



# Agenda

**MAYOR'S COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY  
THURSDAY, May 16, 2019  
10:00 A.M.  
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
200 LINCOLN AVENUE, SANTA FE, N.M.**

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: FROM THE MARCH 21, 2019 MEETING
5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: FROM THE APRIL 18, 2019 MEETING
6. PUBLIC COMMENTS (15 MIN. TOTAL)
7. PRESENTATIONS
  - a) ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY – MAURICE C. ALVAREZ, ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST, GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON DISABILITY
8. NEW BUSINESS – DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION
  - a) WELCOME NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS – AURORE BLECK
  - b) LOOP SYSTEM ACCESS / RECOMMENDATION – PAM J. PARFITT
9. OLD BUSINESS
  - a) MCD SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS
  - b) MCD NEW MEMBERS STATUS
  - c) ADA COORDINATOR REVIEW STATUS

ITEMS FROM MEMBERS AND STAFF (3 MINUTES)

10. ADJOURN

NEXT MEETING JUNE 20, 2019

**PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN NEED OF ACCOMMODATIONS, CONTACT THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE AT 955-6520, FIVE (5) WORKING DAYS PRIOR TO MEETING DATE.**

**THIS IS A FRAGRANCE FREE MEETING**

**\*\*Please notify Aurore Bleck, Chair at (505)473-2060 and/or David A. Chapman, Interim ADA Coordinator/Liaison, at (505)955-6824 if you are unable to attend.**

**RECEIVED AT THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE  
DATE: May 6, 2019  
TIME: 10:00 AM**

**INDEX OF**  
**CITY OF SANTA FE**  
**MAYOR'S COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY**  
**MEETING**  
**May 16, 2019**

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<b>APPROVAL OF MINUTES: March 21, 2019</b>	<b>Approved [as amended]</b>	<b>2</b>
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**MINUTES OF THE**  
**CITY OF SANTA FE**  
**MAYOR'S COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY MEETING**  
**Santa Fe, New Mexico**

**May 16, 2019**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting of the Mayor's Committee on Disability was called to order by Aurore Bleck, Chair on Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. at the City Council Chambers, 200 Lincoln Avenue, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Aurore Bleck, Chair  
Angelique Montoya-Chavez  
Kathlynn Gish  
Victor Hughes  
Pam J. Parfitt  
Hope Reed  
Michael D. Wirtz

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Kendra Garcia  
Miriam Jawhar

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Maurice C. Alvarez, Governor's Commission on Disability, Technical Assistance Program  
David Chapman, Staff Liaison  
Mark Garcia, visitor  
Robert Johnson, visitor/artist  
Germaine Mitchell, Solace Crisis Treatment Center  
Jo Ann G. Valdez for Elizabeth Martin, Stenographer

**DRAFT: SUBJECT TO APPROVAL**

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chair Bleck amended the Agenda to add item 9d (*Discussion of Subcommittee Assignments*) under *Old Business*.

Ms. Gish said she would like to amend the agenda also to add item 9e (*Follow up on the SNAP Benefits being counted as income*) under *Old Business*.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Mr. Wirtz, seconded by Ms. Montoya-Chavez to approve the agenda as amended.

**VOTE:** The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: March 21, 2019 meeting**

Chair Bleck said the Committee has recently had a problem with the minutes incorrectly using the last name “Lucero” when it should be “Hughes” (Committee Member). She said it is on numerous pages: page 3 (1<sup>st</sup> paragraph), 4 (last paragraph) and 7 (last paragraph in item 9) of the March 21, 2019 meeting minutes.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Mr. Hughes, seconded by Ms. Gish to approve the Minutes of the March 21, 2019 meeting as amended.

**VOTE:** The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: April 18, 2019 meeting**

Chair Bleck said the Minutes of the April 18, 2019 meeting have the same problem with incorrectly using the last name “Lucero” multiple times and pages.

She said on page 1, she does not know if the new Members were notified that they were approved to come to the meeting and in the event, they should all be marked excused.

She said on page 2, under *Presentations*, 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence should be changed to read: “*He thanked him for all the hard work and **public** service he has given to the City over the years.*”

She said on page 4, under Item B (*MCD New Member Status*), the name Pam Parfill should be changed to: Pam **Parfitt**

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Mr. Hughes, seconded by Mr. Wirtz to approve the Minutes of the April 18, 2019 meeting as amended.

**VOTE:** The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

## 6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Bleck asked if there were any public comments today.

Ms. Gish said she has a public comment on behalf of a constituent who emailed her regarding a subcommittee that is seeking members to serve on the subcommittee. The subcommittee is seeking accessibility for all of the disabled community to participate in the 2020 census. She needs one or two people to sit on the committee who can represent the disabled population.

Chair Bleck asked Ms. Gish if they are doing other outreach also.

Ms. Gish said yes. She noted that this individual sent her some information and she will forward it to David Chapman.

Chair Bleck said if anyone is interested or know individuals who might be interested in serving on the subcommittee, they can get the information through David Chapman.

She asked if there were any other public comments and there were none.

## 7. PRESENTATION

### a) ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY – MAURICE C. ALVAREZ, ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST, GOVERNOR’S COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

Ms. Alvarez introduced herself noting that she is an Assistive Technology Specialist with the New Mexico Technologies Assistance Program (NMTAP), which is a branch of the Governor’s Commission on Disability. The Program is supported by a grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Community Living.

Ms. Alvarez distributed some brochures on the services that they provide for individuals with disabilities and explained the services that they provide. NMTAP provides assistive technology related assistance for individuals with disabilities of any age, any disability, any income who are living anywhere in New Mexico.

The Program is designed to meet the requirements of the Assistive Technology Act of 2004, part of US public law. Assistive Technology includes any device or system that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of an individual with a disability in education, employment and community engagement. The Device Loan Program provides short-term loans of assistive technology devices for any individual with a disability. Devices can be borrowed to try out before purchasing, to act as a loaner until a

personal device is repaired, to provide training or for short-term accommodations. They also arrange device demonstrations for individuals or groups which are designed to explore and compare similar types of assistive technology that are available to provide access for those with cognitive, visual, speech, hearing and mobility issues.

