

 *Keith Maes*

*Chairperson*

 **NEW MEXICO TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

 **ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING – MINUTES**

Monday, December 9, 2019

Disability Rights New Mexico

3916 Juan Tabo Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111

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

**NMTAP Staff**: Tracy Agiovlasitis (NMTAP Program Manager); Deborah Wieclaw (AgrAbility Specialist)

 **NMTAP Partners present:** Larry McCabe and April Esplain (San Juan Center for Independence/SJCI)

**Guests:** Isaac Plummer.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

NMTAP Council Chair, Keith M, called the meeting to order at 1:09 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 and German B seconded. The council members approved the agenda unanimously.

The minutes from the last meeting were reviewed. Bill N moved to approve the minutes and German B seconded as presented. The council members approved the minutes from August 19, 2019 unanimously.

**NMTAP PROGRAM UPDATE:**

Tracy A thanked council members for their RSVP and providing feedback on the meeting minutes and program needs. She reported that program partners are submitting data and she is working on the federal report for Fiscal Year 2019 (FFY19) that ended on September 30, 2019. The number of individuals borrowing devices this year was 245 statewide, about the same number over the last four years. There was a decrease in the number of device demonstrations this year due to tighter reporting guidelines, with 180 individuals with disabilities directly participating in this decision making process. There was an increase in services provided by both the financial loan and reused equipment partners this last year. We, along with our satellite offices, trained 1382 professionals and individuals with disabilities on Assistive Technology (AT) devices or services. Outreach was provided to 34 groups including many education, veteran, community living and employer agencies, with an extension into the previously untapped area of teachers and principals in the NM Corrections Department. Our annual “ATC20” conference is secured for May 4 & 5, 2020 at the Uptown Sheraton and council members are welcome to assist with providing information at the NMTAP exhibitor table. The call for papers was released and the deadline for educational sessions is January 17, 2020 and Tracy A asks for council members and program partners to encourage AT experts they know to submit proposals.

There was much discussion amongst the advisory council members regarding outreach and engagement with case managers or care coordinators and senior centers. NMTAP has provided outreach to some Managed Care Organization (MCO) and Veteran case or care managers, as well as some senior centers. Tracy A welcomes advisory members with contacts they have to connect us to reach more individuals in all these areas. This supports the purpose of the advisory council, which is to assist in awareness of services to the public and bring awareness of public needs related to assistive technology to the program. There was also discussion of home modification challenges, especially in the rural areas such as Carlsbad. Albert D talked a little about the challenges ILRC faces in that area for home modifications. Nat D noted that a few individuals shared with her that they had difficulties accessing the home modifications program at the Governor’s Commission on Disability (GCD) due to not being able to hear on the phone or difficulty completing the application due to brain injury issues. Tracy A stated that borrowing a phone amplifier from NMTAP is an option and that she would discuss the application issue with GCD staff.

Tracy A noted that awareness of the AgrAbility grant is slowly increasing and that it is unfolding differently from how it was anticipated. Tracy A introduced Deborah W, noting that she has done lots of outreach in the greater Albuquerque area. Deborah W talked about her activities. Everyone participated in a general discussion regarding community gardens and other farming areas in the state.

Anthony Alarid, Interim GCD Director, was not able to attend so Tracy A stated that NMTAP is operating on a continued resolution from the federal government. She noted that purchasing some new AT is in process from the approximately $39,000 funds available from the $50,000 onetime appropriation for AT and home modifications.

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

April E, SJCI CFO, reported on the expenses for running the Access NM Loan and SEED Loan programs paid at the end of the year. She also reported that the invested funds for both programs are stable and growing. A written report was on the expenses and investments, as well as the 19 Access Loans and the one SEED Loan currently open. Larry McCabe reported on the loans, noting that the few loans that defaulted over the course of many years due mostly to major changes in health or death of the borrowers. He also noted that since began in 2005, about 2 million has been financed through Access Loans.

Keith M opened the discussion whether the Community Fund (the last resort fund in our federal plan) is viable and should be included in the next NMTAP state plan. The Community Fund has approximately $3.00 at this time and we continue to wait for promised $1000 contribution from Kiwanis. After discussion about the possibilities of adding funds, Bill N moved to postpone the vote until next meeting, Robin G seconded and the council approved unanimously. Tracy A will continue to follow up with the Kiwanis.

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

There was no representative from Adelante, but a written report was provided to the council members. Bill N noted that he wrote a letter to DiverseIT offering assistance in the program as an individual.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Since there was no elections required for the Chair or Vice Chair positions, the council discussed the idea of a subcommittee to look at possible ways to fund the AT Community Fund. Bill N moved to create a subcommittee, German B seconded and it was unanimously approved. Nat D, Ricardo O and Bill N all expressed interest in service on this committee.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

It was noted that Disability Rights Awareness Day (DRAD) will be in the Capitol rotunda on January 23, 2019. It was suggested that could be an arena to advertise to serve on this council. Tracy A agreed to do that and welcomes council members to attend.

**ADJOURN:**

The next NMTAP Advisory Council meeting was scheduled for March 9, 2020 in Espanola at 1pm. Keith M will look into a location and adjourned the meeting at 3:49 pm.

 ***Minutes Approved by Council members 3.9.2020.***