



Partners for Employment

FY24 Annual Report

July 2023 - June 2024



CENTER FOR
DEVELOPMENT
& DISABILITY

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Who We Are

Founded in 2013, Partners for Employment (PFE) is a statewide collaborative to improve competitive and integrated employment for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In keeping with New Mexico's Employment First policy, we believe people with disabilities should have the support to pursue a rewarding life in their communities, including pathways to competitive, integrated employment. PFE provides training, resources, and technical assistance to agencies and individuals who are building their capacity to deliver high quality Supported Employment, Community Inclusion, and School-to-Work Transition Services.

Our partners include:

- The University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability (UNM/CDD)
- New Mexico Health Care Authority/Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD)
- New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR)

PFE is operated by UNM/CDD and funded by DDSD and NMDVR. UNM/CDD is New Mexico's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD). There are 67 UCEDDs in total, one in every US state and territory. UCEDDs provide training, technical assistance, service, research, and information sharing to support individuals with developmental disabilities.

We advance promising practices for inclusive employment throughout New Mexico. We work to build the capacity of the following stakeholder groups:

- Individuals with disabilities
- Family members
- Providers/Vendors
- Guardians
- Advocates
- Case Managers/Consultants/Community Supports Coordinators
- Teachers/educators
- DDSD Staff and
- NMDVR Staff



The Partners for Employment (PFE) Steering Committee

Partners for Employment’s work is guided by continuous input from the members of the PFE Steering Committee. The Steering Committee meets at least once every month to review progress on contract deliverables, to discuss issues and opportunities in New Mexico’s supported employment and school-to-work transition systems, and to develop training projects.

PFE would like to thank the following FY24 Steering Committee members for their ongoing commitment to elevating the field of Supported Employment and School-to-Work Transition services in New Mexico.

New Mexico Health Care Authority/Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD)

Scott Doan, Deputy Director

Frank Gaona, Statewide Supported Employment Lead

New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation/Public Education Department

Casey Stone-Romero, Director

Nash Sisneros, Rehabilitation Services Unit Deputy Director

Christine Fuller, Supported Employment/Deaf & Hard of Hearing Coordinator

Rudy Grano, Field Operations Director

Antoinette Holmes, Field Operations Director

Mario Lucero, Field Operations Director

Charlene Chavez, Statewide Transition Coordinator

Dominique Nunez, Staff Development Trainer

Monica Moya, Staff Development Trainer

The UNM/CDD Partners for Employment Team



Carrie Walter, MEd, is the Family and Community Partnerships Division Director at the University of New Mexico's Center for Development and Disability. The division houses Partners for Employment, the Mi Via and Supports Waiver programs, and the library and Information Network at the center. Carrie has 30 years of experience supporting people with developmental disabilities at the county, state, and University levels. Carrie is a Credentialed Employment Support Professional (CESP) and believes that everyone can work!



Marcy Hintz, BA Secondary English Education, MA Clinical Psychology, CESP, is the Partners for Employment Education and Outreach Manager. Before joining Partners for Employment (PFE) in 2016, Marcy worked in both high school and college settings as a classroom teacher, program manager, and mental health counselor for transition-age youth and families. Within PFE, Marcy has overseen New Mexico's Project SEARCH programs and led School-to-Work Transition Teams (SWTTs). Marcy enjoys building on the strong leadership of New Mexico's Supported Employment community by maintaining a culture of learning, expertise, and chances to grow.



Monica Elsbrock serves as a Program Manager for PFE's training initiatives. Monica has 35 years of experience working for individuals with disabilities as they build careers of their choosing. She has worked with some of the largest non-profits in the country, creating, implementing and managing Community Employment Programs. Monica has a BS from the University of New Mexico and is very happy to work at her alma mater.



Naomi Sandweiss Willie, serves as Program Manager for PFE's School-to-Work initiatives. The PFE School-to-Work team coordinates statewide School-to-Work transition teams, Project SEARCH, and produces training modules on transition-related topics. Prior to joining PFE, Naomi served as Executive Director at Parents Reaching Out (PRO) for seven years during which she was involved in a number of statewide initiatives for young people with disabilities. Previously, Naomi worked as a non-profit program manager, college career counselor, and ran youth-serving programs for UNM. Naomi holds an MA in Education.

The UNM/CDD Partners for Employment Team



Alex Rios is a Training and Development Consultant for Partners for Employment. Alex has a Master of Public Health degree and is a Credentialed Employment Supports Professional (CESP). Alex has experience working as an employment consultant and in implementing Project SEARCH. She serves as New Mexico's statewide Project SEARCH Coordinator.



Amanda Cowan is a Training and Development Consultant with Partners for Employment. Amanda uses her background in critical intercultural communication to build inclusive and equitable practices in educational spaces. Amanda has led PFE's College of Employment Services and is PFE's liaison with the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) on the Credentialed Employment Support Professional (CESP) exam and certification process.



Deborah Lassiter is an Education Specialist with Partners for Employment. In her role, she works alongside PFE's College of Employment Services team. She previously worked at New Mexico Department of Health/Developmental Disabilities Support Division (DOH/DDSD). She has a BS in Psychology, certificates in ACRE, RBT (Registered Behavioral Technician), CRAFT (Community Reinforcement and Family Training), and CCSS (Comprehensive Community Supports Services).



