# Assistive Technology Advisory Committee (ATAC)

# Meeting Minutes

**Wednesday, March 9, 2022, from 1:00 pm to 4:30pm**

**Participate by Video Conference**

[https://dor-ca-gov.zoom.us/j/89350103430?pwd=NW9oWjBwMmRldmJPNG5hNldGNWZSZz09](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fdor-ca-gov.zoom.us%2Fj%2F89350103430%3Fpwd%3DNW9oWjBwMmRldmJPNG5hNldGNWZSZz09&data=04%7C01%7CKarl.Ortega%40dor.ca.gov%7C857a37ec27fa4505e1e408d9f70620d3%7C19ed70549d9743c792b16781b6b95b68%7C0%7C0%7C637812427966651053%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=g6Sv5ecla7wY3IWBEmvg78YMearJA2Klo8yzmZGeE3o%3D&reserved=0)

**Participate by Teleconference**

Call: +1 (408) 638-0968 Meeting ID**:** 893 5010 3430 Passcode**:** 76163034

**Committee Members (present or joined remotely)**

* Kathleen Barajas
* Gloria Certvantes
* Larry Grable
* Brent Jolley
* NickoleRenee Mensch
* April Shin

**DOR Staff (present or joined remotely)**

* Ana Acton, Deputy Director, Independent Living Community Access Division
* Megan Sampson, Chief, Independent Living Assistive Technology Section
* Karl Ortega, AT Grant Administrator
* Timothy Burkhart, Voice Options Program
* Elizabeth Wood, Voice Options Program

**CFILC Staff (present or joined remotely)**

* Christina Mills, California Foundation for Independent Living Centers (CFILC) Executive Director
* Kathrine Crowley, CFILC Ability Program Manager
* Megan Cowdell, CFILC Deputy Director

**Agenda Item 1: Call to order**

Chair Grable called the meeting to order at 1:04 pm.

### **Agenda Item 2: Welcome and Introductions**

Larry Grable welcomed all ATAC members and members introduced themselves.

**Agenda Item 3: Review and Approve Review December 21, 2021, Meeting Minutes**

**Motion:** Member Jolley made a motion to accept the minutes and member Shin seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a 6-0-0 vote. (Yes – Members: Barajas, Certvantes, Ellis, Grable, Jolley, and Shin, (No – Members: 0), (Abstain – Members: 0).

**Agenda Item 4: Title IX Regulations- DOR Legal, Daisy Hughes**

DOR legal, Daisy Hughes informed members that DOR has identified necessary changes to regulations after an internal review conducted by DOR legal of our policies, procedures, and current regulations that guard against sexual and other forms of abuse. There was discussion on Title IV of the Education Act which prohibits discrimination of the basis of sex in any education program or activity that receives federal funds and that includes Vocation Rehabilitation. Title IV provides the framework for the regulatory changes that DOR has identified as a goal to mirror and follow these policies and practices. There was discussion on the current discrimination process and how complaints are handled on sexual misconduct.

DOR is expecting the federal government, U.S. Department of Education to issue amendments to the Title IV regulations as early as April 2022 and DOR plans to post the Title IV regulations amendments for public comment in December of 2022.

**Agenda Item 5: Guest Speaker, Wilson Tam, Chief-Aging and Disability Resource Connection Bureau and Alex Griffith, Analyst**

Wilson Tam, Chief-Aging and Disability Resource Connection and Alexandria Griffith from the California Department on Aging provided members with a comprehensive overview of the Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC). Members were informed about the difficulty families face navigating the fragmented maze of Long Term Supports and Systems (LTSS). The presentation covered the ‘No Wrong Door vision’, the benefits of ADRC partnerships and the linkage between ADRC and Assistive Technology.

The No Wrong Door system minimizes confusing by streaming access to LTSS though a single reliable source. This is a highly integrated network of various community-based organizations and extended partners. People of all ages, income, and disabilities receive access to the same information regardless of which partner ’door” they enter. There are many extended partners and state agencies who provide these services. For example, 211 Information and assistance, AT Programs, County Mental Health, Food Pantries, Hospitals, Independent Living Centers, Nursing facilities, Multipurpose Senior Service Programs, Department of Aging, Department of Developmental Services. Department of Public Health and many others.

One of the nice features about the ADRC and the extended partners is the ability to bring education and awareness to both consumers and their partners through the availably of AT services and programs. This this would include access to resources such as wheelchairs, glasses, hearing aids, screen readers, speech generating devise and support an individual choice to maintain independent in their community.

**Agenda Item 6: DOR Departmental and Programmatic Updates, Ana Acton, Deputy Director, Independent Living and Community Access Division**

ILATS Deputy Director Acton informed members that the month of March is brain injury awareness month and disability awareness month. This is a time to celebrate while increasing awareness.

