

EMPLOYMENT

OPPORTUNITIES

Support initiatives to increase competitive integrated employment for people who are blind or visually impaired. Individuals with visual impairments have a 70% unemployment rate and a 22% underemployment rate. People experiencing vision loss have unique needs related to obtaining and maintaining living wage employment. This includes: specialized training in assistive technologies, workplace accommodations, transportation access, and employer bias toward persons with visual disabilities.

BUDGET ITEMS

- Increase funding for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) so that it can provide vital services including: counselor education across differences in disability, increased monitoring of case management after DVR consumers acquire a job to assure a successful transition to work and long-term job retention.
- Expand DVR and transportation assistance services beyond 90 days to help maintain employment. Currently, DVR cases are closed after 90 days if the consumer is still employed. The quick closure rate for DVR cases and loss of transportation services puts people at risk of job loss.



- Maintain funding for the Transition Incentive and Special Education Transition Readiness grant programs.

LEGISLATIVE ITEMS

- Promote the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) as a viable employment option for people who are blind or visually impaired across the state. This includes making jobs attractive to younger workers. This program offers business ownership to well-qualified candidates, who then hire additional workers and provide service to state agencies, through offering vending services.