

New Mexico Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

Regular Meeting (Held Hybrid)

September 2, 2026, 10:00 AM

Minutes (draft)

1. Call to Order & Roll Call

The SILC Chair called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM

SILC voting members present at the meeting were: Dr. Paula Seanez (SILC Chair in person) Bernadine Chavez (in person), Marlencia Chee (Unexcused Absence), Peggy Jo Hayes (Present Virtual) Lisa McNiven (Present Virtual) arrived at 11:00 AM, Michael Murphy – (Excused Absence), Mariah Regan (present-virtual), Cody Unser (present-virtual), Rachel Minnaar – (present-virtual).

Dr. Stephon Scott Ex-Officio non-voting (in person), Greg Trapp, Ex-Officio non-voting (in person)

2. Introduction of Guests, Partners, and Independent Living Network Members

Sarah Mchaud - New Vistas Director, Samantha Rendon- ASU Deputy Director/ Chief Financial Officer Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Juan Haro- Commission for the Blind IL Manager, Angelina Montoya – DVR, (DVR), Elaine Trujillo, DVR, Delaine Trujillo – DVR, Mario Lucero, DVR, Maggie – ASL Interpreter, Cynthia, ASL Interpreter.

3. Consideration and/or approval of changes to the Order of the agenda

Dr. Seanez reviewed the agenda that was sent out and that approval of the agenda was not necessary. Only the order of items on the agenda can be changed. She asked if there were any proposed changes to the order of the agenda. There were not changes to the order of the agenda and the meeting proceeded as presented.

4. Approval of minutes of July 2, 2026

Dr. Seanez asked if all member reviewed the draft minutes from July 2, 2026, that were sent out. The members took some time to review Dr. Seanez asked if all members reviewed the draft minutes from July 2, 2026.

Bernadine Chavez motioned to approve the July 2,2026 Minutes with the spelling correction of Joan Curtiss last name. Joan Curtiss seconded the motion.

All voting members voted to approve 7 approved

5. Chair report, Paula Seanez, Ph.D.

Dr. Seanez provided a brief overview of the State plan for Independent Living (SPIL) and reminded the members that it is a responsibility to monitor the SPIL at each meeting. The 3 goals in the SPIL are: Goal 1, Enhance the lives of New Mexicans with disabilities through the coordination of Independent Living and other disability services, Goal 2, Ensure access to quality IL services throughout New Mexico's diverse communities, Goal 3, Enhance and expand the ability of the network of centers for independent living to deliver quality independent living services statewide.

Dr. Seanez also reviewed the Methods that will be used to evaluate the SPIL goals.

1. Review the SPIL at each SILC meeting through SILC updates, CIL updates and success stories and evaluate whether timelines are being met. If Indicators and/or objectives have not been accomplished, analyze why and determine whether adjustments need to be made. Public comment on monitoring the SPIL is available at each quarterly SILC meeting. This is to be completed Quarterly.

Other areas for Methods that will be used to evaluate included:

2. Review the annual consumer satisfaction survey results. The CILs and the SILC have agreed upon at least 3 survey questions that all CILs will use and report results to the SILC at the end of each federal fiscal year. Timeline: 1st Quarter each year

Dr. Seanez requested for the 3 questions that were to be used by the CILs as that has not been shared. No one on the SILC were aware of the 3 questions. Dr. Seanez recommended that this be reviewed at the next meeting.

3. Review the Program Performance reports from all NM CILS listed in the SPIL at the end of each fiscal year. 1st quarter of each year.

Dr. Seanez noted that while DVR received Program Performance reports from the NM CILS, the reports have not been shared or reviewed with the CILs.

4. Review ACL and DSE Site Review reports of CILS when available. If requested SILC can offer resources to assist CILs with corrective action plans for below standard performance designations. Timeline: As needed
5. Create an annual Progress Report on the state of IL in New Mexico, including an analysis and recommendations and distribute to IL Network, state legislature, Governor's office and other interested

Cody Unser volunteers to be on task force for the SPIL amendment and SPIL development process.

Dr. Seanez acknowledge new members of the SILC, Joan Curtiss and Cody Unser representing individual with a disability. Dr. Seanez allowed time for Ms. Curtiss and Ms. Unser to share their background and their interests for serving on the SILC. Dr. Seanez also recognized Rachel Minnaar whose emails were being returned. However, she has provided a current email address and will continue to participate as a member of the SILC.

6. Independent Living Network Updates

- a. Sarah Michaud, Director for New Vistas provided the following report. (Sarah emailed her report. New Vistas continues to engage in the provision of all five core IL services.

