

New Mexico Commission for Deaf & Hard of Hearing



Quarterly Report FY26 Quarter 2



FY26 Quarter 2 Board Report

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NMCDHH BOARD MEETING

Thursday, March 5, 2026

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:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/A0oIOvf-EG0>

FINAL AGENDA

Posted: 2/27/2026

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call
- II. Approval of Agenda
- III. Approval of Minutes – December 4, 2025
- IV. Potential Date Change for June Board Meeting
- V. Board Elections
- VI. 2026 OMA Resolution
- VII. Executive Director Report
- VIII. Department Reports
 - Community Advocacy
 - Community Engagement
 - Administrative Services
- IX. Adjournment



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

*Quarterly Board Meeting
Thursday, December 4, 2025
3:00pm*

*The meeting was virtual on Zoom and the public could view the meeting livestream on YouTube with interpreting and captioning at www.youtube.com/live/OnTemalw4AU Part 1
www.youtube.com/live/iJUp_99CrVo Part 2*

DRAFT – These minutes will be subject to possible revision and approval by the commissioners at the next Board meeting on March 5, 2026.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair John Hooper called the meeting to order at 3:02pm. Renee Bregar, Administrative Operations Specialist, called roll call.

Present: Mr. John Hooper – Chair
Mr. Joseph Lopez, III - Vice Chair (joined at approx. 3:21pm)
Dr. Norm Dawson
Dr. Jennifer Herbold (left at approx. 4:47pm)
Mr. Jeff Levine (DVR Designee)
Mr. Ryan Means
Ms. Tiffany Gallegos

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, Rhonda Hall, Isabella Krooth and Jacqueline Trujillo interpreted. Partners Interpreting LLC provided CART transcription. Mr. Christopher Harrington, from the New Mexico Department of Justice (NMDOJ), was also present.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Hooper asked for a motion to approve the agenda.

Mr. Brennan asked Mr. Harrington for clarification on agenda item V. NMCDHH Executive Director Performance Review - Limited Personnel Matters. The agenda noted, "the meeting may be closed to the public during this portion of the agenda pursuant to the New Mexico Open Meetings Act, § 10-15-1(H)(1), (3), and/or (7) NMSA 1978. Closed session is limited to discussion of the matters identified in the motion and any final action will take place after the closed session and will be on the record, in open session." Mr. Brennan noted that New Mexico Open Meetings Act, § 10-15-1(H)(2) NMSA 1978 appears to be the correct section. Mr. Harrington agreed that H2 or Open Meetings Act sections 10-5-1 H is appropriate.

26.1
Commissioner Means made a motion to approve the agenda, as amended.
Commissioner Herbold seconded.
Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper – Yes	Commissioner Lopez - Absent
Commissioner Dawson – Yes	Commissioner Herbold – Yes
Designee Levine – Yes	Commissioner Means - Yes
Commissioner Gallegos – Yes	

Motion passed

III. APPROVAL of SEPTEMBER 4, 2025 MINUTES

Commissioner Hooper asked if there were any changes to the minutes from September 4, 2025.

26.2
Commissioner Means made a motion to approve the minutes as written.
Commissioner Herbold seconded.
Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper – Yes	Commissioner Lopez - Absent
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Commissioner Dawson – Yes Commissioner Herbold – Yes
Designee Levine – Abstain Commissioner Means - Yes
Commissioner Gallegos – Yes

Motion passed

IV. Calendar Year 2026 Meeting Dates

Mr. Gomme requested an additional special meeting with the Commission to discuss the FCC proposals. Board and legal input will be needed before Mr. Gomme can comment to the FCC. A date has not been identified but Mr. Gomme said it will be soon.

Commissioner Means asked how much advanced notice will be when a special meeting is scheduled. Commissioner Herbold stated 72 hours, Mr. Gomme concurred.

Commissioners discussed the proposed meetings dates of March 5, June 4, September 3 and December 3. The June 4 date does not work for Commissioner Herbold or Commissioner Means. Several dates were discussed and commissioners agreed upon June 11. Commissioner Dawson is not available on that date.

Chair Hooper asked for a motion to accept March 5, June 11, September 3 and December 3, as amended.

26.3

Commissioner Herbold made a motion to accept the calendar years 2026 meeting dates, as amended. Commissioner Means seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper – Yes Commissioner Lopez - Abstain
Commissioner Dawson – Yes Commissioner Herbold – Yes
Designee Levine – Yes Commissioner Means - Yes
Commissioner Gallegos – Yes

Motion passed

V. NMCDHH Executive Director Performance Review – Limited Personnel Matters

Commissioner Hooper asked to close the meeting to enter an Executive Session at approx. 3:26pm.

26.4

Commissioner Means made a motion that the Commission enter into Executive Session.

Commissioner Herbold seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper – Yes	Commissioner Lopez – Yes
Commissioner Dawson – Yes	Commissioner Herbold – Yes
Designee Levine – Yes	Commissioner Means - Yes
Commissioner Gallegos – Yes	

Motion passed with 7 Yes,

At approx. 4:24pm, Mr. Harrington announced that there was no action taken in the Executive Session.

The Commission voted to re-open the meeting.

26.5

Commissioner XXX made a motion that the Commission open the meeting.

Commissioner XXX seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper – Yes	Commissioner Lopez – Yes
Commissioner Dawson – Yes	Commissioner Herbold – Yes
Designee Levine – Yes	Commissioner Means - Yes
Commissioner Gallegos – Yes	

Motion passed

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Gomme reviewed the recently released FCC document 25-79, its related request for comment, and the response he was drafting, as detailed in the Executive Director Report. Mr. Gomme reiterated his need to have the board review the response, at a later date, during a board meeting.

Mr. Gomme and Chair Hooper discussed that dialogue will need to occur with the legislature in future sessions, when more information is available.

