workplace for employees, contractors and volunteers and a secure place for customers. This depends on planning, policies, procedures and training. Identify work areas that are not accessible to customers, secure storage for chemicals and tools, and appropriate safety training for each worker. Even if not required by law to do so, conduct regular drills for fire, weather and other emergency evacuation circumstances.

Ref.: IQ-ATR 3.2

KB: HR module/OSHA Training Requirements that May Apply to Reuse Programs

Provide Adequate Space and Services for Refurbishing Operations

Smart organization and adequate space is essential for programs to conduct the chosen AT reuse activities. Consider:

- A separate, secure area for administration and program records
- A private area for customer intake
- A separate area for device matching
- A separate area for device refurbishing
- Appropriate areas for unloading and loading equipment
- *Reference(s): IQ-ATR 3.3*

KB: Program Operations module, Storage category for articles and aids

Videos: See FODAC Tours for specific areas of facility, Project MEND tour of donations and refurbishing areas; REM New Hampshire Tour, Walton Options CIL Storage Areas

Giving a presentation related to reuse? Want to explore a topic for staff training? Use resources from national conferences.

A wealth of information and ideas from program leaders and speakers from all over the country is available for reference and use or reuse. Presentations from regional or national conferences are in the Knowledge Base under "National Conferences." Travel funds may be limited, but the presentations from ATIA Conferences and Reuse Conferences are available for viewing. (Please credit the original source.)

Implement a Good Inventory Management System

An accurate and efficient method to track the inventory of available devices is important.

This includes written policies and procedures and software capable of:

- The unique identification of every donated device (by label or bar code)
- The ability to determine the availability of devices by type
- The assignment of an inventory valuation to each device
- The ability to identify devices subject to recall notices
- The ability to identify customers who have received devices subject to recall notices

The specially-designed systems from AgoraNet and AT4All are widely used, but other programs use Quick Books or the built-in inventory reporting of 3dcart, an online store system for programs that refurbish and sell devices on the Internet.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 3.4

Webinar Aug. 2009 – Data Tracking and Inventory

KB: National Conferences – CIL Conference Dec. 2012/ Promising Practices: Tracking Inventory and Data; Program Operations module, Inventory articles and aids

Notify Customers about Recalls, Withdrawals and Safety Alerts

Devise procedures to track device recalls, market withdrawals and safety alerts and to identify and contact individuals who received devices from the program that are affected by such notices. Assistive Technology for Kansans suggests putting this responsibility into someone's job description. The procedures should include:

- A method to monitor device recalls and alerts
- The ability to identify devices that are the subject of recalls, market withdrawals or safety alerts by the FDA, and to identify and notify users of reassigned devices.
- An attempt to replace (temporarily or permanently) the device if it is recalled or withdrawn

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 3.6

Resources: Subscribe to FDA e-mail notification at

<http://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/Safety/ListofRecalls/default.htm>

Specify Equipment Needs and Make Donors Aware of the Needs

Develop written policies specifying the categories of devices that will or will not be accepted for donation, and methods to communicate the policies to prospective donors. This information can be posted in the facility, on the website and included in a brochure. For ease of sharing, Project MEND (San Antonio) uses a business card with the needed devices on the front and information about dropping off donations or requesting services on the back. (An image of the card is in the Knowledge Base.)

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 3.7

Webinar: June 2012 – Extending Reuse in Specific Categories of AT, June 2010 – How to Get Equipment for Refurbishing

KB: Marketing, Awareness – See Project MEND card images in attachments; Donations: Tips for Accepting and Refusing

Use a Systematic Method for Evaluating the Condition of Donated Devices

Develop written, device-specific procedures for evaluating the repair and refurbishing needs of donated equipment. Some veteran refurbishing programs have donated both written checklists and videos for evaluating some common devices.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 3.9

KB: Program Operations Module: Equipment Maintenance category for articles, checklists

Videos: See links to several from New Hampshire Refurbished Equipment Marketplace, including 14-Point Check for a Manual Wheelchair

