

**New Mexico Division
of Vocational Rehabilitation
Health and Human
Services Meeting
October 5, 2022**



NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH (NDEAM)

2022 THEME

DISABILITY: PART OF THE EQUITY EQUATION



#NDEAM | [DOL.GOV/ODEP](https://dol.gov/odep)



Our Vision:

Every New Mexican with a disability is empowered with the resources to contribute to their quality of life and the economic prosperity of the State.

Our Mission:

We are committed to ensuring that every New Mexican with a disability achieves their employment goals and thrives in their communities.

Our Values:

Inclusivity–Diversity–Empowerment–Collaboration–Innovation–Respect

History of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program

- Smith-Fess Act of 1920
 - VR run by State Boards of Education
 - 1954: Allowed org structure option; agency could be administered by a State Agency primarily concerned with VR and other rehab
 - 1965: Amendments allowed VR to be administered by a State Agency that contained at least two other units administering a program of education, health, welfare or labor
 - NMDVR remains under Public Education Department (PED)
 - General VR Agency
 - Blind VR Agency

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR)

34 CFR 361.13

- State Agency Administration
 - Requires a State Agency primarily concerned with VR, or VR and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, or
 - **A State Agency that includes a VR bureau, division or other organizational unit must:**
 - Be primarily concerned with VR, or VR and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, and be responsible for the VR program of the Designated State Agency (DSA);
 - Be administered by a full-time director;
 - Employ staff on the rehabilitation work of the organizational unit all or substantially all of whom devote their full-time to such work; and,
 - Be located at an organizational level and have an organizational status within the DSA comparable to that of other major organizational units of the DSA;
 - Have the sole authority and responsibility to expend funds

NMDVR Organizational Structure

NMDVR is a division of the Public Education Department

Director appointed by the Governor

25 offices throughout New Mexico

22 Field Offices

DDS 1 Office

2 Admin Offices (SF & ABQ)

Rehabilitation Services Unit (RSU)

- Deputy Director
- 3 Field Operations Directors
- 9 Program Managers
- 78 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
- 37 Vocational Rehabilitation Technicians
- Independent Living Program

Disability Determination Services (DDS)

- Administrator
- 96 Disability Adjudicator Positions

Administrative Services Unit (ASU)

- Deputy Director
- Chief Financial Officer

Information Technology

- Chief Information Officer

Human Resources

- Director

Legal

- Supervising Attorney

COUNCILS

Mandated by Federal Regulation

- **STATE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL (SILC)**

- Consumer controlled; majority must be individuals with disabilities and Centers for Independent Living Directors
- Adheres to a philosophy of “independent living” or empowerment of persons with disabilities to make their own decisions and life choices to the greatest extent possible
- Develops the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) every 3 years

- **STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL (SRC)**

- Consumer controlled; mandated members
- Reviews, analyzes, and advises NMDVR regarding rehabilitation programs and policies administered by the agency
- Partners with NMDVR to ensure the highest quality services are made available to those seeking support services
- Conducts a Client Satisfaction Survey every 3 years
- Creates SRC Annual Report including recommendations for NMDVR

Rehabilitation Services Unit (RSU)

- **Vocational
Rehabilitation
Process**



Referral

Application

Eligibility
Determination

Comprehensive
Assessment

Individualized
Plan for
Employment
(IPE)

Employment

RSU Services

Vocational Guidance & Counseling

School to Work Transition Planning

Training

Medical & Psychological Restoration

Assistive Technology

Job Training/Coaching/Support

Job Seeking Skills & Job Search



RSU Economic Impact

NMDVR receives federal grant funding for the operation of the State Vocational Rehabilitation program

78.7% Federal Funding

21.3% NM State General Fund Match

Federal Revenue Increase of **\$519,270** for FY24

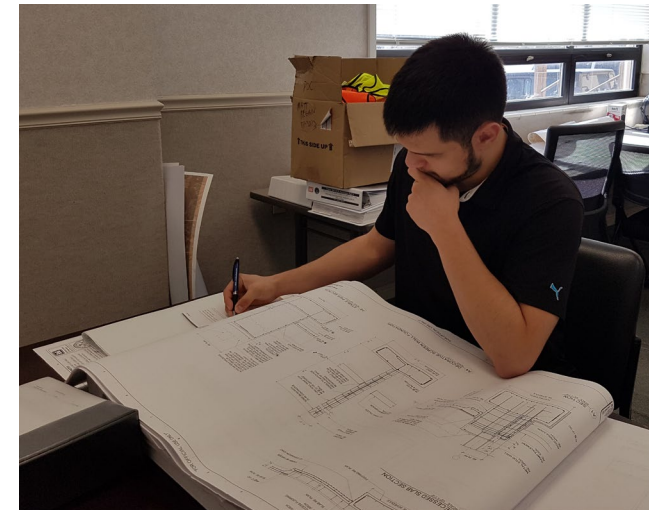
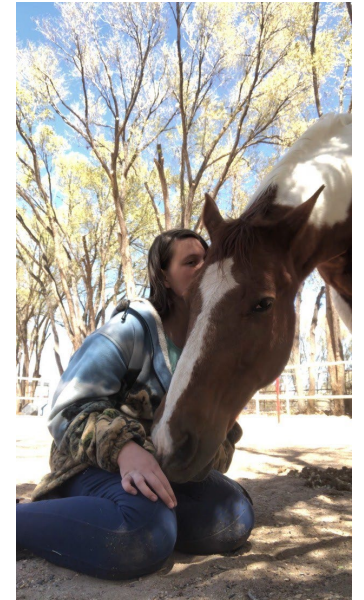
Requesting **\$140,540** in State General Fund match to allow draw down of our full Federal Funds



