

# New Mexico Commission for Deaf & Hard of Hearing



## Quarterly Report FY25 Quarter 3



# FY25 Quarter 3 Board Report

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## **NMCDHH BOARD MEETING**

**Thursday, June 5, 2025**

**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/AXjbjomat2I](https://www.youtube.com/live/AXjbjomat2I).

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### **FINAL AGENDA**

Posted: 6/2/2025

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call
- II. Action Items:
  - A. Approval of Agenda
  - B. Approval of Minutes – March 27, 2025
- III. Discussion:
  - A. Welcome NMAD President, Ryan Means.
  - B. Discussion of Survey Results and FY24 Legislative Measures
  - C. OMA Training Update
- IV. Reports
  - a. Executive Director Report
  - b. Department Reports
    - Community Advocacy
    - Community Engagement
    - Administrative Services
- V. Adjournment



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

*Quarterly Board Meeting  
Thursday, March 27, 2025  
3:00pm*

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

<https://www.youtube.com/live/GMhiKpSeqZw>

***DRAFT – These minutes will be subject to possible revision and approval by the commissioners at the next Board meeting on June 5, 2025.***

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

Chair John Hooper called the meeting to order at 3:04pm. Renee Bregar, Administrative Operations Specialist, called roll call.

Present: Mr. John Hooper – Chair  
Dr. Jennifer Herbold – Vice-chair  
Dr. Norm Dawson  
Dr. Meena Mann  
Designee Ms. Christine Fuller  
Mr. Joseph Lopez, III (arrived at 3:14 p.m.)  
Ms. Tiffany Gallegos

Absent:

Quorum was met.

Seven staff members from NMCDHH were present: Executive Director, Nathan Gomme; Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Deborah Romero; Director of Community Advocacy, Corina Gutiérrez; Director of

Community Engagement, Amy Bourque, Communication Development Specialist, Jessica Eubank; Community Engagement Specialist, Trevor Brennan; Administrative Operations Specialist, Renee Bregar. Jessica Eubank interpreted the meeting along with Jessica Seiters-Martinez, and Barbara Shaffer. Jessica Spriggs from Partners Interpreting LLC provided CART transcription.

## **II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chair Hooper asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

### **25.7**

Commissioner Mann made a motion to approve the agenda as written.

Commissioner Herbold seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dawson – Yes

Commissioner Gallegos – Yes

Commissioner Hooper - Yes

Commissioner Mann - Yes

Designee Fuller – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Lopez

Motion passed unanimously.

## **III. APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 5, 2024 MINUTES**

Commissioner Hooper asked if there were any changes to the minutes from December 5, 2024.

### **25.8**

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

Commissioner Dawson seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dawson – Yes

Commissioner Gallegos – Yes

Commissioner Hooper - Yes

Commissioner Mann - Yes

Designee Fuller – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Lopez

Motion passed unanimously.

## **IV. WELCOME PARENT OF HARD OF HEARING CHILD**

Commissioner Gallegos stated that she is a mother of a Hard of Hearing child, and is excited to be on the NMCDHH board.

**V. DISCUSSION OF OMA TRAINING FOR BOARD MEMBERS**

Commissioners held a discussion regarding the OMA training. Mr. Gomme stated there is a public session scheduled on April 15, 2025, at the State Bar Office located at 1521 Masthead Street NE in Albuquerque, 9:30a.m. – 12:45p.m. Several commissioners are unavailable on that date. Mr. Gomme explained the public session is only one option and others may be available in the future. Commissioner Herbold stated this discussion item, which does not need a motion, should be listed under discussion on the agenda.

**25.9**

Commissioner Herbold made a motion that the discussion is tabled until more information is available.

Commissioner Lopez seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dawson – Yes

Commissioner Gallegos – Yes

Commissioner Hooper - Yes

Commissioner Mann - Yes

Designee Fuller – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Lopez – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

**VI. BOARD ELECTIONS**

Mr. Gomme announced the officers elected today will begin their term at the next Board Meeting. He requested nominations for Chair and asked Commissioner Hooper if he would like to continue as Board Chair. There were no other nominations. Mr. Gomme thanked Commissioner Hooper for his invaluable support, particularly during the legislative session.

**25.10**

Commissioner Lopez nominated Commissioner Hooper for Chair.

Commissioner Herbold seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dawson – Yes

Commissioner Gallegos – Yes

Commissioner Hooper - Yes

Designee Fuller – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Lopez – Yes

Commissioner Mann - Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Hooper nominated Commissioner Dawson for Vice Chair; Commissioner Dawson declined. Commissioner Hooper suggested Commissioner Lopez. Commissioner Lopez asked for clarification of duties, Commissioner Hooper explained the Vice Chair will step in to lead Board Meetings if the Chair is not available. Mr. Lopez accepted.

**25.11**

Commissioner Hooper nominated Commissioner Lopez for Vice Chair.

Commissioner Herbold seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dawson – Yes

Commissioner Gallegos – Yes

Commissioner Hooper - Yes

Commissioner Mann - Yes

Designee Fuller – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Lopez – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Hooper requested a nomination for Secretary. Commissioner Herbold asked for an explanation of what the role entails. Mr. Brennan explained it is a position required by Board rule and is related to the meeting minutes. However, there is a transcript provided and used for the minutes. Mr. Gomme further explained the position is secretary in name only. Commissioner Dawson accepted the nomination by Commissioner Hooper.

**25.12**

Commissioner Hooper nominated Commissioner Dawson for Secretary.

Commissioner Herbold seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dawson –Yes

Commissioner Gallegos – Yes

Commissioner Hooper - Yes

Commissioner Mann - Yes

Designee Fuller – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Lopez – Yes



Motion passed unanimously.

## **VII. REPORTS**

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

Mr. Gomme explained that his report was written before the Legislative Session and that he was not comfortable waiting until the June meeting to discuss the Legislative Session. Chair Hooper had requested that Mr. Gomme mention the happenings at the Federal level which influence services in New Mexico.

Mr. Gomme prefaced the bill status with, though some bills have passed, none have been signed into statute by the Governor. He discussed House Bill 2, which has passed and is awaiting signature. Prior to the beginning of the session a budget proposal was submitted requesting that the special appropriation of \$200,000 during the last fiscal year request become a continued appropriation to support the Communication Facilitator Program, this funding request was approved in House Bill 2. We also pointed out that the TRS revenue continues to decline. Late in the process of budget request an additional \$200,000 was also requested, this was separate from the special appropriation becoming a permanent part of our budget and was specific to the needs of the Support Service Providers program. However, it was not added to our budget request for FY26. To address it, Mr. Gomme requested adjustments to the General Fund or Fund Balance, but there is no further action from the legislature to date.

Mr. Gomme also addressed Senate Bill 372 which was a request for a flat rate percentage increase to the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) billing. Senate Bill 372 was heard in its first committee but stalled in committee.

Senate Bill 535, related to Workers' Comp was introduced, which also created a funding source for the 988 service in New Mexico, as well as other additions later. In the bill, our funding from the TRS surcharge did increase from 0.33% to 1.66%. However, 80% of that fund will go to 988 and 20% of that is what is available to support the Telecommunications Access Fund, of which 3% will go to NM Tax and Revenue. The bill also allowed approval to remove the cap on telecommunications access funds and allow 100% expenditure, which was added by Senator Sedillo Lopez, since Senate Bill 372 the bill she originally sponsored would not likely be heard.

The Board discussed House Bill 49 (HB49), the Closed Captioning Act. Mr. Gomme noted that the bill made it as far as the Senate Judiciary but was not heard prior to the end of the Legislative Session. He commended Commissioner Hooper for his support and participation and Commissioner Herbold for the same. Commissioner Hooper suggested collaboration from the community, in the future. Commissioner

Herbold agreed and suggested involving students from NMSD, stating there was significant interest from them regarding this session. HB49 was also supported by the AARP.

