

New Mexico Commission for Deaf & Hard of Hearing



Quarterly Report FY26 Quarter 3



FY26 Quarter 3 Board Report

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NMCDHH BOARD MEETING

Thursday, June 4, 2026

3:00pm

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://youtube.com/live/SVbmJX52FA>.

FINAL AGENDA

Posted: June 1, 2026

1. Call to order and Roll Call
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes – March 5, 2026
4. FY25 Final Audit Presentation by Auditor Thad Porch
5. Evaluation of the Executive Director
 - The Commission may recess to executive session pursuant to NMSA 1978, §10-15-1 (H) (2)
6. Executive Director's Report
7. Department Reports
8. Adjournment



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

*Quarterly Board Meeting
Thursday, March 5, 2026
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/A0oIOvf-EG0>

DRAFT – These minutes will be subject to possible revision and approval by the commissioners at the next Board meeting on June 4, 2026.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair John Hooper called the meeting to order at 3:01pm. Renee Bregar, Administrative Operations Specialist, called roll call.

Present: Mr. John Hooper – Chair
Mr. Joseph Lopez, III
Dr. Norm Dawson
Dr. Jennifer Herbold
Dr. Stephon L. Scott (absent)
Mr. Ryan Means
Ms. Tiffany Gallegos (joined at approx. 3:13pm)

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 Jamie Jaramillo 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.

26.7

Commissioner Dawson made a motion to approve the agenda.

Commissioner Means seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper - Yes

Commissioner Lopez - Yes

Commissioner Dawson – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Scott - Absent

Commissioner Means - Yes

Commissioner Gallegos – Absent

Motion passed

III. APPROVAL of December 4, 2025 MINUTES

Director Gomme made note of a mistake in the minutes from the December meeting prior to any discussion by the board. The commissioner who made the motion to return from the executive session and the name of the commissioner who seconded the motion, are entered as “XXX”. Mr. Brennan will investigate toward correction.

26.8

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

Commissioner Lopez seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper - Yes

Commissioner Lopez - Yes

Commissioner Dawson – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Scott - Absent

Commissioner Means - Yes

Commissioner Gallegos – Absent

Motion passed

IV. Potential Date Change for June Meeting

Commissioner Hooper mentioned that he will be the recipient of an advocacy impact award at the national Hearing Loss Association of America conference in Louisville, Kentucky and will not be able to participate in the June meeting as scheduled. He proposed keeping the current date. Then, whomever is elected vice chair can run the meeting, or the date can be changed.

Commissioners discussed options.

26.9

Commissioner Herbold made a motion to change the June meeting date to the 4th.

Commissioner Means seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper - Yes	Commissioner Lopez - Yes
Commissioner Dawson – Yes	Commissioner Herbold – Yes
Commissioner Scott - Absent	Commissioner Means - Yes
Commissioner Gallegos – Yes	

Motion passed

V. Board Elections

Mr. Gomme asked for nominations for chairman of the board.

Commissioner Herbold nominated Commissioner Hooper.

Commissioner Hooper accepted.

26.10

Commissioner Herbold nominated Commissioner Hooper.

Commissioner Lopez seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

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

Motion passed with 5 Yes,

Commissioner Hooper asked for nominations for vice chairman of the board.
Commissioner Hooper nominated Commissioner Means.
Commissioner Dawson seconded.
Commissioner Means declined the nomination.
Commissioner Hooper nominated Commissioner Lopez.
Commissioner Lopez asked for clarification and then accepted the nomination.

26.11

Commissioner Hooper nominated Commissioner Lopez.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

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

Motion passed

Commissioner Hooper asked for nominations for secretary.
Mr. Gomme and Mr. Brennan explained there are not really duties associated with the secretary position but that it is required by statute,

26.12

Commissioner Means nominated Commissioner Dawson.

Commissioner Lopez seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

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

Motion passed

VI. 2026 OMA Resolution

Commissioner Hooper explained that the Open Meetings Act (OMA) resolution is the same as last year, but with dates changed to this year.

Chair Hooper asked for a motion to adopt the OMA resolution, as written.

26.13

Commissioner Lopez made a motion to adopt the OMA resolution.

Commissioner Herbold seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper - Yes

Commissioner Lopez – Yes

Commissioner Dawson – Yes

Commissioner Herbold – Yes

Commissioner Scott - Absent

Commissioner Means - Yes

Commissioner Gallegos – Yes

Motion passed

VII. Executive Director Report

Director Gomme discussed the FCC posts regarding a notice of proposed rulemaking and calls for comment which happened in January. He mentioned the sparse population in the state which still relies upon TTY services so sunseting the service would have to align with broadband expansion and that should align with the FCC timeline. The comment submissions reviewed from other organizations are in agreement with timelines similar to this as well. There are two more notices of proposed rulemaking. Mr. Gomme expressed several concerns and has worked with other states and national organizations in preparation for comments when the time comes. He invited any who would like to be involved in the conversation with the FCC around these issues to let him know.

