



NEW MEXICO
DIVISION OF
VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION

Public Education Department

A black and white photograph of a person's hands using a mallet and chisel to work on a piece of wood. The person is wearing a dark jacket. The mallet is held in the right hand, and the chisel is held in the left hand. The chisel is being used to carve a piece of wood. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

NMDVR REHABILITATION GUIDE

WWW.DVRGETSJOBS.COM

My Counselor _____

Address _____

Phone _____ **FAX** _____

E-Mail _____

APPOINTMENTS

DATE _____ **TIME** _____

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New Mexico
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New Mexicans,

Welcome to the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR). This guide is meant as a general introduction only.

The NMDVR team is here to help individuals with disabilities find work. Like others, people with disabilities may need guidance and assistance to become employed. What that “help” may be varies for each person that we assist.

First, staff will meet with you to gather information regarding your background, medical records, disability, skills and abilities, etc. The counselor can then take the steps needed to decide if you qualify.

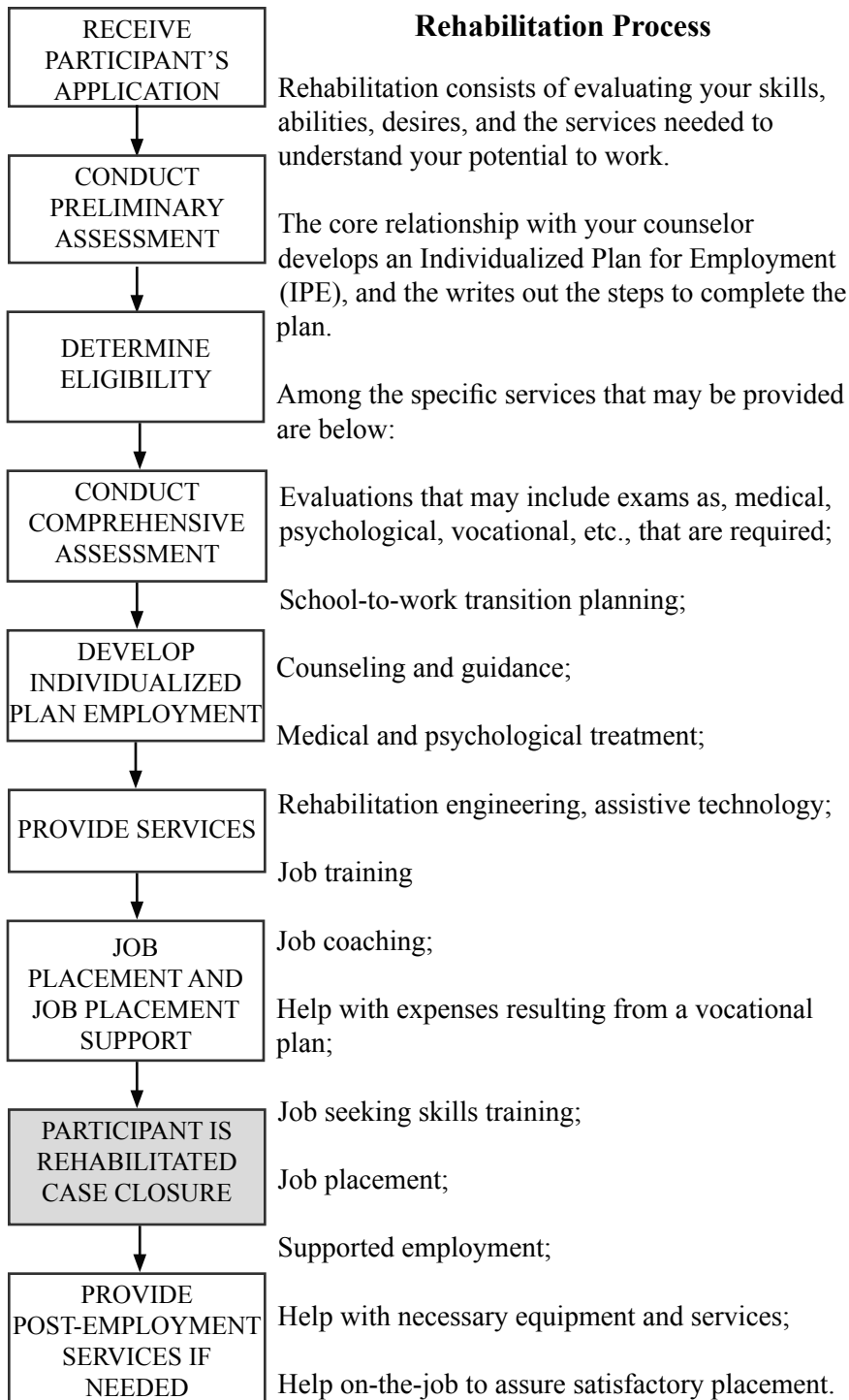
Once qualified, you and your counselor work closely as a team. Like others, you may feel undecided about what kind of work you might want. However, as you work with your counselor you will find how helpful the process becomes, to make work goals.

