

RI Council on Assistive Technology
September 9, 2010 ~ 2:30 – 4:00 pm
PARI IL Center
500 Prospect Street ~ Pawtucket, RI

Minutes

Attendees: Kathleen Fresher-Samways, Elisabeth Hubbard, James Litvack, Melissa McDonald, Mike Montanaro, Teresa O'Brien, Daniel Pieroni, and Kim Wennermark.

Guest: Becky Wright – RIDE.

Partners: Denise Corson, ATEL; Roberta Greene-Whittemore, ATAP Program Director; Kat Grygiel, former ATAP Program Director; Allen Parent-Wetmore, PARI.

Welcome: Meeting was called to order at 2:40 p.m. by Co-Chair Dan Pieroni.

Approval of Minutes from 6/24/10: James Litvack made motion, seconded by Liz Hubbard to approve minutes. Motion unanimously passed.

Co-Chair Report:

- Co-Chair Pieroni brought up the topic of his work schedule and how he might not be able to make the RICAT meetings every time as he has started substitute teaching. He also stated he remains committed to RICAT, but does not feel it is fair to other co-chair and questioned having a defacto chair to take over at those times or have one of the ATAP members run those meetings. Liz Hubbard brought up the RICAT Guidelines (attached) and questioned how often would this happen. Guidelines would need to be amended if another chair were

added. Kat Grygiel noted that as we already had an agenda set up for this meeting, could this be put on next meetings' agenda. Kim Wennermark asked if we have guidelines on website. Members have been asked to review them and come back next meeting with suggestions. Dan Pieroni noted how he was worried about the number of people whose terms would be coming to an end. Kathleen Samways asked about finding out what other groups do. Kat responded that they had put a lot of work in revising guidelines and training. She feels they need to look at guidelines, think through what they need, and then make decision. Roberta added in that when we think about future meetings, we need to take into consideration holidays/religious dates. Kathleen added that a lot of people are representing agencies, but there are also some who can't make it through the day. Kat commented that is a valid point that not everyone is in position to do this during their work day. Kim W. commented on succession planning – planning ahead and electing next 2 so that they would be mentoring under the current two Co-Chairs.

New Business (Roundtable):

- Kat Grygiel commented that Liz Hubbard had given a presentation on the AT Act, and today she would give a brief presentation on the core services of ATAP including General Information and the 4 main initiatives: State Financing, Reutilization, Device Loans, and Device Demonstrations. (See attached). When RSA awards grant to states they do not presume every service can be offered by every state. RI traditionally utilized a decentralized model – ORS functions as lead agency then other agencies are contracted to provide some of these services. Intent of act is to get AT to individuals with disabilities and their families. Most of the service areas listed on attachment provided by Kat are provided by RI. Some states offer an Alternative Finance Program. RI does not offer. Acquisition and access – gets AT into hands of clients that

need them. RI has luxury of having ATEL, which is 95% state funded (small percentage comes from ATAP), who provides adaptive telephone equipment to those needing it. Denise Corson, ATEL Program Coordinator, commented that this year they serviced about 350 individuals. Usually ATEL ran out of money in March used to purchase equipment, and this year they did not due to change in location. Legislation tells us what type of equipment they can provide and some of it is outdated. ATEL Advisory Council is looking to revisit the array of technology provided. There are so many devices out there that they are unable to provide due to the legislation. Kathleen Samways asked out public access information/PA systems and the law. Kat responded this law was just about ATEL and individual systems in homes.

Reutilization – PARI is our partner that primarily provides reutilization. Consists of donations to PARI, and also consists of equipment exchange through website www.getATstuff.com.

Device Loans provide an opportunity for someone to try out a piece of equipment prior to purchasing. Also, when someone is waiting for a piece of equipment to come in, they can sometimes borrow this equipment from PARI. Three of our partners provide device loans – PARI, TechACCESS, and East Bay Educational Collaborative.

Device Demonstrations – all of our partners do demonstrations to educate small groups of individuals on AT.

On an annual basis we submit report to RSA, and what we need to provide is an account of deliverables provided to individuals. We need to submit both numerical data and results of 2 surveys.