Then, Mr. Gomme discussed some legislative issues beginning with House Bill 2, which impacts budget. It was recommended that the agency request a flat budget and it did; it is the same as last year. However, depending upon what changes may come from the FCC, the budget requirement could change. Interest in the captioning bill for next year was mentioned. Funding for the Office of Accessibility through the department of Health did not pass. A bill for the Office of Special Education did pass.

Mr. Gomme then discussed Auracast, investigation for which included Commissioner Hooper and Commissioner Dawson. Auracast is a blue-tooth-based system which is very popular in the Hard-of-Hearing community. This led to lively discussion among the commissioners as to how the tool can benefit the hearing loss community.

VIII. Department Report

Commissioner Dawson went on to describe some of his experience within the City of Albuquerque (COA) related to communication access and closed captioning. Director Gomme invited Ms. Gutiérrez, the Director of the Department of Community Advocacy, to join the conversation. Ms. Gutiérrez joined the COA accessibility committee in November.

Ms. Gutiérrez commented that Vancro is working with an immigration law center and provided a workshop for the hearing loss community about how to handle interacting with ICE agents. Information about the workshop will be shared with board members after the meeting.

IX. Adjournment

Chair Hooper asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

26.14

Commissioner Means made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Lopez seconded.

Ms. Bregar took a roll call vote:

Commissioner Hooper - Yes Commissioner Lopez - Yes
Commissioner Dawson – Yes Commissioner Herbold – Yes
Commissioner Scott - Absent Commissioner Means - Yes
Commissioner Gallegos – Yes

Motion passed

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Renee F. Bregar

Renee Bregar
Administrative Operations Specialist

Executive Summary

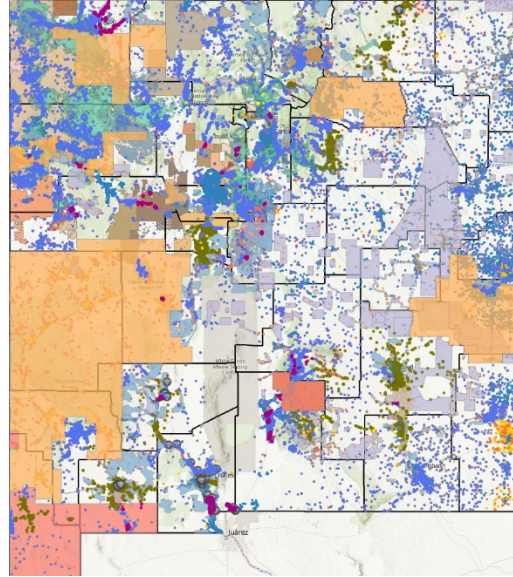
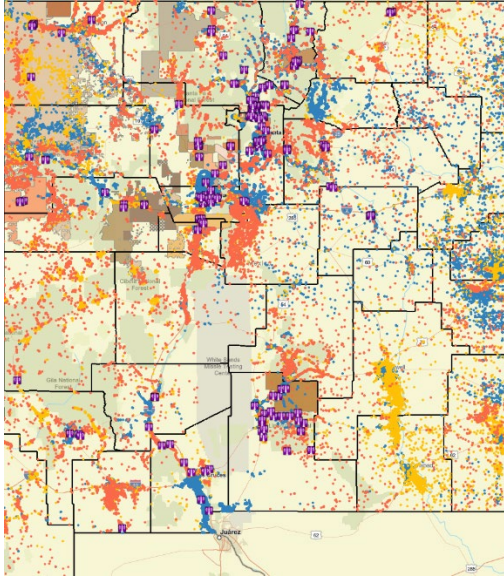
G. Nathan Gomme, Executive Director

Commissioners and community members, I present the third quarter Executive Summary of Fiscal Year 26 (FY26) for the New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing. This report reflects the work completed between January and March of this year, highlighting major program achievements, administrative developments, regulatory updates, and continued efforts to support communication access across New Mexico.

Regulatory and Federal Engagement

During this quarter, federal regulatory activity continued to shape our priorities. We monitored developments from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), including the forthcoming response to the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) 25-79 addressing modernization of legacy relay services. The proposed shift to fully IP-based relay services remains a significant concern for our state, especially as we plan both short- and long-term strategies to protect functional equivalency for all New Mexicans.

In January of this year, it was announced that rural Chaves County would be seeing an investment in high-speed internet service through a pilot program that expanded broadband internet to underserved communities. This means they will have access to fiber speeds in rural areas. This ties into the goal of total statewide broadband access by the end of 2029. You can see in our maps the progress so far in the state as we see projects in the Navajo Nation, Hidalgo County and more, so that areas like Lordsburg can see high speed internet. With that said, we still see a continued need to support those who still have not received broadband access and need to make relay calls.



