

## Position or White Paper on Assistive Technology by the Assistive Technology Council

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 obtainin and maintaing 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. The Nevada Assistive Technology Council therefore asserts that all persons with disabilities, regardless of age or life situation, must have access to life empowering assistive technology to truly succeed.

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, it is our strong position that the Nevada Legislature work with state entities to increase access to and ensure funding for appropriate AT devices and services.

These services are critical to success:

- 1) Person-centered, independent assistive technology evaluations and assessments.
- 2) Purchase of appropriate AT based on assessment.
- 3) Installation and set-up of AT devices.
- 4) Adequate training on these devices.

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.