Mr. Gomme then mentioned House Bill 120 – State Office Accessibility and Web Site Accessibility (WCAG). After several amendments and the removal of an appropriation for the office, the bill did pass and will be housed under the Governor’s Commission on Disability. If signed, it will be in effect beginning in July, next fiscal year.

Based on the passing of a member in the national Deaf community due to carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, it has been suggested that CO detectors may become part of the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP). In New Mexico, we already have the capacity for this, but several other states do not have the same capacity. This has become a national discussion thanks to the work of Sherri Collins at the Deaf Seniors of America.

Mr. Gomme mentioned the ongoing changes happening on the Federal level, per Commissioner Hooper’s request. Those changes and potential challenges are happening in Social Security, Special Education and ADA Guidelines.

Mr. Gomme introduced the new Director of Community Engagement, Amy Bourque, and thanked them for their commitment to the community. Commissioner Hooper welcomed them as well.

#### **b. Department Reports Q & A**

##### **Community Advocacy**

Based on the Community Advocacy report, Commissioner Hooper reported that he was impressed as to how Community Advocacy Specialist, Myra Sandoval, handled a situation with a constituent who worked in the medical industry. Commissioner Hooper asked if that individual is required to use the phone. Myra’s supervisor, Ms. Corina Gutierrez, did not have access to the full detail in Myra’s report at that moment. Mr. Gomme also commended Myra and suggested that there are challenges in explaining current options to employers with the rapid changes in technology.

#### **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

##### **25.13**

Commissioner Lopez made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Mann seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Dawson– Absent

Designee Fuller – Yes

Commissioner Gallegos – Yes  
Commissioner Hooper - Yes  
Commissioner Mann - Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes  
Commissioner Lopez – Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:47pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Renee F. Bregar

Renee Bregar  
Administrative Operations Specialist

# Executive Summary

*G. Nathan Gomme, Executive Director*

Commissioners and Community members, I present the Executive Summary of the Fiscal Year 25 (FY25) third quarter report for the New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

First, I want to highlight that some of the topics in this report are the finalized results of our legislative session which has been signed by the New Mexico Governor and therefore chaptered. I will reflect on topics I discussed during the last board meeting but with some fleshed out details. Next, I will walk you through some exciting changes that we are working on to begin by the fourth quarter with regards to community presence and awareness, as well as some steps we are taking to streamline our Telecommunications Equipment Distribution (TED) Program application process. Last, I would like to touch on some plans for early next year to address some of the remaining goal objectives I have.

## **Legislative Work**

During the third quarter, the Commission actively engaged with the legislative body to help educate the members on policies enhancing accessibility and support for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community. Key efforts included collaborating with advocacy groups such as the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) Chapter of New Mexico and providing expert testimony on bills when needed related to communication access. This year was a particularly busy year with some efforts related to the captioning bill as well as our funding. As I have explained in the last few board meetings, I am working to increase the available funding for the Support Service Program (SSP) and Communication Facilitator (CF) contract. In addition, I wanted to see if we could change our funding collection from a percentage-based collection to a flat fee which was presented in Senate Bill (SB) 372. The legislative session adjourned on March 22<sup>nd</sup> and below is a summary of the results. both what passed and what did not make it through the session.

### **Passed and Chaptered**

#### **House Bill (HB) 2 Funding Bill**

##### **Key Provisions-**

The \$200,000.00 request to be added into the yearly budget of the agency has been approved by the legislature. The last fiscal year appropriation had a \$200,000.00 appropriation as well, but it was a Special Appropriation which is typically a short-term appropriation for up to 2 years. This change means our funding available for the SSP and CF programs are permanently increased. This was a big step toward increasing the overall budget available to our community using the SSP and CF services, a goal of mine for this fiscal year.

The total increase to the General Fund and use of Fund Balance for the budget is an increase of 12.7% over last year. However, we continue to see the same challenges we have seen year after year with our TRS revenue, from FY23 to FY24 we saw a 9% drop in the relay surcharge revenue. The revenue from the relay surcharge will likely continue to drop and offset the increased funding support from the General Fund and Fund Balance. This is likely to mean that we will not have the Telecommunication Relay Service (TRS) revenue projected in the HB2 budget, and we will likely be short by about \$150,000.00. Also, as a result of SB535, we are uncertain if that decrease will be a larger drop compared to previous years or not.

**HB2 Projection for Relay Surcharge- \$1,042,600**

**Fiscal Impact Report (FIR) that was provided for SB535 Projected revenue-\$892,000**



Executive Director Gomme presented to the House Appropriations and Finance Committee on Tuesday, Jan 20, 2025, regarding House Bill 2. Mx. Bourque interpreted. These sessions were accessible online via livestream with captions, due to the work of the Commission and several other organizations and entities regarding accessibility.



## Senate Bill 535

SB 535 does a number of things in one bill. The bill was introduced on March 13<sup>th</sup>, the day after the committee hearing of SB 372. Here is a summary of SB 535:

- **Purpose:** The bill aims to enhance funding for the Workers' Compensation Administration and establish a new 988 Lifeline Fund to support mental health services.

### 988 Lifeline Fund:

The bill creates a new non-reverting fund to provide confidential support services for emotional and mental health issues through the 988 hotline.

The funding of 988, and some of the other functions, does not seem to be directly tied into the funding for the Commission, but a deeper dive into the plans for the 988 Lifeline fund is where we see some concerns:

### Telecommunications Relay Service Surcharge:

To fund the 988 Lifeline, the bill increases the telecommunications relay service surcharge, which has traditionally only been for the Commission, from 0.33% to 1.66% on various telecommunications services such as landline and mobile carrier services.

### Allocation of Surcharge Revenue:

The revenue generated from the increased telecommunications surcharge will be split: 80% will go to the new 988 Lifeline Fund. The remaining 20% will benefit the Telecommunication Access Fund, which supports access to telecommunications services for New Mexicans who have a hearing loss or speech disability.

The breakdown of the funds collected, at least on paper, means we could see a two thousandths of a percent increase in the surcharge rate, which may not even trigger a change in the amount collected but could mean up to a thousand dollars more per month total. However, the 3% allocation of the fund that goes to Taxation and Revenue will also come from the 20% collected in this fund. What is concerning is that this still

does not stop the decline we have seen year after year and means that now, two programs will not be able to have a steady funding source.

#### Telecommunication Access Fund Usage:

The bill also allows the state budget division to approve the expenditure of up to 100% of the telecommunications access fund for the commission's administrative expenses.

**\*We do not know what this will do in terms of impact on the agency funds.\***

#### Effective Date:

The provisions of this bill are set to take effect on July 1, 2025.

SB 535 was chaptered and will therefore take place on the effective date. We are still unsure what this will mean for our funding since we have never seen something like this. The increased percentage is good, but the division raises some concerns about what we will see in terms of revenue. In addition, historically the percentage-based collection of revenue has not yielded the expected amount of revenue that we see in the projections in our funding bill year to year. The change in our ability to spend 100% of our funds may be helpful in offsetting some lost revenue but will only be at the expense of our remaining fund balance. If we are not careful with our spending, we may run the risk of reducing the fund balance to no funds.

### **Heard but not Passed or Chaptered**

#### **Senate Bill 372: Telecommunication Surcharges**

In summary, SB 372, which aims to modify telecommunication surcharges to benefit the Telecommunications Relay Service Fund, passed the Senate Tax, Business and Transportation Committee and was then referred to the Senate Finance Committee.

#### Key Points:

This bill proposes to change the telecommunications relay service surcharge from thirty-three hundredths percent of the gross amount paid on certain telecommunications bills to a fixed rate of fifty-one cents per telecommunications bill.



According to a Fiscal Impact Report dated March 11, 2025, the Commission for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Persons reports that revenue from the existing surcharge has declined significantly. They suggest the additional revenue from the proposed change in SB 372 could allow the agency to forgo general fund appropriations and balance transfers.

