New Mexico Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

Regular Meeting

October 13, 2026, 10:00 AM

MINUTES

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

5200 Oakland Avenue, NE

Albuquerque, NM 87113

1. Call to order & Roll call:
Dr. Seanez called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM.

Roll was taken and attending in person were Dr. Paula Seanez (Chair), Bernadine Chavez and Greg Trapp (ex officio). Attending virtually were Joan Curtiss, Rachel Minnaar, and Mariah Regan. Cody User (Excused), Lisa McNivens (Excused), Marlencia Chee (Excused), Michael Murphy (Excused), Peggy Hayes, (Excused) and Dr. Stephon Scott (ex officio) – (Excused).

2. Introductions of Guests, Partners, and Independent Living Network Members
Guests attending in person were Angelina Montoya, DVR, Delaine Trujillo, DVR, Jim Salas- Deputy Director, Commission for the Blind (CFB) and Anabell Morta (CFB).

Partners and IL Network members attending virtually were Sarah Michaud, Executive Director, New Vistas, Charlie Phelps, Director, San Juan Center, Leslie Wrights, CFO, San Juan Center and Rudy Grano, DVR.

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

Dr. Seanez reviewed the agenda, saying that only the order of items can be changed, and that nothing can be added or deleted from the agenda. The agenda was accepted as presented.

4. Approval of minutes of September 2,2026

Dr. Seanez said the September 2nd draft minutes were sent out and asked if the members had reviewed the minutes. Dr. Seanez gave the members time to review the minutes. Mariah Regan commented that the minutes were lengthy. Dr. Seanez responded that the minutes captured the full discussion that took place at the meeting to make sure that members who are absent would have the full information.

Joan Curtiss requested changes to her introduction on page 2 item 5 for the correct spelling of Allies. Also Ms. Curtiss worked as a board member to the group. Ms. Curtiss asks that the statement be adjusted to clarify that she was a board member of the board but is no longer a board member, however the group is still active and open.

Bernadine Chavez motioned to approve the minutes of September 2nd, with the changes noted by Ms. Curtiss. Mariah Regan seconded the motion. A roll call vote was conducted, and all five voting members in attendance voted to approve the minutes as revised. Mr. Trapp recommended that when the minutes are complete, they should be labeled as final and uploaded to the SILC website.

5. Chair report, Paula Seanez, Ph.D

Dr. Seanez reported that she, Dr Scott and Bernadine Chavez met with Jennifer Martin, Admission on Community Living. The meeting was to address a few concerns one being a SILC Amendment to allocate $9,642.00 to the Commission for The Blind (CFB). These funds would utilize administration costs. It was determined that this was considered a substantial amendment and will require formal amendment procedures including public meetings. Dr. Seanez assured the SILC that they will comply with both state and federal rules.

Dr. Seanez and Ms. Chavez also met with DVR about a resource plan. The development of a new resource plan was acknowledged and will need ongoing collaboration with DVR on future resources for the SILC. This would include funds for newspaper advertisement, accommodations, interpreter services to name a few.

Disability Employment Awareness month (DEAM) was celebrated in October. Multiple events were planned throughout the month all around the state. Several counties, cities and agencies hosted events. DEAM is a time to honor workers with disabilities and promote inclusive workplaces. Proclamations were issued in multiple NM cities and counties to highlight disability employment.

Dr. Seanez reported that there will be a need for the recommendation for a Center of Independent Living Representative to the SILC.

6. Independent Living Network Updates

A. Sarah Michaud, New Vistas

Sarah Michaud, Executive Director, spoke about independent living network updates. She approached her updates by first stating that New Vistas continues to provide all five core services. She explained that New Vistas KIVA (keeping independent visions alive). The program is still active and currently serving 19 young adults. Movie night remains a current event that is hosted by New Vistas. Ms. Michaud states that the youth programs remain active, and that participation has increased and continues to grow. Staff from

New Vistas participated in a reintegration fair recently for formerly incarcerated individuals. This event occurred on October 10,2026.

