



NEW MEXICO DIVISION
OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

**STATE
REHABILITATION
COUNCIL**

**OPENING
DOORS
TOGETHER**

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2010**



NEW MEXICO DIVISION
OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
**STATE
REHABILITATION
COUNCIL**

ANNUAL REPORT 2010

October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2010

**435 St. Michael's Drive, Bldg. "D"
Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87507**



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New Mexico Division
of Vocational Rehabilitation
**State
Rehabilitation
Council**

Bernadine Chavez, Chairwoman
Sarah Michaud, Cochairman

Honorable Governor Martinez and Secretary Skandera:

The New Mexico State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) is pleased to present the 2010 Annual Report. The SRC is comprised of dedicated New Mexicans who take on the federal mandate of partnering with the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) to promote quality vocational rehabilitation services, independence, and employment opportunities for New Mexicans with disabilities.

In this difficult time of budget shortfalls, fewer resources and more need, it is imperative that the partnership of the SRC and the NMDVR be a productive relationship with common goals.

The SRC has worked hard this year in supporting the NMDVR's efforts to be proactive in continuing to provide quality services with fewer resources. Unfortunately, NMDVR will be entering into an order of selection and some New Mexicans with disabilities may not receive the services needed to return to the workforce. The SRC recognizes that these are difficult decisions for the administration and applauds the thoughtfulness and the meticulous planning on the part of the Acting Director and his staff.

The SRC members are keenly aware of the challenges that NMDVR faces, as well as those of job seekers and service providers. I believe our continuing joint efforts to overcome barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities will serve to enhance the lives of all New Mexicans. It is with renewed hope that the SRC continues its commitment to work with NMDVR to improve the quality of life and the opportunity for employment for New Mexicans with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Bernadine Chavez
SRC Chair

435 St. Michael's Drive, Building D, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505
1-800-224-7005 (505) 954-8500
(505) 954-8562 (FAX)



NEW MEXICO
DIVISION OF
VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION

Public Education Department

SUSANA MARTINEZ
GOVERNOR
HANA SKANDERA
SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
RALPH VIGIL
ACTING DIRECTOR FOR
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

December 30, 2010

Citizens of New Mexico:

It has been my honor to work with the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's (NMDVR) State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). During the past year, we have faced numerous budgetary challenges. These have impacted the Division's ability to hire staff, to maintain supporting contracts, and will impact the agency's service delivery model.

In spite of these challenges, NMDVR was able to maintain services to the general public with minimal interruption. Also of significance is the fact that NMDVR services provide a significant return to the state. For every one dollar (\$1.00) of state appropriation, \$5.63 is returned to the treasury when a DVR participant goes to work.

Because of the continuing revenue shortfalls experienced in New Mexico, NMDVR will be entering into an Order of Selection in 2011. This means that the Division will not be able to serve all of the public, but will instead have to establish priority service groups and a waiting list. The extent to which individuals can be removed from the waiting list and receive services will be dependent on funding. Staff is resolved to create efficiencies and innovative practices to work towards that end, and ultimately, to move out of the Order of Selection.

NMDVR benefits persons with disabilities, the business community, and the overall economy. Through its partnership with the SRC, a continued commitment to effective resource management and to continuous quality improvement, I am very confident that NMDVR will continue to be a strong resource during these difficult economic times, and into the future.

Truly,

Ralph Vigil
Acting Director

435 St. Michael's Drive, Building D, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505
1-800-224-7005 (505) 954-8500
(505) 954-8562 (FAX)
www.dvrgetsjobs.com

VISION

The New Mexico State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) strives to be a voice for people with disabilities within the state. (Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 established, and in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, authorized the states' councils.) The SRC collaborates with the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) to assure high quality service delivery to those eligible individuals seeking support and services. To achieve this goal, the SRC acts as an external, community-oriented voice in the consideration of New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) policy development and service provision. The SRC works closely with the NMDVR to remain informed on those issues most pertinent to the provision of services to the disability community in New Mexico and to express concerns or support for those issues and initiatives.