There were no questions regarding other Director reports.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Hooper asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

26.6

Commissioner Lopez made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Means seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper – Yes	Commissioner Lopez - Yes
Commissioner Dawson – Yes	Commissioner Herbold – Absent
Designee Levine – Yes	Commissioner Means - Yes
Commissioner Gallegos – Yes	

Motion passed

The meeting was adjourned at 4:49pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Renee F. Bregar

Renee Bregar
Administrative Operations Specialist

Executive Summary

G. Nathan Gomme, Executive Director

Commissioners and community members, I present the second quarter Executive Summary of Fiscal Year 26 (FY26) for the New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

In this report, I will highlight some of the critical programmatic achievements we accomplished during the second quarter, while providing vital updates on the federal regulatory shifts and evolving state funding structures we are currently navigating. Following the foundational work we established in the first quarter, we began pushing more towards the topic of modernization of communication access for all New Mexicans. In addition, we continued our work of ensuring funding resources for the continued support of our Support Service Provider program (SSP) and Communication Facilitator (CF) contracts and completed the work of finding a vendor for our audit of the surcharge revenue.

As I mentioned in my last report, the red flags regarding the future of analog-based relay services have become increasingly apparent, and the issue is urgent. On November 20, 2025, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) 25-79, initiating a profound overhaul of Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS). This proposal seeks to phase out the mandatory status of traditional TTY-based relay services and transition fully to Internet Protocol (IP)-based networks.

This unification of regulatory standards will likely impose significant technical and administrative overhead on our agency and our vendors if done. Because of the profound impact this will have on our state, I drafted a formal response to the FCC. During the time I presented some of the context at the previous board meeting and will provide an update at this one. I learned that the deadline for comments, which I anticipated would be further along the coming months was not so. I informed Chair Hooper and started sending some drafts and information I had collected from other states and national organizations. My final comments to the FCC are attached and were also submitted to the Chair. In addition to the comments, I was also responsible, as

chair of the National Association of State Relay Administration (NASRA), to draft the NASRA comments reflecting several state relay administrators and this would eventually include our partners from the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program Association (TEDPA). NASRA would also sign on to comments from several key national stakeholders who also drafted comments in response to the FCC proposal. As a reminder these are the specifics of what it proposes:

End the TTY Mandate: Remove the requirement for individual states to run and fund legacy analog TTY (Teletypewriter) relay services.

Force the IP Transition: Push the transition of remaining relay users to modern, Internet Protocol (IP)-based alternatives like Real-Time Text (RTT), Video Relay Service (VRS), and IP Relay.

Create a National Safety Net: Potentially certify a single "National Analog Relay Provider" as a temporary backstop for people who still don't have internet access.

Expand Database Registration: Require legacy analog users to register in a federal database (the TRS-URD) to verify their identity and prevent fraud.

Delete Obsolete Rules: Clean out outdated regulations that apply to 1990s-era telecommunications networks that no longer exist.

I have also provided a summary of the NASRA/TEDPA talking points later in this document for review. We should know the response of the FCC in March. However, in addition to this proposal for rule changes, we saw another Notice of Proposed Rule Making addressing the Modernization of IP-based relay services and the Lifeline program. These will both have a significant impact on the future of relay services as well as the affordability programs that offset the cost for access to carrier and internet services. These proposals may or may not have an impact on the agency as well.

Regarding our financial status, the legislative changes to the surcharge and the 80/20 split between 988 services and NMCDHH continue to strain our budget. However, the strain was less than expected by December, which made it difficult going into the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) meeting to discuss our needs. We are unsure if

we will see the drop we typically see year by year, but we still do not believe the agency can rely on that funding source to support the entirety of our budget needs. To address the decreasing surcharge revenue, we have requested additional general funds to ensure we can maintain our mandated service levels moving forward. This includes continued funding for the SSP and CF services which were highlighted during the hearing by our analysts. This ensures that we will not see a drop in services for the next fiscal year. In addition, while we were told to request a flat budget due to the challenges in funding the state is facing, we did not see any reduction in our funding in either the executive or legislative analysts, which we did see for others. This is part of the work done to share details and needs with our analysts and successfully highlight our challenges prior to and during our hearing. Our relay numbers continuing to drop is still cause for concern due to how we cannot consistently anticipate usage of relay services; we continue to be required by mandate to have funding for it which continues to put us in a difficult position. However, the proposed budgets by both analysts during our hearing in October contained general funds and other funding which will ensure we are able to continue providing services as we have this fiscal year.

As I mentioned, I had several meetings with national stakeholders, NASRA, TEDPA, as well as the FCC in an Ex-Parte capacity, at several points during the second quarter. I also presented at: Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) in October, which was very well attended in Albuquerque; to the Legislative Staff at our Roundhouse in October, as part of a panel of individuals with disabilities who work in the state; and, I worked to push New Mexico agencies forward with web accessibility training. In addition, I was invited to the opening of the Jr. NAD (National Association of the Deaf) event, which was held at the New Mexico School for the Deaf (NMSD). There, I was able to do a short introduction before some wonderful speeches from the Superintendent, who serves on our board, as well as Mr. Means, who represented the New Mexico Association for the Deaf (NMAD). Our agency participated and worked to support Jr. NADs efforts during their event in Santa Fe. In December, both myself and Ms. Gutiérrez, as well as Vancro, met with the Deaf Senior community to address some of their concerns and share some information that had not been explained very well in the past. There remained some confusion on if there was a cap on SSP and CF hours. The team present explained that this was not the case, and provided more information on how Vancro set up the budget month to month. In short, it was explained that while Vancro expects at least 20 hours of services per person in a month, and budgets in this

manner that often times people may use more or fewer hours and Vancro is able to adjust based on need. I believe this was a relief to several people who thought they had a cap on their services.