Implement Appropriate Procedures for Sanitizing Donated Equipment

Devise written procedures based on sound medical or scientific practice for sanitizing equipment to protect both workers and new users.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 3.10

Webinar: July 2010 – Planning a Sanitization Program

KB: Program Operations Module, Sanitization category for multiple articles and checklists

Videos: FODAC Tour Part 7, Paraquad – Sanitizing a Power Wheelchair, Paraquad – Sanitizing Non-electrical Equipment

Refurbish Donated Equipment in a Manner Consistent with Manufacturer Specifications

Implement a written procedure for refurbishment/repair of equipment/AT that is consistent with manufacturer specifications. This may include obtaining manufacturer training for technicians. Guard against the risk inherent in modifying the device from the original specifications (remanufacturing).

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 3.11

Webinar: June 2013 – Education, Training and Certifications

KB: Program Operations module, Refurbishing Equipment articles and aids

Videos: FODAC Tours Part 8 and 13

Remove Personal Data from Digital Devices before Reassigning

If digital devices (computers, cell phones, tablets, PDAs, etc.) come through the reuse program, all personal data should be permanently removed to avoid the possibility of identity theft or breach of privacy. This requires measures beyond the routine deleting of files because that leaves the data stored in the device.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 3.12

KB: Program Operations Module, Data Removal and Refurbishing Computers categories

Videos: See InterConnection videos on operating a computer reuse program

Comply with Software Licensing Law and Agreements

The program should have written policies and procedures that are consistent with current law and licensing agreements when loading software to refurbished computers.

- Comply with the software publisher's licensing agreements
- Track the purchase and assignment of licenses
- Reload programs only if the original software is provided with the computer

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 3.13

KB: Restoring Operating Systems

Offer a Limited Warranty on Refurbished Devices

Many programs offer a limited warranty on refurbished devices. The warranty should be given to the customer in writing when the device is delivered and the terms should be very specific. This language is often included on the customer's delivery receipt. The warranty may permit the user to return the device for refund (if a fee was paid) or have the device replaced with an equivalent device within a specified time period.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 3.14

KB: User Services Module, see Liability Release and Limited Warranty for Refurbished Devices

Optimize Use of Space to Store Donated Equipment

Adequate space for storage of donated equipment is often a challenge. Try to:

- Create separate storage for different types of devices
- Optimize the use of space with adequate shelving, bins or other storage options
- Separate sanitized from unsanitized equipment
- Provide proper heating, cooling and ventilation for equipment storage as needed
- Acquire materials handling equipment to access high storage in a safe manner

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 3.15

KB: Program Operations Module, Storage category for articles, aids

Implement Procedures for Transportation of Equipment

Transportation is a major challenge for most reuse programs. If the program operates vehicles, safety and liability are major concerns. Policies and procedures for picking up or delivering equipment should confirm that:

- Drivers have current licenses and safe driving records
- Drivers and other workers who pick up donated equipment are trained in safe lifting and handling techniques
- Vehicles used to pick up donated devices have proper loading features and/or accessories (lifts, dollies, lift truck, as needed)
- Workers are trained in appropriate procedures for dealing with donors (e.g., courtesy, giving receipts to acknowledge donations, obtaining liability releases from customers, etc.).

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 3.16, 4.7, 4.8

KB: Program Operations Module, Transportation for articles, checklists and useful forms

Practice Safe, Legal End-of-life Recycling

Does the refurbishing program have a written procedure that is legally compliant and applied consistently for disposal of end-of-life and non-usable equipment/AT? Some ideas from programs:

- Identify the devices that can be broken down for reusable spare parts.
- Find a certified recycler for unusable equipment.
- Save time by triaging donated equipment before it is brought into the facility. Keep a container for the recycler at the receiving door. Ask if the recycler will provide the bin.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 3.17

Webinars: May 2012- E-Waste and Recycling for Small Reuse Programs, July 2009 - E-Waste and

E-Recycling

KB: Program Operations Module, Recycling category for articles

Videos: InterConnection Recycling

Devise Consistent, Legally-Compliant Procedures for Customer Intake

Use written policies and procedures that are applied consistently for application equipment and determination of eligibility.

