

## New York State Commission for the Blind

### Overview of Services

May 16, 2019

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May 16, 2019

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### Meet the Presenters

Jane Sullivan, MA CVRT, CRC  
District Manager, Buffalo Office  
NYS Commission for the Blind

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District Manager, Albany Office  
NYS Commission for the Blind

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### Vocational Rehabilitation – Title IV

Two agencies in New York State

- New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB), a division of the Office of Children and Family Services
- Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES-VR), a division of the State Education Department

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### Vocational Rehabilitation

- Both NYSCB and ACCES-VR operate under the same Federal Regulations
- Main goal of VR is to assist individuals in obtaining competitive integrated employment
- Certain policies differ between the two agencies




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### New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB)

State vocational rehabilitation agency that provides employment services to New Yorkers who are legally blind

The mission of the New York State Commission for the Blind is to enhance employability, to maximize independence and to assist in the development of the capacities and strengths of people who are legally blind




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### What is legal blindness?

- A visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better or stronger eye with best correction, or
- A restricted field of vision of 20 degrees or less in the better or stronger eye
- NYSCB can assist in determining if someone meets this criteria




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## Organizational Structure

- 7 District Offices and Six outstations
- 65 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
- Transition Specific Counselors, Children's Consultants
- O&M and VRT Certified Trainers on staff in some offices
- Also maintains an eye registry of legally blind New Yorkers
- NYSCB holds Comprehensive Services Contracts, Placement Services Contracts and hires private vendors across the state




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## Overview of Services

Children's Services  
 Independent Living (IL)  
 Adaptive Living Program (ALP)  
 Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)




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## Applying for Services

Visit the NYSCB website at: [visionloss.ny.gov](http://visionloss.ny.gov)

On the website you will find an application for service, as well as a list of contact information for the district offices.

Feel free to call your local district office for more information.




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## Eligibility

Eligibility is based on two conditions:

- Having a disability (which for NYSCB services must include legal blindness) which results in a substantial impediment to employment
- Requiring VR services to prepare for, enter, engage in or retain gainful employment




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## Eligibility

### Determining Eligibility

- the VRC will need existing medical records or information from the Social Security Administration that verifies a disability
- An eye exam may be necessary if existing reports are not available, NYSCB can pay for the exam to determine whether the applicant is legally blind.
- Once a participant is determined eligible, a plan for services, the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) will be developed




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## Children's Services

- Rehabilitation Services to children who are legally blind, beginning at birth
- A Children's Consultant works directly with the family and school to develop a plan to meet the individual child's need(s)
- Children's Consultants provide counseling and guidance to the family, advocacy services, educational coordination and vocational coordination
- Children are offered the opportunity to participate in summer camps and year-round recreation programs to increase self confidence and social skills




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## Independent Living Services

- Individuals who are not eligible for VR services and are not receiving services through another NYSCB program and need support in carrying out day-to-day activities
- Services are provided through not-for profit organizations and low vision specialists
- Service are based on individual need and may include: O&M, VRT, low vision services, adaptive equipment and social casework




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## Adaptive Living Program (ALP)

- ALP services are for people who need training and services to assist them in living at home and in the community
- The primary benefit of this program is to allow senior citizens who are experiencing vision loss to function more independently in daily activities
- Participants in the program need to be over 55




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## Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services

NYSCB services are individualized based on what the participant requires in order to achieve their employment goal




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## Vocational Rehabilitation

•Services are provided to students and youth typically beginning at age 14 but services can begin as early as age 10 for some youth; there is a strong focus on pre-employment transition services for this age group; these services can include pre-vocational services, work readiness, work experiences and pre-college programs

•Adult services typically start at age 18; There is no upper age limit for someone who otherwise meets the criteria for eligibility and has an employment goal

•Typically there are 3,600 individuals receiving VR services from NYSCB at any given time



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## Most Common VR Services

- **Low Vision Services**- work with individuals to maximize the use of residual vision.
- **Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (VRT)** - Assist with looking at accommodations such as lighting, physical layout, or use of hand magnifiers, can include some technology and Braille
- **Orientation and Mobility (O&M)** - Assist with navigating safely to and from work or school as well as within the location
- **Assistive Technology (AT)** - Assist with adapting hardware/software to the needs of the participant. Includes computer training and troubleshooting school/work technology issues



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## Additional VR Services

- Assessment Services
- Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling and Guidance, Referral Services
- Adaptive Equipment and Home Modifications
- Interpreter Services for Deaf-Blind participants and Non-English Speaking Individuals
- Medical Restoration Services
- Placement and Post-Employment Services
- Reader's Services
- Special Expenses Related to Training
- Technological Aids and Adaptive Equipment
- Transportation
- Vocational and Other Training Services (Including College Training)
- Other Goods and Services



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## Employment Based Services

- Placement Services
- Work Experience Training (WET)
- Work Readiness
- On-the-Job training (OJT)
- Work Try Out (WTO)
- Internship




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## Job Save Program

NYSCB can help individuals who are losing vision and are currently employed to maintain their employment. These individuals are not yet legally blind but are expected to be legally blind within a year. Individuals must be currently employed and at risk of losing their job due to vision related issues and not currently being served by ACCES-VR.




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## Supported Employment

NYSCB also offers placement services in conjunction with our community partners for those that we serve that are considered most significantly disabled. Supported Employment allows participants to receive increased levels of job coaching and support on the job. This service is reserved for those with multiple barriers to employment.




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## Youth and Transition Services

NYSCB can begin VR services as early as age 10, though typically these services begin at age 14.

### Services for 10-14

- Pre-vocational
- Work Readiness
- Social and Skill Building Programs

### Services for 14+

- Work Readiness
- Work Experience Training (WET)
- Pre-College Program
- SEE Program (Summer Employment Experience)




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## NYSCB and WIOA

NYSCB is one of the core partners under WIOA, Title IV, Vocational Rehabilitation

NYSCB participates in the state level WIOA Interagency Team along with NYSDOL, ACCES-VR, ACCES Adult Ed, TANF, and SOFA.

NYSCB is a signatory on all 33 Service Delivery and Infrastructure Funding MOU's.

Shared knowledge and expertise will lead to increased success for all partners and participants




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## NYSCB Employment Contacts

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