



OREGON COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

**Strategic Plan
2016-2019**

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Executive Director**

Executive Director's Message:

Under Governor Brown's leadership, Oregon is working to build healthy, vibrant communities that offer opportunities for all Oregonians to reach their full potential. Opportunities for Oregonians who are blind means the same as it does for all citizens of Oregon; access to a seamless system of education, the ability to participate in a thriving statewide economy and good paying jobs and expanded choices for independence and being fully engaged in their homes and communities. Oregonians who are blind believe and expect that their opportunities should in no way be limited by their vision loss.

As the only statewide organization that provides specialized services to adults who experience vision loss, the Commission for the Blind recognizes its critical role in ensuring that Oregonians who are blind have access to the services and resources necessary in order for them to lead fully integrated and productive lives. As Oregon's population increases, more individuals with vision loss will require training and supports to get and keep work.

In addition, as Oregonians age, there is a growing demand for services required to maintain full independence in their homes and communities. Many Oregonians who are blind experience vision loss as adults and need to learn alternative skills in order to operate and live independently. After learning adaptive skills such as white cane travel, braille, adaptive technology, and adaptive techniques for everyday life activities, it is expected that individuals who are blind will go back to work and engage in other meaningful activities such as hobbies, recreation and civic engagement.

Governor Brown has prioritized investing in education and prevention services as a long term investment that will produce greater outcomes and reduce the costs to the state. Vocational Rehabilitation has consistently demonstrated that there is a substantial return on investment. Individuals who are blind and successfully gain or retain employment pay back the cost of their rehabilitation through paid taxes and by investing their earnings into the economy as consumers. Seniors who are able to acquire skills needed to remain independent in their homes after experiencing vision loss can delay or avoid higher levels of assisted living and nursing care (that would otherwise be paid for at the expense of taxpayers). Maximizing independence and self-reliance are deeply embedded in the core

values of Oregonians. The Commission for the Blind assists those of us who are blind in personally applying those values and principles in everyday life.

Government is faced with making difficult decisions in regards to how best to invest the limited resources available to create lasting outcomes in our state. The increased demand for services is compounded by the limited resources which results in an increasing gap between the need for the agency's services and funding/access to those services.

The development of a strategic plan is an essential foundation for the agency to build necessary infrastructure and leverage the right partnerships/resources that will expand opportunities for Oregonians who are blind.

The Commission for the Blind is facing critical challenges in the coming years that will only be able to be fully addressed through the utilization of available resources. These challenges include:

- Nearly all jobs require the ability to interface with technology to apply for and engage in the work. Individuals who are blind access this information through adaptive tools and training.
- Changes in the demographics of working age adults who are blind now include more individuals with multiple conditions that result in complex barriers to employment.
- A rapidly increasing aging population (who experience vision loss) who need training and support in order to remain independent in their homes and actively engaged in their communities.
- Society has become increasingly reliant upon technology for daily life activities. Available adaptive solutions for individuals who are blind require training and support to ensure that people are able to access and operate these technologies.

This strategic plan provides the framework to address these challenges through targeted resource allocation and informed decision-making to ensure that the agency is investing now to be future ready. The plan will guide the agency in utilizing resources effectively and efficiently and optimizing our understanding of how we utilize our resources to generate outcomes to benefit the citizens of Oregon who are blind.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Daria".

Introduction:

The Oregon Commission for the Blind was established in 1937 as a state agency and has evolved over time to be a consumer driven organization with a citizen governing body appointed by the Governor. Today, the agency receives policy direction and oversight from a seven member Commission representing consumer organizations, education, ophthalmology/optometry, business and individual citizens. It is required that the majority of the seven members of the Commission are persons who experience blindness. These leaders of the organization have charged the agency with the important task of becoming an exemplary service provision entity within state government.

The agency operates under ORS 346.110 through 346.570 and through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, which designated the US Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration as the principal federal agency to oversee the national vocational rehabilitation system throughout the nation, in collaboration with the US Department of Labor and other workforce entities.

