



NEW MEXICO
DIVISION OF
VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION

Public Education Department

Mission Statement: *The mission of the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is to encourage and assist the efforts of New Mexicans with disabilities to reach their goals for working and living in their communities.*

Vision Statement: *Every New Mexican with a disability has the opportunity to contribute to the quality of life and the economic prosperity of the state.*

Attachment 4.11(a): Statewide Assessment, Results of Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of the Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals with Disabilities and Need to Establish, Develop, or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs:

The Division jointly conducts with the State Rehabilitation Council continuing statewide studies to determine the needs of individuals with disabilities within the State and the best methods to meet those needs. The Division periodically conducts surveys through its programs, projects and activities to ensure that the annual evaluation of effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program meets the goals and objectives set forth in the State Plan, and does not impede the accomplishments of the purpose and policy of federal funding.

As part of the development of the State Plan, the continuing statewide studies include:

- 1) A triennial comprehensive assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant disabilities who reside in the State,
- 2) A triennial review of the effectiveness of outreach procedures used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who are unserved and under-served by the vocational rehabilitation system; and
- 3) A triennial review of the broad variety of methods to provide, expand, and improve vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with the most significant disabilities, including individuals receiving supported employment services.

The Division conducts an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the State's Vocational Rehabilitation program in providing vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services, especially to individuals with the most significant disabilities. The annual evaluation analyzes the extent to which the Division has achieved the goals and priorities established in the State Plan and annual amendments to the plan; and that the Division is in compliance with the evaluation standards and performance indicators established by the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

The number of individuals in New Mexico with disabilities is difficult to estimate. The U.S. Census 2008 estimated the general resident population for the State of New Mexico is 1,984,356 (Annual Disability Statistics Compendium 2009, Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics).

The 2008 Disability Status Report, Cornell University provides the following disability statistics specific to New Mexico (Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Demographics and Statistics, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York 14853 www.disabilitystatistics.org):

Prevalence of disability among non-institutionalized people ages 21 – 64 in New Mexico (Working Age) -

- Overall percentage of working-age people with a disability was 12.4%
- Disability Type
 - Any Disability 12.4%
 - Visual 2.5%
 - Hearing 3.2%
 - Ambulatory 6.4%
 - Cognitive 5.3%
 - Self-Care 2.4%
 - Independent Living 4.4%
- Employment rate for working-age people with disabilities was 41.2%
- Actively looking for work among people with disabilities who were not working was 6.5%
- Working people with disabilities working full-time / full-year was 24.5%
- Median annual earnings of working people with disabilities working full-time / full-year was \$37,200
- Median income of households that include any working-age people with disabilities was \$36,200
- Poverty rate for working-age people with disabilities was 25.2%
- Working-age people with disabilities receiving SSI payments in NM was 20.5%
- Educational Attainment of working-age people with disabilities in NM
 - High school diploma or equivalent 32.1%
 - Some college or an associate degree 31.3%
 - Bachelor's degree or more 14.7%

Specific to identifying statewide needs of individuals with disabilities in New Mexico, findings from two Participant and Stakeholder Satisfaction and Statewide Needs Assessments were reported in April 2007 and August 2008. (Participant and Stakeholder Satisfaction and Statewide Needs Assessment, sponsored by the New Mexico State Rehabilitation Council and the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, April 2007, Contract Number 07-644-1000-0058, and December 2007, Contract Number 08-0035 Michael D. O'Brien, Ed.D., CRC, CVE).

Major findings in the 2007 study indicated the following needs by New Mexicans with most significant disabilities with the greatest frequency:

1. 40% of clients did not feel like they could get needed training in the community where they lived
2. Only half of the consumers surveyed reported having an adequate number of providers to choose from in their community
3. The One-Stop service delivery system is clearly not a meaningful provider of services to individuals with disabilities working with DVR. It is noted that over 33% of respondents

to the survey did not answer the questions related to One-Stop Centers. Many marked “NA” or placed a “?” by the question indicating that they did not know what a One-Stop is. Many respondents specifically asked the question, what is a One-Stop?

4. Local One-Stop centers are not meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities or that individuals with disabilities are not aware of One-Stop services
5. Participants overwhelmingly did not feel that the support they got for medical needs from DVR was a primary contributor to their success.
6. Some participants indicated it was difficult to get medical needs met.
7. Most consumers were satisfied with their current transportation and living situation.

