# **Department of Rehabilitation (DOR)**

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

# **Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, July 16, 2024**

**9:00 am – 12:00 pm**

**Meeting Locations and Attendance**

Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), 721 Capitol Mall, Room 301, Sacramento, CA 95814

* Attendance: Keith Ellis; Regina Cademarti, Chief, Independent Living and Assistive Technology Section (ILATS)
* DOR Staff: Sheeyee Ntuj, Staff Services Manager, ILATS; Elizabeth Wood, Assistive Technology Program Analyst, ILATS

Service Center for Independent Life, 107 South Spring Street, Claremont, CA 91711

* Attendance: Larry Grable, Chair

By Zoom:

* Attendance: April Shin; Sandee Nieves; Gloria Cervantes; Brent Jolley; Kathleen Barajas, Vice Chair
* Members of the Public: Autumn Dalton, Vincent Ewing

**Item 1: Call to Order**

Chair Grable called the meeting to order at 9:01 am and welcomed all participants.

**Agenda Item 2: Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Grable introduced himself, followed by DOR staff, CFILC staff, ATAC members, and members of the public.

**Agenda Item 3: Review and Approve April 3, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

As quorum was not met, postponed review of April 3 Meeting Minutes until next meeting.

**Agenda Item 4: Department of Rehabilitation Updates**

ILATS Chief Regina Cademarti provided general DOR updates.

* DOR hired two Staff Services Managers for the ILATS, Sheeyee Ntuj over Voice Options and Assistive Technology, and Shapree Butler over Independent Living.
* The Governor’s FY24-25 budget includes a budget deficit, but there are no cuts to Independent Living or Assistive Technology.
* The AT Program received over $1.3 million from the Administration for Community Living and $210,000 from the State General Fund for AT Act services for FY24-25.
* DOR’s Assistive Technology Program also received the Public Health Workforce grant, which closes September 30, 2024.
* DOR is gearing up to make the AT State Plan (SPAT) for FY24-26 AT Program activities and reporting, as the SPAT dictates what must be reported in December for AT Annual Progress Reporting (APR).
* Connected with the AT Program in Michigan for information sharing and sharing best practices – expecting to maintain ongoing collaboration.

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

AT Analyst Wood provided an overview of the Voice Options Program (VOP). This program is a collaboration with the California Public Utilities Commission’s Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program and provides demonstrations and short-term loans of six speech-generating applications on iPads to Californians who cannot speak or who have difficulty speaking.

The Voice Options Program has 29 providers, offers materials in 11 different languages, provides in-person services to 98 percent of California, and 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 black, indigenous, and other people of color and rural communities.

Highlighted the Voice Options data entry training, held in partnership with Kathrine at CFILC, for Independent Living Centers who are also Voice Options Providers on entering VOP data into NATADS to streamline reporting. Also noted the Memorandum of Understanding between the California Public Utilities Commission and DOR has been signed, finalizing another year of services. One notable addition is the digital authorization form that consumers can complete online. The VOP team is finalizing grant amendments for Providers and their cataloguing device inventory. Timothy Burkhart retired from the Voice Options Program June 2024, and DOR is working on backfilling for his position.

**Agenda Item 6: Ability Tools Report**

CFILC Ability Tools Deputy Director Crowley was unable to join the meeting, so this agenda item was skipped.

**Agenda Item 7: AT Program Updates**

AT Analyst Wood provided updates for the AT Program. DOR is gearing up for the AT State Plan (SPAT), which delineates the anticipated activities for FY24-26, as ACL is rolling out changes to the SPAT to better align with the 21st Century AT Act. Reviewed expectations and laws of the Bagley Keene Open Meeting Act. Provided updates regarding ATAC membership recruitment efforts and potential members for the Department of Education, Department of Healthcare Services, Disability Rights California, and/or the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service. Discussed the revised Assistive Technology Advisory Committee Application, which is an accessible and fillable PDF.

**Agenda Item 9: Assistive Technology Program Request for Interest (RFI)**

Ahead of schedule, so addressed this item prior to Agenda Item 8 to allow presenter preparation time.

AT Analyst Wood provided a follow-up of the AT RFI and Scope of Work, posted publicly March 28, which gathered interest and feedback for the AT Act Program. Responses from the RFI are being used to help guide and refine the AT Program solicitation. The current AT grant is being extended through March 2025 to allow time for the RFP process.

**Agenda Item 8: Service Center for Independent Life (SCIL)**

Gina Hernandez provided an overview of two of Service Center for Independent Life’s programs, Talking Fingers Braille Program and their Food Pantry program. Through Talking Fingers Braille, individuals who are blind/low-vision can obtain printed documents converted to braille and made more accessible. This includes restaurant menus, reading materials, outreach materials, greeting cards and more. Hernandez also shared the Food Pantry program, which operates in partnership with local grocery stores to bring groceries to individuals and families who need it. This includes collecting food, and sometimes home/living supplies like furniture and kitchenware, and these items are delivered to over 80 families weekly.

**Agenda Item 10: Committee and Respective Community Updates**

Chair Grable asked ATAC members to discuss AT or community updates, or any information that should be shared.

Keith Ellis shared that he was reappointed to the City of Sacramento Disability Advisory Commission, which addresses accessibility issues in Sacramento through policy and implementation.

**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 Ellis motioned to adjourn and Member Barajas seconded the motion. The meeting ended at 10:21 am.