The above maps show existing broadband coverage in New Mexico on the left, and currently planned and funded projects on the right. These interactive maps are available online at maps.connect.nm.gov.

In addition to ongoing TRS modernization efforts, we tracked the FCC's draft NPRM addressing the Lifeline Program. Our agency participated in multi-state discussions to assess impacts on broadband access needs for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, and DeafBlind users who rely on high-bandwidth services. In addition, we tracked a recent NPRM on relay payment formulas, which will be discussed in May.

Budget, Legislative Tracking, and Financial Planning

The third quarter closely followed the financial trends seen in previous quarters. We continued assessing the impact of the 80/20 surcharge split between 988 services and NMCDHH. While decreased surcharge revenue remains a challenge, our agency prepared updates for stakeholders and collaborated with legislative analysts to ensure stable funding for Support Service Provider and Communication Facilitator programs.

Throughout the quarter we continued tracking vendor balances, including confirmation of the FY26 Vancro balance sent to the Executive Director for review, along with updates to quarterly and year-to-date summaries. We also began discussing the need for more office space for Vancro; this will impact the budget but allow for a better quality of services.

We began the audit of our TRS surcharge revenue. Throughout the quarter, I met with our vendor Rolka Loube and began sending the documentation needed to move forward, which included letters and audit requests to 15 vendors. We may have to reduce the number of vendors we are able to audit due to time though. Throughout the process, we have been working with various individuals and going over the collections of our funding. We will be updating the details with our vendor regarding the surcharge audit information once it has all been compiled and it will be included in future TRS compliance work.

We also reviewed the executive and legislative budget proposals for FY27, including receipt of the Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) proposal, for planning purposes earlier in the quarter. These updates helped shape the agency's long-term budget strategy and supported communication with the Commission Chair and legislative partners. We are happy to report that our FY27 budget remains consistent with the current fiscal year. This is a positive sign, as we were fortunate to avoid the reductions seen by other agencies.


Program Updates and Operational Wins

Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP)

The transition to IP-based equipment continued. The online TED application—launched earlier in the fiscal year—continued to gain usage through January, February, and March. We received consistently positive feedback from community members using the English and Spanish portals. We also began the advertising system through Google

Ads with our vendor. We are happy to say it is in full effect and has also begun to increase traffic.

Sponsored result

 nmtded-apply.org
<https://www.nmtded-apply.org>

Hard Of Hearing Support | Program For NM Residents
Access Equipment For Deaf And Hard Of Hearing Needs. Apply Now! Designed For People Who Have Difficulty Hearing On Standard Phones. Apply Online Today!

Apply For Phone Devices >
New Mexico Residents Can Apply For A Hard Of Hearing Phone.

Phone Equipment For The Deaf >
Get Phone Equipment From A Trusted State Program. Apply Online.

People also search for ×
nmcdhh

During this quarter, we also began preliminary preparation for enhancements to the application platform, incorporating feedback from users and staff to improve navigation and reduce processing time. We will be rolling out a video guide on how to use the applications and have begun looking at ways to turn around applications in a more effective manner.

Recently, after attending an Accessibility Technology conference, I was able to meet with several vendors and innovative technology manufacturers focused on increasing resources for our community. One such tool is the Lotus Ring, a device that uses infrared signals to connect the ring to several potential devices. After talking with the developers, we realized we could integrate the tool with phones for our community and wanted to test the viability of the tool since it is a wearable device, which comes with some complications. As we previously learned with smart glasses, deploying wearable technology presents unique complications. The ring is one of the more elegant designs though, so we will be deploying a pilot at PAH! Hiland Plaza in June. Unfortunately, unlike the ring, the glasses have been much harder to develop a consistent strategy for deployment. We will still be working on a pilot program with the captioning glasses, but until some companies make them easier to purchase and customize, it remains difficult

to integrate them into our program. Another piece of technology we are already integrating is Auracast technology. We are showcasing that at presentations such as the one Mr. Sinderholm attended.

Website Accessibility Progress

On the topic of presentations, I remain active in presenting to our statewide coalition regarding the upcoming accessibility standards that are expected to be in place by the end of April. Unfortunately, I heard news that the timeline may be changed since several people have expressed difficulty in getting their websites up to the standards of the new rules.

Coordination with the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) and internal IT staff continued to ensure that accessibility standards remained central to all updates. We began deploying some of our equipment upgrades as well. We experienced some challenges with equipment setups while deploying them throughout the office.

Support Service Provider (SSP) and Communication Facilitator (CF) Programs

SSP and CF services remained steady throughout Quarter 3. Vancro's month-to-month allocation of hours was reviewed with the DeafBlind and Senior community members earlier this fiscal year and follow-up outreach and clarification continued throughout this quarter. We reinforced that service hours are flexible and based on need, not capped.

