



New Mexico Drug Recognition Expert Program

2026 DRE School Information and Acknowledgement Form

To the Applicant and Department Head:

Thank you for your interest in the New Mexico Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) Certification Program. Before submitting an application, please carefully review the information below regarding the program, training schedule, travel requirements, and participant expectations. The DRE Certification process is rigorous and requires a significant commitment from both the applicant and their agency. Attendance is mandatory for all phases of training, and successful completion of each phase is required before advancing to the next.

The DRE Certification Program consists of three phases:

PHASE 1: Pre-School Training (16 hours)

This two-day classroom session introduces students to the term “drug” as it pertains to drug-impaired driving. Students will also be given a proficiency examination on Standardized Field Sobriety Tests (SFSTs), as well as a written test. Both tests must be passed in order to proceed to the next phase.

PHASE 2: DRE School (64 hours)

This eight-day classroom training immediately follows Phase 1. Students will learn the techniques of drug evaluation, the various drug categories and their associated signs and symptoms, as well as relevant physiological effects. A comprehensive written exam must be passed to advance to Phase 3. **Phases 1 and 2 will be held concurrently in Albuquerque, New Mexico, from October 12–23, 2026 (with the weekend off).**

PHASE 3: Field Certification

Field certification takes place at the California Highway Patrol Office in San Francisco, California. Students will perform evaluations on live drug-impaired subjects and must formulate opinions on a minimum of twelve individuals. A final comprehensive exam will be administered after successful completion of all evaluations. Phase 3 is tentatively scheduled for November. Students who successfully complete Phases 1 and 2 will be notified of their assigned Field Certification dates prior to returning to their agencies.

Important Notes on Travel and Funding:

Please be aware that the certification process involves travel. While Phase 3 will require travel out-of-state, Phases 1 and 2 may also involve travel depending on the student's home location within New Mexico. The entire program is funded by a grant and does not involve any monetary cost to your agency (other than the student's salary while in training). Lodging for Phases 1 and 2 (for students traveling 50+ miles) and both lodging and airfare for Phase 3 will be paid directly

by the grant. However, per diem expenses must be paid up front by the student. Students will be reimbursed at the federal per diem rate upon completion of the training.

Applicants should expect to be away from their regular duty assignments during all scheduled training dates, as well as any required travel associated with the certification process. The support of the applicant's agency is essential to the student's successful completion of the program.

Please note: Reimbursement checks are made out to the student, not the agency.

Selection Process

Submission of an application does not guarantee selection. Class size is limited, and applicants are selected based on multiple factors, including geographic need, agency support, and statewide program needs. Preference may be given to applicants from areas with limited or no certified Drug Recognition Experts.

Ongoing Certification Requirements

Certification as a Drug Recognition Expert is an ongoing commitment. To maintain certification, DREs must complete recertification requirements every two years in accordance with the International Standards for the Drug Evaluation and Classification (DEC) Program. Agencies should be prepared to support these ongoing requirements.

Applicant Acknowledgement:

Applicant, please read and initial each bullet point below:

_____ I understand that, if selected, I am responsible for paying per diem up front, and that I will be reimbursed at the conclusion of training (applicable to Phase 3 and potentially Phases 1 and 2 depending on my location).

_____ I understand that reimbursement is handled directly between the NMDRE program and myself—not my agency.

_____ I certify that I am proficient in the administration and interpretation of the Standardized Field Sobriety Test (SFST) battery.

_____ I understand that successful completion of the DRE School does **not** result in certification. Certification is awarded only after successful completion of all required phases, examinations, and field certification requirements.

_____ I understand that attendance is mandatory for all phases of training, and if selected, I will make the necessary arrangements to ensure full attendance.

_____ I understand that the DRE School is academically demanding and that I am strongly encouraged to avoid working overtime or secondary employment during the training period so that I can adequately rest and prepare for each day of instruction.

Signatures:

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the information contained in this document. I understand the time, travel, and participation requirements associated with the DRE Certification Program and, if selected, agree to fulfill these obligations.

Applicant Printed Name

Applicant Signature

I support this employee's participation in the program and understand the commitment required of both the employee and the agency.

Department Head/Designee Printed Name

Department Head/Designee Signature

***This form must be signed and emailed to cfiles@nmdre.org to complete the application process. Incomplete applications will not be considered.**