



Employment, Independence & Equality

Department of Rehabilitation

Biennial Report

on

Programs and Activities of the Division of Specialized

Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired and

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

July 1, 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
2. BACKGROUND.....	3
3. BLIND FIELD SERVICES (BFS)	4
4. DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING SERVICES (DHHS).....	7
5. BUSINESS ENTERPRISES PROGRAM (BEP)	10
6. ORIENTATION CENTER FOR THE BLIND (OCB)	13
7. INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS FOR OLDER INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BLIND (OIB).....	15
8. CONSUMER SUCCESS STORIES	17
8.1. BFS SUCCESS STORIES.....	17
8.2. DHHS SUCCESS STORIES.....	18
8.3. BEP SUCCESS STORIES	20
8.4. OCB SUCCESS STORIES.....	20
8.5. OIB SUCCESS STORIES	22
9. APPENDIX A: LIST OF ACRONYMS.....	25

1. Executive Summary

The Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) presents this biennial report to the Legislature on Programs and Activities of the Specialized Services Division (SSD) providing services to the Blind and Visually Impaired and Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Pursuant to the requirements of Senate Bill 105, Chapter 1102, Statutes of 2002 (hereafter referred to as SB 105), this report provides statistics on competitive employment placements for persons who are blind and visually impaired and/or deaf and hard of hearing, as well as an update on the programs administered by the SSD. This is the DOR's eighth biennial report to the Legislature. The first seven reports starting July 1, 2005, and each subsequent odd numbered year, are available by request.

Since the implementation of SB 105, this eighth biennial report highlights the continued one-third higher than average weekly earnings for blind and visually impaired consumers served by the Blind Field Services compared to the average weekly earnings of all DOR consumers.

Since State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2003-04, the average weekly earnings for deaf and hard of hearing consumers remains higher than the total DOR caseload. The Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf continue to account, on average, for more than 70 percent of the competitive employment placements for deaf and hard of hearing consumers. This suggests that specialized services aids in successful transition of deaf and hard of hearing consumers from reliance on social services and public benefits to independence and gainful employment.

From Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2002-03 to FFY 2017-18, the Business Enterprises Program (BEP) has experienced an increase of \$13.6 million in sales, an increase of \$2.6 million in net profit income to BEP vendors, and an increase of over \$54,000 in average annual BEP vendor income. While 89 BEP facilities have closed since FFY 2002-03, 76 new facilities have been established over the same period. The financial gains reflect the benefits of closing less profitable facilities.

Since SFY 2002-03, through December 2018, the Orientation Center for the Blind (OCB) has served 684 participants. Length of services for each participant averages nine months. The participants who received OCB services have been positioned to advance their employment goals, increase their independence, and further their individual pursuit of equality.

The Title VII, Chapter 2, Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) program continues to serve annually over 5,000 individuals aged 55 or older with severe visual impairments in California. Notably, over 78 percent of OIB grant funds were spent on providing direct services such as assistive technology, daily living skills, and orientation and mobility training. Consumer surveys showed over 95 percent of OIB recipients reporting an increase in their independence as a direct result of the services received.

2. Background

The DOR's mission is to work in partnership with consumers and other stakeholders to provide services and advocacy resulting in employment, independent living, and equality to individuals with disabilities. The primary program administered by DOR is the Vocational Rehabilitation program, which provides a wide range of services designed to help individuals with disabilities prepare for, obtain, maintain, retain, and advance in competitive integrated employment consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

The Specialized Services Division (SSD) was established with the enactment of SB 105, which recognized the need for a more skilled and tailored approach to providing vocational rehabilitation job training, and placement services to individuals with sensory disabilities. The goals of the SSD are:

- (1) To assist persons who are blind and visually impaired and deaf and hard of hearing to obtain competitive employment.
- (2) To enlarge economic opportunities for persons who are blind or visually impaired and deaf or hard of hearing.
- (3) To enhance the independence and self-sufficiency of blind and visually impaired and deaf and hard of hearing persons.

Under SSD, management, counselors, and support staff were realigned to create Blind Field Services (BFS) and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) program. Staff within the BFS District and the DHHS program are located throughout the state and provide specialized services to their respective consumer groups. The BFS District staff and the DHHS administrative program staff report to the SSD Deputy Director, while the Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf report to local managers and the Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Division Deputy Director.

In addition to the realignment, SSD assumed oversight of the Business Enterprises Program, the Orientation Center for the Blind, and the Older Individuals who are Blind program.

3. Blind Field Services (BFS)

The BFS is a statewide District that provides specialized and comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services to Californians who are blind or visually impaired (B/VI). The BFS utilizes a service delivery team approach through nine units of Rehabilitation Counselors for the Blind (RCBs) and paraprofessional and administrative staff managed by the Team Managers and a District Administrator, all of whom have specialized knowledge and training in serving this population.

