NMTAP logo, state with Zia symbol with four stick figures with disabilities

*Brian Schobel – Chair*

*Karen Wiley – Vice Chair*

**NEW MEXICO TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING – MINUTES**

Monday, April 28, 2025

Zoom Platform

**Members Present:** [Zoom] Robin Garrison (Consumer of AT); TJ Chester (Independent Living Resource Center/ILRC); Karen Wiley (Consumer of AT); Eric Gonzales (Commission for the Blind); Julie Bisbee (Guardian Consumer of AT); [Phone] Ricardo Ortega (Consumer of AT); [In-person] Bernadine Chavez (Disability Rights New Mexico/DRNM) **Absent:** Brian Schobel (Consumer of AT) excused; Pilar Murray (Family of Consumer of AT) - excused; Desiree Anaya – proxy for Valerie Griego (NM Division of Vocational Rehabilitation/NMDVR)

**NMTAP Staff Present**: [Zoom] Lisa McNiven (Deputy Director of Governor’s Commission on Disability/GCD); Maurice Alvarez (NMTAP AT Specialist); Jared Silva (NMTAP Support Staff); [In-person] Tracy Agiovlasitis (NMTAP Program Manager)

**NMTAP Partners Present:** [Zoom]: Anthony Montoya & Jill Beets (Adelante Development Center/ADC); Stephanie Dawson, FundAbility Manager, **Absent:** none

**Guests:** Chris Zafra [in-person]

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Karen W, Council Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm. Meeting protocol was reviewed. It was established by roll call that a quorum was present. See attendance noted above.

Karen W asked for approval of the agenda. Robin G moved to approve the agenda, Julie B seconded, and all council members in attendance approved by roll call.

Karen W asked for approval of the draft minutes from January 27, 2025. Robin G moved to approve the minutes, Berna C seconded, and all council members in attendance approved by roll call.

**NMTAP PROGRAM UPDATE:**

Tracy A reported on a few activities within the last quarter as noted on a handout. Also provided was an annual federal report comparison chart since 2014 noted that device loans and outreach events were down in 2024 due to lack of current AT inventory. The agreement with NMDVR is moving forward with all deliverables to be met and approximately $34,640.09 expenses through March 2025. AT is being ordered under a more restrictive procurement process making it difficult to obtain items needed. A total of 193 broken/antiquated AT devices and 138 older with some potential value for consumers were identified. The ones with potential value can be offered free of charge through our regular Re-Use service and the others should be approved for discarding at the August 2025 GCD Commission Meeting as required. The first orientation training on how NMDVR accesses free and paid services was held 4/7/25 and was well received by the southern offices. Two more are planned for the next two months. Jared S was hired as an AT support staff person and is digging into the AT equipment and database. The AT Specialist replacement staff position was posted on 4/3/25. The two national events with NMTAP involvement, the AgrAbility National Training Workshop and the AT Leadership Symposium were successfully held in March in New Mexico. Sport chairs for demonstration and loan housed with Carrie Tingley Hospital Foundation were stolen in March and a police report was filed. The one-time grant for the Digital Divide Coordinator will end before the next meeting and a report will be available on the research and activities. The annual AT Conference (ATC25) will be held September 22/23 in Albuquerque and planning is progressing.

Lisa M reported that it is unclear if there are federal funding cuts specific to the grantees of the 21st Century AT Act at this time, but the AT Programs will be moved to the Children and Families division under Health and Human Services, due to the dissolution of the Administration on Community Living in which it was housed. She noted that the NMTAP Fiscal Year (FY25) budget is $522,100 and it was recommended that drawdowns of the funds be made monthly. The FY26 budget is $528,800 with a four percent raise for staff per the Governor. The $80,000 for the Digital Divide will not be renewed. The renewal of contracts is planned for FY26 with Adelante for Back in Use/DiverseIT for ReUse, the Regional Educational Cooperative #2 as the fiscal agent for ATC25, and the support position supported by NMDVR. The funds requested from NMDVR are anticipated to be no more than $287,000. Lisa M continues to look for congressional funding.

**FINANCIAL LOAN (FundAbility NM) UPDATE:**

Stephanie D reported that in February the NM Bank and Trust was purchased by a large out of state bank and can no longer partner with Adelante for FundAbility. The new bank is Capra Bank. She referred to the written report previously provided to members noting that cash continues to slowly increase in the funds. The monthly compensation expenses, and some Certificates of Deposit (CDs) are due, were noted. She provided marketing at ten events in the last quarter and two loans were refinanced in January. Fifteen inquiries were received, and they are still in the review process. Stephanie will continue to look for other options for individuals that support their best financial health and still get the help needed. Available funds for new financial loans is a moderate amount. A review of items requested included a specialty bed, adapted vehicles, computers, electric scooter, hearing aids, a communication device that was in process with a Speech Language Therapist, and a standard work tool. No official applications have been received.

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

Jill B reported that in March the funding through NMTAP provided 24 computers. An additional 36, through other funding for low-income children, were also distributed. She described a successful situation. She added that the proposed bill requiring adults changing tables in public places did not pass the legislative session but highlighted there is a grant from the Tourist Department available. She will provide the information to council members. The adult changing table in Explora was showcased last weekend on the news with some Adelante families to bring attention to the need for them. Jill also noted that Blue Cross Blue Shield paid for the table for NMTAP to participate in the 50+ Senior Tech Fair hosted by Adelante. It is very appreciated by NMTAP for this support. TJ Chester noted that the support for Windows 10 is ending, and Jill B noted that they are removing some of the code from Windows10 that causes problems, installing additional protective software, and watching what is happening with possible with operating system updates.

Anthony M reported donations and requests continue at a level pace, providing as much as possible to those in need. All types of Durable Medical Equipment (DME) are in high demand. The written report provided prior to the members was quickly reviewed, noting that the vehicle modification provided was a wheelchair lift for a car. Occasionally they receive one-of-a-kind donations such an AT magnifier and they will give out as they are requested. Tracy A and Anthony M will meet soon regarding how to provide other AT as NMTAP has more non-DME items to provide through ReUse.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

none

**COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS:**

Karen W noted that her tea business is setting up accessible parking etc in Ruidoso.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

**ADJOURN:**

The next NMTAP Advisory Council meeting will be on **Jule 28, 2025 from 1pm – 3pm** as a hybrid meeting via Zoom with location TBD. The meeting was adjourned at 2:40pm.

*Approved on 7/28/25*