



GCD Access News - Summer 2022

About GCD

The New Mexico Governor's Commission on Disability (GCD) is committed to improving the quality of life of all New Mexicans with disabilities by addressing social integration, economic self-sufficiency, political resolve, physical and program accessibility, and full participation in the benefits of life and rights of all individuals. GCD addresses physical, sensory, programmatic, and attitudinal barriers to forward its mission. Such barriers may keep a person with a disability from enjoying the full aspects of community living.

GCD works to improve the quality of life of New Mexicans with disabilities through progressive systems advocacy.

GCD promotes community living and access to: employment opportunities; universal access to information; appropriate and available assistive technology; accessible education; accessible, affordable, universally designed housing; accessible and available

transportation (rural and urban); available home and community-based services; and access to social and recreational settings.

GCD serves as liaison and advisor to the Governor and Legislature on disability issues. GCD programs include:

Disability Awareness and Advocacy Program

Physical Accessibility Unit

[New Mexico Technology Assistance Program](#)

[Brain Injury Advisory Council](#)



Meet the Director: Stan Ross

My career in architecture introduced me to accessibility with passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, and it has been an influence throughout my career in the private sector.

Born in Richmond VA. and attended the College of William & Mary. Transferred to and graduated from the College of Architecture at Arizona State University with a 'Bachelor of Architecture' degree. I initially attained architectural licensure in Arizona, followed by licensure in Colorado, Indiana, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and New Mexico. NCARB certified, ACTCP (ADA Coordinator Training Certification Program), CPM (Certified Public Manager), CAPE (Certified Advocated in Public Ethics). Moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico in December 1999.

I represent the GCD as a voting member on the 'Accredited Standards Committee A117.1 on Architectural Features and Site Design of Public Buildings and Residential Structures for Persons with Disabilities'.

As Director of the Governor's Commission on Disability I take the Agency lead in improving physical access in places of public accommodation and government entities through site assessments, architectural plan reviews, technical assistance, and trainings on state and federal accessibility standards. As well as working to ensure compliance with current accessibility standards under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the International Building Code, and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI A117.1).

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Meet the Deputy Director: Lisa McNiven

Lisa McNiven was born Deaf due to maternal rubella. Not until she was two years' old did her family discover that she was Deaf. She was raised in regular schools, with Speech Therapy to support her in reading lips to get by for most of her life in Michigan before attending Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C - the only liberal arts university in the world for the Deaf. There, she learned American Sign Language and the power of community. Lisa participated in the groundbreaking Deaf President Now demonstrations at Gallaudet in 1988, helping to change the landscape of self-governance for people with disabilities for generations to come.

She completed her studies there and received a Bachelor's degree in Psychology.

Lisa has worked for many years serving the needs of the Disability community; as a Respiratory Therapy assistant, Autism program teaching assistant, and personal care attendant for persons with Developmental Disabilities. She volunteered for the Children's Burn Center and the Special Olympics. She was a research assistant for the International Deaf Way Conference, a Census-taker and worked for the National Organization for Women.

Upon graduating from Gallaudet University, she worked in various non-profits serving individuals with disabilities in addition to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community. She worked at the National Children's Center (NCC) in Washington, DC. One of her favorite jobs in D.C. was as a group home counselor for 4 years, serving individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities.

Seeking new horizons, Lisa moved to New Mexico in 1994 and worked for the Community Outreach Program for the Deaf (COPD) in New Mexico for 11 years, starting as a Case Manager and eventually was promoted to Assistant Director of Direct Services (Case Management, Job Development, Job Coaching, Peer Counseling).

Lisa has worked with the GCD for 17 years, the last seven as a Disability Specialist.

Some of the current projects that she oversees at GCD are the Statewide Accessibility Emergency Preparedness Networking project, the Development of an ADA Council for ADA Coordinators, the

Disability Statistics Data Portal Project, and the Medical Access Symposium. She has been proud to serve as a board member of the ADA Council in Albuquerque and regent for N.M. School for the Deaf, as well as many other committees/boards statewide to advance the welfare and accessibility of all people with disabilities over the last 26 years in New Mexico. She is now currently serving on the N.M. Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and is very involved in the Deaf Culture Center of N.M. (DCCNM).