Since the last biennial reporting period, BFS continues to focus on implementing the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), passed in 2014, which places significant emphasis on providing pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities. These services include job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, post-secondary education counseling, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy. The BFS diligently conducts outreach to ensure that at least one third of individuals served include students with disabilities, specifically those who are blind and visually impaired in the 16-21 age range. The WIOA also places greater emphasis on job driven training and employer engagement to further support outcomes for individuals seeking employment. In response, BFS, in collaboration with the DOR's Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Division (VRED) staff and other stakeholders, has been engaging the business community to provide an array of services, including but not limited to, disability etiquette training, assistive technology consultations, an online jobs board for businesses to post open positions, and referring qualified consumers to meet their workforce needs.

The BFS continues to provide ongoing in-service education to all BFS staff and community partners to increase their expertise and remain current on trends and innovations leading to successful employment outcomes for B/VI consumers. In 2017, BFS staff met for a three-day training in Northern California, and again in 2018 for another three days in Southern California. Training topics included: WIOA regulatory requirements, barriers that students with disabilities face in achieving the same careers and outcomes as peers, Special Education's Individualized Education Program process and the importance of collaborating with the local education agencies, the role of the counselor in serving students, resources and partnerships to create work experience opportunities for students, and programs and resources available within DOR to support consumer service delivery.

The following table provides data on the total number of competitive employment placements of B/VI consumers for DOR as a whole compared to those served just by BFS, as well as average weekly earnings for the total DOR caseload and BFS consumers.

State Fiscal Year (SFY)	Total B/VI Competitive Placements	BFS Placements	BFS Placements % of Total	DOR Average Weekly Earnings**	BFS Average Weekly Earnings
2001-02	389	N/A	N/A	\$334	N/A
2002-03	390	N/A	N/A	\$340	N/A
2003-04	347	214	61.6%	\$340	\$497
2004-05	363	242	66.7%	\$344	\$513
2005-06	452	355	78.5%	\$351	\$484
2006-07	445	363	81.5%	\$363	\$565
2007-08	404	323	80.8%	\$372	\$554
2008-09	406	347	85.5%	\$374	\$619
2009-10	278	235	84.5%	\$355	\$578
2010-11	368	309	83.9%	\$367	\$629
2011-12	354	306	86.4%	\$351	\$556
2012-13	344	281	81.7%	\$388	\$585
2013-14	402	335	83.3%	\$386	\$609
2014-15	387	316	82%	\$390	\$622
2015-16	443	376	85%	\$390	\$570
2016-17	398	339	85%	\$402	\$646
2017-18	297	242	82%	\$421	\$774
2018-19*	142	126	89%	\$444	\$648

Source: Ad hoc Reports-Field Computer System (pre SFY 2010-11), AWARE (post SFY 2010-11)

*As of December 31, 2018

**DOR average weekly earnings are comprised of competitive weekly earnings of all consumers served including the BFS consumers

N/A-BFS District implemented July 1, 2003

As seen in the table, the percentage of B/VI consumers achieving employment success in BFS has continued to rise to 89% since the implementation of SB 105, when compared to B/VI consumers served by the VRED districts. Also, the average weekly earnings for BFS consumers continues to be higher the average weekly earnings for all consumers served by DOR.

While statistics can be useful in measuring performance, they do not reflect the personal impact and meaningful benefit for BFS consumers. The BFS consumer success stories can be found in section 8.1.

For the next biennium, BFS will continue its efforts to increase applications from blind and visually impaired students as well as employed adults who are experiencing job retention concerns or interested in advancing in employment. In collaboration with VRED staff and stakeholders, BFS will focus on activities to better prepare consumers for employment readiness and successful job placement. The BFS will also continue to develop additional relationships with employers and foster partnerships with the local Workforce Development Boards, training programs, and employment programs to expand employment opportunities for its consumers.

4. Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS)

Although the DHHS program has been aligned within SSD, the Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (RCDs) and their managers do not report to the SSD Deputy Director. Rather, they report to the administrators of the VRED districts in which they serve. The DHHS program provides technical guidance and consultation as well as training services, such as the annual SB 105 training and regional training, for the RCDs along with their managers and teams.

Since the last biennial reporting period, the DHHS program has established specialized services for D/HH consumers with two deafness Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) in the southern California. The DHHS also worked to expand services being provided by three deafness CRPs in other parts of the state. The curricula for these services now include language and communication skills attainment related to employment, travel training, self-advocacy and employment preparation skills training for D/HH consumers.

The DHHS continues to provide in-service Deaf awareness sensitivity training annually to the RCDs and their teams. The CRPs and partners are invited and attend the training to support ongoing collaboration with the RCDs and their teams to improve services and employment outcomes for the D/HH population.