- ✓ Commitment to ensuring each NM with a disability achieves their employment goals and thrives in their communities
- ✓ Opportunity for inclusion and independence
- ✓ Increased income/earnings for New Mexicans with disabilities
- ✓ Return on investment to the state of New Mexico through income taxes
- ✓ Employment is a right!

2021-22 Annual Report

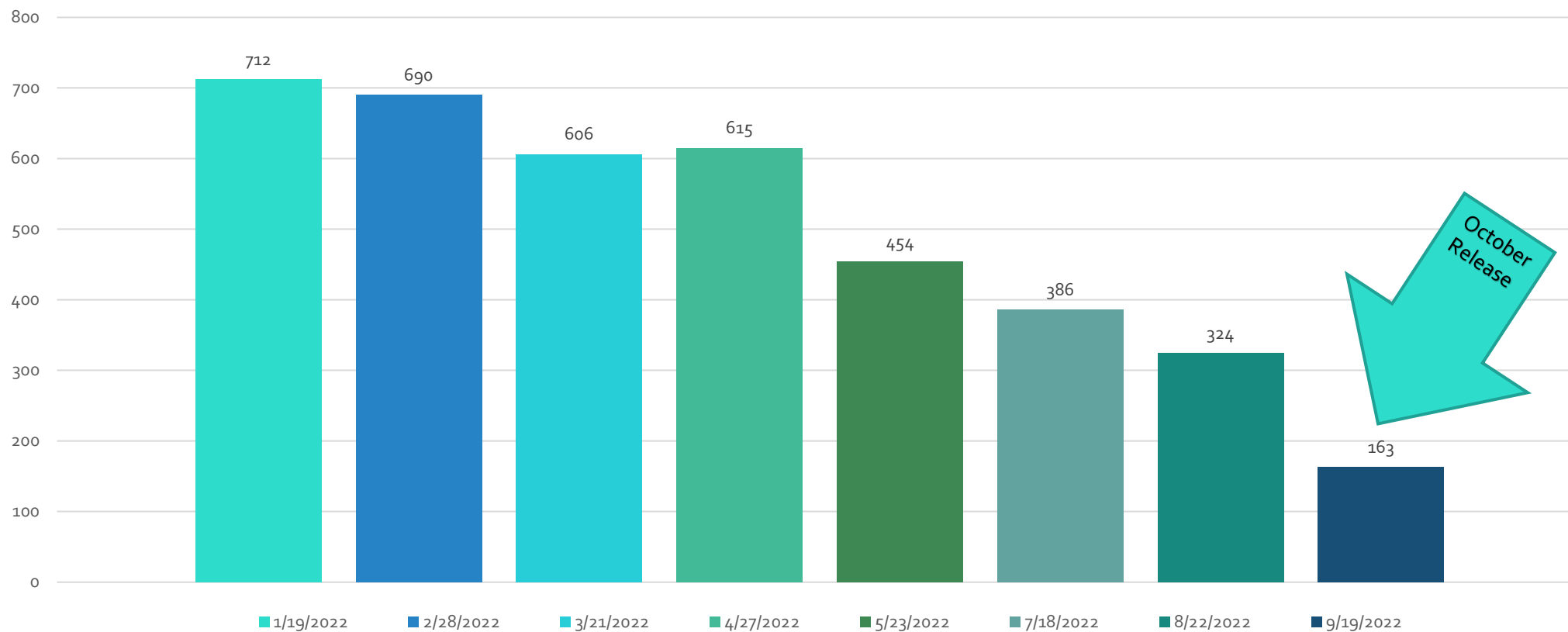
- Agency served 7,870 participants
- 437 competitively employed New Mexico participants
- Average annual salary of participants: \$24,618.48
- Total Wages for successfully rehabilitated individuals: \$10,930,604.36



RSU-OOS

OOS Release Date	Number of Participants Released
1/19/2022	101
2/28/2022	204
3/21/2022	102
4/27/2022	50
5/23/2022	200
7/18/2022	102
8/22/2022	102
9/19/2022	201
TOTAL	1062

RSU-Order of Selection (OOS)



