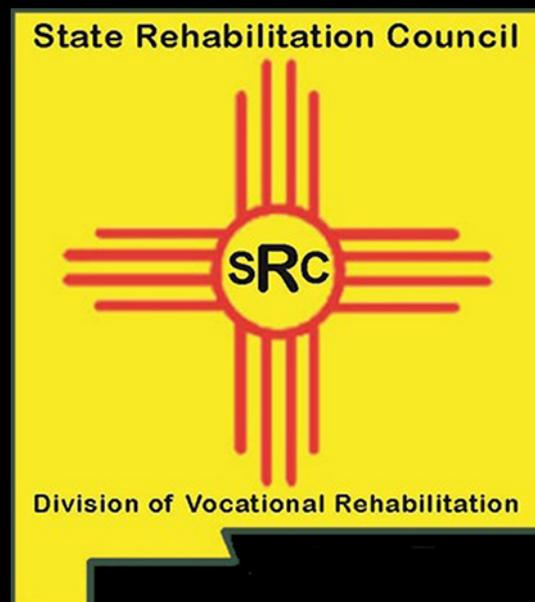


NEW MEXICO STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL

2017 ANNUAL REPORT



Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
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New Mexico

State Rehabilitation Council

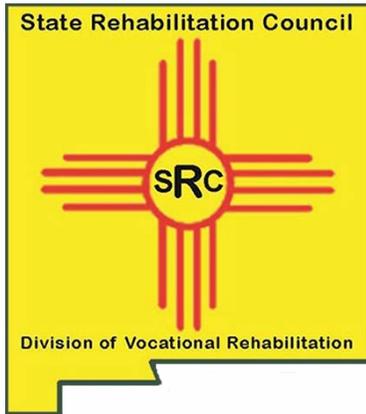
2017 Annual Report

The New Mexico State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) was established under Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, now authorized in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998. Tasked with partnering with the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) to ensure the highest quality services are made available to those seeking support and services, the SRC acts as the external, community-oriented voice in the consideration and development of NMDVR policy. To achieve this goal, the SRC works closely with the NMDVR to remain informed on those issues most pertinent to the provision of services to the disability community within New Mexico and to express concerns or support regarding those issues and initiatives.

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SUSANA MARTINEZ
GOVERNOR

CHRISTOPHER RUSZKOWSKI
DESIGNATE SECRETARY OF
EDUCATION

BERNADINE CHAVEZ
SRC CHAIR

JOE D. CORDOVA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

December 30, 2017

Honorable Governor Martinez,

As the Chair of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) of New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) it is my great pleasure to submit the 2017 SRC annual report. The Council members, who are appointed by the Governor, have diligently worked to maintain a standard of excellence and move forward as one of the hardest working councils on behalf of the participants of NMDVR.

This report summarizes the efforts of the SRC and NMDVR over the past year and hopefully will provide its readers with a clear understanding of our mutual focus toward that primary goal. The SRC is hopeful that the partnership between NMDVR and the Rehabilitation Council will strengthen and grow. The council works hard to meet the federally mandated activities and maintain the standard of service to New Mexicans with disabilities in the area of vocational rehabilitation. The members of the SRC continue to work diligently to support the mission of the agency and to be the voice of the consumer.

The Council remains committed to advocate for a vocational rehabilitation program that provides effective, results-oriented services for New Mexicans with disabilities seeking employment.

We look forward to a new year of renewed partnerships and creating new employment opportunities for New Mexicans with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Bernadine Chavez
SRC Chair



SUSAN MARTINEZ
Governor

CHRISTOPHER RUSZKOWSKI
Designate Secretary of Education

JOE D. CORDOVA
Executive Director of Vocational Rehabilitation

Again, it has been my honor and pleasure to work in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) this past year. The SRC continues to represent the voice of the disabled community in New Mexico and thus the public can be assured the voice of the consumer is well represented on the Council.

Though it has been difficult this past year to keep a fully constituted SRC as required in the Rehab Act, the remaining SRC members have held strong and have continued to do the work of the Council.

We filled the SRC's liaison position but, unfortunately, the individual holding this position resigned for another job. We are currently looking to replace that vacancy, as we believe this position is vitally important to the work of the Council.