Service trends have remained steady throughout the calendar year. Our EI program supported 631 children last year and has 334 open cases currently. Our DSA program is currently serving 76 individuals under ILP and 17 individuals through I&Rs. Our IL Staff participated in the Disability Pride parade in Santa Fe in July and were able to set up an informational table at the Plaza that day as well. Staff had a great time meeting with community members and sharing information on IL and agency services. We also set up a table at La Familia's Health and Wellness Fair, which was held July 25th. Staff from our EI and IL teams jointly staffed that table to share information with community members. We have signed up for a community re-entry fair in Santa Fe in October and for the Harding County Health Fair in October as well.

Our partnership with PED continues to go well. I continue to serve on the CTE Advisory Board as a CIL Director and currently chair the students with disabilities subcommittee.

Our 2nd annual youth transition conference was held on Friday, August 7th, at NMHU in Las Vegas. The conference included a resource fair, presentations on IL, financial management, employment support and an interactive Game of Life activity. The event was a great success, and we are already considering locations for next year's event.

We continue to host weekly youth Open Space sessions and online movie nights for our youth participants.

KIVA classes have started with Santa Fe Public Schools for the school year. We are working with 17 students this year to provide IL skills training and transition services twice per month.

Now that fire season has started, we have begun to update our website with wildfire updates from local incident management teams to help spread the word in our communities and help the disability community remain informed about possible evacuations in our service area.

Our IL Advocate who is trained as a non-attorney representative for social security claims has been assisting several consumers through the SSA adjudication process this year. She recently has been working with a few parents and grandparents raising grandkids in our EI program to assist them with applications as well.

- b. Gil Yildiz– Independent Living Resource Center- Not Present
- c. Albert Montoya – The Ability Center- Not present
- d. Audra Wilson – Choices- Not present
- e. Charlie Phelps – San Juan Center for Independence, Absent personal issues
- f. Dr. Stephon L. Scott– Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (Designated State Entity)

Dr. Scott provided an update from the DVR Designated State Entity. He stated that he proposed additional resources from the state recurring general funds in the amount of \$337,300 to the Governor's office. Goal is to make sure there is reliable income for CILS.

He reported that Antoinette Holmes has been hired as the RSU Unit Director. She will oversee Client Services, Statewide Programs, and Pre Employment Transition services.

Dr. Scott added that the DVR team is currently working on a plan for education and assisting schools. This includes Tech Robots that will be at public schools DVR serves. They will act as resources for students and will assist counselors while taking away the stress of commuting. Counselors are spending an average of two hours commuting to one school. These resources will now take away this stress, while still helping the students and giving them the support they need.

7. Update on State Fiscal Year 28 Budget Request from Designated State Entity

Dr. Scott reported that DVR will be requesting \$337,300 in general funds for independent living services.

8. Update on the Process to Amend Federal fiscal Year 2025-2027 State Plan for Independent Living

Jennifer Martin- contact for State of New Mexico office of independent living program is it a technical amendment or substantial amendment.

Met this afternoon 9/2/26 to discuss what funding of \$9,642 will be used for the 5 independent living services including Independent Living Skills Training, Peer counseling, Individual and systems advocacy, Transition services

9. Update on the Process to Amend Federal fiscal Year 2025-2027 State Plan for Independent Living

Carry-over from 7/2/2026 minutes

10. Approval of the Statewide Independent Living Council Amending, through either a Technical Amendment or a Substantial Amendment, the Federal Fiscal Year

2025-2027 State Plan for Independent Living to Implement the Following Changes:

Reduce the Amount of Part B Funds Received by the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to Serve as the Designated State Entity from \$19,284 to \$9,642; and

Provide \$9,642 in Part B funds to the New Mexico Commission for the Blind (CFB) and Authorize CFB to use the \$9,642 to provide Part B services to Persons who are Blind or Low Vision.

Dr. Seanez clarified that during the July 2, 2026, SILC meeting, the SILC approved the process to Amend the Federal fiscal year 2025-2027 State Plan for Independent Living. This action item clarifies that the SPIL would be amended based on the guidance from ACL, Jennifer Martin who will be meeting with the Executive Committee at 2:30 PM.

Sarah Michaud asked if the CILs participated in the amendment of the SPIL.

Dr. Seanez clarified that the Commission for the Blind would utilize the \$9,642 to provide the five core IL activities; information and referral; IL skills training; peer counseling; individual and system advocacy; and transition services. The transition services would primarily include helping people at risk of entering an institution to remain in their own home or community. It would also include helping people transition out of a nursing home. She further clarified that the funds would reduce the Part B funds received by New Mexico DVR and there would be no reduction in funds to the CILs.

