

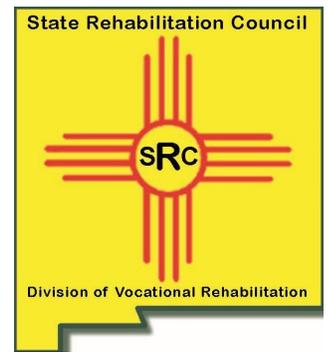


# Annual Report 2022

*New Mexico  
State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)*

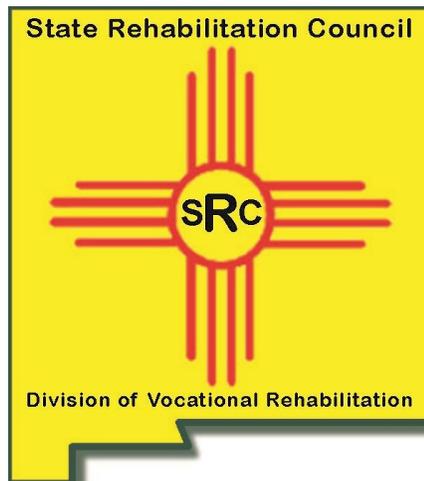
*in partnership with NM  
Division of Vocational  
Rehabilitation (NMDVR)*





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## **What is the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)?**

**The New Mexico State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) was established under Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and authorized in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014. WIOA linked the state Workforce Development Board into the collaborative effort.**

**As a partner with the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR), the SRC is involved in developing policies and goals, planning activities, evaluating the program effectiveness and other related functions. The primary goal is to ensure that people with disabilities are provided with an equal opportunity to receive the programs, services and supports needed for integrated competitive employment.**

**The SRC acts as the external, community-oriented voice in the consideration and development of services, working closely with the NMDVR. The goal is to remain informed on those issues most pertinent to the provision of services to the disability community within New Mexico and to express concerns, ideas or support regarding those issues and initiatives. The required SRC membership brings the consumer voice from varied perspectives as a result of their work and interactions with individuals with disabilities.**



## Letter from the SRC Chair



The Honorable Michelle Lujan-Grisham and Secretary Kurt Steinhaus

It is my great pleasure submit to you the 2022 Annual Report for the New Mexico DVR State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). The SRC is charged with partnering with the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) to ensure that the highest quality of services and supports are provided to individuals seeking assistance. Each year, the SRC works to represent the voice of the agency's consumers and provides input to NMDVR to help maintain and/or improve their services to best serve our communities. To achieve this outcome, the SRC partners with the agency in a variety of ways including providing assistance with the establishment of a slate of Fair Hearing Officers to address concerns about NMDVR services, facilitating routine statewide Consumer Satisfaction Surveys, and providing ongoing input and approval for proposed changes to the NMDVR Manual of Operating Procedures.

We recognize the importance of building bridges with employers, educational agencies, and other disability service providers to meet the needs of people with disabilities within our state. This year's annual report offers excellent examples of the work the SRC has done in partnership with NMDVR to promote the provision of services for people with disabilities statewide. The SRC is particularly pleased with the progress the agency has made clearing the Order of Selection waitlist; moving more New Mexicans with disabilities into employment and education service plans.

The Council is pleased to continue to support the agency in the important work that they do. We look forward to continuing our partnership and building on these successes as we move forward into FY 2023.

Sincerely,

*Sarah Michaud*

Sarah Michaud  
SRC Chair



## Letter from the NMDVR Director



Dear Honorable Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, Secretary Kurt Steinhaus, Participants and Partners,

I am honored to work with the New Mexico State Rehabilitation Council. The partnership between NMDVR and the SRC is stronger than ever. SRC members have provided valuable input into public hearings, policies and practices in the last year and their guidance has been invaluable.

NMDVR has significantly reduced vacancy rates in the Rehabilitation Services Unit to approximately 15%. We have updated the New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC) 6.63.11 on Counselor Licensure to follow federal regulation and are now able to accept Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors with a bachelor's degree in a wider array of fields. The SRC is supportive of this rule change and the emphasis that NMDVR will place on training for incoming staff based on the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD). The reduction in vacancy rates also allowed NMDVR to actively engage in removing individuals from the Order of Selection Waitlist. SRC celebrated this success with staff and provided encouragement to continue to work toward elimination of a waitlist through FY23.