The mission of the Commission for the Blind is to Empower Oregonians who are blind to fully engage in life.

The agency core values include the following:

- Customer service- Dedication to meet the needs of our clients and customers and honoring our commitments
- Leadership - Being open, authentic and lifting others up while building consensus towards a common goal
- Integrity – Meet Commitments, act responsibly with public and personal trust and be accountable for words and actions
- Professionalism – Commitment to quality, pride in your work
- Operational Excellence – Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement

- Innovation – Developing creative solutions and putting them into action
- Collaboration – The ability to facilitate, negotiate, build consensus, build strong teams and empower others

We are committed to ensuring that people have access to options/opportunities and are equipped with the tools and resources they need in order to make meaningful choices for their lives.

The Commission for the Blind has five major program objectives in service to our mission:

1. Helping Oregonians who are blind get and keep jobs that allow them to support themselves and their families;
2. Training Oregonians in the alternative skills related to blindness such as adaptive technology, white cane travel, braille and activities of daily living;
3. Helping seniors and individuals with vision loss (who are unable to work) live with the highest levels of independence and self-sufficiency so that they can remain independent in their homes and active in their communities;
4. Licensing and supporting business owners who operate food service and vending operations in public buildings and facilities throughout the state;
5. Executing business functions and providing administrative support for agency programs that ensure effective and efficient use of resources delivering high quality services and outcomes.

Key Goals

The agency has a team of 52 full time equivalent (FTE) specialized rehabilitation and administrative staff that work toward achieving the following key goals:

- Exemplary Service- Our direct services to our clients and the business functions that support those services meet and exceed the expectations of stakeholders.
- Engaged Staff – The direct service delivery framework of the organization requires staff with specialized skills that are fully committed to high quality services and outcomes.
- Financially Strong – Stable funding is essential for maintaining the adequate level of infrastructure to plan for and execute programs and services statewide.
- Effective Community Education and Outreach - As a small state agency, it is essential that we maintain regular communication/outreach activities in communities throughout Oregon. This is the only way we are able to increase community awareness about the capabilities of Oregonians who are blind and ensure that people know about the services available through the agency.
- Measurable Results – The agency has developed a business intelligence strategy that allows us to understand in real time how we are doing in meeting the needs of our customers and delivering outcomes for Oregonians who are blind.

The agency key goals align with the Governor’s Plan for Oregon in the following areas:

A Seamless System of Education and Workforce Training

As transition aged youth who are blind prepare to exit high school, our Transition Specialists work with the student, their families and education planning team to develop a seamless transition into further post-secondary

training and/or employment. Oregonians who are blind work with the Commission for the Blind's specialized vocational rehabilitation counseling and teaching professionals to build and implement individualized plans for employment consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice.

A Thriving Statewide Economy

Vocational rehabilitation at the Commission for the Blind is about helping individuals who are blind and want to gain or retain employment to acquire the necessary adaptive skills for full participation in the workforce. In order for Oregonians who are blind to fully participate in the economic recovery, they need access to training, technology and other related vocational rehabilitation services. It is also critical that there be employers who want to hire qualified individuals with disabilities in order to enhance and diversify their workforce. We are committed to being an agency that leads by example and have many employees who are blind who are working at all levels of the organization.

Healthy, Safe Oregonians

Oregonians who are blind that can be actively engaged in their community and enjoy participation in hobbies, recreation, civic engagement, or whatever their interests take them. Seniors who lose their vision and desire to remain living in their own homes can learn to be safe and independent in their daily lives through specialized adaptive training designed for their own environment and life. This training is provided via the agency's specialized rehabilitation staff.

Excellence in State Government

The agency's business intelligence strategy utilizes outcome based management that emphasizes accountability and transparency throughout the organization. We focus on measuring results that tell the agency that

we are meeting the needs of our customers, delivering results, and focusing on the priorities established by the Governor and the Commission.

