

New Mexico Commission for Deaf & Hard of Hearing



Quarterly Report FY25 Quarter 1



FY25 Quarter 1 Board Report

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NMCDHH BOARD MEETING
Thursday, December 5, 2024
3:00 PM

The meeting will be virtual and hosted on Zoom. The public can view the meeting livestream on YouTube with interpreters and captioning at this link:

www.youtube.com/live/7f9Q3TsFzq4

DRAFT AGENDA
Posted 11/21/2024

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call
- II. Action Items:
 - A. Approval of Agenda
 - B. Approval of Minutes - June 6, 2024
 - C. Introduction of New Commissioner – Mr. Joseph Lopez, III
 - D. Confirm Meeting Dates for Calendar Year 2025
 - March 27, June 5, September 4, December 4
 - E. Adoption of Revised OMA Resolution
 - F. Executive Director's Goals
- III. Reports
 - a. Executive Director Report
 - b. Department Reports
 - Community Advocacy
 - Community Engagement
 - Administrative Services
- IV. Adjournment



**STATE OF NEW MEXICO
COMMISSION FOR DEAF & HARD OF HEARING**

*Quarterly Board Meeting
Thursday, September 5, 2024
3:00pm*

Canceled

The Board meeting was canceled due to unforeseen circumstances.

Executive Summary

G. Nathan Gomme, Executive Director

I am pleased to present the Fiscal Year 25 (FY25) first quarter report for the New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing. In this report, I will provide some information about the thought process and plans for this upcoming fiscal year and also with our budget request for Fiscal Year 26 (FY26). I will be touching on some of the challenges we are already seeing and some steps that are being taken to address concerns with the growth of our Support Service Program, updates with what we are looking to do this fiscal year with the updated language from the Older Americans Access Act, some events that were attended and plans for our Equipment Distribution Program to offset some of the concerns we are seeing with the future of relay services, and some plans in our budget request for FY26, which began being discussed in this first quarter.

First, with the new contract being signed for the Support Service Provider (SSP) Program just before the end of the previous fiscal year, we were unable to meet with the awarded vendor, Vancro, until July 1st. We wanted to meet with them as soon as we could to start discussions about the training and implementation of the pilot program for Communication Facilitators (CFs) and the community utilizing the service. One of the first things discussed was the need to make a clear delineation between SSPs and CF's, both for community and for staff understanding. To that end, Mark Lucero-Muñiz, who will be leading the pilot program at Vancro, created several presentations to review with Ms. Corina Gutiérrez and myself. These addressed several aspects such as confidentiality, how to facilitate effectively, what an appropriate set up would look like and the transition between roles such as SSP and CF. There were also scenarios to review and a version of the Code of Conduct for Communication Facilitators. Mr. Lucero-Muñiz did a wonderful job working out the nuances of this program and developing training material that could enable the newly minted CF's in doing their job.

Below is an example of the training module that was used in August for a 6-hour session.

ROLE PLAYING

- Set up
- Process on transition from SSP to CF/ CF to SSP
- How to make call (Gather number and putting number on Telecommunication device)
- Facilitating the message to participants

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There also needed to be discussions on the needs for space, technology and resources to implement the program effectively. One of the first things that will be done is to establish a workspace for Communication Facilitators and the persons involved with the program, separate from the space at PAH! Hiland. This is critical for privacy and the separation between SSP services and CF services. The space will also be used for CF training, which, as I mentioned, the first session of which occurred in August. In addition to the training, Vancro provided a survey to the staff participants to see how they felt about the training and set up for the new space, prior to the first assignments. The program will also be purchasing equipment to serve, in some situations as a backup

device, for the community to use if they don't have the necessary equipment or if their equipment is not effective. We will be looking at the possibility of discussing MyMMX, a software to enable various methods of communication via telecommunication devices including; braille, large type, Real Time Text and a special version for Communication Facilitators. Shortly after the onboarding and after reviewing feedback, two other presentations were created. The first was a Review training for the new Communication Facilitators and users of the service. The next was training on Haptics, which occurred in September. We are looking forward to the program moving to the next phase, which is usage and expansion. The usage or stress test of the program will begin in October.

This new addition to the suite of programs provided in the state with Communication Facilitators is exciting, as we become the fourth state to formally provide the program, we have to consider the challenges we are seeing with the Support Service Program. As I mentioned in the fourth quarter report from last fiscal year, we saw huge growth in the program, which we have not historically seen. In fiscal years prior to FY23 we saw a 10%-11% growth in users of the services. The growth from the end of FY23 to the end of FY24 was more than 50.1%, showing a high demand and need for the SSP services which also correlated with the opening of PAH! Hiland, which brought a number of new residents to the state of New Mexico. Over the course of the prior fiscal year, we looked to see if the situation was an outlier or a trend of things to come with the program, and looking to see if there were any concerns with funding in the future. Uncertainty about other potential programs and funding opportunities to address the needs of the community that moved to New Mexico, as well as the fact that the vendor had an office in that space, added to the reliance on the program for various requests and invited expectations for "services-on-demand", in a sense. While this was expected by the vendor and the commission, it was not realistic in terms of the actual funding that was available. With the continued growth of the user base of SSP services, we soon got to a point where funding was going to be a concern in FY25. The amount of need and funding remained uncertain, however. At the end of the last fiscal year, we expended all but \$46 dollars on the Purchase Order. I began discussions with Ms. Gutiérrez about what we would need to do to ensure services could be maintained at the level we

expected, and we both thought that the funding was sufficient, at the time, if the program didn't continue to grow due to an influx of new residents like it did in FY24, but we needed to look to continue expanding the funding for FY26. Shortly into FY25, we learned that the vendor was able to continue finding additional people in need of their services and began considering a cap on monthly use of SSP services. The cap was in order to ensure equitable use of SSPs by all persons utilizing the program. This led to some complaints that the cap of 20 hours per month was not acceptable. Both Ms. Gutiérrez and I met with the Zia Deaf Blind Club and with the vendor in August to explain the rationale and how services would continue with an emphasis on coordinating and scheduling time better. We felt this would help with any of the concerns that people had that they couldn't schedule their needs. We also discussed videos and one-on-one explanations to the community using the services. In early October, we will be meeting with the Senior community to discuss these services associated with their group's needs.

When reviewing our request for funding in FY26, I considered several key factors that were identified during the first quarter of this fiscal year. First and foremost, I wanted to ensure we had, at minimum, the same amount of funding that we received for both the SSP services and CF services. The CF services for FY25 was done via a special appropriation. However, my intent is to ensure these funds become a permanent part of the funding available to the awarded vendor. This additional funding is currently a portion of the total funding for SSP services for this year, and even with that funding I don't know that it will be enough in the future with what we have seen of the growth thus far. I do caution the assumption that the funding would be a guarantee. As I previously mentioned, the addition of Pah Hiland and historically minimal growth of the program could indicate that the FY24 expenditure is an outlier, without more data showing a sustained growth. While this year will be helpful in showing if the growth is consistent, it does not factor into the data we have readily available and requires continued information from the vendor. The vendor has been incredibly supportive of providing the information and supportive of the initiative to look for funding but also has to operate within the funding it has available to it. The vendor has also been committed to serving

the community, working to resolve any barriers, and finding other funds to support the community. While it is frustrating to have to consider capping services, the information about growth and the sustained growth will be helpful in the next few years in securing additional funds, which will be one of my goals moving forward. The partnership we have is part of the reason we can look at growing a program appropriately with the correct data and resources. In addition to the request to cover the special appropriation to continued/reoccurring funding for the SSP/CF services, my hope is to collect enough information from the vendor prior to the finance hearing to put in an additional request for funding if we are able to for the FY26 budget request.

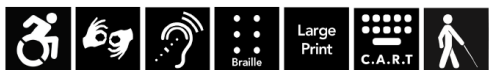
I have also been working on finding an auditor that can audit the relay funding both on the state level and on the federal level for our relay surcharge collections. Historically, we only audited the collections through our state taxation and revenue offices. This allows us to edit information collected by the state, but many people don't know that the information is also submitted to the federal regulators; their reporting requirements are more in depth and that is how they collect the surcharge for the federally provided relay services, such as the Video Relay Services (VRS). We are not able to see those details but could be able to work with a vendor who could see them. I learned of two states who contract with this vendor with the intent of doing these type of spot audits. One state was able to find over a million dollars in unannounced and collected funds that the state should have received. My hope is that with this audit we will be able to recoup any lost funding we should had received, and to also put the discussion about increasing our collection rate back as the only viable solution to our decline issues. This audit would require a one-time appropriation which I discussed with our analysts in a September budget meeting. Another aspect of our funding request was in improving our hardware to ensure our staff can do their job effectively, this was also a one-time funding request that Mr. Trevor Brennan explains later in the report. All of the requests were added to the budget request submitted in early September along with the P1 for FY26. We also met with our analysts to discuss the plans for the October hearing on our funding request. We were informed that we would be seeing a different process during this

preliminary hearing than in the past. So, both Ms. Romero and I wanted to ensure we had everything buttoned up in the request before the hearing.