While there are funding and regulatory concerns, we also had several major successes during the second quarter of the year:

Telecommunications Equipment Distribution (TEDP): I am pleased to share that our shift toward IP-based technology is well underway. The online TED application is now fully available on our website in both English and Spanish, making it significantly easier for our community to apply. We also distributed an ASL video prior to the holidays to notify the community of this update. Year-to-date, we have successfully completed 619 accessible technology distributions. We are still seeing more people start to apply this way and are also working on a mobile application service for future outreach, which we hope to deploy sometime in March.

Support Service Provider (SSP) & Communication Facilitator (CF) Programs: These funded programs experienced steady growth this quarter. SSPs fulfilled 738 requests (1,870 service hours), and CFs completed 128 requests (235.75 service hours). Program leadership also successfully developed comprehensive handbooks for SSPs, CFs, and consumers to promote consistent standards and clarify expectations. A lot of this work came with support from Ms. Gutiérrez and Ms. Bregar.

Community Advocacy: Our advocacy specialists have addressed 8,835 communication barriers year-to-date. A key highlight this quarter was our successful intervention at clinics, where we educated staff on the necessity of on-site tactile sign language interpreters for DeafBlind patients, replacing an ineffective Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) setup. Furthermore, Ms. Sandoval partnered with the Albuquerque Police Department (APD) to create ASL videos and QR codes to make domestic violence resources accessible to our community.

Outreach: I want to recognize the immense effort our team put into the Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) Conference in October. NMCDHH was integral to the event's success, serving as the sole provider of ASL interpreting and CART captioning for nearly 150 attendees. In addition to this event, we also continued

excellent outreach in Southern New Mexico; Ms. Santillan participated in 26 booth events and reached 777 visitors.

As we move into the second half of the fiscal year, I will be utilizing a dual-track strategy to handle the possible TRS transition. My short-term strategy (12–24 months) involves finalizing our shift to IP-based equipment and providing updated language to the Telecommunications Access Act to reflect current technology. This assumes the FCC accepts the comments from many of our partners. My long-term plan (3 years) focuses on safely sunsetting legacy analog services without leaving our rural and tribal constituents behind. My ultimate executive goal is to maintain "functional equivalence" during this digital transition so that no member of our community loses access to vital communication tools.

New Mexico has laid the groundwork for this transition, and the work done at the NMCDHH continues to be a critical part of the state's overall success. I remain confident in our upcoming years during this transition. However, if the FCC makes a decision to sunset traditional relay services and does not accept the proposals of several states, these plans will need to shift rapidly.

G. Nathan Gomme

FCC Discussion Points NASRA and other Partners:

The Sunset Timeline & Rural Broadband Reality

- **Synchronizing with BEAD:** The proposed sunset of mandatory traditional TTY-based relay services cannot occur prematurely. The sunset timeline must strictly synchronize with the 2030 Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program deployment timeline.
- **Protecting Rural Constituents:** Ending analog services before high-speed broadband is fully deployed risks severing essential communication access for rural and tribal communities, which fundamentally violates the functional equivalence mandate of the ADA.

II. Transition Logistics & Data Access

- **The Need for a Transition Data Waiver:** To effectively and safely migrate legacy users to IP-based platforms, we require a "Transition Data Waiver." Without direct access to current user lists, state agencies like ours cannot perform the targeted, hands-on outreach necessary to prevent severe service disruptions.

III. Mitigating Administrative Burdens

- **Opposing TRS-URD Expansion:** We firmly oppose the proposal to extend the TRS User Registration Database (TRS-URD) requirements to legacy users. Forcing state programs and vendors to retrofit outdated analog systems with new, complex data collection and verification procedures introduces massive, uncompensated administrative and technical overhead.

IV. Equipment Distribution & Device Modernization

- **Protecting State EDPs:** The regulatory overhaul must protect state Equipment Distribution Programs (EDPs).

- **COTS Classification:** Consumer Off-The-Shelf (COTS) devices, such as the iPads and tablets we are actively distributing, must be classified as compensable equipment. Our community must have the actual modern hardware required to utilize IP-based networks.

V. Funding Critical Support Services

- **Communication Facilitator (CF) Programs:** The FCC must mandate federal funding to support Communication Facilitator programs. These programs are essential for DeafBlind users navigating the transition to IP-based services, and the financial burden cannot fall entirely on strained state intrastate funds.

VI. National Alignment & Strategic Defense

- **A Unified Defensive Front:** As Chair of NASRA, I have been coordinating closely with other state administrators and national consumer advocacy groups. We are presenting a unified request that they not provide a premature sunset to ensure the FCC fully understands the on-the-ground, state-level operational realities of this transition.

Industry Response thus far:

The Industry Response: "Cut the Cord"

Major carriers and industry associations (USTelecom, CTIA) are commenting on the NPRM to push for the final deregulation of legacy copper networks. Their response is driven by the high cost of maintaining dual networks (analog and IP).

Stakeholder Group	Core Argument	Key Motivation
Wireless Carriers (CTIA)	"Native RTT is Ready"	They argue that Real-Time Text (RTT) is already deployed and functional on mobile networks, so the TTY mandate is a redundant regulatory burden that impedes network evolution.
Wireline/Broadband (USTelecom)	"End Copper Obligations"	They view TTY mandates as "zombie regulations" that force them to keep copper lines active. They want a hard sunset date to finalize the transition to all-IP networks.
TRS Providers (Hamilton, Sorenson)	"Streamline Certification"	They support modernization but are focused on reducing the bureaucratic burden of certification. They want a simplified process to offer new IP-based services without the "heaviness" of old state-by-state regulations.

