

2018-20 Executive Progress Report

Commonwealth of Virginia
Secretary of Health and Human Resources
Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired

At A Glance

The mission of the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) is to provide services and resources which empower individuals who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind to achieve their desired levels of employment, education, and personal independence.

Staffing 134 Salaried Employees, 0 Contracted Employees, 147 Authorized, and 60 Wage Employees.

Financials Budget FY 2019, \$74.87 million, 8.46% from the General Fund.

Trends Legend ↑ Increase, ↓ Decrease, → Steady

Key Perf Areas

- ↑ Infants and Toddlers receiving Education Services
- ➔ RT/IL Successful Independent Living Outcomes
- ➔ VR Successful Employment Outcomes

Productivity Legend ↑ Improving, ↓ Worsening, → Maintaining

For more information on administrative key, and productivity measures, go to www.vaperforms.virginia.gov

Background and History

Agency Background Statement

The Agency's Headquarters building, Library and Resource Center, and Rehabilitation Center are located on thirty two acres of donated property at 397 Azalea Avenue in Henrico County. The complex consists of eight buildings and an abundance of wooded areas. Title 51.5, Chapter 12, of the Code of Virginia provides statutory authority for the agency. The provision to provide Vocational Rehabilitation Services to eligible individuals for services is authorized through Federal law, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. The Rehabilitation Act was incorporated into the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 thus making the agency's vocational rehabilitation a core partner in the Commonwealth's workforce development system. Our services assist citizens who are blind, deafblind and vision impaired to acquire the skills which lead to confidence and positive attitudes, which are essential components in becoming independent contributing members of our communities. The skills training provided to Virginians with significant vision impairments allow them to acquire work related skills, attain industry recognized credentials, and achieve quality employment outcomes. These are in direct alignment with the objectives and priorities of Virginia's Career Works system. This alignment includes ensuring that Virginia's workforce, including individuals served by DBVI, meet current and anticipated economic development needs by making sure that these individuals have the requisite skills and credentials to become members of a highly qualified and relevant workforce. Priority alignment also includes addressing in-demand skill sets associated with economic growth and prosperity of workers and employers to support growth in the public and private sectors. Towards this end, vocational rehabilitation services are offered to include counseling, vocational evaluation, career training, paid and unpaid work experiences, job development, placement, post-employment and other services to assist consumers in obtaining jobs in the public and private sectors. Training and licensure is provided for qualified individuals who are blind to manage food service operations on public and private property as part of the Randolph-Sheppard vending facility program which is also known as the Virginia Enterprises for the Blind (VEB).

The Virginia Industries for the Blind (VIB) provides employment opportunities through operations at twenty four locations across the Commonwealth including its Charlottesville and Richmond plants, its several supply store operations on Virginia military installations, and contract support services provided to various governmental entities. VIB directly employs persons who are blind and deaf blind. Assessments and training to assist our customers in achieving their independent living goals are available through residential and community based services offered by our six regional offices (Richmond, Fairfax, Bristol, Staunton, Norfolk and Roanoke) and the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI). VRCBVI provides pre-vocational training in the areas of activities of daily living, personal and home management, mobility, and

communications including use of Braille, and assistive technologies. Through the DBVI regional offices, specialized programming is available to seniors with vision loss for the purpose of maintaining or increasing their independence. Low Vision services are offered to individuals of all ages with limited vision to assist them in utilizing their remaining vision more effectively and to greater benefit by providing training, optical aids and devices. Most customers of the Department have some residual vision and find low vision services to be highly beneficial. We contract with a network of eye care professionals throughout the Commonwealth to assist in providing low vision services to residents of the Commonwealth.

Specialized assessments and technical assistance is available to assist consumers and service providers to meet the needs of individuals who are deafblind or who experience significant losses of both vision and hearing.