Melissa MacDonald questioned if ORS is involved with AT for transition age students. Kat responded that ATAP is not involved in purchasing equipment for individuals. ATAP receives about \$312,000 a year. One thing several states have done is developed a School Swap program where they utilize AT dollars to help schools develop a device loan and exchange program. RI has not done this for several reasons: 1) limited dollars, 2) responsibility of school system to have AT needs met through school system. When it comes to ORS, same applies. We can provide VR evaluations and summer work experiences while students are in high school, again purchase of AT falls on schools to resolve. When someone is in college, that is a different issue. Roberta added that if a piece of equipment is needed to perform a job function, they could also look to the employer to provide AT equipment as an accommodation. Roberta noted that they have a Memorandum of Understanding between RI Dept. of Education (RIDE) and ORS. Kat added that RIDE and ORS are currently updating the Memorandum of Understanding. Liz Hubbard also added that when the school purchases equipment for students, it is the property of school system. However if parents get it through health insurance, then it belongs to the student. Becky White added they need to make sure it gets written into the IEP. Kat added that on a national level there is a push to invest in School Swap. We have chosen that until resources come in, or schools come in requesting assistance, we have not taken it on. Kim W. questioned at what time does ORS write an IPE in conjunction with an IEP for a student. Kat responded that when we do an employment plan with any client, we have already done whatever we need to do to determine eligibility. We'll do an employment plan for student if we feel we need to a vocational evaluation, some type of assessment to look at driving skills, if the student might be thinking of doing a summer work experience. They do an IPE to cover time when in school, but it is then updated at time of graduation. Kathleen

Samways asked about equipment purchased while in school. When it is purchased, it is important for it to be written somewhere who device belongs to. Melissa added that if you go on RIDE website, there is a Medicaid pamphlet that was developed about purchasing equipment. Schools are getting IDEA money every year under RIDE to purchase AT. If federal dollars are used, property can't be resold so sometimes equipment does just sit in closet. Kat commented they are acutely aware that there is AT in closets that they would love to get their hands on and put in recycling or loan programs. Time involved in setting up school swap does not let us take on this initiative. Dan added that he had to use laptop when in school, but his school system made sure it was their property.

Melissa MacDonald stated they have the Materials Center for Students with visual impairment which is housed at the Northern Educational Collaborative that provides information free to schools. Districts don't take advantage of this center as much as they should. Instead they have their people order stuff.

Kat said if there are ways to be seen as a broker for some of these loans. ORS is looking at utilizing ATAP for loan prior to purchase to make sure device is appropriate and better decisions are made.

Allen stated that PARI counselors can't utilize their own PAAT program.

Roberta added that so much of the AT is the training along with the device. If people have the opportunity to try it out prior to purchase, it helps.

Kat had talked with Judi Carlson, TechACCESS, about school swap program and how for several years she has tried to

coordinate between schools and consolidate purchasing equipment. Melissa added that there is an association on the idea of BJ's, and you can bulk order computer items. Only thing is you have to be careful about guidelines and specialized equipment.

ATAP Program Director's Report:

- Roberta Greene Whittemore stated she would defer to Allen so that he could give the tour of PARI. She first reminded everyone that the AT Conference will be November 30th at the Crowne Plaza at the Crossing, Warwick, RI.

ATAP Partners' Reports:

- PARI: Allen Parent Wetmore noted that they are involved with recycling, device loan, device demonstration, state level activities, information and referral, collaboration with other partners, and public awareness. PARI itself is an independent living center which provides advocacy, peer support, job training, PCA program to help individuals keep their independence. PAAT program is what we are here to see. Allen proceeded to show their storage/refurbishing room. PARI staff person, Jim, takes in donations, cleans, repairs, inspects, labels, then sells/loans out equipment. They recently purchased a sanitizer with a grant from the Champlin Foundation. The tour then moved on to the demonstration center. They keep one of everything they have. Wheelchairs, bed rails, transport wheel chairs, tub seats and transfer benches are items that are hard to keep in stock. A lot of times they will let them take items home to try out. Allen stated they will soon be starting to sell new equipment as well as refurbished equipment. Policy has not been set yet as far as if set pricing will be used or flexible. Goal is to get people the equipment, and hopefully it will be donated back to them down the road. Barcode system will be used to separate new and refurbished equipment.

Next Meeting: November 4, 2010 – TechACCESS of RI, 110
Jefferson Blvd, Warwick, RI

Motion was made by Kim Wennermark and seconded by Melissa MacDonald to adjourn meeting at 4:10 pm. Motion passed.

Attachment

Assistive Technology Access Partnership

9/9/10

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACCESS PARTNERSHIP (ATAP)

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

The Rhode Island Assistive Technology Access Partnership (ATAP) is designed as a statewide partnership of organizations, each with a targeted assistive technology focus, working together to improve access to and acquisition of assistive technology for individuals with disabilities. ATAP's main initiatives include: State Financing, Device Demonstration; Device Loan; Device Re-Use; Training, Public Awareness, Collaboration, Information & Referral ORS functions as the lead agency for ATAP. Partners include Adaptive Telephone Equipment Loan Program (ATEL), East Bay Educational Collaborative (EBEC), Ocean State Center for Independent Living (OSCIL), PARI Independent Living Center, and TechACCESS of RI.

