

# 2014-16 Executive Progress Report

Commonwealth of Virginia  
Secretary of Health and Human Resources

## Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired

### At A Glance

The mission of the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired ("VRCBVI") is to empower blind, vision impaired, and deafblind citizens of Virginia to achieve optimum vocational, educational, and social independence.

Staffing 26 Salaried Employees, 0 Contracted Employees, 0 Authorized, and 24 Wage Employees.

Financials Budget FY 2015, \$2.60 million, 6.46% from the General Fund.

Trends	➔ Job readiness of graduates	Key Perf Areas	⬆ increasing skills percentage
	⬆ Training needs of clients	Productivity	⬆ customers receiving skills
	⬆ Multi-disabled clients	Legend	⬆ Improving, ⬇ Worsening, ➔ Maintaining
Legend	⬆ Increase, ⬇ Decrease, ➔ Steady		

For more information on administrative key, and productivity measures, go to [www.vaperforms.virginia.gov](http://www.vaperforms.virginia.gov)

### Background and History

#### Agency Background Statement

Section 51.5-73 of the Virginia Code authorizes the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired to operate and maintain a Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired. VRCBVI provides residential evaluation and adjustment training to blind and vision impaired adults. We also offer services to commuter students. Students generally remain in training from six to nine months depending upon individual needs and employment goals; however, this can be modified according to individual student goals and needs. On average, the Center services approximately 25-35 students in the general program. We also offer specialized training for blind and vision impaired adolescents. Administrative and Support Services are essential to the provision of these services. General administration and management, as well as the management and operation of the training center, housing, and dining facilities, make training possible. General administrative direction and management control are provided in the areas of planning, budgeting, financing, instructional planning, staffing, accounting, and record keeping. Liaison with other agencies and the public is also provided. Support services provided include clerical services, office management, and coordination of operation of the physical facilities required for instruction, recreation, housing, feeding, and health of the students.

#### Major Products and Services

VRCBVI's full personal adjustment to blindness training curriculum includes orientation and mobility (cane travel), personal and home management (cooking, cleaning, and maintaining the home), braille, keyboarding, computers and access technology, academic instruction (GED) (if needed), conversations about blindness, vocational services, health education, physical conditioning and recreation, case management services, low vision services, and dormitory services. All classes emphasize the development of self-confidence and a positive attitude about blindness. Additionally, we offer a summer program for blind and vision impaired adolescents ("LIFE" - Learning Independence, Feeling Empowered). LIFE is a five week residential transition program for blind and vision impaired high school students who want to have fun and make new friends while gaining nonvisual skills and work experience to assist in the transition from high school to the rest of their lives. Another specialized program we offer is Learning Excellence in Academics ("LEAP"). This is a five week collaborative program with Virginia Commonwealth University ("VCU") which gives rising high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to assess their college-readiness skills. Participants reside on VRCBVI's campus and attend classes at VCU. Classes will be taught by college professors and/or graduate students, and graded according to collegiate standards (not reflected on transcript). This program will enhance awareness of the academic and blindness-related demands of college, and evaluate ability to manage time and priorities. Several times a year we offer Saturday Seminars on various skills of blindness topics. Appropriate participants are students who are blind or have vision impairments and their families, teachers, technology service providers, and other professionals.

#### Customers

## Customer Summary

Customers of the Rehabilitation Center include youth, adults, and seniors who are: blind and vision impaired, deaf-blind, blind/vision impaired with secondary disabilities, and blind/vision impaired who speak English as a second language. Included in our customer base are our stakeholders: state employees, employers, family members, and private sector contractors/vendors.

### Customer Table

Predefined Group	User Defined Group	Number Served Annually	Potential Number of Annual Customers	Projected Customer Trend
State Government Employee	Workforce/Employees of the Agency	50	50	Stable
Blind or Vision-Impaired	Blind vision impaired or deafblind people who want to work and live independently	180	1,000	Increase

## Finance and Performance Management

### Finance

#### Financial Summary

The agency's funding comes from federal funds (89%), general funds (10%) and miscellaneous sources such as sale of meals and sales from vending (1%).