This past year the SRC made many recommendations to DVR, which I will address, in the SRC annual report.

I look forward to another prosperous year of our partnership with the SRC and to continue to make improvement in the DVR service delivery system that will benefit disabled consumers in New Mexico.

Sincerely,

Joe D. Cordova
Director of Vocational Rehabilitation

SRC At-A-Glance

Mission

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) provides assessment, advice and recommendations to the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) and other regarding coordination and effectiveness of programs and strategies which promote competitive employment for individuals with disabilities.

Vision

The SRC will endeavor to ensure the highest quality services are made available to New Mexico individuals with disabilities seeking employment and support services.

SRC Goals

- To encourage all SRC Members to complete SRC Orientation training in order to ensure membership is aware of their roles and responsibilities under the Rehab Act as amended.
- To assess the effectiveness and delivery of vocational services provided by the NMDVR to individuals with disabilities.
- To improve the coordination of vocational services among the NMDVR, state agencies and public and private entities for the benefit of individuals with disabilities.
- To recognize DVR staff and local business partners that go beyond their day to day activities on behalf of individuals with disabilities.

SRC At-A-Glance

SRC Functions:

Working in partnership with NMDVR, the SRC strives to accomplish the following tasks:

- To review, analyze and advise the NMDVR regarding its performance in carrying out its responsibilities as the state agency designated to administer the public Vocational Rehabilitation program.
- To provide input to NMDVR in preparing the State Plan for Vocational Rehabilitation and Supported Employment, as well as other plans, reports, needs assessments and evaluations.
- To review the effectiveness of and consumer satisfaction with the performance of the NMDVR and other public and private agencies in providing vocational rehabilitation services to New Mexico individuals with disabilities.
- To prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor of New Mexico and the Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services Administration.
- To coordinate with other advisory councils in the state, which oversees services to individuals with disabilities.
- To provide input to the NMDVR regarding coordination of activities with the New Mexico workforce investment system.
- To perform other functions as appropriate to the mission of the SRC.

SRC Committees

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Purpose:

To direct the work of the SRC and ensure the council meets its charge of representing the voice of the consumer with the NMDVR. The Executive Committee also represents the SRC on a state and national level. Ensure membership remains aware of legislative trends that might impact the charge of the council or of NMDVR. Ensure that the council addresses the federal requirements including the recruitment of membership to fill all required openings, the facilitation of public forums to gather input regarding disability and employment services with the state, and the coordination of council activities.

STATE PLAN AND OUTCOMES COMMITTEE

Purpose:

To advise the New Mexico Public Education Department and the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) regarding activities authorized to be carried out in accordance with Public Law 105-220, and now the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). Assist in the preparation of the State Plan and any amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments and evaluations required. The committee assists in the preparation and submission of an Annual Report to the Governor and the RSA Administrator on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs operated in the State. The committee collaborates with the Legislative Committee to conduct a statewide needs assessment and also ensures the widest distribution of any report developed on behalf of individuals with disabilities.

SRC Committees

LEGISLATIVE AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Purpose:

To educate legislators and legislative staff on both the State and National level about the efforts and success of the NMDVR in New Mexico. To conduct public forums to solicit input from participants on their experiences with NMDVR and the services they receive. To coordinate with the State Plan and Outcomes Committee to complete the Customer Satisfaction and Statewide Needs Assessment Survey and to develop an outreach plan to promote the NMDVR.

STATE PLAN AND OUTCOMES COMMITTEE

Purpose:

To recruit potential candidates for membership on the SRC, per Title I, Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and now WIOA. Provide new members with an orientation about the work of the SRC and ongoing learning opportunities. Recognize NMDVR staff and business partners that go over and beyond on behalf of individuals with disabilities.

SRC Members

Bernadine Chavez - Client Assistance Program
Chair Person

Sandy Sandoval - Business and Industry
Vice Chair

Paula Seanez - 121 Representatives

Rebecca Holland - SILC Representative

Mariela Pijem - Parent Training Center (PRO)

Hermila Ortega - Current NMDVR Councilor

Rebecca Roybal - CDD

Tracy Aziovlst - NMTAP

Guy Surdi -

Joe Cordova - Executive Director of Vocational Rehabilitation

NMDVR Response to SRC 2016 / 2017 Recommendations

The SRC has established criteria for an award honoring NMDVR staff. Nominations were solicited from all state offices, and three (3) VR counselors were selected to be honored for their work serving participants with disabilities. The award ceremony was held at the SRC summer meeting. The SRC looks forward to this being an annual event, and has added an employer award.