The initial comment period for this NPRM is closed, with reply comments due by March 3, 2026. A review of the docket reveals that other states share our deep concerns regarding a premature transition:

- **Opposition to Hard Deadlines:** State utility commissions, such as the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (Pa. PUC), have formally opposed the FCC's proposal to terminate the requirement for state-run TTY Relay programs at this time.
- **Risk of State Defunding:** Commenters have pointed out that if the federal mandate is eliminated, state legislatures might move to terminate funding and discontinue administration of relay programs, placing vulnerable individuals at the mercy of political decisions.
- **Threshold-Based Alternatives:** Rather than a strict national deadline, states have proposed that the FCC make the termination of a state's mandatory TTY

Relay status contingent on its statewide usage falling below a certain threshold of annual minutes.

- **The Rural Broadband Gap:** Echoing rural state concerns, comments highlight that existing landline connections remain the *only* viable option for TRS users in remote rural areas where broadband internet service is unavailable or wireless signals are weak.
- **Transition Burdens:** States are strongly emphasizing that any plans to eliminate analog relay must incorporate a comprehensive transition plan. This includes aggressive outreach, training, and addressing the heavy financial burden placed on users who will be forced to purchase new IP-compatible equipment to maintain access to relay services.

Link to Lifeline NPRM FCC 26-8: <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-418282A1.pdf>

Link to Internet Based TRS NPRM FCC 26-4:
<https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/FCC-26-4A1.pdf>

Link to NASRA Filing FCC 25-79 Modernizing TRS:
<https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/102031590724370/1>

Link To Disability Organization Filing FCC 25-79 Modernizing TRS:
<https://www.fcc.gov/ecfs/document/10203072017665/1>

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.

During the second quarter of FY26, the Director of Community Advocacy, Ms. Corina Gutiérrez, along with Community Advocacy Specialists, Mr. Dennis Stidham and Ms. Myra Sandoval, focused on addressing communication barriers within clinics, law enforcement agencies, and non-profit organizations. While only a limited number of cases were fully resolved this quarter, several others remain ongoing. In this report, we outline our department's work, achievements, and priorities related to communication access this quarter.

Medical Advocacy: During this quarter, we worked with a non-profit rehabilitation center that was providing Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) services for a Deaf individual. However, the VRI connection experienced technical problems, making it difficult for the individual to fully understand the information being communicated. We educated the organization on the differences between VRI and on-site interpreting. The organization ultimately implemented a hybrid method, resulting in a positive outcome.

We worked with a dental clinic to ensure appropriate communication access for DeafBlind patients. The clinic initially relied on VRI, which was ineffective for patients who require tactile signing and are unable to see the video. We educated clinic staff on what constitutes effective communication for DeafBlind individuals and explained the need for on-site interpreters who can provide tactile communication. The clinic showed

understanding and arranged for on-site interpreters, resulting in improved communication access for DeafBlind patients.

Law Enforcement Advocacy: We assisted a DeafBlind individual who had a negative experience interacting with law enforcement via VRI on a mobile phone, which was ineffective for this individual. We worked with the law enforcement department to schedule a meeting with the individual and ensure an on-site ASL interpreter was present. As a result, the report was successfully completed with full communication access, and the outcome was effective.

Special Projects: This quarter, Ms. Sandoval worked with the Albuquerque Police Department (APD), including the Domestic Violence and Sexual Abuse units in Bernalillo County, to review pamphlets and fact sheets outlining resources for individuals experiencing domestic violence or sexual abuse. Officers responding to domestic violence calls will provide these materials, which include QR codes linking to information in multiple languages for non-English speakers, as well as QR codes linking to ASL videos. Ms. Sandoval also partnered with APD to create ASL videos corresponding to the pamphlets and factsheets, making the information accessible to the Deaf community. She has developed ASL glosses for each document and aims to complete all videos by the end of this fiscal year.

During this quarter, we partnered with the New Mexico Department of Justice (NMDOJ) and the New Mexico Health Care Authority (NMHCA) to improve communication access at Rehabilitation and Nursing Centers. Some of our hearing loss community members who were transferred from hospitals did not receive appropriate communication access at these centers. Our advocacy staff worked with individuals to submit formal complaints to NMDOJ and NMHCA when centers fail to provide adequate access. These agencies stated they will follow up to ensure compliance and ensure that an on-site ASL interpreter is provided for each individual with hearing loss.

Ms. Gutiérrez was appointed to the City of Albuquerque's American with Disabilities Act Advisory Council (ADAAC) and confirmed by the City Council on October 20, 2025. She attended her first ADAAC meeting in November, where she met other committee members and discussed accessibility initiatives in Albuquerque. ADAAC meetings are scheduled via Zoom on the first Friday of each month. Additionally, Ms. Gutiérrez

continued to actively participate in the quarterly meetings of the New Mexico DeafBlind Task Force, where discussions focused on counseling and therapeutic services, as well as Protactile workshops for DeafBlind consumers. The Task Force agreed to hold one in-person meeting annually, with all remaining meetings conducted remotely.

Community Education

NMCDHH staff and vendors provided a total of 64 presentations and training sessions this quarter. Presenters included Mr. Robb, Mr. Brennan, Ms. Eubank, Ms. Sandoval, Mr. Stidham, Ms. Santillan, and Mr. Gomme. Mr. Sena from Hamilton Relay also provided presentations.

Mr. Robb gave 39 presentations and trainings on Hearing Loss Sensitivity (different main topics such as Medical and Employment) in addition to the NMCDHH Overview and Deaf Culture to different entities such as NM Asian Family Center, NM Environment, Department, Aging and Long-Term Services Department to name few.

Mr. Brennan provided one presentation to UNMH educators, as detailed in the Community Engagement Section of the report.

Ms. Eubank provided the 2nd part of the Demand Control Schema and Ethical Decision-Making training this quarter for the UNM Signed Language Interpreting Program (SLIP).