Ms. Alvarez said NMTAP does not sell any of these items - the Device Loan Program helps individuals compare similar types of assistive technology that are available - to make an informed decision on what works best for them.

She said one of the main goals of their program is to help alleviate some of the financial burdens for those individuals who do not have the opportunity to try different types of devices, such as hearing devices, which can be very expensive.

She said as part of the NMTAP program, two types of financial loans are available to any individual with a disability. San Juan Center for Independence is their partner who provides two types of loans: Access Loan New Mexico is a low interest loan that allows a NM resident with a disability to purchase an assistive technology device or to make home or vehicle modifications. NM SEED (Self Employment for Entrepreneurs with Disabilities) Loans is a low interest loan for an individual with a disability who needs to purchase equipment to expand or create a home-based business. This program is funded through the Rehabilitation Services Administration Access to Telework Award and provides accommodations, including materials in alternative formats to afford an individual with a disability, the equal opportunity to all services, meetings and loan applications. People can obtain information and applications through the NMTAP website or call them at 1-855-891-8295.

Ms. Alvarez said this program does not cover start-up costs.

She said another two parts of their program include the Device Reutilization program. NMTAP can provide used assistive technology to individuals with disabilities when there are no other options. "Back in Use" provides donated durable medical equipment that has been gently used to individuals with disabilities. DiverseIT provides refurbished computers to individuals with disabilities, free of charge. NMTAP is partners with Adelante Development Center who is located in Albuquerque to provide this assistance. There is an application process for this and people can contact Adelante Development Center.

Ms. Alvarez said the last part of their program is the training and technical assistance. Trainings include presentations like this where they go out and speak to the public or organizations to let people know about their services that are available. They provide information on availability of resources and funding through public and private sources to obtain devices or services. This also includes referrals to other agencies, organizations or companies. They also offer instructional/training events for groups designed to increase knowledge, skills and competences regarding assistance technology.

She mentioned that NMTAP has two satellite offices in the NE (Las Vegas) and SW

(Silver City) regions of the state who can also provide device loans, demonstrations and trainings. People can link to these offices from the NMTAP website.

Ms. Alvarez said they are trying to reach out to the rural communities who might not have access to this technology; or do not know that it exists. She noted that NMTAP ships products free-of-charge to the user.

Ms. Alvarez demonstrated some samples of the devices that included an amplified cell phone device; an eating utensil (helps individuals who have a mobile disability: tremors); they recently received a robotic eating device; a vision device; and an IPAD and Notebook that had different types of apps like a memory task app. She said people can request a demonstration or a device loan through NMTAP's website or call 505-841-4464.

### **Questions/Comments**

Ms. Parfitt asked Ms. Alvarez if they had devices that were compatible with hearing devices (some kind of earbuds) or headphones.

Ms. Alvarez said no, unfortunately, they do not have any type of hearing aid devices. They usually refer people to the Hearing and Vision Center in Albuquerque because they focus on hearing aid devices.

Mr. Wirth asked how many people approximately are taking advantage of the facilities and equipment.

Ms. Alvarez said she would say hundreds. They loan out devices quite often during the week and they ship out items throughout the entire state. They also have therapists come in to work with people on the different goals they have. She said they would definitely want to have more utilization of their free services and one of their challenge is getting the word out to let people know that they have these services available.

Ms. Montoya-Chavez asked how they advertise to the public – how do they get the word out to the public.

Ms. Alvarez said mostly word of mouth. They also do public awareness events and try to participate with community events to talk to the community but getting the word out could definitely improve. She said if the Committee, or anyone, had ideas on ways that they could reach the smaller communities, please let them know.

She mentioned that they hold an annual conference and they just had that last week and therapists from around the state attend that and they spread the word out.

Chair Bleck asked Ms. Alvarez if they have training for medical providers in northern New Mexico.



Ms. Alvarez said yes, as mentioned earlier, they do have different kinds trainings but if there is an organization that specifically would like for them to go out and do a training, they do this as well. They also get calls to make presentations or training for staff at the universities a lot.

Chair Bleck asked if there were any more questions.

Mr. Garcia wanted to know what the exact website was.

Ms. Alvarez said it is [www.tap.gcd.state.nm.us](http://www.tap.gcd.state.nm.us) and it is also listed on the brochures that she distributed.

A citizen noted that he has trouble with putting time in perspective and he is always running late and he asked if they had any device for this and for organizing things better.

Ms. Alvarez said yes, they have a couple of them that she can recommend, if he would like to speak with her after.

Mr. Chapman asked Ms. Alvarez how often they get updated or new equipment.

Ms. Alvarez said they do purchases 2-3 times a year and people can let them know if there is any equipment that they would like to add to see about purchasing it.

Ms. Montoya-Chavez said she has personally seen how these devices can impact a family. She mentioned that she is a mother with two children with disabilities and she is their full-time care provider to her children who are both medically fragile. She said she takes a lot of pride in caring for them, and is honored to be a part of the Committee for, not only her children, but for their peers also. She noted that her son is completely dependent on a couple of apps on the IPAD. She offered her assistance in any way that she can help to get the word out to other children.

Ms. Alvarez said she brought extra brochures as well so she can leave some with Ms. Montoya-Chavez.

Chair Bleck asked if there were any more questions and there were none. She thanked Ms. Alvarez for her informative presentation.

## **8. NEW BUSINESS – DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION**

### **a) WELCOME NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS – AURORE BLECK**

Chair Bleck said the Committee has new members: Angelique Montoya-Chavez and Pam Parfitt. She asked the Committee Members to introduce themselves. Each of them provided a brief history of their respective backgrounds.