You make and agree on a plan that is individualized for your goals. Your involvement with these efforts may be one of the most exciting things you have ever done.

The relationship you make and maintain with your counselor is very important, as you both work to reach the employment goal that meets your needs. Good luck and best wishes as you start,

The Staff at the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation Process



NEW MEXICO DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

The purpose of the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) is to help people with disabilities to find or retain work.

NMDVR is part of the State of New Mexico, Public Education Department, and its program is supported by state and federal funds.

Qualified Licensed Counselors

NMDVR is committed to providing the highest quality of services to you. This begins with having quality staff. In order to assure professionalism and competence, the agency requires that all Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors be licensed, and meet specific qualification requirements. If NMDVR must employ counselors who are not initially licensed, these counselors are closely supervised by a licensed rehabilitation counselor. And they are required to participate in a professional development plan to meet the qualification standards and obtain a license.

Eligibility

A person is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services when all of the following criteria below apply:

- 1) You meet the definition of an individual with a disability:
 - A) a person with a physical or mental impairment;
 - B) which for you results in a substantial barrier to employment;
and
 - C) you can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services to obtain work.
- 2) Vocational rehabilitation services are required in order for you to **prepare for, begin, keep, or regain employment.**

Cost Of Services

Some services, such as evaluation and counseling, are provided at no charge to participants. Participants may be asked to share in the cost of other planned services, depending on household financial resources.

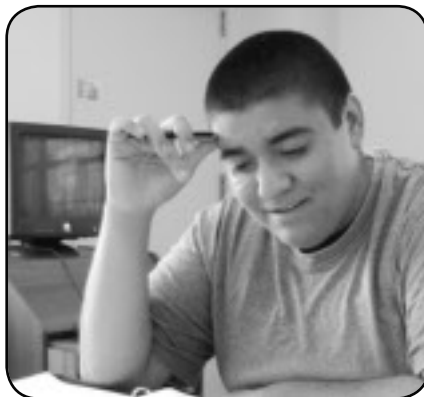
Applying For Services

Any person with a disability residing in New Mexico may apply for NMDVR services. Visit or call the nearest office. The nearest NMDVR office is available on the back cover. You may also call at 800-224-7005 for information.

During the initial interview, staff will explain the rehabilitation process and request pertinent information about you. You will be asked to help get information from other agencies, organizations or individuals needed to determine eligibility. Bringing any medical, psychological, or educational information available to the initial interview will help you with the application process.

Sixty-day Eligibility

After applying, NMDVR has up to 60 (sixty) days to determine your eligibility. There are occasions when a counselor may determine that additional information is required. An Extended Evaluation or Trial Work Experience would be an exception to the 60 day rule.



The Rehabilitation Process

Vocational rehabilitation is designed to help you obtain and retain employment appropriate to your skills, abilities and interests. For some people, rehabilitation is lengthy; for others, it may be a short period.

Services are based on your individual needs and planned goals. The types of services you need can't be compared to the services that other participants receive.

Informed Choice

Everyone is informed, in a way best understood due to their disability, about informed choices and the vocational rehabilitation process. Your counselor wants a partnership with you to gather and evaluate information so you can make informed choices about the goals, services, and service providers.

