# **Assistive Technology Advisory Committee (ATAC)**

# **Meeting Minutes**

**October 5, 2022**

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

* Larry Grable, Chair
* Gloria Certvantes
* April Shin
* Kathleen Barajas
* NickoleRenee Mensch (joined late)

**Committee Members (absent)**

* Brent Jolley
* Keith Ellis
* Sherry Mung

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

* Ana Acton, Deputy Director, Independent Living Community Access Division (ILCAD)
* Megan Sampson, Chief, Independent Living Assistive Technology Section
* Kritika Devi, ILCAD
* Regina Cademarti, ILCAD
* Timothy Burkhart, Voice Options Program
* Elizabeth Wood, Voice Options Program
* Michael Lee, Voice Options Program
* William Blalock-Tovar, Chief Office Technician

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

* Kathrine Crowley, CFILC Ability Program Manager
* Megan Cowdell, Deputy Director (joined late)

**Members of the Public**

* Michael Galvin, Community Resources for Independent Living
* Lana Nieves, Independent Living Resource Center San Francisco
* Samantha Mam, Disabled Resources Center
* Vincent Johnson, Disabled Resources Center
* Harry, Service Center for Independent Life
* Neil Kim, Stanford University
* Jen McDonald-Peltier, Center for Accessible Technology (joined late)
* Norma Mendoza, Rolling Start, Inc. (joined late)
* Robert Medel, Santa Clara Valley Medical Center (joined late)

**Agenda Item 1: Call to order**

Chair Grable called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

**Agenda Item 2: Welcome and Introductions**

Larry Grable welcomed all ATAC members to introduce themselves, followed by DOR staff, CFILC staff, and then members of the public. As four ATAC members were present, quorum was not met.Chair Grable identified that without a quorum any agenda items requiring voting would need to be skipped.

**Agenda Item 3: Review and approve meeting minutes from March 9, 2022**

This meeting item was skipped as quorum was not met at this time.

**Agenda Item 4: Department of Rehabilitation Report, Ana Acton**

Deputy Director (DD) Acton identified the role disability plays in equity, diversity, and inclusion, especially in relation to an inclusive workforce, and promoted DOR’s NDEAM event on October 26, 2022. DD Acton provided information on the Demand Side Employment Initiatives, which allots $5M for inclusive hiring in small and medium-sized businesses.

DD Acton identified the new federal fiscal year and the implication of new funding for the federal program along with the $70,000 allocation to each California Independent Living Center for AT-related activities.

DD Acton discussed the Community Living Fund Program, a one-time $10M allocation for institutional transition and diversion for individuals with disabilities and older adults, which will be modeled off San Francisco’s Community Living Fund. DD Acton emphasized that this funding could be used for services but could also be used for AT and durable medical equipment (DME). The intent of this funding is to be used to support, not supplant other funding sources.

No questions were asked.

**Agenda Item 5: Voice Options Program Report**

Elizabeth Wood, Voice Options Outreach and Communications Coordinator, provided an overview of the Voice Options Program. This program is a collaboration with the California Public Utilities Commission and provides demonstrations and short-term loans of six speech-generating applications on iPads to Californians who cannot speak or who have difficulty speaking. Following this loan period, the Consumer can identify their preferred application, and enter into a long-term loan in which they receive their speech-application, a new iPad, a case, charger, and any ancillary devices needed to use the program.

The Voice Options Program has 26 Providers, offer materials in 11 different languages, provide in-person services to 96 percent of California, and also provide services virtually and by mail. Consumers range in age from 18 months old to over 80 years, span more than 50 disability types, and efforts are being made to reach more BIPOC communities.

Chief Sampson provided information about accessibility and technical assistance and Chair Grable provided information about demonstrations.

**Item of note**

Chair Grable identified additional participants had joined and asked them to introduce themselves. Jen McDonald-Peltier, ATAC Member NickoleRenee Mensch, Norma Mendoza,andRobert Medel introduced themselves.

**Agenda Item 3: Review and approve meeting minutes from March 9, 2022**

Chair Grable requested Chief Sampson return to Agenda Item 3. Chief Sampson orally and visually shared the meeting minutes from March 9, 2022. A vote for approval was called with all in favor (5-0) of approving the meeting minutes.

**Agenda Item 6: Ability Tools Report, Kathrine Crowley**

Ability Tools Program Manager (PM) Crowley defined the AT activities under the AT Act as follows:

State leadership activities deal with the intangible information providing elements of at act requirements, including public awareness activities which have a wide scope and provide general information, information and assistance activities which have the narrowest of scopes providing information specific to individuals, needs trainings which are delivered to groups, and are designed to build on knowledge and skills, and finally, technical assistance, which are long term commitments to facilitate systemic changes to organizations that need improvements to be more inclusive to all members of the general population.