Response: DVR will make the staff and employer awards an annual event.

The SRC encourages NMDVR to initiate a public relations campaign to promote this activity as a method for enhancing the image of NMDVR and increasing awareness of disabilities services in New Mexico.

Response: DVR will incorporate the awards activity into its public relations literature.

The SRC has a completely new group of members and we are re-evaluating our committee structure to keep pace with WIOA requirements. The SRC will also be adding a new committee to look at transition services. Our goal is to establish committee meetings for SRC Working Committees that are held outside quarterly meetings in order to further SRC work.

Response: DVR will work with the SRC committee on improving transition services.

NMDVR Response to SRC 2016 / 2017 Recommendations

The SRC recommends that NMDVR get out of an “Order of Selection” when fiscally feasible since there are serving all categories and have been since entering into an order of selection. We also request that the agency keep the SRC informed at each quarterly meeting on the statistics of order of selection.

Response: DVR will keep SRC informed on the status of order of selection and whether it is feasible to get out of order of selection at any point in time.

SRC recommends involvement in selection and training of hearing officers for New Mexico.

Response: DVR will include SRC in selection and training of future hearing officers.

Facilitation of public forums to collect feedback regarding DVR services.

Response: DVR will include SRC in future public forums to get feedback on DVR services.

Exploration of public hearings in conjunction with other boards and disability service agencies.

Response: DVR will explore having public hearings in conjunction with other disability related agencies.

Review of SRC bylaws and responsibilities to ensure council members are fully aware of federal regulations, and assist the SRC in recruiting SRC to meet statutory requirements.

Response: DVR will review SRC bylaws with SRC members and offer training to the SRC members concerning mandatory requirements in the Rehab Act.

NMDVR Response to SRC 2016 / 2017 Recommendations

Create a training program to ensure that SRC members are fully versed and aware of services throughout the state.

Response: DVR will create a training program that will assist SRC members to be aware of services that are available to disabled consumers throughout the state.

The SRC recommends that NMDVR establish a culturally competent outreach program for Native Americans that will meet each individual's community needs and provide a consistent presence in these communities to gain credibility and establish a positive relationship with the 121 programs.

Response: NMDVR will begin to establish a culturally competent out-reach program for native Americans and increase its presence in the native American community in order to increase DVR's credibility and to establish a positive relationship with the native American community.

NMDVR At-A-Glance

Statistical Year At-A-Glance	
9,903	New Mexicans sought and received direct vocational rehabilitation services.
8,821	New Mexican received vocational rehabilitation services including: medical treatment, guidance and counseling, training and job seeking skills.
867	Successfully rehabilitated
663	Job ready or employed but not yet closed
\$19,021	Average yearly employee wage
210%	Percent wage increase after rehabilitation
38%	Most Significantly disabled
54%	Significantly disabled
\$16,491,448	Total wages for successfully rehabilitated individuals

NMDVR At-A-Glance

Participants by Major Disabling Conditions	
Major Disabling Condition	Count
Cognitive Impairment	2,471
Psychosocial Impairment	1,953
Other Impairment - Mental	1,075
Dexterity Orthopedic/Neurological Impairment	1,055
Other Impairment - Physical	655
Hearing Loss	562
Deafness	323
General Physical Debilitation	250
Other Impairment - Orthopedic	209
Communicative Impairment	137
Other Impairment - Visual	52
Respiratory Impairment	43
Blindness	25
Deaf-Blindness	11
Total	8,821

NMDVR At-A-Glance

Rehabilitated Closure by Occupation	
Occupation	Count
Service Occupations	371
Professional, Paraprofessional and Technical	180
Prod, Const, Operating, Maint. & Material Handling	149
Clerical and Administrative Support	81
Sales and Related Occupations	47
Managerial and Administrative	23
Agricultural, Forestry, Fishing and Related	6
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	4
Community and Social Service Occupations	3
Other	2
Healthcare Support Occupations	1
Total	867