The COVID-19 Pandemic took a toll on all services, and we continue to learn new ways of doing business, including online services. COVID was a unique opportunity that allowed us to implement services in an online format, introduce digital signatures, and expand our reach to those who may have had barriers to accessing an office. The SRC's work did not stop during COVID; they continued forward with their 2021 Consumer Satisfaction survey and provided NMDVR with valuable recommendations on how to improve services in multiple modalities to New Mexicans with disabilities.

NMDVR is appreciative of the support, encouragement and guidance from the SRC for all our achievements in the last year. NMDVR looks forward to continued collaboration with the SRC and success in providing quality and customer-oriented vocational rehabilitation services that result in successful employment outcomes.

Casey Stone-Romero  
Director NMDVR



## *SRC Accomplishments*

- SRC began receiving regular updates on fair hearing requests this year with presentations from the NMDVR legal team.
- SRC members participated in a “meet and greet” with the new NMDVR Director, Casey Stone-Romero, in January.
- SRC was asked to present to NMDVR staff at an All Staff meeting in September to educate on who the council is and what we are responsible for. Presentation was very well received and great discussions occurred.
- SRC reviewed and provides feedback on several NMDVR Program Policy Information updates at the request of the NMDVR Director.
- NMDVR sent two SRC members to NCSRC and CSAVR this year.
- SRC began to review current committee structure and discuss possible changes to improve input for services.
- SRC received updates on NMDVR’s wait list of services under Order of Selection and related reductions in order to ensure VR services for New Mexicans with disabilities remain available on an ongoing basis.
- SRC received updates on service changes as COVID-19 pandemic intensity reduced for the general population.
- SRC received updates from NMDVR regarding the Combined State Plan for New Mexico as requested..
- SRC ensured inclusion in all planning and scheduling of public hearings for policy changes, updates on the monitoring process, and finalization of the Manual of Operating Procedures (MOP).
- SRC continued to request and receive updates regarding expansion of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) services into communities across the state.
- SRC provided group and individual trainings for the SRC membership to increase understanding of their roles and responsibilities as well as our federal mandates.
- SRC continued to request and receive updates regarding Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Monitoring and Technical Assistance recommendations and the NMDVR responses.

### *SRC Mission*

The New Mexico State Rehabilitation Council is responsible for assisting with the operation of the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation program through advisement, evaluation and partnership to support access to employment and promotion of a diverse workforce statewide.

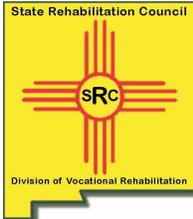


## ***SRC Functions per the Rehabilitation Act and WIOA:***



Working in partnership with NMDVR and in consultation of the state Workforce Development Board, the SRC must:

- (1)** Review, analyze, and advise the designated State unit regarding the performance of the State unit's responsibilities under this part, particularly responsibilities related to -
  - (i)** Eligibility, including Order of Selection;
  - (ii)** The extent, scope, and effectiveness of services provided; and
  - (iii)** Functions performed by State agencies that affect or potentially affect the ability of individuals with disabilities in achieving employment outcomes under this part;
- (2)** In partnership with the designated State unit -
  - (i)** Develop, agree to, and review State goals and priorities in accordance with § 361.29(c); and
  - (ii)** Evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program and submit reports of progress to the Secretary in accordance with § 361.29(e);
- (3)** Advise the designated State agency and the designated State unit regarding activities carried out under this part and assist in the preparation of the vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan and amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations required by this part;
- (4)** To the extent feasible, conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with -
  - (i)** The functions performed by the designated State agency;
  - (ii)** The vocational rehabilitation services provided by State agencies and other public and private entities responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under the Act; and
  - (iii)** The employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services under this part, including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with those employment outcomes;



## *SRC Functions continued.....*

- (5)** Prepare and submit to the Governor and to the Secretary no later than 90 days after the end of the Federal fiscal year an annual report on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs operated within the State and make the report available to the public through appropriate modes of communication;
- (6)** To avoid duplication of efforts and enhance the number of individuals served, coordinate activities with the activities of other councils within the State, including the Statewide Independent Living Council established under chapter 1, title VII of the Act, the advisory panel established under section 612(a)(21) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council described in section 124 of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, the State mental health planning council established under section 1914(a) of the Public Health Service Act, and the State workforce development board, and with the activities of entities carrying out programs under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998;
- (7)** Provide for coordination and the establishment of working relationships between the designated State agency and the Statewide Independent Living Council and centers for independent living within the State; and
- (8)** Perform other comparable functions, consistent with the purpose of this part, as the Council determines to be appropriate, that are comparable to the other functions performed by the Council.

