

## State Rehabilitation Council

Quarterly Meeting

November 18, 2024

NMDVR Las Cruces Office

3381 Del Rey Blvd

Las Cruces, NM 88012

SRC Meeting 10 am

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### I. Call to Order/Introductions/Roll Call

Meeting called to order at 10:15am by Interim Chair

Roll Call:

Tracy Agiovlasitis, Present

Bernadine Chavez, Present

Paula Seanez, Present

TJ Chester, Present

Rebecca Sanford, Present

Casey Stone-Romero, Present

Jennifer Gelhardt, Present arrived at 10:44am

Guests:

Angelina Montoya, New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Melissa DeLaurentis, New Mexico Public Education Department

### II. Action Items

#### A. Approval of Agenda

TJ Chester approves agenda as amended

Bernadine Chavez seconds motion to approve agenda as amended

Unanimously approved

#### B. Approval of Minutes

TJ Chester motions to approve minutes

Jennifer Gelhardt seconds the motion

Unanimously approved

### III. DVR Directors Reports

#### A. Agency Director – Casey Stone-Romero

##### a. NMDVR and NMSILC

##### i. Collaborating on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

1. The purpose is to establish a cooperative framework that outlines their roles, responsibilities, and support mechanisms to ensure effective functioning and compliance with federal regulations under the Rehabilitation Act and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

2. This MOU aims to strengthen collaboration between NMDVR and NMSILC to better support individuals with disabilities in New Mexico

- ##### b. Christine Fuller, The Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Supported Employment Coordinator has been actively engaged in enhancing the skills and knowledge of our staff through comprehensive training sessions on Supported employment

- i. There will be a double fill posted
- ii. MOU Development meeting
  - 1. Christine Fuller and Rudy Grano, Field Operations Director (FOD) will engage in a collaborative meeting with Aging and Long-Term Services Department (ALTSD) representatives to draft a MOU aimed at enhancing collaboration particularly around ALRSD's D&E waiver services
- c. Rosalva Lucero and Penelope Garcia-Fernandez are attending an in-person session of LeadVR this week in Texas
- d. Mario Lucero, FOD and Jeremy Bangs, CFO have both been accepted for the next cohort of NRLI
- e. We are collaborating with DDS to reset employment expectations
  - i. MOU and rates for Job Developers and Job Coaches
- f. Cara Benta, Program Manager and Stephanie Varoz, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor will be our DVR attendees at the CANAR conference in December 2024 in Las Vegas, Nevada
- g. The DVR State Administrative Office moved into a new office on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024
  - i. Located in the Aspen Plaza building, 1596 Pacheo Street, Suite 203 Santa Fe, NM 87505
- h. 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Pre-Employment Transition Services Correction Action Plan response was submitted to Rehabilitation Services Administration by Director Stone-Romero on October 30, 2024
  - 1. We have heard from RSA that a resolution is near and pending final approval and signature
- i. NMDVR All Staff meeting is being held on 11/13/2024 – 11/14/2024 at the Santa Ana
- j. Stay Survey was sent out to staff
  - i. Releasing the survey every 6 months
  - ii. Will go over trends to address issues
- k. Requested full state match for budget cycle
  - i. LSC analyst and DFA analyst presented of behalf of DVR
    - 1. There was not a session for comments
- l. Vacancy Rates
  - i. 16 positions are actively being recruited or are in the interview/selection process
  - ii. Of the 67 vacant positions, 41 are DDS positions that cannot be filled at this time
  - iii. 1 Hiring actions is
  - iv. a

Unit	Filled Positions	Vacant Positions	Total Positions	Vacancy Rate
ASU	38	3	41	7%
RSU	154	23	177	13%
DDS	95	41	136	30%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>354</b>	<b>19%</b>

v. Staffing Numbers

**Staffing Numbers**

Job Title	Job Code	Filled	Vacant	Total	Vacancy Rate
Vocational Rehab Counselors	G1015A	64	12	76	16%
Vocational Rehab Supervisors	G1015S	7	0	7	0%
VR Techs-A	G1099A	9	0	9	0%
VR Techs-O	G1099O	35	3	38	8%
VR Tech-Sup	G1099S	1	0	1	0%
Disability Adjudicator I	G10801	24	24	48	50%
Disability Adjudicator II	G10802	10	11	21	52%
Disability Adjudicator III	G10803	13	0	13	0%
Disability Adjudicator Supervisors	G1080S	9	1	10	10%

m. NMDVR and Commission for the Bind combined statistics exceeded all negotiated workforce innovation and opportunity act (WIOA) VR Performance indicators for PY 2023

i. Full report can be found at:

<https://rsa.ed.gov/sites/default/files/publications/annual-reports/2023/ETA-9169-AnnualReport-PY2023-NM.pdf>

	Employment Rate (Q2) <sup>2</sup> (Cohort Period: 07/01/2022 - 06/30/2023)		Employment Rate (Q4) <sup>2</sup> (Cohort Period: 01/01/2022 - 12/31/2022)		Median Earnings (Cohort Period: 07/01/2022 - 06/30/2023)	Credential Rate <sup>3</sup> (Cohort Period: 01/01/2022 - 12/31/2022)		Measurable Skill Gains <sup>3</sup> (Cohort Period: 07/01/2023 - 06/30/2024)	
	Num	Rate	Num	Rate	Earnings	Num	Rate	Num	Rate
<b>Negotiated Target</b>		42.0%		38.0%	\$4,600		28.0%		35.0%
<b>Actual</b>	710	47.5%	655	43.3%	\$5,418	216	40.0%	1,120	53.3%

ii. PY23 Performance Assessment indicates that New Mexico exceeds the 90% threshold for achieving performance indicators

PY 23 Performance Assessment					
New Mexico					
	Negotiated Level	Adjustment Factor	Adjusted Level	Actual Level	Indicator Score (Actual Level/Adjusted Level)
<b>WIOA Performance Indicators</b>					
*Measurable Skill Gains Rate	-	-	-	-	-
Employment Rate - 2nd Quarter After Exit	42.0%	7.0%	49.0%	47.5%	97.0%
Median Earnings - 2nd Quarter After Exit	\$4,600	-\$261	\$4,339	\$5,418	124.9%
Employment Rate - 4th Quarter After Exit	38.0%	4.5%	42.5%	43.3%	101.9%
Credential Attainment Rate	28.0%	12.8%	40.8%	40.0%	98.1%

\* As described in FAQ 24-02, RSA did not assess Measurable Skill Gains in PY 22, nor did it assess Overall State Program Scores.  
The individual indicator score is calculated by dividing the actual level of performance achieved by the adjusted level of performance.  
The adjusted level of performance is calculated by adding the adjustment factor to the negotiated level of performance.  
Individual indicators incur performance failures when the result is below the 50.0 percent threshold.  
Additional detail on performance calculations and applicable terms available within RSA TAC 20-02 and in the overview sheet of this workbook.

n. Casey will be retiring at the end of the year

B. RSU Update – Casey Stone-Romero

a. VR Wellness Check meetings

- i. Finance
- ii. Legal
- iii. HR
- iv. RSU

v. Conversations regarding how we are doing as a VR program

b. RSU Re-Org chart

i. Gen I for statewide services posted on SPO

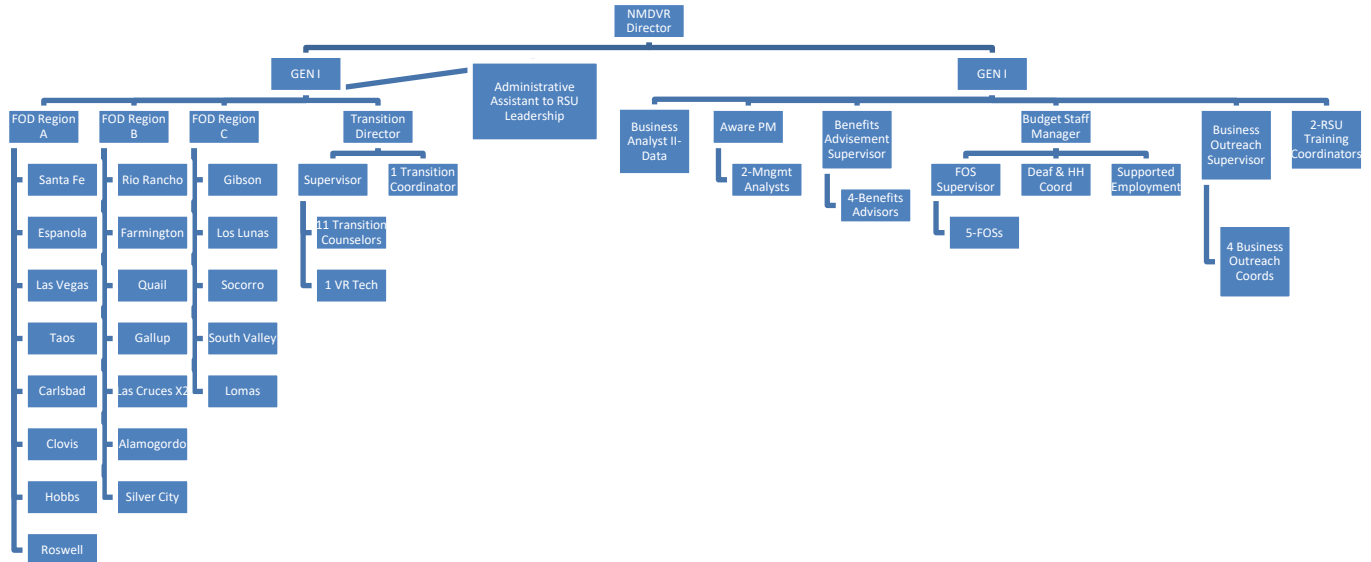
1. Statewide Programs and Services Deputy Director