Advocacy and Community Support

Our Advocacy team continued to work across the state to address communication barriers. Community Advocacy Specialists provided education to medical, legal, and public-facing entities to ensure compliance with ADA communication requirements. We also supported continued partnership with law enforcement through ASL-accessible materials.

Outreach and Training

Outreach efforts continued across the state, with team members attending community events, providing booths, and distributing communication access materials. Staff also participated in ongoing state workforce trainings that enhance our agency's alignment with modern state personnel practices. In the fourth quarter, we will be having some internal training to better support our ADA work and improve our training services to the community.

Administrative Work, Meetings, and Coordination

Throughout the quarter, I attended multiple coordination meetings at both the state and national levels. This included ongoing collaboration with NASRA and TEDPA members regarding the upcoming national conference and site visit scheduling. I continued communication with partners and stakeholders through email, supporting planning for meetings, travel coordination, and national relay administrator discussions.

Internal document reviews also continued this quarter as part of routine administrative operations. These included reviewing candidate materials, performance documentation, and draft meeting minutes from partner organizations.

Looking Forward

As we approach the final quarter of FY26, our focus remains steady on:

- Monitoring pending federal actions that may impact relay and accessibility services;
- Preparing transition plans for the possible phaseout of analog relay services;
- Strengthening statewide communication access infrastructure; and
- Ensuring stable funding for essential support programs.

New Mexico continues to stand as a leader in preparing for the modernization of relay services, and I remain confident in our agency's ability to navigate the rapidly evolving regulatory and technological landscape. We also are committed to the day-to-day needs of our community by improving our skill sets to better support the community's need for

communication access. In addition, we are working towards improving our training and opportunities for our young interpreter community through increased professional development opportunities.

G. Nathan Gomme

Executive Director

New Mexico Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing

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 third 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 state agencies, clinics, healthcare providers, corporations, schools, employers, and non-profit organizations. In this report, we outline our department's work, achievements, and priorities related to communication access.

State Agency Advocacy: We worked with a state agency to ensure an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter was provided for a Deaf individual's meeting. We worked closely with the agency to help them understand the need for communication access, and they were receptive and willing to arrange the interpreter. As a result, the meeting was successful.

Medical, Healthcare & Mental Health Advocacy: We advocated for several individuals to ensure access to effective communication during their medical appointments.

In one case, we worked with a dental clinic to provide guidance on accommodating a Deaf parent, in a dental appointment. Although the Deaf individual was not the patient, we explained that the office is still responsible for ensuring effective communication by providing an ASL interpreter. We shared relevant fact sheets, and the office successfully arranged for an on-site interpreter for the appointment.

In another case involving a dental clinic, the provider attempted to use Video Relay Interpreting (VRI) for a Deaf with Additional Disabilities individual, which was not effective communication access. The individual attempted to self-advocate, without success due to the nature of the visit. We educated the clinic on the differences between VRI and on-site interpreting, as well as what effective communication means for this situation. The clinic agreed to ensure that the individual would receive an on-site interpreter for future appointments. As a result, an on-site interpreter was provided, allowing for effective communication access.

We also worked with a medical clinic to ensure they provided an on-site interpreter rather than relying on VRI, which was not effective communication access in this situation, due to technical limitations at the site. After discussing these concerns, the clinic acknowledged the limitations of VRI and agreed to work with the individual. They established a contract with a local interpreter referral agency and provided an on-site interpreter for appointments.

In another medical environment, we learned that a healthcare provider was unable to secure an on-site interpreter for a Deaf patient's appointment scheduled for the following day. We contacted the provider's Point Of Contact (POC) and explained the situation. The POC responded promptly and took immediate action to arrange an on-site interpreter for the next day. As a result, the appointment was successful.

We worked with a non-profit organization to address communication access needs for a Deaf with Additional Disabilities individual receiving services under the Mi Via program. Mi Via is New Mexico's self-directed waiver program empowering people with disabilities to manage their own services and support, within a defined budget. Initially, an on-site interpreter had not been arranged. We provided information regarding effective communication and the organization's responsibilities. Following this, the organization arranged for an on-site interpreter to support the individual.

Employment Advocacy: We provided advocacy support to corporations to improve communication access for Deaf employees in the workplace.

We met with a corporation to improve communication access for a Deaf employee. We worked with the employer to ensure an ASL interpreter was available for discussions

related to the employee's work hours and retirement. Initially, the employer relied on written communication and did not recognize the need for an interpreter, despite the employee's request for one. Through advocacy efforts, the employer agreed to arrange for an interpreter, resulting in effective communication and a successful outcome.

We worked with another corporation that repeatedly delayed and failed to provide an ASL interpreter for a Deaf employee. The company relied on VRI, but it was ineffective due to frequent freezing and dis-connections. As a result, the employee filed a complaint with the district office which led to immediate action and engagement between the corporation and CDHH. Following this intervention, the company began providing an on-site interpreter for meetings and training.