She discussed Governor’s Newsome Covid 19 Smarter Plan as part of the pandemic recover discussed on February 17. This approach outlined foundational plans for the next phase of the Covid 19 pandemic. The foundation plans include making sure everyone has current Covid 19 shots and people are wearing masks whenever appropriate to reduce the spread of Covid 19. State agencies should also be prepared to handle what may come next including other Covid variances. There needs to be more education on Covid 19 and more testing for individuals who want a free Covid test.

Members were informed that all 28 Independent Living Centers provide assistive technology services through a $70,000 grant to provide a wide range of Assistive Technology (AT) services. Last year, 8,691 individuals set goals related to assistive technology and 7,214 met their goals. There are 6,802 consumers who receive assistive technology services through independent living centers. In additional, Independent Living Centers provided over 2,268 AT referrals.

There was discussion about the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) program, DOR completed a Request for Application (RFI) to award six TBI program sites with funding. The award was repealed, and DOR was requested complete a new evaluation panel and rescore the applications which were completed and posted with the intent to award. DOR is also working Community Based Spending Plan where DOR will receive funding for nine TBI contracts that will be effective April 1 to provide services for individuals with a TBI.

ILATS Section Chief Sampson discussed the federal grants from the Administration on Community Living. The first grant began in 2018, a TBI state partnership program grant that ends on May 30, 2022. The goal of the program was to establish a TBI advisory board, create a TBI state plan, create a TBI registry and create a TBI needs assessment. The TBI state plan is targeted to be approved in April 2022 and the TBI survey data is near completion. The next TBI partnership agreement was awarded in August 2021 with a new set of goals. TBI Advisory Committee also created a survivor committee to gain different perspectives. The goal of the subcommittee to provide information and education to community-based organizations.

Member Mensch recommended increasing the number of mobile units that delivery AT services would help get the numbers up. Member Jolley agreed and said fixed demonstration locations creates accessibility limitations.

ILATS Deputy Director Acton recommended creating an ATAC Ad-hoc subcommittee to address the AT State Plan and get stakeholder engagement to better inform the AT State Plan. This could be accomplished through a AT survey, a focus group and getting meaningful input. Members agreed and the following members agreed to an email will be sent to see which members would be interested in joining the subcommittee. The was also a recommendation to allow non-ATAC members to join. CFILC Executive Director Mills believes it would be a conflict on interest for CFILC staff to join the subcommittee.

**Agenda Item 7: Quarterly Report from Voice Options Program, Megan Sampson, ILATS Section Chief**

ILATS Section Chief Sampson informed members that the Voice Options Program is a partnership with the California Public Utilities Commission and the program provides free speech generating applications on an iPad to Californians who cannot speak or have a difficulty speaking completely free of charge. The goal of the program is to provide full and equitable telecommunications access for people with disabilities.

The Voice Options Program is in pilot year two that began July 1, 2021. The Voice Option Provider selects one of the six speech generating applications that best meets the individual needs and complete a demonstration. The consumer then selects the application that best suits their needs. The consumer then has the opportunity to receive a short-term loan between two to fourteen days with their selected speech application.

 Finally, the consumer can enter a long-term loan where they will receive a new iPad with their selected speech application.

There were 813 consumers have completed short-term loans and are moving or have moved into a long-term loan. On July 1, 2021, there were only 216 individuals or a 276% increase. There are now 25 Voice Options providers and there were only 12 vendors at the beginning of year two. This program covers 47 counties for in-person services that accounts for 94% of California being covered. The program only covered 36 counties previously and coverage can be provided remotely or by mail.

The Voice Options Program has been able to be collected key demographics that have allowed the program to change. For example, in the beginning of the Voice Options Program, DOR was only able to serve 12 disability types. Today, the program serves 54 disability types.

A sixth speech application was added to Voice Options- Proloquo2Go and over nine percent of consumers have selected this speech application.

The Voice Options Program has created new projects to further build-out the program. One program is the Disaster Emergency Assistance Program that is being created in partnership with California Office of Emergency Services where demonstration iPads are available with all six speech generating applications ready to be deployed in case of a disaster or a need for media assistance if the need arises to be deployed with a Functional Assessment Service Team (FAST).

**Agenda Item 8: Quarterly Report from Ability Tools, CFILC**

Kathrine Crowley, CFILC Ability Tools Program Manager provided members with the Ability Tools Quarterly update and the members also reviewed the 40-page report and the Assistive Technology Report covering period from: October 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021. A report summary can be located at: <https://dor.ca.gov/Home/AtacMeetingArchiv>

**Agenda Item 9: Meeting Break**

ATAC members and guests took a 10-minute meeting break.