II. STATE FINANCING

A state financing activity is an activity approved as part of the State Plan for AT. State financing focuses on the development of systems to provide and pay for AT, for the purchase, lease, or other acquisition of, or payment for AT; or of State-financed or privately financed alternative financing systems of subsidies. The Adaptive Telephone Equipment Loan Program (ATEL) is the ATAP element that captures this activity.

III. REUTILIZATION

Device reutilization includes device exchange activities, device recycle/refurbish/repair activities and open-ended device loans in which the borrower can keep the device for as long as it is needed, because these loans are considered a form of “acquisition.” Device exchange activities are those in which devices are listed in a “want ad”-type posting and consumers can contact and arrange to obtain the device (either by purchasing it or obtaining it for free) from the current owner -

getATStuff. Device recycle/refurbish/repair activities are those in which devices are accepted (usually by donation) into an inventory; are repaired, sanitized, and/or refurbished as needed; and then offered for sale, loan, rental, or give away to consumers as recycled products. PARI provides the ATAP re-use service for primarily durable medical equipment.

IV. DEVICE LOANS

ATAP provides short-term loans of AT devices to individuals or entities. The purpose of the loan may be to assist in decision making, to serve as a loaner while the consumer is waiting for device repair or funding, to provide an accommodation on a short-term basis, or for other purposes. The other purposes may include: self-education by a consumer for the purpose of later decision making, self-education by an intermediary and training. PARI, TechACCESS & East Bay Educational Collaborative provide these services.

V. DEVICE DEMONSTRATIONS

Device demonstrations compare the features and benefits of a particular AT device or category of devices for an individual or small group of individuals. The purpose of a device demonstration is to enable an individual to make an informed choice.

Whenever possible, the participant should be shown a variety of devices. Device demonstrations are intended to enable an individual to make an informed choice rather than merely making him or her aware of a variety of AT. In a device demonstration for an individual, guided experience with the device(s) is provided to the participant with the assistance of someone who has technical expertise related to the device(s). This expert may be in the same location as the participant or may assist the participant through Internet or distance learning mechanism that provides real-time, effective communication to deliver the necessary device exploration. All partners provide device demonstrations.

VI. TRAINING

Training activities are instructional events, usually planned in advance for a specific purpose or audience, that are designed to increase participants' knowledge, skills, and competencies regarding AT. Such events can be delivered to large or small groups, in-person, or via telecommunications or other distance education mechanisms. In general, participants in training can be individually identified and could complete an evaluation of the training. Examples of training include classes, workshops, and presentations that have a goal of increasing skills, knowledge, and competency, as opposed to training intended only to increase general awareness of AT.

VII. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Technical Assistance is defined as direct problem-solving service provided by Statewide AT Program staff to assist programs and agencies in improving their services, management, policies, and/or outcomes. TA may be provided in person, by electronic media such as telephone, video, or e-mail, and by other means. The following are examples of technical assistance: needs assessment, program planning or development, curriculum or materials development, administrative or management consultation, program evaluation and site reviews of external organizations, and policy development.

VIII. PUBLIC AWARENESS AND INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

Public awareness activities are designed to reach large numbers of people, including activities such as public service announcements, radio talk shows and news reports, newspaper stories and columns, newsletters, brochures, and public forums. Actual numbers of information recipients are often difficult to know for certain, but should be reported when known, and in other cases estimated as accurately as possible. Information and assistance includes provision of information and supports to individuals and provision of referrals to other entities.

IX. COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION ACTIVITIES

ATAP coordinate activities, among public and private entities, that are responsible for policies, procedures, or funding for the provision of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services to individuals with disabilities, service providers, and others to improve access to assistive technology devices and assistive technology services for individuals with disabilities of all ages in the State.

X. STATE IMPROVEMENT OUTCOMES

AT Programs will receive referrals, share information, serve on advisory boards, etc. and will provide assistance to a variety of agencies and entities. Outcomes as a result of any improvement initiatives by the State may address written policies, practices, and procedures that the State has developed and implemented about access to, provision of, and funding for, assistive technology devices, and assistive technology services, in the contexts of education, health care, employment, community living, and information technology and telecommunications, including e-government.

XI. ADDITIONAL AND LEVERAGED FUNDS

Statewide AT Programs establish partnerships and leverage funds to support state implementation of required AT Act activities as described in the State Plan.