We also worked with the Human Resources department of an additional corporation to discuss their responsibility to provide an ASL interpreter for a Deaf employee. The company was initially unsure how to secure an interpreter, so we provided guidance and shared relevant fact sheets, and after further research were able to help them determine that they already had an existing contract agreement in place. As a result, they took steps to ensure that on-site interpreters would be provided for one-on-one meetings.

In another situation, a Deaf individual applied for a position, was hired, and was required to attend training. However, the employer initially didn't provide interpreters for the training. We worked with the employer and explained their responsibilities regarding communication access. The employer understood and arranged for ASL interpreters for training, which was successful.

Education Advocacy: We advocated for a Deaf student who wished to enroll in courses at a trade school but was having difficulty obtaining information about ASL interpreter services. We worked closely with the trade school to educate them on their responsibility to provide an ASL interpreter. We continued to follow up until the school secured a contract with an interpreter referral agency, ensuring that ASL interpreters were in place for the student's courses.

Community Education

NMCDHH staff and vendors provided a total of eleven presentations and training sessions during the third quarter.

Mr. Brennan provided the “Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Accessibility Compliance using Word and PowerPoint” training to the State of New Mexico Accessibility Collaboration through Zoom.

Ms. Gutiérrez provided the “Deaf Self-Advocacy Training: Interpreters’ Role and Impact” presentation for interpreters in New Mexico which was conducted in person. This was the presentation at the “Reconnecting with the Deaf Community” Workshop event.

Ms. Sandoval did two presentations. One was a “Hearing Loss Sensitivity” training for the Access Control Department at the Albuquerque International Airport, which was conducted in person. The other was with Mr. Stidham, the “Best Practices for Using ASL Interpreters” to the Developmental Disabilities Services Division (DDS) staff in New Mexico through Zoom.

Mr. Sinderholm provided a “Technology of Hearing Assistance” presentation to the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA), Albuquerque chapter, as well as other visitors. It was a hybrid event conducted in person and through Zoom.

Mr. Stidham was a “Reconnecting with the Deaf Community” panelist as detailed in the Community Education Report.

Executive Director Gomme provided two presentations which were explained in his report.

Thomas Sena from Hamilton Relay provided three presentations as detailed later in the report.

Systemic Advocacy

Albuquerque Police Department (APD): As mentioned in previous reports, Mr. Robb is assisting APD with a series of videos related to their fact sheets. These printed fact

sheets that will be given out by officers when appropriate, will have a QR code that can be scanned so that individuals with hearing loss can see the information from the fact sheets, in ASL. Mr. Robb completed all of the ASL gloss for the APD fact sheets and will be making and editing the ASL videos during the 4th Quarter.

Coffee with Cops Event: Mr. Robb worked with the APD, Vancro, and RGC Access to get the Coffee with Cops event scheduled for May 2, 2026, from 9am to 11am, at the University Substation. The flyer for the general public, as well as an accessible flyer for the DeafBlind, Deaf with Additional Disabilities and Deaf Seniors, have been created and disseminated. A Vlog explaining more about the event is in process and will be shared with the community, prior to the event, in the fourth quarter.

Santa Fe Public Library: Mr. Robb worked with the Santa Fe Public Library in making their after-school activities more accessible for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children after a parent complained they did not know whether there would be ASL interpreters for children's activities. Mr. Robb reviewed the flyer the library used to announce the event and made some suggestions in re-wording the information. The library staff was grateful for the assistance.

Las Cruces Satellite Office

Individual Advocacy and Service Coordination

Ms. Susana Santillan, Community Advocacy Specialist in Southern New Mexico, continues to assist with eliminating communication barriers for the Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing community by advocating for effective communication at Law Firms, Dental Clinics, Courts, and Veterans' Service Organization.

Individual Advocacy

Legal Advocacy: Ms. Santillan assisted a Deaf individual, who was charged by the law firm representing the individual, for using an ASL interpreter in court. The Deaf individual had already paid the surcharge, and wanted to know how to get the money back. Ms. Santillan reached out to the law firm to discuss the matter, provided them with the NMCDHH fact sheets "Americans' with Disabilities Act Title III", "How to Find a Sign Language Interpreter" and "Who Pays for Interpreters". As a result, the law firm reimbursed the individual for the charges.

Ms. Santillan worked with the Law Office of the Public Defender to ensure that a Deaf individual was provided an ASL Interpreter for an appointment. She provided them with guidance and resources, including several NMCDHH fact sheets.

Ms. Santillan assisted a Deaf individual who received courts orders to appear in more than one legal matter at a Municipal Court. Ms. Santillan worked with the Language Access Coordinator for the municipality to ensure this individual was provided an ASL interpreter for each of these incidents.

