

RI Council on Assistive Technology
June 23, 2011 ~ 2:30 – 4:00 pm
TechACCESS of RI
110 Jefferson Boulevard, Suite I, Warwick, RI

Minutes

Attendees: Flo Adeni-Awosika, Kathleen Fresher-Samways, Becky Wright – RIDE (for Melissa McDonald), Michael Matraccia, Daniel Pieroni, Colleen Poliselli, Bill Robinson, and Ying Sun.

Partners: Denise Corson, ATEL; Roberta Greene-Whittemore, ATAP Program Director; Alan Parent-Wetmore, PARI; Lisa Labitt, EBEC; and Lezlee Shaffer, OSCIL.

Welcome: Meeting was called to order at 2:40 p.m. by ATAP Program Director – Roberta Greene Whittemore.

Approval of Minutes from 9/9/10: Mike Matraccia made motion, seconded by Ying Sun to approve minutes with corrections made via email from Kim Wennermark. Motion unanimously passed.

AT Project Director's Report: Roberta began her report by stating she had planned on giving a report on the national AT Conference, however, she added she had been hospitalized and was unable to attend. She stated that funding has been level funded for next year. The 3-year contract with each of the partners expires at the end of September. She is writing the new contracts at this time. She explained that each of the partners received a one-time dollar amount to increase and update AT devices.

New Business (Roundtable):

Membership: A mail ballot had been sent to members. Three RICAT members whose terms were expiring were all voted to another 3-year term. They included Flo Adeni-Awosika, Michael Matraccia, and Daniel Pieroni. Roberta added that they still need

to fill one required position on RICAT from someone on the Governor's Workforce Investment Board. She passed out a list of members and asked if anyone knew anyone on the list that they could recommend. Roberta will discuss with Margaret Hoyer (Membership Committee) three names they are interested in contacting – Mario Bueno, Executive Director of Progreso Latino, Pheamo Witcher, President of the Genesis Center, and Brandon Melton, Sr. VP of Human Resources of Lifespan. Once this position is filled, we would be in compliance with the AT Act.

Guidelines: Roberta gave a brief background on why the guidelines were being revised. Discussion was held about the actual process of meeting planning. Roberta mentioned that the AT Project itself would drive the agenda, explaining that certain things are required at certain times (ie. contracts, State Plan updates, performance reports.) It was noted that the Membership Committee would continue to be a Standing Committee. Roberta stated that at any time a RICAT member would like to become the Chair, she would be there to assist and facilitate if they could not. Ying Sun asked if she was considered a Member of RICAT. Roberta responded that she is not. As ATAP Program Director, she is considered an Ex-Officio of RICAT and can not vote. Mike Matraccia asked if there was any type of job description showing duties of Chair/Co-Chair. Roberta responded there were not.

Kathleen Samways questioned if there was a way to leave the Guidelines as they are now, but add in that the Program Director would facilitate and support the Council in the absence of the Chair. RICAT members all agreed with that suggestion. Revised Guidelines will be sent out prior to next meeting so that they can be voted on then.

ATAP Partners – Overview of Work Plans:

OSCIL: Lezlee Shaffer explained that as part of their work plan OSCIL provides Device Demonstrations to adults and seniors. As part of that they do assessments for AT, home visits, and safety issues. As part of Technical Assistance, they assist with nursing home transitions with an emphasis on the younger disabled.

Public Awareness activities include information and referral (I & R). Lezlee noted that they had also received money from the Tufts Grant. A staff member of OSCIL just does I & R and keeps an updated list of resources for funding for AT. Under Coordination and Collaboration OSCIL does many outreach efforts to the community including presentations at senior centers, Warwick Mall Expo, and public forums. They have a variety of exhibits they use including a kitchen and bathroom. Lezlee noted that they have 4 staff members: Melissa Rosenberg, AT Specialist; Susan Eleoff, I & R Specialist; Bonnie Abols, AT for Deaf Community (retiring soon); and Lezlee, Supervisor. Lezlee also added that the extra money they are receiving will be used to update outdated exhibit devices. Ying commented he would be interested in what AT devices are still working after 15 years! Lezlee responded that a lot were the low-tech devices.