"The beautiful thing about learning is nobody can take it away from you."

B. B. King

PURPOSE

- Provide guidance for the development and expansion of VR services, programs, and concepts on a statewide basis to maximize employability, independence, and integration of persons with disabilities into the workforce and the community.
- Provide guidance to state agencies and to local planning and administrative entities that affect or potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities to achieve rehabilitation goals and objectives.
- Advocate for the promotion and expansion of VR services within New Mexico

To accomplish its established purpose, the council has assumed the following duties for the FFY 10 fiscal year:

- Review and advisement of the NMDVR policies regarding the proposed establishment of an Order of Selection (OOS) service delivery model for 2011.
- Pursue creation of a continuous consumer satisfaction method to assess the effectiveness of VR services statewide.
- Participate and provide feedback in the Rehabilitation Services Administration review of NMDVR, NM Commission for the Blind and NM Client Assistance Programs, and review RSA comments on performance of these agencies.
- Promote achievement of a functioning SRC membership that fully complies with State Rehabilitation Council by-laws and federal regulations.

- Assist in the development and review of the NMDVR annual report and state plan to recommend priorities for action and service delivery within the state.
- Coordinate and support efforts for existing state groups and boards including the NM State wide Independent Living Council, Ticket to Work Employment Network group, Client Assistant Program, and Disability Rights programs.
- Review applications and select pool of qualified Hearing Officers for consumers going through the Fair Hearing process, and assure that new officers receive full training in service regulations and policies.
- Conduct training of the SRC membership regarding federal regulations and member responsibilities required for a fully functioning council.

"A failure is not always a mistake, it may simply be the best one can do under the circumstances. The real mistake is to stop trying."

B. F. Skinner

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The New Mexico State Rehabilitation Council is pleased to note that the Council made significant progress in execution of these duties this year. NMDVR comprehensively educated the Council personnel regarding the fiscal challenges faced by the division throughout the year. These challenges, including notable cuts to program funding due to deficits within the state, did have an impact on DVR services and contracts. Because of budget cuts instituted within the state, the NMDVR began looking at the implementation of an Order of Selection process for the next year.

SRC members were involved in these discussions, and were fully apprised of the process the NMDVR used to research and establish Order of Selection policies and protocols. NMDVR projections indicate an introduction of the process by February, 2011. The Council has requested ongoing updates on the status of OOS implementation, the impact an OOS has upon services, and the timeliness of service delivery to individuals with disabilities NMDVR serves.

The SRC committees worked diligently through the year to establish a continuous consumer satisfaction survey model. The SRC's Consumer Satisfaction, Agency Outcomes, and Performance Committee met throughout the year to develop a pool of questions and review potential survey methodologies. The committee did not implement the survey due to NMDVR budget constraints; however, the Council anticipates completing this project in 2011.

SRC members participated in RSA reviews of multiple New Mexico agencies this year including NMDVR, CAP, and Commission for the Blind. This was an excellent opportunity for council members to work with RSA. The Council provided opinions about the operation of these essential services, and addressed their strengths and service gaps that exist for people with disabilities within the state. The committees still await the final report from RSA on these reviews, and intend to review RSA's report and recommendations for service improvement once they are available.

Committee members were also able to meet with the new RSA Commissioner, Ms. Lynnae Rutledge, and hear her vision for rehabilitation services. Commissioner Rutledge shared her support of services for consumers and her desire to see programs avoid implementation of Order of Selection processes if possible. Unfortunately, the economic situation within the state made that impossible.

"The program has helped me to stay in the work place, and my life is by far better for it. I pay tax my income and I make a better living."

Dennis Arnault

The Council expressed support of the Disability Program Navigator Initiative, a NMDVR program that assisted people with disabilities to navigate the service delivery system within the One Stop Service Centers. The Navigator program staff demonstrated positive impacts in service and satisfaction for participants, but again the economic challenges faced by the state necessitated the cessation of funding for this program. The SRC supports acquiring funding to reinstate the Disability Program Navigator Initiative.

