

San Diego State University
Interwork Institute

State of New Mexico
New Mexico Public Education Department
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
And
The State Rehabilitation Council

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Report

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- Rudy Grano, Field Operations Director

The project team would like to express their appreciation to DVR Director Casey Stone-Romero and to each individual who took the time to share their thoughts by completing a survey, taking part in an interview, and/or participating in the focus group research.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The State of New Mexico, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), the State Rehabilitation Council and the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University jointly conducted an assessment of the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing in the State of New Mexico. A triennial needs assessment is required by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and is intended to help inform the Combined State Plan developed by the core partners in New Mexico's Workforce Development System. The data was gathered analyzed and grouped into the sections listed below. A summary of key findings in each section is contained here. The full results are found in the body of the report.

NOTE: All of the information in this report, especially the data related to agency performance, should be interpreted in the context of the global Covid 19 pandemic. Concern for personal health impacted the return-to-work behavior of many individuals in New Mexico and across the country, especially individuals with disabilities. It is important to consider this when interpreting the findings in the report.

Section One: Overall Performance of DVR

The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods (data, surveys and interviews) related to this topic area:

1. While impacted by the pandemic, DVR is recovering to pre-pandemic levels in many areas. The number of applications and individuals served increased significantly in PY 2022.
2. The staff at DVR were consistently characterized as caring and committed to helping individuals with disabilities in New Mexico to prepare for and obtain employment. Despite experiencing staffing shortages throughout the State, the personnel at the agency were described as trying to do their best.
3. New Mexico passed all of their WIOA performance measures for PY 2022. The agency exceeded their negotiated rates for the employment rate in the second and fourth quarter after exit, median earnings, credential rate and measurable skill gains.
4. Difficulty with recruitment and retention of staff, especially counselors and technicians, has been a challenge for the agency. The vacancy rate results in existing staff covering vacant caseloads, which impacts responsiveness and timely service delivery. The pandemic exacerbated the staffing concerns at DVR and at providers, who are experiencing high vacancy rates as well.
5. There is a need to increase community awareness of DVR and its services throughout the State.
6. There is a need for more staff development opportunities for counselors and technicians. This is especially important related to working with individuals with behavioral health concerns and individuals with criminal backgrounds.

7. Due to the large expanses of rural areas of the State, and the resulting shortage of employment opportunities in these areas, there is a need to increase the use of self-employment as a viable IPE goal.
8. Preparing individuals with disabilities to work in remote jobs is encouraged as a result of the shift in work environments caused by the pandemic.
9. There is a need to reduce the rate of individuals exiting DVR after application and prior to plan.

The following recommendations are made to New Mexico DVR based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:

1. DVR is encouraged to continue to work on increasing pay for all staff, especially counseling and support staff (technicians) to address the recruitment and retention challenges.
2. DVR is encouraged to pursue the purchase and use of artificial intelligence technology to communicate with consumers and assist with labor intensive information gathering needs that detract from effective use of counselor and technician time with consumers. One option is the SARA program that DVR can acquire as part of a pilot project with the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Management (VRTAC-QM). The agency could implement SARA for free and determine if the program works for them up until 9-30-2025.
3. DVR is encouraged to increase self-employment opportunities for consumers, especially those in the rural areas of the State. One option to assist with this initiative would be to work with the Vocational Rehabilitation for Quality Employment (VRTAC-QE), as self-employment is one employment strategy that the VRTAC-QE provides TA and training on for VR agencies.
4. DVR is encouraged to help consumers pursue remote work opportunities if this type of work is consistent with their primary employment factors (their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interest and informed choice).
5. DVR should continue their current marketing and communication campaign and expand it as their staffing and capacity grows. The agency has a multi-faceted approach to marketing currently, and this appears to be paying dividends in terms of increased applications and numbers served.
6. DVR should ensure that they are providing regular and consistent training on how to effectively work with consumers that have behavioral health impairments and criminal backgrounds.
7. DVR is encouraged to implement an initiative focused on rapid engagement of consumers in the VR process specifically increasing the speed of eligibility determinations and increasing the speed to plan. An analysis of data on the speed to plan and its effect on outcomes in PY 201 illustrates the importance of moving consumers through the process from application to IPE. Table 1 contains the results for New Mexico DVR.

Table 1
Speed to Plan on Outcomes for DVR PY 2021

Association between Speed to Plan and VR Outcome - New Mexico PY 2021				
Duration	Rehabilitated		Other than Rehabilitated	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
One day or less	0.0%	0	100.0%	5
2 to 30 days	29.1%	23	70.9%	56
31 to 60 days	32.5%	50	67.5%	104
61 to 90 days	25.0%	55	75.0%	165
91 to 150 days	26.4%	147	73.6%	409
151 days or more	25.8%	162	74.2%	465
Totals		437		1,204

The data indicates that the sooner an applicant moves to IPE, the more likely they are to exit in employment. The difference between 31-60 days to plan and 151 days or more is 6.7%. An initiative focused on rapid and meaningful engagement should also help DVR address the attrition rate prior to IPE.

8. In order to help with the attrition rate after application, DVR is encouraged to examine a sample of cases that have exited unsuccessfully, especially those where the exit reason had to do with being unable to locate or contact, to see if there are strategies that can be employed to help ensure more consistent engagement.
9. As resources allow, DVR is encouraged to provide staff with technology to communicate with customers via text and social media to improve responsiveness, especially to youth.
10. DVR is encouraged to conduct an accessibility audit of their website to ensure all content is fully accessible.
11. DVR is encouraged to continue to work with the VRTAC-QM in an intensive technical assistance capacity to ensure that their data is accurate and valid. The agency has made tremendous strides in this area in the last two years and is encouraged to keep this focus as a priority.

Section Two: The needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment

The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:

1. Transportation, the lack of job skills and work experience, lack of education and training and mental health concerns are common rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities and impact their ability to prepare for, obtain and maintain employment. All of these needs are magnified in the rural areas of the State.
2. The lack of broadband Internet access is a barrier to employment, especially in the rural areas. The shift to remote work and communication resulting from the pandemic magnified how important reliable Internet access is for all individuals, and the lack of

access in many rural areas of New Mexico prevents individuals with disabilities from accessing information necessary for job search and remote employment opportunities.

3. Assistive technology, job placement assistance, and employment preparation services were all cited repeatedly as rehabilitation needs of DVR customers.
4. DVR serves a large population of individuals with behavioral health impairments including mental health impairments and substance use disorders. The available treatment for this population was noted as severely lacking, especially outside of Albuquerque and Santa Fe. Mental health counseling was noted as nearly non-existent in the rural areas of the State, which impacts the stability of individuals necessary for sustained employment.
5. Many DVR customers need supported employment (SE) services to maintain employment, but there are very few SE providers outside of the urban areas of the State. CRPs are experiencing high vacancy rates and there are almost no SE providers in the rural areas of the State. In addition, there is no capacity to provide customized employment (CE) in the State.
6. The fear of benefit loss, especially medical benefits, is a barrier to SSA beneficiaries returning to work, or pursuing work at a self-sustaining level. Many DVR customers that are receiving either SSI or SSDI pursue employment at the part-time level so that they can augment their benefits, but not face losing them due to work. This results in many individuals working below their potential.
7. Many Deaf customers have a need to develop their reading and language skills, but there are very few options for them in the State.
8. The need for affordable housing has become a major issue since the pandemic began in 2020. The need to identify affordable housing options has become of paramount importance for DVR consumers.
9. Poverty is a significant concern for individuals with disabilities in New Mexico. The poverty rates in the State are consistently in the top three in the country according to the US Census Bureau, and the effect of poverty on individuals with disabilities is disproportionate.

The following recommendations are made to New Mexico VR based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:

1. DVR is encouraged to examine creative ways to address the transportation barrier in rural areas of the State. One possibility is to utilize ride-share services such as Uber or Lyft when available. Ride-share services also provides an opportunity for former or current consumers of VR to engage in part-time employment, so if they can be recruited and supported to be drivers, this strategy can act as a way to build capacity in the rural areas.
2. VR is encouraged to conduct connectivity assessments for all consumers that are engaged in the comprehensive assessment process for plan development. When needed, VR should purchase the necessary equipment and service to ensure their participants are able to effectively access and function in the digital world. This includes broadband internet where available and laptops, cell phones and hotspots in cellular service plans. One possibility for adaption is the BPD Technology Assessment Checklist created by the Technology Committee for the association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program

Directors. The tool is available in Appendix F. VR should adapt the tool for their own needs if they decide to use it.

3. Because of the positive working relationship that DVR has with the Centers for Independent Living in the State, the agency is encouraged to identify CILs where partnership can be further developed and CILs can be recruited to become service providers. Increases in the ability to live independently are positively associated with successful employment outcomes, so enhancing IL services for consumers is an important goal for DVR.
4. DVR is encouraged to further its partnership with the Behavioral Health Services Division (BHSD) of the Human Services Department in New Mexico. BHSD offers an array of services and support that are helpful for DVR consumers.
5. The rate of consumers served by DVR that have either a primary or co-occurring disability of substance abuse necessitates that VR staff and partners increase collaboration and partnerships with other State and community organizations that serve youth and adults in recovery. DVR is encouraged to share expertise and resources with recovery programs and provide training to counselors and providers on ways to help consumers address the multiple dimensions of recovery that include:
 - a. Planning for physical and emotional health;
 - b. Helping the individual identify resources to ensure that they have a safe and supportive living environment;
 - c. Assist the individual to have hope, often as a result of a sense of purpose which can frequently be established through the pursuit of meaningful employment; and
 - d. Provide the individual with resources that can help establish a support network and build a sense of community.

The dimensions of recovery noted above are also applicable to individuals with mental health impairments and are recognized as a standard of effective counseling and treatment by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) found here: <https://www.samhsa.gov/>.

6. DVR is encouraged to work with Deaf advocates and service programs to further develop Deaf and HH services in the lower half of the State. In addition, DVR is encouraged to develop a communication and language skills training program for the Deaf in order to address the language development needs of this population throughout the State.
7. A large percentage of DVR consumers are SSA beneficiaries whose fear of benefit loss affects their return-to-work behavior. Although DVR has Benefits Advisors, it would be helpful for the agency to augment these services with training for staff and providers on strategies that contribute to the pursuit of work above the level of SGA, including self-sufficiency. These interventions and strategies include:
 - Establishing and reinforcing high expectations for the individual;
 - Identifying role models, or peer mentors that will model positive behavior and provide a positive “push” for the individual to achieve their maximum potential (in many instances, the positive push can come from the rehabilitation counselor if there are no family members, friends or mentors available);
 - Maximizing the individual’s ability to live and function independently;

- Reinforcing the need for tenacity and persistence by the individual by helping them develop resiliencies, and then providing constant support and positive feedback;
 - Benefits planning that is ongoing and plans for overpayments when work occurs. Overpayments are planned for and the individual or the Benefits Planner is aware enough to calculate the effect of wages on benefits by themselves and set aside dollars that will likely occur as a result of overpayments for future payback to SSA;
 - Pursuit of higher education at the highest possible level for the individual; and
 - Work experience, internships or any exposure to work in the beneficiary's field of choice.
8. DVR is encouraged to ensure that all of their staff have access to affordable housing resources for consumers. One option is found at https://www.hud.gov/states/new_mexico/renting.
 9. DVR is encouraged to help consumers address poverty concerns through short-term and long-term strategies such as assisting customers in obtaining “survival employment” while supporting long-term training for in-demand high-paying jobs.
 10. DVR is encouraged to develop and provide financial literacy and empowerment services to consumers throughout the State.
 11. DVR is encouraged to explore the possibility of identifying key staff to become Supported or Customized Employment specialists – to in effect, bring these services in-house.

Section Three: The needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program

The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:

1. The rehabilitation needs of minorities are consistent with the needs of all DVR customers, with the exception of the need for language interpreters. Language barriers adversely affect the ability of minority individuals with disabilities to prepare for and obtain employment and to access DVR services.
2. DVR is serving individuals by race consistently with their appearance in the general population of the State. There is room to further develop the relationship with the 121 tribal VR programs in the State, especially related to the number of shared cases.
3. The rural areas of the State were cited as underserved due to lack of access to transportation and other services. While the capacity to connect by distance increased during the pandemic, the lack of broadband access in rural areas means that they were not able to benefit from remote possibilities to the same extent as those living in urban areas.
4. Based on disability, the one group that was noted as possibly being underserved was Deaf individuals. This was related to the lack of counselors who can sign and the general lack of interpreters in the State.

5. The population of aging workers or aging individuals with acquired disabilities (mobility, vision, hearing loss) was mentioned by several interview participants as possibly underserved.

The following recommendations are made to New Mexico VR based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:

1. DVR is encouraged to establish regular and consistent meetings with tribal VR programs across the State. This helps establish and demonstrate a commitment to collaboration and should help to increase shared cases, increase communication, understanding, and awareness of each agency's services.
2. As resources allow, DVR is encouraged to sponsor their staff that work with the 121 programs to attend the annual CANAR conference.
3. DVR and the 121 programs are encouraged to provide regular cross-training for staff from both agencies. This is especially important given the frequency of staff turnover on both sides.
4. DVR is encouraged to establish liaison relationships with community agencies serving Deaf individuals and Hispanic individuals in New Mexico as a way to develop awareness of DVR services and increase referrals. In addition, DVR is encouraged to recruit and hire bilingual staff in ASL and Spanish whenever they have an open position.
5. DVR is encouraged to establish partnerships at the State and local level to support individuals that are aging but wish to remain in, or re-enter, the workforce.

Section Four: The needs of youth and students with individuals with disabilities in transition

The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:

1. The rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities were similar to adults served by DVR except that youth were noted as needing more work experience and soft skills.
2. DVR has transition counselors, which has helped to develop their relationship with schools and increase pre-employment transition services.
3. Project Search sites were applauded for their impact on students, especially because the projects provide work experience for students and youth, which was identified as an important need.
4. The relationship between DVR and the schools across the State varies in intensity. Some schools are very involved with the agency and services are coordinated and working well, and in others, DVR does not go into the school and VR services are not getting to students until they are close to graduation or after. The pandemic stalled the progress in the relationship between DVR and schools, especially in those areas where there has been turnover of DVR staff and school staff. As staff are hired and relationships reestablished, progress has picked up and services are increasing.

5. All of the five required pre-employment transition services were noted as important and helpful for students with disabilities. Work-based learning opportunities were identified by all as the most important of the five required services and DVR has worked to increase the availability of these WBLE's across the State.
6. Youth succeed at higher rates when parents are engaged in the process. Lack of parent engagement can result in youth not accessing services early or "falling through the cracks." Parents were described as essential to the transition process, to helping youth to understand their disability and to developing realistic vocational expectations.
7. Parents of youth that receive SSI were often characterized as fearful of their children losing benefits and this adversely affects the motivation of the youth to work. In addition, if the youth does attempt to work, the parents may not be supportive, which can lead to an unsuccessful work attempt.
8. DVR has good working relationships with community colleges and universities throughout the State. These positive relationships result in a smoother transition from secondary to postsecondary education, reasonable accommodation needs being met, and increased rates of persistence and success for youth and students with disabilities. Although the overall number of individuals with disabilities in postsecondary education training dropped as a result of the pandemic from PY 2020-21, the numbers increased again in PY 2022 as schools reopened.

The following recommendations are made to New Mexico DVR based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:

1. DVR is encouraged to establish more work-based learning opportunities as part of their expansion of pre-employment transition services across the State. The agency has been working closely with CRPs and schools to expand these opportunities and should continue these efforts as resources and capacity of CRPs allow.
2. DVR is encouraged to replicate Project Search programs as resources allow. DVR staff and community partner agencies indicated that these programs are innovative and significantly impact the employability of participants.
3. DVR is encouraged to continue to work with the NTACT:C and VRTAC-QM to increase and improve relationship with schools and improve tracking and reporting of pre-employment transition services.
4. As the number of transition counselors increase through future hiring, DVR is encouraged to expand their outreach and education of families of students that are receiving SSI in order to help assuage the fear of benefit loss and encourage the work-seeking behavior of these youth.
5. In partnership with Education, DVR is encouraged to establish Model Transition Program (MTP) sites where transition and pre-ETS is thriving. These MTPs could serve as a demonstration or mentor school for lower performing schools. Schools in rural locations should receive technical assistance to demonstrate the same practices adapted to their setting.

Section Five: The needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide Workforce Development System

The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:

1. DVR consumers are frequently referred to the New Mexico Workforce Connection (Titles I and III) centers for job search assistance and resume writing workshops. The workshops are helpful for consumers, but job development services were described as self-initiated and online, so were less impactful on individuals with disabilities needing one-on-one assistance.
2. While the workshops are helpful, the relationship between DVR and the Workforce Connection centers is one of referral primarily. There are few cases where funding for training is shared between agencies.
3. Co-location of DVR within the Workforce Connection offices was described as beneficial to the relationship between the two agencies and staff felt that it helped with ensuring that individuals with disabilities were quickly connected to the services and supports they need.
4. Workforce Connection staff need training on how to work with individuals with disabilities and they need working and up-to-date assistive technology for job seekers that need this technology to access programs. Deaf interpreters were also cited as needed in the Workforce Connection Centers.

The following recommendations are made to New Mexico VR based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:

1. DVR should identify and share examples of shared funding of cases throughout the State to encourage replication of these cases.
2. DVR is encouraged to work with the Workforce Connection staff to develop apprenticeships and customized training programs in high demand occupations that include individuals with disabilities.
3. DVR and the Workforce Connection center staff should provide regular and consistent cross-training to staff in order to improve the number of individuals with disabilities that are effectively accessing and benefitting from services at the centers.
4. DVR is encouraged to strengthen its relationship with the Title I Youth program to provide training and placement opportunities for students and youth with disabilities.

Section Six: The need to establish, develop or improve Community Rehabilitation Programs in New Mexico

The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:

1. The pandemic significantly impacted staffing at service providers agencies, with shortages noted in most geographic areas and services. Consequently, the wait for

services has increased and the need to establish and develop services offered by CRPs is pervasive.

2. There is a need to establish all VR services and service providers in the rural areas of the State.
3. There is a significant need for SE providers throughout the State.
4. There is a need for DVR to examine its current rate structure for purchased services. Partners indicate that the current fee schedule is insufficient to meet their needs for service provision.

The following recommendations are made to New Mexico VR based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:

1. DVR should examine their current rates for purchased services and the past methodology for how these rates were established to determine if rate revisions are needed and if the methodology is adequate given the changing landscape of staffing and service delivery since the pandemic. The agency is encouraged to work with the fiscal team at the VRTAC-QM as needed for technical assistance in this area.
2. DVR is encouraged to consider using the Establishment Authority to help establish SE and other service providers over the course of the next State Plan cycle. The need for these services is clearly evident from all staff and partners interviewed for this CSNA.
3. DVR is encouraged to establish a provider network meeting at least semi-annually to share information, increase communication, and enhance the partnership between DVR and service providers.
4. If VR services are unable to be developed, then DVR is encouraged to consider bringing services in-house by hiring individuals with specialized skills in the given area (e.g. job placement, assessment, supported employment).
5. DVR is encouraged to investigate the national Supported Employment Community of Practice facilitated by the Center for Innovative Training in VR at George Washington University. Representatives from VR systems across the country learn together and benefit from shared problem-solving opportunities.

Section Seven: The needs of businesses and effectiveness in serving employers

The following findings and recurring themes emerged from all of the research methods related to this topic area:

1. Employers indicate a need for education and information on training opportunities related to candidates and employees with disabilities.
2. Business Engagement has historically been done by local staff, primarily technicians and counselors. DVR has begun hiring staff that are assigned to business relations development, but this has not been pervasive to date.
3. The pandemic resulted in many employers opening their minds to hiring individuals with disabilities, but stereotypes still remain and there is a need to educate employers on disability awareness and sensitivity on a consistent basis.

The following recommendations are made to New Mexico VR based on the findings and recurring themes that emerged from all of the research methods:

1. As resources allow, DVR is encouraged to provide training for employers on disability awareness. This should be done in partnership with their Title I partners if possible.
2. DVR is encouraged to partner with employers and expand registered apprenticeship opportunities for individuals with disabilities throughout the State, especially youth.
3. As indicated in Section 5, DVR is encouraged to work closely with their Title I partners and businesses to develop customized training programs that are inclusive of individuals with disabilities.
4. DVR is encouraged to provide training to technicians on employment preparation skills (resume development, interviewing skills, structured job search) and employer outreach.
5. Identify employers that have inclusive hiring practices and have hired DVR customers and recognize them in an annual employer awards ceremony.

The project team provides recommendations associated with some of the needs identified in each of the categories. It is understood that many of the recommendations require the collaboration and partnership of multiple agencies over an extended period of time. Some of the recommendations may be much easier to adopt and implement than others. The project team offers the recommendations with this awareness and hopes that DVR, the SRC and other stakeholders will find these recommendations helpful.

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IMPETUS FOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) contains the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. Section 101(15)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act and Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Section 361.29 requires all State vocational rehabilitation agencies to assess the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities within their respective State and relate the planning of programs and services and the establishment of goals and priorities to their needs. According to Section 102 of WIOA and Section 101 of the Rehabilitation Act, each participating State shall submit a Unified or Combined State Plan every four years, with a biannual modification, as needed. In addition, Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 361.29 indicates that the State Plan must include the “results of a comprehensive, Statewide assessment, jointly conducted by the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council every three years describing the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State.” In response to this mandate, and to ensure that adequate efforts are being made to serve the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities in New Mexico, the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, in partnership with the State Rehabilitation Council, entered into a contract with the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University for the purpose of jointly developing and implementing the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) of the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing in New Mexico.

PURPOSE OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND UTILIZATION OF RESULTS

The purpose of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) is to identify and describe the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within New Mexico. In particular, the CSNA seeks to provide information on:

- The overall performance of DVR as it relates to meeting the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in the State;
- The rehabilitation needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
- The rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities, and those who may have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program;
- The rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities in transition, including their need for pre-employment transition services;
- The rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system;

- The need to establish, develop and/or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State; and
- The needs of businesses in recruiting, hiring, accommodating and retaining individuals with disabilities and the effectiveness of DVR in serving the needs of employers.

It is expected that data from the needs assessment effort will provide DVR and the SRC with direction when creating the VR portion of the Combined State Plan and when planning for future program development, outreach and resource allocation. This CSNA covers quantitative data for Program Years (PY) 2020 through 2022, and qualitative data through November 2023. Program Year 2020 began on July 1, 2020 and ended on June 30, 2021. Program Year 2022 ended on June 30, 2023.

METHODOLOGY

The comprehensive statewide needs assessment was conducted using qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry. The specific methods for gathering the data used in this assessment are detailed below.

Analysis of Existing Data Sources

The project team at SDSU reviewed a variety of existing data sources for the purposes of identifying and describing demographic data within New Mexico including the total possible target population and sub-populations potentially served by DVR. Data relevant to the population of New Mexico, the population of persons with disabilities in New Mexico, ethnicity of individuals, income level, educational levels and other relevant population characteristics were utilized in this analysis. Sources analyzed include the following:

- The 2022 American Community Survey: One- and Five-Year Estimates;
- U.S. Census Annual Estimates of Resident Population, 2022;
- 2023 Social Security Administration SSI/DI Data;
- The New Mexico Public Education Department;
- U.S. and New Mexico Bureau of Labor Statistics;
- Annual Report on People with Disabilities in America-2023, University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability.
- Cornell University's disabilitystatistics.org;
- DVR case service data compiled at the request of the project team;
- DOL's Employment and Training Administration's 969 Report for Program Years 2020-2022; and
- The Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration's RSA-911 case service data for DVR and the RSA data dashboards.

Individual and Focus Group Interviews

Instrument. The instruments used for the individual and focus group interviews (Appendix A) were developed by the researchers at SDSU and reviewed and revised by DVR.

Interview population. The individual and focus group population consisted of DVR staff and community partners. A total of 17 people were interviewed individually for this assessment and 173 were interviewed as part of a focus group. The interviews were held in-person and virtually. Interviews were held during the period of August 2023 to November 2023. In-person interviews and focus groups were held in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Las Cruces and surrounding areas.

Data collection. The general format of the interviews was consistent between participants regardless of their group. First, participants were asked questions to ascertain their personal and professional experience with or knowledge of DVR. Participants were then asked open-ended questions about their perceptions of the needs of individuals with disabilities in New Mexico. Finally, participants were asked to share their perceptions of how DVR could improve their ability to help meet these needs, especially as it relates to helping consumers obtain and retain employment.

Efforts to ensure respondent anonymity. Names and other identifying characteristics were not shared with anyone by the interviewers. Participants were informed that their responses would be treated as anonymous information, would not be reported with information that could be used to identify them, and would be consolidated with information from other respondents before results were reported.

Data analysis. The interviewers took notes on the discussions as they occurred. The notes were transcribed and analyzed by the researchers at SDSU. Themes or concerns that surfaced with consistency across interviews were identified and are reported as common themes in the report narrative.

Surveys

Instruments. The instruments used for the electronic surveys of individuals with disabilities, community partners, VR staff and businesses were developed by the project team and reviewed and revised by DVR and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). These surveys are contained in Appendices B-E.

Survey population. Individuals identified for participation in this survey effort can be described as individuals with disabilities who are potential, current or former clients of DVR. Community partners include representatives of organizations that provide services, coordinate services, or serve an advocacy role for persons with disabilities in New Mexico. DVR staff members include those working for the organization between May and November 2023.

Data collection. Data was gathered from the different populations through the use of an internet-based survey. DVR and community programs serving individuals with disabilities broadly

dispersed the electronic survey via an e-mail invitation. DVR identified individuals with disabilities, partners, staff and businesses and invited them to participate in the electronic survey effort via e-mail. Once the survey was active, DVR sent an invitation and link to the survey by e-mail. Approximately two weeks after the distribution of the initial invitation, another electronic notice was sent as both a “thank you” to those who had completed the survey and as a reminder to those who had not. There were two additional reminder notes that were sent to the different groups. Approximately eight weeks after the surveys were distributed, they were closed. Survey responses were then analyzed using Qualtrics.

Efforts to ensure respondent anonymity. Respondents to the individual survey were not asked to identify themselves when completing the survey. In addition, responses to the electronic surveys were aggregated by the project team at SDSU prior to reporting results, which served to further obscure the identities of individual survey respondents.

Accessibility. The electronic survey was designed using an accessible, internet-based survey application. Respondents were provided with the name and contact information of the Project Director at SDSU in order to place requests for other alternate survey formats.

Data analysis. Data analysis consisted of computing frequencies and descriptive statistics for the survey items with fixed response options. Open-ended survey questions, which yielded narrative responses from individuals, were analyzed by the researchers for themes or concepts that were expressed consistently by respondents.

Number of completed surveys. A total of 496 valid surveys were submitted by the different groups. A survey was considered valid if an individual completed the survey, even if they did not answer all of the questions. If an individual started a survey and did not complete it, it was considered invalid. It is difficult to gauge the return rate of the surveys as many of the e-mail notices and invitations to take the survey could have come from forwarded email invitations.

Table 2 summarizes the totals for all research types by group for this CSNA.

Table 2

Data Collection Totals by Type for New Mexico DVR

Research Totals by Type and Group for New Mexico DVR 2023 CSNA					
Research Method	Research Group and Count				
	Consumer	Partner	Staff	Business	Total
Surveys	217	89	101	89	496
Individual Interview	0	3	14	0	17
Focus Group					
Number of groups	0	9	27	0	36
Number of participants	0	37	136	0	173
Total participants	217	129	251	89	686

Analysis and Triangulation of Data

The data gathered from the national and agency-specific data sets, individual interviews, surveys and focus groups were analyzed by the researchers on the project team. The common themes that emerged regarding needs of persons with disabilities from each data source were identified and compared to each other to validate the existence of needs, especially as they pertained to the target populations of this assessment. These common themes are identified and discussed in the Findings section.

Dissemination Plans

The CSNA report is delivered to DVR and the SRC. We recommend that DVR publish the report on their website for public access and that they notify the public of the availability of the report by e-mail.

Study Limitations

Inherent in any type of research effort are limitations that may constrain the utility of the data that is generated. Therefore, it is important to highlight some of the most significant issues that may limit the ability to generalize the needs assessment findings to larger populations. Inherent in the methods used to collect data is the potential for bias in the selection of participants. The findings that are reported reflect only the responses of those who could be reached and who were willing to participate. Individuals who were disenfranchised, dissatisfied, or who did not wish to be involved with DVR may have declined to complete a survey. A second significant concern is that the information gathered from respondents may not accurately represent the broader concerns of all potential constituents and stakeholders. Although efforts were made to gather information from a variety of stakeholders in the vocational rehabilitation process, it would be imprudent to conclude with certainty that those who contributed to the focus groups and the individual interviews constitute a fully representative sample of all of the potential stakeholders in the vocational rehabilitation process in New Mexico.

FINDINGS

Section 1: Overall agency performance

Section 2: Needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment

Section 3: Needs of individuals with disabilities that are minorities, including needs of individuals who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program

Section 4: Needs of youth and students with disabilities in transition

Section 5: Needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system

Section 6: Need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs in New Mexico

Section 7: Needs of businesses and effectiveness in serving employers

SECTION ONE

OVERALL AGENCY PERFORMANCE

The first section of the CSNA reports on areas of general performance by DVR. General performance refers to how well DVR is fulfilling its mission of assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve their employment goals and thrive in their communities. The area of general performance also refers to how effectively DVR facilitates case movement through the stages of the rehabilitation process, how well DVR adheres to the timelines for this case movement identified in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended by Title IV of WIOA, and how successfully DVR achieves their common performance measures and the quantity and quality of employment outcomes achieved by their consumers.

The structure of this section, as well as the following sections, will include the following:

1. Data that pertains to the section in question, including observations based on the data;
2. Electronic survey results pertaining to the section;
3. Recurring/consensual themes that emerged during the individual interviews and focus groups; and
4. Recommendations to address the findings in each area of the assessment.

The time-period covered by the data in this Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment is the three-year period from July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2023. The data on agency performance included in this section comes from the case management system used by VR and is compared to the available RSA-911 data submitted by VR where available.

NOTE: All of the information in this report, especially the data related to agency performance, should be interpreted in the context of the global Covid 19 pandemic. Concern for personal health impacted the return-to-work behavior of many individuals in New Mexico and across the country, especially individuals with disabilities. It is important to consider this when interpreting the findings in this report.

RECURRING THEMES ACROSS ALL DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The following recurring themes emerged in the area of Overall Agency Performance:

1. While impacted by the pandemic, DVR is recovering to pre-pandemic levels in many areas. The number of applications and individuals served increased significantly in PY 2022.
2. The staff at DVR were consistently characterized as caring and committed to helping individuals with disabilities in New Mexico to prepare for and obtain employment. Despite experiencing staffing shortages throughout the State, the personnel at the agency were described as trying to do their best.
3. New Mexico passed all of their WIOA performance measures for PY 2022. The agency exceeded their negotiated rates for the employment rate in the second and fourth quarter after exit, median earnings, credential rate and measurable skill gains.
4. Difficulty with recruitment and retention of staff, especially counselors and technicians, has been a challenge for the agency. The vacancy rate results in existing staff covering vacant

caseloads, which impacts responsiveness and timely service delivery. The pandemic exacerbated the staffing concerns at DVR and at providers, who are experiencing high vacancy rates as well.

5. There is a need to increase community awareness of DVR and its services throughout the State.
6. There is a need for more staff development opportunities for counselors and technicians. This is especially important related to working with individuals with behavioral health concerns and individuals with criminal backgrounds.
7. Due to the large expanses of rural areas of the State, and the resulting shortage of employment opportunities in these areas, there is a need to increase the use of self-employment as a viable IPE goal.
8. Preparing individuals with disabilities to work in remote jobs is encouraged as a result of the shift in work environments caused by the pandemic.
9. There is a need to reduce the rate of individuals exiting DVR after application and prior to plan.

NATIONAL, STATE, LOCAL AND AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA RELATED TO OVERALL AGENCY PERFORMANCE

The project team gathered data from national and state data sets to provide information to VR and to interested parties related to population, disability prevalence, income, poverty, educational attainment, unemployment and labor force participation in New Mexico. Where available, we have included information specific to the nine DVR service areas. The project team is hopeful that this information will provide DVR and their partners with data that can guide resource allocation and future planning.

General Trends of DVR with State and National Comparisons

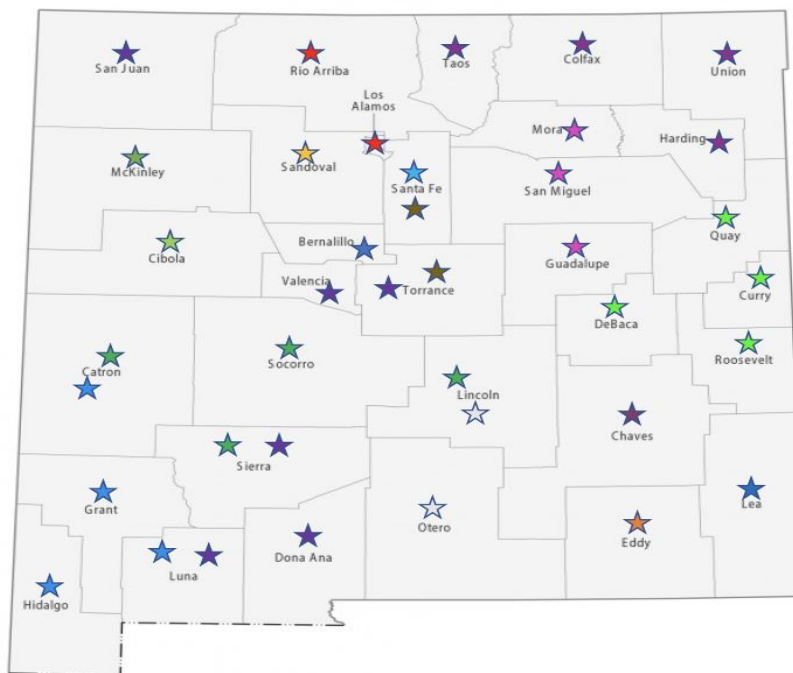
An understanding of the geographic composition of the State, and knowledge of the State's structure of populations is beneficial in order to better serve the VR consumer. In this section, geographic information and demographic data regarding the State's population, age, income, home value, poverty and education are presented with comparisons to the Nation and local regions.

Geographic Composition

New Mexico is comprised of 33 counties. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in New Mexico divides the state into nine vocational rehabilitation service areas that comprise three DVR service regions. Due to the overlap of counties within service areas, this report presents data by area and by individual county to allow DVR to understand the various trends and to make decisions accordingly. The map indicates the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation office locations within the areas. Below the map is a table of codes for the DVR areas, detailing the counties served.

Map 1
New Mexico DVR Service Region and Area Map

DVR Counties Map



Source: DVR of New Mexico

Table 3
Area Codes and Counties Served

Area/County	Code	Counties Served
Area 1	A1	Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe
Area 2	A2	San Juan, Sandoval
Area 3	A3	Catron, Dona Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, Otero
Area 4	A4	Chaves, Curry, De Baca, Eddy, Lea, Quay, Roosevelt
Area 6	A6	Cibola, McKinley
Area 7	A7	Socorro, Valencia
Area 9	A9	Colfax, Guadalupe, Harding, Mora, San Miguel, Taos, Union
Bernalillo County	NA	Bernalillo
Lincoln County	NA	Lincoln
Sierra County	NA	Sierra
Torrance County	NA	Torrance

Population

Population (raw number of people in area) and population density (number of people per square mile of land) provide a picture of where customers may be located in the State and assists with developing service delivery strategies (i.e., DVR office locations, number of staff members) in a region.

Table 4 contains the total population data for the State of New Mexico. The table cites the United States Census Bureau July 1, 2023 Annual Population Estimates of the Resident Population for the Nation and State. Population estimates for the 33 counties in New Mexico are taken from Vintage 2022 Annual Estimates of Resident Population for Counties. Rural and urban data is taken from the American Community Survey (ACS) 2022 1-year estimates.

Table 4

Local Area Population for New Mexico

Geographic Area Name	Total population	Percent of NM Pop. CSNA 2024
United States	333,914,895	-----
United States - Urban	266,018,160	-----
United States -- Rural	67,269,402	-----
New Mexico	2,114,371	NM = 0.6% of U.S. Pop
New Mexico -- Urban	1,586,195	0.6%
New Mexico -- Rural	527,149	0.8%
Bernalillo	672,508	Rank #1 in State for County Pop. Size; 31.8%
Lincoln	20,411	Rank #19 in State for County Pop. Size; 1.0%
Sierra	11,436	Rank #25 in State for County Pop. Size; 0.5%
Torrance	15,454	Rank #23 in State for County Pop. Size; 0.7%
A1	214,899	10.2%
A2	273,919	13.0%
A3	353,425	16.7%
A4	273,451	12.9%
A6	96,780	4.6%
A7	94,195	4.5%
A9	86,866	4.1%

Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for the United States, Regions, States, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2023 (NST-EST2023-POP); Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties in New Mexico: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2022 (CO-EST2022-POP-35); 2022 ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Tables

The U.S. Census Bureau Annual Estimates of Resident Population Change State Rankings ending July 2022 indicated that New Mexico increased in numeric population size (895) and ranked in the 36 position for numeric growth compared to the 49 other states in the U.S. during the period from July 1,

2022, to July 1, 2023. New Mexico's overall numeric population growth (-3,154) from April 20, 2020 to July 1, 2023 was negative one percent, or thirty-eighth overall.

U.S. Census Bureau collaborated with the U.S. Department of Commerce to determine population density rates for 2010 to 2020. Excluding Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia, New Mexico ranked 45th out of 50 States in 2020 with a population density average of 17.5 people per square mile.

Land and Urbanization

New Mexico, located in the mountain division of the southwest region of the United States, is landlocked and bordered by Oklahoma, Texas, Arizona, Colorado, and Mexico's states of Chihuahua and Sonora. The total area of New Mexico is 121,590 square miles (121,298 square miles of land; 292 square miles of water). New Mexico is the 5th largest state in the Nation in terms of land area, 49th in the Nation for water area, and 5th in the U.S. for total area.

The criteria and definitions for rural and urban areas based on the 2020 Census are defined as follows:

- *Rural: Territory not defined as urban.*
- *Urban: Generally, densely developed territory, encompassing residential, commercial, and other non-residential urban land uses within which social and economic interactions occur.*
- *Urban Area: A statistical geographic entity consisting of a densely settled core created from census blocks and contiguous qualifying territory that together have at least 2,000 housing units or 5,000 persons.*

The U.S. Census Bureau published a list of all 2020 Census Urban Areas for the U.S., Puerto Rico, and Island Areas. New Mexico has 35 urban areas within the State and one urban area that is located partially in the State. In 2020, the Census Bureau did not identify any new urban areas in New Mexico.

Based on the 2020 Census, 74.5% of New Mexico's population is considered urban, and 25.5% of the population resides in territories that are defined as rural. The Albuquerque urban area is the most densely populated urban area in New Mexico and has a population density of roughly 2,926 people per square mile.

The Census Bureau published a list of areas that were classified as urban in the 2010 Census that changed to be designated as rural based on the 2020 Census new urban and rural criteria. Table 5 contains a list of the areas that were designated rural in 2020 along with the county and DVR service area that the rural area is located in.

Table 5
2010 Urban Areas that Changed to Rural in 2020

DVR Area	2010 Urban Areas Changed to Rural in 2020	County
A1	Edgewood, NM	Santa Fe with annexations in Bernalillo and Sandoval
A1	Eldorado at Santa Fe, NM	Santa Fe
A1	Pojoaque, NM	Santa Fe
A2	Santo Domingo Pueblo, NM	Sandoval
A3	Holloman AFB, NM	Otero
A3	Tularosa, NM	Otero

A3	Vado, NM	Doña Ana
A4	Eunice, NM	Lea
A6	Zuni Pueblo, NM	McKinley
A9	Santa Rosa, NM	Guadalupe
State Border	Fort Defiance, AZ--NM	Apache County, AZ
State Border	Window Rock, AZ--NM	Apache County, AZ

Source: List of 2010 Census Urban Areas that are Classified as Rural in 2020; <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>

The U.S. Census Bureau published county-level urban and rural information for the 2020 census. Bernalillo County had the highest county-level population density with roughly 582 people per square mile and Harding County had the lowest county-level population density of less than one person (0.31 people) per square mile. The urban population density of Curry County is second highest in the state compared to Bernalillo's urban population density. Note the difference between Curry County's urban population density (2,447.41 people per square mile) compared to the county-level population density of 34.46 people per square mile. Table 6 details the 2020 county-level, urban, and rural population density averages for each county in New Mexico along with percentage rates of the county population that reside within urban and rural blocks.

Table 6

New Mexico County-level Urban and Rural Information: 2020 Census

County	2020 Pop. density of the County (square miles)	2020 total blocks within the County	Percent of the 2020 Census Pop. of the County within Urban blocks	2020 Urban Pop. density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Urban within County	Percent of the 2020 Census Pop. in the County within Rural blocks	2020 Rural Pop. density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Rural within County
Area 1								
Los Alamos	177.96	371	95.02%	1,742.31	282	4.98%	9.81	89
Rio Arriba	6.89	4,126	43.59%	1,177.54	658	56.41%	3.89	3,468
Santa Fe	81.04	4,259	64.96%	1,934.33	1,834	35.04%	29.19	2,425
Total Blocks		8,756			2,774			5,982
Area 2								
San Juan	22.05	7,369	64.80%	1,388.41	1,946	35.20%	7.84	5,423
Sandoval	40.12	6,390	80.85%	2,343.11	2,082	19.15%	7.79	4,308
Total Blocks		13,759			4,028			9,731
Area 3								
Catron	0.52	1,327	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	0.52	1,327
Doña Ana	57.66	7,002	77.51%	2,250.58	3,893	22.49%	13.23	3,109
Grant	7.12	1,967	59.58%	1,210.96	772	40.42%	2.89	1,195

County	2020 Pop. density of the County (square miles)	2020 total blocks within the County	Percent of the 2020 Census Pop. of the County within Urban blocks	2020 Urban Pop. density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Urban within County	Percent of the 2020 Census Pop. in the County within Rural blocks	2020 Rural Pop. density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Rural within County
Hidalgo	1.22	863	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	1.22	863
Luna	8.58	3,124	58.65%	1,819.34	997	41.35%	3.56	2,127
Otero	10.26	3,666	45.40%	2,243.13	831	54.60%	5.61	2,835
Total Blocks		17,949			6,493			11,456
Area 4								
Chaves	10.74	4,353	74.94%	1,943.48	1,406	25.06%	2.70	2,947
Curry	34.46	2,474	81.18%	2,447.41	1,221	18.82%	6.56	1,253
De Baca	0.73	1,031	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	0.73	1,031
Eddy	14.92	5,091	77.98%	1,845.89	2,222	22.02%	3.31	2,869
Lea	16.95	4,457	75.11%	1,815.77	1,740	24.89%	4.25	2,717
Quay	3.04	2,161	59.65%	1,362.62	728	40.35%	1.23	1,433
Roosevelt	7.85	1,601	63.58%	2,323.57	688	36.42%	2.86	913
Total Blocks		21,168			8,005			13,163
Area 6								
Cibola	5.99	3,439	36.70%	1,622.71	402	63.30%	3.79	3,037
McKinley	13.37	7,580	33.54%	1,787.38	591	66.46%	8.91	6,989
Total Blocks		11,019			993			10,026
Area 7								
Socorro	2.50	2,363	48.94%	1,498.74	301	51.06%	1.28	2,062
Valencia	71.44	2,581	70.03%	1,353.79	1,201	29.97%	22.23	1,380
Total Blocks		4,944			1,502			3,442
Area 9								
Colfax	3.30	2,412	45.44%	1,198.97	375	54.56%	1.80	2,037
Guadalupe	1.47	902	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	1.47	902
Harding	0.31	715	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	0.31	715
Mora	2.17	889	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	2.17	889
San Miguel	5.76	2,715	53.42%	2,080.87	587	46.58%	2.69	2,128
Taos	15.66	2,112	45.42%	830.77	399	54.58%	8.62	1,713
Union	1.07	2,104	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	1.07	2,104
Total Blocks		11,849			1,361			10,488
Individual Counties								

County	2020 Pop. density of the County (square miles)	2020 total blocks within the County	Percent of the 2020 Census Pop. of the County within Urban blocks	2020 Urban Pop. density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Urban within County	Percent of the 2020 Census Pop. in the County within Rural blocks	2020 Rural Pop. density of the County (square miles)	2020 blocks classified as Rural within County
Bernalillo	582.52	11,943	96.02%	3,067.83	10,504	3.98%	28.36	1,439
Lincoln	4.20	2,333	54.48%	653.99	616	45.52%	1.92	1,717
Sierra	2.77	1,426	66.63%	936.08	515	33.37%	0.93	911
Torrance	4.50	2,069	0.00%	0.00	0	100.00%	4.50	2,069

Source: County-level Urban and Rural information for the 2020 Census (Updated September 2023); <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/urban-rural.html>

The Office of Rural Health Policy and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) determine geographic eligibility for grant funding and for various local programming. The following information is provided to assist DVR in its efforts to support customers who are in need of health services and may qualify for local rural programs. Table 7 lists the counties in New Mexico that are considered rural. Urban counties that contain rural census tracts and the number of rural census tracts located within the urban counties are included. Note that Bernalillo County is the only county considered 100 percent urban even though Los Alamos County has 95.02 percent of the population residing in urban blocks according to the U.S. Census Bureau urban and rural information. The information for the following table is taken from the 2021 update of the Office of Rural Health Policy's "List of Rural Counties and Designated Eligible Census Tracts in Metropolitan Counties."

Table 7

New Mexico's Rural Counties from the OMB and the Office of Rural Health Policy

DVR Area	Rural Counties	Urban Counties and Number of Rural Census Tracts	100 Percent Urban Counties
A1	Los Alamos; Rio Arriba	Santa Fe County (1)	
A2		San Juan (12); Sandoval (8)	
A3	Catron; Grant; Hidalgo; Luna; Otero	Doña Ana (2)	
A4	Chaves; Curry; De Baca; Eddy; Lea; Quay; Roosevelt		
A6	Cibola; McKinley		
A7	Socorro	Valencia (1)	
A9	Colfax; Guadalupe; Harding; Mora; San Miguel; Taos; Union		
Bernalillo			Bernalillo
Lincoln	Lincoln		
Sierra	Sierra		
Torrance	Torrance		

Report Note: Several tables throughout this report contain data from the United States Census Bureau. Unless otherwise noted, data for the Nation, State, Area 2 (San Juan and Sandoval Counties), and Bernalillo County are taken from the Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2022 1-Year estimates. U.S. Census Bureau data referenced for the remaining individual counties and DVR service areas taken from the 2022 ACS 1-year and 5-Year estimates unless otherwise noted.

Age, Income, and Home Value

Understanding a population's age composition provides insight into an area's changing phenomena, and current and future social and economic challenges. Income is the gauge often used to determine well-being. Home value provides a picture of the housing situation in the area and insight into the local economic status.

Median Age and Median Working Age

The median age of residents for the Nation is 39 years and New Mexico's median age is less than one year higher (39.4 years). The median age in Sierra exceeds the National average by 16.4 years. The median working age for individuals ages 16 to 64 in the United States is 39.5 years, and New Mexico's median working age is 39.1 years. Bernalillo County, A3 and A7 have a median working age that is lower than the National average by less than 1 percent. A4's median working age is lower than the National average by 3.2 percent. Table 8 provides the statistics for median age and median working age in New Mexico.

Table 8

Median Age and Median Working Age

Geographic Area	Median Age	Median Working Age 16 to 64
United States	39.0	39.5
United States - Urban	37.9	38.9
United States -- Rural	43.4	42.3
New Mexico	39.4	39.1
New Mexico -- Urban	38.2	38.5
New Mexico -- Rural	43.9	41.5
Bernalillo	39.1	38.9
Lincoln	51.7	43.4
Sierra	55.4	42.9
Torrance	43.0	40.0
A1	43.5	41.4
A2	38.8	40.8
A3	42.6	39.2
A4	34.6	36.3
A6	35.8	39.8
A7	39.2	39.2
A9	46.9	39.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Median Household Income and Median Home Value

The median household incomes for the Nation and the State are \$74,755 and \$59,726 respectively. New Mexico's median household income ranked 43rd in the Nation in 2022 as New Jersey had the highest average (\$96,346) and Mississippi had the lowest average (\$52,719). Although the rural New Mexico's median household income is below the National rural average by \$13,576, the median household income range in A4, a completely rural area, reaches up to a high of \$77,458, which is higher than the National rural average by \$6,358.

