# Missouri Assistive Technology Council December 6, 2024 Virtual Meeting

## 1. Call to Order

**A. Introductions** The meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by Chairperson Chip Hailey.

**Members in Attendance:** Stacy Morse, Chad Rohr, Andrew Lackey, Aaron Luna, Camille Anderson-Weddle, Jennifer Boedeker, Lisa Meisenheimer, Melinda Bridge, Mary Ross, Pam Arbeiter, Rachel Baskerville, Samantha Marsicovetere, Shari LaRoussa, and Kim Reese.

**Staff in Attendance:** Brenda Whitlock, Eileen Belton, Felicia George, Kara Adams, Kris Rooff, Scout Mary, David Baker, and Stacy Brady.

**Guest in Attendance:** Angelina Alpert.

**B. Approval of December Agenda** The agenda for the December meeting was approved as presented.
 *(Motion: Rohr; Second: Morse).*

**C. Approval of September Minutes** The minutes of the September meeting were approved as presented.
 *(Motion: Morse; Second: Lackey).*

## 2. Director's Report

**A. Council Update**

1. **Membership Update** The Boards and Commissions Office has suspended new appointments until after the new governor is sworn in early January. Once a new contact is identified, David will reach out to discuss the Council’s needs.
2. **Annual Letter to the Governor**Each year, the Council is required by its statute to provide an annual letter to the governor overviewing activities for the past state fiscal year and highlighting items of focus for the upcoming year. A draft of the letter was included in the meeting materials. Identified as noteworthy outcomes for the past year were adoption of updated state Information Communication Technology (ICT) standards, enhancement of services to Missouri schools, decreasing the digital divide for people with various disabilities, and our impact in terms of cost savings and related benefits to Missourians.

For FY 2025, activities of Council and staff focus include prioritizing assistive technology use within the state’s aging population, promoting the role of assistive technology in increasing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, advocating for increased focus and attention to inclusion of assistive technology in transition services, and continuing our collaboration with the Institute for Human Development at UMKC on the development of a person-centered framework to help individuals and families plan, problem-solve, and obtain assistive technology for a good life across all life stages.

Upon final revision, the letter will be sent along with an annual report to Governor Parson. In addition, a copy will be provided to governor-elect Kehoe.

1. **Annual Report**

A rough draft of the 2024 annual report was shared in advance of the meeting. David outlined the reports content and noted the focus on trying to show MoAT’s impact in several key areas such as increasing access, awareness and acquisition of assistive technology, as well as our many collaborations with agencies and organizations.

Feedback was solicited both on content and accessibility. The printed report will be shared with elected officials, various agencies, other Tech Act Programs, in addition to other partners.

**4. 2025 Meeting Schedule** The tentative 2025 Executive Board and Council meeting schedule was shared and is as follows:

* March 6 & 7 (Virtual)
* June 5 & 6 (In-person in Columbia)
* September 11 & 12 (in-person in Jefferson City)
* December 4 & 5 (Virtual)
1. **Ethics Commission Compliance** Officially appointed members must submit a Personal Financial Disclosure to the Missouri Ethics Commission. Notices will be sent in early January, and the deadline is in early May.

## 3. Current Activities

1. **Dementia Caregiver Program (David)** MoAT is collaborating with the Bureau of Senior Services to provide assistive technology for caregivers of individuals with dementia. Nearly 100 families have been referred, with services including consultations, device provision, and follow-ups. Approximately 200 families are expected to benefit this year.
2. **Annual Performance Report (David)** Each December, Tech Act Programs submit reports to ACL covering activities and data for the past fiscal year. The report includes state-level activities (device demos, loans, re-use, AT financing) and state leadership activities (training, information, technical assistance, collaboration).
3. **Let’s Talk ICT Series**

Eileen highlighted that a focus of the ICT training series this year has been on helping individuals understand and adopt practices that help ensure that they are in compliance with the new WCAG 2.1 standards. An adjunct to these efforts is the roll-out of AT testing kits. The kits contain assistive devices that can be used by those working in the digital accessibility space to assist them in better testing content to ensure it is accessible and aligns with the new standards. A related set of training sessions were held to provide support. Later in the month, an in-person roll-out of the kits will be held in Jefferson City. With Eileen retiring at the end of the month, Brenda will be taking on the ICT focused responsibilities.

