

REHABILITATION
DIVISION



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December 15, 2016

Mario J Gaspar de Alba
Nevada Commission on Autism Spectrum Disorders
Aging and Disability Services Division
State of Nevada
3416 Goni Road, Building D, Suite 132
Carson City NV 89706

Dear Mr. Gaspar de Alba,

Thank you so much for your letter of December 5, 2016. In that letter, you raise many salient points about the importance of quality training for individuals working with persons diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), and the potential consequences for limited training.

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you that all counselors working at the State of Nevada, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation have a master's degree in either Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling, or another human service related field and eligibility to sit for the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor exam. We do ongoing annual training with our technical assistance (TA) partner, San Diego State University, as well as with other TA providers through two other national competitive TA awards.

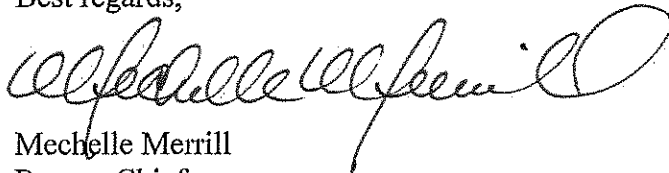
As much as I respect the complexity and consequence of working with individuals with ASD, we are a "general" agency, and must act in concert with our federal mandate to serve all disabilities equally. In the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, signed into law on July 22, 2014, a greater emphasis was placed on serving transition students and youth and individuals in sub-minimum wage, 14c settings. I believe that this mandate, in and of itself, will steer Vocational Rehabilitation to serve more students and youth with ASD. We are also providing ongoing training to help our staff shift their practice to meet this expectation.

In your letter, you closed with an offer to assist Vocational Rehabilitation in coordinating sensitivity training provided by a self-advocate to professionals. I am eager to understand how you envision this roll out, and what resources it would take to bring it to fruition. And additionally, how we could collaborate with other state and community agencies to broaden the scope of who participates in this training. We are always interested in opportunities for professional learning and skills expansion for our counselors and technicians.

DECEMBER 15, 2016

Again, thank you so much for reaching out, and I look forward to learning your model for partnership.

Best regards,



Mechelle Merrill
Bureau Chief



Janice John
Deputy Administrator

xc: Brian Boughter, Personnel Officer 3, DETR
Renee Olson, Administrator, Employment Security Division, DETR
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