Some other matters that occurred during the first quarter of the fiscal year are related to some work done with our colleagues in the state. I attended a Disability Awareness Event in July followed by the Disability Awards later in July, both in Santa Fe. Mr. John Hooper, NCMDHH Board Member and HLAA Santa Fe Chapter President, was a recipient of the award for his work in advocating for captioning as was Ms. Lisa McNiven, from the Governor's Commission on Disabilities, for her work with PAH! Hiland. It was great to see them both acknowledged for their work. I also continued work with the CoLab on developing presentations for the state on upcoming Web Content and Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) changes and plans. These are presented during a monthly CoLab event where state Chief Information Officers (CIOs), Public Information Officers (PIOs), and staff are invited to learn about best practices with accessibility tools and resources. To date, I have co-presented 3 of these, an example of one of the presentations is below. Most of these center on things such as alt text in documents and online, Accessibility and Inclusion with cyber security in mind, and Voluntary Product Accessibility Templates. Mr. Brennan and I have also presented on some of the accessibility tools to our Department of Advocacy.

Writing Alternative Text: Best Practices for Digital Accessibility

Digital Accessibility and Inclusion Collaborative (CoLab)



CoLab 09-26-2024
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Our agency began working with the Disability Employment Awareness Month Conference group chaired by Ms. McNiven to provide resources and support in the one-day event in October. The event is meant to provide an accessible venue to award employers who hire individuals with a disability here in New Mexico, as well as to give persons with a disability a chance to interview with potential employers here in our state. Our agency will be working to find a sponsor for their event which will likely be Hamilton Relay. We will also be assisting with the coordination of the ASL interpreter services, which Ms. Dignan and Ms. Eubank will be assisting with, and CART services for the event. To support the coordination, I am working with the group to create a registration form that can be used to plan out accommodations not just for our hearing loss community but for anyone who attends. This will be one of the last big events Ms. Dignan will be working with me on as she announced her retirement earlier in the first quarter. This work like all of her other work, has been greatly appreciated and valued by

the Commission and the state. Another thing that we needed to work out in the first quarter was the Lease agreement with our current building. Ms. Deborah Romero and I worked to get the lease amended for the next 5 years. This took an inordinate amount of time due to some issues with getting our legal representative to sign off on the lease and due to needing clarification on who, from the New Mexico Department of Justice (NMDOJ), would be working with us for the year. During my work with Ms. Romero on the building lease she began to introduce Ms. Vairea Rice, our recently promoted Financial Services Specialist, into the agreement processes which included the vehicle leases for FY25, Ms. Rice is quickly learning and becoming a critical part of the agency functions. In addition, I have been reviewing the gaps in services to our senior community with respect to the Older Americans Act. While our program for SSP's and CF's shores up some gaps we still need to look at the coordination between state entities, the vendor being used for transportation services and potential vendors in ASL interpreting services, especially as we see projections nationally for the older adult population growing to 73.1 Million Americans, 21% of the overall population by 2030. As one of my goals, I will address some proposed plans to address some of the gaps noted.

Mr. Sinderholm and I went to the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association (TEDPA) Conference as well as the National Association for State Relay Administrators (NASRA) Conference during the first quarter. This was important as both programs will be transitioned to Mr. Sinderholm's oversight by the end of the fiscal year. We attended several workshops discussing the future of Relay and the Equipment Distribution Program, with a heavy amount of the discussion centering around the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the realm of accessibility tools. We met with vendors such as Whispp, a company offering a new take on Assistive Voice Technology, got opportunities to test equipment such as Earzz, and were able to discuss topics with representatives from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and various other vendors, such as InnoCaption, Nagish, and more. One of the hot topics was the decline in some captioning services in various states, which was difficult to effectively transition to new technology, due to old rules that prevented specific information sharing with the

states. Instead, we see many people lose access to the services, and more are at risk of the same, due to a lack of an effective replacement tool. This discussion is complex based upon the rules with which states and vendors are required to comply, but the discussion is the only way to potentially support the community and also possibly transfer the funding to programs such as Communication Facilitators without potential harm to another group of users. We are already working on editing our catalog to disseminate to the community by the midpoint of this fiscal year and incorporate some AI-ready hardware and updated iPhones. Mr. Sinderholm also has already volunteered himself to be an active member of the TEDPA and NASRA boards and support our state's continued involvement in leadership in these two important organizations. Another result of attending the NASRA conference was a request to present to the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners in October. My presentation will be to the Senior Director of Regulatory Affairs for InnoCaption. The plan is to encourage the regulators to help us update the current LifeLine minimum standards, found on the FCC website, to expand access to services. Below is a screen shot from our presentation.



ACCESS TO TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES BY INDIVIDUALS WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

Nathan Gomme & Cristina Duarte

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Mr. Brennan and I continue to work on our Acceptable Use Policies to provide to DoIT in November and in response to the Cybersecurity Executive Order. Our work addresses various policies related to things like safe use of emails all the way to the upcoming of use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. I continue to work with Mr. Brennan on addressing IT related issues in the agency. In addition to much of the work being done with IT, our agency is also working to improve our accessibility policies related to our website and documents. In addition, I am pleased to announce that the Legislative Services at the Roundhouse hired an ADA coordinator, and I have already begun working with Robin Garrison on the accommodation suggestions I discussed in the last report. I have gone to the Roundhouse several times already to discuss and review plans for the upcoming session. I also met with AccesSOS and representatives from the New Mexico

Association for the Deaf in late September to discuss the launch of the program and NMAD's involvement in rolling out the information to the community.

Thank you for your time and thank you to all of the staff here at the Commission.

G. Nathan Gomme

Executive Director Goals for the Fiscal Year

Summary of Goals

1. Work to request and potentially receive increased permanent funding for the Support Service Provider (SSP) and Communication Facilitator (CF) Programs.
2. Have a plan in place by end of Fiscal Year to comply with Title II of the Americans with Disability Act, Web Content Accessibility Guideline requirements that take effect in April 2026 regarding the Commission website and social media postings.
3. With the statewide plan expiring in 2025, I will work to be involved with the review application of the revisions to the Older Americans Act and the definition changes.
4. Develop a Task Force to address the interpreter shortage in New Mexico and the Commission's approach to mentoring.

1.

In light of the new details and growth of the SSP Program, and with the addition of the Communication Facilitator Pilot Program, it is critical we make the necessary additions to the budget requests for the longevity of the program as well as the potential expansion of the services, as seen by the Q1 growth and growth in the last fiscal year. In order to effectively do so, my short term goals for this are as follows:

- Collecting data from our current vendor, Vancro, and making funding requests to first stabilize the revenue at the increased budget we currently received for this fiscal year. This will mean the request will change the additional \$200,000 in funding from a special appropriation to a more permanent reoccurring fund.
 - The first part of this goal will be done in the budget request due in September which has already taken place.
 - The next will be justifying and discussing with the finance committee on ways to ensure a continued period of funding in the budget bill during the legislative session.
 - I will also be discussing the plans for the Communication Facilitator program in the list of required services by the FCC. If this occurs there may be a precedent to use the relay funding for the CF program and reassess fund allocation.
- Reviewing the data to showcase growth on a consistent basis as well as expected growth numbers to justify an increased request for the next fiscal year budget request by June. This request will need to show a continued pattern of growth to justify. If that data is found I will incorporate that into the request as needed. Throughout all of this I will also have Ms. Gutiérrez work with me to also learn some of these steps and support this goal for the community services.

2.

With the recent addition of the WCAG requirements to the ADA and the expectation that by 2026 all of our material and online presence will be accessible, I will be working with Mr. Brennan, and potentially the new Director of Community Engagement, to overhaul the website and tools used to disseminate information. Over the past several years, many things have been updated and improved on the website but without a comprehensive assessment of the website and documents available to the community we are at risk for noncompliance, and we do not want to wait until it is too late to address. To that end, an assessment and potential remediation of the website is an obligation of the agency, and I will be working to bring our web presence into compliance by the end of the calendar year, with a full plan in place by the end of the fiscal year. Therefore, my short term goals in regard to this are:

- Full assessment of current state of the website in terms of compliance.
- Meet with web developer to go over remediation needs and, if possible, website overhauls.
- Review all social media policies related to posting and dissemination.
- Educate staff on standard policies for document accessibility and implement them in policies moving forward.