#### Legislative Status:

The bill was introduced in the Senate on February 12, 2025.

It was referred to the Senate Tax, Business and Transportation Committee (STBTC) and the Senate Finance Committee (SFC).

The STBTC reported the bill with a "Do Pass" recommendation on March 13, 2025. The roll call vote in the STBTC was 7 in favor and 1 against.

On March 14, 2025, the bill was reported by the committee with a Do Pass recommendation and was pending in the Senate Finance Committee but did not receive a hearing due to the introduction of SB 535. As a result, the bill was not sent to the governor for signature and failed.

#### **House Bill 49: Closed Captioning Act**

This bill mandates that places of public accommodation that display television programming must provide closed captioning.

#### Key Points:

It defines key terms and establishes a private right of action for individuals with hearing loss disabilities who are denied access to closed captioning.

It also includes civil penalties for those who knowingly violate the act.

The bill moved through several committees in the House, with amendments and a committee substitute. The bill passed a floor vote with the house of representatives, and it was sent to the Senate Health and Public Affairs Committee (SHPAC) where it received a "Do Pass" recommendation and then to the Senate Judiciary Committee

(SJC) where it did not receive a hearing. As a result, the bill was not sent to the governor for signature and failed.

**HJC/HB 49 CLOSED CAPTIONING ACT**

CLOSED CAPTIONING ACT

HJC/HB 49  
Calendar Item # 3

230511.3

REP. BORREGO



Rep. Roybal Caballero



**FINAL PASSAGE**

A Abeyta	Y Cullen	Y Hernandez, J.N.	N Mason	Y Rubio
Y Anaya	Y De La Cruz	Y Herndon	Y Matthews	Y Sanchez
Y Anyanonu	A Dixon	Y Herrera	Y McQueen	A Sariñana
N Armstrong	N Dow	Y Hochman-Vigil	A Mejia	N Sena Cortez
Y Baca	N Duncan	A Johnson	A Mirabal Moya	Y Serrato
N Block	Y Ferrary	N Jones	N Montoya	Y Silva
Y Borrego	Y Gallegos	Y Lara	A Murphy	Y Small
N Brown	Y Garcia, M.P.	Y Lente	Y Ortez	Y Szczepanski
Y Cadena	Y Garratt	Y Little	Y Parajón	N Terrazas
Y Cates	Y Gonzales	E Lord	N Pettigrew	Y Thomson
Y Chandler	Y Gurrola	Y Lujan	N Reeb	Y Torres-Velásquez
N Chatfield	A Hall II	Y Llodatrom	Y Romero, A.	N Vincent
Y Chávez, E.	N Henry	A Hernandez, J.P.	Y Martinez, J.	N Zamora
Y Chavez, N.	A Hernandez, J.P.	Y Martinez, J.	Y Roybal Caballero	

**Yeas: 42**
**Nays: 17**
**Excused: 1**
**PNV: 0**
**Absent: 9**

HB 49 passed a House floor vote, but did pass through the legislature before the end of the session.

## House Bill 120 Accessibility of State Agencies (The Accessibility Act)

Initial language:

This bill mandates that all state agencies' websites, mobile applications, and physical facilities must comply with digital and physical accessibility standards. It requires digital accessibility standards to align with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA by April 1, 2026. The bill also establishes the "Office of Accessibility" within the Governor's Commission on Disability to oversee compliance, provide technical assistance, and develop training programs. Furthermore, it requires state agencies to post accessibility statements on their websites and creates a private right of

action, allowing individuals with disabilities to file civil lawsuits for non-compliance. The bill includes an appropriation of \$200,000 to operate the Office of Accessibility in FY26.

#### Key Provisions:

HB 120 was introduced on January 17, 2025. The Bill was amended and also had a substitute prior to passing the House Judiciary Committee after which the bill passed both the House (March 18, 2025) and the Senate (March 20, 2025) and was sent to the Governor. The context of the amendments-

- No more \$200,000.00 appropriation.
- Removes specific Private Right of Action language
- Added partnership with DoIT

Unfortunately, this bill was not signed. The Commission continues to work with other agency partners to push towards accessibility and help with the education of all the state agencies on the upcoming digital accessibility standards that are required by April 2026. We continue to work toward that goal ourselves with the expectation that we will be compliant with all of the requirements by the start of the new fiscal year.

Overall, my work and the work of Mx. Bourque, who had to join me as an interpreter in addition to their other roles for the bulk of the session, yielded some positive results but also had some mixed results. Mr. Hooper was very much a part of my many visits to the Roundhouse and we appreciated Mr. Robertson and Dr. Herbold's involvement in some of our hearings as well.

#### **Meetings**

I participated in several meetings in the community and with partners throughout the third quarter. These gatherings focused on addressing community concerns, reviewing progress on strategic initiatives, and fostering partnerships with local organizations.

I met with Hamilton Relay a few times during the third quarter. One of the big changes we are seeing with the federal obligations is the phasing out of the requirement to include the usage of American Standard Code for Information Interchange (ASCII) in

relay services. Relay providers such as Hamilton have requested from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that this requirement be waived due to a lack of use for TTY-based relay services. In my discussions with Hamilton, we saw no usage of ASCII in the state for the last year and we have likely no ASCII users in the state. These discussions started in January, and as a result, we will honor the waiver. We also met with Hamilton to create a Public Service Announcement (PSA) document to provide information to relay users, for example Captioned Telephone Users, about the possibility that their phones were no longer functioning due to the transition of the carrier landline services, which had been historically analog, to internet-based digital carrier services. The document can be seen in our TED section and is available in both English and Spanish on our website. In addition to these discussions, Hamilton provided a Relay Administrator meeting in March and we also reached the optional renewal period for Hamilton. We have opted to continue working with Hamilton, which will require an amendment to the current contract. We saw a cost increase which is tied to several factors, but I want to note that we all see the declining minute use of Captioned Telephone Service (CTS) services, which is creating a dramatic drop in minutes nationally. We continue to monitor this drop while serving the remaining community that utilizes these services. We already have begun to work on the amendment to the contract and will have it complete by the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

As we reached the end of the legislative session, we began to discuss the upcoming changes with Vancro. I also met with some community members who were concerned about the number of hours they were receiving SSP services. Our discussions with Vancro centered around how we could make the needed changes to increase the number of hours for services. While funding is still a concern, we were able to figure out a solution for the remainder of this fiscal year. This is largely a positive move but not one that we can consistently see with the growth of the Communication Facilitator Program. We also had to work with Vancro to amend our current contract to reflect the increase in available funding, year to year, for the services. After the session adjourned, we met to go over the amendment and started the process to amend the contract for the

remainder of the term. We anticipate the contract being signed and ready by the 4th quarter.

Our agency is already working on website accessibility, Mr. Brennan and I met with Real Time Solutions (RTS), our website host and developer, in January to discuss website compliance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). RTS will do a thorough review and work with Mr. Brennan and myself to get the process moving. In the meantime, I am already working with our vendors to ensure any new documents we produce are accessible. Mr. Brennan is also working with Mx. Bourque on what needs to be done in the social media space. We had a review meeting with RTS in March and we are looking very good at the goal of compliance by the end of the fiscal year. Most of our website is already compliant with some manual checks needed. I also had meetings to discuss the results regarding the accessibility of the legislative session. I enjoyed having access to the captions during the floor hearings thanks to the work of Robin Garission. We also discussed what can be done in the future as well during the interim hearings, which are often held in other locations but do not have the same level of tools for access as the Roundhouse committee hearings. I met with Lisa McNiven and the Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) group to work on the next DEAM Conference in October. I met with the National Association for the Deaf (NAD) to discuss support for the upcoming JR. NAD event in October at the New Mexico School for the Deaf (NMSD) and I continue to provide training to our state partners on how to make their websites accessible.