**b) LOOP SYSTEM ACCESS/RECOMMENDATION – PAM J. PARFITT**

Ms. Parfitt said she is here to advocate and represent the hard of hearing people who can benefit from the assisted hearing loop. A hearing loop is a type of assistive listening system used to silently transmit sound to the hard of hearing via electromagnetic waves that are received by tiny receivers called telecoils. Such systems are now required in most public venues that feature a public address system. In its simplest form, a hearing loop is an insulated wire loop that surrounds a seating area. The loop is connected to an amplifier and microphone and it transmits a silent electro-magnetic signal to the telecoils found in most hearing aids or cochlear implants that those devices turn into sound. A telecoil is a small copper coil of wire that can be found in over 79% of all hearing aids currently available and in all new cochlear implants.

Ms. Parfitt noted that a hearing loop assistive listening system allows those with telecoil equipped hearing aids and CIs to access the system with the simple touch of a button.

She mentioned that she set up a fund “Loop Santa Fe” at the Santa Fe Community Foundation. This will pay the bill to loop the Lensic Theatre. She said she has also been speaking with the Center for Contemporary Arts and they are actively seeking bids to install the loop. Loop Santa Fe will help with that funding.

Ms. Parfitt spoke about House Bill 48 that was recently passed into law that makes it mandatory that hearing aid dispensers and audiologists counsel their clients about telecoil technology before they sell them a hearing aid.

Ms. Parfitt distributed information that explains the assisted hearing loops and the laws for these. Please see “Exhibit 8b” for the specifics of this presentation.

**Questions/Comments:**

Mr. Wirth said there has been all sorts of controversy and confusion about cell towers and electro-magnetic fields to the point that people are sick from it. He asked if there was any potential of these loops causing some health problems.

Ms. Parfitt said she can tell him that she is one of those people who had all kinds of trouble and who was sensitized to computers, to YouTube and to every single new technology but she has never been affected by magnetic fields or magnetics. However, to answer the question, she can never say that there will be no one who will be affected by this.

Ms. Montoya-Chavez asked about individuals who have a magnet for their seizures – will they be affected by this.

Ms. Parfitt said she did not know medically-speaking if this technology will affect

seizure implants but she does know that magnets change things because she used to have hearing aids that were implanted and she used to turn them on and off with a magnet and she remembers that the magnet in the receivers turned her hearing aids off. She said there are magnets everywhere and she did not know where all of them are.

Ms. Montoya-Chavez said it would be interesting to find this out for those who have implants in their brains and their chests.

Ms. Parfitt said she could try and find out if this technology could affect those. She asked Ms. Montoya-Chavez to write down her concerns.

Ms. Montoya-Chavez said sometimes people do not know and possibly signs indicating that the facility/building is looped would be helpful and she would like to see how they can be inclusive of different populations.

Ms. Parfitt said that is the law that the signs go up and she will look into whether or not this will affect those with these types of implants.

She said mass gathering places (city buildings) is the first priority that she would like to address-such as the Convention Center or the Genoveva Chavez Center.

Chair Bleck said it seems that Ms. Parfitt's recommendation is that the Convention Center and the Genoveva Chavez Center need to be fixed and the southside needs to be looped. She suggested that Ms. Parfitt make a list of the City's public facilities because they can only affect things that are city-controlled.

Ms. Reed noted that they can talk with the Governors' Commission on Disability for the State buildings.

Chair Bleck asked if there was any more comments or questions and there were none.

## **b) OLD BUSINESS**

### **a) MCD-SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **Plan Review Subcommittee**

Ms. Reed said they have not had plans to review and she noted that the notes from the last meeting state that there are CAD programs that can help them to see if they are in compliance and would save them time; however, she find out that this programs are not working that well yet. She said the other issue is that they have to design one for New Mexico because there are different laws and requirements in our State and they want a system that will work for New Mexico. She will look at that further.

### PTS Subcommittee

Mr. Hughes said they have a few things to comment on. First, he attended the Assisted Dogs of the West graduation last night and a gentleman shared his story how the service dog has assisted him in cutting down his medication that he takes by 50%. He said this is an example of the kind of impact that these dogs can have.

Mr. Hughes said the other event that he attended this past month was a Trauma-Informed Care Working Group Collaborative meeting that was hosted by the Santa Fe Community Foundation. He said this group consists of approximately 50-60 different service groups who all deal with traumatized individuals. He said it was a very productive meeting and they plan to meet every month to discuss how to approach trauma-informed care here in Santa Fe. He noted that although the group is quite large, they are looking to make it as inclusive as possible and he will be inviting others to participate and if anyone else has any recommendations for people to participate, or anyone who will benefit from participating in this group to let him know.

Mr. Hughes said he also met with Kyra Ochoa, the Community Services Director for the City and she expressed interest in attending a Mayors Committee on Disability meeting in the future.

Mr. Chapman offered to get a hold of her to possibly speak to the group.

### Transit

Chair Bleck said the Transit Committee had a meeting in April and they discussed the Southside Center that is supposed to open in 2020 and redoing the share center downtown. She said there is no movement whatsoever mainly because of culture issues and the fact that we are getting into tourist season.

She noted that Transit is going to have 40 new buses at the end of September and they received four vans for Paratransit. They also trained some people on the route maps and things like that, which should increase sufficiency with routing people in the Paratransit system.

She mentioned that they are doing a service plan update and they are going to ask for extended pick up service in Santa Fe to 8:00 p.m. She said they are also changing their brochure and are addressing the no-show policies and they looked at the policies and systems that the Committee set up several years ago. They are also talking about combining the paratransit rides and the senior rides. She noted that they are supposed to have an app now that will show where the buses are.

She said they have good employees in the Paratransit system and the service has been great. The drivers and call takers have received a \$2.00 raise and the Transit Department also has retention incentives.

Mr. Wirth noted that there was an article in the *New Mexican* a couple of days ago

about the weeds in Santa Fe and again one of his actions is the reduction and elimination of the use of herbicides so he will be calling John Munoz (new Director of Parks) to make sure that he follows the integrated risk-management resolution that was passed.

**b) MCD NEW MEMBERS STATUS**

Chair Bleck said they now have a complete Committee and there are no vacancies.

**c) ADA COORDINATOR REVIEW STATUS**

Mr. Chapman reported that they received applications from five qualified individuals for the ADA Coordinator position and they will finalize their selection this afternoon and hire someone soon.

