image005

*Karen Wiley*

*Chairman*

**NEW MEXICO TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING – MINUTES**

Monday, October 30, 2017

Disability Rights New Mexico (DRNM) Conference Room

3916 Juan Tabo Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111

ATTENDANCE:

**Members Present:** Karen Wiley (Chairperson - Division of Vocational Rehabilitation/DVR); Katharine Gutierrez (Vice Chair - Consumer of AT); Albert Deimer (Independent Living Resource Center/ILRC); Andrea Valles (Disability Rights New Mexico/DRNM); Richard Bailey (Consumer of AT); and by phone - Larry (Hilario) Melendez (Gadsden Schools Transitions); Chris Zafra (Workforce Solutions); Nat Dean (Consumer of AT).

**Member Absent:** Curtis Chong (New Mexico Commission for Blind/CFB); Sam Cueto (Consumer of AT);

**NMTAP Staff**: Karen Courtney-Peterson (Governor’s Commission on Disability or GCD/NMTAP Director); Anthony Alarid (GCD/NMTAP Deputy Director); Tracy Agiovlasitis (NMTAP Supervisor)

**NMTAP Partners:** Jim Bullard (Back In Use/Adelante); Tim Carver (San Juan Center for Independence/SJCI) and by phone Amaris Fay (Western New Mexico University Satellite Office)

**Guests:** Stephanie Swanberg (Back in Use)

**CALL TO ORDER:**

NMTAP Council Chair, Karen W, called the meeting to order at 1:12pm. The chair called the roll and established that a Quorum was present. Karen W asked for everyone to introduce themselves.

Council member Andrea V moved to approve the agenda, Larry M seconded the motion. Agenda was approved unanimously.

The minutes from the last meeting were reviewed. Nat D moved to approve the minutes as written. Andrea V seconded the motion. The minutes of July 17, 2017 were approved unanimously.

**NMTAP PROGRAM UPDATE:**

Tracy A reported a statistics comparison from Federal Fiscal Year 2016 (FFY16) and Federal Fiscal Year 2017 (FFY17). In FFY16, note that 518 devices were loaned to 262 consumers and in FFY17 872 devices were loaned to 347 consumers. In FFY16, the program provided 424 device demonstration events that evaluated equipment for 576 consumers. In FFY17, NMTAP provided 153 events that evaluated equipment for 1430 consumers. This indicates that this year the program was able to gather more individuals to attend a device demonstration event versus demonstrating for one individual at a time. She noted that either individual or group device demonstrations are available and valuable for consumers. In FFY16, NMTAP provided 87 training events, increasing Assistive Technology (AT) knowledge considerably for 753 persons. In FFY17, the program provided 80 training events, increasing knowledge for 1382 persons. In FFY16, NMTAP referred 190 people to other resources or provided individual support or training on AT devices or services. In FFY17, 309 people were provided this type of support, which does not include people we simply talked to about NMTAP and partner services. Another project in FFY17 included 30 hours of hands-on review, training and policy development for the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) to ensure their digital classroom interfaces and materials are accessible. GCD concurrently did a similar project for the physical accessibility on their campus.

Assistive Technology Conference 2018 (ATC18) will be held on May 7 & 8, 2018 at the Sheraton Uptown. Note that most of the educational sessions planned were topics requested by attendees from ATC17. They will include AT related to wheelchair mobility, low tech speech generating devices, environmental control options, AT and emergency planning, AT for blind and near blindness, AT for executive functioning, guidance to take fear out of using AT and possibly a study on Individual Educational Plan input in rural school districts. Our lunch presenters will include Service Animals and an Independent Living panel of speakers. Save the Date information was emailed to our listserv in late August. Tracy A noted that she met with all the NMTAP partners regarding data for the federal report due now for FFY17. The partners included Back in Use, San Juan Center for Independence, Western New Mexico University, Northeast Regional Education Cooperative, GO Unlimited, Cody Unser Scuba Foundation and the Commission for the Blind.

Tracy A asked Advisory Council members to provide feedback on AT needs in NM for persons with disabilities and outreach of services available to New Mexicans with disabilities, as indicated in the statute. This would include all council members spreading the ATC18 “Save the Date” email or printed cards, as well as the upcoming registration flyer, to all their contacts. Council members are encouraged to attend the conference.

Karen P, GCD Director, reported that we are now spending the FFY17 funding for the statewide program, Regarding the FFY18 funding, it has been reduced by $994 and they have only awarded partial funding through December 8, 2017.