Assessment For Determining Eligibility

Every applicant receives an assessment to gather enough diagnostic information to make a professional determination of eligibility. Sometimes a Trial Work Experience or Extended Evaluation program (for a period not to exceed six months) is needed. These provide for more time or studies to determine if vocational rehabilitation services can help you plan, prepare, find, and secure employment.



Guidance And Counseling

Working to make a good, professional relationship with your counselor is so important. NMDVR counselors training and experience help you understand the rehabilitation process, the expectations for vocational rehabilitation, and how to establish appropriate goals. They help you plan goals, and the services needed to reach your employment goals. Your active participation is critical in planning and completing a successful vocational rehabilitation program.

Planning Your Rehabilitation Program

If you are determined eligible for services, your counselor will discuss developing and completing the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The plan documents the services and activities that can reasonably be expected to lead to an employment goal. Your counselor will complete a comprehensive vocational assessment. After the assessment is completed, your counselor will explain your options for developing the IPE. This guides the development of the objectives, the nature, and scope of services needed for an employment goal. So providing your counselor your ideas and opinions, then working as a team is critical. Express any questions as the IPE is developed. Ask for clarification and make sure you understand. With all the required approvals and signatures you will receive a copy. You and your counselor will review the IPE at least yearly to make certain it works; however, you may request a review of your IPE at any time. If you need change, your IPE can be adjusted. The best advice? Remember that you need to work as a team where everyone is open, honest and flexible.



Services

Depending on your requirements, different types of services are needed for you to find work appropriate with your skills, abilities, and desires. The potential services that may be considered for you are listed below:

- Evaluations that may include medical, psychological, vocational, and other specialist exams as required;
- School-to-Work transition planning;
- Counseling and guidance;
- Medical and psychological treatment;
- Rehabilitation engineering or assistive technology services;
- Help with obtaining equipment and services needed for employment;
- Training;
- Job coaching;
- Job placement and support;
- Supported employment;
- Job seeking skills training;
- Help with basic living and transportation costs resulting from participation in an IPE. (**This service can't increase your standard of living, or pay for any prior of current expenses other than the extra costs required to participate in the vocational rehabilitation process**);
- Independent living services;
- Other services needed to help or maintain employment.

Keep in mind that each case is reviewed on an individual basis. Therefore, not all the services listed above may be needed to help you prepare for, obtain and retain suitable employment.

If you have been out of work for a long time, you may receive training to help you acquire skills and abilities required to adjust to your disability and changes in the job market.

Maintaining a good relationship with your counselor remains the best way to discuss the services you feel are required to meet the goals of your IPE. ***Remember this guide is meant to help you understand how the vocational rehabilitation process with NMDVR works, not answer all the questions you may have about vocational rehabilitation.***

If you need reasonable accommodations to perform the essential duties of your job, NMDVR can provide advice and assistance to you, and your employer with your permission. It's important to remember that the only services NMDVR can pay for are those *authorized and listed on an approved and signed IPE*. This is important; it can cost you money and time. The only exception to this is diagnostics which may be provided when authorized by your vocational rehabilitation counselor.

Job Search

You may need some help when you are ready to look for work. Your counselor can help you develop a resume; complete a job application; prepare for an interview; and help conduct a job search. But the most important factor may be “selling” your skills and abilities to an employer.

Closure

After you start work, you should keep in contact with your counselor about your progress. Generally, after working 90 days successfully, your case will be closed. If you have problems keeping employment, you may consider contacting NMDVR, even after your case has been closed. You may be eligible for post-employment services to help you keep employment or look for other employment. In some cases, people are asked to reapply and a new eligibility determination is made.



Your Responsibilities

Financial Participation

Depending upon the household income and expenses, you may be asked to help pay for a portion of your rehabilitation costs. You are expected to work with your counselor to find additional sources of funding or similar benefits. These would include any private insurance or any programs for which you might be eligible.

Program Planning

It is your responsibility to help plan and complete your IPE. If you believe that your program should be changed, contact your counselor and discuss your ideas.

Satisfactory Performance

While completing your IPE it is your responsibility to make the best effort you can. It is important for the counselor to keep informed about your progress and any concerns. For example, if you are in academic training, you must maintain a certain grade point average. Remember that it's your responsibility to keep ahead of planned activities; it may take time to schedule an appointment and discuss future needs. For instance, you must providing copies of your grade reports prior to scheduling another semester.