To increase consumer access to materials in alternate media for educational and leisure reading, the Library and Resource Center provides Braille, large print and recorded materials. This program produces and procures all Braille textbooks used in school divisions. The agency is the Virginia sponsor of Newline for the Blind which allows eligible individuals to access newspapers, periodicals and job information via the telephone and computer. The Education Services program collaborates with parents, schools and early childhood specialists to assist in the education and development of blind, deafblind and vision impaired students. Technological solutions for accessing information are provided for our clientele and businesses employing persons with disabilities through our Rehabilitation Technology services.

Major Products and Services

The agency provides Vocational Rehabilitation services to include evaluation and assessment, pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities, vocational training, rehabilitation engineering services, orientation and mobility services, and transition services to blind, vision impaired, and deafblind consumers. The Randolph-Sheppard Vending Program (also known as the Virginia Enterprises for the Blind or VEB) provides for the training and licensure of persons who are blind as qualified managers of businesses located on federal, state, and other properties under permits and contracts held by the department. Virginia Industries for the Blind (VIB) creates employment opportunities for individuals who are blind through the manufacture and sell of various products and services to federal and state agencies as well as private entities. VIB also operates office supply centers on federal properties and provides contracted support services to federal and state agencies.

Through the Department's independent living services, Virginians who experience significant vision loss are able to receive assessment and direct instruction in skills for home management, activities of daily living, orientation and mobility, communication, Braille reading and writing, use of assistive technology, and application of aids and techniques to maximize use of remaining vision. Counseling and support is offered to assist consumers with the adjustment to vision loss. Low Vision Services maintains a central inventory of special optical devices and items such as magnifiers, lighting appliances, reading systems, telescopes, bioptic systems, and microscopic glasses. Training, technical assistance and consultation to agency staff, teachers of the visually impaired and other professionals are offered through this program. The agency contracts with and provides training to a network of sixty-five Low Vision examiners throughout the state.

The Library and Resource Center is a regional library affiliated with the National Library Service of the Library of Congress. General Library Services include the loan of library books, magazines, and playback equipment for recorded materials and provides access to over 400 newspapers and several popular magazines through the NFB- NEWSLINE. It also produces and/ or purchases Braille textbooks for loan to Virginia schools for use by blind and vision impaired students. The Education Services program provides consultation, technical assistance, and training to support blind and vision impaired infants, children and youth and their families.

Customers

Customer Summary

The Agency has the privilege of serving residents of the Commonwealth who are blind, vision impaired, and deafblind. Our customers range in age from infants to centenarians. In collaboration with school systems and families, we provide Education services to blind, vision impaired, and deafblind infants, children and youth. We serve an increasing number of adults who desire vocational skills and assistance in obtaining employment. Other adult customers include our blind business managers licensed through the Randolph Sheppard vending facility Program, adults seeking independent living skills, citizens with low vision needs, and deafblind individuals. We have experienced some success in our retail services to consumers through our Virginia Industries for the Blind by identifying and seeking new ventures to replace our declining Federal sales. This expansion of services should expand our customer base over time. Advances in computerized technology available to individuals who are blind, vision impaired and deafblind provide the opportunity for these individuals to access more information through independent operation of technological devices and have resulted in an increase in those customers seeking assistive technology equipment and training. All of the various programs offered by the Department to its various consumers of services generally lead to Virginians with significant vision disabilities having opportunities to lead happy and successful lives.

Customer Table

Predefined Group	User Defined Group	Number Served Annually	Potential Number of Annual Customers	Projected Customer Trend
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Finance and Performance Management

Finance

Financial Summary

The agency funding sources consist of general, enterprise, special revenue, agency trust and federal grant funds. General fund allotments