RSU-School to Work Transition

- Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires VR Agencies to set aside at least 15% of their federal funds to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR programs
- 5 Core Pre-ETS
 - Job Exploration Counseling
 - Work-Based Learning Experiences
 - Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education
 - Education in Self-Advocacy
 - Workplace Readiness Training

RSU-School to Work Transition

- Pre-ETS and other transition services provided by:
 - 7 Transition Counselors
 - Transition Program Manager
 - Added Transition VR Tech to assist
 - 8 Contracts
 - UNM-Center for Development & Disability
 - Rocky Mountain Youth Corps
 - Mandy's Farm
 - Best Buddies
 - Rio Rancho School District
 - Taos School District
 - Las Cruces School District
 - Jemez VR-Project HOPE (not currently active)

RSU-Project SEARCH

- 2 National Awards for 100% Employment Placement 2020-'21, every intern placed earning minimum wage or higher
 - Hilton Garden Inn Gallup
 - Embassy Suites Albuquerque
- 8 Project SEARCH Sites
 - Albuquerque-UNM Hospital & Embassy Suites
 - Rio Rancho-Rust Hospital
 - Farmington-City of Farmington
 - Santa Fe-Pueblo of Pojoaque
 - Gallup-Hilton Garden Inn
 - Las Cruces-(Employer Pending)
 - Alamogordo-Holloman Air Force Base

Partners for Employment (PFE)

PFE's mission is to build capacity by providing training, technical assistance and opportunities for networking and collaboration to increase competitive and integrated employment for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

- Statewide collaborative effort by UNM/Center for Development and Disability, Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) and NMDVR
- As of September 2022 in NM,
 - 217 Association for Community Rehabilitation Educator (ACRE) certificate holders
 - 60 Certified Employment Support Professionals (CESP) credential holders
- In FY22
 - 121 professionals participated in College of Employment Services
 - 79 providers reached through PFE trainings

<https://unmhealth.org/services/development-disabilities/programs/other-disability-programs/partners-for-employment/>

Disability Determination Services (DDS)

- 100% federally funded through the Social Security Administration (SSA)
- DDS Adjudicator Positions-worked with State Personnel Office (SPO) to create alternative pay band, now able to recruit with a HS Diploma or GED
- 2022 Training Symposium-restarted annual staff training event
- FY22 Hiring Authority-28 positions
- FY23 Hiring Authority-granting approval to fill vacant positions
- First in the region to fully transition to SSA proprietary case processing system
- No findings on the SSA audit

DDS-FY22 Performance

- **Total Workload Clearance** 22,781
- **Exceeded all FY22 SSA Workload Targets**
- **Initial Level Claims**
 - Budgeted—12,000
 - Completed—14,112
 - Exceeded SSA Goal
- **Reconsideration Claims**
 - Budgeted—1,044
 - Completed—1,270
 - Exceeded SSA Goal
- **Continuing Disability Reviews (CDRs)**
 - Budgeted—768
 - Completed—5,314
 - In coordination with National DDS Partners, helping Regional and National Workload Targets
 - Exceeded SSA Goal
- **Accuracy**
- The DDS NM has a current year-to-date accuracy of 96.1%
 - Ranked 1st in the Dallas region
 - Tied for 5th in the nation
 - The regional average for year-to-date initial accuracy is 93.1%
 - National average of 94.0%

DDS-National Recognition

- **Kryss Duran**, Professional Relations Unit Supervisor
Associate Commissioner's Individual Citation Award from SSA
- **Roberto Cruz**, Policy Manager
Asked to speak on a national level regarding claim accuracy
- **Charles "Alan" Hamlin**, Administrator
National Disability Issues Subgroup
National Council of DDS Directors

NMDVR FY22 Achievements

- DDS Adjudicator alternative pay band
- Lower vacancy rates in all units
- Elimination of the waitlist for VR services
- Renewed partnerships with many agencies & stakeholders
- Update of NMAC 6.63.11 Counselor Licensure Rule
- Increased outreach through social media and 'Round the Roundhouse
- Increased internal communication via monthly all-staff meetings & DVReporter
- Regular Success Stories and Press Releases

NMDVR FY22 Achievements

- Improved data reporting
- Completion of MOA with Public Education Department & joint memo from PED Special Education Division & NMDVR to all school districts regarding School to Work Transition Services and NMDVR Contacts
- Increased internal controls, additional contracts and financial training for all staff
- Highest user of DocuSign among State Agencies to eliminate paper waste and improved process control
- Addition to RISE NM project
- Creation of new positions
- Additional plans to reassign vacant positions to areas of most need

Thank you!

- Casey Stone-Romero, MRC, CRC
Director
Casey.Stone-Romero@dvr.nm.gov
- Tina Montoya
Human Resources Director
Tina.Montoya@dvr.nm.gov
- Nash Sisneros
RSU Deputy Director
Nash.Sisneros@dvr.nm.gov
- Therese "Terry" Trujillo
Administrative Services Deputy Director/CFO
Therese.Trujillo@dvr.nm.gov
- <https://www.dvr.state.nm.us/>

