

# DHS - Services For The Blind

## Enabling Laws

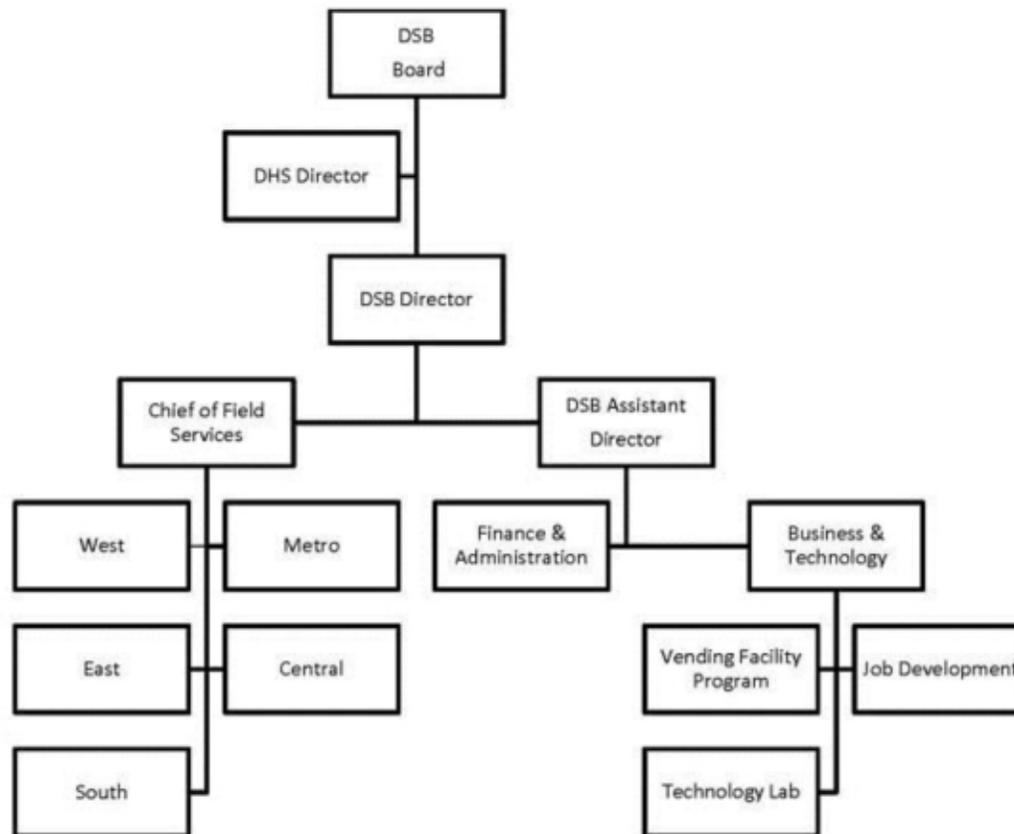
Act 114 of 2014  
A.C.A. §25-10-201 et seq.

## History and Organization

During the 1940s and early 1950s, blind Arkansans received rudimentary services from generically trained “home teachers” employed by the Arkansas Department of Public Welfare. Services consisted of non-specialized instruction in independent living skills and monthly stipends paid from Aid to Aged, Blind and Disabled funding. Little effort was made in vocational skills development or job placement other than the operation of vending stands in predominantly federal locations.

In 1955, the emphasis shifted from welfare to rehabilitation, and the state responsibility for services to blind persons was transferred to the Department of Education, Division of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services. However, blind persons were still provided generic services within the general population of disabled consumers. Later, the Arkansas General Assembly recognized the value of specialized services to blind persons, and passed Arkansas Act 180 of 1965 creating the division of Rehabilitation Services for the Blind within the State Board of Vocational Education. Over the next two decades, the General Assembly would pass laws to combine and separate services to blind persons within various state departments several times until passing Act 481 of 1983.

