

# New Mexico Commission for Deaf & Hard of Hearing



## Quarterly Report FY24 Quarter 1



# FY24 Quarter 1 Board Report

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## **NMCDHH BOARD MEETING**

**Thursday, December 14, 2023**

**3:00 PM**

The meeting will be held remotely via Zoom and the public can view the meeting livestream on YouTube with interpreters and captioning at this link: <https://youtu.be/g5TLyYXCKYA>  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXvDvcbFRNM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXvDvcbFRNM)

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### **FINAL AGENDA**

Posted: 12/7/2023

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call
- II. Action Items:
  - A. Approval of Agenda
  - B. Approval of Minutes- September 14, 2023
  - C. Discussion of Return to In-Person Meetings.
- III. Discussion on Development of Annual Review Process for the Executive Director
- IV. Reports
  - a. Auditor's Report
  - b. Executive Director Report
  - c. Department Reports
    - Community Advocacy
    - Community Engagement
    - Administrative Services
  - d. Report from Susana Santillan, Community Advocate Specialist.
- V. Adjournment

*Personal attacks on Commission members, staff, interpreters, or other persons in attendance or absent will not be tolerated. Individuals engaging in this activity will be asked to leave the meeting immediately.*

The New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and provides Signed Language Interpreters and Real-Time Captioning at all public meetings. Additional reasonable accommodations will be provided by contacting the New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing at 1-800-489-8536 with sufficient lead time to secure necessary services or equipment. Public documents can be provided in various accessible formats.



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

*Quarterly Board Meeting  
Thursday, September 14, 2023  
3:00pm*

*The meeting was held remotely via Zoom and the public could view the meeting  
livestream on YouTube with interpreting and captioning at*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCBCgr\\_LIKQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCBCgr_LIKQ)

***DRAFT – These minutes will be subject to possible revision and approval by the  
commissioners at the next Board meeting on December 14, 2023***

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair John Hooper called the meeting to order at 3:00pm. Trevor Brennan, Administrative Operations Specialist, called roll call.

Present: Mr. John Hooper  
Dr. Jennifer Herbold  
Dr. Meena Mann  
Ms. Christine Fuller – DVR Designee.

Absent:

Quorum was met.

Six staff members from NMCDHH were present via Zoom: Executive Director Nathan Gomme, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Deborah Romero, Director of Community Advocacy Corina Gutiérrez, Director of Community Engagement Lisa Dignan, Community Engagement Specialist Jessica Eubank, and Trevor Brennan. Jessica Eubank interpreted the meeting along with Jacqueline Trujillo and Amy Bourque. Partners Interpreting LLC. provided CART transcription. Assistant Attorney General Delilah Tenorio was also present.

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chair Hooper asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

**23.20**

Commissioner Herbold made a motion to approve the agenda.

Commissioner Mann seconded.

Mr. Brennan took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Mann – Yes

Designee Fuller – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

**III. APPROVAL OF JUNE 15, 2023 MINUTES**

Chair Hooper asked if there were any changes to the minutes from June 15, 2023.

**23.21**

Commissioner Herbold made a motion to approve the minutes as written.

Commissioner Mann seconded.

Mr. Brennan took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Mann – Yes

Designee Fuller – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

**IV. DISCUSSION OF RETURN TO IN-PERSON MEETINGS**

Assistant Attorney General Tenorio and Executive Director Gomme led the commissioners in a discussion regarding returning to in-person Board meetings. Prior to the pandemic, the Commission did host in-person Board meetings in the large conference room at the Albuquerque office. Now, there are additional challenges that were not present at that time. The only CART provider option is remote only, and hosting hybrid meetings going forward would require a larger number of interpreters.

Currently, the Commission is able to host virtual meetings with three interpreters. Hybrid meetings would require a minimum of five. Additionally, the Commission would need to purchase additional audio/visual equipment to ensure equitable access for all, and to ensure compatibility with the existing loop system in the large conference room. The rise and fall of COVID numbers throughout the year are also a cause for consideration for everyone's safety. The Commission is committed to providing access and accommodations to all citizens of New Mexico, so virtual meetings are currently the best way for the Commission to serve the public given current staffing and equipment.

**23.22**

Commissioner Herbold made a motion to table the discussion of return to in-person meetings until the December 2023 meeting.

Commissioner Mann seconded.

Mr. Brennan took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Mann – Yes

Designee Fuller – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

**V. DISCUSSION ON DEVELOPMENT OF ANNUAL REVIEW PROCESS FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Assistant Attorney General Tenorio, and Commissioners discussed the development of an annual review process for Executive Director Gomme. Executive Director Gomme welcomes a review process, which he has requested be performed in the past, and will collaborate with the board to develop a process for evaluation with clearly defined goals and criteria. Commissioners clarified with Ms. Tenorio about the procedures for establishing an evaluation committee.

**VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Chair Hooper asked for a motion to close the meeting and enter into Executive Session to discuss the items listed on the agenda under item IV: Pursuant to Section 10-15-1-H(2) of the Open Meetings Act authorizing closed sessions to discuss review and evaluation of the Executive Director, NMSA 1978, Section 28-11B-2(A)

**23.23**

Commissioner Mann made a motion to enter into a closed Executive Session

Designee Fuller seconded.

Mr. Brennan took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Mann – Yes

Designee Fuller – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

The Board returned from closed session at 4:10pm. Assistant Attorney General Tenorio stated that at this time, no action was taken by the board. Under the authority tasked to the board chair, A review committee

was established and will consist of Commissioners Herbold and Mann, along with Executive Director Gomme.

## **VII. REPORTS**

### **a. Executive Director Report**

Executive Director Gomme discussed Text to 911 and AccesSOS and how they are similar, and different. Text to 911 is based on the SMS messaging system, while AccesSOS is an app. The AccesSOS app is not the same as Text to 911 in another way, in that the app requires you to register. Text to 911 is a method that allows for direct access to a 911 dispatch center without an app or registration. AccesSOS is currently limited to the Santa Fe and Bernalillo areas. Executive Director Gomme and Corina Gutiérrez have been working for over two years to continue to push for adaption of text to 911 service across the state of New Mexico and are continuing those efforts going forward. That being said, the AccesSOS app does provide a new and enhanced method of communicating emergencies that did not previously exist.

Executive Director Gomme shared that Vancro has started to provide Support Service Provider services as of July 2023. There was no interruption in service as there was a shift in agencies, and Vancro continues to evaluate their process for service provision. Executive Director Gomme is working with Board Chair Hooper to continue address concerns in funding for the future with the legislature.

The Commission is working to fill vacant positions in the Agency. One position has been filled, and other positions have recently closed for applications and interviews will be conducted in September 2023.

Executive Director Gomme shared the Albuquerque International Airport (known locally as the Sunport) has recently added loop systems to some of the airline counters and information booths. The Commission is continuing to ensure that the Videophones at the airport are in service.

Executive Director Gomme and commissioners discussed some of the voice to text/transcription/captioning applications available on Apple and Google devices, the differences between the applications, and what applications will be installed on the iPhone 14s that will be available through the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program. The Federal Communications Commission and other organizations are having discussions and evaluating the future requirements for captioning across a variety of mediums potentially utilizing services such as Real Time Text.

Commissioner Herbold left the meeting at 4:30pm. There was no quorum after this time, and no action was taken by the Board after 4:30pm.

