

# LEVERAGING COLLABORATIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT

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# BEFORE WE START...

On behalf of all colleagues at the Health Care Authority, we humbly acknowledge we are on the unceded ancestral lands of the original peoples of the Pueblo, Apache, and Diné past, present, and future.

With gratitude we pay our respects to the land, the people and the communities that contribute to what today is known as the State of New Mexico.



A cloudy morning looking over Santa Cruz Lake  
photo by Jessica Gomez



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# MISSION

*We ensure New Mexicans attain their highest level of health by providing whole-person, cost-effective, accessible, and high-quality health care and safety-net services.*



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# VISION

*Every New Mexican has access to affordable health care coverage through a coordinated and seamless health care system.*

# GOALS



**LEVERAGE** purchasing power and partnerships to create innovative policies and models of comprehensive health care coverage that improve the health and well-being of New Mexicans and the workforce.



**BUILD** the best team in state government by supporting employees' continuous growth and wellness.



**ACHIEVE** health equity by addressing poverty, discrimination, and lack of resources, building a New Mexico where everyone thrives.



**IMPLEMENT** innovative technology and data-driven decision-making to provide unparalleled, convenient access to services and information.



# NMDVR Mission

The mission of the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is to encourage and assist the efforts of New Mexicans with disabilities to reach their goals for working and living in their communities.

# NMDVR Vision

Every New Mexican with a disability has the opportunity to contribute to their quality of life and the economic prosperity of the state.



# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Learn about DDSD and NMDVR's shared goal of employment
- Understand the *Employment Framework* as a roadmap for increasing integrated jobs for the people we serve
- Recognize the five strategy areas of the *Employment Framework* for systems change and how New Mexico has implemented them
- Review an example of how a person navigates employment services across both agencies

# NMDVR AND DDSD SHARED GOAL

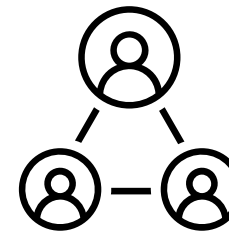
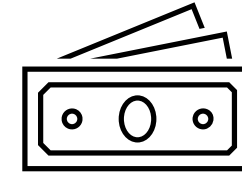
- NMDVR and DDSD have the shared goal of increasing competitive integrated employment for the New Mexicans we serve

# WHAT IS COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT?

- Competitive integrated employment has four primary components:
  - Competitive earnings
  - Access to benefits
  - Integrated setting
  - Opportunity for advancement

# WHY IS EMPLOYMENT IMPORTANT?

AN EMPLOYED PERSON HAS . . .





# EMPLOYMENT FRAMEWORK

- The Employment Framework for Higher Performing States (Hall et al 2007) is a research-backed model of systems change to build effective employment systems and partnerships
- NMDVR and DDSD collaborated and agreed to use this model as a roadmap for New Mexico to increase integrated employment outcomes

# THE EMPLOYMENT FRAMEWORK



Hall, A. C. , Butterworth, J. , Winsor, J. , Gilmore, D. , & Metzel, D. (2007) . Pushing the employment agenda: Case study research of high performing states in integrated employment. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 45: (3), 182–198.



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# INTERAGENCY COLLABORATIONS



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- The Health Care Authority (HCA) Developmental Disabilities Supports Division (DDSD) operates home and community-based services (HCBS) programs designed to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is a federally and state funded program that provides services to individuals with disabilities to assist in gaining, regaining, obtaining, maintaining, or advancing in employment.
- VR focuses on competitive integrated employment where job supports help to provide meaningful job opportunities in the community.
- VR ensures that wages paid to those we serve are compensatory to their peers performing the same tasks.
- Partners for Employment (PFE) at the University of New Mexico Center for Development and Disability provides training in support of New Mexico's Employment First policy.



