



# GCD ACCESS NEWS

## 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



## IN THIS ISSUE:

- Program Updates
- Tech Corner: TD Pilot
- Fair Housing Act
- Agency News: Introducing new staff
- How prepared are you to work with the disabled community in a disaster?
- Trainings
- Useful links



# PROGRAM UPDATES

## AWARENESS & ADVOCACY

### Quality of Life Grant

In July the GCD awarded five New Mexico non-profit organizations Quality of Life Grants. These organizations are dedicated to improving the lives of New Mexicans with disabilities in a wonderful variety of ways. Here are the organizations and the projects that were funded:

**The Ability Center** received \$12,920 to expand their ENABLE program in the Las Cruces area.

- Distribute 20 window air conditioners and 60 smoke/carbon Monoxide detectors.
- Develop and implement basic computer literacy and smartphone function literacy classes and resources.
- Provide weekly opportunities for social interaction virtually through Zoom.

**Collins Lake Autism Center** received \$9,363 to expand their sensory integration playground equipment.

- Purchase and install sensory integration playground equipment to expand playground.

**Explora** received \$11,999.90 to expand their effective communication with students who are blind or low vision.

- Hold listening sessions with community partner organizations that serve blind and low-vision individuals.
- Hire two blind or low-vision teens as interns at 40 hours each.
- Using best practices from museums nationally and internationally, improve accessibility of exhibits to blind and low-vision individuals.
- Provide training for all front-line staff on the needs of blind and low-vision audiences and accommodation strategies.
- Work with partner organizations to create and test accessibility of additional exhibit graphics.

**Healing America's Heroes** received \$11,139 for the expansion of the Healing America's Heroes therapeutic recreational programs.

- Increase participation in and duration of each session of the therapeutic recreational programs.
- Incorporate assistive devices for art sessions.
- Increase geographical areas served by the program.
- Expand eligibility for the program to include first responders with disabilities.

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# PROGRAM UPDATES

## AWARENESS & ADVOCACY

- Conduct two 5-day sessions for a total of 24 disabled individuals.

### **Velo Cruces/Everybody Rides with Grace**

received \$14,600 for the distribution of adaptive cycles and related accessories to residents of Dona Ana County.

- Distribute at least 5 adaptive cycles and related accessories to disabled residents of Dona Ana County.
- Host a Bike Safety Rodeo to promote rules of the road and safety.
- Host a Reduce the Carbon Footprint Ride/parade, to include recipients and the community.

### **ADA Coordinator Certification Program and Related Trainings**

In late September GCD hosted a two-day conference/training on topics related to the ADA Coordinator Certification Program (ACTCP.) The event was co-sponsored with the Southwest ADA Center and the Great Plains ADA Center. Approximately 100 people attended the hybrid event, with 19 in person. Topics included the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design, Role of an ADA

Coordinator, and Emergency Preparedness, among others. Keep an eye out for announcements of upcoming trainings in the spring of 2024.

Many of GCD's past trainings are available on our website. Go to [ADA Coordinator Certificate Program: Empowering Accessibility \(nm.gov\)](https://www.nm.gov/ada-coordinator-certificate-program) and scroll down to the bottom for a list. Follow directions to log in and register for the training of your choice. Certificates of attendance are available, just follow the directions on the page.

### **Other Recent and Upcoming Trainings**

The program has offered several trainings this quarter and has several coming up. We've done trainings on disability awareness and etiquette for the NM Administrative Office of the Courts, a training on the same topic for the Magistrate Judges' Conference, and an ADA Title III training for the Santa Fe Farmer's Market. Upcoming trainings are planned for the International Folk Art Museum, and Las Cruces area emergency responders. community.