The table below provides data on the total number of the DOR's competitive employment placements of D/HH consumers compared to those served by RCDs in the DHHS program, and the average weekly earnings for the total DOR caseload and DHHS consumers.

State Fiscal Year (SFY)	Total D/HH Competitive Placements	DHHS Placements	DHHS Placements % of Total	DOR Average Weekly Earnings**	DHHS Average Weekly Earnings
2001-02	757	N/A	N/A	\$334	N/A
2002-03	824	N/A	N/A	\$340	N/A
2003-04	872	760	87.2%	\$340	\$411
2004-05	785	729	92.9%	\$344	\$406

State Fiscal Year (SFY)	Total D/HH Competitive Placements	DHHS Placements	DHHS Placements % of Total	DOR Average Weekly Earnings**	DHHS Average Weekly Earnings
2005-06	826	772	93.5%	\$351	\$417
2006-07	737	728	98.8%	\$363	\$432
2007-08	740	695	93.9%	\$372	\$464
2008-09	710	596	83.9%	\$374	\$477
2009-10	560	536	95.7%	\$355	\$553
2010-11	652	432	66.3%	\$367	\$482
2011-12	614	454	73.9%	\$351	\$486
2012-13	606	414	68.3%	\$388	\$450
2013-14	610	512	83.9%	\$386	\$469
2014-15	813	575	71.4%	\$390	\$472
2015-16	855	589	68.9%	\$390	\$467
2016-17	793	612	77.2%	\$402	\$458
2017-18	678	516	76.1%	\$421	\$495
2018-19*	322	253	78.6%	\$444	\$534

Source: Ad hoc Reports - Field Computer System (pre SFY 2010-11), AWARE (post SFY 2010-11)

*As of December 31, 2018

**DOR average weekly earnings are comprised of competitive weekly earnings of all VRED consumers served including the DHHS consumers

N/A - DHHS program implemented July 1, 2003

While statistics can be useful in measuring performance, they do not reflect the personal impact and meaningful benefit for D/HH consumers.

Consumer success stories, on DHHS services, can be found in section 8.2.

For the next biennium, DHHS will work to increase access for D/HH consumers to apprenticeships, vocational training, employment services available within the workforce system. The DHHS will continue to provide

training to RCDs with their teams and CRPs to support ongoing collaboration and improved employment outcomes. The DHHS will work to expand the availability of specialized CRP services to this population. Furthermore, DHHS will continue working collaboratively with the VRED on responding to changes as required under WIOA.

5. Business Enterprises Program (BEP)

The BEP was created through the Federal Randolph-Sheppard Act (RSA) of 1936, which authorized a priority for BEP in placing vending facilities on federal property. California State law, enacted in 1945, expanded the federal program giving priority for BEP operated vending facilities on State property.

The BEP provides training and support to enhance self-employment for B/VI consumers. Seven trainees successfully completed the BEP training program since the last biennial report. The curriculum is evolving to be computer-based learning, with more emphasis on occupational skills to better prepare the trainees to operate a food service business. Other BEP services include developing new facilities, overseeing the selection process for placement of vendors into these facilities, providing technical assistance to BEP vendors, purchasing and maintaining all vendor equipment, and managing funding for new and existing facilities.

The BEP vendors operate facilities including cafeterias, snack bars, convenience type stores, coffee carts, vending machine routes, and Department of Defense contracts on federal, state, county, and city property. As of December 2018, there are 96 BEP facilities at 256 addresses operated by 88 vendors throughout the State.

The following table provides an overview of the BEP activities since Federal Fiscal Year 2002-03.

Federal Fiscal Year	Vendor Person Years of Employment	Gross Sales	Net Profit to Vendors	Average Vendor Earnings	Total Facilities	Number of New Locations
2002-03	138.3	\$38,141,507	\$5,052,869	\$36,536	185	17
2003-04	128.2	\$37,035,071	\$4,564,908	\$35,608	182	13
2004-05	122.6	\$41,545,828	\$5,012,233	\$40,883	178	10
2005-06	129.1	\$48,707,789	\$5,318,684	\$41,198	167	5
2006-07	131.5	\$48,823,250	\$5,897,458	\$44,848	156	1