Act 481 established the Division of State Services for the Blind (DSB) within the Department of Human Services, and vested responsibility for DSB within a policy-making board. Five of the seven members represent statewide consumer, civic and professional organizations involved in state services to blind persons. The two remaining members represent the public at large. By law, four of the seven DSB board members must be blind or severely visually impaired. All members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The DSB Board is a policy making body responsible for rehabilitation services provided to blind Arkansans of all ages. It sets program policy and employs a Commissioner (director) to oversee agency operations within applicable federal and state law. Because of the governing structure of the board, DSB is recognized federally as a Commission within the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act. The Division of State Services for the Blind is also designated as the state-licensing agency for the Randolph Sheppard Vending Facility Program for Arkansas.



## Agency Commentary

The DHS Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) is responsible for the provision of rehabilitation and social services to blind and severely visually impaired persons age 14 and above in Arkansas. Services are provided through the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program and the Older Blind Program. Specially trained itinerant counselors travel the state to arrange for, purchase or deliver services necessary to the rehabilitation goals of blind persons in Arkansas. Older Blind Services are provided via a Professional Services contract with statewide coverage. Both programs are funded by the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration through formula grants based upon the elevated incidence of disability in the Arkansas population. The state is required to match the VR grant at 21.3% and Older Blind grant at 10% and provides a certain amount of additional mandated general revenue with which DSB meets its Maintenance of Effort. This qualifies DSB for additional incentive funding.

For the 2015-2017 Biennium DSB seeks approval of five federally funded requests above base level. No additional general revenue is required.

### RECLASSIFICATION OF CASELOAD STAFF REGULAR SALARIES COMMITMENT ITEM 00

DSB seeks to reclassify its eleven E039C DHS/DSB Teachers for the Blind to L098C Certified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselors. The result of this request would authorize all DSB caseload counselors as L098C "Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors", with only CRC or LPC certified personnel paid at the C119 level. All other caseload personnel would be classified as L051C Rehabilitation Counselors until such time as they secured their certification. Such a structure will greatly improve DSB ability to serve job-seekers who are blind or severely visually impaired on a one-to-one basis and help them develop the skill-sets their preferred employers seek. Regular Salaries on reclassification is \$10,982. No additional general revenue is required.

### RECLASSIFICATION OF CASELOAD STAFF PERSONAL SERVICES MATCHING COMMITMENT ITEM 03

DSB seeks \$2,693 for the eleven E039C DHS/DSB Teachers for the Blind to L098C Certified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselors.

#### MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS- COMMITMENT ITEM 02

DSB requests \$65,000 in fund center 896 funded federal appropriation for FY2016 and FY2017 for AWARE Database System annual upgrade and maintenance support. No additional general revenue is required. IT Plan pages 13 -15

DSB requests \$160,000 in fund center 896 funded federal appropriation for FY2016 and FY2017 for routine replacements of personal computer desktops, laptops and software licenses. No additional general revenue is required. IT Plan pages 8-10

#### CAPITAL OUTLAY- COMMITMENT ITEM 11

DSB requests funded federal appropriation of \$25,000 for FY2016 and FY2017 in operating Fund Center 896 to provide for Capital Outlay (commitment item 11). The request is to enable DSB to purchase equipment that is normally purchased as Maintenance & Operation (M&O) in the event the item exceeds the M&O Cost Ceiling and becomes Capital Outlay and to enable DSB to replace a federally funded vehicle used for itinerant travel to consumer's home for places of employment. No additional general revenue is required.

#### ASSISTANCE, GRANTS, AID- COMMITMENT ITEM 04

DSB requests unfunded appropriation of \$300,000 in commitment item 04 each year. Due to lack of funding, over 750 blind and severely visually impaired Arkansans over age 55 are on a waiting list for equipment and services such as training in cane travel. Without these services, they are at great risk of falls, medical complications and premature institutionalization. The funding will purchase those services from World Services for the Blind. DSB will also contract with DHS Aging & Adult Services to train service providers to observe client risk and provide minor services.

## Audit Findings

DIVISION OF LEGISLATIVE AUDIT  
AUDIT OF :  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2011

Findings

Recommendations

Audit findings are reported under the DHS Director's Office/Office of Chief Counsel.