3.

The changes to the Older Americans Act that I have seen so far have been mostly definitions. We will need to become engaged in the statewide planning development in order to bring up topics specific to our community, which include things such as, expanding disability definitions to include communication disabilities, enhancing coordination between state agencies and area agencies on aging serving individuals with communication disabilities, and look to comprehensive care models that are accessible. My short term goals are as follows:

- Get involved in the statewide planning committee for the upcoming development of the revision of the New Mexico State Plan for Aging and Long-Term Services Department. The current term of the state plan is until September 2025.
- Attend Senior Day and annual conferences to participate in discussions for our community.
- Continue working with Vancro to see if there are more caregiver trainings that could be taken by potential caregivers.

4.

Challenges with interpreting availability have become a common discussion point in the community. In rural parts of the state this has long been an issue, but we are seeing it more and more in other parts of our day-to-day life as persons with a hearing loss. During the first quarter I was approached with a request to take some steps to address some of the concerns. We need to take some steps to address some of the barriers we have acknowledged and grow the pool available interpreters throughout the state. With

respect to what our agency can do, I will work with the incoming Director of Community Engagement, and Ms. Jessica Eubank, to explore some possible outcomes, but for now my short term goals are as follows:

- Develop a task force to review all barriers and possible solutions for a strategic plan.
- Review if there are any needed revisions in our approach to mentoring.
- Look at how we are providing professional development in the rural parts of the state.

Community Advocacy

Corina Gutiérrez, Director of Community Advocacy

Individual/System Advocacy & Public Policy

The Department of Community Advocacy continued to work with members of the Hearing Loss community, which includes individuals who are Deaf, DeafBlind, Deaf with Additional Disabilities Hard of Hearing, and Speech Disabled, to address communication barriers that they encounter in their daily lives. These communication barriers prevent access to services on both a systemic and individual levels. This first quarter of FY25, we addressed communication barriers with health care providers, dental offices, law firms, courts, corporations, and non-profit organizations. During the first quarter of FY25, our department worked on various projects. We remain mindful of any potential high-risk situations with COVID-19 and practice safety protocols, when needed.

Our Director of Community Advocacy, Ms. Corina Gutiérrez, successfully advocated for a Deaf individual with an additional disability who was hospitalized without an on-site interpreter. Ms. Gutiérrez reached out to the hospital coordinator to inform them that no interpreters had been provided, even though the individual needed one to communicate with her physical therapist. While the hospital attempted to use Video Remote Interpreting (VRI), the nurses were unfamiliar with how it worked and instead the individual had to communicate through writing, which caused frustration, as English was not the first language of the Deaf person. The coordinator promptly addressed the situation, and the individual received interpreter support for the remainder of her stay, resulting in a successful resolution.

Ms. Gutiérrez worked with a representative from a health insurance company to educate them on the importance of providing on-site interpreters when meeting with Deaf senior individuals to discuss their daily living needs. Additionally, she worked with them to ensure that a local health clinic provided ASL interpreters for the Deaf community members who needed their services. This resulted in a positive outcome.

Ms. Gutiérrez, Mr. Robb, and Mr. Stidham met with some directors from the Health Care Authority who oversee the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waiver to discuss the

communication access for our Deaf, DeafBlind, Deaf with Additional Disabilities, and Hard of Hearing individuals who are on the DD waiver. Our advocacy staff worked with some individuals who have had little to no communication access at their group homes, regarding different planning meetings, etc. The CDHH team advocated for the individual and educated the group home, case worker, social worker, etc. to ensure they understood their responsibility to provide ASL interpreters for the community members being served. The directors were very much interested in working with Mr. Robb to do the Hearing Loss Sensitivity training in the future for their organization. We will continue to partner to ensure that they provide the appropriate communication access for our community in NM.

Ms. Gutiérrez and Mr. Robb were invited to an Albuquerque Police Department's (APD) Coffee with Cops event, hosted by PAH! Hiland, where two ASL interpreters were provided. With the help of the interpreters, the community had the opportunity to meet various department representatives and learn about their roles. They expressed interest in organizing a similar event for our Deaf, DeafBlind, Deaf with Additional Disabilities, Deaf Seniors, and Hard of Hearing community at PAH! Hiland, where all residents of the development, as well as the Deaf community at large, would be able to attend. This event would help our community better understand the responsibilities of each department within APD. We plan to meet with different stakeholders in January 2025 to discuss this further.

Ms. Gutiérrez and Mr. Robb worked with a manager from UNMH Interpreter Language Services to provide guidance on a new video project they are working on. The project involves recording an interpreter signing for UNM-H wayfinding videos to improve community and patient access. We recommended using a Deaf interpreter for the video instead of a hearing interpreter. The manager agreed with our suggestion and will work with the interpreter referral agency to find a Deaf interpreter for the project.

Ms. Gutiérrez continued to actively engage in monthly/quarterly meetings with the New Mexico DeafBlind Task Force.

Here are some of the accomplishments of Community Advocacy Specialist, Ms. Myra Sandoval:

- Ms. Sandoval successfully advocated for the mother of a Deaf child to ensure that a dentist's office provided an ASL interpreter for the child. Initially, the mother attempted to advocate for her child directly, but the office required further education to understand their need to provide accommodations. Ms. Sandoval engaged with several managers, and a positive outcome was reached as the office agreed to provide an interpreter for appointments.
- Ms. Sandoval worked with a courthouse to ensure that an ASL interpreter and a Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) were provided for a Deaf individual with additional disabilities during their hearing. As a result, the courthouse successfully facilitated communication access for this individual.
- Ms. Sandoval assisted a Hard of Hearing individual, who does not know ASL, but does benefit from closed captioning. During a courthouse hearing conducted via Zoom an ASL interpreter was initially provided. However, this accommodation did not provide the appropriate communication access for this individual. The individual stated that captions displayed during the Zoom meeting would be effective. Ms. Sandoval worked with the courthouse to ensure that captions were enabled and available for the Zoom session. As a result, the captions were provided.
- Ms. Sandoval advocated for a DeafBlind individual to secure appropriate communication access at a dental office. In the past, the office had not provided an interpreter. Ms. Sandoval educated the dental office about the communication needs of DeafBlind patients. The office suggested using VRI instead of an in-person interpreter. The patient agreed to try the VRI and was satisfied with the service. Ultimately, the dental office agreed to provide the necessary communication access, resulting in a positive outcome.

Here are some of the accomplishments of Community Advocacy Specialist, Mr. Dennis Stidham:

- Community Advocacy Specialist, Dennis Stidham, worked with a local dentist's office to ensure they provided an ASL interpreter for a Deaf patient. A change in management led to the absence of an interpreter. Mr. Stidham educated the new office staff about their responsibility to provide an interpreter and shared a fact sheet to support this. The outcome was successful, and the office arranged for an interpreter for the Deaf individual.

- Mr. Stidham advocated for a Deaf individual to ensure that a healthcare provider arranged an ASL interpreter for their home visits. Initially, the provider informed the individual they would need to bring their own interpreter. However, Mr. Stidham worked with the provider, explaining that it was their responsibility to provide one. After reviewing procedures for requesting an interpreter, the individual had an interpreter for their home visits and was very pleased with the outcome.
- Mr. Stidham worked with the father of a Deaf with Additional Disabilities individual to ensure that a non-profit organization provided an ASL interpreter for the individual's evaluation appointment, after initially requesting that the father interpret. However, Mr. Stidham worked with the organization, educating them about their obligation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title III to provide an interpreter, and how it is not appropriate to use a family member as an interpreter in situations like these. He also shared relevant fact sheets. As a result, the organization after learning of their responsibilities, provided an ASL interpreter for an evaluation.
- Mr. Stidham worked with the Human Resources department of a large corporation to ensure they established a contract with an interpreter referral agency to provide an ASL interpreter for a Deaf individual during their onboarding training.
- Mr. Stidham worked with another large corporation that, initially, did not provide an ASL interpreter for a Deaf individual who uses ASL. He informed the manager that the corporation has a contract with an interpreter referral agency and encouraged them to contact the agency to request an interpreter. As a result, the individual had an interpreter for their interview, secured the job, and was provided an interpreter during the onboarding training as well.
- Mr. Stidham worked with a healthcare provider's Surgical and Emergency Departments to address using an ASL interpreter. The provider had not initially set up an interpreter until meeting with Mr. Stidham. After the initial meeting with Mr. Stidham an onsite interpreter was provided. Then, when surgery was completed, there was no interpreter available again. Mr. Stidham reached out again to educate the provider on the need for continued communication access. As a result, the provider used Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) to communicate with the individual and facilitate their discharge.