Executive Director Gomme, Lisa Dignan, and commissioners discussed interpreting agencies available in New Mexico, the upcoming Invitation to Bid (ITB) for the upcoming Statewide Price Agreement for interpreting services, how a Statewide Price Agreement impacts the ability for various organizations to



use/obtain interpreting services, and the resources on the Commission website to help find interpreters such as the Fact Sheet titled “How to Find a Signed Language Interpreter”.

**b. Department Reports Q & A**

There were no questions regarding department reports.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Hooper adjourned the meeting at 4:41pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Trevor M. Brennan*

Trevor Brennan  
Administrative Operations Specialist

# Executive Summary

*G. Nathan Gomme, Executive Director*

Commissioners and Community Members:

It is my pleasure to present to you the first quarter report of Fiscal Year 24 for The New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Throughout the report you will note the work mentioned on filling some of our vacant positions, facilitating the transition of the Support Service Providers (SSP)'s from one vendor to the new vendor, Vancro, ensuring no loss of services, and some events that are and will be occurring before the end of the calendar year. We began preparing for our FY23 audit which will be completed by the end of the first quarter, and presented to you during the December 14, 2023 board meeting. We also continued the discussion on our fiscal needs for FY25 with our respective legislative analyst. We continue to push for changes to our collection process with the surcharge in our requests and reports to the legislature.

With regards to funding, we are looking to offset the continued loss in relay surcharge revenue and also looking to see if there is any potentially likelihood at increasing the general fund appropriation for the next fiscal year to account for the visible and planned growth of the SSP program in the first 6 months of the contract. We have already seen positive changes in the operations and services in the SSP program already, which are more in line with the expected services. With those changes we have also seen the increased need for additional funds that we had anticipated in previous years, but never saw occur. This includes a refocus/retraining on best practices for serving our community and hiring long-time vacant positions. In addition to the funding needs for the growth of the SSP program, one of my goals for FY24 for the program, that will be added to the upcoming Request for Proposal (RFP), that will be released later this year is the addition of the Communication Facilitator language for our DeafBlind community. A more detailed concept of the service will be presented to the board during the Quarter 2 board meeting. This language will add to the suite of services being provided under this contract, and we have already seen a version of this service appear in Washington

state and Maryland. I will also be looking to their services, and other similar services nationwide for any key factors to consider.

I will also be seeking valuable input from our local community with hearing loss in a variety of ways. I will be attending the Vancro town halls in the second quarter to personally hear from the community what services they would like to see added. I will also be going to a Deaf Senior event to talk with them directly about what challenges they are facing and to address some concerns they have with the transition of the SSP vendor. The goal of those meetings and future meetings with the direct users of the services is to make whatever additions will be needed to establish a long term (at minimum four-year contract) for the services provided to the DeafBlind, Deaf Plus, and Deaf Senior community.

Vancro has already committed to having an office, in the PAH! Highland apartments, that will be established by the time of the opening which will provide direct access to services for a number of residents that will be residing in the area. Another goal I am looking at is incorporating some of the changes we are seeing due to the discussions happening around the Older Americans Act Program regulations. Some of those discussions revolve around the fact that there are issues with direct care, mental health concerns, and service coordination. These topics along with several others were presented to the Commission this year and at the end of last year for potential implementation in the scope of services for this contract. As a result, I am looking to some of the work I have seen in Arizona by their commission to see what if any services could be covered with the modifications to the current contract. The items that are not covered such as the direct care provider will likely require involvement from the advocacy teams here at the commission to make the systems level changes in the services which will take some time to develop an approach for.

Another aspect of the funding will be to allow the Commission itself to be fully staffed, but also able to provide any additional funding needed for the cost of living or adjustments for state employees that need to be made, more information about how those increases have impacted the agency can be found in the FY23 Quarterly reports. So long as the surcharge remains unchanged, we will need that additional general fund

to offset the challenges. What I was told though is that it will be unlikely we will see any change to the surcharge during this year's session. I also learned we are not the only state agency facing this challenge and in need of a revision to the collection amount in order to support our many services and potential services. I won't stop attempting to see if we can get a bill put to the floor to change the language, however it does not seem likely.

Speaking of bills that we would like to see in the upcoming legislative session, I have already begun working with Mr. John Hooper and their legislative sponsor about the concerns and recommendations I have on some of the items still outstanding in the language for the bill for closed captioning in public places (HB 288). I am hoping to see any and all changes and hoping that it does find its way to a hearing during the 30-day session. If I hear of any updates, I will have Mr. Brennan send out information so that the board is aware of its location in the legislative process. One thing I wanted to note regarding the Roundhouse is that after several on my meetings with the Legislative team which is a result of two years of work with Disability Rights New Mexico (DRNM), I got to see the brand-new set up of the Roundhouse in person for accessibility. I will be going with the DRNM representative in the second quarter to fully catalog all of the new changes at the Roundhouse and their committee room improvements which includes a 360 view of captions and interpreters when requested, and improved sound system. I will be attending a several upcoming meetings in the community to also see if there are any discussions about potential bills or concerns for the upcoming session. I am hoping to hear if any proposals or considerations are also being planned for the next 60-day session in January 2025. One thing that we have seen additional progress on, and are hoping to codify in the next session, is the work being done to address state website accessibility. This collaboration has several agencies involved, including the CDHH, Commission for the Blind, the Governor's Commission on Disability, Development Disabilities Council, The Department of Information Technology (DoIT), and a representative from the Attorney General's office. As of September, we will likely see a plan for funding during this session and an executive statewide memo to support the assessment of both physical and web access across the state. We are drafting a phased plan and job description for a project manager. While that will be a little bit before we see some traction, we did have an ADA Pride Month Flag Raising and

Proclamation in July at the Roundhouse which was largely due to the members of the aforementioned collaboration, and members of Disability Rights NM. It has been truly wonderful to see the support from both the agencies and representation of the legislature on access for the disability community as a whole.

Thanks to the hard work of several members of the team here at the agency during the first quarter we will be looking to fill at least three of our vacancies before the next board meeting. We will still have two more positions that need to be filled and we anticipate one of them will be filled by January and the other hopefully sometime in February. This will be a big help moving forward for the agency both in Albuquerque and Las Cruces. This will be important as I mentioned we will be starting the Request for Proposal for the SSP program to establish a long term contract for services with the awarded vendor and would like to make sure the team is established and moving forward before this starts.

Thank you,

*G. Nathan Gomme*

# Community Advocacy

*Corina Gutiérrez, Director of Community Advocacy*

## **Individual/System Advocacy & Public Policy**

The Department of Community Advocacy continues to work with members of the Hearing Loss community, which includes individuals who are Deaf, DeafBlind, 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 an individual and systemic level. This first quarter of FY24, we worked with a wide variety of organizations across the state educating both the organizations and individual members of our community regarding effective communication methods, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), working with sign language interpreters, and about other communication and technology issues that impact the Hearing Loss community. We are still remaining mindful of any potential high risk situations with COVID-19 and practice safety protocols when needed.