Following Recommendations

You are expected to follow recommendations professionals offer. These may include medical treatment, taking medication, following a special diet, or exercise regimen. Keep your scheduled appointments. Be on time. If you can't keep an appointment, make sure you call early and inform the NMDVR office serving you.



Working With Your Counselor

1) Again, NMDVR stresses the importance of working closely with your counselor, it is the single most important way to maximize your chances for success. Among your expectations are below:

- obtaining and providing any requested records pertaining to your disability,
- providing honest and accurate information,
- keeping all scheduled appointments,
- following counselor and professional recommendations,
- informing your counselor of any changes that can affect your program.

2) You may be required to contribute toward the cost of your program. NMDVR needs and requires you to apply for and utilize services and benefits that other agencies, organizations and programs may provide. It's essential to report any services you receive.

Released and Request Of Information From The Social Security Administration, The Department Of Labor Or Human Services Department

Cooperative agreements between NMDVR, the Social Security Administration, the Department of Labor, and the Human Services Department allows NMDVR to request and share information related to work and benefits. The agency attempts to recover some of the rehabilitation costs from the Social Security Administration, as participants return to work.

Right To Release Confidential Information

NMDVR staff has the ethical responsibility to contact any appropriate professionals or law enforcement authorities, and disclose confidential information, in the event that a participant discloses plans or actions to harm themselves or others. Otherwise your confidential information is strictly controlled and cannot be released without your signed release. On occasion a family may inquire about you, but we can't confirm or deny that you even participate without a specific signed release. We believe that confidentiality is the cornerstone of a trusting relationship.

Your Rights

The mission of vocational rehabilitation services is to help you become suitably employed. You have protected rights in trying to work with NMDVR and find work.

Eligibility

To be determined eligible for services, you must meet the following criteria: 1) You must have a physical or mental impairment; 2) which for you is a substantial barrier to work; 3) you can benefit from services to find work; 4) and vocational rehabilitation services are required to help you to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain gainful employment.

Nondiscrimination

The agency or its staff do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability in determining eligibility or providing vocational rehabilitation services.

Confidentiality

While this has been written before, NMDVR believes strongly about the strict confidentiality of your information and the relationship with your counselor. Your information is not given to any person or agency without your written consent or that of a guardian. The only exceptions are by order of the court, as mandated by law, or disclosure that a person is a threat to harm or abuse themselves or others.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, guides NMDVR decisions. The information you provide allows eligibility decisions, developing Individualized Plans for Employment, review of your progress, amending plans, and assisting you to reach employment goals. Providing your information is voluntary; however, failure to provide all the required information may result in case closure or delay case development.

Your Appeal Rights

Everyone should work with their counselor to have an open discussion of any differences of opinion; it's one of life's processes. But appeals exist if you are dissatisfied with any service decision or service action made by NMDVR staff. These are:

- 1) Request a trained **Mediator** to help with decisions made by NMDVR staff. Request this in writing to the Deputy Director of Rehabilitation Services at 435 St. Michael's Dr., Bldg. D, Santa Fe, NM 87505.
- 2) When you have worked with your counselor, you may ask for **Supervisory Review from the Program Manager**.
- 3) An **Administrative Review by the Field Operations Director**, is available if the initial Supervisory Review doesn't lead to an agreement.
- 4) You can ask for a **Fair Hearing** by writing to the Director for Vocational Rehabilitation at 435 St. Michael's Dr., Bldg. D, Santa Fe, NM 87505.
- 5) **Disability Rights New Mexico** may assist you with understanding appeal rights, NMDVR decisions or administrative or legal options. Call DRNM at 800-432-4682 or write at 1720 Louisiana NE., Albuquerque, NM 87110.

Selection Of An Impartial Hearing Officer: An impartial Hearing Officer is appointed to conduct hearings and make a ruling about a dispute. The impartial hearing officer is selected by the following steps:

- 1) From among a pool of persons qualified impartial Hearing Officers identified by NMDVR and the State Rehabilitation Council.
- 2) Then on a random basis or by agreement between the Director for Vocational Rehabilitation and the participant, or including the participant's representative, a Hearing Office is appointed.