Lisa graduated with a Master's in Public Administration (MPA) in 2016, which she is excited to put to good use in her role as the new Deputy Director of the New Mexico Governor's Commission on Disability (GCD). Lisa's areas of expertise are Disability Awareness, Emergency Preparedness, Medical Access, Employment issues, Special Education, Systematic Advocacy, and Public Management/Public Policy. She is a certified ADA Coordinator and is also a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteer.

A few of Lisa's current roles at the GCD are to support, monitor, and supervise the operation of the 3 programs: 1) The Disability Awareness and Advocacy Unit, 2) NM Technology Assistance Program (NMTAP), and 3) the Brain Injury Advisory Council (BIAC).

Lisa brings extensive Disability and project/public management experience to her role as Deputy Director and is honored to have this opportunity to continue to serve the people of the beautiful state of New Mexico.

Lisa enjoys hiking, movies, cultural events, her cats and traveling and spending time with her wife and son.

If you have any questions about the Governor's Commission on Disability or are looking for resources related to the Disability Community, contact Lisa.mcniven@state.nm.us or 505-435-9326.

GCD Disability Awareness & Advocacy Program



Jeminie Shell - Disability Specialist

Jeminie Shell is a Disability Specialist with the New Mexico Governor's Commission on Disability, working in the Disability Awareness and Advocacy program. She provides technical assistance and trainings regarding the ADA and other disability-related laws to state and local governments, businesses, and the public.

She is a Certified ADA Coordinator and at the GCD she manages programs such as the ADA Coordinator Certification program and the Quality of Life Grant. In her role at the GCD she also covers topics such as service animals, higher education, Title III of the ADA, adaptive sports, and hospitality and tourism. She has over 10 years of experience working in program development and advocacy with an emphasis on social justice.

Contact her if you have questions about disability laws, would like training on any disability topic, or are looking for resources related to disability support and services.

In Celebration of the 26th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act

32 years ago, on July 26, 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law. This historic civil rights law protects the rights of people with disabilities to have equal access and pursuits in daily activities of living such as employment, services in state/local government or accessing provisions in public accommodation, and communication access to Information.

The New Mexico Governor's Commission on Disability (GCD) celebrates this achievement of physical and programmatic access in all aspects of our society. We continually strive for equality to opportunities that are not more than but equal to those without a disability.

Keep in mind that what works for people with disabilities works for everyone, this is called Universal Designs. We want everyone to be included, to do this you need inclusive practices. When you think about universal concepts in your designs for a building, equipment, technology, tools, and/or providing services you want to use – always think about how it will work for all people with various types of disabilities. You can test your designs with partners in the disability community, they can tell you if it will work. Testing it before makes sense, it saves time and money to be inclusive.

Celebrating the ADA is a journey towards excellence! We want to say thank you for being our allies towards a more perfect union, that is inclusive to all of us including individuals with disabilities. We have a long way to go to achieving this dream, but it would not have happened without the combined energy, drive and passion of the Disability community and our allies.

In Disability Pride, the GCD continues to be proactive as advocates, trainers, and policy makers towards a more accessible society today and going forward while in celebration of the ADA that made this possible.

NM Technology Assistance Program (NMTAP)

NMTAP offers free services to New Mexicans with disabilities, older adults, and the professionals working with them to help get the assistive technology (AT) services they need. NMTAP is a statewide program designed to increase knowledge of, access to, and acquisition of assistive or adaptive technology for anyone with any disability, anywhere in the state, of any age.

NMTAP services offered include:

- **Device Demonstrations:** Individuals with disabilities compare several devices that can assist with their goals in a hands-on trial with an AT Specialist. This opportunity begins the process to find the best tool.
- **Assistive Technology Device Loan Library:** Individuals may borrow device(s) for up to 6 weeks to try the tool(s) in their own environment. If the item is a good fit, NMTAP can also help locate the item for purchase from another business.
- **Trainings:** Meet in a large or small group setting to increase knowledge on specific AT devices or accessible practices. This can be for professionals or individuals with disabilities.
- **Financial Loan:** Optional low interest loan for individuals to pay for an assistive device.
- **Reused Equipment:** Individuals with disabilities can obtain Durable Medical Equipment or a refurbished computer when there are no other options.
- **Technical Assistance:** Any agency or group can collaborate with AT Specialists regarding tools and practices to provide the accessibility required by law.