Findings from the 2008 study indicate the following needs by New Mexicans with disabilities:

1. Access to public transportation, accessible housing and access to local training opportunities were reported as issues of concern.
2. Only 52% of the participants reported they were satisfied with the vendor assigned to them to help with job placement. Only 36% reported that they had multiple vendors to choose from when they began their job search. This raises questions about the vendors being used or the number of available vendors. This concern is consistent with previous surveys and is indicative of the challenges in recruiting vendors.
3. Only 11.6% reported that they received any services from a One-Stop. Perhaps more disturbing, only about 13% reported that the One-Stop was able to understand their disability needs. Similar results were discovered in the 2007 survey.

The Division also assesses the needs of New Mexicans with disabilities utilizing reports generated by other entities in the state. Very recently, a preliminary report by the Center of Development and Disability, (Preliminary Report: Barriers to Access to Healthcare for People with Disabilities in New Mexico: Towards Improved Public Health Practice, Center for Development and Disability, 2300 Menaul Blvd NE, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107, 505.272.2990, March 2007, Anthony Cahill, Ph.D.) reported that a greater percentage of people with disabilities, particularly those requiring assistance, responded that they sometime or always had a problem getting access to healthcare compared to people with no disability. Another telling finding of this study was that providers’ perceptions of barriers faced by people with disabilities were generally limited to physical access issue and the use of certified American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters at primary and public healthcare offices was mostly unheard of. These types of resource issues provide challenges to NMDVR.

The New Mexico Developmental Disabilities Planning Council conducted several public forums in the latter part calendar year 2009. These forums were specific to garnering the public’s perception of need as related to Developmental Disabilities. Although the findings were not obtained by scientific methodology, but rather delivered by the public at the forums, the findings do illustrate rehabilitation needs in New Mexico and again are indicative of the resource challenges in the state. Select findings were specific to Childcare, Formal and Informal Community Supports, Education and Early Intervention, Employment, Health, Housing, Recreation, Transportation, and Quality Assurance. Listed below are those findings which more directly impact vocational rehabilitation in New Mexico (language provided by NMDDPC):

- “Need career support for Persons with Disabilities (PWD) who have educational degrees”

- “Need re-employment and job change support services”
- “Need help for families of PWD to get employment”
- “Need to address employer misconceptions”
- “Inadequate transition services at college and between HS and employment”
- “Need job generation and development”
- “Need employer training”
- “Need DVR services and working relationship with them”
- “Teachers do not know what is required for transition”
- “Need community-based centers”
- “Need a one-stop shop for services”
- “Need services for adults with Autism”
- “Need training on education, benefits, legal assistance, guardianship”
- “Training needs to be culturally competent”
- “There is no driver training for PWD”

Editorial NOTE: two additional community forums are planned by the DDPC for March 11 and March 18th. The data from these forums will be incorporated when available and probably not prior to State Plan Public Hearings.

The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation addresses the vocational rehabilitation service needs of individuals with disabilities of various ethnic and minority groups. The 2008 Disability Status Report for New Mexico from Cornell University provides the following Quick Statistics:

- The overall percentage (prevalence rate) of disability among people of Hispanic/Latino origin ages 5 and older was 12.6%
- The overall percentage of disability among people of non-Hispanic/Latino origin ages 5 and older was 14.5
- Disability prevalence rate among non-institutionalized working-age New Mexicans (21 to 64) by rate category:
 - 12.2 % of persons who were White reported a disability
 - 14.2% of persons who were Black/African American Reported a disability
 - 13.5% of persons who were Native American reported a disability
 - 3.7% of persons who were Asian reported a disability
 - 13.2% of persons who were some other race reported a disability.

NMDVR recognizes the need to address the vocational rehabilitation needs of minorities. One such measure is to work toward the improvement of community rehabilitation programs within the state to address rehabilitation needs of minorities, especially those in remote rural communities is obvious. Geographically, New Mexico is a large state in land mass with many areas of the state sparsely populated. Many rural areas have few, if any, community rehabilitation providers (CRPs). Along with Rio Grande corridor from Taos in the northern part of the state to Las Cruces in the south, is a concentration of community rehabilitation providers in the larger communities of the Greater Albuquerque Metropolitan area, Socorro, and Las Cruces. The northeast quadrant, southeast quadrant, and the southwest quadrant are the areas most affected by the lack of service providers.

Case in point, the town of Raton in the northeast quadrant has only one CRP available to provide supported employment services. DVR also has a two person office in Raton. However, it is noted that before supported employment services can be agreed upon with the CRP, the individual must be on the Developmental Disabilities Medicaid Waiver for the long-term funding. This service provider is capable of offering services to the communities of Cimarron (41 miles) and the community of Angel Fire (80 miles) one way. Other communities served by the DVR office, such as Clayton (83 miles), Eagle Nest (65 miles), Springer (38 miles), Maxwell (about 23 miles), and Ute Park (about 50 miles) do not have the benefit of CRP services. Note: all mileage is one-way distance and the listed communities are not all inclusive of northeast New Mexico served by the DVR Office.