**d) DISCUSSION OF SUBCOMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS**

Chair Bleck asked if anyone would like to add or subtract from their subcommittee assignments.

Ms. Parfitt said she would like a little more definition of the Plan Review Subcommittee.

Ms. Hope said they review all new and renovated sidewalks and parks, and to make sure that events and buildings are ADA accessible. She said they would welcome Ms. Parfitt and would like her to participate with them when they do assembly areas - on the hearing aid systems.

Chair Bleck asked if there was anyone else who would like to do subcommittee assignments and there were no responses.

**e) FOLLOW UP ON SNAP BENEFITS**

Ms. Gish noted that she voiced either in September or October 2018 that the Federal law states that SNAP benefits cannot be counted as income for any purpose. She said the City Water Division is counting these as income for the Low-Income City Water permits that eliminate monthly fees for the charges of water usage. There are some who could potentially lose this benefit because they count SNAP benefits as income. She said she forwarded this information to David Chapman and he forwarded to the City Attorney but they have not had an official response from the City. She mentioned that the City agrees with the Federal law and what it says about SNAP benefit and they would like to act in any way to reduce this conflict. She said she is not sure how to proceed.

Chair Bleck said she noticed that David Chapman re-stirred the issue recently by sending an email.

Mr. Chapman said this is his third follow up that he sent to Legal and he also talked to the Public Works Division Director yesterday. He will also be having a conversation with him on another subject today and he will discuss it with him again and hopefully the City Attorney can determine how to get this resolved. The City Attorney would still like to get

month.

Ms. Gish said the City is violating the Federal law because no government entity should count SNAP as income, for any purposes, especially if it reduces people from qualifying for other benefits.

Ms. Montoya-Chavez said she is concerned about those who do not have the means to advocate about this and could have their water shut-off.

#### **ITEMS FROM MEMBERS AND STAFF**

Mr. Parfitt asked Mr. Chapman if the hearing loop was installed at the Convention Center.

Mr. Chapman said he does not know anything more from the last time he talked to Ms. Parfitt. He said he asked the Project Manager to let him know but he could request that the Committee would like the Project Manager for that project to address the Committee at the next meeting.

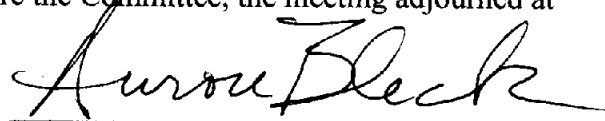
Chair Bleck said that would be great.

Mr. Chapman reported that the City is working with two contractors to remodel and replace ADA curb ramp improvements. He mentioned that the City has put a lot of money (\$500,000) towards these improvements.

**NEXT MEETING: June 20, 2019**

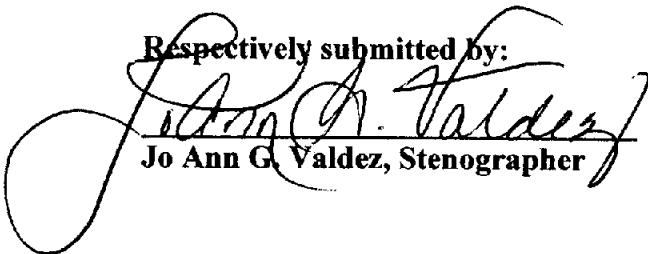
#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

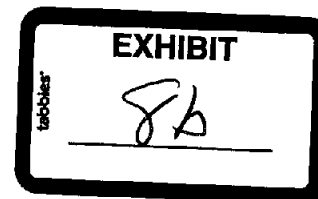


**Aurore Bleck, Chair**

Respectively submitted by:



**Jo Ann G. Valdez, Stenographer**

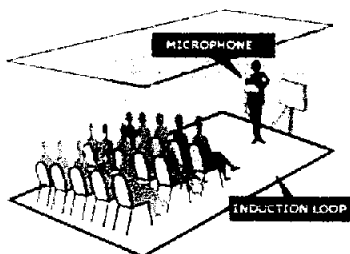


**A CLEARINGHOUSE FOR INFORMATION ON HEARING LOOPS**  
 LoopNM@gmail.com • (505) 401-4195 • P.O. Box 1714, Corrales, NM 87048

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New Mexico residents and visitors deserve to have the necessary communication tools and technology to fully enjoy and participate in the joy offered by the *Land of Enchantment*. Chief among them is the hearing loop and the telecoil. Loop New Mexico is a clearing house for information on this time tested and ADA compliant system that wirelessly connects hearing aids and cochlear implants to audio devices, doubling the functionality of hearing aids. We provide documents, slide presentations, referrals, advice and otherwise assist inquirers in our joint efforts to raise awareness and availability of hearing loops throughout the state.

### WHAT IS A HEARING LOOP?



A hearing loop is a type of assistive listening system used to silently transmit sound to the hard of hearing via electromagnetic waves that are received by tiny receivers called telecoils.. Such systems are now required in most public venues that feature a public address system. In its simplest form a hearing loop is an

insulated wire loop that surrounds a seating area. The loop is connected to an amplifier and microphone and it transmits a silent electro- magnetic signal to the telecoils found in most hearing aids or cochlear implants that those devices turn into sound. Users without telecoil equipped hearing aids or CIs are provided with a receiver that contains a telecoil and a headset or ear buds to hear the proceedings.

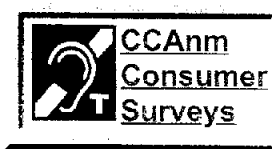
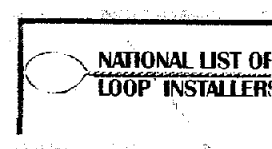
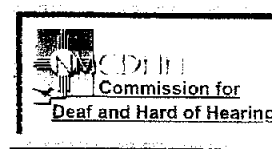
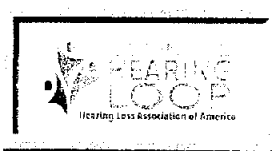
### WHAT IS A TELECOIL?