Brain Injury Advisory Council

About the BIAC

The New Mexico Brain Injury Advisory Council (BIAC) is a program of the NM Governor's Commission on Disability. The council was created by statute in 1995 to advise the Governor's Commission on Disability,

The Governor, The Legislature and state agencies about concerns and issues related to brain injury. Members of the council are from all areas of the state and include individuals with brain injuries, family members, healthcare professionals and representatives from agencies that provide help for persons living with brain injuries.

Mission Statement

The BIAC supports evidence-based research, education and advises public and private entities to enhance the statewide system of comprehensive, community-based resources, services, and supports to maximize the personal choices and functional independence of persons with brain injuries.

The BIAC also promotes prevention and increased public awareness to decrease the incidence of brain injuries.

About Monica

Monica is the Brain Injury Advisory Council (*BIAC*) Program Coordinator. She manages the BIAC program. She provides brain injury information and referral, technical support and advocates for brain injury programs in NM. Monica is a Certified Brain Injury Specialist through the Brain Injury Association of America, a Certified Americans with Disabilities Act-Coordinator and holds a Master's Degree in Counseling with an emphasis on Rehabilitation Counseling from NM Highlands University. Monica has dedicated her career to supporting individuals with disabilities for more than 20 years.

Tech Corner

Magnilink Voice 2

The Magnilink Voice 2 is a portable reading machine that allows an individual with disabilities to have content read back to them which can include books, newspapers, and digital documents. It can be used by low vision individuals or those with reading disabilities that require content to be read back to them. By using an intuitive remote control, a user can independently snap a picture of their document, and control features like the rate of speech speed, and the volume level. Featuring 5 hours of battery time, this device is designed for people on the go or for those that need reading assistance in the house. Other features include voice feedback for all menu options, automatic language detection, and high contrast depth of field for large textbooks. Users can also connect an external monitor via HDMI cord to add a visual display to the content being read out loud.

The Magnilink Voice 2 retails for \$2,495.00 and can be loaned out for FREE, for 6 weeks through the New Mexico Technology Assistance Program.





Disability Employment Corner

**DIVISION
OF VOCATIONAL**

DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (DVR)

WHAT IS DVR?



The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is an agency dedicated to helping folks with disabilities start work, get back to work, maintain work, or advance in their work.

WHO DO THEY HELP?

DVR is an eligibility-based program and is able to assist folks who have a diagnosis of a disability. While income may be considered, it is not the sole factor in qualifying an individual for assistance.



WHAT DO THEY DO?



DVR utilizes a holistic approach to case management, including advocacy, skills assessments

advocacy, skills assessments,
individualized plans,, and
transferrable skills analysis.

HOW TO REACH DVR

dvr.state.nm.us

Click the online referral so someone can reach
out and schedule a follow up with you



Agency News

Special Education Ombudsman

The Office of the Special Education Ombud (OSEO) was created through HB222 which was passed by the legislature with bi-partisan support and signed into law by Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham in the spring of 2020. The bill, a Governor's priority bill, was sponsored by Representatives Liz Thomson and Joanne Ferrary, and Senators Linda Lopez and Siah Hemphill. The main goals of the office are to:

1. Advocate with and for public school students and their families by providing comprehensive knowledge, resources, and support

for those navigating the special education system in New Mexico.

2. Creating a supportive network of district ombuds (volunteers) in every district in New Mexico.
3. Identify important issues in special education and report them to DDC, PED, SED, the legislature, and the governor, advocating for systemic change in special education.

Both state and district ombuds will review IEPs, reach out to school and district personnel to create collaborative student centered solutions, share information about resources in their community, attend IEP, BIP, MDR meetings, and discipline hearings.

Michelle Tregembo is the special education state ombud. She served her community as an educator for 25 years both in urban and rural settings. She taught in elementary, middle, and high schools throughout her career. She earned her National Board Certification as an Exceptional Needs Specialist in 2001. She is honored to serve families and public school districts across NM. “When we all work together; family, teachers, educational assistants, ancillary staff and administration, kids are more successful. I know we all want all students to succeed and when student centered decisions are made, barriers come down and opportunities improve.” She looks forward to creating positive relationships with the families, schools, and districts across New Mexico. If you are struggling with navigating the special education system in NM, or you are interested in becoming a certified district ombud, please reach out (505) 841-4565 or

michelle.tregembo@state.nm.us, or review information found at www.nmddc.org.