The SRC's Advocacy, Partnership and Collaboration committee worked hard this year to ensure that the SRC's membership adhered with all statutory regulation requirements. The council promoted recommendations for membership in the SRC, but struggled with timely action on those recommendations. The council experienced challenges with appointments because of delays in approval of applications for membership. This did influence the council's ability to do business, as many member terms expired this year and without replacement appointments. The council plans to work closely with the new administration within New Mexico to educate them of the importance of the SRC and the regulations guiding the membership of and the actions taken by the council.

During the year, the council established and maintained a mentorship program to pair new members with established SRC members, assisting new members to assimilate into the Council quickly. SRC members also worked to create an orientation-training program for new members to help them understand the role of the SRC and the responsibilities of the membership. SRC members reviewed an online training on this topic. Currently members work to create training tailored to the needs of New Mexico communities and administration.

Significantly, the SRC review and selection of Hearing Officers for the state of New Mexico. The SRC not only assisted in the selection process for new hearing officers, but also assured that these officers completed training about the regulations guiding the Fair Hearing process. This affirmed that the officers utilized in the state of New Mexico will provide the best services possible to individuals participating in a Fair Hearing, and

that all decisions will fully comply with federal rules and regulations.

"Live your life that the fear of death can never enter your heart."

Tecumseh

COMMITTEES

The New Mexico State Rehabilitation Council conducts quarterly meetings to gain information needed to achieve these duties. Each council member participates in committees meetings to support and work on tasks related to the duties of the council as a whole. The NM SRC committees include:

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is composed of the SRC Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and the Chairpersons of the standing committees of the Council. This committee meets at the call of the SRC Chair and assumes policy development and information review for the council as a whole. This year we met to review the list of applicants for the pool of Independent Hearing Officers. We reviewed their qualifications and made recommendations to NMDVR about training of the hearing officers.

The executive committee also reviewed the by-laws and worked with an ad-hoc by-law committee to clarify the issues of proxy. The Council acted to review, revise, and adopt new proxy by-laws.

The executive committee has also worked diligently to maintain the statutory requirements for the membership of the SRC. We have been actively recruiting members who will provide the expertise and participation that meet the statutory requirements for member composition.

The executive committee also participated in the RSA monitoring process. We attended the training on strategic planning and gave feedback to the RSA monitoring team about the partnership of the SRC and NMDVR.

Advocacy, Partnership, and Collaboration Committee

The Advocacy, Partnership, and Collaboration Committee (APC) worked closely with the Executive Committee to recruit new members who meet the statutory requirements, and to provide those new members with the tools necessary to become productive and informed members of the SRC. Our work to draft and complete an orientation manual that provides information about the SRC and our mission, the Rehabilitation Act, and NMDVR, is ongoing.

The Council assigned the APC to investigate transpiration issues that affect consumers of NMDVR and

their efforts to return to or maintain employment. The APC established the goal to look at the gaps and identify the barriers to transportation particularly in rural underserved areas. The committee began collecting data from various studies and looking at the key stakeholders that make decisions about transportation in the state of New Mexico, with the goal to provide recommendations to the key stakeholders. We are in the process of surveying NMDVR staff in the field to determine what the resources and the barriers are for their clients.

"I have noticed even people who claim everything is predestined, and that we can do nothing to change it, look before they cross the road."

Stephen Hawking

Consumer Satisfaction, Agency Outcomes and Performance Committee - State Plan, Report and Outreach Committee

The CSAOP and SRO committees combined their responsibilities into one acting committee last year due to membership gaps within the SRC. The two committees have continued to work together in pursuit of their goals through the current year. The Consumer Satisfaction, Agency Outcomes and Performance (CSAOP) Committee is tasked with the review of NMDVR policies that affect the achievement of employment outcomes for consumers. To the extent possible, the committee is responsible for conducting a review and analysis of the effectiveness of NMDVR services and of consumer satisfaction with the services provided by the NMDVR. To that end, the committee also assumes responsibility for evaluating trends in Fair Hearing requests, to identify common barriers or issues with service delivery within the state, and to make recommendations on addressing these issues.