### **Equipment Program Developments**

Significant changes were made in the equipment distribution program. The Commission introduced new assistive technologies tailored to meet diverse needs, improved the distribution process for efficiency, and is working on a streamlined approach to applications for our community, to ensure they remain well-supported. We produced a new catalog and application for the community, a sample of which can be seen some in the TED report. There was a bit of a delay in these items due to a long review to ensure accessibility prior to posting them on our website, which we anticipate will be completed

in the early fourth quarter. Now that we have worked with our vendor to make accessible documents, we anticipate the turnaround time for any future document ADA compliance will be short but, this being the first time, it took a lot of back and forth. The new catalog introduces all of the Android-based equipment, new wearable alerting devices, and removed some technology that is no longer available. These documents can be found in English and Spanish. I also met with Teltex in January to discuss some big projects I hope to begin in the fourth quarter with the goal of these projects going live in the beginning of the new fiscal year. I wanted to provide a preview of some of these projects though.

### **Online Application Process**

This has been a lengthy back and forth with Teltex due to ensuring a few things including compliance with cybersecurity concerns, accessibility, and also language access for our Spanish users. Currently, Teltex is working with several states, notably Colorado and Illinois, to provide a portal to apply for equipment. That portal includes all of the requirements of the state and a method to provide all required documents securely. The portal then provides our agency with a way to check and approve distribution of the requested equipment. We expect this will streamline the entire process since the online system cannot be completed unless all of the required portions are completed. I will be seeing a demo of our state's version in the fourth quarter, and I am looking forward to the launch in the next fiscal year.

### **Better outreach tools**

I don't think we have modernized our outreach enough. While our TED program is just one part of our overall service, making a person aware of one available service can help introduce them to other aspects of our agency. To better accomplish this, we need to use targeted systems to make sure a person looking for some type of help with hearing loss online in New Mexico is made aware of our program. To do this we need to look at things such as Google Ads, improved social media interactions, and a better breakdown of current trends via infographics and flyers, which are accessible. We have done this in-house for a long time, but things continue to evolve and there are ways to leverage

things such as Linktree in our Instagram posts to streamline a post to a website visit and possible request for services. We also need to look at agencies such as Aging and Long-Term services, who are running ads on television. I think with our online application process we will drive more traffic and also connections. I have already been talking with Mr. Sinderholm about projects in American Sign Language (ASL) and other ways to spread the word. We are looking at costs and plans in the fourth quarter, after discussing some of these ideas with both Teltex and Hamilton. We have already seen the PSA on which we worked with Hamilton, but we have more work to do. This work will also tie into the work being done by the Mx. Bourque and Mr. Brennan, who are re-examining our social media, newsletter, website, and other information sharing methods from top to bottom.

### **Future Tech**

We are continuing to look at the future of our TED program and will be testing some critical tools I think will help in the future. We are already seeing more and more captioning glasses, or variations of translation tools, in a wearable form factor. What we know of relay is changing and our community sees a smaller and smaller gap between what used to be telecommunications space and what used to be in-person space. Projects, such as Google Beam, are changing how we view online interaction and telecommunication calls. We will continue to explore realistic ways to make telecommunication technology available that serve more than one purpose. An example, alerting devices can be used for the phone and can also help you know someone is at the door. We can no longer create a clear delineation for the purpose(s) of a device.

### **Upcoming Projects**

Looking forward, the Commission is preparing to launch several initiatives, including:

A statewide outreach campaign, as I explained earlier, to raise awareness about available services, by the start of the new fiscal year.

The work is being done by Mx. Bourque, Ms. Eubank, and Mr. Brennan on expanding our interpreter professional development opportunities. They are already hard at work engaging with the broad community. I have been impressed with their ideas and goals, some of which you will see in the Community Engagement Report. You will see some discussion of the programs to be provided in the fourth quarter and in the future, which look like great projects.

Ms. Gutierrez's department is working on the Coffee with a Cop program, and several other projects including the upcoming work with the Language Access Implementation Committee at the Albuquerque Police Department (APD). We are also looking forward to the plans with Vancro now that we have the committed funds moving forward and will be working with them to review a PSA on Communication Facilitators since it is such a new concept. Mx. Bourque and Ms. Eubank have also been an important part of this work, from a communication access perspective.

We are already wrapping up contract amendments and I am working on the Relay Surcharge audit procurement which I hope we can start right at the beginning of the new fiscal year, getting it set to go in the fourth quarter. We will start wrapping up and working on closing up the fiscal year soon, and we have a great team working on that already. Ms. Romero and I are already looking at Fiscal Year 27 for our budget needs and working with Ms. Bregar in her role as HR on the SPO changes that are being implemented.

We remain committed to enhancing the quality of life for all Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals in New Mexico through advocacy, education, and resource development.

*J. Nathan Gomme*



# 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, Hard of Hearing, Deaf with Additional Disabilities 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 level. This third quarter of FY25, we addressed communication barriers with health care providers, clinics, apartments, animal shelters, courts, corporations, and non-profit organizations.

Here are some of the accomplishments of our Director of Community Advocacy, Corina Gutiérrez, during the third quarter:

- Advocated on behalf of a Deaf individual who did not receive effective communication access during a visit to a local Emergency Department (ED). We worked with Patient Advocacy and met with the ED administrators to share the individual's experience. The administrators acknowledged their concerns and expressed a desire to improve their system. They also showed interest in having Community Education Specialist, Mr. Roger Robb, provide Hearing Loss Sensitivity Training for their staff.
- Worked with a mental health counseling service that supports several individuals in need of ASL interpreters for their therapy sessions and meetings. She provided them with a fact sheet on how to find American Signed Language (ASL) interpreters. As a result, the service successfully arranged ASL interpreters for the individuals.
- Established a collaboration with a representative from Hands United, a non-profit organization that supports immigrant families with Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. Ms. Gutiérrez connected them with her department, and used the opportunity to discuss how to support individuals in New Mexico who may need

referrals for immigration-related services. This partnership is a valuable resource for our community.

- Continued collaboration with members of the American Society for Deaf Children (ASDC) to provide a two-part presentation series. Ms. Gutiérrez delivered the first presentation during the third quarter. The second presentation will take place during the fourth quarter
- Partnered with an out-of-state non-profit organization providing Deaf Self Advocacy Training (DSAT) for their trainers. We held several planning meetings to finalize the training schedule, which was set for March 31 to April 4.
- Partnered with the Director of Program Quality Assurance from the New Mexico Immigrant Law Center to discuss interpreting services and communication access for our community. Ms. Gutiérrez connected them with the Department of Community Advocacy to foster a better understanding of the services offered and explore opportunities for collaboration and referrals. The center also offers training on immigration topics, and we expressed interest in having them provide training sessions for all of our departments in the future.
- Continued to actively engage in monthly/quarterly meetings with the New Mexico DeafBlind Task Force and Interagency Transition Alliance.

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

- Worked with a Deaf with Additional Disabilities individual, to ensure effective communication access with their apartment complex. The individual chose to file a complaint with Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity (FHEO) after not receiving communication access via an interpreter. A representative from FHEO was assigned to the case, and together they negotiated an agreement with the apartment complex to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), specifically regarding the provision of an ASL on-site interpreter for meetings. As a result, the apartment complex provided an ASL interpreter, allowing the individual to discuss various topics. Additionally, the new office manager committed to ensuring interpreters will be provided for future meetings.
- Worked with an animal shelter to educate them on their responsibility to provide an ASL interpreter for a Deaf with Additional Disabilities employee during training. Ms. Sandoval emphasized the importance of effective and equal

communication access through interpretation services. As a result, the shelter arranged for an interpreter to be present during the training.