- Written standards for determination of eligibility
- Written referral procedures, when referrals are required
- Written application for services that includes demographics and financial information
- Staff training in compliance with privacy laws
- Monitoring and enforcement of compliance with privacy laws
- Staff training in customer service
- A computer database for maintaining customer records
- If appropriate, information about sources of funding for the customer

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 4.1

KB: User Services Module, Intake category

Match the Customer with an Appropriate Device

Customers deserve an appropriate solution, not just a solution. Finding the appropriate device may be a challenge, and networking may help. Demonstration loans may help. In some circumstances, matching requires specially trained professionals who follow documented procedures to match customers to the technology solution. The professional may vary, depending on the situation and type of technology. If these professionals are not affordable, consider strategies to obtain their services.

- Approach the local chapters of professional organizations to identify volunteers.
- Partner with local hospitals or healthcare organizations.
- If academic programs exist locally to train the needed professional, approach the director about creating internships or field experiences in the reuse program.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 4.2

KB: National Conferences – CIL Conference Dec. 2012/ Matching Persons to Equipment (three presentations); User Services Module, Matching category

Involve the Customer in Device Choice

Choice is a significant factor in the acceptance and use of an AT device. The customer and direct support provider(s) should be informed of all appropriate device options and allowed to participate in the choice of device.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 4.3

Resource: Clinical practice guidelines to improve shared decision-making about assistive device use in home care, <http://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0738399103003021>

Provide Customer Training on the Assigned Device

The customer and his direct support provider(s) may need basic training on features, operation, maintenance, safety and troubleshooting for the device at the time the device is given. Don't have a lot of time for this level of customer involvement? Try videotaping these explanations for the most frequently reassigned items. Tell customers where to find this information online for later use, or create written instructions for basic operation and maintenance that can be printed on demand. This could be a scanned user manual.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 4.4

Confirm the Donor's Right to Donate or Sell AT

Does the program have written policies and procedures to confirm that the donor has the right to sell or donate the equipment? Think it isn't needed? The AT could be the property of the original payer, a rental, or it could be stolen. Procedures may help prevent this. Consider adding a statement to the donation receipt requiring the donor to affirm the right to donate or sell the item.

Reference: IQ-ATR 3.8

Allow a Trial Period on the Device

Give customers a trial period (of specified duration) with the device, both at the facility and the environment(s) in which it will be used.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 4.5

Resource: Work: Putting Technology to Work: User's Perspective on Assistive Technology in the Workplace, <http://iospress.metapress.com/content/3jy7x2ygjx6cmy62/>

Provide Technical Assistance for Customers

Users often have questions about the equipment after they get home. Initial training helps, but it's also important to have a trained individual respond to a new user's request for technical assistance promptly.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 4.6

KB: User Services Module, Technical Assistance

Follow Up with Customers to Improve Outcomes

Document the scheduled follow-up with every new customer via telephone, e-mail or in person. Use the routine customer follow-up by a trained individual to learn more about what could be done to better serve the customers by expanding or improving services.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 4.9

KB: User Services Module, Follow-up

Use a Mission Statement to Focus Planning and Activities

Devise a mission statement that defines the purpose of the organization, and drives program planning and activities. It should be brief, focused and easily understood. The annual goals and objectives are formulated for consistency with the stated mission, resources are allocated in this manner, and customers and their support systems are treated in a manner consistent with the stated mission. Post the mission statement prominently in the facility, on the website, and in printed literature.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 5.2

KB: Organization Module, How to Write a Mission Statement

Be Proactive in Managing Risk and Liability

Assess risk and liability and implement strategies to mitigate them. Risk is the possibility of loss or injury. Liability is responsibility or legal obligation. Being proactive to mitigate risk is a strategy for minimizing potential liability.