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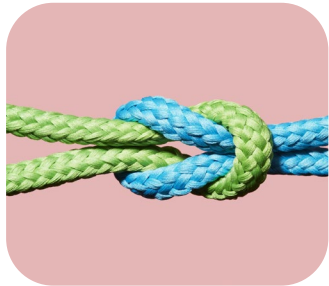
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# STRATEGY 1: POLICY



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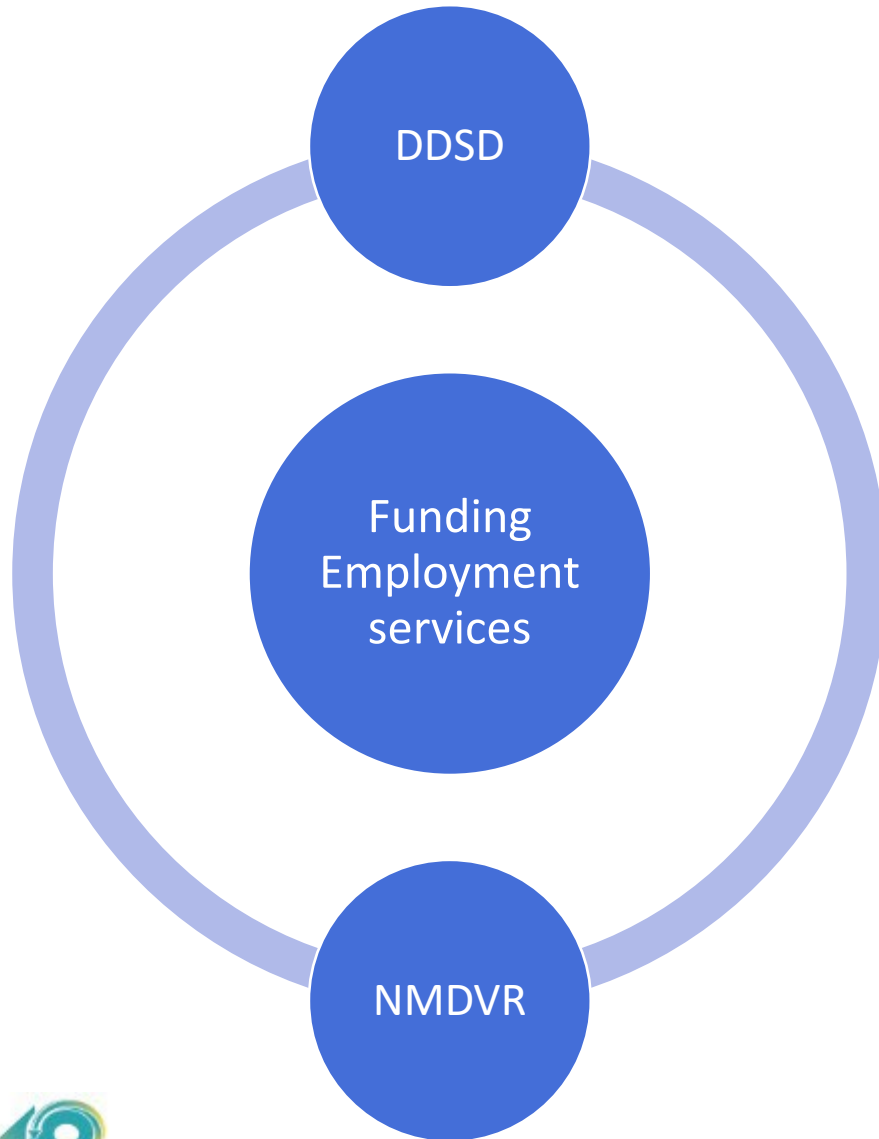
- DDSD Employment First policy was adopted in 2016 to establish procedures for providing access to employment opportunities for working age adults in the waiver system.
- NMDVR is a state and federally funded program designed to help eligible individuals with documented disabilities find suitable employment.
- NMDVR services are voluntary and individualized to support suitable employment outcomes.
- NMDVR and DDSD have a Memorandum of Understanding to improve flow of critical case information to help you access our services and geared towards increasing employment outcomes.