NMDVR At-A-Glance

Income Reliance Before and After Return to Work		
Primary Source of Support	At Application	Closure
Personal Income	49	400
Employment Earnings	125	229
Public Support (SSI, SSDI, TANF, AFDC)	161	146
Family and Friends	369	46
Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)	91	30
All Other Sources	27	10
All Other Public Sources	30	4
Client Income	5	2
Annuity or Other Non-disability Insurance Benefits	2	-
Public Assistance without Federal Funds (GA Only)	2	-
Public Institution - Tax Supported	1	-
Worker's Compensation	5	-
Total	867	867

NMDVR Success Stories

VANESSA DURAN:

The DVR journey for Vanessa Duran started in high school. Vanessa attended the Wagon Mound Schools District, and had been in a serious ATV accident in 2011 that resulted her being hospitalized for two-month. Following her hospital release, the Wagon Mound schools allowed Vanessa to complete her senior year at home. This is when her DVR counselor met with her to discuss DVR services, which would then qualify her as a transition student. At the time, Vanessa did not want to hear about DVR services and most of the conversation was with her mother while Vanessa remained in another room avoiding DVR staff. Vanessa struggles with social skills and developing relationships with people outside of her family. She was content to stay home in Watrous after she graduated from high school and not interested in working, especially in Las Vegas. As a result, services did not move forward at that time, but her mother brought her back in 2013 to apply for DVR services. During her initial appointment, she refused to answer questions other than yes or no and would look at her mother to answer for her (Vanessa typically avoids eye contact). Services did not move forward at that time as well, but her counselor discussed the need to apply for SSI and the DD waiver.

In 2015, Vanessa and her mother applied for DVR services again. This time she was more willing to talk to her counselor but still, very difficult discussing what type of work she was willing to pursue. Since she was determined eligible for the DD Waiver, her counselor was able to secure a State General Funds slot and long term service provider (Family Options) to start working with her to develop supports needed to move her closer towards employment. Vanessa liked her staff with Family Options but was very resistant to work other than

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...

NMDVR Success Stories

grooming and feeding horses, which had been investigated, but deemed not to be viable employment for Vanessa.

Family Options worked to get Vanessa out of the house and together with DVR's assistance, they convinced her to start coming to their facility to build her skills interacting with others. Since Vanessa did like animals local groomers were pursued for possible on the job training placements. The local groomers declined the OJT placements, as they did not feel they would be able to hire her following her training and did not have the time to invest in training her to groom animals. Other employment options were discussed with Vanessa but she was resistant and not willing to try anything other than working with horses.

About six months later she was encouraged to try On the Job Training at the Comfort Inn working as a Breakfast Attendant. This was not something she wanted to do but when she was taken to visit the site she noticed the laundry facility had a woman working who was deaf, which interested Vanessa since she did learn some basic sign language when she was hospitalized and unable to communicate. Vanessa had expressed early in her meetings with her DVR counselor that she had wanted to work as an interpreter but it was determined this would not be a goal she could achieve. Her initial interest in working at the Comfort Inn was motivated by her ability to work alongside the woman who communicated in Sign Language. Vanessa was finally willing to try the On the Job Training at the Comfort Inn.

She completed a three-month part time On the Job Training immediately following the three months she was offered employment.

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NMDVR Success Stories

She has worked as a Breakfast Attendant, Housekeeper and returned to Laundry where she has now been employed for over a year. Vanessa's mom feels she has gained confidence and greatly developed her social skills as a result of her job at the Comfort Inn. While if you ask Vanessa if she likes her job she will most likely tell you "no". Keep in mind this is who she is and how she may answer many questions, but she has been working about 15 hours a week, shows up to work on time, diligent with completing work tasks and has attended both of the company Christmas parties (which is no small feat for Vanessa). Vanessa does enjoy her job but cannot express this according to her mother. The Comfort Inn values Vanessa's work ethic and depend greatly on Vanessa.