**Partners working  
together**



# SUCCESSFUL JOBS!

## Kaity Ellis



For much of her 28 years, **Kaity Ellis** has had to fight for her rights as a person with a disability. Now, in addition to advocating for herself, she supports other state residents in similar situations. A full-time advocate with Disability Rights New Mexico, Kaity makes sure people with disabilities

can earn an education, have voting rights, receive needed therapies and medical devices, and have equal access to services available to all New Mexicans. And she plans to continue the fight all the way to Capitol Hill in Washington, DC.

“Just because I have a disability, no one is going to dictate what I can and can’t do,” Ellis asserts. “It may take me 20 minutes to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, but I will do it!”

When the long-time Deming resident—who now lives in Albuquerque—was graduating high school, she was discouraged from attending college. Kaity defied the naysayers and not only earned a bachelor’s degree, but also a Master’s in Social Work from Western New Mexico University. “Ever since they told me I couldn’t dress myself as a five-year-old, if you tell me I can’t do it, I will,” says Ellis, who is both legally blind and has cerebral palsy.

“NMDVR helped her get that chance to try, she says. “I applaud (Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor) Ms. Linda Fisher, who said, ‘Let’s see what we can do. We want you to be successful,’” Ellis recalls. Fisher told her what transition services were available, explained Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and asked what kinds of technology she thought she would need to succeed. “I learned what my rights were.”

NMDVR was able to help coordinate the proper doctors and testing. The agency also facilitated her access to assistive technology to help her get through college and begin her career. “What I really appreciate (about working with NMDVR) is that I was an individual,” Kaity said. “When you finish high school with a disability, you need the employment skills that come naturally to other high school students,” She added, **“It’s up to us, as program participants, to say, ‘This is what I want to do.’ The services will support that goal.”** “I want people to see that just because you have a disability doesn’t mean you can’t be a prominent member of society.

## Restoration Pizza

Restoration Pizza, a concept that opened in Albuquerque in 2019, has proven so successful that a second location in Santa Fe’s Railyard District is opening this fall. The restaurant’s motto is “Pizza that gives everyone a seat at the table.” “We look at your abilities rather than disabilities, and do all that we can with your abilities,” Operations Manager Nathan Winham says.

About 35 percent of the staff has a disability. “I feel like we accurately represent the public on every shift,” Winham says. “It’s not something we force. It’s just kind of how it all worked out.”



**Staff members with disabilities have meaningful, gainful employment and earn competitive wages.**

“They’re working and supporting themselves. That is a plus for the community as well,” says Winham. But it’s not just a feel-good effort. “We are a for-profit business, don’t get me wrong. If we didn’t feel as though this was a successful business, we wouldn’t be looking to expand.”

These success stories include individuals now successfully employed and employers who successfully hire individuals with disabilities. View [more stories](#) on the website!

# SUCCESSFUL JOBS!

## Jesus Carbajal

“I’m in a better position than even one year ago,” says Jesus Carbajal. He is part of a job program with the U.S. Air Force in Utah, where he is interning to perfect his engineering skills, with an opportunity to join a master’s program in Mechanical Engineering.

Carbajal has been diagnosed with high-functioning autism. He says that other than some social awkwardness and discomfort with making eye contact, people wouldn’t realize he has a disability.

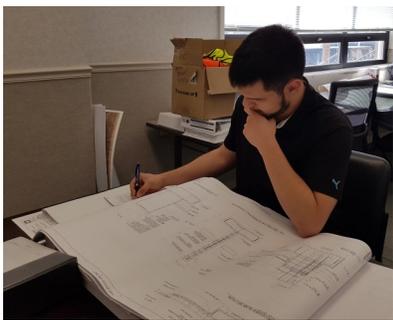
NMDVR helped the Raton, NM native with planning, financial assistance, and just letting him know what options were out there for him. “There was a bit of a struggle, and they showed as much support as they could,” he says. He finally found his place at New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology in Socorro.

“This was the place that allowed me to be a professional nerd,” Carbajal says of his time at NM Tech. “It was not easy, but it was a great program. I was always confident I would finish my degree.”

Then the shut-down of Covid epidemic made it more difficult to find career opportunities, “But I pressed on because doing nothing was going to amount to nothing.”

His persistence made the difference, along with the willingness to venture into the unknown by taking an out-of-state job with the military. “At first I was scared about it,” Carbajal recalls. “It’s a big change, but things won’t happen unless you put in the effort to change. I don’t have any regrets about my decision. The program on the base has been very useful and I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

“He has grown tremendously,” says Carbajal’s



former rehabilitation counselor, Casilda Gallegos, a program manager with NMDVR. “I’m so proud of his ability to not only finish his degree, but to get a job and begin a career, living on his own.”