Ms. Sandoval and Mr. Stidham provided the “Guardians: Advocate for Access” training to the Office of Guardianship.

Mr. Sinderholm and a representative from Teltex provided 4 presentations during Jr. NAD on the benefits of assistive technology. This included hands on support and information about other programs throughout the nation that could support them in receiving similar assistive technology.

Ms. Santillan provided the NMCDHH Overview presentation to the Local Emergency Planning Committee and the Parkinsons Support Group at separate meetings.

Mr. Stidham gave 10 presentations at UNM.

Executive Director Gomme gave 4 presentations. These included presentations at the DEAM Conference, a welcoming speech for Jr. NAD, a digital accessibility workshop with the State of New Mexico Digital Accessibility CoLAB on closed captioning, and an additional presentation in Santa Fe regarding Title II accessibility and disability awareness for the Legislative Staff at the roundhouse.

Mr. Sena, from Hamilton Relay, provided 2 presentations discussing telecommunications captioning services and ASL access.

Systemic Advocacy

The City of Albuquerque (COA) ADA Advisory Council: Mr. Robb's term was completed when Ms. Corina Gutiérrez was accepted by Mr. Keller, the City of Albuquerque Mayor, to assume his position on the council.

Office of the Santa Fe County Clerk (OSFCC): The video requested by the OSFCC, and as mentioned in the first quarter report, was completed prior to the November election and it was distributed to the community. OSFCC and CDHH agreed to revisit the first part after the new year and to add more county clerk information to the video.

In collaboration with the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP), we produced a video to notify the community about the new TED applications that will make it easier for them to fill out online. We distributed the video prior to the December holidays.

Las Cruces Satellite Office

Individual Advocacy and Service Coordination

This second quarter of FY26, Ms. Susana Santillan, Community Advocacy Specialist in Southern New Mexico, assisted with eliminating communication barriers for the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing community by advocating for effective communication in healthcare and community organizations.

Key Accomplishments

Ms. Santillan addressed a concern involving a hospital Emergency Department (ED) related to the delayed provisioning of an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter for a Deaf individual. Ms. Santillan worked with the hospital's Risk Management representative responsible for accommodation requests to address the incident. Efforts focused on reviewing procedures and providing staff education to ensure appropriate and timely responses to future requests for ASL interpreting services.

Systemic Advocacy & Special Projects

Ms. Santillan continues to accept notifications from constituents regarding lack of access to city information, then works with the city involved to ensure the information posted is captioned allowing access for the hearing loss community in Southern New Mexico.

Mrs. Santillan continues to serve on nine (9) committees and attends networking meetings throughout Southern New Mexico to build professional relationships, share knowledge and enhance her outreach efforts.

Booths and Presentations

Ms. Santillan participated in twenty-six (26) booth events throughout Southern New Mexico in Las Cruces, Alamogordo, Truth or Consequences, Silver City, and Tularosa. Additionally, she attended food pantries held in Doña Ana, Las Cruces, Mesquite, Butterfield, Anthony, La Mesa, Vado, Radium Springs, Berino, Chaparral, and Tortugas. She attended food pantries, Disabled American Veterans locations and Senior programs to name a few. She had 777 visitors in her booth efforts.

Support Service Provider Program

As Reported by Vancro Integrated Interpreting Services

Executive Summary

During the second quarter of FY26, the New Mexico Support Service Provider (SSP) and Communication Facilitator (CF) Programs continued to deliver consistent, high-quality services to DeafBlind, Deaf Seniors, and DeafPlus consumers statewide. This quarter represented a period of steady growth in service demand and community involvement while also completing a significant leadership transition. Responsibilities expanded to include increased supervision, coordination, and external collaboration to better support participants across New Mexico. Additionally, Vancro worked to enhance internal processes to include a more robust case management tracking system.

SSPs fulfilled 738 requests totaling 1,870 service hours. CFs completed 128 requests totaling 235.75 service hours. The program maintained a strong statewide presence and reinforced consumer autonomy through reliable access to trained SSPs and CFs.

Throughout the quarter, program leadership supported onboarding and supervision of the Case Manager role, strengthened scheduling and service coordination practices, and advanced key operational improvements. A major accomplishment included the development of comprehensive handbooks for SSPs, CFs, and consumers to promote consistent standards, clarify expectations, and strengthen accountability across all program areas.

Community engagement remained a strong focus during this quarter. Program leadership participated in Zia DeafBlind Club meetings to support organizational development related to 501(c)(3) status and joined the DeafBlind Taskforce to contribute to collaborative efforts aimed at strengthening resources, advocacy, and support systems for DeafBlind individuals.

Case Management

Case management services supported consumers throughout the second quarter

through 161 documented touch points, reflecting consistent engagement and ongoing coordination of services statewide. During this period, services focused on relationship building with supported consumers while providing ongoing navigation for healthcare and public benefits. Key areas of support included public assistance, food security resources, medical appointment coordination, and health insurance enrollment as consumers prepared for the new calendar year.

Several consumers experienced financial strain due to reductions or delays in state and federal food assistance programs. In response, case management support included reviewing and updating benefits information, identifying alternative community food and nutrition resources, and sharing accessible information to reduce confusion and increase awareness of available assistance.

Consumers also faced communication and coordination challenges in addressing medical needs and maintaining routine care. Case management assistance involved verifying medical needs and coordinating accessible appointments for specialized and routine healthcare services. Additionally, multiple consumers requested support in navigating health insurance coverage, which included assistance with plan enrollment, education on available options, and establishing care with primary healthcare providers.

SSP Services

The New Mexico SSP Program fulfilled 738 consumer requests totaling 1,870 service hours. SSPs provided statewide coverage and supported consumers with daily errands, medical appointments, community engagement, recreation, and transportation. SSPs continued to promote consumer independence by serving as sighted guides, readers, and environmental support in a variety of settings.

