

## **Access to Independence Summary Report**

### **Information about the Applicant**

Access to Independence (Access) is one of eight Independent Living Centers in the state of Wisconsin, and serves the counties of Columbia, Dane, Dodge, and Green. For over 44 years, Access has been providing an array of services to people of any type of disability, and of all ages. The mission of Access to Independence is to advocate and educate to support and empower people with disabilities. The impact has been through the delivery of several services to thousands of people in a four-county region. These services include Information and Referral, Peer Support, Skills Training, Advocacy, Transition (institutional and youth), Assistive Technology, and Accessibility Assessments. Additionally, Access provides several community-impact services such as Collaboration, Education, Systemic Advocacy, Outreach, and Technical Assistance.

### **Statement of Need**

Access to independence is seeking funds to purchase equipment to allow members the access and try out various types of adaptive equipment and assistive technology so they can have an opportunity to learn how to use these devices and figure out what is best for them. Wispact funds are being requested because current Wistech funding for purchasing equipment is limited, as most of those grant funds are for staff time. The equipment needs far exceed the resources available through Wistech. Additionally, Access has received some funding from the Dana and Christopher Reeve Foundation for adaptive gaming, but Access would like to add more equipment than those funds will allow.

### **Project Goals and Expected Benefits**

With the funds provided by this grant, Access to Independence will be able to purchase a significant number of new devices, further expanding access to AT by people with disabilities living in the region, which is consistent with the Assistive Devices priority of Wistech. Here are the goals and objectives with these funds:

Goal 1: People with disabilities will have access to free device demonstration of one or more AT devices to determine which device(s) will meet their needs for independent living, education, or employment.

Objective 1: No less than 50 devices will be demonstrated to learn about the devices, and their benefits. Device demonstrations, and impact of the demonstration will be tracked in the AT4ALL system.

Goal 2: People with disabilities will have access to a free short-term loan of one or more AT devices to assist with their decision-making, or to assist with a short-term accommodation.

Objective 1: People with disabilities will borrow at least 200 devices from Access to Independence for use in their home, workplace, or school; or a community location of their choice. Device loans, and the outcome of the loans, will be tracked in the AT4ALL system.

### **Project Implementation Plan**

Access to Independence has a robust AT program that includes free demonstration, loan, and training, and has over 1,000 items available for use by people with disabilities. This project will ensure that Access to Independence has an inventory that is current, and will meet increasing demand. To do this, Access will first purchase items from the current "wish list" of AT that has been created through feedback from staff, and from people with disabilities who've used services. Access staff will work with the Assistant Director to begin purchasing items from the existing list, between the months of November and March. Additionally, Access has identified a number of items, such as mobility devices, that are in need of repair, or upkeep. Purchase of materials and supplies, as well as replacement of devices that cannot be repaired, will be made between November and June. Finally, from November through January, Access will be purchasing adaptive gaming devices and related equipment in support of the adaptive gaming

groups that the agency is developing. These groups will provide participants with equipment to use on-site, as well as an additional set for someone to borrow to try at home, or use to practice with, at home. Devices in the project will be provided to people with disabilities for free demonstration, loan, or training, through June 30th, 2023, and continuing after the grant period ends. The Assistant Director will monitor staff activities through the MIS, as well as through a system that tracks AT device activities, called AT4ALL. Finally, the Finance Manager provides grant status updates with monthly financials, and meets weekly with the Executive Director to discuss issues, anomalies, and progress. This ensures timely and appropriate utilization of funds.

#### **Evaluation Plan**

Devices in the project will be provided to people with disabilities for free demonstration, loan, or training, through June 30th, 2023, and continuing after the grant period ends. The Assistant Director will monitor staff activities through the MIS, as well as through a system that tracks AT device activities, called AT4ALL. Finally, the Finance Manager provides grant status updates with monthly financials, and meets weekly with the Executive Director to discuss issues, anomalies, and progress. This ensures timely and appropriate utilization of funds.

#### **Budget**

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Current Wish List AT and Accessories	\$5,000
Repair and Replacement of AT	\$2,000
Adaptive Gaming AT/Accessories	\$3,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>
<b>Other Committed Funds: Wistech (AT Purchases)</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>
<b>Other Committed Funds: Reeve Foundation (Gaming AT)</b>	<b>\$4,700</b>

#### **Staff Recommendation**

The grant application can be recommended for approval with a slight modification to the budget. We can provide funds to purchase the AT and Accessories as well as the Adaptive Gaming AT/Accessories; however, the maintenance costs would constitute an operational expenses which we cannot provide. We can approve an adjusted amount of \$8,000.00.