a. Taking over all Special Programs

i. Data Unit

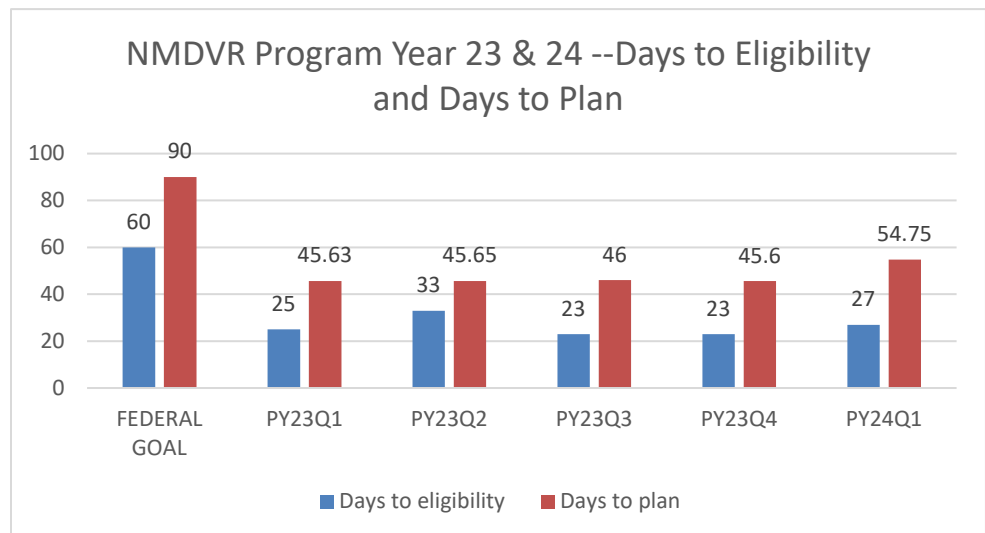
- ii. Aware Program Manager
- iii. Benefits Advisement
- iv. Budget and Staff Manager
- v. Business Outreach
- vi. Training Coordinator

2. We also created a supervisor under our Transition Director, see chart below



c. RSU Stats

- i. Average days to Eligibility, 27 days
- ii. Average days to IPE (from date of eligibility) 54.75 days



C. DDS Administrator – Casey Stone-Romero

- a. NM DDS Federal Fiscal Year 2024 (09/30/2023 – 09/27/2024)
  - i. Total Receipts 21,776
  - ii. Total Dispositions (All claim Types) 24,427
    - 1. Met all workload targets
  - iii. Initial Claim Mean Processing Time
    - 1. SSA Target <230 days