Jun Dai, B.M. Information Management & Information System, M.A. Family & Child Studies, joined the Partners for Employment team as a Education Specialist in October 2022. She is a Credentialed Family Life Educator (CFLA) and holds an Association of Community Rehabilitation Educator (ACRE) certificate. Jun works on projects related to school-to-work transition and supports all regions in New Mexico.

The UNM/CDD Partners for Employment Team



Kathryn Schwaar, holds a Master of Music degree from the University of New Mexico, a CESP credential, an ACRE certificate, and is an Education Specialist with Partners for Employment. She helps oversee school-to-work transition team meetings and various micro trainings that educate community members about inclusion, community mapping, Employment First ideals, school-to-work transition, and working with DVR to gain better employment outcomes. She has over seven years of experiences working with New Mexico non-profit organizations. She is passionate about inclusion and equity and enjoys promoting these values in the community.



Kaitlyn Terayama is PFE's Training Support Analyst. In her role, she collaborates with all PFE activities to produce and coordinate the behind the scenes communication and information-management platforms. She has three years of experience working with individuals with disabilities in various capacities. She values the work that she does to support and empower individuals. Kaitlyn holds a BBA in Marketing and an ACRE certificate.



Master Training Plan

In 2018, Partners for Employment developed a Master Training Plan to address the diverse training needs of employment support professionals in New Mexico. In developing this training plan, which originally addressed fiscal years 2018 through 2020, Partners for Employment conducted extensive research of exemplary Supported Employment training programs across the country, including WISE and ICI at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

The plan was updated in FY21-FY23 to address how PFE would address learners' needs, instructional design methods, and how training would be evaluated to measure increased knowledge.



In FY24, the plan was updated again to demonstrate projected timelines and training content for FY24 contract deliverables.

As the Master Training Plan has unfolded and PFE's work has grown, we've gained a clearer picture of its capacity-building domains. In FY24, these include:

- Foundational Training and Certificates
- Continuing Education
- Networking and Information-Sharing
- School-to-Work Transition
- Online Resources
- Leadership Development

This remainder of this report will review FY24's work inside each of these domains.



Foundational Trainings

College of Employment Services (CES)

CES is an Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) credentialed training that PFE first implemented during the summer of 2018. This online course was developed by the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) at the University of Massachusetts Boston. It consists of 11 self-paced online modules. From this base, PFE has created a blended training that combines the online modules with 1-hour, bi-weekly online Zoom sessions that allow participants opportunities for in-group discussion and the practice of new skills. Over 15 weeks, learners participate in 8 hours of in person discussion in addition to 26.4 hours of online content, for a total of 34.4 hours of learning.

The following table represents attendance and completion data for FY24 CES cohorts across stakeholder groups.

	Attended	Completed all coursework
State Employees (DVR, DDS, Workforce, other)	10	5
Provider Agency Staff	36	23
Employment Service Vendors/Independent	7	5
School-Based or Post-Secondary Employment Preparation Programs	12	12
Advocacy or Community Organizations	9	6
Family Members	3	3
Other	3	1
TOTAL	80	55

* Since the first 2018 cohort, twenty-nine CES learning cohorts have taken place through New Mexico, with 480 individuals participating in this training.

CES Satisfaction Survey

The PFE Facilitators Were:	Percentage that Strongly Agree or Agree
Knowledgeable in their topic/area.	100%
Responsive to participants' questions and needs.	100%
Well-organized.	100%
Able to present the materials in an understandable way.	100%

Zoom Discussion Sessions:	Percentage that Strongly Agree or Agree
Gave me the opportunity to apply what I had learned in the online session.	100%
Helped me understand supported employment issues.	100%
Provided me the opportunity to have my questions answered.	100%
Provided me the opportunity to network and learn from my peers.	97%
Contributed to the overall success of the whole program.	100%

CES participant comments:

- *"I'm new to the field, so learning about experienced professionals' experience was super helpful."*
- *"I realized after this class that there's still so much information that I needed in order to be prepared for becoming a job coach, despite years of experience."*

Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) Certificate

The Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) awards nationally recognized Certificates of Achievement to employment professionals. This certificate documents that the employment professional has satisfactorily completed a minimum of 40 hours of training or professional development provided by an ACRE-approved training resource. Partners for Employment offers ACRE-approved training via the College of Employment Services, followed by scholarship opportunities for individuals to pursue an ACRE certificate.

Individuals who utilize a PFE scholarship to pursue an ACRE certificate must then complete additional coursework to demonstrate a thorough understanding of Supported Employment best practices. Throughout this process, participants receive individualized technical assistance from PFE in setting up their account, accessing their coursework through a designated website, technical assistance in understanding their ACRE grades and submitting ACRE coursework, monthly progress reports, monthly question and answer sessions, and individualized assistance to understand the requirements for successfully obtaining an ACRE certificate.

In FY24, a total of 41 people achieved an ACRE certificate. At the end of FY24, New Mexico has a total of 293 professionals who hold the ACRE certificate.

Development of a New Mexico ACRE Curriculum

In FY24, PFE began a three-year process of designing and implementing its own 40-course hour ACRE curriculum. The curriculum will incorporate all ACRE learning competencies and will be structured around online/on-demand video modules, facilitator-led discussion sessions, and fieldwork assignments. The course will also prioritize accessibility features for diverse learners, cultural competencies for New Mexico's diverse and rural regions, and connection to New Mexico resources.

