

Position on Assistive Technology Services by the Nevada Assistive Technology Council

The Nevada Assistive Technology Council asserts that all persons with disabilities, regardless of age or life situation, must have access to life empowering assistive technology to participate and succeed in modern society. Acquiring appropriate assistive technology (AT) devices and services are a necessity for many people with disabilities who are striving to succeed in life's pursuits including education, employment, living independently, and recreation. AT makes the essential difference in a child receiving an appropriate education, a person obtaining and maintaining their employment, a veteran re-entering civilian life, the individual trying to regain some independence, or seniors wanting to remain active and engaged in the community.

Assistive technology (AT) is any device or service that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of people with disabilities. Examples of AT include magnifying glasses, talking computers, software, phones, and Braille-output for persons who are visually impaired; communication devices for people who are unable to speak; adapted switches, keyboards, and controls for persons who have trouble accessing standard keyboards and other input devices; voice input or speaking through a phone or computer for those unable to type or persons who have learning or intellectual disabilities; and home modifications, vehicle adaptations, mobility devices such as wheelchairs, scooters, and walkers. AT may also include processes and systems that make a home or workplace more accessible, such as modifying some parts of job descriptions or changing the way paper files are accessed.

Therefore, the Nevada Assistive Technology Council holds the following unyielding position.

Basic Principles:

1. Appropriate technology is critical to the success and quality of life of people with disabilities.
2. The State of Nevada has gaps in services, collaborations, and practices.
3. The Nevada Assistive Technology Council will operate as lead stakeholder.
4. Assistive Technology service requires an interdisciplinary team-based approach.

Priorities, practices, and goals:

1. Increase access to and usability of assistive technology services statewide.
2. Foster inter-agency collaborations to improve service delivery.
3. Require access to independent, person centered, and team based assessment, training and follow along services.
4. Support the creation of an accessible web-based system for education to increase exposure to Assistive Technology training opportunities.
5. Provide Assistive Technology reutilization, device demonstrations, device loans, training, technical assistance, and public awareness throughout the state.

It is our conviction that by providing timely and appropriate AT that Nevada will see greater contributions by persons with disabilities, as well as savings, as a result of employment and independence gained. To accomplish this we need legislative support and changes to policies and procedures that will ensure appropriate access to and acquisition of assistive technology for persons with disabilities.