During the first quarter our Director of Community Advocacy, Ms. Corina Gutiérrez, advocated for a Deaf individual regarding communication access at a local healthcare provider. The Deaf individual experienced some unforeseen difficulties communicating with employees, and this difficult communication situation was further exacerbated by difficulties with technology when attempting to use Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) services. The internet service at the center could not support a smooth VRI experience, and the Deaf person was not able to communicate effectively. Ms. Gutiérrez connected the individuals with the Executive Director at the healthcare provider to work on how to solve this situation, and through this connection and advocacy work, the Deaf person received effective interpreting services. Working with our local healthcare providers is an ongoing project for the advocacy department to increase the positive outcomes and experiences when our community members with hearing loss go for medical treatment.

Ms. Gutiérrez also worked with a different healthcare provider in the first quarter regarding the importance of providing an on-site interpreter for any Deaf patients who request one in the Emergency Department, when those interpreters are available. VRI communication for many members of the hearing loss community while in the Emergency Room, is not ideal, and we work to remind local medical staff of this communication difficulty whenever possible. The coordinator at the healthcare provider will work with the staff members at the Emergency Department, to help them understand the importance for on-site interpreting whenever possible, and how to utilize this service when it is available.

Ms. Gutiérrez worked with several mental health therapists from a local nonprofit organization and educated them about providing appropriate communication accommodations for Hard of Hearing and Deaf individuals. The therapists were receptive to the information provided by Ms. Gutiérrez and are better prepared, and able to provide effective communication access when needed/requested. Ms. Gutiérrez shared with them the factsheet on how to find a signed language interpreter. The therapists were also interested in receiving the Hearing Loss Sensitivity training that the Commission provides, and Ms. Gutiérrez connected them to her Community Education Specialist, Mr. Roger Robb, for further collaboration and education. The Hearing Loss community often faces extensive barriers to receiving appropriate access to mental health care, and these collaborations with local mental health organizations are an important part of the work that we do to reduce these barriers.

Ms. Gutiérrez was able to network with staff members from the American Immigration Council (AIC) and the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to discuss improving language access resources for unaccompanied Deaf and Hard of Hearing children who were in confinement. Some of these resources include American Sign Language (ASL) and Certified Deaf Interpreters (CDI). Ms. Gutiérrez also connected these organizations with the National Association for the Deaf, to have this important educational work done at a national level.

Ms. Gutiérrez continues to participate in monthly/quarterly meetings with the University of New Mexico Hospital (UNMH) Patient & Family Advisory Council (PFAC), the Interagency Transition Alliance (ITA), and the New Mexico DeafBlind Task Force.

Ms. Gutiérrez, Mr. Robb, and Mr. Gomme have worked to plan a series of Town Halls which were also known as Community Needs Assessments, with Ryan Baca, the Care Experience Executive Director and Director of Language Access of Presbyterian Hospital in Albuquerque, during the end of the last Fiscal year, and as planned we were able to start our first event in the first quarter of FY 24. Mr. Robb was a co-presenter with Ms. Baca at the first event held Saturday, July 22<sup>nd</sup> at Presbyterian's Main Hospital in Albuquerque. The event was attended by Deaf, Deaf Plus and Hard of Hearing community members, as well as Presbyterian employees who wanted to learn and better understand our communities communication access needs. Ms. Gutiérrez facilitated this event, and community members were able to share their stories and experiences regarding communication access at Presbyterian facilities, both positive and negative. Presbyterian employees listened and expressed a desire to see communication access improve. One recurring story that was shared by community members, is the severe shortage of available interpreters that impacts communication access for individuals with hearing loss in all aspects of their lives, but has tremendous and potentially life-threatening consequences in a medical setting. In the second quarter of FY24, the NMCDHH will be hosting a second Community Needs Assessment event with Presbyterian at their Rust Medical Facility. This event was originally planned for the first quarter but had to be rescheduled due to some scheduling conflicts to ensure that our community was able to participate in the event.

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

- Successfully advocated for a mother of a Deaf child with a local eye care facility. Initially, the facility refused to provide proper communication for the child, they expected the mother to facilitate the conversation between the doctor and the child regarding a surgical procedure. Ms. Sandoval explained



the difference in communication between a hearing child and a Deaf child. She emphasized that both the parent and the child deserve to receive the same information and level of communication access regarding the purpose of the surgery. Because of this, and many other reasons, a family member is not an appropriate interpreter. The facility understood the importance of proper communication, and provided an ASL interpreter for the child's appointments going forward.

- Worked with a local facility for the unhoused, to help them understand their need to provide proper communication access for a Deaf individual. This case has been ongoing as initially, the facility did not want to provide an ASL interpreter. However, the facility agreed to sign a one-time agreement with an interpreter referral agency for the individual's medical appointment. Ms. Sandoval encouraged the facility to sign an ongoing contract with the interpreter referral agency, that way they could provide an ASL interpreter for any Deaf individuals in the future. After working with Ms. Sandoval over a long period of time, the facility signed an ongoing contract with a local agency and was able to provide interpreters for this individual's future appointments, and will be able to provide communication access to any other individuals with hearing loss who are in need of assistance from the facility.
- Worked with a local dental office to educate them about their responsibility to provide an ASL interpreter for a Deaf individual. The facility believed that either the partner of the Deaf individual should be able to interpret for the appointment, or that written communication would be sufficient. Ms. Sandoval provided the facility with information on ADA Title III, the responsibility of payment for interpreters, how to find a signed language interpreter, and how written communication does not equal effective communication when communicating with some individuals with hearing loss. The facility finally agreed and signed a contract with an interpreter referral agency and confirmed that the individual will have on-site interpreters for their future appointments.
- Worked with a home health care facility regarding providing on-site interpreters instead of VRI, which they were initially using to communicate with a Deaf individual. However, the Deaf individual expressed that VRI was not effective for them, for many different reasons. A staff member from facility and Ms. Sandoval discussed back and forth through email regarding how to provide effective communication access, and as an end result, they signed a contract with a local interpreter referral agency and will provide an ASL

interpreter for the Deaf individuals from now on.

Here are some of the accomplishments during the first quarter of Community Advocacy Specialist, Dennis Stidham:

- Advocated for an individual who identifies as Deaf Plus who needed an ASL interpreter for a surgical procedure. The medical facility did not want to provide an interpreter, and instead asked the Deaf individual to bring their own. Mr. Stidham spoke to the office manager and explained the rights of the Deaf patient to have appropriate communication access, which the medical facility is responsible to provide by law. Eventually, the facility signed a contract with an interpreter referral agency and were able to provide an interpreter for the individual.
- Advocated for a Deaf individual regarding a communication access issue at a large chain vision-center. Once again, the facility at first did not want to provide an ASL interpreter and asked the individual to bring their own. Mr. Stidham educated them about their responsibility to provide appropriate communication access. In a positive outcome after several conversations, the facility provided the interpreter for the individual's appointment.
- Worked with a local company and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to provide an ASL interpreter for a Deaf individual's job training. DVR covered the interpreting cost for an initial period of the training, however the individual needed to continue to have an interpreter until the training was completed. Mr. Stidham helped the company understand their responsibility to provide appropriate communication access. The company supported their employee, in classroom and on-the-job training, by providing an interpreter.

Ms. Sandoval and Mr. Stidham both attended the National Leadership Training Conference that was hosted by the National Association for the Deaf in Albuquerque, during the first quarter. They attended a variety of workshops on a broad range of topics, here are some of the workshops that were available at the conference, some of which they attended:

- Racial Equity Training
- Advocating with Seniors
- Build a Dynamic Team

- Accessibility within Deaf Communities
- Values in the Narratives of Deaf BIPOC Youth and their Identities
- Is It JUST Social Media?
- Child Welfare System Reform
- LGBTQIA2S+ Rights Under Attack
- Advocacy Letters: When and Why
- Preserving Protecting and Promoting Deaf Education: Our Strategies, and Taking on Racism in the Deaf Communities.