Carbajal’s advice for others with similar challenges? **“Never give up. The perseverance will pay off,”** he says. “People don’t tell you about all the struggles and uncertainty. Despite that, the worst thing someone can do is just give up on their aspirations if they don’t see their results immediately. If you keep walking forward, your efforts will speak for themselves. Because it’s not about if something is easy, it’s about if it’s worth it.”

The 27-year-old’s future may involve a career in HVAC system engineering, a master’s degree, or even a PhD. “Whatever it is I want to do in the future, I hope never to be bored of it,” Carbajal adds.

## **NMDVR - Wait List Action!!**

For several years NMDVR has been on Order of Selection (OOS), in which services are provided in order of categorizations. The categories are defined by the federal government as “Most Significant Disability”, “Significant Disability”, and “Not Significantly Disabled.” Only those in the most significant category are served under OOS. This resulted in 1,300 individuals being placed on a Wait List for services as of November 2021.

NMDVR has worked tirelessly to reduce the wait list this year and were successful! The full Wait List, plus an additional 300 individuals, were cleared from the list as of the end of October 2022. **There is no longer a wait list for services! “Our doors are open...to assist any person in NM with a disability who is seeking employment,”** says Director Stone-Romero.

Apply at <https://referral.dvr.nm.gov>

# NMDVR AT-A-GLANCE

## Statistical Year At-A-Glance

<b>FY2022</b>	<b><i>FY2021</i></b>	
<b>7,870</b>	<b><i>7350</i></b>	<b>New Mexicans sought and received direct vocational rehabilitation services</b>
<b>7,100</b>	<b><i>6685</i></b>	<b>New Mexicans received vocational rehabilitation services including medical treatment, guidance &amp; counseling training and job seeking skills training</b>
<b>437</b>	<b><i>271</i></b>	<b>Successfully Rehabilitated</b>
<b>741</b>	<b><i>522</i></b>	<b>Job ready or employed but not yet closed</b>
<b>1,521</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>Student received Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), including job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling and enrollment opportunities, work readiness training, and instruction on self-advocacy</b>
<b>\$24,594.23</b>	<b><i>\$22,926.97</i></b>	<b>Average yearly employee wage</b>
<b>98%</b>	<b><i>94%</i></b>	<b>Percent wage increase after rehabilitation</b>
<b>56%</b>	<b><i>51%</i></b>	<b>Most Significantly Disabled</b>
<b>42%</b>	<b><i>46%</i></b>	<b>Significantly Disabled</b>
<b>\$10,895,244</b>	<b><i>\$6,213,209</i></b>	<b>Total wages for successfully rehabilitated individuals (i.e. those individuals who successfully gained employment and maintained for at least 90 days)</b>

<b>REHABILITATED CLOSURES BY OCCUPATION</b>		
<b>CATEGORY OCCUPATION DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>FY22 closures</b>	<i>FY21 closures</i>
Office and Administrative Support	79	33
Food Preparation Serving, and Related	48	22
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	42	32
Personal Care and Service	42	26
Transportation and Material Moving	33	17
Sales and Related	33	19
Education, Training, and Library	23	17
Community and Social Service	20	8
Healthcare Support	17	19
Production	17	10
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	14	9
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	13	17
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports and Media	11	8
Management	10	12
Protective Service	10	3
Computer and Mathematical	9	3
Construction and Extraction	8	2
Business and Financial Operations	6	6
Architecture and Engineering	6	4
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	3	1
Life, Physical, and Social Science	1	0
Legal	0	3
<b>TOTAL REHABILITATED CLOSURES</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>271</b>