Communication Facilitator Program

The Communication Facilitator (CF) Program continued to grow in visibility and demand during the October through December quarter. The increasing volume of assignment requests reflects growing awareness of the program and continued trust in its ability to

support communication access for DeafBlind, DeafPlus, and Deaf Seniors participants statewide.

During the quarter, CFs completed 128 requests totaling 235.75 service hours. Coordination efforts focused on meeting participant needs while maintaining quality, professionalism, and adherence to established policies and procedures. The program also supported access to educational opportunities, including requests for CF support to attend a Vancro workshop focused on Digital Footprint awareness, reinforcing the program's role in promoting independence, safety, and informed decision-making. During this quarter, the program also engaged in national-level discussions with the Helen Keller National Center and representatives from other Communication Facilitator programs to review service standards, clarify expectations, and explore opportunities for stronger alignment across programs.

Outreach, Education, and Training

In the second quarter of the fiscal year, outreach efforts in New Mexico were targeted and focused on strategic relationship building and accessibility planning. Although the number of public events attended was modest, the benefits to the program are expected to be significant, strengthening collaboration opportunities and expanding consumer access in upcoming quarters.

At a National Federation of the Blind convention on October 24 and 25, Vancro engaged with several community members who expressed interest in services and returned with follow-up questions.

In addition to formal events, staff supported consumer-led training development and behind-the-scenes planning efforts. A consumer expressed interest in hosting a workshop for SSPs, CFs, and the community, and staff assisted with developing accessible content and visually effective materials. Community partners, including the New Mexico School for the Deaf and the Deafblind Youth Project NM, also expressed

interest in workshops related to Haptics and K–12 applications. Planning discussions are ongoing with the goal of expanding these efforts during the next quarter.

Consumer Feedback and Quality Improvement

Consumer feedback and continuous improvement remain central to the New Mexico SSP and CF Programs. Throughout the quarter, staff continued to address participant needs through responsive scheduling, service coordination, and collaboration with consumers and community partners. Program leadership will continue gathering feedback and identifying opportunities to improve access, training, and service coverage throughout the remainder of the fiscal year.

NMCDHH Activities During Q2 FY26



NMCDHH staff attended 32 booths in the second quarter.





Dennis and Myra presented to the Office of Guardianship on “Advocating for Access”. This presentation focused on the differences between on-site interpreter/VRI/VRS, how to use them properly, and how to advocate for proper interpreters for their clients. NMCDHH staff and contractors provided 64 workshops or presentations during the second quarter.



Outreach & Telecommunications

During the second quarter of FY26, the Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP) focused on enhancing accessibility, exploring innovative technologies, and managing a successful leadership transition. Key highlights for the quarter include:

- **Remote Application Certification Process (RACP) Portal Accessibility:** Initiated a video project to provide visual, bilingual (English and Spanish) instructions for the online application portal, ensuring WCAG 2.1 AA compliance.
- **Technology Exploration:** Began developing a pilot program to test smart "captioning" glasses, which offer real-time speech-to-text transcription for qualifying New Mexicans.
- **Program Administration Transition:** Mr. Sean Sinderholm officially assumed administrative responsibility for the TEDP from Ms. Corina Gutiérrez on October 6, 2025.
- **Supply Chain Mitigation:** Identified potential issues with Random Access Memory modules or RAM due to increased demand for RAM, which is prompting shortages of everyday technology, prompting strategic vendor discussions planned for Q3 to address possible technology shortages in our equipment space.
- **Program Impact:** Distributed 330 pieces of equipment and reached 1,226 individuals through community outreach events

Online Application Portal and Accessibility Initiatives: During the second quarter, Mr. Gomme initiated projects to expand awareness of the TEDP. A primary focus was the RACP, an online portal that hosts the TEDP application for New Mexicans. To ensure compliance with WCAG 2.1 AA mandates, the team is creating visual instructions for the portal.

Mr. Sinderholm was asked to draft two scripts for the initial portal announcement and one showing a detailed walkthrough of the portal, at the request of Mr. Gomme. Due to time constraints, the project was strategically divided into two phases: an RACP

Introduction and Detailed RACP Instructions. Mr. Gomme's primary goal was to get a video released introducing the RACP to the community. The second was a detailed breakdown of the portal, which proved rather difficult to conceptualize leading to a collaborative planning meeting called by Mr. Gomme, which included Mr. Sinderholm, Ms. Gutiérrez, Mrs. Sandoval, and Mr. Robb from the Department of Community Advocacy. This meeting addressed some of the details and to ensure it served the community and aligned with the agency's mission.

The introductory video highlights the convenience of the online portal as an alternative to the standard PDF application. To broaden accessibility, the team plans to provide subtitles in both English and Spanish. Mr. Sinderholm, Mr. Robb, and Mrs. Sandoval successfully filmed the introductory video at NMCDHH. Mr. Sinderholm is currently developing the script for the detailed instruction video in collaboration with the same team.

Research on Smart "Captioning" Glasses Pilot Program Mr. Gomme and Mr. Sinderholm continue researching new assistive technologies to benefit qualifying New Mexicans. One promising area of exploration is smart eyeglasses, or more colloquially known among us as "captioning glasses," which feature an integrated computer that projects a screen onto the lens. These glasses utilize speech-to-text technology to transcribe spoken conversations and display the text directly on the lens for the wearer. Additional features include real-time language translation, navigation, and teleprompter capabilities.