The opportunity to attend some of these workshops will give Ms. Sandoval and Mr. Stidham additional tools to work with our community.

### **DeafBlind, Deaf Plus, and Deaf Senior Program**

During the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2024, Vancro officially started providing Support Service Provider (SSP) services to the NM DeafBlind, Deaf Plus (Deaf/Hard of Hearing with a significant disability) and Deaf Senior community in the New Mexico on July 16th, 2023. Between July 1<sup>st</sup> and July 16<sup>th</sup> services were provided temporarily by the Community Outreach Program for the Deaf-New Mexico (COPD-NM), the now former vendor. One of the goals of the Commission has been to find a vendor that provides these important services to our DeafBlind, Deaf Plus, and Deaf Senior community with most, if not all, of the same faces that you have all come to know and appreciate as the SSP's. The other goal has been to find a vendor who has the background and experience to continue improving the user experience and expand the services to those in need. As the selected vendor, Vancro will provide these services to this specific community that has already been receiving these services, and will also be reaching out to the community who need and want these services. They are also looking to expand the number of available SSP's to go with their core group, and providing the necessary training and support to provide our DeafBlind, Deaf Plus, and Deaf Senior community in the state with quality services. As the Executive Director mentioned in his 4<sup>th</sup> quarter report last year, Vancro was successfully able to hire all of the Support Service Providers that had worked for the former vendor. It should be noted that the contract term is only until June of this Fiscal Year and an RFP will be conducted by the Executive Director for these services long term by midyear of the fiscal year.

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: 9
- Number of Program Participants: 62 (with 2 new applicants pending)
- Number of Outreach / Community Events attended: 11
- Number of complaints addressed: 3
- Number of SSP hours: 741.5
- Number of SSP trainings offered: 0

Vancro will be providing training on October 27th. This is a refresher training for current SSPs. On October 28th and 29th Vancro will be providing SSP training for new SSPs. One of the strategic goals for the next 6 months is to increase the pool of available SSPs.

During that same weekend Vancro will be hosting Town Halls for Deaf Senior Citizens and Deaf community members who have additional disabilities. Vancro staff will be available to answer questions during these meetings, and hear the experiences that our community members have had. Executive Director Gomme and Ms. Gutiérrez will both be attending these Town Hall events as well, in order to hear the stories of our community, and better understand how to serve our constituents in the future. DeafBlind New Mexican's will be invited to meet with key staff for one-on-one conversations.

Community Events Vancro provided services for:

- Zia outings:
  - Potluck/meeting
    - July 22nd
  - DeafBlind Picnic at Doc Longs
    - July 22nd
  - NM State Fair
    - September 16th
  - Deaf Senior Citizens of Greater Albuquerque Meetings:
    - July 6th and 27th
    - August 10th and 24th
    - September 7th and 21st
  - DeafBlind Task Force:
    - September 20th.

Vancro's aim is to be fully staffed by the end of Quarter 4 of FY24, and to greatly increase the number of program participants and SSP's.

### **Community Education**

A total of 21 presentations were provided by Community Education Specialist, Mr. Robb and other staff members as well as staff at New Mexico Relay.

Corina Gutiérrez provided 4 trainings/presentations: Three presentations were about the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP) to ASL students at Central New Mexico Community College (CNM).

She also provided Deaf Self-Advocacy Training during the NLTC conference hosted by NAD, which was a well-attended workshop.

Jessica Eubank provided 3 trainings/presentations:

The first one was "Welcome to the Commission" for our new apprentice interpreters.

Ms. Eubank also provided two trainings to the University of New Mexico (UNM) Signed Language Interpreting Program (SLIP) practicum students:

1. "Demand Control Schema and Ethical Decision Making for Interpreters"
2. "Ethical Values Interpreters Hold in Practice"

Mr. Robb completed 9 presentations/trainings during the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2024.

This is the breakdowns of the presentations/trainings Mr. Robb provided:

- Hearing Loss Sensitivity – General – 4
- Deaf Culture – 1
- Hearing Loss Awareness – 1
- Hearing Loss Sensitivity for 911 Dispatchers – 1
- Hearing Loss Sensitivity for Driving Schools – 1
- Shadow Interpreting – 1

The entities that Mr. Robb provided the presentations/trainings to were:

- 911 Dispatchers in New Mexico (Zoom)
- Fairwinds Senior Living
- Presbyterian Healthcare System
- Signed Language Interpreting Program – UNM
- Transportation Safety Center – UNM
- TriCore Laboratories

The presentations/trainings continue to be a hybrid of both virtual and in-person sessions.

Thomas Sena provided 2 presentations as detailed in the Outreach and Telecommunications section of this report.

Executive Director Gomme performed three presentations this quarter, he presented on website accessibility twice, once working with Eli Fresquez with the New Mexico AG's office and Kelly Burma with the Commission for the Blind to members of a statewide Collaborative meeting with several Public Information Officer's (PIO's) and some Chief Information Officers (CIO's) across the state. The second time Mr. Gomme was asked to present to Tax and Revenue representatives directly on access needs for our specific community on their website. Mr. Gomme went over the entire Tax and Revenue website with their staff highlighting some positives and concerns throughout the website. Mr. Gomme also spoke at the ADA Pride flag raising event about the work being done to support individuals with disabilities throughout New Mexico at the Roundhouse.

### **Systemic Advocacy**

This is a summary of the Systemic Advocacy cases that Mr. Robb focused on for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2024:

- Albuquerque Police Department – After finishing an initial Vlog with APD last Fiscal Year, we started a second Vlog, for which most of the scenes for the Placards Video Project have been filmed and there are a couple more that need to be done. We anticipate the Vlog being ready during Q2 of FY24.
- Las Cruces Police Department – We continue to have a dialogue with LCPD in regard to initiating the placard project.
- Presbyterian Healthcare System – The first scheduled Town Hall event occurred on July 22, 2023, at the Downtown Presbyterian Hospital. The September 23,

2023, Town Hall event at Rust Medical Center had to be postponed, and was rescheduled to November 4, 2023.

- Rio Rancho Police Department – We continue to have a dialogue with RRPD in regard to initiating the placard project.
- Santa Fe Police Department – We continue to have a dialogue with SFPD in regard to initiating the placard project.
- University of New Mexico Hospital (UNMH) Patient & Family Advisory Council (PFAC) – The council is working on producing an ASL video of the Wayfinder system, which explains how to get to the Surgery department from the new parking garage. Filming has been scheduled for Q2 FY24.
- United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) – Executive Director Gomme was contacted by Jwana Adebiyi, the Field office Director for the Albuquerque USCIS office. Mr. Gomme had Mr. Robb work with Ms. Adebiyi, to schedule a presentation of the Hearing Loss Sensitivity training to their staff. This training will allow the staff of USCIS to better serve the individuals they work with who have hearing loss. The Commission previously worked with USCIS in FY21, and works to foster these long term on-going relationship whenever possible. The training has been scheduled for October of this year.
- VANCRO – Mr. Robb has been partnering with Sara Collins, representative from Vancro, to do some video production to help disseminate important information to the community.