<b>FY 2021 Eligible Participants by Major Disabling Conditions</b>		
<b>Categories of Disabilities</b>	<b>FY22</b>	<b>FY21</b>
Cognitive Impairment	2103	1863
Psychosocial Impairment	1443	1333
Other Impairment - Mental	939	870
Other Impairment - Physical	612	607
Hearing Loss - Primary Communication Auditory	334	307
Mobility Orthopedic/Neurological Impairment	247	334
Cognitive Impairments (learning, thinking, etc.)	176	221
General Physical Debilitation	160	154
Other Impairment - Orthopedic	157	138
Deafness—Primary Communication Visual	144	135
Communicative Impairment (expressive/receptive)	123	96
Combination of Orthopedic/Neurological Impairment	84	103
Mobility Impairment	82	28
Psychosocial Impairment (interpersonal/behavioral,etc.)	77	98
Deafness—Primary Communication Auditory	68	66
Mobility and Manipulation/Dexterity Impairment	56	19
Manipulation Orthopedic/Neurological Impairment	38	51
Hearing Loss—Primary Communication Visual	34	34
Respiratory Impairment	32	28
Dexterity Orthopedic/Neurological Impairment	30	39
Mobility & Manipulation/Dexterity Orthoped/Neurological	26	34
Other Impairment - Visual	24	26
Blindness	22	26
Other Impairment - Hearing	20	18
General Physical Debilitation (fatigue, pain, etc.)	17	19
Manipulation/Dexterity Orthoped/Neuro Impairment	13	14
Deaf - Blindness	13	7
Other orthopedic impairment (limited range of motion)	12	13
Manipulation/Dexterity Impairment	12	3
Other Hearing Impairments (Tinnitus, Meniere's etc.)	1	1
Other Impairment	1	0
<b>Total Eligible</b>	<b>7100</b>	<b>6685</b>

## Income Reliance Before and After Return to Work

At Application	At Closure	Primary Source of Support
192	91	Public Support (SSI, SSDI, TANF, AFDC)
140	11	Family and Friends
76	324	Personal Income (savings, rental income, etc.)
21	11	All Other Sources
4		All Other Public Sources
4		Employment Earnings/Client Income
437	437	TOTAL



# SRC Recommendations for 2023

Using the prior Consumer Satisfaction Report results and considering input from participants and council members, these following recommendations were developed for NMDVR during the regular September SRC meeting. Responses from NMDVR are included here:

- The SRC recommends that NMDVR staff and leadership focus attention on enhancing communication with participants to ensure that they understand where they are in the eligibility determination process as well as their status when receiving services under the IPE. Consistency and clarity of communication were clearly highlighted as areas for improvement under the Consumer Satisfaction survey done in 2021, and the SRC would recommend that NMDVR continue to update their communication plan to address this participant concern and to track their progress in addressing the existing gaps.
- *NMDVR Response: NMDVR continues to prioritize training of staff to ensure enhanced and effective communication techniques through all steps of the vocational rehabilitation process. In the coming year the agency will continue to emphasize individualized communication that best meets the consumer's needs. Rehabilitation Services Unit (RSU) has a Program Policy Instruction (PPI) on Case and Caseload Management where field staff are instructed to maintain contact with each individual on a caseload at least monthly. This is reinforced through the case review process where program managers audit random cases on each caseload each month to ensure proper follow-up is occurring throughout the entire VR process. Finally, RSU has partnered with technical assistance centers including Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Management (VRTAC-QM) and Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment Outcomes (VRTAC-QE) to provide training to management and field staff on how to succeed in transitioning from the "employment outcome" focus of the Workforce Investment Act to the "career pathway" paradigm required under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.*
- The SRC recommends that training on assistive technology needs and uses be emphasized with agency job coaches and employers. The council further recommends that additional emphasis be given to educating participants on AT costs, resources, and accessibility so that they can more easily transition when, for example, school-provided tools are no longer available, or a reasonable accommodation needs to be requested
- *NMDVR Response: NMDVR will educate consumers, job coaches/developers, and employers on AT costs, resources, accessibility and reasonable accommodations. NMDVR will continue to foster the agency's relationship with the NM Technology Assistance Program (NMTAP) and utilize its services as a valuable resource. RSU has identified staff in each of the nine areas across the state to specialize their knowledge and professional development in assistive technology. These staff members are designated "AT liaisons," which means they are the point of contact in their area for all things AT. They are charged with sharing AT information and resources with their fellow field staff, and at a basic level, provide guidance to VRCs and participants when making AT purchase decisions. These AT liaisons typically attend the annual NMTAP conference to stay in-the-know on latest AT trends and resources.* 15