The median home value for the United States (\$320,900) is higher than New Mexico's average (\$243,100) by \$77,800. The urban median home value for the Nation exceeds New Mexico's urban average by \$96,500 and the Nation's rural median home value is higher than the State rural average by \$37,400. Compared to other states, New Mexico's statewide median home value ranks 35th (ranking is from the highest to lowest), with Hawaii's average securing the top position at \$820,100. New Mexico's rural median home value ranks in the 37th position and the urban average ranks 33rd compared to the averages of the 50 states.

DeBaca County (A4), which is considered rural due to 100 percent of its population residing in rural areas, has the lowest median household income (\$34,702) in the State, and the 5th highest median home value (\$247,300) in the State when examining available data. DeBaca County's median household income average is significantly lower than the National and State averages. DeBaca County's average median home value is also significantly lower than the National rural average by \$101,700 and higher than the State's rural median home value average by \$14,400.

Los Alamos County's median household income (\$135,801) and home value (\$412,700) are significantly higher than all of the National and State averages. Los Alamos County is considered 100 percent rural by the Office of Rural Health Policy and the OMB. However, the Census Bureau classified 95.02% of Los Alamos County's population as residing in urban blocks and the population density within the urban blocks is 1,742.31 people per square mile.

Table 9 details the averages for median household income and median home value.

Table 9

Median Household Income and Median Home Value

Geographic Area	Median Household Income	Household Income Ranges	Home Value 2022	Home Value Ranges	Census Bureau Estimate Type
U.S.	\$74,755	\$52,719 (MS) - \$96,346 (NJ)	\$320,900	\$155,100 (WV) - \$820,100 (HI)	1-Year Supplemental
U.S. - Urban	\$75,706	\$52,840 (MS) - \$94,871 (HI)	\$349,800	\$163,100 (WV) - \$854,700 (HI)	1-Year Supplemental
U.S. - Rural	\$71,100	\$52,621 (MS) - \$119,993 (RI)	\$242,200	\$146,300 (MS) - \$609,300 (HI)	1-Year Supplemental
New Mexico	\$59,726	\$34,702 - \$135,801	\$243,100	\$70,200 - \$412,700	1-Year Supplemental; Ranges = 5 year
NM - Urban	\$60,194	-----	\$253,300	-----	1-Year Supplemental

Geographic Area	Median Household Income	Household Income Ranges	Home Value 2022	Home Value Ranges	Census Bureau Estimate Type
NM - Rural	\$57,524	-----	\$204,800	-----	1-Year Supplemental
Bernalillo	\$65,075	-----	\$287,300	-----	1-Year Supplemental
Lincoln	\$45,412	-----	\$214,500	-----	1-Year Supplemental
Sierra	\$35,256	-----	\$138,400	-----	5-year
Torrance	\$50,727	-----	\$132,600	-----	5-year
A1	\$89,741	\$59,574 - \$137,106	\$409,167	\$247,900 - \$528,900	1-Year Supplemental
A2	\$66,952	\$50,264 - \$83,639	\$250,250	\$185,000 - \$315,500	1-Year Supplemental
A3	\$47,272	\$38,241 - \$53,651	\$143,850	\$100,900 - \$187,400	5-year
A4	\$53,537	\$34,702 - \$77,458	\$148,014	\$76,800 - \$219,200	5-year
A6	\$45,799	\$45,636 - \$45,962	\$117,100	\$82,300 - \$151,900	1-Year Supplemental
A7	\$48,473	\$40,699 - \$56,246	\$158,550	\$132,700 - \$184,400	5-year
A9	\$43,581	\$38,713 - \$55,145	\$149,514	\$95,500 - \$313,400	5-year

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Poverty

Poverty is defined as not having enough money to meet basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter. Examining poverty in an area, in addition to income, provides further insight into determining the well-being of an area's population.

Poverty in New Mexico for the Working Age 18 to 64 Years

Socorro County has a significantly higher poverty rate (31.9%) than the National average by 20.2 percent and the rate is nearly triple the National rural average. Socorro County is noted as the 22nd largest county in New Mexico for population size (16,115) in 2022. Note that 48.94 percent of the population resides in urban blocks according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The county is considered completely rural by the Office of Rural Health Policy and the OMB

Conversely, Los Alamos County's poverty rate (4.4%) is less than half of the National geographical averages. As noted in the income section of this report, Los Alamos County has significantly higher median household income and home value averages than the National and State averages.

Table 10 presents the average poverty rate and the range of poverty rates for the civilian noninstitutionalized population ages 18 to 64 years. National, State, Bernalillo County and A2 poverty rates are taken from the 2022 U.S. Census 1-year estimates. Poverty rates for the remaining counties and areas taken from 2022 U.S. 5-year estimates. Area averages are calculated by adding the numeric

count for those living below poverty in the area and dividing the total into the numeric count of the total civilian noninstitutionalized population (TCNP) ages 18 to 64 years residing in the area.

Table 10

Poverty Rates: Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population Ages 18 to 64 Years

Geographic Area	Average Poverty Rate 18 to 64 years	Lowest Level	Highest Level
U.S.	11.7%	New Hampshire 7.1%	West Virginia 17.7%
U.S. - Urban	11.9%	Rhode Island 3.2%	New Mexico 17.8%
U.S. - Rural	11.0%	New Hampshire 7.9%	West Virginia 19.3%
New Mexico	17.0%	Los Alamos 4.4%	Socorro 31.9%
NM - Urban	16.7%	-----	-----
NM - Rural	17.8%	-----	-----
Bernalillo	13.8%	-----	-----
Lincoln	16.6%	-----	-----
Sierra	27.8%	-----	-----
Torrance	22.4%	-----	-----
A1	13.2%	Los Alamos 4.4%	Rio Arriba 20.4%
A2	15.3%	Sandoval 8.9%	San Juan 23.0%
A3	21.6%	Otero 18.8%	Catron 26.1%
A4	16.5%	Eddy 11.0%	Quay 21.8%
A6	29.8%	Cibola 26.8%	McKinley 30.8%
A7	19.5%	Valencia 16.9%	Socorro 31.9%
A9	19.4%	Harding 11.7%	San Miguel 26.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Internet Accessibility

Access to fast and reliable high-speed internet service offers the opportunity to participate equally in society and engage in the global community. Internet access has become as important a measure of capacity and function as reliable transportation. The pandemic made high-speed reliable internet service essential for many jobs and an integral component of any assessment of the individual's ability to participate in rehabilitation services. A study of internet access is especially important in a State where there is a large rural area, as previous studies have shown that many rural communities lack infrastructure and access to internet and satellite networks.

Internet Accessibility in New Mexico

Over 76 percent of households in New Mexico's local service areas and individual counties have one or more computing devices. Note that Area 6 has the lowest rate (76.5%) and the rates for the remaining individual counties and DVR service areas range between 86 to 96.1 percent. When comparing the rates of internet subscription service in New Mexico's DVR service areas and counties, the rates vary from a low of 57.3 percent in A6 to 91.1 percent in Bernalillo. Residents in New Mexico have higher rates of cellular data plan use in their households than broadband such as cable, fiber optic or DSL service. Key finding is that over 42 percent of A6 households are without any internet service and that roughly one-fourth of households in Sierra and Torrance counties along with Areas 7 and 9 are without internet access. The lack of infrastructure and lack of access to online services may be impacting DVR's ability to reach consumers via only with online or phone data services.

Table 11 provides a picture of the availability of virtual accessibility in the U.S. and New Mexico, including urban and rural areas. Tables 11, 12 and 13 contain rates for types of computers and Internet subscriptions for each area.

Table 11

Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions: U.S. and NM, including Urban and Rural Areas

Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions	U.S.	U.S. - Urban	U.S. - Rural	New Mexico	NM - Urban	NM - Rural
Total households	129,870,928	103,990,597	25,880,331	848,218	651,469	196,749
TYPES OF COMPUTERS						
Has one or more types of computing devices:	95.7%	96.2%	93.8%	93.9%	94.8%	91.0%
Desktop or laptop	80.5%	81.8%	75.3%	76.4%	78.4%	69.7%
Desktop or laptop with no other type of computing device	2.5%	2.4%	3.2%	3.0%	2.9%	3.5%
Smartphone	91.3%	92.0%	88.3%	88.7%	89.7%	85.3%
Smartphone with no other type of computing device	9.5%	8.9%	11.9%	11.9%	10.9%	14.9%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer	63.9%	65.1%	59.3%	57.4%	59.2%	51.6%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer with no other type of computing device	0.7%	0.7%	0.9%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%
Other computer	2.5%	2.7%	2.0%	3.6%	3.6%	3.5%
Other computer with no other type of computing device	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
No computer	4.3%	3.8%	6.2%	6.1%	5.2%	9.0%
TYPES OF INTERNET SUBSCRIPTIONS						
With an Internet subscription:	91.2%	92.0%	87.7%	86.8%	88.9%	80.0%
Dial-up with no other type of Internet subscription	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Broadband of any type	91.0%	91.9%	87.4%	86.6%	88.7%	79.8%
Cellular data plan	85.3%	86.6%	80.2%	78.6%	81.7%	68.3%
Cellular data plan with no other type of Internet subscription	11.2%	10.4%	14.5%	11.4%	10.7%	13.7%
Broadband such as cable, fiber optic or DSL	75.9%	79.0%	63.6%	69.0%	73.5%	54.2%
Satellite Internet service	6.7%	5.5%	11.3%	8.8%	7.5%	13.0%
Without an Internet subscription	8.8%	8.0%	12.3%	13.2%	11.1%	20.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates;

Table 12

Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions: Individual Counties

Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions	Bernalillo	Lincoln	Sierra	Torrance
Total households	286,424	9,031	5,285	5,599
TYPES OF COMPUTERS				
Has one or more types of computing devices:	96.1%	95.4%	85.1%	89.3%
Desktop or laptop	82.1%	70.8%	65.6%	67.5%
Desktop or laptop with no other type of computing device	2.6%	5.0%	5.1%	3.4%
Smartphone	91.6%	85.2%	75.1%	83.7%
Smartphone with no other type of computing device	9.9%	16.6%	16.0%	15.1%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer	61.4%	53.3%	42.6%	51.1%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer with no other type of computing device	0.6%	1.2%	0.2%	0.5%
Other computer	5.2%	3.0%	10.3%	2.9%
Other computer with no other type of computing device	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
No computer	3.9%	4.6%	14.9%	10.7%
TYPES OF INTERNET SUBSCRIPTIONS				
With an Internet subscription:	91.1%	80.5%	77.6%	74.4%
Dial-up with no other type of Internet subscription	0.4%	0.6%	0.3%	0.3%
Broadband of any type	90.7%	79.9%	77.3%	74.0%
Cellular data plan	85.8%	69.5%	61.7%	59.6%
Cellular data plan with no other type of Internet subscription	10.7%	14.7%	18.2%	12.0%
Broadband such as cable, fiber optic or DSL	76.7%	53.6%	47.9%	51.3%
Satellite Internet service	6.5%	12.1%	7.9%	11.6%
Without an Internet subscription	8.9%	19.5%	22.4%	25.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table 13

Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions: Areas 1 - 4

Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions	A1	A2	A3	A4
Total households	90,091	99,156	129,210	100,356
TYPES OF COMPUTERS				
Has one or more types of computing devices:	90.1%	94.0%	91.2%	90.1%
Desktop or laptop	78.0%	78.4%	71.7%	67.9%
Desktop or laptop with no other type of computing device	3.8%	3.0%	3.4%	3.4%
Smartphone	83.7%	89.2%	85.5%	83.7%
Smartphone with no other type of computing device	7.8%	11.1%	13.5%	14.1%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer	56.8%	56.7%	54.6%	56.1%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer with no other type of computing device	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	1.2%
Other computer	4.1%	1.3%	2.0%	1.8%
Other computer with no other type of computing device	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
No computer	9.9%	6.0%	8.8%	9.9%
TYPES OF INTERNET SUBSCRIPTIONS				
With an Internet subscription:	83.6%	83.6%	83.2%	80.8%

Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions	A1	A2	A3	A4
Dial-up with no other type of Internet subscription	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%
Broadband of any type	83.4%	83.5%	83.0%	80.6%
Cellular data plan	71.6%	73.1%	75.3%	72.7%
Cellular data plan with no other type of Internet subscription	9.3%	8.6%	13.2%	15.3%
Broadband such as cable, fiber optic or DSL	64.6%	66.4%	64.0%	59.7%
Satellite Internet service	11.7%	12.7%	8.1%	9.3%
Without an Internet subscription	16.4%	16.4%	16.8%	19.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table 14

Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions: Areas 6, 7 and 9

Types of Computers and Internet Subscriptions	A6	A7	A9
Total households	29,037	31,225	60,772
TYPES OF COMPUTERS			
Has one or more types of computing devices:	76.5%	86.0%	87.0%
Desktop or laptop	52.9%	68.1%	68.7%
Desktop or laptop with no other type of computing device	3.5%	5.5%	4.7%
Smartphone	69.2%	75.6%	77.7%
Smartphone with no other type of computing device	17.2%	13.1%	12.4%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer	44.1%	49.8%	52.4%
Tablet or other portable wireless computer with no other type of computing device	1.4%	0.8%	1.3%
Other computer	5.9%	7.3%	3.4%
Other computer with no other type of computing device	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
No computer	23.5%	14.0%	13.1%
TYPES OF INTERNET SUBSCRIPTIONS			
With an Internet subscription:	57.3%	73.6%	76.3%
Dial-up with no other type of Internet subscription	0.6%	0.1%	0.5%
Broadband of any type	56.7%	73.5%	75.8%
Cellular data plan	42.1%	62.2%	64.4%
Cellular data plan with no other type of Internet subscription	17.6%	13.1%	12.5%
Broadband such as cable, fiber optic or DSL	32.1%	53.1%	53.9%
Satellite Internet service	9.4%	8.9%	11.1%
Without an Internet subscription	42.7%	26.4%	23.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment

Educational attainment refers to the highest level of education completed in terms of the highest degree, or the highest level of schooling completed. Level of education influences the job market, both in public and private sectors.

Table 15 provides rates for both High School Graduation and Education at or above a bachelor's degree for the State's total population ages 25 years and over. Area rates are calculated by adding the total population data for each area and dividing by population data for each category.

High School Graduation Rates

The National average for the total population over age of 25 whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school diploma, or its equivalent is 26.1% and the State average is 25.7%. Sierra and Torrance Counties' rates for those whose highest educational attainment level is a high school graduate or equivalency over the age of 25 are higher than the general Nation rate by roughly 10 percent and higher than the National rural average by about 3 percentage points. Note that Sierra County is considered 100 percent rural by the OMB and Office of Rural Health Policy and the U.S. Census Bureau records that 66.63 percent of Sierra County's population resides in urban blocks. A1 and Bernalillo County's high school graduation rates are lower than the general National average by roughly 4 percent. Bernalillo is considered urban, and the high school graduate attainment rate is lower than the National urban average by about 2 percentage points.

Education Level at or Above a Bachelor's Degree

The National and State averages for the total population over the age of 25 whose highest level of educational attainment is a Bachelor's degree is 21.6% and 16.9%, respectively. All DVR areas and county rates for achieving a Bachelor's degree are lower than the general National and National urban rates. A6's rate is the lowest in the State (7.6%), which is lower than the general National average by 14 percentage points and lower than the National rural average by 8.7%.

Table 15

Educational Attainment: Population 25 years and over

Geographic Area	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	Some college, no degree	Associate degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree	High school graduate or higher	Bachelor's degree or higher
U.S.	26.1%	19.1%	8.8%	21.6%	14.0%	89.6%	35.7%
U.S. - Urban	24.1%	18.8%	8.4%	23.0%	15.3%	89.6%	38.3%
U.S. - Rural	33.6%	20.4%	10.2%	16.3%	9.4%	89.9%	25.8%
New Mexico	25.7%	22.7%	9.1%	16.9%	13.5%	88.0%	30.5%
NM - Urban	24.8%	22.4%	9.2%	17.8%	14.7%	89.0%	32.5%
NM - Rural	28.5%	23.5%	8.8%	14.3%	10.1%	85.3%	24.5%
Bernalillo	22.3%	20.6%	9.1%	20.6%	18.0%	90.5%	38.6%
Lincoln	29.3%	27.5%	9.1%	14.3%	10.0%	90.1%	24.3%
Sierra	36.2%	24.3%	10.1%	11.7%	8.0%	90.3%	19.7%
Torrance	36.4%	28.6%	6.5%	9.0%	5.5%	86.0%	14.5%
A1	22.1%	20.6%	7.2%	19.9%	20.5%	90.3%	40.4%
A2	26.8%	24.2%	10.7%	16.8%	10.9%	89.4%	27.6%
A3	25.6%	22.3%	8.5%	15.4%	11.0%	82.8%	26.4%
A4	29.7%	25.0%	8.7%	10.7%	7.0%	81.0%	17.7%
A6	34.9%	25.1%	8.6%	7.6%	5.5%	81.7%	13.1%
A7	32.9%	22.7%	8.8%	10.5%	9.9%	84.8%	20.4%
A9	29.1%	24.9%	8.1%	15.1%	11.8%	89.0%	26.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Disabilities Under the Age of 65

In addition to understanding the general trends of a geographic area, it is also important to gain knowledge of the prevalence of disability in the State when engaging in strategic planning and allocating resources. In this section, demographic data regarding the State's disability population with reference to age, disability type, income, poverty and education are detailed with comparisons to the Nation and to local regions.

Disability Status

The estimated average for the number of people with disabilities residing in the Nation in 2022 is 13.4 percent. The State's percentage is higher than the National average by 3.7 percent, averaging at 17.1 percent. Of the civilian noninstitutionalized population ages 18 to 64 years in New Mexico, 26 percent of the residents in Sierra County report a disability, which is significantly higher than the National average by 15 percent; higher than the National urban average by 15.4 percent and is 13.2 percent higher than the Nation's rural average of 12.8 percent for the same age group. The average percentage rate for individuals 18 to 64 years reporting a disability in A1 is recorded at 10.9 percent, which is lower than the State average by 3.5 percent and reflects the general and urban U.S. averages.

Disability Status estimates are calculated for the Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population (TCNP) by the U.S. Census. National, State, and Area averages are provided in Table 16.

Table 16

Disability Status: Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population

Geographic Area	With a disability	Under 18 years	18 to 64 years
United States	13.4%	4.8%	11.0%
United States -- Urban	12.9%	4.8%	10.6%
United States -- Rural	15.4%	5.0%	12.8%
New Mexico	17.1%	5.7%	14.4%
New Mexico -- Urban	16.4%	5.4%	14.1%
New Mexico -- Rural	19.3%	6.7%	15.3%
Bernalillo	16.2%	6.5%	13.6%
Lincoln	23.1%	4.7%	18.5%
Sierra	30.4%	5.2%	26.0%
Torrance	23.1%	7.0%	20.5%
A1	14.1%	5.2%	10.9%
A2	15.2%	2.8%	12.4%
A3	17.3%	6.1%	14.7%
A4	16.3%	6.0%	14.8%
A6	16.9%	3.5%	15.1%
A7	21.9%	6.6%	19.9%
A9	22.3%	5.1%	19.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Disability Types

Knowledge of the types of disabilities reported by area residents helps New Mexico DVR anticipate and prepare for meeting service needs and assisting the consumer to obtain necessary accommodations to maximize function and employability.

The data indicates that the State's rates for each disability category exceed the National averages, with the exception of self-care disability, by roughly one or two percentage points.

Cognitive disabilities is the most frequently reported disability type in among individuals ages 18 to 64 in the State of New Mexico (6.8%) and the rate is 1.6 percentage points higher than the National average (5.2%). Sierra County's rate for individuals ages 18 to 64 reporting a cognitive disability is 10 percent higher than the National average and AI's rate is lower than the National average by about 1 percentage point. (Important to note that mental health impairments are not included in the ACS data.)

The rates for individuals ages 18 to 64 reporting ambulatory and/or independent living disabilities in the four individual counties and six of the seven areas are higher than the National average for the respective disability category.

Disability types are classified into six categories and detailed by age in the U.S. Census data. Tables 17, 18, 19 and 20 provide specific data for the civilian noninstitutionalized population. Table categories include the population under 18 years and the population ages 18-64. Disability type percentages are calculated by dividing the total number of individuals reporting the disability type within the designated geographic area by the number of noninstitutionalized civilians residing in the area.

Table 17

Disability Types and Age: U.S. and NM

Disability Types and Age	Percent with a disability					
	U.S.	U.S. - Urban	U.S. - Rural	New Mexico	NM - Urban	NM - Rural
With a hearing difficulty	3.7%	3.3%	5.1%	5.7%	5.2%	7.2%
Population under 18 years	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%	0.8%	0.7%	1.1%
Population 18 to 64 years	2.0%	1.8%	2.9%	3.2%	3.0%	3.9%
With a vision difficulty	2.5%	2.4%	2.8%	3.7%	3.6%	4.1%
Population under 18 years	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%	1.3%	1.2%	1.6%
Population 18 to 64 years	2.1%	2.0%	2.5%	3.3%	3.3%	3.2%
With a cognitive difficulty	5.7%	5.6%	5.9%	7.2%	7.1%	7.4%
Population under 18 years	4.8%	4.8%	4.9%	5.4%	5.0%	6.5%
Population 18 to 64 years	5.2%	5.1%	5.5%	6.8%	6.9%	6.3%
With an ambulatory difficulty	6.7%	6.5%	7.9%	8.7%	8.2%	10.2%
Population under 18 years	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.7%	0.8%	0.7%
Population 18 to 64 years	4.4%	4.2%	5.6%	6.0%	5.6%	7.3%
With a self-care difficulty	2.6%	2.5%	2.8%	3.2%	3.1%	3.4%
Population under 18 years	1.1%	1.2%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%
Population 18 to 64 years	1.7%	1.6%	2.0%	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%
With an independent living difficulty	6.0%	5.9%	6.5%	7.3%	7.2%	7.7%
Population 18 to 64 years	3.9%	3.8%	4.5%	4.9%	5.0%	4.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 18

Disability Types and Age: Individual Counties

Disability Types and Age	Percent with a disability			
	Bernalillo	Lincoln	Sierra	Torrance
With a hearing difficulty	5.1%	8.9%	10.1%	9.3%
Population under 18 years	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Population 18 to 64 years	2.7%	5.6%	5.6%	5.2%
With a vision difficulty	3.4%	4.9%	8.1%	6.7%
Population under 18 years	1.2%	1.8%	2.5%	0.6%
Population 18 to 64 years	3.2%	4.4%	7.4%	6.1%
With a cognitive difficulty	7.2%	5.5%	12.2%	8.1%
Population under 18 years	5.8%	4.3%	3.6%	7.2%
Population 18 to 64 years	7.1%	5.3%	14.4%	7.1%
With an ambulatory difficulty	7.6%	12.5%	17.5%	12.3%
Population under 18 years	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Population 18 to 64 years	5.1%	9.4%	11.0%	10.1%
With a self-care difficulty	3.1%	3.6%	6.1%	4.4%
Population under 18 years	1.0%	0.7%	0.0%	1.0%
Population 18 to 64 years	2.2%	3.3%	6.6%	3.3%
With an independent living difficulty	7.1%	6.9%	11.7%	8.2%
Population 18 to 64 years	5.0%	5.4%	10.1%	4.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table 19

Disability Types and Age: Areas 1 - 4

Disability Types and Age	Percent with a disability			
	A1	A2	A3	A4
With a hearing difficulty	4.8%	6.1%	5.7%	4.8%
Population under 18 years	0.6%	0.8%	0.9%	1.1%
Population 18 to 64 years	2.7%	3.1%	3.4%	3.2%
With a vision difficulty	3.1%	3.6%	3.3%	3.4%
Population under 18 years	1.3%	0.6%	0.9%	2.0%
Population 18 to 64 years	2.4%	2.8%	2.7%	2.9%
With a cognitive difficulty	4.8%	6.2%	7.0%	6.1%
Population under 18 years	4.7%	3.1%	6.0%	5.3%
Population 18 to 64 years	4.3%	5.5%	6.9%	6.0%
With an ambulatory difficulty	6.7%	6.8%	8.2%	8.2%
Population under 18 years	0.9%	0.8%	0.5%	0.8%
Population 18 to 64 years	4.5%	4.8%	6.0%	7.3%
With a self-care difficulty	2.3%	2.3%	3.2%	3.0%
Population under 18 years	1.0%	1.1%	1.2%	1.1%
Population 18 to 64 years	1.6%	1.4%	2.2%	2.8%
With an independent living difficulty	4.4%	5.3%	6.0%	5.1%
Population 18 to 64 years	3.5%	4.5%	5.5%	4.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table 20

Disability Types and Age: Areas 6, 7, and 9

Disability Types and Age	Percent with a disability		
	A6	A7	A9
With a hearing difficulty	5.8%	7.5%	8.5%
Population under 18 years	0.7%	0.5%	0.2%
Population 18 to 64 years	3.0%	5.3%	4.7%
With a vision difficulty	3.9%	6.4%	6.5%
Population under 18 years	0.6%	2.3%	0.8%
Population 18 to 64 years	3.0%	6.1%	5.9%
With a cognitive difficulty	6.8%	9.4%	8.9%
Population under 18 years	3.5%	5.7%	4.7%
Population 18 to 64 years	6.4%	9.7%	9.2%
With an ambulatory difficulty	9.4%	11.4%	11.1%
Population under 18 years	0.8%	1.1%	1.6%
Population 18 to 64 years	8.4%	9.5%	8.4%
With a self-care difficulty	4.1%	5.7%	4.2%
Population under 18 years	1.0%	1.2%	1.2%
Population 18 to 64 years	3.7%	4.8%	3.4%
With an independent living difficulty	6.0%	8.4%	7.5%
Population 18 to 64 years	5.7%	8.3%	6.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Disabling Environments Index

The environment contributes to the process of an individual's ability to engage in meaningful tasks, by either enabling participation (enablement) or creating barriers to participation (disablement). An example, blindness or having serious vision difficulty even when wearing glasses (= vision disability) may be more disabling in areas without a mass transit system. Researchers at the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) created the "Disabling Environments Index" which is designed to take a snapshot of the disabling nature of one's local environment and be used as an indicator of local area accessibility.

The Index examines the reporting of an independent living disability among the focus population ages 18-64 living in community settings who also reported a hearing, vision, ambulatory, and/or cognitive disability. In the 2023 Annual Disability Compendium, the Disabling Environments Index for civilians in the United States with hearing, vision, ambulatory, and/or cognitive disabilities who also reported an independent living disability in the year 2021 was 32.4 percent. Researchers at the NIDILRR graciously calculated State data by request. Table 21 contains the Disablement Index for the 50 States in ranking order from lowest index rate to the highest.

Table 21

Disabling Environments Index: Ranking Order – Lowest to Highest

Disabling Environments Index - United States					
United States Index = 32.4					
State Ranking Low to High					
Rank	State	Index	Rank	State	Index
1	North Dakota	17.8	26	Minnesota	32.4
2	Nebraska	24.3	27	Massachusetts	32.5
3	South Dakota	25.3	28	Alabama	32.6
4	Wyoming	26.3	29	Oregon	32.7
5	Idaho	27.1	30	Indiana	32.9
6	Maryland	27.7	31	Mississippi	33
7	Nevada	28.4	32	North Carolina	33
8	Alaska	29.7	33	Kentucky	33.2
9	Colorado	29.7	34	Tennessee	33.2
10	Texas	29.9	35	Delaware	33.4
11	Arizona	30.1	36	Illinois	33.5
12	Vermont	30.3	37	Connecticut	33.6
13	Montana	30.8	38	Pennsylvania	33.6
14	Ohio	30.9	39	Wisconsin	33.7
15	South Carolina	30.9	40	Rhode Island	33.9
16	Virginia	30.9	41	California	34.1
17	Iowa	31.2	42	Kansas	34.1
18	Oklahoma	31.2	43	Hawaii	34.2
19	Utah	31.5	44	West Virginia	34.2
20	Louisiana	31.8	45	New Jersey	34.3
21	Washington	32	46	Michigan	34.8
22	New Mexico	32.1	47	New York	35.1
23	Missouri	32.1	48	New Mexico	35.2
24	New Hampshire	32.2	49	Arkansas	35.8
25	Georgia	32.3	50	Maine	40.1

Source for US rate is from: Houtenville, A., Bach, S., and Paul, S. (2023). Annual Report on People with Disabilities in America: 2023. Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability. A. Houtenville prepared State Data specifically for Interwork and is not published in the Annual Report.

New Mexico ranks in the 48th position (lowest to highest rate scale) when examining how many individuals who reported a hearing, vision, ambulatory and/or a cognitive disability also reported an independent living disability (35.2%). North Dakota ranked in the first position, with less than 18 percent of individuals who reported a specific disability and also reported an independent living disability. Conversely, slightly more than 40 percent of individuals residing in the state of Maine who reported a specific physical disability also reported an independent living disability.

When examining the Disabling Environments Index, the following observation is noted: The top four states with the lowest ranking disabling environments scores have urban populations ranging between 57.2 to 73 percent while the four states with the highest disabling environments scores have urban populations ranging between 38.6 to 87.4 percent. In previous years, the top four states with the lowest ranking index scores had urban populations of less than 66% while the four states with the highest index scores had urban populations of over 70 percent. More in-depth analysis of the Disabling Environments Index and State urban/rural population rates is needed to determine if there is a correlation of the local environmental accessibility and urban/rural population rates.

Disability and Income

Tables 22, 23 and 24 provide statistics for median earnings (income) for the civilian noninstitutionalized population (CNP) with earnings and with disabilities age 16 and over. The numbers are rounded to the nearest dollar amount.

People with disabilities earn approximately \$12,998 per year less than individuals without a disability. In the State of New Mexico, people with disabilities earn roughly \$10,614 less than people without disabilities. People with disabilities residing in Rural New Mexico earn \$2,137 less than individuals with disabilities residing in urban areas of New Mexico. Females with disabilities in Torrance County have the highest earnings in the State, with an average that is higher than the National average for females with a disability by \$3,930 and higher than the State average for females by \$7,614. Females with disabilities in A3 earn \$18,435 per year, which is significantly less than the National and State urban and rural averages for females with disabilities.

When comparing the median earnings for males with and without disabilities, males with disabilities in Torrance County earn \$45,223, which is \$13,426 higher than males without disabilities in Torrance County. When compared to all National and State geographical averages for males with disabilities, Areas 1 and 9 along with Torrance County's median earnings for males with disabilities are significantly higher than the National and State averages.

Table 22

Median Earnings for People with Disabilities 16 Years and Older: U.S. and New Mexico

Median Earnings: People with Disabilities	U.S.	U.S. - Urban	U.S. - Rural	New Mexico	NM - Urban	NM - Rural
Total CNP 16+ with earnings	\$42,609	\$43,072	\$41,492	\$36,245	\$36,650	\$34,158
With a disability:	\$30,885	\$30,897	\$30,840	\$26,549	\$26,850	\$24,713
Male	\$35,985	\$35,687	\$37,081	\$30,579	\$31,814	\$23,682
Female	\$26,383	\$26,746	\$24,650	\$22,699	\$22,345	\$27,692
No disability:	\$43,883	\$44,376	\$42,186	\$37,163	\$37,563	\$35,293
Male	\$51,257	\$51,392	\$50,776	\$41,299	\$41,830	\$39,567
Female	\$37,470	\$38,354	\$34,966	\$33,552	\$34,195	\$31,782

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 23

Median Earnings for People with Disabilities 16 Years and Older: Counties, Areas 1 and 2

Median Earnings: People with Disabilities	Bernalillo	Lincoln	Sierra	Torrance	A1	A2
Total CNP 16+ with earnings	\$39,747	\$26,699	\$23,499	\$30,428	\$52,683	\$36,568
With a disability:	\$27,302	\$26,596	\$15,407	\$38,750	\$57,335	\$24,001
Male	\$31,238	\$32,964	\$15,064	\$45,223	\$59,593	\$25,935
Female	\$24,122	\$23,143	\$20,500	\$30,313	\$27,472	\$20,894
No disability:	\$41,077	\$26,714	\$25,122	\$28,588	\$52,872	\$37,346
Male	\$45,796	\$34,165	\$25,472	\$31,797	\$61,507	\$44,738
Female	\$37,016	\$23,396	\$24,201	\$26,027	\$43,807	\$32,979

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table 24

Median Earnings for People with Disabilities 16 Years and Older: Areas

Median Earnings: People with Disabilities	A3	A4	A6	A7	A9
Total CNP 16+ with earnings	\$27,816	\$33,970	\$30,560	\$30,622	\$29,483
With a disability:	\$22,088	\$25,065	\$20,394	\$32,152	\$32,080
Male	\$23,164	\$32,861	\$25,191	\$34,399	\$44,066
Female	\$18,435	\$19,805	\$22,460	\$21,922	\$28,043
No disability:	\$28,524	\$34,774	\$32,077	\$31,056	\$29,459
Male	\$33,894	\$44,055	\$36,181	\$33,377	\$33,321
Female	\$23,844	\$27,021	\$27,223	\$27,478	\$26,976

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Disability and Poverty

The University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability and the United States Census Bureau publish statistics on disability and poverty. This section contains the most recent information published by both organizations.

University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability

According to the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability, in the year 2021, an estimated 30% of the noninstitutionalized civilians with disabilities ages 18 to 64 years living in New Mexico were living below the poverty line. The difference between the largest and smallest poverty rates for people with disabilities across New Mexico counties was 52.6 percent. Los Alamos County had the lowest poverty rate (3.5%) for people with disabilities ages 18 to 64 years and DeBaca County had the highest rate (56.1%). Table 25 summarizes the 2021 poverty rates for ages 18 to 64 years in all 33 of New Mexico's counties.

Table 25

Disability and Poverty Rates: Civilians Ages 18 to 64 – New Mexico Counties

<i>Disability and Poverty Rates: Civilians Ages 18 to 64 - New Mexico Counties</i>						
	Disability			No Disability		
County	Total	Count	% [1]	Total	Count	% [2]
New Mexico	169,274	50,815	30	1,046,415	165,008	15.8
Individual Counties						
Bernalillo	52,090	14,850	28.5	358,116	48,821	13.6
Lincoln	1,705	210	12.3	8,877	1,199	13.5
Sierra	1,370	380	27.7	4,161	1,159	27.9
Torrance	1,587	611	38.5	7,050	1,522	21.6
A1						
Los Alamos	718	25	3.5	10,780	556	5.2
Rio Arriba	3,128	1,042	33.3	19,905	3,639	18.3
Santa Fe	9,505	2,385	25.1	76,741	8,038	10.5
A2						
Sandoval	10,129	1,790	17.7	76,085	7,482	9.8
San Juan	9,138	2,985	32.7	61,861	13,056	21.1
A3						
Catron	442	189	42.8	1,157	237	20.5
Doña Ana	16,925	5,518	32.6	108,153	22,394	20.7
Grant	2,509	820	32.7	11,846	2,643	22.3
Hidalgo	388	163	42	1,892	321	17
Luna	2,168	930	42.9	10,800	2,247	20.8
Otero	6,404	2,132	33.3	28,404	4,956	17.4
A4						
Chaves	6,336	2,080	32.8	30,147	4,778	15.8
Curry	4,374	1,464	33.5	21,926	3,515	16
De Baca	98	55	56.1	739	121	16.4
Eddy	4,324	1,247	28.8	31,258	3,501	11.2
Lea	4,177	1,397	33.4	36,249	4,830	13.3
Quay	1,073	347	32.3	3,433	660	19.2
Roosevelt	1,871	472	25.2	8,712	1,749	20.1
A6						

Disability and Poverty Rates: Civilians Ages 18 to 64 - New Mexico Counties						
	Disability			No Disability		
County	Total	Count	% [1]	Total	Count	% [2]
Cibola	2,778	1,114	40.1	12,226	3,191	26.1
McKinley	6,469	2,570	39.7	36,093	11,029	30.6
A7						
Socorro	1,699	578	34	7,483	2,490	33.3
Valencia	8,778	2,252	25.7	34,284	4,970	14.5
A9						
Colfax	1,335	378	28.3	4,954	875	17.7
Guadalupe	374	44	11.8	1,710	326	19.1
Harding	46	2	4.3	269	31	11.5
Mora	837	329	39.3	1,517	129	8.5
San Miguel	3,505	1,661	47.4	11,723	2,380	20.3
Taos	2,598	651	25.1	16,436	2,044	12.4
Union	396	144	36.4	1,428	119	8.3
Source: Paul, S., Rogers, S., Bach, S., & Houtenville, A. (2023). 2023 State Report for New Mexico County-Level Data: Poverty. Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability. Take from U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. https://data.census.gov . Based on a sample and subject to sampling variability.						
[1] The percentage of people with disabilities in poverty.						
[2] The percentage of people without disabilities in poverty.						

United States Census Bureau

The official poverty measure compares thresholds of family size and age of the family members to an individual's or family's pre-tax cash income. The Census Bureau uses the thresholds to determine who is living in poverty. Poverty levels determined in this section of the CSNA report are calculated using the 2022 one-year estimate table "Age by Ratio of Income to Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months by Disability Status and Type" published by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Census Bureau provided the following definition regarding income-to-poverty ratios:

"Income-to-poverty ratios represent the ratio of family or unrelated individual income to their appropriate poverty threshold. Ratios below 1.00 indicate that the income for the respective family or unrelated individual is below the official definition of poverty, while a ratio of 1.00 or greater indicates income above the poverty level. A ratio of 1.25, for example, indicates that income was 125 percent above the appropriate poverty threshold" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004).

In this section, poverty and disability statistics are presented. Two different questions regarding poverty and disability are addressed:

- 1) What is the proportion of the total civilian noninstitutionalized population (TCNP) ages 18 and over who have a specific disability type and live in poverty?; and
- 2) Of the total number of the civilian noninstitutionalized population ages 18 and over that live in poverty, and have a disability, what proportion have a specific disability type?

Before reviewing disability and poverty statistics, note that the State of New Mexico's percentage of residents that are 18 years and older (78.3%), reflects the National average.

When answering question #1 with regard to hearing, vision, and self-care disabilities, note that in each county represented in New Mexico, roughly one percent of the TCNP ages 18 year and older that lives in poverty, reported either a hearing, vision, or self-care disability. Table 26 contains National and State averages in response to question #1.

Table 26

Poverty, Disability Type, and Population: Ages 18 and Over – 2022: U.S. and NM

Poverty, Disability Type, and Population: Ages 18 and Over	United States	New Mexico
TCNP:	324,481,864	2,058,039
18 years and over:	253,240,885	1,610,656
Percent of population 18 and over	78.0%	78.3%
Number of 18 years and over population classified in under .50 to .99 poverty ratio	29,341,173	258,980
Percent of 18 years and over population classified in under .50 to .99 poverty ratio	11.6%	16.1%
With a disability:	3.2%	4.6%
With a hearing difficulty	0.7%	1.2%
With a vision difficulty	0.7%	1.2%
With a cognitive difficulty	1.5%	2.2%
With an ambulatory difficulty	1.8%	2.5%
With a self-care difficulty	0.7%	1.0%
With an independent living difficulty	1.5%	2.0%
No disability	8.3%	11.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

In New Mexico, among individuals ages 18 and over that live in poverty and have a disability, ambulatory disability is the most frequently reported disability type. Self-care disability was reported less frequently and ranked in the lowest position in New Mexico. Table 27 identifies disability types for the population that lives in poverty and are age 18 and over (answering question #2).

Table 27

Disability Types Among the 18+ Population Living in Poverty: Nation and State

Disability Types Among the 18+ Population Living in Poverty	U.S.	New Mexico
<i>Number of 18 years and over population classified in under .50 to .99 poverty ratio</i>	29,341,173	258,980
<i>Number of 18 years and over in Poverty with a Disability:</i>	8,230,762	73,621
<i>With a disability:</i>	28.1%	28.4%
<i>With a hearing difficulty</i>	20.5%	25.6%
<i>With a vision difficulty</i>	20.6%	26.0%
<i>With a cognitive difficulty</i>	45.7%	48.2%
<i>With an ambulatory difficulty</i>	55.0%	55.2%
<i>With a self-care difficulty</i>	22.0%	22.7%
<i>With an independent living difficulty</i>	45.4%	44.7%
<i>No disability</i>	71.9%	71.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment for Individual with Disabilities

Table 28 and 29 contain educational attainment rates for individuals with disabilities for the total civilian noninstitutionalized population (TCNP) ages 25 and older. Data is available for 12 of the State's 33 counties. In lieu of area averages, county data is provided. Note that all county data with the exception of Bernalillo County is taken from the U.S. Census 2022 five-year estimates.

Table 28

Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: United States and New Mexico

Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: United States and New Mexico	United States		New Mexico	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
TCNP Age 25 and Over	225,493,657		1,421,577	
Population Age 25 and Over	38,005,098	187,488,559	308,577	1,113,000
Less than high school graduate	17.0%	8.8%	16.5%	10.5%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	33.0%	24.4%	30.3%	24.6%
Some college or associate's degree	29.0%	27.7%	33.5%	31.2%
Bachelor's degree or higher	21.0%	39.1%	19.7%	33.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 29

Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: Counties

Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: Counties	Bernalillo		Chaves	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
TCNP Age 25 and Over	466,655		40,781	
Population Age 25 and Over	90,749	375,906	10,461	30,320
Less than high school graduate	12.6%	8.6%	24.9%	16.2%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	30.3%	20.3%	33.8%	24.4%
Some college or associate's degree	32.9%	28.8%	30.6%	39.2%
Bachelor's degree or higher	24.2%	42.2%	10.7%	20.2%
Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: Counties	Curry		Doña Ana	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
TCNP Age 25 and Over	27,462		132,041	
Population Age 25 and Over	6,875	20,587	26,153	105,888
Less than high school graduate	28.2%	17.6%	27.2%	16.2%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	32.1%	25.0%	25.3%	21.7%
Some college or associate's degree	29.4%	34.3%	24.9%	29.4%
Bachelor's degree or higher	10.3%	23.1%	22.6%	32.8%
Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: Counties	Eddy		Lea	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
TCNP Age 25 and Over	39,180		41,806	
Population Age 25 and Over	7,897	31,283	7,047	34,759
Less than high school graduate	21.4%	14.3%	31.3%	21.7%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	32.8%	29.1%	33.3%	33.1%
Some college or associate's degree	30.9%	37.4%	27.2%	29.0%
Bachelor's degree or higher	14.9%	19.1%	8.2%	16.3%
Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: Counties	McKinley		Otero	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
TCNP Age 25 and Over	44,647		40,401	
Population Age 25 and Over	9,732	34,915	10,889	29,512
Less than high school graduate	33.6%	15.2%	18.0%	10.9%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	32.9%	36.9%	35.4%	27.8%
Some college or associate's degree	27.6%	34.0%	33.0%	36.7%
Bachelor's degree or higher	5.9%	13.9%	13.6%	24.6%
Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: Counties	Sandoval		San Juan	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
TCNP Age 25 and Over	103,288		78,756	
Population Age 25 and Over	18,946	84,342	17,171	61,585
Less than high school graduate	14.4%	6.7%	24.1%	11.6%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	29.2%	23.9%	30.0%	29.1%

Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: Counties	Sandoval		San Juan	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
Some college or associate's degree	32.2%	35.4%	36.2%	41.8%
Bachelor's degree or higher	24.1%	34.0%	9.7%	17.5%
Educational Attainment for Individuals with Disabilities: Counties	Santa Fe		Valencia	
	With a Disability	No Disability	With a Disability	No Disability
TCNP Age 25 and Over	115,148		50,826	
Population Age 25 and Over	19,335	95,813	13,957	36,869
Less than high school graduate	13.4%	8.3%	21.7%	12.4%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	25.2%	19.9%	34.4%	29.0%
Some college or associate's degree	29.9%	27.0%	32.7%	33.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher	31.5%	44.8%	11.2%	25.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

In educational attainment at the college graduate level, individuals with disabilities have lower educational attainment rates than their peers without disabilities. In review of the available data, Doña Ana and Santa Fe Counties have the lowest level of high school graduation attainment for individuals with disabilities (25.3%, 25.2% respectively) and Otero County has the highest rate.

Doña Ana and Santa Fe Counties are noted to have the second and third highest populations in the State. Santa Fe County ranks 4th in the State for median household income, ranks 2nd for median home value, and ranks 5th (from lowest to highest) for poverty rate for ages 18 to 64. When using 2022 one-year estimates, Santa Fe County ranks 4th in the State for internet access. Doña Ana County ranks 13th in the State for median household income, ranks 10th for median home value, and ranks 22nd (from lowest to highest) for poverty rate for ages 18 to 64. When using 2022 one-year estimates, Doña Ana County ranks 3rd in the State for internet access.

Otero County ranks 14th in the State for median household income, ranks 18th for median home value, and ranks 15th (from lowest to highest) for poverty rate for ages 18 to 64. Otero County ranks 5th for internet access using 2022 one year estimates. Achievement of higher levels of education are important considerations for individuals with disabilities served by DVR if they are to achieve self-sufficiency through employment.

General Trends of Employment, Occupations, Industries, and Labor Force Participation for the Civilian Non-Institutionalized Population

Local economies thrive based on employment, occupations, and industries available to area residents and the individuals' participation in the labor force. Knowledge of the local area labor force, internet accessibility, employment rates, occupations, industries, and labor force participation facilitates helping customers find local job opportunities and securing appropriate job placement.

The labor force includes all people classified in the civilian labor force, plus members of the U.S. Armed Forces (people on active duty with the United States Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard). The civilian labor force consists of people classified as employed or unemployed and

actively looking for work. The labor force participation rate represents the proportion of the population that is in the labor force.

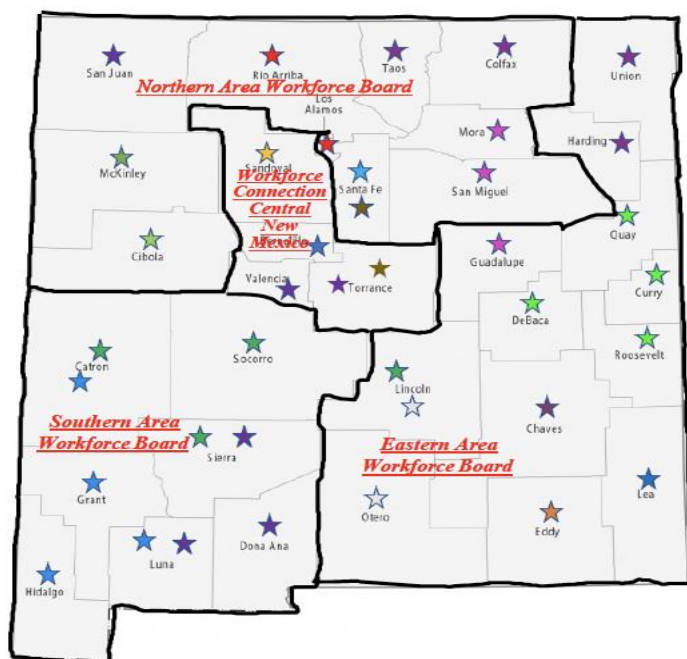
Local Workforce Areas

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions establishes the State's workforce development areas and publishes information on the State's labor market and trends. Currently, New Mexico has four workforce development areas. The workforce board structure may change in the near future, pending adaption of the transformation and redesign analysis results and the accepting of the draft of the 2024 - 2028 Combined Partners 4-year State Plan. The proposed restructure will convert the local workforce regions into two workforce regional areas: Metro/Urban Area and Rural Area. The Metro/Urban Area would cover Sandoval, Bernalillo, and Santa Fe Counties which border each other in the Central portion of the State and include Doña Ana County, located in the southcentral portion of the State. The remaining 29 counties would be part of the Rural Workforce Area.

Map X contains the current local workforce area structure. Table 30 contains detailed information comparing the local workforce areas and the DVR service area structure. Map 2 is a revision of Map 1, designating the workforce board service regions. This information is presented to help inform DVR on how a proposed restructure may have service delivery implications, financial impact, and provide needed information as DVR engages in strategic planning for the future.

Map 2

State of New Mexico Local Area Workforce Boards



Source: DVR of New Mexico. Revisions made by Interwork Research Team.

