



T'áá hwó ájit'éego

Navajo Nation Department for Self Reliance Customer Newsletter

Former DSR Customer finds her Career through Assessments

Arlene Jones heard about the Department for Self Reliance (DSR) while she was attending a parent-teacher conference. At the time she was newly separated from her husband and was struggling to provide for her four children. She was told, “they help single parents with money and they help you find a career,” said Arlene.

Arlene admits that she had a hard time getting back on her feet. “At that time in my life I was suffering from depression, my marriage ended and I had lost my father. It was a really tough time for me.”

Arlene applied for assistance at the DSR Shiprock Office in 2009. She recalls, “when I was a DSR customer, I tried to attend all of the training the DSR offered. I remember going to whatever training Emerson planned,” said Arlene.

Brand new to the DSR, Arlene found hope when she completed one of her assessments, “What changed for me was when I took one of the tests I think it was called the PICS (Picture Interest Career Survey). It tells you what your interests are and it really helped me figure out what my interests were and what kind of training I should look into.” After taking the assessment, Arlene recognized her interests directed her to healthcare.

“I was living in Farmington at the time so I started taking classes at San Juan College.” Arlene immersed herself in nursing classes, “one of the classes I remember taking was Navajo medical terminology, I really enjoyed that class,” Arlene said about attending school.

“I almost finished my degree but I chose to take some time off from school. I was divorcing my husband and it was a difficult situation,” said Arlene.

Arlene was able to find employment



Arlene Jones poses in lab coat and face shield she uses while she works at DaVita Kidney Care in Tuba City, Ariz. where she performs a myriad of roles in the center.

with United Blood Services (UBS) where she worked as a phlebotomist. After seven years at UBS, Arlene decided she needed to make some changes in her life and transferred with UBS and moved her family to Flagstaff, Ariz.

Soon after moving she realized, “Flagstaff wasn’t the same as I remembered it, I wanted to move from there soon after I got there,” said Arlene.

She spent another year with UBS and saw a job opening with DaVita, applying for employment with DaVita meant she would have to move again. “I applied at DaVita Kidney Care in Tuba City, and they hired me,” said Arlene.

“I never dreamed I would be living

out here but here I am. I’ve been with DaVita for four years,” said Arlene, then explains what DaVita does, “DaVita is a dialysis provider for individuals living with a kidney disease.”

Arlene continued, “Now, I’m a translator at the DaVita dialysis clinic. I help educate patients on their lab results. Sometimes patients have a hard time understanding what their phosphorous and potassium levels should be. I also advise them on their diet and how to keep their lab results favorable. It’s very complicated,” said Arlene.

Arlene added, “I do other stuff besides translating, I assist with treatment and services to patients, and help with lab work. There’s a lot of work every day, filling in here and there, it really keeps me busy.”

Arlene states proudly, “Recently DaVita sent me and another co-worker to Orlando, Florida for a conference and I got to go to the Magic Kingdom, it was a great experience for me.”

About living in Tuba City, Arlene said, “I really like Tuba City, the high school here is awesome. My youngest daughter is a junior and she is doing very well, she’s an honor student and in the ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps).”

“‘Táá hwo ájit’éego’, it’s that slogan, it’s up to me. I really have to credit your program. The slogan, the training, the expectations, it all ties together. If I want to be successful. If I want to be paid, then I have to go to school. I have to do something.”

“To anyone in the program, continue going, go to training, go to school, and it’ll all come together in the end, ‘Táá hwo ájit’éego’.”

NAVAJO NATION DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEPARTMENT FOR SELF RELIANCE



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The Department for Self Reliance (DSR) is established under the Navajo Nation Division of Social Services within the Executive Branch of the Navajo Nation government. The DSR is responsible for administering the Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program for eligible families residing on the Navajo Nation and federally recognized near reservation communities within the states of New Mexico, Arizona and Utah.



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The DSR provides short-term cash benefits to families with minor children for their basic needs while assisting the adult(s) to secure sustainable employment through appropriate support, work experience opportunities, training and education.

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September 2019, the Navajo Division of Social Services (NDSS) held a division-wide meeting, for its five-hundred (500) plus NDSS employees to disseminate information on the current Navajo Nation administration's restructuring, reorganization and streamlining of program services.

This meeting also allowed for the Department of Self Reliance (DSR) to become reacquainted with the other NDSS services.

The NDSS oversees eight programs including the DSR, Department of Family Services, Child Care Development Fund, Navajo Children and Family Services, Navajo Treatment Center for Children/Families, Disability Developmental Program, Navajo School Clothing Program, and the Strengthening Families Program.

Each DSR Support Service supervisor gave a presentation on what services their sections provide to the DSR field staff and Customers.