# SRC Recommendations for 2023



- The SRC recommends that all NMDVR services maintain a disability focus, and all hires at NMDVR should participate in comprehensive training on topics including disability awareness and sensitivity, vocational rehabilitation services, assistive technology and the needs of specific disability populations. The SRC had previously noted that with the change in federal and state hiring requirements regarding minimum qualifications for VR Counselors, new agency hires can lack a foundation in vocational rehabilitation and the framework of rehabilitation service delivery. The SRC acknowledges that NMDVR did make progress in addressing this issue in 2021 with the VR Boot Camp facilitated in partnership with Western New Mexico University. However, based on participant responses to the 2021 Consumer Satisfaction survey, continued focus on this area is required to ensure well trained vocational rehabilitation staff who work closely with participant to identify appropriate vocational placements taking individualized needs into consideration.
- NMDVR Response: NMDVR has created and anticipates hiring a Staff Development Coordinator in 2023. This position will coordinate the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) for NMDVR, ensuring that personnel have a 21st-century understanding of the evolving labor force and the needs of individuals with disabilities. NMDVR personnel will then have the specialized training and experience enabling them to assist individuals with disabilities in achieving competitive integrated employment and to work effectively with employers who hire such individuals. NMDVR has invested in the subscription to YESLMS. This learning management system is developed from the VR Development Group. These trainings are created by professionals in the vocational rehabilitation industry to include PhDs and experts in vocational rehabilitation with content created from various universities and Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) staff. The learning management platform provides a library of trainings including a five-part series on medical aspects of disability, encompassing mental health, body systems, and disorders. This resource provides an immediacy to training, learning, and understanding concepts in vocational rehabilitation for new and existing VR Counselors.
- The SRC recommends that NMDVR begin a discussion on trauma-informed care for VR field staff due to the impact of COVID-19 and other traumatic effects that individuals may have experienced. It is the council's belief that this would help the agency staff better assist participants, better address employment related issues now occurring due to COVID-19, and to better support their own service team by creating additional natural supports.
- NMDVR Response: NMDVR will explore options for staff training on Trauma-Informed Care to better address employment-related issues now occurring due to COVID-19 and other traumatic effects individuals may have experienced. NMDVR has, during the past several years, provided staff access to training resources through the pandemic. The vocational rehabilitation industry has created and provided numerous valuable trainings to support VR professionals. These resources have focused curriculum on many aspects around the COVID-19 pandemic, including professional self-care for VR professionals. NMDVR utilizes many of these trainings through VRTAC-QE, National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Counseling, VRTAC-QM, as well as the YESLMS platform and others.

# SRC Recommendations for 2023

## Trauma-Informed Care (TIC)

The recent years of the pandemic have resurfaced the idea of TIC in which there is an understanding and consideration of the pervasive nature of trauma, thereby promoting environments of healing and recovery rather than practices and services that may inadvertently re-traumatize.



This approach in the human service field assumes that an individual is more likely than not to have a history of trauma. Trauma-Informed Care recognizes the presence of trauma symptoms, and acknowledges the role trauma may play in an individual's life (including service staff). The idea is to begin to change the organizational culture with a services approach that is accessible and appropriate to those who have experienced trauma, rather than directly treating symptoms.

- The SRC continues to recommend that DVR maintain adequate budget and staffing needed in order to allow the agency to move out from Order of Selection. The status of Order of Selection for the agency has essentially created a situation where community perception is that no new participants are receiving services due to systemic issues of lack of funding and Order of Selection restrictions. The SRC recommends that DVR take steps to better advertise the work done to reduce the wait list and move participants into services in order to address this perception.
- *NMDVR Response: NMDVR has successfully eliminated the waitlist for services in 2022. NMDVR will continue to remain on Order of Selection—with all categories open—to ensure a strong foundation is built related to budget and staffing.*
- The SRC recommends that NMDVR give attention to retention of staff to increase the number of counselors and techs achieving a 3-year benchmark for employment. This would enhance consistency and communication as well as confidence in services.
- *NMDVR Response: NMDVR will strongly consider and explore options for retention pay for all staff to enhance consistency and communication as well as confidence in services. NMDVR will also explore a mentorship program where senior staff are paired up with new staff to provide guidance and relationship as new staff onboard. This will cultivate a sense of “belonging” and encourage staff to stay at NMDVR as they are building long-lasting relationships.*

# SRC Recommendations for 2023



*NMDVR will continue to support RSU staff to attend the NMTAP conference each year.*

- The SRC recommends that NMDVR continue to increase the number and quality of employment outcomes by providing vocational rehabilitation training and counseling that is designed to enhance and improve job-seeking skills of NMDVR participants. The SRC further recommends that the agency continue to track and report this data to reflect the true impact of agency services.
- *NMDVR Response: NMDVR has entered into technical assistance agreements with VRTAC-QM and VRTAC-QE to develop long-term training platforms. This will support an increase and better-quality in employment outcomes by training RSU staff and management how accurate and complete data correlates to quality employment outcomes for NMDVR participants. NMDVR will focus on data reporting and validation in 2023 with an emphasis on streamlining and improving processes*
- The SRC recommends that NMDVR continue to improve the number and quality of employment outcomes for participants that are “job ready” by following the “informed choice” provisions of the Rehabilitation Act, thereby maximizing the opportunity for successful placements in the participant’s chosen career field.
- *NMDVR Response: NMDVR agrees with this recommendation and will improve the number of quality employment outcomes for consumers that are job ready by following the informed choice provision of the Rehabilitation Act.*
- The SRC recommends that NMDVR continue to explore expanding PreETS services utilizing Project Hope (Jemez VR/NMDVR partnership) as a model.
- *NMDVR Response: NMDVR will again partner with Jemez VR to implement PreETS services through Project Hope. This model will be explored for other areas of the state. Discussions with the Jemez VR have already begun in efforts to rebuild engagement by all vested parties after the pandemic. Other districts within the Jemez*