The glasses often are required to operate in tandem with a smartphone application, utilizing microphones from the phone or on the frame or nose bridge to capture audio, process it via the phone, and project the text back to the lenses. While several viable models have been identified, however challenges exist. One manufacturer requires in-store, custom fittings, and these specific devices cannot currently be purchased through a manner which makes them available in our version of our TED program. In order to adequately address this for New Mexicans, we are looking at more readily achievable glasses which can scale with our community. Another noted challenge is the fact that

we will need to have some method to provide glasses with prescriptions, this has not typically been a part of our program and requires additional thought.

Technology Shortages and Supply Chain Volatility Global RAM shortages and supply chain volatility pose a potential risk to the TEDP's ability to provide equipment. Factors such as the increasing cost of tech components and reduced consumer availability threaten to create barriers to communication access.

There is current concern of a scenario which could leave many qualifying individuals without necessary communication access. Mr. Sinderholm and Mr. Gomme have reviewed the concern. Mr. Gomme plans to meet with the program's equipment vendor, Teltex Inc., in the third quarter to discuss mitigation strategies and potential solutions. Further updates will be provided in the Q3 report.

Transitional Administration of TEDP After more than nine years of overseeing the TEDP, Ms. Corina Gutiérrez has officially transitioned the program to Mr. Sean Sinderholm. Under Mr. Gomme's guidance, Mr. Sinderholm will continue to assume more duties and responsibilities related to the program.

During the second quarter, Mr. Gomme, Ms. Gutiérrez, and Mr. Sinderholm met to finalize the transition in October. We would like to extend deep appreciation to Ms. Gutiérrez, who oversaw the program and was a part of the great success of it during her tenure.

Second Quarter Statistics

Available Equipment: Equipment includes amplified telephones, iPads, speech assistive devices, notification systems, loud ringers, and assistive listening with neckloops.

Equipment Distributed: The TEDP distributed a total of 330 pieces of equipment during the quarter, including iPads, Amplified Telephones, and Sonic Alert Notification Systems.

Outreach: Mr. Sinderholm, and Mr. Brennan hosted six booth events throughout Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and the Pueblo of Tesuque, reaching a total of 1,287 individuals. These events included the DEAM conference, as previously mentioned, the City of Albuquerque, and Pueblo of Tesuque Health Fairs. Mr. Sena from Hamilton Relay also attended 9 booth events for a total of 1,250 visitors. Altogether, we hosted 15 booths in the northern part of the state, for a total of 2,537 visitors in the second quarter.

Community Engagement

Amy Bourque, Director of Community Engagement

The Community Engagement Department used much of Q2 collaborating with other groups and agencies, as well as internally with peers in the Commission. We continued the work with Albuquerque Police Department and Rio Grande Communication Access (RGCA) on creating material for their academy about what new officers should expect when working with a signed language interpreter. This will become a video for cadets, as well as a refresher for seasoned officers who may need a reminder.

RGCA, Community Engagement, and Community Advocacy worked toward creation of a workshop to help reconnect interpreters to their work and to the Deaf community they serve. Meetings to set educational objectives and plan presentations occurred throughout Q2, and the workshop will be presented in Q3.

We met with representatives from the Public Education Department (PED) to see how we can reignite a mutually supportive relationship that had gone out with confusion and staff turnover within PED. The initial meeting was just the beginning of the conversation to explore how we can bolster their work to serve students with hearing loss, their parents, and educators throughout NM.

A huge cooperative effort culminated on October 15th when the Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) Conference was successfully executed by various stakeholders of NM State agencies, non-profit groups, and private sector employers. Nearly 150 attendees engaged with topics ranging from assistive technology to job coaches, employment and community resources, and more. NMCDHH was integral in the planning, scheduling, audio and video pre-production and onsite work, as well as the sole provider for ASL interpreting and communication access real-time translation (CART) captioning services. We worked with 8 interpreters to cover main conference sessions, resources for community members' and employers' booths, and conference

staff access. We were proud to see the hard work of our department and so many others come to fruition for the community.

The Community Engagement Department continues their dedication to training and skills development. We took a workshop on ADA considerations for best practices for virtual meetings and webinars to see different perspectives and improve on our practice. We were pleased to see that we are doing well in our attention to access in our meetings, but we will continue to adopt new practices to adapt to changes. Director Bourque completed the Essentials of Supervision and Management Program coursework taught by the State Personnel Office (SPO), and they are now an official ESM Graduate. The department also revisited the Open Meetings Act (OMA) and Inspection of Public Records Act (IPRA) with training from SPO. Our staff interpreter continues her skill development, having attended three workshops dedicated to enhancing accuracy and accessibility of interpretation.

On the technology-focused side of our department, we worked on hardware and digital media. With our Administrative Services Department (ASD), we received new computers and laptops early in Q2 and deployed nearly all of the new equipment to employees independently of technicians from the State Department of Information Technology (DoIT). This internal work has prevented additional costs for the agency that would be incurred to use DoIT resources and has also allowed for agency staff to have technical concerns addressed more quickly. Staff have also been briefed on new cybersecurity training and guidelines to protect their new equipment and information. Our Public Information Officer (PIO) has worked diligently to update fact sheets and templates with which we share our information to the public in anticipation of the enhanced accessibility requirements mandated by the federal government; Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA. He also worked in tandem with other commission departments to update the website for their program's needs. The TEDP application is now available online from our website and information was disseminated on social media and in our newsletter to reach as many constituents as possible, as previously mentioned, in this report.

In our outreach work, we provided information to community members through booths and presentations. When another staff member was not available, we stepped in to provide information to the Pueblo of Tesuque regarding our services, as well as listen to their experiences as Indigenous people with hearing loss. We value the time and vulnerability that they shared with us. We presented on core interpreting frameworks to the UNM Signed Language Interpreting degree program, class of 2026. These ten students will be future interpreters, and we appreciate being even a small part of their education. Through work with the Patient and Family Advisory Council at University of New Mexico Hospital (UNMH), we provided information to UNMH educators as part of a panel sharing experiences of a patient with hearing loss. It was an honor to speak to medical educators about what they should share with their students when working with individuals with hearing loss. We also proctored the last Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment written exam to be hosted by the Commission. The technical requirements of the assessment have become incompatible with what the state can agree to, so we will no longer be able to proctor.