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# PROGRAM UPDATES

## PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY UNIT

**The Residential Accessibility Modification Program (RAMP)**, now has another member who joined our team in August of 2023. Josh Lopez is the Architectural Access Specialist for the Governor's Commission on Disability. The team has been working hard "revamping" the RAMP program, as it had taken a short hiatus during the COVID pandemic. We are in the process of updating forms, flyers, policies, and procedures, and trying to streamline further applications for the future. Our team at RAMP Services has been traveling across the state, meeting clients at their homes for Initial Site Visits, assessing their environment, taking measurements and pictures, to begin the next phases in the ramp or bathroom modification process that RAMP services provide. We have also been meeting and getting acquainted with the contractors that assist us in making these modifications come true. Some of the areas that we visited are Chimayo, Rio Communities, Raton, Ranchos de Taos, Las Vegas, Espanola, Albuquerque, Yatahey, Edgewood, Carrizozo, etc. The goal is to be able to provide services in all areas of the state, to the wonderful constituents that we serve. In addition, we have been doing outreach, meeting with agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security, Senior Centers, Independent Living Resource Centers, and other state agencies to collaborate further.

### **Outreach events**

On November 13 and 14th, we attended the Conference on Aging provided by the NM Aging and Long-Term Services Department and attended some educational sessions and provided an outreach table for the attendees. We met with several folks that attended the event and informed them about all the good work that GCD does. We also provided attendees with the RAMP applications and information regarding the process on how they can obtain the modifications. We found the event to be successful and look forward to doing more outreach tables as time allows.

During the first week of December 2023, Nadine and Josh will be joining additional GCD staff in where we will be presenting our piece at an event in Las Cruces, regarding accessibility in shelters. We will also be going to Initial Site Visits in the Sunland Park and Chaparral area during that time. We are excited for what this coming year will entail regarding the RAMP program!

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# PROGRAM UPDATES

## BRAIN INJURY ADVISORY COUNCIL (BIAC)



### **Introducing Angelia Velarde-Logsdon BIAC Program Coordinator**

Serving my community and helping others is something I learned from my parents.

Growing up my parents were operators of Boarding Homes. They cared for individuals with mental illness, and this was something I was around all the time. I learned early on of the prejudice our residents faced. One day when I was walking home from elementary school, one of my schoolmates asked, "Aren't you afraid that those people you live with are going to hurt you?" That thought had never occurred to me. Immediately I felt uncomfortable; my parents taught me early on that our residents were family. I knew in my heart and in my mind that none of our residents would ever do anything to hurt me. Our residents listened to me read, they played games with me, and if I fell and scraped my knee, they made sure to take me to my mom. Some of the residents lived with my parents for 40+ years. I watched my mother hold the hand of one of our dying residents

all night, so he would not be alone when he passed. The humanity that I experienced in early life has shaped me into the person that I am today. I want to continue this legacy and be part of making the world a better place. I have over 20 years' experience in healthcare with background in healthcare compliance, process improvement, advocacy for the underserved, and community outreach. I began my career working at a long-term care facility where I stayed 13 years and worked my way up to a leadership role. I have worked in several different settings throughout my career including nursing homes, assisted living, corrections, homeless shelters, and hospitals. I obtained an associate degree in Health Information Technology from San Juan College, and I am a Registered Health Information Technician by the American Health Information Management Association. My most current role was at Christus St. Vincent Regional Medical Center as the Trauma Data Registrar and Injury Prevention Outreach Coordinator. Some of my outreach programs included fall prevention, gun safety, car safety, and brain injury prevention by helmet distribution and bike rodeos.

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# PROGRAM UPDATES

## BRAIN INJURY ADVISORY COUNCIL (BIAC) CONTINUED

I am also a devoted volunteer with the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). My interest in working with veterans came from my husband who served in the Special Forces as a pararescueman in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is a recipient of the Airforce Cross Medal, Bronze Star Medal, and 2 Purple Heart Medals. The trauma he endured during his service changed him, and helping veterans is very important to me.

When I am not working, I enjoy traveling, spending time with my family, ice skating, cooking, and spoiling my pets. I am privileged and honored for this opportunity and look forward to working for New Mexicans with GCD team.

## NM TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NMTAP)

Two of the major activities that NMTAP provides to individuals with disabilities of all ages and any disability statewide are Device Demonstrations and Device Loans. It starts with a device demonstration and often ends with a device loan as outlined by our federal funding under the AT Act.

**DEVICE DEMONSTRATION:** To provide awareness of Assistive Technology (AT), an individual with a disability compares several similar AT devices to accomplish a needed or desired goal or to perform a task. By reviewing in details of the choices, a person makes an informed decision on which would work best for them. This Device Demonstration is guided by an AT Specialist after a discussion of the tasks, the abilities, and the challenges. Other support people can be involved in the demonstration as needed. These are scheduled in advance and time is allowed for lots of trials, questions, and discussion.