Table 30

Workforce Board Counties and DVR Areas Served

Workforce Board	Counties Served by Workforce Board	Individual County and DVR Area Served by Workforce Board
Northern Area Workforce Board	Cibola, Colfax, Los Alamos, McKinley, Mora, Rio Arriba, San Juan, San Miguel, Santa Fe, Taos	Area 1; Area 6; Part of Area 2 (San Juan); Part of Area 9 (Colfax, Mora, San Miguel, and Taos)
Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico	Bernalillo, Sandoval, Torrance, Valencia	Bernalillo; Torrance; Part of Area 2 (Sandoval); Part of Area 7 (Valencia);
Southwestern Workforce Board	Catron, Doña Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, Sierra, Socorro	Sierra; Part of Area 3 (Catron, Doña Ana, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna); Part of Area 7 (Socorro);
Eastern Area Workforce Board	Chaves, Curry, De Baca, Eddy, Guadalupe, Harding, Lea, Lincoln, Otero, Quay, Roosevelt, Union	Lincoln; Area 4; Part of Area 2 (Otero); Part of Area 9 (Guadalupe, Harding, Union)

Internet Accessibility of Individuals in the Labor Force

The U.S. Census Bureau gathers data regarding the availability of the Internet to the working age population and based on employment status. In some instances, certain areas of the 50 states that have the lowest populations of people may lack the infrastructure to support internet accessibility.

The data for working age individuals (ages 18 to 64) in the State indicates that almost 90 percent of the working age population has access to broadband Internet subscriptions. When reviewing individual county data, 69.4 percent of Harding County's working age adults has access to broadband internet services, which is significantly lower than the National and State averages, including rural averages.

The employment status data includes civilians ages 16 and over, with no cut-off age. The data cites that those who are unemployed in Harding, Otero and Bernalillo counties have higher rates in the category "percent without broadband internet" than those who do not participate in the labor force. The gap of difference for the unemployed and those not in the labor force who do not have broadband internet service in Sierra and Grant Counties ranges from 3.9 to 7.3 percent. is less than 1 percentage point. Access to broadband Internet for those who do not participate in the labor force ranges from 73.5 to 87.4 percentage points, which reflects the National and State averages for all geographic areas.

Tables 31 and 32 provide statistics collected by the U.S. Census Bureau with regard to working age and employment status. Five counties were selected to represent the DVR service areas in lieu of an area average. Counties were selected based on the numeric population size for ages 18 to 64 years. The statistics provided for the Nation, State, Otero and Bernalillo counties is taken from the 2022 one-year estimates. Data for Harding, Sierra and Grant counties are taken from 2022 five-year estimates.

Table 31

Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status for the U.S. and New Mexico

<i>Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status</i>	United States				New Mexico			
	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household
		Percent Broadband internet	Percent without internet			Percent Broadband internet	Percent without internet	
18 to 64 years	196,865,344	94.3%	4.0%	1.6%	1,218,351	89.9%	6.6%	3.4%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS								
Civilian population 16 years and over	260,431,565	92.3%	4.6%	3.0%	1,654,550	87.6%	7.4%	4.8%
In labor force	168,284,498	95.1%	3.6%	1.3%	974,899	91.6%	5.9%	2.4%
Employed	161,195,196	95.2%	3.5%	1.3%	928,438	92.0%	5.7%	2.3%
Unemployed	7,089,302	92.5%	5.3%	2.1%	46,461	84.7%	9.7%	5.6%
Not in labor force	92,147,067	87.2%	6.4%	6.2%	679,651	81.9%	9.6%	8.3%
<i>Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status</i>	United States -- Urban				New Mexico -- Urban			
	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household
		Percent Broadband internet	Percent without internet			Percent Broadband internet	Percent without internet	
18 to 64 years	159,285,095	94.9%	3.7%	1.4%	934,268	91.9%	5.4%	2.7%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS								
Civilian population 16 years and over	207,618,828	93.1%	4.2%	2.6%	1,242,017	89.6%	6.2%	4.1%
In labor force	136,882,560	95.5%	3.3%	1.1%	760,138	93.1%	4.8%	2.0%
Employed	130,909,444	95.7%	3.2%	1.1%	726,233	93.4%	4.6%	2.0%
Unemployed	5,973,116	92.9%	5.1%	2.0%	33,905	87.5%	9.7%	2.7%
Not in labor force	70,736,268	88.3%	6.0%	5.5%	481,879	84.0%	8.4%	7.4%
<i>Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status</i>	United States -- Rural				New Mexico -- Rural			
	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household
		Percent Broadband internet	Percent without internet			Percent Broadband internet	Percent without internet	
18 to 64 years	37,580,249	91.9%	5.4%	2.6%	284,083	83.4%	10.8%	5.6%

<i>Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status</i>	United States -- Rural				New Mexico -- Rural			
	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household
		Percent Broadband internet	Percent without internet			Percent Broadband internet	Percent without internet	
18 to 64 years	37,580,249	91.9%	5.4%	2.6%	284,083	83.4%	10.8%	5.6%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS								
Civilian population 16 years and over	52,812,737	89.2%	6.0%	4.5%	412,533	81.7%	11.0%	7.1%
In labor force	31,401,938	93.0%	4.8%	2.1%	214,761	86.3%	9.7%	3.9%
Employed	30,285,752	93.1%	4.8%	2.0%	202,205	86.8%	9.7%	3.3%
Unemployed	1,116,186	90.7%	6.2%	3.0%	12,556	77.0%	9.5%	13.4%
Not in labor force	21,410,799	83.7%	7.8%	8.2%	197,772	76.7%	12.5%	10.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Table 32

Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status for Counties in New Mexico

<i>Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status</i>	Harding			
	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household
		Percent Broadband internet	Percent without internet	
18 to 64 years	366	69.4%	27.0%	3.6%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS				
Civilian population 16 years and over	550	68.5%	20.9%	10.2%
In labor force	305	63.6%	30.5%	5.9%
Employed	283	65.7%	28.3%	6.0%
Unemployed	22	36.4%	59.1%	4.5%
Not in labor force	245	74.7%	9.0%	15.5%
<i>Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status</i>	Sierra			
	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household
		Percent Broadband internet	Percent without internet	
18 to 64 years	5,440	87.0%	4.4%	8.5%

EMPLOYMENT STATUS				
Civilian population 16 years and over	9,530	80.8%	6.2%	12.8%
In labor force	3,731	92.1%	4.4%	3.4%
Employed	3,554	91.7%	4.7%	3.6%
Unemployed	177	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Not in labor force	5,799	73.5%	7.3%	18.9%
<i>Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status</i>	Grant			
	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household
		Percent Broadband internet	Percent without internet	
18 to 64 years	14,203	91.2%	5.2%	3.7%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS				
Civilian population 16 years and over	22,416	86.9%	6.0%	7.0%
In labor force	10,454	91.3%	5.3%	3.4%
Employed	9,670	90.9%	5.5%	3.6%
Unemployed	784	97.3%	2.7%	0.0%
Not in labor force	11,962	83.0%	6.6%	10.2%
<i>Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status</i>	Otero			
	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household
		Percent Broadband internet	Percent without internet	
18 to 64 years	38,205	92.4%	6.5%	1.1%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS				
Civilian population 16 years and over	46,478	89.7%	6.5%	3.8%
In labor force	25,404	91.6%	8.0%	0.4%
Employed	23,910	91.5%	8.0%	0.4%
Unemployed	1,494	92.8%	7.2%	0.0%
Not in labor force	21,074	87.4%	4.8%	7.8%

<i>Internet Accessibility: Working Age and by Employment Status</i>	Bernalillo			
	Total	With a computer		Percent no computer in household
		Percent Broadband internet	Percent without internet	
18 to 64 years	406,631	93.3%	4.5%	2.0%
EMPLOYMENT STATUS				
Civilian population 16 years and over	537,528	91.2%	5.6%	2.9%
In labor force	343,484	94.3%	4.2%	1.4%
Employed	329,544	94.4%	4.0%	1.5%
Unemployed	13,940	91.3%	8.7%	0.0%
Not in labor force	194,044	85.7%	8.1%	5.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Unemployment Rates

At the end of August, 2023, the National non-adjusted unemployment rate was 3.9% and the State non-adjusted unemployment rate was 4.2%. A1 had the lowest unemployment rates from August thru November 2023. Torrance County had the highest unemployment rate in August while Sierra County had the highest unemployment rates from September through November 2023. Note that A1 consists of 1 county that is considered urban (Santa Fe) that contains 1 rural census tract as designated by the Office of Rural Health Policy. Roughly between 43.59 to 95.02 percent of the 3 county populations in A1 reside in urban blocks according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Table 33 contains the National, State, and DVR area averages of the non-seasonally adjusted unemployment rates for the months of August through November 2023.

Table 33

Local Area Unemployment Rates

Area	23-Aug	23-Sept	23-Oct	23-Nov	23-Dec	Annual 2023
U.S.	3.9	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.6
NM	4.2	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.6	
Bernalillo	4.1	3.4	3.5	3.5		
Lincoln	3.4	2.9	3.3	3.4		
Sierra	5.5	5	5.2	5.6		
Torrance	5.8	4.8	4.8	5.1		
A1	3.3	2.9	3.0	3.0		
A2	4.5	3.7	3.8	3.9		
A3	4.8	4.1	4.4	4.8		
A4	3.8	3.2	3.2	3.3		
A6	5.6	4.6	4.7	4.8		
A7	4.6	3.9	4.1	4.2		
A9	4.1	3.6	3.7	3.8		

<https://www.bls.gov>

Occupations

Occupation describes the kind of work a person does on the job.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics provides data for the largest occupations within the various States and the Nation. Eight of the top 10 occupations in New Mexico are also listed in the top 10 occupations in the U.S. and are in a different rank order from the National list. Two key differences between the State and National lists occur: Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive, which is the second largest occupation in New Mexico, is not included in the top 10 occupations in the U.S. overall. Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners, which is ranked in the tenth position on the New Mexico list, does not appear on U.S. list.

The New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions Economic Research & Analysis Bureau published the New Mexico State of the Workforce Report in September, 2023. The report noted:

- 1) About one in five workers are employed in the top seven occupations and only one occupation (General and Operations Managers) earned wages higher than the median wage of \$39,000 in the year 2022.; and
- 2) The top occupation in the State of New Mexico with the highest employment, Home Health and Personal Care Aides, had the lowest median wage of \$24,170 per year in 2022.

(Source: New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions: *New Mexico 2023 State of the Workforce: A Report Highlighting New Mexico's Current and Future Workforce*; https://www.dws.state.nm.us/Portals/0/DM/LMI/SOTW_2023_.pdf)

Tables 34 and 35 contain the largest occupations in the U.S. and New Mexico.

Table 34

Occupational Employment Statistics for the U.S.

Largest occupations in the United States, May 2022	
Occupation	Employment
Retail Salespersons	3,640,040
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	3,504,230
General and Operations Managers	3,376,680
Fast Food and Counter Workers	3,325,050
Cashiers	3,296,040
Registered Nurses	3,072,700
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	2,934,050
Customer Service Representatives	2,879,840
Stockers and Order Fillers	2,842,060
Office Clerks, General	2,517,350

https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/area_emp_chart/area_emp_chart_data.htm#United_States

Table 35

Occupational Employment Statistics for the New Mexico

Largest occupations in New Mexico, May 2022	
Occupation	Employment
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	35,740
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	26,410
Retail Salespersons	22,260
Fast Food and Counter Workers	21,670
Customer Service Representatives	20,280
Cashiers	17,730
General and Operations Managers	16,810
Stockers and Order Fillers	15,970
Registered Nurses	15,910
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	14,810

https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/area_emp_chart/area_emp_chart_data.htm#United_States

Local Employers in New Mexico

The New Mexico Workforce Connection website contains statewide regional labor force and economic data that identifies local industries and local employers in New Mexico. Table 36 contains information that was released in September 2023 on the top 15 employers in New Mexico and found on the website.

Table 36

Largest Employers in New Mexico – September 2023

Largest Employers in New Mexico			
Company Name	City	Zip Code	Estimated number of employees
Sandia Corp	Albuquerque	87123	10,000+
University NM Board of Regents	Albuquerque	87131	10,000+
United States Dept of Energy	Los Alamos	87545	10,000+
Los Alamos National Laboratory	Los Alamos	87545	10,000+
Optum Care	Albuquerque	87102	5,000 to 9,999
Presbyterian Hospital	Albuquerque	87106	1,000 to 4,999
New Mexico State Univ- Las Cruces	Las Cruces	88003	1,000 to 4,999
Intel Corp	Rio Rancho	87124	1,000 to 4,999
Navajo Agricultural Products	Farmington	87401	1,000 to 4,999

Largest Employers in New Mexico			
Company Name	City	Zip Code	Estimated number of employees
Rocky Mountain Dressage Society	Santa Fe	87505	1,000 to 4,999
Albuquerque International	Albuquerque	87106	1,000 to 4,999
Albuquerque Police Dept	Albuquerque	87102	1,000 to 4,999
NMSU Board of Regents	Las Cruces	88003	1,000 to 4,999
Raymond G Murphy VA Hosp Med	Albuquerque	87108	1,000 to 4,999
Sandia Resort & Casino	Albuquerque	87113	1,000 to 4,999

Source: New Mexico Workforce Connection Labor Market Facts;
<https://www.jobs.state.nm.us/vosnet/lmi/emp/LargestEmployers.aspx?enc=L7oJxr1YFbUokVta13SSD3ot9SAle0nuacTliYMFOcx/hKojzIDDT0m9aMmAw754>

Regional Industries

The term industry in this section of the report refers to the kind of business conducted by a person's employing organization.

The US Census Bureau publishes data from the American Community Survey detailing information on the top industries by employment for the Nation, State, and each County in the state. Table XX displays the top six industries with the most employees for the Nation and the New Mexico.

The State's lists of leading industries by employment are similar to the National lists, with ranking order differences and a few industry differences in the urban area. On the general lists of industries, Manufacturing ranks in the fourth position in the U.S. and is not on New Mexico's list. Public Administration is the 6th leading industry in New Mexico. Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing, and Manufacturing are leading industries in the urban United States while Construction and Public administration rank as the 5th and 6th leading industries in New Mexico. The industries listed on the rural National list matches the general list with rank order differences. Rural New Mexico's leading industry list matches the general State list, including the rank order of industries.

Table 37

Local Area Top Industries by Employment: U.S. and NM, Including Urban and Rural Averages

Geographic Area	Industries	Percent
U.S.	1) Educational services, and health care and social assistance	1) 23.1%
	2) Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	2) 12.6%
	3) Retail trade	3) 11.1%
	4) Manufacturing	4) 9.9%

Geographic Area	Industries	Percent
	5) Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	5) 8.7%
	6) Construction	6) 6.9%
U.S. Urban	1) Educational services, and health care and social assistance	1) 23.2%
	2) Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	2) 13.4%
	3) Retail trade	3) 11.2%
	4) Manufacturing	4) 9.2%
	5) Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	5) 9.1%
	6) Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	6) 7.1%
U.S. Rural	1) Educational services, and health care and social assistance	1) 22.3%
	2) Manufacturing	2) 12.9%
	3) Retail trade	3) 11.0%
	4) Construction	4) 9.2%
	5) Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	5) 8.9%
	6) Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	6) 6.8%
New Mexico	1) Educational services, and health care and social assistance	1) 25.7%
	2) Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	2) 12.5%
	3) Retail trade	3) 11.0%
	4) Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	4) 10.0%
	5) Construction	5) 7.6%
	6) Public administration	6) 7.5%
NM Urban	1) Educational services, and health care and social assistance	1) 26.2%
	2) Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	2) 13.3%
	3) Retail trade	3) 10.8%

Geographic Area	Industries	Percent
	4) Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	4) 10.1%
	5) Construction	5) 7.2%
	6) Public administration	6) 7.1%
NM Rural	1) Educational services, and health care and social assistance	1) 23.7%
	2) Retail trade	2) 11.7%
	3) Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	3) 9.6%
	4) Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	4) 9.3%
	5) Construction	5) 9.1%
	6) Public administration	6) 8.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Employment, Occupations, Industries and Labor Force Participation for People with Disabilities

Data on employment, occupations, industries, and labor force participation for people with disabilities is collected and analyzed by various government bureaus and research institutes. This section presents statistics from the various agencies regarding people with disabilities and their participation in the labor force.

Occupations and Employees with Disabilities

The U.S. Census Bureau collects and analyzes data for the largest occupations within the various States and the Nation for people with disabilities who are part of the total civilian noninstitutionalized population (TCNP). The following tables summarize percentage rates of the occupations that people with disabilities are employed in.

Table 38

Percent Distribution of Employed Individuals by Disability Status and Occupation: U.S. and NM

	United States			New Mexico		
	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	42.5%	34.2%	43.2%	40.3%	33.0%	41.0%
Service occupations	16.1%	20.1%	15.8%	19.1%	22.8%	18.7%
Sales and office occupations	19.8%	21.7%	19.7%	19.7%	22.7%	19.4%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	8.5%	8.4%	8.5%	11.0%	10.3%	11.0%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	13.0%	15.5%	12.9%	10.0%	11.2%	9.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Regional Industries and Employees with Disabilities

The U.S. Census Bureau publishes data that provides information on the top industries by employment for people with disabilities. The data represents the total civilian employed population ages 16 and over.

The table is designed to identify the industries that have the highest rates of employees with disabilities and compare the percentage rates of employees with disabilities with the rates for employees without disabilities. Table 39 displays the top 6 industries by employment for people with disabilities in the United States and New Mexico. Data is available for 12 of the State's 33 counties and is provided in the table. The county population rankings and the disability population count for age 16 and over are documented in the table for reference.

Table 39

Local Area Top Industries by Employment: People With & Without Disabilities Ages 16 and Over

Geographic Area	Industries	Employees with Disabilities	Employees without Disabilities
U.S.	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	22.3%	23.1%
	Retail trade	13.7%	10.9%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	11.7%	12.7%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.6%	8.6%
	Manufacturing	9.3%	9.9%
	Construction	6.1%	7.0%
New Mexico	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	24.5%	25.8%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	12.2%	12.5%
	Retail trade	11.6%	11.0%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	11.2%	9.8%
	Construction	7.6%	7.6%
	Public administration	5.8%	7.6%
Bernalillo Disability Pop 16+ = 101,277	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	31.8%	27.2%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	15.5%	15.2%
	Retail trade	11.8%	9.4%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	11.4%	9.0%

Geographic Area	Industries	Employees with Disabilities	Employees without Disabilities
Pop Rank = 1	Construction	5.6%	7.0%
	Public administration	4.7%	6.8%
A4 Chaves Disability Pop 16+ = 11,272 Pop Rank = 10	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	22.2%	26.6%
	Retail trade	17.4%	11.8%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	12.4%	9.6%
	Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	9.2%	7.3%
	Other services (except public administration)	7.0%	5.1%
	Construction	6.8%	6.1%
A4 Curry Disability Pop 16+ = 7,635 Pop Rank = 12	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	16.1%	11.1%
	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	15.0%	21.3%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	14.7%	5.8%
	Construction	8.8%	6.8%
	Wholesale trade	7.6%	1.1%
	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	6.5%	8.0%
A3 Doña Ana Disability Pop 16+ = 29,290 Pop Rank = 2	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	26.4%	29.0%
	Retail trade	12.9%	10.8%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	11.1%	9.9%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	8.4%	9.3%
	Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	7.9%	3.9%
	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	7.1%	3.8%
A4 Eddy Disability Pop 16+ = 8,549 Pop Rank = 11	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	25.0%	18.1%
	Retail trade	11.9%	9.9%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	11.4%	8.4%
	Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	10.3%	4.5%
	Construction	9.6%	8.4%

Geographic Area	Industries	Employees with Disabilities	Employees without Disabilities
	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	8.5%	19.5%
A4 Lea Disability Pop 16+ = 7,693 Pop Rank = 7	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	20.1%	16.5%
	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	16.7%	18.7%
	Other services (except public administration)	14.6%	4.0%
	Retail trade	10.3%	10.5%
	Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	9.2%	9.8%
	Construction	8.0%	9.4%
A6 McKinley Disability Pop 16+ = 10,265 Pop Rank = 8	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	52.1%	31.7%
	Retail trade	9.8%	15.4%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.7%	10.8%
	Public administration	6.0%	10.6%
	Manufacturing	5.5%	3.8%
	Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	4.4%	4.0%
A3 Otero Disability Pop 16+ = 11,801 Pop Rank = 9	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	22.3%	23.0%
	Construction	21.9%	10.4%
	Public administration	16.2%	11.5%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	9.6%	10.9%
	Retail trade	8.7%	13.6%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	5.5%	8.1%
A2 Sandoval Disability Pop 16+ = 19,834 Pop Rank = 4	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	26.8%	23.7%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	11.7%	12.2%
	Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	9.4%	4.0%
	Public administration	9.4%	7.6%
	Retail trade	8.1%	11.7%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	7.4%	9.3%

Geographic Area	Industries	Employees with Disabilities	Employees without Disabilities
A2 San Juan Disability Pop 16+ = 18,089 Pop Rank = 5	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	25.6%	27.0%
	Retail trade	11.8%	12.1%
	Public administration	8.6%	6.4%
	Construction	8.5%	5.9%
	Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	8.1%	6.9%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	7.8%	11.0%
A1 Santa Fe Disability Pop 16+ = 20,185 Pop Rank = 3	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	21.0%	22.1%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	14.1%	16.8%
	Retail trade	11.8%	11.2%
	Construction	10.4%	7.2%
	Public administration	9.7%	9.9%
	Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	7.8%	13.5%
A7 Valencia Disability Pop 16+ = 15,260 Pop Rank = 6	Educational services, and health care and social assistance	28.8%	25.0%
	Public administration	10.8%	10.1%
	Other services (except public administration)	9.2%	5.1%
	Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	8.5%	11.1%
	Retail trade	8.2%	12.2%
	Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	7.9%	4.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

United States Department of Labor Disability Employment Statistics

The U.S. Department of Labor provides monthly Disability Employment Statistics. The Labor Force Participation Rate refers to the percentage of non-institutionalized U.S. citizens who are in the labor force. The unemployment rate measures the percentage within the labor force who are currently without a job. The data indicates that labor force participation rates for individuals with disabilities is consistently over 43 points higher than the rate for individuals without disabilities. In addition, the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities is consistently at least between 3 and 4 percentage points higher compared to individuals without disabilities. Table 40 contains the statistics for August

through December 2023, and includes the Annual 2023 averages for individuals without and with a disability in the U.S ages 16 and over.

Table 40

Labor Force Participation and Unemployment Rates for PWD in the U.S

	Labor Force Participation Rates					
Group	23-Aug	23-Sep	23-Oct	23-Nov	23-Dec	Annual 2023
People with Disabilities	24.9%	24.2%	24.4%	24.8%	24.5%	24.2%
People without Disabilities	68.4%	68.3%	68.2%	68.2%	67.6%	68.1%
	Unemployment Rate					
People with Disabilities	7.4%	7.3%	7.4%	7.3%	6.7%	7.2%
People without Disabilities	3.8%	3.4%	3.4%	3.3%	3.4%	3.5%

<https://www.bls.gov>

National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research: Disability Employment Statistics

The National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) released the 2022 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium in February 2022 which contains data on employment for people with disabilities ages 18 to 64 years based on 2021 Public Use Microdata Sample. According to the report, the National employment percentage for individuals ages 18 to 64 living in the community was significantly higher for people without disabilities (76.6%) versus people with disabilities (40.7%). The employment gap, which is the difference between the employment percentage for people with disabilities and people without disabilities is 35.9% for the Nation. In 2021, New Mexico's employment rate for individuals with disabilities ages 18 to 64 was 34.9% and the employment rate was 71.2% for individuals without disabilities. The employment gap for New Mexico was 36.3%. Compared to the 50 states, New Mexico's employment gap ranked 28th in the Nation (lowest rate to highest rate rank order), tying with the State of New Jersey.

County employment rates for people with and without disabilities is also published in the Annual Compendium. The statistics are calculated from 2017-2021 five year estimates, which is different from Public Use Microdata Sample information provided in the previous paragraph. In 2021, the county with the highest employment rate for people with disabilities was Otero County (40.3%) and the county with the lowest employment rate for people with disabilities was Hidalgo County (14.4%). Otero County and Hidalgo County are both located in VR Area #3. Table 41 details the employment rates for people with and without disabilities for each county in New Mexico and includes New Mexico statewide averages using the five-year estimates.

Table 41

*Employment of Civilians with and without Disabilities Ages 18 to 64 Years Living in the Community:
New Mexico and Counties – 2021*

County	Disability: Percent Employed	No Disability: Percent Employed	Employment Gap
New Mexico	35	72.4	37.4
Bernalillo	40	77	37
Catron	38.2	43.9	5.7
Chaves	34.2	73.7	39.5
Cibola	16.1	63.2	47.1
Colfax	33.2	78	44.8
Curry	32.9	73.8	40.9
De Baca	15.3	67.1	51.8
Doña Ana	33.9	70.3	36.4
Eddy	36.1	76.1	40
Grant	33.4	63.6	30.2
Guadalupe	35	64.4	29.4
Harding	26.1	74.7	48.6
Hidalgo	14.4	70.6	56.2
Lea	32	72.8	40.8
Lincoln	37	68	31
Los Alamos	39.2	83	43.8
Luna	26.6	65.2	38.6
McKinley	29.9	56.9	27
Mora	16	68.4	52.4
Otero	40.3	66.4	26.1
Quay	35.7	71.8	36.1
Rio Arriba	33.6	67.5	33.9
Roosevelt	39.8	74.4	34.6
San Juan	30.5	65.2	34.7
San Miguel	31.3	66.4	35.1
Sandoval	35.8	73.4	37.6
Santa Fe	36.8	75.6	38.8
Sierra	34.2	65.4	31.2
Socorro	22.2	59.4	37.2

County	Disability: Percent Employed	No Disability: Percent Employed	Employment Gap
Taos	23.9	68.2	44.3
Torrance	20.9	62.6	41.7
Union	25.5	69.5	44
Valencia	31.6	69.9	38.3
Source: Paul, S., Rogers, S., Bach, S., & Houtenville, A. (2023). 2023 State Report for New Mexico County-Level Data: Employment. Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability. Taken from U.S. Census Bureau, 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. https://data.census.gov . Based on a sample and subject to sampling variability.			
[1] The percentage of people with disabilities who are employed.			
[2] The percentage of people without disabilities who are employed.			

The NIDILRR also publishes statistics regarding employment based on disability type for ages 18- to 64-year-old individuals with disabilities. The following data in table 42 contains the National and State employment rates by disability type from 2021 that were published in the 2022 Annual Compendium. The categories are for non-institutionalized civilians ages 18 to 64, male and female, from all ethnic backgrounds and includes all education levels.

Table 42

2021 Employment by Disability Type for Civilians Ages 18 to 64

Disability Type	U.S. Percent Employed	NM Percent Employed
Any Disability	40.7%	34.9%
Hearing Disability	55.1%	45.4%
Visual Disability	47.9%	45.7%
Cognitive Disability	33.6%	29.3%
Ambulatory Disability	26.4%	22.3%
Self-Care Disability	15.7%	18.4%
Independent Living Disability	20.2%	20.1%

Source: Paul, S., Rogers, S., Bach, S., & Houtenville, A. (2023). Annual Disability Statistics Compendium: 2023 (Table 3.1). Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability. Note: Authors' calculations using the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2021, which is subject to sampling variation.

U.S. Census Bureau Labor Force Participation (LPF) Statistics

The United States Census Bureau publishes a variety of statistics regarding people with disabilities and their participation in the labor force. The following three sets of statistics contain data regarding labor force participation and employment of people with disabilities.

Labor Force Participation Rates (LPF)

The labor force participation rate represents the proportion of the population that is in the labor force.

Of the total population age 16 years and older residing in the United States who report having a disability, 28.1% are employed and participating in the Labor Force, while approximately 69.2% are not in the Labor Force. The State of New Mexico's average for those who report a disability and are employed is 26.6% while 71.1% of those who report a disability are not engaged in the Labor Force.

Table 43 provides data based on disability status and employment for ages 16 and over from the U.S. Census Bureau for the year 2022 for the Nation and the State.

Table 43

LFP - Total Civilian Non-institutionalized Population (TCNP) Age 16 and Over: U.S. and NM

	United States			New Mexico		
	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability	TCNP	With a Disability	No Disability
Population Age 16 and Over	264,618,455	41,295,440	223,323,015	1,671,803	334,843	1,336,960
Employed	61.4%	28.1%	67.6%	56.0%	26.6%	63.4%
Not in Labor Force	35.8%	69.2%	29.7%	41.2%	71.1%	33.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Employment to Population Ratio – People with Disabilities

The employment-to-population ratio is a measure derived by dividing the civilian noninstitutional population 18 to 64 years who are employed by the total civilian noninstitutional population 18 to 64 years and multiplying by 100. The employment-to-population ratio indicates the ratio of civilian labor force currently employed to the total working-age population of the designated geographic area, which is different from the labor force participation rate because the labor force participation rate includes currently employed and those who are unemployed but actively looking for work.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the U.S. Census Bureau collects and analyzes the employment-population ratio for the civilian noninstitutionalized population ages 18 to 64 years by state, county, and urban and rural geography. The State's employment to population ratio for people with disabilities is 2.4 percent lower than the Nation's ratio. New Mexico ranked 40th highest for employment-to-population ratio for people with disabilities in 2022 when compared to other states in the Nation. Table 44 contains the available 2022 employment-to-population ratios for the Nation, State, nine counties, the Navajo Nation Reservation, four cities, and three urban areas.

Table 44

Employment to Population Ratio for People with Disabilities Ages 18-64

EMPLOYMENT TO POPULATION RATIO FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY	
State/ Urban – Rural/County/City/Reservation Trust Land	
Geographic Area	Percent
United States	44.5
United States -- Urban	45.9
United States -- Rural	39.6
New Mexico	42.1

EMPLOYMENT TO POPULATION RATIO FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY	
State/ Urban – Rural/County/City/Reservation Trust Land	
Geographic Area	Percent
New Mexico -- Urban	44.8
New Mexico -- Rural	33.8
Counties	
Bernalillo	50.1
Doña Ana	43.2
Lea	44.5
McKinley	33.5
Otero	41.8
Sandoval	35.2
San Juan	37.8
Santa Fe	39.4
Valencia	42.9
Cities	
Albuquerque city	52.5
Las Cruces city	46.9
Rio Rancho city	28.9
Santa Fe city	39.4
Reservation Trust Land	
Navajo Nation Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, AZ--NM--UT	18.9
Urban Areas	
Albuquerque, NM Urban Area (2020)	48.4
Las Cruces, NM Urban Area (2020)	49
Santa Fe, NM Urban Area (2020)	39.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Employment Status by Disability Status and Type

Employment status by disability type is estimated for the population ages 18 years to 64 years by the U.S. Census Bureau. The U.S. average for individuals with cognitive disabilities (41.1%) ranks the highest for labor force participation when compared to other disabilities. The State average for individuals with cognitive disabilities also ranks the highest for labor force participation and is 1.3 percent lower than the National average. The lowest labor force participation rates among those reporting a disability in the Nation and the State are individuals reporting a self-care difficulty, with rate at 6.1 percent for the U.S. and at 5 percent for the State.

Otero County has a significantly higher labor force participation rate (12.1%) for people with disabilities ages 18 to 64 years. The rate is higher than the National rate by 5.6 percent and higher than the State average by 3.5 percent. Hearing disability is the most frequently reported disability type among those that are employed and have a disability in Otero County. Otero County's labor force participation rate for individuals with cognitive disabilities is lower than the U.S. average by 25.7 percent. Otero County's labor force participation rate for those with hearing disabilities exceeds the National and State rates by over 12 percent. This information is presented to help inform VR as it engages in strategic planning for the future.

Table 45 contains labor force participation rates from 2022 for the Nation, State and two counties as limited data is available. Counties selected are the counties that have the highest and lowest population counts for ages 18 to 64 years obtained from available 2022 one-year estimates.

Table 45

Employment Status by Disability Status and Type: U.S. and New Mexico

<i>Employment Status by Disability Status and Type: U.S. and New Mexico</i>	United States	New Mexico
Total 18 - 64 years:	199,645,753	1,219,567
In labor force:	78.5%	73.9%
Employed:	95.8%	95.1%
With a disability	6.5%	8.6%
Hearing	23.6%	24.6%
Vision	22.1%	25.0%
Cognitive	41.1%	39.8%
Ambulatory	26.6%	28.0%
Self-care	6.1%	5.0%
Independent Living	18.9%	14.9%
No disability	93.5%	91.4%
Unemployed:	4.2%	4.9%
With a disability	15.1%	16.8%
No disability	84.9%	83.2%
Not in labor force:	21.5%	26.1%
With a disability	26.1%	29.6%
No disability	73.9%	70.4%
LFP employed & unemployed w/ disability	6.9%	9.0%
LFP employed & unemployed w/o disability	93.1%	91.0%
Total Pop w/ disability	11.0%	14.4%
Total Pop w/o disability	89.0%	85.6%
	Bernalillo	Otero
Total 18 - 64 years:	408,362	33,573
In labor force:	78.3%	70.9%
Employed:	95.8%	94.0%
With a disability	9.1%	12.1%
Hearing	19.9%	37.1%
Vision	23.4%	23.4%

	Bernalillo	Otero
Cognitive	50.1%	15.4%
Ambulatory	24.6%	34.0%
Self-care	3.6%	6.5%
Independent Living	17.5%	2.4%
No disability	90.9%	87.9%
Unemployed:	4.2%	6.0%
With a disability	17.7%	9.8%
No disability	82.3%	90.2%
Not in labor force:	21.7%	29.1%
With a disability	28.7%	37.3%
No disability	71.3%	62.7%
LFP employed & unemployed w/ disability	9.5%	12.0%
LFP employed & unemployed w/o disability	90.5%	88.0%
Total Pop w/ disability	13.6%	19.3%
Total Pop w/o disability	86.4%	80.7%

AGENCY-SPECIFIC DATA RELATED TO OVERALL PERFORMANCE

The project team requested data related to overall performance and case movement from DVR for this assessment. The data is presented throughout the report in the applicable areas. Where there were discrepancies between the agency provided data and the RSA 911 data available through the data dashboards, the project team used the data dashboards as this data has been submitted to RSA. Table 46 contains general information for all DVR consumers for the period of Program Years 2020-2022.

Table 46
General Statistics for all DVR Consumers

Item	ALL CONSUMERS		
	2020	2021	2022
Applications	2403	1732	2354
Percent of apps found eligible	92%	87%	86%
Begin all cases			
Percent of apps that had a determination made within 60 days	77.0%	99.5%	99.5%
Percent closed prior to IPE development	35%	43%	48%
Plans developed	1292	1273	1135
Percent of plans developed within 90 days	87.0%	99.6%	100.0%
Number of consumers in training by type			
Vocational	127	172	260

Item	ALL CONSUMERS		
	2020	2021	2022
Undergraduate	500	353	387
Graduate	47	45	56
Credential attainment rate	24.1%	32.9%	37.6%
MSG Rate	13.5%	17.3%	52.9%
Number of cases closed rehabilitated	475	268	437
Employment rate at exit	NA	25.8%	28.2%
Employment rate in 2nd quarter after exit	NA	39.3%	41.3%
Employment rate in 4th quarter after exit	NA	36.40%	40.8%
Median wages of all exited participants	4901.4	5182.43	5033.37
Total number of cases served	2403	1732	2354
Avg. cost of all cases	2971.52	3405.90	3606.85
Avg. cost of cases closed rehabilitated	2416.24	2760.62	2706.92
Avg. cost per case closed unsuccessful	1250.11	1,233.86	1664.3
Avg. cost per case closed prior to plan	178.3	177.26	265.34

The data indicates that DVR experienced a 28% decrease in applications to the program from PY 2020 to 2021 but increased by 37% the following year. The initial decrease is likely a consequence of the pandemic, while the recovery is likely a combination of many factors, including active outreach by DVR staff to increase referrals to pre-pandemic levels. In PY 2021 and 2022, DVR was above 99% in determining eligibility within the prescribed 60-day period allowed by law. The agency also exceeded 99% for the rate of IPE's developed within 90 days. These are exceptional compliance percentages and the agency is to be commended for ensuring that they adhere to the established case processing timelines.

One area of concern for DVR is the rate of individuals closed prior to plan development, which increased from year to year of the study. DVR will want to investigate the reasons for this rate as the data does not indicate that eligible individuals are waiting an undue period of time to have an IPE developed.

The number of participants in training increased across the board for DVR from PY 2021 to 2022. Especially notable is the number of individuals in graduate level education.

DVR exceeded their negotiated target rates for all five of the WIOA performance measures in PY 2022. The measure on effectiveness in serving employers is not included in this assessment as there have been no negotiated rates for this measure. The employment rate at exit, and in the second and fourth quarter after exit, increased from PY 2021 to 2022. The credential attainment rate and measurable skill gains rate also increased from PY 2021 to 2022. The median wages dipped slightly in PY 2022, but still exceeded the negotiated rate for the agency. Some of the data from PY 2020 is not available, and consequently it is not factored into these calculations. It is important to note that DVR has focused on improving their data validity and reliability, which allows the agency to make evidence-based decisions and plan for performance improvement with confidence.

Gender and Age:

The project team examined the rate of individuals served by gender and age. Information is only presented for PY 2021 and 2022 as the PY 202 data was invalid. The information is contained in Table 47

Table 47

Gender and Age of Individuals Served

Gender and Age of Participants	All Participants	
	2021	2022
Male	50.7%	46.6%
Female	43.7%	40.8%
24 and younger	35.4%	36.5%
25 - 59	54.6%	53.9%
60 and Older	10.1%	9.7%

The data indicates that DVR serves more men than women, but the disparity in the two genders decreased from PY 2021 to 2022. The rate of youth served increased slightly from PY 21 to 22, while the rate of working age adults and older adults slightly decreased.

Case Service Expenditures:

The project team analyzed all expenditures by service category for DVR for the life of the study in order to determine where the case service dollars are being spent by the agency. Expenditure information is provided for the categories with the highest rate of funds expended only. Table 48 contains this information.

Table 48

Major Expenditures for New Mexico DVR

Major Expense Category	2020	2021	2022
Assessment	\$176,334	\$163,804	\$254,131
Percent of Total	3.2%	3.1%	4.4%
Other Goods and Services	\$457,823	\$459,258	\$492,084
Percent of Total	8.4%	8.7%	8.6%
Postsecondary Training	\$2,641,452	\$2,598,080	\$2,356,128
Percent of Total	48.7%	49.1%	40.9%
Job Placement	\$124,622	\$95,592	\$154,124
Percent of Total	2.3%	1.8%	2.7%
Pre-employment transition services	\$333,489	\$155,475	\$603,412
Percent of Total	6.1%	2.9%	10.5%
Assistive/Rehab Technology	\$615,321	\$754,058	\$542,462
Percent of Total	11.3%	14.3%	9.4%

The data indicates that DVR has spent between 40-50% of their case service dollars on postsecondary education from PY 2020-2022, though this rate dropped by just over 8% from PY 20221 to 2022. The

agency's expenditures on pre-employment transition services increased dramatically from PY 2021 to 2022, likely the result of DVR working to accurately capture and report these expenditures.

Types of Employment Outcomes:

An important measure of the performance of the organization is the type of employment outcomes obtained by the consumers served. The project team utilized RSA-911 data to examine employment outcomes by Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code for all individuals in the VR program nationally and DVR pulled the same data for all individuals exiting in employment for PY 2022. The comparison between the two sets of data is included in Table 49. All instances where New Mexico VR differed from the national results by 2% or more are highlighted in blue.

Table 49

Employment Outcomes by SOC Code for New Mexico DVR and all VR Programs in PY 2022

SOC Code Category	VR Agency Frequency in PY 2022	All VR Programs in 2020	Difference
Management Occupations	2.3%	2.4%	-0.1%
Business and financial operations occupations	1.4%	1.4%	0.0%
Computer and Mathematical Operations	2.0%	1.1%	0.9%
Architecture and engineering occupations	1.4%	0.7%	0.7%
Life, physical and social science occupations	0.2%	0.5%	-0.3%
Community and social science (service) occupations	4.5%	2.9%	1.6%
Legal occupations	0.00%	0.4%	-0.4%
Education, training and library occupations	5.2%	3.0%	2.2%
Art, design, entertainment, sports and media occupations	2.5%	1.1%	1.4%
Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations	2.9%	2.7%	0.2%
Healthcare support occupations	3.8%	4.1%	-0.3%
Protective service occupations	2.3%	1.6%	0.7%
Food preparation and serving related occupations	10.8%	11.3%	-0.5%
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	9.5%	9.3%	0.2%
Personal care and service occupations	9.5%	5.7%	3.8%
Sales and related occupations	7.4%	8.5%	-1.1%

SOC Code Category	VR Agency Frequency in PY 2022	All VR Programs in 2020	Difference
Office and administrative support occupations	17.8%	15.8%	2.0%
Farming, fishing and forestry occupations	0.7%	0.6%	0.1%
Construction and extraction occupations	1.8%	2.5%	-0.7%
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	3.2%	4.9%	-1.7%
Production occupations	3.8%	8.0%	-4.2%
Transportation and material moving occupations	7.4%	8.5%	-1.1%

The data indicates that the types of employment outcomes achieved by DVR consumers are consistent with VR programs nationally in most areas. Some notable differences occur in the area of education, training and library occupations, personal care occupations, and office and administrative support occupations. DVR exceeded the national average in these three areas by more than two percent. The only occupation category where DVR was lower than the national average by more than two percent was the production occupations, where the difference was 4.2%.

Program Exit:

The project team examined the type of exit and the reasons for exit from the program utilizing the RSA 911 case service report for PY 2021 and 2022. An examination of closure types and reasons can help the agency identify where they may need to focus energy and resources in the rehabilitation process to maximize the likelihood of success for customers. Table 50 contains information on the type of exit.

Table 50

Type of Exit for DVR customers

Type of Exit	2021						2022					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	% of all	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	% of all
Individual exited as an applicant, prior to eligibility determination or trial work	97	86	70	102	355	12.5%	76	89	71	70	306	11.1%
Individual exited as an applicant after being determined ineligible for VR services.	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	1	3	1	2	7	0.3%
Individual exited during or after a trial work experience.	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%

Type of Exit	2021						2022					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	% of all	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	% of all
Individual exited after eligibility, but from an order of selection waiting list.	70	120	106	39	335	11.8%	25	4	0	0	29	1.1%
Individual exited after eligibility, but prior to a signed IPE.	66	61	123	250	500	17.7%	261	314	184	146	905	32.8%
Individual exited after an IPE without an employment outcome.	347	315	275	266	1203	42.5%	292	249	288	243	1072	38.9%
Individual exited after an IPE in noncompetitive and/or nonintegrated employment.	0	1	0	0	1	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Individual exited after an IPE in competitive integrated employment or SE.	86	99	103	149	437	15.4%	80	118	104	137	439	15.9%

The data indicates that nearly 40% of the program exits in PY 2022 occurred prior to IPE development, with almost 33% of those exits coming after eligibility was determined, but prior to the IPE being developed. DVR will want to investigate the reasons for these closures, and Table 51 may help shed some light on these reasons.

Table 51
Reasons for Exit

Reason for Exit	2021						2022					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	%	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	%
Health/Medical	16	7	8	6	37	1.3%	15	13	17	22	67	2.4%
Death of Individual	7	8	12	3	30	1.1%	2	3	2	1	8	0.3%
Ineligible After Determined Eligible	1	4	2	2	9	0.3%	3	0	3	3	9	0.3%
Criminal Offender	3	4	2	1	10	0.4%	5	2	1	3	11	0.4%
No Disabling Condition	0	1	1	2	4	0.1%	1	5	3	3	12	0.4%
Transferred to Another Agency	1	3	0	4	8	0.3%	1	3	2	3	9	0.3%
Achieved Competitive Integrated Employment Outcome	86	99	103	149	437	15.4%	80	118	104	137	439	15.9%

Reason for Exit	2021						2022					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	%	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	%
Extended Employment	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	1	0	1	0	2	0.1%
Unable to Locate or Contact	362	390	343	376	1471	52.0%	399	411	310	214	1334	48.4%
No Longer Interested in Receiving Services or Further Services	141	129	176	228	674	23.8%	195	180	175	183	733	26.6%
All Other Reasons	49	37	30	34	150	5.3%	32	42	29	28	131	4.7%
Short Term Basis Period	0	0	0	1	1	0.0%	0	0	1	0	1	0.0%
Ineligible - Section 511	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
Ineligible - Trial Work Experience	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	1	0	0	1	2	0.1%
Total	666	682	677	806	2831	100%	735	777	648	598	2758	100%

The data indicates that nearly 50% of all program exits occur because the individuals is unable to be located or moved. This was the most frequent reason for exit in both years, followed by no longer interested in receiving services or further services. In combination, these two exit reasons account for $\frac{3}{4}$ of all reasons for exit. It will be important for DVR to determine why it is so difficult to locate individuals once they apply for the program and identify strategies to help facilitate more sustained engagement.

SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

Individual Survey: Respondent Demographics

Individual survey respondents were asked to identify their age. Two-hundred sixteen respondents indicated their age. The largest percentage of respondents were between the ages of 25 to 64 (71.8 percent) followed by individuals under the age of 25 (19 percent). Table 52 identifies the age of the respondents.

Table 52

Individual Survey: Age of Respondents

Age Range of Respondents	Number	Percent
25-64	155	71.8%
under 25	41	19.0%
65 and over	20	9.3%
Total	216	100.0%

Respondents were asked to identify their county of residence. Bernalillo County was cited by 209 respondents (96.3 percent). One county in New Mexico was not listed, Hidalgo County. Only counties that had at least one respondent are listed. Table 53 details the survey results to this question.

Table 53

Individual Survey: County of Residence

County of Residence	Number	Percent
Bernalillo	209	96.3%
Sandoval	4	1.8%
Valencia	2	0.9%
Socorro	1	0.5%
Torrance	1	0.5%
Total	217	100.0%

Individual Survey: Disability Types

Individual survey respondents were asked two questions regarding their disability.

Primary Disability

Respondents were presented a checklist and asked to identify their primary disabling condition. Mental Health was cited by about 21 percent of the respondents. The categories Developmental Disability and Deaf or Hard of Hearing were each cited by about 14 percent of the respondents. Items listed in the narrative comments in response to the item “other” included: ADHD; arthritis; autism; brain injury; cerebral palsy; cancer; dyslexia; MS; mental health disorders; motor development disability; PTSD; physical disabilities; and seizures. Table 54 details the 2023 survey results in response to the question.

Table 54

Individual Survey: Primary Disability

Primary Disability	Number	Percent
Mental Health	45	20.9%
Developmental Disability (DD)	31	14.4%
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	30	14.0%
Other (please describe)	29	13.5%
Physical	23	10.7%
Intellectual Disability (ID)	22	10.2%
Brain injury	9	4.2%
Mobility	8	3.7%
No impairment	7	3.3%
I don't know	6	2.8%
Communication	3	1.4%

Primary Disability	Number	Percent
Blind or visually impaired	1	0.5%
Spinal Cord injury	1	0.5%
Deaf-Blind	0	0.0%
Total	215	100.0%

Secondary Disability

Respondents were also asked to identify their secondary disabling condition, if they had one. Roughly 16 percent of the individuals reported no secondary disability. Thirty-two of the 33 respondents who cited the category “other” reported various health conditions including ADHD; anxiety; autism; autoimmune disease; below the knee amputation; cervical vertebrae condition; chronic pain; depression; epilepsy; gunshot wounds to the head; PTSD; liver disease; and stroke with hemiparesis. Table 55 details the results.

Table 55

Individual Survey: Secondary Disability

Secondary Disability	Number	Percent
Other (please describe)	33	17.2%
No impairment	31	16.2%
Mental Health	27	14.1%
Physical	21	10.9%
Developmental Disability (DD)	20	10.4%
Intellectual disability (ID)	18	9.4%
Mobility	11	5.7%
Communication	10	5.2%
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	7	3.7%
I don't know	7	3.7%
Brian injury	5	2.6%
Blind or visually impaired	2	1.0%
Deaf-Blind	0	0.0%
Spinal Cord injury	0	0.0%
Total	192	100.0%

Individual Survey: Association with DVR

Individuals who responded to the survey were presented with two questions asking them to identify the statement that best described their association with DVR by identifying their client status, and their reason for seeking DVR services.