In the first year of designing this course, PFE assembled an inventory of its existing training resources and began to categorize them according to their ACRE competencies. They also researched Learning Management Systems to host the course, and became an official member of ACRE – the first step in having the curriculum reviewed and approved.

Credentialed Employment Support Professional (CESP)

Partners for Employment also provides scholarships for the Credentialed Employment Support Professional (CESP) examination for employment professionals in New Mexico. This credential was established by the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) and is recognized as the national standard of knowledge for employment support professionals to demonstrate the skills and competence necessary to perform the requirements of the job. Partners for Employment provides scholarships to support the cost of examination fees. In FY24, six individuals obtained their CESP credential. At the end of the fiscal year, New Mexico had a total of 55 professionals who hold the CESP credential.

Continuing Education

Monthly Training Series

In FY24, PFE partnered with WISE (formerly known as the Washington Initiative for Supported Employment) to host three training series. The trainings were led by WISE staff and enhanced by the local knowledge and experience of various Employment Specialists across New Mexico.

The following table presents FY24’s three training series, their attendance numbers, and the stakeholder groups in New Mexico who contributed to the content of each training.

Series 1	Series 2	Series 3
September to November	January to March	April to June
<i>Promising Practices for School-to-Work Transition</i>	<i>Maximizing Your Social Network</i>	<i>Building Relationships with Corporate Employers</i>
September 21 - 23 attended October 19 - 35 attended November 16 - 44 attended	January 18 - 51 attended February 15 - 57 attended March 16 - 67 attended	April 11 - 66 attended May 16 - 37 attended June 14 - 43 attended
Featured panel discussions with teaching staff at Gadsden Independent Schools	Featured co-presentations with DDSD Community Inclusion Coordinators	Featured co-presentations with local Employment Specialists

WISE Satisfaction Survey

Because I attended this session...	Percentage Agree or Strongly Agree
I have gained valuable knowledge and skills.	92%
There will be a positive impact on my professional work.	93%

Networking and Information-Sharing

Supported Employment Local Leaders (SELL)

Partners for Employment facilitates the collaborative peer networking opportunities of employment providers to increase statewide capacity through ongoing peer networking and informational meetings. As interagency meetings shifted to an online format in 2020-21, PFE shifted Supported Employment Local Leaders (SELL) meetings to an online, statewide format in FY22 to facilitate their accessibility to a wider audience. Statewide SELL meetings include local community agency providers, advocacy/family organization members, business representatives, and state agency partners.

PFE hosted 4 statewide SELL team meetings in FY24 with 218 unique participants.

SELL Satisfaction Survey

Because I attended this session...	Percentage Agree or Strongly Agree
I have gained valuable knowledge and skills.	97%
There will be a positive impact on my professional work.	97%

Community of Practice / New Mexico FINDER

As a complement to its trainings, PFE offers an online community of practice as a place for stakeholders to post local resources and events related to the full inclusion of individuals with disabilities in their communities.

In FY24, PFE introduced stakeholders at both SELL (Supported Employment Local Leaders) and SWTT (School-to-Work Transition Team) meetings to New Mexico Disability Resource FINDER – a statewide directory of disability-related resources and events. Going forward, New Mexico FINDER will replace PFE’s online Community of Practice as the participant-led portal for New Mexico events and resources.

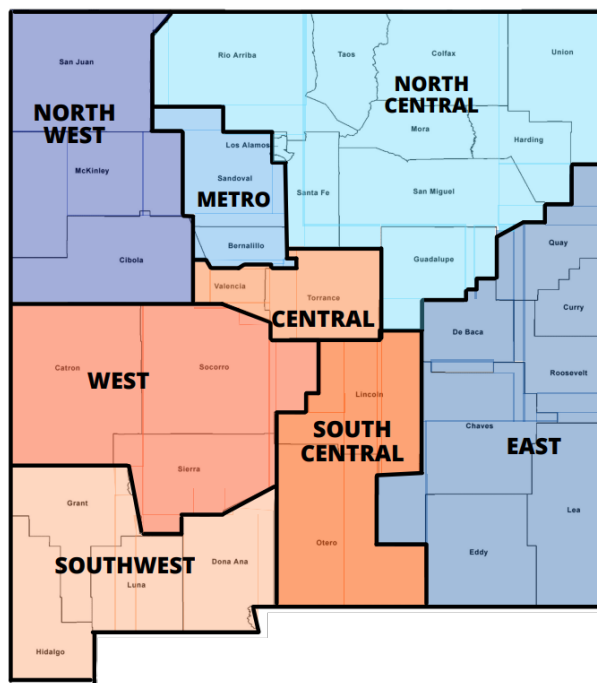


School-to-Work Transition

School-to-Work Transition Teams (SWTT) Meetings

In support of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act's (WIOA) mandate for coordinated services among agencies supporting transition age youth, Partners for Employment facilitates collaborative networking meetings for schools, state agencies, local provider agencies, advocacy organizations, civic group leaders, and business representatives who play a role in supporting youth with disabilities' transition to adulthood.

