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

*Robin Garrison – Chair*

*Ricardo Ortega – Vice Chair*

**NEW MEXICO TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

**ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING – MINUTES**

Monday, October 21, 2024

Governor’s Commission on Disability Conference Room - 491 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, NM, Conference Room and Zoom Platform

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

**NMTAP Staff Present**: [In person]: Tracy Agiovlasitis (NMTAP Program Manager); [via Zoom}: Lisa McNiven (Deputy Director of Governor’s Commission on Disability/GCD); Julie LaJeunesse (NMTAP AT Specialist)

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

**Guests:** Angelia Velarde-Logsdon (Coordinator for the GCD Brain Injury Advisory Council), Jeminie Shell (Disability Specialist for GCD)

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Robin G, Council Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:13 pm. Meeting protocol was reviewed. It was established by roll call that a quorum was present. See attendance noted above. She noted that Andrea Sterling and Dennis Campos are no longer council members. Robin G is no longer with DRNM and will continue as a consumer of AT and Bernadine Chavez was appointed to represent DRNM.

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

Robin G asked for approval of the draft minutes from July 22, 2024. Brian S moved to approve the minutes, Ricardo O seconded, and all council members in attendance approved by roll call.

**NMTAP PROGRAM UPDATE:**

Tracy A noted that she is working with NMDVR leadership to create a stronger collaboration between them and NMTAP. The contract signed will include Vocational Counselors utilizing NMTAP device demonstrations and device loans statewide, training on the process and training on AT, as well as an option for AT Evaluations if needed. The funds have not been available at this point, but the GCD Chief Financial Officer is working on the funding aspect. NMTAP staff members have been very busy this last quarter, sending out AT device loans to 56 individuals and many device demonstrations. NMTAP and GCD BIAC Coordinator, Angelia V, met with ARCA and ILRC to review how each program can collaborate to best serve individuals with brain injuries. NMTAP did a similar collaborative meeting with Teeniors and added them to the State of NM vendor list so they may be hired to help individuals with disabilities working with state agencies. The NMTAP three-year state plan (October 2024-September 2026) has been completed and Tracy A will be completing the Annual Progress Report by November 2024. Contract Partners will be asked to contribute success stories of individuals served through ReUse and FundAbility. The Digital Divide Coordinator, a temporary federal funded position, has been empty since July 2024 and interviews for a couple of applicants will be done this week. Tracy A noted a few trainings, but not all of them for the last quarter. GCD provided $60,000 for new AT in response to the council’s notice of need and about $27,000 of new AT has been purchased and about $10,000 is pending financial processing. Activities with the NM AgrAbility Project have increased, Julie L attended a Veteran’s business training to better serve our food growers, and the Farm and Ranch Museum’s NM AgrAbility exhibit will open in January 2025. The National AgrAbility Training Workshop will be held in Las Cruces and the AT Leadership Training in Albuquerque in March 2025. It is an honor to have these trainings in New Mexico and Advisory Council member involvement could be useful. A Vamos Intern, student job trial agreement, from Mandy’s Farm is working once a week with NMTAP, updating the AT from the closed Satellite offices in the database and sanitizing them.

Advisory Council members discussed components of an AT Evaluation for an adult and for a student and the suggestion of behavioral health AT to help deescalate young people who are neurodivergent within the foster care system as a pilot program with GCD and NMTAP. A reminder that AT demonstrations and AT loans are available to anyone of any age in the state, including young people, incarcerated, or older persons to trial, but purchasing current equipment is a large and vital task to provide those services.

Lisa M reported some information about the NMTAP budget for state FY25, which started 7/1/24. Lisa M reviewed the budget projections provided at the July 2024 meeting including $344,300 in personnel, $95,500 in contracts, and $82,300 in miscellaneous expenses. The contract with NMDVR is for a maximum of $310,000, of which $80,000 if for temporary staff for the project, $200,000 for new AT, and $30,000 for supplies, travel, and miscellaneous costs.

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

Stephanie D reported that they submitted the first invoice to NMTAP, there were 26 active loans transferred and she is working with the bank to make sure they stay in good standing. The intention is to provide “micro loans” (AT costing about $5,000-$10,000 versus vehicle modifications) until the funds are returned to $3,000,000. She attended her first conference and is planning to market the program more around the state. The interest rate is 2% above CD rates. Stephanie will verify if a co-signer could be a family member not living in New Mexico if needed.

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

Anthony M reported that they showcased the Back In Use program to Representative Melanie Stansbury, who was excited about the project. Durable Medical Equipment devices are given out as fast as they are donated at a rate like pre-pandemic times. Wheelchairs, walkers, transport chairs, and hospital beds are the most requested items. Advisory Council members clarified requests are accepted by phone, on-line, or walk-in services, or medical services. If there is an available item it will be no longer than two to three weeks to give it out, and that increased funding from GCD/NMTAP would be required to consistently provide needed items to the rural areas of the state. Whenever possible, they partner with other professionals, ADC employees, or NMTAP staff to pick up donations or deliver equipment whenever possible. Advisory council members may offer to deliver items, and it was noted that there are other programs that can provide DME in some areas.

Jill B reported that DiverseIT also continues to have a higher demand for laptops than donations due to space in individuals’ homes or the need for portability. Using the NMTAP contract funding the number of computers has decreased due to a decrease in donations. They usually do not provide Chromebooks for those in need since they have a short operating shelf life and are not as powerful to meet needs for school or work. Most schools received these across the United States during the pandemic. Through another funding stream, they provided 44 laptops to the Ruidoso area after their disaster. The expense for that one project was just under $5,000, so the $20,000 provided by GCD/NMTAP would not cover services beyond the larger metro area. The funding has not increased in the last ten years. Jill B shared a success story of providing a Chromebook to an adult student to record school lessons with a desktop to transfer those recordings at home. This was a creative way to use decreased inventory and the individual danced in the lobby with excitement. NMTAP has offered to continue delivery to individuals with disabilities when they are going to a rural area. There will be classes that are free for individuals with disabilities and seniors in November and December through other funding sources and she will provide that information to the full council. The class fee is normally $25 each.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Robin G, asked for nominations for new leadership including the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and the Executive Counciler. Brian S was nominated by Robin G and Ricardo O was nominated by TJ Chester for Chairperson. Ricardo gracefully declined to opportunity due to health. Brian S was voted as the new Chair starting at the next meeting and all council members in attendance approved his service. TJ Chester nominated Karen W as Vice-Chair and she was voted as the new Vice-Chair by all council members in attendance. TJ Chester nominated Pilar M as the Executive Councilor, but she declined due to a very busy schedule and may not be as available as needed. Karen W nominated TJ Chester as the Executive Counselor, and all council members approved with TJ Chester abstaining the vote.

Robin G opened the discussion regarding the Bylaws. A clarification regarding leadership terms, meaningful breaks, and details of presence at meetings was discussed and changed. Karen W moved to approve the Bylaws with the current revisions, Ricardo O seconded, and all members in attendance agreed to approve. For the Open Meetings Act (OMA) Resolution, TJ Chester moved to approved as written, Brian S seconded, and all council members in attendance approved. Robin G signed them as the outgoing Chairperson.

**COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS:**

Due to time constraints, none were provided.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Anglelia V appreciated being present.

**ADJOURN:**

The next NMTAP Advisory Council meeting will be on **January 27, 2025, from 1pm – 3pm** with a location TBD (possibly in Ruidoso pending weather) with a Zoom option. The meeting was adjourned at 3:04pm.

***Approved 1.27.25***