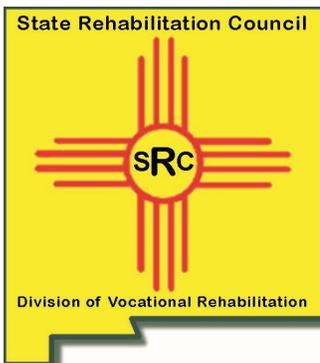
## **SRC Members Needed!**

You can make a difference in employment for individuals with disabilities as a SRC Council Member. There are 3 vacant positions for “**representatives of business, industry or labor.**”



Appointments are by the Governor. To inquire or apply contact:

- Sarah Michaud, (SRC Chair)  
[smichaud@newvistas.org](mailto:smichaud@newvistas.org)
- Tracy Agiovlasis (SRC Vice Chair)  
[tracy.agiovlasis@gcd.nm.gov](mailto:tracy.agiovlasis@gcd.nm.gov)
- Melissa Salazar (NM Boards and Commissions) (please use this website link to apply)  
[Boards and Commissions | Office of the Governor - Michelle Lujan Grisham \(state.nm.us\)](https://www.state.nm.us/gov/boards-commissions/)



# SRC Membership

*Members who served the majority of 2022*

## **Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)**

*Sarah Michaud, (New Vistas) SRC Chair, Santa Fe*

## **Parent Training and Information Center**

*Delores Harden, (Parents Reaching Out) Albuquerque*

## **Client Assistance Program (CAP)**

*Bernadine Chavez, (Disability Rights New Mexico) Albuquerque*

## **Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (ex-officio, non-voting member)**

*Lisa Jones, (NMDVR) Alamogordo*

## **Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider**

*Jennifer Gelhardt, (Best Buddies International) Albuquerque*

## **Business, Industry and Labor**

*Chris Boston, (Tresco) Las Cruces (now vacant position)*

*Tara Spracklen, (Amazon) Albuquerque*

*Meta Hirschl, (DiverseIT/Adelante) Albuquerque (now vacant position)*

*Vacant Position*

## **Disability Advocacy Groups**

*Tracy Agiovlasitis, (Governor's Commission on Disability) SRC Vice-Chair, Albuquerque*

## **Representatives of Individuals with Disabilities**

*TJ Chester, (Independent Living Resource Center) Socorro*

## **Current or Former NMDVR Participants and Disabled Veteran**

*Joseph Cruz, Las Vegas*

## **Section 121 or American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services**

*Paula Seanez, (Navajo Nation Department of Dine Education Administration/ Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services) SRC Sergeant at Arms, Four Corners Area*

*Marlencia Chee, (Jemez Vocational Rehabilitation Program) Jemez Pueblo*

## **State Workforce Development Board**

*Yolanda Montoya-Cordova, (Department of Workforce Solutions) Albuquerque*

## **State Educational Agency Representative**

*Sbicca Brodeur, (NM Public Education Department, Special Education Parent Liaison and Autism Support) Santa Fe*

