

*Karen Wiley*

*Chairperson*

 **NEW MEXICO TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

 **ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING – MINUTES**

Monday, January 22, 2018

Toney Anaya Building – Rio Grande Conference Room

2550 Cerrillos Road NE, Santa Fe, NM 87505

ATTENDANCE:

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

**NMTAP Staff**: Anthony Alarid (GCD/NMTAP Deputy Director); Tracy Agiovlasitis (NMTAP Supervisor); Jesse Armijo (AT Specialist); Sophia DeConti (AT Specialist): Erin Gallegos (AT Specialist)

**NMTAP Partners:** Meta Hirschl & Stephanie Swanberg (Back In Use/Adelante); Tim Carver (San Juan Center for Independence/SJCI).

**Guests:**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

NMTAP Council Chair, Karen W, called the meeting to order at 1:10 pm. The chair called the roll and established that a Quorum was present. Karen W asked for everyone to introduce themselves.

Council member Nat D moved to approve the agenda, Curtis C seconded the motion. Agenda was approved unanimously.

The minutes from the last meeting were reviewed. Nat D moved to approve the minutes as written. Katharine G seconded the motion. The minutes of October 30, 2017 were approved unanimously.

**NMTAP PROGRAM UPDATE:**

Tracy A presented a comparison of federal program reports from 2014 through 2017 which indicated a steady increase in all program services. For example, the number of individuals who participated in device demonstrations increased from 176 to 754, individuals who borrowed devices increased from 53 to 346 and individuals trained increased from 239 to 1382. She also noted the changes in staff during those four years and introduced the newest AT Specialist, Sophia DeConti, who started on January 2, 2018. A quick review of activities starting this month included two groups receiving device demonstrations, two program presentations at the Capitol during the legislative session and the first Hands On Workshop of Assistive Technology (HOW-AT) to be held in Las Vegas, NM on February 1, 2018. The educational sessions scheduled for Assistive Technology Conference 2018 (ATC18) were reviewed, noting that the conference rooms will be looped courtesy of the Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Staff is preparing to submit the request for CEUs and registration will be open to the public soon. Information about these events can be found on the NMTAP website.

Anthony A, GCD Deputy Director, reported that GCD is also one of the sponsors for the Hearing Loss Technology Workshop on May 9, 2018, which is the same hotel as ATC18. More details on this event can be found on the GCD website. He also stated that the federal shutdown does impact the NMTAP program, but should not affect current services since funds were drawn down last week for expenses.

**FINANCIAL LOANS (NM SEED 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) continue to be financially secure. He noted one Access Loan for a vehicle modification was paid off in December 2017 and that there has been one new SEED Loan approved in November 2017. Tim C reported that the NMTAP Community Fund program provided added funds to three individuals with disabilities since the start of this federal fiscal year. There is a small amount of funding in the Community Fund that could boost other funding for larger technology needs or fund a small need.

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

Meta H reported that Jim Bullard has retired and she will be the primary person attending the council meetings. She reminded us that Adelante is separating the provision of refurbished computers and durable medical equipment for persons with disabilities. The computer part will expand to include training and repairing computers by their staff, many who are individuals with disabilities. The open house event for the computing part, called DiverseIT, will be this week. They will also be able to report public awareness on both of these activities from their Facebook postings. Back In Use, the durable medical equipment part, will be moving into a larger warehouse that is more accessible hopefully around August 2018. This new space will also provide furniture to homeless shelters and other non-profits. Stephanie S stated that 197 pieces of equipment (both computers and durable medical equipment) were given to 159 individuals with disabilities since October 2018, mostly related to mobility and daily living. They have seen an increase in donations since after the holidays. Karen W stated that she is encouraging DVR to donate their old computers to our ReUse partner, now called DiverseIT.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Jesse A, Sophia D and Erin G, AT Specialists from NMTAP, provided a hands-on demonstration of a few speech to text and text to speech items. Dragon Naturally Speaking (DNS) Version 15 (cost about $300) for your computer was demonstrated on how it requires a little less work to train this speech to text software. The training and continued use will provide better output and special names can be trained for correct spelling. The DNS software allows you not only to do word processing, but also to navigate around the computer.

Curtis C noted that smart phones do not require training to change speech to text and to navigate to apps, especially within the iPhone. There are also several Chrome extensions that allow for some computer access for word processing. (These Chromebook extensions will be covered at our HOW AT in Las Vegas on 2/1/18.)

Built in mobile device speech to text capability was demonstrated as well. It can be as used to convert speech to text for messages, emails or other apps. Some navigation is possible on most iOS or android devices as well.

ZoomText Image Reader and ZoomText computer software (cost about $600 for both) was demonstrated primarily for low vision users. The image reader is a camera device that attaches to your computer to input any document text onto the computer screen. The text can then be read aloud, words highlighted and/or magnified. The software also as color contrast options and all these features are useful for low vision or learning disabilities. Placing the document can be properly placed by tactile, so it is accessible for individuals who are blind as well.

The Prodigi Connect 12 was then demonstrated as a very portable video magnifier with a touchscreen for documents and objects. This device takes a photo of the document and can then magnify it or read it aloud. Use by a person who is blind is less possible, unless pressure touch pads were in place for the touch screen commands. It was noted that the speech output is digital, but comes with male and female voices. Technology is not at the point of natural human voice output.

A few apps for iOS devices, including Prizmo which uses the built in camera to take a photo of a document and then read the text aloud with words highlighted. This makes it useful for low vision or learning disabilities. Speak and Speak IT are also apps that require typing, that is then read aloud, so an elderly person with speech difficulties or a low voice could engage in conversation. The last app demonstrated was the KNFB Reader (about $100), which converts text captured as a picture into spoken text, but it can also be connected to a braille display. Curtis C also noted there is a free app for iOS, Seeing AI. This app has document, text, currency and color recognition as well as the ability to read barcodes.

Note that a standard device demonstration by NMTAP staff shows several devices or apps that might fit a consumer’s need. The consumer tries all of them and decides which might best fit their needs. Then any device can be loaned to the consumer for 30 days to try out in their own school, work or community environment.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Meta H asked about movie options for individuals with low vision and Curtis C was happy to respond. He noted that audio description is more common in major theaters in the US, sometimes called described narration. Many movies have this option now and it will be noted as “audio described”. The device is synced to the right movie, but like all technology, it may have glitches noted after the movie has started.

Curtis C mentioned that the State Secretary’s office indicates they should have accessible on-line voting set up for individuals who are blind in time for the June primary voting.

**ADJOURN:**

The next NMTAP Advisory Council meeting was scheduled for April 23, 2018 in the Albuquerque area, location to be determined. Karen W adjourned the meeting at 2:54 pm.

***Approved on April 23, 2018 by the Advisory Council.***