Recourse For Fair Hearing Decision: NMDVR does question the decisions made by an Impartial Hearing Officer. If a participant disagrees with the Hearing Officer's decision, and wants to appeal or challenge the findings, civil legal action is the only remaining choice available.

Common NMDVR Terminology

Administrative Review: If you are not satisfied with a decision made by your counselor, followed by a Program Manager's ruling, you can ask for a review by the regional Field Operations Director.

Authorization: The document the counselor uses to purchase all approved services. No bills can be paid unless the services are in an approved and signed IPE.

DRNM: Disability Rights New Mexico – This is a federally-funded program to assist NMDVR participants, applicants, and former participants with problems relating to NMDVR services.

Community Rehabilitation Program: A vocational rehabilitation program that offers a variety of services such as vocational evaluations, supported employment, work services, or other specific skills training.

NMDVR: New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the division within New Mexico Public Education Department responsible for the state vocational rehabilitation program.

Eligibility: The decision that qualifies you to receive vocational rehabilitation services. To be qualified, you must have a disability that keeps you from working, and you must require vocational rehabilitation services so that you can work.

Employment: Full-time or part-time employment consistent with your skills, abilities, and desires. The definition includes: working for another person; self-employment; telecommuting; homemaking; home-based employment; supported employment, or other gainful work.

Extended Evaluation: An assessment that involves a written plan of services. These help a counselor make an eligibility decision, when other steps taken leave questions about eligibility.

Fair Hearing: A hearing conducted by an Impartial Hearing officer. When other appeal rights have not helped you with a requested service, you may ask for a fair hearing. Write to the Director for Vocational Rehabilitation at 435 St. Vincent's Dr., Bldg. D, Santa Fe, NM, 87505.

Financial Need: This is the ability to help pay for your vocational rehabilitation services. The decision is made on the basis of the type and amount of household income and expenses.

Guidance and Counseling: Assistance to help you identify problems, how to come to understand your situation better, and ways to help you make decisions that affect your life.

Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE): The written plan designed with your counselor, alone, or with the help of others. It describes the agreed upon services and activities needed to reach a vocational employment goal. IPEs may need change in time, and certainly need time and consideration to make them effective.

Maintenance: Financial help that can be provided according to need. These are not your normal living expenses, but one that result from participating in a NMDVR vocational rehabilitation plan. Like all services, they depended on your individual circumstances.

OJT: On-the-job training provided in a work setting to develop work skills and experience.

Personal Adjustment: Assistance to help you work out personal issues, such as adjusting to your disability.

Placement Services: Help with how look for a job, how to prepare for a job interview, and other assistance to help you find work.

Supervisory Review: A meeting with the Program Manager to discuss a service you and your counselor can't resolve. After completion, the Program Manager has ten (10) days to submit their decision.

Treatment: Medical, psychological, and related care that is required to improve your ability to complete an IPE and work.

Trial Work Experience: Exploration of your abilities, skills, and capacity to perform in work situations, with supports when needed. Trial Work can appraise the patterns of work tolerance, attitude, habits, behaviors and, social skills necessary for successful job performance. When the available information is insufficient, Trial Work can help counselors make informed eligibility decisions.

Disability Rights New Mexico

The Disability Rights New Mexico (DRNM) is a federally-funded program designed to assist participants, applicants, and former participants with problems related to NMDVR services. The DRNM can: help you understand NMDVR and other rehabilitation service programs under the Rehabilitation Act; advise you about your rights and responsibilities; help you to try and resolve problems or disagreements associated with NMDVR; and represent you in pursuing legal, administrative, or other help to assure that your rights are protected.

For information regarding DRNM call 505-256-3100 or 1-800-432-4682. You may also write to:

Disability Rights New Mexico
1720 Louisiana Blvd., N.E., Suite 204
Albuquerque, NM 87110

This publication was funded, in part, by an RSA grant from the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services Administration, and by New Mexico state general funds. All activities of the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation are conducted without regard to race, color, creed, religion, gender, age, national origin, sexual orientation, or type of disability. All applicants for program participation, services or employment have the right to file complaints and receive a review of counselor decisions affecting their case.



