

Resource Guide

July 2020

**New Mexico Commission for the Blind
2200 Yale Boulevard SE
Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87106
Phone: 505-841-8844
Toll-free 888-513-7958
Fax: 505-841-8850
Worldwide Web: www.cfb.state.nm.us**

Table of Contents

New Mexico Commission for the Blind:	1
Department of Veterans Affairs Visual Impairment Services Team (VIST):	2
Centers for Independent Living:	3
Financial and Medical Benefit Entitlements:	4
Funding for Surgical Procedures:	6
New Mexico Health Insurance Exchange (NMHIX):	7
Diabetes Information:	7
Low Vision Services:	8
Disability Rights:	9
Organizations of and for the Blind:	10
Support Groups:	13
Senior Services:	14
Transportation Alternatives:	14
Newsline Newspaper Reading Service:	19
Books and Magazines in Alternative Formats: ..	20
Religious Materials in Alternative Formats:	22
Braille and Recording Services:	24
Telephone Services:	25
Hearing Loss and Amplification Devices:	25
Free Matter Mailing Privileges:	26
Descriptive Video:	26
State-Issued Identification Cards:	28
Aids and Equipment Vendors:	28
Assistive Technology Vendors:	29
New Mexico Technology Assistance Program (NMTAP):	33

“Public Law 101-166 Notice: The Commission receives federal funds from the U.S. Department of Education and from the Health and Human Services Department. For Federal Fiscal Year 2020, the Commission will receive approximately \$5,050,503 for Vocational Rehabilitation with a \$1,366,909 state match; \$55,500 for Supported Employment with a \$3,083 state match; \$225,000 for Older Blind with a \$25,000 state match; and \$59,800 for Independent Living with a \$6,644 State match.”

A variety of resources are available to help blind and visually-impaired individuals lead independent and fulfilling lives. It is the responsibility of the Commission to not only teach clients about these resources, but to also ensure that clients are able to access these resources once Commission services are no longer required. Provided in this guide are the names, phone numbers (toll-free numbers when available), and Website addresses of those organizations that help blind and visually impaired people remain truly independent.

New Mexico Commission for the Blind:

The Commission serves New Mexicans that are legally blind, have a progressive eye condition likely to result in legal blindness, or who are functionally blind. Services cover a variety of areas, including vocational rehabilitation, blindness skills training (in either a home or residential center setting), vending, emergency medical eye care, and Newline newspaper reading service. Commission services are free of charge.

Contact the nearest Commission office for additional information.

*Alamogordo Orientation Center

575-437-0401 toll-free 888-513-7967

*Albuquerque Office

505-841-8844 toll-free 888-513-7958

*Farmington Office

505-327-3031 toll-free 888-513-7964

*Las Cruces Office

575-524-6450 toll-free 888-513-7960

*Las Vegas Office

505-425-3546 toll-free 888-513-7963

*Roswell Office

575-624-6140 toll-free 888-513-7961

Department of Veterans Affairs Visual Impairment Services Team (VIST):

A source of various services, training, aids, and equipment for visually-impaired veterans. Veterans in New Mexico are served by two VIST coordinators. Those in the northern and central parts of the state are served by Trudi Valdez at the NM Veterans Affairs Health Care System in Albuquerque, 505-265-2774,

toll-free 800-465-8262, ext. 2774. Veterans in the southern part of the state are served by either Trudi Valdez, Albuquerque; or Rosario Zuniga, at the El Paso Veterans Affairs Health Care System, 915-564-6102, toll-free 800-672-3782, ext 6102.

Centers for Independent Living:

Ten independent living centers are located throughout New Mexico, providing independent living services to people with disabilities other than blindness. Center phone numbers are listed below, or reach the Independent Living Resource Utilization website at www.ilru.org.

* Choices Center for Independent Living, Roswell
575-627-6727
<http://choicescil.org>

* Independent Living Resource Center, Alamogordo
575-439-1112 toll-free 800-260-5022

* Independent Living Resource Center, Albuquerque
505-266-5022 toll-free 800-260-5022

* Independent Living Resource Center, Moriarty
505-832-1128 toll-free 800-260-5022

* Independent Living Resource Center, Socorro
575-835-2486 toll-free 800-260-5022

- * New Vistas, Las Vegas
505-425-5044 toll-free 800-737-0330
www.newvistas.org
- * New Vistas, Santa Fe
505-471-1001 toll-free 800-737-0330
www.newvistas.org
- * San Juan Center for Independence, Farmington
505-566-5827 toll-free 877-484-4500
www.sjci.org
- * San Juan Center for Independence, Gallup
505-726-2709 toll-free 877-484-4500
www.sjci.org
- * The Ability Center, Las Cruces
575-526-5016 toll-free 800-376-4372
www.theabilitycenter.org

Financial and Medical Benefit Entitlements:

Investigate financial resources thoroughly. Some benefits decrease in value or terminate with time.