- Worked with the manager of a Deaf employee at a large retail organization to ensure they had the necessary information on how to secure an interpreter. Ms. Sandoval provided a fact sheet with relevant resources, and as a result, the organization was able to successfully arrange an interpreter for their staff meetings.
- Assisted a DeafBlind individual who was receiving communication access at a doctor's office via Video Remote Interpreting (VRI). VRI was not effective due to the individual's low vision. Ms. Sandoval worked closely with the doctor's office to educate them on the importance of providing on-site interpreters for medical appointments for DeafBlind individuals. After extensive communication with the office manager an on-site interpreter was arranged, resulting in a positive outcome for the individual.

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

- Assisted a Hard of Hearing individual and their landlord regarding the need for an accessible doorbell at their apartment. When the landlord initially refused to provide one, Mr. Stidham educated them on accommodation requirements and communication access needs. He also shared information for obtaining an appropriate doorbell. As a result, the landlord was able to provide the individual with a doorbell.
- Advocated on behalf of a Deaf individual to ensure appropriate communication access was provided by both an attorney and a courthouse. Mr. Stidham shared a fact sheet with the attorney outlining how to get qualified interpreters, which led to a contract being established with an interpreter referral agency to provide ASL interpretation for attorney-client meetings. He also worked with the courthouse to ensure an ASL interpreter and a Deaf Interpreter were present for the individual's court proceedings. Additionally, Mr. Stidham worked with the individual's case worker at a detention center to ensure access to a videophone (VP) for communication with family and to facilitate the replacement of a battery for the individual's hearing aids.
- Assisted a DeafBlind individual who faced challenges advocating for themselves with a local event center regarding the provision of tactile interpreters. Although

the individual had purchased front-row seats, the event coordinator attempted to move them to a different location, citing concerns that the interpreters would block the aisle. Mr. Stidham intervened and explained to the supervisor that the individual required specific accommodation due to both vision and hearing loss. He clarified that providing a tactile interpreter and maintaining the individual's front-row seating was both necessary and reasonable accommodations. As a result, the situation was resolved successfully, and the individual was able to remain in their original seat with appropriate access.

- Worked with a municipal courthouse to ensure they fulfilled their responsibility of providing an ASL interpreter for a Deaf individual. Mr. Stidham facilitated the connection between the courthouse and a language access coordinator to assist with the process. An interpreter was successfully provided for the individual.

### **Community Education**

A total of 13 presentations were provided by Community Education Specialist, Mr. Robb and other staff members.

Ms. Corina Gutiérrez, Director of Community Advocacy, provided 4 presentations. Here is the breakdown of the topics.

- The first one was to the Latino families on understanding the self-advocacy for their Deaf child which was through partnership with American Society for Deaf Children (ASDC).
- The second one was a hands-on activity presentation for medical residents through Lovelace/UNMH Rehabilitation Center after Mr. Robb's presentation.
- The third and fourth were two modules for a train-the trainer-workshops on Deaf Self-Advocacy Training for Deaf trainers.

Mr. Sean Sinderholm, Technology Coordinator, presented to the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) Albuquerque Chapter, on the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP).

Mr. Robb provided 4 presentations/training during the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2025. Here is the breakdown of the presentations/trainings provided:

- Hearing Loss Sensitivity – Medical Staff
- Hearing Loss Sensitivity with attention to Deaf Culture
- Hearing Loss Sensitivity – Law Enforcement

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

- Albuquerque Police Department
- Department of Transportation – Albuquerque office
- Law Enforcement Academy
- Lovelace/UNMH Rehabilitation Center

Executive Director Gomme provided 3 presentations this quarter as detailed in his report.

Mr. Thomas Sena from Hamilton Relay provided one presentation as detailed in the TED Program section of the report.

### **Systemic Advocacy**

**Patient & Family Advisory Council (PFAC - UNM Hospital)** – We continue to participate in their monthly meetings, both in person and via Zoom. Mr. Robb worked with the PFAC coordinator to identify a replacement, as his term was set to expire during the third quarter.

**City of Albuquerque ADA Advisory Council** – Out of the three scheduled meetings, only one took place; the other two were canceled due to a lack of quorum. The meeting that did take place addressed several agenda items, including the development of a job description for a Staff Interpreter position with the City of Albuquerque. Mr. Robb and a council member agreed to work on this task and have since exchanged emails to share ideas and suggestions for the job description.

### **Special Projects**

### **Coffee with Cop Event – In Progress**

We met with the Community Engagement Manager from APD following their “Coffee with a Cop” event at the University Substation, where various specialized units—such as the helicopter, police horses, and armored vehicle—were showcased to the public. Inspired by the event, we proposed hosting a similar event specifically for the hearing loss community. In January, we held a brainstorming meeting that included our staff interpreter. It was decided to expand the planning team by inviting representatives from Vancro, SOL Housing, and PAH! Hiland staff to the next meeting in February. We continued coordinating logistics and also invited HLAA and RGC Access to be part of the planning process. The event is tentatively scheduled to take place at PAH Hiland at the end of July 2025.

### **Language Access Implementation Committee (LAIC) - Ongoing**

The committee chair from APD invited Mr. Robb to join a newly formed committee. Both Ms. Gutiérrez and Mr. Robb attended the initial meeting and found it to be a valuable opportunity for advocacy on a systems level. The committee’s purpose is to ensure that communities using various languages have equitable access to APD services. It was agreed that Mr. Robb would represent NMCDHH at the LAIC meetings moving forward.

During a LAIC meeting, there was a discussion about translating APD pamphlets and fact sheets into various languages, such as Spanish and Diné Bizaad (Navajo). This prompted Mr. Robb to consider how to make these materials accessible for the Deaf community. A follow-up meeting with the Language Access Coordinator was held, and they were enthusiastic about the idea. Together, we brainstormed and developed a plan to create ASL versions of each pamphlet. These videos would be accessible via QR codes printed on the pamphlets. The goal is to begin production of the first video and share it with APD for feedback during the 4th Quarter

## 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.

Here are some of the accomplishments of Community Advocacy Specialist, Ms. Susana Santillan:

- Advocated for a Deaf individual to ensure they obtain an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter for a local court hearing. Ms. Santillan contacted the court clerk who informed Ms. Santillan they will work on having an ASL interpreter available and later confirmed that an ASL interpreter was provided.
- Advocated for a DeafBlind individual who requested an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter for an appointment with a local attorney. Ms. Santillan discussed ADA Title III, effective communication, and who pays for interpreters. Afterwards, Ms. Santillan emailed the NMCDHH fact sheet on How to Find an ASL interpreter, and one was provided for the appointment.
- Served on the following committees and educated them about hearing loss resources:
  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 Council-Secretary
  4. Doña Ana County City of Las Cruces Office of Emergency Management Family Assistance and Resource Center Committee
  5. New Mexico Workforce Connection Disabilities Committee

6. New Mexico Workforce Connection Disabilities Monitoring Committee
  7. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbian and Gays (PFLAG) Las Cruces Board
  8. Doña Ana Community United Time Bank Steering Committee
  9. Emergency Management Community Awareness Subcommittee-Chairperson.
- Continues to participate in virtual and in-person networking meetings to continue her outreach efforts in Southern New Mexico.
  - She educates entities and individuals about hearing loss resources, provides information on NMCDHH services, and information regarding reducing communication barriers for the hearing loss community.

### **Booths and Presentations**

During the third quarter, Ms. Santillan attended twenty-one (21) booths to provide information regarding NMCDHH services.