- a. NM DDS FY24 Performance 214.5 days, meeting the SSA PSI
      - i. Dallas Region 298
      - ii. Nation 231
      - iii. NM DDS Only performance 139 days
    - iv. FY24 Allowance Rate 42.6%
      - 1. In Claims 38%
    - v. NM DDS Accuracy
      - 1. NM DDS Recognized by SSA for being on of the top performance DDS for in claims accuracy over the last 4 fiscal years (2019 – 2023)
  - b. Operations
    - i. Compared to FY23 average caseload sized for examiner staff decreased for all levels of experience
    - ii. NM DDS created a pre-development unit it October 2023
      - 1. NM DDS has seen a decrease in claim processing time and increase in claim accuracy for claims initiated by our PDU
      - 2. Mentorship program instituted for trainee examiners
  - c. Consultive Exam Scheduling Unit
    - i. Scheduled: 14,551 exams, down from 18,391 exams in FY23
    - ii. Cancellations: 1,417 down from 2,092 exams since FY23
    - iii. Switchboard coverage: FY24 a total of 34,530 calls were logged, up from 18,360 in FY23
  - d. NM DDS Supporting SSA
    - i. Consultant cadre continue to go above and beyond reviewing and completing cases for NM DDS
    - ii. MC/PC's completed 20,522 reviews for 4 other states and 1 federal component
  - e. Challenges
    - i. Limited experience of staff
    - ii. Complexity of the SSA Program
      - 1. Leadership is supporting more informal, peer to peer supports accompanied with larger agency support such ask desk aides and written business processes
    - iii. SSA Field Offices impacts to examiner workload and quality
      - 1. Re-engaged in SSA Area work Inventive Coordinator (AWIC) to identify and resolve SSA FO training issues
    - iv. Adaption to Change
      - 1. DDS management is taking a measured approach in FY25 to slow down and meet staff where they are, building long term institutional knowledge
  - f. Successes
    - i. 17 internal promotions in FY24
    - ii. Completed (closed decision) on more disability applications than received
    - iii. Natasha Gutierrez represented NewMade (NM Chapter of NADE) at the national convention in Oklahoma City, OK
      - 1. NADE- National Association of Disability Examiners
        - a. Professional organization outside the State of NM of SSA that is aimed at the education of the disability examiner position nationally
    - iv. Extended examiner training an additional 5 weeks to ensure thorough training

- v. Fiscal maintained the 5% or SSA variance requirement with an average of 3.19% throughout FY24
- vi. Managers and Supervisors completed an internal “Innovation Thinktank” to identify areas of agency need and collaborate on how to achieve success in those areas
- vii. NM DDS was the top performing state in the Dallas Region on IMAGEN
  - 1. A SSA case processing tool aimed to help increase case processing efficiency
- viii. Developed a Business Process Workgroup
  - 1. Completed an internal Operations workgroup survey and instituted recommendations and training based on user feedback
  - 2. Completed development and roll out of internal SharePoint
    - a. Aimed at providing uniform and transparent communication for all staff
  - 3. Completed a SWOT analysis with Casey in September 2024
    - a. Meeting with DDS Leadership team next week to share the information
    - b. Management team has proactively taken actions to address many of the issues raised and has a plan in place to track the progress of additional actions
  - 4. Created a bimonthly Leadership huddle
    - a. Involving all members of DDS management and supervisors through the agency
    - b. The purpose of these huddles is the reduce of lack of share information or inconsistent messaging staff receive
    - c. Also allows the agency leaders the opportunity to proactively engage each other to resolve issues impacting other units

D. Legal Update – Casey Stone-Romero

- a. No Fair Hearings or Mediations in the last quarter
- b. 722 report is currently being worked on
- c. NMAC officially published
  - i. Timeline for submission of Administrative Appeal 30 Days
- d. One ongoing case in the court system
  - i. Hearing on November 21st

IV. 121 Report – Paula Seanez

- a. AIVRS/TVR Program
  - a. Competitive grant funded under Section 121 of the Rehabilitation Act
  - b. Funding is 90% Federal and 10% Tribal match
    - i. 88 Active TVR programs in No Cost Extension award status
    - ii. AIVRS programs are in 26 states
      - 1. In NM the funded programs are Laguna Acoma Connections, Jemez Pueblo, and Navajo Nation
      - 2. Memoranda of Agreements are current between all the AIVRS programs
  - c. Jemez Pueblo Rehab
    - i. Covering a larger area and receiving a lot of referrals
  - d. Discretionary Grant programs, ever 5 years

- i. Last grant competition- 8 programs were not funded
  - e. Window rock and Gallup office- Collocate with DVR
    - i. Lease funds requests to be funded out of the VR grant
- b. Navajo Nation held its Annual Disability Awareness Conference in conjunction with the Advisory Council on October 30, 2024, at Dine College
  - i. Information tables were set up to provide information to students
  - ii. Presentations included information on Navajo Nation laws related to
    - 1. Disability
    - 2. IDEA- Parental Rights
    - 3. Voting Rights
    - 4. Traumatic Head Injury
  - iii. Overall conference was well attended and a success
- c. Vacancies for Navajo Nation
  - a. 2 Individual offers for a VRC in Chinle and Farmington
  - b. Rehab Service Tech in Gallup
  - c. and Employment Development positions vacancy
- d. Navajo OSERS director continues to serve as to the University of Montana
  - a. Rural institute for Inclusive Communities on providing regional training for the Tribal VR Self-Employment toolkit
    - i. <https://tvrselfemployment.org/>
- e. Councilor Project SEARCH International
  - a. Recognized for expectational- at the conference
  - b. No staff in the Farmington office
    - i. Working closely with Charlene DVR
  - c. CANAR
    - i. A voice and lobbying efforts
    - ii. Conference will be held December 3 – 5 in Las Vegas, NV
- f. Putting in lease expenses to not have a large carryover

