DakotaLink

Winter News 2022

Technology Solutions for Life's Limitations

Greetings and Happy New Year!

DakotaLink had a Black Hills Special Services audit in the Fall as well as a review from the State. We compiled all of the requested materials for both parties and are awaiting the results which will be coming in the next few weeks.

We are continuing our transition of personnel with Patrick Czerny retiring at the end of February 2022. Brett Burden will then be taking full responsibilities as Coordinator of Technical Services for DakotaLink as of March 1st, 2022.

DakotaLink Advisory Council

In the Fall we had the Executive Committee come together to assist with creating the agenda for future DakotaLink Advisory Council meetings. We will continue to meet prior to our meetings to create the agenda as a team going forward.

We also created a Bylaws Subcommittee to revise them. They hadn't been updated since May of 2005 so there was a lot to update and clarify. DakotaLink greatly appreciates the help of Gaye Mattke, Steve Stewart, and Jeff Kisecker for all of their help in updating the document. The updates are complete and have been sent to the Advisory Council for review and we will be voting on the amendments at our next meeting in March 2022.

If you or anyone you know would like to be a part of the DakotaLink Advisory Council, I have provided a link to the application:

https://www.dakotalink.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/DakotaLink-Advisory-Council-Application.pdf

KeloLand Commercial

DakotaLink created a commercial last summer that aired on KeloLand Living. We are keeping the commercial going through September of 2022. It will also air on KeloLand Xtra. Here is a link to the commercial if you missed it:

https://www.keloland.com/keloland-living/dakotalink-providing-technology-solutions-for-lifes-limitations/

Annual Progress Report 2021

The Annual Progress report is complete and approved at the State and Federal level!

This document is public information that eventually gets posted on ACL's (Administration for Community Living) website. (The State Plan for AT is there as well). https://acl.gov/.

You can also find it on DakotaLink's website here: https://www.dakotalink.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/2021-DakotaLink-Annual-Report.pdf

However, if you would like to have the documents sent to you digitally, simply send an email with your request to: phudson@dakotalink.net

Washington Update

White House Releases $1.75 Trillion Build Back Better Framework

Last November, the White House and Congressional Democrats announced a new framework and released draft text for the Build Back Better Act. Totaling $1.75 trillion, the revised framework and draft bill lay out a plan to expand and support key domestic programs at about half the originally proposed price tag of $3 trillion. As negotiations continue, the framework and text released propose to invest $400 billion in early childcare and universal Pre-K, increase investments in K-16 education by $21.4 billion and extend and revise the child tax credit and the earned income tax credit for $200 billion. Specific to education and related programs, investments target the educator pipeline by funding key higher education preparation programs at $810 million, including $160 million for personnel under Part D of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The Pell Grant maximum award would increase by $550 annually, and career and

technical education programs, as well as adult literacy and education, are expanded by $700 million each.

Consistent with Biden's promise to improve access and equity for individuals with disabilities, the Build Back Better Act would invest $150 billion in home-based care services, provide $10 million for the Assistive Technology Act, and create a grant program for $270 million to incentivize states to increase access to competitive integrated employment and stop funding programs that pay subminimum wages in sheltered workshops to people with intellectual disabilities.

The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) provided funding to recruit, hire, and train public health workers to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for future public health challenges. ARPA directed those funds may be used to offset costs of hiring a range of public health professionals, including but not limited to social support professionals, community health workers, communication and policy experts, and "other positions" as may be required to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19.

On November 10, 2021, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) announced a $150 million investment to expand the public health workforce within the aging and disability networks. In January 2022, ACL began the process of distributing the funding to grantees. We are currently in the process of how to best spend those funds.

MERR Program Year 6

If you or anyone you know needs gently used Medical Equipment, we would encourage you to support this program**.**

Ron Lien continues to work to expand The Medical Equipment Recycle and Reuse program.

Here is a link to the brochure for the program:

https://www.dakotalink.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/MERR-Brochure-20181004-1.pdf

Here is a list of the latest items available from the website:

https://www.sd.at4all.com/Items/ItemSearch.aspx?Mode=NewItems

Free Assistive Technology Webinars

This link will provide you with several Assistive Technology Webinars assembled by the Accessible Technology Coalition:

https://at3centerblog.com/2022/01/03/free-at-webinars-january-2022/

Social Networking

We continue our efforts in social networking getting a great deal of traffic on Facebook and share posts with ATAP, AT3, ILC, DHS, DSS, and MERR. More resource information on our website: https://www.dakotalink.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/AT-Resource-Directory-2017.pdf

Low Interest Loans

We also want to remind everyone of our low-interest loan program. The loans are designed to fit your budget and we will work with you to create affordable payback payments. We will also help you fill out the application if you have any concerns with that process. The application is on our website, but here is the direct link:

https://www.dakotalink.net/at-funding

Cool New Assistive Technology

https://www.techradar.com/uk/news/invisible-headphones-are-as-cool-and-crazy-as-they-sound

DakotaLink strives to maintain its professionalism by earning a RESNA ATP certification. (ATP – Assistive Technology Professional). We currently have 5 staff with their ATP certification and will continue to help the newer employees gain that status. To maintain these credentials, we must complete a specific amount of CEU's (Continuing Education Credits) on a biennial basis. We have been doing that mostly through webinars that ATAP provides through an agreement with ATIA.

Remember, we are on Facebook! So, be sure to "like" us to see what we are up to daily:

https://www.facebook.com/DakotaLinkAT/

Be safe and healthy!

Best,

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DakotaLink is the South Dakota Assistive Technology Program.

Our mission is to assist individuals with functional limitations; due to a disability, illness, injury, or the effects of aging; maximize their potential whether at home or in the community, at school, at work, or at play through the use of Assistive Technology.

An assistive technology device is any equipment or tool that helps individuals overcome limitations in daily activities.

Assistive technology services assist individuals to acquire, use, modify or maintain an assistive technology device.