<b>Q3 Events</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Casa De Peregrinos Food Pantry	Las Cruces	1/6/2025	44
Hacienda Orgullo Apartments Office Conference Room	T or C	1/15/2025	4
2025 Health & Wellness Fair by MV Hospice & Palliative Care	Las Cruces	1/17/2025	64
Calvary Baptist Church Food Pantry	Las Cruces	1/22/2025	40
San Jose Catholic Church Food Pantry	La Mesa	1/28/2025	29
Salvation Army Food Pantry	Las Cruces	1/30/2025	20
Lighthouse Food Pantry	Las Cruces	2/4/2025	49
Doña Ana Community Center Food Pantry	Las Cruces	2/6/2025	32
Silver City Senior Center Agency Resource Booth	Silver City	2/10/25	21



Radium Springs Community Center Mobile Food Pantry	Radium Springs	2/13/2025	43
Truth or Consequences Job Fair	T or C	2/20/2025	31
Butterfield Community Resource Center Food Pantry	Butterfield	2/21/2025	34
Veterans of Foreign Wars Food Pantry	Anthony	2/24/2025	45
America's Job Center Silver City High School Spring into Action Career Fair	Silver City	2/28/2025	34
Vado - Del Cerro Multipurpose Center Food Pantry	Vado	3/7/25	36
Adelante Senior Meals Agency Resource Booth	Mesilla	3/13/25	23
Immaculate Conception Catholic Church Food Pantry	Berino, NM	3/14/25	13
Las Cruces VA Clinic Agency Resource Booth	Las Cruces	3/18/25	29
Tularosa Senior Program	Tularosa	3/19/2025	16
Mesquite Community Center Food Pantry	Mesquite	3/20/2025	33
Heroes Hiring Heroes Employment Event	Las Cruces	3/26/2025	36
		<b>Total</b>	<b>676</b>

Here are some of the accomplishments of Community Advocacy Specialist, Mx. Jennifer Dahlgren:

- Worked with several local medical clinics and doctors' offices to ensure that effective communication access was received by individuals with hearing loss, through methods that were appropriate for each individual.
- Advocated for a Deaf individual with additional disabilities to ensure effective communication access regarding their living situation.

# Support Service Provider Program

## *As Reported by Vancro Integrated Interpreting Services*

During the third quarter of Fiscal Year 2025, Vancro is excited to continue their work for the New Mexican Deaf Senior Citizens, DeafBlind, and Deaf with Additional Disabilities community and remain committed to expanding services state-wide. Below are the key metrics Vancro is tracking for this contract. These are the baseline metrics that allow us to compare data quarterly.

- Number of Support Service Providers: 28 (11 in pending status)
- Number of Program Participants: 99
- Number on waitlist: 5
- Number of complaints addressed: 2
- Number of SSP hours for the quarter: 1804
- Number of SSP requests for the quarter: 677
- Number of Communication Facilitator requests for the quarter: 148
- Number of CF hours for the quarter: 218.75
- Number of SSP trainings offered: 0
- Number of 1:1 SSP trainings: 0
- Number of CF trainings offered: 1

Vancro's third quarter continued to show growth in the Communication Facilitation. We are expecting this program to continue to expand. This quarter also showed a significant increase in case management requests ranging from navigating issues with housing, access to services and tax paperwork. Vancro continues to look for ways that they can partner with community organizations to highlight the DeafBlind New Mexican Community. We have been in meetings with key stakeholder for Coffee with a Cop and a training of New Mexico Law Enforcement on best practices with DeafBlind community members.

### **SSP and Case Management Program**

Vancro started the year busy supporting consumers. This past quarter we did not slow down. Shockingly, we are already down to the last 3 months of the fiscal year. Case management was a priority at the beginning of 2025 due to several urgent needs that required extensive time and attention. Therefore, there was a major reduction for in-person outreach opportunities.

One of the most challenging aspects of the last few months was tax season. The Vancro team handpicked a vendor to meet with consumers for taxes. However, the vendor was no longer available. The team worked diligently to find a replacement. Vancro staff was finally able to secure tax appointments for consumers which had to be completed over the course of two days. Although the appointments are booked, consumers have not attended them yet.

### **Communication Facilitator Program**

The Communication Facilitator (CF) Program marks a significant step toward improving accessibility for DeafBlind and Deaf with Additional Disabilities individuals, providing essential support for Video Relay Service (VRS) calls and other ASL-related communication needs.

### **Program Growth and Staffing**

The Communication Facilitator (CF) Program has continued to expand this quarter. To meet increasing demand and maintain quality services, six additional Communication Facilitators were hired in January and March. These new hires were necessary due to some staff transitioning to other jobs or leaving the program.

### **Public Service Announcement (PSA) Video**

To raise awareness and promote the Communication Facilitator Program within the community, a Public Service Announcement (PSA) video is currently in development. Vancro has requested the creation of this video to demonstrate the program and its functions. We have been working closely with the media team to create a script, develop a shot list, and plan the production process. This video will highlight the

importance of the program, its services, and how it benefits DeafBlind and Deaf with Additional Disabilities individuals. The PSA is expected to increase participation and community engagement once completed.

### **Participant and Facilitator Feedback**

Feedback continues to reflect a high level of satisfaction with the services provided by the program. Participants have expressed appreciation for the professionalism, ethical standards, and seamless communication support provided by the facilitators. The feedback gathered helps guide ongoing improvements and ensures the program maintains high standards.

- **Participant Comments:**

- "This concept is very good! I love that Mark comes up with this program. I really enjoy this."
- "CF were professional and stayed in their role. The new set up is fantastic. Allow me to get up if I need to!"
- "CF has made my communication so much easier. I feel heard and understood."

### **Future Focus**

Looking ahead, the program will focus on:

- Continuing to recruit and train facilitators to maintain service quality.
- Expanding outreach to engage more participants in the community.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the PSA video to assess its impact on community awareness.
- Exploring opportunities to establish a second office location in Santa Fe to serve participants in the northern part of New Mexico.

### **Conclusion**

This quarter has been marked by significant progress in expanding the Communication Facilitator Program and enhancing its visibility. With additional staff onboard and an impactful PSA video in development, the program is well-positioned to continue providing exceptional services to the community.

## NMCDHH Activities During Q3 FY25

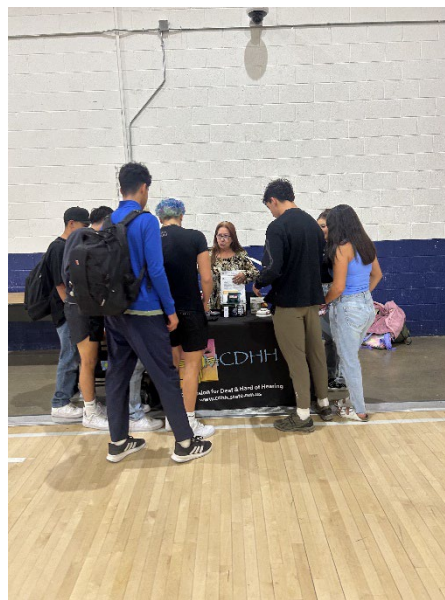


NMCDHH staff attended 37 booths in Q3. Jessie and Sean are pictured attending events in Albuquerque on this page.





Susana attended many events in several municipalities in southern New Mexico this quarter, including Las Cruces (above), and Silver City (below)



# 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 neck loops.

### **Equipment:**

During the third quarter, Mr. Sinderholm continued to perform outreach to spread awareness about TEDP and NMCDHH's service. Mr. Gomme and Mr. Sinderholm are in discussion about the transition process for Mr. Sinderholm to take the reins of the program from Ms. Gutiérrez. In the meantime, Mr. Gomme, Ms. Gutiérrez and Mr. Sinderholm have undertaken the tasks to update the catalog and add more equipment.

In the third quarter, TEDP distributed a total of 192 pieces of equipment. The equipment distributed is outlined below.