Karen P also noted that GCD, NM Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and the Hearing Loss Association of Albuquerque are co-sponsoring a Hearing Loss Technology workshop on May 9, 2018 at the Sheraton Uptown hotel. The audience is audiologists, speech language therapists, hearing aid dispensers and other professionals. Scheduled the day after ATC18, this allows for persons to easily attend both events if desired. It will also provide CEUs in those disciplines.

**FINANCIAL LOANS (NMSEED Loans, Access Loan NM & Community Fund) UPDATE:**

Tim C reported on both the statewide financial loan programs available through the NMTAP partner SJCI. He stated that both Access Loan NM, available for anyone with a disability to obtain needed AT, and SEED Loans, available to purchase equipment for entrepreneurs with disabilities, are financially secure. He noted that in FFY17, nine (9) new Access Loans were provided to New Mexicans with disabilities and 5 loans were closed. Most of the Access Loans were for accessible vehicles and the rest were for bathroom modifications. No new loans were approved in the SEED Loans program in FFY17, but earlier in October, they approved one for FFY18. This is for an established concrete business operated by a person with a disability to expand and upgrade his services. The SEED Loan program is now working with Accion to provide new loans, including this one. The previous nine (9) loans (opened in 2012 – 2016) are still held at US Bank and only one defaulted. SJCI is happy to partner with Accion for SEED Loans due to better support for the borrowers provided by Accion. Tim C reported that the NMTAP Community Fund program provided five (5) individuals with support during FFY17. This is a small amount that is added to funding from ILRC, SJCI, Carrie Tingley Hospital Foundation and/or family contributions to obtain needed accessibility. This small fund provided for three (3) bathroom modifications, one wheelchair lift and one feeding/activity chair in FFY17. The Community Fund is made up of any remaining funds from the annual conference, so council members promoting ATC18 attendance will support this small fund.

Tim C noted the SJCI payment to operate these financial loan programs is paid at the end of the federal fiscal year. The cost to operate the Access loan program was $49,184 and $31,336 for the SEED Loan program.

**BACK IN USE (BIU) UPDATE:**

Jim B reported that they hope to have new space to hold the durable medical equipment (DME) by the end of this year. This would be possible using the PNM grant Adelante received for a project called Give ABQ. For FFY17 they provided 900 pieces of equipment for 659 persons with disabilities. The fair market value of these items was $148,336, of which $78,640 was specifically for computers. Each computer was valued at $350 since they are high quality laptops or desktops. He notes that BIU does ask for donations from consumers, but no payment is required. Jim B stated that he is retiring at the end of this year and the new contract administrator from Adelante has opened a discussion with NMTAP to collect some type of fee for used equipment to sustain the program. BIU and NMTAP worked together to find additional funding to sustain the program, including recent participation in the largest information technology (IT) conference in New Mexico, ExperienceIT. Noted that Adelante has launched a new name, DiverseIT, for the computer component of their ReUse contract. While using the same phone number for Back in Use (DME specific) and DiverseIT (computer specific), this will be more understandable for those persons with disabilities who benefit from this service.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Amaris F, from WNMU, reported that this month they have loaned 74 devices to 18 consumers, primarily to the schools in the Southwestern area of NM. Their current outreach is for general medical and community service areas, including Hidalgo Medical Services, Family Health Services, Kids In Need of Supportive Services and the Silver City Welcome Center. They also shared NMTAP information with 700-900 persons who participated in the Buddy Walk held earlier this month in Silver City.

NMTAP will provide a hands-on demonstration of speech to text AT at the next advisory council meeting per request of council members.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

There was follow up on the discussion at the last meeting regarding screen readers not functioning well when a person is applying for a job with the State of New Mexico. It was noted that the state government is addressing this issue; at this time there is a statement of a current system update on the website and a phone number to call for access issues.

Larry M requested more training this year in the Anthony/Las Cruces area since it was so well received last year. Tracy A reported that the one-day conferences provided by NMTAP, called Hands-On Workshops for Assistive Technology (HOW-AT), are being planned for 2018 and include the Las Cruces area.

**ADJOURN:**

The next NMTAP Advisory Council meeting was scheduled for January 22, 2018 in the Santa Fe area, location to be determined. Karen W adjourned the meeting at 2:44 pm.

***Minutes Approved on 1/22/18***