

2014-16 Strategic Plan

Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired [263]

Mission

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.

Vision

VRCBVI envisions a world in which blind, vision impaired, and deafblind people can access all that society has to offer. We believe this is achievable.

Values

Equal Access: We value equal access to all life activities, including information, education, training, and employment.

Diversity: We value diversity, respect for the individual and personal choice.

Finance

Financial Overview

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

Biennial Budget

	2015 General Fund	2015 Nongeneral Fund	2016 General Fund	2016 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	167,883	2,429,623	167,925	2,429,623
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	0

(Changes to Initial Appropriation will be 0 when the plan is created. They will change when the plan is updated mid-biennium.)

Customers

Anticipated Changes to Customer Base

Increase, particularly in the areas of older blind consumers and in the number of consumers with multiple/secondary disabilities.

Current Customer List

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

Partners

Name	Description
Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) Regional Offices	DBVI's six regional offices that refer customers for comprehensive training.
Department of Rehabilitative Services	The Center, through the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI), utilizes a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services ("DARS") to provide accounting, budgeting, payroll, information services, purchasing, internal auditing, and human resources services.

Agency Goals

- **To enhance the independence, wellbeing, and personal responsibility of blind and vision impaired citizens through comprehensive adjustment to blindness training.**

Summary and Alignment

Empowering blind and vision impaired individuals to gain the skills necessary to be independent promotes personal responsibility and gives them control over their life decisions. This decreases the need for public assistance and dependence on family members and others, and improves their quality of life. This aligns with the long-term objective of supporting Virginians toward healthy lives and strong and resilient families.

Associated State Goal

Education: Elevate the levels of educational preparedness and attainment of our citizens.

Objectives

» **Increase independent living skills of blind and visually impaired individuals.**

Description

To increase the level of independent functioning of individuals in the core areas of blindness skills (orientation and mobility, personal and home management, braille, computers and access technology, issues of blindness, and physical conditioning) as a direct result of training received.

Objective Strategies

- Develop an individualized plan of instruction according to assessed needs.
- Encourage student empowerment through the establishment of challenging expectations.
- Perform functional assessments in core skill areas.
- Provide quality case management services.
- Reassess needs through regular progress evaluations.
- Respond to student feedback.

Measures

- ◆ Numbers of customers receiving skills of blindness training
- ◆ Percentage of students increasing their level of independent functioning in the core skills areas of blindness

» **Promote and support efficient and effective Center operations and customer service delivery**

Description

This service area provides support to the Center's Social and Personal Adjustment to Blindness Training services area. Support services include administration and management, including direction and supervision of direct customer services. The Center, through the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired ("DBVI"), has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services ("DARS") to utilize their administrative services such as program compliance audits and analyses, accounting, budgeting, information services, purchasing, and human resources services. Physical plant services are provided by DBVI's maintenance department, and capital outlay and maintenance reserve activities are also handled by DBVI.

Objective Strategies

- Promptly address customer questions and concerns.
- Provide staff with the latest computer information technology.
- Compliance with policies, procedures, and regulations of Central State Agencies, i.e., Department of Accounts, Treasury, Virginia Information Technology Agencies, Department of General Services, etc.
- Compliance with policies, procedures, and regulations of federal grantor agencies.
- Obtain input from blind consumer groups on Center services.

Measures

- ◆ Percentage of students increasing their level of independent functioning in the core skills areas of blindness

- **To provide for effective performance of VRCBVI personnel to ensure sound business practices and center operations.**

Summary and Alignment

Providing consistent administrative support to our staff to ensure their success directly contributes to the agency's success in meeting its mission. Implementation of sound business practices and efficient agency operations ensures effective administration of agency programs. This aligns with the long term objective of Virginia being recognized as the best-managed state in the nation.

Associated State Goal

Government and Citizens: Be recognized as the best-managed state in the nation.

Associated Societal Indicator

Civic Engagement

Objectives

» Increase independent living skills of blind and visually impaired individuals.

Description

To increase the level of independent functioning of individuals in the core areas of blindness skills (orientation and mobility, personal and home management, braille, computers and access technology, issues of blindness, and physical conditioning) as a direct result of training received.