* Contact the U.S. Internal Revenue Service toll-free at 800-829-1040, www.irs.gov; the New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department in Santa Fe at 505-827-0700, www.tax.newmexico.gov for information on tax benefits available to legally blind taxpayers.

* Contact the Social Security Administration toll-free at 800-772-1213, www.ssa.gov, or 800-633-4227 www.medicare.gov, for information on Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability Insurance, and Medicare.

* Contact the New Mexico Department of Human Services - Medical Assistance Division for information on Medicaid entitlements at 505-827-3100, or toll-free 888-997-2583, www.hsd.state.nm.us/.

* CenturyLink offers the Telephone Assistance Plan, which provides anyone who is covered by Medicaid or the Low-Income Energy Program with a \$9.25 discount off their monthly phone bill. Call 1-855-954-6546 for details or online at www.centurylink.com/TAP.

* Employee Group Insurance: Most employers have group insurance. Check for a disability clause and 30-day conversion privileges.

* Private Insurance: Car, credit-life, disability, health, home, mortgage, and life. Check for waiver of premium and other benefits resulting from disability. For unresolved insurance problems contact the State of New Mexico Insurance Superintendent in Santa Fe at 505-827-4601, toll-free 855-427-5674, www.osi.state.nm.us.

* Veterans Administration: Check with the Visual Impairment Services Team coordinator (discussed earlier in this guide) for service and non-service connected benefits for veterans as well as spouses, widows/widowers, and children of veterans.

* The National Council on Aging provides an internet-based utility for determining entitlement and eligibility for a wide variety of benefits for persons age 55 and over, visit www.benefitscheckup.org.

Funding for Surgical Procedures:

Necessary eye surgeries are generally covered by private medical insurance, Medicare, or Medicaid. New Mexicans that do not have any insurance can take advantage of the following sources to fund needed eye surgeries.

* Emergency Eye Care Program: This program is sponsored by the Commission for the Blind and is administered by Dr. Arup Das, University of New Mexico Hospital in Albuquerque. It pays for eye surgery necessary to prevent permanent vision loss. Cataract removal is not covered.

UNM Hospital uses Emergency Eye Care Program funds for New Mexicans outside Bernalillo County and a separate fund to cover residents of Bernalillo County. Call Celia Baca, 505-272-6123, or UNM Hospital Division of Ophthalmology in Albuquerque at

505-272-6120,

<http://surgery.unm.edu/divisions/ophthalmology/index.html>

New Mexico Health Insurance Exchange (NMHIX):

Implements the Affordable Care Act in New Mexico. Designed to cover the uninsured, people who can't afford their employer plans and those who are buying their own insurance but want better options. The NMHIX offers a variety of health insurance plans from such popular commercial providers as Blue Cross Blue Shield, Molina, New Mexico Health Connections and Presbyterian. Reach the NMHIX at toll-free at 855-996-6449, <http://www.BeWellNM.com>.

Diabetes Information:

Information specific to diabetics with vision loss is available from the Diabetes Action Network, a division of the National Federation of the Blind. Contact Bernadette Jacobs at 410-215-8587, email bernienfb75@gmail.com, <http://nfb.org/diabetics>.

Other sources for information on diabetes include the American Diabetes Association, Albuquerque, 505-266-5716, www.diabetes.org and The National Research & Training Center on Blindness & Low Vision at Mississippi State University, www.blind.msstate.edu.