A telecoil is a small copper coil of wire that can be found in over 70% of all hearing aids currently available and in all new cochlear implants. When turned on it receives an electromagnetic signal from a hearing loop and sends it through the digital circuitry of the hearing device where it becomes sound. This process, in effect, places the mouth of the person speaking right at the listener's ear, providing dramatically improved clarity and intelligibility right at the listener's ear.

### WHY ARE ASSISTIVE LISTENING SYSTEMS NECESSARY?

The higher the frequency of a sound the less strength that sound has thus shortening the distance it can travel and still be heard. This is particularly problematic to the hard of hearing, most of whom have a higher frequency hearing loss. The effective range of hearing aid microphones is only about six to eight feet and once sound is coming from a distance greater than that those microphones will have difficulty picking it up.

The loudspeakers of most public address systems are not set to provide extra amplification to higher frequencies and users would find that sound unpleasant if



they were, but that's the added amplification the hard of hearing need if they are to be able to understand the sounds they are hearing as words.

No matter how high the volume on the loudspeakers is set, hard of hearing listeners will still have difficulty hearing the higher frequency sounds as they will be "covered" by the louder, stronger, lower frequency sounds and they will thus have difficulty understanding the words being broadcast. An assistive listening system places the sound right at the user's ear via earphones, ear buds or the telecoils in hearing aids thus compensating for the weaker high frequency sounds to some degree.

## BENEFITS OF HEARING LOOPS OVER OTHER SYSTEMS

A hearing loop assistive listening system (ALS) allows those with telecoil equipped hearing aids and CIs to access the system with the simple touch of a button - no need to borrow a receiver and headset and then return it after the event. They need not remove their hearing aids so there's no chance that their hearing aids might be damaged or lost when removed to don the headset.

If they use the combination Mic/Telecoil setting on their hearing aids they can still hear and talk with others while connected to the loop - something that's difficult to do when wearing a headset when wearing a headset - or they can go strictly to the telecoil setting (turning off the hearing aid microphones) thus eliminating most background noise and reverberation.

The headset or ear buds loaned with an FM or IR ALS are really just miniature loudspeakers placed over or in your ears. They cannot customize sound to match your audiogram whereas digital hearing aids and CIs are miniature computers that customize the sound so that those frequencies you don't hear well get more amplification thus making words clearer and easier to identify. This is particularly important for those with a higher frequency hearing loss which makes it difficult to hear consonants.

## WHERE WILL I FIND HEARING LOOPS IN USE?

The majority of hearing loops are currently to be found in places of worship and you can find a list of know New Mexico looped churches such as Las Placitas Presbyterian Church shown here by using this link. Other examples are the Albuquerque City Council/Bernalillo County Commission chamber or the Albuquerque Little Theatre and numerous other places among the over 140 venues of various types throughout the state that feature hearing loop technology of some sort in their public address system and the list is growing longer every month.

## NATIONAL PRESENCE OF LOOPS

Hearing loops can now be found in churches nationwide and in such diverse locations as New York City subway information booths and Broadway theatres. A growing number of airports and other transportation hubs are installing the technology as are supermarket and drug store chains. Some small, independent movie theaters like this one in California have looped each of the auditoriums while large chains like Cinemark are now loaning earphones or neckloops with FM receivers.

Transportation hubs like this Intermodal Station in Milwaukee have installed hearing loop technology at various locations throughout the complex while Amtrak information booths and ticket counters have been looped in New York's Grand Central and Penn stations and at Union Station in Washington, DC.

[Looping Links](#)

[Under Construction](#)

[Telecoils and Hearing Devices Webinar](#)



[LOOP NEW MEXICO Under Construction Slide Presentation](#)

[Looping Toolkit](#)

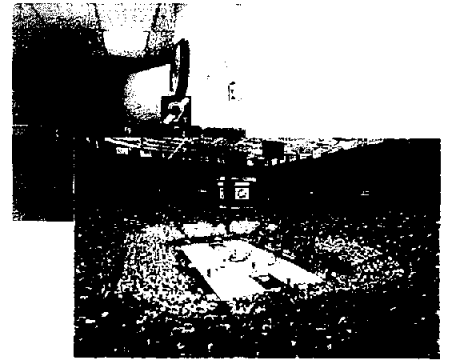
[Information on hearing loss](#)





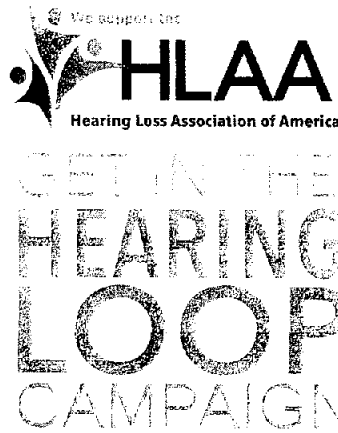


The Richard Rogers Theatre on New York's Great White Way is just one of hundreds of performing arts halls around the country that now feature hearing loops and the 12,000 seat Breslin Center at Michigan State University has all 12,000 of those seats looped so the hard of hearing can hear above the roar of the crowd.



There are several web sites that contain lists of known loop installations throughout the country. Among them are those of [Loop America](#) and this [Assistive Device Locator](#).

As you can see, America is taking notice of the movement to *Get in the Hearing Loop*.





*We dream of a world where people with hearing loss can thrive each day with communication access, full inclusion, and equal participation in all aspects of life, everywhere they go.*

*Through education, advocacy, and consultation services, the Get in the Hearing Loop (GITHL) program has laid the groundwork for a national movement of loop enthusiasts who are promoting communication access and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), one hearing loop at a time.*

## How Do Hearing Loops Work?

Hearing loops, or induction loops, are a type of assistive listening system (ALS) that transmit sound directly to a listener's telecoil-enabled hearing aids or cochlear implants for improved clarity and understanding. Hearing loops deliver intelligible, distortion-free speech and sound in environments where distance, ambient noise, and challenging acoustics otherwise make

listening and understanding with hearing aids and cochlear implants virtually impossible.

