

JOSÉ EARNS A DIPLOMA THROUGH HARD WORK (AND A LITTLE HELP)

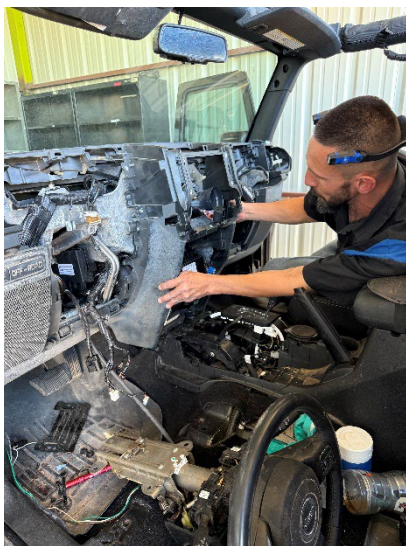
A reading disability didn't stop José Miramontes from earning a college degree—with some help from the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

As he prepared for his May 2025 graduation, Miramontes said, "I've fought to get where I am. It's been a long road and I'm still fighting." Then he added, "I've learned so much in these past few years."

José's father was an auto mechanic and certified welder, which figuratively sparked his interest in these trades. He brought documentation to NMDVR regarding his disability and the agency was able to assist him. It provided college tuition, technology, and extra reading help for José to pursue his associate degree in automotive technology from Doña Ana Community College in his hometown of Las Cruces.

"You have to figure out how to overcome that barrier," he says of the late nights he spent studying and the hard work he's put into his success. "I went to tutors. I sat with all my instructors after class. The instructors at DACC helped me with all my classes."

The 46-year-old Miramontes is looking to run his own auto mechanic business once he secures the equipment and a location for his shop. In the meantime, he's working on cars in his backyard and at his brother's house. He's also planning to use the same assistance he's been getting from NMDVR to become a certified welder and earn his commercial driver's license.



He says Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Megan Allen has been a big help. "She understands where I came from and how I got here. If I needed help, she provided advice and pointed me to where I needed to go. She's been the most amazing person, and I thank her for that."

"We worked closely and he kept pushing until he achieved his dream," says Allen. "He has conquered so much and never gave up on himself. I am overwhelmed with joy that all that work has paid off and he can start his career."

Miramontes is most proud of the fact he has become a role model for others. His son is now getting ready to go to college, his niece is taking college courses, and friends who have seen the results of his academic efforts are going back to school.

“Use all the help you can get,” advises José. “We all need help. I’ve met some very good people who want me to succeed. They get you the help that you need. It’s the most amazing feeling.”

For information about how NMDVR can help you achieve your employment goals, contact your nearest office. There are two dozen locations across the state: dvr.state.nm.us/locations/.

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

The Vocational Rehabilitation program receives 78.7% of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For federal fiscal year 2025, the total awarded is \$24,099,900. The remaining 21.3% is funded by state appropriations and transfers from the Commission for the Blind and Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

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