The DSR Pathway to Quality Services coordinates staff development and training, the DSR Finance and Recovery Services handles all department's financial affairs, DSR Communications focuses on internal and external communications to promote services, DSR Fraud Investigation Unit deters and prevents fraud among Customers and staff, DSR Compliance reviews case management practices for corrective action, DSR Liaison/Legislative section collaborates with tribal, state and federal stakeholders on policy issues, DSR Information Technology maintains the DSR network, DSR Tribal Assistance System monitors the case management software to submit required federal reporting, while the DSR Education and

Career Services section places Customers in subsidized employment and vocational certificate training.

Each of the DSR support services sections manages their areas of expertise to allow for the DSR field offices to focus on service delivery and Customer progress.

The DSR field office supervisors presented DSR Customer eligibility and service delivery. DSR's service delivery model has four (4) progressive stages of learning and personal development, NITSÁHAKÉÉS (Thinking), NAHAT'Á (Planning), AADÍÍLIL (Doing), and BEE NIISÉELDOO (Growing). These four Navajo concepts and traditional teachings serve as a model to guide the development of Customer well-being and promote Hozho K'eh Iina for DSR families.

The DSR received positive feedback from the other NDSS programs. Most were excited about the case management software the DSR uses. One participant stated, "Love how current the DSR is with technology! The paper/case file is all digitized! Can we all be there soon? Thumbs up!"

The success of the division's restructuring, reorganization and streamlining of program services depends on the collaboration of its staff. Without teamwork, it will be difficult to achieve improved services for the Navajo People.

To achieve the division goals, the NDSS is planning another division-wide meeting to provide NDSS staff with professional development training, communication strategies, organizational information, team building, and leadership development activities.

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Customers find success with Education and Career Services



Grace Kaye, DSR Employment Development Specialist presented the eligibility and policies for the DSR Customers who attended a Subsidized Adult Employment (SAE) orientation for Life Sharing Center, Inc. (St. Jude Food Bank) in Tuba City, Ariz. on Dec. 5. The Life Sharing Center had four vacant positions for Tax Preparers for the upcoming 2020 tax season. The four selected applicants will begin training in tax preparation on Dec. 9.



Left to right: Benson James, DSR EDS; Deanne J. Tah, DSR Customer; and Grace Kaye, DSR EDS pose for pictures. Deanne received a Certificate of Completion from the Welding program from UNM-Gallup.

The Department for Self Reliance (DSR) continues to successfully provide DSR Customers with opportunities to acquire long-term employment through Subsidized Adult Employment (SAE) and Extended Training (ET). The SAE and ET programs are managed by the DSR's Education & Career Services' (ECS) section.

To increase a Customer's chance at obtaining long-term employment, the ECS section partners with employers and educational institutions on and around the Navajo Nation. To establish and manage these partnerships, the DSR employs Employment Development Specialists.

Working alongside the EDS is the Training Instructor (TI). While the EDS' are developing partnerships, the TI provides Adult Basic Education and Computer Basic Training to Customers interested in ECS opportunities. The TI also administers the following assessments: Adult Basic Education (TABE), Barriers to Employment Success Inventory (BESI), and Picture Interest Career Survey (PICS) to help Customers prioritize their interests. These assessments also identify any additional training or education that is lacking in preparation for ECS opportunities.

Another important job within the ECS section is the administrative duties. The Administrative Assistant (AA) manages administrative duties to monitor the MOAs and contracts and to verify invoices received from employers and schools.

As a team, the ECS supervisor, the AA, the EDS' and the TIs, manage SAE with the following employers: Bashas', Chinle Chapter, Life Sharing Center, Inc. (St. Jude Food Bank), Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA) and the Southwest Indian Foundation (SWIF), and oversee the ET partnerships with the following educational institutions: University of New Mexico - Gallup, Utah State University Blanding, and San Juan College.

How it Works

Before an employer or educational institution can begin to employ or enroll DSR Customers, they must sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the DSR.

After the MOA is completed, the EDS staff will begin recruiting interested DSR Customers to attend an orientation with the employer or educational institution.

At the orientation, DSR Customers learn about requirements and expectations. Customers will decide from the orientation if the job description, wages, worksite requirements, class schedules, or attendance requirements work with their responsibilities and situations.

If a Customer chooses to apply, they must be included in the benefit group, and they must have an approved case.

If selected, the DSR customer must meet with DSR EDS staff to update their Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP) to include their Education and Career Goals

(ECG). The EDS will monitor the DSR Customer's progress and make worksite/school visits for follow-up evaluations.

DSR Customers must comply with their ECG and continue to submit hours on their DSR timesheet. Customers are expected to continue to maintain their eligibility requirements and report all changes to both the EDS and their Senior or Principal Caseworker.

DSR Customers in SAE or ET are responsible to inform their supervisor or instructor and if applicable, their assigned EDS staff, of any concerns they have that may potentially interfere with their employment or education.