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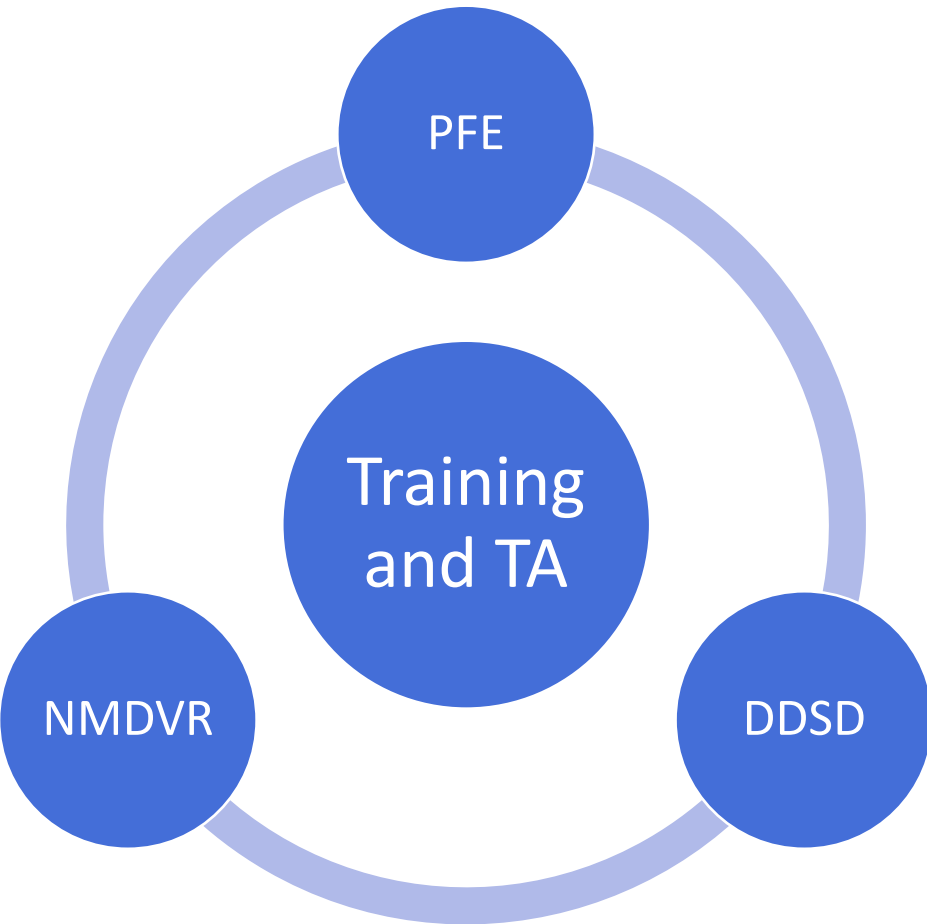
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# STRATEGY 2: FINANCING



- Both NMDVR and DDSD fund services to help eligible individuals reach and maintain competitive integrated employment.
- There are some restrictions and limitations but also, they can work together.
- NMDVR funds are the primary supports for eligible individuals to secure employment.
- DDSD funds are the primary supports for maintaining employment long-term.
- No duplication of funding

