

Our Mission

The mission of the Business Enterprise Program is to promote independence by providing quality business opportunities to Oregonians who are legally blind through superior customer satisfaction.

The Business Enterprise Program operates food service and vending facilities throughout Oregon. These businesses are in federal, state, and other government buildings. Each business is designed to meet the needs of the customers for that specific site.

“As a self-employed businessman, my goal is to provide quality food and excellent customer service.”

Business Enterprise Cafeteria Manager,
Portland



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OUR VISION is to achieve full inclusion of people who are visually impaired in society. We help people make informed choices about their individual goals, focusing on successful employment, independent living, and social and financial self-sufficiency. We provide a wide variety of training and services at no cost to qualified participants.

Our vision is clear.

Business Enterprise Program



What We Do

The purpose of the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) is to provide business management opportunities for people who are legally blind through food service and vending operations.

The BEP is administered by the Oregon Commission for the Blind under the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Stand Act (which covers federal properties) and ORS 346.510 to 346.570. The state law provides that the Commission for the Blind shall operate vending facilities in or on any "public buildings or properties" defined as any building, land or other real property, owned, leased, or occupied by any department or agency of the state of Oregon or any of its political subdivisions except public elementary and secondary schools.

Training Program

Before operating a Business Enterprise Program food service facility, each manager must complete an extensive training program consisting of classroom instruction and on-site training.

When classes and training are completed, managers must pass a final examination to be licensed as BEP managers.

Types of Facilities

Vending Machines:

Computer-mechanized machines serve a variety of snacks, food items,

beverages, fruits, etc. Most vending machine locations require as little as a 3' x 3' space per machine and are serviced as needed. Vending machine locations need a daily customer base of approximately 40 persons per machine.

Sundry/ Espresso Carts: Products such as newspapers, magazines, snacks and beverages are offered. These facilities are usually located in the lobby area of a building and need a daily customer base of 200 people.

Snack Bars: These attractively designed facilities offer the customer a variety of self-serve products as well as freshly prepared food items. Snack bars need a customer base of around 250 people per day.

Cafeterias: Most cafeterias offer a rotating menu with a variety of freshly prepared entrees, baked goods, and an assortment of self-serve products. These units require a customer base of at least 300-500 people to generate enough revenue to have a viable business, or to generate enough revenue and profit for the manager to achieve financial independence.

How It Works

When a manager goes into a facility, the BEP provides necessary equipment and initial merchandise to begin the

operation. After that, the manager operates as an independent businessperson and is responsible for all daily operations including: hiring of employees, purchasing inventory, cleaning the facility and all other functions of managing a food service operation. The Business Enterprise Program provides ongoing support by assisting in the repair and replacement of equipment and by renovating facilities as needed. The BEP insures that the facility meets all state and federal regulations and property agreements.

Business Enterprise Consumer Committee

The Business Enterprise Consumer Committee is a group of six

managers elected by their peers. They work collaboratively with the Agency's staff in administering the BEP, actively participating in policy, program and major administrative decisions.

To find out more about having your site evaluated as a potential Business Enterprise Program business site, to tour some existing facilities, or to become a Business Enterprise manager, please contact us at 971.673.1588.