In FY24, PFE coordinated the meetings of 8 School-to-Work Transition Teams for a total of 40 SWTT meetings held with 289 unique attendees, not including PFE staff. Attendees represented 65 school districts, tribal entities, state agencies, and state and local advocacy groups. FY24 SWTT teams covered the following regions:



School-to-Work Transition Team Annual Satisfaction Survey Results	Percentage Agree or Strongly Agree
Because I participated in SWTT, there's been a positive impact on my delivery of school-to-work transition services.	100%
Because I participated in SWTT, my understanding of agencies' different roles in supporting successful school-to-work transition has increased.	100%
Because I participated in SWTT, I am connected to resources in my community that will benefit the young adult I serve.	100%
Overall, I am satisfied with the information-sharing and collaboration provided by this School-to-Work Transition team.	100%

Project SEARCH

Project SEARCH is an internationally-adopted, evidence-based school-to-work internship model for youth with disabilities between the ages of 18 and 22. The program takes place at a host business and is a full collaboration of an interagency Steering Committee with representatives from a local school district, NMDVR, DDS, a local long term provider agency, the host business, and the UNM/CDD. These agencies work together to provide workplace education and community-based support to students in three 10-week rotations over the course of the year. Students learn different employability skills in each rotation, with the overall goal of obtaining competitive employment by the end of the internship. In alignment with the Pre-Employment Transition Service goals outlined by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Partners for Employment coordinates training and ongoing professional development in the Project SEARCH model for New Mexico's seven Project SEARCH teams. Partners for Employment also provides each team with technical assistance to establish internal processes, shared documents and resources, and a continuous plan for improvement.



Since its inception in 2014, 120 New Mexico Project SEARCH graduates have achieved competitive employment in their communities, working at least 16 hours per week, at or above minimum wage. New Mexico Project SEARCH teams have also received national awards, presented at statewide and national conferences, and contributed to national Project SEARCH work committees.

Project SEARCH notable outcomes in FY24:

- Outcome data from program year 2022-2023 showed 100% of Project SEARCH graduates from Embassy Suites Hotel, UNM Hospital, and Gallup Hilton Garden Inn obtaining competitive, integrated employment.
- The HIVE Education Project SEARCH team supported a Project SEARCH intern through the Medicaid waiver intake and eligibility process, and resources for independent living and financial independence. NMDVR provided the intern with an electric bicycle for transport to work. The intern now has a job with the Project SEARCH host business, housing, transportation, and long-term employment supports.
- A Holloman Air Force Base Project SEARCH graduate was recruited by two separate businesses. She's now been employed for a year with one of these businesses, lives independently, and is completing education to pursue a career in early childhood education.
- The owner of HIVE Education (the Project SEARCH host business in Sunland Park) presented on the benefits of disability employment to a local business coalition.

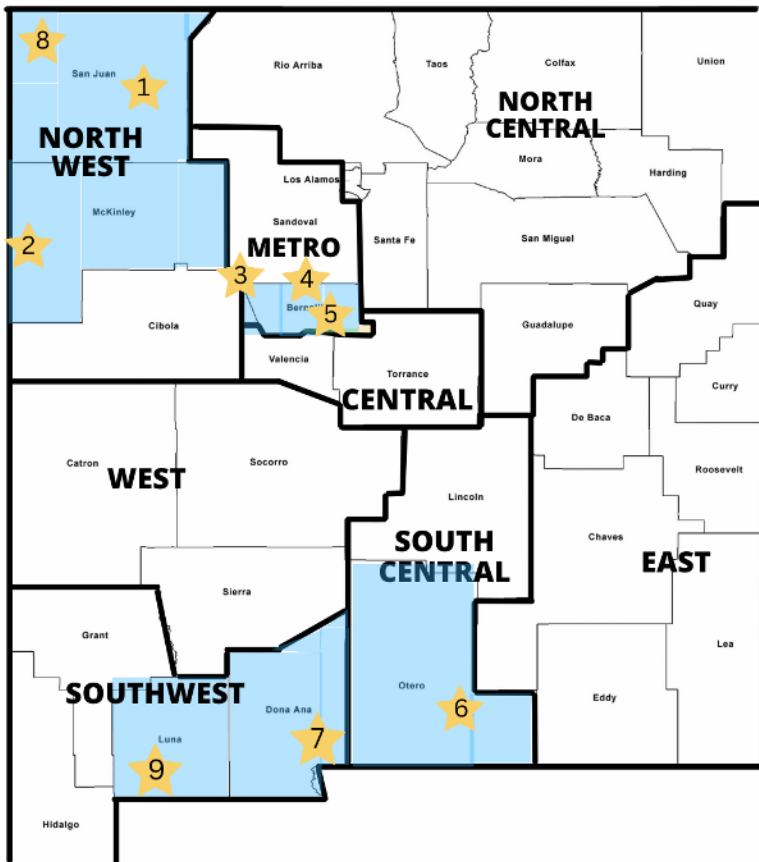


- Ninety-three (93) New Mexico delegates are registered to attend the national Project SEARCH conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, July 15-19, 2024. Four New Mexico Project SEARCH sites will give conference presentations. Three New Mexico Project SEARCH graduates will share the story of their employment journey since Project SEARCH.