represent a portion of the funds received for the Library and Resource Center programs and operations, the Braille text books program, the Education Services programs, the Rehabilitation Teaching/Independent Living program, the Vocational Rehabilitation program, Regional Office administration and the Agency Administrative Services divisions. Special fund revenue, derived mainly from indirect cost recoveries and Low Vision Services revenue, is used to fund and support the Agency Administrative Services division, the Randolph Shepard Vending program administrative cost, the Rehabilitation Teaching program, the Vocational Rehabilitation program, Low Vision Services, the Braille textbook program and Library Services. Federal funds for the agency consist of the Rehabilitation Services Agency Vocational Rehabilitation Grant, the Older Blind/ Independent Living Grant, and Program Income received from the Social Security Administration. These federal funds support the agency's Low Vision Program, Rehabilitation Teaching and Independent Living Services as well as the Vocational Rehabilitation Services program. We are mandated to provide a state match to the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Federal Grant. Agency Trust Funds are allotted to the agency and other entities through the approval of the Virginia Board for the Blind and Vision Impaired to support various activities to benefit persons who are blind within the Commonwealth. These funds support programs such as the annual Super Summer Camp for blind and vision impaired children, the salaries of the drivers who provide reasonable accommodations for Rehabilitation professionals who are blind and work in Regional Offices, and services offered by community organizations that serve Virginians who are vision impaired. The Virginia Industries for the Blind is an Enterprise fund program which operates using the revenues it generates and does not receive any additional funding from the Commonwealth.

Fund Sources

Fund Code	Fund Name	FY 2019	FY 2020
0100	General Fund	\$6,335,907	\$5,923,019
0200	Special	\$290,025	\$516,871
0280	Appropriated Indirect Cost Recoveries	\$761,116	\$761,116
0591	Manufacture Products	\$55,283,360	\$51,783,360
0715	Visually Handicapped Endowment Fund	\$205,000	\$205,000
1000	Federal Trust	\$11,995,362	\$12,388,418

Revenue Summary

The agency receives federal grant funding from the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitative Services Administration to support the Vocational Rehabilitation Program for blind and vision impaired citizens. Other Federal Grants from the department include Independent Living/ Older Blind federal grant, Supported Employment federal grant, and the In-Service Training federal grant. This revenue stream has experienced a 5% overall reduction due to the Federal governments 2013 federal year sequestration event. The agency receives indirect cost recovery from administering the federal grants and these funds are integral in providing the state's required match for the federal grants received. Enterprise fund revenue derives from the Virginia Industries for the Blind sales and service contracts. Trust and Agency non general funds represent funds made available to the agency by the VA Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired Agency Board members. Request for funding to the board, by the Agency and other entities that support our mission, is made on an annual basis and the board votes to approve expending funds that represent accumulated donations made to the agency's Endowment Fund.

Performance

Performance Highlights

The Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired measures its service performance through performance measures tied to the goals and objectives developed to help the agency accomplish its mission. The fiscal year 2017 average hourly wage of individuals who have completed their Vocational Rehabilitation program and were closed as employed was \$15.60, which is significantly higher than the current \$7.25 federal minimum hourly wage. In 2016 the agency reached a target of 98% of Virginians who completed a Vocational Rehabilitation program and were employed having a wage greater than minimum wage. In 2017 the agency continued to increase the number of infants, children and youth served through our partnership with families, early childhood service providers, and school division staff by serving 2,367 through Education Services.

The Library Resource Center has consistently served over 10,000 patrons during the last two years. With the advent of e-Books, the expectation is that more people will utilize the Library services.

Selected Measures

Measure ID	Measure	Alternative Name	Estimated Trend
702.0003	Percentage of infants and toddlers birth through age two who are blind or vision impaired and receive multiple direct services from Education Services staff as compared to infants and toddlers who are known to us as blind or vision impaired and do not receive multiple direct services	Infants and Toddlers receiving Education Services	Improving
M702SA12001	Ratio of the total earnings of Vocational Rehabilitation consumers achieving a successful employment outcome compared to Vocational Rehabilitation program service funds expended	VR Earnings Ratio	Improving
702.0002	The percentage of Rehabilitation Teaching/ Independent Living (RT/IL) cases closed as successfully able to obtain or maintain independent living within the home environment as a result of services provided as compared to those RT/IL cases closed as unable to live independently	RT/IL Successful Independent Living Outcomes	Maintaining
702.0001	The percentage of Vocational Rehabilitation cases closed that received services with successful employment outcomes as compared to those Vocational Rehabilitation closed cases that received services without achieving an employment outcome	VR Successful Employment Outcomes	Maintaining

Key Risk Factors

We expect increasing requests for services, due to the rising number of older Virginians who are blind or vision impaired seeking the ability to remain independent and maintain their quality of life. The agency must identify ways to meet the demand for the essential Braille textbooks and support material that blind students need in order to achieve educational success. The agency has historically loaned Virginia schools the Braille textbooks they need to teach students who are blind. Over the past decade the cost of Braille textbooks has substantially increased. The agency must continue to be creative in exploring new avenues of providing Braille textbooks to students. Keeping pace with advances in technology and providing training to blind and vision impaired citizens in utilizing new technology to increase their independence remains a central focus for the Agency.