Federal Fiscal Year	Vendor Person Years of Employment	Gross Sales	Net Profit to Vendors	Average Vendor Earnings	Total Facilities	Number of New Locations
2007-08**	122	\$37,739,686	\$6,106,816	\$50,056	151	3
2008-09**	116	\$35,754,322	\$5,911,371	\$50,960	149	4
2009-10	112	\$48,432,548*	\$5,667,628*	\$50,604*	140	1
2010-11	110	\$48,514,643	\$6,043,826	\$54,944	134*	6*
2011-12	104*	\$47,742,039	\$6,688,849	\$64,316	128*	7*
2012-13	104	\$48,452,853	\$7,333,891*	\$70,518	119	7*
2013-14	96	\$47,315,041	\$7,319,353	\$76,164	114	7*
2014-15	93	\$48,712,182	\$7,629,192	\$81,771	104	4*
2015-16	88	\$49,641,741	\$8,055,668	\$91,542	101	9*
2016-17	85	\$48,356,035	\$7,655,510	\$90,065	101	8*
2017-18	85	\$51,804,332	\$7,704,395	\$90,747	96	13*

Source: RSA 15 Reports

*Values adjusted to reflect final published RSA 15 Reports

**Data does not include Department of Defense

While statistics can be useful in measuring performance, they do not reflect the personal impact and meaningful benefit for BEP vendors. Consumer success stories on the BEP services can be found in section 8.3.

The BEP's focus for the next biennium is to become the preferred food service choice throughout the state. To increase the customer base for BEP vendors, BEP will continue to modernize vending facilities to meet or exceed the trends seen in today's food service industry. The BEP will continue to focus on providing continued education and consultation to staff and BEP vendors in the areas of marketing, operations management, new health and food safety requirements, customer satisfaction and employee retention.

The BEP is exploring the possibility of developing micro market vending facilities to expand the number of BEP facilities. A micro market is a vending concept typically described as an unattended, self-checkout food facility, usually located inside a secured building and available to its employees. Patrons can access prepackaged and fresh foods directly, and then pay for those items at an automated payment kiosk. Micro markets do not require staff and represent a new vending facility opportunity for BEP in locations where there may not be a sufficient customer base to warrant an employee staffed BEP facility.

The BEP is also working to streamline procedures to proactively replace BEP owned equipment at the conclusion of its useful life. Having an active replacement cycle will decrease the number of incidents where equipment fails. This will support BEP vendors with their profitability and ability to provide dependable, quality food service to their customers.

6. Orientation Center for the Blind (OCB)

The OCB is a DOR owned and operated residential training facility that assists consumers who are visually impaired and blind to adjust to vision loss, prepare for success in post-secondary education and vocational training, and obtain, retain, and advance in competitive integrated employment. Credentialed teachers and qualified rehabilitation professionals provide a full curriculum of courses and experiences to assist each consumer to develop work-readiness skills and reach their full potential for independence. The training is tailored to meet consumers' individualized needs, and the average length of training is nine months. The residential facility is available to support up to 36 consumers at any given time.

In addition to residential training services, OCB expanded its program in the past two years. One new offering is non-residential services for those living in the Greater San Francisco Bay Area. Local consumers can attend training at the OCB one to five days per week depending on their availability and individual training needs. This allows consumers with minor children at home, medical limitations such as dialysis, part-time employment, community college classes, and other scheduling restrictions to participate in training at OCB without having to forgo their other demands entirely. Instructional OCB staff are also able to provide lessons in the consumer's home community. For example, the orientation and mobility instructors may work with a consumer on establishing safe and reliable routes from home to local resources such as adult schools and community colleges, DOR offices, medical offices and grocery stores in support of the individual's preparation for seeking and entering competitive integrated employment.

The second new program component, which started as a pilot project in June 2017, was launched as a core service in January 2018. The OCB developed a two-week Comprehensive Work-Related Behaviors and Skills Assessment program to evaluate the consumer's baseline skills in areas related to blindness, including orientation and mobility (white cane use, mental mapping, use of travel related technology tools, and travel training to include fixed route systems), Braille proficiency, Foundational skills (money handling to include card and cash identification and management, labelling, color identification, telling time, keeping appointment calendars, etc.), assistive technology applications including smartphones, and daily living skills. A third-party comprehensive career interest inventory and aptitude assessment is also offered as part of the assessment program.

The information gathered is designed to be used by the consumer and their BFS counselors to develop an appropriate vocational rehabilitation plan leading to a successful employment outcome.

During SFY 2016-17 and SFY 2017-18, OCB served 66 and 69 non-duplicated consumers, respectively. Through the first half of SFY 2018-19, 45 consumers have been served. While statistics can be useful in measuring performance, they do not reflect the meaningful benefits of OCB services. Individual consumer stories can be found in section 8.4.