Strategic Priorities

In order to be a future ready agency that can prepare for changes in the needs of our clients and demands on resources, the Commission for the Blind has developed four strategic priorities as a means to organize our work:

Strategic Priority- Investment in efficient and effective statewide services

State Investment - Support of programs that aligns with the priorities of government and funding level meets the needs of Oregonians who are blind.

Federal Investment - The agency leverages the maximum available federal dollars available to Oregon to address the employment and independent living needs of Oregonians who are blind.

Other Fund Investment - Targeted and strategic opportunities for community partner collaborations and donated funds to engage in innovation and expansion activities.

Outcome measures aligned with priority

Number of clients served

Community donations

Spending to budget

Meeting federal match

Strategic Priority - Client Independence

Financial Independence - Oregonians who are blind are able to get and keep jobs at living wages so that they can experience prosperity along with other citizens of the state.

Home/Community Independence - Oregonians with vision loss have access to the critical training in adaptive skills related to blindness in order for them to lead full and productive lives.

Technology Independence – Technology advances have allowed individuals who are blind to engage in numerous activities independently utilizing the right technology devices and training on how to be proficient at using those devices.

Outcome measures aligned with priority

Client employment

Client independence

BE client performance

Client referrals

Number of clients served

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance

Client satisfaction

Engaged staff

Strategic Priority - Timely Service Delivery

Independent Living Services - Seniors can obtain independent living skills assessment and training within a timely manner statewide.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services - Oregonians who are blind who seek assistance from the agency to get and keep jobs receive timely eligibility determinations and services they need in order to reach their goals.

Technology Services - Oregonians who are blind have access to technology tools and training for getting and keeping jobs and living independently. Work sites are optimized through adaptive technology.

Timely Life Goal Attainment - Oregonians who are blind can get the services they need when they need them in order to reach maximum independence.

Timely Job Attainment - Oregonians who are blind are able to find jobs that match their unique skills and abilities and fully engage in the labor market. Businesses are seeking and hiring qualified individuals who are blind as a means of diversifying their work force

Outcome measures aligned with priority

Client employment

Client independence

BE client performance

Timely service delivery

Client referrals

Number of clients served

Client satisfaction

Engaged staff

Strategic Priority – Innovative Pre-Employment Transition Services

Ensuring that in school youth who are blind have access to services that include job exploration counseling, work based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in postsecondary educational and training programs, workplace readiness training and instruction in self advocacy and peer mentoring.

Providing a seamless transition from high school to higher education or training or employment for students who are blind. Utilizing evidenced based strategies to engage our youth in services and activities that will lead to higher levels of employment and independence after high school.

Outcome measures aligned with priority

Client employment

Client independence

Client referrals

Number of clients served

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance

Client satisfaction

Engaged staff

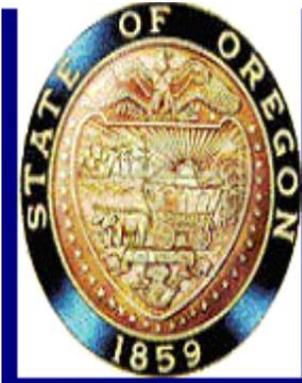
Delivering Outcomes

The Commission for the Blind’s ability to deliver results on these strategic priorities will require the following:

- The ability to recruit and retain specialized staff trained in the field of blindness rehabilitation that has a strong commitment and passion for serving Oregonians who are blind.
- Staffing capacity at a level necessary to be responsive to individuals at the time they receive the diagnosis of blindness so that they understand their options to learning skills and resuming full independence.
- Leveraging the full amount of federal dollars available to Oregon. Strategic enhancements of agency services over time to build capacity and agency responsiveness to emerging needs.
- The ability to have specialized staff be available as a resource to health care providers who are working with individuals experiencing vision loss.
- The opportunity to partner and collaborate with the education system to provide for a seamless transition from school services to post-secondary training and employment for transition-aged youth.
- The capacity to actively engage in the workforce system to assist businesses in recruiting and retaining qualified workers who are blind.