Staff also participated in radio interviews. Staff will also be participating in an event in Roy this upcoming week. Halloween events remain to be planned and community based.
New Vistas is currently exploring a new opportunity in exploring partnership with equine- assisted learning programs.

B. Gil Yildiz- Independent Living Resource Center (ILRC)

Bernadine Chavez read the report from ILRC since Mr. Murphy or Gil Yildiz did not attend the SILC meeting. The report stated that ILRC continues to follow and meet all five core services. Beginning July 1st. 457 consumers were served. 325 Consumers are receiving personal assistance services, and 51 Community advocacy/ outreach activities have been completed.

Some significant challenges that have been noted are housing shortages statewide, rural infrastructure limitations, and difficulty advocating consistent adherence to Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) requirements. It was also noted that exemptions at this time are given out on a case-by-case basis.

C. Albert Montoya- The Ability Center

Albert Montoya emailed the SILC Chair and indicated that he was unable to attend the SILC meeting today. Albert will be given the next meeting details and will hopefully be able to attend the next meeting. No written report provided.

D. Audra Wilson- Choices

Audra Wilson did not attend the meeting. No written report provided.

E. Charlie Phelps- San Juan Center for Independence

Charlie Phelps spoke about providing the five core services. Mr. Phelps emphasized that San Juan and Mckinley Counties are providing independent living services.
Charlie stated that there was an increase in involvement in school Individualized education program (IEP) advocacy. It was mentioned that there has been an extensive amount of outreach events like Navajo Nation Fair, and Veteran Stand Down.

Mr. Phelps explains that San Juan Center for Independence offers conference room space to the public. This space is designated to help the community and provides a free space to host meetings and or training. Mr. Phelps acknowledges that they have 1-2 requests monthly for individuals to use the space. Mr. Phelps is excited to note that San

Juan Center for Independence will be starting a partnership with KIBU. KIBU is a company that offers life skills, job skills and recreational classes for adults with IDD. There are numerous his categories for individuals. Program categories include but not limited to finance, baking, basic math.

Additionally, Mr. Phelps explains that they will be hosting a trunk or treat later in the month. There will also be a dance for the community and food. Lastly, there will be other community events that will take place, these include movie nights, bingo, and baking classes.

F. Stephon L. Scott- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (Designated State Entity)

Dr. Scott was unable to attend SILC meeting. Rudy Grano, NMDVR RSU Deputy Director of Client Services provided the DSE update.

Mr. Grano reported that per Dr. Scott the Governor's office continues to support increased funding for statewide independent living services. The Governor continues to support the proposal made by DVR which is over $300,000.00 requested for additional recurring funds for independent living. DVR also requested a full matching fund necessary to support DVR's federal funding. DVR's priority remains the same and collaborating with the SILC is one of its top priorities. Mr. Grano emphasized that DVR's ability to serve New Mexico depends on its partnerships and DVR appreciates and acknowledges the work that goes into SILC.

7. Approval of the Statewide Independent Living Council Bylaws Amendments

Dr. Seanez introduced the SILC bylaw amendments. She indicated that the Bylaws Committee members include Ms. Chavez, Peggy Hayes and Dr. Scott. She indicated that the proposed Bylaw amendments were emailed to the SILC allowing sufficient time for members to review and provide feedback. Dr. Seanez reviewed her recommendation to consistently use SILC not NMSILC. She noted some other minor changes.

Ms. Chavez summarized that the SILC Bylaws needed to be structured in the same matter across the whole document. Ms. Chavez noted that the bylaws need to be consistent to federal and state guidelines. She also said quorum requirements were changed to a simple majority.

Ms. Chavez reviewed that "hybrid meetings and votes must be in accordance with the New Mexico Open Meetings Act (NMSA 1978, Ch. 10, Art. 15). Public meetings of policymaking bodies must be open to the public, and the law allows for virtual participation when in-person attendance is "otherwise difficult or impossible." Members were encouraged to attend in person if possible. In addition, the public must be able to hear the members, and all participants must hear each other. A quorum can be established with virtual participation, and virtual participation counts

toward quorum requirements. 75% of attendance at meetings is required for SILC members.