Technically known as audio frequency induction loop systems (AFILS), hearing loops consist of a special amplifier and a copper wire that transmits sound via a magnetic field. Any hearing device with a manually

accessible telecoil becomes a wireless receiver in the hearing loop. Hearing loops work in any size venue or location, from a large auditorium to a taxi or an elevator.

## The Telecoil Imperative

Telecoils provide many people with hearing loss what wheelchair ramps provide people with mobility challenges—access. Telecoils are an essential gateway to hearing aid compatible assistive listening for most people with hearing aids and cochlear implants. Telecoils receive the magnetic sound signal from a hearing loop and also enable listening via infrared (IR) and FM systems signals with the use of a neckloop.

Most hearing aid models—more than 70 percent—either come with a telecoil or offer it as an option (all cochlear implant processors made today have a telecoil). *When buying a hearing aid, consumers should always ask that a telecoil be included and also that the audiologist or dispenser activates the telecoil program at the time of fitting. The consumer should also master the simple procedure for turning on the correct hearing aid or cochlear implant program to use the telecoil when needed.*

## Hearing Loop Access for People without a Hearing Aid or Telecoil

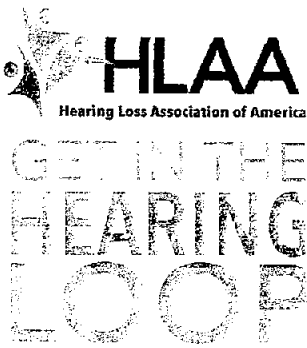
Hearing loop systems serve most people with hearing loss who wish to improve their ability to understand speech and sounds. As with FM and IR systems, hearing loops also offer accessibility via portable receivers and headphones.

## Hearing Loops Are a Top Choice for Hearing Access

Hearing loops are the most user-friendly of the assistive listening options and the first choice for many people, offering benefits for individuals and venues alike.

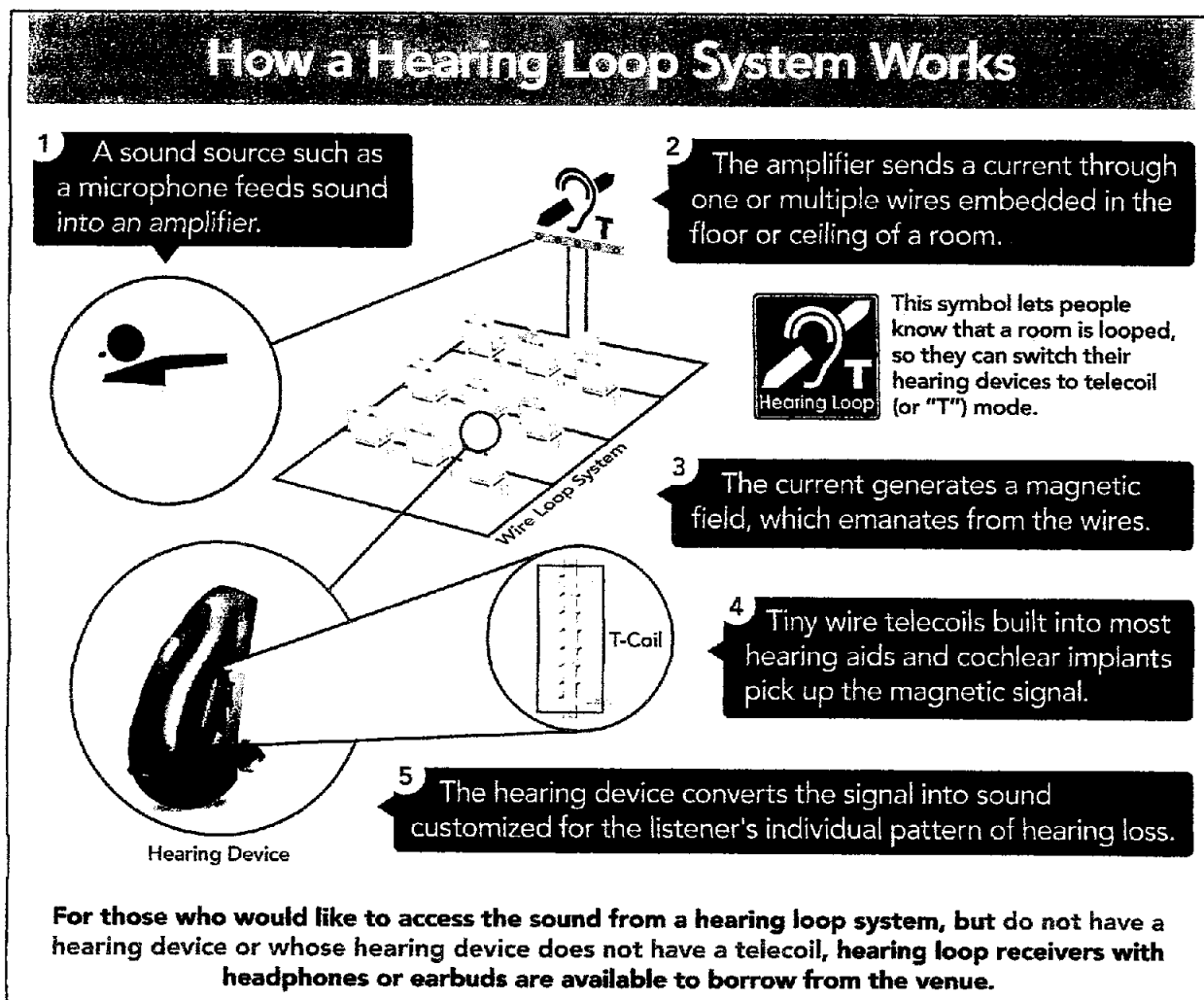
For individuals with hearing loss, hearing loops provide:

- easy, immediate and discreet communication access;
- universal hearing aid compatibility;
- opportunities for greater participation and inclusion in the community.



