

National Leadership Summit on Emergency Management and AT Reuse

Washington, DC | Feb. 23 – 24, 2010

*Successful Strategies,
Innovative Partnerships,
Futures Planning*

**Summit Review Webinar
March 31, 2010**



Pass It On
C E N T E R

National Assistive Technology Device Reutilization Coordination and Technical Assistance Center

Goals for the Summit

- To define the role of reused assistive technology (AT) in emergency management
- To identify the infrastructure needed for delivering reusable AT to people affected by disaster
- To develop a sustainable network to pursue national strategies for addressing the AT needs of people affected by disasters
- To develop achievable action steps to meet these goals

Invited Participants

- Leaders in the field of Emergency Management
- Key government officials in agencies providing Emergency Management services or services to people with disabilities
- Advocates for people with disabilities
- Leaders in the field of Assistive Technology reutilization

Panelists from . . .

- Rehabilitation Services Administration
- FEMA
- U.S. Dept. of Agriculture
- Administration on Developmental Disabilities
- Community Emergency Preparedness Information Network
- Pass It On Center
- Dept. of Justice
- Administration for Children and Families
- Argonne National Laboratory
- Florida Governor's Commission on Disabilities
- Computer/Electronics Accommodations Program (CAP)

Panelists from . . .

- National Organization on Disability
- Wireless RERC
- Deaf Link
- EAD and Associates
- Assistive Technology for Kansans
- Friends of Disabled Adults and Children
- Louisiana Assistive Technology Assistance Network
- The Institute for Rehabilitation & Research
- Association of University Centers on Disabilities
- Western University of Health Sciences
- Iowa Easter Seals
- Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs
- Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology

Framing the Discussion

■ **Jeremy Buzzell, RSA:**

Why AT reuse and the Pass It On Center?

- In part a response to Katrina and other natural disasters
- Growing reuse of AT
- Environmental concerns

■ **Deborah Buck, NISAT**

What the data from state AT programs tells us:

- Increasing use of AT when made available
- Critical for people who cannot afford or have no other access to AT
- Sought for employment, education, daily living

Framing the Discussion, cont.'

■ **Marcie Roth, FEMA**

Directs new Office of Disability Integration & Coordination; focus on programs in DHS and across Federal gov.

FEMA assistance requires request from state governor, disaster declaration from President

- Issue of limit on compensation for losses under Stafford Act: no extra allowances for AT or home modifications
- New office will build cadre of experts
- Need to determine how break FEMA's contracts for DME into 3-tiered system

Framing the Discussion, cont.'

Sara Sack, AT for Kansans

AT program's experience in disaster response:

- Has a critical resource (reusable AT) to offer
- Had to learn how to work with partners, how to become part of the emergency response system, what questions to ask Red Cross
- Faced issues with logistics of delivery to point of need

Framing the Discussion, cont.'

George Heake, PIAT and Pass It On Center

- AT Reuse programs need to advocate for National Response Network
- Become part of the system and solution
- Formulate better communications
- Address transportation issues

Chris Brand, FODAC

- His nonprofit org. used demo grant money to leverage development of a statewide (GA)/ regional network of AT reuse programs
- FODAC, very large AT reuse program, assists in domestic and foreign disasters when possible; e.g., Haiti response

Framing the Discussion, cont.'

Lynnae Ruttledge, RSA Commissioner

- Seven weeks into her new job, she has previous experience in responding to disasters
- Statewide inter-agency planning can play a big role in emergency preparation
- Emphasized opportunities to define additional involvement of Vocational Rehabilitation in preparing AT users for emergency readiness
- Has concerns about CILs, Native American rehabilitation programs and seasonal migrant programs

Emergency Management Cycle

- A cycle, not a line: no finite beginning and no end
- Plan, learn from problems and failures; revise
- Involve people with disabilities in all phases



Preparation

PANELISTS:

- Bruce McFarlane, NOD
- Helena Mitchell, Wireless RERC
- Kevin Curtin, USDA
- Jamie Karam, LATAN
- Faith McCormick, ADD



Preparation: Issues

- **Emergency communications not designed to reach people with various disabilities**
- **Shelters, evacuation system not prepared to deal with people with disabilities, AT**
- **Lack of emergency preparation by people with disabilities**
- **Strategies, infrastructure not in place to make appropriate use of reusable AT from programs around the country**

Response

PANELISTS:

- Tracy Keninger, Iowa Easter Seals
- Amy Green, Red Cross
- Julie Nesbit, LATAN
- David Lett, ACF
- Kay Chiodo, Deaf Link



Response: Issues

- **Inadequacy of communication technology after disaster (loss of land lines)**
- **People evacuated without AT or peripherals**
- **Loss of power impacts ability to re-charge devices**
- **Shelter staff not knowledgeable about AT, users**
- **AT users often diverted to medical shelters, overloading those unnecessarily**

Response: Issues, cont.'