Low Vision Services:

Commission teachers may be able to help with some aspects of low vision; however, they are not equipped to evaluate clients over the full-range of low vision devices. According to the American Optometric Association, the optometrist conducting a low vision examination will ask for a complete personal and family general health and eye health history. In addition, the optometrist will discuss the functional problems with the patient, including such things as reading, functioning in the kitchen, glare problems, travel vision, the workplace, television viewing, school requirements, and hobbies and interests. Preliminary tests may include assessment of ocular functions such as depth perception, color vision, contrast sensitivity, and curvature of the front of the eye. Measurements will be taken of the person's visual acuity using special low vision test charts, which include a larger range of letters to more accurately determine a starting point for gauging low vision. Visual fields are usually evaluated, and each eye will be examined. The optometrist may prescribe various treatment options, including low vision devices, as well as assist the person with identifying other resources for vision and lifestyle rehabilitation. Additionally, prospective purchasers should look for a vendor that allows a trial evaluation of the device prior to purchase, or, alternatively, a customer-friendly return policy if the device does not work well in the customer's home setting.

Disability Rights:

A variety of resources and organizations exist to help blind and visually-impaired persons understand their rights and enforce laws that protect them against unlawful discrimination.

* The New Mexico White Cane Law, 28-7-1 - 28-7-7 NMSA 1978: Guarantees blind and visually-impaired individuals using a mobility cane or guide dog access to all common carriers (cabs, buses, trolleys, trains, planes, etc.) and places of public accommodation (grocery stores, restaurants, hotels, museums, etc.) without limitations or additional charges.

* Protection and Advocacy: A federally mandated program in each state that provides protection of the rights of persons with disabilities through legally based advocacy. Disability Rights New Mexico (DRNM) is the organization responsible for these services in our state. DRNM also administers the Client Assistance Program (CAP) which seeks to identify, explain, and resolve problems a client might be having with his/her vocational rehabilitation program. DRNM can be reached in Albuquerque at 505-256-3100, toll-free 800-432-4682, www.drn.org.

* Southwest ADA Center: Information on the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, toll-free at 800-949-4232, or www.adata.org.

* U.S. Department of Justice: Americans With Disabilities Act Information toll-free at 800-514-0301, www.justice.gov/crt/disability-rights-section.

Organizations of and for the Blind:

Several organizations help blind persons adjust to blindness and deal with education, employment, social security, vocational rehabilitation, civil rights, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and other matters.

* American Council of the Blind:
toll-free 800-424-8666, www.acb.org.

** The Braille Forum is the official publication of the ACB. It is a source for information about ACB and blindness issues. The Braille Forum is available in a variety of formats. Sign up for the Braille Forum at the above phone number or get more information at www.acb.org/pubs.

** American Council of the Blind of New Mexico (ACBNM): Ellen Nolan-Sorenson, President, Albuquerque, 505-410-5918, www.acb.org/affiliatenew-mexico.

* American Foundation for the Blind (AFB):
212-502-7600, www.afb.org.

** AFB AccessWorld Magazine, Technology News for People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired. Published

bimonthly online. Read the latest issue and sign up to be notified when the next issue is available at <http://www.afb.org/aw/main.asp>.

* Blinded Veterans Association: Trudi Valdez, Albuquerque 505-265-1711 ext. 2774, toll-free 800-465-8262 ext. 2774. Meetings are held quarterly in Albuquerque.

* National Federation of the Blind (NFB): National Center for the Blind, 410-659-9314, www.nfb.org.

** The Braille Monitor is the official publication of the NFB and is published eleven times a year. It covers the events and activities of the NFB and addresses the many issues and concerns of the blind. It is available in a variety of formats. Sign up for the Braille Monitor at the above phone number or get more information at <https://nfb.org/braille-monitor>.

** National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico (NFBNM): Adelmo Vigil, President, Alamogordo, 575-921-5422, email at NFBNewMexicoPresident@gmail.com, or online at www.nfbnm.org.

Chapters meet regularly in Alamogordo, Albuquerque, Farmington, and Las Cruces.

** NFBNM Association of Blind Students (NMABS):

Kaden Calahan, President, Albuquerque,
505-290-4100, President.nmabs@gmail.com.

** NFBNM Parents of Blind Children Division
(NMPOBC): Lucy Mallahan, President, Alamogordo
615-971-0999, NFBNM.POBC@gmail.com.

** NFBNM Senior Division (SAGE):
Veronica Smith, President, Albuquerque,
505-269-1034, NFBNM.SAGE@gmail.com.

* New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually
Impaired (NMSBVI): Alamogordo Campus
575-437-3505, toll-free 800-437-3505,
www.nmsbvi.k12.nm.us.