#### Fund Sources

Fund Code	Fund Name	FY 2015	FY 2016
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#### Revenue Summary

The agency receives funding from the U.S. Department of Education federal formula grants to states to support a wide range of services designed to help individuals with disabilities. These funds are awarded to the agency to provide services to those citizens who are blind and vision impaired.

### Performance

#### Performance Highlights

VRCBVI measures its service performance through performance measures tied to the goals and objectives developed to help the agency accomplish its mission. The agency's mission is to empower eligible individuals who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind to achieve maximum levels of employment, education, and personal independence.

Services to facilitate achievement of these goals are provided through evaluation and assessment and comprehensive adjustment to blindness training in:

1. Assessment of Independent Living Skills
2. Adjustment to blindness training, including Orientation and Mobility, Braille, Keyboarding/Computer, Access Technology, Physical Conditioning and Recreation, Personal Home Management (cooking, cleaning, maintaining home)
3. Vocational Evaluation
4. Job Readiness Training
5. Adult Basic Education
6. Health Education
7. Transition programs for high school age students
8. Low Vision Evaluation
9. College Assessment for students planning for post-secondary education
10. Weekend seminars for consumers and teachers of the blind and vision impaired
11. Parent and teacher outreach

VRCBVI served 106 blind and vision impaired adolescents and adults in the comprehensive adjustment to blindness training program (92) and mobile assessments (14).

## Selected Measures

Measure ID	Measure	Alternative Name	Estimated Trend
26345408.001.001	Percentage of students increasing their level of independent functioning in the core skills areas of blindness	Percentage of students increasing their level of independent functioning in the core skills areas of blindness	
M263AG12004	Percentage of students increasing their level of independent functioning in the core skills area of blindness	increasing skills percentage	Improving
M263AG12006	Numbers of customers receiving skills of blindness training	customers receiving skills	Improving

## Key Risk Factors

**Societal low expectation:** There are an increasing number of transition-aged blind and vision impaired consumers who lack age-appropriate social experiences and skills, self-advocacy skills, and the overall desire to be independent which is found in the general population for young people in this age range. As a result, these blind and vision impaired young people, who should be dreaming about their future as related to achieving social and economic freedom, are content, due to low expectations, to remain in custodial relationships that more than likely will not lead to their becoming active, taxpaying citizens. VRCBVI staff will continue to reach out to schools, educators, service providers, families, consumer organizations, and others to identify and provide services for this age group of consumers.

**Ageing population:** The general population of seniors (individuals age 55 and above) is increasing, and seniors experience a higher rate of visual impairment than the general population due to vision loss from a variety of causes, including cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and age-related macular degeneration. Accordingly the population of visually impaired seniors needing training in independent living skills is increasing significantly. Marketing to this population through the local Area Agencies on Aging and the Department for the Aging will be a priority in coming years.

**Qualified staff Funding** In the future, the need to provide core adjustment to blindness skills training and vocational readiness training to a broad spectrum of Virginians with visual impairments will continue, particularly as the population of the Commonwealth ages. Since resources are limited and the population to be served is becoming increasingly diverse and complex, it is expected that resource allocation, staff training, and programmatic changes will need to be made. We will continue to focus on those blindness skills that have been demonstrated to increase our customers' chances to maximize their level of employment, education, and personal independence.

## Agency Statistics

### Statistics Summary

The statistics cited in this summary provide a comprehensive snapshot of the breadth of the Rehabilitation Center consumers served. Secondary disabilities, which include physical, cognitive and psychiatric disabilities, as well as diabetes, play a major role in serving customers who are blind and vision impaired, and represents a challenge for the agency.

