

 *Keith Maes*

*Chairperson*

 **NEW MEXICO TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

 **ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING –MINUTES**

Monday, January 28, 2019

Governor’s Commission on Disability – Conference Room

491 Old Santa Fe Trail, Lamy Building, Santa Fe, NM 87501

ATTENDANCE:

**Members Present:** Keith Maes (Division of Vocational Rehabilitation/DVR - Chair); German Benitez (New Mexico Commission for Blind/CFB); Nat Dean (Consumer of AT); Bill Newroe (Consumer of AT); and by phone - Albert Deimer (Independent Living Resource Center/ILRC); Larry Melendez (Gadsden Schools Transitions); Andrea Valles (Disability Rights New Mexico/DRNM - Proxy); **Members Absent:** Katharine Gutierrez (Vice Chair - Consumer of AT) – excused; Chris Zafra (Workforce Solutions) - excused; Michael Acorta (Consumer of AT); Sam Cueto (Consumer of AT).

**NMTAP Staff**: Tracy Agiovlasitis (NMTAP Program Manager); Karen Courtney-Peterson (GCD Director): Anthony Alarid (GCD Deputy Director)

**NMTAP Partners:** Tim Carver (San Juan Center for Independence/SJCI); on the phone - Yvette Tovar & Jerome Rael (Adelante)

**Guests:** none

**CALL TO ORDER:**

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

Keith M asked for approval of the agenda. Nat D moved to approve the agenda, Bill N seconded and the committee approved the agenda unanimously.

The minutes from the last meeting were reviewed. Keith M asked for a vote to approve minutes from October 15, 2018. Bill N moved to approve the minutes, German B seconded and the committee approved unanimously.

**NMTAP PROGRAM UPDATE:**

Tracy A reported that Maurice Alvarez, AT Specialist, was hired in November 2018 and that Jesse Armijo, AT Specialist, will be attending the Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA) conference later this week. A review of more rural locations NMTAP staff provided services from January to December 2018 included Taos, Las Vegas, Anthony, Las Cruces, Los Alamos, Pueblo of Isleta, Alamogordo, Portales, Silver City and Crownpoint. She noted that receipt of funding for the AgrAbility Grant awarded to New Mexico State University Extension Services, in partnership with NMTAP, University of New Mexico and Mandy’s Farm, was delayed. While our AgrAbility Specialist position has not been posted yet, the team is working on setting up the program and will have an information table at the AgFest next week in Santa Fe. This grant is to provide AT services to farmers and ranchers statewide. The federal report for 2018 was submitted and is posted on the NMTAP website. Tracy A will be meeting with all partner programs to review the required data collection for 2019, as well as general evaluation of the partnership. The Assistive Technology Conference (ATC19) is scheduled for May 6 & 7, 2019 at the Sheraton Uptown in Albuquerque and registration opened last week. The call for papers will close this Friday (February 1, 2019) and we have received several proposals. Details of ATC19 were discussed and can be reviewed on the NMTAP website. Our satellite office partnerships include Northeast Regional Educational Cooperative (NEREC) in Las Vegas, NM and Western New Mexico University (WNMU) in Silver City, NM. Both areas utilize student interns to provide device demonstrations and device loans. We are planning a Hands-On Workshop of Assistive Technology (HOW-AT) in Las Vegas next month and WNMU loan library is now located in the Social Work department building on campus. We have discussed with SJCI to do another HOW-AT in Farmington this year. Council members discussed outreach to the Navajo Nation, service outreach to the Brain Injury Resource Center in Albuquerque and that NMTAP does include the Amazon Fire tablet as an AT device available in demonstrations.

Karen P noted that federal funding is provided through a Continuing Resolution and that it is unclear at this point if funding will remain level or experience a 12% cut for the next year. The funding for AgrAbility has been added to the NMTAP budget now and so we can begin recruitment for the AgrAbility Specialist. She also noted that Senate Bill 139 was introduced in this legislative session to help provide for AT needed to keep up with the ever-changing technology beneficial to individuals with disabilities statewide.