State level activities are much more hands on. They're dealing with activities that work to get assisted technology directly into the hands of consumers. It includes device demonstrations which provide consumers with the ability to attune themselves to a device alongside an AT specialist who can provide information about the device and answer any questions the consumer might have. Consumers are also able to participate in device loans so that they can try out devices in their homes for 30 days. Consumers are also able to get devices for free or low cost through utilization activities or get support purchasing new devices, utilizing State financing activities.

PM Crowley highlighted the following State Leadership Activities:

The Ability Tools network connected with over 32,000 participants over the course of this quarter, was featured in two pieces of media from outside organizations, and published seven blogs in the third quarter, including topics like accessible hiking, physical education, accommodations for students, etc.

PM Crowley stated that in the last quarter 120 households were connected to low-cost internet, 344 individuals participated in 9 training workshops, the annual Earth Day Conference was held, and worked towards Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waivers for AT.

PM Crowley highlighted the following State Level Activities:

* 150 device demonstration activities were performed to 171 participants, which included a consumer interested in trying out a standing desk to alleviate pain from sitting for an extended period.
* 356 devices were loaned through 272 loan activities. These included things like demonstrations of Bluetooth switches, accessibility features of iPads, and loans of various accessibility items to test.
* 809 reutilization devices were distributed through 512 activities.

PM Crowley noted that Independent Living Centers continue to under report AT activities which impact reporting to the Administration for Community Living.

PM Crowley reported eight staff vacancies including the Executive Director position.

Megan Cowdell, Deputy Director of CFILC, introduced herself and thanked PM Crowley for her presentation. No questions were asked.

**Agenda Item 7: AT State Plan**

Chief Sampson informed members that the State Plan for Assistive Technology (SPAT) is developed and prepared by DOR in collaboration with CFILC with the advice and feedback of the ATAC. The SPAT is required to be completed every 3 years, defines how CA will conduct AT activities, and is tied to annual reporting.

SPAT Activities:

* Advisory Council
* State Leadership Activities
* State Level Activities
* Coordination and Collaboration
* Leveraged Funding

**Agenda Item 8: AT Annual Progress Report**

Chief Sampson informed members about the main components of the Annual Progress Report (APR) as they align with the SPAT, which are:

* Outcome Measurements
* Consumer Satisfaction
* Expenditures
* Cost Savings for Consumers

**Agenda Item 9: AT Needs Assessment Survey**

Chief Sampson informed members the Assistive Technology Engagement Survey was created to determine how Californians learned about, obtained, and used AT to better serve them. 100 people responded to the survey and were allowed to select multiple options on several questions; therefore, percentages for some questions will exceed 100 percent. The Engagement Survey measured AT engagement, barriers accessing AT services and equipment, and knowledge and participation statewide. The following is a summary of the presentation provided by Chief Sampson:

Findings:

* When an individual needs information about AT, they are most likely to search the internet for information (57%) about it, contact their doctor or healthcare provider (46%), reach out to their local Independent Living Center (42%), or ask a friend or family member (32%).
* 53% purchase their AT out-of-pocket
* 50% off the internet
* 49% doctor or healthcare provider
* If they cannot obtain it from either of those sources, they will buy it from a medical supply store (40%), reach out to an ILC (26%), or borrow one from a friend or family member (22%)
* Once they no longer need their AT, there is an 80 percent chance that the item is donated, 42 percent chance it is given to a friend or family member, and a 28 percent chance that it is kept in a closet or garage in case it’s needed again.
* Only 14 percent of individuals sell their AT and 11 percent throw it away

When asked how California’s Assistive Technology Program can help to better meet their needs, Californians across the state replied:

* Provide more outreach and information. Be proactive in keeping up to date on new technology and make resources easy to find and access.
* Provide better access to affordable reuse equipment, short-term loans, and training.
* Help us to navigate insurance claims, appeals, letters of medical necessity, waiver programs, and provide help to access to AT we need.
* Train hospital discharge planners and maintain relationships to ensure needs are being met immediately.
* Don’t silo disabilities into various places; provide technical assessments for all disabilities at all locations.

Chair Grable opened the floor for questions, for which there weren’t any.

**Agenda Item 10: Committee and respective community updates**

Chair Grable asked Chief Sampson to inform members about the purpose of this agenda item. Chief Sampson stated that it was a time during which the ATAC members could discuss AT updates, information that should be shared, advice, community updates, etc. No ATAC members had items to share.

**Agenda Item 11: Public comment**

Chair Grable opened the floor for public comment. There was no public comment.

**Agenda Item 12: Call for motion to adjourn**

Chair Grable called for a motion to adjourn. Member Mensch motioned to adjourn and Member Certvantes seconded the motion. The meeting ended at 2:15PM.