Visual and auditory voting was reviewed in the Bylaws. Lastly, it was acknowledged that the SILC does not remove members from the Council the Governor does. The Governor is the only one with the authority to remove or add members. Members are allowed to serve two terms.

Joan Curtiss motioned to approve the updated bylaws, and Mariah Regan seconded the motion. Before the vote, Greg Trapp noted that the section on voting should be visual or auditory voting. The amendment to the motion was accepted. Dr. Seanez called for the vote and all 5 voting members approved the motion.

8. Approval of the Open Meeting Act Resolution

Dr. Seanez introduced the next item and reminded the SILC membership that the OMA Resolution was sent out for their review. Mariah Reagan reads resolution into the record.

"WHEREAS, SECTION 10-15-1(B) OF THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT, states that, except as may be otherwise provided in the constitution or the provisions of the Open Meetings Act, all meetings of a quorum of members of any board, council, commission, administrative adjudicatory body or other policymaking body of any state or local public agency held for the purpose of formulating public policy, discussing public business or for the purpose of taking any action within the authority of or the delegated authority of such body, are declared to be public meetings open to the public at all times; and

WHEREAS, any meetings subject to the Open Meetings Act at which the discussion or adoption of any proposed resolution, rule, regulation or formal action occurs shall be held only after reasonable notice to the public; and

WHEREAS, SECTION 10-15-1(D) OF THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT requires the Statewide Independent Living Council to determine annually what constitutes reasonable notice of its public meetings;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), meeting in the city of Albuquerque this 13th day of October 2026, that:

All meetings of the SILC shall be held as indicated in the meeting notice, except that meetings may be canceled due to a lack of a quorum, due to inclement weather, or for other appropriate reasons. Regular meetings: Notice of regular meetings shall be given at least 10 days in advance of the meeting. Special meetings: Notice of special meetings shall be given at least 3 days in advance of the meeting. Emergency meetings: Emergency meetings will be called only if unforeseen circumstances exist that, if not addressed immediately by the SILC, will likely result in injury or damage to persons or property or substantial financial loss to the SILC. For regular meetings described in paragraph (2), notice of the date, time, place, and how to obtain a copy of the agenda shall be placed on the SILC web page at www.dvrstate.nm.us/state-independent-living-

council. Notice shall also be sent to each of the five centers for independent living. The meeting agenda shall be posted on the SILC web page at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

For special meetings described in paragraph (3), notice of the date, time, place, and how to obtain a copy of the agenda shall be placed on the SILC web page at www.dvrstate.nm.us/state-independent-living-council. Notice shall also be sent to each of the five centers for independent living. The meeting agenda shall be posted on the SILC web page at least 72 hours prior to the meeting.

7.For emergency meetings described in paragraph (4), notice requirements are met if notice of the date, time, place, and a copy of the agenda is made reasonably available under the circumstances, which may include posting on the SILC web page and sending to each of the five centers for independent living. The agenda shall also be posted to the SILC web page and sent to each of the five centers for independent living.

8.For regular, special, and emergency meetings, notice also shall be given to those broadcast stations licensed by the Federal Communications Commission and newspapers of general circulation that have made a written request for notice of public meetings.

9. All notices shall include information on how persons with disabilities may request a reader, amplifier, qualified sign language interpreter, or any other form of auxiliary aid or service as may be required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

10. A member of the SILC may attend by conference telephone or other similar communications equipment, including through online conferencing platforms. However, such attendance is allowed only when it is otherwise difficult or impossible for the member to attend. Such attendance is allowed at the discretion of the chair. In addition, each member thus participating must be identified when speaking, all participants must be able to hear each other at the same time, and the public must be able to hear any member who speaks during the meeting.

11.The SILC may close a meeting to the public only if the subject matter of such discussion or action is excepted from the open meeting requirement under the Open Meetings Act.