** NMSBVI Early Childhood Programs, Albuquerque,
505-271-3060, 575-437-3505 ext. 4401, or 800-437-
3505, ext. 4401, www.nmsbvi.k12.nm.us.

* Hadley: The mission of Hadley is to create
personalized learning opportunities that empower
adults with vision loss or blindness to thrive - at home,
at work, and in their communities. Founded in 1920 by
William Hadley, an educator who lost his eyesight later
in life, Hadley offers practical help, connection and
support free of charge to anyone with a visual
impairment, their families and professionals supporting
them. Providing online, large print, braille and audio
media, Hadley serves nearly 150,000 individuals each

year, reaching all 50 states and 100 countries. More people learn braille from Hadley than from any other organization worldwide. Hadley's help conveniently meets learners where they are. Free of wait lists. Free of office visits. Free of charge. Toll-free at 800-323-4238, www.hadley.edu.

Support Groups:

Several support groups meet regularly, usually monthly, to help blind and visually-impaired persons understand and adjust to their vision loss. Listed below are the locations and contact person for each group:

* Alamogordo, Low Vision Support Group: Peggy Hayes, 575-434-2076.

* Albuquerque, Blinded Veterans Association (BVA): Trudi Valdez, 505-265-2774, toll-free 800-465-8262 ext. 2774.

* Albuquerque, 20/20 Club, Low Vision Support Group: Barbara Free 505-275-9952 or Art Schreiber, 505-243-6165.

* Albuquerque, Creating Options: Sarah Villavicencio, 505-841-8844.

* Carlsbad: Debbie and Rich Pinching, Facilitators, 575-302-1877

* Las Cruces, Low Vision Group: Dr. Cherie Black, 575-639-4200.

* Los Alamos, Los Alamos Low Vision and Hearing Challenged Support Group: Mary Vennable, 505-663-0107.

* International Low Vision Support Group:
www.mdsupport.org

Senior Services:

Over 200 senior centers exist throughout New Mexico. To determine the location of the nearest center, contact the New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department in Santa Fe at 505-476-4846; toll-free 800-432-2080 www.nmaging.state.nm.us. The Department can also counsel seniors on Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and other entitlement programs. The Albuquerque Department of Senior Affairs can be reached at 505-764-6400, <https://www.cabq.gov/seniors>.

Transportation Alternatives:

Transportation can often be a challenge for blind and visually impaired persons who no longer drive. Following are some suggestions for getting around this barrier to independent travel:

* Bus: A handful of communities in New Mexico have regular fixed-route bus service. These currently include

Alamogordo, Albuquerque, Carlsbad, Farmington, Las Cruces, Roswell, Santa Fe, and Taos. Commission teachers will happily provide bus travel training to Commission clients.

* Para transit: Many communities provide paratransit transportation services to mobility impaired individuals in those communities. Once determined eligible, riders can schedule curb-to-curb service for a fraction of the cost of a taxi.

* Senior Centers: Some senior centers provide transportation services to seniors and citizens with disabilities in their communities.

* Medicaid: Persons covered by Medicaid can receive free transportation to/from medical appointments. Safe-Ride is the Medicaid-approved transportation provider in many, though not all, New Mexico communities.

* Social Service Organizations: Some churches and other social service agencies provide transportation services to particular groups within their communities.

* Volunteer Drivers: Friends, relatives, neighbors, and other acquaintances may sometimes be willing to provide transportation to/from appointments, shopping, and other errands. Offering to pay for gas, parking, etc., is appropriate.

* Private Drivers: Some people hire drivers (friends, relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances) to drive them to/from shopping, errands, and appointments.

* Taxi: An entire industry exists to transport people from one place to another, for a fee.

* Ride Sharing Services:

** Uber and Lyft are services that have grown rapidly in the past few years. Many blind and visually-impaired persons now use these services to get to work, school, shopping, and other errands for about 60% of the cost of a taxi, <https://riders.uber.com> and <http://www.lyft.com>.

** GoGoGrandparent turns on-demand transportation companies like Lyft into services that help families take better care of older adults. Call 855-464-6872, <https://gogograndparent.com/>.

Delivery Services:

Many grocery stores accept phone-in orders, and will either have groceries waiting for the patron to pick-up or will deliver them to the patron's home. Other shopping services will accept a telephone order, purchase the groceries, and deliver them to the patron's home. These services are generally not limited to grocery shopping, but will take orders for the drug store, hardware store and department store; or run numerous other errands, for a fee.