- **No infrastructure for immediate access to replacement AT or delivery system**
- **Some AT sent to disaster sites not ready for use**
- **Difficulty finding storage places for staging AT**
- **Problems maintaining access to benefits and services (computer access, phones, displacement of service providers, etc.)**

Recovery

PANELISTS:

- William Lynch,
Dept. of Justice
- Elizabeth Davis,
EAD & Associates
- Richard Petty,
Inst. for Research
& Rehabilitation
and Univ. of Texas



Recovery: Issues

- **Evacuation to distant locations away from existing support system**
- **No prior identification of people with disabilities, assessment of needs**
- **Non-compliance with laws protecting people with disabilities; all apply**
- **Absence of priorities: first come, first serve**

Recovery: Issues, cont.'

- **No consideration of community infrastructure priorities for SBA business recovery loans (e.g., preserve pharmacy, AT provider, etc.)**
- **Rigidity in applying laws/policies not always best result for individual (all apply but flexibility for common sense application)**
- **Compensation for homes has no extra allowance for AT or home modifications**
- **Political influence provides higher compensation to evacuees to return to original home, even if relocation is better for person**

Mitigation

PANELISTS:

- Neil McDevitt, CEPIN
- June Kailes, Disability Policy Consultant
- Ed Tanzman, Argonne Nat. Lab
- Bryan Vaughan, FL Governor's Comm. on Disabilities



Mitigation: Issues

- **Inadequate building codes**
- **Absence of individual emergency preparedness**
- **AT not available when needed for emergency**
- **Multiplicity of charging devices and connectors for powered communication and AT devices**
- **Inaccessibility of many print materials to people with sensory disabilities**
- **Evacuees without medical records**
- **Bias in emergency management system that favors devices over education and training**

Recommendations

Role of AT Reuse in Emergency Mgt.

- Develop policies for EMs that explain use of AT/reused AT
- Developed standards for AT to be used in EM
- Modify policies to state temp. AT does not change right to new AT
- Clarify right of user to keep AT issued during emergency until it is no longer needed, regardless of relocation
- Devise protocols for return of unneeded AT to the emergency cache

Recommendations

Infrastructure Needed: The Vision

- Include AT resource info in EM training
- Add person to Incident Command System to assist with people with disabilities
- Create database, inventory of renewable, quality reused AT
- Pre-stage AT and use supply chain mgt. to deliver to point of need
- Forecast needs; implement checklist for shelters
- Teach responders how to trigger AT delivery
- All state plans should address needs of people with disabilities, multi-modal communications
- Involve vendors, mfrs. in meeting needs

Infrastructure Needed: The Vision, cont.'

- Include AT reuse in training of AT professionals (PT, OT, SLP, ATP)
- Implement MOUs with AT profs. at state level
- Have AT providers discuss emergency prep. with user when AT is assigned
- Put AT in the “ready line” for JIT delivery with other supplies
- Create incentives for donation of usable AT
- Establish a readily-available resource of “lessons learned” about AT in emergency management

Recommendations

Developing a Network for AT Reuse

- Identify and involve key groups who were not at DC Summit
- Advocate for inclusion of “disability cluster” in all facets of EM
- Encourage/educate people with disabilities to take more personal responsibility for prep.
- Get AT users involved in EM system to address issues related to shelters, evacuation, communication, etc.
- Advocate for standards for recharging devices
- Create technical assistance partnership to address ‘digital divide’, English literacy

Developing a Network, cont.'

- Work to build inter-agency models to coordinate response and mitigate impact
- Create and disseminate tools that help AT users prepare for disasters
- Identify and publicize preparation steps: “Go Kit”, labeling devices, gathering records, etc.
- Make use of existing models to forecast needs in emergency situations
- Create AT fact sheets to share with emergency responders

Next Steps

- Post information about this initiative on Web
- Draft Summit report and share widely
- Use mailing list software to disseminate information to all interested parties
- Flow chart current EM process as it related to AT reuse and identify gaps
- Establish priorities
- Create task forces or working groups to address specific facets of the initiative



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Questions? Suggestions?

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