(a)If any meeting is closed during an open meeting, such closure shall be approved by a majority vote of a quorum of the SILC taken during the open meeting. The authority for the closed meeting and the subjects to be discussed shall be stated with reasonable specificity in the motion to close. The vote of each member on the motion to close shall be recorded in the minutes. Only those subjects specified in the motion may be discussed in the closed meeting.

(b)If a closed meeting is to be conducted when the SILC is not in an open meeting, the closed meeting shall not be held until appropriate public notice is given.

(c)Following completion of any closed meeting, the minutes of the open meeting that was closed, or the minutes of the next open meeting if the closed meeting was separately scheduled, shall state whether the matters discussed in the closed meeting were limited only to those specified in the motion or notice for closure.

(d)Except as provided by the Open Meetings Act, any action taken as a result of discussions in a closed meeting shall be made by vote in an open public meeting.

Passed and electronically signed by the Chairperson of the Statewide Independent Living Council this 13th day of October 2026.

Dr. Paula Seanez, Chair
Statewide Independent Living Council".

End of act-

Bernadine Chavez motioned to approve the Open Meetings Act Resolution and Joan Curtiss seconded the motion. Dr. Seanez called for the vote and all 5 voting members approved the motion.

9. Discussion of Statewide Independent Living Council Resource Plan

Dr. Seanez reported that the Executive Committee will be meeting with Dr. Scott to discuss a SILC Resource Plan. Ms. Chavez shared that the Resource Plan will need to be approved by the SILC and will include funds necessary for the SILC to perform its duties. Ms. Chavez said that final approval is expected by or at the next SILC meeting, which is set for November 18th, 2026. Voting will also take place at that meeting.

No further comments were made

10. Discussion of SILC Monitoring of the State plan for Independent Living

Dr. Seanez states that there are three main goals in the SPIL (State plan for Independent Living). She has sent out the material to SILC members and would like feedback. Paula states that the current SPIL ends in 2027 and explained that the SILC needs to review and document progress of the SPIL. Dr. Seanez paused so SILC members to discuss further what they want to do going forward.

Mariah Regan recommended that accomplishments of SILC should be included in the report. Mariah shared a document that reported "What Was Accomplished (October 1, 2022, thru September 30, 2023)." While the role of the SILC is to monitor the SPIL, these data are IL services provided by the CILs and are not necessarily SILC accomplishment. Dr. Seanez added that consumer satisfaction surveys are included in the SPIL and the CIL data should be shared with the SILC.

Mr. Grano commented that DVR collects data from the SPIL on an annual basis. It was recommended that since the CILs report to DVR then a report should be generated by DVR with the annual data. Mr. Trapp recommended adding a discussion about compliance.

11. Discussion of SILC Representatives to the State Rehabilitation Councils for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Commission for the Blind

    Dr. Seanez stated that currently Peggy Hayes is the SILC representative to New Mexico Commission for the Blind SRC. Ms. Hayes's term will expire in December 2026. Mr. Trapp summarized a few options for this appointment. Dr. Seanez will follow up on these options and report out at the next meeting.

    Dr. Seanez also stated that an email will be sent to the CIL directors to request them to recommend a CIL representative to the SRC. Once a CIL Director is identified the SILC will forward the recommendation to the Governor's office. The Governor will complete the appointment. Ms. Michaud stated that the CIL directors have discussed this and stated that no one wanted to serve in this capacity.

12. Review and discussion of the annual consumer satisfaction survey results

    Dr. Seanez reviewed the SPIL and the reference to the annual consumer satisfaction and the 3 survey questions for data to be gathered. These survey results are to be reported annually by December 31st. Mr. Grano stated that the CILs report data to DVR however he has not seen the consumer satisfaction survey data.

    Ms. Michaud could not remember the 3 questions and said one was their satisfaction of how they were treated (courtesy), access to IL resources and the third was services that helped me to be independent. She has not completed their response details. It was recommended by Mr. Trapp that the same procedure be used for the consumer satisfaction surveys so that there can be comparisons over time.

    Ms. Grano and Ms. Michaud stated that they will provide the data over to the SILC Chair in the coming month.