* Walking: Many blind people choose the location of their homes and apartments based on walking distance to work, school, shopping, medical facilities, and bus stops. Commission teachers will be happy to provide mobility training to enable blind and visually-impaired clients to walk to destinations independently, skillfully, and gracefully.

* Reading Alternatives: Gaining access to print can also prove to be a bit more difficult as loss of vision increases. Blind and visually impaired person's access print in ways that sighted persons would have never considered.

* Low Vision Devices: A variety of magnifiers, ranging in size and power from small hand-held optical devices to large desktop video magnification systems can be used to magnify the size of regular print to a level usable by some visually-impaired people.

* Books and Magazines: A great number of books are now available in a variety of formats, including both four-track and two-track cassette tapes, computer text files, compact disk, MP3, Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY), and other digital formats, as well as large print and Braille. (See Books and Magazines in Alternate Formats later in this guide.)

* Newspapers: The Newslines service makes newspapers and other publications accessible via

touch-tone telephone and other formats. (The Newsline service is described in detail later in this guide.)

* **Reading the Computer Screen:** Screen magnification and screen reader software can be loaded onto most personal computers. Screen magnifiers enable the user to magnify screen images. Screen readers present the contents of computer screens through synthetic speech. Both approaches make it possible for blind and visually-impaired computer users to work with documents, spreadsheets, electronic mail, and the Internet. Books in digital format can be easily read using screen readers, as well as the majority of electronically-reproduced documents and materials on the Internet.

* **Scanners:** Many people use scanners to scan print materials into their computers, and read the scanned documents using screen enlargement or screen reading technology. Scanned documents are converted from images to text using optical character recognition (OCR) programs before the documents can be read with screen reading software.

* **Volunteer Readers:** Family members, neighbors, and friends are sometimes willing to read mail, bills, and other print materials.

* Paid Readers: Most blind and visually impaired persons hire family members, friends, and neighbors to assist with mail, bills, and other print materials.

Newsline Newspaper Reading Service:

* New Mexico Newsline: This service is provided free of charge by the Commission, and offers statewide access to a variety of publications via touch-tone telephone. Daily and weekly newspapers include the Albuquerque Journal, Santa Fe New Mexican, Gallup Independent, Los Alamos Monitor, and Alamogordo Daily News. Other publications include Prime Time (monthly senior news), New Mexico Magazine (monthly NM history, geography, and culture), Albuquerque The Magazine, New Mexico Talking Book Library Newsletter, Alibi Weekly, and others. Daily TV listings are also available.

* National Federation of the Blind Newsline: This service, sponsored by the Commission, is also available free of charge, offering telephone, email, Web, and mobile access to more than 400 newspapers, magazines, news services, and international publications. Newspapers include the New York Times, Washington Post, Chicago Tribune, USA Today, Los Angeles Times, Wall Street Journal, Albuquerque Journal, Farmington Daily Times, Four Corners Business Journal, Roswell Daily Record, and Las Cruces Sun News. Magazines include Time Magazine, Popular Science, Rolling Stone, Vanity Fair, Readers Digest, Parade, and Smithsonian. News services include the

Associated Press, United Press International, CNN, Bloomberg, and Fox News. International publications include the Financial Times of London, China Daily, The Jerusalem Post, and the Toronto Globe and Mail. The publications identified above are just a small sample of those available on NFB Newsline. In addition, NFB Newsline also provides local television listings for broadcast, cable, and satellite providers, job listings via CareerBuilder and USAJobs, and weather alerts via AccuWeather. Visit www.nfbnewsline.org.

* Contact the Commission for the Blind Newsline office in Albuquerque at 505-841-8844, toll-free 888-513-7958 to register for either of these services.

Books and Magazines in Alternative Formats:

Books and magazines are available in a variety of formats including four-track and two-track cassette, compact flash, compact disk, Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY), MP3, Braille, and large print. Listed below are several sources of reading materials for persons with vision loss:

* The National Library Service Talking Books Program is available free to any U.S. resident who has difficulty, for any reason, reading print. Digital books and magazines are sent through the mail or downloaded from an NLS Website, and playback equipment is loaned to the patron for as long as needed. Braille books and magazines are also available. The Talking

Book program is administered by the National Library Service, Library of Congress, through the New Mexico State Library for the Blind & Print Disabled (LBPD), Toll-free 800-456-5515; online catalog at <http://www.nmstatelibrary.org/lbph>.