Project SEARCH Annual Satisfaction Survey Results	Percentage Agree or Strongly Agree
Increased my knowledge of how to support successful School-to-Work transition.	100%
Had a positive impact on my ability to support successful School-to-Work transition.	100%
Overall, I'm satisfied with the technical assistance I received.	100%



2024 NM PROJECT SEARCH SITES



OPERATING SITES:

1. Farmington Municipal Services, Farmington NM

Program Contact- Chelsea Chairion: cchairion@fms.k12.nm.us

2. Hilton Garden Inn, Gallup NM

Program Contact- David Palenschat, dpalensc@gmcs.k12.nm.us

3. Presbyterian Rust Medical Center, Rio Rancho NM

Program Contact- Theresa Griffin-Golden, theresa.Golden@rrps.net,
Ben Vigil, benjamin.vigil@rrps.net

4. Embassy Suites Hotel, Albuquerque NM

Program Contact- Terry Casey, teresa.casey@aps.edu

5. UNM Hospital, Albuquerque NM

Program Contact- Brian Love, brian.Love@aps.edu

6. Holloman Air Force Base, Alamogordo NM

Program Contact- Lisa Jones, lisa.jones@dvr.nm.gov

7. The Hive Education, Sunland Park, NM

Program Contact -Patricia Garcia, pgarcia@gisd.k12.nm.us

SITES IN DEVELOPMENT:

8. Central Consolidated School District, Shiprock, NM

Program Contact: Alex Rios, aerios@salud.unm.edu

9. City of Deming, Deming NM

Program Contact: Alex Rios, aerios@salud.unm.edu

Online Resources

Online/On-Demand Trainings

Employment First in New Mexico

This online training is available on demand via the Partners for Employment website. The training addresses the DDS Employment First policy and the resources available to assist with supported employment in New Mexico. An online test and certificate of completion are available to those participants who register through Partners for Employment's registration and learning management system. In FY24, 68 professionals have successfully registered for the training and passed the skill check.

Working with DDS and NMDVR

This online training is available on demand via the Partners for Employment website. The training provides an overview of accessing supported employment services through the New Mexico Health Care Authority/Developmental Disabilities Supports Division and the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. An online test and certificate of completion are available to those participants who register through Partners for Employment's registration and learning management system. In FY24, 22 professionals have successfully registered for the training and passed the skill check.

Social Security Benefits and Employment Training Series

In FY24, Partners for Employment developed a 5-part online/on-demand training series addressing common questions related to Social Security Benefits and employment. Each video is less than 15 minutes long and is designed to give teachers, counselors, case managers, employment specialists, and family members basic information to combat myths and connect to personalized Benefits services.

Part One: General Knowledge about Social Security Benefits

Part Two: Dispelling Myths about Social Security Benefits and Work

Part Three: Case Study: Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) Work Incentives

Part Four: Case Study: Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Work Incentives

Part Five: Getting Personal Social Security Advisement

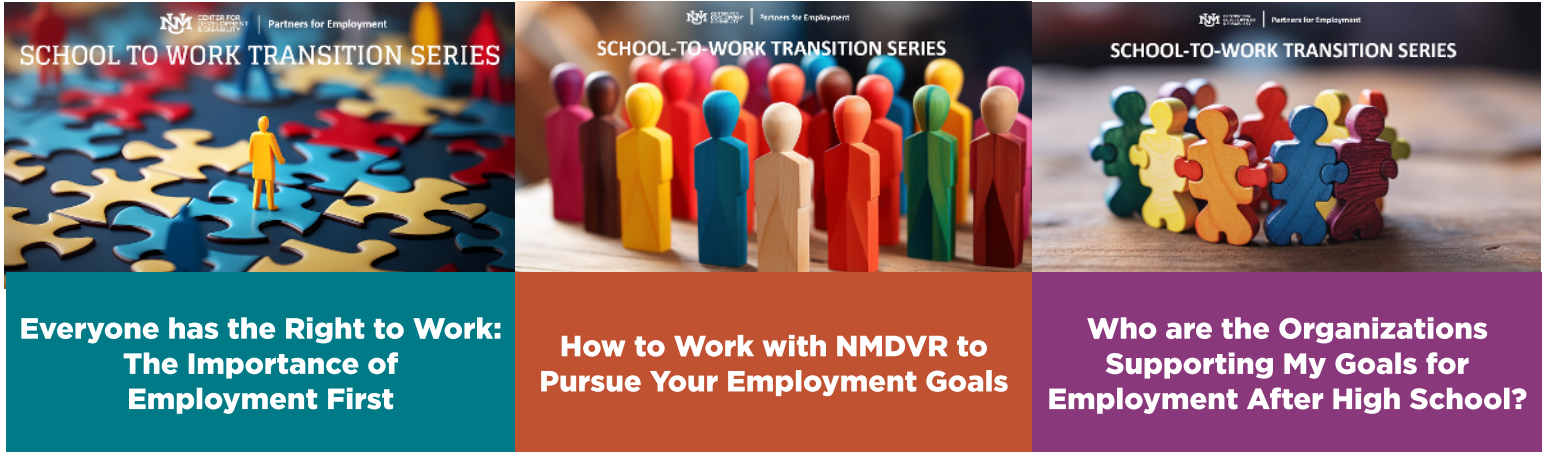
The Social Security Benefits and Employment Training Series is posted in the DDS Training Portal and on the Partners for Employment website.