Mr. Robb produced 4 vlogs during the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2024, and edited 1 pre-existing video:

- Presbyterian & NMCDHH Town Hall Partnership – This video explained about the partnership between Presbyterian Healthcare System & NMCDHH to provide two Town Hall events where the Hearing Loss community would have an opportunity to express their experiences (positive/negative) so that some staff would hear them, and also explained how to register for the event. This video was originally produced in the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of FY23, and was then edited to include updated information in the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of FY24.
- PHS July Event Deadline Extended Vlog – the video explained about the extension of the registration deadline and to encourage more people to register.
- Direction to Savage Auditorium – the video explained how to get to Savage Auditorium at the Downtown Presbyterian Hospital from different parking lots/garage.

- How to Get to the Large Community Room at Rust Medical Center – the video explained how to get to the Large Community Room from the parking lot.
- New Date for PHS/NMCDHH Event Vlog – the video explained that the September 22, 2023, event has been postponed to November 4<sup>th</sup> due to several events scheduled at the same time.



## 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:**

There are some updates regarding equipment for FY24. Some equipment has been removed due to discontinuation of products. These discontinued items include: the Clarity BT-914, Clarity D704, and Clarity CE50.

New equipment has been added, such as the Geemarc AmpliPower 60+, BeHear SmartO, and several variations of the iPhone14, equipped with Deaf, Hard of Hearing, DeafBlind, and speech disabled packages, similar to the existing iPads that the program has had for several years. We have also added two new models of Electrolarynx, the Romet R700, and the Provox (Formerly Griffin Laboratories) Trutone Plus.

Several devices have also been upgraded for the program, including the Serene 360QK, which is an improvement over the older model 360, and Sonic Alert devices, now labeled as HA360MKBR-II and HA360MK-II. Speech devices have also returned, with three electrolarynxes from Atos (formerly Griffin) and one new model, the Romet R700. The catalogs and applications with these changes will be available in both English and Spanish editions starting in the second quarter.

The availability of the equipment when ordering continues, with slight delays for Sonic Alert devices, Silent Call Medallions, and the BeHear SmartO. However, there is a major delay for the CapTel 840.

During this past quarter, TEDP Program Specialist, Mr. Jason Siergey:

- Assisted a user who had an iPad stolen in receiving a replacement.

- Helped an applicant work with an Internet service provider to retrieve a bill to complete their program application.

Mr. Siergey provided catalogs and applications upon request via email, website link, or traditional mail service.

In the first quarter, TEDP distributed a total of 560 pieces of equipment. The equipment distributed is outlined in two tables below.

<b>Phone</b>	<b>Total items distributed</b>
Clarity Alto	7
Clarity Alto Plus	0
Clarity BT914	0
Clarity D704	0
Clarity D714	0
Clarity JV35	0
Clarity XLC2+	0
Clarity XLC7BT	0
Clarity XLC8	28
Clarity XLC8 with GLT	25
GLT	11
ClearSounds A1600BT	0
ClearSounds CSC600ER	11
Panasonic KX-TGM430B	0
Panasonic KX-TGM450S	11
Geemarc Ampli550	0
Geemarc AmpliPower60+	32
CapTel 840	6
<b>iPad</b>	
Deaf Package	8

Hard of Hearing Package	48
Deaf-Blind Package	8
Speech Package	8
<b>iPad mini</b>	
Deaf Package	8
Hard of Hearing Package	8
Deaf-Blind Package	8
Speech Package	0
<b>iPhone</b>	
Deaf Package	0
Hard of Hearing Package	0
DeafBlind Package	0
Speech Package	0
<b>Total Phone/iPad Equipment Distributed Count:</b>	<b>227</b>

<b>Accessories</b>	<b>Total items distributed</b>
Amplicom NL100 Neckloop	0
Bellman Mino with neckloop	10
Bellman High Powered Neckloop (no device)	0
BeHear SMARTO	99
Clarity SR100 Super Phone Ringer	3
Clarity HA40 In-line Telephone Amplifier	0
ClearSounds Quattro Pro	0
ClearSounds ANS3000 Answering Machine	0
ClearSounds CS-CR200 Phone Ringer	0
ClearSounds CS-WIL95 Amplifier	0
Comfort Audio Duett Neckloop	0

Geemarc LH10PK Neckloop	0
Geemarc V2T-10	0
GLT with V2T-10	16
Provox® SolaTone® Plus	0
Provox® TruTone® EMOTE®	0
Provox® TruTone® Plus	0
ROMET® R700 Electronic Larynx	12
Krown RA 05 Amplified Ringer with Strobe	0
Serene Innovations CentralAlert CA360QK	28
Serene Innovations CentralAlert CA380	0
Serene Innovations RF-200 Alerting System	10
Serene Innovations SA-40 Cell Phone Amplifier	0
Serene Innovations UA-45 Universal Phone Amplifier	0
Silent Call Medallion Kit	36
SonicAlert HA360MKBR-II	104
SonicAlert HA360MKBR	0
Surge Protector (Phones and accessories)	15
<b>Total Accessories Equipment Distributed Count:</b>	<b>333</b>
<b>Total Overall Equipment Distributed Count:</b>	<b>560</b>

### **Outreach**

During the first quarter of FY24, Mr. Stidham and Mr. Sena from Relay New Mexico hosted one booth at the New Mexico Technology Assistance Program Conference. Mr. Stidham also provided three booths in Albuquerque, and Santa Ana Pueblo. The total number of individuals who visited our booths was 312.

<b>Q1 Events</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Visitors</b>
Roadrunner Foodbank	Albuquerque	9/6/2023	27
New Mexico Technology Assistance Program	Albuquerque	9/11-9/12/2023	160
Jemez Job and College Fair	Santa Ana Pueblo	9//14/2023	91
Rio Grande Down Syndrome Network (RGDSN)	Albuquerque	9/16/2023	114
		<b>Total:</b>	<b>312</b>

**Relay New Mexico (RNM)**

Mr. Sena attended and hosted booths at 4 additional locations, and attended several other locations for field visits in Ruidoso, Rio Rancho, and Albuquerque. In all he worked with over 49 individuals across the state, as well as providing 2 presentations: one on Speech to Speech services, and the other on emergency services with relay. He met with 660 attendees in the events he attended without Mr. Stidham. Mr. Sena already has several additional events planned in the upcoming months in various parts of the state.

<b>Q1 Events</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Visitors</b>
NMAFP Family Medicine Seminar	Ruidoso	8/3/2023	250
Tularosa Senior and Community Center	Tularosa	9/13/2023	40
Alamo Senior Center	Alamogordo	9/14/2023	250
Stand Down	Albuquerque	9/28/2023	120
		<b>Total:</b>	<b>660</b>



# Las Cruces Satellite Office

*Susana Santillan, Las Cruces Community Advocacy Specialist*

## **Individual Advocacy and Service Coordination**

Ms. Santillan assists our community members with hearing loss in Southern New Mexico by providing individual advocacy and service coordination to remove communication barriers.

## **Susana Santillan's Accomplishments**

Ms. Santillan assisted a Deaf individual, who requested an ASL interpreter for their appointment at a local federal agency. However, when the individual arrived for their appointment, the consumer was told they use VRI to communicate with all Deaf individuals. During the appointment, the VRI equipment experienced severe technical difficulties, and effective communication could not be established. Ms. Santillan contacted the supervisor of the facility and went over the ADA, effective communication, and the benefits of using an in-person ASL interpreter vs VRI in a situation where the technology or communication infrastructure may not be adequate. The supervisor agreed with Ms. Santillan and rescheduled the consumer with an in-person ASL interpreter.