The SAE Process

The SAE hiring process is completed by the employer. The DSR does not determine who will be hired and does not determine the wages to be paid.

DSR Customers may be asked to submit an application and any other relevant documents by the employer, such as a resume and a letter of interest. The employer will conduct their interviews to determine which DSR Customers are the best match for their business.

In preparation for the official job application process, the ECS staff will assist Customers with completing a mock job application, a resume, a cover letter, and a mock interview.

If employed, copies of check stubs must be submitted to the EDS staff and their Senior or Principal Caseworker for documentation. The wages earned

through SAE is not countable income, therefore, DSR Customers will continue to receive their monthly cash benefits.

The employer will keep track of the hours worked, the wages earned, the benefits paid, and any other related costs paid to submit an invoice to the DSR.

Wages paid, to the DSR Customers, are taxable and must be reported by the employer. Employers are eligible to receive tax credits between \$1,200 to \$9,000 per employee depending on the number of employees and the number of hours the DSR Customers complete. Employers must contact their local State Workforce Agency to find out how they can get the tax credits.

DSR Customers must follow their employer's worksite policies and procedures. Any issues that arise during employment are between the employer and the DSR Customer. The employer may decide to remove a DSR Customer from employment.

The ET Process

The process for obtaining a certification from a higher learning institution is similar to the SAE process. DSR Customers to attend an orientation by the educational institution to determine if they meet the requirements and expectations.

If a DSR Customer chooses to apply for an ET opportunity, they must sign a Customer Agreement, committing themselves to complete and pass the certification training.

The DSR pays for registration costs and related expenses. If a Customer does not complete their certification training, they are required to repay the DSR.

"Embracing the concept of T'áá hwó ájít' éego has helped DSR Customers find success and independence, and they are continuing to make the DSR proud of their achievements." Said Marian Tapaha, delegated ECS supervisor. Through DSR's ECS section, many DSR Customers have obtained permanent employment to become self-sufficient.

For more information on SAE or ET opportunities, contact delegated ECS Supervisor, Marian Tapaha at marian.tapaha@nntanf.org or (928) 810-8592.



Madelena Kee, Administrative Services Officer of the Navajo Division of Social Services, Department of Family Services, Family Assistance Program (FAP) presents the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program policies to FAP staff at the Navajo Nation Education Center on Dec. 6, 2019.

May 2019, Navajo Division of Social Services (NDSS) Executive Director, Deannah Neswood-Gishey, organized an assessment of all NDSS programs and departments.

The assessment helped identify areas of improvement in regards to streamlining services, reducing administrative costs, increasing pass-through funding, and preventing duplication of services.

This assessment has led to several, division-wide, improvement projects. One directly impacting the DSR is the transition to automation of NDSS' financial services.

June 2019, the Department for Family Services (DFS) began preparing its Financial Assistance Program (FAP) to transition to the *Tribal Assistance Software (TAS). TAS will be used to result in improved application and payment processes for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), General Assistance (GA), Burial Assistance (BA), Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), and the Navajo School Clothing Program (NSCP).

Faster application and payment processes are not the only advantages of TAS. TAS is a case management software that can develop reporting to support and encourage Customer progression. TAS can adjust its software modules according to policy requirements, be programmed to provide advanced federal reporting, find and alert users for compliance issues, and automated case management communications.

Currently, the DSR serves an average of three-thousand (3,000) families and generates just as many checks per month, using TAS.

The DSR's caseworkers input Customer timesheets into TAS to determine their eligibility for payment. The approved payment data, from all DSR locations, is then compiled into one batch to be uploaded for payment processing. This automated process allows for checks to be mailed the day after they are uploaded.

Without TAS, the DSR's payment process would be a manual process where all three-thousand (3,000) payment requests would be, single-handedly, reviewed by an administrator for approval. Each approved payment would then be recorded into a ledger. After that lengthy process, payment request forms would need to be completed for each check. This manual process takes several weeks to complete, which can be detrimental to families in need.

Mrs. Neswood-Gishey envisions the DSR's automated service delivery for all NDSS financial assistance programs. Since the DSR has been using TAS since 2010, they have been assigned as technical support to the FAP while they transition to automation.

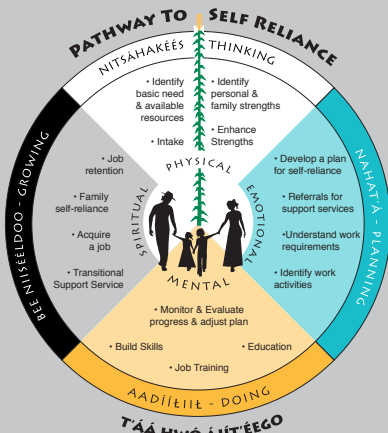
When the FAP is utilizing TAS, they will have the ability to prevent duplication of services by cross-referencing DSR Customers.