Community Education

A total of 17 presentations were provided by Community Education Specialist, Mr. Robb and other staff members as well as staff at New Mexico Relay. First quarter, generally, is slow for presentations/trainings.

Mx. Dahlgren provided “Safe Zone” training on July 24th to the entire NMCDHH staff during a staff meeting this quarter. This is an LGBTQIA+ inclusivity training to ensure that NMCDHH staff are ready to serve and work alongside the LGBTQIA+ community.

Ms. Jessica Eubank was asked to present a 2-day lecture series to the practicum class at UNM regarding Demand Control Schema and Ethical Decision Making for Interpreters. These trainings review the foundational principles of Demand Control Schema and discuss the ethical imperatives interpreters have to uphold the values of our field according to the Code of Professional Conduct.

Ms. Lisa Dignan & Ms. Jessica Eubank co-presented on “Requesting Signed Language Interpreter Services” twice for the Aging & Long-Term Services staff twice in person.

Ms. Lisa Dignan provided the “New Mentor Orientation” training twice, once through Zoom and once in person.

Ms. Susana Santillan provided the “NMCDHH Overview” presentation to the Local Emergency Planning Committee in person.

Mr. Trevor Brennan moderated the “Roundtable Discussion between Deaf & Hearing Components of the SafeAI Group” virtually.

Mr. Sinderholm presented to Elderly Housing Development & Operations Corporation, at the Edward Romero Terrace in Albuquerque, to help senior citizen individuals’ insights on TEDP.

Mr. Sinderholm also co-presented to Santa Fe and surrounding residents the topic of Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program with Mr. Trevor Brennan at the Hearing Loss Association of America – Santa Fe Chapter meeting.

Mr. Roger Robb provided 1 presentation this quarter. It was the “Hearing Loss Sensitivity for Medical Staff” to the UNM Hospital staff.

Executive Director Gomme provided 4 presentations, as detailed in the Executive Director’s Report.

Mr. Thomas Sena provided 1 presentation. More information can be found in the New Mexico Relay Section.

Systemic Advocacy

Mr. Robb had several Systemic Advocacy cases for the first quarter of Y25.

This is a summary of the cases that he focused on for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2025:

- Patient & Family Advisory Council (UNM Hospital) – We continue to participate in their monthly meetings. Mr. Robb continues to provide feedback and ask questions, when appropriate, to help ensure that patients with hearing loss are able to access to the services and information that the hospital and the healthcare system provide.
- Christus St Vincent Hospital – Ms. Corina Guiterrez and Mr. Robb visited the hospital in Santa Fe for an onsite review of the space that would be used for a listening session/town hall. Mr. Robb walked the space to ensure they had photos that would assist the attendees on how to get to the community room where the event will be held. These photos were later used in the video that would be released prior to the event along with the details and time of the event We also were able to provide feedback on the set-up of the room to ensure communication access was well set up and the expectations of which equipment would be used due to the room layout having multiple video screens for potential presentations.
- ADA Advisory Council – Mr. Robb continues to attend the council meetings every month through Zoom. Mr. Robb’s term will expire at the end of October and there are plans on finding someone with a hearing loss to replace Mr. Robb on the council.
- City of Albuquerque Staff Interpreter position – Mr. Robb had a meeting with Ms. Lorrie Kosinski, who is the director of the Denver Deaf & Hard of Hearing

Services for the City & County of Denver, to get some idea of what hiring a staff interpreter for the city of Albuquerque would entail, a project Mr. Robb began working on in Q4 FY24. In the meantime, Mr. Alex Colbert-Taylor, the ADA Coordinator for City of Albuquerque, got approval from their superiors to draft a job proposal. We will be meeting to develop the proposal in Q2.

- DD Waiver project – We addressed community concerns that different guardianship agencies who have Deaf/Hard of Hearing clients were not providing effective communication access for them. CDHH initiated systemic advocacy to resolve the issue. CDHH met with Ms. Angie Brooks, the Regional Office Bureau Chief of the Developmental Disabilities Supports Division under the New Mexico Health Care Authority, to discuss. She agreed to work with us to resolve the issue, solutions for which, are still in development.
- A Drag Christmas Show – Mr. Robb initiated education and advocacy with Ticketmaster and the City of Albuquerque (Kiva Auditorium) who did not have information in place on their website where people with hearing loss could buy tickets in a particular area with access to interpreters. Mr. Robb continues to work with this organization towards a resolution.

Special Projects

Mid-Year Report Vlog Project - Completed

Mr. Robb and Ms. Sandoval were able to complete a vlog and posted it on our website. We shared it through our social media. The community can see what NMCDHH did during the first 6 months of the 2024 Fiscal Year.

APD Placard Video Project – In Progress

We were able to add captions to the community video. We are currently in the process of making revisions to the application process for obtaining a placard and will be creating a vlog to inform the community that it is ready to be rolled out.

Las Cruces Satellite Office

Individual Advocacy and Service Coordination

Ms. Santillan and Mx. Dahlgren assist the Hearing Loss community in Southern New Mexico by providing advocacy and service coordination to remove communication barriers.

Susana Santillan (Community Advocacy Specialist) Accomplishments

- Ms. Santillan assisted a Deaf individual with requesting an ASL interpreter for an appointment with a local attorney. She contacted the law office to discuss the consumer's request, effective communication, and how the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects people with disabilities from discrimination. The law office requested information on how to obtain a sign language interpreter as a result of this conversation, which Ms. Santillan provided. The consumer was happy to report a sign language interpreter was provided for them.
- Ms. Santillan continues to assist the hearing loss community with providing NMCDHH services and various resources.
- Ms. Santillan continues outreach to potential members of the community by participating in networking meetings in Southern New Mexico (virtually and in person). She provides resources that assist organizations with how to appropriately accommodate the hearing loss community and assists with information regarding the NMCDHH services.
- Ms. Santillan continues collaboration with local agencies to share employment opportunities and other relevant information with the hearing loss community.

Community Collaboration

Ms. Santillan serves on the following committees to assist with hearing loss resources:

- Behavioral Health Collaborative Policy & Advocacy State Committee
- Behavioral Health Local Collaborative 3 Member
- City of Las Cruces Americans with Disabilities Act Advisory Committee (Elected Secretary for FY2024-2025)

- Dona Ana Community United Time Bank Steering Committee
- Emergency Management Community Awareness (Subcommittee-Chairperson)
- New Mexico Workforce Connection Disabilities Committee
- New Mexico Workforce Connection Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board Special Monitoring & Performance Committee

This first quarter, Ms. Santillan built several new relationships with 35 local community partners, to promote NMCDHH's visibility in the community-by-community involvement. with the following entities, with many ongoing:

- Adult/Substance Abuse/Medicaid Sub-Committee
- Aprendamos Family of Services
- Balance of State Continuum of Care
- Behavioral Health Local Collaborative 3
- Behavioral Health Professional Workforce Resilience ECHO Program
- Celestial Hearing Solutions.
- Center for Health Innovation
- Center of Protective Environment (COPE)
- City of Las Cruces Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Advisory Board
- City of Las Cruces Youth Development & Diversion
- Cliff/Gila Senior Health
- Columbus Coalition
- Diersen Charities Community Relations
- Doña Ana Community United Time Bank
- Dona Ana County Resilience Leaders
- Dr. Uchechukwu Genevieve Komolafe
- Expert Hearing Care
- Gray Mar Environmental Manager
- Hear On Earth Hearing Care Center
- Hobbs Senior Center
- Luna County Driving While Intoxicated (DWI) Program
- Luna County Health Council
- Memorial Ear Nose & Throat Institute.
- Memorial Urology Clinic

- Mesilla Valley Hospital
- Molina Healthcare
- Mountain View Regional Medical Center
- New Mexico Disabled American Veterans Chapter 10 - Mesilla Valley
- New Mexico Workforce Connection
- New Mexico Workforce Connection Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board Special Monitoring & Performance Committee
- Silver City Senior Center
- Southwest Area Workforce Development
- Southwestern New Mexico Workforce Partner
- The Ability Center for Independent Living
- United Health Care

Booths

During the 1st quarter, Ms. Santillan provided information regarding NMCDHH services to the community by setting up eighteen (18) resource booths and assisted 479 individuals at these events.

