

“IF I CAN DO IT, YOU CAN DO IT.”

by Anthony Garcia, NMDVR Participant, Roswell



For many years I struggled with substance abuse and addiction. I also suffered with a back disability. As I went through this destructive pattern, I thought I would never dig myself out of this pit I put myself into. I had to put a stop to what was killing me. In 2021, I overdosed and was on life support for almost two weeks. I came out of that and decided to turn my life around because I was just that close to death.

My probation officer gave me an ultimatum that if I tested positive, she would lock me up again. I decided I would never test positive again. I started doing intensive outpatient therapy and began working with a good therapist. Through New Mexico Golden Gloves, I ran into Ms. Jessica Banda from NMDVR. She

told me about the program and how it could help me with my disability. So, I made that phone call.

Ms. Silvia Gurrola [Vocational Rehabilitation Technician in the Roswell NMDVR office] went through my intake and Ms. Comien Cheadle [Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor] helped me achieve personal goals, housing, and NM State Certifications. Ms. Cheadle was always on me, making sure I was okay and wanting me to succeed. Now they see a totally different person than they saw the first time I walked in the door.

Going through the program, I obtained my Certified Peer Support Worker (CPSW) and my Community Comprehensive Support Service (CCSS). These certifications helped me receive full-time employment working for the NM District Court Treatment Program, where I am currently a volunteer coach mentor. I also am employed by LifeHouse Recovery as a community responder for crisis calls and I work for MedMark Treatment Centers, where we dispense medication-assisted treatment for those struggling with substance use disorders.

I'm not fully recovered from my back pain, but at least I can stand up. Everything happened for a reason. I believe it was a path I had to take to get where I am now and stay clean. Back in 2014, I was actually the first patient in the methadone clinic where I work now. I mentor people, help them stay out of trouble, make sure they make their meetings, and any other positive things I can do for them. I love helping people and giving back. I see where I used to be. Some people still come here from when I came [as a patient]. I want them to see that change is possible. I want to be an example to help others succeed. Hey, if I can do it, you can do it!

There is help out there. If you seek that help, all these doors will open for you. Take advantage of what NMDVR offers. Get to know your counselors and case workers. I can't thank NMDVR enough for supporting me to get to this new chapter of my life. It feels so good to overcome something that almost ended my life!

The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation helps individuals with disabilities find suitable employment. Vocational rehabilitation is a voluntary program supporting people who want to work.

With a long history of success and proven methodology for making the best fits, NMDVR is committed to helping participants thrive in their communities. For more information, visit dvr.state.nm.us or call 505-954-8500.

The Vocational Rehabilitation program receives 78.7% of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For federal fiscal year 2026, the total awarded was \$26,147,963. The remaining 21.3% is funded by state appropriations and transfers from the Commission for the Blind and Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.