For interpreting needs, we met all of our staff requests with no cancellations. All requests totaled to around 150 hours of actual interpreting work. With two large events in the quarter, DEAM and Prime Time 50+, we scheduled several interpreters with varying availability and covered all needs. We are proud to have a clear record of commitment and dedication to the needs of the agency. Our work with our Apprentice Interpreters remains a strong pillar of our mission. We worked with them in 13 professional development opportunities for a total of 45 hours between the three of them. They also had a combined 50 hours of supervised and supported interpreting time. They are being evaluated on these assignments with new rubrics, created by our staff interpreter. Throughout this work they have been receiving group and individual attention to make measurable improvements to their interpreting skill.

To revamp and revitalize the New Mexico Mentoring program, we worked through Q2 to attract curricula creators to propose their work for NMM. This included a specified proposal call shared through the interpreter distribution listserv, social media, website,

and newsletter. We then hosted a pre-proposal conference where interested creators could ask questions that we then compiled into a Q&A shared through the same channels. Creators submitted their proposals near the end of Q2, and we are working carefully and ethically to make the best choice from the submissions.

The Community Engagement Department remains committed to our mission and stands proud of the work we have accomplished.

Administration & Finance

Deborah Romero, Director of Administrative Services

FY26 – Second Quarter Board Report						
Category		2026 Budget	Expenditures	Encumbered	Remaining Budget	% Expended
200	PERSONNEL SERVICES	1,587,200.00	724,748.67			45.66%
300	CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	1,627,300.00	374,605.05	997,072.93		23.02%
400	OTHER	280,800.00	130,580.54	121,454.67		46.50%
500	OTHER FINANCING USES	116,500.00				0.00%
Total		3,611,800.00	1,229,934.26	1,118,527.60	0.00	34.05%

FY26 Collected Revenue September 30, 2025		
Month	General Fund Allotment	TRS Revenue
Subtotal	\$1,074,150.00	\$406,831.81

Data & Statistics

As required by Legislative Performance Measures

Fiscal Year 2026

Legislative Performance Measure	Target	Year to Date	YTD % of Goal Met
Number of workshops & training sessions conducted	140	79	56.43%
Number of outreach events coordinated	150	85	56.67%
Average number of relay minutes per month	9,000	2,037.43	22.64%
Number of accessible technology distributions	1,350	619	45.85%
Number of communication barriers addressed	21,500	8,835	41.09%
Number of interpreters in CDHH sponsored professional development	150	26	17.33%

Fiscal Year 2025

Legislative Performance Measure	Target	Year to Date	YTD % of Goal Met
Number of workshops & training sessions conducted	135	155	115%
Number of outreach events coordinated	122	140	115%
Average number of relay minutes per month	10,000	2851.65	29%
Number of accessible technology distributions	1,070	1,279	120%
Number of communication barriers addressed	21,000	22,928	110%
Number of interpreters in CDHH sponsored professional development	200	88	44%

Community Members by Region



	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter	Year to Date
Region 1	16	6			22
Region 2	5	10			15
Region 3	54	51			105
Region 4	6	2			8
Region 5	55	35			90
Total Members by Quarter	136	104			240

Individuals by Self-Identified Disability

	1 st Quarter	2 nd Quarter	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter	Year to Date
Deaf	70	24			94
Hard of Hearing	43	35			78
DeafBlind	13	4			17
Speech Disabled	0	0			0
Hearing	10	41			51
Total Individuals by Quarter	136	104			240



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

From: Kathy Abernathy, RSU Staff Manager

Date: 2/17/2026

Re: HAFC/H 2 and 3, aa

COMMISSION FOR DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING PERSONS:

The internal service funds/interagency transfers appropriation to the deaf and hard-of-hearing program of the commission for deaf and hard-of-hearing persons in the other financing uses category includes ninety-one thousand five hundred dollars (\$91,500) to transfer to the rehabilitation services program of the vocational rehabilitation division to match with federal funds to provide deaf and hard-of-hearing rehabilitation services and

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION DIVISION:

The internal service funds/interagency transfers appropriation to the rehabilitation services program of the vocational rehabilitation division in the other category includes ninety-one thousand five hundred dollars (\$91,500) to match with federal funds to support and enhance deaf and hard-of hearing rehabilitation services.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION DIVISION:

Report

(July 2025-September 2025)

- Sign Language Interpreting: \$23,788.01
- Hearing Aids or Other Hearing Devices: \$216,229.11.

- Serving 433 Participants
- 44 Rehabilitated Closures

(October 2025-December 2025)

- Sign Language Interpreting: \$21,878.97
- Hearing Aids or Other Hearing Devices: \$186,919.91
- Serving 402 Participants
- 35 Rehabilitated Closures



Collaborating Agency Quarterly Report

Agency Name: Signed Language Interpreting Practice Board, RLD

Report By: Emma Quintana, Board Administrator

Expiration Date: December 31, 2025

Quarter Reported:

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

Memorandum of Understanding:

New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing will:

- A. Transfer \$25,000 as appropriated in the General Appropriation Act of 2025 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	7 Community, 3 Provisional
Complaints	2	
License denials, suspensions, and revocations	0	

Agendas and draft minutes are available on the Signed Language Interpreting Practices Board website:

<https://www.rld.nm.gov/boards-and-commissions/individual-boards-and-commissions/signed-language-interpreting-practices/board-information/signed-language-interpreting-practices-board-meetings/>.