## Hearing loops also offer significant advantages for venues:

- **Cost Effective:** Compared to other systems, a hearing loop will save money for a venue through reduced staff time, maintenance and equipment costs.
- **Instant Access:** Only a hearing loop assistive listening system (ALS) will allow a significant number of people with hearing loss to access the system without the need to borrow and return venue-provided equipment.
- **ADA Compliant:** Hearing loops are the only ALS that can meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandate for hearing aid compatibility without the need to borrow and return venue-provided equipment.
- **Universally Accessible:** Hearing loops are the universally-accepted international standard for hearing access.



Hearing loop systems provide better communication access by transmitting sound directly to telecoil-equipped hearing aids, cochlear implants or other assistive listening devices. (Graphic courtesy of OTOJOY)



- **International Standards:** Facility managers and decision makers should choose only trained and experienced loop installers who are willing to provide references. Installers should confirm that the installation meets the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) standard IEC 60118-4. This standard defines the strength of the magnetic field, the frequency response, and methods of measuring these requirements. It also specifies the acceptable range of electromagnetic background noise.

## The Get in the Hearing Loop Program

Many people are not yet aware of hearing loops or other technologies that can improve communication access and public engagement or how they can enrich the lives of people with hearing loss, their families, friends,



***This universal symbol lets you know there is a hearing loop installed in the room or venue.***

colleagues, and even communities. The Get in the Hearing Loop (GITHL) program is changing that... one loop, one advocate, one ADA request at a time.

Get in the Hearing Loop, a communication access program of the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), is dedicated to providing and promoting community education, advocacy on behalf of people of hearing loss, and consultation services to help venues of all kinds successfully implement hearing loop technology.

The Get in the Hearing Loop program:

- educates community and local government leaders about the need for hearing loops;
- provides information about hearing loops and hearing loss to places of worship, audiologists, public and private venues, and other organizations;
- advocates to city and state government for improved communication access for people with hearing loss;
- offers workshops, toolkits, videos, articles, and more to inspire and guide anyone interested in communication access, including event planners, installers, venue managers, decision makers, civic leaders, audio-visual techs, advocates, funders, and of course, people with hearing loss;
- requests communication access via hearing loops at a wide variety of venues;
- consults closely with installers to ensure loop installations meet universal IEC standards.

Each hearing loop helps build our nation's accessibility infrastructure, creating more hearing-friendly communities. We envision a world where hearing loops and communication access are an automatic, enduring part of our daily lives.

For more information about hearing loops and the Get in the Hearing Loop program, visit [hearingloss.org/programs-events/get-hearing-loop](http://hearingloss.org/programs-events/get-hearing-loop) or email [GITHLinfo@hearingloss.org](mailto:GITHLinfo@hearingloss.org).

## Hearing Loss Association of America

7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1200 • Bethesda, MD 20814 • 301.657.2248 • Fax 301.913.9413 • [hearingloss.org](http://hearingloss.org)

## 219 Assistive Listening Systems

**219.1 General.** Assistive listening systems shall be provided in accordance with 219 and shall comply with 706.

**219.2 Required Systems.** In each assembly area where audible communication is integral to the use of the space, an assistive listening system shall be provided.

**EXCEPTION:** Other than in courtrooms, assistive listening systems shall not be required where audio amplification is not provided.

**219.3 Receivers.** Receivers complying with 706.2 shall be provided for assistive listening systems in each assembly area in accordance with Table 219.3. **Twenty-five percent minimum of receivers provided, but no fewer than two, shall be hearing-aid compatible in accordance with 706.3.**

**EXCEPTIONS:**

1. Where a building contains more than one assembly area and the assembly areas required to provide assistive listening systems are under one management, the total number of required receivers shall be permitted to be calculated according to the total number of seats in the assembly areas in the building provided that all receivers are usable with all systems.

2. Where all seats in an assembly area are served by an induction loop assistive listening system, the minimum number of receivers required by Table 219.3 to be hearing-aid compatible shall not be required to be provided.

Capacity of Seating in Assembly Area	Minimum Number of Required Receivers	Minimum Number of Required Receivers Required to be Hearing-aid Compatible
50 or less	2	2
51 to 200	2, plus 1 per 25 seats over 50 seats <sup>1</sup>	2
201 to 500	2, plus 1 per 25 seats over 50 seats <i>(20 for 500 seats)</i>	1 per 4 receivers <i>(5 must be neck loops for 500 seats)</i>
501 to 1000	20, plus 1 per 33 seats over 500 seats	1 per 4 receivers
1001 to 2000	35, plus 1 per 50 seats over 1000 seats	1 per 4 receivers
2001 and over	55 plus 1 per 100 seats over 2000 seats	1 per 4 receivers

## 706 Assistive Listening Systems

**706.1 General.** Assistive listening systems required in assembly areas shall comply with 706.

**Advisory 706.1 General.** Assistive listening systems are generally categorized by their mode of transmission. There are hard-wired systems and three types of wireless systems: induction loop, infrared, and FM radio transmission. Each has different advantages and disadvantages that can help  
(Continued on next page)

determine which system is best for a given application. For example, an FM system may be better than an infrared system in some open-air assemblies since infrared signals are less effective in sunlight. On the other hand, an infrared system is typically a better choice than an FM system where confidential transmission is important because it will be contained within a given space. The technical standards for assistive listening systems describe minimum performance levels for volume, interference, and distortion. Sound pressure levels (SPL), expressed in decibels, measure volume, interference, and distortion. Signal-to-noise ratio (SNR or S/N), also expressed in decibels, represents the relationship between the loudness of a desired sound (the signal) and the background noise in a space or piece of equipment. The higher the SNR, the more intelligible the signal. The peak clipping level limits the distortion in signal output produced when high-volume sound waves are manipulated to serve assistive listening devices.

Selecting or specifying an effective assistive listening system for a large or complex venue requires assistance from a professional sound engineer. The Access Board has published technical assistance on assistive listening devices and systems.

**706.2 Receiver Jacks.** Receivers required for use with an assistive listening system shall include a 1/8 inch (3.2 mm) standard mono jack.

**706.3 Receiver Hearing-Aid Compatibility.** Receivers required to be hearing-aid compatible shall interface with telecoils in hearing aids through the provision of neckloops.