Given the anticipated near future transition into retirement of a large number of long term staff members who possess institutional knowledge and high levels of skills, management must work to develop strategies to meet this challenge. Limited resources and a highly competitive recruitment environment impact the agency's ability to hire and retain skilled Orientation and Mobility staff. There is a limited supply of individuals possessing the credentials to provide Orientation and Mobility training to consumers and the Agency is continuously in a position of examining ways to attract these highly sought after professionals. The agency must revamp its training programs to address Blind citizens that are diagnosed with significant secondary disabilities that attend our Rehabilitation Center. In order to provide services to these individuals, the Agency staff must possess multiple educational disciplines.

The Virginia Industries for the Blind contracts with the Federal Government to provide contract closeout services as well as operate supply stores on Federal properties. Changes in Federal Government spending can directly affect the revenues for the Virginia Industries for the Blind. Management is constantly examining new ventures that provide continuing revenue streams for this self-supporting enterprise program which allow it to fulfill its primary mission of providing quality jobs for Virginians who are blind.

The agency continues to address Accessibility issues arising from changes in technology and the requirements for our staff and consumers to utilize mandated systems. Solutions to address the accessibility issues often require a substantial investment of time and funding.

There is an ever increasing demand for the agency's services. Services to businesses and other organizations continues to evolve. The Department is challenged to meet the needs of various constituents with limited human and fiscal resources.

The Agency closely follows legislative changes that impact its operations and the ability to serve our growing client base. Management strives to be pro-active in identifying solutions to issues that directly affect our ability to serve the blind and vision impaired population.

Agency Statistics

Statistics Summary

Data from the American Community Survey (ACS) 2017 one year estimate, conducted annually by the U.S.. Census Bureau, updated in September 2018, indicate that in 2017 approximately 190,000 Virginians have vision difficulty as compared with 165,000 in 2016. This steady increase supports the agency's expectation of an increase in request for services. The agency strives to serve vision impaired Virginians of all ages, historically, the working age group has consistently been the majority of clients served, at approximately 50%. In 2017 the agency received 420 applications for the Vocational Rehabilitation program. There are two emerging populations of clients that the agency anticipates will require increased services. The first population is the older vision impaired age group. The 2017 ACS results show that 176,160 Virginians with vision impairments are 18 years or older; however, 73,861 equaling almost half (42%) of those are 65 years or older. This supports the agency's expectation of an increase in request for services from individuals of traditional retirement age of 65 or older. The second emerging population is among children. The 2017 ACS data indicate that approximately 14,157 children in Virginia are vision impaired which is an 13% increase over the 2015 finding of 12,476. This supports the agency's expectation of an increase in the number of children requiring education

services. The agency will continue to align its resources to be poised to serve all groups of vision impaired Virginians.

Statistics Table

Description	Value
Number of Virginians with prevalence rates of visual loss in 2017, 65 years old and over	73,861
Number of Virginians with prevalence rates of vision loss in 2017, under 5 years old	2,616
Number of people that went through our VR application process during the federal year of 2017	420