Q1 Events	Location	Date	Participants
St. Thomas Moore Catholic Church Food Pantry	Chaparral	7/2/2024	22
Salvation Army Food Pantry	Las Cruces	7/11/2024	23
Casa De Peregrinos Food Pantry	Las Cruces	7/15/2024	25
Hatch Food Pantry	Hatch	7/17/2024	17

Butterfield Community Resource Center Food Pantry	Butterfield	7/19/2024	23
Veterans of Foreign Wars Food Pantry	Anthony	7/22/2024	40
VA Clinic Resource Booth	Las Cruces	7/26/2024	26
Radium Springs Community Center Mobile Food Pantry	Radium Springs	8/8/2024	39
Mesquite Community Center Food Pantry	Mesquite	8/15/2023	29
United University Methodist Church	Las Cruces	8/16/2024	37
Lighthouse Food Pantry	Las Cruces	8/20/2024	40
San Jose Catholic Church Food Pantry	La Mesa	8/27/2024	21
Calvary Baptist Church Food Pantry	Las Cruces	8/28/2024	23
The Disabled American Veterans	Las Cruces	9/11/2024	21
Alamo Senior Center Health Fair	Alamogordo	9/12/2024	26

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church Food Pantry	Berino	9/13/2024	22
Truth or Consequences Housing Authority	Truth or Consequences	9/18/2024	8
Peace Lutheran Church Food Pantry	Las Cruces	9/19/2024	37
		Total:	479

Jennifer Dahlgren (Community Advocacy Specialist) Accomplishments

- Successfully advocated for a Deaf individual to reopen their DVR case and have meetings, with interpreters. After working with the individual on how to self-advocate for themselves the individual exercised their self-advocacy skills to make requests during their meetings
- Provided information and referral to a Deaf individual out of state to explain the services provided for NM residents by the Commission.
- Provided information and referral to a Hard-of-Hearing High School student to let them know about DVR and other available resources for Hard of Hearing youth.
- Assisted in connecting a Deaf individual with additional disabilities successfully with Vancro to proceed with intake and training. This person has begun to receive SSP services
- Assisted a Deaf individual with additional disabilities to have successful outcomes, due to advocacy, for surgery. There was an interpreter available for all appointments.
- Advocated for a Deaf with additional disabilities individual to ensure that communication access which, for this individual was an ASL Interpreter, was successfully provided during an emergency room visit.

- Worked with an Individual who is Deaf with additional disabilities to practice how to successfully self-advocate for their needs, often through walk through scenarios to learn how to make the SSP requests through Vancro on their own.
- Successfully advocated to ensure that mental health counseling for an individual who is Deaf with additional disabilities was provided with appropriate communication access. Interpreters are now being provided and the individual can participate fully in their care.
- Successfully advocated for an individual who is Deaf with additional disabilities to their treatment team that the individual should never sign any documents without an interpreter present. Entire team is on board now and knows to provide an interpreter for any documents that need to be signed.
- Had a successful meeting with several state agencies, and service providers for an individual who is Deaf with additional disabilities on the DD waiver. All agencies were on board to provide interpreting services to the individual. Within 30 days all agencies had contacts with interpreting agencies and began providing services with communication access.
- Worked with a Deaf individual with additional disabilities, going through exercise scenarios on how to request different interpreters on VRS when they could not understand the interpreter to call their guardian. The person wanted to self-advocate for more funding but struggled with effectively understanding the interpreters they had encountered with VRS, the individual was successful in using self-advocacy skills to request financial support.
- Successfully advocated for an interpreter at a specialist doctor's office for an individual who is Deaf with additional disabilities.
- Working with a Deaf individual with additional disabilities who is on the DD waiver to explain to their Inter Disciplinary Team (IDT) what technology the individual and their family would like to empower the individual to live more independently.
- Positive outcome for Deaf individual at a mental health clinic. The clinic is located in a rural part of the state and is now providing VRI services..
- Assisted a Deaf individual in securing interpreted appointments with DVR.

- Worked with a Deaf individual to get interpreted appointments with a local several local centers and resources. Also advocated to explain the individual's language needs.
- Successfully advocated for an individual who is Deaf with additional disabilities to their DD waiver treatment team to provide interpreters for all of their meeting with the individual.
- Worked with local DVR office to ensure they had interpreters in place for the new fiscal year for client appointments.
- Worked with a Deaf individual to help them communicate with Social Security and HSD using a UbiDuo device.
- Worked with a Deaf client to get an appointment with interpreters at DVR. Client successfully used self-advocacy skills to let the counselor know what they needed help with.

Community Collaboration

For the first quarter Mx. Dahlgren worked with 10 organizations and agencies, providing information, guidance and fact sheets:

- Hearts of Hope
- Links of Life
- State DD Waiver Manager's Office
- Community Options
- NM DVR
- Heart of New Mexico
- Peak Development Services
- Podiatry Office
- Oral Surgery Clinic
- City of Las Cruces ADA Committee

Support Service Provider Program

As Reported by Vancro Integrated Interpreting Services

During the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2025, Vancro started providing SSP services to NM DeafBlind or Deaf Plus (Deaf/Hard of Hearing with a significant disability) or Deaf Seniors program in the state of New Mexico.

Below are Key Metrics Vancro is tracking for this contract. These are our baseline metrics and will allow us to compare quarterly.

- Number of Support Service Providers: 27 (11 in pending status)
- Number of Program Participants: 93
- Number of complaints addressed: 1
- Number of SSP hours for the quarter: 1831
- Number of SSP requests for the quarter: 683
- Number SSP trainings offered: 0
- Number of 1:1 SSP trainings: 1

Community Events and Engagement and Training:

- August 3rd Communication Facilitator- Opening Presentation
- August 12th SSP Gathering at PAH
- August 13th End of Year helping participants fill out Survey
- August 23rd Communication Facilitator- Training
- September 20th National Federation for the Blind Collaboration
- September 21st Communication Facilitator- Hand-on Training
- September 25th Meet and Greet with Hard of Hearing Veterans
- September 26th Worked with National Library Services for the Blind and Hadley School for the Blind
- September 28th/29th Haptics Training
- September 30th Connected CNM instructor with DeafBlind individual for class presentation

Vancro has started the new contract year off strong. We are serving over 90 participants in the program. Our case management services have had 89 touch points for the first quarter and well over 600 SSP requests. This quarter made the difficult decision to limit participants' requested SSP time to 20 hours a month. This was a decision not made lightly and only after meeting with the accounting team to assess best case scenarios. Our aim is to ensure access of SSP services for the entire fiscal year. These are numbers that we will be watching with regularity to ensure we are on track. Also, the Vancro team conducted a survey of performance during the month of September. We are analyzing that feedback with the intention of assessing the data for trends in our work and implementing changes to the program. We hosted a very successful Haptics workshop in September bringing René and Joan Pellerin, esteemed Haptics trainers to Albuquerque. This event was highly successful with over 70 participants joining the training. Most exciting to Vancro was the kickoff of our Communication Facilitator pilot. A Communication Facilitator, or CF, is a skilled American Sign Language (ASL) signer who supports video calls, such as those made through Video Relay Service (VRS) or other direct calls. The CF plays a unique role when both parties are communicating in ASL, either through an interpreter or directly. We have identified 10 participants and 10 CFs to participate in the Pilot. We have completed all the necessary training and will start allowing formal CF requests October 1st. Our hope is that this pilot can be used as a model not only for New Mexico but nationally.

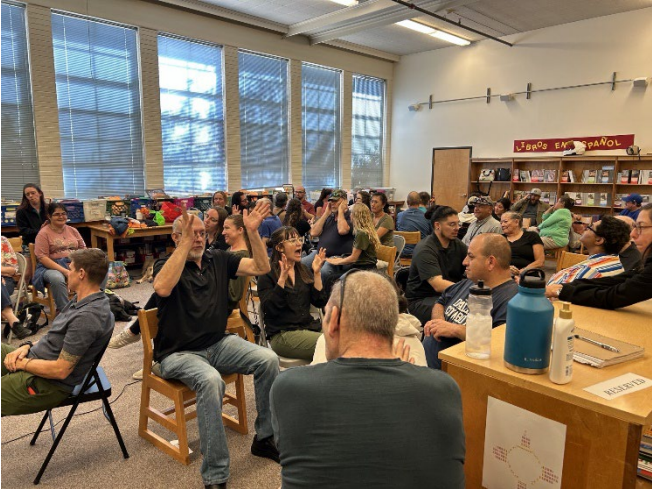
As always, we are excited to continue our work for the New Mexican Deaf Senior Citizens, DeafBlind and Deaf Disabled community and remain committed to expanding services state-wide.