### State Contracts Over \$50,000 Awarded To Minority Owned Businesses Fiscal Year 2014

None

## Publications

### A.C.A. 25-1-201 et seq.

| Name | Statutory Authorization | Required for |                  | # of Copies | Reason(s) for Continued Publication and Distribution | Unbound Black & White Copies Produced During the Last Two Years | Cost of Unbound Copies Produced During the Last Two Years |
|------|-------------------------|--------------|------------------|-------------|--|---|---|
|      |                         | Governor     | General Assembly |             |  |   |   |
| None | N/A                     | N            | N                | 0           | N/A  | 0   | 0.00  |

# Department Appropriation Summary

## Historical Data

## Agency Request and Executive Recommendation

| Appropriation                          | 2013-2014        |           | 2014-2015         |           | 2014-2015         |           | 2015-2016         |           |                   |           |                   |           | 2016-2017         |           |                   |           |                   |           |
|--|------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|
|  | Actual           | Pos       | Budget            | Pos       | Authorized        | Pos       | Base Level        | Pos       | Agency            | Pos       | Executive         | Pos       | Base Level        | Pos       | Agency            | Pos       | Executive         | Pos       |
| 896 Division of Services for the Blind | 4,687,082        | 75        | 6,429,757         | 76        | 6,629,807         | 76        | 6,442,345         | 76        | 6,706,020         | 76        | 6,706,020         | 76        | 6,444,195         | 76        | 6,707,870         | 76        | 6,707,870         | 76        |
| 898 Purchase of Services               | 3,876,318        | 0         | 4,719,977         | 0         | 4,719,977         | 0         | 4,719,977         | 0         | 5,019,977         | 0         | 5,019,977         | 0         | 4,719,977         | 0         | 5,019,977         | 0         | 5,019,977         | 0         |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>8,563,400</b> | <b>75</b> | <b>11,149,734</b> | <b>76</b> | <b>11,349,784</b> | <b>76</b> | <b>11,162,322</b> | <b>76</b> | <b>11,725,997</b> | <b>76</b> | <b>11,725,997</b> | <b>76</b> | <b>11,164,172</b> | <b>76</b> | <b>11,727,847</b> | <b>76</b> | <b>11,727,847</b> | <b>76</b> |

| Funding Sources                |                  | %            |                   | %            |  | %                 |              | %                 |              | %                 |              | %                 |              | %                 |              | %                 |              |
|--------------------------------|------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|--|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| General Revenue 4000010        | 1,893,515        | 22.1         | 1,902,128         | 17.1         |  | 1,903,930         | 17.1         | 1,903,930         | 16.7         | 1,903,930         | 16.7         | 1,904,194         | 17.1         | 1,904,194         | 16.7         | 1,904,194         | 16.7         |
| Federal Revenue 4000020        | 6,669,885        | 77.9         | 9,247,606         | 82.9         |  | 9,258,392         | 82.9         | 9,522,067         | 83.3         | 9,522,067         | 83.3         | 9,259,978         | 82.9         | 9,523,653         | 83.3         | 9,523,653         | 83.3         |
| <b>Total Funds</b>             | <b>8,563,400</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>11,149,734</b> | <b>100.0</b> |  | <b>11,162,322</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>11,425,997</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>11,425,997</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>11,164,172</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>11,427,847</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>11,427,847</b> | <b>100.0</b> |
| Excess Appropriation/(Funding) | 0                |              | 0                 |              |  | 0                 |              | 300,000           |              | 300,000           |              | 0                 |              | 300,000           |              | 300,000           |              |
| <b>Grand Total</b>             | <b>8,563,400</b> |              | <b>11,149,734</b> |              |  | <b>11,162,322</b> |              | <b>11,725,997</b> |              | <b>11,725,997</b> |              | <b>11,164,172</b> |              | <b>11,727,847</b> |              | <b>11,727,847</b> |              |

## Agency Position Usage Report

| FY2012 - 2013     |          |          |       |            |                        | FY2013 - 2014     |          |          |       |            |                        | FY2014 - 2015     |          |          |       |            |                        |
|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|------------|------------------------|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|------------|------------------------|-------------------|----------|----------|-------|------------|------------------------|
| Authorized in Act | Budgeted |          |       | Unbudgeted | % of Authorized Unused | Authorized in Act | Budgeted |          |       | Unbudgeted | % of Authorized Unused | Authorized in Act | Budgeted |          |       | Unbudgeted | % of Authorized Unused |
|                   | Filled   | Unfilled | Total | Total      |                        |                   | Filled   | Unfilled | Total | Total      |                        |                   | Filled   | Unfilled | Total | Total      |                        |
| 74                | 64       | 12       | 76    | -2         | 13.51 %                | 76                | 70       | 6        | 76    | 0          | 7.89 %                 | 76                | 68       | 8        | 76    | 0          | 10.53 %                |