Emergency Resources

Governor's Commission on Disability has "Go Bags" available for individuals with disabilities of any age who reside in New Mexico. Priority is given to individuals who have experience wildfires in their communities.

In this starter bag we have prepared for you, it has some items but not all that is listed in the evacuation workbook (link below) on page 28. The "Go Bag" will have your own copy of the evacuation workbook that you can review with your family or friends. Please contact Lisa McNiven, Deputy Director at Lisa.mcniven@state.nm.us for more information and/or to obtain your own bag. We only have 40 bags left, but we are looking to expand this for FY 23 (July 2022 to June 2023).

https://gcd.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/GCD-Evacuation-Workbook_Fillable-002-final-with-corrections-an-table-of-contents-links.pdf

Long COVID and the ADA

- [Guidance on "Long COVID" as a Disability Under the ADA, Section | HHS.gov](#)
- [What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(eoc.gov\)](#)

Trainings

- [***Emergency Management and Preparedness – Inclusion of People with Disabilities***](#)
- [***ADA National Network Learning Session: What Did They Say - Why Effective Communications is Critical in Emergency Management***](#)
- [***Health Care Access for Patients with Cognitive Disabilities***](#)
- [***Disabled, Trans, and Queer: Intersectional Conversations in the Workplace***](#)
- [***Twitter Chat: Post-Secondary Education and the ADA***](#)
- [***ADA Coordinator: Getting the Job Done***](#)

Useful Links

- [Ask an ADA Professional Question RE: Communication Requirements under the ADA \(accessibilityonline.org\)](#)
- [Accessible Residential Facilities \(accessibilityonline.org\)](#)
- [ADA Anniversary Update \(accessibilityonline.org\)](#)

Quality of Life Grants

- Adelante Development Center: will expand computer and technology training to people with disabilities across the state to reduce isolation and improve day-to-day task capabilities.

- Carrie Tingley Hospital Foundation: will expand their Wheel Runners wheelchair basketball program to include more participants and add a wheelchair to their inventory.
- Cloud Dancers Therapeutic Horsemanship: will expand the number of hours and types of hippo therapy offerings for people with a variety of disabilities.
- Collins Lake Autism Center: will allow the purchase of adaptive outdoor play equipment for their Sensory Integration Therapy program for people with autism.
- High Country Supported Living: will expand and enhance art and gardening day programs that are designed to reduce isolation and increase integration of people with disabilities.
- Thrive in Southern New Mexico: will allow the purchase of tools and other equipment to be used in their Day of Caring program that provides home repairs and property cleanup for elders and people with disabilities.

Call for Participants

Online Study: New Mexicans with Disabilities - COVID-19 and Access to Employment, Healthcare & Education

Take Survey Now

[Participants Needed for Online Research Study](#)

**New Mexicans
With Disabilities:
COVID-19 and Access
to Employment,
Healthcare, and
Education**



PRESBYTERIAN
Community Health

Has COVID-19 impacted your access to education, healthcare, and employment? If you are a person with a disability living in New Mexico, we want to hear from you.

Details

- Your answers will be kept anonymous.
- There is no requirement to participate in the survey.
- The survey should take between 15 and 20 minutes to complete.



[Take Survey Now](#)

Questions? If you have questions, contact Sharz Weeks, MPH at sweeks3@phs.org or (505) 559-6854.

[Se necesitan
participantes para un
estudio de
investigación en línea](#)

**Nuevomexicanos
con discapacidades:
Acceso a empleo,
atención médica y
educación durante
la pandemia de
COVID-19**



PRESBYTERIAN
Community Health

¿Le ha afectado la COVID-19 el acceso a educación, atención médica y empleo? Si usted es una persona con discapacidad que vive en Nuevo México, deseamos escucharle.

Detalles

- Sus respuestas se mantendrán anónimas.
- No hay ningún requisito para participar en la encuesta.
- La encuesta toma de 15 a 20 minutos para completarse.



[Haga la encuesta ahora](#)

¿Preguntas? Si tiene preguntas, comuníquese con Sharz Weeks, MPH al sweeks3@phs.org o al (505) 559-6854.



Aging and Long Term Services Dept, 2550 Cerillos Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505

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