Communication Facilitator Pilot Program Training was conducted in August and September.



NMCDHH Activities During Q1 FY25

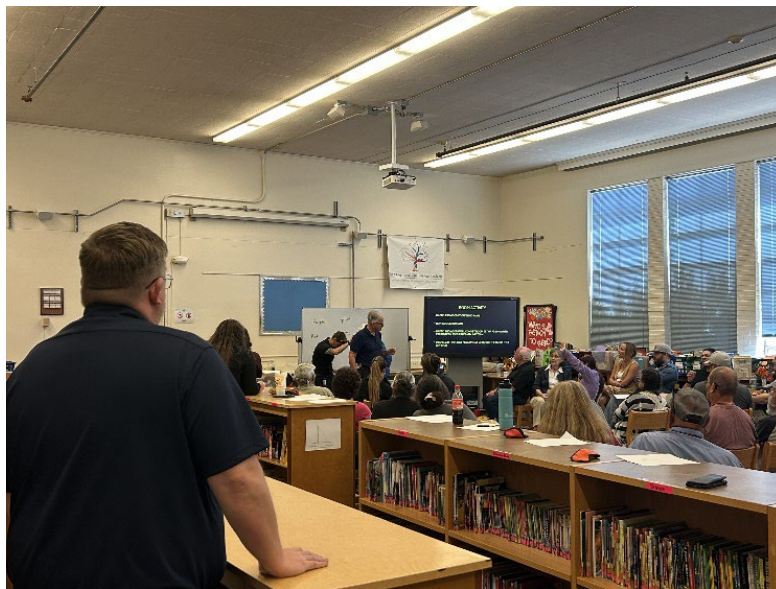


The Haptics Training workshop in September was well attended by many members of the hearing loss community.





Our Executive Director Nathan Gomme attended the Haptics Training along with other members of the hearing loss community.





NMCDHH Staff attended 30 booths during the first quarter of FY25.





NMCDHH Staff attended 30 booths during the first quarter of FY25.



NMCDHH staff were able to attend Coffee with a Cop to learn more about APD's various departments.



There were 4 participants in the Fall session of New Mexico Mentoring, seen here attending orientation.



Outreach & Telecommunications

Telecommunications Equipment Distribution (TED) Program

The Telecommunication Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP) lends telecommunication devices at no cost to qualifying New Mexico residents who need assistance in communicating via telephone. Equipment includes amplified telephones, iPads, speech assistive devices, notification systems, loud ringers, and assistive listening with neckloops.

Equipment:

During the first quarter, Mr. Sinderholm has gained vast knowledge and operation of TEDP when he attended Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association Conference (TEDPA). Throughout the national conference, he found newly emerging products that would improve the quality of life for individuals and gained a better understanding of various states TEDP/EDP programs. It is his goal to improve the experiences for individuals.

Mr. Sinderholm met an individual who struggles with the hearing loss and financial hardship for hearing aids. He encouraged an individual to join Hearing Loss Association of America – Albuquerque Chapter to have a support system for hearing loss. Also, he referred an individual to look into Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing website for fact sheets on hearing aids, financial assistance for hearing aids, and resources for the hard of hearing. An Individual is happy to have a starting point to manage with hearing losses.

In the first quarter, TEDP distributed a total of 281 pieces of equipment. The equipment distributed is outlined in two tables below.

Phones	Total Item Distributed
Amplicom PowerTel 3355	0
Clarity Alto	0

Clarity Alto Plus	0
Clarity D714	0
Clarity JV35	0
Clarity XLC2+	0
Clarity XLC8	15
Clarity XLC8 with GLT	22
ClearSounds CSC600ER	12
Geemarc Ampli550	0
GeeMarc AmpliPower60+	0
Panasonic KX- TGM430B	0
Panasonic KX- TGM450S	0
UltraTec CapTel 840	0
<i>Apple iPad</i>	
Deaf Package	40
Hard of Hearing Package	32
DeafBlind Package	0
Speech Disabled Package	0
<i>Apple iPad Mini</i>	
Deaf Package	8
Hard of Hearing Package	0
DeafBlind Package	0
Speech Disabled Package	0
<i>Apple iPhone</i>	
Deaf Package	0
Hard of Hearing Package	0
DeafBlind Package	0
Speech Disabled Package	0
<i>Apple Watch</i>	
40mm Small/Medium	0
44mm Medium/Large	0
<i>Google Pixel</i>	
Deaf Package	0
Hard of Hearing Package	0
DeafBlind Package	0

Speech Disabled Package	0
Total Phone(s) Equipment Distributed Count:	129

Accessories	Total Item Distributed
Amplicon NL100 Neckloop	0
BeHear SMARTO	77
Bellman & Symfon High-Powered Neckloop	0
Bellman & Symfon Mino	0
Clarity HA40	0
Clarity SR100	0
ClearSounds ANS3000	0
ClearSounds CR200	0
ClearSounds WIL95	0
Geemarc LH10PK Neckloop	0
Geemarc V2T-10	0
GLT Captioning Tablet	0
GLT Captioning Tablet with V2T-10	0
Google Pixel Watch	0
Krown RA05	0
Provox TruTone Plus	0
Provox SolaTone Plus	0
Provox TruTone EMOTE	0
Romet R700	0
Serene CA-360QK	0
Serene CA-380	0
Serene RF-200	0
Serene SA-40	0
Serene UA-45	0
Silent Call Medallion Smoke Detector Kit	0
Sonic Alert HA360BRK	0
Sonic Alert HA360MKBR-II	75
Sonic Alert HA360MK-II	0

Trisonic Surge Protector	0
Total Accessories Equipment Distributed Count:	152
Total Overall Equipment Distributed Count:	281

During the first quarter of FY25, Mr. Sinderholm and Mr. Stidham, and Mr. Brennan hosted several booth events in the State of New Mexico. The total number of individuals who visited our booth was 260.

Q1 Events	Location	Date	Visitors
New Mexico Occupational Therapy Association Conference	Albuquerque	9/7/2024	51
New Mexico School for the Deaf Homecoming	Santa Fe	9/14/2024	26
ASL Family Fun Night	Albuquerque	9/26/2024	60
De Baca Family Practice Health and Wellness Fair	Fort Sumner	9/29/2024	123
Total:			260

Relay New Mexico (RNM):

Mr. Sena had one presentation during Q1 at the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services where he presented to 25 veterans on the CapTel, CapTel for smartphones, and different equipment available. Mr. Sena also went to several networking and meetings throughout the quarter in Albuquerque and Rio Rancho. He provided 3 field visits in Tularosa, Alamogordo, and Bernalillo. Mr. Sena also met with a CapTel customer to provide customer support. Mr. Sena was also contacted about providing sponsorship to the upcoming Disability Employment Month event in October, he

referred the request to Ms. Abby Magtogo from Hamilton Relay Headquarters who worked with me throughout the event.

Q1 Events	Location	Date	Visitors
Palo Duro Senior Center	Albuquerque	7/17/2024	60
NMAFP Family Medicine Seminar	Santa Fe	7/25-26/2024	300
Patriot Palooza Veteran Resource Event	Albuquerque	8/3/2024	100
Pecos Senior Event	Pecos	8/14/2024	25
Alamo Senior Center	Alamogordo	9/12/2024	175
City Of Clovis Hillcrest Senior Center	Clovis	9/25/2024	80
RSVP Recognition Breakfast	Albuquerque	9/27/2024	250
Total:			990

Community Engagement

Lisa Dignan, M.Ed., CI and CT, Director of Community Engagement

Director of Community Engagement Highlights

Ms. Dignan was involved in a variety of tasks and projects in the first quarter of FY25, and some big changes are coming in the Community Engagement Department.

