

BUREAU OF BLINDNESS AND VISUAL SERVICES

Promoting Independence for
Pennsylvanians with Vision Loss



WHO WE ARE

The Bureau of Blindness and
Visual Services (BBVS) is a
Bureau under the Office of
Vocational Rehabilitation
(OVR), Department of Labor
and Industry, Commonwealth
of Pennsylvania



WHO WE ARE

BBVS Services are provided throughout
the Commonwealth by six district
offices. The BBVS Central Office for
administrative operations is located at:
1521 N. Sixth St.
Harrisburg, PA 17102
1-800-622-2842
1-866-830-7327 TTY



DISTRICT OFFICE LOCATIONS AND COUNTIES SERVED

Altoona BBVS
1130 12th Ave. Suite 300
Altoona, PA 16601
1-866-695-7673
1-866-320-7956 TTY
FAX 814-949-7995

Erie BBVS
4200 Lovell Place
Erie, PA 16503
1-866-521-5073
1-888-884-5513 TTY
FAX 814-871-4746

Bedford, Blair, Cambria,
Centre, Clinton, Columbia,
Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata,
Lycoming, Mifflin, Montour,
Northumberland, Snyder,
Somerset, Union

Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield,
Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest,
Jefferson, Lawrence,
McKean, Mercer, Potter,
Venango, Warren



DISTRICT OFFICE LOCATIONS AND COUNTIES SERVED

Harrisburg BBVS
Forum Place
555 Walnut St., 8th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101
1-866-375-8264
1-888-575-9420
FAX 717-772-0589

Philadelphia BBVS
444 North 3rd St., 5th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19123
1-866-631-3892
1-888-870-4473 TTY
FAX 215-965-4873

Adams, Cumberland,
Dauphin, Franklin,
Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry,
York

Bucks, Chester, Delaware,
Montgomery,
Philadelphia



DISTRICT OFFICE LOCATIONS AND COUNTIES SERVED

Pittsburgh BBVS
531 Penn Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
1-866-412-4072
1-877-255-5082 TTY
FAX 412 565-2296

Wilkes-Barre BBVS
300 G Laird St.
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702
1-866-227-4163
1-888-651-6117 TTY
FAX 570-826-2538

Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver,
Butler, Fayette, Greene,
Indiana, Washington,
Westmoreland

Berks, Bradford, Carbon,
Lackawanna, Lehigh,
Luzerne, Monroe,
Northampton, Pike,
Schuylkill, Sullivan, Tioga,
Wayne, Wyoming



Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services Mission

The mission of BBVS is to assist Pennsylvanians who are blind or visually impaired to work and maintain independent lives.

BBVS provides services to Pennsylvanians of all ages experiencing vision loss.



Eligibility for Services

There are four criteria used to establish eligibility for BBVS Services:

- Visual eligibility
- Assessment of need for services
- Financial
- Residency requirement



Visual Eligibility

E	1	20/200
F P	2	20/100
T O Z	3	20/70
L P E D	4	20/50
P E C F D	5	20/40
E D F C Z P	6	20/30
F E L O P Z D	7	20/25
D E F F O T E C	8	20/20
L E F O S P C T	9	
F F F T G O D	10	
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Visual Eligibility

Based on one or more of these four factors:

- ✓ A corrected visual acuity of 20/70 or greater loss in the better eye
- ✓ A visual field loss of 20 degrees or greater
- ✓ A diagnosis of a progressive sight threatening disease
- ✓ A significant functional limitation from vision loss



Visual Eligibility: Functional Limitations



Visual Eligibility (continued)

Must receive documentation of visual diagnosis. Can be obtained from customer's:

- Ophthalmologist, optometrist, or physician
- Social Security Disability Determination Unit
- From the Social Worker's observation of the bilateral enucleation of the customer's eyes



Eligibility: Assessment of Need

An assessment of need for service must be completed.

Assessment identifies significant functional limitations in completing daily living tasks that result from vision loss and determines what services the individual needs to maintain an independent life.



Financial Eligibility

Certain services require the completion of a Financial Needs Test (FNT)

The FNT is based on income guidelines established by the federal government.

