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

# **Meeting Minutes**

**December 7, 2022**

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

* Larry Grable, Chair
* Brent Jolley
* Keith Ellis
* Gloria Certvantes
* April Shin
* Kathleen Barajas
* NickoleRenee Mensch
* 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
* Lisa O’Guinn, Independent Living and Assistive Technology Section
* 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

**Members of the Public**

* Jen McDonald-Peltier, Center for Accessible Technology

**Agenda Item 1: Call to order**

Chair Grable called the meeting to order at 9:30 am.

**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.

**Agenda Item 3: Review and approve meeting minutes from October 5, 2022**

Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

**Agenda Item 4: Department of Rehabilitation Report, Megan Sampson**

Chief Sampson discussed current happenings within the DOR. Introduced new Independent Living and Assistive Technology Section manager Lisa O’Guinn and Assistive Technology program analyst, Elizabeth Wood, highlighted the appointment of Peter Frangel and Jake Johnson, and acknowledged hiring of Jean Cooper and Denise Dorsey.

Chief Sampson also provided updates regarding the tentative offer made for the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) analyst position, the posted positions for ILATS Office Technician and the Community Living Fund analyst, and for the advertised Limited-term analyst position for Voice Options. A brief update was also provided on the Community Living Fund release, which was intended to begin February 1, 2023, with $8.8 million and up to 50 nonprofits collaborating.

**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 28 Providers, offer materials in 11 different languages, provide in-person services to 98 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.

**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 37,000 participants by the end of the quarter, was featured in three pieces of media from outside organizations, and published fourteen blogs in the fourth quarter, including topics like accessible fashion, education, gardening, etc.

In the last quarter 36 households were connected to low-cost internet, 72 individuals participated in 5 training workshops, and 294 individuals participated in 207 information and assistance events.

PM Crowley also highlighted the following State Level Activities:

* 136 device demonstration activities were performed to 155 participants
* 401 devices were loaned through 323 loan activities. These included things like demonstrations of Bluetooth switches, accessibility features of iPads, and loans of various accessibility items to test.
* 787 reutilization devices were distributed through 537 activities.

PM Crowley noted that Independent Living Centers continue to under report AT activities which impact reporting to the Administration for Community Living, and reported eight staff vacancies in CFILC, including the Executive Director position.

**Agenda Item 7: AT Annual Progress Report, Megan Sampson**

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.

Chief Sampson also informed members about the main goals and requirements 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 8: AT Program RFA/RFP, Megan Sampson**

Chief Sampson highlighted considerations being made as we approach the end of our agreement timeline. Chief Sampson reviewed with members the pros and cons of utilizing a contract, or RFP, versus using a grant, which would require an RFA be used. Chief Sampson and Program Manager Crowley offered comparisons for how other states implement their AT programs, noting that California has received criticism for how it has been administered. Program Manager Crowley and DD Megan Cowdell discussed CFILC’s historical participation with the AT program, and provided insight as to possible challenges with a RFA versus RFP.

ATAC members Jolley and Ellis and Chair Grable offered questions and discussions/comments on the efficiency and effectiveness of past and current models.

**Agenda Item 9: 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 10: Public comment**

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

**Agenda Item 11: Call for motion to adjourn**

Chair Grable called for a motion to adjourn. Member Ellis motioned to adjourn and Member Shin seconded the motion. The meeting ended at 11:15PM.