Dr. Seanez stated that the SPIL amendment would be jointly developed by Dr. Seanez, as Chair of the SILC and the CIL directors. That process should take place after public input is gathered. A majority of the CIL Directors would also have to sign off on the SPIL.

There were additional discussion and clarification regarding this action item. Much of the discussion was discussed at the July 2, 2026 meeting at which Michael Murphy motioned to approve the process for the SPIL amendment and approved unanimously by the SILC voting members. After the discussion, Dr. Seanez called for a motion.

Peggy Hayes made a motion to approve the Statewide Independent Living Plan through a technical or substantial amendment. Lisa McNlvens seconded the motion. 8 voting members voted to approve the motion.

11. Discussion on the FY 2028-2030 State Plan for Independent Living Development Process

Dr. Seanez reported that this is the last year of the current SPIL. The SPIL will end on September 30, 2027. The SILC needs to develop a SPIL development process

including timelines and processes to develop the SPIL for 2028 – 2030. Dr. Seanez proposed that a task force be established to develop this workplan process.

It is important for the SILC to follow the Open Meetings Act (OMA), State and Federal regulations.

Bernadine Chaves shared that Section 704 c2 guidebook will be sent to SILC members so that they can review to have a better understanding to the SPIL development process.

State goals objectives and strategies of how state chapter b funds will be spent account of outreach efforts of unserved and underserved populations

12. Update on the Designated State Entity Provision of Administrative Support

Bernadine Chavez reported that the Executive Committee reviewed and assessed the duties of a SILC Liaison. Based on this review, a work plan was developed that outlined duties and responsibilities. DVR assigned a staff member to serve as the SILC Liaison. Duties and responsibilities are delineated on the table shared by Ms. Chavez.

Ms. Chavez summarized the duties that DVR will provide as administrative support, including handling logistics like finding a meeting location, posting legal notice on the DVR website site and newspaper.

13. Update on SILC Membership and Committee Assignments

Dr. Seanez reported that the SILC membership includes 12 members. The SILC has an Executive Committee and a Bylaws committee that includes Peggy Hayes, Bernadine Chavez, and Dr. Stephon Scott. A task force has been formed to work on the SPIL development process for 2027. The task force will also focus on the process of amendment the current SPIL. The task force will consist of Cody Unser and Dr. Seanez.

14. Update on the Building partnerships in creating access to housing and resources

Bernadine Chavez represents SILC on Building Partnerships. Many programs for seniors and people with disabilities. Many providers available and programs for individuals with disabilities. There are some HUD grants available for these coalitions. The coalitions include mental health providers, case manager, and CILs.

15. Update on Request for Open Meetings Act Training from New Mexico Department of Justice

Dr. Seanez reached out to the New Mexico Department of Justice and requested for TBD for Open Meetings Act (OMA). An OMA training will be scheduled as part of the agenda at the October or November meeting. In preparation for the training, Dr. Seanez encouraged SILC members to read the OMA which can be found on the New Mexico Department of Justice website.

16. Update on Orientation for New SILC members

Dr. Seanez reported that she requested training from the Independent Living Training and Technical Assistance Center at (ilttacenter.org). The Independent Living Training & Technical Assistance (IL T&TA) Center is a national resource center funded by the Administration for Community Living (ACL). We are dedicated to advancing the work of Centers for Independent Living (CILs), Statewide Independent Living Councils (SILCs), and Designated State Entities (DSEs) by providing training, technical assistance, and peer connection grounded in the values of the Independent Living movement to improve outcomes for people with disabilities.

While the IL T& TA center provided an overview for the SILC, Dr. Seanez recommended that training be provided as there are several new members. The response from the IL T& TA Center was that there is no funding to provide individual training, the SILC can access the IL T& TA Center website and review the peer learning and resources. Is also recommended that the SILC members could pair up and review and material and discuss.

17. Date and Location of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on October 13, 2026, at 10:00 AM, with a location in Albuquerque to be determined.

18. Public Comments

Urja Lansing commented positively on the meeting. She stated that the connectivity allowed for all information could be heard loud and clear.

Juan Haro, IL Counselor for New Mexico Commission for the Blind provided an update on the independent living program. The program has 1 vacancy in Albuquerque. New members are coming to Santa Fe area. The Commission for the Blind is able to cover all New Mexico counties.

19. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 12:52pm

Approved and Electronically Signed this 13th day in October, 2026.

Paula Seanez, Chairperson

Statewide Independent Living Council

New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

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Santa Fe, NM 87505

Or Join Zoom Meeting

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