For the next biennium, OCB is focused on building relationships with community partners with expertise in other disabilities or underserved groups. Recent collaborations that have proven mutually beneficial include: working with Services for Brain Injury, a non-profit specializing in serving individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI), to build their capacity to serve individuals with vision loss in their employment preparation program and strengthen OCB staff's ability to work effectively with individuals with TBI; partnering with Contra Costa Unified School District continuation school programs to provide a worksite for transition students with disabilities (a current participant has just been hired for a permanent full time custodial position upon his graduation in June); and San Francisco State University School and Career Counseling Graduate Program where graduate students obtain experience by providing college and career counseling to OCB consumers. Specific partnership areas identified by OCB include agencies working with individuals with disabilities who are homeless, formerly incarcerated, or have acute psychiatric illness.

Through these partnership efforts, OCB will be able to serve individuals with multiple disabilities and/or additional societal barriers as well as assist the other agencies to better serve the B/VI population who may seek their services. By sharing knowledge and expertise, OCB hopes to strengthen common aims, conserve limited resources, and achieve more positive outcomes for B/VI individuals.

7. Independent Living Skills for Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB)

Title VII, Chapter 2 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, authorizes and funds independent living services to individuals age 55 or older, whose severe visual impairment makes competitive employment difficult to attain, but for whom independent living goals are feasible.

With the funding methodology, implemented in October of 2014, of allocating OIB funds based on a formula of the geographic size and age 55-plus population of each county, 57 of the 58 California counties are served by OIB provider agencies. This shift to providing county-based grant funding to OIB provider agencies has helped reach new OIB consumers in some of the geographically remote communities, as the old funding methodology distributed funds to “service areas” to serve mostly the large population centers. The OIB program continues to annually serve over 5,000 individuals, with over 78% of grant funds spent on providing direct consumer services such as assistive technology, daily living skills, and orientation and mobility training. Consumer surveys for FFY 2018 showed over 95% of the recipients reporting an increase in their independence as a direct result of OIB services.

This biennium, the OIB program conducted a competitive Request for Application (RFA) for service provider agencies and has worked intentionally to extend the grant cycle to 5 years, rather than the traditional 3-year cycle. This helps maintain fiscal stability for the grantees and ensures continuity of services for individuals served by the OIB program. The OIB also conducted program reviews and provided technical assistance to grantees to ensure quality OIB services. The OIB also worked with other DOR grant and administrative programs to formalize the grant solicitation manual (GSM). The GSM is used by DOR staff when developing and implementing an RFA and is available to the public who wish to better understand the grant solicitation process. This effort will strengthen DOR’s ability to competitively solicit for and identify the best partners for providing OIB services in the next grant cycle.

The following table shows the history since FFY 1999-00 in grant funds awarded and the number of individuals who received OIB services.

Federal Fiscal Year	Federal Award	Number Served
1999-00	\$1,004,368	680
2000-01	\$1,713,782	2,162
2001-02	\$2,290,501	2,332
2002-03	\$2,604,141	2,874
2003-04	\$3,086,561	3,326
2004-05	\$3,367,434	3,701
2005-06	\$3,260,338	4,113
2006-07	\$3,258,596	4,349
2007-08	\$3,168,533	4,715
2008-09	\$3,381,947	5,272
2009-10	\$3,386,393	5,509
2010-11	\$3,379,345	5,874
2011-12	\$3,397,041	7,268*
2012-13	\$3,212,792**	6,228
2013-14	\$3,350,574**	6,553
2014-15	\$3,297,919**	7,178
2015-16	\$3,297,919**	6,737
2016-17	\$3,352,651	5,849
2017-18	\$3,380,180	5,246

Source: RSA-7-OB Reports

*Increase due to one-time American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding

**Values adjusted to reflect final published 7-OB reports

While statistics can be useful in measuring performance, they do not reflect the personal impact and meaningful benefit for each individual. Consumer success stories on OIB services can be found in section 8.5.

For the next biennium, the OIB program will monitor and provide technical assistance to the grantees. The OIB program will also assist grantees, particularly those that may be newer to the program, with reporting and invoicing processes. Lastly, development of the RFA for the new grant cycle will begin in 2021.

8. Consumer Success Stories

All names have been altered to protect the privacy of the consumers and recipients of SSD services.

8.1. BFS Success Stories

Mr. H came to DOR with low self-esteem. Through continual counseling and dialogue with his BFS counselor, Mr. H took the opportunity to lead a few classes for other people with disabilities at a local independent Living Center. He continued to worry about how he could teach with his legal blindness. Even some of his professors and his university advisor made comments that diminished Mr. H's belief in his potential. He regularly wavered between accepting an entry-level customer service job, just to make ends meet, and pushing himself to pursue a teaching position in keeping with the master's degree he was completing at California State University, Fullerton. With deep encouragement from his BFS counselor, Mr. H gained self-confidence and received assistive technology, low vision aids, and other services to pursue his goal and dream. He is now successfully employed as an Adult Literacy, Remedial and General Education Teacher at \$24 per hour.

