

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 – meaning almost the entire population has an unfavorable employment status. People experiencing vision loss have unique needs related to obtaining and sustaining 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 coordination between the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Department of Transportation to ensure workers with disabilities don't lose their jobs once DVR transportation services end. Currently, DVR cases are closed after 90 days if the consumer is still employed. The quick closure rate for DVR cases and loss of DVR transportation services puts people at risk of job loss.
- Increase funding for the Special Education Transition Readiness grants by \$3.5 million per year and increase the cap on the Special



Education Transition Incentive grants to \$1,500.

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.