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

Tim C reported full financial review of all statewide loan programs available through SJCI, the NMTAP partner for financial AT loans. These include Access Loan NM (available for anyone with a disability to obtain needed AT), NM SEED Loans (available to purchase equipment for entrepreneurs with disabilities) and the AT Community Fund. In the last quarter, two Access Loan NM loans were processed for wheelchair accessible vans. One was a new loan and another was modified to reduce monthly payments in order for a family to keep the van needed for a child with a disability. The balanced investment accounts and available funds for Access Loan is maintained at over one million dollars, with just under that amount held in Certificates of Deposit (CDs) that secure the current loans. In this last quarter, there was one new NM SEED Loan approved for office equipment to support a small business owner providing brain biofeedback and behavioral coaching in the Santa Fe area. Tim C noted that the total funds between those secured in current open loans, investment funds and available for new loans is over $600,000. Tim C reported that the NMTAP Community Fund can provide up to $500 to an individual with a disability when all other options have been exhausted, or to supplement other funding. This fund has only enough money to assist one individual with a disability and the last assistance, provided in June 2018, was to cover one payment of an accessible van for a child with a disability during a severe family hardship. This “last resort” fund was originally formed with half of the proceeds from the annual AT Conference, but the proceeds in the last few years have only been enough to cover conference expenses, so the balance remains low.

Council members discussed how these financial loans are advertised, which includes it being posted on both NMTAP and SJCI websites, discussed at all outreach events by both partners throughout the state, and through Facebook and Tim C highlighted the SEED Loan program on KRQE television station in November 2018. Bill N suggested these loans be advertised to commercial AT vendors, such as Access Solutions. While we work with Access Solutions and they have participated in our AT Conferences, Anthony A gave contact information to Tim C to speak directly with them. It was also noted that NMTAP is advertising the SEED Loans in 24 rural newspapers the third weekend in February, April, June, August and October 2019.

**REUSE (Back In Use and DiverseIT - Adelante) UPDATE:**

Adelante is the NMTAP program partner that provides refurbished equipment to individuals with disabilities. The Back in Use program, housed in GiveABQ, provides Durable Medical Equipment (DME), as well as home and office furnishings for other non-profit agencies. DiverseIT with Adelante provides computers for those who have no other options. Yvette T, Executive Director of GiveABQ of Adelante, noted that the Back in Use program almost doubled DME provided to consumers this last quarter, which challenges the rate of donations. They had two equipment donation drives in November and December 2018, advertised in the Albuquerque Journal. They are fielding many calls since that time and currently have a 30-45 outstanding requests, especially for wheelchairs

The hours for drop off or pick up of equipment at 1520 First Street NW in Albuquerque increased to Monday – Friday from 9am to 3pm. They ask individuals to allow up to 30 days to fulfill the DME request. They field 25-30 calls a day to check on the request status. The official Grand Opening for GiveABQ is February 1, 2019. In response to council members’ questions, it was noted that while incoming computer donations from Intel varies, the donations from the Army Corps of Engineers is good as they update all of their offices. Also, the waiting list is categorized and consumers are served in order of date requested.

Nat D shared a resource for reused medical equipment in the Santa Fe area. Coming Home Connection.org provide loans of equipment in that area. The7 are open Monday – Friday from 8am-4pm and can be reached at (505) 988 2468 or at the website.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Keith M opened discussion on the needed review of the council By-laws. As noted in the current By-Laws done in 2015, the Executive Committee is responsible for the review and any needed update. Keith M appointed German B to serve on the Executive Committee with him and Bill N, Vice Chair. They will work on the By-laws and present an updated draft to the members at the next meeting. In regard to the required Open Meetings Act (OMA) Resolution, it was decided that Tracy A will look at current templates used by GCD and other councils. This will be addressed at the next meeting as an action item. Note that NMTAP currently adheres to the OMA guidelines.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Nat D noted that iPads are no longer available through NM Commission on Deaf and Hard of Hearing equipment distribution program at this time and is hoping to hear an update on any changes in the status. Bill N noted he would like NMTAP to increase outreach and collaboration with the Navajo Nation. NMTAP welcomes any additional connections that council members can provide.

**ADJOURN:**

The next NMTAP Advisory Council meeting was scheduled for April 15, 2019 in Anthony, NM at 1pm. Larry M, council member, will arrange for a location to be announced prior to the next meeting. It was also decided that the August 2019 meeting will be held in Farmington in coordination with SJCI. Keith M adjourned the meeting at 2:45 pm.

***Approved at April 15, 2019 meeting.***