Ms. Santillan also worked with a Judicial District Court Trial Court Administrator to ensure that a Deaf individual obtained an ASL interpreter for a hearing.

Medical Advocacy: Ms. Santillan assisted a Deaf individual with obtaining an ASL Interpreter for an appointment with a local clinic by educating the clinic about their responsibility to provide effective communication access, which they did.

Veterans' Service Advocacy: Ms. Santillan worked with a Southwest American Legion Commander to ensure that a Hard of Hearing individual obtained Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) at their event.

Systemic Advocacy & Special Projects

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

Ms. Santillan continued to serve on nine committees and attends networking meetings throughout Southern New Mexico to build professional relationships, share knowledge and educate about hearing loss resources, while enhancing her outreach efforts.

Booths and Presentations

Ms. Santillan participated in 25 booth events throughout Southern New Mexico in Las Cruces, Columbus, Berino, Silver City, La Mesa, Chaparral, Doña Ana, Tortugas, Radium Springs, Mesquite, Butterfield, Anthony, Truth or Consequences, Vado, Tularosa, and Mesilla Park. She attended food pantries, senior centers, a VA Clinic, the Housing Authority, High School Career Community Resource & Wellness Fairs, other agencies' resource booths and Parkinson's Workshops. She had 859 visitors in her booth efforts.

Support Service Provider Program

As Reported by Vancro Integrated Interpreting Services

Executive Summary

During the third quarter of FY2026, the New Mexico Support Service Provider (SSP), Communication Facilitator (CF), Case Management, and Outreach programs continued to strengthen access for DeafBlind, DeafPlus, and Deaf Senior Citizens across New Mexico. The program advanced both direct service delivery and long-term program infrastructure through service coordination, consumer support, workforce development, policy implementation, outreach planning, and collaboration with state and community partners.

During this reporting period, the SSP program fulfilled 843 requests, totaling 2,176.25 service hours. The CF program fulfilled 94 requests, totaling 136.25 service hours.

A significant development this quarter was the addition of Lydia Tesfaye as Case Manager. Since joining Vancro on February 9, 2026, Lydia has focused on orientation, caseload integration, consumer relationship building, compliance support, resource navigation, advocacy, healthcare access, housing stability, and employment-related support.

Program Progress and Service Delivery

Throughout the quarter, Vancro continued to provide direct services that support communication access, independence, and community participation. SSP and CF services remained central to the program's impact by supporting consumers in daily life activities, appointments, community access, information gathering, and communication-based interactions.

The number of fulfilled requests and service hours demonstrates continued demand for both SSP and CF services. These services remove barriers by giving DeafBlind,

DeafPlus, and Deaf Senior Citizens access to visual, environmental, and communication information that may otherwise be inaccessible. Without this support, consumers may face increased isolation, reduced access to essential services, and greater difficulty participating fully in community life.

Case Management and Consumer Support

Consumer support this quarter included assistance with SSP applications, caregiver identification, mail processing, document review, and interpretation of written information. This type of support is especially important for DeafBlind consumers who may not have full independent access to printed mail, complex forms, or written notices. By assisting with these materials, case management helps consumers remain informed, make decisions, respond to deadlines, and maintain greater independence.

Community Outreach and Partnerships

Vancro coordinated a “Know Your Rights” workshop in partnership with the New Mexico Immigration Law Center. The workshop provided community members with information about legal rights and available resources. This type of workshop removes barriers by giving consumers access to important legal information in a more understandable and accessible format. When consumers have access to information about their rights, they are better positioned to make informed decisions, ask questions, seek assistance, and advocate for themselves.

Training and Workforce Support

Two SSP training courses were conducted. During this period, Vancro hired five new SSPs and held a session for current SSPs to review and communicate recent policy updates. Updated training materials and presentation slides were also developed to strengthen SSP skills and improve service quality.

NMCDHH Activities During Q3 FY26





NMCDHH staff attended 28 booths in the third quarter in 19 communities across the state.





Corina presented on Deaf Self Advocacy Training, the Interpreters Role and Impact during our “Reconnecting with the Deaf Community”



Dennis was a panelist “Reconnecting with the Deaf Community” workshop as detailed in the Community Engagement Report.