Client Status

Slightly more than 54.5 percent of the individual respondents indicated that they were current clients of DVR. A gap of 26.5 percent is noted between current clients and previous clients. Twelve of the 33 individuals (36.4%) who selected “other” indicated that they were parents of current clients. Table 56 summarizes the results from the survey.

Table 56

Individual Survey: Client Status

Association with DVR	Number	Percent
I am a current client of DVR	126	54.6%
I am a previous client of DVR, my case has been closed	65	28.1%
Other (please describe)	33	14.3%
I have never used the services of DVR	7	3.0%
I am not familiar with DVR	0	0.0%
Total	231	100.0%

Reasons for Seeking DVR Services

Respondents were presented with a checklist and asked to identify their reasons for seeking DVR services. There was no limit to the number of options a respondent could choose.

Two-hundred twelve respondents answered the question. Roughly 45 percent of the respondents indicated they were seeking assistance finding a job. Forty-eight narrative responses were received in the category “other” and a diverse list of personal reasons were noted, including needing a job coach, workman’s compensation, and needing help maintaining a job. Seven of the narrative responses indicated that the client wanted assistance with their current business or starting a business. Table 57 contains the individual survey results in response to the question.

Table 57

Individual Survey: Reasons for Seeking DVR

Reasons for Seeking DVR	Number	Percent of number of respondents
I needed help finding a job	96	45.3%
I wanted to go to college or some other kind of postsecondary education	76	35.8%
Other (please describe)	50	23.6%
I was told to by someone	48	22.6%
I wanted help with technology skills/equipment	48	22.6%
I needed help getting medical equipment/supplies	41	19.3%
I needed money	33	15.6%

Reasons for Seeking DVR	Number	Percent of number of respondents
I was in danger of losing my job	13	6.1%
I don't know	4	1.9%
Total	409	

Individual Survey: Service Delivery

Individual survey respondents were asked a series of questions regarding service delivery.

Meeting Location

Individual survey respondents were asked to indicate where they usually met with their counselor. The majority of respondents (59.4%) meet with their counselor at the DVR office. Table 58 details the meeting locations reported by respondents.

Table 58

Individual Survey: Meeting Location

Meeting Location	Number	Percent
I go to a DVR office to meet with my counselor	111	59.4%
I don't have a counselor	43	23.0%
I meet with my counselor virtually	30	16.0%
I usually meet with my counselor in my community/school	3	1.6%
Total	187	100.0%

Preferred Service Delivery Modality

Respondents were asked to identify their preferred service delivery modality, with the choices of in-person, virtual or no preference. Over 42 percent of the 181 individual survey respondents indicated that their preferred modality of service delivery is in-person service. Table 59 contains the results to the question from the survey.

Table 59

Individual Survey: Preferred Service Delivery Modality

Preferred Service Modality	Number	Percent
In-person	77	42.5%
I have no preference	53	29.3%
Virtual	51	28.2%
Total	181	100.0%

Remote DVR Services

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, DVR closed offices and modified service delivery for clients to include remote services.

Individual respondents were provided a list of services and asked to identify the types of services that were delivered to them remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although over 20 percent of the 182 respondents that answered the question indicated that they received guidance and counseling remote services during the pandemic, 32.3 percent of respondents indicated that they did not receive remote services during the pandemic. A variety of responses were recorded in the written comments for the item response option “other, please describe.” Thirteen responses cited specific case management services, vendor services or counseling received during the pandemic. Two comments cited receiving lists of people to call for assistance, noting the lists were outdated names, phone numbers and email addresses. Four comments cited “text/email/phone.” Twelve comments cited: no services received; negative experiences with DVR during the pandemic. Table 60 summarizes the results regarding remote services.

Table 60

Individual Survey: DVR Services Delivered Remotely Since COVID

DVR Services Delivered Remotely Since COVID	Number	Percent
I have not received any services from DVR remotely during the pandemic	86	32.3%
Guidance and counseling (provided by my DVR counselor)	54	20.3%
Other (please describe)	40	15.0%
Help looking for work or applying for jobs	24	9.0%
Assistive technology	23	8.7%
Help understanding how work will impact my disability	22	8.3%
Help keeping a job	17	6.4%
Total	266	100.0%

Effectiveness of Remote Services

The respondents who utilized remote services were asked to rate the effectiveness of the services that were delivered remotely. Ninety-five respondents answered the subsequent question.

The ratings for effectiveness of remote services provided during the pandemic are narrowly divided among respondents as to whether or not the remote services are effective or not effective. Although the majority of respondents (28.4%) indicated that remote service provided during the Covid pandemic were effective, 27.4 percent of respondents indicated that the remote services were either not effective at all or less effective. Also, a narrow margin of difference exists between the item choices extremely effective and somewhat effective. Table 61 details the effectiveness ratings for remote services as selected by individual respondents.

Table 61

Individual Survey: Effectiveness of Remote Services

Effectiveness of Remote Services	Number	Percent
Effective	27	28.4%
Extremely effective	22	23.2%
Somewhat effective	20	21.1%
Not effective at all	17	17.9%
Less effective	9	9.5%
Total	95	100.0%

Individual Survey: DVR and the Services

An open-ended survey question relating to the overall performance of DVR asked individual respondents if there was anything they would like to add to the survey regarding DVR. A total of 22 narrative responses were received. Four of the comments were positive and included citing gratitude to specific individuals and for DVR services. Five comments cited specific problems and frustration with vendors. Nine comments contained negative remarks regarding VR staff and VR services. Comments are not included unless they specifically relate to the rehabilitation needs of customers.

Individual Survey: Anything Else Would Like to Share

Individual survey respondents were presented with a second open-ended question asking them if they had anything that they would like to share. A total of 61 narrative comments were received. Twenty comments cited the phrases “no/N/A/none”. Seven comments expressed gratitude for VR and its services, including special thanks to specific employees. Twelve comments expressed personal situations and/or progress and included the need for DVR to help the individual client to find work. Eleven comments were negative towards DVR, citing frustration with DVR service or problems with DVR counselors. Six comments contained dissatisfaction with the workforce connection centers.

COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS**Partner Respondent Characteristics**

The first survey question asked partners to classify their organization. Roughly one-fifth of the respondents identified the narrative option “other” and identified adult education; assisted living; BIE; Career Technical Training and Postsecondary School; community WIOA services; dental consulting practice; federal business support program; housing agency; hospitality; non-profit organizations; private business; service dog agency; interpreter services for Spanish language; and a university. One category was not represented in the survey (Veterans agencies). Table 62 identifies the classifications indicated by partner respondents.

Table 62

Partner Survey: Organization Type

Organization Type	Number	Percent
Other (please describe)	18	20.2%
Secondary School	12	13.5%
Other Public or Private Organization	12	13.5%
Postsecondary school	10	11.2%
Other Federal, State, or Local Government Entity	10	11.2%
Individual Service Provider	10	11.2%
Developmental Disability Organization	6	6.7%
Community Rehabilitation Program	3	3.4%
Mental Health Provider	3	3.4%
Medical Provider	3	3.4%
Client Advocacy Organization	2	2.3%
Veterans Agency	0	0.0%
Total	89	100.0%

Partners were presented a list of 32 of the State's 33 counties and asked to identify the counties where they provide services. There was no limit to the number of counties that a respondent could choose. Eighty-three partners answered the question.

All counties listed were represented in the survey. Respondents most frequently identified Bernalillo County as where they provide service. Nine partner respondents provide services in Harding County. Table 63 includes this information.

Table 63

Partner Survey: County Served

County Served	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Bernalillo	38	45.8%
Sandoval	24	28.9%
Santa Fe	21	25.3%
Socorro	21	25.3%
Taos	21	25.3%
Valencia	20	24.1%
Dona Ana	16	19.3%
Rio Arriba	16	19.3%

County Served	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Los Alamos	14	16.9%
Sierra	14	16.9%
Chaves	13	15.7%
McKinley	13	15.7%
San Miguel	13	15.7%
Catron	12	14.5%
Colfax	12	14.5%
Grant	12	14.5%
Lincoln	12	14.5%
Luna	12	14.5%
Mora	12	14.5%
Otero	12	14.5%
Cibola	11	13.3%
De Baca	11	13.3%
Quay	11	13.3%
Roosevelt	11	13.3%
San Juan	11	13.3%
Curry	10	12.0%
Eddy	10	12.0%
Guadalupe	10	12.0%
Lea	10	12.0%
Torrance	10	12.0%
Union	10	12.0%
Harding	9	10.8%
Total	452	

Partners were provided with a list and asked to identify the client populations with whom they worked on a regular basis. There were no limitations to the number of client populations that a partner respondent could choose.

The client population of “transition-aged youth” was cited by roughly one-half of partner respondents who answered the question. The client populations “that need long-term support to maintain employment” and “that are racial or ethnic minorities” are being served by slightly more than 46

percent of the partners. Respondents who selected the “other” category reported serving individuals with a variety of disabilities which include acquired brain injury, business and community officials, college students, homeless, those that have not completed high school, senior citizens, farmers and cattle handlers, and youth. Table 64 details the client populations that partners serve.

Table 64

Partner Survey: Client Populations

Client Populations	Number of times chosen	Percent of total number of respondents
Transition-aged youth (14-24)	44	55.0%
Individuals that need long-term support to maintain employment	37	46.3%
Individuals that are racial or ethnic minorities	37	46.3%
Individuals with the most significant disabilities	31	38.8%
Individuals that are Deaf or Hard of Hearing	29	36.3%
Individuals that are blind or low vision	26	32.5%
Veterans	25	31.3%
Other (please describe)	24	30.0%
Individuals served by New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers (formerly referred to as One-Stops or Career Centers)	20	25.0%
Total	273	

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Staff Respondent Characteristics

The first survey question asked staff respondents to identify their job classification. All staff positions are represented in the survey. Table 65 clarifies the types of staff positions that are represented in the survey.

Table 65

Staff Survey: Job Classification

Job Classification	Number	Present
Rehabilitation Counselor	45	44.6%
Supervisor/Manager/Director	20	19.8%
Support staff	19	18.8%
Administration	12	11.9%
I prefer not to say	5	5.0%
Total	101	100.0%

Staff were asked to indicate the number of years that they have held their current position. The results in table XX indicates a narrow margin of less than one percent exists between the number of respondents that have eleven to 20 years in their current position and twenty or more years in their current position. The majority of staff are relatively new to the job, combining the categories of less than one year and one to five years (70.3%).

Table 66

Staff Survey: Years in Current Position

Years in Current Role	Number	Percent
1-5 years	38	37.6%
Less than one year	33	32.7%
6-10 years	15	14.9%
11-20 years	8	7.9%
21+ years	7	6.9%
Total	101	100.0%

Another survey question asked staff respondents to identify the office(s) where they work. There was no limit to the number of response options a respondent could choose. A total of one hundred one staff provided a response to this survey item.

An equal percentage of staff respondents identified working in the Albuquerque-Gibson and Rio Rancho offices. The Carlsbad, Espanola, Hobbs, Las Cruces-Loretto Towne Center, Silver City, and Taos offices were also identified an equal number of times by respondents. Table 67 details the results.

Table 67

Staff Survey: Office Work In

Office Work In	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Albuquerque-Gibson	14	13.9%
Rio Rancho	14	13.9%
Las Cruces	11	10.9%
Albuquerque-Lomas	10	9.9%
Los Lunas	9	8.9%
Farmington	8	7.9%
Albuquerque-Quail	7	6.9%
Santa Fe	7	6.9%
Socorro	7	6.9%
I prefer not to say	7	6.9%
Albuquerque-South Valley	6	5.9%
Alamogordo	5	5.0%

Gallup	5	5.0%
Clovis	4	4.0%
Central Office	4	4.0%
Las Vegas	3	3.0%
Roswell	3	3.0%
Carlsbad	2	2.0%
Espanola	2	2.0%
Hobbs	2	2.0%
Las Cruces-Loretto Towne Center	2	2.0%
Silver City	2	2.0%
Taos	2	2.0%
Total	136	

Staff Survey: Services that DVR is Most Effective in Providing

Related to the overall performance of the organization, respondents were provided a list of 17 items and asked to identify the services that DVR are most effective in providing to DVR clients, directly or through community partners. There was no limitation to the number of items a staff respondent could choose.

Staff cited “vocational/postsecondary education,” and “disability benefits counseling” as the services DVR is the most effective in providing to clients as each item was identified by over 74 percent of staff respondents. Health insurance and home modification services were the two least frequently cited items in response to the question.

The open-ended category “other” was selected by six staff respondents. The respondents were provided the opportunity to describe additional services that DVR is effective in providing that were not in the list. “Vocational counseling and guidance,” “sign language interpreter services,” “career exploration,” and actual job development services” were noted in the narrative responses. “None/not sure” was noted one time. One comment cited that DVR lacks providing services to clients. Table 68 lists the services and the number of times each item was selected, as well as the percent of the time the service was selected by respondents.

Table 68

Staff Survey: Services DVR Most Effective in Providing – Directly or Through Partners

Services DVR Staff Most Effective in Providing (Directly or Through Partners)	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Vocational/Postsecondary education	64	91.4%
Disability benefits counseling	52	74.3%
Pre-employment transition services	48	68.6%
Assistive technology	46	65.7%
Job training	38	54.3%
Job search/placement/retention	37	52.9%
Transportation assistance	29	41.4%
Vehicle modification	22	31.4%
Maintenance or Income assistance	18	25.7%
Mental health treatment	18	25.7%
Medical treatment	12	17.1%
Substance abuse treatment	12	17.1%
Personal care attendants	8	11.4%
Housing	8	11.4%
Other (please describe)	7	10.0%
Health insurance	5	7.1%
Home modification	4	5.7%
Total	428	

Staff Survey: Top Three Changes that Enable Staff to Better Serve DVR Clients

Staff were presented with a list of sixteen options and asked to identify the top three changes that would enable them to better assist their DVR clients.

A total of sixty-seven staff provided a response to this question. “Smaller caseload” was the most frequently cited item (53.7% of staff respondents). “More streamlined processes” and “more community-based service providers for specific services” rounded up the top three changes that would enable staff to better serve DVR clients. Incentives for high performing service providers was the least frequently cited item by staff in response to the question.

Trainings identified by staff who selected the item “additional trainings” and comments from the category “other” are provided in the table following the detailed survey results.

Table 69 details the survey results. Table 70 lists the additional training suggestions and comments from the item “other, please describe.”

Table 69

Staff Survey: Top Three Changes to Better Serve DVR Clients

Top Three Changes to Better Serve DVR Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Smaller caseload	36	53.7%
More streamlined processes	28	41.8%
More community-based service providers for specific services	21	31.3%
More administrative support	13	19.4%
Increased outreach to clients	13	19.4%
Accountability for poor performance by service providers	13	19.4%
Improved business partnerships	12	17.9%
More effective community-based service providers	10	14.9%
Better data management tools	8	11.9%
Other (please describe)	8	11.9%
Increased options for technology use to communicate with clients	8	11.9%
Increased collaboration with other workforce partners including New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers	8	11.9%
Better assessment tools	6	9.0%
Additional training (please identify what training areas you have need of)	5	7.5%
More supervisor support	4	6.0%
Incentives for high performing service providers	2	3.0%
Total	195	

Table 70

Staff Survey: Training Suggestions and Comments

Training Suggestions
<i>"Address the 'why', don't just read from the MOP"</i>
<i>"I'd like to know about assessment tools, career exploration tools, etc."</i>
<i>"Management training that would teach how to run offices with an ongoing deficit of staff. Study on how to create improvements in recruitment of qualified VR counselors"</i>
Narrative Comments from Survey Item "Other"
Staff - Related Needs
<i>"Have someone or a few people train a soon to be VRC/VRT of how the job works from beginning to end. VRC - walk through each case status up to a successful/non-successful closure. VRT - have training for each section of their job from start to finish. Really dedicate more trainings to make each one of us more successful."</i>
<i>"Fill vacant caseload for Deaf and Hard of hearing. This caseload has been vacant for 9 months."</i>

Training Suggestions
<i>"More staff"</i>
<i>"Other states offer multiple different VR Counselor levels. I think this would be extremely beneficial for our agency. It would give everyone a chance at upward mobility and having one particular counselor do eligibilities, while one is solely pre-ETS, one does mental health etc. might cause higher moral."</i>
<i>"Remote work options. Split caseloads for Regular VR, not mixed with Supported Employment & Transition all thrown into my caseload."</i>
Improving Direct Client Service
<i>"More communication with upper management to refocus our efforts on actually helping clients in the service status. All the decision right now are focused on protecting the agency from overtimes and increased reporting of MSG's and not allowing staff to work with client in service status."</i>
<i>"Developing IPEs based on what an individual needs. Right now everyone is told to spend as much money as possible, so we are buying clients things they don't need and not making their IPEs tailored to them."</i>
<i>"VR documentation takes significant amount of time that could be utilized towards working with participants and building skills needed for employment."</i>

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following themes emerged on a recurring basis from the individual interviews and focus groups conducted for this assessment as it relates to overall program performance for New Mexico DVR:

1. The staff at DVR were consistently characterized as caring and committed to helping individuals with disabilities in New Mexico to prepare for and obtain employment. Despite experiencing staffing shortages throughout the State, the personnel at the agency were described as compassionate and trying to do their best.
2. The pandemic had a significant impact on DVR and on VR programs nationally. DVR experienced the same decrease in applications and numbers served at the height of the pandemic that all VR programs did during PY 2020 and 2021. The number of applications and individuals served increased significantly in PY 2022, which indicates that DVR is recovering in these areas. Business closures, School closures, health concerns, the shift to remote work, and staff shortages all impacted service delivery for individuals with disabilities during the pandemic.
3. New Mexico passed all of their WIOA performance measures for PY 2022. The agency exceeded their negotiated rates for the employment rate in the second and fourth quarter after exit, median earnings, credential rate and measurable skill gains.
4. Difficulty with recruitment and retention of staff, especially counselors and technicians, was repeatedly cited as a barrier to meeting the needs of customers. The vacancy rate results in existing staff covering vacant caseloads, which impacts responsiveness and timely service delivery. The difficulty with recruitment and retention was consistently cited as a result of low wages. The pandemic exacerbated the staffing concerns at DVR and at providers, who are experiencing high vacancy rates as well.
5. There is a need to increase community awareness of DVR and its services throughout the State. While the agency's website is a good source of information about DVR, participants indicated that there is a need for an accessibility audit of the website as some of the videos on the website need ASL and captions included.
6. Participants indicated a need for more staff development opportunities for counselors and technicians. This need was expressed most frequently when discussing the need to work with individuals with behavioral health concerns and individuals with criminal backgrounds.
7. Due to the large expanses of rural areas of the State, several interview participants indicated a need to increase the use of self-employment as a viable IPE goal.
8. Preparing individuals with disabilities to work in remote jobs was identified as an area where DVR could focus on as a result of the shift in work environments caused by the pandemic.
9. Participants indicated that a significant number of individuals that apply for services exit the program prior to plan development. The data supports this observation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. DVR is encouraged to continue to work on increasing pay for all staff, especially counseling and support staff (technicians) to address the recruitment and retention challenges.
2. DVR is encouraged to pursue the purchase and use of artificial intelligence technology to communicate with consumers and assist with labor intensive information gathering needs that detract from effective use of counselor and technician time with consumers. One option is the SARA program that DVR can acquire as part of a pilot project with the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Management (VRTAC-QM). The agency could implement SARA for free and determine if the program works for them up until 9-30-2025.
3. DVR is encouraged to increase self-employment opportunities for consumers, especially those in the rural areas of the State. One option to assist with this initiative would be to work with the Vocational Rehabilitation for Quality Employment (VRTAC-QE), as self-employment is one employment strategy that the VRTAC-QE provides TA and training on for VR agencies.
4. DVR is encouraged to help consumers pursue remote work opportunities if this type of work is consistent with their primary employment factors (their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interest and informed choice).
5. DVR should continue their current marketing and communication campaign and expand it as their staffing and capacity grows. The agency has a multi-faceted approach to marketing currently, and this appears to be paying dividends in terms of increased applications and numbers served.
6. DVR should ensure that they are providing regular and consistent training on how to effectively work with consumers that have behavioral health impairments and criminal backgrounds.
7. DVR is encouraged to implement an initiative focused on rapid engagement of consumers in the VR process specifically increasing the speed of eligibility determinations and increasing the speed to plan. An analysis of data on the speed to plan and its effect on outcomes in PY 2021 illustrates the importance of moving consumers through the process from application to IPE. Table 71 contains the results for New Mexico DVR.

Table 71

Speed to Plan on Outcomes for DVR PY 2021

Association between Speed to Plan and VR Outcome - New Mexico PY 2021				
Duration	Rehabilitated		Other than Rehabilitated	
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
One day or less	0.0%	0	100.0%	5
2 to 30 days	29.1%	23	70.9%	56
31 to 60 days	32.5%	50	67.5%	104
61 to 90 days	25.0%	55	75.0%	165
91 to 150 days	26.4%	147	73.6%	409
151 days or more	25.8%	162	74.2%	465
Totals		437		1,204

The data indicates that the sooner an applicant moves to IPE, the more likely they are to exit in employment. The difference between 31-60 days to plan and 151 days or more is 6.7%. An initiative focused on rapid and meaningful engagement should also help DVR address the attrition rate prior to IPE.

8. In order to help with the attrition rate after application, DVR is encouraged to examine a sample of cases that have exited unsuccessfully, especially those where the exit reason had to do with being unable to locate or contact, to see if there are strategies that can be employed to help ensure more consistent engagement.
9. As resources allow, DVR is encouraged to provide staff with technology to communicate with customers via text and social media to improve responsiveness, especially to youth.
10. DVR is encouraged to conduct an accessibility audit of their website to ensure all content is fully accessible.
11. DVR is encouraged to continue to work with the VRTAC-QM in an intensive technical assistance capacity to ensure that their data is accurate and valid. The agency has made tremendous strides in this area in the last two years and is encouraged to keep this focus as a priority.

SECTION TWO

NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

Section 2 includes an assessment of the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment. This section includes the rehabilitation needs of DVR consumers as expressed by the different groups interviewed and surveyed. All of the general needs of DVR consumers were included here, with specific needs identified relating to supported and customized employment.

RECURRING THEMES ACROSS ALL DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities including their need for supported employment:

1. Transportation, the lack of job skills and work experience, lack of education and training and mental health concerns are common rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities and impact their ability to prepare for, obtain and maintain employment. All of these needs are magnified in the rural areas of the State.
2. The lack of broadband Internet access is a barrier to employment, especially in the rural areas. The shift to remote work and communication resulting from the pandemic magnified how important reliable Internet access is for all individuals, and the lack of access in many rural areas of New Mexico prevents individuals with disabilities from accessing information necessary for job search and remote employment opportunities.
3. Assistive technology, job placement assistance, and employment preparation services were all cited repeatedly as rehabilitation needs of DVR customers.
4. DVR serves a large population of individuals with behavioral health impairments including mental health impairments and substance use disorders. The available treatment for this population was noted as severely lacking, especially outside of Albuquerque and Santa Fe. Mental health counseling was noted as nearly non-existent in the rural areas of the State, which impacts the stability of individuals necessary for sustained employment.
5. Many DVR customers need supported employment (SE) services to maintain employment, but there are very few SE providers outside of the urban areas of the State. CRPs are experiencing high vacancy rates and there are almost no SE providers in the rural areas of the State. In addition, there is no capacity to provide customized employment (CE) in the State.
6. The fear of benefit loss, especially medical benefits, is a barrier to SSA beneficiaries returning to work, or pursuing work at a self-sustaining level. Many DVR customers that are receiving either SSI or SSDI pursue employment at the part-time level so that they can augment their benefits, but not face losing them due to work. This results in many individuals working below their potential.

7. Many Deaf customers have a need to develop their reading and language skills, but there are very few options for them in the State.
8. The need for affordable housing has become a major issue since the pandemic began in 2020. The need to identify affordable housing options has become of paramount importance for DVR consumers.
9. Poverty is a significant concern for individuals with disabilities in New Mexico. The poverty rates in the State are consistently in the top three in the country according to the US Census Bureau, and the effect of poverty on individuals with disabilities is disproportionate.

***NATIONAL AND/OR AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA RELATED TO
THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH THE MOST SIGNIFICANT
DISABILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR NEED FOR SUPPORTED
EMPLOYMENT:***

Number Served by Disability Type:

The project team gathered information from DVR and the RSA data dashboards on the primary disability types served by the agency, whether they were SE consumers and/or SSA beneficiaries. Tables 72 includes the primary disability type of program participants for PY 2021 and 2022.

Table 72

Primary Disability Type of DVR Participants

Primary Disability Type by Group	All Participants	
	2021	2022
Visual	0.7%	0.6%
Auditory or Communicative	10.4%	11.2%
Physical	22.6%	20.3%
Cognitive	33.9%	35.2%
Psychological or Psychosocial	32.5%	32.7%

The data indicates that cognitive and mental health disabilities comprise more than 66% of all participants served by DVR. Individuals with physical disabilities account for 20% of the DVR customer population followed by auditory or communicative disabilities. There are approximately 200 customers a year that receive supported employment services by DVR, and nearly half of their customer population indicate that they are Social Security Administration (SSA) beneficiaries. More than half of their participant population is categorized as most significantly disabled according to the RSA data dashboards for PY 2021 and 2022.

SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

Individual Survey: Receipt of Social Security Disability Benefits

Individual survey respondents were presented with a checklist and asked to indicate whether they received Social Security disability benefits. The total number of respondents who answered this question is 211.

Based on the table data, the inferences can be made that 56% of the individual survey respondents do not receive Social Security disability benefits. About one-fifth of the respondents receive SSDI and about one-fifth of the respondents receive SSI. Table 73 summarizes the responses to this question. Note that individuals were allowed to select more than one option in the series of items (e.g., in the case of an individual who received both SSI and SSDI).

Table 73

Individual Survey: Social Security Benefit Status

Social Security Benefits Status	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
I do not receive Social Security disability benefits	119	56.4%
I receive SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance. SSDI is provided to individuals that have worked in the past and is based on the amount of money the individual paid into the system through payroll deductions)	44	20.9%
I receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income. SSI is a means-tested benefit generally provided to individuals with little or no work history)	42	19.9%
I receive a check from the Social Security Administration every month, but I do not know which benefit I get	10	4.7%
I don't know if I receive Social Security disability benefits	3	1.4%
Total	218	

Individual Survey: Finances and Money Management

DVR has made a concerted effort in the last few years to provide financial empowerment services for individuals with disabilities served by the program. Consequently, they included a series of questions in the survey that seek to identify the financial management competency of respondents and how fiscal issues impact their ability to function independently.

Financial Situation

Respondents were given a list of statements and asked to describe how they manage their financial situation. A total of 180 respondents participated in answering this survey item. Slightly more than one-third of respondents indicated they are doing OK financially and slightly less than one third of the respondents are not doing well financially. Table 74 details the results.

Table 74

Individual Survey: Financial Situation

Current Financial Situation	Number	Percent
I am doing OK financially	66	36.7%
I am not doing well financially	57	31.7%
I am in desperate need for money	39	21.7%
I am doing well financially	18	10.0%
Total	180	100.0%

Managing Money

Individual survey respondents were presented a checklist of statements regarding money management and asked to indicate whether the item represents how they manage money. Although almost 40% of respondents indicated they have a monthly budget and about one-third of respondents have savings accounts, less than 5.5% of the respondents indicated they invest money. Less than 16 percent of the respondents have another person managing their money. Table 75 details the results.

Table 75

Individual Survey: Managing Money

Managing Money	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
I have a checking account	96	51.6%
I have a monthly budget	74	39.8%
I have a savings account	63	33.9%
I have no money to manage	36	19.4%
Someone else manages my money for me	29	15.6%
I have no specific way that I manage my money	21	11.3%
I invest my money	10	5.4%
Total	329	

Interest in Financial Services

When asked the question, “If DVR offered financial education or skills training, would you be interested in receiving these services?”, one-quarter of respondents were unsure if they would be interested and roughly 58 percent of the respondents are interested in DVR sponsored financial services. Table 76 includes this information.

Table 76

Individual Survey: Interest in DVR Financial Services

Interest in DVR Financial Services	Number	Percent
Yes	108	58.4%
I am not sure	47	25.4%
No	30	16.2%
Total	185	100.0%

Individual Survey: Barriers to Employment

Individual survey respondents were asked a series of questions to identify barriers to employment

Identifying Barriers to Obtaining or Keeping a Job

Respondents were presented with a list of 18 potential barriers and asked to indicate whether or not the item had been a barrier that impacted their ability to obtain or keep a job. There was no limit to the number of barriers that an individual survey respondent could choose. A total of 178 survey respondents participated in answering the question.

Two items, “limited job skills/work experience” and “lack of education or training” were cited most frequently by respondents and the rates range between 35 to 41 percent of the total number of respondents. “Lack of attendant care,” “substance abuse,” “lack of broadband internet access,” and “language barriers” were the lowest ranking barriers.

Table 77 summarizes the barriers identified by respondents.

Table 77

Individual Survey: Identifying Barriers to Obtaining or Keeping a Job

Identify Barriers to Getting a Job	Times identified as a barrier	Percent of number of respondents
Limited job skills/work experience	73	41.0%
Lack of education or training	63	35.4%
Mental health concerns	58	32.6%
Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability	56	31.5%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	51	28.7%
Lack of reliable transportation	39	21.9%
Other health issues	36	20.2%
Lack of job search/interview skills	35	19.7%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	27	15.2%
Lack of available jobs	25	14.0%

Identify Barriers to Getting a Job	Times identified as a barrier	Percent of number of respondents
Lack of assistive technology	20	11.2%
Criminal Record	19	10.7%
Lack of housing	14	7.9%
Lack of child care	12	6.7%
Lack of attendant care	9	5.1%
Substance abuse	9	5.1%
Lack of broadband Internet access	9	5.1%
Language barriers	8	4.5%
Total	563	

Top Three Barriers to Obtaining or Keeping a Job

Individual survey respondents were presented with a subsequent question asking them to identify their top three barriers to obtaining or keeping a job. One-hundred sixty-two individuals answered the question.

Limited job skills/work experience was the most frequently selected barrier to getting a job. Lack of education or training was identified as the second top barrier to employment and employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability ranked as the third top barrier to getting a job. Note that the top four barriers selected in this question are the same top four barriers cited in the previous table although two items are in a reverse rank order (employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability; mental health concerns). Lack of broadband internet service was cited 9 times on the previous Table 78 but is cited one time in response to this question. Table 79 contains a summary of the responses.

Table 78

Individual Survey: Top Three Barriers to Getting a Job

Top Three Barriers to Getting a Job	Times identified as a barrier	Percent of number of respondents
Limited job skills/work experience	62	38.3%
Lack of education or training	48	29.6%
Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability	43	26.5%
Mental health concerns	42	25.9%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	42	25.9%
Lack of job search/interview skills	27	16.7%

Top Three Barriers to Getting a Job	Times identified as a barrier	Percent of number of respondents
Other health issues	24	14.8%
Lack of reliable transportation	22	13.6%
Lack of available jobs	15	9.3%
Lack of assistive technology	15	9.3%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	15	9.3%
Criminal Record	12	7.4%
Lack of attendant care	10	6.2%
Lack of housing	6	3.7%
Lack of child care	5	3.1%
Language barriers	4	2.5%
Substance abuse	4	2.5%
Lack of broadband Internet access	1	0.6%
Total	397	

Other Barriers to Getting A Job

Individuals were presented with an open-ended question asking them to identify other barriers that they may have experienced that prevented them from getting a job that are not included in the previous questions. There were 44 individuals who provided a narrative response to this question. Thirteen of the respondents indicated that they did not experience other barriers and two of the 13 comments included obtaining employment without the use of DVR. Content analysis of the remaining responses indicated that the following are “other barriers” preventing respondents from obtaining or keeping a job: employer issues; lack of accommodations; physical, mental health, and cognitive disabilities; employed but want to make more money/a different job/start a business; age; lack of job developer assistance; lack of vendors; over qualified/over educated; not having the correct tools to do the job; no recent work history; embezzling tendencies; transportation; client uneasy with hearing disability; cannot keep the job; and no response to job applications submitted.

Individual Survey: Barriers to Accessing DVR

Respondents were presented with three questions regarding barriers to accessing DVR services.

Barriers to Accessing DVR

Respondents were presented with a list describing potential barriers to accessing DVR services and asked to indicate whether the barriers had made it difficult to access DVR services. There was no limit to the number of barriers that an individual respondent could choose.

Forty percent of respondents cited “other, please describe” which ranked the item as the most frequently cited barrier to accessing DVR service by respondents and 55 narrative comments were received. Twenty-eight comments cited various frustrations with DVR services and counselors. Fourteen comments cited phrases “no barriers/none, n/a.” The remaining narrative comments included comments including: not connecting with DVR, various disability-related issues, transportation, and lack of service provider follow-through.

Table 79

Individual Survey: Barriers to Accessing DVR Services

Identify Barriers to Accessing DVR Services	Times identified as a barrier	Percent of number of respondents
Other (please identify)	56	40.0%
Lack of information about available services	50	35.7%
Difficulties scheduling meetings with my counselor	31	22.1%
Other difficulties with DVR staff	29	20.7%
Lack of disability-related accommodations	26	18.6%
Lack of available transportation to the DVR office	23	16.4%
DVR's hours of operation	13	9.3%
Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)	12	8.6%
I have nobody that can help me access services	9	6.4%
Lack of broadband Internet access	7	5.0%
Language barriers	4	2.9%
Difficulties completing the DVR application	3	2.1%
Total	263	

Individual Survey: How Can DVR Change to Help Get A Job

Individual survey respondents were asked an open-ended question asking them for suggestions on how DVR could improve their services in order to assist them in getting a job. A total of 124 survey participants responded to the question.

Twenty-five comments did not have any suggestion as the comments contained the phrases “none/don’t know/I have a job/I do not want to work.” Thirteen of the write-in responses contained positive comments regarding DVR without including a recommendation for change. Quotes found in the narrative comments include:

- “My experience has been really positive this time. DVR staff has been receptive and open to the work I need to do to discern what path to take.”
- “I honestly am very, very happy with DVR and the services they offer”
- “More training for different sorts of jobs, electronics or vouchers for electronics for people who need to work from home.”

- *“Maybe have a job fair with companies who will hire people who have disabilities, that way they know the struggles we have with our specific challenges.”*
- *“Provide the services somewhat more expediently. I struggle with communication disabilities and have been lost in the shuffle when my counselor became ill. Several months transpired with no updates until someone would help me communicate with them.”*
- *“Provide more information about the services available from DVR. Have more uniform training of staff and better communication between staff and clients. More proactivity of DVR counselor. Dynamic document that contains the list of job coaches with links to websites or more description of services. The job coach document should be able to be reorganized by area of the state served by the job coaching service.”*

COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS

Partner Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals

Partners were asked two questions regarding the barriers clients face when attempting to achieve their employment goals.

Most Common Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – General DVR Clients

Partner survey respondents were given a list of 22 barriers and asked to identify the most common barriers to achieving employment goals for DVR clients. There was no limit to the number of barriers that a respondent could choose. A total of 57 responses were received.

Over seventy-five percent of the partner respondents cited “limited job skills/work experience” as a common barrier to reaching employment goals for clients. One-third of the respondents indicated that a “lack of job search/interview skills” is also a common barrier to employment for DVR clients. Three items were cited by over 57 percent of partners as common barriers (lack of reliable transportation; lack of education or training; employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities). Note the similarity of the five most common barriers cited by partners compared to the top three barriers to employment cited by individual survey respondents (limited job skills/work experience, the lack of education or training, and employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability).

Table 80 lists the barriers presented to partner respondents along with the number of times each of the barriers was cited and the percent of the number of respondents who selected the item.

Table 80

Partner Survey: Most Common Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – General DVR Clients

Most Common Barriers to Employment Goals – General DVR Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Limited job skills/work experience	43	75.4%
Lack of job search/interview skills	38	66.7%
Lack of reliable transportation	34	59.6%
Lack of education or training	33	57.9%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	33	57.9%

Most Common Barriers to Employment Goals – General DVR Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Lack of soft skills	28	49.1%
Mental health concerns	23	40.4%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	23	40.4%
Other transportation issues	22	38.6%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	21	36.8%
Substance abuse	18	31.6%
Lack of available jobs	17	29.8%
Lack of technology skills	17	29.8%
Lack of assistive technology	16	28.1%
Lack of housing	15	26.3%
Criminal record	15	26.3%
Lack of childcare	14	24.6%
Lack of attendant care	14	24.6%
Language barriers	13	22.8%
Lack of Internet access	12	21.1%
Other health concerns	11	19.3%
Other (please describe)	7	12.3%
Total	467	

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Most Significant Disabilities

Partner survey respondents were given a list of 22 barriers, including an option for “other”, and were asked to identify the barriers that prevent DVR clients with the most significant disabilities from achieving their employment goals. The sample size was 54 respondents.

Four of the top five barriers to achieving employment goals selected by at least 50 percent of the partners for clients with the most significant disabilities match four of the top five barriers partners cited for the general population of clients. Three of the six narrative comments in response to the item “other, please describe” cited “not familiar/I don’t know.” Quotes from the remaining comments are:

- *“Lack of support available to assist with around the clock job coaching supports. Low pay, lack of DVR supports and communication between VRC and service providers”*
- *“One to one individualized supportive services”*
- *“Staffing shortage”*

Table 81 summarizes the results to the question.

Table 81

Partner Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Most Significant Disabilities

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Most Significant Disabilities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Limited job skills/work experience	36	66.7%
Lack of job search/interview skills	30	55.6%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	30	55.6%
Lack of education or training	28	51.9%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	27	50.0%
Lack of soft skills	24	44.4%
Lack of reliable transportation	23	42.6%
Lack of available jobs	21	38.9%
Mental health concerns	18	33.3%
Lack of assistive technology	18	33.3%
Lack of attendant care	18	33.3%
Other health concerns	17	31.5%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	16	29.6%
Lack of technology skills	15	27.8%
Other transportation issues	15	27.8%
Language barriers	12	22.2%
Substance abuse	10	18.5%
Lack of housing	9	16.7%
Lack of Internet access	8	14.8%
Other (please describe)	6	11.1%
Criminal record	6	11.1%
Lack of childcare	5	9.3%
Total	392	

Partner Survey: Top Three Reasons Difficulty Accessing DVR Services

Respondents were presented with a question that prompted them to indicate the top three reasons that people with disabilities might find it difficult to access DVR services. Twelve response options were provided.

Almost 45 percent of partners identified “application/eligibility process is too cumbersome” as the top reason why people with disabilities have difficulty accessing DVR services. “Slow service delivery” was identified by slightly more than one-third of partners as a barrier to accessing DVR services. The third

top reason, selected by slightly less than one-third of the partners, relates to the location where DVR staff meet with clients. Ten comments were received in the category “other.” One quote related to the lack of knowledge about DVR services. Three quotes related to lack of DVR staff to adequately support, provide services, and respond to clients. Two quotes related to the lack of follow-through on the part of the client, and one quote referenced limited resources. A quote that provided a suggestion for improvement is noted:

- *“Not enough supportive service providers especially in rural areas. DVR needs to establish collaborative relations with community colleges and develop programs to bridge HS and community college. Also need more on the job training opportunities and training programs for clients who can only learn “hands on” and are not candidates for college.”*

Table 82

Partner Survey: Top Three Reasons Difficulty Accessing DVR Services

Top Three Reasons Difficult to Access DVR Services	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Application/Eligibility process is too cumbersome	22	44.9%
Slow service delivery	17	34.7%
DVR staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live	16	32.7%
Limited accessibility of DVR via public transportation	14	28.6%
Lack of technology needed to engage in virtual or remote services	12	24.5%
Inadequate assessment services	10	20.4%
Other (please describe)	10	20.4%
Other challenges related to the physical location of the DVR office	8	16.3%
Lack of assistance to develop the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)	5	10.2%
Inadequate disability-related accommodations	3	6.1%
Language barriers	2	4.1%
Lack of options for the use of technology to communicate with DVR staff	2	4.1%
Total	121	

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Staff Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals

Staff were asked questions regarding the barriers clients face when attempting to achieve their employment goals.

Most Common Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – General DVR Clients

Staff survey respondents were given a list of 22 barriers to employment and asked to identify the most common barriers to achieving employment goals for the general population of DVR clients. There was no limit to the number of barriers a respondent could choose.

Staff identified mental health issues and criminal offences more frequently than partner and individual survey respondents, and the items rank in the two top positions on the staff results list. One item that ranked in the third position on the staff results list, “limited job skills/work experience,” was the first choice of partners and of individual survey respondents when asked to identify the top three barriers that prevent clients from getting or keeping a job. Lack of internet access was selected by 30.4 percent of staff (n=21) and by one individual respondent. Note that the majority of individual survey respondents were from Bernalillo County which is considered about 96 percent urban.

Table 83 details the results to the question from the survey.

Table 83

Staff Survey: Most Common Barriers to Employment Goals - General DVR Clients

Most Common Barriers to Employment Goals - General Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Mental health concerns	49	71.0%
Criminal record	47	68.1%
Limited job skills/work experience	45	65.2%
Lack of reliable transportation	44	63.8%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	41	59.4%
Substance abuse	40	58.0%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	40	58.0%
Lack of education or training	38	55.1%
Other transportation issues	36	52.2%
Lack of job search/interview skills	32	46.4%
Lack of housing	32	46.4%
Lack of soft skills	32	46.4%
Lack of technology skills	31	44.9%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	30	43.5%
Lack of childcare	26	37.7%
Lack of internet access	21	30.4%
Language barriers	20	29.0%
Other health issues	16	23.2%

Most Common Barriers to Employment Goals - General Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Lack of available jobs	14	20.3%
Lack of attendant care	11	15.9%
Other (please describe)	5	7.2%
Lack of assistive technology	5	7.2%
Total	655	

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Most Significant Disabilities

Staff respondents were also asked to identify the barriers to achieving employment goals for clients with the most significant disabilities.

The rank order of items that staff selected in response to the question are slightly different from the partner respondents' choices for barriers to achieving employment goals for clients with the most significant disabilities. The top three items chosen by staff relate to the lack of skill/experience/employer perceptions/disability-related accommodations. Partners selected the item "lack of job search and interview skills" more frequently than the item "lack of disability-related accommodations at work".

Table 84 details the staff survey results in response to the question

Table 84

Staff Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Most Significant Disabilities

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Most Significant Disabilities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Limited job skills/work experience	43	62.3%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	42	60.9%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	39	56.5%
Lack of reliable transportation	38	55.1%
Lack of job search/interview skills	34	49.3%
Lack of soft skills	34	49.3%
Lack of education or training	33	47.8%
Mental health concerns	29	42.0%
Other health issues	29	42.0%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	29	42.0%
Other transportation issues	28	40.6%
Lack of technology skills	28	40.6%

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Most Significant Disabilities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Lack of available jobs	25	36.2%
Lack of attendant care	18	26.1%
Substance abuse	18	26.1%
Criminal record	15	21.7%
Language barriers	14	20.3%
Lack of internet access	13	18.8%
Lack of childcare	11	15.9%
Lack of housing	11	15.9%
Lack of assistive technology	9	13.0%
Other (please describe)	6	8.7%
Total	546	

Staff Survey: Top Three Reasons Difficulty Accessing DVR Services

Staff were presented with a question that prompted them to indicate the top three reasons that individuals with disabilities might find it difficult to access DVR services. Twelve response options were provided.

Two of three top reasons individuals with disabilities have difficulty accessing DVR services chosen by staff matched two of the partners' top reasons (application/eligibility process too cumbersome; slow service delivery). Staff respondents ranked "limited access the DVR office via public transportation" as the number one reason individuals with disabilities have difficulty accessing DVR services while partners ranked the item in the fourth position.

One narrative comment received stated that "DVR services are extremely easy to access." Content analysis of the remaining narrative comments indicated that: the lack of understanding /knowledge of DVR services and process (x5); VR staff turnover and vacancies (x3); too much reliance on Spanish speaking staff to translate (x1); no time for VRC to work directly with client due to being bogged down with documentation (x1); clients feel they "jump through hoops" by providing receipts and documents (x1); lack of job developers (x1); and client residing in rural areas (x1) are the difficulties that hinder access to DVR services.

Table 85 summarizes the staff choices in response to the question.

Table 85

Staff Survey: Top Three Reasons Difficulty Accessing DVR Services

Top Three Reasons Difficult to Access DVR Services	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Limited access the DVR office via public transportation	30	45.5%
Application/eligibility process is too cumbersome	21	31.8%
Slow service delivery	21	31.8%
Lack of technology needed to engage in virtual or remote services	20	30.3%
Other (please describe)	14	21.2%
DVR staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live	14	21.2%
Lack of options for the use of technology to communicate with DVR staff	13	19.7%
Other challenges related to the physical location of the DVR office	10	15.2%
Language barriers	10	15.2%
Inadequate assessment services	6	9.1%
Inadequate disability-related accommodations	3	4.5%
Lack of assistance to develop the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)	3	4.5%
Total	165	

Staff Survey: Remote DVR Services

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, modified service delivery for clients included remote services. Staff respondents were asked a series of questions regarding remote service delivery.

Effectiveness of Remote Service During Covid Delivered by DVR Staff

The first question presented to staff asked respondents to rate the effectiveness remote services delivered by DVR staff during the covid pandemic. Seventy-one respondents answered the question.

Staff were divided on the degree of effectiveness of remote services during the pandemic. Slightly more than one-third of the staff respondents indicated that the remote services were “effective,” and one-third of staff cited “somewhat effective.”

When combining items “effective” and “extremely effective” the staff percentage rate (50.7%) is less than 1 percentage point lower than the individual respondents’ ratings for remote service effectiveness (51.6 percent). Conversely, when combining the items “minimally effective” and “not effective at all” the rate of ineffectiveness indicated by staff (15.5%) is 11.9 percent lower than the ineffectiveness rating of individuals (27.4%) who indicated that remote services were either “less effective” or “not effective at all.” Table 86 summarizes the staff responses to the question.

Table 86

Staff Survey: Effectiveness of Remote Services Delivered by DVR Staff During Pandemic

Effectiveness of Remote Services Delivered by DVR Staff During Pandemic	Number	Percent
Effective	26	36.6%
Somewhat effective	24	33.8%
Extremely effective	10	14.1%
Minimally effective	10	14.1%
Not effective at all	1	1.4%
Total	71	100.0%

Effectiveness of Remote Service During Covid Delivered by Service Providers

The second question regarding remote services presented to staff asked respondents to rate the effectiveness remote services delivered by service providers during the covid pandemic. A total of 71 respondents answered the question.

Over 42 percent of the staff respondents indicated that the remote services of service providers were "somewhat effective." The rate for "extremely effective" service provider remote services found in the staff results table 87 is 1.4% lower than the "extremely effective" rating of DVR staff delivered remote services. Conversely, the staff survey percentage rate for "minimally effective" service provider delivered remote services is 1.4 percent higher than "minimally effective" rating of staff delivered remote services found in table 86 above. Table 88 summarizes the staff responses to the question regarding service provider delivered remote services during the covid pandemic.

Table 87

Staff Survey: Effectiveness of Remote Services Delivered by Service Providers During Pandemic

Effectiveness of Remote Services Delivered by Service Providers During Pandemic	Number	Percent
Somewhat effective	30	42.3%
Effective	19	26.8%
Minimally effective	11	15.5%
Extremely effective	9	12.7%
Not effective at all	2	2.8%
Total	71	100.0%

Comments Regarding Remote Service Delivery

Staff were presented an open-ended question asking if they had any comments regarding remote service delivery. Twenty-nine staff respondents provided a narrative response.

Eleven of the twenty-nine respondents were not employees of the agency during the pandemic and did not provide additional remarks. The remaining eighteen narrative comments contained positive,

negative, and mixed feedback regarding remote services. Some positive comments of staff did not align with individual respondent negative feedback found in the individual survey results regarding remote service. Note again, the majority of individual survey respondents reside in an urban area and cited in-person as their preferred modality of service. Table XX contains eighteen quotes in response to the question.