EBEC: Lisa Labitt explained her segment involves children and youth. With the extra money they will be receiving, she will be purchasing updated software, as well as devices. EBEC's focus is on Device Loan, Device Demonstration, Training and Technical Assistance. The Children and Youth Resource Center provides AT for students, parents, teachers, therapists, and families to try out devices prior to purchasing them. During year 1, Lisa would like to survey the school district needs for AT development. Also she would like to update the loan library and reconfigure the tracking software in conjunction with TechACCESS. Device Demonstration is where she provides demonstrations, workshops and vendor demonstrations through electronic learning experiences. Not a full blown training, just a surface-type training. Also holds forums to showcase AT devices. Also works with students going on to employment. Transition activities includes early intervention to school age, also transition age students 14-21. Technical Assistance – state agencies she works with include RIPIN, RI Department of Ed. Her focus is on the RI Alternate Assessment which is a very small population of students that have severe to profound disabilities. RI is partnering with 18 other states to develop alternate assessment materials. She provides technical support for students that need communications technology. Also works with RIVESP – people that work with

blind and low vision students. Department of Health when transition activities pop up, she is the support person for them as well. Coordination and Collaboration –with other agencies include RIDLT, RIPIN. Also works with Northern Collaborative who hosts the Accessible Materials Center.

EBEC wish list included devices that are low tech, mid tech, high tech, learning disabilities, low vision, hearing, mobility, early childhood. She also talked to Judi at TechACCESS so they didn't purchase the same devices.

PARI: Allen Parent-Wetmore stated that PAAT (PARI Affordable Assistive Technology) Program receives funding from ATAP. Sole mission is primarily around Durable Medical Equipment-tub seats, wheelchairs, walkers, etc. Device Demonstration – they try to maintain an inventory of at least one type of item. They have equipment available for people to try out. Equipment is almost all reutilized equipment. The cost runs around 10-20% of the retail value. Allen stated they are very flexible with their pricing. Device Exchange – for larger items they partner with a contractor that picks up and stores items for PARI. The person then just usually has to pay for installation of the item. Information & Referral – usually has between 15-30 calls a day. Coordination & Collaboration – working with partners and doing referrals to them. He never knows how many donations they are going to get. This past year they started selling new equipment as well as used. Allen stated he is hoping that over several years this new equipment will be donated back to them. Wish list for this year is to get a new inventory tracking system, and some new items that they usually don't get donated. They are going to try to do a point of sale software. Lisa stated they have a POS software up and running at a store run by a Transition Academy. Becky Wright, RIDE rep, commented that at a previous meeting there was a huge discussion about inventory. Roberta responded that we had one meeting about the School Swap program. Started discussions but stated there is still a host of questions that need to be answered before going forward.

ATEL: Denise Corson stated they did not get any additional money for devices because they have more. The Captel phone originally was \$400 per phone, and now they get them for \$100 per phone. State Financing – had been written that it had to be a single party line – has always been interpreted as a landline. They are looking into wireless now. There are 5 states and 10 pending and Sprint is piloting in other states more person specific. The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) feels strongly that wording in legislation needs to be changed to include wireless. Roberta added that they are talking with Eileen Naughton about introducing legislation next year. Download Hamilton Relay Captel software. They are looking at a lot of things to bring communication to people. When this program was established 25 years ago, it was primarily for Deaf population, whereas now, they service mostly Hard of Hearing individuals. Other big thing they do is the demonstrations they do. They do all different types of devices, not just phones. Hamilton Relay had a certain amount of \$\$ that they were supposed to spend on outreach that they hadn't spent. They had a list of demonstration equipment that they wanted. James Litvack has one set and the other set is at TechACCESS for people to loan out. There is also going to Captioning LED screen at the Commission on Deaf & Hard of Hearing that will be available for outdoor use, etc. Collaboration portion includes the demonstrations with TechACCESS, as well as OSCIL featured them in their quarterly newsletter. One of the issues of ATEL is that they moved from an easy to drive up location to one that is not as easy to drive up and drop off equipment. They can now drop off and pick up at TechACCESS. Denise added that they are also working with Cox to develop program with Captel to try to pay for the type of modems needed.

TechACCESS: Judi Carlson was unable to attend today's meeting.

Roundtable (Cont)

William Robinson suggested that RICAT act as a watchdog group as vets return from Afghanistan/Iraq. Reach out to the American Legion, VFW, etc. to alert them of what should be available

through the Veterans Administration. Kathleen Samways asked if they ever do information nights for their members. Bill responded they are a very small group and they do not. Roberta commented that we could do up a letter to the American Legion and VFW to let them know about ATAP, the partners and the demonstration centers. Lezlee added that Kim Wennermark has been sending referrals to OSCIL and TechACCESS from the VA hospital.

Kathleen Samways announced that the AmeriCorp program in RI has made a significant investment in AT in order to accommodate AmeriCorp members. They purchased 4 different kinds of software that will support learning disabilities and other cognitive issues, as well as low vision and hearing.

Next Meeting: October 27, 2011 from 2:30 – 4:00 pm at TechACCESS of RI, 10 Jefferson Blvd, Suite I, Warwick, RI.

Motion was made by Michael Matraccia and seconded by Dan Pieroni to adjourn meeting at 4:05 pm. Motion passed.