- Ms. Dignan announced that she will be retiring from the agency in November. To facilitate a seamless transition, she is working closely with Director Gomme, Deborah Romero, Trevor Brennan, Jessica Eubank, and Renee Bregar to hand off all of her duties and assure that services will continue as the agency and the community are accustomed.
- Mr. Brennan was named as the Interim Director of Community Engagement until the position is filled. This is a logical appointment due to Mr. Brennan's current role as the Community Engagement Specialist, and also pairs well with his previous experience in the Administrative Services Department.
- Ms. Bregar expressed an interest in taking on the agency Human Resources duties and Mr. Gomme and Ms. Romero supported that change. It makes sense to have the HR duties moved to the Administrative Services Department. Ms. Bregar has been participating in multiple Human Resources training courses in preparation to take over these duties.
- The Signed Language Interpreting Practices Board (SLIPB) Board Administrator, Emma Quintana, continues to work closely with Ms. Dignan as she learns more details about signed language interpreter qualifications and licensure requirements.
- In the first quarter, Ms. Dignan continued to promptly respond to a broad range of questions about licensure from interpreters, hiring entities, staffing agencies, and the SLIPB staff. Most frequently asked questions were about qualifications for different license types and the application process, so Ms. Dignan continued to update our Fact Sheets on these topics. In preparation for her retirement, Ms. Dignan has included Mr. Brennan on these messages so he is well prepared to take over responding to them.
- The Fall 2024 session of New Mexico Mentoring began in August with two mentor-mentee pairs who are all from the Albuquerque area. Mr. Brennan assisted with the

Orientation meeting and is taking the lead on facilitating the session with Ms. Dignan's guidance.

- Ms. Dignan completed her final term on the New Mexico Council for Purchasing from Persons with Disabilities after more than a decade of service.
- Ms. Dignan provided guidance to several entities on issues related to communication access including:
 - New Mexico School for the Deaf
 - Equality New Mexico
 - New Mexico Department of Health
 - New Mexico State Purchasing Department
 - The Signed Language Interpreting Practices Board Administrator and staff
 - Interpreter referral agencies and staffing agencies
 - Several other individuals and private businesses

Community Engagement Activities

- Our social media contacts grow each quarter. Currently we have 2508 connections across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, which is an increase of 28 over the last quarter, and we have 111 subscribers to our YouTube channel. We have 355 subscribers to the bi-weekly email newsletter, an increase of 9 from last quarter. Information shared includes meetings and events, open captioned movies in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Las Cruces, webinars, job postings, and other information of interest to our constituents.
- Sharing booth events in advance continued. The events are listed on the NMCDHH website calendar (www.cdhh.nm.gov/events) and shared on social media and in the bi-weekly email newsletter. We appreciate the staff for their assistance compiling the details for upcoming booths and events, and for providing photos to share on social media and in agency reports.
- We continue to respond to questions submitted via the "Ask the Expert" form on the website or directly to the NMCDHH.Info@cdhh.nm.gov email address which is monitored by Mr. Brennan and Ms. Dignan. Ms. Bregar will begin assisting with monitoring this email in the second quarter in light of Ms. Dignan's retirement. Contacts in the first quarter included questions about financial assistance for hearing aids, SSP services, and how to obtain ASL interpreters. During the first quarter, Mr. Brennan addressed 81 communication barriers via phone or email. The most common request was for advocacy assistance. The remaining questions in order of

frequency were requests for information about the TEDP program, financial assistance for hearing aids, how to find an interpreter, and who pays for interpreting services.

- Ms. Bregar addressed 372 communication barriers by telephone, email, or in person. The most common request was for information about advocacy services. Other questions in order of frequency were financial assistance for hearing aids, how to find an interpreter and who pays for interpreting services.
- More NMCDHH Fact Sheets were updated and uploaded to the website. This is an ongoing project with collaboration between several staff members.
- The New Mexico Interpreter Distribution List continues to be a growing avenue to share information with the interpreting community. In preparation for her retirement, Ms. Dignan transferred administration of the list to Mr. Brennan in the first quarter and he continues to use it to share information with the interpreting community. Entities around New Mexico regularly request that information be shared. Messages regarding professional development opportunities, job postings, certification testing changes, licensure board and professional organization meetings, and other information relevant to interpreters were shared with an average of one email per week to well over 200 subscribers.
- Except for the website and our email accounts, all the platforms on which we engage the community are used at no cost to the agency.

Community Engagement Specialist Highlights

- With Ms. Dignan's retirement, Mr. Brennan has been busy during the 1st quarter learning the job functions of the Director of Community Engagement position allowing him to serve as Interim Director of Community Engagement after Ms. Dignan's departure until the position is filled.
- Mr. Brennan is helping to run the fall cohort of New Mexico Mentoring so that he is familiar with the process. With only 4 participants in 2 pairings, this cohort was the perfect opportunity for Mr. Brennan to learn about running New Mexico Mentoring and to assist with future sessions.
- Preparation continues to ensure that Web Content and Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 are implemented by the Commission on the website and social media by April 2026. Mr. Brennan has had conversations with several community partners, such as UNM Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) staff, the

Deaf Cultural Center, and New Mexico Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (NMRID) about what these changes will mean regarding how the Commission is able to share information with the community in the future.

- During the 1st quarter, Mr. Brennan and Mr. Gomme worked together on several IT matters: Mr. Patrick Velasquez was hired and Mr. Brennan coordinated with the New Mexico Department of Information Technology (DoIT) to have him set up on the state system and with IT equipment. Mr. Brennan and Mr. Gomme completed a comprehensive Cybersecurity survey to help ensure NMCDHH is addressing all IT security matters. Mr. Brennan attended a 3-day training session about the possible use of Microsoft Copilot AI for the state, which is still under consideration for implementation. Finally, Mr. Brennan and Mr. Gomme reviewed IT procedures and security during the staff meeting held in July.
- Mr. Brennan continues to work with the DeafSafeAI Advisory Group. In the first quarter, the group has changed its name to the Coalition of Sign Language Technology and Equity (CoSET) and is working towards a more formal organizational status.
- In an intersection of his WCAG, IT, and AI work, Mr. Brennan will be attending the National M-Enabling Summit in the second quarter. The Summit will host networking and educational opportunities with a focus on leaders and practitioners engaging in accessible technologies and environments from around the globe. This year's conference has a heavy focus on accessibility, AI, and accessibility technology.
- Mr. Brennan attended a webinar about the use of AI in Healthcare and healthcare interpreting.
- Mr. Brennan and Ms. Eubank worked together to reach out to seven former apprentices and recognize them for their hard work. Four former apprentices are now NIC/RID certified. Three other former apprentices have passed the EIPA written test and scored a 4.0 or higher on the performance test, allowing them to qualify for a New Mexico Educational Interpreting License. These accomplishments were celebrated with recognition posts to our social media and in our email newsletter.
- Mr. Brennan continues to serve as Chair of the New Mexico Signed Language Interpreting Practices Board. He has been attempting to help the board

administrator find qualified and interested individuals to serve on the board, as the resignation of some members has left the board without enough members to hold an official meeting. Through their efforts, positions were filled and the board is scheduled to meet in November 2024.

Communication Development Specialist Highlights

Ms. Eubank opened the first quarter of FY25 by working heavily within the local community on professional development and providing resources regarding interpreting. Her work includes the following:

- Ms. Eubank and Ms. Dignan worked together to develop and present trainings to Aging and Long-Term Services on how to request signed language interpreting services and the special considerations that should go into planning services for consumers who have a hearing loss and additional disabilities.
- Ms. Eubank was honored to participate in a series of meetings with the Commission on Collegiate Interpreter Education (CCIE) regarding the effectiveness of the Signed Language Interpreting Program at the University of New Mexico as part of the re-accreditation process for the program. Of all the interpreter training programs in the United States and Canada, only 19 have accreditation from CCIE. The program at UNM was initially accredited in 2013 and was going through the 10-year reaccreditation process. As part of this process, Ms. Eubank was asked to provide feedback to the CCIE team from her perspective as an alum, a practicum supervisor, and a community stakeholder on the preparedness and effectiveness of UNM graduates to enter the field.
- Ms. Eubank was asked to present a 2-day lecture series to the practicum class at UNM regarding Demand Control Schema and Ethical Decision Making for Interpreters. These trainings review the foundational principles of Demand Control Schema and discuss the ethical imperatives interpreters have to uphold the values of our field according to the Code of Professional Conduct.
- Ms. Eubank continues her service on the national board of the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf. This service has allowed her to make many connections within the field both locally and nationally, and to work on policies and procedures that will impact the field of interpreting, as a whole.
- NMCDHH provided a total of 118.5 hours of interpreting services in the 1st quarter.
- Referral agencies were used once this quarter.

- There were no unfilled interpreting requests this quarter.