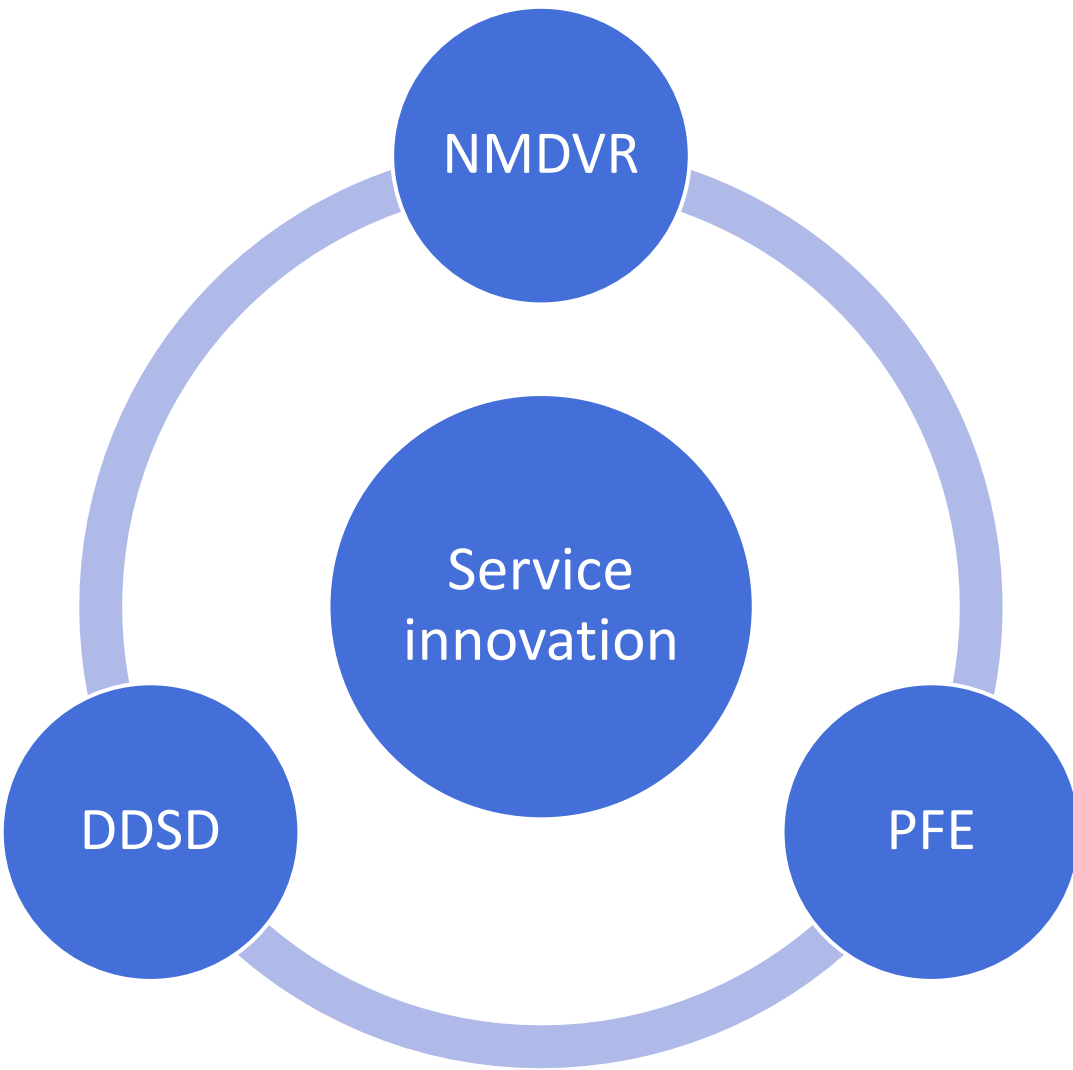
# STRATEGY 3: TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE



- RSU Training Team
- DDSD Training and Knowledge Management Unit and Community Inclusion Coordinators
- PFE Trainings to external and internal stakeholders