XII. PERFORMANCE MEASURES & SATISFACTION SURVEYS

ATAP gathers information about decision-making and satisfaction of customers and incorporates



ATAP ADVISORY COUNCIL GUIDELINES

NAME

The name of the body shall be the Rhode Island Council on Assistive Technology, hereinafter referenced as RICAT.

PURPOSE

The mission of the RI Council on Assistive Technology is to provide guidance and advice to the Assistive Technology Access Partnership (ATAP).

RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) To provide consumer-responsive, consumer-driven advice to ATAP for the planning, implementation and evaluation of the activities carried out through the AT Act.
- 2) To assist ATAP in development and monitoring of annual goals for the program.
- 3) To participate in the development of the annual program plan updates.
- 4) To provide guidance to ATAP in establishment of priorities.
- 5) To adhere to the Rhode Island Open Meeting Law, Rhode Island General Laws §42-46-1 et. seq., with particular emphasis on architectural and environmental accessibility.

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

- 1) The Council shall be comprised of no fewer than 15 members.
- 2) The Council shall have a representative from the Office of Rehabilitation Services, State Center for Independent Living, State Workforce Investment Board, Rhode Island Department of Education, as well as other State Agencies as determined by the lead agency. These representatives shall not count as consumer representation.
- 3) "Fifty-one per cent (51%) of the members, **excluding required representatives listed above**, shall be individuals with disabilities who use assistive technology, or the family members/guardians of the individuals.
- 4) The Advisory Council shall be geographically representative of the State and reflect the diversity of the State with respect to race, ethnicity, socio-economic groups, types of disabilities across the age span, and users of types of services that an individual with a disability may receive.
- 5) Each member of RICAT, other than the required representatives listed above, shall be called to serve for three (3) years and be eligible for re-election. Expiration of this term may occur upon the request of the resigning members for any reason or for reasons found appropriate by RICAT.
- 6) Member vacancies shall be filled within three (3) months.
- 7) New members shall participate in an Orientation to the ATAP program & the Advisory Council prior to attendance as member.
- 8) Any member of RICAT who has three consecutive non-excused absences shall be considered to have submitted a DeFacto resignation. Absences are considered excused if

the Co-Chairs, ATAP Program Director, or Technical Support Staff of ATAP is notified of the absence.

- 9) The Administrator of the Lead Agency and the ATAP Program Director shall be Ex-Officio Members of RICAT, without voting privileges. RICAT may appoint other ex-officio members.

COUNCIL STRUCTURE

- 1) The Council shall have two Co-Chairs from its membership, with at least one being a consumer member of RICAT.
 - a) Co-Chairs shall assume duties immediately following the election and shall serve for a two (2) year term.
 - b) Elections shall occur for each position on alternating years to assure continuity.
 - c) If there is a Co-Chair vacancy, the vacancy shall be filled by a vote of RICAT members, held in a timely manner, for the remaining term of the Co-Chair.
- 2) The Membership Committee shall identify, recruit and nominate appropriate individuals to be voted upon by a quorum of the full Council membership.
- 3) Ad Hoc Committees shall be created as needed and at the discretion of RICAT (ex.: Communications to increase public awareness.)

RICAT GUIDELINES

1) Meeting Procedures

- a) The RICAT Co-Chairs and ATAP Program Director shall collaborate on development of agenda two weeks prior to meeting date.

- b) ATAP Contracted Partners shall provide updates to Council members at each meeting, either in person or by written report.
- c) QUORUM: One third of RICAT shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of its business, provided that 51% of those members present are individuals with disabilities that use assistive technology, or the family members or guardians of the individuals. In the event that votes are equally divided, the topic shall be tabled until the next meeting.
- d) Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, shall govern RICAT and its committees in all cases in which they are applicable and in which they are not in conflict with these Guidelines or Rhode Island statute, Federal law or related rules and regulations.
- e) **EMERGENCY MEETINGS:** The Co-Chairs or Program Director may request an emergency meeting to consider matters of unforeseen urgency. Every effort shall be made to notify all RICAT members of such an emergency meeting.

2) Meetings Structure

- a) All meetings of RICAT shall be conducted according to the Rhode Island Open Meeting Law, and shall be held in locations on public transportation routes. RICAT shall make every attempt to hold meetings in locations that shall encourage full attendance by its members.
- b) RICAT shall meet a minimum of four (4) times a year. Meeting dates, time, and place shall be set by RICAT. A meeting on other occasions may be called as the Co-Chairs deems necessary or upon the request of any four members of RICAT. Documented notice in appropriate format of the agenda, date, time and place of such meetings shall be received at least one (1) week in advance by all RICAT members.