DSR Customers receive a Winter Payment Standard from December through March, an annual school clothing incentive that is available in June and, if applicable, short-term non-recurring benefits to assist with emergencies.

These DSR services are comparable to LIHEAP, NSCP, and CSBG services. When applying for LIHEAP, NSCP, and CSBG, applicants will be cross-referenced with the DSR's Customers, using TAS, to prevent duplication of services, to result in more FAP funds to serve more families.

Congratulations to DSR Customers and Staff!!

The DSR met the overall work participation rates for the fiscal year 2018. The DSR exceeded its target rate of thirty-two (32) percent. The overall rate the DSR achieved was forty-four-point-two (44.2) percent.



The Department for Self Reliance (DSR) is required to submit a three-year plan, called the Tribal Family Assistance Plan (TFAP), to the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services through the Administration for Children and Families for review and approval. A negotiated work participation rate is identified in the TFAP to measure how well the DSR's Customers' engage in approved work activities.

After a Customer is approved for benefits, they must complete a Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP). After the PRP is in place, Customers are required to complete a minimum of twenty-four (24) work participation hours per week. There are exceptions to who is required to do work participation hours. (See Pathway to Self Reliance Manual, page 27)

In the DSR's current TFAP, the DSR identifies twenty-nine (29) Work Participation Activities to remove barriers to employment and self-reliance. (See Pathway to Self Reliance Manual, page 29)

Failing to meet the minimum work participation requirement can result in a penalty to the DSR, from the federal government. Customers who fail to meet their required hours are subject to penalties. (See Pathway to Self Reliance Manual, page 46)

"When we meet our rates, it means our families are doing their part in pursuing a career to be self-sufficient," stated DSR Department Manager III, Roxanne Gorman.

Depositing a Check Twice, is illegal! Don't do it!!!



"Remote Deposit Capture," is when you deposit a check with a mobile device, like a cell phone or a tablet. When using a Remote Deposit Capture you keep the paper check, rather than handing it over to a bank teller or check cashing business.

When cashing a paper check that you already deposited, using a mobile device, at a bank or a check cashing business is called "Double Presentment." Double Presentment is a criminal offense. Criminal charges can be filed against you.

Everyone should be aware of the consequences before they knowingly attempt this kind of activity. Double Presentment has far-reaching effects that may become a barrier to your success in life.

Besides being charged criminally, financial Institutions will report your illegal bank activity to the major Credit Bureaus, and it becomes part of your credit history. If you have illegal bank activity reported on your credit history, you may be denied employment and/or credit. Being denied may force you to pass on relocating for that education/training opportunity. You will have difficulty purchasing a vehicle or a new home. Not to mention, if you are required to complete a background check for employment or services, your illegal bank activity will be discovered, which may result in you not being offered the job.

If you accidentally commit Double Presentment, you should alert the payer, your Financial Institution, or the check cashing business, immediately to express your oversight and discuss how you plan on repaying the second payment.

The DSR Fraud Investigation Unit refers DSR Customers who intentionally commit Double Presentment to the Navajo Nation Office of the Prosecutor to pursue criminal charges.

For more information contact the DSR Fraud Investigation Unit at (928) 810-8592.

For further reading: "Banks fight mobile deposit fraud" by Dick Hogan, www.news-press.com. "Fraud Against Financial Institutions," www.criminalfraud.com. "Double Dipping Through Mobile Checking" by Toni Lapp, www.banknews.com. "Remote Deposit Capture Legal & Risk Concerns," www.remotedepositcapture.com.



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Navajo Nation Fair Kid's Day

YOUTH



Students from Ganado Elementary School participate in learning the meaning of T'áá hwó ájít' éego and how it applies to their lives in the present and future.

The Department for Self Reliance (DSR) staff shared the Navajo teachings of T'áá hwó ájít' éego with elementary and high school students at Kid's Day held

at Navajo Nation (NN) Fairs in Window Rock, Tuba City, Ariz., and Shiprock, NM.

The youth that attended, understand that as children and students, their

responsibility is to complete homework assignments, help their parents with household tasks, and do their best in school.

When the youth were asked what kind of job they wanted when they grew up, the most popular response was, "I want to be a police officer."

The youth were also asked who would provide for them when they have their own families, and after the giggling subsided, a majority of the answers were, "We have to go to college and get good jobs!"

The DSR outreach activities are important to keep the public informed of it's services and changes in policies.

If you would like a presentation on DSR benefits and services, contact DSR Communications at (928) 810-8592.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- December 25, 2019 - HOLIDAY Christmas
- January 1, 2020 - HOLIDAY New Year's Day

Email the DSR at info@nntanf.org with your feedback, comments, questions or concerns.

- January 7, 2019 - DSR Limited Services/Policy Training
- January 20, 2019 - HOLIDAY Martin Luther King, Jr. Day