* Horizons for the Blind records printed materials onto compact discs or cassette tapes if necessary. They record materials that are not otherwise available in audio format; conversion into Braille and/or large print is also available. Contact them for a price quote at 800-318-2000, email mail@horizons-blind.org; www.horizons-blind.org.

* Learning Ally is another source for digital materials for persons who cannot read standard print books. Learning Ally focuses on textbooks, reference books, and professional materials, although it does also have a large collection of general interest materials. Borrowers can also send books to Learning Ally for recording. Materials are produced in digital audio format. Books are available on indefinite loan. Learning Ally can be reached toll-free at 800-221-4792, www.learningally.org.

* Commercial Vendors: Audio books can be purchased and rented from a variety of book sellers, some with physical locations and some with only Web outlets. Books are available in a variety of formats, including

two-track cassette, compact disk, MP3, as well as other digital formats. Booksellers include:

** Barnes & Noble at www.barnesandnoble.com

** Amazon.com at www.amazon.com

** Recorded Books LLC toll-free at 877-732-2898, www.recordedbooks.com

** Books on Tape toll-free at 800-733-3000 (follow prompts for customers), www.booksontape.com

** Bookshare.org at www.bookshare.org

** Audible toll-free at 888-283-5051, www.audible.com (Now owned by Amazon)

** Open Library <https://openlibrary.org>

Religious Materials in Alternative Formats:

The Bible and other religious materials are available from several sources in large print, Braille, and audio formats. Unless otherwise noted the materials referenced below are available free of charge. A Commission teacher or counselor can certify visual impairment for Commission clients if needed.

* Aurora Ministries: The complete New King James Version is available in audio format. Parts of the Bible

are also available in 70 other languages, including Spanish. More information can be obtained by calling 941-748-3031, or by faxing requests to 941-748-6137, www.audiobiblesfortheblind.org.

* Braille Bible International: The complete Old King James Version is available in Braille, large print (18 and 24 point), and audio format. Call toll-free 800-522-4253, www.braillebibles.org.

* Lutheran Braille Workers: The complete New International Version is available in Braille, large print (18 point) and audio. Parts of the Bible are also available in 30 other languages, including Spanish. Application information is available toll-free at 800-925-6092, www.lbwinc.org.

* Xavier Society for the Blind: The complete New Bible Version (Catholic) is available in audio format and Braille. Call toll-free 800-637-9193, www.xaviersocietyfortheblind.org.

* Faith Comes by Hearing: The complete Bible is available in many versions, including Old King James, New King James, New International, Contemporary English, New Revised Standard, New Bible Version (Catholic) and Reina Valera, in several audio formats. The Bible can be obtained in both a standard reading and a dramatic reading, and in over 1,353 languages.

Audio format Bibles can be obtained free of charge. In Albuquerque call 505-881-3321, or toll-free 800-545-6552, <https://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/>.

* Jewish Braille Institute: The Torah and other materials are available in large print, Braille, and audio format. For more information, call toll-free 800-433-1531, fax 212-689-3692, www.jbilibrary.org.

* Learning Ally: Materials from many faiths are available from Learning Ally, including the Koran, the Tanakh (containing the Torah), and the Bible (New American Standard, New International Version, and others). These materials are produced in digital audio format and are on indefinite loan. Learning Ally toll-free at 800-221-4792, www.learningally.org.

* Jehovah's Witness: Materials are available in Braille and digital audio formats. Call 845-744-6000, or www.jw.org.

Braille and Recording Services:

* Braille Transcription: Zia Access, Deborah Lieberman, Sandia Park, 505-259-4991, or email at zia-access@mindspring.com.

* Recording: Learning Ally provides a custom recording service to members. Materials range from general interest literature to school textbooks to professional

materials. Contact Learning Ally's recording service in Princeton, New Jersey, at 609-750-1830 or at 800-221-4792, www.learningally.org.

Telephone Services:

CenturyLink provides free directory assistance to anyone who is unable to use conventional print phone directories. CenturyLink also offers their monthly statements in alternate formats, including large print, Braille, and electronic mail. Some Long-distance and wireless carriers also offer free directory assistance for their blind or visually-impaired customers. Call toll free 800-223-3131 for an application form that can be certified by an eye doctor or a Commission teacher/counselor.