**Advisory 706.3 Receiver Hearing-Aid Compatibility.** Neckloops and headsets that can be worn as neckloops are compatible with hearing aids. Receivers that are not compatible include earbuds, which may require removal of hearing aids, earphones, and headsets that must be worn over the ear, which can create disruptive interference in the transmission and can be uncomfortable for people wearing hearing aids.

**706.4 Sound Pressure Level.** Assistive listening systems shall be capable of providing a sound pressure level of 110 dB minimum and 118 dB maximum with a dynamic range on the volume control of 50 dB.

**706.5 Signal-to-Noise Ratio.** The signal-to-noise ratio for internally generated noise in assistive listening systems shall be 18 dB minimum.

**706.6 Peak Clipping Level.** Peak clipping shall not exceed 18 dB of clipping relative to the peaks of speech.

### **Signage.**

**4.30.1\*** General. Signage required to be accessible by 4.1 shall comply with the applicable provisions of 4.30. Appendix Note

**4.30.2\*** Character Proportion. Letters and numbers on signs shall have a width-to-height ratio between 3:5 and 1:1 and a stroke-width-to-height ratio between 1:5 and 1:10. Appendix Note

**4.30.3 Character Height.** Characters and numbers on signs shall be sized according to the viewing distance from which they are to be read. The minimum height is measured using an upper case X. Lower case characters are permitted.

Height Above Finished Floor Minimum Character Height

Suspended or Projected Overhead in compliance with 4.4.2 3 in (75 mm) minimum

**4.30.4\* Raised and Brailled Characters and Pictorial Symbol Signs (Pictograms).** Letters and numerals shall be raised 1/32 in (0.8 mm) minimum, upper case, sans serif or simple serif type and shall be accompanied with Grade 2 Braille. Raised characters shall be at least 5/8 in (16 mm) high, but no higher than 2 in (50 mm). Pictograms shall be accompanied by the equivalent verbal description placed directly below the pictogram. The border dimension of the pictogram shall be 6 in (152 mm) minimum in height. Appendix Note

**4.30.5\* Finish and Contrast.** The characters and background of signs shall be eggshell, matte, or other non-glare finish. Characters and symbols shall contrast with their background – either light characters on a dark background or dark characters on a light background. Appendix Note

**4.30.6 Mounting Location and Height.** Where permanent identification is provided for rooms and spaces, signs shall be installed on the wall adjacent to the latch side of the door. Where there is no wall space to the latch side of the door, including at double leaf doors, signs shall be placed on the nearest adjacent wall. Mounting height shall be 60 in (1525 mm) above the finish floor to the centerline of the sign. Mounting location for such signage shall be so that a person may approach within 3 in (76 mm) of signage without encountering protruding objects or standing within the swing of a door.

#### **4.30.7\* Symbols of Accessibility.**

(1) Facilities and elements required to be identified as accessible by 4.1 shall use the international symbol of accessibility. The symbol shall be displayed as shown in Fig. 43(a) and (b).

(2) Volume Control Telephones. Telephones required to have a volume control by 4.1.3(17)(b) shall be identified by a sign containing a depiction of a telephone handset with radiating sound waves.

(3) Text Telephones (TTYs). Text telephones (TTYs) required by 4.1.3(17)(c) shall be identified by the international TTY symbol (Fig 43(c)). In addition, if a facility has a public text telephone (TTY), directional signage indicating the location of the nearest text telephone (TTY) shall be placed adjacent to all banks of telephones which do not contain a text telephone (TTY). Such directional signage shall include the international TTY symbol. If a facility has no banks of telephones, the directional signage shall be provided at the entrance (e.g., in a building directory).

(4) Assistive Listening Systems. In assembly areas where permanently installed assistive listening systems are required by 4.1.3(19)(b) the availability of such systems shall be identified with signage that includes the international symbol of access for hearing loss (Fig 43(d)). Appendix Note

### **216.10 Assistive Listening Systems**

Each assembly area required by 219 to provide assistive listening systems shall provide signs informing patrons of the availability of the assistive listening system. Assistive listening signs shall comply with 703.5 and shall include the International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss complying with 703.7.2.4.

Hearing Loss Association of America

The Nation's Voice for People with Hearing Loss

[www.hearingloss.org](http://www.hearingloss.org) • 7910 Woodmont Avenue Suite 1200 Bethesda, MD 20814

## 216.10 Assistive Listening Systems

Each assembly area required by 219 to provide assistive listening systems shall provide signs informing patrons of the availability of the assistive listening system. Assistive listening signs shall comply with 703.5 and shall include the International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss complying with 703.7.2.4.

**EXCEPTION:** Where ticket offices or windows are provided, signs shall not be required at each assembly area provided that signs are displayed at each ticket office or window informing patrons of the availability of assistive listening systems. Each assembly area required by 219 to provide assistive listening systems shall provide signs informing patrons of the availability of the assistive listening system. Assistive listening signs shall comply with 703.5 and shall include the International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss complying with 703.7.2.4.

**EXCEPTION:** Where ticket offices or windows are provided, signs shall not be required at each assembly area provided that signs are displayed at each ticket office or window informing patrons of the availability of assistive listening systems.

### Assstive Listening Systems Signage

**703.7.2.4 Assistive Listening Systems.** Assistive listening systems shall be identified by the International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss complying with Figure 703.7.2.4.



**Figure 703.7.2.4 International Symbol of Access for Hearing Loss**



**HLAA NOTE:** It has become common practice for the symbol to be modified with the addition of a “T” to indicate the assistive listening system is a hearing loop.

**The compliance date for the 2010 Standards for new construction and alterations is determined by:**

- the date the last application for a building permit or permit extension is certified to be complete by a State, county, or local government;
- the date the last application for a building permit or permit extension is received by a State, county, or local government, where the government does not certify the completion of applications; or
- the start of physical construction or alteration, if no permit is required.

If that date is on or after March 15, 2012, then new construction and alterations must comply with the 2010 Standards.