

Nevada Assistive Technology Council Position Statement 2023

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 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 gain or improve their personal independence, or seniors wanting to remain active and engaged in their community.

Assistive technology (AT) is any device or service that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of people with disabilities. AT can be highly technical or very low tech. Examples of AT include magnifying glass or electronic magnifier, screen reading technology; 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, home modifications, vehicle adaptations, mobility devices such as wheelchairs, scooters, and walkers. AT services also include the education and training on the use of AT. 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. Those are all examples of AT services, when you think of AT, think of it as a solution to a problem or barrier. Much like a ladder is a solution for reaching a burned-out light bulb in a home, AT is a tool that can enable a person with a barrier to overcome that hurdle.

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 Assistive Technology user must be at the forefront and a lead decision maker about their AT needs.
3. The State of Nevada has gaps in services, collaborations, and practices.
4. The Nevada Assistive Technology Council will operate as lead stakeholder.

Priorities, practices, and goals:

1. Increase the access to and acquisition of assistive technology services statewide.
2. To improve AT service delivery in Nevada.
3. Require consumer driven models of AT selection through independent and team-based support systems. Including training and follow-along services.
4. Promote and advocate for accessible web-based systems and websites that enable access for everyone.
5. Promote Nevada Assistive Technology Collaborative services: Information and Assistance, Device Demonstrations, Device Loans (trying the devices), Reutilization and Open-Ended Device Loans, Last Resort State Funded AT for daily living, Training, Technical assistance, and Public Awareness throughout the state.

By providing timely and appropriate AT Nevada will see greater contributions by persons with disabilities, as well as savings, because of employment and independence gained. To accomplish this, we need legislative support and changes to policies and procedures.