Ms. T's case was originally opened to receive assistance in retaining her job. However, when she was let go from her position, BFS focused on assisting her obtain competitive integrated employment. A number of services was provided to Ms. T to obtain and support employment including counseling and guidance, assistive technology and software, employment services, and worksite technology evaluation. Ms. T has successfully completed her vocational goal of customer service representative. Since August 2018, she has been working full-time at \$17 per hour for the UC Berkeley American Campus Communities and loves it. There is also the opportunity for growth. Ms. T is very thankful for all the services she received from her BFS counselor and the team.

Ms. S came to DOR in 2016 for assistance in retaining her employment as a Financial Manager. She was losing her sight due to Retinitis Pigmentosa, a progressive eye disease. Her BFS counselor was encouraging and provided the needed retention services. Ms. S was set up with low-vision and assistive technology evaluations, resulting in the recommendation and purchase of assistive technology devices and software to access her computer and the rest of her work environment. With this support, not only did she retain her job, she received a promotion at her well-known

engineering firm. Ms. S's current salary is \$145,000 a year with full benefits. Her duties include managing accounts and staff in the finance department. She is very happy with her situation.

Ms. N has successfully completed her vocational goal as a massage therapist. The BFS staff provided her with the following services: school tuition, adaptive technology and devices with technology support, transportation, and counseling and guidance. Ms. N also attended the OCB training program to develop skills to live independently and prepare for job training and readiness. She is working 20 hours a week, and her hourly wage is \$19.00 an hour. Ms. N now knows she has the tools, skills, and confidence to build on her income as she moves forward in her future.

Ms. M came to DOR while she was finishing up high school in 2009. She had several BFS counselors over the life of her case. She was involved with the Hatlen School for the Blind and received many basic skills needed for the future. Ms. M received adaptive technology and devices to assist with her independence and schooling to obtain her Associate of Science degree in Business. In addition, she completed a comprehensive computer training program through the San Diego Futures Foundation where she learned how to utilize Zoomtext, a magnification and reading software program for individuals with low vision. Ms. M further received orientation and mobility training so she could travel independently. In April 2018, Ms. M applied and received a job as a navy closeout specialist where she works full time at \$19.27 per hour with a generous benefits package and retirement plan. She enjoys her current job where she inputs data into the Navy's computer system assisting them to close out contracts from all over the world.

8.2. DHHS Success Stories

Ms. T, a profoundly deaf consumer who uses American Sign Language (ASL) as her primary language, graduated from California School for the Deaf, Fremont with no formal work experience and training. Ms. T worked with her RCD to enroll in employment readiness training with a local deafness CRP. In the training, she developed basic language, communication, and work readiness skills as well as skills to eliminate personal barriers to assist her with obtaining employment. In addition, she received job coaching, employment, transportation, and interpreting services as well as assistive technology devices. Ms. T obtained full-time employment as a Food Preparation/Kitchen Helper earning \$16.00 per hour.

Mr. C is a consumer with sensorineural hearing loss who wears hearing aids in both ears. His journey with DOR began in August of 2014. With an associate's degree from a local community college, he worked with his RCD to complete a 4-year university plan, majoring in criminal justice. Upon completion of his bachelor's degree, Mr. C obtained full time employment as a police officer at a State Hospital. He has learned to utilize his sight more when patrolling the facility. Mr. C advocates to other deaf and hard of hearing individuals to "Never give up" in their quest to obtain the job of their dreams. Mr. C was hired at \$28.50 an hour.

Ms. P, a consumer with a moderate hearing loss, was an undergraduate student at the time she became a consumer with DOR. She was denied financial aid assistance to continue her post-secondary education and training. Her RCD provided her with tuition support, books and supplies, transportation and other equipment to assist her in obtaining a bachelor's degree and teaching credential. Ms. P obtained full-time employment as a kindergarten teacher in the San Francisco Bay Area earning \$18.31 an hour.

Ms. C has a profound hearing loss and uses ASL to communicate. She became a consumer in 2015. While working with her RCD, she was able to acquire the skills and confidence needed to successfully conduct online employment searches. Using the federal job website, she applied for an opening and was able to secure an interview. Ms. C received an offer as a Regulatory Assistant at Loma Linda Veterans Association for Research and Education. Ms. C's advice to other deaf and hard of hearing consumers is to keep on trying and get out in the community to network for opportunities. Ms. C received an outstanding performance review and is anticipating her first raise in the coming months. Ms. C's hourly wage at time of employment was \$18.00.

Mr. P has severe hearing loss and was a self-employed attorney. His private practice revenue was declining, preventing him from providing adequate financial support for his family. Mr. P came to DOR requesting assistance with employment search, interpreting services, and hearing aids, He also received a Limited Examination and Appointment Program (LEAP) certificate that enables individuals with disabilities to become eligible for certain state jobs. His RCD was able to provide the requested services and Mr. P secured employment with the State of California as an attorney. Mr. P's hourly wage at time of hire was \$32.35.