Hearing Loss and Amplification Devices:

The New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons has a program that can provide telecommunications equipment free of charge to people with hearing loss. These devices are designed primarily to help individuals with hearing loss continue using the telephone, either by amplifying the sound of the ringer or by amplifying the voices of persons on the other end of the line. Eligibility for the free equipment is restricted to New Mexico residents who earn less than \$50,000 per year. Commission teachers/counselors can prepare the application. The Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons can

be reached in Albuquerque toll-free at 800-489-8536 Voice/TTY, www.cdhh.state.nm.us.

Free Matter Mailing Privileges:

Materials in alternative formats, such as large print (14 point or larger, this print is 18 point), Braille, tape, or equipment used to produce materials in alternative formats can be mailed with no postage. Just write "Free Matter for the Blind" where the stamp would otherwise be placed. U.S. Postal Service Publication #347, "Mailing Free Matter for the Blind and Visually Handicapped Persons" and other information may be obtained online at, www.usps.com and enter in the search field: mailing free matter for persons who are blind or visually impaired.

Descriptive Video:

Also known as descriptive narration and audio narration, the process of adding narrated descriptions to television shows and Hollywood movies. The process adds a separate audio track which describes actions, scene changes, graphics, facial expressions, and other key visual elements, without interfering with regular dialogue. Audio descriptions are available in numerous movie theaters, on television shows, on DVDs, and on streaming services. Check out the National Library Service Audio Description Resource Guide at <https://www.loc.gov/nls/about/services/reference-publications/guides/audio-description-resource-guide/>

* Television: Audio descriptions are accessed using various methods, depending on whether programming is received via over-the-air, cable, satellite, or on-demand services. A list of described programs is available at, <http://www.acb.org/adp/tv.html>.

* DVD: If description is available, it can be activated in the settings menu on the DVD itself. A list of DVDs that have description is at, <http://acb.org/adp/dvdsalpha.html>.

* Movie Theaters: Numerous movie theaters are equipped to provide audio description for first-run movies. Check with the theater in advance and get the device used to receive the audio description at the customer service counter in the theater. Information on audio description systems and theater chains can be found at <http://acb.org/adp/movies.html>.

* Streaming Services: Audio description is available for many television shows and movies on most of the streaming services via television, computer, tablet, and smart phone. See details at <https://acb.org/adp/streaming.html>.

* Audio-Only MP3s: MP3 files containing movie and television show audio plus the descriptive narration are available from various sources. The Blind Mice Mart has an extensive collection of these MP3 files, available for no charge beyond registering on their Website.

The MP3 audio files can be downloaded for free and played on a computer, portable book reader, or smart phone. Register at www.blindmicemart.com and navigate to the Blind Mice Movie Vault

State-Issued Identification Cards:

The New Mexico Motor Vehicle Department issues identification cards to blind and visually impaired New Mexicans. The cards cost \$10/four years or \$18/8 years. New Mexico residents 75 years of age and older do not pay a fee for an I.D. card. To obtain a card an applicant must provide proof of residency, identity, and social security number at any MVD office. For more specific information, call NM MVD toll-free at 888-683-4636, and choose the option for driver's license/ID information.

Aids and Equipment Vendors:

A wide variety of tools are available to improve the quality of life and help increase independence for persons with vision loss. These tools include long white canes and replacement cane tips, large print/Braille writing supplies, low vision aids, timekeeping devices, mathematics aids, recording and playback devices, measuring devices, medical devices, house wares, games, and many more. Listed below are vendors that can be contacted to purchase various aids. The following contact information is provided solely as a public service. The New Mexico Commission

for the Blind in no way warrants the services/products provided by these vendors.

* Hearing and Vision Center,
8400 Menaul NE, Suite F, Albuquerque, NM, 87112
505-299-7777, toll-free 877-287-0608,
www.HearingandVisionCenter.com.

* American Printing House for the Blind,
toll-free 800-223-1839, www.aph.org.

* Independent Living Aids,
toll-free 800-537-2118, www.independentliving.com.

* Lighthouse Guild, Vision and Health,
toll-free 800-284-4422, www.lighthouse.org.

* LS&S,
toll-free 800-468-4789, www.lssproducts.com.

* Maxi-Aids,
toll-free 800-522-6294, www.maxiaids.com.