# PROGRAM UPDATES

## NM TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NMTAP)

**DEVICE LOAN:** After the best choice of AT has been decided on, that device is borrow for a “try it, before you buy it” experience in the environments it will be used. This short-term loan is usually for 6 weeks, but some AT devices in high demand may only be for 4 weeks to allow equal opportunity to all individuals with disabilities statewide. There is an easy application process with guidelines for use, care, and safety that can be submitted on-line, by email, fax, or hand delivered. Support of the AT Specialist is available during the whole loan period and then options for purchasing with vendors are offered.

Call, email or check our website for more information and get what you need to help you accomplish your goals! [click here for NMTAP website](#) or call 505-841-4464

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[New Mexico Technology Assistance Program](#)  
[New Mexico Brain Injury Advisory Council](#)



[@nm.gcd](#)



NEXT PAGE: TECH CORNER  
TD PILOT

# PERSONAL STORIES



The GCD gets many calls about issues related to housing and the Fair Housing Act. Many of those calls involve problems with accessible parking. One consumer called earlier this year asking for help getting an accessible parking space near the door to his apartment. He reported that the apartment complex had accessible parking on the other side of the building, in a separate parking area, but none in the lot that served the entrance to his side of the building. We advised him of the Fair Housing Act and recommended that he request an accessible space on his side of the building as a reasonable accommodation related to his disability. He worked for several months trying to get them to create a new space for him, but they initially declined, then dragged their feet after saying they would do it. The consumer contacted us again saying that they were not responding to his messages at all anymore. We contacted the management company of the apartment complex and explained the law to them, including that they are required to provide accessible parking as a reasonable accommodation. Within a couple weeks the management had gotten an accessible space sign and had the space striped for an accessible parking space. The consumer was elated and told his neighbors what had happened. Many of them had issues related to disability that they were struggling with, and he explained the Fair Housing Act to many of them so they could be empowered to request their own reasonable accommodations.

**NEXT PAGE: AGENCY NEWS**



# AGENCY NEWS



## Introducing New Staff

Joshua Ross Lopez is an Architectural Access Specialist who was born and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Josh comes from a diverse background in the design field, working in various specialties since graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Architecture from the University of New Mexico in 2018. Josh has made stops designing at room scale (Kitchen Design Firm), building scale (Traditional Architectural Firm), site scale (Landscape Architectural Firm), and beyond (Surveying Firm) in an attempt to find his most fulfilling career path.

Josh has been reinvigorated by the personal nature of his work at the Governor's Commission on Disability. As the main travelling member of GCD's R.A.M.P (Residential Accessibility Modification Program) team, Josh gets the most face-to-face time with the individuals in need of life altering home modifications. In just the few short months on the job, Josh has already met a number of lovely clients. From a guitar teacher just minutes away from his apartment in Albuquerque, to a well-traveled teacher down south in Carrizozo, Josh has made his way across the state to receive warm welcomes from New Mexicans that are overjoyed to receive assistance from the State to make their daily lives easier.

Aside from traveling and taking measurements at each client visit, Josh handles the majority of Computer Aided Drafting (CAD) duties for the Commission. Josh draws on his knowledge of various CAD programs to produce accurate drawing representations of the work to be performed. The Commission's home modification projects may be the smallest in scope that Josh has worked on, but are easily the most detail oriented. These bathroom and ramp projects are tailored to the individual homeowner and their disability, requiring careful attention to minute details such as a shower threshold or ramp slope.

**NEXT PAGE: EMERGENCY  
RESOURCES**

# EMERGENCY RESOURCES



**DATE: DECEMBER 5TH, 2023**

## HOW PREPARED ARE YOU TO WORK WITH THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY IN THE EVENT OF A DISASTER?

NM Governor's Commission on Disability Sponsored event:

Training is designed to support the whole community approach to emergency planning for all hazards in the areas of service animals, accessible shelter preparations, and inclusive practices working with the local disability community.