1. **Makers/3D Printing**

Scout provided a quick run down of the constellation of Maker and 3D Printing activities he has been engaged in across the state and nation. Of particular note was a collaboration at the end of October with the robotics club at Paseo Academy in Kansas City in which students and mentors helped create switches that were then paired with adapted toys that will be distributed during the holiday season. He continues working with the Area Agencies on Aging, hosting the national Maker Roundtable and will be participating in Maker Day at ATIA, the national assistive technology conference. In addition, Scout and Brenda had the pleasure of participating in the Make 48 event held in Kansas City, Make 48 is a nationwide invention competition in which teams have 48 hours to plan and develop a new item focused on a specific challenge.

5.**Training & Outreach**

Furthering our outreach across the state through participation in various events is always an area of emphasis. Some additional events not mentioned elsewhere during the meeting included a TechFest in Arnold, Missouri, participation at a deafblind event in St. Louis and the on-going and expanding AT library installments.

## 4. AT Spotlight: Assistive Technology for Mental Health

Assistive technologies to aid individuals maintain or improve their mental well-being is a growing area, David provided an overview of a variety of options now available to individuals with various conditions including depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, etc. These include both app-based solutions and stand-alone devices. A copy of the related PowerPoint was sent out after the meeting.

## 5. Program Data & Updates

1. **Demonstration & Reutilization**
	* Scout noted that the contracts with the demonstration and re-use sites (that were approved at the last Council meeting) have been signed and returned. One exception, the agreement for Northwest Missouri, has not yet been finalized. This agreement was previously held my MERIL, who was purchased by Life Unlimited, who is still weighing if they want to continue to be a demonstration location.
	* He also mentioned that early data trends for this federal fiscal year are positive and that he continues to hold monthly demonstration meetings with the centers to help them learn about assistive technologies and provide better related services.
2. **TAP for Telephone & Wireless**
	* Stacy partnered with a representative from Relay Missouri and provided several trainings across the state on Missouri Relay, with a particular emphasis on its value for individuals with speech disabilities. These were well received, in particular since many individuals were unaware of the various relay services available to individuals.
	* In addition, she has been actively marketing TAP-T and TAP-W to audiologists, hearing aid specialists, Areas Agencies on Aging and other touch-point organizations that come in contact with potential program beneficiaries.
3. **TAP for Internet/DeafBlind Equipment Program**
	* Brenda noted that both TAP-I and the DeafBlind Equipment Program have been receiving applications and requests for services at the same pace as previous years. She went on to share that one of her goals for 2025 is to increase the number of counties that the programs receive applications from and to continue development of built-in accessibility stations to help individuals understand the many now readily available accessibility features in Apple, Google and Microsoft operating platforms.
	* MoAT was included in a grant application submitted by KC Digital Inclusion. She shared that we are still awaiting news on if the grant was received.
4. **ATR & ETC Programs**
	* With Eileen’s pending retirement, Kara has assumed responsibility for our social media. She outlined several ideas for enhancing our presence on various platforms, including a weekly feature called Tech Tuesday that features a new type of device each week.
	* She went on to share that ATR funds for the current school year have been fully obligated. Unfortunately, there were more applications than dollars available.
5. **Show-Me Loans/KAT/MFP**
	* Show-Me Loans applications and inquiries have been coming in at a steady pace. In order to provide better safeguards and protections, a policy update has been enacted in which vehicle loan checks will be issued directly to the vendor, not to the individual.
	* KAT has received and acted on quite a few applications, with many having been approved. Some funds are still available, but anticipation is funds will be extinguished soon.

## 6. New Business

**Missouri as a Model Employer (Stacy Morse)**

Stacy discussed the Missouri Employment First Act and a related Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Council’s consideration. The MOU outlines MoAT’s commitment to increasing access to assistive technology and improving ICT accessibility. At it’s meeting, the Executive Board discussed the MOU and advanced a motion to sign on to the MOU. The Council unanimously approved the motion. *(Motion: Lackey; Second: Boedeker).*

## 7. Announcements

* **Paula Darr (Bureau of Special Care Needs)** introduced a new [resource guide](https://health.mo.gov/seniors/shcn/pdf/mch-resource-guide-birth.pdf) for families of children ages birth to 12.
* **Mary Ross (Vocational Rehabilitation)** announced Karen Kleinke’s retirement from VR at year’s end.
* **Eileen Belton** is retiring after over 10 years of service with MoAT. The Council extends its gratitude and best wishes.

## 8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 PM. *(Motion: Rohr; Second: Meisenheimer).*