* National Federation of the Blind Independence
Market, 410-659-9314,
<https://nfb.org/independence-market>

Assistive Technology Vendors:

A variety of technology exists that can help blind, and visually-impaired persons access printed material,

computer files, and information on the Internet and on smart phones. Such assistive technology includes:

- * Text Enlargement: Tools such as desktop video magnifiers, which project the magnified image of printed material onto a television screen, portable video magnifiers, and handheld video magnifiers; or computer software that allows the user to quickly and easily increase/decrease the size of computer images.

- * Screen Readers: Computer software that reads the contents of a computer document, spreadsheet, e-mail message, or Web page to the user in an electronic voice through the computer's sound card and speakers.

- * Scanning/Optical Character Recognition (OCR) Systems: Hardware scanners and OCR software that enables the user to scan a letter, phone bill, recipe, instruction manual, etc. into the computer, or have the computer convert an image file already on the computer, and have the material read to the user in an electronic voice.

- * Braille Production: Software and hardware that allow a user to format and emboss Braille documents or refreshable Braille displays that are used with computers or mobile devices.

* Electronic Braille Note Takers: Braille notetakers are mobile information management systems. They use either a Braille or QWERTY keyboard for input and voice and/or refreshable Braille for output. They are used to take notes in meetings or classes, work with documents, keep an appointment calendar, keep a contact list, access email, access the Internet, and other mobile functions.

* Digital Book Players: Handheld devices designed to read DAISY and a variety of other electronic book formats in a synthetic voice. They can also typically read a variety of document formats, play MP3 files (which could be books, podcasts, or music), record with an on-board digital recorder, and often access FM radio stations with an on-board FM tuner.

* Cell Phones: Although many individuals still prefer a basic cell phone that enables the user to make and receive phone calls, more and more blind and visually-impaired individuals are opting for smart phones. Although navigation of the touch-screen models can often involve a steeper learning curve, both Apple and Android models have proven to be fairly accessible due to screen reading and magnification applications (apps). Apple, for example, has included Voiceover (screen reader) and Zoom (screen magnifier) on all Macintosh computers, iPhones, iPads, and iPod Touch devices. Native IOS (Apple) apps such as email, text messaging, and Web surfing are quite accessible using

these accessibility tools. Android devices can be made similarly accessible using a variety of screen reading and screen magnification apps.

One of the reasons smart phones have become so popular is that users can install apps, some free and some paid, that enable the users to identify currency, identify colors of clothing, find the nearest ATM and get turn-by-turn directions while walking or in a car, scan/read print materials, read books, read magazines, read newspapers, listen to Internet radio stations from around the world, get weather forecasts, scan product bar codes, play games, and much, much more. A community of users has arisen to review and provide information on the accessibility of the myriad apps that are released each day. Users of Apple devices should go to www.applevis.com, while Android users should go to www.androidaccess.net.

* Assistive Listening Systems: Enable a person with hearing loss to access one-on-one or group conversations, phone calls, and television programs more easily, especially for those individuals with the newer digital hearing aids.

* A comprehensive list of assistive technology hardware and software is available at <https://nfb.org/technology-resource-list>.

Most of the vendors listed in the previous section covering aids and equipment also carry some assistive technology products. However, the vendors listed below are local and deal in assistive technology software, hardware, and related services. Again, the Commission does not in any way warrant the products or services provided by these vendors, and contact information is provided solely as a public service.

* The Hearing and Vision Center,
8400 Menaul NE, Suite F, Albuquerque, NM 87112;
Magnifiers, Amplifiers, Alerting Systems;
505-299-7777, toll-free 877-287-0608,
www.HearingandVisionCenter.com.

* Pat Goodwin's Office Equipment, Albuquerque, NM,
Kurzweil Scanning Systems, 505-265-8441; or by
contacting Kurzweil Education directly at
800-894-5374, www.kurzweiledu.com.

New Mexico Technology Assistance Program (NMTAP):

The New Mexico Technology Assistance Program provides assistive technology information, equipment loans, devices, and services throughout New Mexico for people of all ages with disabilities. Contact NMTAP 505-841-4464, <http://www.tap.gcd.state.nm.us/>, email Tracy Agiovlasitis at Tracy.Agiovlasitis@state.nm.us or the Governor's Commission on Disability, toll-free, 877-696-1470.