Table 88

Staff Survey: Narrative Comments Regarding Remote Service Delivery

Comments Regarding Remote Service Delivery
Positive Re: Remote Services
<i>"All Staff were allowed to telework and all services remained open remotely."</i>
<i>"Doing work remotely allowed me to meet with my clients more quickly, and this was redacted by coming back into offices when remote work was removed as a work option for staff"</i>
<i>"It seemed as though we were much more productive when we had the ability to provide remote services"</i>
<i>"Staff members continued to provide services remotely utilizing technology provided by the agency such as a laptop, a phone app, and a virtual app platform to communicate with participants"</i>
<i>"Working remotely allowed me to get more work done. In the office there are constant interruptions and people wanting to gossip about others at work, so they are less productive. I wish we could go back to a semi-remote model."</i>
Negative Re: Remote Services
<i>"It was a challenge overall for everyone involved, and compared to not working remotely, the effectiveness of delivered services is better not working remotely for all stakeholders"</i>
<i>"Many clients needed more support during the pandemic"</i>
<i>"Most Deaf clients during pandemic had SSI and stayed home until virus reduced or they had COVID-19 shots. Hard of Hearing were desperate to get a job and difficult for them as job placement was very difficult to get. This VRC had to either change job developers when it was not effective or help to search with the client as they were very discouraged."</i>
<i>"Not everyone had computers or internet, or knew how to utilize the remote services"</i>
<i>"There were limited services available during this time as many providers were unable to retain staff which limited the number of people they could serve"</i>
<i>"We deal with the people with disabilities and a large portion of these individuals have a learning disability, low income, and are computer illiterate. This makes virtual meetings and remote services near impossible to administer and follow through. On top of this, the counties I serve as a VR Counselor are largely remote, meaning some areas do not have accessible internet or cell phone service."</i>
Mixed
<i>"I think we can maintain a case virtually but the relationship developed between the VRC and participant needs to be in person."</i>
<i>"One to one in person is the best format for engaging clients. Remote should be an option if client has temporary transportation or personal issues"</i>
<i>"Remote service effectiveness was for all agencies and the business closures made it difficult to get jobs for anyone."</i>
<i>"Remote services did definitely effect the customer service aspect of being available"</i>
<i>"Remote services only work if there is adequate equipment and internet service by both parties involved. This is not the case with many of the participants served. However, in-person seems to engage the participants more."</i>
<i>"Remote work could be more effective if offered to staff on a limited basis to be occurred like leave to facilitate times where staff would like to still work their caseload but coming into work would cause an unnecessary risk. there are time we can do our job but we may have a physical ailment that present a hard barrier from traveling into work."</i>

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following themes emerged on a recurring basis from the individual interviews and focus groups conducted for this assessment regarding the needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment:

1. Transportation was by far the most common need cited by all groups for individuals with disabilities to prepare for, obtain and maintain employment. Public transportation in the rural areas is especially problematic and was characterized as nonexistent in most cases, and unreliable when it was available. The lack of transportation is a barrier to both employment and accessing DVR services.
2. The lack of broadband Internet access was cited as a barrier. The shift to remote work and communication resulting from the pandemic magnified how important reliable Internet access is for all individuals, and the lack of access in many rural areas of New Mexico prevents individuals with disabilities from accessing information necessary for job search and remote employment opportunities.
3. Assistive technology, job placement assistance, employment preparation services, work experience and behavioral health counseling were all cited repeatedly as rehabilitation needs of DVR customers.
4. Participants indicated that DVR serves a large population of individuals with behavioral health impairments including mental health impairments and substance use disorders. The available treatment for this population was noted as severely lacking, especially outside of Albuquerque and Santa Fe. Mental health counseling was noted as nearly non-existent in the rural areas of the State, which impacts the stability of individuals necessary for sustained employment.
5. Many DVR customers need supported employment (SE) services to maintain employment, but there are very few SE providers outside of the urban areas of the State. CRPs are experiencing high vacancy rates and there are almost no SE providers in the rural areas of the State. In addition, there is no capacity to provide customized employment (CE) in the State.
6. The fear of benefit loss, especially medical benefits, is a barrier to SSA beneficiaries returning to work, or pursuing work at a self-sustaining level. Many DVR customers that are receiving either SSI or SSDI pursue employment at the part-time level so that they can augment their benefits, but not face losing them due to work. This results in many individuals working below their potential. DVR does provide benefits counseling, and this is helpful, but it has not made any significant impact on motivating beneficiaries to pursue employment at a level high enough for them to no longer need benefits.
7. Many Deaf customers have a need to develop their reading and language skills, but there are very few options for them in the State.
8. The need for affordable housing has become a major issue since the pandemic began in 2020. Interview participants in all groups indicated that the need to identify affordable housing options has become of paramount importance for DVR consumers.
9. Poverty is a significant concern for individuals with disabilities in New Mexico. The poverty rates in the State are consistently in the top three in the country according to the US Census Bureau, and the effect of poverty on individuals with disabilities is disproportionate according to several partners and staff interviewed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to DVR based on the results of the research in the Needs of Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities, including their need for Supported Employment area:

1. DVR is encouraged to examine creative ways to address the transportation barrier in rural areas of the State. One possibility is to utilize ride-share services such as Uber or Lyft when available. Ride-share services also provides an opportunity for former or current consumers of VR to engage in part-time employment, so if they can be recruited and supported to be drivers, this strategy can act as a way to build capacity in the rural areas.
2. VR is encouraged to conduct connectivity assessments for all consumers that are engaged in the comprehensive assessment process for plan development. When needed, VR should purchase the necessary equipment and service to ensure their participants are able to effectively access and function in the digital world. This includes broadband internet where available and laptops, cell phones and hotspots in cellular service plans. One possibility for adaption is the BPD Technology Assessment Checklist created by the Technology Committee for the association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors. The tool is available in Appendix F. VR should adapt the tool for their own needs if they decide to use it.
3. Because of the positive working relationship that DVR has with the Centers for Independent Living in the State, the agency is encouraged to identify CILs where partnership can be further developed and CILs can be recruited to become service providers. Increases in the ability to live independently are positively associated with successful employment outcomes, so enhancing IL services for consumers is an important goal for DVR.
4. DVR is encouraged to further its partnership with the Behavioral Health Services Division (BHSD) of the Human Services Department in New Mexico. BHSD offers an array of services and support that are helpful for DVR consumers.
5. The rate of consumers served by DVR that have either a primary or co-occurring disability of substance abuse necessitates that VR staff and partners increase collaboration and partnerships with other State and community organizations that serve youth and adults in recovery. DVR is encouraged to share expertise and resources with recovery programs and provide training to counselors and providers on ways to help consumers address the multiple dimensions of recovery that include:
 - e. Planning for physical and emotional health;
 - f. Helping the individual identify resources to ensure that they have a safe and supportive living environment;
 - g. Assist the individual to have hope, often as a result of a sense of purpose which can frequently be established through the pursuit of meaningful employment; and
 - h. Provide the individual with resources that can help establish a support network and build a sense of community.

The dimensions of recovery noted above are also applicable to individuals with mental health impairments and are recognized as a standard of effective counseling and treatment by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) found here:

<https://www.samhsa.gov/>.

6. DVR is encouraged to work with Deaf advocates and service programs to further develop Deaf and HH services in the lower half of the State. In addition, DVR is encouraged to develop a communication and language skills training program for the Deaf in order to address the language development needs of this population throughout the State.
7. A large percentage of DVR consumers are SSA beneficiaries whose fear of benefit loss affects their return-to-work behavior. Although DVR has Benefits Advisors, it would be helpful for the agency to augment these services with training for staff and providers on strategies that contribute to the pursuit of work above the level of SGA, including self-sufficiency. These interventions and strategies include:
 - Establishing and reinforcing high expectations for the individual;
 - Identifying role models, or peer mentors that will model positive behavior and provide a positive “push” for the individual to achieve their maximum potential (in many instances, the positive push can come from the rehabilitation counselor if there are no family members, friends or mentors available);
 - Maximizing the individual’s ability to live and function independently;
 - Reinforcing the need for tenacity and persistence by the individual by helping them develop resiliencies, and then providing constant support and positive feedback;
 - Benefits planning that is ongoing and plans for overpayments when work occurs. Overpayments are planned for and the individual or the Benefits Planner is aware enough to calculate the effect of wages on benefits by themselves and set aside dollars that will likely occur as a result of overpayments for future payback to SSA;
 - Pursuit of higher education at the highest possible level for the individual; and
 - Work experience, internships or any exposure to work in the beneficiary’s field of choice.
8. DVR is encouraged to ensure that all of their staff have access to affordable housing resources for consumers. One option is found at https://www.hud.gov/states/new_mexico/renting.
9. DVR is encouraged to help consumers address poverty concerns through short-term and long-term strategies such as assisting customers in obtaining “survival employment” while supporting long-term training for in-demand high-paying jobs.
10. DVR is encouraged to develop and provide financial literacy and empowerment services to consumers throughout the State.
11. DVR is encouraged to explore the possibility of identifying key staff to become Supported or Customized Employment specialists – to in effect, bring these services in-house.

SECTION THREE

NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FROM DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS, INCLUDING NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY THE VR PROGRAM

Section 3 includes an identification of the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including needs of individuals who may have been unserved or underserved by DVR.

RECURRING THEMES ACROSS ALL DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including individuals who may have been unserved or underserved by the VR:

1. The rehabilitation needs of minorities are consistent with the needs of all DVR customers, with the exception of the need for language interpreters. Language barriers adversely affect the ability of minority individuals with disabilities to prepare for and obtain employment and to access DVR services.
2. DVR is serving individuals by race consistently with their appearance in the general population of the State. There is room to further develop the relationship with the 121 tribal VR programs in the State, especially related to the number of shared cases.
3. The rural areas of the State were cited as underserved due to lack of access to transportation and other services. While the capacity to connect by distance increased during the pandemic, the lack of broadband access in rural areas means that they were not able to benefit from remote possibilities to the same extent as those living in urban areas.
4. Based on disability, the one group that was noted as possibly being underserved was Deaf individuals. This was related to the lack of counselors who can sign and the general lack of interpreters in the State.
5. The population of aging workers or aging individuals with acquired disabilities (mobility, vision, hearing loss) was mentioned by several interview participants as possibly underserved.

NATIONAL AND/OR AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA RELATED TO THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES FROM DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS, INCLUDING NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN UNSERVED OR UNDERSERVED BY VR

Race and Ethnicity:

An understanding of the local population's ethnic diversity is needed in order to better serve the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups residing in the community.

Race: *"The U.S. Census Bureau collects race data in accordance with guidelines provided by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and these data are based on self-identification. The racial categories included in the census questionnaire generally reflect a social definition of race recognized in this country and not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. In addition, it is recognized that the categories of the race question include race and national origin or sociocultural groups. OMB requires that race data be collected for a minimum of five groups: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. OMB permits the Census Bureau to also use a sixth category – Some Other Race. Respondents may report more than one race."*

Ethnicity: *"The U.S. Census Bureau adheres to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) definition of ethnicity. There are two minimum categories for ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino. OMB considers race and Hispanic origin to be two separate and distinct concepts. Hispanics and Latinos may be of any race."*

<https://www.census.gov/glossary/>

Race and Ethnicity for the Total Population

Statewide New Mexico averages exceed the National averages for ethnic diversity in the categories of Hispanic and Latino (31.1% higher than the National average) and for American Indian and Alaskan Native (7.6% higher than the National average). The statewide New Mexico average for Black or African Americans is 10.2 percentage points lower than the National average. The State's rate for Asians is 4.1 percent lower than the National rate. Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders make up less than 1 percent of New Mexico's population. Whites comprise roughly 35 percent of New Mexico's population and the rate is about 23 percent lower than the National average.

Table 89 contains the information regarding the race and ethnic diversity of New Mexico. County averages are presented in lieu of area averages and are alphabetized and separated in the table according to U.S. Census Bureau estimate profile.

Table 89

Race and Ethnicity: Total Population

Area	Total population	Hispanic or Latino	White	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Two or More Races
U.S.	333,287,562	19.1%	57.7%	11.9%	0.5%	5.8%	0.2%	4.3%
U.S. -- Urban	266,018,160	21.8%	52.2%	13.4%	0.3%	7.1%	0.2%	4.4%
U.S. -- Rural	67,269,402	8.4%	79.0%	5.7%	1.3%	1.0%	0.1%	4.0%
New Mexico	2,113,344	50.2%	34.8%	1.7%	8.1%	1.7%	0.0%	3.1%
NM -- Urban	1,586,195	52.5%	34.9%	2.0%	4.9%	2.1%	0.0%	3.2%
NM -- Rural	527,149	43.1%	34.5%	0.9%	17.9%	0.5%	0.0%	2.9%
2022: ACS 1-Year Estimates								
County	Total population	Hispanic or Latino	White	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Two or More Races
Bernalillo	672,508	50.9%	35.8%	2.4%	3.8%	2.8%	0.1%	3.6%
Doña Ana	223,337	69.1%	25.4%	1.3%	0.8%	1.3%	0.0%	1.9%
Lea	72,452	63.3%	30.2%	2.8%	0.5%	1.7%	0.0%	1.3%
McKinley	69,830	14.6%	7.8%	0.8%	74.1%	1.4%	0.0%	1.3%
Otero	68,823	39.7%	45.9%	3.6%	5.8%	1.3%	0.0%	2.9%
Sandoval	153,501	41.4%	39.9%	2.2%	11.3%	1.4%	0.2%	3.3%
San Juan	120,418	21.8%	34.9%	0.4%	38.2%	0.7%	0.0%	3.9%
Santa Fe	155,664	50.3%	41.3%	0.6%	2.1%	1.6%	0.0%	3.5%
Valencia	78,080	61.6%	30.3%	1.1%	3.3%	0.8%	0.0%	2.3%

2022: ACS 5-Year Estimates

County	Total population	Hispanic or Latino	White	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Two or More Races
Catron	3,635	15.5%	79.3%	0.5%	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%
Chaves	64,701	59.1%	36.2%	1.5%	0.5%	1.0%	0.0%	1.5%
Cibola	27,211	38.4%	18.1%	1.3%	39.3%	0.3%	0.0%	2.5%
Colfax	12,370	49.2%	46.1%	0.6%	1.4%	0.6%	0.0%	2.0%
Curry	48,327	44.4%	44.7%	4.9%	0.4%	1.5%	0.1%	3.7%
De Baca	1,695	63.5%	35.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.4%
Eddy	61,264	51.5%	43.5%	1.3%	1.1%	0.7%	0.0%	1.3%
Grant	28,006	50.1%	45.7%	0.8%	1.0%	0.8%	0.0%	1.5%
Guadalupe	4,413	75.3%	14.4%	2.0%	6.4%	0.1%	0.0%	1.9%
Harding	671	42.9%	43.8%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	2.8%
Hidalgo	4,160	59.4%	36.9%	0.2%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	2.8%
Lincoln	20,222	34.3%	59.3%	1.6%	2.5%	0.3%	0.0%	1.9%
Los Alamos	19,253	18.3%	70.5%	1.2%	0.9%	5.3%	0.0%	3.7%
Luna	25,393	68.8%	26.9%	1.3%	0.4%	1.2%	0.0%	1.4%
Mora	4,208	81.4%	18.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Quay	8,641	46.1%	47.5%	1.8%	1.0%	0.0%	0.4%	3.1%
Rio Arriba	40,285	71.3%	12.0%	0.6%	14.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.9%
Roosevelt	19,142	44.0%	49.3%	1.9%	0.9%	0.5%	0.2%	3.0%
San Miguel	27,215	78.0%	15.4%	1.1%	2.0%	0.7%	0.0%	2.1%
Sierra	11,506	32.1%	61.4%	0.2%	2.6%	0.3%	0.0%	3.3%
Socorro	16,453	50.3%	33.2%	0.9%	12.1%	2.0%	0.0%	1.5%
Taos	34,475	56.8%	35.6%	0.1%	4.6%	0.7%	0.0%	2.2%
Torrance	15,203	44.7%	47.8%	1.6%	1.2%	0.8%	0.0%	2.7%
Union	4,074	42.2%	52.3%	1.1%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

The New Mexico Office of the Secretary of State has published a list of the 23 New Mexico Federally Recognized Tribes. The list in table 90 is taken from the Native American Election Information Program webpage and includes the counties where the tribes are located.

Table 90

Federally Recognized Tribes in NM Counties – 23 Tribes

Federally Recognized Tribes in NM Counties	Tribe	County Located In
1	Taos Pueblo	Taos
2	Picuris Pueblo	Taos
3	Ohkay Owingeh	Rio Arriba
4	Santa Clara Pueblo	Rio Arriba
5	Jicarilla Apache Nation	Rio Arriba
6	San Ildefonso Pueblo	Santa Fe
7	Nambe Pueblo	Santa Fe
8	Pojoaque Pueblo	Santa Fe
9	Tesuque Pueblo	Santa Fe
10	Cochiti Pueblo	Sandoval
11	Santo Domingo Pueblo	Sandoval
12	San Felipe Pueblo	Sandoval
13	Santa Ana Pueblo	Sandoval
14	Sandia Pueblo	Sandoval
15	Zia Pueblo	Sandoval
16	Jemez Pueblo	Sandoval
17	Isleta Pueblo	Bernalillo, Valencia
18	Acoma Pueblo	Cibola
19	Laguna Pueblo	Cibola
20	Zuni Pueblo	McKinley
21	Mescalero Apache Tribe	Otero
22	Ft. Sill Apache Tribe	Luna
23	Navajo Nation	Bernalillo, Cibola, Rio Arriba, McKinley, San Juan, Sandoval, Socorro

Source: New Mexico Office of the Secretary of State; <https://www.sos.nm.gov/voting-and-elections/native-american-election-information-program/23-nm-federally-recognized-tribes-in-nm-counties/>

Race/Ethnicity and Poverty for the General Population

Poverty as related to race and ethnicity is calculated by the United States Census Bureau for the total population.

Poverty rates in New Mexico are higher than the National averages for each race and ethnic category with the exception of Black or African Americans. Note that not enough data was received for the State in the category of Two or more races. Although the poverty rates for Asians in Colfax and Torrance Counties exceed 80 percentage points, note that the percentage rates for the number of Asians residing in the counties is low. Although the poverty levels are calculated for the entire population based on race and ethnicity, the data is important for understanding the impact of poverty, population size, race and ethnicity when addressing the VR needs of consumers.

Table 91 identifies the percentage of individuals designated by race and ethnic categories living below poverty levels in the Nation, State and Regions in New Mexico. County averages are presented in lieu of area averages and are alphabetized and separated in the table according to U.S. Census Bureau estimate profile.

Table 91

Race/Ethnicity and Poverty for the General Population: U.S. and New Mexico

<i>Race/Ethnicity and Poverty for the General Population: United States and New Mexico</i>							
Geographic Area	Percent below poverty level						
	White alone	Black or African American alone	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	Asian alone	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)
U.S.	9.9%	21.3%	21.7%	10.1%	17.6%	14.8%	16.8%
U.S. -- Urban	9.8%	21.1%	19.6%	10.1%	17.4%	14.7%	16.7%
U.S. -- Rural	10.1%	22.9%	26.2%	8.8%	19.6%	15.4%	17.3%
New Mexico	14.5%	18.0%	30.9%	14.0%	N	16.9%	19.6%
NM -- Urban	14.8%	19.3%	25.6%	14.4%	N	17.1%	19.8%
NM -- Rural	13.5%	N	35.9%	N	N	16.2%	18.6%

2022: ACS 1-Year Estimates	Percent below poverty level						
County	White alone	Black or African American alone	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	Asian alone	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)
Bernalillo	13.4%	23.0%	21.2%	7.4%	N	15.4%	16.4%
Doña Ana	17.5%	N	N	N	N	19.8%	28.2%
Lea	17.1%	N	N	N	N	25.1%	25.6%
McKinley	6.4%	N	36.7%	N	N	35.7%	31.6%
Otero	14.8%	N	41.9%	N	N	23.7%	27.0%
Sandoval	6.4%	N	22.1%	N	N	9.6%	10.0%
San Juan	16.8%	N	33.9%	N	N	12.5%	21.7%
Santa Fe	9.8%	N	16.5%	N	N	14.4%	14.4%
Valencia	25.2%	N	N	N	N	17.7%	21.6%
2022: ACS 5-Year Estimates	Percent below poverty level						
County	White alone	Black or African American alone	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	Asian alone	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)
Catron	20.5%	100.0%	0.0%	-	-	28.9%	30.8%
Chaves	20.4%	23.9%	18.0%	5.7%	0.0%	25.1%	24.9%
Cibola	24.3%	8.1%	32.9%	17.1%	0.0%	21.1%	22.4%
Colfax	17.6%	60.9%	43.4%	86.8%	-	17.6%	22.1%
Curry	17.5%	23.2%	14.2%	9.2%	0.0%	22.4%	26.4%
De Baca	15.7%	-	-	-	-	26.9%	18.5%
Eddy	11.4%	18.7%	23.0%	0.9%	-	11.7%	15.3%
Grant	18.8%	12.0%	52.8%	16.3%	-	24.6%	21.7%
Guadalupe	16.0%	0.0%	27.1%	-	-	18.2%	21.4%
Harding	5.6%	0.0%	-	-	0.0%	20.8%	25.3%
Hidalgo	22.8%	100.0%	0.0%	-	-	30.8%	28.4%
Lincoln	12.8%	8.6%	30.3%	26.3%	-	29.1%	20.4%

2022: ACS 5-Year Estimates	Percent below poverty level	2022: ACS 5-Year Estimates	Percent below poverty level	2022: ACS 5-Year Estimates	Percent below poverty level	2022: ACS 5-Year Estimates	Percent below poverty level
Luna	20.5%	31.1%	6.8%	4.0%	100.0%	35.5%	24.4%
Mora	23.9%	-	30.8%	-	-	8.7%	22.7%
Quay	20.6%	8.8%	18.5%	0.0%	100.0%	38.0%	30.8%
Rio Arriba	24.8%	29.6%	26.4%	51.4%	0.0%	15.0%	21.4%
Roosevelt	22.1%	67.9%	28.0%	6.9%	0.0%	9.4%	19.9%
San Miguel	22.0%	1.9%	41.4%	10.9%	-	23.3%	24.8%
Sierra	25.5%	100.0%	84.2%	0.0%	-	11.0%	25.6%
Socorro	23.8%	0.0%	62.9%	4.6%	-	37.0%	32.1%
Taos	14.1%	52.6%	33.8%	0.0%	-	13.2%	13.7%
Torrance	20.0%	10.5%	29.4%	81.7%	-	22.1%	26.1%
Union	15.5%	0.0%	18.1%	-	-	24.4%	25.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Race and Ethnicity and Educational Attainment for the General Population

The VR consumer's educational attainment impacts the vocational choices available to the consumer. Understanding the educational attainment rates in a local area is crucial to identifying available workforce members for meeting local business workforce needs. The U.S. Census Bureau collects data on educational attainment and ethnicity.

American Indian and Alaskan Natives in New Mexico have higher rates of high school graduation attainment in Statewide and urban New Mexico when compared to the National rates. In the rural area, the National rate is higher than the State average by about 2 percent. American Indian and Alaskan Natives rates for Bachelor's degree attainment range from 10.3 to 17.2 percent in all of the State's areas. American Indian and Alaskan Natives in urban New Mexico attain a Bachelors' degree at a lower rate than the National urban average by difference of 1.4 percentage points.

State-level rates for high school graduation attainment for those of Hispanic and Latino ethnicity are higher than the National averages and lower than all other race and ethnic categories within the State. The State's Bachelors' degree attainment for those of Hispanic Latino ethnicity are reflective of the National averages and the rate differences are less than 1 percent lower than the National general, urban and rural averages.

The high school graduation attainment rates and the bachelor's degree attainment rates for the Black race in New Mexico are higher than the National rates for Blacks in all of the State's geographic areas. In rural New Mexico, the rates of high school graduation attainment for the Black race is higher than the National rural rates for Blacks by 10 percent. Rates of Bachelor degree attainment for Blacks in New Mexico exceeds the National rate by 7.5%. Rates of Bachelor degree attainment for Blacks in

rural New Mexico is 10.3% lower when compared to urban New Mexico and almost 8 percent higher than the National rural rates for Blacks' Bachelor degree attainment.

Table 92 contains averages for educational attainment at the high school and bachelor's degree level in each ethnic category for the population 25 years and over.

Table 92

Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity: National and State Rates for the Total Population Age 25 and over, including Urban and Rural Averages

<i>Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity: National and State Rates for the Total Population Age 25 and over, including Urban and Rural Averages</i>							
Race/Ethnicity	Degree level and higher	U.S.	U.S. -- Urban	U.S. -- Rural	New Mexico	NM -- Urban	NM -- Rural
White alone	High school graduate or higher	93.7%	94.4%	91.7%	94.0%	94.3%	93.0%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	39.0%	43.4%	27.0%	39.8%	41.2%	35.6%
Black alone	High school graduate or higher	88.3%	89.0%	82.8%	94.1%	94.3%	92.8%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	25.4%	26.5%	16.2%	32.9%	34.3%	24.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	High school graduate or higher	78.1%	76.2%	82.1%	84.4%	88.8%	80.2%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	16.8%	18.6%	13.1%	13.6%	17.2%	10.3%
Asian alone	High school graduate or higher	88.2%	88.2%	88.8%	89.4%	89.1%	N
	Bachelor's degree or higher	57.4%	57.7%	49.9%	54.9%	55.8%	N
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	High school graduate or higher	87.6%	87.8%	86.4%	N	N	N
	Bachelor's degree or higher	19.8%	20.1%	17.3%	N	N	N
Two or more races	High school graduate or higher	81.3%	81.2%	82.2%	84.6%	86.5%	79.0%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	27.9%	28.8%	21.4%	23.9%	25.7%	18.1%
Hispanic or Latino Origin	High school graduate or higher	73.1%	73.3%	71.9%	80.9%	81.9%	77.3%

Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity: National and State Rates for the Total Population Age 25 and over, including Urban and Rural Averages

Race/Ethnicity	Degree level and higher	U.S.	U.S. -- Urban	U.S. -- Rural	New Mexico	NM -- Urban	NM -- Rural
	Bachelor's degree or higher	20.4%	20.8%	16.0%	19.5%	20.6%	15.6%
Race/Ethnicity	Degree level and higher	Bernalillo	Lincoln	Sierra	Torrance	A1	A2
White alone	High school graduate or higher	95.4%	91.7%	91.5%	89.8%	93.4%	94.0%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	48.0%	25.3%	18.8%	15.0%	48.7%	37.1%
Black alone	High school graduate or higher	98.8%	82.8%	100.0%	31.6%	95.1%	N
	Bachelor's degree or higher	41.8%	3.7%	0.0%	31.6%	43.7%	N
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	High school graduate or higher	91.5%	65.8%	59.0%	98.0%	86.9%	83.7%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	24.9%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	16.2%	11.2%
Asian alone	High school graduate or higher	91.2%	39.5%	100.0%	100.0%	94.2%	N
	Bachelor's degree or higher	57.7%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	69.5%	N
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	High school graduate or higher	N	N	N	N	100.0%	N
	Bachelor's degree or higher	N	N	N	N	14.9%	N
Two or more races	High school graduate or higher	88.7%	87.9%	88.4%	81.1%	86.4%	90.9%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	30.6%	25.2%	30.1%	21.3%	28.1%	27.6%
Hispanic or Latino Origin	High school graduate or higher	83.0%	84.0%	88.9%	78.4%	82.6%	84.6%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	24.4%	13.8%	22.7%	8.8%	20.2%	21.9%

Educational Attainment by Race/Ethnicity: National and State Rates for the Total Population Age 25 and over, including Urban and Rural Averages

Race/Ethnicity	Degree level and higher	U.S.	U.S. -- Urban	U.S. -- Rural	New Mexico	NM -- Urban	NM -- Rural
Race/Ethnicity	Degree level and higher	A3	A4	A6	A7	A9	
White alone	High school graduate or higher	86.5%	85.3%	89.6%	87.4%	91.8%	
	Bachelor's degree or higher	29.5%	21.3%	28.9%	22.3%	31.5%	
Black alone	High school graduate or higher	89.6%	86.0%	98.2%	92.7%	86.1%	
	Bachelor's degree or higher	29.4%	17.2%	16.2%	13.5%	38.0%	
American Indian or Alaska Native alone	High school graduate or higher	76.9%	80.6%	78.9%	78.2%	92.5%	
	Bachelor's degree or higher	16.0%	15.4%	6.8%	13.0%	13.8%	
Asian alone	High school graduate or higher	87.5%	82.9%	97.4%	87.8%	92.5%	
	Bachelor's degree or higher	55.1%	28.8%	64.6%	57.6%	51.9%	
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	High school graduate or higher	92.8%	68.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	Bachelor's degree or higher	28.0%	0.0%	27.4%	0.0%	0.0%	
Two or more races	High school graduate or higher	82.7%	71.4%	85.7%	82.4%	85.7%	
	Bachelor's degree or higher	24.4%	8.8%	18.7%	17.6%	25.3%	
Hispanic or Latino Origin	High school graduate or higher	74.6%	69.9%	79.4%	79.0%	85.0%	
	Bachelor's degree or higher	18.2%	8.6%	11.6%	14.4%	18.4%	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Disability and Race/Ethnicity

The U.S. Census collects data on disability among ethnic categories for the total civilian noninstitutionalized population (TCNP). Consider the ethnic category's population size in relation to the percentage of individuals reporting a disability. Table 93 identifies the estimated average rates of disability among ethnic categories in the Nation and State. County averages are presented in lieu of area averages and are alphabetized and separated in the table according to U.S. Census Bureau estimate profile.

Table 93

Disability and Race/Ethnicity: U.S. and New Mexico

Disability and Race/Ethnicity	Percent with a disability						
	White alone	Black or African American alone	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	Asian alone	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
U.S.	14.4%	14.9%	15.7%	8.3%	12.5%	11.6%	10.5%
U.S. -- Urban	14.0%	14.6%	14.8%	8.2%	12.4%	11.2%	10.4%
U.S. -- Rural	15.6%	18.2%	17.6%	9.0%	12.6%	14.4%	10.8%
New Mexico	18.0%	13.8%	17.6%	5.3%	N	17.4%	15.9%
NM -- Urban	17.4%	14.2%	16.4%	5.2%	N	16.4%	15.5%
NM -- Rural	20.2%	10.1%	18.8%	5.4%	N	21.0%	17.1%
2022: ACS 1-Year Estimates	Percent with a disability						
County	White alone	Black or African American alone	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	Asian alone	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Bernalillo	16.3%	9.6%	14.6%	4.8%	N	18.0%	16.5%
Doña Ana	15.8%	18.7%	15.0%	N	N	15.6%	14.4%
Lea	15.5%	N	N	N	N	9.3%	8.3%
McKinley	11.6%	N	14.3%	N	N	9.9%	9.7%
Otero	22.5%	N	19.6%	N	N	19.8%	15.2%
Sandoval	14.9%	N	15.2%	N	N	12.1%	12.0%
San Juan	16.7%	N	18.3%	N	N	14.9%	13.1%
Santa Fe	16.2%	21.5%	7.6%	4.6%	N	15.7%	12.4%
Valencia	19.2%	N	N	N	N	19.4%	18.5%

2022: ACS 5-Year Estimates	Percent with a disability						
County	White alone	Black or African American alone	American Indian and Alaska Native alone	Asian alone	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	Two or more races	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Catron	41.1%	100.0%	0.0%	N	N	61.4%	22.7%
Chaves	19.0%	24.4%	17.0%	13.5%	0.0%	24.3%	16.5%
Cibola	20.6%	51.5%	20.6%	0.0%	0.0%	27.0%	21.4%
Colfax	25.3%	31.9%	12.8%	0.0%	N	26.7%	23.4%
Curry	18.4%	22.6%	19.6%	8.8%	54.1%	17.2%	16.7%
De Baca	21.9%	N	N	N	N	3.1%	9.6%
Eddy	14.7%	27.8%	21.5%	2.5%	N	17.5%	13.5%
Grant	24.2%	13.7%	23.6%	5.0%	N	17.4%	20.3%
Guadalupe	18.2%	0.0%	1.3%	N	N	21.2%	20.7%
Harding	24.1%	0.0%	N	N	0.0%	19.8%	20.1%
Hidalgo	17.5%	0.0%	17.9%	N	N	15.4%	15.6%
Lincoln	24.0%	16.7%	18.9%	0.0%	N	18.6%	20.9%
Los Alamos	11.7%	5.4%	24.8%	3.4%	N	8.0%	7.9%
Luna	24.3%	9.6%	50.8%	1.3%	0.0%	16.8%	17.0%
Mora	22.0%	N	15.4%	N	N	30.4%	37.6%
Quay	25.5%	19.9%	37.2%	0.0%	0.0%	20.4%	19.9%
Rio Arriba	19.5%	4.7%	16.5%	0.5%	0.0%	17.6%	15.2%
Roosevelt	20.0%	9.3%	17.0%	0.0%	0.0%	24.8%	16.8%
San Miguel	19.8%	0.9%	17.2%	8.4%	N	28.4%	25.2%
Sierra	32.6%	0.0%	31.9%	0.0%	N	23.2%	12.9%
Socorro	23.1%	54.9%	23.5%	6.1%	N	23.0%	25.8%
Taos	17.0%	10.0%	19.9%	49.6%	N	25.9%	20.6%
Torrance	23.6%	18.2%	17.4%	0.0%	N	23.1%	21.7%
Union	21.7%	28.6%	18.1%	N	N	30.4%	27.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Disability, Race/Ethnicity and Poverty Rates

The 2023 Annual Disability Statistics Supplement published data on poverty, disability and race/ethnicity for the total population. The trends were produced using data from the Current

Population Survey-Annual Social and Economic Supplement (which is distributed annually in March) and the 2021 American Community Survey. Table 94 presents population raw numbers, percentage rates, and the differences (gaps) between the poverty rates for individuals with disabilities and individuals without disabilities for five race and ethnic categories in the U.S. and New Mexico. The population numbers provide an accurate picture of the percentage rate differences in this table. The most significant poverty rate and gap of difference between individuals with and without disabilities is noted in the Other Race Population. Whites and Blacks had a similar gap of difference in poverty rates between individuals with and without disabilities.

Table 94

Race and Ethnicity, Disability, and Poverty Rates: U.S. and New Mexico

United States							
	With Disabilities in Poverty			Without Disabilities in Poverty			
Race	Total w/ Disability	Poverty		Total w/o Disability	Poverty		GAP
		Count	Percent		Count	Percent	
White	27,016,547	4,756,567	17.6	163,082,331	15,476,795	9.5	8.1
Black	5,522,115	1,692,472	30.6	32,530,825	7,053,309	21.7	8.9
Asian	1,454,941	254,780	17.5	17,360,003	1,876,824	10.8	6.7
Other Race	2,439,380	633,005	25.9	15,742,813	2,392,273	15.2	10.7
Hispanic	6,169,016	1,544,545	25	55,624,807	9,908,632	17.8	7.2
New Mexico							
	With Disabilities in Poverty			Without Disabilities in Poverty			
Race	Total w/ Disability	Poverty		Total w/o Disability	Poverty		GAP
		Count	Percent		Count	Percent	
White	133,877	26,444	19.8	587,957	77,999	13.3	6.5
Black	4,793	1,594	33.3	29,986	7,934	26.5	6.8
Asian	2,912	520	17.9	27,403	2,570	9.4	8.5
Other Race	37,235	13,002	34.9	208,385	50,136	24.1	10.8
Hispanic	157,740	44,723	28.4	887,204	179,969	20.3	8.1

Citation: Paul, S., Rogers, S., Bach, S., & Houtenville, A. (2023). Annual Disability Statistics Supplement: 2023 (Table 6.15). Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability. Note: Authors' calculations using the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2021, which is subject to sampling variation.

United States Department of Labor Annual Labor Force Statistics by Disability Status and Race/Ethnicity

The U.S. Department of Labor in collaboration with (ODEP) published 2022 Annual Labor Force Statistics by disability status, race, and ethnicity. Statistics provided include the labor force

participation rate, employment-to-population ratio, and unemployment rate by disability status and race/ethnicity for ages 16 to 64 years. Table 95 contains the annual 2022 data.

Table 95

2022 Annual Labor Force Statistics By Disability Status and Race/Ethnicity

2022 Annual Labor Force Statistics by Disability Status and Race/Ethnicity						
Persons with a Disability, Aged 16-64, 2022						
	Hispanic	White	Black	Asian	Other	Total
Labor Force Participation Rate	38.3%	39.7%	29.7%	40.6%	35.4%	37.8%
Employment-Population Ratio	34.4%	37.0%	26.0%	37.9%	30.7%	34.7%
Unemployment Rate	10.1%	6.7%	12.4%	6.7%	13.2%	8.2%
Persons without a Disability, Aged 16-64, 2022						
	Hispanic	White	Black	Asian	Other	Total
Labor Force Participation Rate	74.5%	79.0%	75.2%	74.5%	73.4%	77.1%
Employment-Population Ratio	71.5%	76.8%	70.7%	72.4%	69.4%	74.4%
Unemployment Rate	4.1%	2.8%	5.9%	2.8%	5.4%	3.5%
Source: Current Population Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics						
Notes: The category labelled "Other" combines the three categories of American Indian and Alaska Native, Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and multiple races; all categories after Hispanic are limited to non-Hispanics						

Source: Borbely, James @bls.gov

Disability, Race, Ethnicity and Employment

The University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability published statistics for state-level employment by disability, race, and ethnicity. The categories include non-institutionalized civilians ages 18 to 64, male and female, from all education levels. Data includes the difference in percentage employed (employment gap) between people with disabilities and people without disabilities in each race and ethnic population. Data suggests that access to employment is available to all races and ethnic groups for people with disabilities in New Mexico.

Table 96

Disability, Race, Ethnicity and Employment: U.S. and New Mexico

United States							
	With Disabilities Employed			Without Disabilities Employed			
Race	Total w/ Disability	Employed		Total w/o Disability	Employed		GAP
		Count	Percent		Count	Percent	
White, Non-Hispanic	12,597,488	5,226,854	41.5	101,761,594	80,042,441	78.7	37.2
Black, Non-Hispanic	3,207,068	1,083,079	33.8	20,641,596	14,956,626	72.5	38.7
Asian, Non-Hispanic	616,124	277,345	45	11,944,740	8,896,570	74.5	29.5
Other Race, Non-Hispanic	1,460,996	590,095	40.4	8,681,331	6,440,182	74.2	33.8
Hispanic	3,493,488	1,528,140	43.7	34,497,980	25,637,772	74.3	30.6
New Mexico							
	With Disabilities Employed			Without Disabilities Employed			
Race	Total w/ Disability	Employed		Total w/o Disability	Employed		GAP
		Count	Percent		Count	Percent	
White, Non-Hispanic	56,861	20,070	35.3	344,622	253,601	73.6	38.3
Black, Non-Hispanic	3,516	309	8.8	19,659	12,575	64	55.2
Asian, Non-Hispanic	1,997	958	48	18,925	13,985	73.9	25.9
Other Race, Non-Hispanic	20,918	6,889	32.9	131,212	82,929	63.2	30.3
Hispanic	88,796	31,896	35.9	533,392	382,793	71.8	35.9

Source: Paul, S., Rogers, S., Bach, S., & Houtenville, A. (2023). Annual Disability Statistics Supplement: 2023 (Table 3.24). Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability. Note: Authors' calculations using the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample, 2021, which is subject to sampling variation.

University of New Hampshire Disability Statistics – Employment by Disability Type and Race/Ethnicity

The University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability prepared statistics for State-level employment by disability type and ethnicity. The categories include non-institutionalized civilians ages 16 to 64, male and female, from all education levels. Limited data was available for Asians and Native Hawaiian

and Other Pacific Islanders due to the limited count available from the population size in New Mexico. Data suggests that access to employment is available to all race and ethnic groups and most disability types in New Mexico.

Table 97

2021 New Mexico Employment by Ethnicity and Disability Type for Non-institutionalized Population Ages 16-64

2021 Employment by Disability Type and Ethnicity Ages 16 to 64	Percent Employed by Disability Type						
	<i>Any</i>	<i>Visual</i>	<i>Hearing</i>	<i>Ambulatory</i>	<i>Cognitive</i>	<i>Self-care</i>	<i>Independent Living</i>
White, non-Hispanic	35.2%	53.6%	45.0%	23.8%	30.0%	16.8%	19.5%
Black/African American, non-Hispanic	6.4%	--	--	5.0%	5.0%	0.3%	8.2%
American Indian and Alaskan Native, non-Hispanic	33.7%	34.6%	41.0%	25.6%	34.0%	31.4%	25.6%
Asian, non-Hispanic	45.6%	--	--	--	--	--	28.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Some Other Race, non-Hispanic	33.4%	56.1%	52.4%	18.8%	21.2%	22.2%	18.8%
Hispanic/Latino	32.0%	19.2%	37.9%	21.7%	27.9%	13.0%	17.1%

Source: 2021 American Community Survey, 1-year estimates. Prepared by Stacia Bach/Megan Henly ---- Disability Statistics at UNH

DVR Participants by Race/Ethnicity:

The project team examined the race and ethnicity of DVR participants as reported in the RSA data dashboards for PY 2022 and compared the rates for each race to the general population of New Mexico to determine if any population was potentially being underserved. The results of the analysis are in Table 98.

Table 98

DVR Participants by Race/Ethnicity Compared to New Mexico Overall

Race/Ethnicity	New Mexico Overall	All DVR Participants PY 2022	Difference
White	34.8%	34.6%	-0.2%
American Indian	8.1%	7.1%	-1.0%
Asian	1.7%	1.4%	-0.3%
Black	1.7%	5.2%	3.5%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.8%	0.8%
Multi-Race	3.1%	3.3%	0.2%
Hispanic	50.2%	52.2%	2.0%

The data indicates that the participant population of DVR is very closely aligned with the general population of New Mexico. The largest difference occurs with Blacks being overrepresented by 3.5%, There is no other race where the difference is greater than 2%. This data is consistent with the interviews conducted for this assessment in that the interview participants did not think that DVR underserved any specific population by race.

SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

Individual Survey: Race and Ethnicity

Individuals were asked to report their primary race or ethnic group.

The number of respondents who answered the question regarding ethnicity was 217. The majority of respondents identified as Caucasian/White. Hispanic/Latinos respondents accounted for 44.7% of the 217 respondents which is a numeric difference of 9 respondents (n=9) and about a one percent margin of difference in percentage points when compared to those who indicated “White”. Note the ranking order of the results to this question when compared to the percentage rates of the State's race and ethnic demographic category ranking based on the U.S. Census Bureau DP05 Hispanic or Latino and Race State data from 2022 one-year estimates found in the race and ethnicity general trends section of this report.

Table 99

Individual Survey: Race or Ethnic Group

Primary Race or Ethnic Group	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Caucasian/White	106	48.8%
Hispanic/Latino	97	44.7%
Other (please describe)	12	5.5%
African American/Black	10	4.6%
I prefer not to answer	10	4.6%
American Indian or Alaska Native	9	4.1%
Asian	2	0.9%
Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	0.5%
Total	247	

Individual Survey: Preferred Language for Communication

Individuals were asked a question regarding their preferred language for communication.

Ninety-four percent of the 217 respondents who answered the question cited English as their preferred language. The results are contained in table 100.

Table 100

Individual Survey: Preferred Language for Communication

Language Preference	Number	Percent
English	204	94.0%
Spanish	6	2.8%
American Sign Language	3	1.4%
Native American (Please specify dialect)	3	1.4%
Japanese	1	0.5%
Hawaiian	0	0.0%
Chinese	0	0.0%
Other (Please identify)	0	0.0%
Total	217	100.0%

COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS

Partner Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Minorities

Partners were provided a list of 22 barriers and asked to identify the barriers to achieving employment goals for clients who were racial or ethnic minorities. There was no limit to the number of items a partner could choose. Forty-six partner respondents answered the question.

Three items were selected by over 60.5% of the partners as a barrier to achieving employment goals for minorities (lack of job search/interview skills; limited job skills/work experience; lack of education or training). The items that tied for the fourth position were selected by 54.3% of partners.

Of the four comments received in response to the item “other, please describe,” two comments cited “don’t know/NA.” The phrase, "rural communities" was written in one of the narrative comments. The remaining comment is quoted:

- *"Ignorance, fear of being discriminated against, fear of racism, self-doubt. So many positions available and so many companies that work with no discrimination."*

Table 101 details the results to this question.

Table 101

Partner Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Minorities

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Minorities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Lack of job search/interview skills	31	67.4%
Limited job skills/work experience	29	63.0%
Lack of education or training	28	60.9%
Language barriers	26	54.3%
Lack of reliable transportation	26	54.3%
Lack of soft skills	23	50.0%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	21	45.7%
Other transportation issues	21	45.7%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	17	37.0%
Lack of Internet access	17	37.0%
Lack of housing	16	34.8%
Lack of technology skills	16	34.8%
Lack of available jobs	15	32.6%
Mental health concerns	15	32.6%
Lack of childcare	12	26.1%
Substance abuse	11	23.9%
Criminal record	11	23.9%
Lack of assistive technology	11	23.9%
Other health concerns	10	21.7%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	10	21.7%
Lack of attendant care	10	21.7%
Other (please describe)	5	10.9%
Total	381	

Staff Survey Results**Staff Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Minorities**

Staff were presented a list of 22 items and asked to identify the barriers to achieving employment goals for clients who were racial or ethnic minorities. There was no limit to the number of items staff could choose.

Staff and partners differed slightly in their ranking order of barriers that prevent clients who are racial or ethnic minorities from achieving their employment goals. Sixty-three staff survey respondents answered the question, and almost 63.5% of staff selected "language barriers" as the top barrier to achieving employment goals for those who are minorities. "Not having education or training," "limited job skills/work experience," and "lack of job search/interview skills " rounded out the top four most frequently cited responses by staff.

Other differences between staff and partner lists include: staff citing "mental health issues," and "convictions for criminal offenses," more frequently than partners; staff ranked "lack of disability-related accommodations at work" less often than partners.

Five comments were received in the category "other" and one contained the abbreviation "na". The quotes from the remaining comments are:

- *"A lot of the rural areas do not get services and there are no outreach services to these areas"*
- *"Lack of Case Management services"*
- *"Some minorities are transient, lack of diploma and poor reading and math skills"*
- *"Some people want a certain salary but are not willing to begin at the bottom and work themselves up the chain."*

Table 102

Staff Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Minorities

Barriers to Employment Goals - Minorities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Language barriers	40	63.5%
Lack of education or training	39	61.9%
Limited job skills/work experience	36	57.1%
Lack of job search/interview skills	32	50.8%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	31	49.2%
Lack of reliable transportation	31	49.2%
Lack of soft skills	29	46.0%
Criminal record	27	42.9%
Mental health concerns	26	41.3%
Other transportation issues	24	38.1%
Substance abuse	24	38.1%
Lack of housing	22	34.9%
Other health issues	20	31.7%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	18	28.6%
Lack of technology skills	17	27.0%
Lack of internet access	16	25.4%

Barriers to Employment Goals - Minorities	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	13	20.6%
Lack of childcare	13	20.6%
Lack of available jobs	11	17.5%
Lack of assistive technology	7	11.1%
Lack of attendant care	6	9.5%
Other (please describe)	5	7.9%
Total	487	

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities from different ethnic groups, including individuals who have been potentially unserved or underserved by DVR:

1. Native Americans with disabilities were cited the most frequently as a population of people that may be potentially underserved by DVR. This is in part due to the large number of tribes in the State. DVR does have a working relationship with the tribal VR programs in the State, but the depth of the relationship has been affected by the pandemic and the turnover of staff at both DVR at the TVR programs. The number of shared cases between the tribal programs and DVR was cited as very low and in need of growth over the next year as staffing patterns stabilize and liaisons assigned by DVR establish working relationships with each tribe.
2. The rural areas of the State were cited as underserved due to lack of access to transportation and other services. While the capacity to connect by distance increased during the pandemic, the lack of broadband access in rural areas means that they were not able to benefit from remote possibilities to the same extent as those living in urban areas.
3. Hispanic individuals were noted as being potentially underserved. This was noted as primarily occurring because of the lack of bilingual counselors in DVR. It is important to note that the data does not support this conclusion, though it was mentioned by several interview participants.
4. Based on disability, the one group that was noted as possibly being underserved was Deaf individuals. This was related to the lack of counselors who can sign and the general lack of interpreters in the State.
5. The population of aging workers or aging individuals with acquired disabilities (mobility, vision, hearing loss) was mentioned by several participants as possibly underserved. Participants cited that this appears to be an increasing need in their communities, but the resources are not focused on employment-related supports.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered to DVR based on the results of the research in the Needs of Individuals with Disabilities from Different Ethnic Groups, including needs of Individuals who have been Unserved or Underserved by the VR Program area:

1. DVR is encouraged to establish regular and consistent meetings with tribal VR programs across the State. This helps establish and demonstrate a commitment to collaboration and should help to increase shared cases, increase communication, understanding, and awareness of each agency's services.
2. As resources allow, DVR is encouraged to sponsor their staff that work with the 121 programs to attend the annual CANAR conference.
3. DVR and the 121 programs are encouraged to provide regular cross-training for staff from both agencies. This is especially important given the frequency of staff turnover on both sides.
4. DVR is encouraged to establish liaison relationships with community agencies serving Deaf individuals and Hispanic individuals in New Mexico as a way to develop awareness of DVR services and increase referrals. In addition, DVR is encouraged to recruit and hire bilingual staff in ASL and Spanish whenever they have an open position.
5. DVR is encouraged to establish partnerships at the State and local level to support individuals that are aging but wish to remain in, or re-enter, the workforce.