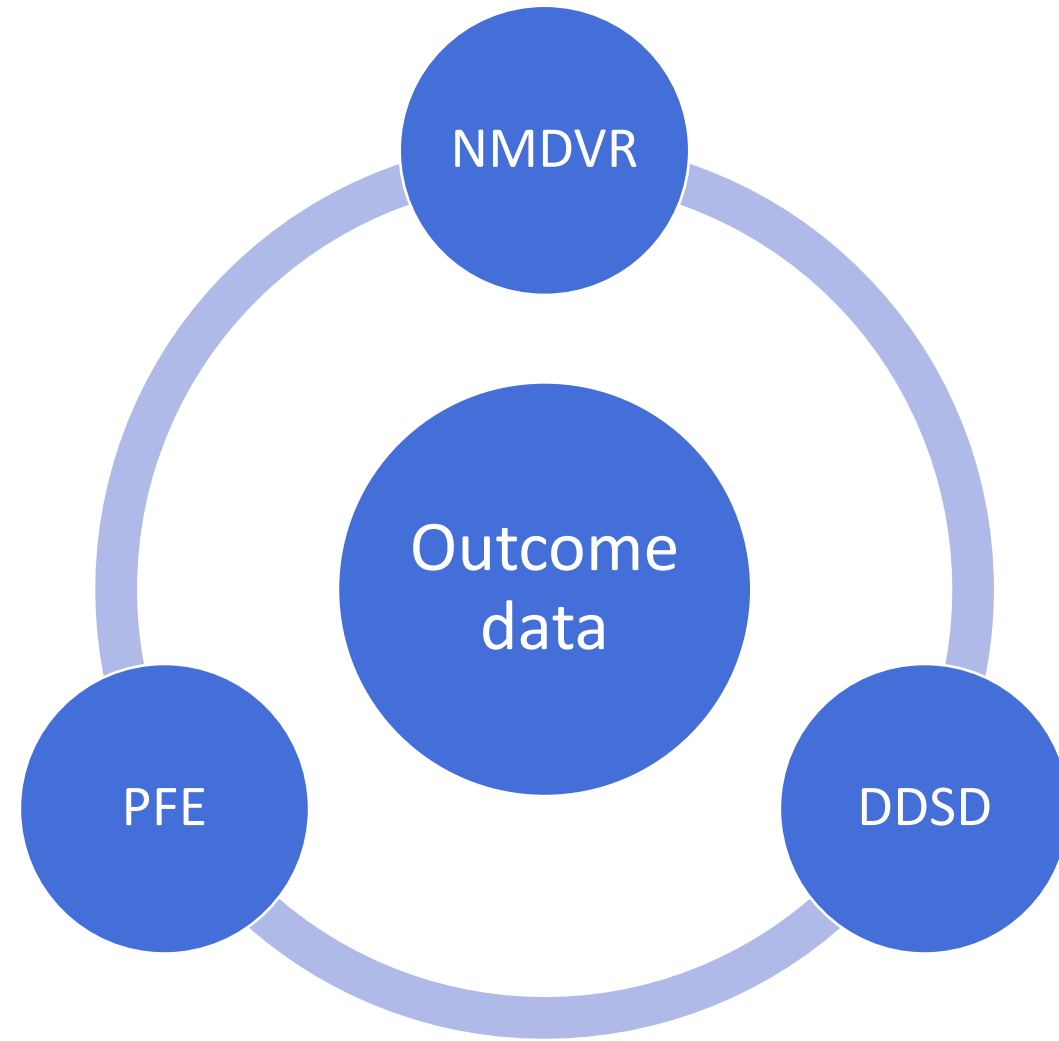


# STRATEGY 4: SERVICE INNOVATION



- Service innovation is the most dynamic strategy and has many active components.
- Some key examples of service innovations are:
  1. Project SEARCH
  2. Accessing and using assistive technology
  3. Credentialling of job developer and job coach providers

# STRATEGY 5: OUTCOME DATA



- How do we know the systems are working?
- In State FY 2024, NMDVR successfully closed 86 Supported Employment cases after the participants successfully obtained stability.
- DDSD has a total of 474 people receiving employment services in all of our waivers as of February 2025.
- Since 2015, PFE has helped 319 professionals and family members obtain an employment professional credential, the ACRE.

# ALIGNED AND READY FOR SUCCESS



- DDSD and NMDVR are ready to help individuals reach their employment goals and sustain gainful employment.
- The collaboration we have through PFE has and will continue to help the agencies work together towards our shared goal.
- We'll show you how our systems work together from an individual perspective.

# HOW DO PEOPLE NAVIGATE OUR SYSTEMS FOR EMPLOYMENT?

- Now that you understand how we have continuously updated our systems, let's look at this framework and system from a person-centered perspective.
- The person
  - 21 – 67 years of age
  - Eligibility for HCBS waiver established
  - Allocated on a HCBS waiver

