

MAKING OTHERS FEEL GOOD ABOUT THEMSELVES, NOW THAT SHE FEELS BETTER

A self-described “tomboy” who served more than four years in the U.S. Army, Chrystal Childress never expected to have a career in the beauty industry. But with support from the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Las Cruces native has launched her own business providing facials, body sculpting, and full-body waxing for both women and men.



“This is very much out of my comfort zone,” Childress says of [Barecat](#). “I was raised by my dad, so I didn’t know girly stuff.” She needed a job after a divorce and became a receptionist at a massage spa and soon began assisting staff. Realizing she didn’t mind working with clients on sensitive and private parts of their bodies, she went to school to earn her certification as an aesthetician.

Due to several disabilities—including painful endometriosis, post-traumatic stress disorder, attention deficit disorder, and dyslexia—Chrystal knew she would need some assistance to become an entrepreneur. She reached out to NMDVR, which helped her create a business plan, arranged for a business coach, and provided money for a computer; start-up products for her business; and promotion, including a website and presence on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

“I was looking for any help I could get,” Childress recalls. “I knew I wanted to open my own business, and I didn’t want to make mistakes that other people make.” At first, she was nervous about sharing information about her disabilities. But she says, “I wanted to be successful, so I did everything I could, and now I’m more comfortable speaking with everyone.”

That newfound comfort helps her put her clients at ease. “If I can do something small to make people feel better about themselves, that’s why I do what I do. It’s also like a therapy session. I can relate to what they’re going through and pass on what I’ve learned. I bring my whole life into my work.”

She jokingly says her business model is to “boost people’s confidence with services you can see and services you hope you’re lucky enough to see.”



One year after starting her business, Childress moved into a bigger office in a prime downtown Las Cruces location, where she is renting some of her space to cosmetologists, barbers, nail techs, and other related professions. She’s even considering franchising. “It’s gone from zero to 100 so fast,” she says, surprised herself at how quickly Barecat became a success, with dozens of five-star Google reviews.

“You have to put in the work,” Chrystal says. “DVR won’t just hand it to you. But it’s so worth it. I got so much out of it, even just learning what I need to do for a business and how to be organized.”

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 was \$26,800,619. 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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