

SERVICES FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED  
SOCIAL SERVICES/INDEPENDENT LIVING UNITS

I. LEGAL AUTHORITY

Chapter 9 R.I. Public Law 40-9-1 through 40-9-9.

II. POLICY STATEMENT AND PURPOSE

Due to the nature of blindness as a unique disability, specialized casework services are available for those persons who are blind or visually impaired. These services are designed to enable individuals, families, and groups to understand and adjust to the problems encountered by those with visual impairments. Social workers coordinate a comprehensive range of services which enable individuals to maintain their independence and self-sufficiency in the community.

A. Eligibility

1. Any individual who is blind or visually impaired, as defined in the ORS Policy and Procedures Manual Section 110.2, and has no immediate potential for an employment outcome should be referred to this unit.

B. Types of Services Provided without Regard to Financial Need:

1. Evaluation, diagnostic and related services;
2. Referrals to rehabilitation teachers and mobility instructors for evaluation and instruction;
3. Adjustment counseling and guidance for individuals and their families;
4. Referrals to appropriate state and community agencies;
5. Assistance in obtaining financial aid, medical coverage, housing, Independent Living and other support services;
6. Property and income tax exemptions for legally blind individuals;
7. Coordination with regional library services for the individuals who are blind and/or visually impaired;
8. Educational planning for children.

C. Types of Services Provided Which Require Application of Financial Need Criteria (See Section 115.8) and contingent upon available funding:

1. Purchased items such as visual aids, and adaptive equipment;
2. Telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices; and
3. Other support services as deemed necessary and appropriate.

**III. PROCEDURES**

- A. When a new or reactivated case is assigned to a social worker within the social services or independent living unit, the worker will contact the individual within fifteen (15) working days of the date of assignment and schedule a home visit. At the initial interview, the worker will inform the individual of her/his right to appeal agency actions and/or decisions.
- B. An eligibility determination will be made by the worker through:
  1. An intake interview;
  2. Collection of ophthalmological and other medical documentation; and
  3. Review and discussion of material with the ophthalmological or other appropriate consultant.
- C. Once eligibility has been established, the worker will develop a case plan which includes but is not limited to the following:
  1. Identification of presenting problem(s);
  2. Goals and objectives as developed by the worker and the individual, including criteria for meeting objectives;
  3. Tasks and needed services to achieve these objectives; and
  4. Planned contacts to follow up on tasks.
- D. Deactivation
  1. Criteria for Deactivation
    - a. A case may be deactivated for the following reasons because:
      - 1) The goals and objectives in the individual's case plan have been achieved;

- 2) The individual's case has been referred to SBVI/VR Unit;
- 3) Funding for needed services is not available; or
- 4) The individual's inability to benefit from services.

2. Procedure for Deactivation

- a. A case file will be deactivated through the mutual consent of client and worker with the understanding that the situation may be reassessed and the case reactivated for additional services at any time at the client's request.

E. Case Closure

1. Criteria for Case Closure

- a. A case may be closed due to the individual's:
  - 1) Death;
  - 2) Moving out of state;
  - 3) Refusal of services;
  - 4) Status is no longer legally blind or visually impaired; OR
  - 5) Location unknown.

2. Procedure for Case Closure

- a. An entry in the case record will indicate the date of the action and reason for closure.
- b. The individual must be notified by the worker using the appropriate mode(s) of communication identified/preferred by the individual and by sending a Notice of Agency Action ten (10) days before the date of closure unless the reason for closure is death.
- c. The client has the right to request a fair hearing within thirty (30) days of the date the notice is sent.
- d. If the request for hearing is made within ten (10) days of the notice, services must continue until the hearing decision is rendered.