- Assess exposure to risk and/or liability by reviewing compliance with laws, the features and use of the physical environment, and how activities are performed.
- Writing and following policies and procedures helps to mitigate risk and/or liability.
- Identify and obtain appropriate types of insurance to address risk and/or liability.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 5.3

Webinar: March 2012 Liability Considerations and Solutions for AT Reuse Programs

KB: Organizational Structure, Governance & Insurance I, II and III, Risk Management Strategies

Comply with Legal Record-Keeping Requirements

Records are subject to many laws. The nature of the record-keeping is determined by the types of information collected and stored. The program should:

- Have written and implemented policies and procedures for the maintenance and retention of records for the periods of time required by law (tax records, health records),
- Maintain records in compliance with its legal organizational structure as required by federal and state law (including tax-exempt status, if applicable),
- Maintain customer records in compliance with the privacy provisions of all applicable laws, including HIPAA, and
- Maintain its financial records in compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and federal and state tax laws.
- Encourage nonprofit partners to keep a few copies of the most recent IRS Form 990 available to supply upon request. (Customers are entitled to this.)

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 5.4, 8.2

KB: Finance & Accounting Module, see articles on recordkeeping; Organization Module, Legal Records

Use Return-on-Investment Analysis to Leverage Support

Return-on-investment (ROI) is a business formula that calculates how much was returned for the amount of money invested. This can be determined for reuse by determining the value of goods and services provided for the total cost of the reuse program. This is a powerful tool in communicating with potential grantors, donors or government agencies. Calculate the number and keep it ready to share with anyone it might influence. Share it in the newsletter. Hang a simple framed statement in the facility. Print a small label that can be placed on the back of a business card, for example: "This year we recaptured \$2.87 for every dollar spent on AT reuse." Every person who gets a business card gets the message.

Reference(s): References: IQ-ATR 2.2 and 2.3

Webinars: March 2011 - Making the Business Case for AT Reuse

Develop Job Descriptions and Use Them for Development and Accountability

Job descriptions are not simply onerous bureaucracy. Used properly, they are useful tools in recruiting, personnel development, performance evaluation, and accountability for program activities. Create job descriptions for employees and volunteers. They clarify responsibility and accountability. While contractors are not employees and their work cannot legally be supervised in the same manner as employees, it is still possible to manage expectations by developing standards or expectations of performance (e.g., ethical conduct, compliance with all laws, timely completion of contract deliverables, and timely reporting and billing.)

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 6.2

Webinar August 2010 – Job Descriptions and Performance Evaluation; KB: Job Descriptions

Develop Policies and Procedures for Recruiting and Hiring Employees and Contractors

Reuse programs all operate with limited staffing, so every individual is important. The recruitment and hiring of employees and contractors should be conducted according to written policies and procedures that facilitate the identification of candidates who meet specified requirements. A few phone calls can ensure better hiring and avoid potential problems.

- Check professional and personal references. Yes, legal issues make employers very cautious, and some will only confirm dates of employment. But, if you call former supervisors, much can be learned from what they say or *don't* say about the applicant.
- Verify the educational background claimed.
- Confirm the work experience claimed.
- Verify that the applicant holds the specific licenses or credentials required for the position, and that those licenses or credentials are active in the state of employment. (If required by the program) conduct criminal background checks.
- Give preference in hiring to volunteers who apply (if they meet the specified requirements).

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 6.3, 6.4, 6.5

KB: Human Resource Module for guidance, forms and examples

Use a Structured Orientation Plan for All Workers

Use a structured orientation plan for new employees, contractors, and volunteers to ensure that they have a proper understanding of the mission and activities of the program. Develop a presentation and an orientation packet that includes:

- Essential information about the organization's mission and activities
- Basics about communicating with people with disabilities (People First Language)
- Information about benefits
- Information about required training and the availability of formal training, on-the-job training or tuition reimbursement
- Required employment documents for signatures

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 6.6

KB: HR Module, Worker Orientation

Train and Develop Workers

Offering some job-related training for employees and volunteers builds a stronger reuse program and aids the community. Training opportunities may take several forms:

- Formal training (on or off-site)
- On-the-job training worker by another worker
- Tuition reimbursement for education and/ or training on the worker's personal time
- Visits to another reuse program
- Attendance at a reuse conference (or use of some conference videos from PIOC)

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 6.7

Webinar: July 2013 – Education, Training and Certifications; KB: Training and Development;

Evaluate Worker Performance

Performance evaluation is a tool for personnel development if conducted through a program of consistently implemented, regularly scheduled, and documented sessions. It gives the worker regular feedback on progress, and it builds documentation if steps must be taken to discipline or terminate.