SECTION FOUR

NEEDS OF YOUTH AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

An assessment of the rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities is a required component of the CSNA as identified in 34 CFR 361.29. This section contains an assessment of the need for transition services and pre-employment transition services and the extent to which such services provided are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

RECURRING THEMES ACROSS ALL DATA COLLECTION METHODS

1. The rehabilitation needs of youth and students with disabilities were similar to adults served by DVR except that youth were noted as needing more work experience and soft skills.
2. DVR has transition counselors, which has helped to develop their relationship with schools and increase pre-employment transition services.
3. Project Search sites were applauded for their impact on students, especially because the projects provide work experience for students and youth, which was identified as an important need.
4. The relationship between DVR and the schools across the State varies in intensity. Some schools are very involved with the agency and services are coordinated and working well, and in others, DVR does not go into the school and VR services are not getting to students until they are close to graduation or after. The pandemic stalled the progress in the relationship between DVR and schools, especially in those areas where there has been turnover of DVR staff and school staff. As staff are hired and relationships reestablished, progress has picked up and services are increasing.
5. All of the five required pre-employment transition services were noted as important and helpful for students with disabilities. Work-based learning opportunities were identified by all as the most important of the five required services and DVR has worked to increase the availability of these WBLE's across the State.
6. Youth succeed at higher rates when parents are engaged in the process. Lack of parent engagement can result in youth not accessing services early or "falling through the cracks." Parents were described as essential to the transition process, to helping youth to understand their disability and to developing realistic vocational expectations.
7. Parents of youth that receive SSI were often characterized as fearful of their children losing benefits and this adversely affects the motivation of the youth to work. In addition, if the youth does attempt to work, the parents may not be supportive, which can lead to an unsuccessful work attempt.
8. DVR has good working relationships with community colleges and universities throughout the State. These positive relationships result in a smoother transition from secondary to postsecondary education, reasonable accommodation needs being met, and increased rates of persistence and success for youth and students with disabilities. Although the overall number of individuals with disabilities in postsecondary education training dropped as a result of the pandemic from PY 2020-21, the numbers increased again in PY 2022 as schools reopened.

NATIONAL AND/OR AGENCY SPECIFIC DATA RELATED TO THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS IN TRANSITION

Youth Data

Vocational Rehabilitation services for youth with disabilities enable individuals to pursue meaningful employment that corresponds with their abilities and interests. This section contains various statistics regarding the general trends of youth and youth with disabilities in the Nation and New Mexico.

Educational Attainment: 18 to 24 Years

The data indicates that the rate of individuals ages 18 to 24 years whose highest level of educational attainment is a high school graduate or the equivalent in the general State and urban areas is 4.7 to 6 percentage points higher than the general U.S. and urban U.S. averages. The State's rural average is 1.7 percentage points lower than the National rural average.

Torrance County has the lowest rate of individuals for whom high school graduation was their highest level of educational attainment (28.3%). Although Area 6 had the lowest percentage of youth who attained at least a Bachelor's degree (1.4 percent), the rates for individuals ages 18 to 24 who have attained some college, or an associate degree in A6 County slightly exceeds the National rate by .8 percentage points, indicating that students start college in A6 at rates similar to other counties/states in the Nation but are not attaining bachelor's degree educational goals.

Table 103 contains Educational Attainment rates for ages 18 to 24 years, which includes high school graduation rates and bachelor's degree achievement.

Table 103

Educational Attainment for Ages 18 to 24 Years: New Mexico

<i>Educational Attainment: Ages 18 to 24 Years</i>	Less than high school graduate	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	Some college or associate's degree	Bachelor's degree or higher
U.S.	11.6%	35.4%	39.6%	13.4%
U.S. - Urban	10.9%	34.0%	40.8%	14.3%
U.S. - Rural	15.8%	42.4%	33.2%	8.6%
New Mexico	14.6%	40.1%	37.7%	7.6%
NM - Urban	14.2%	40.0%	37.5%	8.3%
NM - Rural	16.0%	40.7%	38.3%	5.0%
Bernalillo	15.0%	34.8%	38.2%	11.9%
Lincoln	10.6%	36.5%	39.4%	13.6%
Sierra	4.8%	55.8%	30.3%	9.1%
Torrance	31.4%	28.3%	37.7%	2.6%
A1	15.7%	38.0%	37.5%	8.8%
A2	13.1%	40.7%	43.6%	2.6%

<i>Educational Attainment: Ages 18 to 24 Years</i>	Less than high school graduate	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	Some college or associate's degree	Bachelor's degree or higher
A3	11.6%	33.6%	46.3%	8.6%
A4	18.4%	41.8%	34.6%	5.2%
A6	19.0%	45.7%	34.0%	1.4%
A7	16.4%	45.4%	34.2%	3.9%
A9	18.7%	30.5%	46.4%	4.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

School Enrollment, Educational Attainment and Employment Status: Ages 16 to 19 Years

Data found in Table 104 represents school enrollment, educational attainment and employment status for individuals ages 16 to 19 years.

The rate for youth who participate in the labor force that are categorized as "high school graduates (including equivalency) employed" in New Mexico is slightly higher than in the U.S. The total youth labor force participation rates in New Mexico range between 19.3 to 64.2 percent while 40.7 % of the youth in the U.S. areas ages 16 to 19 years are participating in the labor force. Those enrolled in school ages 16 to 19 in Sierra county participate in the labor force but after high school graduation, the numeric count and the percentage rates of those participating in the labor force drops dramatically.

Table 104

Education and Employment for Ages 16 to 19 Years: United States and New Mexico

Education and Employment for Ages 16 to 19 Years: United States, New Mexico, Individual Counties, Areas				
Statewide	U. S.		New Mexico	
	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled
		Not Enrolled		Not Enrolled
<i>Total</i>	17,402,141	-----	111,362	-----
<i>Enrolled in school:</i>	14,605,120	83.9%	86,940	78.1%
<i>Employed</i>	4,583,966	31.4%	27,522	31.6%
<i>Unemployed</i>	583,897	4.0%	1,891	2.2%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	9,437,257	64.6%	57,527	66.2%
<i>Not enrolled in school:</i>	2,797,021	16.1%	24,422	21.9%
<i>High school graduate (includes equivalency):</i>	2,115,074	75.6%	15,614	63.9%
<i>Employed</i>	1,370,664	64.8%	10,313	66.0%
<i>Unemployed</i>	206,956	9.8%	1,203	7.7%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	537,454	25.4%	4,098	26.2%

<i>Not high school graduate:</i>	681,947	24.4%	8,808	36.1%
<i>Employed</i>	276,946	40.6%	4,222	47.9%
<i>Unemployed</i>	66,340	9.7%	790	9.0%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	338,661	49.7%	3,796	43.1%
<i>Total Labor Force Participation</i>	7,088,769	40.7%	45,941	41.3%
<i>Total Not in labor force</i>	10,313,372	59.3%	65,421	58.7%
County	Bernalillo		Lincoln	
	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled
		Not Enrolled		Not Enrolled
<i>Total</i>	15,319	-----	705	-----
<i>Enrolled in school:</i>	13,063	85.3%	521	73.9%
<i>Employed</i>	5,583	42.7%	174	33.4%
<i>Unemployed</i>	240	1.8%	3	0.6%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	7,240	55.4%	344	66.0%
<i>Not enrolled in school:</i>	2,256	14.7%	184	26.1%
<i>High school graduate (includes equivalency):</i>	1,292	57.3%	40	21.7%
<i>Employed</i>	671	51.9%	28	70.0%
<i>Unemployed</i>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	621	48.1%	12	30.0%
<i>Not high school graduate:</i>	964	42.7%	144	78.3%
<i>Employed</i>	179	18.6%	50	34.7%
<i>Unemployed</i>	56	5.8%	0	0.0%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	729	75.6%	94	65.3%
<i>Total Labor Force Participation</i>	6,729	43.9%	255	36.2%
<i>Total Not in labor force</i>	8,590	56.1%	450	63.8%

County	Sierra		Torrance	
	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled
		Not Enrolled		Not Enrolled
<i>Total</i>	335	-----	1,005	-----
<i>Enrolled in school:</i>	292	87.2%	771	76.7%
<i>Employed</i>	173	59.2%	184	23.9%
<i>Unemployed</i>	42	14.4%	0	0.0%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	77	26.4%	587	76.1%
<i>Not enrolled in school:</i>	43	12.8%	234	23.3%
<i>High school graduate (includes equivalency):</i>	43	100.0%	117	50.0%
<i>Employed</i>	0	0.0%	40	34.2%
<i>Unemployed</i>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	43	100.0%	77	65.8%
<i>Not high school graduate:</i>	0	0.0%	117	50.0%
<i>Employed</i>	0	0.0%	73	62.4%
<i>Unemployed</i>	0	0.0%	34	29.1%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	0	0.0%	10	8.5%
<i>Total Labor Force Participation</i>	215	64.2%	331	32.9%
<i>Total Not in labor force</i>	120	35.8%	674	67.1%
Area	A1		A2	
	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled
		Not Enrolled		Not Enrolled
<i>Total</i>	9,948	-----	15,301	-----
<i>Enrolled in school:</i>	8,219	82.6%	12,234	80.0%
<i>Employed</i>	2,020	24.6%	2,851	23.3%
<i>Unemployed</i>	404	4.9%	446	3.6%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	5,795	70.5%	8,937	73.1%
<i>Not enrolled in school:</i>	1,729	17.4%	3,067	20.0%
<i>High school graduate (includes equivalency):</i>	1,133	65.5%	2,105	68.6%
<i>Employed</i>	737	65.0%	1,123	53.3%
<i>Unemployed</i>	134	11.8%	444	21.1%

<i>Not in labor force</i>	262	23.1%	538	25.6%
<i>Not high school graduate:</i>	596	34.5%	962	31.4%
<i>Employed</i>	174	29.2%	265	27.5%
<i>Unemployed</i>	14	2.3%	24	2.5%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	408	68.5%	673	70.0%
<i>Total Labor Force Participation</i>	3,483	35.0%	5,153	33.7%
<i>Total Not in labor force</i>	6,465	65.0%	10,148	66.3%
Area	A3		A4	
	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled
		Not Enrolled		Not Enrolled
<i>Total</i>	22,381	-----	16,642	-----
<i>Enrolled in school:</i>	17,802	79.5%	12,553	75.4%
<i>Employed</i>	4,347	24.4%	3,470	27.6%
<i>Unemployed</i>	685	3.8%	693	5.5%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	12,770	71.7%	8,390	66.8%
<i>Not enrolled in school:</i>	4,579	20.5%	4,089	24.6%
<i>High school graduate (includes equivalency):</i>	3,547	77.5%	2,716	66.4%
<i>Employed</i>	1,989	56.1%	1,725	63.5%
<i>Unemployed</i>	338	9.5%	407	15.0%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	1,220	34.4%	584	21.5%
<i>Not high school graduate:</i>	1,032	22.5%	1,373	33.6%
<i>Employed</i>	386	37.4%	673	49.0%
<i>Unemployed</i>	119	11.5%	77	5.6%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	527	51.1%	623	45.4%
<i>Total Labor Force Participation</i>	7,864	35.1%	7,045	42.3%
<i>Total Not in labor force</i>	14,517	64.9%	9,597	57.7%

Area	A6		A7	
	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled
		Not Enrolled		Not Enrolled
<i>Total</i>	5,835	-----	5,262	-----
<i>Enrolled in school:</i>	4,316	74.0%	4,029	76.6%
<i>Employed</i>	368	8.5%	863	21.4%
<i>Unemployed</i>	97	2.2%	223	5.5%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	3,851	89.2%	2,943	73.0%
<i>Not enrolled in school:</i>	1,519	26.0%	1,233	23.4%
<i>High school graduate (includes equivalency):</i>	1,059	69.7%	860	69.7%
<i>Employed</i>	347	32.8%	343	39.9%
<i>Unemployed</i>	171	16.1%	0	0.0%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	541	51.1%	517	60.1%
<i>Not high school graduate:</i>	460	30.3%	373	30.3%
<i>Employed</i>	115	25.0%	42	11.3%
<i>Unemployed</i>	31	6.7%	98	26.3%
<i>Not in labor force</i>	314	68.3%	233	62.5%
<i>Total Labor Force Participation</i>	1,129	19.3%	1,569	29.8%
<i>Total Not in labor force</i>	4,706	80.7%	3,693	70.2%
Area	A9			
	Total Population	Percent of Enrolled		
		Not Enrolled		
<i>Total</i>	4,426	-----		
<i>Enrolled in school:</i>	3,599	81.3%		
<i>Employed</i>	903	25.1%		
<i>Unemployed</i>	94	2.6%		
<i>Not in labor force</i>	2,602	72.3%		
<i>Not enrolled in school:</i>	827	18.7%		
<i>High school graduate (includes equivalency):</i>	524	63.4%		
<i>Employed</i>	393	75.0%		
<i>Unemployed</i>	40	7.6%		

<i>Not in labor force</i>	91	17.4%		
<i>Not high school graduate:</i>	303	36.6%		
<i>Employed</i>	133	43.9%		
<i>Unemployed</i>	0	0.0%		
<i>Not in labor force</i>	170	56.1%		
<i>Total Labor Force Participation</i>	1,563	35.3%		
<i>Total Not in labor force</i>	2,863	64.7%		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates; 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Bureau of Labor Statistics Youth Labor Force and Unemployment Rates Including Youth with Disabilities

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics collects information on the Nation's youth labor force participation and unemployment by age. The data indicates that the labor force participation rates for youth with disabilities are lower compared to individuals without disabilities when youth are ages 16 to 19 and the difference ranges between 1.7 to 8.7 percentage points. The margin of difference in the Annual 2023 rate is 10.5 percent. When the group ages to 20 to 24 years, the disparity ranges between 21 to 25.7 percentage points and the annual difference for 2023 is 20.7 percentage points.

From October through December of 2023, the unemployment rate difference between those with and without disabilities ages 20 to 24 ranged between 0.4 to 6.5%, which is significantly lower than the first four months of 2023 where the range was 6.3 to 10%.

Table 105 details the National labor force participation and unemployment data for youth ages 16 to 19 and 20 to 24 with and without disabilities.

Table 105

Youth Labor Force Participation Rate and Unemployment Rate: October - December 2023 and Annual 2023 Averages

Group	Youth Labor Force Participation Rate							
	Oct-23		Nov-23		Dec-23		Annual 2023	
	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability
Age 16 to 19	28.5%	37.2%	34.3%	36.0%	29.9%	35.1%	27.0%	37.5%
Age 20 to 24	50.2%	71.9%	51.3%	72.3%	45.9%	71.6%	51.8%	72.5%
	Youth Unemployment Rate							
	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability	Disability	No Disability
Age 16 to 19	20.5%	12.8%	23.7%	10.4%	15.8%	10.0%	18.0%	11.0%
Age 20 to 24	7.0%	6.6%	9.5%	5.9%	12.0%	5.5%	11.8%	6.4%

Source: Borbely, James @bls.gov

University of New Hampshire Disability Statistics – Employment by Disability Type and Race/Ethnicity

The University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability prepared statistics for State-level employment by disability type and ethnicity for non-institutionalized civilians ages 16 to 20, male and female, from all education levels. Limited data was available due to the small population size and age range.

Although the data is limited, data suggests that access to employment is available to youth who report Some other race and Hispanic/Latino ethnicity in New Mexico.

Table 106

2021 New Mexico Employment by Ethnicity and Disability Type for Non-institutionalized Population Ages 16-20

<i>New Mexico: Employment by Disability Type and Ethnicity Ages 16 to 20</i>	<i>Percent Employed by Disability Type</i>						
	<i>Any</i>	<i>Visual</i>	<i>Hearing</i>	<i>Ambulatory</i>	<i>Cognitive</i>	<i>Self-care</i>	<i>Independent Living</i>
<i>White, non-Hispanic</i>	19.5%	--	--	--	21.8%	--	18.7%
<i>Black/African American, non-Hispanic</i>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<i>American Indian and Alaskan Native, non-Hispanic</i>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<i>Asian, non-Hispanic</i>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<i>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic</i>	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
<i>Some Other Race, non-Hispanic</i>	15.1%	--	--	--	22.5%	--	--
<i>Hispanic/Latino</i>	21.2%	--	--	--	7.8%	--	--

Source: 2021 A

DVR Youth Data:

The project team gathered data from DVR on youth ages 14-24 served by the agency. Table 107 contains the information.

Table 107

Youth Data for DVR

Item	Age		
	14-24		
	2020	2021	2022
Applications	629	576	822
Percent of all applications	26%	33%	35%
Percent of apps found eligible	94%	82%	91%
Begin all cases			
Percent of apps that had a determination made within 60 days	94%	95%	99%
Percent closed prior to IPE development	23%	41%	30%
Plans developed	335	377	452

Item	Age		
	14-24		
	2020	2021	2022
Percent of plans developed within 90 days	97%	96%	96%
Number of consumers in training by type			
Vocational	26	27	37
Undergraduate	222	184	208
Graduate	0	4	4
Number of cases closed rehabilitated	40	39	94
Total number of cases served	1589	718	1399
Percent of all served	66.1%	41.5%	59.4%
Avg. cost of all cases	3775.91	3816.85	4892.12
Avg. cost of cases closed rehabilitated	3184.66	4053.46	3329.38
Avg. cost per case closed unsuccessful	2075.33	2846.02	2218.63
Avg. cost per case closed prior to plan	237.93	208.21	344.89

The data indicates that youth with disabilities accounted for an increasing number of applications and plans developed for DVR from PY 2020-2022. The case movement timeframes and cost average cost of cases for youth is consistent with adult populations served by DVR.

DVR was able to breakdown age groups within the youth category and provide WIOA performance measures for each age group. The results only include PY 2021 and 2022 as PY 2020 information was of questionable validity. This information is contained in Table 108.

Table 108

Youth WIOA Performance Measures for DVR

WIOA Measure	PY 2021			PY 2022		
	<16	16 - 18	19 - 24	<16	16 - 18	19 - 24
Credential Attainment Rate	12.5	38.6	28.0	8%	1%	2%
Measurable Skill Gains Rate	59.2	29.5	10.9	57%	60%	47%
Employment Rate in 2nd Quarter after Exit	41.2	41.5	43.1	45%	49%	46%
Employment Rate in 4th Quarter after Exit	25.00	46.3	39.9	46%	49%	41%
Median Wages in 2nd Quarter after Exit	2,258	4,624	5,487	6,164	\$4,927	\$1,510

The data indicates that the outcomes for youth in all age groups are consistent with the outcomes for adults served by DVR in all categories except the credential attainment rate. It is unclear why this rate dropped in PY 2022, but DVR should investigate this data element to ensure the results are accurate. It is clear that youth served by DVR are achieving outcomes consistent with, or at a greater rate, than adult populations served by the agency.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

The Rehabilitation Act as amended and reauthorized in WIOA requires VR programs to expend at least 15% of their Federal allotment annually on pre-employment transition services. These services must be made available to all eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities in the State who have

need of such services. It is clear from the interviews and the survey results that students with disabilities in New Mexico have a need to receive the five required pre-employment transition services. These services include the following:

1. Job exploration counseling;
2. Work-based learning experiences;
3. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
4. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living (often referred to as soft skills); and
5. Instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.

Each of these Pre-ETS was noted as a need on a recurring basis when discussing the needs of students with disabilities in New Mexico, with work-based learning experiences being the most frequently mentioned and considered the most valuable in terms of preparing students for employment in the future. The project team examined the number of pre-employment transition services by type provided by DVR in PY 2022. The results are in Table 109.

Table 109

Pre-Employment Transition Services in New Mexico in PY 2022

Type of Pre-Employment Transition Service in PY 2022	Number	Percent of All
Number receiving job exploration counseling	2057	21.6%
Number receiving work-based learning experiences	1838	19.3%
Number receiving counseling on postsecondary enrollment opportunities	1578	16.5%
Number receiving work readiness training	2066	21.7%
Number receiving instruction in self-advocacy	1997	20.9%
Total	9536	100%

The data indicates that DVR, either directly or through a contracted service provider, delivered the five required pre-employment transition services fairly evenly, with four of the five representing roughly 20% of all services provided. An examination of the impact of pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities indicates that approximately 66% of all potentially eligible students that receive pre-employment transition services apply for services from DVR. This percentage indicates that nearly two-thirds of students receiving pre-ETS find the services valuable enough to pursue becoming a DVR customer.

The project team examined the expenditures for each of these pre-employment transition services and this information is contained in Table 110.

Table 110

Pre-Employment Transition Services Expenditures in New Mexico

Expenditure by Service Category			
Service Category	Amount spent per year		
	2020	2021	2022
Pre-ETS: Self-Advocacy Instruction Service		\$0	\$6,551
Pre-ETS: Work-Based Learning Experience/Service	\$268,805	\$112,256	\$492,732
Pre-ETS: Job Exploration Counseling/Service	\$0	\$1,402	\$8,765
Pre-ETS: Enrollment Opportunities Counsel/Service	\$0	\$0	\$1,400
Pre-ETS: Workplace Readiness Training/Service	\$64,685	\$41,817	\$93,964

DVR spent the vast majority of funds set-aside for pre-employment transition services on work-based learning opportunities (WBLEs). DVR contracts out for this service primarily while providing the other four services primarily (though not exclusively) through their own staff.

SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE

COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS

Partner Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Youth in Transition

Partner survey respondents were asked to indicate the barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition from a list of 22 barriers. There was no limit to the number of barriers that a partner respondent could choose. A total of 52 respondents answered the question.

Four of the top five most frequently cited barriers to employment that partners selected for youth in transition are the barriers partners identified most frequently for the general population of clients. The top barrier for youth in transition selected by the partners is "limited job skills/work experience." "Lack of assistive technology" ranked in the 21st position on the partner results list for youth and ranked in the 14th position on the partner's list for the general population of DVR clients. An equal number of partners (n=17) cited "lack of technology skills" as a barrier to achieving employment goals for youth and for the general population of DVR clients.

Of the nine comments received in the category "other" three indicated that the respondent did not know, did not work with youth, or lacked familiarity with DVR. The remaining 6 comments are quoted:

- "Access to services"
- "Lack of staffing"
- "Lack desire"
- "Lack of support, participants & families don't want to work without job coaching support. Not enough funding through DVR for one on one support. School transition/ job readiness programs leave them without confidence and skills to maintain and teach them codependency."
- "Schools are not utilizing IEPs to help build skills for our youth to be able to obtain employment. IEPs are mainly focused on education success and accommodations while at school vs. skill build for post high school life."

- “These young people have misperceptions about their disability due to K-12 experience and need in-depth psychoeducation and counseling on their disability and how to manage it in the workplace.”

Table 111 lists the barriers for youth in transition along with the number of times a barrier was identified by partner respondents.

Table 111

Partner Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Youth in Transition

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Youth	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Limited job skills/work experience	38	73.1%
Lack of education or training	35	67.3%
Lack of job search/interview skills	34	65.4%
Lack of reliable transportation	33	63.5%
Lack of soft skills	24	46.2%
Other transportation issues	22	42.3%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	18	34.6%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	18	34.6%
Mental health concerns	17	32.7%
Lack of technology skills	17	32.7%
Lack of available jobs	13	25.0%
Substance abuse	11	21.2%
Lack of housing	11	21.2%
Criminal record	11	21.2%
Lack of Internet access	11	21.2%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	10	19.2%
Other health concerns	9	17.3%
Other (please describe)	9	17.3%
Lack of attendant care	9	17.3%
Language barriers	8	15.4%
Lack of assistive technology	7	13.5%
Lack of childcare	4	7.7%
Total	369	

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Staff Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Youth in Transition

Staff were provided a list of 22 barriers and asked to identify the barriers to achieving employment goals for clients who are youth in transition. There was no limit to the number of items staff could choose.

The top five most frequently cited barriers to employment staff selected for youth are different from the top five barriers staff identified as barriers to employment for the general population of DVR clients. Note that the top five barriers staff selected for youth match the partners' top five barrier choices for youth but the items are in a slightly different rank order.

Also similar to partner results, nine comments were received in the category "other" and two comments indicated that the respondent did not know. Two comments cited the lack of motivation. The remaining 6 comments are quoted:

- *"Lack of jobs"*
- *"Lack of providers for transition"*
- *"Lack of understanding the value of VR from student, school staff and parents. Lack of student maturity and motivation"*
- *"Parents are often very concerned about their son/daughter going to work for safety issues and afraid they would be taken advantage of. Some youth have not matured enough and don't know how to handle situations or how to behave when they are under pressure."*
- *"Reading levels, lack of prep for employment- what they want to do, lack of support at home"*

Table 112 summarizes the staff's choices as barriers to achieving employment goals for youth in transition.

Table 112

Staff Survey: Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals – Youth In Transition

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Youth	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Limited job skills/work experience	49	72.1%
Lack of job search/interview skills	48	70.6%
Lack of soft skills	42	61.8%
Lack of reliable transportation	38	55.9%
Lack of education or training	35	51.5%
Other transportation issues	28	41.2%
Mental health concerns	20	29.4%
Lack of available jobs	17	25.0%
Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities	16	23.5%
Lack of disability-related accommodations at work	15	22.1%

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals - Youth	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Substance abuse	14	20.6%
Lack of internet access	12	17.6%
Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working	9	13.2%
Other (please describe)	9	13.2%
Other health issues	8	11.8%
Language barriers	7	10.3%
Lack of housing	7	10.3%
Lack of assistive technology	7	10.3%
Lack of technology skills	4	5.9%
Lack of attendant care	2	2.9%
Lack of childcare	1	1.5%
Criminal record	1	1.5%
Total	389	

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following recurring themes emerged related to the needs of youth and students with disabilities in transition:

9. The needs of youth and students with disabilities were similar to adults served by DVR except that youth were noted as needing more work experience and soft skills.
10. DVR has transition counselors, which has helped to develop their relationship with schools and increase pre-employment transition services.
11. Project Search sites were applauded for their impact on students, especially because the projects provide work experience for students and youth, which was identified as an important need.
12. The relationship between DVR and the schools across the State varies in intensity. Some schools are very involved with the agency and services are coordinated and working well, and in others, DVR does not go into the school and VR services are not getting to students until they are close to graduation or after. The pandemic stalled the progress in the relationship between DVR and schools, especially in those areas where there has been turnover of DVR staff and school staff. As staff are hired and relationships reestablished, progress has picked up and services are increasing.
13. All of the five required pre-employment transition services were noted as important and helpful for students with disabilities. Work-based learning opportunities were identified by all as the most important of the five required services and DVR has worked to increase the availability of these WBLE's across the State.
14. Youth succeed at higher rates when parents are engaged in the process. Lack of parent engagement can result in youth not accessing services early or "falling through the cracks." Parents were described as essential to the transition process, to helping youth to understand their disability and to developing realistic vocational expectations. Focus group and interview participants indicated that there was a need to work to engage with parents and keep them involved in transition efforts.
15. Parents of youth that receive SSI were often characterized as fearful of their children losing benefits and this adversely affects the motivation of the youth to work. In addition, if the youth does attempt to work, the parents may not be supportive, which can lead to an unsuccessful work attempt.
16. DVR has good working relationships with community colleges and universities throughout the State. These positive relationships result in a smoother transition from secondary to postsecondary education, reasonable accommodation needs being met, and increased rates of persistence and success for youth and students with disabilities. Although the overall number of individuals with disabilities in postsecondary education training dropped as a result of the pandemic from PY 2020-21, the numbers increased again in PY 2022 as schools reopened.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are provided to DVR related to the needs of youth and students with disabilities in transition:

1. DVR is encouraged to establish more work-based learning opportunities as part of their expansion of pre-employment transition services across the State. The agency has been working closely with CRPs and schools to expand these opportunities and should continue these efforts as resources and capacity of CRPs allow.
2. DVR is encouraged to replicate Project Search programs as resources allow. DVR staff and community partner agencies indicated that these programs are innovative and significantly impact the employability of participants.
3. DVR is encouraged to continue to work with the NTACT:C and VRTAC-QM to increase and improve relationship with schools and improve tracking and reporting of pre-employment transition services.
4. As the number of transition counselors increase through future hiring, DVR is encouraged to expand their outreach and education of families of students that are receiving SSI in order to help assuage the fear of benefit loss and encourage the work-seeking behavior of these youth.
5. In partnership with Education, DVR is encouraged to establish Model Transition Program (MTP) sites where transition and pre-ETS is thriving. These MTPs could serve as a demonstration or mentor school for lower performing schools. Schools in rural locations should receive technical assistance to demonstrate the same practices adapted to their setting.

SECTION FIVE

NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES SERVED THROUGH OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE STATEWIDE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

The following information was gathered during this assessment in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide Workforce Development System. Throughout this section, the term Workforce Connection Center will be used to refer to services provided by DVR's partners in what used to be termed the One-Stop Career Center and is now referred to nationally as the American Job Centers (AJCs). The information and comments noted in this Section only refer to DVR's partners, not DVR unless explicitly stated.

RECURRING THEMES ACROSS ALL DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce development system:

1. DVR consumers are frequently referred to the New Mexico Workforce Connection (Titles I and III) centers for job search assistance and resume writing workshops. The workshops are helpful for consumers, but job development services were described as self-initiated and online, so were less impactful on individuals with disabilities needing one-on-one assistance.
2. While the workshops are helpful, the relationship between DVR and the Workforce Connection centers is one of referral primarily. There are few cases where funding for training is shared between agencies.
3. Co-location of DVR within the Workforce Connection offices was described as beneficial to the relationship between the two agencies and staff felt that it helped with ensuring that individuals with disabilities were quickly connected to the services and supports they need.
4. Workforce Connection staff need training on how to work with individuals with disabilities and they need working and up-to-date assistive technology for job seekers that need this technology to access programs. Deaf interpreters were also cited as needed in the Workforce Connection Centers.

SURVEY RESULT BY TYPE

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

Individual Survey: New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers

Individuals with disabilities in New Mexico were asked a series of questions about their use and opinion of New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers.

New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers - Use and Accessibility

Roughly one-third of the respondents cited “yes” when asked if they had used the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers beyond an online account.

Of the respondents who utilized New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers beyond creating an online account, physical accessibility of the building was difficult for one-fourth of the respondents (n=15) and access to programs was challenging for 30.5% (n=18). The narrative responses regarding physical concerns indicated the following:

- *“Auto door not available/working”*
- *“I am limited by my physical requirements”*
- *“It’s in a dip. Steep stairs to get in”*
- *“Long wait times, no help using computers, no ADA assistance and they treat you as if you are a bother to them.”*
- *“The system is a legacy system that needs to be updated. It’s very difficult to get around. It’s also very difficult to update your resume.”*
- *“Understaffed and they make assumptions everyone knows how to use a computer”*
- *“Unfortunately parking is not the best and the walkways are really not the best here in Albuquerque”*
- *“I called and emailed every person on the list they gave me that was in my area, and not one person responded back to me”*
- *“Everything was closed for covid, but you couldn’t even get in contact with a representative over the phone. A lot of people had the same problem.”*
- *“It was closed due to covid I haven’t been back”*
- *“They wouldn’t let anyone in during Covid, then it moved locations.”*

Table 113

Individual Survey: New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers – Use and Accessibility

Accessibility Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
Have you ever tried to use the services of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers beyond an online account?	60	32.8%	123	67.2%	183
Did you experience any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building?	15	25.0%	45	75.0%	60
Did you have any difficulty accessing the programs at the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers (i.e. no available assistive technology, no interpreters, etc.)?	18	30.5%	41	69.5%	59

New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers – Training and Employment

Individuals indicated that the services they sought at the Workforce Connection Centers did not result in desired outcomes for the majority of respondents. Fifteen survey respondents (25% of 60 respondents) went to the Center to get training. Seven individuals (46.7%) indicated that they received the training they were seeking, and 4 individuals (26.7%) found work as a result of the training. Thirty-three (55%) out of 60 individuals went to the Center with the purpose of seeking assistance to find a

job. Thirty-three respondents answered the question regarding receiving help that resulted in employment with 75.8% indicating that they did not receive assistance in finding employment. Table 114 details the results from using the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers for seeking training and employment.

Table 114

Individual Survey: New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers – Training and Employment

Training and Employment Questions	Yes	Percent of Total	No	Percent of Total	Total Number of Responses
Did you go to the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers to get training?	15	25.0%	45	75.0%	60
Did you get the training that you were seeking?	7	46.7%	8	53.3%	15
Did the training result in employment?	4	26.7%	11	73.3%	15
Did you go to the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers to find a job?	33	55.0%	27	45.0%	60
Did they help you find employment?	8	24.2%	25	75.8%	33

New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers – Helpfulness and Value

The concepts of helpfulness and value are evaluated in this study with respect to the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers.

Fifty-six respondents answered the question regarding helpfulness. The results to this question are almost equally divided into thirds with item “not helpful” cited the most frequently. A small margin of difference exists (n=2) between the number of respondents that found the Connection Center staff to be not helpful or very helpful.

Similar to the results in response to question regarding helpfulness, the results in response to the question regarding value are almost equally divided into thirds. Fifty-five individuals answered the question regarding the value of the services they received at the Connection Centers. The majority of individual respondents found the services to be not valuable and slightly less (n=19) found the Centers’ services to be somewhat valuable.

Table 115 identifies the rating for helpfulness of the staff and the value of the services at the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers by the individuals that responded to the survey.

Table 115

Individual Survey: New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers – Helpfulness and Value

NM WF Connection Center Staff Helpful	Number	Percent
No, they were not helpful	21	37.5%
Yes, they were very helpful	19	33.9%
They were somewhat helpful	16	28.6%
Total	56	100.0%

NM WF Connection Center Services Valuable	Number	Percent
No, the services were not valuable	21	38.2%
The services were somewhat valuable	19	34.6%
Yes, the services were very valuable	15	27.3%
Total	55	100.0%

New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers – Effectiveness

In terms of an overall effectiveness rating of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers, not all individual respondents had an opinion. The “no opinion” choice option was cited most frequently by respondents (n=17). The margin of difference between no opinion and very ineffective is one respondent. Considering the results to the survey questions regarding training and employment, caution is to be used when making inferences regarding the results of this question.

Table 116 details the effectiveness of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers’ services.

Table 116

Individual Survey: New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers – Effectiveness

Effectiveness Rating	Number	Percent
No opinion	17	30.4%
Very ineffective	16	28.6%
Very effective	10	17.9%
Somewhat effective	8	14.3%
Somewhat ineffective	5	8.9%
Total	56	100.0%

COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS

Partner Survey: New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers

Partner survey respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their opinion and use of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers.

New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers - Use and Accessibility

The project team asked respondents to identify their frequency of interaction with the Workforce Connection Centers. Slightly less than one-third of the partner respondents rarely interacted with the Workforce Connection Centers. An equal percentage (27.8%) of the partner respondents either never interacted with the Workforce Connection Centers or interacted somewhat frequently with the Centers.

The survey asked about the physical and programmatic accessibility of the Workforce Connection Centers. The majority of partner respondents (50%) indicated that Centers were somewhat physically accessible.

Over one-fourth of partners are not knowledgeable regarding the Workforce Connection Centers' program accessibility while 47.4% of partner respondents indicated that the Centers were somewhat programmatically accessible. Individual respondents differed in their report as the majority (69.5%) indicated that they did not have difficulty accessing the programs at the Centers.

Tables 117-121 summarize the responses from DVR's community partners regarding interaction and accessibility of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers.

Table 117

Partner Survey: Frequency of Interaction with New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers

Frequency of Interaction with New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers	Number	Percent
Infrequently	17	31.5%
Somewhat frequently	15	27.8%
Not at all	15	27.8%
Very frequently	7	13.0%
Total	54	100.0%

Table 118

Partner Survey: Physical Accessibility of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers

Physical Accessibility of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers	Number	Percent
Somewhat accessible	19	50.0%
Fully accessible	10	26.3%
I do not know	7	18.4%
Not accessible	2	5.3%
Total	38	100.0%

Table 119

Partner Survey: Programmatic Accessibility of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers

Programmatic Accessibility of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers	Number	Percent
Somewhat accessible	18	47.4%
I do not know	11	29.0%
Fully accessible	8	21.1%
Not accessible	1	2.6%
Total	38	100.0%

New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers – Effectiveness Rating

Partners and individual survey respondents differed in their viewpoint when asked about the overall effectiveness of the Workforce Connection Centers in serving people with disabilities. Slightly less than 49 percent of the partners indicated that Workforce Connection Centers effectively serve people with disabilities.

Table 120

Partner Survey: New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers – Effectiveness Rating

Effectiveness of New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers	Number	Percent
Effectively	18	48.7%
Not effectively	11	29.7%
Very effectively	7	18.9%
They do not serve individuals with disabilities	1	2.7%
Total	37	100.0%

New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers – Improving Service

In the final survey question related to the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers, the respondents were asked what the Centers could do to improve services for people with disabilities. Partners were presented a list of six items, including the open-ended category “other,” and asked to select all that apply. Thirty-three respondents answered the question.

Roughly 61% of respondents indicated that the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers should partner more effectively with DVR. Six narrative comments were received in the response for the item "other, please describe." Two of the comments indicated that the Centers should advertise and inform the public about services. The four remaining comments are:

- *“Assistance with clients who do not read or write, preparing accommodations for clients who are deaf or hard of hearing, preparing materials for visually impaired clients, helping clients who have intellectual disabilities properly fill out applications and or forms.”*
- *“It would be nice to offer more classes for job readiness and soft skills building besides the WIOA program.”*
- *“Prepare employers to work with individuals with disabilities.”*
- *“Varies from locations and clients on needs”*

Table 121

Partner Survey: New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers – Improving Service

Improving Service of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers to Effectively Serve PWD	Number	Percent of number of respondents
Partner more effectively with DVR to serve dually enrolled clients	20	60.6%
Train their staff on how to work with individuals with disabilities	17	51.5%
Improve programmatic accessibility	13	39.4%
Improve physical accessibility	7	21.2%
Other (please describe)	6	18.2%
Total	63	

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Staff Survey: New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers

Staff were asked a series of questions about their use and opinion of New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers.

New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers - Use and Accessibility

The majority of staff (38.2%) indicated "somewhat frequently" as their level of interaction with the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers while the majority of partners selected "infrequently." Seven of the staff respondents did not interact with the Workforce Connection Centers at all, which is about half of the number of the partner respondents (n=15) who cited "not at all" in response to the question.

The survey asked about the physical accessibility of the Centers. The majority of staff respondents (41.9 percent) indicated the Workforce Connection Centers were fully accessible, which reflects the individual survey results and is different from partners' results. About 16 percent of staff indicated that they did not know if the buildings are accessible.

The majority of staff found the Workforce Connection Centers to be somewhat programmatic which is similar to the partner survey results.

Tables 122-126 summarize the responses from DVR staff regarding the use and accessibility of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers.

Table 122

Staff Survey: Frequency of Interaction with New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers

Frequency of Interaction with New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers	Number	Percent
Somewhat frequently	26	38.2%
Infrequently	20	29.4%
Very frequently	15	22.1%
Not at all	7	10.3%
Total	68	100.0%

Table 123

Staff Survey: Physical Accessibility of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers

Physical Accessibility of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers	Number	Percent
Fully accessible	26	41.9%
Somewhat accessible	23	37.1%
I do not know	10	16.1%
Not accessible	3	4.8%
Total	62	100.0%

Table 124

Staff Survey: Programmatic Accessibility of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers

Programmatic Accessibility of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers	Number	Percent
Somewhat accessible	28	45.2%
Fully accessible	20	32.3%
I do not know	11	17.7%
Not accessible	3	4.8%
Total	62	100.0%

New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers – Effectiveness Rating

A narrow majority of staff do not find the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers to be effective. Note that the staff and partners top two most frequently cited items in response to this question are in reverse rank order. Note also, individual survey respondents were mixed in their viewpoint when asked about the overall effectiveness of the Workforce Connection Centers.

Table 125

Staff Survey: New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers – Effectiveness Rating

Effectiveness of New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers	Number	Percent
Not effectively	27	43.6%
Effectively	25	40.3%
Very effectively	8	12.9%
They do not serve individuals with disabilities	2	3.2%
Total	62	100.0%

New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers – Improving Service

Staff survey respondents were asked what the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers could do to improve service to clients. There was no limit to the number of suggestions that could be chosen. A total of fifty-six respondents answered the question.

Staff and partners agree on what the New Mexico Workforce Centers could do to improve services to people with disabilities as staff and partner survey results are similar regarding this question. Although staff had one additional choice option to select, staff and partners ranked the items in the same order.

Six narrative comments were received from staff in the category “other (please describe)” and differed from the partners’ suggestions. Two comments contained “unknown/NA”. The four remaining quotes from staff are:

- “I find they are doing an amazing job”
- “Consistency in programs and personal for the youth.”
- “Contract with DVR for better services to this population”
- “Maintain staff/high turnover”

Table 126

Staff Survey: New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers – Improving Service

Improving Service of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers to Effectively Serve PWD	Number	Percent of number of respondents
Partner more effectively with DVR to serve dually enrolled clients	39	69.6%
Train their staff on how to work with individuals with disabilities	38	67.9%
Include individuals with disabilities when purchasing training for their clients	20	35.7%
Improve programmatic accessibility	15	26.8%
Improve physical accessibility	12	21.4%
Other (please describe)	6	10.7%
Total	130	

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following information was gathered from the individuals interviewed for this assessment in the area of the needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the Statewide Workforce Development System:

1. DVR consumers are frequently referred to the New Mexico Workforce Connection (Titles I and III) centers for job search assistance and resume writing workshops. The workshops are helpful for consumers, but job development services were described as self-initiated and online, so were less impactful on individuals with disabilities needing one-on-one assistance.
2. While the workshops are helpful, the relationship between DVR and the Workforce Connection centers is one of referral primarily. There are few cases where funding for training is shared between agencies.
3. Co-location of DVR within the Workforce Connection offices was described as beneficial to the relationship between the two agencies and staff felt that it helped with ensuring that individuals with disabilities were quickly connected to the services and supports they need.
4. Workforce Connection staff need training on how to work with individuals with disabilities and they need working and up-to-date assistive technology for job seekers that need this technology to access programs. Deaf interpreters were also cited as needed in the Workforce Connection offices.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following recommendations are offered to DVR based on the results of the research in the Needs of Individuals with Disabilities served through other Components of the Statewide Workforce Development System area:

1. DVR should identify and share examples of shared funding of cases throughout the State to encourage replication of these cases.
2. DVR is encouraged to work with the Workforce Connection staff to develop apprenticeships and customized training programs in high demand occupations that include individuals with disabilities.
3. DVR and the Workforce Connection center staff should provide regular and consistent cross-training to staff in order to improve the number of individuals with disabilities that are effectively accessing and benefitting from services at the centers.
4. DVR is encouraged to strengthen its relationship with the Title I Youth program to provide training and placement opportunities for students and youth with disabilities.

SECTION SIX

NEED TO ESTABLISH, DEVELOP OR IMPROVE COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS IN NEW MEXICO

Section 6 identifies the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs in New Mexico that serve individuals with disabilities. VR purchases most of the services provided to consumers other than the core service of counseling and guidance.

RECURRING THEMES ACROSS ALL DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The following themes emerged in the area of the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs serving individuals with disabilities in New Mexico:

1. The pandemic significantly impacted staffing at service providers agencies, with shortages noted in most geographic areas and services. Consequently, the wait for services has increased and the need to establish and develop services offered by CRPs is pervasive.
2. There is a need to establish all VR services and service providers in the rural areas of the State.
3. There is a significant need for SE providers throughout the State.
4. There is a need for DVR to examine its current rate structure for purchased services. Partners indicate that the current fee schedule is insufficient to meet their needs for service provision.

SURVEY RESULTS BY TYPE

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESULTS

Individual Survey Results

Individual Survey: Service Providers and Vendors

Individual survey respondents were asked a series of questions identifying their use of DVR referrals; the quality, effectiveness, and responsiveness of their service provider or vendor; and whether or not they would recommend their service provider or vendor to others.

Use of a DVR Referral

The first question asked individual survey respondents to indicate whether or not they received services from a service provider or vendor that they were referred to by DVR. A total of 181 respondents answered the question. Slightly more than 61 percent of respondents indicated that they did not receive service provider or vendor services recommended/referred to by DVR. Table 127 summarizes the results.

Table 127

Individual Survey: Use of a DVR Referral

Use of DVR Referral	Number	Percent
No	111	61.3%
Yes	70	38.7%
Total	181	100.0%

Quality of Service from Service Provider or Vendor

Individuals were asked to rate the quality of service from the service provider or vendor. A total of 70 responses were received and 37.1 percent indicated that the quality of service from the service provider or vendor was “excellent.” Table 128 details the results.

Table 128

Individual Survey: Quality of Service from Service Provider or Vendor

Quality of Services: Service Provider or Vendor	Number	Percent
Excellent	26	37.1%
Good	24	34.3%
Poor	12	17.1%
Fair	8	11.4%
	70	100.0%

Effectiveness of Service Provider Services or Vendor

Individuals were asked to rate the effectiveness of the services from the service provider or vendor. The majority rated the services from the service provider as “effective.” Slightly more than one-fourth of the respondents indicated that the services were either ineffective or somewhat ineffective (28.5%). The results are detailed in Table 129.

Table 129

Individual Survey: Effectiveness of Service from Service Provider or Vendor

Effectiveness of Services: Service Provider or Vendor	Number	Percent
Effective	28	40.0%
Very effective	22	31.4%
Ineffective	12	17.1%
Somewhat ineffective	8	11.4%
Total	70	100.0%

Responsiveness of Service Provider or Vendor

Respondents were also asked to rate the responsiveness of the service provider or vendor. The margin of difference between “good” and “excellent” in response to the question is small (n=3). The majority

of the respondents rated the responsiveness of the service provider as “good”. Table 130 summarizes the results.

Table 130

Individual Survey: Responsiveness of Service Provider or Vendor

Responsiveness of Service Provider or Vendor	Number	Percent
Good	25	35.7%
Excellent	22	31.4%
Poor	12	17.1%
Fair	11	15.7%
Total	70	100.0%

Recommend Service Provider or Vendor

The final question asked of individuals regarding service providers and vendors was “Would you recommend your service provider or vendor to others served by DVR?” Over 62 percent of the respondents indicated that they would recommend their service provider or vendor to others. The response ratings are contained in Table 131.

Table 131

Individual Survey: Recommend Service Provider or Vendor

Recommend Service Provider or Vendor	Number	Percent
Yes	43	62.3%
No	16	23.2%
Not sure	10	14.5%
Total	69	100.0%

COMMUNITY PARTNER SURVEY RESULTS

Partner Survey: Service Providers and Vendors

Partner survey respondents were asked a series of questions regarding rehabilitation service provider services in order to identify the availability of services to clients and whether or not the services are meeting the clients’ needs.

Services Readily Available to DVR Clients

Partners were provided with a list of 16 items and asked to select the services that are readily available to DVR clients. Sixty-six partners responded to the question.

Four items were cited by over 63 percent of partners as services that are readily available to DVR clients (job training, job search/placement/retention, vocational/postsecondary education, pre-employment transition services). Vehicle modification services was cited the least number of times by partners in response to the question. Table 132 details the results.