- c) Technical Support Staff for the ATAP Lead Agency shall assume responsibility for distributing agenda and recording/distributing the minutes of all meetings, subsequent to review and approval by either Co-Chair or Program Director.
- d) Assistive technology to facilitate communication, print and other media materials shall be provided in alternate formats upon request prior to meetings.
- e) RICAT members shall not receive a per diem but shall be reimbursed as approved by the Program Director, upon submission of invoice and completion of required documents for payment through the state agency, for their actual and necessary expenses incurred attending meetings.

Proposed changes to the Council Guidelines may be presented at any time to the Co-Chairs. The Co-Chairs shall review and evaluate the proposed modification to the guidelines. Proposed changes shall be distributed by the Co-Chairs, in writing, or other most appropriate formats, to all members of RICAT at least thirty (30) days in advance of the next regular meeting. Any changes to the Guidelines must be approved by a majority vote.



The PARI PAAT Program

Affordable Assistive Technology Program

"affordable medical equipment"

The PARI PAAT Program provides medical and adaptive equipment to those unable to afford new equipment due to fixed incomes or insurance limitations.

The PAAT Program receives equipment donations from individuals and businesses throughout Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts. The equipment is cleaned, refurbished and offered for resale at greatly reduced and affordable rates. The inventory can include items such as wheelchairs, walkers, canes, tub seats, transfer benches, commodes, slide boards and Hoyer lifts. The PAAT Program also provides an exchange database for individuals who would like to donate or are in need of wheelchair ramps, stairglides and adaptive vehicle modifications.



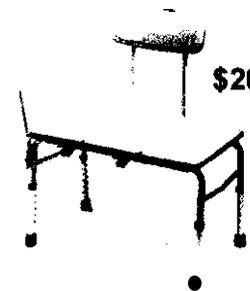
\$80.00

PARI Independent Living Center
500 Prospect Street
Pawtucket, RI 02860
www.pari-ilc.org

Contact Allen Parent-Wetmore
 Equipment Program Coordinator
 401-725-1966 (V/TTY), ext 28
 Email aparent@pari-ilc.org

\$15.00

! **Nosotros Hablamos Español**
 (401) 365-1839



\$20.00



\$35.00

In 2009 we were able to provide over 600 pieces of durable medical equipment and environmental modifications to people at an estimated savings of over \$80,000 dollars. We operate a demonstration center providing people the opportunity to see and try the many different types of assistive equipment. We also offer inexpensive rentals of wheelchairs, scooters and ramps.



Equipment donations are always welcome, thank you!

PARI Independent Living Center

"Working with people with any kind of disability to *identify* goals and provide training, *equipment*, advocacy, and counseling to help them to *achieve* their goals."



PARI Programs

Independent Living Services

PARI Independent Living Center subscribes to and supports the independent living philosophy, providing skills training, peer counseling, advocacy, direct services and information and referral.

PersonalChoice Program

The PersonalChoice Program is a participant directed personal assistance program. The participant hires, trains and supervises personal assistants to assist with personal care and household tasks. A Medicaid funded program, requiring Medicaid eligibility.

State PCA Program

This program is to provide up to 35 hours per week of personal care assistance services to persons who are eligible. The goal is to achieve and maintain independence.

PAAT Program

Given the high cost of new adaptive equipment, PARI has come up with an alternative for the consumer through its equipment recycling program. PARI's Affordable Assistive Technology (PAAT) Program is an effort to provide any person of limited means the necessary equipment he/she would otherwise be unable to obtain to achieve independence.

Gift of Hearing Program

The Gift of Hearing Program is operated in cooperation with the University of Rhode Island Speech and Hearing Center and The Hearing Loss Association of Rhode Island to provide hearing aids at a reduced cost to those who otherwise could not afford them.

Live Well RI

PARIS Live Well RI program provides an opportunity for people with disabilities to develop coping strategies as they participate in group discussions, information sessions, share ideas with others, develop a supportive network and explore adaptive possibilities for physical activity, sports and recreation.

Habilitation Waiver Program

The purpose of the Habilitation Waiver, which allows a larger scope of services than other waivers, is to provide intensive home and community-based services to eligible adults with significant medical needs and/or a brain injury residing in a community setting as an alternative to hospital care. This program offers a rehabilitative approach through its comprehensive services.

State and Federal Home Modification and Equipment Program

This program is funded with federal and state funds and administered by PARI and OSCIL. Its goal is to provide Rhode Islanders with disabilities the means of making their homes more accessible and/or purchasing equipment to be more independent

enabling consumers to remain active members of the community.

a publication of



a resource for
independent
living

PARI

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FAX 401/725-2104

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the consumer news bulletin

possibilities 2