



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
**LABOR & ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY**

Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP)

Presented by:

**-Sharday Lawrence, MA, LPC
Acting West Region Manager
Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor**



Mission & Vision

Bureau of Services for Blind Persons

Mission

Provide **opportunities** to individuals who are blind or visually impaired to achieve **employment**, and/or achieve maximum and meaningful **independence** in life through comprehensive rehabilitative services.

Vision

To help Michigan become a better State for **blind and visually impaired** persons to be **equal** contributing citizens that enjoy all the advantages of a full, **independent** life.

Labor & Economic Opportunity

Mission

Expand economic **opportunity and prosperity** for all.

Vision

Make Michigan a place where **all** people, businesses and communities have the educational and economic means to reach their **full potential**.

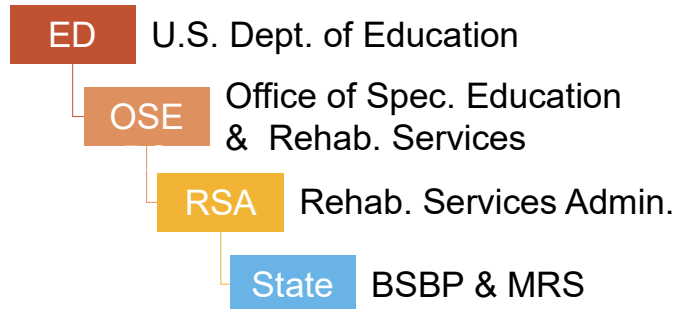


Federal • State Program → Vocational Rehabilitation

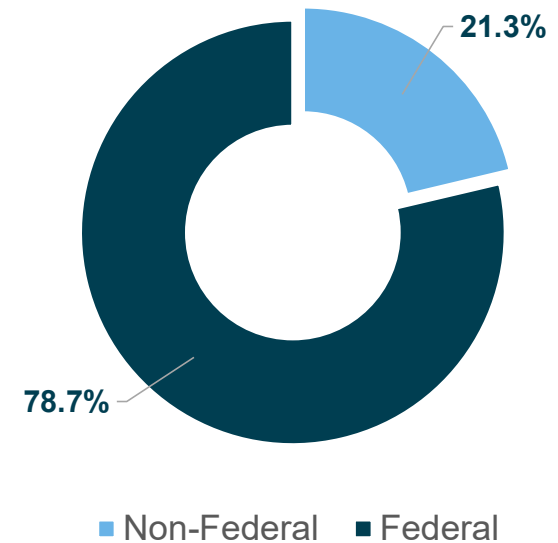
Authority & Federal Structure

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

[34 CFR § 361 • State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program](#)



Funding



BSBP Programs & Services

- Youth Low Vision
- Pre-Employment Transition Services
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Business Enterprise
- Independent Living- Part B
- Independent Living- Older Blind
- Braille and Talking Book Library
- BSBP Training Center



- www.michigan.gov/bsbp

Youth Low Vision Services

Eligibility

- Ages Birth to 14 years
- Visual acuity of 20/70 or greater or visual field of 40 degrees or more
- Eligible customers must be students currently enrolled or participating in a qualified educational program (including home school, alternative school and registered online school programs)
- Referrals are made to the Michigan Bureau of Services for Blind Persons by the student's Teacher Consultant for the Visually Impaired (TCVI) through their [intermediate school district \(ISD\)](#).



Youth Low Vision Services

BSBP – assists to provide students with head-borne, low-vision devices which will allow the student to participate as fully as possible in an educational setting

Equipment Examples:

- **Telescopic and microscopic glasses**
- **Complex contact lenses**
- **Prescription Goggles**
- **Bifocals**
- **Prismatic Lenses**



Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Eligibility

- **Ages 14 - 26**
- Provided to students who meet the program requirements in collaboration with local educational agencies and community partners.
- **Pre-ETS** is designed to be an early start at job exploration assisting students with identifying career interests to be further explored through additional VR services. Pre-ETS helps students transition from high school to postsecondary education or employment.