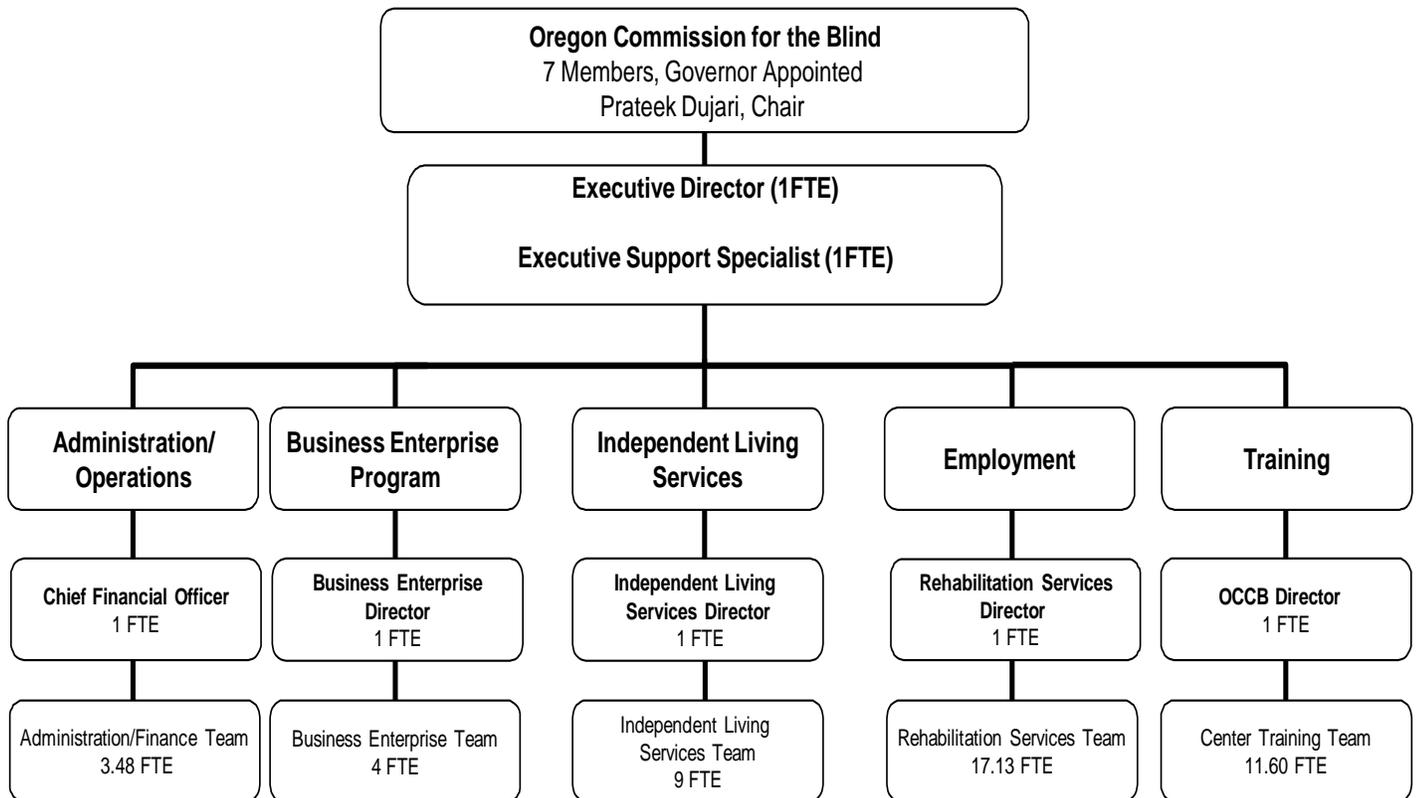
Appendix



OREGON COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

Organization Chart
2015-2017

FTE 52.21



Vision

Values

Consumer/Client-driven outcomes
 Personal and Professional advancement of our clients
 The worth, dignity and rights of people with disabilities
 People making choices and taking responsibility for their lives

Mission

Our mission is to assist blind Oregonians in making informed choices and decisions to achieve full inclusion and integration in society through employment, independent living, and social self-sufficiency.