IK:

In 2012, when IK moved from Albuquerque to Colorado, she was very depressed and extremely confused. IK needed to connect with friends and nurture her soul. When she settled in after a few months, IK felt it was very important to doing something with her life. She also felt it was important to engage her brain, which would also help her heal. She started taking prerequisite classes for nursing school. The classes were hard for her, and at times felt very discouraged. However, with the help of tutors, classmates, friends and counseling from DVR, she passed her classes.

After a couple of years, IK was accepted into an LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse) program. IK was happy that she was accepted, but did not like the school. She considered moving back to New Mexico, where she had left her heart behind, but it seemed like an impossible task to pack everything up again.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...

NMDVR Success Stories

In addition, find new counselors, a new place to live, and setting up her life once again in a different town. It took IK a year to accomplish it, and in the meantime, she had completed one year of LPN school in Colorado.

After moving back to Santa Fe, IK applied to an RN (Registered Nurse) program and got accepted. Most of her classes did not transfer, so she almost had to start over with nursing school. Initially, this was disappointing since she had worked so hard, but she decided that by repeating classes she could further master all the nursing skills and the science behind nursing. In the end, IK decided, she might actually be better at it and feel more confident. This decision helped her go on because the thought of gaining confidence after the last several years of feeling so much disappointment, shame and discouragement, confidence sounded really good.

IK had a counselor who believed in her and fought for her. She was referred to benefits advisement, where she learned about her work options. She also found an organization of advocates that helped people with disabilities. IK contacted an advocate and wrote a plan to achieve self-support. With the help of NMDVR and Positive Approach to Student Success (PASS) she did not have to take any student loans. In addition, IK received the support she needed to get through another round of nursing school. "Looking back, it was challenging, but it was really good, too".

In May 2017, IK graduated from nursing school with an RN degree (Registered Nurse).

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NMDVR Success Stories

IK is now employed and her job is going really well. Although, she is still learning, this is not any different from any other new nurse. She is proud of what she has accomplished. IK feels that putting herself through the rigors of school, developing patience with herself, as well as finding the discipline to study for hours at a time, helped her regain some self-confidence. She can now trust her brain again, and knows she could not have done this all on her own. IK would like to thank all her friends, counselors, therapists, advocates, and advisors for all their help and patience. "I am grateful, and feel ready now to give back to the world."

Even though her case is closed with NMDVR, she knows that benefits advisement is there to help her make decisions about health insurance and public benefits, as she continues to work on her ability to support herself and be part of the working community.

JOHNNY SALAZAR

When Johnny first came to DVR, he was somewhat of a shy person, staying to himself most of the time. He had a confused sense of direction regarding his career choices. With guidance from DVR, Johnny decided to attend cosmetology school and successfully passed his NM Board Certification Exam, all while re-connecting with old friends. Johnny is currently working as an intern at a barbershop and continuing to attend school. He has become so focused, as compared to when he first became a NMDVR participant. Johnny has been offered a space at a haircut salon where he thinks he can do well. NMDVR will continue to work with Johnny to support him through his success.

NMDVR Success Stories

DANNI MCMAHAN

Ms. Danni McMahan was a DVR client from January 2008 through June 2017. During this time, NMDVR supported Danni's employment goals through training experience, including guidance and counseling and support services through the Carlsbad field office. Danni received assistance with her undergraduate education, medical school tuition, fees, books and supplies, as well as a computer. DVR also provided information regarding social security benefits via the WISE Program; adaptive driver training that helped her acquire a driver's license; and vehicle modification of a pickup her parents purchased for her which helped facilitate training, treatment and now, suitable employment with the VA Hospital in Fort Worth, TX. Danni was on the Dean's list throughout her undergraduate training, graduating with highest honors, Summa Cum Laude. She then completed Medical School graduating # 1 in her Pharmacy School Class with a 96.111 GPA for 169 hours.

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Albuquerque - Lomas

111 Lomas Blvd. NW,
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(505) 383-2529 (Fax)

Albuquerque - NM Workforce Connection

501 Mountain Rd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87102
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Albuquerque - Oakland

5200 Oakland Ave. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87113
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5205 Quail NW
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1710 Rio Bravo SW
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Belen

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State Rehabilitation Council



Division of Vocational Rehabilitation



New Mexico Division of
Vocational Rehabilitation

Public Education Department