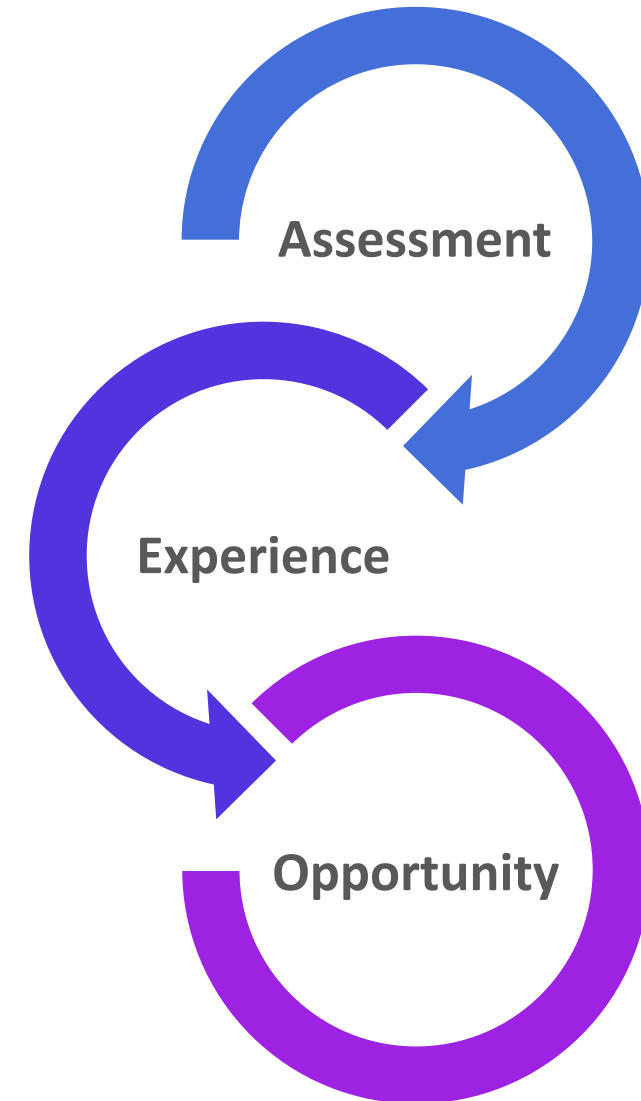


# WAIVER CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- Supports Informed choice through person centered planning process
- Assures meaningful conversation about employment
- Plans for other waiver supports (beyond employment supports) that may help prepare for success to include:
  - Transportation
  - Community supports
  - Technology

# MAKE AN INFORMED CHOICE ABOUT EMPLOYMENT

- Informed choice is an individualized process that starts with three key components:
  - Assessment
  - Experience
  - Opportunity
- This ensures the individual is well on their way to making an informed choice