• <https://youtu.be/-4b8-0JFonY>

Pre-Employment Transition Services cont.

The 5 Pre-ETS categories are:

1. Job exploration counseling
2. Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school, after school, or community-based opportunities
3. Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs
4. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills/independent living
5. Instruction in self-advocacy, including peer mentoring



Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services

Purpose of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program: VR services are to prepare for, obtain, retain and advance in employment...

Individualized services are coordinated and provided by agency staff located around the state and may include:

- Assessment for eligibility, diagnostic evaluations, career exploration, and planning for employment.
- Disability management through counseling and guidance, training in skills of blindness or the purchase of adaptive/assistive devices and low vision equipment.
- Vocational training and education to enhance work skills and increase confidence in abilities.
- Job search assistance to help find employment and identify supports/appropriate accommodations necessary for success on the job.



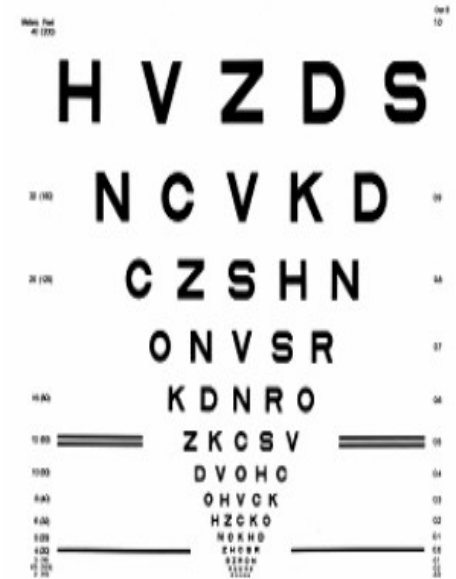
Factors to determine Vocational Rehabilitation Eligibility

Legal Blindness

- The individual's visual acuity is 20/200 or worse in the better eye with best correction or visual fields 20 degrees or less in the better eye with best correction.

or

- The individual's visual acuity is 20/100 or worse in the better eye with a prognosis of rapid deterioration with best correction, or visual field of 40 degrees or less in the better eye with a prognosis of rapid deterioration with best correction.
- **Barriers to Employment-** must have a substantial barrier to employment as a result of vision loss
 - Barriers may include communication, interpersonal skills, mobility, lack of work skills, etc.



BSBP Job Placement Trends

- Automotive Industry
 - Banking
 - Customer Service
 - Education
 - Farmers and Ranchers
 - Food Services
- Healthcare
 - Information Technology
 - Professional Trades
 - Retail Trade
 - Social Services



Business Services

- **BSBP works with Businesses** – Provides assistance to identify and hire qualified employees creating successful employment outcomes for customers and employers
- **BSBP provides Employees with:**
 - Job Task Analysis
 - Orientation & Mobility training to ensure safe travel in work setting
 - Job Coaching
 - Technical Assistance and Equipment



Business Services cont.

- **BSBP Provides Employers with:**
 - Job Analysis
 - Technical Assistance and Equipment
 - Work Based Learning Opportunities
 - Continued Support, Education and Coordination
 - Work Opportunity Tax Credit information



Business Enterprise Program

- **BSBP Business Enterprise Program (BEP)** – Provides training and licenses to approximately 80 blind persons to manage food service operations all over Michigan
- **Ages 18 years and older**
- **BEP facilities** - Found in both Federal & State buildings as mandated by law and provides vending services on Michigan State highways
 - Business Enterprise Program Median Operator Income: \$54,449, one of the highest in the nation!