Comparable benefits must be used when applicable



Residency Requirement

Applicant must be either a U.S. citizen or lawfully admitted alien and considered a Pennsylvania resident because they declare a place of permanent residence located within the Commonwealth, or

They are a migrant worker who is seasonally employed or seeking employment with the Commonwealth



Referral/Application Process

1. Referral received, case file created, case placed on a master list to await investigation.
2. Referral is assigned to appropriate program
3. Letter acknowledging referral sent to the individual with a release of information form to obtain an eye report to establish visual eligibility.
4. The Social Worker or Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor assigned to the case then contacts the individual to set up an appointment for an initial interview
5. Initial interview-SW completes assessment including impact of vision loss on functional capabilities; eligibility criteria discussed; available services discussed and community resources; application completed



PLAN FOR SERVICES

- Development of plan can only occur after eligibility is established, and the assessment of needs and application are completed.
- Social worker and customer work together to develop plan
- Plan contains description of customer's goals, description of services to be provided by BBVS and other agencies
- Plan is a blueprint of those rehabilitative services to be provided with the end goal of promoting the individual's independence.



Overview of BBVS Programs

To accomplish our mission statement, BBVS provides rehabilitation services through the following programs:

- Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR)
- Randolph-Sheppard Business Enterprise Program (BEP)
- Independent Living Older Blind Program
- Special Services for Children Program
- Specialized Services for Adults Program
- Instructional Services: Rehabilitation Teaching & Orientation and Mobility Training
- Contract Services



Vocational Rehabilitation Program



Vocational Rehabilitation Program

Helps individuals prepare, enter into or retain employment

Services offered under this program can include but are not limited to:

- Counseling and guidance
- Adjustment to blindness
- Vocational Evaluation
- Vocational and college training
- Assistive technology
- Rehabilitation Teaching
- Orientation and Mobility Instruction
- Occupational tools and equipment
- Job placement services



Vocational Rehabilitation Program (continued)

Services are based on individual's needs and choices, and some or all of these services may be needed for the person to prepare for, enter into or retain employment

VRCs work directly with an individual to determine an appropriate employment goal and what services are needed to reach that goal.

An Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) is developed jointly by the counselor and customer



Randolph Sheppard-Business Enterprise Program (BEP)

The Randolph-Sheppard BEP assists persons in the operation of food service business in commercial, industrial or government locations.

Food Service businesses can range from a vending machine route to the management of a large cafeteria.

Specialized training is provided at the Hiram G. Andrews Center (HGAC)

Eligible persons enter this program through the BBVS VR Program.

BBVS BEP Agents are available and provide ongoing technical support.



Specialized Services Program (SS)

SS Program assists individuals to become more self-sufficient and independent in their homes and communities.

Two components to this program:

- SS Adult: serves adults up to 54 years of age who are not candidates for VR Program. Services provided are similar to those under the ILOB program; will be described in detail in successive slides.
- SS-Children: serves children from birth to age 21 and their families.



Specialized Services for Children Program (Birth to 18 years of age)

A BBVS Social Worker works with the child and their family to provide the following services as needed:

- Adaptive equipment
- Advocacy for educational services
- Low vision services
- Rehabilitation Teaching
- Counseling and guidance
- Community Orientation and Mobility instruction
- Children's summer programs
- Transition services (assisting the student with transition from school to post-secondary education or employment by coordinating with BBVS VRC)



Independent Living Older Blind Program



Independent Living Older Blind Program (ILOB) Age 55+

Purpose of program: to provide rehabilitation services to enable individuals to regain or maintain maximum independence in their homes and communities.

A BBVS Social Worker after receiving a referral contacts the customer, establishes eligibility, assesses their needs and develops a Service Plan with them which identifies the services to be provided.



ILOB Program (continued)

Services can include:

- Information and referral service- the direct provision of information about services including appropriate community resources.
- Counseling and guidance-BBVS Social Worker helps customer and their families adjust to blindness by listening, educating them about vision impairment and other independence issues, explores resources, discusses options and provides information about support groups.



Sight Loss Support Groups



ILOB Services (continued)

- Advocacy Services-Social Worker may be involved in teaching self-advocacy skills to empower customers to advocate for themselves
- Diagnostic Services-Can be provided to determine visual eligibility; can include eye exams



ILOB Services (continued)

- Low vision Services
BBVS Social Worker purchases low vision services from an Optometrist trained in the specialty of low vision.
BBVS can pay for up to \$175.00 for exam. Must use comparable benefits.