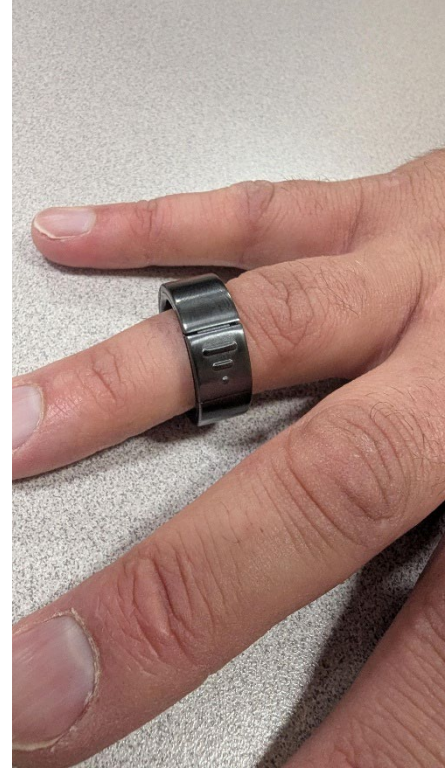
Outreach & Telecommunications

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

Emerging Technologies Evaluation

Auracast Technology: The program is evaluating Auracast, a Bluetooth-based technology designed as a modern alternative to the 80-year-old Telecoil (T-coil) audio induction system. While traditional T-coil hearing loops require continuous maintenance to function optimally, Auracast utilizes a newly released portable-transmitter speaker combination that operates without wired connections or external speakers. Initial tests by users with Auracast-enabled hearing aids indicate high sound clarity and a reduction in the interference commonly experienced with T-coil systems. Mr. Gomme, Mr. Brennan and Mr. Sinderholm are currently engaging with government entities, local businesses, and various organizations throughout New Mexico to discuss Auracast and its associated devices.

Assistive Technology (AT) Ring Wearables: A new wearable assistive technology is also under review. The device is a ring that connects to a switch, allowing users to remotely operate powered doors, lights, and appliances. This technology is designed to assist individuals with disabilities by eliminating the need to physically reach standard switches. Mr. Gomme and Mr. Sinderholm are conducting ongoing tests of the product to explore potential expansions of its capabilities.



The Auracast speaker on the left, and the AT Ring on the right, currently undergoing testing.

AT Via Smartphone: Mr. Gomme, Mx. Bourque, and Mr. Brennan met with a national company regarding the possibility of utilizing AT in government and public spaces, such as airports, museums, and service offices, using geofenced technology merged with Video Relay. The premise of the technology is to provide a type of interpretation service in real time which would be charged to the business where the service is being utilized. For example, if the airport covered the cost of the service while a person was in the airport then they could access interpretation in the airport. However, once outside the airport they would no longer have access to the service.

Third Quarter Metrics

Equipment Distributed: The program distributed a total of 115 pieces of equipment during the reporting period. These items included iPads, Clarity XLC8 devices, and Sonic Alert Notification Systems.

Outreach: In the third quarter, Mr. Sinderholm conducted outreach activities in the Albuquerque and Santa Fe areas, reaching a total of 275 constituents. These events included the Disability Awareness Day, the Brain Injury Resources Center, and the University of New Mexico Martin Luther King Dream Weekend.

Mr. Sinderholm also provided one presentation as detailed earlier in this report.

Hamilton Relay also conducted outreach events throughout the quarter. Mr. Sena went to ten events throughout the state of the New Mexico including Isleta, Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Gallup, Grants, and Zuni Pueblo. In all, he reached 609 constituents. Events included Senior Centers, Resource Centers, and Chambers of Commerce. In addition, Mr. Sena provided three presentations, two of which were to the Courts Call Center and the other to the Administrative Office of the Courts. These all centered around Relay for Business Presentations.

Community Engagement

Amy Bourque, Director of Community Engagement

In Q3, the Department of Community Engagement worked on technological needs, professional development, and interpreting requests.

We successfully rolled out new technology for internal staff, with minimal Department of Information Technology (DoIT) support. We worked with the Executive Director to make sure our website, and the documents hosted there, are near compliance with the upcoming WCAG deadline. As we revise and update the website, we are making changes to our fact sheets that will streamline the webpage. There have been nationwide concerns from many entities about meeting the deadline due to a variety of reasons, and we continue to monitor all communications from the Department of Justice (DOJ) regarding any changes to the upcoming rule.

When other organizations asked us to share documents or promotional materials from them, we took the time and effort to educate them, if it seemed they were not aware of WCAG. We have spent time explaining to these community groups the importance of creating accessible documents that are inclusive for our DeafBlind, and other visually impaired constituents, so they have full access to the information. This will require ongoing effort, but we are committed to promoting access and removing communication barriers for our community.

As we have become more knowledgeable, in not only the requirements of WCAG, but also in the process of creating accessible documents, outside agencies have begun contacting us to present on the matter. We presented to the Statewide Digital Accessibility Collaborative on how to use Microsoft Word and PowerPoint to create accessible documents from scratch. The presentation was received very well and resulted in other groups reaching out for presentations by NMCDHH to their staff; presentations can be tailored to individual agency needs. We look forward to sharing

the knowledge we gain on a daily basis. We have already received requests for future presentations on this topic as well.