Independent Living – Part B

Eligibility

- 14 and older
- Legally Blind
- Significant Disability: The customer's **severe** physical or mental impairment must cause a substantial impediment to independent living
- Customers are often living in assisting living facilities or nursing homes; this is not a requirement
- + Customer is not interested in seeking employment



Independent Living –Part B Continued

- ❖ This program is very small and has limited funding; therefore, services are limited.
- ❖ Example of a non-eligible person: the individual is legally blind and other medical conditions include diabetes, high blood pressure and anxiety. They do not feel like they want to work, but in reality, they probably can work. This individual would likely not qualify for this program due to their other conditions not being severe enough to impact their ability to obtain employment.
- ❖ Example of an eligible person: the individual is legally blind and also diagnosed with dementia, diabetes, and high blood pressure. They live in an assisted living facility and is unable to work.



Independent Living – Older Blind (ILOB)

Eligibility

- 55 years or older
- Legally Blind

Our overall goal is to increase a person's independence in their home and improve their quality of life. The important thing to remember is that looks different for each person depending on their home environment and their own personal goals and motivation.



Independent Living Services

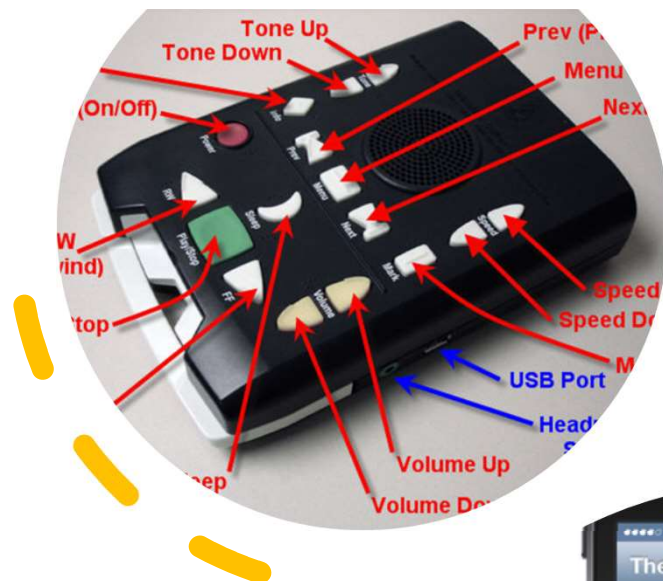
- Adaptive Kitchen Skills
 - Money Management
 - Telling Time
 - Orientation and Mobility
 - Low Vision Devices
 - Medication / Health Management
- Leisure Activities
 - Support Groups
 - Counseling and guidance
 - Information and community resources
 - Assistive Technology



- **Braille and Talking Book Library (BTBL)** - serves people who are unable to use standard print material due to a visual or physical disability

- BARD (Braille and Audio Download)- download the free BARD Mobile App to your personal smart device (iPad, Android, etc.)
- Traditional mail service- audio book player and cartridges mailed directly to the home.
- Over 100,000 books and growing!

- https://www.michigan.gov/documents/leo/2021_BTBL_NLS_Application_720952_7.docx



BSBP Training Center

- The BSBP Training Center in Kalamazoo provides training and services to people who are blind and visually impaired.
- [Labor and Economic Opportunity - BSBP Training Center \(michigan.gov\)](http://michigan.gov)



BSBP Training Center

Training Center Classes:

- Counseling
- Job Seeking Skills Training
- Nutrition & Diabetes Education
- Introduction to Basic Computer Skills (IBCS)
- iOS Core Education (ICE)
- Assistive Technology and Computer Program (ATAC)
- Life Skills
- Low Vision
- Braille
- Adaptive Kitchen Skills (AKS)
- Travel Skills
- Industrial Arts (IA)
- Personal Management



General Referral Process

Referring Customers to BSBP

- An eye exam is required for all BSBP programs except Pre-ETS. The exam can be completed by any licensed optometrist or ophthalmologist. The [BSBP Eye Report form](#), signed by the patient and the eye doctor who completed the exam, serves as the referral form for services. The form may be filled out electronically and then printed for the signatures, or the form may be printed blank and then filled out and signed by hand. The form may be faxed or mailed to the BSBP central office in Lansing or to [your local BSBP office](#).



- [Labor and Economic Opportunity - Eye Doctors \(michigan.gov\)](#)



Questions?