### **Phones:**

Apple iPad Deaf Package - 16

Apple iPad Hard of Hearing Package - 8

Apple iPad Mini Hard of Hearing Package - 8

### **Accessories:**

BeHear SMARTO - 77

Serene Innovations CentralAlert CA360QK - 8


SonicAlert HA360MKBR-II - 75

Specialized Equipment

Android Phone

The Android Phone will arrive pre-installed with:










- ✓ A Protective Case
- ✓ Approved telecommunications applications specific to your self-identified disability
- ✓ Power Cable
- ✓ Wall Charger
- ✓ The equipment is enrolled in TeltexCare+



**DO NOT** contact Android Phone Manufacturer directly or take to the Android Phone Store.

Any VRS or IP CTS registered apps are the responsibility of the user. Any issues with the services will need to be resolved directly with that service provider, not NMCDHH or Teltex. Your app package will be determined by the disability marked on first page of the application.


Visit [www.iAccessibility.com](http://www.iAccessibility.com) to View Training Videos on How to Use your Android Phone.

18 V: 505.383.6530 • TTY: 505.383.6541 • VP: 505.435.9319 • Fax: 505.383.6533

Tablet/Smartphone Deaf-Blind Package

This package is for individuals who are Deaf-Blind or have combined hearing and vision disabilities. From the large screen size, ability to increase font, apps that give access to telecommunications and Braille accessory support, the Tablet/Smartphone is an all around tool for communication access.



Deaf-Blind Apps

Including but not limited to:

1. Video Relay Service
2. IP Captioned Telephone Service
3. Video Calls
4. Email

The TED Program Catalog has been updated with several new devices, including Android devices.

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## **Outreach**

During the third quarter of FY25, Albuquerque staff attended 10 booths, the total number of visitors to our booths was 1,135.

**13<sup>th</sup> Annual CNM Conference on Teaching and Learning** – January 10 – 86 attendees

**Disability Rights Awareness Day Albuquerque** – January 11 - 80 attendees

**ASL Fun Night** – January 23 - 41 attendees

**Rio Rancho High School Transition Expo** – January 28 – 95 attendees

**Senior Connection by Westwind Productions** – February 8 – 170 attendees

**APS Transition Fair Open House** – February 11 – 83 attendees

**Disability Rights Awareness Day Santa Fe** – February 13 – 277 attendees

**New Mexico Counseling Association 2025 Annual Conference** – March 7 – 57 attendees

**UNM Valencia Career & Wellness Expo** – March 12 – 97 attendees


**Parents Reaching Out Family Leadership Conference** – March 14 – 149 attendees

## **Relay New Mexico (RNM):**

During the third quarter of FY25, Mr. Sena provided a presentation to the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services in Albuquerque on CapTel Services. Mr. Sena attended networking events and provided 6 outreach events throughout New Mexico which included stops in Corrales, Rio Rancho, and Albuquerque.

<b>Q3 Events</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Visitors</b>
North Valley Senior Center	Albuquerque	1/8/2025	65
B2B Business & Consumer Expo	Albuquerque	1/15/2025	200
Bear Canyon Center	Albuquerque	1/21/2025	90
Barelas Senior Center	Albuquerque	2/4/2025	50

North Valley Senior Center	Albuquerque	3/19/2025	65
Highland Senior Center	Albuquerque	3/25/2025	80
<b>Total:</b>			<b>550</b>


RelayNM.org

### What is the **Analog to Digital Transition**, and how does it affect me?

The telephone industry is in the process of replacing traditional telephone service (copper telephone lines/analog) with internet-based service (fiber lines/digital) – this is what's called the Analog to Digital Transition. The benefits of the transition include increased speed, longer lifespan of the technology and greater security.

**How the Analog to Digital Transition May Affect Telecommunications Relay Services**  
When telephone lines are upgraded to digital, relay services and the use of relay devices can be affected. If you experience garbling, loss of text or gaps in your communication while using your assistive equipment – such as a TTY, VCO (Voice Carry Over) phone, HCO (Hearing Carry Over) phone or CapTel® 840 phone – it may be a result of the upgrade.

**How do I know if I have analog or digital lines?**  
If you are not sure if changes have been made to your telephone lines and you are experiencing issues with your connection to Relay, contact your telephone service provider to inquire about possible changes in your area.


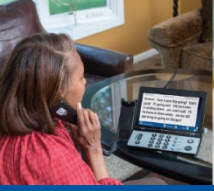

**What solutions can keep me connected to Relay?**  
With the transition from analog to digital lines, you may need to consider acquiring internet service. This may necessitate that you update your Relay equipment to a device that is compatible with a digital (internet) line.

If you are experiencing issues with your TTY or HCO phone, one possible solution could include Real-Time Text (RTT)/TTY accessibility on a mobile device. More information can be found at [fcc.gov](http://fcc.gov).

If you are experiencing issues using a VCO phone or a CapTel 840 phone, possible solutions include:

- CapTel 840i
- CapTel 2400i
- Hamilton Mobile™ CapTel® app
- Hamilton Web™ CapTel®

There are programs and organizations available to assist individuals in acquiring internet and compatible equipment. (Please see reverse side.)

20241204


RelayNM.org




The Digital to Analog Transition accessible flyer is available on the Commission website, in both English and Spanish.

# Community Engagement

*Amy Bourque, Director of Community Engagement*

Q3 was a period of transition and change for the Community Engagement Department. On January 18<sup>th</sup>, Mx. Amy Bourque joined the commission as the new Director of Community Engagement. They come with over a decade of experience interpreting in the community as well as educational settings. They are passionate about providing New Mexico's interpreters with the opportunities they need to best serve our Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing communities. As a corporate stage manager, they have the skills to coordinate and plan for large-scale community events and have already begun this work with the commission's collaborations. With their Certificate in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, they are diving into how the benefits and limitations of AI will impact our future endeavors.

## **Director's Highlights**

In the two months that Mx. Bourque has been here, they have worked with their department to begin an enhanced focus on interpreter professional development.

Ms. Jessica Eubank, Communication Development Specialist, and Mx. Bourque have dedicated hours to planning our FY26 Interpreter Apprentice Program. Our new mission statement for the program is:

"The mission of the NMCDHH Apprentice Interpreter Program is to enhance novice signed language interpreters' skills and abilities to provide quality, effective communication access to the residents of New Mexico through structured professional development plans, mentored interpreting practice, and exploration of ethical dilemmas."

Through Ms. Eubank's diligent analysis of previous years' programming and expertise in the field, an updated curriculum was developed across four quarters of professional development and interpreting experience. It is our belief that the apprentices should

begin the year with a strong emphasis on learning and end the year with more hands-up interpreting opportunities with staff support.

Mx. Bourque began reaching out and planning an interpreting workshop to be presented in Q4. With the support of the ASD staff, they learned the procurement process of bringing an outside party to work with CDHH.

The department is also working to update and revitalize the New Mexico Mentoring (NMM) program for FY26, so the work is starting now. We met to discuss our goals for the program and began planning how to make them happen. Mr. Trevor Brennan, Community Engagement Specialist, investigated historical data to help Mx. Bourque see trends in curricula popularity over time, what was requested vs. assigned, and mentor/mentee pairings. By analyzing the program's past, we can better plan for its future. NMM has been a staple of the commission's professional development mission, and we want it to continue to be a pillar for our community.

As Mx. Bourque continues to find their footing, community events have become a priority for collaboration between our departments and other agencies.

In Q3, Mx. Bourque joined Ms. Gutiérrez and Mr. Robb in planning for the upcoming event between APD and our Deaf, DeafBlind, Deaf with additional Disabilities, Deaf Senior Citizens, and Hard of Hearing communities. With Vancro, PAH! Hiland, and APD, the Commission is working to bring connection through education and outreach. Mx. Bourque and Ms. Eubank have been key players in the logistics of attaining many interpreters with various skills to facilitate this connection.

In addition to the APD event, Mx. Bourque joined the planning committee for the DEAM's day-long conference and they will serve a significant role in the organization and scheduling to ensure a well-run event. Mr. Brennan is also a member of the team, working on the A/V and tech needs for the conference.