The State Plan, Report and Outreach (SRO) Committee assists with the preparation of the NMDVR State Plan and amendments. The committee also reviews and assists with the state needs assessment and with the preparation and submission of the SRC Annual Report.

The primary focus of the two committees was preparing the implementation and completion of a new consumer satisfaction survey for the state. The committee members met regularly to create a pool of questions that best assessed the needs of individuals with disabilities within the state, and their satisfaction with the services provided by the NMDVR.

The committee also worked to identify potential contractors to establish the survey system and analyze the results. The actual methodology of the assessment tool is still in transition, as the contractor creates the instrument under committee approval. The committee understands that available funding affects the scope and complexity of the project. The committees could not implement the survey process this past year due to lack of funding. However, the committees have been informed that funding will be available next year, and we estimate that implementation of this project will begin in 2011.

The CSAOP/SRO Committee worked on the development of the annual report for the State Rehabilitation Council. Committee members reviewed reports from other states to make the SRC Annual Report a more

meaningful and useful tool for educating state administrators and legislators regarding the impact NMDVR has upon the lives of people with disabilities in the state.

"Whatever your life's work is, do it well. A man should do his job so well that the living, the dead, and the unborn could do it no better."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

CHALLENGES

The SRC operated with membership gaps and struggled to meet requirements for a quorum during the fiscal year. Despite this, active members found ways to combine resources to be an effective partner with NMDVR. The SRC scaled down the scope of services it anticipated performing resultant from membership performance and resources. The NMDVR worked to complete its mission with field staff shortages, resultant from the state hiring freeze, approaching twenty percent.

Compounding the staff shortage, the Agency struggled with a funding shortage associated with State appropriations. In accordance with the Rehabilitation Act, state funds receive an 20% to 80% federal match, and the NMDVR received state appropriations insufficient to receive the full federal match. Were it not for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, and drastic cuts to valuable resources, the NMDVR would have entered an Order Of Selection much earlier in the year, and many individuals with disabilities would have missed the opportunity for employment.

New Mexico faces a deficit of approximately \$400 million, and job growth remains relatively stagnant. The incumbent governor faces the challenge of reducing the deficit and spurring positive job growth and investment in New Mexico. Looking forward, the NMDVR may face difficulty in receiving state appropriations sufficient to receive the full federal match in 2011.

Working under an Order of Selection, the Agency can anticipate serving an increasingly more disabled population which may require greater resources, and potentially create more difficulty in obtaining job placement. NMDVR's employment figures may drop while expending more per individual.

With field staff shortages approaching 20%, an increased work load, salaries frozen for 3 years, and no new hiring on the horizon, the Agency must work to maintain morale, and keep current employees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The SRC recommends the Council and NMDVR should encourage the executive

decision-makers and the legislature to realize the advantage of fully funding the NMDVR, for the positive impact of full federal funding spent on goods and services with New Mexico vendors. The millions spent in New Mexico have a positive impact on the economy and the state treasury of \$5.63 for every \$1 of state investment, when NMDVR participants go to work.

- The SRC recommends for the Agency to continue mentoring agency workers to improve their skills, abilities, and value, with the Leadership Institute for Tomorrow LIFT Program.
- The SRC recommends that the NMDVR continue aggressively to seek comparable services and benefits to offset funding for an Individual Plans of Employment.
- The SRC recommends that the NMDVR Leadership must continue to consider cost-containing moves such as co-locating or closing smaller field offices, while still serving individuals in their home communities.
- The SRC recommends that Counselors should continue to work with individuals with disabilities to match employment goals with current employment trends to maximize a person's employability.

"Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly."