In addition to employees, volunteers can benefit from less formal feedback on performance. This may help someone develop useful job skills for the marketplace. An option for contractors might be review of performance against pre-defined expectations or standards.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 6.8

Webinar: August 2010 – Job Descriptions and Performance Evaluation;

KB: Employee Performance Evaluation

Develop Strategies to Enhance Capacity for Statewide Geographical Coverage

Developing the capacity to serve all parts of the state can be challenged by size, geography and limited resources. Some strategies for overcoming these challenges are:

- A network of strategically located centers, possibly with partnering agencies
- A Web-based Exchange site
- Collaboration with other organization(s). In Georgia, a library became a node in the reuse network. It had space to collect equipment.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 7.5

Webinar: August 2011 - Expanding Reuse through Public/Private Partnerships

Implement Strategies to Enhance Comprehensiveness

The program can serve clients of all ages and types of disabilities by providing reusable assistive technology of all types:

- By collaborating with organizations that focus on specific disabilities (e.g., United Cerebral Palsy, the ALS Society)
- By collaborating with community institutions that reach specific age groups (e.g., schools and Senior Citizens centers)
- By collaborating with as many organizations as possible to identify potential users and to reclaim AT for reuse (Centers for Independent Living, rehabilitation centers, hospitals, veterans groups)

The secondary school reuse programs implemented in Vermont and Massachusetts represent an innovative strategy for expanding reuse into a younger age group.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 7.6

Webinars: Feb. 2011 - Going Green in Schools: An Effective AT Reuse Experience, Sept. 2011 – AT Reuse for Recreation

Videos: Mass. Ann Shor on how School Share started; Vermont AT – Implementing AT School Swap

Provide Additional Information Resources to Customers

Be prepared to provide customers with information about other suppliers of assistive technology and related services that may include:

- Appropriate types of medical personnel to assess AT needs
- Where to find AT professionals (evaluators and/or rehabilitation engineers)
- Other sources of used AT (including local providers and state or national exchange programs)
- Where to find qualified individuals to repair devices
- Where to find additional manufacturer information about the device (e.g., web link for user manuals)

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 7.7

Build Relationships with Suppliers and Manufacturers

Collaborate with suppliers and manufacturers of the types of technology used in the program.

- Build working relationships with local suppliers, perhaps through contracts or referrals, or by participating in the state Association of Medical Equipment Suppliers.
- Work with manufacturers to certify repair technicians (if applicable) and post certifications in an area visible to the customers of the reuse program.
- Collaborate with manufacturers on response to disasters. They often donate needed devices.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 9.1

Webinars: Dec. 2012 – Innovative Strategies to Involve DME Providers, July 2013 – Education, Training and Certifications

Videos: CIL Berkeley Sustainability with a Vendor; NEAT Vendor Relationships 1, 2 and 3;

Devise and Implement a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

The program can be helpful in emergencies only if it continues to function. That requires a current and documented continuity of operations plan that identifies the measures to be taken to remain in operation during and following an emergency or disaster. The plan should address all of the issues that could prevent normal (or extraordinary) operations to assist the community.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 10.1

Webinar: Jan. 2011 – Developing a Continuity of Operations Plan

KB: Continuity of Operations

Resource: http://www.niqca.org/documents/IT_Plan_for_Emergencies.pdf

Define a Role for the Program in Emergency Response

The reuse program can become an integral part of the state's emergency response framework:

- By participating in the writing of the state plan for people with disabilities,
- By cooperating with Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) in the state; and
- By getting training and becoming involved at the state level and networking with supporting agencies.

