



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) Complete 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 has historically conducted 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. Recently, this has been interrupted due to budgetary constraints. The Division plans to move forward with an evaluation in the fall of 2011. The 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 NMDVR. Note 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 NMDVR 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. Only about 13% of those who visited reported that the One-Stop was able to understand their disability needs; this is perhaps more disturbing. 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. Dr. Anthony Cahill in a preliminary study “Barriers to Access to Healthcare for People in New Mexico” 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 influence 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”

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. NMDVR 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 NMDVR Office.

The same holds true for southeastern New Mexico in Lea County. There are two community rehabilitation providers in the town of Hobbs where NMDVR has a four-person office. 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, NMDVR 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 NMDVR 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 NMDVR 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 NMDVR 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 scarce and distances vast from community to community with few rehabilitation community providers. These rural locations are itinerantly served by NMDVR 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.

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 NMDVR-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 NMDVR 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 NMDVR counseling staff / teams that could be shared with attendees of Rehabilitation Academy
 - b. Develop specific on-going training for NMDVR staff accessible through the Training Administration System (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 NMDVR counselors and staff with special skills and networks service Native American populations in Gallup, Farmington. Taos, Rio Ranch and other areas with their expertise, networking connections, and best practices should be garnered and made available to all NMDVR counseling staff / teams.
3. NMDVR – 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 NMDVR 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.

The New Mexico Cultivando Habilidades/Cultivating Abilities (CHCA): The New Mexico Cultivando Habilidades/Cultivating Abilities (CHCA) 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. CHCA targets a broad range of agriculture-related activities, including food processing, ranching, produce delivery, dairy, orchard, and fieldwork. CHCA is a federally funded project.

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