Low Vision Evaluation



ILOB Services (continued)

Purpose of LVE is to prescribe optical and non-optical aids that assist the customer in maximizing the use of their residual vision.

Low vision aids include high powered glasses, magnifiers, telescopic devices, electronic devices, special lighting or glare filters.

BBVS can authorize a maximum of \$2000 to purchase low vision aids. FNT must be completed.



Low Vision Aids



ILOB Services (continued)

•Hearing Aids

Goal of providing a hearing aid is to reduce isolation by enabling verbal communication or to enable the customer to remain independent.

Particularly when a documented hearing loss poses a threat to safety such as the recognition of environmental sounds and speech discrimination necessary for safe travel

Hearing aid may be purchased as part of customer's plan.



ILOB Services (continued)

•Access Technology

Different types of speech or large print software are available to allow the customer with vision loss to access their computer.

BBVS can pay for up to \$2000 for this software

Cannot purchase personal computers, upgrades or hardware

Access technology assessment must be completed

Maximum of 10 hours training may be provided



ILOB Services (continued)

•Instructional Services-

Rehabilitation Teaching (RT)

Orientation and Mobility Instruction (O&M):

Provided by teachers on staff with BBVS

No fee for training or recommended adaptive equipment



Rehabilitation Teaching Program

Instruction in adaptive equipment and techniques is provided to help individuals safely and efficiently perform their daily living activities at home, on the job and in the community.

A comprehensive evaluation is completed by a trained teacher and a plan is developed with the customer



Rehabilitation Teaching



Rehabilitation Teaching (continued)

Training may include instruction in adaptive techniques for:

- Personal management skills such as grooming and hygiene, clothing care, medication management, time and money management
- Home management skills such as using appliances, food preparation and cooking, eating and dining skills, laundry, cleaning, sewing, home maintenance and repair



Rehabilitation Teaching (continued)

- Communication Skills such as using the telephone, writing, recording and listening devices, and Braille
- Access Technology such as keyboarding and adaptive software
- Orientation to immediate home environment



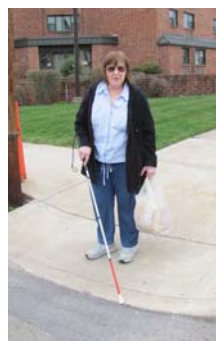
Orientation and Mobility Instruction (O&M)

O&M training teaches individuals how to travel independently and safely within their homes, workplaces and the community

A BBVS professional instructor provides individualized training. After evaluation is completed by the instructor, an instructional services plan is developed with customer to meet their specific needs



Orientation and Mobility Instruction



O&M Instruction

Individual instruction with customer is initiated and may included:

- Provision of an adaptive mobility tool such as the red/white cane and instruction in techniques for use
- Preparation for, referral and follow-up training for a guide dog
- Instruction in the development and use of all senses for orientation



O&M Instruction

Incorporation of low vision aids in instruction

Provide information and assist in making application to alternate transportation resources and provide one on one instruction in their use

Instruction in techniques for independent travel in a variety of environments

Instruction in techniques for intersection analysis and negotiation



O&M Instruction



Services to Residents of Nursing Homes



- BBVS can provide outreach and education services to facilities.
- Minimum training is provided to familiarize nursing home staff on how to refer residents for a low vision evaluation and/or other services such as talking books from the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

Services to Residents of Assisted Living, Personal Care Homes and Group Homes



- Comprehensive BBVS services can be provided to those residents who are blind or experiencing vision loss to maximize their independence.
- It should be noted that comprehensive services can be provided to a resident of a nursing home if the facility is providing temporary rehabilitative services prior to the resident being discharged into a community setting.

Case Closure

After all services as outlined in the Independent Living/Specialized Services Plan have been provided and all goals have been met to the mutual satisfaction of the customer and Social Worker the case is then closed.

Before the case is closed the customer is contacted to discuss closure of the case and if all objectives have been satisfied and how the customer has benefited from services.

In addition a letter informing the customer of the case closure is sent along with information on their right to appeal and this process.



Referral to BBVS for Services

A BBVS Referral Form has been provided for your convenience

Feel free to make duplicates

Please take this back with you to your agency and share with your staff

If you or anyone on your staff feels that a customer can benefit from BBVS Services please complete this form and fax or mail it to one of the BBVS District offices listed at the beginning of this presentation