The same holds true for southeastern New Mexico in Lea County. There are two community rehabilitation providers in the town of Hobbs where DVR has a four person office. Both of these community rehabilitation providers are available only to individuals who live in Lea County to such places as Tatum (50 miles north) and Eunice (50 miles south). One provider specializes in mental health while the other provider specializes in developmental disabilities. All recipients of these services must have long-term funding in place before supported employment services are rendered.

In southwestern New Mexico, DVR has a two person office in Silver City where there are two community rehabilitation providers. Both providers make services available to residents in Silver City and Deming (50 miles) but not to the other communities served by the DVR office such as Mimbres (30 miles), Lordsburg (50 miles), Animas (80 miles), and Reserve (85 miles). Note: all mileage is one-way distance and the listed communities are not all inclusive of northeastern New Mexico served by the DVR Office.

Central western New Mexico is a very large territory inclusive of Indian Reservation land. American Indian populations have access to four community rehabilitation providers through their local tribal affiliations when resident on Indian land. However, for non-American Indian populations access to community rehabilitation programs is more limited to one provider and again funding is an issue relative to acquiring supported employment services. There are four staff in the Gallup DVR office serving a geographic community of almost 80 miles to the east, 25 miles to the Arizona state line, not less than 80 miles to the south, and not less than 50 miles to the north. Outside of Gallup and the services available to American Indian populations, there is not much available in terms of community rehabilitation programs in central western New Mexico.

There are other rural locations throughout the state where population is sparse and distances vast from community to community with few rehabilitation community providers. These rural locations are itinerantly served by DVR offices in larger communities with many community rehabilitation services providers stretching their resources as best they can to extend services.

Below are examples of how the Division addresses expansion of services to underserved and unserved populations with disabilities in the state.

American Indian Populations: The Division recently renewed a contract with New Vistas in Santa Fe to continue the Native American Liaison Program (NVNALP) and three of the Directors of the Section 121 American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Programs in New Mexico serve on the State Rehabilitation Council. The Division works closely with New Vistas to assure fulfillment of the contract and the Division works collaboratively with the 121 Programs to align resources, streamline services delivery, and increase employment outcomes for American Indian populations. It is also noteworthy that the Pueblo of Jemez hired a part-time individual who concurrently works part-time for New Vistas as a state liaison. The arrangement is indicative of the strength and collaboration between New Vistas and the 121 American Indian programs. The NVNALP program facilitates service delivery to American Indians living in their communities through educational outreach and culturally appropriate service delivery. Challenges include lack of transportation, inadequate community services, and high unemployment. These are similar challenges faced by NMDVR counselors serving rural populations. However, NVNALP rehabilitation technicians help the NMDVR counselors understand cultural factors that may affect relationships with American Indians. The association with New Vistas continues to help NMDVR meet its goals of culturally appropriate service delivery for American Indians with disabilities.

The Division continues to explore ways to improve services to American Indian populations as well as increasing staff competencies with respect to cultural differences. Division resources will determine priority and further development of these broad general goals of Career Development, Successful Employment Outcomes, and DVR-SRC Collaboration:

1. Career Development -
 - a. Develop, create, increase, improve specific training at Rehabilitation Academy specific to / incorporating Native American issues such as:
 - cultural competency issues,
 - identifying / listing statewide community services providers specific to Native Americans and making this information available to all counseling staff / teams
 - best practices in developing professional relationships with the 121 Programs in the state (who's who, where located, 121 Program Strengths, and their employment outreach activities)
 - the array of services 121 programs offer (what they actually offer / provide and not what is specified by law, to learn how best to dovetail DVR services / strengths with 121 Program services / strengths
 - dual participation of Native Americans in both 121 Programs and State VR, citing the laws / rules that govern this
 - have 121 Program Directors participate and/or do the topic presentations / training at Rehabilitation Academy
 - identifying best practices already employed by DVR counseling staff / teams that could be shared with attendees of Rehabilitation Academy
 - b. Develop specific on-going training for DVR staff accessible through TAS with the focus of Native American issues as they relate to vocational rehabilitation services,

