

## About Us

### Our Mission

New Vistas partners with and supports people with disabilities and families of children with special needs to enrich their quality of life in New Mexico. A New Mexico Center for Independent Living

A Center for Independent Living is a consumer controlled, community based, cross disability, nonresidential private nonprofit agency that is designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities and provides an array of independent living services.

51% of staff are persons with disabilities; 51% of Board of Directors are persons with disabilities; and provides four core services:

- Information & referral
- Independent living skills training
- Individual and systems advocacy
- Peer counseling

See the Independent Living Research Utilization website for more information

### History

- December 6, 1971: New Vistas was incorporated as a non-profit organization to support children with disabilities in Santa Fe through the leadership of its founding Executive Director, Mary K. Russell.
- 1972 to 1975: New Vistas relied upon a staff of volunteers to provide education and therapeutic services for six preschool children with special needs in Santa Fe.
- 1975: New Vistas had received many requests to serve adults with disabilities. This resulted in an expansion of services in vocational training, employment programs, residential aid, independent living services and rural coverage in northeastern New Mexico.
- Late 70s: The Early Childhood Program expanded into rural communities of northeastern New Mexico.
- Today: Over the course of New Vistas 36 years of existence, we have been a leader in the development and implementation of innovative and "state of the art" programs. We are committed to hiring people with disabilities and having people with disabilities serve on the Board of Directors and in management positions. Public Recognition

Individuals and organizations at the national, state and local levels have recognized the accomplishments of New Vistas. Activities that were "firsts" for New Vistas include:

- 1975: One of the first agencies to place individuals into jobs in the community in fully integrated mainstream businesses.
- 1976: First home-based rural services program in New Mexico to support families with children at risk.
- 1980: Established the first Center for Independent Living in New Mexico and also founded satellite centers and programs in Albuquerque (1983), Las Cruces (1987) and Las Vegas (1994).
- 1986: Established a unique partnership with local hospitals to serve premature children at risk for delays.
- New Vistas became one of four non-profits to partner with the State of New Mexico to develop and implement "Supported Employment" programs and services for individuals with developmental disabilities.
- 1987: First community program to establish community living support services as an alternative to group home residential services.
- 1990, 1993, 1996, 1999 and 2002: Received accreditation by Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).
- Established the first regional TTY relay service program, which expanded to provide statewide services for the hearing impaired.
- 2000: New Vistas was awarded the New Mexico Division of Vocational Rehabilitation contract to provide liaison services to the nineteen Pueblos and the two Apache Nations. New Vistas continues to perform that contract.
- New Vistas became one of two Centers for Independent Living to provide Benefits Advisement to individuals with disabilities receiving SSI or SSDI benefits to reenter the world of work in nine northeastern counties.
- 2004: New Vistas formally established its Legislative Action Team as part of its strategic planning process to actively advocate for legislative and executive priorities for people with disabilities throughout the year. The Action Team is comprised of staff, board members, consumers, and families of children who have developmental delays.