Objective Strategies

- Develop an individualized plan of instruction according to assessed needs.
- Encourage student empowerment through the establishment of challenging expectations.
- Perform functional assessments in core skill areas.
- Provide quality case management services.
- Reassess needs through regular progress evaluations.
- Respond to student feedback.

Measures

- ◆ Numbers of customers receiving skills of blindness training
- ◆ Percentage of students increasing their level of independent functioning in the core skills areas of blindness

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.

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).

Staffing

Authorized Maximum Employment Level (MEL)	0
Salaried Employees	26
Wage Employees	24
Contracted Employees	0

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.

Aging 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.

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.

Estimate of Technology Funding Needs

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.

Supporting Documents

Title	File Type
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Social and Personal Adjustment to Blindness Training [45408]

Description of this Program / Service Area

The Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired ("VRCBV") provides evaluation and training services to adolescents and adults with vision impairments to enhance their personal, educational, and vocational independence.

Mission Alignment

VRCBVI Rehabilitation Assistance Services directly reflect the Agency's mission to empower individuals who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind to develop or regain the ability to participate fully in their communities through enhancing personal, educational, and vocational opportunities.

Products and Services

Description of Major Products and Services

- Assessment of Independent Living Skills
- Adjustment Counseling
- Assistive Technology Utilization
- Training in Communication (Braille, adult basic education)
- Personal and Home Management (cooking, cleaning, personal financial management, shopping, and laundry)
- Independent management of personal health
- Orientation and Mobility (independent traveling skills)
- Recreational Skills (physical conditioning, leisure activities)
- Vocational Evaluation and Job Readiness training
- Transition programs for high school age students
- College Assessment program for students planning post-secondary education

Anticipated Changes

As the use of assistive communication technology becomes more essential to independent functioning in personal, educational, and vocational areas, the need to expand computer, iOS products, note taker, and scanner instruction is becoming increasingly important.

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) instruction, which teaches the skills to travel independently in a variety of environments, has been shown to be a critical component in the overall success of customers in their educational and vocational endeavors as well as their overall independence and feeling of self worth. We added an additional O&M position in fiscal year 2011. However, we hope to have all vacant positions filled in fiscal year 2015.

Factors Impacting

Staffing level: The current number of staff limits the number of individuals that can participate in the center's programs.

Financial Overview

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

Biennial Budget

	2015 General Fund	2015 Nongeneral Fund	2016 General Fund	2016 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	0	1,356,830	0	1,356,830
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	0

Supporting Documents

Title File Type

Program Plan

Administrative and Support Services [499]

Description of this Program / Service Area

The Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired ("VRCBVI") provides evaluation and training services to blind, vision impaired, and deafblind adolescents and adults to enhance their personal, educational, and vocational independence. 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, 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 and office management, coordination of operation of the physical facilities required for instruction, recreation, housing, feeding, and health of the students.

Mission Alignment

VRCBVI's General Management and Direction supports the Center's mission to empower individuals who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind to develop or regain the ability to participate fully in their communities through training that enhances personal, educational, and vocational opportunities.

Products and Services

Description of Major Products and Services

General Management - General administration and management, as well as the management and operation of the training, 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, as well as coordination of operation of the physical facilities required for instruction, recreation, housing, feeding, and health of the students with other programs of the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, as well as other state, local, and federal agencies.

The department obtains the following administrative support services from the Department of Aging and Rehabilitation Services via a cooperative agreement: information systems support ("VITA"), human resources management, fiscal management, comprehensive purchasing and procurement services, interagency mail pick-up and delivery, transportation management of state pool cars, and internal audit services by request.

Anticipated Changes

We have several staff vacancies that we will aggressively work on filling in state fiscal year 2015. We also expect some retirements of some senior staff members in state fiscal years 2015 and 2016.

Factors Impacting

We expect completion of the renovation of our recreation building and dining facility in state fiscal year 2015.

Financial Overview

Biennial Budget

	2015 General Fund	2015 Nongeneral Fund	2016 General Fund	2016 Nongeneral Fund
Initial Appropriation for the Biennium	167,883	1,072,793	167,925	1,072,793
Changes to Initial Appropriation	0	0	0	0

Supporting Documents

Title File Type