Community Mapping Training Series

This online training is available on demand via the Partners for Employment website. The training addresses person-centered planning, community inclusion, and tools to identify and pursue community-based interests in collaboration with individuals utilizing services. An online test and certificate of completion are available to participants who register through Partners for Employment's learning management system. In FY24, 26 professionals registered for the training and passed the skill check.

School-to-Work Transition Training Videos

In 2024, PFE produced three new videos addressing issues in school-to-work transition. Each video is 20 minutes long and combines instructional information with interviews featuring the lived experience of youth, family members, and professionals. PFE consulted with a panel of NMDVR and DDSD staff, a Mi Via consultant, a family member, and a self-advocate in the development and production phase of each video. All three videos will be posted to the PFE training portal in FY25, where they will be available on-line and on-demand.



Social Security Benefits Tip Sheets

Three new Social Security Benefits Tip Sheets were added to PFE's website in FY24. These include:

- Impairment-Related Work Expenses (IRWE)
- How to Apply for a my Social Security Account
- What you Need to Report while Receiving Social Security Disability Benefits

In total, Partners for Employment offers twelve (12) Social Security Benefits tip sheets on its website. Six of these tip sheets are available in both English and Spanish. Topics include:

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (English and Spanish)
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) (English and Spanish)
- Social Security Benefits - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) (English and Spanish)
- ABLE Accounts and Social Security (English and Spanish)
- Age 18 Redetermination for SSI (English and Spanish)
- Social Security Timelines (English and Spanish)
- 1619(b) Supplemental Security Income Work Incentive
- Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIE)
- Ticket to Work

PFE Website

The Partners for Employment website includes an online library of publications, videos, tools, and resource information on employment for persons with disabilities topics. The website includes links to national and state resources and hosts a statewide calendar of current trainings, meetings, and events.

- The Partners for Employment website is [located here](#) .

PFE Training Calendar

PFE maintains an online, interactive calendar of all upcoming training and networking events. Registration links to all events are available through their listing on the training calendar.

- The Partners for Employment training calendar is [located here](#).

PFE Newsletter

PFE produces a monthly newsletter through Constant Contact. In FY24, the monthly newsletter's contact list increased from 1639 recipients to 2051 recipients. At the same time, no-longer-valid emails were removed from the list. Many of the roughly 400 new contacts were acquired through PFE's one-on-one phone outreach to provider agencies, statewide. PFE also gained many new school district contacts through collaboration with the office of Special Education at the New Mexico Public Education Department.



Leadership Development

New Mexico Training Associates (NMTA)

New Mexico Training Associates (NMTA) is an initiative developed to identify, train, and catalyze the leadership of young career Supported Employment advocates and professionals in New Mexico. Qualified participants have either completed College of Employment Service training and/or received their CESP or ACRE credential; or have demonstrated sustained engagement in Partners for Employment (PFE) training and networking activities. Participants are paired with a mentor from the PFE staff who guides them in selecting a professional development exercise related to their professional interests and in developing a capstone training presentation which is given at the Partners for Employment *Reaching New Heights in Supported Employment* conference.

In FY24, the following individuals participated in PFE's NMTA program:

- Victoria Rodriguez – Job Developer, Mandy's Farm
- Amanda Montano – Employment Specialist, LifeROOTS Solutions
- Leslea Lehoucq – Parent

Between December and April, NMTA participants met regularly with their PFE staff mentors to hone and develop the trainings they presented at the *Reaching New Heights in Supported Employment* conference. Following the conference, their trainings were recorded and posted on the PFE website. The NMTAs' trainings were as follows:

- Victoria Rodriguez – *The Vitality of Teamwork: Tools and Strategies for Seamless Communication within Supported Employment Services*
- Amanda Montano – *Empowering Independence: Developmental Services for Underserved Populations*
- Leslea Lehoucq – *Tools for Transition Success: a Perspective from a Parent's Lived Experience*

Reaching New Heights in Supported Employment Conference

PFE's fifth annual *Reaching New Heights in Supported Employment* conference took place April 18-19, 2024 in Bernalillo, New Mexico. One hundred sixty (160) participants representing state agencies, local provider agencies, advocacy organizations, and school districts attended the conference.

The conference was headlined by Rob Snow and Nick Doyle, representing the Improvaneers – an Improv troupe led by individuals with intellectual disabilities. Breakout sessions featured practical presentations from NMDVR, DDSD, Partners for Employment, New Mexico Workforce, and New Mexico Employment Service providers. Between sessions, participants were able to shop from self-employed artisans supported by waiver services, and meet with representatives from organizations supporting community-based living.