The Apprentice Interpreter Program:

The first quarter had us welcoming a new cohort of Apprentice interpreters to the program. We are excited to work with our new group and are seeking new and dynamic approaches to their professional development. Program highlights for this quarter are as follows:

- Four new Apprentice interpreters were selected for FY25. Three are located in the Albuquerque area, and one is located in southern New Mexico.
- Ms. Eubank and the Department of Community Advocacy (DCA) staff collaborated on ways to introduce the new Apprentice interpreters to the work of our agency and the linguistic needs of our staff and consumers. Our apprentices have all had a good number of observation hours and are beginning to interpret with a team for agency needs.
- Ms. Eubank and Mx. Dahlgren worked closely on developing a professional development plan for the Apprentice in southern New Mexico. As this Apprentice will be primarily working in the Las Cruces office, Ms. Eubank and Mx. Dahlgren plan to collaborate on providing professional development opportunities.
- Apprentices engaged in 50.5 hours of observation, interpreting, and professional development work in the first quarter. This is a significant increase compared to previous quarters, partially due to being able to select more apprentices than we have in several years.

Human Resources

The first quarter was a bit quieter in terms of HR activities:

- The vacant Business Operations Specialist position was posted and interviews conducted at the end of last fiscal year. Patrick Velasquez was selected for the position and was onboarded in July.
- As has been discussed, Ms. Dignan will be retiring in November and Ms. Bregar will be taking over the Human Resources duties for the agency. In preparation for this significant addition to her duties, Ms. Bregar's position was re-classified and she received a promotional increase.
- Since Mr. Brennan will be the Interim Director of Community Engagement while Ms. Dignan's position is being filled, he received a Temporary Salary Increase for the additional duties he will be performing.

- Ms. Dignan and Ms. Bregar worked together to prepare Ms. Bregar to take over the HR duties fully next quarter.
- All Manager and Staff evaluations for FY25 should have been opened in July. Managers have been reminded to complete them.
- The Employee Handbook and agency Organizational Chart were updated and shared with updates and policy changes.
- The weekly “Employee Handbook Minute” emails to agency staff have been handed off to Ms. Bregar and will be restarted soon.

NMCDHH Library

- Library patrons may not enter the library to browse the collection, but individuals who contact us requesting to borrow materials may pick them up by appointment.
- The online library can be accessed at <https://NMCDHH.librarika.com>, where people can view all of our library materials, reserve items, and review their loan history.
- Currently 119 people have registered for access to the database, an increase of 3 over Q4.

Library Usage - FY 2025					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Patrons	1				
Items Loaned	3				

Administration & Finance

Deborah Romero, Director of Administrative Services

FY25 – First Quarter Board Report						
Category		2025 Budget	Expenditures	Encumbered	Remaining Budget	% Expended
200	PERSONNEL SERVICES	1,452,300.00	338,020.37		1,114,279.63	23.27%
300	CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	1,427,300.00	77,527.35	471,986.00	877,786.65	5.43%
400	OTHER	282,100.00	74,919.85	41,957.60	165,222.55	25.56%
500	OTHER FINANCING USES	116,500.00		116,500.00	0.00	0.00%
Total		3,278,200.00	490,467.57	630,443.60	2,157,288.83	14.96%

FY25 Collected Revenue September 30, 2024		
Month	General Fund Allotment	TRS Revenue
Subtotal	\$412,926.00	\$101,832.38

Data & Statistics

As required by Legislative Performance Measures

Fiscal Year 2025

Legislative Performance Measure	Target	Year to Date	YTD % of Goal Met
Number of workshops & training sessions conducted	140	17	12%
Number of outreach events coordinated	150	30	20%
Average number of relay minutes per month	8,000	3,660.39	36%
Number of accessible technology distributions	1,240	281	23%
Number of communication barriers addressed	21,500	7261	33%
Number of interpreters in CDHH sponsored professional development	208	40	19%

Fiscal Year 2024

Legislative Performance Measure	Target	Year to Date	YTD % of Goal Met
Number of workshops & training sessions conducted	135	133	99%
Number of outreach events coordinated	122	111	91%
Average number of relay minutes per month	10,000	4,268.58	43%
Number of accessible technology distributions	1,070	1,349	126%
Number of communication barriers addressed	20,000	21,482	107%
Number of interpreters in CDHH sponsored professional development	200	120	60%

Community Members by Region



	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter	Year to Date
Region 1	12				12
Region 2	12				12
Region 3	87				87
Region 4	6				6
Region 5	52				52
Total Members by Quarter	169				169

Individuals by Self-Identified Disability

	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter	Year to Date
Deaf	79				79
Hard of Hearing	40				40
DeafBlind	6				6
Speech Disabled	0				0
Hearing	44				44
Total Individuals by Quarter	169				169



To: Nathan Gomme, Executive Director
New Mexico Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

From: Casey Stone-Romero, Director
New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Date: October 2, 2024

Re: MOU Goals and Performance Report for First Quarter SFY2024 (**July 1-September 30, 2024**)

NMDVR Liaisons:

- **New Mexico Association for the Deaf** – *The position is currently vacant.*
- **NM Chapter – Hearing Loss Association of America** – Christine Fuller Supported Employment and Deaf & Hard of Hearing Coordinator.

NMDVR Service Provision:

- **Order of Selection (OOS):** The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR) has been officially off OOS since June 2024.
- **Information and Referral (I&R):** We provide applicants with a list of community entities where they may receive assistance.
- **Counseling and Guidance:** Available to all DVR- eligible individuals receiving services under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).
- **Other Hearing Impediments-** This category within the DVR AWARE database includes individuals who have hearing impediments such as Tinnitus and Meniere's disease.

Performance Measures: *Statistics for this quarter only.*

- **Sign Language Interpreting:** Sixteen individuals received sign language Interpreter services with a total expenditure of \$11,003.43.
- **Hearing Aids or other hearing devices:** Sixty-eight individuals received hearing aids or other devices, totaling \$305,003.26 in authorized and expended funds.

Closed Successfully Rehabilitated: (Employed)

- **Deaf-Blind Individuals:** 1 individual
- **Deaf Individuals:** 3 individuals
- **Hard of Hearing Individuals:** 27 individuals
- **Other Hearing Impairments:** 1 individual

Employment Information:

For the 125 employed individuals who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing, or have other hearing impairments:

- **Average Hours Worked per Week:** 30.61 hours
- **Average Wage:** \$20.89 per hour

Caseload Activity:

- **Deaf/Deaf-Blind Individuals:** Of the 223 individuals on a DVR caseload, 45 cases have been opened or opened and closed.
- **Hard of Hearing/Other Hearing Impediments:** Of the 452 individuals on a DVR caseload, 121 cases have been opened or opened and closed.

Ineligible for VR Services:

- No individuals who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing, or have other hearing impairments have been determined as ineligible for VR services.

Transition Services:

- 129 individuals who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing, or have other hearing impairments have been identified as receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) or transition services.

Provision of Services by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation:

- All DVR offices are open, and staff work full-time on-site.
- Individuals with disabilities can complete an online referral form electronically via our web page at www.dvr.state.nm.us or in person.
- All who complete an online or in-person referral will be contacted by staff to schedule an initial interview.

Respectfully Submitted:

Casey Stone-Romero

Casey Stone-Romero-Director
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation



Collaborating Agency Quarterly Report

Agency Name: Signed Language Interpreting Practice Board, RLD

Report By: Emma Quintana, Board Administrator

Expiration Date: June 30, 2025

Quarter Reported:

1st (July-Sept) 2nd (Oct-Dec) 3rd (Jan-Mar) 4th (Apr-June)

Memorandum of Understanding:

New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing will:

- A. Transfer \$25,000 as appropriated in the General Appropriation Act of 2024 to the Signed Language Interpreting Practices Board for purposes of carrying out the provisions of the Signed Language Interpreting Practices Act at NMSA 1978, Section 61-34-1 to 17.

Regulation and Licensing Department will:

- A. Deposit the transfer of \$25,000 with Signed Language Interpreting Practices Fund and use the funds only for purposes of carrying out the provisions of the Signed Language Interpreting Practices Act per NMSA 1978, Section 61-34-13.
- B. Provide quarterly reports to the NMCDHH Director of Community Engagement including:
 - a. Number of licenses issued
 - b. Dates of Signed Language Interpreting Practices Act Board Meetings
 - c. Number of complaints
 - d. Number of license denials, suspensions, and revocations

C. Provide budget reports for the Signed Language Interpreting Practices Fund upon request with appropriate advance notice.

Performance Report

<i>Category</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Licenses Issued	16	6 Community, 4 Educational, 5 Provisional, 1 Reinstatement
Complaints	0	
License denials, suspensions, and revocations	0	

Dates of Signed Language Interpreting Practices Board Meetings:

Last meeting: April 4, 2024

Next meeting: November 4, 2024

Agendas and draft minutes are available at the Board website:

www.rld.nm.gov/boards-and-commissions/individual-boards-and-commissions/signed-language-interpreting-practices/slip-board-information/slip-board-meetings