

**TFL Advisory Council Meeting**  
**1700 Century Circle**  
**Atlanta, GA 30345**  
**12/2/04**

**Present:** Carolyn Phillips, Greg Sams, Connie Freier, Michael Leverett, Jerilyn Leverett, Joanne Willis, Adrienne Anderson, Carolyn McGonagill, Tom Bauer, Beth Tumlin, Allan Goldman, Maya Mattison

**Notetaker:** Maya Mattison

**10:30 AM Sign in and introductions**

- Went over new AT Act, particularly section 4. Section 4 contains most of the changes that will be affecting TFL and the advisory council.
- **Reviewed current status:** Georgia's AT Project is currently in a leadership role; setting an example for other states of a successful model currently providing many of the services already legislated for AT Act programs.
- RESNA, the Rehabilitation Engineering Society of North America, has been designated Georgia/TFL's Technical Assistance liaison and will do reporting and data collection to the Federal government.
- RSA, the Rehabilitation Services Administration, is TFL's current research liaison and will also be doing reporting

The current/basic level of funding, taking effect July 1, 2005, provides \$410K for AT Act program in Georgia. The maximum amount of increase based on the current formula is \$300K (based on 80% state population w/ disabilities, 20% to be split among all states)

- Sunset provision for AT Act projects has been removed!
- Existing AT Act (effective 7/1/05) will not be up for reauthorization again until 2010.
- Option exists of choosing a new lead agency for the project. Among choices are: DOL, DOE, DHR, and universities currently providing research or technical assistance – Georgia Tech or another research university. Suggestions were also made to use the Statewide Independent Living Council or the DD council as the new lead agency.
- Consensus indicates that TFL program should remain with DOL; other options could take funding away from client assistance, although relationships could be developed with the other entities suggested:

-DOE, DHR, SILC, DD Council (focus is not on assistive technology), DOT (especially to work on resolving transportation availability issue) private and public universities

Tom Bauer's legislative update included the information that the state minimum will be the standing amount for the July budget. The additional funding available will need to be advocated for in the future.

At the time of this meeting, the following scenarios were possible regarding budget:

- I. \$20K added; raised to original (2003-04) level for services; -10K for special projects (affects ATRCs); DOL adds 10K for special projects. Funding for ATRC Consortium (statewide ATRCs) would be equivalent 203K.
- II. Given \$192K for state purposes; translates into 10,000 change in base budget for AT Act program, ATRCs would have a 3% reduction from current budget. Additional 5% would mean no cut.

DOL wants to replace 78% of Sec. 209 funds (TFL project in this group) with federal match Sec. 110 funds to use with VR program specifically. This is a point that will need negotiation with DOL in the future.

Primary need is to negotiate the DOL reserve to bring funding back up to 2004 levels of \$440K. This amount also means TFL could serve more Vocational Rehabilitation clients with the extra funds.

Minna suggested pursuing outside fundraising and grants from foundations. Outside fundraising has some restrictions on it from DOL, but is an idea worth pursuing in future. Currently TFL is pursuing some foundation grants, with more as time allows.

Additional funding resources for clients: Federal law allows a person within a certain income level to be matched 1:1 for individual financial goals, including purchase of assistive technology, through an IDA (Individual Development Account).

E-text update: Currently in negotiation for continuing/future efforts.

ICWP update (Jerilyn): Independent Care Waivers currently have a 100% of poverty-level income cap, decreasing Medicare coverage, which affects at least 116 clients in nursing homes. The GAO is currently working to resolve the issue.

### **Further Updates:**

*Credit-Able Program:* The basics of the new alternative loan financing program, which essentially provides clients another option for procuring Assistive Technology, as well as financial education were reviewed and explained by Greg.

Currently, Credit-Able is compiling a Loan Review Panel. Several prospective members have been suggested and contacted about their involvement, including Dan Miers, Carol Lowe (from Coca-Cola credit union) and Peggy Chavis. Mass mailing is scheduled for January. (**ongoing**)

There are currently 3 credit unions signed up to participate: MAACO, Gwinnett Federal, and MedCom.

\* The Credit-Able initiative would give support to negotiations with DOL, especially in the area of financial education.

-40% of funds required for transition-related activities

-Necessary to become more active providing information to those involved in transitioning from one environment to another: school-college, schoolwork, institution-work

-60% of funds directed to ATRC-related activities.

-No more than 10% of funds used for indirect costs (this makes using a university as a lead agency prohibitive)

### **AT Act Review continued. – Developing the Advisory Council**

By **March 26, 2005** the advisory council is required to be developed along the following guidelines:

-51% consumers or people w/disabilities

-VR representative required

- State Agency for the Blind representative required

Other suggestions made included representation from the SILCs, Workforce Investment, and the Department of Education.

In order to meet this guideline, the nomination process also needs to be further developed.

Council members need to work with the ATRCs and other initiatives.

Suggestion was made of a retreat/orientation day for new advisory council members. (*Originally this was scheduled for later in December, but has been postponed*)

Suggestion was made to rotate meeting locations, especially to increase representation in the southern part of the state, and other areas outside of Atlanta as well.

**Additional suggestions for revising the TFL Advisory Council**

- 1-day meetings, rotating location, meeting quarterly
- Advisory council needs to take a more active role advising and supporting initiatives and the ATRCs.
- Each Council member serves on at least 1 committee. Suggested committees: Advocacy, Information/Resource, Direction/Advising

*Nomination Process:*

- 1) *Prospects need to be contacted, and to submit their resume and evidence of qualifications.*
- 2) *Resumes will be reviewed and nominations will be made by using the form available on the TFL website.*

- Maximum number of advisory council members is 24; 5 additions necessary to current list.

- Orientation date needs to be added prior to commitment by AC members.
- Council members will be chosen by the end of February.

First meeting will be a 2-day event including an orientation in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter.

**Future**

- **Go over and update by-laws**
- **Match ATRC/ReBoot goals with AT Act requirements**
- **Building and increasing services to clients**
- **Plan for upcoming TFL conference**
- **Overview and detailed orientation: Credit-Able**
- **Other initiatives**