The conference schedule was as follows:

PARTNERS FOR EMPLOYMENT
Reaching New Heights in Supported Employment Conference
2024



CONFERENCE AGENDA

DAY 1 – Thursday, April 18

	9:00-10:00	Registration Open	
JOINT SESSIONS	10:00-11:00	Welcome, Partners for Employment Opening Remarks	Vista Grande Ballroom
	11:00-12:00	Keynote: <i>Minimize the Mountain</i> - Rob Snow, Improvaneers	
	12:00-1:30	Lunch	Vista Grande Ballroom
BREAKOUT SESSIONS	1:30-2:30	New Mexico Training Associate (NMTA) Presentation: <i>Empowering Independence: Developmental Services for Underserved Populations</i> - Amanda Montano, LifeROOTS	Sierra Blanca
		<i>Inclusivity is Not Just a Check Box</i> – NM Department of Workforce Solutions Sheryl Trail, Program Coordinator; Veronica Alonzo, WIOA Program Manager and ETPL Administrator; Karen Huladek, Economic Development Representative	Sacramento West
		<i>Community Mapping: Tools for Pre-Employment Transition Services</i> - PFE	Sacramento East
	2:30-2:45	Break	
BREAKOUT SESSIONS	2:45-3:45	New Mexico Training Associate (NMTA) Presentation: <i>Tools for Transition Success: A Perspective from a Parent's Lived Experience</i> – Leslea Lehoucq, Parent Advocate	Sierra Blanca
		<i>Transition from DVR (short-term services) to DDSD (long-term services)</i> – DVR & DDSD	Sacramento West
		<i>Social Security Benefits: 5 short trainings to help you answer front-line questions</i> - PFE	Sacramento East
	3:45-4:15	Break	
JOINT WORKSHOP	4:15-5:15	ImprovaGanza! - This interactive session will involve you in the communication and self-advocacy skills that come through improvisation.	Vista Grande Ballroom

DAY 2 – Friday, April 19

	7:30-9:00	Breakfast	Tularosa
JOINT SESSIONS	9:00-10:00	<i>Statewide Program Updates from NM DVR, NM DOH/DDSD, and UNM CDD</i> Director Casey Stone-Romero, DVR; Deputy Director Scott Doan, DDSD; Associate Director Pat Osbourn, CDD	Vista Grande Ballroom
	10:00-10:30	Break	
BREAKOUT SESSIONS	10:30-11:30	<i>Community Mapping: Tools for Implementing a Meaningful Day</i> - PFE	Sierra Blanca
		New Mexico Training Associate (NMTA) Presentation: <i>The Vitality of Teamwork; Tools and Strategies for Seamless Communication within Supported Employment Services</i> - Victoria Rodriguez, Mandy's Farm	Sacramento West
		<i>Working with DVR Through Transition</i> – Kayla Damron, DVR Supervising Counselor; Jennifer Cordasco, Transition Counselor	Sacramento East
	11:30-11:45	Break	
JOINT WORKSHOP	11:45-12:30	Keynote: <i>Unleashing the Big Dog: My Roller Coaster Journey to Success</i> – Nick Doyle, Improvaneers	Vista Grande Ballroom
	12:30-1:30	Lunch	Vista Grande Ballroom
JOINT SESSIONS	1:30-2:00	<i>Looking Ahead: Recognizing Today's Leaders and Tomorrow's Goals</i> - PFE	Vista Grande Ballroom
	2:00-3:00	Q&A Session with DVR, DDSD, and PFE (<i>Submit questions via pre-printed slip of paper</i>)	
	3:00	Dismiss	

Conference Satisfaction Survey Results	Percentage that Strongly Agree or Disagree
As a result of attending this conference, I learned about policies and resources that guide the practice of Supported Employment in New Mexico.	100%
As a result of attending this conference, I learned about Supported Employment's core values of equal access to employment, equal wages, and person-centeredness.	100%
As a result of attending this conference, I learned best practices in individualized employment and career planning.	100%
As a result of attending this conference, I learned strategies for researching my community and communicating with prospective employers.	100%
Overall, this conference met its learning objectives.	100%

Additional feedback from Satisfaction Survey results:

- *"Information is right on, and the values of the work are very visible."*
- *"There was a lot of thought put into this conference."*
- *"Most of the topics I was knowledgeable about, but I still learned something new. I'm in my 3rd year of working in the field of VR, but this time around it was nice to understand the information, processes, and continue to get a deeper understanding in all the areas that were presented."*

Overall Reach

In FY24, one hundred thirty-four (134) provider agencies, school districts, government agencies, advocacy organizations, colleges and universities, and employers attended Partners for Employment training events.

Provider Agencies

A Better Way of Living	InsightVocational LLC
Absolutely You LLC	LifeROOTS
Active Solutions Inc.	LSG and Associates
Adelante Development Center	Mandy's Farm
All Individuals First Inc.	Milagro De Vida
ARCA	New Mexico Caregivers
Best Buddies	New Mexico Quality Case Management
Better Together Home and Community Services LLC	Peak Developmental Services
Collins Lake Ranch	Presbyterian Medical Services
Coyote Canyon Rehabilitation Center	Ramah Care Services LLC
Direct Therapy Services	RGC Access
ENMRSH Inc.	Se Puede LLC
EnSuenos y Los Angelitos Development Center	The Tunland Company
Family Options LLC	Zia Therapy Services
	United Access

School Districts and Regional Education Cooperatives

Alamogordo Public Schools
Albuquerque Public School
Albuquerque School of Excellence
Albuquerque Sign Language Academy
Aldo Leopold Charter School
American Sign Language Academy
Amy Biehl Charter High School
Atrisco Heritage Academy