Robert Kennedy

IMPACT OF NMDVR SERVICES

- The Agency continued to serve more individuals with disabilities than in FFY 09.
- During FFY 10, 1,541 individuals closed their cases with a positive employment outcome.
- The minimum wage in New Mexico is \$7.50, 25 cents higher than the national wage (\$9.92 in Santa Fe, highest in the nation), and 96.9% of individuals had significant disabilities, and earned jobs paying equal to or better than minimum wage.
- Even in a stagnant economy, those with significant disabilities who met or exceeded minimum wage increased by 2.2 percent over FFY 09.
- The average individual wage of an individual with a job income above minimum wage was \$12.18
- 284% more individuals relied on their own income as largest single source of income at closure.

SUCCESS STORIES



Squatting beside a gift to the Las Vegas NMDVR office, stonemason Marcos Carillo's smiles shows how much he enjoys his business, Landscaping New Mexico. Marcos has a true talent for construction, learning quickly by observation. He has a

talent for design, an important part of his business, which brings him repeat business. NMDVR helped him with tools. "They stood by me, and inspired me with their attitude," he says. Starting without a truck made work more difficult, but nothing was to stop his desire to succeed. People know the quality of his work, such that they recognize his completed work. Marcos can be reached at 505-660-7618.



Mary Trujillo has a smile to greet all who drop by. Mary's disability required her to recline and use oxygen and this provided challenges to her and her counselor. A special reclining wheelchair was the beginning. Her picture and that

smile tell about her personality and determination to work. NMDVR continues to work on her office space, to refine the ergonomic design. Some of her office equipment is not easily reached. Mary works as a secretary. It seems that her positive attitude rubs off on everyone who visits. She is quite adept at using her powered wheelchair and very pleased that she will not let her disability become a barrier to finding a work solution



Megan Sims became an entrepreneur in Los Lunas working with NMDVR. In 2009, she found a change in career was needed. She had an idea of working as a dog groomer but with a twist. Megan drives her fully equipped trailer to her customers,

a unique feature that has brought convenience to everyone, and to her repeat business. "Moral support and help to see my dream become a reality was so important." Since beginning *Crittters Spa on Wheels*, her work has increased. Mega is recognized in her new large truck, and people in Los Lunas wave "Hello". Like any good businessperson, Megan is on the prowl for new business. She can be reached at www.meganscritterspa.com.



Dustin Archuleta, a young student in college, came to NMDVR as a School-To-Work referral from high school. Dustin, like many successful people, recognized his strengths and limitations and found methods to work with his strengths. "I

would say that the most important part of working with NMDVR is the connections with your counselor. My counselor has been very understanding and supportive. This positive relationship has given me increased confidence." Dustin lacks two semesters in Media Arts, and has already identified the type of work he wants. He appears ready to begin, and a fortunate company will secure an educated and willing employee.

STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL MEMBERS FFY 2010

Bernadine Chavez, Vice Chairperson
Client Assistance Program
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87110

Mark Cornett
Business, Industry and Labor
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87109

Ron Garcia, Chairman
Community Rehabilitation Program
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87507-6201

Ava Gutierrez
Rehabilitation Counselor
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Yvonne Hart
Business, Industry and Labor
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87507

Richard D. Jiron
NMDVR, Ex-Officio
Albuquerque, NM 87120

Andrew MacRae
Parent Training and Information Center
Chaparral, NM 88081-7939

Alex Martinez
Business, Industry and Labor
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Krista Martinez
NMDVR, Ex-Officio
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Sarah Michaud
Jemez Vocational Rehabilitation
Jemez, New Mexico 87024

Ken Ortiz
Department of Workforce Solutions
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

Rosemarie Ortiz
Disability Advocacy Group Representative
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Marcia Prophet
Disability Advocacy Group Representative
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505

Treva Roanhorse
Navajo Vocational Rehabilitation
Window Rock, AZ 86515

Gilberto Romero
Business, Industry and Labor
Santa Cruz, New Mexico 87567

Ralph Vigil, Acting Director
NMDVR, Ex-Officio
Santa Fe, NM 87507

Louise Williams
State Educational Agency
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501



New Mexico Division
of Vocational Rehabilitation
**State
Rehabilitation
Council**

For more information regarding the New Mexico
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
State Rehabilitation Council 2010 Annual report
please call,
1-800-224-7005