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

    Dr. Seanez states that the ad hoc committee consisting of her and Cody Unser created a plan of the steps that the SILC needs to take to complete the process of amending the current SPIL. Dr. Seanez will work with the Ad Hoc committee to move forward with scheduling public hearings to obtain input on the SPIL amendment. Dr. Seanez will have more information, and a discussion can take place soon.

    Mr. Trapp suggests that there should be at least two public forums for the SPIL Amendment. He further noted that it is critical to have zoom access during this discussion to ensure public participation and input.

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

The Executive committee met with DVR regarding the administrative support that is being provided to the SILC by the DSE. The tasks and assigned individuals were further delineated by Antoinette Holmes, RSU Director. She will be the lead in reviewing material relating to administration support.

Angelina Montoya and Delaine Trujillo from DVR and the SILC Vice-Chair, Bernadine Chavez, were also present at the meeting. Delaine Trujillo will be the primary contact for supporting SILC. Angelina Montoya will be the backup person of contact. It is critical that the SILC meet the OMA timelines for posting meetings, agendas and have access for the public to participate. The DSE and the SILC Executive Committee will continue to work on processes to get the work done.

Mr. Grano shared that a Memorandum of Understanding is already in place between DVR and the SILC to provide administrative support. The MOU was signed by the former DVR Director, Casey Stone-Romero. He will provide a copy of the MOU.

15. Update on Orientation for New SILC members

Dr. Seanez stated that all SILC members received an email for logging into the IL Training and Technical Assistance Training Center (IL T&TA Center) website for training. The IL T & TA Center is the national hub for training, technical assistance and peer support for the IL network, including the Centers for IL (CILs), SILC and the DSE. She recommended 3 of the trainings for all SILC members to complete. These sessions are self-pace and SILC members can carve out time to complete the modules.

The 3 recommended courses are 1) Foundations & History of the Independent Living Movement; 2) Becoming an effective SILC member and 3) SIL Fundamentals. Dr. Seanez indicated that these topics are important and informative for SILC members. There are other modules on Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act and Funding Explained and State Plan Fundamental that would be important to complete as well.

As part of SILC training, the Department of Justice will be providing training on the Open Meetings Act (OMA) at the November 18, 2026 SILC meeting from 10:15 AM to 11:15 PM.

16. Next meeting date November 18, 2026; location to be, determined

The next SILC meeting is scheduled for November 18, 2026; location will be determined. The legal notice will be posted in early November, and the agenda will be posted at least 3 days prior to the meeting.

17. Public comments

The meeting was open for public comments.

Jim Salas from the Commission for the Blind (CFB) provided the following information. The CFB has 8 independent living teachers in Farmington, Santa Fe, Roswell, 2 in Las Cruces and 3.5 positions in Albuquerque. We do have a couple of vacancies. CFB has a new independent living teacher in their Santa Fe office receiving staff training. CFB has a new employee in the Albuquerque office and a vacancy in the Albuquerque office. The job vacancy will be posted in another week or two.

30 Merlins which are a desktop video magnifier, were purchased by the CFB. They are easy to use and they provide great access for consumers with usable low vision. CFB has serves a lot of consumers who are not totally blind. The lead worker for low vision technology is Danielle Valdez within the independent living program. She's been with CFB for 11 years, in the VR/IL department for three years now, and she is a low vision user and very knowledgeable on the use of low vision devices. She is knowledgeable in the whole breadth of technology including low vision concepts, both desktop, portable handheld smartphones, optical magnifiers. The CFB operates Newsline, which is a newspaper reading service available for anyone with print impairment.

Individuals with dyslexia, paralysis or chemical sensitivity to print as well as different kinds of disabilities that keep them from reading regular print can qualify for Newsline service. Newsline provides access to over 600 local and national publications.

Dr. Seanez asked if there were other comments. There were no other public comments.

18. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:34 pm.

Approved and Electronically Signed this 18th day of November 2026.

Paula Seanez, Ph.D., Chairperson

Statewide Independent Living Council