Table 132

Partner Survey: Services Readily Available

Services Readily Available	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Job training	48	72.7%
Job search/placement/retention	48	72.7%
Vocational/Postsecondary education	42	63.6%
Pre-employment transition services	42	63.6%
Assistive technology	30	45.5%
Transportation assistance	27	40.9%
Disability benefits counseling	23	34.8%
Mental health treatment	20	30.3%
Medical treatment	18	27.3%
Personal care attendants	15	22.7%
Housing	15	22.7%
Maintenance or income assistance	14	21.2%
Substance abuse treatment	14	21.2%
Health insurance	14	21.2%
Vehicle modification	12	18.2%
Other (please describe)	7	10.6%
Total	389	

Services Not Readily Available to DVR Clients

Partner survey respondents were also asked to indicate which services are not readily available in the area of the State where the respondent works. There was no limit to the number of services that could be chosen.

Partners displayed consistency in their choices for available and not available services. The top four services listed in Table 132 (above) are found at the bottom of the list of services not readily available. Housing was cited most frequently by partners as a service not readily available to DVR clients. Table 133 contains the partner results to this question.

Table 133

Partner Survey: Services Not Readily Available

Services Not Readily Available	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Housing	27	56.3%
Substance abuse treatment	25	52.1%
Vehicle modification	23	47.9%
Personal care attendants	21	43.8%
Medical treatment	20	41.7%
Mental health treatment	20	41.7%
Transportation assistance	19	39.6%
Health insurance	19	39.6%
Maintenance or income assistance	18	37.5%
Disability benefits counseling	18	37.5%
Assistive technology	15	31.3%
Other (please describe)	11	22.9%
Job training	10	20.8%
Job search/placement/retention	8	16.7%
Pre-employment transition services	8	16.7%
Vocational/Postsecondary education	6	12.5%
Total	268	

Service Providers Meeting Client Needs

Partner survey respondents were asked to identify how frequently service providers in the State of New Mexico were able to meet DVR clients' rehabilitation service needs.

Roughly 44% of the partner respondents indicated that service providers are able to meet the needs of DVR customers some of the time. The next most frequently selected choice of the partners was "most of the time." Table 134 summarizes the results to this question.

Table 134

Partner Survey: Frequency of Service Providers Meeting Needs

Frequency of Service Providers Meeting Needs	Number	Percent
Some of the time	30	44.1%
Most of the time	29	42.7%
All of the time	8	11.8%
None of the time	1	1.5%
Total	68	100.0%

Services that Providers Are Most Effective in Providing to DVR Clients

Partners were provided a list of 16 items and asked to identify the services that service providers were most effective in providing to DVR clients. There was no limit to the number of services that could be chosen.

Table 135 contains the partners' choices of services that service providers are most effective in providing. The table is slightly different from Table X, which contains the partners' list of services readily available.

Ten comments were received in response to the category of “other” and five cited “I don’t know/none/unsure”. The remaining comments cited the following as services that service providers are most effective in providing: dental consultation, evaluation services to determine eligibility, job coaching, and university charges.

Table 135

Partner Survey: Services that Service Providers Are Most Effective in Providing

Services that Service Providers are Most Effective in Providing to DVR Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Job search/placement/retention	34	58.6%
Pre-employment transition services	30	51.7%
Job training	28	48.3%
Vocational/Postsecondary education	20	34.5%
Assistive technology	13	22.4%
Disability benefits counseling	12	20.7%
Other (please describe)	10	17.2%
Transportation assistance	8	13.8%
Mental health treatment	8	13.8%
Substance abuse treatment	6	10.3%
Housing	6	10.3%
Vehicle modification	5	8.6%
Maintenance or income assistance	5	8.6%
Medical treatment	5	8.6%
Personal care attendants	5	8.6%
Health insurance	5	8.6%
Total	200	

Client Needs Service Providers are Unable to Meet

Partner survey respondents were given an open-ended question and asked to identify the rehabilitation needs that service providers were unable to meet in their area. Twenty-six respondents provided a narrative response indicating various service gaps.

Eight narrative comments did not provide service needs, citing phrases including “I don’t know/unsure”. Various services were mentioned in the remaining partner comments and 6 comments cited diverse problems when attempting to delivery services rather than a particular service need. Table 136 details the comments received from partners in response to the question.

Table 136

Partner Survey: Needs Service Providers are Unable to Meet

Partner Survey: Needs Service Providers are Unable to Meet
Service Needs Not Met
"Attending IEP meetings, providing group Pre-ETS services and developing IEP's prior to graduation from high school"
"Brain Injury Specific services"
"Continuing Education for students in post-secondary programs"
"Creating and monitoring on the job training programs. Specialized counseling for clients to understand and learn appropriate work place behaviors."
"Employment for individuals"
"Everything, from doctors to employers that will provide a good paying job"
"Housing, Quality Mental Health Treatment"
"Job Coaches"
"Job Development/Job coaching services"
"Transportation, Transition to long term employment supports"
"We are experiencing a lack of Affordable Housing options in Sandoval County, New Mexico. This is a critical DVR need."
Problems When Attempting to Deliver Services
"DVR specialists are great but there is a shortage of staff."
"Timeliness"
"It depends on where what services are needed. I work with all types of people."
"I have participant who have not been able to navigate the DVR system and successfully utilize programs."
"They do not do home visits. It seems important to connect with a consumer if you can see what his/her home life looks like."

Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients’ Needs

Partners were provided with a list of five reasons and asked to identify the primary reasons why vocational rehabilitation service providers were unable to meet clients’ service needs. Respondents were able to select more than one item if desired. Fifty respondents answered the question.

In response to the question, thirty-six out of 50 partners (72%) agreed there are not enough service providers available in area. Five comments received in the category other cited “unknown/not sure/I don’t know.”

Table 137 contains the number of times the reason was chosen and the percentage of the number of respondents who answered the question.

Table 137

Partner Survey: Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients' Needs

Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients' Needs	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Not enough service providers available in area	36	72.0%
Client barriers prevent successful interactions with service providers	22	44.0%
Low quality of service provider services	17	34.0%
Low rates paid for services	11	22.0%
Other (please describe)	11	22.0%
Total	97	

Top Three Changes to Help Better Serve DVR Clients

Partner survey respondents were presented a list and asked to identify the top three changes that would help them better serve DVR clients.

More streamlined processes, smaller caseload, and reduced documentation requirements ranked as the top three changes that would help partners better serve DVR clients. Increased collaboration with the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers was chosen by almost 23% of respondents. Note that: 1) about 59% of the partner respondents interacted infrequently or not at all with the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers; 2) over 67% of partners believe the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers are very effective or effectively serving people with disabilities; and 3) 29% of partners are not knowledgeable regarding Connection Centers' program accessibility and 47.4% of partners believe that the Connection Centers are somewhat programmatically accessible to clients.

Table 138 lists the changes along with the number of times each change was identified as one of the top three changes that would help better serve DVR clients.

Table 138

Partner Survey: Top Three Changes to Help Better Serve DVR Clients

Top Three Changes to Better Serve DVR Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
More streamlined processes	22	45.8%
Smaller caseload	15	31.3%
Reduced documentation requirements	14	29.2%
Improved communication with referring DVR counselor	13	27.1%
Increased collaboration with New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers	11	22.9%
Improved business partnerships	10	20.8%

Top Three Changes to Better Serve DVR Clients	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Other (please describe)	9	18.8%
Additional training	7	14.6%
Higher rates paid by DVR for services	7	14.6%
Referral of appropriate individuals	6	12.5%
Incentives for high performance paid by DVR	4	8.3%
Increased options for technology use to communicate with clients	2	4.2%
Total	120	

Most Important Change DVR Service Providers Could Make to Support Clients' Efforts to Achieve Employment Goals

Partner respondents were asked to identify the most important change that network or rehabilitation service providers could make to support DVR clients' efforts to achieve their employment goals. A total of 44 written responses were received and 36 contained a variety of different feedback. The quotes summarize the contents of the 36 comments. The quotes are:

- *“To show the client support. Let them know you are there and interested in their achievement to get a job.”*
- *“It would be very beneficial if all of the DVR staff was trained the same if they all round their offices the same way and there was some type of uniform to the way service providers interacted with DVR VRCs and DVR VRCs interacted with service providers ... All around unison and togetherness would make for a higher employment rate and success rate among participants in the community.”*
- *“Consistency when providing services or approval of services. Ensuring the IPE's are current and reflect the clients goals. More workers in the DVR offices.”*
- *“Support individualized customized employment to include self-employment development”*
- *“More robust offerings for our community, with organized DVR managers.”*
- *“Work with local employers”*
- *“Provide more job coaches. My business is very busy and my staff do not have the time to supervise and assist individuals who have special needs who need job coaching”*
- *“Completing referrals, intakes, eligibilities and IPE development in a timely manner. Coordinating with school staff.”*
- *“Better communications on programs available to those with disabilities”*
- *“Improve their communication with service providers.”*

STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

Staff Survey: Service Providers and Vendors

Staff survey respondents were asked a series of six questions regarding rehabilitation service provider and vendor services. The purpose of the questions was to identify the availability of services that DVR

refers or recommends to clients and to understand whether or not the services are meeting the clients' needs.

Services Readily Available to DVR Clients

Staff were provided with a list of 17 items and asked to select the services that are readily available to DVR clients.

Staff and partner results in response to the question are similar, with a slightly different rank order. Five items were cited by over 85 percent of staff as services that are readily available to DVR clients (vocational/postsecondary education, pre-employment transition services, job search/placement/retention, assistive technology, job training). Table 139 details the staff choices of readily available services.

Table 139

Staff Survey: Services Readily Available to DVR Clients

Services Readily Available	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Vocational/Postsecondary education	74	91.4%
Pre-employment transition services	73	90.1%
Job search/placement/retention	71	87.7%
Assistive technology	70	86.4%
Job training	69	85.2%
Transportation assistance	63	77.8%
Disability benefits counseling	61	75.3%
Vehicle modification	55	67.9%
Medical treatment	54	66.7%
Mental health treatment	54	66.7%
Substance abuse treatment	49	60.5%
Maintenance or income assistance	46	56.8%
Health insurance	40	49.4%
Housing	34	42.0%
Personal care attendants	32	39.5%
Home modification	26	32.1%
Other (please describe)	7	8.6%
Total	878	

Services Not Readily Available to DVR Clients

Staff were asked to indicate what services were not readily available in the area of New Mexico where they work. There was no limit to the number of services that could be chosen. A total of 66 staff respondents answered the question.

Similar to partners, staff displayed consistency in their choices for available and not available services as the items selected as services not readily available listed at the top of Table 140 below are found at the bottom the list of services that staff indicated as readily available. Home modification was cited most frequently by staff as a service not readily available and the item was not on the list presented to partners. Overall, staff and partners results were different in rank order.

Nine out of the eleven comments received in the category “other” cited “I don’t know/unsure”. Two comments identified services not available and the services are: cognitive rehabilitation; one-to-one assistance for the severely disabled clients; and psychoeducational counseling.

Table 140 details the staff choices of services not readily available to clients.

Table 140

Staff Survey: Services Not Readily Available to DVR Clients

Services Not Readily Available	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Home modification	37	56.1%
Housing	33	50.0%
Personal care attendants	26	39.4%
Maintenance or Income assistance	24	36.4%
Vehicle modification	19	28.8%
Health insurance	18	27.3%
Medical treatment	17	25.8%
Substance abuse treatment	16	24.2%
Transportation assistance	15	22.7%
Mental health treatment	14	21.2%
Other (please describe)	10	15.2%
Job training	6	9.1%
Job search/placement/retention	6	9.1%
Disability benefits counseling	4	6.1%
Assistive technology	3	4.5%
Pre-employment transition services	2	3.0%
Vocational/Postsecondary education	0	0.0%
Total	250	

Service Providers Meeting Clients' Needs

Staff survey respondents were asked to identify how frequently service providers in the State of New Mexico were able to meet DVR clients' rehabilitation service needs.

The majority of respondents (54%) indicated that service providers were meeting the needs of DVR clients' most of the time. A significantly lower rate of respondents indicated that service providers are meeting the needs of clients some of the time. Note that slightly less than two-thirds of individual survey respondents would recommend their service provider.

Table 141

Staff Survey: Frequency of Service Providers Meeting Clients' Needs

Frequency of Service Providers Meeting Needs	Number	Percent
Most of the time	41	54.0%
Some of the time	24	31.6%
All of the time	10	13.2%
None of the time	1	1.3%
Total	76	100.0%

Service Needs that Service Providers are Unable to Meet

Staff respondents were provided a list of 17 items and asked to identify the service needs that rehabilitation service providers were unable to meet. There was no limit to the number of services respondents could choose. Fifty-seven staff respondents participated in answering this survey question.

Staff cited "housing" as the top service need that rehabilitation service providers are unable to meet. Home modification ranked in the second position by a narrow margin of difference (n=2, 3.5%) from the top item "housing". Although staff identified "Job search/placement/retention" as the third top service readily available to DVR clients in the previous Table 141, staff identified the service, along with "housing" and "home modification" as one of the three top services needs that rehabilitation service providers are unable to meet. Six comments received in the category "other" contained the phrase "job coaching" and included Spanish speaking and ASL trained coaches. Supported employment and mental health services were each cited in two narrative comments. The services "long term supports" and "substance abuse" were cited one time. Table 142 contains the staff choices of service needs that rehabilitation service providers are unable to meet.

Table 142

Staff Survey: Service Needs that Service Providers are Unable to Meet

Client Needs Service Providers are Unable to Meet	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Housing	26	45.6%
Home modification	24	42.1%
Job search/placement/retention	20	35.1%
Personal care attendants	19	33.3%

Client Needs Service Providers are Unable to Meet	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Vehicle modification	17	29.8%
Transportation assistance	16	28.1%
Other (please describe)	16	28.1%
Job training	12	21.1%
Maintenance or Income assistance	12	21.1%
Mental health treatment	12	21.1%
Substance abuse treatment	12	21.1%
Health insurance	9	15.8%
Medical treatment	8	14.0%
Vocational/Postsecondary education	5	8.8%
Assistive technology	5	8.8%
Pre-employment transition services	5	8.8%
Disability benefits counseling	4	7.0%
Total	222	

Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients' Needs

Staff were provided with a list of five reasons and asked to identify the primary reasons why vocational rehabilitation service providers were unable to meet clients' service needs. Respondents were able to select more than one item if desired.

Although staff and partners selected "not enough service providers are available" as their first choice of primary reasons why service providers are unable to meet clients' rehabilitation needs, staff and partners did not match in their choices for the second primary reason. Staff ranked the item "client barriers prevent successful interactions with service providers" lower than partners.

Comments received in the category "other" are:

- *"Not allowed in DVR"*
- *"Services not provided per Policy and procedures"*
- *"Remote areas in Farmington and San Juan County"*
- *"Rural area. Fewer job opportunities"*
- *"Provider shortages vendors stretched thin"*
- *"Providers don't pay high enough wages to retain quality staff at job development agencies"*
- *"The reasons vary among providers. For housing, there just isn't enough available."*
- *"Understaffed, burnout"*
- *"Our field of work as a whole is very negative and discouraging. In my opinion it makes both DVR employees and service providers want to work in other fields resulting in low staff."*

- *“The high caseload for counselors to handle is enormous. The continuous retention issues. Counselors are not paid enough to stay and do different job duties.”*
- *“We have Service Providers but they do not communicate in ASL and they delay in placing the Supported Employment clients to make more money. They are finally put on a Moratorium when they are not placing the Supported Employment clients. Job Coaches not paid well and there is a HUGE turnover in job coaches. ASL Communication for Deaf and HH are very minimal for Job Developers and Job Coaches where VRC has to work with SL Interpreters which is not always successful in communicating with Deaf/ID clients.”*

Table 143 summarizes the staff responses to this question.

Table 143

Staff Survey: Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients' Needs

Primary Reasons Service Providers are Unable to Meet Clients' Needs	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Not enough service providers available in area	58	93.5%
Low quality of service provider services	29	46.8%
Low rates paid for services	23	37.1%
Client barriers prevent successful interactions with service providers	17	27.4%
Other (please describe)	12	19.4%
Total	139	

Most Important Change Service Providers Could Make to Support Client Efforts to Achieve Employment Goals

Staff respondents were asked an open-ended question to identify the most important change that service providers could make to support customer's efforts to achieve their employment goals. A total of 55 responses were received and 52 contained suggestions for change. Content analysis indicated consistent themes regarding finding and improving job developer services, hiring more job coaches, increasing the number of service providers, improving communication, providing consistent services to clients, and meeting rural area needs. Quotes that best summarize the recurring suggestions received are provided in table 144.

Table 144

Staff Survey: Most Important Change Service Providers Could Make to Support Client Efforts to Achieve Employment Goals

Quotes: Most Important Change Service Providers Could Make to Support Client Efforts to Achieve Employment Goals
<i>“Become more engaged with the agency to understand our procedures and how we support the goal so as not to duplicate some services and forget others”</i>
<i>“Due to the requirement that all providers are vendors this eliminates a lot of possible vendors that can help clients”</i>
<i>“Provide DVR service providers with effective management and mentoring so that they can effectively serve clients. Make improvements in the AWARE system that make it more user friendly for all who use it”</i>

<i>"For my area I think the biggest and most effective changes could adequately service providers. In agency job development would be extremely helpful. It can be said that services provided from outside agencies feel unregulated the services provided for job development/coaching is subpar at best most times. Along with this we have no services providers in my area at this time. How can we pay for a service that no one is willing to provide."</i>
<i>"Hire at a higher pay rate, get more employees so that we can have more Job developers, job coaches, supported employment services"</i>
<i>"Hire and train staff to provide quality services. Job placement with job coaching to support more on-the-job training contracts."</i>
<i>"Pay the Job Developers and, especially, Job Coaches better for better retention and higher success in job placements."</i>
<i>"To get more providers in this area to become vendors"</i>
<i>"More Supported Employment Providers"</i>
<i>"Be more motivated to stay in contact with DVR clients on a regular basis"</i>
<i>"Be responsive, be professional, train their staff adequately"</i>
<i>"Providing quality services over the quantity of people served"</i>
<i>"More external job developers or develop an internal unit of dedicated to job development, coaching, and business outreach for OJT sites"</i>
<i>"I really what would be really effective is making sure there is a job coach/developer in every area in New Mexico. Once or twice per office. Also, having more long-term providers as well."</i>
<i>"Consistency, client's don't have the consistency needed from a job developer or job coach to maintain employment. In Farmington, there is only one provider. Farmington has a huge lack of resources, and finding quality staff is very difficult."</i>

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following themes were recurring from the individuals interviewed for this assessment in the area of the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs serving individuals with disabilities in New Mexico:

1. The pandemic significantly impacted staffing at service providers agencies, with shortages noted in most geographic areas and services. Consequently, the wait for services has increased and the need to establish and develop services offered by CRPs is pervasive.
2. There is a need to establish all VR services and service providers in the rural areas of the State.
3. There is a significant need for SE providers throughout the State.
4. There is a need for DVR to examine its current rate structure for purchased services. Partners indicate that the current fee schedule is insufficient to meet their needs for service provision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendation is offered to DVR based on the results of the research in the Need to Establish, Develop or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs in New Mexico:

1. DVR should examine their current rates for purchased services and the past methodology for how these rates were established to determine if rate revisions are needed and if the methodology is adequate given the changing landscape of staffing and service delivery since the pandemic. The agency is encouraged to work with the fiscal team at the VRTAC-QM as needed for technical assistance in this area.
2. DVR is encouraged to consider using the Establishment Authority to help establish SE and other service providers over the course of the next State Plan cycle. The need for these services is clearly evident from all staff and partners interviewed for this CSNA.
3. DVR is encouraged to establish a provider network meeting at least semi-annually to share information, increase communication, and enhance the partnership between DVR and service providers.
4. If VR services are unable to be developed, then DVR is encouraged to consider bringing services in-house by hiring individuals with specialized skills in the given area (e.g. job placement, assessment, supported employment).
5. DVR is encouraged to investigate the national Supported Employment Community of Practice facilitated by the Center for Innovative Training in VR at George Washington University. Representatives from VR systems across the country learn together and benefit from shared problem-solving opportunities.

SECTION SEVEN

NEEDS OF BUSINESS AND EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS

The need for the VR program to engage with the business community and effectively provide services to employers is one of the common performance measures for the core partners in WIOA. Consequently, it is important for every VR program to do a self-assessment of how well they are serving employers. The project team is hopeful that this section of the report will be useful to VR as they engage in the evaluation of how effectively they are providing services to employers and develop strategies to increase business engagement.

RECURRING THEMES ACROSS ALL DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The following themes emerged in the area of the needs of business and effectiveness in serving employers:

1. Employers indicate a need for education and information on training opportunities related to candidates and employees with disabilities.
2. Business Engagement has historically been done by local staff, primarily technicians and counselors. DVR has begun hiring staff that are assigned to business relations development, but this has not been pervasive to date.
3. The pandemic resulted in many employers opening their minds to hiring individuals with disabilities, but stereotypes still remain and there is a need to educate employers on disability awareness and sensitivity on a consistent basis.

SURVEY RESULTS

BUSINESS SURVEY RESPONSES

Disability in the Workplace: Employer Needs

With respect to the "Disability in the Workplace" section of the survey, business survey respondents were presented with eight questions regarding whether or not their business needed help with a variety of concerns related to disability and employment. The questions were structured in a yes-no format.

The sample size is (n=67) in response to employer needs regarding disability in the workplace as the total number of survey respondents who answered specific questions is 64 to 67 respondents.

Roughly 35% to 50% of business respondents indicated that they need assistance in regard to disability in the workplace which includes training, accommodations, incentives, recruitment and retaining workers with disabilities.

Table 145

Disability in the Workplace: Employer Needs

Does your business need help...	Number of times Yes was chosen	Percent of time Yes was chosen	Number of times No was chosen	Percent of time No was chosen	Total
Obtaining information on training programs available for workers with disabilities?	32	49.2%	33	50.8%	65
Identifying job accommodations for workers with disabilities?	29	43.3%	38	56.7%	67
Understanding disability-related legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Rehabilitation Act as amended?	28	41.8%	39	58.2%	67
Obtaining incentives for employing workers with disabilities?	28	43.1%	37	56.9%	65
Helping workers with disabilities to retain employment?	26	40.6%	38	59.4%	64
Obtaining training on the different types of disabilities?	26	40.0%	39	60.0%	65
Obtaining training on sensitivity to workers with disabilities?	26	40.0%	39	60.0%	65
Recruiting job applicants who are people with disabilities?	23	34.9%	43	65.2%	66

Applicants with Disabilities: Recruitment Process

Business respondents were asked six questions regarding the need for recruitment assistance for applicants with disabilities. Respondents were asked to provide responses to the questions in a yes-no response format.

Although roughly 59 percent of business respondents indicated not needing assistance with recruitment, roughly 40 percent of the respondents indicated that they needed help recruiting applicants with disabilities that have good work habits, good interpersonal skills, and accessing applicant skills. More than 37 percent of businesses would like assistance with recruiting applicants who meet the job qualifications and assistance with reasonable accommodations.

Business respondents were asked if they would like to further comment on their answers in the previous question or if they had additional comments or needs regarding recruiting applicants with disabilities. Four responses were received that contained additional comments:

- *"I would like to know if we have a qualified applicant with disabilities, and we discussed those disabilities during the interview process. and then decided to pass on that individual."*

Are we open to discrimination if we choose to hire another individual over an individual with disabilities?”

- *“I’m not looking for help right now but I would love in the future to consider it.”*
- *“Need more professionals to work in the above needs which our University does not have.”*
- *“Part of our interview process allows us to gauge social and interpersonal skills.”*

Table 146 summarizes the results of the responses to the six questions according to the percentage of respondents who indicated a need for help with respect to the item indicated in each question.

Table 146

Applicants with Disabilities: Recruitment Process

Does your business need help...	Number of times Yes was chosen	Percent of time Yes was chosen	Number of times No was chosen	Percent of time No was chosen	Total
Recruiting applicants with good work habits?	22	40.0%	33	60.0%	55
Recruiting applicants with good social/interpersonal skills?	22	40.7%	32	59.3%	54
Recruiting applicants who meet the job qualifications?	21	38.9%	33	61.1%	54
Assessing applicants' skills?	21	40.4%	31	59.6%	52
Discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants?	20	38.5%	32	61.5%	52
Identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants?	19	37.3%	32	62.8%	51

Employees with Disabilities: Challenges to Job Retention

Business survey respondents were presented with a list of 12 job-related challenges and asked to identify the challenges they have now or have experienced in the past with respect to employees with disabilities. A total of sixty-three respondents answered the question.

Over one-half of the respondents cited “I have no knowledge of any challenges we have had retaining employees with disabilities. Specific challenges on the list were cited between 3 to 18 times, with mental health concerns being cited the most often. One comment was received in the category “other” that described specific challenges and is quoted:

- *“Assistance from DVR to provide job coaches, difficulty with DVR paying for a student with disabilities desire to go to college”*

Business survey respondents were asked an open-ended question if they would like to further comment on their answers in the previous question or if they had additional comments or needs regarding challenges experienced with employees with disabilities. Respondents were given the opportunity to provide a narrative response. Three narrative responses are quoted:

- *“Alamo Navajo School Board, INC. accommodates employees with disabilities and English Language Learners through professional development and alternative licensure if available through State of New Mexico and Navajo Nation.”*
- *“Difficulty getting appointments to speak to a DVR counselor; no one answers the phone when a client calls, telephone number listed on line is not accurate, counselors accurately creating the clients IPE, taking very long for DVR to pay invoices for college tuition, inconsistencies with paying for college seems each district follows different rules and are not consistent”*
- *“I would like to explore how we can work with this diverse and talented untapped workforce”*

Table 147 contains the list of challenges to job retention and the number of times chosen by business survey respondents.

Table 147

Employees with Disabilities – Challenges to Job Retention

Challenges to Job Retention	Number of Times Chosen	Percent of number of respondents
I have no knowledge of any challenges we have had retaining employees with disabilities	33	52.4%
Mental health concerns	18	28.6%
Difficulty learning job skills	16	25.4%
Slow work speed	14	22.2%
Lack of transportation	12	19.0%
Poor attendance	11	17.5%
Physical health problems	11	17.5%
Poor work stamina	10	15.9%
Poor social skills	9	14.3%
Identifying effective accommodations	7	11.1%
Other (please describe)	4	6.3%
Language barriers	3	4.8%
Total	148	

Services Provided to Employers by DVR: Knowledge and Use

Business survey representatives were asked three questions regarding their knowledge and utilization of services provided by the agency. The representatives were asked to do the following:

- 1) Indicate their knowledge level of DVR Outreach Coordinators and Services;
- 2) Cite whether or not their business had utilized DVR Employment Specialist services; and
- 3) Identify what services the DVR Employment Specialists provided their business.

Roughly 48 percent of business survey respondents indicated that they had little or no knowledge of DVR Outreach Coordinators and Services. Slightly more than half of business respondents cited that they have not used DVR Employment Specialist Services and roughly one-fourth of the respondents did not know if their business has used DVR Employment Specialist services.

The category “other, please describe) was the most frequently cited item in response to the question regarding services provided to the employer by DVR. Twelve responses were received. Eight responses contained the phrases “NA/none/unsure/have not utilized DVR”. The quotes from the remaining narrative comments are:

- “I have never had a DVR reach out to us”
- “Seeking of coaching for applying for grant programs by owner of our company”
- “Supporting students with skills and information”
- “We have not had contact with DVR in some time”

The most frequently cited DVR services used by employers that were listed as response options were accessing applicants’ skills, helping workers with disabilities to retain employment, and identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants.

Tables 148-150 include the results of the questions related to employers’ knowledge and use of DVR services for employers.

Table 148

Employers’ Knowledge of DVR Outreach Coordinators and Services

Knowledge of DVR Outreach Coordinators and Services	Number	Percent
Little or no knowledge	30	48.4%
Somewhat knowledgeable	28	45.2%
Very knowledgeable	4	6.5%
Total	62	100.0%

Table 149

Employer Usage of DVR Employment Specialist Services

Employer Usage of DVR Employment Specialist Services	Number	Percent
No	35	55.6%
I don't know	15	23.8%
Yes	13	20.6%
Total	63	100.0%

Table 150

Services Provided to Employers by DVR

Services Provided to Employers by DVR	Number of times chosen	Percent of number of respondents
Other (please describe)	13	36.1%
Assessing applicants' skills?	10	27.8%
Helping workers with disabilities to retain employment?	9	25.0%
Identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants?	7	19.4%
Recruiting job applicants who are people with disabilities?	6	16.7%
Obtaining information on training programs available for workers with disabilities?	6	16.7%
Discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants?	6	16.7%
Recruiting applicants who meet the job qualifications?	5	13.9%
Assistance identifying job accommodations for workers with disabilities?	4	11.1%
Obtaining training on the different types of disabilities?	3	8.3%
Recruiting applicants with good work habits?	3	8.3%
Recruiting applicants with good social/interpersonal skills?	3	8.3%
Training in understanding disability-related legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Rehabilitation Act as amended?	2	5.6%
Obtaining training on sensitivity to workers with disabilities?	2	5.6%
Obtaining incentives for employing workers with disabilities?	2	5.6%
Total	81	

Employer Satisfaction with Services Provided by DVR

Business survey representatives who utilized DVR services were presented with a five-point response scale (with responses ranging from "very satisfied" to "very dissatisfied") and asked to indicate how satisfied they were with the services they received from DVR.

Seven of the 41 business respondents indicated that they were very satisfied with the services they received from DVR. Roughly one-half of the business respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the DVR services that their business received.

Table 151 details the results.

Table 151

Employer Satisfaction with DVR Services

Satisfaction Rating	Number	Percent
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	20	48.8%
Satisfied	9	22.0%
Very satisfied	7	17.1%
Dissatisfied	3	7.3%
Very dissatisfied	2	4.9%
Total	41	100.0%

Employer Needs: Applicants or Employees with Disabilities

Business survey respondents were asked an open-ended question asking if their business has any needs related to applicants or workers with disabilities that are not currently being met and to describe them in a narrative format. The quotes are:

- *“Assistance with paying for college for students with disabilities. Accurately creating a client's IPE, providing services to clients with a lower intellect, assistance with job coaches for adults with disabilities”*
- *“I am unaware and unsure if HR has mentioned or addressed employees with disabilities. I only know of one NTU employee who has extreme health issues and met disabilities criteria after she almost died in NTU parking lot. Today, I don't think University has hired an employee as of yet.”*
- *“Job coaches coming from DVR or from other agencies would be SUPER helpful.”*
- *“Local shuttle bus route to Cannon Air Force Base”*
- *“Need for additional support”*
- *“NMDVR in Socorro covers geographical area of 500 miles within 3 counties. Rural employment is difficult due to lack of nongovernment businesses. NMDVR in Socorro work with clients to the best of their abilities, within described circumstances. NMDVR employees are professional, respectful and empathetic with clients.”*
- *“We are a mental health agency that provides services through our Comprehensive Community Support Services that encompasses job development and supported employment. We have not had contact with DVR in some time. At one point, we had a pretty robust partnership with them, but it seems that has fallen away.”*
- *“We have never had a DVR talk to our business about hiring persons with special needs. We do believe that there are no disabilities, only abilities waiting to be discovered.”*
- *“We have referred students needing a psychological evaluation to determine eligibility, which is a very slow process, sometimes they do not get the help they need.”*

Business Demographics

Business survey respondents described their respective business types and the number of employees the business currently employs. The tables below indicate the various business types and the size of the organization based on the number of employees.

In response to the question regarding business types, the business types reported in the category "other" are: behavioral health; billboards; counselor; energy exploration & production; family homes; insurance; landscaping; lawyer's office; media; non-profits including food pantry and dog training; oil and gas; school; skills training/job development and value added reseller services.

In response to the question regarding organization size, the most frequently cited size was one to 15 employees.

Table 152

Type of Business

Business Type	Number	Percent
Education	21	23.6%
Other (please describe)	20	22.5%
Service	16	18.0%
Construction	8	9.0%
Health care	8	9.0%
Retail	5	5.6%
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing	4	4.5%
Government	4	4.5%
Manufacturing	1	1.1%
Banking/Finance	1	1.1%
Gambling/Casino	1	1.1%
Total	89	100.0%

Table 153

Number of Employees

Number of Employees	Number	Percent
One - 15	41	46.6%
16 - 50	17	19.3%
51 - 250	17	19.3%
251 - 999	7	8.0%
1,000 or more	6	6.8%
Total	88	100.0%

INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The following information was gathered from the individuals interviewed for this assessment in the area of Needs of Business and Effectiveness in Serving Employers:

1. Business Engagement has historically been done by local staff, primarily technicians and counselors. DVR has begun hiring staff that are assigned to business relations development, but this has not been pervasive to date.
2. The pandemic resulted in many employers opening their minds to hiring individuals with disabilities, but stereotypes still remain and there is a need to educate employers on disability awareness and sensitivity on a consistent basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are offered based on the information gathered in the Needs of Business and Effectiveness in Serving Employers section:

1. As resources allow, DVR is encouraged to provide training for employers on disability awareness. This should be done in partnership with their Title I partners if possible.
2. DVR is encouraged to partner with employers and expand registered apprenticeship opportunities for individuals with disabilities throughout the State, especially youth.
3. As indicated in Section 5, DVR is encouraged to work closely with their Title I partners and businesses to develop customized training programs that are inclusive of individuals with disabilities.
4. DVR is encouraged to provide training to technicians on employment preparation skills (resume development, interviewing skills, structured job search) and employer outreach.
5. Identify employers that have inclusive hiring practices and have hired DVR customers and recognize them in an annual employer awards ceremony.

CONCLUSION

The comprehensive statewide needs assessment for New Mexico's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation program utilized qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities in the State. The combination of surveys and interviews resulted in more than 680 people participating in the assessment. The project team at San Diego State University's Interwork Institute is confident that data saturation occurred across the multiple areas of investigation in the CSNA and is hopeful that the findings and recommendations will be utilized by DVR to inform future planning and resource allocation for the agency.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

New Mexico DVR, CSNA 2023 Focus Group Protocols

[Introductions/confidentiality/purpose statements]

Focus Group Protocol - Partner Agencies:

Employment Goals

- What barriers do people with disabilities in New Mexico face in getting or keeping a job?
Follow up: Education, not enough jobs, discrimination, attitudes, lack of communications, fear of loss of benefits, lack of knowledge of options, etc.

Barriers to accessing services

- What barriers do people with disabilities encounter when trying to access rehabilitation services from VR?

Impressions of needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities

- What are the unmet rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant or most significant disabilities?
- What needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities are being met the best/most extensively?

Needs of underserved groups with disabilities

- What groups of individuals would you consider un-served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation system?
(Prompt for different disability groups, minority status, geographic area or other characteristics)
(For each identified group): What unmet needs do they have?

Need for supported employment

- Please describe how effective the SE and CE programs are in New Mexico. What populations are receiving SE and CE services?
- What SE or CE needs are not being met?
- What do you recommend to meet the needs for SE or CE?

Transition

- What needs do young people with disabilities in transition from high school have as far as preparing for, obtaining or retaining employment?
- How well are the high schools in New Mexico preparing young people for the world of postsecondary education or employment? What can the schools do differently to prepare young people to be successful in postsecondary education or employment?
- How would you characterize VR's relationship/partnership with the secondary school system in New Mexico?
- How well is VR serving youth in transition in terms of preparing them for postsecondary education or employment?

- What can VR do to improve services to youth in transition?

Needs of individuals served through the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers

How effectively does the Workforce Connection Centers Center system in New Mexico serve individuals with disabilities?

- Are there any barriers to individuals with disabilities accessing services through the Workforce Connection Centers? If so, what are they and what can be done to change this?
- How effectively is DVR working in partnership with the Workforce Connection Centers? Do you have any recommendations about how to improve this partnership if needed?
- What would you recommend to improve the Workforce Connection Centers' ability to serve individuals with disabilities in New Mexico?

Need for establishment, development or improvement of CRPs

- What community-based rehabilitation programs or services need to be created, expanded or improved?
- What services need to be offered in new locations in order to meet people's needs?
- What community-based rehabilitation services are most successful? How are they most successful or what makes them so?

Need for improvement of services or outcomes

- What needs to be done to improve the vocational rehabilitation services that people receive?

Focus Group Protocol – New Mexico DVR staff:

Employment Goals

- What barriers do people with disabilities in New Mexico face in getting or keeping a job?
Follow up: Education, not enough jobs, discrimination, attitudes, lack of communications, fear of loss of benefits, lack of knowledge of options, etc.

Barriers to accessing services

- What barriers do people with disabilities encounter when trying to access rehabilitation services from VR?

Impressions of needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities

- What are the unmet rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant or most significant disabilities?
- What needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities are being met the best/most extensively?

Needs of underserved groups with disabilities

- What groups of individuals would you consider un-served or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation system?
(Prompt for different disability groups, minority status, geographic area or any other characteristics).
(For each identified group): What unmet needs do they have?

Need for supported employment

- Please describe how effective the SE and CE programs are in New Mexico. What populations are receiving SE and CE services?

- What SE or CE needs are not being met?
- What do you recommend to meet the needs for SE or CE?

Transition

- What needs do young people with disabilities in transition from high school have as far as preparing for, obtaining or retaining employment?
- How well are the high schools in New Mexico preparing young people for the world of postsecondary education or employment? What can the schools do differently to prepare young people to be successful in postsecondary education or employment?
- How would you characterize VR's relationship/partnership with the secondary school system in New Mexico?
- How well is VR serving youth in transition in terms of preparing them for postsecondary education or employment?
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- What would you recommend to improve the Workforce Connection Centers' ability to serve individuals with disabilities in New Mexico?

Need for establishment, development or improvement of CRPs

- What community-based rehabilitation programs or services need to be created, expanded or improved?
- What services need to be offered in new locations in order to meet people's needs?
- What community-based rehabilitation services are most successful? How are they most successful or what makes them so?

Need for improvement of services or outcomes

- What needs to be done to improve the vocational rehabilitation services that people receive?

New Mexico 2023 CSNA - Individual Survey

Q1

New Mexico Vocational Rehabilitation Individual Survey

The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) program helps individuals with disabilities prepare for, obtain, retain, and advance in employment.

You are receiving this survey because you are a current or former DVR customer and we need your help to better understand the employment needs of individuals with disabilities in New Mexico . The results of this survey will be used to help improve programs and services for persons with disabilities in New Mexico.

The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. You may ask a family member, personal attendant, or caregiver to complete the survey with or for you. If you are a family member, personal attendant or caregiver and are responding on behalf of an individual with a disability, please answer the survey questions based upon your knowledge of the needs of the person with the disability.

This survey is anonymous, and your participation is voluntary. If you have any questions regarding this survey, or if you would prefer to complete this survey in an alternate format, please contact Dr. Chaz Compton at San Diego State University at the following e-mail address

ccompton@sdsu.edu

Thank you very much for your time and input!

Q2 Which statement best describes your association with DVR? (select one response)

- ☐ I am a current client of DVR
- ☐ I am a previous client of DVR, my case has been closed
- ☐ I have never used the services of DVR
- ☐ I am not familiar with DVR
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____

Skip To: Q4 If Which statement best describes your association with DVR? (select one response) = I have never used the services of DVR

Skip To: Q4 If Which statement best describes your association with DVR? (select one response) = I am not familiar with DVR

Q3 Why did you go to DVR for services (check all that apply)?

- ☐ I needed help finding a job
- ☐ I was in danger of losing my job
- ☐ I wanted to go to college or some other kind of postsecondary education
- ☐ I needed help getting medical equipment/supplies
- ☐ I wanted help with technology skills/equipment
- ☐ I needed money
- ☐ I was told to by someone
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____

Q4

Demographic Information

Q5 What is your age?

- ☐ under 25
- ☐ 25-64
- ☐ 65 and over
-

Q6 What is your primary race or ethnic group (check all that apply)?

- ☐ African American/Black
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Caucasian/White
- ☐ Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ Hispanic/Latino
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____
- ☐ I don't know
-

Q7 What is your language of preference for communication?

☐ English

☐ Spanish

☐ Hawaiian

☐ Chinese

☐ Japanese

☐ American Sign Language

☐ Other (Please identify) _____

Q8 Please identify the County where you live.

- ☐ Bernalillo
- ☐ Catron
- ☐ Chaves
- ☐ Cibola
- ☐ Colfax
- ☐ Curry
- ☐ De Baca
- ☐ Dona Ana
- ☐ Eddy
- ☐ Grant
- ☐ Guadalupe
- ☐ Harding
- ☐ Lea
- ☐ Lincoln
- ☐ Los Alamos
- ☐ Luna
- ☐ McKinley
- ☐ Mora
- ☐ Otero
- ☐ Quay
- ☐ Rio Arriba

- ☐ Roosevelt
 - ☐ Sandoval
 - ☐ San Juan
 - ☐ San Miguel
 - ☐ Santa Fe
 - ☐ Sierra
 - ☐ Socorro
 - ☐ Taos
 - ☐ Turrance
 - ☐ Union
 - ☐ Valencia
-

Q9 Which of the following would you use to describe your primary disabling condition? (select one)

- ☐ Blind or visually impaired
 - ☐ Intellectual Disability (ID)
 - ☐ Developmental Disability (DD)
 - ☐ Brain injury
 - ☐ Spinal Cord injury
 - ☐ Communication
 - ☐ Deaf or Hard of Hearing
 - ☐ Deaf-Blind
 - ☐ Mental Health
 - ☐ Mobility
 - ☐ Physical
 - ☐ Other (please describe) _____
 - ☐ I don't know
 - ☐ No impairment
-

Q10 If you have a secondary disabling condition, which of the following would you use to describe it? (select one) If you do not have a secondary disabling condition, please select "No impairment" below.

- ☐ Blind or visually impaired
 - ☐ Intellectual disability (ID)
 - ☐ Developmental Disability (DD)
 - ☐ Brian injury
 - ☐ Spinal Cord injury
 - ☐ Communication
 - ☐ Deaf or Hard of Hearing
 - ☐ Deaf-Blind
 - ☐ Mental Health
 - ☐ Mobility
 - ☐ Physical
 - ☐ Other (please describe) _____
 - ☐ I don't know
 - ☐ No impairment
-

Q11 Please indicate whether you receive the following Social Security disability benefits (please check all that apply).

☐

I receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income. SSI is a means-tested benefit generally provided to individuals with little or no work history)

☐

I receive SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance. SSDI is provided to individuals that have worked in the past and is based on the amount of money the individual paid into the system through payroll deductions)

☐

I receive a check from the Social Security Administration every month, but I do not know which benefit I get

☐

I don't know if I receive Social Security disability benefits

☐

I do not receive Social Security disability benefits

Q12

Employment-Related Needs

The next several questions ask you about employment-related needs that you may have.

Q13 Please identify which of the following have been barriers to you getting or keeping a job? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Lack of education or training
- ☐ Limited job skills/work experience
- ☐ Lack of job search/interview skills
- ☐ Criminal Record
- ☐ Language barriers
- ☐ Lack of available jobs
- ☐ Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability
- ☐ Lack of assistive technology
- ☐ Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- ☐ Lack of attendant care
- ☐ Lack of reliable transportation
- ☐ Lack of broadband Internet access
- ☐ Mental health concerns
- ☐ Substance abuse
- ☐ Other health issues
- ☐ Lack of child care
- ☐ Lack of housing
- ☐ Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working

Q14 What have been the top three barriers to you getting or keeping a job? (select three)

- ☐ Lack of education or training
- ☐ Limited job skills/work experience
- ☐ Lack of job search/interview skills
- ☐ Criminal Record
- ☐ Language barriers
- ☐ Lack of available jobs
- ☐ Employer concerns about my ability to do the job due to my disability
- ☐ Lack of assistive technology
- ☐ Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- ☐ Lack of attendant care
- ☐ Lack of reliable transportation
- ☐ Lack of broadband Internet access
- ☐ Mental health concerns
- ☐ Substance abuse
- ☐ Other health issues
- ☐ Lack of child care
- ☐ Lack of housing
- ☐ Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working

Q15 If you have experienced other barriers to getting a job not mentioned above, please list them here.

Q16

Barriers to Accessing New Mexico DVR

The next several questions ask you about barriers to accessing DVR services.

Q17 Please indicate which of the following have been a barrier to you accessing DVR services. (select all that apply)

- ☐ Lack of available transportation to the DVR office
- ☐ Lack of broadband Internet access
- ☐ DVR's hours of operation
- ☐ Lack of information about available services
- ☐ Lack of disability-related accommodations
- ☐ I have nobody that can help me access services
- ☐ Language barriers
- ☐ Difficulties scheduling meetings with my counselor
- ☐ Other difficulties with DVR staff
- ☐ Difficulties completing the DVR application
- ☐ Difficulties completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
- ☐ Other (please identify) _____

Q18 Have you had any other challenges or barriers not already mentioned that have made it difficult for you to access DVR services?

- ☐ Yes (please describe) _____
 - ☐ No
-

Q19 Where do you usually meet with your counselor?

- ☐ I usually meet with my counselor in my community/school
 - ☐ I go to a DVR office to meet with my counselor
 - ☐ I meet with my counselor virtually
 - ☐ I don't have a counselor
-

Q20 Which of the following DVR services have you received remotely (by phone, email or video conference) since the beginning of the COVID 19 pandemic? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Guidance and counseling (provided by my DVR counselor)
- ☐ Help looking for work or applying for jobs
- ☐ Help keeping a job
- ☐ Help understanding how work will impact my disability
- ☐ Assistive technology
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____
- ☐ I have not received any services from DVR remotely during the pandemic

Skip To: Q22 If Which of the following DVR services have you received remotely (by phone, email or video conferen... = I have not received any services from DVR remotely during the pandemic

Q21 How would you rate the effectiveness of the services delivered remotely during the pandemic?

- ☐ Extremely effective
 - ☐ Effective
 - ☐ Somewhat effective
 - ☐ Less effective
 - ☐ Not effective at all
-

Q22 Please tell us how you manage your money by choosing which of the following statements are true for you (select all that apply).

- ☐ I have a monthly budget
 - ☐ I have a savings account
 - ☐ I have a checking account
 - ☐ I invest my money
 - ☐ I have no specific way that I manage my money
 - ☐ I have no money to manage
 - ☐ Someone else manages my money for me
-

Q23 How do you feel about your current financial situation?

- ☐ I am doing well financially
 - ☐ I am doing OK financially
 - ☐ I am not doing well financially
 - ☐ I am in desperate need for money
-

Q24 If DVR offered financial education or skills training, would you be interested in receiving these services?

- ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ I am not sure
-

Q25 How can DVR change their services to help you get a job?

Q26 Have you received services from a service provider or vendor that DVR referred you to? (This may include an assessment, preparing for or finding a job, job coaching, training, assistive technology or other services)

☐ Yes

☐ No

Skip To: Q32 If Have you received services from a service provider or vendor that DVR referred you to? (This may... = No

Q27 How effective were the services you received from the service provider or vendor?

☐ Very effective

☐ Effective

☐ Somewhat ineffective

☐ Ineffective

Q28 How would you rate the quality of services you received from your service provider or vendor?

☐ Excellent

☐ Good

☐ Fair

☐ Poor

Q29 How would you rate the responsiveness of your service provider or vendor?

☐ Excellent

☐ Good

☐ Fair

☐ Poor

Q30 Would you recommend your service provider or vendor to others served by DVR?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not sure

Q31 If there is anything else you would like to add about DVR, please write that in the space below.

Q32

New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers The next several questions ask you about experiences you may have had with the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers.

Q33 Have you ever tried to use the services of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers beyond an online account?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Skip To: Q44 If Have you ever tried to use the services of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers beyond an... = No

Q34 Did you experience any difficulties with the physical accessibility of the building?

☐ Yes (If yes, please describe the difficulties you experienced)

☐ No

Q35 Did you have any difficulty accessing the programs at the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers (i.e. no available assistive technology, no interpreters, etc.)?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q36 Did you go to the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers to get training?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Skip To: Q39 If Did you go to the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers to get training? = No

Q37 Did you get the training that you were seeking?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q38 Did the training result in employment?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q39 Did you go to the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers to find a job?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Skip To: Q41 If Did you go to the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers to find a job? = No

Q40 Did they help you find employment?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q41 Were the New New Mexico Workforce Connection Center staff helpful?