This training is designed for the local community to gain knowledge and awareness in accessible designs and practices, using the whole community approach that FEMA encourages which includes people with disabilities in planning ahead.

If you are an emergency manager, first responder, medical professional, shelter personnel, veterinarian, animal caretaker, person with a disability, service provider to the disability community or an interested community member this **free** training is for you!



Reservation not required but encouraged, to have enough material for you.

Please reserve your spot or request accommodation by sending an email to Lisa McNiven, Deputy Director at [Lisa.mcniven@gcd.nm.gov](mailto:Lisa.mcniven@gcd.nm.gov)

Call if you have questions at 505-435-9326

[www.gcd.nm.gov](http://www.gcd.nm.gov)

### Time:

10 to 4:30pm

Lunch on your own and Breaks are included.

### Topics:

Emergency Preparedness from the perspective of People with Disabilities

Service Animals vs Emotional Support Animals

Accessible Shelters

### LOCATION:

COMMISSION CHAMBERS FOR THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

845 N. Motel Blvd.  
Las Cruces, NM 88007

# EMERGENCY RESOURCES



IF INTERESTED IN HAVING AN ALL DAY TRAINING IN YOUR AREA ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS REGARDING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, AS FEMA IS ENCOURAGING THE WHOLE COMMUNITY APPROACH WHERE IT TAKES EVERYONE TO BE INCLUDED IN THE DISCUSSION BEFORE A DISASTER OCCURS TO BE BETTER PREPARED.

PLEASE CONTACT LISA MCNIVEN AT  
LISA.MCNIVEN@GCD.NM.GOV OR 505-435-9326 TO SCHEDULE  
A TRAINING SESSION.

**WHAT KIND OF  
PROGRAMS DOES THE  
GOVERNORS  
COMMISSION ON  
DISABILITY HAVE?**



CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AT  
[HTTPS://WWW.GCD.NM.GOV/PROGRAMS/](https://www.gcd.nm.gov/programs/)

**NEXT PAGE: TRAININGS**

# TRAININGS

## Ongoing

- ADA Coordinator Certificate Program: Empowering Accessibility (nm.gov) <https://www.gcd.nm.gov/programs/ada-coordinator-certificate/>
- Training | Rocky Mountain ADA <https://rockymountainada.org/services/training>
- Trainings - Mid-Atlantic ADA Center <https://www.adainfo.org/trainings/>
- Self-paced Webinars <https://www.accessibilityonline.org/continuing-education/SelfPacedWebinars.aspx>
- Accessibility Online <https://www.accessibilityonline.org/ao>
- Conferences and Online Training - ADA Coordinator Training Certification Program (ACTCP) - Great Plains ADA Center <https://www.adacoordinator.org/page/Training>

## December/January

### December Accessibility Online Webinar Series

- [Emergency Transportable Housing](#)  
Thursday, December 7, 2023

### December ADA Audio Conference Series

- [Artificial Intelligence and the ADA: Understanding How Employment Discrimination May Occur . . . And How to Avoid It](#) Tuesday, December 12, 2023

### December Arts-N-Rec

- [Red Rocks Amphitheatre: Denver City's Rocky Road Toward Ensuring Access for All](#) Thursday, December 14, 2023

### January Ask an ADA Pro

- [Ask an ADA Professional Questions RE: Accommodations in the Court System](#) Wednesday, January 10, 2024

# USEFUL LINKS

## Links

**NM Governor's Commission on Disability:** <https://gcd.state.nm.us/>

**ADA National Network:** <https://adata.org/>

**NMTAP:** <https://www.tap.gcd.state.nm.us/>

**CDC on Corona virus :** [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/needs-extra-precautions/FS\\_COVID\\_Plan\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/needs-extra-precautions/FS_COVID_Plan_FINAL.pdf)

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** <https://www.ada.gov/>

**ADA Coordinator Certificate Program and Related Training:**  
<https://gcd.state.nm.us/ada-coordinator-certificate/>

## Social

**New Mexico Governor's Commission on Disability:**

<https://www.facebook.com/NewMexicoGCD>

**New Mexico Technology Assistance Program:**

<https://www.facebook.com/NewMexicoTAP>

**New Mexico Brain Injury Advisory Council**

<https://www.facebook.com/NMBIAC/>

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