



## Pandemic Support Program

Autism Action Partnership (AAP) has created the Pandemic Support Program to assist the Nebraska autism community during the COVID-19 pandemic. While members of all communities are being impacted by unplanned and seemingly unavoidable circumstances, we are acutely aware that members of the autism community are being impacted in unique ways. We also know that some of these temporary circumstances can lead to long term and potentially lifelong negative consequences. Our mission to improve the quality of life for the autism community remains, and the current environment has compelled us to create new ways to fulfill this mission.

The Pandemic Support Program has four primary components:



**pandemic response fund**



**navigation services**



**online resource guide**



**activity kits**

- 1) **Pandemic Response Fund** - Individuals and families with one or more members of a household living on the Autism Spectrum are eligible to apply for needs-based funds of up to \$250\*. These funds may be used to offset lost revenue (layoffs or furlough) and/or assist in covering increased expenses as a direct result of the pandemic (such as specialized childcare, in-home therapy services, medical expenses, etc.). ***To donate or apply for assistance, click [here](#).***
- 2) **Navigation Services** - AAP has designated a fulltime staff member who will provide guidance and support to families who are experiencing hardships. Any resident of Nebraska who has autism or cares for an individual with autism is eligible to receive navigation services. The navigator will help to identify the most effective and efficient ways for individuals to access resources and services, as well as advocate on behalf of an individual or family (if requested). These services are offered at no cost to the autism community. ***To receive Navigation Services, contact Thomas at 402-208-3986, [tdaly@autismaction.org](mailto:tdaly@autismaction.org) or click [here](#) to get started!***
- 3) **Online Resource Guide** – AAP has gathered and continues to collect a variety of information on resources and activities and have compiled links to them on one resource page on our website. The resources range from basic need supports to autism- specific activities and information and includes a growing list of links to fun and exciting web-based opportunities. The goal of the Guide is to help connect the autism community to the things they need and want as efficiently as possible. We have asked and continue to receive content recommendations from the autism community, to ensure the Guide is meeting its goal. ***To access the guide, click [here](#).***
- 4) **Activity Kits** – Autism Action Partnership has heard from numerous families whose loved one(s) with autism are struggling during this pandemic (sudden and extended closure of schools, decreased access to services and programs, etc.) In response, we partnered with local and national experts to create an Activity Kit full of a variety of items to maximize learning, development and fun. The kits include information on available online resources, instructions for multiple activities (fun and therapeutic), items needed for the activities, as well as additional sensory-friendly items. The kits will be made available to families at no cost and families can keep them. The kits will be piloted in Omaha in May with the goal of making them available statewide, as soon as possible. ***To learn more about the Activity Kits, click [here](#).***

The Pandemic Support Program has been made possible through the generous support of AAP donors, as well as the reallocation of AAP operating budget. AAP intends to continue to make this program available to the Nebraska autism community until the pandemic ends. The sustainability of the program (or components of the program) will likely be determined by funding constraints.

*\*award amount can exceed \$250 in emergency/crisis situations*