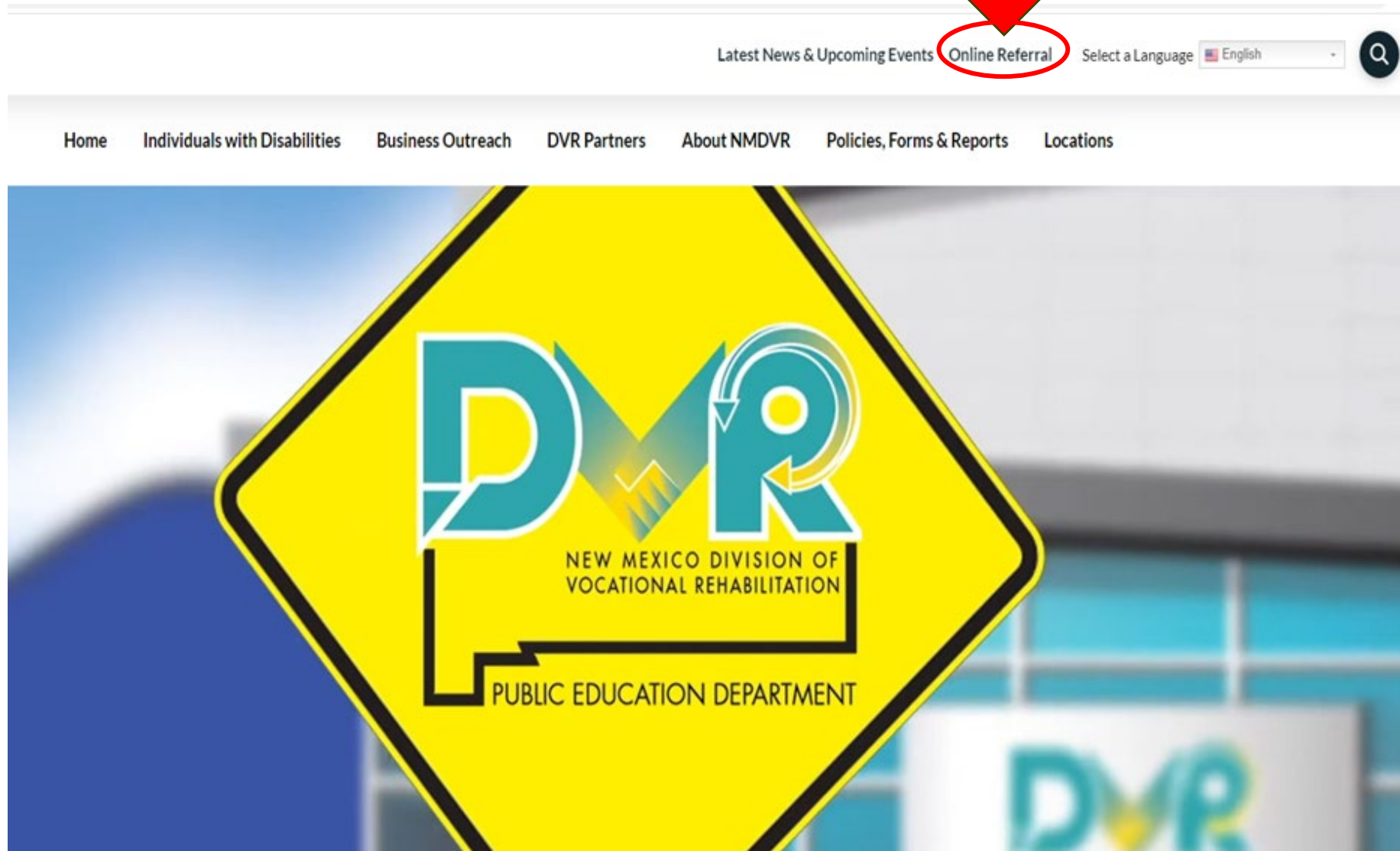




INFORMED CHOICE MADE TO SEEK EMPLOYMENT

**What happens next?**

# REFERRAL TO NMDVR



NMDVR Website Address: <https://www.dvr.state.nm.us/>



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## DVR Client Referral

Select Language ▼

About You

Contacting You

Student

Supported Employment

Source

Disability

### Supported Employment Info/DD Waiver Wait List

☐ Check here if you are receiving DD Waiver Funds, Mi Via Funds, State General Funds or Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) Funds.

### Supported Employment Attachment(s)

If available please attach the following documents: (Not Mandatory)

#### Release of Information

Upload ROI

#### Individual Service Plan (Current ISP)

Upload ISP

#### Freedom of Choice Form

Upload FOC

#### Level of Care Form

Upload LOC

First

Next

Previous

Last

\* Denotes required field.



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REFERRAL SUBMITTED TO NMDVR

**What happens next?**

# NMDVR REFERRAL PROCESS

1. Referral information will be collected from the online referral portal.
2. The identified office will be notified that a new referral has been received. Individuals can complete an online referral at their convenience including at any local NMDVR office.
3. Office staff have 48 hours to respond to the new referral.
4. NMDVR staff will contact the referral source to provide intake appointment date at time.



**Reminder:** If necessary, referral information can be taken over the phone and entered by staff using the online referral.

# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

## Participant

- Respond to NMDVR staff calls and emails
- Attend your intake interview
- Provide requested documentation for Eligibility Determination

## Waiver Case management

- Monitor progress through NMDVR services
- Support the transfer of necessary documents
- Attend NMDVR appointments as able and invited



# NMDVR INTAKE

- The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (VRC) will conduct an initial intake interview with the participant.
- The VRC will begin asking questions to better know the participant, including getting a snapshot of their daily life and schedule, their background and educational history, and potential employment goals.
- The VRC will also begin gathering documentation to find the participant officially eligible for NMDVR services.

## For those receiving SSDI/SSI Social Security Benefits:

*An applicant is presumed eligible for VR services (34 CFR §361.42(a)(3)) and to be an individual with a significant disability if they are eligible for Social Security benefits under Title II (SSI) or Title XVI (SSDI) and the case transitioned into eligible status.*



# NMDVR IPE PROCESS

- The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) takes shape after the intake appointment details are gathered and synthesized during the Comprehensive Assessment.
- The Comprehensive Assessment gathers information on the participant's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.
  - This includes discussion of any potential issues relating to identifying an employment outcome and the nature and scope of rehabilitation services that may be necessary to achieve that outcome.
- The IPE will be developed as soon as all required information is available but no later than 90 days following determining eligibility.
- The IPE is developed and implemented in a manner that affords the participant the opportunity to exercise informed choice in selecting an employment outcome, the vocational rehabilitation services to be provided under the plan, the entity that will provide services, the employment setting, and the methods used to procure the service.



# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

## Participant

- Inform your team or circle of support
- Work with the VR job developer towards your employment goal in your IPE
- Include your IPE employment goal in your waiver plan

## Waiver Case management

- Review IPE goal and services and integrate in the waiver person-centered planning
- Invite VRC to meetings
- Monitor progress towards employment

IPE SIGNED AND NMDVR SERVICES AUTHORIZED

**What happens next?**

# JOB DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

- Job development takes place with the participant's chosen employment agency for up to 9 months.
- The job developer assists the participant with appropriate employment placement and is paid by NMDVR. Then the participant is provided with 90 days of job coaching services paid for by NMDVR.
- The participant will then transition to HCBS Waiver funding for long-term supports.
- NMDVR closes the participant's case following minimum 90 days of long-term funding in place.