NOTES



New Mexico
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New Mexico Relay Network offers free telecommunications relay services that links Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Speech Impaired and hearing people via the telephone Relay New Mexico. Relay is available 24 hours a day and all calls are strictly confidential. You can reach a New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation office during normal working hours from 8:00 - 5:00.

How to Connect:

Dial 7-1-1 to use Relay in New Mexico or call one of the numbers below:

TTY 800-659-8331

Voice Carry Over 877-659-4174

Voice 800-659-1779

Speech to Speech 888-659-3952

Spanish Translation is available at 800-327-1857. Relay New Mexico provides Spanish-to-Spanish, English-to-Spanish and Spanish-to-English translation as part of their standard relay service. Communication Assistants fluent in Spanish will be available to provide services when Spanish is needed.

El relai Español New Mexico de la traducción 800-327-1857 proporciona Español-a-Español, Inglés-a-Español, y traducción Español-a-Inglésa como parte de nuestro servicio estándar del relai. El cas fluido en Español estará disponible para proporcionar servicios cuando los usuries del relai se comunican en Español.



NMDVR OFFICES

Alamogordo Office

2300 Indian Wells Rd.
Alamogordo, NM 88310
575-437-6550
888-901-7868

Albuquerque Central Office

5301 Central NE, St. 1600
Albuquerque, NM 87108
505-841-6450
866-526-0863

Albuquerque Lomas Office

111 Lomas NW, St. 422
Albuquerque, NM 87102
505-383-2500
888-818-3259

Albuquerque Quail Office

5205 Quail Rd. NW
Albuquerque, NM 87120
505-836-1774
888-818-3263

Albuquerque South Valley Office

1710 Rio Bravo SW
Albuquerque, NM 87105
505-877-7673
888-815-2981

Anthony Office

1215 Anthony Dr., St. K.
Anthony, NM 88021
575-882-1023
866-883-8693

Belen Office

911 Castillo Ave.
Belen, NM 87002
505-864-1617
888-901-7902

Carlsbad Office

37605 National Parks Highway
Carlsbad, NM 88220
575-885-8821
800-645-0258

Clovis Office

100 E. Manana Blvd., Unit 17
Clovis, NM 88101
575-763-3437
800-645-2143

Espanola Office

706-B La Joya St.
Espanola, NM 87532
505-753-2908
888-901-3647

Farmington Office

2901 Hutton St.
Farmington, NM 87402
505-327-5123
888-901-7901

Gallup Office

312E. Nizhoni Blvd.
Gallup, NM 87301
505-726-1429
800-279-5681

Hobbs Office

726 E. Michigan, St. 160
Hobbs, NM 88240
575-393-3330
888-201-5859

Las Cruces Office

3381 Del Rey Blvd.
Las Cruces, NM 88012
575-524-6135
888-901-7866

Las Vegas Office

2532 Ridgerunner Blvd
Las Vegas, NM 87701
505-425-9365
888-901-7865

Moriarity Office

105 Broadway
Moriarity, NM 87035
505-832-5038
888-901-7864

Raton Office

217 York Canyon Rd.
Raton, NM 87740
575-445-2852
888-901-7863

Rio Rancho Office

3791 Southern SE, St. 210
Rio Rancho, NM 87124
505-896-4500
866-585-5446

Roswell Office

1014 S. Atkinson Ave.
Roswell, NM 88201
575-624-6024
800-644-7732

Santa Fe Office

2540 Camino Edward Ortiz St. B
Santa Fe, NM 87507
505-827-3526
800-773-4072

Silver City Office

1622 E. Pine St.
Silver City, NM 88061
575-538-5351
888-901-7861

Socorro Office

508 N. California St.
Socorro, NM 87801
575-835-4243
888-901-7903

Taos Office

224 Cruz Alta St.
Taos, NM 87571
575-758-4348
888-901-7869

NMDVR State Office

435 St. Michael's Dr., Bldg. D
Santa Fe, NM 87505
505-954-8500
800-224-7005
505-954-8562 (Fax)