**Agenda Item 10: AT Structures Discussion and RFA/RFP update**

ILATS Section Chief Sampson explained how everything with do in assistive technology starts with the AT State Plan. Every three years, each state is required to develop an AT State Plan that is updated annually when there are significant changes in the program. The AT State Plan explains the who, what, why and when and how assistive technology is done through specific goals and performance measures. Every state is also required to complete an Annual Progress Report (APR) that accurately demonstrates how we are doing in achieving the goals identified AT State Plan.

ILATS Deputy Director Acton discussed how members should begin planning for the AT State Plan and some considerations to consider. She said the AT Structure Overview document provided outlines some potential options how we administer AT Act funding. ILATS Section Chief Sampson provided members with some additonal background information regarding the current California AT Program. She explained that Ability Tools is the state AT program, and the program is administered by the California Foundation for independent Living Centers (CFILC). DOR also provides $70,000 in funding to each of the 28 Independent Living Centers to provide AT services.

ILATS Deputy Director Acton informed members that DOR is the Lead Agency who receives and administers about $1.2 million dollars in funding for the AT program. DOR completed a competitive bidding process to select an implementing entity which is currently CFILC to carry-out all state level and state leadership activities identified in the AT Act. Currently AT funding is administered through a competitive grant with CFILC as the Implementing Entity. The AT grantee also receives an additonal $210,000 in state funds through Welfare and Institution Code to provide information and assistance and support to independent living centers around assistive technology.

The current AT grant expired and was extended one additonal year with CFILC through September 30, 2022. DOR is considering extending the AT grant for one additonal year to align with the AT State Plan this is due July 1, 2022. The AT State Plan will identify how AT activities are carried out which will drive how AT funding should be administered from the AT Act.

**Agenda Item 11: CFILC Spending Proposals: AT American Rescue Plan Funding and AT Salary Savings**

ILATS Deputy Director Acton discussed the $80,000 in American Rescue funding that is active now and must be spend down by September 30, 2024. This funding is for staffing specifically. DOR has also been working with accounting and there is $174,000 in AT salary savings that must be spent down by September 30, 2022. CFILC was requested to put together some spending proposal to send down these funds. CFILC Executive Director Mills provided the following spending proposals to spend down the $174,000 in AT Salary Savings. Member were asked to select the top two options to spend down funds.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Spending Proposal | Amount |
| 1 | AT Conference in 2022 | $40,000  |
| 2 | AT Research & Analysis Consultant w/ Mobile DLDC options  | $40,000  |
| 3 | DLDC Smart Devices- Purchase additonal equipment | $25,000  |
| 4 | Digital Literacy Health Training Series | $40,000  |
| 5 | AT Gaming Maker Events for Youth & Adults | $15,000  |
| 6 | Website Redesign / Redo | $15,000  |
| 7 | Mobil Research Units - Details pending. This option was a suggestion from the ATAC.  |   |

Members agreed by consensus to the following spending proposals: There were:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Option(s) | # of Votes |
| Option 1  | 1 |
| Option 2 | 0 |
| Option 3 | 2 |
| Option 4 | 0 |
| Option 5 | 1 |
| Option 6 | 2 |
| Option 7 | 3 |

CFILC Executive Director Mills agreed to provide DOR with revised spending proposals based on the ATAC selected options above.

To spend down the $80,000 American Recue Plan funding, CFILC Executive Director Mills proposed hiring a part-time temporary ability tools staff to serve as disability health coordinator for staffing over a two-year period. This position would be responsible for cultivating and maintaining relationships with the Department of Public Health and Office of Emergency Services. To organize and coordinate the Personal Protection Equipment, and Covid 19 Testing kits for all independent living centers.

**Agenda Item 12: ATAC Bylaws revision- vote: Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

**Motion:** Member Mensch made a motion to revise the ATAC Bylaws: *To be eligible for officer positions, an individual shall be a current member of the ATAC,* and member Barajas seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a 5-0-0 vote. (Yes – Members: Barajas, Grable, Jolley, Mensch and Shin), (No – Members: 0), (Abstain – Members: 0).

**Motion:** Member Grable made a motion to elect a new ATAC Vice-Chair and member Mensch seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a 5-0-0 vote. (Yes – Members: Barajas, Grable, Jolley, Mensch and Shin), (No – Members: 0), (Abstain – Members: 0).

**Motion:** Member Barajas made a motion to elect a new ATAC Chair and member Jolley seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a 5-0-0 vote. (Yes – Members: Barajas, Grable, Jolley, Mensch and Shin), (No – Members: 0), (Abstain – Members: 0).

**Agenda Item 13: Updates from Committee and respective communities and agencies**

There were no report-outs.

**Agenda Item 14: Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Agenda Item 15: Call for a motion to adjourn the meeting**

**Motion:**

Member Grable made a motion to adjourn the meeting and the motion was seconded by member Jolley. The meeting was adjourned.