

Massachusetts Assistive Technology Act of 2004

Advisory Council

Principles and Operating Procedures

Purpose

The Advisory Council is comprised of individuals with disabilities who use assistive technology, family members or guardians of individuals, and representatives of agencies concerned with advancing the use of assistive technology. A majority, not less than 51%, of the members of the advisory council shall be individuals with disabilities who use assistive technology or the family members or guardians of the individuals. The Council will provide input and perspectives regarding the anticipated federal grant re-application and resulting state level activities.

Guiding Principles

The Advisory Council will adhere to the following principles:

1. Supports are driven by the needs of individuals and their families, and are provided within community settings.
2. Partnerships between individuals, families and agency representatives will be based on communication that is open, honest, clear, understandable and timely.
3. All Council activities will respect and respond to the diversity of culture, language and abilities of all partners in order to ensure full participation.
4. All input and contributions are equally respected and valued.
5. The recommendations and actions of the Council will be based on all partners sharing relevant information.
6. The Council will share responsibility and reasonable risks toward a common purpose, learn from failure and celebrate success.

Ground Rules/Operating Procedures

The Advisory Council will conduct business according to the following operating procedures:

Frequency of Advisory Council Meetings

The Advisory Council will meet up to six times during Year I and quarterly during Year II and Year III. A meeting location will be secured that is accessible and geographically pleasing to all members.

Primary Responsibilities of the Advisory Council

The primary role of the Advisory Council members is to attend meetings and actively participate in providing guidance and recommendations through various communication mechanisms including conference calls, e-mails, phone calls and regular postage mail as necessary. The Advisory Council will provide input on the overall vision of the state project as well as specific recommendations on which “state-level” and “state leadership activities” should be implemented. The Advisory Council will be looking at which processes need to be established to identify consumer needs and what mechanisms should be developed to provide feedback on the success of the AT federal application and grant. The Advisory Council will provide feedback concerning the following AT grant- related state level and leadership activities.

State-Level Activities

- State financing programs
- Device reutilization programs
- Equipment demonstration programs
- Device loan programs

State Leadership Activities

- Public Awareness
- Information and Referral
- Coordination and Collaboration

Preparation and Contribution to the Agenda for Council Meetings

The lead state agency is responsible for preparing the agenda. All Advisory Council members may request that a topic be placed on the agenda by calling the lead state agency. Agendas will be mailed out in advance of council meetings.

Procedure for Achieving Council Recommendations

Advisory Council members will strive to reach consensus for all recommendations however in the event of disagreements there may be a majority and minority ruling issued. The lead agency retains the authority for all final decision making.

Advisory Council Structure

The Advisory Council will elect a chairperson and a vice chair to serve in the event of absence. The chairperson will convene and facilitate all meetings. The lead agency will have final discretion regarding the selection of the chairperson and vice chairperson.

Council members may be requested to serve on subcommittees and workgroups to focus on specific needs and report back the Council.

Council Communications

All information shared at Advisory Council meetings is considered draft and is not to be distributed to the public until this information is finalized for dissemination. The lead agency will be responsible for recording and disseminating meeting minutes, and for maintaining Advisory Council related records. When data gathering is to be implemented, the lead agency will be responsible for establishing appropriate procedures and communicating those procedures to the Advisory Council. The lead agency is responsible for public relations and public communications regarding the Advisory Council and the AT grant.

Compensation of Advisory Council Members

Advisory council members do not receive compensation for their work, however all meals, transportation and other expenses related to participating in Advisory Council meetings will be reimbursed by the lead agency in accordance with federal funding, and in collaboration with other state agency partners.

Selection of New Members

The Council will form a subcommittee to nominate new members when vacancies occur and when terms end.

Advisory Council Term Limits

Advisory Council members are nominated and approved for a three-year term. Members may seek re-election to the council at the end of a term; however no members may serve for more than two consecutive terms. After the first three year period, a phase-in process will facilitate orderly transition of incoming and retiring Council members as follows.

Year '05 -'08 All Council members appointed for a 3-year term

Year '08 -'11 One third of the members are re-appointed for 3 years

One third of the members are re-appointed for 2 years

One third of the members are re-appointed for 1 year

Advisory Council members who are unable to fulfill their responsibilities or complete their term of service may withdraw by submitting a letter of resignation to the lead agency. When a member of the council steps down from participation, a process of outreaching across disability organizations for a new member will be followed