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## May 2020 State Rehabilitation Council ATP Report

### **Nancy Noha-Marketing**

During 2019 Nebraska VR staff received quarterly newsletters on a variety of topics, including apps and solutions for those who are hearing impaired. The first edition of the 2020 newsletter featured a Nebraska VR client and a variety of solutions to make independent living possible, including a bidet. [Watch the video.](#) A similar newsletter will be sent to Health and Human Services and Developmental Disabilities Supervisors/Coordinators in the coming year.

Contractor recruitment was a focus of marketing in the first quarter of this year. A flyer with a tear off was designed and displayed in local lumber yards and coffee shops by the Technology Specialists. A 30 second commercial aired on the Nebraska Rural Network during early morning hours and late afternoons for a two week period.

### **Resource Coordination/Financial Programs – Angie Ransom**

ATP continues to receive Service and Device (S&D) applications. With the ability to complete online in a fillable format, they can be completed, copied, and sent in via fax or mail. In addition, with the COVID-19 changes to staff working remotely, consumers are able to email ATP the S&D and also provide a hard copy in the mail. The process is efficient and providing little down time to the applications being entered.

ATP hosted their Advisory Council Meeting on 4/20/2020 by Zoom. There were approximately 24 council members and staff on the call. There was also accommodations provided by sign language interpreting as well as live captioning. The meeting was successful and informative and helpful with modern technology as we are in a current pandemic.

### **Enrichment Foundation Grant**

The Enrichment Foundation Grant continues to serve individuals in Douglas and Sarpy Counties. It is used to cover needs for assistive technology.

### **DHHS Program – May Faith [1/1/20 through 3/31/20]**

During the second quarter of FY 20, 120 HHS projects were authorized, utilizing \$ 690,083.02 in AD Waiver funding, and \$5,987.00 in DD Waiver funding, totaling \$ 696,070.02 in funding.

These projects assisted 116 consumers with greater independence and accessibility in their homes and communities.

With precautions for COVID-19 beginning to take effect around the end of March 2020 the authorization of projects decreased slightly as consumers made personal decisions to delay having a project begin or even having their referred needs assessed. Referrals began to decline slightly towards the end of March as well.



### **Education – Brian Wojcik**

The ATP/Education Program continues to work toward building capacity by working with those providing special education services to children and students ages 0-21. The program has focused on developing universal and targeted technical assistance through phone/email/video chat support, webinars, and written supports. We are developing webinars related to processes in schools regarding assistive technology including building an understanding of assistive technology, considering assistive technology effectively, assessing children/students to determine assistive technology needs, integrating assistive technology into the IEP/IFSP, implementing assistive technology, and evaluating the effectiveness of assistive technology. We are also working with a series of national experts to develop content related to assistive technology tools to support students in the areas of reading, writing, math, executive function, self-regulation, and communication. Recently, we have launched the annual statewide group buy for News-to-You products which leverages group purchasing power to allow schools to purchase these products at a discounted rate. Finally, the ATP/Education Program has been updating the Statewide Education Loan Pool to add equipment that schools can borrow and try with children/student.

### **iCanConnect Program - Brooke Harrie**

The iCanConnect (iCC) Program is also known as the National Deaf Blind Equipment Distribution Program. This is a nationwide program that provides telecommunication equipment and training to low income individuals with significant hearing and vision loss. The Assistive Technology Partnership is responsible for coordinating the program for the state of Nebraska. There are currently 2 active iCC cases, with 3 additional individuals in the process of submitting all necessary documents to apply for services. Examples of telecommunication equipment that iCC can assist eligible individuals with includes smartphones, laptops, braille displays, magnifier/screen reading software, amplified phones and signalers.

All recent and upcoming summer events scheduled for outreach of the iCC program have been canceled or postponed as a result of the current pandemic. The Program Supervisor has scheduled a virtual Train the Trainer event for the end of April and the iCC staff look forward to gaining new knowledge through this event. The iCC Program continues to take applications as individuals who are deaf blind are needing equipment to be able to telecommunicate now more than ever. The iCC Technology Specialists are meeting with clients over the phone and virtually if possible. We will continue to serve this population to the best of our ability while keeping everyone's health and safety as a top priority.

### **Nebraska VR Title 1 Program - Brooke Harrie**

ATP Technology Specialists for the VR Title 1 Program received 68 service requests from 1/22/20 to 4/20/20. Of those 68 service requests, 25 were adult VR clients, 33 were in Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), 1 was Project SEARCH and 9 were Nebraska VR staff members. Requests were for worksite AT (10), ergonomics (6), bicycles (1), computer/software (1), cognitive aids (34), communication (1), ADL (5), mobility devices/repairs (3) and vehicle modifications/repairs (7). Nebraska VR continues to be in an Order of Selection status. They have taken more priority 1 cases off the waiting list and continue to evaluate how many more people they can serve and at what intervals.



The beginning of 2020 was full of events surrounding Pre-ETS and Project SEARCH. The VR Technology Specialists attended the Eastern Nebraska Transition Conference on January 24 in Norfolk and presented to the students in attendance on apps and technology to assist them in training and post-secondary education. Technology Specialists throughout the state have also been busy attending events through their local Project SEARCH sites, such as Parent's Night and Assessment/Skills Day events, to meet and help select the new incoming class of students for the 2020-2021 year.

As the current pandemic spread, Nebraska VR Technology Specialists began working remotely. We continue to accept new referrals from Nebraska VR to assist individuals with disabilities who are still able to work and needing support. Assessments and meetings are being held virtually and we are doing the best we can to still provide services and information, while focusing on the health and safety of everyone involved.

### **General Update -Tobias Orr**

Because of the current COVID 19 pandemic ATP staff have been working remotely since the end of March, only going into the office if absolutely necessary. Staff have done an excellent job handling the transition, and because of their hard work and flexibility there have been almost no changes or delays in services offered by ATP. The service that has been affected the most by the pandemic is ATP's AT loan and reuse program. When the decision to close offices to the public was decided, ATP temporarily suspended the loan reuse program for everyone except educators requesting loans that are being shipped out of the Cozad site. All loan due dates were extended and messaging was put on the websites and phone systems informing consumers that we are temporarily suspending the program. PPE has been ordered, and once NE passes it's COVID 19 apex, we are going to look into restarting the loan/reuse program on a limited basis.