Ms. Santillan assisted a Deaf individual who requested an ASL interpreter for a medical appointment at a local practice. The individual was told they must pay for their own interpreter, or else the individual would need to cancel the appointment. Ms. Santillan contacted the medical facility and spoke with the office manager. Ms. Santillan worked with the office manager to address the issue of who pays for an interpreter, and to find a solution that provided effective communication access. At first the facility attempted to use VRI as a solution, however during a walkthrough of the facility, which the Deaf individual would have to navigate during different stages of their appointment, it was discovered that an adequate connection could not be maintained to the VRI service. In the end, the facility agreed to provide an in-person interpreter for the individual's appointments.

## **Systematic Advocacy Services**

- Ms. Santillan contacted the local Public Schools Special Educator Administrator Interpreter Supervisor to let them know a parent contacted her regarding not providing sign language interpreters for their Deaf Ed students. Ms. Santillan

worked with the Interpreter Supervisor to ensure sign language interpreters are provided for the Deaf Ed classes. The Supervisor confirmed she has scheduled interpreters at all the Deaf Ed Schools.

- Ms. Santillan worked with a local Coordinator of a Developmental and Disability Services & Support Organization to search for a person that is interested in becoming a mentor that signs to assist a deaf adult male who participates at their social community events. Ms. Santillan was able to assist in finding a candidate to work with the Deaf consumer.
- Ms. Santillan continues to participate meetings to continue her outreach efforts in southern New Mexico. She assists members of our community who have questions regarding NMCDHH services, various information, and resources on how to better serve the hearing loss community.
- Ms. Santillan continues to serve on five committees for the fiscal year of 2024:
  1. Behavioral Health Local Collaborative 3 Member
  2. Behavioral Health Local Collaborative Policy & Advocacy State Committee
  3. City of Las Cruces Americans with Disabilities Act Advisory Committee/elected Secretary for FY2023-2024
  4. NM Workforce Connection Disabilities Committee
  5. NM Workforce Connection Monitoring/Performance Committee

### **Community Collaboration**

This first quarter Ms. Santillan built several new relationships with local community partners to promote our agency's visibility in the community. While continuing several ongoing collaborations:

### **Community Collaborations Q1 FY24**

- Advanced Care Hospital of Southern New Mexico
- Aging & Long-Term Services Adult Protective Services
- Balance of State Membership
- Children's Outpatient Program
- Community Engagement Partnership
- Community-Based Interventions for Suicide Prevention
- Counseling Las Cruces



- Cruces Creatives
- Dona Ana County Emergency Rent & Utilities Assistance Program
- Dona Ana Health and Human Services
- Esperanza Medical and Wellness Business Development
- Expert Hearing Care
- Fyzical Therapy & Balance Caregivers
- Gerald Madrid Bail Bonds
- Humana Market POINT
- Jardin De Los Ninos
- La Casa, Inc.
- La Clinica de Familia Inc. Behavioral Health
- La Clinica de Familia Inc. Northern School Base
- La Clinica de Familia Inc. Santa Teresa School Base
- Las Cruces Public Schools
- Las Cruces Suicide Prevention Task Force
- Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPC) Meeting / Office of Emergency Management
- Markowski Ruvalcaba Law Firm
- Memorial Medical Center
- Memorial Medical Center Growth & Outreach Liaison
- New Mexico Law Offices of the Public Defender
- New Mexico School for the Deaf
- Pain Management and Anesthesiology
- Quality Life Services
- RI International Crisis Triage Center
- RI International Dona Ana Crisis Triage Center
- Save the Children New Mexico Senior Associate Family Engagement Program
- Silver City Senior Center
- Tots Early Intervention Program
- Unified Prevention Coalition
- United Healthcare Licensed Sales Agent
- Workers' Compensation Administration Ombudsman

This 1<sup>st</sup> quarter Ms. Santillan removed 812 communication barriers for our consumers in various settings.

**Booths and Presentations:**

This first quarter Ms. Santillan attended (20) in-person booths.

Ms. Santillan did not provide any presentations for this 1st quarter FY24.

**Booths:**

#	1st Quarter July-September Events	Location	Date	Participants
1	Sage Cafe Senior Center	Las Cruces	7/3/23	28
2	Casa De Peregrinos	Las Cruces	7/5/23	42
3	Frank O'Brian Papen Senior Center	Las Cruces	7/6/23	29
4	Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church	Tortugas	7/10/23	19
5	Calvary Baptist Church	Las Cruces	7/12/23	16
6	Radium Springs Community Center	Radium Springs	7/13/23	26
7	Mesilla Valley Hospice Back-to-School Health Fair	Las Cruces	7/14/23	39
8	Lighthouse Food Pantry	Las Cruces	7/18/23	36
9	Munson Senior Center	Las Cruces	7/26/23	32
10	VA Clinic Resource Booth	Las Cruces	7/28/23	40
11	Immaculate Conception Catholic Church	Berino	8/1/23	27
12	Salvation Army	Las Cruces	8/3/23	20
13	Benavides Senior Center	Las Cruces	8/4/23	27
14	Del Cerro Multipurpose Center	Mesquite	8/8/23	34
15	La Clinica De Familia Health Fair	Las Cruces	8/9/23	46
16	Hidalgo County Senior Center Resource Booth	Lordsburg	8/14/23	9
17	Loaves and Fishes, Inc. Food Program	Anthony	8/15/23	28
18	Peace Lutheran Church	Las Cruces	8/17/23	24
19	Butterfield Community Resource Center	Butterfield	8/18/23	28
20	Mesquite Community Center	Mesquite	8/22/23	15
		Total Participants		565

# Community Engagement

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

## **Director of Community Engagement Highlights**

Ms. Dignan was involved in a broad range of tasks and projects in the first quarter of FY24.

- The shortage of available interpreters continues to impact the agency, making covering all requests a challenge. Thanks to Ms. Eubank and the interpreters contracted directly with the agency, requests sent to referral agencies are kept to a minimum, resulting in significant cost savings.
- The Signed Language Interpreting Practices Board (SLIPB) Administrator left the RLD and an interim Board Administrator, Pauline Varela, stepped in until a replacement is hired. I have been working closely with Ms. Varela and her team to keep things moving forward and to answer all of their questions.
- SLIPB applications and renewals were transitioned to the new NM-PLUS online system, and I continue to work with the RLD staff to debug the process. So far it is going very well and is a tremendous improvement over the old paper-based system.
- Some interpreters had issues with renewing their licenses or didn't receive both their paper license and their photo ID license. I worked with the SLIPB staff to explain the importance of the photo ID licenses, and then with interpreting community to gather information about what was missing. Once compiled, I shared the information with the SLIPB staff and got them all resolved.
- The migration to the new system left some information missing from the License Verification database, so I worked with the interpreting community to have them check their individual records and send me information. I compiled a list of issues and provided it to the SLIPB staff for corrections which have all been completed.
- The volume of questions I receive about licensure continues to be enormous and some are quite complex. Many school districts are turning to out of state interpreters to provide remote interpreting services. We know that is far from ideal, but the shortage of qualified interpreters leaves filling positions, particularly in rural areas, impossible. The interplay between SLIPB licensure and those issued by the Public Education Department for K-12 interpreters generates a lot of confusion. I have created some new Fact Sheets addressing the frequent questions and answer each individual question timely and thoroughly.
- I was very grateful to be able to attend the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf National Conference in Baltimore, Maryland in July. I attended excellent workshops

and both parts of the business meeting where several issues of importance were discussed.