## **Director of NMDVR (ex-officio, non-voting member)**

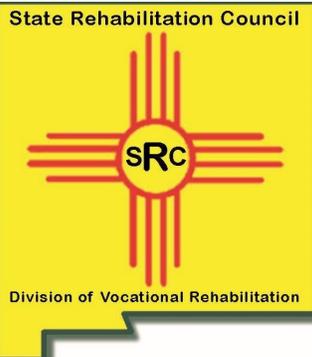
*Casey Stone-Romero, Director of NMDVR*

## **Employees of NMDVR (ex-officio, non-voting members)**

*Nash Sisneros, RSU Administrator*

*Charles Alan Hamlin, DDS Administrator*

*Alicia DeVargas, SRC Liaison*



# NMDVR OFFICE LOCATIONS

*(Offices are Statewide —\*\*Albuquerque Offices on next page)*

## **Alamogordo**

2300 Indian Wells Rd  
Alamogordo, NM 88310  
Fax: 575-250-1716  
Phone: 575-437-6550  
Toll-free: 888-901-7868

## **Española**

710 B La Joya St  
Española, NM 87532  
Fax: 505-207-5268  
Phone: 505-753-2908  
Toll-free: 888-901-3647

## **Las Cruces**

3381 Del Rey Blvd.  
Las Cruces, NM 88012  
Fax: 575-205-1715  
Phone: 575-524-6135  
Toll-free: 888-901-7866

## **Carlsbad**

3605 National Parks Hwy  
Carlsbad, NM 88220-1448  
Fax: 575-205-7718  
Phone: 575-885-8821  
Toll-free: 800-645-0258

## **Farmington**

3401 E. 30th St. Suite B  
Farmington, NM 87402  
Fax: 505-207-5272  
Phone: 505-327-5123  
Toll-free: 888-901-7901

## **Las Cruces**

Loretto Towne Center  
505 South Main Street,  
Suite 142  
Las Cruces, NM 88001

## **Clovis**

100 E. Manana Blvd. #17  
Clovis, NM 88101  
Fax: 575-215-2478  
Phone: 575-763-3437  
Toll-free: 800-645-2143

## **Gallup**

312 East Nizhoni Blvd  
Gallup, NM 87301  
Fax: 505-207-5274  
Phone: 505-726-1429  
Toll-free: 800-279-5681

## **Las Vegas**

32 NM 65 Hot Springs Blvd.  
Las Vegas, NM 87701  
Fax: 505-207-5269  
Phone: 505-425-9365  
Toll-free: 888-901-7865

## **Edgewood**

3 George Court, Suite B  
Edgewood, NM 87015  
Fax: 505-207-5279  
Phone: 505-281-9946  
Phone: 505-281-9947

## **Hobbs**

2120 North Alto #109  
Hobbs, NM 88240  
Fax: 575-205-1719  
Phone: 575-393-3330  
Toll-free: 888-201-5859

## **Los Lunas**

445 Camino Del Rey SW,  
Suite D  
Los Lunas, NM 87031  
Fax: 505-207-5281  
Phone: 505-864-1617  
Toll-free: 888-901-7902

## Rio Rancho

3791 Southern Blvd. SE, Suite 210 (Physical Address)  
PO Box 15430 (Mailing Address)  
Rio Rancho, NM 87124  
Fax: 505-207-5271  
Phone: 505-896-4500  
Toll-free: 866-585-5446

## Roswell

1014 S. Atkinson Ave.  
Roswell, NM 88203  
Fax: 575-213-1097  
Phone: 575-624-6024  
Toll-free: 800-644-7732

## Santa Fe

525 Camino De Los Marquez, Ste 200  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
Fax: 505-207-2313  
Phone: 505-827-3526  
Toll-free: 800-773-4072

## Santa Fe – Administration

2935 Rodeo Park Drive East  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
Fax: 505-207-2307  
Phone: 505-954-8500  
Toll-free: 800-224-7005

## Silver City

3088 32nd St. Bypass Ste A  
Silver City, NM 88061  
Fax: 575-205-1717  
Phone: 575-538-5351  
Toll-free: 888-901-7861

## Socorro

1014 N. California  
Socorro, NM 87801  
Fax: 575-205-1720  
Phone: 575-835-4243  
Toll-free: 888-901-7903

## Taos

145 Roy Road, Suite C  
Taos, NM 87571  
Fax: 575-215-2479  
Phone: 575-758-4348  
Toll-free: 888-901-7869

## Disability Determination Services

7421 Bartlett Dr. NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87107  
Fax: 505-841-5724  
Phone: 505-841-5600  
Toll-free: 800-432-5868



## Albuquerque Gibson Office

Gibson Medical Center  
5400 Gibson SE Box #6  
Albuquerque, NM 87108  
Fax: 505-841-6451  
Phone: 505-841-6450  
Toll-free: 866-526-0863

## Albuquerque Lomas Office

111 Lomas Blvd NW,  
Suite 422  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
Fax: 505-383-2529  
Phone: 505-383-2500  
Toll-free: 888-818-3259

## Albuquerque Oakland Administration Office

5200 Oakland Ave NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87113

## Albuquerque Quail Office

5205 Quail NW  
Albuquerque, NM 87120  
Fax: 505-836-5674  
Phone: 505-836-1774  
Toll-free: 888-818-3263

## Albuquerque South Valley Office

1710 Rio Bravo SW  
Albuquerque, NM 87105  
Fax: 505-877-0961  
Phone: 505-877-7673  
Toll-free: 888-815-2981