Operational Excellence

Engaged Staff

Financially Strong

Effective Community Education and Engagement

Providing Exemplary Service to Oregonians with Vision Loss

OUTCOME MEASURES

OM 1
Client Employment

OM 2
Client Independence

OM 3
BE Client Performance

OM 4
Timely Service Delivery

OM 5
Client Referrals

OM 6
Number of Clients Served

OM 7
ADA Compliance

OM 8
Client Satisfaction

OM 9
Engaged Staff

OM 10
Voluntary Employee Turnover

OM 11
Community Donations

OM 12
Spending to Budget

OM 13
Meet Federal Match & Maintenance of Efforts

OM 14
Meet Controller's Requirement

OM 15
Clean Audits

CORE PROCESSES

**Conducting Public Education and Outreach
OP1**

**Determining Client Eligibility
OP2**

**Delivering Employment & Independent Living Services
OP3**

**Managing and Improving Programs
OP4**

SUB PROCESSES

1. Facilitating and participating in community events
2. Engaging with the Commission
3. Educating the legislature
4. Representing the Governor's policies
5. Engaging stakeholders & staff
6. Soliciting program referrals
7. Collaborating with Consumer groups
8. Partnering with businesses, agencies, organizations
9. Advocating for clients
10. Holding public meetings

1. Identifying Client Interests/Needs
2. Explaining agency services & process
3. Matching client to correct program
4. Obtaining required eye/diagnostics & application signature
5. Confirming referral meets program requirements
6. Identifying functional limitations & agency services beneficial to client
7. Determining eligibility
8. Notifying client of eligibility status & resources

1. Assessing Client needs, abilities, and strengths
2. Identifying appropriate services & best internal/external service providers.
3. Developing case plan
4. Coordinating Services
5. Providing and/or purchasing services/products
6. Monitoring service & product delivery
7. Evaluating progress toward client goals & modifying services as needed.
8. Completing services & Identifying goals are met
9. Monitoring/confirming client success
10. Closing client's case
11. Supporting Post-Employment/BE client success

1. Evaluating and Matching Resources with Blind or Visually Impaired Oregonians
2. Identify and Prioritize Unmet Needs
3. Establishing and implementing program standards
4. Identifying standards for periodic review
5. Evaluating actual program performance against standards
6. Identifying program performance gaps
7. Implementing program improvements
8. Monitoring performance of implemented improvements
9. Taking Corrective Action
10. Reporting performance to state and federal agencies and Key Stakeholders

PROCESS MEASURES

1. Community events/meetings
2. Key stakeholder events/meetings
3. Collaborating with consumer groups
4. Response to legislative requests

1. Number of VR applicants determined eligible
2. Eligibility requirements are met
3. Time from VR referral to application
4. Time from ILOB referral to application
5. Time from Part B referral to application
6. Time from VR application to eligibility
7. Of VR clients who became eligible during the quarter, % who waited more than 60 days as an applicant.
8. Of VR applicants who remained applicants at the end of the quarter, % who waited more than 60 days as an applicant (eligibility not yet determined).
9. Of VR applicants who moved into a non-eligible status at the end of the quarter, % who waited more than 60 days as an applicant.

1. Number of successful closures
2. Actual number of successful VR closures meets or exceeds forecast
3. Training Center Staff to client ratio
4. Budget to Actuals for VR
5. Budget to Actuals for Supported Employment
6. Budget to Actuals for ILOB
7. Budget to Actuals for IL Part B
8. Budget to Actuals for Training Grant
9. Budget to Actuals for Quality Grant
10. Increase in VR client independent Living Skills
11. Increase in ILOB client independent Living Skills
12. Increase in IL Part B client Independent Living Skills
13. Time from eligibility to plan
14. Time from plan to service initiation

1. Tech training cost per client
2. Client Program Satisfaction
3. Staff Program Satisfaction
4. Program Improvement Timeliness