In the event of disaster, acquisition of needed AT can be aided by identifying specific needs and notifying the Pass It On Center.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 10.2

KB: Emergency Management Module, State Plan Outline

Be Prepared to Assist the Community in Disaster Recovery

Is the program prepared to assist the community in recovery from an emergency or disaster situation by providing used AT to existing or new customers?

- Have staff members and workers individually prepare plans for managing personal (and family) health and safety for the first 72 hours after an incident.
- Establish relationships with local emergency management agencies.
- Have designated staff participate in emergency management training and FEMA certification for responders.
- Secure Memoranda of Agreement to work with other agencies and entities in a specified manner, including, but not limited to vendors, therapists, storage facilities, and van and truck rentals.
- Document AT reuse needs that can be anticipated in emergency situations.
- With arrangements to access additional reusable AT from other programs, vendors or emergency caches
- Identify the staff and skill sets that can be made available following a disaster.
- Participate in community drills.
- Establish policies and procedures for taking AT requests, and plan a means of delivery.
- Establish procedures for collecting and recording data regarding the emergency provision of AT for later reporting and planning.
- Determining methods of communicating to other organizations and to customers about availability of devices or services.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 10.2

Webinars: July 2012 - The Role of AT Reuse in Emergency Management, October 2011 - Lessons Learned from Regions IV and III Emergency Management and AT Reuse Summits, June 2011 - Understanding and Navigating the Disaster Recovery Process

KB: Emergency Management Module – articles and aids

Promote Customer Preparedness for Emergencies and Disasters

Create awareness of the need for individual preparedness for emergencies and disasters.

- Post some of the key information for the local area.
- Create brochures based on resources designed for reuse by state and national agencies or other reuse programs.
- Host awareness and preparedness sessions for customers.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 10.2

Webinar: May 2011 – Emergencies: Helping AT Users to be Prepared

PIOC Website/Emergency Management tab: Presentations from three regional AT Reuse and Emergency Preparedness are available

KB: Emergency Management Module – find resources and examples from other program

Resources: Federal site at <http://www.ready.gov>, every state has a site

Involve People with Disabilities

The involvement of people with disabilities is assumed to heighten sensitivity to the issues and circumstances of serving others with disabilities. For that reason, it is desirable to involve people with disabilities on Advisory Council or Board of Directors, and as employees or volunteers across the core activities of the program: acquisition of used AT, customer intake or determination of eligibility, matching clients to appropriate devices, training customers to use the devices, providing follow-up technical assistance, and marketing or promoting the services of the AT program.

Reference: IQ-ATR 1.4

KB: Involvement of People with Disabilities

Other resource: <http://www.uiaccess.com/accessucd/involve.html>

Recruit and Use Volunteers Effectively

Volunteers can be the lifeblood of a nonprofit organization. The program should implement consistent policies and procedures for the recruitment and management of volunteers. Check out some of the innovative sources of volunteers and creative use of volunteers in presentations and videos.

- Define roles and responsibilities for volunteers.
- Document systematic training plans to be used for volunteers.
- Ensure that volunteer activities are managed by a program employee.
- Afford preferences in hiring to qualified volunteers.

Reference(s): IQ-ATR 6.11

KB: Volunteers, Where to Find; Volunteer Sustainability articles; National Conferences - CIL Conference Dec. 2012/ Staffing presentations by Cathy Valdez and Tiffany Johnston

Attempt to Prevent Fraud

Unscrupulous abuse of access to free AT can be prevented with some proactive safeguards. To avoid having AT show up on Internet auctions or in yard sales shortly after it is reassigned to a customer, implement policies and procedures designed to deter fraud.

1. Implement procedures that identify who needs the equipment and why. Records should show who is going to use the devices if they are unable to come to the program in person.
2. Ensure that the recipient of donated equipment acknowledges that it is not to be sold for personal gain by adding language to the equipment receipt that must be signed. This creates a contract and selling the equipment for personal gain would become fraud.
3. Post a simple statement prominently in the facility that makes everyone aware of the expectation that donated equipment is only for the benefit of people with disabilities and should be donated if no longer needed.