8.3. BEP Success Stories

Ms. R is legally blind and came to the BEP training program in March 2017 with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. As part of meeting the entrance requirements, she successfully completed a 20-day evaluation with a BEP vendor in southern California. Ms. R was notable for her tenacious desire to learn and become an independent business operator. Ms. R received her BEP vendor license in May of 2018. Two weeks after receiving her license, she interviewed for and was awarded a BEP facility in a Northern California correctional institution. Six weeks later, Ms. R relocated with her husband and one-year old daughter to begin operating her facility. Ms. R was provided a full array of BEP services to support her success. During the first 6 months of operation, Ms. R's average net income was \$8,255 per month. Ms. R is a financially successful BEP vendor as of July 2018.

Mr. C has been a BEP Vendor for 38 successful years and his life's accomplishments are marked by milestones. Mr. C's employment journey began in the 70's, before the Americans with Disabilities Act, that while applying for jobs, people assumed he was unqualified due to his blindness. Yet, he wanted a career to support himself and his family with dignity and independence. Mr. C discovered BEP through a retired BEP vendor who shared about the self-employment opportunities available in the program. He entered the BEP training program in 1981 and received his BEP vendor license in 1982. Throughout his career, Mr. C operated various types of vending facilities on state property. In April of 2019, Mr. C retired from his BEP facility in a correctional institution which he has operated for close to two decades. In his retirement letter, he wrote, "After 38 years of service, I am RETIRING. BEP has afforded me both the professional and financial opportunity to be independent and self-sufficient. It has been the vehicle that has given me the ability to be of service to others in my city and in the blindness community. Thank you for your guidance, your cajoling and 'get 'er done' approach." Mr. C's retirement marks a milestone that exemplifies the definition of a successful individual and an accomplished vendor within the blind community.

8.4. OCB Success Stories

At the age of five years old, Mr. A was diagnosed with a brain tumor. After surgery, he was blind, lost his pituitary gland, and acquired a significant learning disability. Throughout his primary and secondary education, it was assumed that he could not learn to read or write so he was not given the

opportunity to learn Braille. At the age of 32 years, Mr. A attended OCB where he not only acquired all the skills necessary for independent living and future employment, but he also learned to read. He tearfully called his Braille instructor from an Amtrak train where he had read some words on the Braille brochure for the first time. Mr. A learned that many things that he previously thought were impossible could be done. While completing his OCB training, he enrolled in an online secondary school program to earn a high-school diploma. He took his lessons on budgeting seriously and saved enough to move into his own apartment upon leaving OCB. Mr. A has since completed a certificated janitorial program through a community college, the first blind individual to do so at the school and is actively interviewing for full time employment.

In 2013, Mr. S fell ill to Cryptococcal Meningitis resulting in two years in the hospital, in and out of comas. In addition to other serious complications, he acquired optic nerve damage resulting in blindness overnight. By the time Mr. S's health was recovered, he lost his job and did not know how to make a living as a person with blindness. "Blindness was devastating for me. I felt scared and useless." He came to OCB for an assessment of his independent living and employment readiness skills. Mr. S saw first-hand that a return to gainful employment is possible if he learned the important basic skills necessary for an individual who is blind. He asked to participate in the OCB training program, which he completed with flying colors. His former employer offered him a position in his machine shop. Mr. S independently travels over 160 miles round-trip by train to work and takes great pride in once again providing for his family.

Mr. R entered OCB at the age of 21 after becoming blind from a brain tumor just after high school graduation and undergoing years of aggressive cancer treatment. Mr. R showed a striking interest in every aspect of the world around him. He learned to navigate his environment with a white cane and became proficient in using the navigation application on his iPhone to plan his travel routes. He mastered using a computer with adaptive software and completed the full Braille curriculum. A Braille notetaker was purchased, which he now uses to take lecture notes and read college textbooks. Mr. R is currently in his second year of community college where he was recently awarded a scholarship from a cancer organization. He enjoys cooking and traveling with his new guide dog. He is a psychology major with an interest in business administration and hopes to one day work as an analyst for the federal government.

With the sudden onset of Multiple Sclerosis in 2013, Ms. S, a thirty-five-year-old woman, was left legally blind and out of a job that she loved as an athletic trainer for a California University. Feeling angry and unsure, Ms. S applied for services and was urged by her BFS counselor to consider attending OCB. Ms. S says, “OCB proved to be exactly what I needed. As important as the intensive training was, it was the tremendous support from the staff, the friendships I developed with my classmates, and the self-confidence I ultimately regained that allowed me to get out of the rut I was in and re-imagine my career goals. Although I could no longer perform the duties of an athletic trainer, I realized that I could still pursue a career in the field I was passionate about.” Ms. S is currently in the second year of a Ph.D. program in Sports Management and is teaching an undergraduate course in Sports Ethics.