In our professional development work, we were excited to host a workshop in collaboration with RGC Access (RGCA), a local interpreting agency, titled “Reconnecting with the Deaf Community.” While developing the workshop, we used the phrase “Shifting our attitudes from ‘You’re lucky to have me’ to ‘I’m lucky to be here’” to help guide us in our goal of recentring the Deaf community in our interpreting work. We had Ms. Corina Gutierrez, who is a Master DSA Trainer, modify a portion of her advocacy training to teach interpreters the communication rights for which the Deaf community fights, so interpreters can be better allies. After her presentation and a short question and answer session, we hosted a panel to share their experience working with interpreters. On the panel we had one hearing consumer, two working interpreters, and two Deaf consumers, one of whom was Mr. Dennis Stidham. Their different perspectives provided a robust understanding of how interpreters can affect communication interactions, in positive and negative ways. We had a total of 28 working interpreters in attendance and received very good feedback from all.

Through Q3, we developed another workshop for improving sight translation work. This is often an undertaught skill, and we believe it will meaningfully improve interpreters’ ability to recognize when something can be sight translated, and how to do it effectively. This workshop is planned for Q4.

The third quarter saw a long-term collaboration come to fruition. In early FY26, we were approached by the Albuquerque Police Department to create a script and video to be shown to their incoming cadets about how to work with interpreters for all of their language programs. This video project was separate from Mr. Robb’s ongoing work with APD. With support from the Department of Community Advocacy, we filmed the video in Q3, and the video was shared through APD social media. We are so glad to see this hard work realized.

When UNM practicum interpreting students approached us with questions on the history of the professionalization of interpreting, we took the chance to teach them and ask them questions as well. This direct work in professional development helps interpreters trust us and opens the door to future communication.

During Q3, apprentice interpreters completed 16 professional activities, including practical interpreting assignments and live observations of staff interpreters. Staff feedback from these field assignments directly informed end-of-quarter assessment rubrics. Professional development initiatives included the conclusion of a book club, transition planning for freelance interpreting, and a newly developed "Classifiers in Math" module. This module provided targeted practice in translating complex mathematical and spatial concepts such as coordinate-planes and geometric formulas into visually accessible ASL classifiers. This is just one example of critical skills that allow for visually accessible sign language.

Furthermore, the apprentice cohort engaged in ongoing case conferencing. In these staff-supported sessions, apprentices evaluated anonymized scenarios from their fieldwork, enabling them to safely apply ethical decision-making frameworks and collaboratively discuss alternative approaches.

As always, we continued to coordinate for interpreting requests for our agency staff. This quarter we successfully filled all requests and went above and beyond to work with staff for any additional needs. We took the time to test and ensure the quality of the translation feature in Zoom, so a Spanish interpreter and ASL interpreter could work in an assignment, simultaneously. For a staff member who needed resources, we showed them how to find court certified interpreters in New Mexico and explained interpreter assessments and credentials. For contract interpreters who work NMCDHH board meetings, we created a "cheat sheet" of Telecommunication Relay Service (TRS)-related terms since it is such an important part of the Commission's work. We also worked with community stakeholders to coordinate interpreters for outside events in which we were involved.

Administration & Finance

Deborah Romero, Director of Administrative Services

The third-quarter budget report reflects a total budget of \$3,611,800. Overall expenses to date are \$1,934,793 (53.6% of the budget), with encumbrances totaling \$863,850 (23.9%). Within this, personnel services expenses are \$1,068,813, representing approximately 29.6% of the total budget and about 55.2% of total expenses. Contract expenses are \$561,637 (15.5% of the budget), with encumbrances of \$810,039 (22.4%). Other category expenses total \$187,842 (5.2% of the budget), with encumbrances of \$53,810 (1.5%). Combined expenses and encumbrances total \$2,798,643, or 77.5% of the budget, leaving a remaining balance of \$813,157 (22.5%) for the remainder of the fiscal year.

FY26 Collected Revenue (as of March 31, 2026)

Subtotal — General Fund Allotment: \$1,413,225

Subtotal — TRS Revenue: \$650,914

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	90	64.29%
Number of outreach events coordinated	150	123	82.00%
Average number of relay minutes per month	9,000	1951.88	21.69%
Number of accessible technology distributions	1,350	734	54.37%
Number of communication barriers addressed	21,500	13,218	61.48%
Number of interpreters in CDHH sponsored professional development	150	63	42.00%

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%



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

From: Kathy Abernathy, RSU Staff Manager

Date: 5/4/2026

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

(January 2026-March 2026)

- Sign Language Interpreting: \$7331.13
- Hearing Aids or Other Hearing Devices: \$145,525.29
- Serving 383 Participants
- 34 Rehabilitated Closures



Collaborating Agency Quarterly Report

Agency Name: Signed Language Interpreting Practice Board, RLD

Report By: Garey Barela

Quarter Reported:

1st (July-Sept) __ 2nd (Oct-Dec) __ 3rd (Jan-Mar) X 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	13	3 Community, 6 Educational, 4 Provisional
Complaints	0	
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/>.