Mx. Bourque spent hours with Executive Director Gomme at the 2025 Legislative session, forming different community bonds. While serving as an interpreter, they met

and worked with members of the Governor's Commission on Disability, NM Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, Disability Rights NM, NM Commission for the Blind, and Senators and Representatives from across the state. This crash course in State Government has helped Mx. Bourque develop an understanding of the system from the ground up.

With Mr. Brennan's skill and knowledge, Mx. Bourque has been brought into the fold of the commission's information technology work.

Mx. Bourque was invited to join the Digital Accessibility Collaborative alongside Mr. Brennan and Mr. Gomme. This inter-agency group is dedicated to creating and ensuring digital accessibility for all New Mexicans. Though it is still early, this collective is working toward Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) for State websites and documents. Mx. Bourque is excited to be on a team at the forefront of accessibility.

To best serve our greater Deaf community, Mr. Brennan and Mx. Bourque worked to develop a guiding principle of our social media presence: "To share information relevant to the health, safety, community, and wellbeing of New Mexico Deaf/DeafBlind/and Hard of Hearing residents." When asked by others to share information, we will be asking ourselves if the posting serves our mission. This is an important answer to have in the digital age.

### **Other Highlights**

Mr. Trevor Brennan, Community Engagement Specialist

- Mr. Brennan met with our website host, RTS to establish the work needed to update the NMCDHH website. He created a PO, received signatures, and is now only awaiting a start date.
- He spearheaded a smooth transition of equipment and files to the new Director of Community Engagement.

- With some help from Department of Information Technology (DoIT), he successfully completed the critical task of migrating all Albuquerque and Las Cruces staff to a new VPN client. This is vital to the security of the agency.
- He met with airport staff to order protective cases for iPads that serve as the Sunport's video phones to help preserve the longevity of the devices.
- Mr. Brennan is playing a key role in implementing WCAG for the commission. He began converting our often-used fact sheets with the goal of completing them by the end of FY25.
- He drafted an Acceptable Use Policy for NMCDHH technology, spelling out what can and cannot be done on agency resources. This will continue to be edited and improved until a final draft is approved by the Executive Director.

Ms. Jessica Eubank, Communication Development Specialist

Ms. Eubank spent much of her time serving the internal needs of the agency as our staff interpreter. She also dedicated many hours to working with our interpreter apprentices.

#### Apprentice Program

- Ms. Eubank supervised apprentices during their interpreting work, taking notes on what skills to work on, monitoring accuracy, facilitating additional communication needs, and post-assignment debrief.
- To help us meet our professional development goals, she planned our Demand Control Schema Book Club and ran the first session of that with our 4 apprentices. This book club can be used as an Independent Study for the apprentices' Associate Continuing Education Tracking (ACET) through RID.
- Looking ahead to FY26, she spent time collaborating with other departments to develop professional development activities for next year's apprentices, created a calendar of events to commit apprentices' time with us at the beginning of their year, created a pitch to intrigue interpreters to apply to the apprentice program, and provided feedback for the scope of work for apprentices.

## Other projects

- Ms. Eubank updated the “How to Study for the EIPA Tests “, “Registering for the EIPA Tests”, and “RID Digital Credentials” fact sheets so that NMCDHH is able to communicate and educate accurately.
- She attended the NM Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (NMRID) Board meeting in March.
- To prepare for FY26 interpreter contracts and successfully project the remainder of FY25’s budget, she analyzed our spending on interpreters from previous years. This will help Mx. Bourque’s work immensely.

The Community Engagement Department looks forward to continuing the good work for the rest of FY25 and starting FY26 with a plan to meet our legislative measures and positively impact our community.

# Administration & Finance

*Deborah Romero, Director of Administrative Services*

FY25 – Third Quarter Board Report						
Category		2025 Budget	Expenditures	Encumbered	Remaining Budget	% Expended
200	PERSONNEL SERVICES	1,452,300.00	1,026,701.18		425,598.82	70.69%
300	CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	1,427,300.00	537,532.29	642,720.21	247,047.50	37.66%
400	OTHER	282,100.00	188,612.91	36,101.56	57,385.53	66.86%
500	OTHER FINANCING USES	116,500.00	116,500.00		0.00	0.00%
Total		3,278,200.00	1,869,346.38	678,821.77	730,031.85	57.02%

FY25 Collected Revenue March 31, 2025		
Month	General Fund Allotment	TRS Revenue
Subtotal	\$1,238,778.00	\$646,978.69



## Data & Statistics

*As required by Legislative Performance Measures*

### **Fiscal Year 2025**

<b>Legislative Performance Measure</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Year to Date</b>	<b>YTD % of Goal Met</b>
Number of workshops & training sessions conducted	140	94	67%
Number of outreach events coordinated	150	94	63%
Average number of relay minutes per month	8,000	3,053.05	38%
Number of accessible technology distributions	1,240	743	60%
Number of communication barriers addressed	21,500	19,317	90%
Number of interpreters in CDHH sponsored professional development	208	70	34%

### **Fiscal Year 2024**

<b>Legislative Performance Measure</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Year to Date</b>	<b>YTD % of Goal Met</b>
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 <sup>st</sup> Quarter	2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	Year to Date
Region 1	12	4	2		18
Region 2	12	8	3		23
Region 3	87	37	33		157
Region 4	6	5	1		12
Region 5	52	27	38		117
Total Members by Quarter	169	81	77		327

### 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	79	30	20		129
Hard of Hearing	40	25	30		95
DeafBlind	6	0	4		10
Speech Disabled	0	0	1		1
Hearing	44	26	22		92
<b>Total Individuals by Quarter</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>77</b>		<b>327</b>



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

**From:** Kendra Karp, Interim Director/CIO  
New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

**Date:** February 8, 2025

**Re:** MOU Goals and Performance Report for Third Quarter SFY2025 (January 1-  
March 31, 2025)

**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:** Thirty-one (31) individuals received sign language interpreting services with a total expenditure of \$10,941.58.
- **Hearing Aids or other hearing devices:** Forty-three (43) individuals received hearing aids or other devices, totaling \$409,655.41 in authorized and expended funds.

**Closed Successfully Rehabilitated: (Employed)**

- **Deaf-Blind Individuals:** 0 individual
- **Deaf Individuals:** 12 individuals
- **Hard of Hearing Individuals:** 30 individuals
- **Other Hearing Impairments:** 1 individual

**Employment Information:**

For the 135 employed individuals who are Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Hard of Hearing, or have other hearing impairments:

- **Average Hours Worked per Week:** 31.77 hours
- **Average Wage:** \$19.80 per hour
- Note: 1 person is working in Texas and earning \$8.50/hr. and works 40 hours. Minimum wage in Texas is \$7.25

**Caseload Activity:**

- **Deaf/Deaf-Blind Individuals:** Of the 237 individuals on DVR caseloads, 22 cases have been opened or opened and closed.
- **Hard of Hearing/Other Hearing Impediments:** Of the 391 individuals on DVR caseloads, 45 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:**

- One hundred twenty-six (126) individuals who are Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing, or have other hearing impairments have been identified as receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) or transition services.

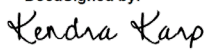
**Provision of Services by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation:**

- 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](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.

**Staff Announcement:**

- NM DVR has hired a new Counselor for Deaf: Amberley Luna. She has taken on Ellen Carpenter's old caseload at the Research Office in Albuquerque, NM.

Respectfully submitted,

DocuSigned by:  
  
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Kendra Karp- Interim Director/CIO  
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:

1<sup>st</sup> (July-Sept) \_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> (Oct-Dec) \_\_\_\_ 3<sup>rd</sup> (Jan-Mar) X 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 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	5	4 Community, 1 Provisional
Complaints	0	
License denials, suspensions, and revocations	0	

- 1 application will be presented before the Board at the next meeting.

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

Last meeting: November 4, 2024

Next meeting: To be scheduled

Agendas and draft minutes are available on the Signed Language Interpreting Practices 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)