8.5. OIB Success Stories

Mrs. W felt very good about her general independence, but she was nervous about getting lost while attending appointments near her home. Her instructor at the Earl Baum Center assessed areas that she had trouble with to navigate to her destinations. The instructor showed different alternative routes and trained her on utilizing the accessible navigation app on her iPhone. Together, they tried a route several times to practice navigation skills. Mrs. W then walked to the local pharmacy and it was found that she was able to successfully arrive there and reverse the route back home without any assistance from the instructor. Mrs. W is now able to travel with confidence in her community.

Mr. U is a 56-year-old man who is functionally blind due to advanced glaucoma. The San Rafael Police referred Mr. U to the Lighthouse for the Blind by the San Rafael Police as he was a risk being on the streets due to his blindness. For over 10 years he had been suffering vertigo, neuropathy of hands and feet, memory loss, and other medical concerns. At the time of referral, Mr. U was offered training if he could show up sober and clean. Mr. U returned to the Lighthouse over a year later after completing a substance abuse rehabilitation program and being placed in a stable living situation. Lacking self-confidence and reliant on his caregiver for as a sighted guide, Mr. U came to the Lighthouse with no independent travel skills. He completed an extensive orientation and mobility training program and learned multiple routes. The routes gave Mr. U the confidence and freedom to exit his apartment as needed and for physical exercise that further built upon his self-confidence and overall fitness. Mr. U continues to evolve as a blind traveler navigating the world independently.

Mr. O came to the Community Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired to learn how to access his smartphone. Mr. O had no knowledge of the Android operating system, the available accessibility features, how to make or receive phone calls, check voice mails, or to access the internet. After Mr. O received instruction on the functions of his phone and the usage of beneficial apps, he was able to call friends and others, receive voicemails, and even order a ride from the Uber. Mr. O is now able to send and receive text messages as well as use voice commands to look up recipes on the internet for his family dinner.

In March 2018, the Dayle McIntosh Center's (DMC) Aging with Vision Loss program staff began providing independent living skills training to Mr. K residing in a skilled nursing facility (SNF). After the initial appointment with Mr. K, there was agreement that he could meet his goal to relocate out of the facility into community living. The DMC instructor provided additional independent living skills training and Mr. K was a quick study. Upon his family review of the progress of his independence from the training received, it was decided that Mr. K would live with his nephew out of state. Mr. K transitioned out of the nursing facility and temporarily lived with the local family for four weeks. Mr. K and his family were provided with OIB resources in the state that he will be living in to further his independent living skills. Ultimately, because of the OIB services provided through DMC, Mr. K and his family were able to envision a future of living outside of an institution.

Every year the Corvette Owners Club of San Diego holds a car show to benefit San Diego Center for the Blind (SDCB). Over 400 cars are usually in attendance. For over 15 years, Ms. I had participated in the car show with her beautiful purple low-rider. Then two years ago, her vision began to fail and she could no longer drive her beloved car. Ms. I fell into a depression. At her lowest point, her daughter reminded her of the car show and the charity it benefitted. Ms. I had helped to raise funds for SDCB, and she was encouraged to see if the Center could help her. With some trepidation, Ms. I came to SDCB and took sessions in independent living skills, cooking, group counseling, and more. With each week, her self-confidence began to return. She went back to swim classes at her neighborhood pool, began using audio books, started cooking, and became a role model for new students. She also signed up for orientation and mobility training. At this year's car show, Ms. I proudly walked around floor showing off her cane and mobility skills. When her beloved purple low-rider took first place in its class, Ms. I made an impassioned speech to the crowd

about her new path in life, courtesy of the SDCB, and thanked everyone for their support of the Center.

9. Appendix A: List of Acronyms

The following list reflect acronyms commonly used in this report:

AWARE	DOR's Case Management System
B/VI	Blind and Visually Impaired
BEP	Business Enterprises Program
BFS	Blind Field Services
CRP	Community Rehabilitation Program
D/HH	Deaf and Hard of Hearing
DHHS	Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
DOR	Department of Rehabilitation
FFY	Federal Fiscal Year
OCB	Orientation Center for the Blind
OIB	Older Individuals who are Blind Program
RCD	Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf
RFA	Request for Applications
RSA	Federal Randolph-Sheppard Act
SB105	Senate Bill 105, Chapter 1102, Statutes of 2002
SFY	State Fiscal Year
SSD	Specialized Services Division
VRED	Vocational Rehabilitation Employment Division
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act