Aztec High School
Aztec Municipal Schools
Bloomfield High School
Bloomfield Municipal Schools
Carlsbad Municipals Schools
Carrizozo Municipal Schools
Central Consolidated School District
Central Region Educational Cooperative (CREC)
Cesar Chavez Charter School
Chaparral High School
Clovis Municipal School District
Cobre Consolidated School District
Cuba Independent Schools
Deming Public Schools
Dora Consolidated Schools
Española Public Schools
Eunice Public Schools
Farmington Municipal Schools
Gadsden Independent School District
Gallup-McKinley County Schools
Hobbs Municipal Schools
Hozho Academy
Jal Public Schools
Laguna Department of Education
Las Cruces High School
Las Montanas Charter High School
Los Lunas Public Schools
Loving Municipal Schools
Lovington Municipal Schools
Mesa Vista Consolidated Schools
Mescalero Apache Schools
Moriarty-Edgewood School District
New Mexico Connections Academy
New Mexico School for the Arts
New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
New Mexico School for the Deaf

Pecos Cyber Academy
Penasco Independent School District
Rio Rancho Public Schools
Ruidoso Municipal School District
San Jon Schools
Sandia High School
Sandoval Academy of Bilingual Education
School of Dreams Academy
Silver Consolidated Schools
Socorro Consolidated Schools
Taos Municipal School
The Ask Academy
Truth or Consequences Municipal Schools
Vista Grande High School
Zuni Public School District

Government Agencies and Organizations

Administrative Office of the Courts
Early Childhood Education and Care Department
Jemez Vocational Rehabilitation Program
Los Lunas Community Program
Navajo Nation Department of Dine Education
Navajo Nation EI Program
Navajo Nation Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (NNOSERS)
New Mexico Commission for the Blind
New Mexico Council of Administrators of Special Education
New Mexico Department of Health Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (NM DOH DDSD)
New Mexico Department of Workforce Connections
New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions
New Mexico Developmental Disabilities Council - Office of the Special Education Ombud
New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NMDVR)
New Mexico Governor's Commission on Disability
New Mexico Public Education Department - Special Education Division (PED/SED)
Roswell Job Corps Center

Community and Advocacy Agencies

Assistance Dogs of the West
Community Share
Developmental Disabilities Council Office of the Special Education Ombud
Education for Parents of Indian Children with Special Needs (EPICS)
Family Matters
HELP New Mexico
Independent Living Resource Center
Laguna Acoma Connections
New Mexico 988 Crisis and Access Line
New Vistas
Otero County Advocates for Developmental Disabilities
Parents Reaching Out
Rocky Mountain Youth Corp
Youth Development Inc.

Colleges and Universities

Central New Mexico University
Dona Ana Community College
Eastern New Mexico University - Roswell Campus
New Mexico State University-Alamogordo
University of New Mexico

Employers

University of New Mexico Hospitals
Presbyterian Rust Medical Center
Central Consolidated School District
City of Deming
City of Farmington
Hilton Garden Inn - Gallup
Embassy Suites Hotel - Albuquerque
HIVE Education - Sunland Park
Holloman Air Force Base

Looking Ahead

Though we can't fully predict what the next year will hold, PFE is dedicated to continuously improving the training and resources we provide and elevating our stakeholders' belief in the professional value of their work.

Below are new FY25 activities we're contracted to provide and projects we're pursuing:

New FY25 Contract Activities:

- Introduction to Supported Employment: In FY25, PFE will develop this new, 3-5 hour asynchronous training, designed for new employment supports providers who need entry-level skills and knowledge to perform their job in compliance with industry standards and person-centered values. The course will introduce Discovery and person-centered planning and will familiarize participants with the services of the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the New Mexico Healthcare Authority/Developmental Disabilities Supports Division, and Partners for Employment at the University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability.
- ACRE course for up to 30 staff at New Mexico School for the Deaf and Albuquerque Sign Language Academy.
- Development of a New Mexico ACRE Curriculum.

Additional projects we're pursuing:

- Completion of a PFE training portal that will house a catalogue of all PFE video trainings and printed resources. No log-in required.
- A reorganized PFE website (landing page) that will give a clear understanding of Employment First, career possibilities in Supported Employment, a view of PFE's mission and programs, and connection to available training resources.
- Assembly of a SELL planning committee comprised of diverse stakeholders.
- Development and delivery of three monthly trainings on 21st century survival skills for Employment Specialists - including communication and technology skills.

Supported Employment and School-to-Work Transition developments we're watching:

- An emerging Inclusive Post-Secondary Education coalition in New Mexico and the four-corners region.
- The City of Deming's interest in developing a local recruitment/training program for job coaches and job developers.
- Training needs arising from a new, separate Employment Supports budget for Mi Via Waiver participants.

- Training needs for family members providing employment supports.
- UNM's interest in developing a Disability Employment training for UNM staff.
- Increased interest from large employers.
- The next steps in building New Mexico's capacity to provide Social Security Benefits advisement.

Interested?

If you'd like to learn more about
Partners for Employment and ways to partner with us,
please reach out to us at:
CDD-PFEinfo@salud.unm.edu

Please also join our PFE mailing list at:
<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/NUcYiFe/PFE>



CENTER FOR
DEVELOPMENT
& DISABILITY

Partners for Employment
2300 Manual Blvd NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87107
Phone: 505.272.3000 Fax: 505.272.2014