- I did not receive any applications for the Fall 2023 Session of New Mexico Mentoring, so it was cancelled. When New Mexico Mentoring was established, it was the only opportunity of its kind in New Mexico, and now there are a broad array of programs. That, coupled with the significantly smaller pool of interpreters graduating from training programs, has resulted in a much smaller pool of potential applicants.
- The Invitation to Bid (ITB) process to establish a new Statewide Price Agreement for signed language interpreting services was started in collaboration with the State Purchasing Department. The ITB will be released next quarter.
- I continue to serve on the New Mexico Council for Purchasing from Persons with Disabilities and attend their meetings monthly via Zoom.
- Webinars provided by the EEOC, the ADA National Network, The Solutions Group, the City of Albuquerque Office of Equity and Inclusion, the State Personnel Office, and others have been beneficial to my work.
- I provided guidance to several entities on issues related to communication access including:
  - The New Mexico Chamber of Commerce
  - Las Cruces Public Schools
  - Las Vegas Schools
  - The Signed Language Interpreting Practices Board Administrator
  - Museum of International Folk Art
  - The New Mexico Office of Broadband Access and Expansion
  - Counseling providers
  - Interpreter referral agencies and staffing agencies
  - Several other individuals and private businesses

### **Community Engagement Activities**

- The Community Engagement Specialist position was vacant for nearly five years and has finally been filled. We selected Trevor Brennan from the pool of candidates with a start date of September 30. However, he will continue to perform all of his current duties in the Administrative Operations Specialist position until all positions in the Administrative Services Department have been filled and the new staff are fully trained. We look forward to exciting new Community Engagement activities after Mr. Brennan has transitioned to his new role.

- Our social media contacts grow each month. Currently we have 2392 connections across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, which is an increase of 63 over the last quarter, and we have 104 subscribers to our YouTube channel. We have 319 subscribers to the bi-weekly email newsletter, an increase of 10 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 continues. The events are listed on the NMCDHH website calendar ([www.cdhh.nm.gov/events](http://www.cdhh.nm.gov/events)) and shared on social media and in the bi-weekly email newsletter. We appreciate Susana Santillan, Dennis Stidham, and Jason Siergey for their assistance compiling the details for upcoming booths and providing photos to share on social media.
- We also continue to share information about our Community Education presentations. Roger Robb provides photos from his presentations which are shared to social media along with a link to the revised Community Education page and an invitation to request presentations ([www.cdhh.nm.gov/advocacy/community-education](http://www.cdhh.nm.gov/advocacy/community-education)).
- 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](mailto:NMCDHH.Info@cdhh.nm.gov) email address which is monitored by Mr. Brennan and Ms. Dignan. Contacts in the first quarter included questions about hearing aids, interpreter licensure, affordable internet services, and assistive technology.
- More NMCDHH Fact Sheets were updated and uploaded to the website. This is an ongoing project with collaboration between several staff members.
- Ms. Dignan shared information with the interpreting community via her email distribution list, which continues to grow. 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.

## Communication Development Specialist Highlights

Ms. Eubank worked on several ongoing projects related to the field of interpreting, both locally and nationally in the opening quarter of FY 24. Her work includes the following:

- Ms. Eubank worked to onboard the new apprentices selected for FY 24, and is looking forward to working with them in an ongoing capacity. More about the new apprentices will be addressed under the Apprentice Interpreter Program highlights.
- In July Ms. Eubank was able to travel to the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) National Conference to represent New Mexico interpreters. Ms. Eubank also attended in the capacity of the RID Region IV Representative-Elect. Region IV includes 11 states from the central region of the United States (including New Mexico). In this capacity, Ms. Eubank will serve as a representative for these states in conversations about interpreting on the national level as well as provide advocacy and resources to the states within Region IV. While Ms. Eubank attended the National Conference as the Representative-Elect, she was officially sworn into office at the beginning of September.
- Ms. Eubank has served as President of the New Mexico Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf since the fall of 2021. However, with her appointment to the RID National Board, Ms. Eubank transitioned out of the presidency role during this quarter. Rhonda Hall, an NMCDHH Apprentice Interpreter in FY 23, was appointed to replace Ms. Eubank, so the two of them have worked closely together through the transition process.
- Ms. Eubank proctored a session of the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment Written Test for an interpreter from eastern New Mexico. The score from this test will allow this interpreter to provide interpreting services to a rural school district in Roosevelt County.
- Ms. Eubank and Ms. Dignan met with a state ambassador from the National Association of Interpreters in Education (NAIE) to discuss the world of k-12 interpreting in New Mexico, including what is working well, what gaps we see in interpreter training and mentoring, and ways that NMCDHH could potentially work collaboratively with NAIE to improve the interpreting outcomes in k-12 settings throughout the state. Currently there are no plans to begin new projects with NAIE, but we hope the conversation may lead to future collaborative opportunities.
- Ms. Eubank was invited to teach Demand Control Schema for Ethical Decision Making to the senior practicum students at UNM. This was a 4-hour lecture across 2 sessions that discussed in depth the Code of Professional Conduct, Demand Control

Schema for decision-making as interpreters, and ethical scenarios that students will encounter in their work as interpreters.

- Ms. Eubank attended several Town Halls and national level interpreter meetings hosted by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf to discuss a wide range of topics related to the interpreting field.
- NMCDHH provided a total of 115.75 hours of interpreting services in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter.
- The severe shortage of interpreters in New Mexico had a significant impact on the interpreting hours this quarter. Best practices state that a team of interpreters be provided for meetings of certain length or complexity to ensure accurate communication access. Our interpreting data is calculated by the number of interpreting hours provided – therefore 2 interpreters providing 2 hours of interpreting service equates to 4 hours of interpreting services provided. Because of the lack of available teams, Ms. Eubank worked alone on several assignments that would have been best served by a team. This resulted in 10 hours of interpreting service that Ms. Eubank worked alone when a team would have been assigned if available.
- Referral agencies were not used this quarter.
- There was one unfilled interpreting request this quarter.

#### **The Apprentice Interpreter Program:**

NMCDHH welcomed two new Apprentice Interpreters to join our program for FY 24. Both Apprentices have shown great promise and dedication in the first quarter. Program highlights for this quarter are as follows:

- In July Ms. Eubank hosted onboarding for our two new Apprentice Interpreters. Both of our Apprentices are not yet certified but come to us with some experience in the field, and have unique skills and abilities. We look forward to working with them this fiscal year!
- Because both Apprentices come to us with some experience in the field, their professional development needs are different than traditional Apprentices who work with us directly after graduating from an Interpreter Training Program. As such, Ms. Eubank has been working with both to develop professional development plans that reflect their current goals, as well as utilize the skills that they already possess.

- Both apprentices received training in the services that NMCDHH provides and engaged in observation opportunities with Ms. Eubank before providing interpreting services for our staff and consumers.
- Apprentices engaged in 41.5 hours of observation, interpreting, and professional development work in the first quarter.