## Statistics Table

Description	Value
Number of customers referred	108
Number of blind and vision impaired customers served	92
Number of blind/vision impaired with secondary disability	59
Number of blind/vision impaired with secondary disability -Psychiatric	5
Number of blind/vision impaired with secondary disability- Cognitive	7
Number of blind/vision impaired with secondary disability -Physical, other	15
Number of blind/vision impaired with secondary disability- Head/Brain Injury	7
Number of blind/vision impaired with secondary disability- Diabetic	15
Number of blind/vision impaired with secondary disability- Deaf/Hard of Hearing	6
Number of blind/vision impaired with secondary disability- Stroke	4
Number of commuter students	10
Number of residential students	82
Number of transition aged students	22
Number of blind and vision impaired seniors	9
Number of attendees to Family Day celebration	69
Number of mobile vocational evaluations	14

## Management Discussion

### General Information About Ongoing Status of Agency

In the future, the need to provide core adjustment to blindness skills training and vocational preparation to a broad spectrum of Virginians with visual impairments will continue. Since resources are limited and the population to be served is becoming increasingly diverse and complex, it is expected that resource allocation, staff training, and programmatic changes will need to be made. We will continue to focus on those blindness skills that have been demonstrated to increase our customers' chances to maximize levels of employment, education, and personal independence.

### Information Technology

#### Anticipated IT Needs and Projects

We continue to explore ways to maximize the use of our existing resources, while updating available services to provide current, relevant training for our customers.

1. Maintenance of software licenses is ongoing. We continue to work with vendors to identify the most cost effective solutions. Keeping our software licenses current, especially with regard to adaptive technology, is a significant yearly expense.
2. In order to ensure student access to network resources, adding two wireless (Wi-Fi) access points, one to the cafeteria and the other to the recreation building, are being considered. By adding these two access points and applying careful adjustment to existing access points, we can deliver student Internet access and, therefore, access to training and communication resources, throughout the entire training facility. This would include the courtyard between the dorm, Administration and Activities (AA) building and recreation building.
3. Focus is being directed at the infrastructure of the dorm with regards the telephone system. While the AA building was being renovated, the dorm was used to house a few of the classrooms and offices, requiring some changes to telephone and network service in the building. We are in the process of organizing and restoring telephone services to each of the dorm rooms.

### Workforce Development

There are a limited number of applicants who have the appropriate qualifications to fill our instructor positions. This is a nationwide situation resulting from university training programs turning out few graduates in the area of blind rehabilitation. We have experienced a lack of qualified applicants from racial and ethnic minority groups who have the specialized training that we require. This results in a workforce that is not reflective of the diversity of the general population. We believe that it is important to hire qualified blind and vision impaired staff who can serve as positive role models for our customers. Blind and vision impaired customers benefit from training, counseling, support, and regular interactions with successful blind and vision impaired professionals.

### Physical Plant

The Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired Administrative and Activities Building (401 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA), Dormitory (393 Azalea Avenue), Cafeteria (391 Azalea Avenue), and Recreation Building (389 Azalea Avenue) have all experienced some level of facilities renovation, some of which are presently ongoing. The renovations have addressed and will continue to address ADAAG noncompliance, updating fire and sprinkler systems, redesign of space to facilitate the agency's ability to carry out its mission, and implementation of energy efficient HVAC systems within the facilities.

With regard to the renovations to the Cafeteria (391 Azalea Avenue), the current work plan includes replacing the roof, ceiling, windows, exterior doors, and HVAC system. The bathrooms will also be renovated to make them ADAAG compliant. However, the appliances and serving facilities, as well as the walk in cooler, all are in critical need of update/ replacement. These items date back at least 20 years and are well beyond their life expectancies.

Additionally, the Recreation Building (389 Azalea Avenue) is presently being renovated, to include exterior doors, windows, ADAAG compliant bathrooms and shower rooms, and new finishes and ceilings. The pool will be retrenched to replace an outdated skimming system. A critical need remains in this area to update the pool equipment (i.e., pumps, filtration systems, chemical feed system, etc.), to maintain safe water chemistry.

An area of need is an industrial arts/ woodworking and home repair shop. Construction of same would allow VRCBVI to expand our skills of blindness training in an area that provides a skill set which would directly enhance employability of our customers.

Another area of need is for new equipment for the existing bowling alley.

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