- c. Project Leadership Institute for Tomorrow (LIFT) – offer a career track (module) specific to working with Native American populations. If such career development was identified and targeted as one of the overall goals for and needs of the Division specific to Project LIFT,
2. Successful Employment Outcomes –
 - a. Target increased successful employment outcomes of Native American participants as a strategic goal of the Division. This will help give focus and direction to achieving such a goal.
 - b. Explore self-employment opportunities with Native American DVR participants who have expressed desire to remain in their community with their business and / or those who want to locate their business in both their community and in the larger community
 - c. Develop working collaborative partnerships with statewide community services providers with outreach and /or specific services to Native American populations, such as Zia Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America, Inc.; Abrazos Family Support Services: Education for Parents of Indian Children with Special Needs; Native American Disability Las Center, Inc.; and of course, the Independent Living Centers throughout the state.
 - d. Many DVR counselors and staff who have expertise and / or have established networks with services to Native American populations: Gallup, Farmington, Rio Rancho, Taos, and other DVR venues. Their expertise, networking connections, and best practices should be garnered and made available to all DVR counseling staff / teams.
 3. DVR – SRC Collaborative - Participant and Stakeholder Satisfaction and Statewide Needs Assessment Surveying -

There has been considerable discussion by the SRC CSAOP / SRO subcommittee that a “study within a study” could be done specifically focusing on Native American populations. To this end, the study sample could include all DVR participants with Native American race/ethnicity coding as well as the random sampling of identified demographics for the overall, larger study that would take place. In essence, we would be conducting a “study within a study” with specific reporting reflecting the findings of the larger, whole study and the “study within a study.” This feature in the study will be incorporated while developing a contract for the service.

NMDVR/Office of African American Affairs: NMDVR continues to collaborate with the State Office of African American Affairs across the state to educate the African American Community about NMDVR services. The Community Outreach Coordinator maintains efforts and rapport with various state and government agencies, businesses, and faith-based organizations to support and market NMDVR services. Working with schools, churches, social and civic groups, as well

as other organizations and agencies, the Community Outreach Coordinator assumes a team role in efforts to overcome obstacles to employment for New Mexicans with disabilities.

Ticket to Work: The Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work program is designed to provide a network of providers for Social Security beneficiaries to obtain employment outcome services. NMDVR is an Employment Network under the Ticket to Work program, and received 182 ticket assignments total at the end of fiscal year 2006.

NMDVR and Behavioral Health Services: NMDVR is a member of New Mexico's Behavioral Health Purchasing Collaborative. During the past four year, work continued toward intra-agency collaboration specifically dealing with behavioral health services among all 17 agencies/divisions of the BHPC. Under the terms of an agreement reached with the State Behavioral Health Services Division, NMDVR continues to facilitate and monitor employment services for people within the BHSD system and to assist others in making connections with that system. Coordination of services among BHSD, NMDVR, regional employment providers, and mental health providers can increase successful employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Migrant Assistance Program: Migrant Assistance Program has been providing services to migrant and seasonal farm workers with disabilities since 2002. Services include educational opportunities, translation or interpretive services, help with job readiness and job search, client follow-up, and advocacy to an often-marginalized population. MAP targets a broad range of agriculture-related activities, including food processing, ranching, produce delivery, dairy, orchard, and field work. MAP is a federally funded project.

Navigators in One-Stop Centers: Specially trained NMDVR teams advise and advocate for people with disabilities who are seeking employment at New Mexico Workforce Connection One-Stop Career Centers. These Centers are government funded job placement offices located statewide. The Navigator Program is currently funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and the Social Security Administration through the Workforce Solutions Department and administered by NMDVR. Originally, 11 navigators worked in 14 One-Stop Centers. Designed to increase employment for Social Security beneficiaries and others with disabilities, the Navigators facilitate seamless and comprehensive services to persons with disabilities, access to programs and services, and linkage to the employer community. Navigator services are broad in range to meet diverse needs. Examples of their duties include, but are not limited to, being system change agents, problem solvers, relationship builders, to help individuals, One-Stop staff, employers, and providers. Navigators offer guidance and implementation of the following: ADA workplace policies and procedures; physical and programmatic accessibility issues; reasonable accommodations; collaboration with One-Stop staff; bridging gaps between the business and human service communities; training One-Stop staff regarding disability issues; and interagency sharing of resources to improve outcomes for people with disabilities. Due to funding issues and grant expiration, DVR does not anticipate administration of this program beyond June 2010. The Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS) is expected to staff 3 – 5 navigators to continue this program. NMDVR will provide training and technical assistance to the DWS navigator program. NMDVR will also work collaboratively with the One Stop Centers throughout the state to improve services to persons with disabilities.

There remains in the State of New Mexico the need to improve community rehabilitation programs within the state. The comprehensive statewide needs assessment reveals that continued training of rehabilitation counselors and rehabilitation technicians in the benefits of their clients utilizing services of One-Stop Centers. Also, it appears that the Division can improve efforts in encouraging DVR participants to avail themselves to the One-Stop Centers for employment services.

DRAFT