## **Human Resources**

The first quarter kept Ms. Dignan very busy with HR activities:

- Our FY24 budget finally allows us to fill our vacant positions, so there has been a tremendous amount of work preparing, posting, interviewing, and planning to hire this quarter. Ten separate position actions have been completed or are in progress related to six different positions.
- A new position was created to replace one that was inactivated a few years ago. This was going to be a Community Advocacy Specialist in Albuquerque, but we decided there was a greater need for the position in Las Cruces, so it was moved to that location. It will be posted and hopefully filled in the second quarter.
- The vacant Community Engagement Specialist position was posted in August. Candidates were interviewed in September and the selected candidate started September 30.
- The vacant Business Operations Specialist position was posted in August and candidates interviewed in September. The selected applicant will start in October.
- The vacant Financial Services Specialist position was posted in August and candidates interviewed in September. The selected applicant will start in October.
- A vacant position was reclassified to Program Coordinator I and will be the new Technology Coordinator position. This was posted near the end of the quarter.
- I shared information about a variety of human resources topics with the staff including administrative leave for Fall Festivities and preparing for Open Enrollment in October.
- The weekly “Employee Handbook Minute” emails to agency staff continue to provide reminders about HR Policies and Procedures to share updates.
- I continue to attend State Personnel Board Meetings and webinars offered by SPO, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), Department of Finance Administration (DFA) Payroll Bureau, and the Employee Benefit Bureau (EBB). The new Acting SPO Director has reinstated HR Council meetings which will vastly improve communication.



### 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 114 people have registered for access to the database.

Library Usage - FY 2024					
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Patrons	1				
Items Loaned	2				

# Administration & Finance

Deborah Romero, Director of Administrative Services

FY24 – First Quarter Board Report						
Category		2024 Budget	Expenditures	Encumbered	Remaining Budget	% Expended
200	PERSONNEL SERVICES	1,613,400.00	213,647.00	0.00	1,399,753.00	13.24%
300	CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	1,229,300.00	117,641.00	951,857.00	159,802.00	9.57%
400	OTHER	282,100.00	74,776.00	135,165.00	72,159.00	26.51%
500	OTHER FINANCING USES	116,500.00	.		0.00	0.00%
Total		3,241,300.00	406,064.00	1,087,022.00	1,631,714.00	12.53%

FY24 Collected Revenue September 30,2023		
Month	General Fund Allotment	TRS Revenue
Subtotal	\$406,551	\$293,730

- Mr. Brennan assists many community members over the phone and via email. During the first quarter, he addressed 240 communication barriers via phone or email. In the first quarter, the most common question was requests for information about Financial Assistance for Hearing Aids. The remaining questions in order of frequency were requests for information about the TEDP program, information regarding how to find an interpreter, who pays for interpreting services, and community advocacy.

# Data & Statistics

As required by Legislative Performance Measures

## Fiscal Year 2024

Legislative Performance Measure	Target	Year to Date	YTD % of Goal Met
Number of workshops & training sessions conducted	135	21	16%
Number of outreach events coordinated	122	29	24%
Average number of relay minutes per month	10,000	4,571.38	46%
Number of accessible technology distributions	1,070	560	52%
Number of communication barriers addressed	20,000	5110	26%
Number of interpreters in CDHH sponsored professional development	200	25	13%

## Fiscal Year 2023

Legislative Performance Measure	Target	Year to Date	YTD % of Goal Met
Number of workshops & training sessions conducted	135	135	10%
Number of outreach events coordinated	122	161	132%
Average number of relay minutes per month	10,000	4,849.42	48%
Number of accessible technology distributions	1,070	1,342	125%
Number of communication barriers addressed	20,000	22,022	110%
Number of interpreters in CDHH sponsored professional development	200	212	106%

## Community Members by Region



	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	Year to Date
Region 1	31				
Region 2	19				
Region 3	89				
Region 4	13				
Region 5	50				
<b>Total Members by Quarter</b>	<b>202</b>				

## Individuals by Self-Identified Disability

	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	Year to Date
Deaf	85				
Hard of Hearing	56				
DeafBlind	7				
Speech Disabled	1				
Hearing	53				
<b>Total Individuals by Quarter</b>	<b>202</b>				





**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:** November 17, 2023

**Re:** MOU Goals and Performance Report for First Quarter SFY2024 (**July 1-September 30, 2023**)

**NMDVR Liaisons**

**New Mexico Association for the Deaf** – 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):** NMDVR is currently under active OOS. All categories are open, and all who are eligible are being served.

**Information and Referral (I&R):** I&R is a list of entities within the community where the applicant may be able to receive assistance.

**Counseling and Guidance** – Counseling and Guidance is 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.

**Performance Measures** – All statistics are for this quarter only.

**Sign Language Interpreting: Nineteen** individuals have received sign language Interpreter services. A total of **\$9,090.55** has been authorized and expended for this service.

**Hearing Aids or other hearing devices: Fifty-six** individuals received hearing aids or other devices. A total of **\$321,618.60** has been authorized and expended for this service.

**Closed Successfully Rehabilitated (employed):**

**One** individual who is Deaf-Blind has been closed and successfully rehabilitated.

**Three** individuals who are Deaf have been successfully rehabilitated.

**Eighteen** individuals who are Hard of Hearing have successfully rehabilitated.

**Seven** individuals who have Other Hearing Impediments have been closed and successfully rehabilitated.

**Employment Information**

The average number of hours worked for individuals who are Deaf/Deaf-Blind/Hard of Hearing or have Other Hearing Impediments is **33.50** hours per week. The average wage is **\$18.43** per hour.

**Caseload Activity**

Of the **two hundred-eleven** individuals who are Deaf/Deaf-Blind and on a DVR caseload, **thirty-four** have been opened or opened and closed.

Of the **four hundred twenty-nine** individuals who are Hard of Hearing or have Other Hearing Impediments on a DVR caseload, **one-hundred eight** individuals have been opened or opened and closed.

**Ineligible for VR Services**

**No** individuals who are Deaf/Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing, or Other Hearing Impediments have been determined as ineligible for VR services.

**Transition Services**

**One Hundred fifty-one** individuals who are Deaf/Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing, or Other Hearing Impediments have been identified as receiving Pre-ETS or Transition services.

**How the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is providing services:**

- All DVR offices are open, and staff work full-time in the office.
- Individuals with disabilities can complete an online referral form electronically via our web page at [www.dvr.state.nm.us](http://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*

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Casey Stone-Romero-Director  
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation





## Collaborating Agency Quarterly Report

Agency Name: Signed Language Interpreting Practice Board, RLD

Report By: Pauline Varela, Interim Board Administrator

Expiration Date: June 30, 2023

Quarter Reported:

1<sup>st</sup> (July-Sept)  2<sup>nd</sup> (Oct-Dec)  3<sup>rd</sup> (Jan-Mar)  4<sup>th</sup> (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 2023 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	10	0 Community, 2 Educational, 8 Provisional
Complaints	0	
License denials, suspensions, and revocations	0	

Note: Due to RLD's system disruption, some data may not have been captured.

**Dates of Signed Language Interpreting Practices Board Meetings:**

Last meeting: July 17, 2023

Next meeting: February 5, 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](http://www.rld.nm.gov/boards-and-commissions/individual-boards-and-commissions/signed-language-interpreting-practices/slip-board-information/slip-board-meetings)