V. SRC Chairperson's Report – Tracy Agiovlasis

- a. Next meeting leadership will be reviewed
  - a. Chair
  - b. Vice Chair
  - c. Sargeant in Arms
- b. Bylaws Language should also be reviewed
  - a. Proxy language
  - b. Add in Resource Budget
- c. NMDVR's All Staff Meeting
  - a. Tracy and Jennifer presented 3 awards
- d. NMTAP Agreement with NMDVR for Assistive Technology (AT)
  - a. All area offices have knowledge of AT that has to borrow to try out devices prior to purchasing

VII. Old Business

A. CSAVR/NCSRC Conference Updates

- a. Great networking with other SRC members from around the country
- b. Resources within the NCSRC Board
- c. AI presentation for the VR program
- d. First time commissioner attended to represent the SRC folks
- e. Caseys presentation received high scores on her evaluation and practical approach to develop a relationship with their SRC

- f. Interview training with Casey for YesLMS
  - i. New Directors Training about how to make the job your own
  - ii. Included director from New Mexico, California, and Wisconsin
  - iii. Presented at the Directors Forum
    - 1. DVR Fiscal Summit
      - a. Statewide Needs Assessment for the State Plan
      - b. How and why, we are spending the dollars we are spending
- B. DEAM Event Updates
  - a. SRC employer awards were presented
  - b. 58% attendance rate
  - c. 202 people in attendance
  - d. Kuddos to Lisa McNiven for a successful event
- C. SRC Awards for NMDVR November All Staff – Jennifer Gelhardt
  - a. Team effort with Kendra to prepare the plaques that were presented at the conference
  - b. Staff Awards were presented along with 1 participant award
  - c. Employer awards were also represented at the DEAM event

### VIII. New Business

- A. SRC Annual Report Discussion and Approval for next steps
  - a. 3 stories total
  - b. DVR statistics were received today
  - c. Casey's letter will also be added
    - i. Revised recommendations response from Casey
  - d. Executive Committee project will draft the Annual report and then will be sent out to committee for review and changes
    - i. Direct responses to the one individual that sends out the email to ensure we do not have a rolling quorum
  - e. Final approved report is sent out to RSA Commissioner, Governor's Office, and PED
    - i. Due December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Jennifer Gelhardt motions to allow Executive Committee to draft Annual report and send out to committee for changes or approval

Rebecca Sanford seconds motion

Unanimously approved

- B. Consumer Satisfaction Survey – Bernadine Chavez
  - a. Sent out questions before last meeting
    - i. Questions will go out again for review
    - ii. Committee for Satisfaction Survey:
      - 1. Bernadine Chavez
      - 2. Alix Dean
      - 3. Jennifer Gelhardt
      - 4. Tracy Agiovlasitis
    - iii. Survey completed every 3 years
  - b. Contract to be put in place to help implement survey, we will need the following to put a PO in place:
    - i. Scope of Work
    - ii. 3 quotes
  - c. SRC goal is to have this done by July 2025
    - i. A timeline will be sent to the Committee



C. Change in Director's Position

a. Director Stone-Romero retiring at the end of the year

i. SRC suggestions:

1. Request to meet with PED Secretary in person to ensure continued support for the agency and those we serve

- a. Executive Team will set up a meeting with all our Partners, SILC, DDC, IL Centers, Adelante, CDD, Disability Collision

D. Next Meeting

- a. 02/20/2024 from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm at the NMDVR Administration Office located at 1596 Pacheco St, Suite 203 Santa Fe, NM 87505

IX. Comments from Audience

- a. No comments from audience

X. Adjournment

- a. Adjourned by Interim Chair at 12:51pm

*If you need a language translator or you are an individual with a disability who is in need of a reader, amplifier or any other form of auxiliary aid or service to participate in this meeting, please contact NMDVR at the telephone number(s) listed below. Public documents, including the agenda or minutes can be provided in various accessible forms. For additional information, contact NMDVR. Telephone numbers: 1-800-224-7005 or 505-954-8500.*

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(Note: the SRC attempts to follow the order of items listed on the agenda; however, it should be noted that the order of specific items is tentative and may vary from the date of the printed agenda.)