☐ Yes, they were very helpful

☐ They were somewhat helpful

☐ No, they were not helpful

Q42 Were the services at the New New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers valuable?

- ☐ Yes, the services were very valuable
 - ☐ The services were somewhat valuable
 - ☐ No, the services were not valuable
-

Q43 Overall, how would you rate the effectiveness of the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers in serving individuals with disabilities?

- ☐ Very effective
 - ☐ Somewhat effective
 - ☐ No opinion
 - ☐ Somewhat ineffective
 - ☐ Very ineffective
-

Q44 Is there anything else you would like to add?

Q45 This is the end of the survey! Your information and feedback is valuable to DVR, thank you for completing the survey.

Please select the "NEXT" button below to submit your responses.

End of Block: Default Question Block

New Mexico 2023 CSNA - Partner Survey

Q1 New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Community Partner Survey The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) program helps individuals with disabilities prepare for, obtain, retain, and advance in employment. DVR is working with the State Rehabilitation Council and staff at the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University in order to conduct a needs assessment of individuals with disabilities in New Mexico. The results of this needs assessment will inform the development of the DVR portion of the Unified State Plan and will help planners make decisions about programs and services for persons with disabilities.

The following survey will ask you about the unmet, employment-related needs of persons with disabilities. You will also be asked about the type of work you do and whether you work with specific disability populations. We anticipate that it will take about 12 minutes of your time to complete the survey. Your participation is voluntary and responses are anonymous. If you have any questions regarding this survey or would like to request the survey in an alternate format, please contact Dr. Chaz Compton at San Diego State University at the following e-mail address: ccompton@sdsu.edu

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

Q2 How would you classify your organization?

- ☐ Community Rehabilitation Program
 - ☐ Secondary School
 - ☐ Postsecondary school
 - ☐ Mental Health Provider
 - ☐ Medical Provider
 - ☐ Developmental Disability Organization
 - ☐ Veterans Agency
 - ☐ Client Advocacy Organization
 - ☐ Other Federal, State, or Local Government Entity
 - ☐ Other Public or Private Organization
 - ☐ Individual Service Provider
 - ☐ Other (please describe) _____
-

Q3 Please identify where you provide services in the State (check all that apply).

- ☐ Albuquerque and Santa Fe area
 - ☐ Las Cruces area
 - ☐ Eastern New Mexico
 - ☐ Northwest New Mexico
-

Q4 Please indicate which client populations you work with on a regular basis (please check all that apply)

☐

Individuals with the most significant disabilities

☐

Individuals that are blind or low vision

☐

Individuals that are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

☐

Individuals that need long-term support to maintain employment

☐

Individuals that are racial or ethnic minorities

☐

Transition-aged youth (14-24)

☐

Individuals served by New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers (formerly referred to as One-Stops or Career Centers)

☐

Veterans

☐

Other (please describe) _____

Q5

Employment-Related Services

The following series of questions asks about employment-related services available to DVR clients through DVR staff, DVR service providers or other agencies or programs in the community.

Q6 To your knowledge, which of the following employment-related services are readily available to DVR clients in the area of the State where you work? (check all that apply).

- ☐ Pre-employment transition services
- ☐ Job search/placement/retention
- ☐ Job training
- ☐ Vocational/Postsecondary education
- ☐ Assistive technology
- ☐ Vehicle modification
- ☐ Transportation assistance
- ☐ Maintenance or income assistance
- ☐ Medical treatment
- ☐ Mental health treatment
- ☐ Substance abuse treatment
- ☐ Personal care attendants
- ☐ Health insurance
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Disability benefits counseling
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____

Q7 To your knowledge, which of the following employment-related services are **not** readily available to DVR clients in the area of the State where you work? (check all that apply).

- ☐ Pre-employment transition services
- ☐ Job search/placement/retention
- ☐ Job training
- ☐ Vocational/Postsecondary education
- ☐ Assistive technology
- ☐ Vehicle modification
- ☐ Transportation assistance
- ☐ Maintenance or income assistance
- ☐ Medical treatment
- ☐ Mental health treatment
- ☐ Substance abuse treatment
- ☐ Personal care attendants
- ☐ Health insurance
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Disability benefits counseling
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____

Q8 In your experience, how frequently are DVR service providers able to meet the rehabilitation service needs of DVR clients in your area?

- ☐ All of the time
- ☐ Most of the time
- ☐ Some of the time
- ☐ None of the time

Skip To: Q11 If In your experience, how frequently are DVR service providers able to meet the rehabilitation serv... = All of the time

Q9 What rehabilitation needs are DVR service providers unable to meet in your area?

Q10 What are the primary reasons that DVR service providers are unable to meet clients' service needs? (check all that apply)

☐

Not enough service providers available in area

☐

Low quality of service provider services

☐

Low rates paid for services

☐

Client barriers prevent successful interactions with service providers

☐

Other (please describe) _____

Q11 What is the most important change that DVR service providers could make to support clients' efforts to achieve their employment goals?

Q12 What services do you feel DVR service providers are most effective in providing to DVR clients (check all that apply)?

- ☐ Pre-employment transition services
 - ☐ Job search/placement/retention
 - ☐ Job training
 - ☐ Vocational/Postsecondary education
 - ☐ Assistive technology
 - ☐ Vehicle modification
 - ☐ Transportation assistance
 - ☐ Maintenance or income assistance
 - ☐ Medical treatment
 - ☐ Mental health treatment
 - ☐ Substance abuse treatment
 - ☐ Personal care attendants
 - ☐ Health insurance
 - ☐ Housing
 - ☐ Disability benefits counseling
 - ☐ Other (please describe) _____
-

Q13

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals

The next series of questions ask about barriers that DVR clients face in achieving their employment goals

Q14 What are the most common barriers to achieving employment goals for DVR clients (check all that apply)?

- ☐ Lack of education or training
- ☐ Limited job skills/work experience
- ☐ Lack of job search/interview skills
- ☐ Criminal record
- ☐ Language barriers
- ☐ Lack of soft skills
- ☐ Lack of available jobs
- ☐ Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- ☐ Lack of assistive technology
- ☐ Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- ☐ Lack of attendant care
- ☐ Lack of reliable transportation
- ☐ Other transportation issues
- ☐ Lack of Internet access
- ☐ Lack of technology skills
- ☐ Mental health concerns
- ☐ Substance abuse
- ☐ Other health concerns

☐

Lack of childcare

☐

Lack of housing

☐

Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working

☐

Other (please describe) _____

Q15 What are the barriers that prevent DVR clients with the **most significant disabilities** from achieving their employment goals? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Lack of education or training
- ☐ Limited job skills/work experience
- ☐ Lack of job search/interview skills
- ☐ Criminal record
- ☐ Language barriers
- ☐ Lack of soft skills
- ☐ Lack of available jobs
- ☐ Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- ☐ Lack of assistive technology
- ☐ Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- ☐ Lack of attendant care
- ☐ Lack of reliable transportation
- ☐ Other transportation issues
- ☐ Lack of Internet access
- ☐ Lack of technology skills
- ☐ Mental health concerns
- ☐ Substance abuse
- ☐ Other health concerns

☐

Lack of childcare

☐

Lack of housing

☐

Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working

☐

Other (please describe) _____

Q16 What are the barriers that prevent DVR clients who are **youth in transition** from achieving their employment goals? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Lack of education or training
- ☐ Limited job skills/work experience
- ☐ Lack of job search/interview skills
- ☐ Criminal record
- ☐ Language barriers
- ☐ Lack of soft skills
- ☐ Lack of available jobs
- ☐ Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- ☐ Lack of assistive technology
- ☐ Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- ☐ Lack of attendant care
- ☐ Lack of reliable transportation
- ☐ Other transportation issues
- ☐ Lack of Internet access
- ☐ Lack of technology skills
- ☐ Mental health concerns
- ☐ Substance abuse
- ☐ Other health concerns

☐

Lack of childcare

☐

Lack of housing

☐

Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working

☐

Other (please describe) _____

Q17 What are the barriers that prevent DVR clients who are **racial or ethnic minorities** from achieving their employment goals? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Lack of education or training
- ☐ Limited job skills/work experience
- ☐ Lack of job search/interview skills
- ☐ Criminal record
- ☐ Language barriers
- ☐ Lack of soft skills
- ☐ Lack of available jobs
- ☐ Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- ☐ Lack of assistive technology
- ☐ Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- ☐ Lack of attendant care
- ☐ Lack of reliable transportation
- ☐ Other transportation issues
- ☐ Lack of Internet access
- ☐ Lack of technology skills
- ☐ Mental health concerns
- ☐ Substance abuse
- ☐ Other health concerns

- ☐ Lack of childcare
 - ☐ Lack of housing
 - ☐ Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working
 - ☐ Other (please describe) _____
-

Q18 What are the top three reasons that people with disabilities find it difficult to **access** DVR services (please select a maximum of three reasons)?

- ☐ Limited accessibility of DVR via public transportation
 - ☐ Other challenges related to the physical location of the DVR office
 - ☐ Inadequate disability-related accommodations
 - ☐ Language barriers
 - ☐ Application/Eligibility process is too cumbersome
 - ☐ Lack of assistance to develop the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
 - ☐ Lack of technology needed to engage in virtual or remote services
 - ☐ Inadequate assessment services
 - ☐ Slow service delivery
 - ☐ Lack of options for the use of technology to communicate with DVR staff
 - ☐ DVR staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
 - ☐ Other (please describe) _____
-

Q19 What are the top three changes that would help you better serve DVR clients (please select a maximum of three changes)?

- ☐ Smaller caseload
 - ☐ More streamlined processes
 - ☐ Reduced documentation requirements
 - ☐ Improved communication with referring DVR counselor
 - ☐ Additional training
 - ☐ Higher rates paid by DVR for services
 - ☐ Referral of appropriate individuals
 - ☐ Improved business partnerships
 - ☐ Incentives for high performance paid by DVR
 - ☐ Increased options for technology use to communicate with clients
 - ☐ Increased collaboration with New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers
 - ☐ Other (please describe) _____
-

Q20

New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers

The following series of questions asks you about the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers

Q21 How frequently do you partner with the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers (formerly referred to as One-Stops or Career Centers)?

- ☐ Very frequently
- ☐ Somewhat frequently
- ☐ Infrequently
- ☐ Not at all

Skip To: Q26 If How frequently do you partner with the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers (formerly referred... = Not at all

Q22 How physically accessible are the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers for individuals with disabilities?

- ☐ Fully accessible
 - ☐ Somewhat accessible
 - ☐ Not accessible
 - ☐ I do not know
-

Q23 How programatically accessible are the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers?

- ☐ Fully accessible
 - ☐ Somewhat accessible
 - ☐ Not accessible
 - ☐ I do not know
-

Q24 In your opinion, how effectively do the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers serve individuals with disabilities?

- ☐ Very effectively
 - ☐ Effectively
 - ☐ Not effectively
 - ☐ They do not serve individuals with disabilities
-

Q25 What can the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers do to improve services to individuals with disabilities (Check all that apply)?

- ☐ Improve physical accessibility
 - ☐ Improve programmatic accessibility
 - ☐ Train their staff on how to work with individuals with disabilities
 - ☐ Partner more effectively with DVR to serve dually enrolled clients
 - ☐ Other (please describe) _____
-

Q26

Your feedback is valuable to us, and we would like to thank you for taking the time to complete the survey!

Please select the "NEXT" button below to submit your responses.

New Mexico 2023 CSNA - Staff Survey

Q1 New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Staff Survey The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) is working with the State Rehabilitation Council and staff at the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University in order to conduct our triennial comprehensive statewide needs assessment of the vocational rehabilitation needs of New Mexico residents with disabilities. The results of this needs assessment will inform the development of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) portion of the Unified State Plan and will help planners make decisions about programs and services for persons with disabilities.

The following survey will ask you about the unmet, employment-related needs of persons with disabilities. You will also be asked about the employment-related needs of those you serve. We anticipate that it will take about 12 minutes of your time to complete the survey. Your participation is voluntary and responses are anonymous. If you have any questions regarding this survey or would like to request the survey in an alternate format, please contact Dr. Chaz Compton at San Diego State University at the following e-mail address:

ccompton@sdsu.edu

Thank your taking the time to complete this survey

Q2 What is your job classification?

- ☐ Rehabilitation Counselor
 - ☐ Support staff
 - ☐ Supervisor/Manager/Director
 - ☐ Administration
 - ☐ I prefer not to say
-

Q3 What Offices do you work in? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Albuquerque-Gilbson
- ☐ Albuquerque-Lomas
- ☐ Albuquerque-Quail
- ☐ Albuquerque-South Valley
- ☐ Alamogordo
- ☐ Carlsbad
- ☐ Clovis
- ☐ Espanola
- ☐ Farmington
- ☐ Gallup
- ☐ Hobbs
- ☐ Las Cruces
- ☐ Las Cruces-Loretto Towne Center
- ☐ Las Vegas
- ☐ Los Lunas
- ☐ Rio Rancho
- ☐ Roswell
- ☐ Santa Fe

- ☐ Silver City
 - ☐ Socorro
 - ☐ Taos
 - ☐ Central Office
-

Q4 How long have you worked in the job that you have now?

- ☐ Less than one year
 - ☐ 1-5 years
 - ☐ 6-10 years
 - ☐ 11-20 years
 - ☐ 21+ years
-

Q5

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The following series of questions asks about services readily available to DVR clients either through DVR staff, DVR service providers, or other agencies or programs in the community.

Q6 Please indicate which of the following employment-related services are readily available to DVR clients in your community (check all that apply).

- ☐ Pre-employment transition services
- ☐ Job search/placement/retention
- ☐ Job training
- ☐ Vocational/Postsecondary education
- ☐ Assistive technology
- ☐ Vehicle modification
- ☐ Home modification
- ☐ Transportation assistance
- ☐ Maintenance or income assistance
- ☐ Medical treatment
- ☐ Mental health treatment
- ☐ Substance abuse treatment
- ☐ Personal care attendants
- ☐ Health insurance
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Disability benefits counseling
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____

Q7 Please indicate which of the following employment-related services are **not** readily available for DVR clients in the area of the State where you work (check all that apply).

- ☐ Pre-employment transition services
 - ☐ Job search/placement/retention
 - ☐ Job training
 - ☐ Vocational/Postsecondary education
 - ☐ Assistive technology
 - ☐ Vehicle modification
 - ☐ Home modification
 - ☐ Transportation assistance
 - ☐ Maintenance or Income assistance
 - ☐ Medical treatment
 - ☐ Mental health treatment
 - ☐ Substance abuse treatment
 - ☐ Personal care attendants
 - ☐ Health insurance
 - ☐ Housing
 - ☐ Disability benefits counseling
 - ☐ Other (please describe) _____
-

Q8 How would you rate the effectiveness of the remote services delivered by DVR staff during the pandemic?

- ☐ Extremely effective
 - ☐ Effective
 - ☐ Somewhat effective
 - ☐ Minimally effective
 - ☐ Not effective at all
-

Q9 How would you rate the effectiveness of the remote services delivered by DVR service providers during the pandemic?

- ☐ Extremely effective
 - ☐ Effective
 - ☐ Somewhat effective
 - ☐ Minimally effective
 - ☐ Not effective at all
-

Q10 Please include any comments you have about remote services provided by either DVR staff or DVR service providers.

Q11 In your experience, how frequently are DVR service providers able to meet the rehabilitation service needs of DVR clients in your area?

- ☐ All of the time
- ☐ Most of the time
- ☐ Some of the time
- ☐ None of the time

Skip To: Q14 If In your experience, how frequently are DVR service providers able to meet the rehabilitation serv... = All of the time

Q12 What rehabilitation needs are DVR service providers unable to meet in your area? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Pre-employment transition services
- ☐ Job search/placement/retention
- ☐ Job training
- ☐ Vocational/Postsecondary education
- ☐ Assistive technology
- ☐ Vehicle modification
- ☐ Home modification
- ☐ Transportation assistance
- ☐ Maintenance or Income assistance
- ☐ Medical treatment
- ☐ Mental health treatment
- ☐ Substance abuse treatment
- ☐ Personal care attendants
- ☐ Health insurance
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Disability benefits counseling
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____

Q13 What are the primary reasons that DVR service providers are unable to meet clients' service needs? (select all that apply)

☐

Not enough service providers available in area

☐

Low quality of service provider services

☐

Low rates paid for services

☐

Client barriers prevent successful interactions with service providers

☐

Other (please describe) _____

Q14 What is the most important change that DVR service providers could make to support clients' efforts to achieve their employment goals?

Q15 What services do you feel DVR staff is most effective in providing to its clients either directly or through community partners (check all that apply).

- ☐ Pre-employment transition services
- ☐ Job search/placement/retention
- ☐ Job training
- ☐ Vocational/Postsecondary education
- ☐ Assistive technology
- ☐ Vehicle modification
- ☐ Home modification
- ☐ Transportation assistance
- ☐ Maintenance or Income assistance
- ☐ Medical treatment
- ☐ Mental health treatment
- ☐ Substance abuse treatment
- ☐ Personal care attendants
- ☐ Health insurance
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Disability benefits counseling
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____

Q16

Barriers to Achieving Employment Goals

The next series of questions ask about barriers that DVR clients face in achieving their employment goals

Q17 What are the most common barriers that prevent DVR clients from achieving their employment goals (check all that apply)?

- ☐ Lack of education or training
- ☐ Limited job skills/work experience
- ☐ Lack of job search/interview skills
- ☐ Criminal record
- ☐ Language barriers
- ☐ Lack of soft skills
- ☐ Lack of available jobs
- ☐ Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- ☐ Lack of assistive technology
- ☐ Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- ☐ Lack of attendant care
- ☐ Lack of reliable transportation
- ☐ Other transportation issues
- ☐ Lack of internet access
- ☐ Lack of technology skills
- ☐ Mental health concerns
- ☐ Substance abuse
- ☐ Other health issues

☐

Lack of childcare

☐

Lack of housing

☐

Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working

☐

Other (please describe) _____

Q18 What are the barriers that prevent DVR clients with the **most significant disabilities** from achieving their employment goals?

- ☐ Lack of education or training
- ☐ Limited job skills/work experience
- ☐ Lack of job search/interview skills
- ☐ Criminal record
- ☐ Language barriers
- ☐ Lack of soft skills
- ☐ Lack of available jobs
- ☐ Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- ☐ Lack of assistive technology
- ☐ Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- ☐ Lack of attendant care
- ☐ Lack of reliable transportation
- ☐ Other transportation issues
- ☐ Lack of internet access
- ☐ Lack of technology skills
- ☐ Mental health concerns
- ☐ Substance abuse
- ☐ Other health issues

☐

Lack of childcare

☐

Lack of housing

☐

Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working

☐

Other (please describe) _____

Q19 What are the barriers that prevent DVR clients who are **youth in transition** (14-24 years of age) from achieving their employment goals?

- ☐ Lack of education or training
- ☐ Limited job skills/work experience
- ☐ Lack of job search/interview skills
- ☐ Criminal record
- ☐ Language barriers
- ☐ Lack of soft skills
- ☐ Lack of available jobs
- ☐ Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- ☐ Lack of assistive technology
- ☐ Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- ☐ Lack of attendant care
- ☐ Lack of reliable transportation
- ☐ Other transportation issues
- ☐ Lack of internet access
- ☐ Lack of technology skills
- ☐ Mental health concerns
- ☐ Substance abuse
- ☐ Other health issues

☐

Lack of childcare

☐

Lack of housing

☐

Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working

☐

Other (please describe) _____

Q20 What are the barriers that prevent DVR clients who are **racial or ethnic minorities** from achieving their employment goals?

- ☐ Lack of education or training
- ☐ Limited job skills/work experience
- ☐ Lack of job search/interview skills
- ☐ Criminal record
- ☐ Language barriers
- ☐ Lack of soft skills
- ☐ Lack of available jobs
- ☐ Employers' perceptions about employing persons with disabilities
- ☐ Lack of assistive technology
- ☐ Lack of disability-related accommodations at work
- ☐ Lack of attendant care
- ☐ Lack of reliable transportation
- ☐ Other transportation issues
- ☐ Lack of internet access
- ☐ Lack of technology skills
- ☐ Mental health concerns
- ☐ Substance abuse
- ☐ Other health issues

☐

Lack of childcare

☐

Lack of housing

☐

Concern over loss of Social Security benefits due to working

☐

Other (please describe) _____

Q21 What are the top three reasons that people with disabilities find it difficult to **access** DVR services (please select a maximum of three reasons)?

- ☐ Limited access the DVR office via public transportation
 - ☐ Other challenges related to the physical location of the DVR office
 - ☐ Inadequate disability-related accommodations
 - ☐ Language barriers
 - ☐ Application/eligibility process is too cumbersome
 - ☐ Lack of assistance to develop the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE)
 - ☐ Lack of technology needed to engage in virtual or remote services
 - ☐ Inadequate assessment services
 - ☐ Slow service delivery
 - ☐ Lack of options for the use of technology to communicate with DVR staff
 - ☐ DVR staff do not meet clients in the communities where the clients live
 - ☐ Other (please describe) _____
-

Q22 What are the top three changes that would help you better serve DVR clients (please select a maximum of three changes)?

- ☐ Smaller caseload
 - ☐ More streamlined processes
 - ☐ Better data management tools
 - ☐ Better assessment tools
 - ☐ Additional training (please identify what training areas you have need of)
-
- ☐ More administrative support
 - ☐ More supervisor support
 - ☐ Improved business partnerships
 - ☐ More community-based service providers for specific services
 - ☐ More effective community-based service providers
 - ☐ Accountability for poor performance by service providers
 - ☐ Incentives for high performing service providers
 - ☐ Increased outreach to clients
 - ☐ Increased options for technology use to communicate with clients
 - ☐ Increased collaboration with other workforce partners including New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers
 - ☐ Other (please describe) _____

Q23

New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers

The following series of questions asks you about the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers

Q24 How frequently do you partner with the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers (formerly referred to as One-Stops or Career Centers)?

- ☐ Very frequently
- ☐ Somewhat frequently
- ☐ Infrequently
- ☐ Not at all

Skip To: Q29 If How frequently do you partner with the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers (formerly referred... = Not at all

Q25 How physically accessible are the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers for individuals with disabilities?

- ☐ Fully accessible
 - ☐ Somewhat accessible
 - ☐ Not accessible
 - ☐ I do not know
-

Q26 How programmatically accessible are the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers?

- ☐ Fully accessible
 - ☐ Somewhat accessible
 - ☐ Not accessible
 - ☐ I do not know
-

Q27 In your opinion, how effectively do the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers serve individuals with disabilities?

- ☐ Very effectively
 - ☐ Effectively
 - ☐ Not effectively
 - ☐ They do not serve individuals with disabilities
-

Q28 What can the New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers do to improve services to individuals with disabilities (Check all that apply)?

- ☐ Improve physical accessibility
- ☐ Improve programmatic accessibility
- ☐ Train their staff on how to work with individuals with disabilities
- ☐ Include individuals with disabilities when purchasing training for their clients
- ☐ Partner more effectively with DVR to serve dually enrolled clients
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____

Q29 Your feedback is valuable to us, and we would like to thank you for taking the time to complete the survey!

Please select the "NEXT" button below to submit your responses.

End of Block: Default Question Block

New Mexico 2023 CSNA - Business Survey

Q1

New Mexico Vocational Rehabilitation Business Survey

The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) program helps individuals with disabilities prepare for, obtain, retain, and advance in employment. DVR is conducting an assessment to learn more about the needs of businesses and employers with respect to partnering with the DVR program and employing and accommodating workers with disabilities. The information that you provide will help DVR to more effectively respond to the needs of businesses and will influence the planning and delivery of employment-related services to persons with disabilities.

This survey will take approximately five minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary and responses are anonymous.

If you have any questions regarding this survey or if you would prefer to complete this survey in an alternate format, please contact Dr. Chaz Compton at San Diego State University at the following e-mail address: ccompton@sdsu.edu

Thank you very much for your time and input!

Q2 Which of the following best describes your type of business? (select one response)

- ☐ Service
 - ☐ Retail
 - ☐ Manufacturing
 - ☐ Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing
 - ☐ Construction
 - ☐ Government
 - ☐ Education
 - ☐ Health care
 - ☐ Banking/Finance
 - ☐ Gambling/Casino
 - ☐ Other (please describe) _____
-

Q3 How many people are employed at your business? (select one response)

- ☐ 1 - 15
 - ☐ 16 - 50
 - ☐ 51 - 250
 - ☐ 251 - 999
 - ☐ 1,000 or more
-

Q4 Disability in the Workplace:

Does your business need help... (select one response for each)

	Yes	No
Understanding disability-related legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Rehabilitation Act as amended?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identifying job accommodations for workers with disabilities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruiting job applicants who are people with disabilities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helping workers with disabilities to retain employment?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obtaining training on the different types of disabilities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obtaining training on sensitivity to workers with disabilities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obtaining incentives for employing workers with disabilities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obtaining information on training programs available for workers with disabilities?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q5 If you would like to comment further on any of your answers above, or if you have additional comments or needs regarding disability in the workplace, please describe them in the space below.

Q6 Applicants with disabilities:

With respect to applicants with disabilities, does your business need help... (select one response for each)

	Yes	No
Recruiting applicants who meet the job qualifications?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruiting applicants with good work habits?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recruiting applicants with good social/interpersonal skills?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assessing applicants' skills?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q7 If you would like to comment further on any of your answers above, or if you have additional comments or needs regarding applicants with disabilities, please describe them in the space below.

Q8 Employees with disabilities:

With respect to employees with disabilities you have now or have had in the past, what are the challenges you have experienced with them regarding job retention?

- ☐ Poor attendance
- ☐ Difficulty learning job skills
- ☐ Slow work speed
- ☐ Poor work stamina
- ☐ Poor social skills
- ☐ Physical health problems
- ☐ Mental health concerns
- ☐ Language barriers
- ☐ Identifying effective accommodations
- ☐ Lack of transportation
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____
- ☐ I have no knowledge of any challenges we have had retaining employees with disabilities

Q9 If you would like to comment further on any of your answers above, or if you have additional comments or needs regarding employees with disabilities, please describe them in the space below.

Q10 How would you rate your awareness of DVR's Employment Specialists and the services they can provide to businesses?

- ☐ Very knowledgeable
- ☐ Somewhat knowledgeable
- ☐ Little or no knowledge

Q11 Has your business utilized any of the services that DVR's Employment Specialists provide?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

Skip To: Q2 If Has your business utilized any of the services that DVR's Employment Specialists provide? = No

Q12 Which of the following services did the Employment Specialists provide to your business (please select all that apply)?

- ☐ Training in understanding disability-related legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the Rehabilitation Act as amended?
- ☐ Assistance identifying job accommodations for workers with disabilities?
- ☐ Recruiting job applicants who are people with disabilities?
- ☐ Helping workers with disabilities to retain employment?
- ☐ Obtaining training on the different types of disabilities?
- ☐ Obtaining training on sensitivity to workers with disabilities?
- ☐ Obtaining incentives for employing workers with disabilities?
- ☐ Obtaining information on training programs available for workers with disabilities?
- ☐ Recruiting applicants who meet the job qualifications?
- ☐ Recruiting applicants with good work habits?
- ☐ Recruiting applicants with good social/interpersonal skills?
- ☐ Assessing applicants' skills?
- ☐ Discussing reasonable job accommodations with applicants?
- ☐ Identifying reasonable job accommodations for applicants?
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____

Q13 How satisfied were you with the services you received from DVR?

- ☐ Very satisfied
 - ☐ Satisfied
 - ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 - ☐ Dissatisfied
 - ☐ Very dissatisfied
-

Q14 If your business has any needs related to applicants or workers with disabilities that are not currently being met please describe them here:

Q15 Your feedback is valuable to us, and we would like to thank you for taking the time to complete the survey!

Please select the "NEXT" button below to submit your responses.

End of Block: Default Question Block

Appendix F

BPD Technology Committee's Technology Assessment Checklist for Social Work Practice (Version 2) September 2018

History: The BPD Technology Committee created the first version of the Technology Assessment Checklist for Social Work Practice in 2016, using the web-based mapping tool, *MindMeister* (<https://www.mindmeister.com>), with ten social workers contributing their suggestions this first version. After compiling all the ideas from the mapping tool, the list was reviewed by members of the committee, and was presented at BPD's 2017 Annual Conference during the Technology Committee's Board Sponsored Session in New Orleans. Feedback was provided and the next step was to revise the checklist. Here is a link that original document:
<https://tinyurl.com/BPDTechChecklist3-2017>.

In 2018, we used an online collaborative process using *Google Docs* to crowd source the next round of revisions to the Technology Assessment List. Below is a list of the individuals who contributed to that process. A sample of the second version was shared at BPD's 2018 Annual Conference during the Technology Committee's Board-Sponsored Session in Atlanta, GA. Attendees reviewed the document for feedback, and the final version is included in this document.

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BPD Technology Committee's
Technology Assessment Checklist for Social Work Practice

Interpretation: Historically, social workers have been taught to assess the psychosocial well-being of clients in the context of their environment, including relationships with family members, peers, neighbors, and coworkers. With the increasing use of technology in society, it is important for social workers to also consider clients' relationships and comfort with technology. Such assessments could include client strengths, such as access to particular forms of technology and the ability to use technology for family, work, school, social, recreational, and other purposes. In addition, social workers should consider relevant needs, risks, and challenges, such as clients' reluctance to use technology; difficulty affording technology; limited computer knowledge or fluency with technology; and the risk of cyberbullying, electronic identity theft, and other behaviors regarding the use of technology.

This assessment checklist also addresses Standard 2.05 of the NASW Technology Standards for Social Work Practice: Assessing Clients' Relationships with Technology, which reads "When conducting psychosocial assessments with clients, social workers shall consider clients' views about technology and the ways in which they use technology, including strengths, needs, risks, and challenges." The goal of this assessment is to help social workers and other practitioners focus on practical issues of technology use across client systems and life span issues. There are seven sections of this assessment checklist:

- Section I: Access to Social & Digital Technology
- Section II: Digital literacy and Comfort of client to use technology
- Section III: Developmentally-based Considerations for Individuals
- Section IV: Intergenerational/Cultural issues
- Section V: Special Populations
- Section VI: Families
- Section VII: Social Worker Technology Self-Assessment

This checklist is not meant to be comprehensive, and a social worker can you use any or all of these questions, in whatever order works best, when conducting an assessment on the use of technology. When using the questions on this checklist, please consider the following:

- Assess for strengths and needs as well as risks and challenges.
- Not every client will have or be aware of the available technology so you may want ask if they use a type of technology before asking about details (i.e. ask if they use email before asking for an email address).
- Although much research about technology use points to associations between mental distress and technology use, (a) the studies are typically correlational; (b) the effect of the correlation is often weak; and (c) the correlation typically occurs with very high rates of screen time, 5 or more non-work/school related hours.

Section I: Access to Social & Digital Technology

General questions

Note: Please adapt these questions for different types hardware and software.

- What hardware/devices do you own?
- What hardware/devices do you have access to? Where? When? How frequently?
- What devices do you wish you had access to (i.e. hearing aids, smartphone, laptop)?
- What are the barriers to owning or accessing hardware/devices (i.e. cost, knowledge of how to use, awareness of what is available/possible)?

Basic Information to obtain about technology ownership and access:

- Hardware Devices available to client (i.e. smartphone, e-readers, computers, etc.):
- Wearable devices
- Assistive technology (i.e. have you ever been prescribed to use/do you use?)
- Software/apps/frequently visited sites used by client
- Internet connection or access available to clients - DSL, Wi-Fi, in-home, and/or library?
- Email Accounts - how many and how used? Email addresses are often required to set-up an account for Electronic Health Records (EHR).
- Social Media Accounts - how many, which ones and how used?
- Apps - how many, which ones and how used?

General Use of Technology

- Number of hours spent engaged with technology each day; How much screen time per day; per week?
- What reasons do you use technology (i.e. social, financial, entertainment, educational, etc.)?
- For social reasons, what types of relationships (i.e. online dating or relationships, online friendships, online community or group memberships)?
- How would you describe your screen time and/or use of technology (i.e. productive vs. non-productive; problematic vs. non-problematic; passive such web surfing, watching ads, or watching videos vs. active use such as reading, communicating with others; or creating content)? How do others perceive your use?
- How does tech affect mood? What prompts tech use; how do you feel after?
- Is any online activity monitored? By who? How?
- Is any online activity private? Secret?

Financial Costs of Technology

- Is computer used for financial purposes (online banking, shopping, medication)?
- What is the monthly expenditure for technology?
- How much awareness do members of your family have regarding the financial impact their technology has on the family budget?
- What is your accessibility and ability to access innovative technology?
- What is your financial burden regarding technology?
- Do you understand their monthly phone/internet plan/bill?
- Are you using online payments for any bills, transactions, or online shopping? If so, what sites and how?
- Do you track your subscriptions? Micro-transactions?

- Are other people in or out of your household connected to these accounts?
- Do you share any subscriptions with anyone (i.e. *Netflix*, *Amazon*, etc.)?
- What percent of their spending is on *Amazon*, online shopping, etc. do you know ways to intervene in problematic tech use? Strategies for cutting back or taking breaks?

Resources:

- Pew Research Center. (n.d.). Internet & Technology Home Page. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/>
- Techopedia. (n.d.). *Techopedia Home Page*. Retrieved from <https://www.techopedia.com/>

Section II: Digital Literacy and Comfort of Client

Note: For this section, you are trying to assess a client's level of knowledge and skills about technology as well as their comfort with technology.

- Overall, how competent or comfortable do you feel using technology?
- Have you ever been uncomfortable with something you posted on someone else's social media site? Have you ever been uncomfortable (angry, sad, afraid) of a post someone send you on a social media site or by private message?
- Has technology created any benefits for you?
- Has technology created any problems for you?
- What do you want to learn or areas of where you need direct technical assistance?
- What is your comfort-level with use of technology with practitioner?
- News and other information - Where do you go for info? So you use trusted sites? How do you assess?
- Online help-seeking behaviors (i.e. medical, behavioral, etc) - Where do you go for info? So you use trusted sites? How do you assess? How do you protect identity when you do?
- Identity Theft/Phishing – what do you do to protect your online identity? Do you use specific hardware or software?
- Netiquette - Is the client familiar with netiquette guidelines? How do the practice civility and etiquette in online environments?
- Tech-Mediated Communications/Interventions - Do you want to use tech-mediated communication/interventions? How do you think you would benefit from tech mediated interventions?

Resources:

- Belshaw, D. (2014). The Essential Elements of Digital Literacies. Retrieved from <http://digitalliteracy.es/>
- Jenkins, H., Clinton, K., Purushotma, R., Robison, A. J., & Weigel, M. (2009). *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century*. Chicago, IL: MacArthur Foundation. Retrieved from https://www.macfound.org/media/article_pdfs/JENKINS_WHITE_PAPER.PDF

Section III: Developmentally-based Considerations for Individuals

Infants, toddlers, and young children:

- How much screen time does the child per day?
- What technology is shared with the child (i.e. caregiver's phone or tablet?)
- What are parents teaching their kids about the internet?
- Do parents actively participate with their children while they are using technology?
- What content, sites, or apps are parents using with their younger children?

Elementary school, Tweens, and Teens:

- Texting: With whom, do you have regular group texts? Who do you text one-on-one with the most?
- Social Media: What types of accounts do you have, use and how frequently used (*Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook Messenger, Kik, YouTube, Vine*)? What types of posts, comments or stories on your accounts? What do you post, like, re-post or share? Who do you follow on these social media accounts? If using anonymous posting sites (i.e. *Yik-yak, Whisper*, etc.) assess for potential bullying, mean-girl/boy behavior or older adult posing as a younger person. What are some of the current social expectations about social media use (leaving friends unread, *Snapchat* replies, response time, etc)?
- Music: How do you listen to music? (i.e. *Pandora, Spotify* or *YouTube*, etc)
- Video: Do you watch *Netflix* or other video platforms such as *YouTube* or *Vine*? If so, when and what do you watch? Do you binge watch? What YouTube personalities do you follow? What movie or TV genres are most viewed? Be aware if child is viewing of high-risk content, including sexually-explicit, self-harm, and other that mismatches family values/practices.
- Create Content: Where do you generate content, and what is it about? (i.e. *YouTube* videos).
- Gaming: Which games? Length of gaming time? Online group video gaming? Any impact of daily functioning? What game streams are you watching? Do they participate in a role play game? Are they using micro-transactions or loot crates?
- Safety & Privacy: Have you discussed inappropriate conversations vs. appropriate conversations with online 'friends'? Have they developed safety provisions if they want to meet online friends or potential dating prospects? Are you currently experiencing any stress or discomfort related to social media use (inability to meet social expectations due to lack of access, not understanding social expectations)?
- Parental Involvement: Do parents speak with you about online issues or controversies, especially if you follow the online personality? Where does the phone/tablet/ computer reside during bedtime? Family time?
- School: What are the school's policy on phone use, access to computers, Wi-Fi, social media, etc? How does this promote or hinder technology use by kids? Does the teen have access to phone or other devices that would allow for chat during school and free Wi-Fi? How is technology used for school work?
- Online Dating: Do you use in online dating apps? How many? Which ones? What is your profile like? Assess online dating practices and app use. Some teenagers also use *Snapchat* and within chat communication of gaming apps to date, they also date within role playing games online using the computer and games on *Xbox* etc.

Adults (19 -64 years of age):

- Work: How is technology used for work activities? What devices are work only devices? Does your profession require technological adaptation over the years? If so, in what era of informational and communication technology did you leave off?
- Family & Friends: What types of technology do their families or friends use? Are they connected to their families or friends on social media? What types? How often do they use it? If they do not connect with them, why? Lack of tech literacy? How aware are you of internet scams and other risk factors? Assess possible isolation and technological disconnectedness.
- Leisure time: How is technology used for leisure activities or socializing?
- Texting: With whom, do you have regular group texts? Who do you text one-on-one with the most?
- Social Media: What types of accounts do you have, use and how frequently used (*Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook Messenger, Kik, YouTube, Vine*)? What types of posts, comments or stories on your accounts? What do you post, like, re-post or share? Who do you follow on these social media accounts? If using anonymous posting sites (i.e. *Yik-yak, Whisper*, etc.) assess for potential bullying, mean-girl/boy behavior or older adult posing as a younger person. What are some of the current social expectations about social media use (leaving friends unread, *Snapchat* replies, response time, etc)?
- Music: How do you listen to music? (i.e. *Pandora, Spotify* or *YouTube*, etc)
- Video: Do you watch *Netflix* or other video platforms such as *YouTube* or *Vine*? If so, when and what do you watch? Do you binge watch? What YouTube personalities do you follow? What movie or TV genres are most viewed? Be aware if child is viewing of high-risk content, including sexually-explicit, self-harm, and other that mismatches family values/practices.
- Create Content: Where do you generate content, and what is it about? (i.e. *YouTube* videos).
- Gaming: Which games? Length of gaming time? Online group video gaming? Any impact of daily functioning? What game streams are you watching? Do they participate in a role play game? Are they using micro-transactions or loot crates?
- Online Dating: Do you use in online dating apps? How many? Which ones? What is your profile like? Assess online dating practices and app use. (i.e. *Tinder* and other dating apps). About a third of romantic relationships now begin online. It is good to know the strengths and risks of various dating websites, whether your clients are using them, and how to assess their knowledge about strengths and risks.
- Safety & Privacy: Have you discussed inappropriate conversations vs. appropriate conversations with online 'friends'? Have they developed safety provisions if they want to meet online friends or potential dating prospects? Are you currently experiencing any stress or discomfort related to social media use (inability to meet social expectations due to lack of access, not understanding social expectations)?

Elderly (65 years of age and older):

- Leisure time: How is technology used for leisure activities or socializing? How often do you go online? What type of activities do you engage in online?
- Family & Friends: What types of technology do their families or friends use? Are they connected to their families or friends on social media? What types? How often do they use it? If they do not connect with them, why? Lack of tech literacy? How aware are you of internet scams and other risk factors? Assess possible isolation and technological disconnectedness.

- Texting: With whom, do you have regular group texts? Who do you text one-on-one with the most?
- Social Media: What types of accounts do you have, use and how frequently used (*Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook Messenger, Kik, YouTube, Vine*)? What types of posts, comments or stories on your accounts? What do you post, like, re-post or share? Who do you follow on these social media accounts? If using anonymous posting sites (i.e. *Yik-yak, Whisper*, etc.) assess for potential bullying, mean-girl/boy behavior or older adult posing as a younger person. What are some of the current social expectations about social media use (leaving friends unread, *Snapchat* replies, response time, etc)?
- Music: How do you listen to music? (i.e. *Pandora, Spotify* or *YouTube*, etc)
- Video: Do you watch *Netflix* or other video platforms such as *YouTube* or *Vine*? If so, when and what do you watch? Do you binge watch? What YouTube personalities do you follow? What movie or TV genres are most viewed? Be aware if child is viewing of high-risk content, including sexually-explicit, self-harm, and other that mismatches family values/practices.
- Create Content: Where do you generate content, and what is it about? (i.e. *YouTube* videos).
- Gaming: Which games? Length of gaming time? Online group video gaming? Any impact of daily functioning? What game streams are you watching? Do they participate in a role play game? Are they using micro-transactions or loot crates?
- Online Dating: Do you use in online dating apps? How many? Which ones? What is your profile like? Assess online dating practices and app use. (i.e. *Tinder* and other dating apps).
- Safety & Privacy: Have you discussed inappropriate conversations vs. appropriate conversations with online friends? Have they developed safety provisions if they want to meet online friends or potential dating prospects? Are you currently experiencing any stress or discomfort related to social media use (inability to meet social expectations due to lack of access, not understanding social expectations)?

Resources:

- Albion. (n.d.). *Netiquette Home Page -- A Service of Albion.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/>
- American Academy of Pediatrics. (n.d.). *Media and Children Communication Toolkit*. Retrieved from <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/pages/media-and-children.aspx>
- Common Sense Media. (n.d.). *Common Sense Media's Home Page*. Retrieved from <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/>
- University of Southern California School of Gerontology. (n.d.). *Designing Technology for the Aging Population [Infographic]*. Retrieved from: <https://gerontology.usc.edu/resources/infographics/designing-technology-for-the-aging-population/>

Section IV: Intergenerational/Cultural issues

- Communication Preferences: For this can we say something like, what is your preferred communication style? What about for your family members? Are there any differences? How do you navigate these? How do you and/or your family communicate regarding sensitive issues in your families (i.e. teens texting parents about topics that they can't discuss face-to-face)? What is the communication style/preference for communicating with technology across generations (i.e. texting conversations at the dinner table instead of face-to-face or

- older adults (maybe) prefer face-to-face while (maybe) teens prefer to text)?
- Grief, death & loss Does the client or family have a plan for social media and other digital accounts at the end-of-life? Who has access to account log-on information to access in case of an emergency? How familiar is the client with archiving or legacy account settings with different types of social media? How comfortable is the client or family with sharing private information via social media?
- Social Media: What cultural or personal beliefs encourage or discourage your interaction with social media?
- General Cultural Issues: Are there any cultural factor that affect how you use technology? How that may impact family dynamics? Has technology increased your access to your culture and heritage? If so, how?

Resources:

- Singer, J. B. (Producer). (2017, February 19). #109 - Death and Grief in the Digital Age: Interview with Carla Sofka, Ph.D. [Audio Podcast]. *Social Work Podcast*. Retrieved from <http://www.socialworkpodcast.com/2017/02/digital-death.html>

Section V: Special Populations

- Homeless: What are the options for battery life, Wi-Fi access? How willing are you to use device to communicate with service provider? What web-based programs do you use? Libraries available as resource? Welcoming or hostile? Social worker available? Some social workers program phone numbers and addresses of resources directly into the phones/ direct technical assistance and/or set-up connections to a *Google* account to store phone numbers and addresses in case of phone loss or they lose the paper copy.
- Mental Health: What apps do you use to track your mental health? There are many apps that can be used to supplement mental health care (i.e. self-awareness, mindfulness, self-regulation, etc).
- Foster Youth: Who are you allowed to contact, and how? What are the special safety issues? Do foster parents know how to monitor use?
- Clients with limited capacity/developmental disabilities: These clients may require extra support around psychoeducational, protection of personal information, online shopping, dating/sex-related sites, and gambling/addiction.
- Rural Communities: Many rural areas may have many dead spots for making phone calls but can still send and receive text messages for help.
- Online Education: Does the student have access to hardware, software and devices needed to access learning management systems? Is student aware of school's institutional policies, requirements and resources for online education? Does student have access to Wi-Fi?

Resources:

- Johnson, E. (2016). *Tech/SW Assessment*. Retrieved from <https://plus.google.com/100511899319175723425/posts/9nwu8RgkAiD>
- Hitchcock, L. I., Sage, M., & Smyth, N. J. (Eds.). (2018). *Technology in social work education: Educators' perspectives on the NASW Technology Standards for Social Work Education and Supervision*. Buffalo, NY: University of Buffalo School of Social Work, State University of New York.

Section VI: Families

- General perception of technology on family: Where does tech support, where does it create tension/harm/family conflict? A tech infused ecomap? Need direct technical assistance?
- Equal Access to Tech: Do the parents have the same kind of technology that their children have (e.g. Does dad have a flip phone while the teenager has an iPhone 6?)
- Norms: What are the family rules/norms about technology use? How are rules made?
- Who has passwords to media accounts? Do parents know each media account youth use? Is the computer in public/private place? Do parents/caregivers teach netiquette to children?
- Privacy & Monitoring: What privacy settings are used in media accounts, and who supports the understanding of privacy use? What circumstances lead to restriction of use or monitoring? Do children know how to screen for lock specific apps and secret phone/video apps?
- Online Friendships: Does internet friendship ever move to “in real life” sphere (phone number exchange, in person meeting)? How and who is involved?
- Technology used by other resources that influence the family: School, Work, Health Care Providers, Non-Profit agencies, etc.
- Divorce: What is the family plan for communicating? There are communication sites for mediation and high conflict or abuse situational divorces where parents need to communicate such as *Our Family Wizard* (<https://www.ourfamilywizard.com/pro/courts>).

Resources:

- Belluomini, E. (2013). *Technology Assessments for Families*. Retrieved from <http://www.socialworker.com/api/content/ce3c1470-3b8c-11e3-ade5-1231394043be/>

Section VII: Social Worker Technology Self-Assessment

- Knowledge & Skills: How knowledgeable are you about the technology that you use in your professional practice (i.e. could you explain privacy settings in *Facebook* to a client)? How familiar are you with online behaviors such as bullying, trolling, binge watching videos, etc? How would you rate your digital literacy skills (i.e. spotting fake news; awareness of and ability to use software, apps, and devices; netiquette; social networking, etc)?
- Technology Use: What technology do you use and how in your social work practice?
- Privacy & Confidentiality: How you protect client confidentiality related to the use of technology (i.e. use of encryption software, HIPAA compliant electronic records, etc)? How do you protect client privacy related to the use of technology? If you have a website, *Facebook* page/group, blog, how do you inform clients about posting, self-identification, and confidentiality/privacy risk?
- Informed Consent: Do you use informed consent with clients about using

- technology to communicate, interact, etc? If so, how?
- Social Media Policy: What are your social media professional practices? Do you have a social media policy?
- Professional Learning Network: Do you have a professional learning network? How do you stay current about tech trends (i.e. crisis texting services, telehealth, etc)?
- Organizational Context: How does your agency support technology use (i.e. training, provides adequate tech, etc)? Do you have a risk management plan for your technology in place of employment?
- Financial: What type of financial transactions do you use your phone/computer for? How do you track passwords? Do you use a fingerprint for financial transactions?

Resources:

- National Association of Social Workers (NASW). (2017a). *Code of ethics of the National Association of Social Workers*. Washington, DC: NASW Press. Retrieved from <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>
- National Association of Social Workers (NASW). (2017b). *NASW, ASWB, CSWE, & CSWA standards for technology in social work practice*. Washington, DC: NASW Press. Retrieved from https://www.socialworkers.org/includes/newIncludes/homepage/PRA-BRO-33617.TechStandards_FINAL_POSTING.pdf
- National Association of Social Workers & Association of Social Work Boards. (2005). *Technology for social work practice*. Retrieved from <https://www.socialworkers.org/practice/standards/NASWTechnologyStandards.pdf>
- University at Buffalo School of Social Work. (n.d.). *Social worker's guide to social media*. Retrieved from <http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/social-media-guide.html> (Includes an infographic and embedded videos).

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