

**Assistive Technology Advisory Council Meeting  
May 21, 2026**

Draft Minutes

**Members Present:**

Kelvin Harris, Chair; Christy Crowther, Vice Chair; Scott Pruett; Sara Pruett; Dan Aunspach; Eric Raff; Jennifer O’Berry, Kevin Koziol; Elizabeth Flaherty

**Members Present by Zoom Conference Call:** Paige Moore

**Guests:**

Dr. Nedra Moncrief-Craig, DARS Commissioner  
Tracy Meador, Director, F.R.E.E.  
John Naples, C.A.T.S.  
John Allen, DARS

**Staff Present:**

Barclay Shepard, Manager, VATS  
Sonja Schaible, VATS  
Robin Ramsey, VATS  
Elin Glass, VATS

**Interpreters:** Heather Kubitski and Cameron Strowbridge

**Call to Order:**

Kelvin Harris, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Mr. Harris stated that this meeting was focused on “Collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation”. The meeting took place at DARS Central Office, 5620 Cox Road, Richmond, Va in the Blue Ridge Conference Room 177-A. Mr. Harris announced that Paige Moore would be participating virtually and counted towards the quorum.

**Approval of Minutes:**

The May 15, 2025, draft minutes were approved as written.

**Approval of Agenda:**

Mr. Harris reviewed the agenda and asked if there were any additions from the floor. No additions were made.

**Public Comment:**

There were no comments from the public.

**Old Business:**

No report

## **New Business:**

### **VATS Program Updates:**

Mr. Shepard provided the following general program updates to include:

- Discussed staff and contractor position changes since the previous meeting.
- Reviewed briefly VATS funding, focus and state and federal oversight, since its inception.
- The Administration for Community Living (ACL) is in the process of developing and testing tools which will move Annual Progress Report and State Plan reporting from the current system to a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) server.
- VATS remains committed to adult and children's DME reuse services
- Discussed VATS ongoing priorities to include durable medical equipment reuse contracts, emergency preparedness for durable medical equipment, as well as increased collaboration with other state agencies that fund AT.
- Reviewed VATS significant accomplishments in FY25 to include:
  - 7,810 Virginians served through the following assistive technology (AT) services: Demonstrations, Short Term Equipment Loans, Reuse; Training, and Information & Assistance.
  - Provided durable medical equipment (DME) to 5,276 Virginians with limited resources. VATS contracted adult and children's DME reuse programs provided 7,375 pieces of gently used DME valued over \$4.1 million to qualifying Virginians.
  - 72 DARS vocational rehabilitation clients served in the DME Reuse Program. Since 2010, the reuse program provided 1,282 DARS clients with primary or back-up equipment needed to maintain or obtain employment.
  - Provided high-impact assistive technology trainings across Virginia to 811 participants.
  - Provided 741 (839 individuals) AT demonstrations and 161 short-term equipment loans (326 pieces of equipment).
  - Provided Information & Assistance to 700 individuals needing assistance connecting to valuable assistive technology resources.

### **Electronic Meeting Policy:**

Mr. Shepard provided members with a copy of an electronic meeting policy for VATS.

Discussion ensued. Mr. Harris asked the membership if someone would like to make a motion to further discuss and vote on this policy. *A motion was made, second and unanimously approved to adopt the VATS electronic meeting policy.*

### **Review of Operational Guidelines:**

Mr. Shepard provided members with a copy of VATS Operational Guidelines. Discussion ensued. Mr. Shepard reported that VATS spoke with DARS Senior Policy Analyst/Regulatory Coordinator regarding the DARS approved standardized format, content as well as requirements to adopt the document. ATAC members will vote at the next meeting to adopt proposed changes made to this document.

## **Presentation: Vocational Rehabilitation Field AT Services and Collaboration with VATS**

Mr. Shepard provided a brief overview of VATS collaboration with DARS vocational rehabilitation (VR) program. John Allen, Lead AT Specialist/Occupational Therapist for the Division of Rehabilitative Services / Field Services reviewed the VR process from intake, eligibility, referral, evaluation, equipment trials, recommendations, to purchasing equipment for VR participants. Mr. Allen also discussed and demonstrated some equipment available for DARS and VATS constituents available at statewide AT Labs. Discussion included client specific projects in which DARS rehabilitation engineering staff provided input, design and custom fabrication.

### **Working Lunch: Advisory Council Member Updates**

Several ATAC members reported updates from their organizations or constituent groups.

### **VATS Contractor Updates:**

John Naples provided a program update from the Children's Assistive Technology Service (C.A.T.S):

- Distributed 1,200 pieces of equipment last year valued at \$2.2 million.
- C.A.T.S. started in 2014. Since that time, they have distributed more than 9,500 pieces of equipment valued at over \$15 million, adding significant value back to the communities they serve.
- Discussed funding sources to include donors, sponsorship and VATS funding.
- Two drop off sites in Northern Virginia (Springfield and Leesburg)
- Satellite sites in Marion, Hopewell and Charlottesville.
- Full-Service locations in Roanoke, Hampton Roads and Richmond.
- Discussed partnerships with colleges and universities to provide volunteers.
- C.A.T.S. received funding to rebuild and migrate their website and inventory database.
- HalloWheels is a fundraising event for C.A.T.S. This event will kick off on October 25 with Trunk or Treat events scheduled in Richmond, Roanoke and Virginia Beach starting October 24. These events kick off the HalloWheels fundraiser.
- C.A.T.S. will be participating in the Department of Education's TechKnowledge Conference.
- Carilion is donating space to C.A.T.S. and it will include a wash station for the DME

Tracy Meador from the Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment & Endowment (F.R.E.E.) provided a program update to include updates from full-service reuse sites. Highlights included:

- Discussed leadership changes to include Tracy Meador appointed as Chief Executive Officer/Chief Operating Officer. Charlotte Rose was hired as the Marketing Manager.
- During the second quarter of 2026, F.R.E.E. has served 1,436 individuals with 2,148 devices valued at approximately \$503,440.
- F.R.E.E. of Smyth County Open House will take place May 27, 2026 in Chilhowie, VA, offering more full service durable medical services in southwest Virginia.
- The Commonwealth Council on Aging awarded F.R.E.E. a Best Practices Award.

- Discussed collaboration with Sentara Health System which is providing durable medical equipment reuse loan closets at Sentara hospitals to include South Hampton Roads, Harrisonburg, Richmond and Williamsburg.
- VDEM Update: F.R.E.E. delivered equipment for three additional Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Shelter Kits to the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. This increased the number of Kits from three to six. DME Kits are strategically placed across the state to improve response times in the event of disasters.

**Next ATAC Meeting:**

The next ATAC Meeting:

- 11/19/26 at DARS Central Office

\*Unless otherwise noted, ATAC meetings will be held at the DARS Central Office at 5620 Cox Road, Richmond, Va.

**Adjournment:**

***A motion was made to adjourn and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:25pm***