

## PROVIDING SECOND CHANCES

“I reached out to DVR and the people there helped me change my life and give me a good career,” says Walt Deiter. “And it’s working out well.”



After getting out of prison in 2009, Deiter attended a seminar that the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) presented in conjunction with a drug rehabilitation program in which he was participating.

But just a few months later, he found himself back in prison after an arrest on weapons charges. He never forgot about what he heard at that seminar, though, and when he was released in 2022, he contacted the NMDVR office in Las Cruces.

A history of drug addiction, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and post-traumatic stress disorder—from a 1995 prison riot in which he says he was almost killed—qualified the Albuquerque native for agency services as a New Mexican with disabilities.

Deiter received counseling and then took a battery of tests to help determine the kind of job that might be a fit. That led to him earning a certificate in truck driving at Doña Ana Community College and achieving his Commercial Driver’s License.

With his instructor vouching for his reliability and punctuality, at age 64 he was hired by Nutrien Ag Solutions as a truck driver. He delivers chemicals, seeds, and pesticides to farms throughout southern New Mexico.

“It’s a good career path,” says Deiter, who estimates he has spent half his life behind bars.

“There’s a lot of work for truck drivers and it’s not minimum-wage menial labor that can lead to relapse. It gives you some self-esteem and aspirations and to be able to realize your hopes and dreams.”

While those with addiction might seem to require instant gratification, for Deiter it was a long process of meetings and schooling. But with his NMDVR counselor, Linda Fisher, helping along the way, it was all worthwhile. “They are there to help. I highly recommend it for someone who wants to change their life and put themselves on a better path.”

Despite the late start to his career, Deiter plans to continue driving at least into his 70s. “I’m in good health and I enjoy driving. I wish I had made other choices in life, but at some point, you’ve got to face what you can work with,” he says, adding, “This has given me a good opportunity and I’m taking it!”

For information about NMDVR programs, contact your nearest office. There are two dozen locations across the state: [dvr.state.nm.us/locations/](https://dvr.state.nm.us/locations/).

*The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation helps eligible individuals with documented disabilities find suitable employment. Vocational rehabilitation is a voluntary program supporting people who want to work. With a long history of success and proven methodology for making the best fits, NMDVR is committed to helping participants thrive in their communities. For more information, visit [dvr.state.nm.us](https://dvr.state.nm.us) or call 505-954-8500.*

*The Vocational Rehabilitation program receives 78.7% of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For federal fiscal year 2023, the total funds awarded is \$22,066,600. The remaining 21.3% is funded by state appropriations and transfers from the Commission for the Blind and Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.*

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