# SERVICE INNOVATION IDEA



“CAN I USE  
TECHNOLOGY  
AS MY JOB  
COACH?”



# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

## Participant

- Ask your vocational rehabilitation counselor and case manager to meet to review the funding options
- Learn how to use the technology
- Provide feedback about the technology
- Use the technology for your job and avoid social media, online games etc.

## Waiver Case management

- Attend appointments with VR team as invited
- Add ongoing technology supports as a service
- Plan for any other applicable long-term funding needs



“I GOT A  
COMPETITIVE  
INTEGRATED  
JOB!”

# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

## Participant

- Request necessary accommodations
- Learn the tasks of my job
- Notify my job coach and VR team of concerns I may have
- Follow all workplace policies

## Waiver Case management

- Get Job Placement Form from NMDVR for long-term planning
- Submit plan and budget

## VR counselor

- All services necessary to support the participant are outlined in an approved and signed IPE
- Ensure necessary Release of Information form is signed and ready for the start of services
- Ensure necessary services are authorized to begin and provide monthly monitoring to ensure progress

LONG TERM SUPPORTS IN PLACE

**What happens next?**

# TIPS FOR SUCCESS

## Participant

- Self-evaluate performance
- Report problems with employment performance to job coach
- Ask for a team meeting if the job is a bad fit

## Waiver Case management

- Manage budget
- Update VR counselor / invite VR counselor to meeting
- Monitor stability and suitability of employment

## VR counselor

- Monitor employment of the participant for a minimum of 90 days
- Obtain validation documentation of employment for the participant
- Address any potential VR concerns that may impact stability of employment

# EMPLOYED FOR 180 DAYS OR MORE



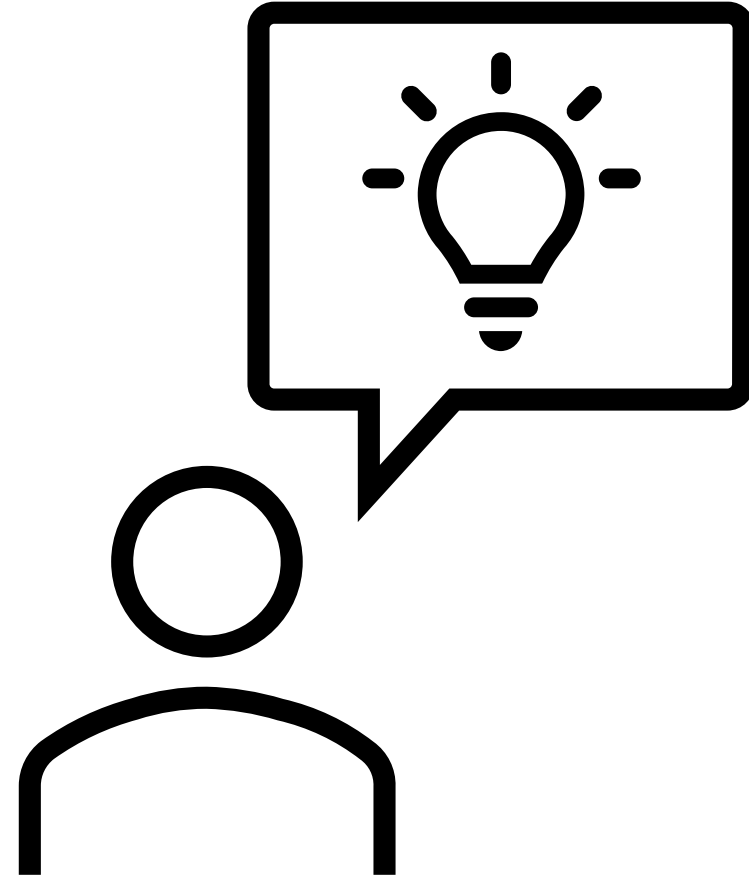
- NMDVR closes the participant's case.
- The supports within your waiver will continue per the person-centered plan and budget.

# RESOURCES

- [The New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation](#)
- [The DDS Community Inclusion Webpage](#)
- [Partners for Employment](#)
- [Waiver services](#)

# JOIN OUR SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT

- What can we improve?
- Where can we improve?
- Raise your hand and tell us your ideas or use the materials provided to write them down.





# THANK YOU

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