Management Discussion

General Information About Ongoing Status of Agency

The priority for DBVI's programs and services continues to be to expand and improve the specialized training and services provided to Virginians who are blind, vision impaired and deafblind which result in positive outcomes of employment and independence. To assist consumers in achieving positive outcomes, DBVI is engaged in several initiatives. The agency is analyzing its quality control processes seeking greater efficiency and effectiveness. Virginia Industries for the Blind has obtained ISO-9001 certification for its manufacturing processes in Charlottesville and Richmond. The Department is exploring application of this standard to management functions. The Department is setting objective measures and implementing evidenced based decision making throughout. The Randolph-Sheppard vending facility program is being re-engineered resulting from a comprehensive study and strategic plan developed with stakeholder involvement. A technology laboratory has been established and is growing in its ability to demonstrate technology to consumers and professionals including less expensive off the shelf alternatives. The buildings and grounds of the Department are being utilized by more individuals and disability service organizations as they are modernized and made fully accessible. Efforts to reach more potential consumers of services and businesses are increasing as human and other resources are redirected towards this end. The programs of the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired are focused on employment with an emphasis on improving health and wellness of consumers as they continue to provide skill development to Virginia residents with vision impairments. DBVI will continue to expand partnerships with private and public entities in ways that leverage its resources to benefit more people. This is of greater importance at present, given that the agency is operating its Vocational Rehabilitation program under an Order of Selection of Services policy. This policy requires DBVI to prioritize services to eligible individuals with the most significant disabilities. Federal law calls for such a policy when a vocational rehabilitation program does not have sufficient resources to serve all eligible individuals in the state. The result is that after eligibility has been determined, some individuals are placed on a waiting list.

Information Technology

As a member of the Disability Services Agencies group, management and oversight of IT services provided by VITA/NG for in scope and out of scope services is provided by the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services. There are a number of current information technology initiatives for the agency. We are currently working toward upgrading the operation system for staff computers to the Windows 7 platform from the Windows XP operating system. The agency has adopted 8 gigabytes of memory as the standard for all agency staff computers. Field staff are now issued laptops to increase their productivity; in addition, cellular telephones are assigned to this mobile group of employees. This group of employees also was provided with GPS navigating systems to use in their assigned state vehicles as a fuel saving measure. There is an increased utilization of Video Conferencing (VTC) among our offices. Convening meetings using VTC is a proven savings for the agency in travel and meeting related cost. The challenge to the agency is in keeping up with technological improvements to this platform and managing our investment in these systems. The agency has also installed wireless access points throughout the various buildings on the Azalea Avenue campus as well as in our field offices. The plan is to gradually expand the wireless service for both in-scope and out of scope computers and provide full coverage throughout our facilities.

To curtail cost, the agency has consolidated server storage for three sites and continues to monitor storage needs for all sites. The agency transitioned its telephone systems at the Azalea Avenue campus to a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and eliminated the utilization of various phone services at the one location. The agency is progressing toward implementing the updated VoIP system to its regional offices.

Workforce Development

The agency has experienced challenges in maintaining adequate staffing levels of qualified specialists to provide direct services to blind, deafblind and vision impaired customers. The agency has an ongoing challenge recruiting for Orientation & Mobility Instructors given that there is a nationwide shortage of individuals that are certified to provide this service. There is competition in hiring with other private and federal entities, which provide more pay incentives, for the relatively few professionals available in this field. The agency is working towards identifying and improving future non-pay incentives that it would be able to offer to interested applicants.

Physical Plant

The challenges of maintaining the Azalea Avenue Campus facility revolve around buildings that have exceeded their anticipated useful life span. In previous biennium, the General Assembly approved funding for the renovation of deteriorating and non-accessible buildings on the campus to

include the renovation of the Rehabilitation Center Administration and Activities building and the dormitory. The agency also received funding to replace roofs on five of the seven buildings on the campus. The Recreation Building, which was constructed in 1971, is the most recently upgraded building on the Azalea Avenue complex. The equipment in the Cafeteria used to prepare and serve food has been replaced to improve efficiency in meal preparation while meeting health and safety requirements. There is a project underway to introduce contiguously configured sidewalks throughout the campus and to improve the entrance to address the safety and convenience of clients, employees and visitors.

The agency is in the midst of a planning project for the redesign and remodel of its headquarters building which was constructed in 1980.

The agency earmarked non-capital outlay funds to support the building of an on-site maintenance building. This building will facilitate more efficient storage of maintenance equipment and products while allowing better utilization of an under staffed building and grounds team.