Authorized in Act may differ from Authorized reflected on the Appropriation Summary due to Reallocation of Resources (Act 282 of 2014 section 17(d)), Miscellaneous Federal Grant (A.C.A. 19-7-501 et seq.) and POOL positions (A.C.A. 21-5-225(b)(1)).

## **Analysis of Budget Request**

**Appropriation:** 896 - DHS–Admin Paying Account

**Funding Sources:** PWP - Administration Paying

In 1983, Act 481 was passed, creating the Division of State Services for the Blind (DSB). The Act removed the Division from the jurisdiction of the Department of Rehabilitation Services and made it an autonomous state agency within the Department of Human Services. The Division is responsible for its own State Plan under the Federal Rehabilitation Act. Agency direction and performance responsibility lies with a seven (7) member consumer board comprised of organization representatives involved in providing services for people who have visual impairments. The member organizations include those such as Arkansas Lions, Blinded Veterans Association, Lions World Services for the Blind, Arkansas School for the Blind, and the Arkansas Affiliate of the National Federation of the Blind. By law, the majority of the members of the Board must be persons who are blind. This organizational structure was maintained in the reorganization of the Department when Act 348 of 1985 was passed. Services to individuals with visual impairments are provided by agency staff and by contracting with service providers who specialize in services for people with visual impairments.

DSB serves consumers through three interdependent units: Field Services, Vending Facility Program, and the DSB Directors Office. These three service units were designed by the DSB Board to offer two advantages to the State of Arkansas:

- First, to enhance the personal self-sufficiency of consumers eliminating costs associated with unnecessary skilled care; and
- Second, to maximize the potential contributions made by consumers as citizens and taxpayers.

The agency is funded through general revenue (DSB - State Services for the Blind Fund Account). Federal funding sources include revenues derived from the federal Department of Education - Rehabilitation Services Administration, Social Security Administration; as well as, federal grant funding such as the Social Services Block Grant. Other revenues which are indicated as various program support can include sources such as M&R proceeds and refunds.

Base Level Regular Salaries and Personal Services Matching include the continuation of the previously authorized 2015 1% Cost of Living Adjustment and Career Service Payments for eligible employees. Personal Services Matching also includes a \$10 increase in the monthly contribution for State employee's health insurance for a total State match per budgeted employee of \$420 per month. Base Level salaries do not include appropriation for Merit Pay Increases.

896 DHS - Administrative Paying Account

The Agency Base Level request for Operations is \$6,442,345 in FY2016 and \$6,444,195 in FY2016 with general revenue funding of \$921,507 in FY2016 and \$921,771 in FY2017 and 76 budgeted Base Level positions.

#### 898 DHS - Grants Paying Account

The Agency Base Level request for the Purchase of Services line item is \$4,719,977 each year of the biennium with general revenue of \$982,423 each year.

The Agency Change Level request for Operations is \$263,675 each year of the biennium with no additional general revenue. The following delineates the agency request:

- Regular Salaries and Personal Services Matching of \$13,675 each year for the reclassification of eleven (11) E039C DHS/DSB Teachers for the Blind (C118) positions to L098C Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (C119) to address the capacity to recruit qualified staff as stated in the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.
- Operating Expenses of \$225,000 each year for upgrade and maintenance support of the AWARE Database System and routine replacements of desktops, laptops, and software. These requests are in compliance with the Agency's IT Plan.
- Capital Outlay of \$25,000 each year to provide appropriation for any large unforeseen purchases.

The Agency Change Level request for the Purchase of Services line item is \$300,000 each year of the biennium with no additional general revenue. This request will provide additional equipment and services for blind and severely visually impaired Arkansans over the age of 55.

The Executive Recommendation provides for the Agency Request in both Operations and the Purchase of Services line item.

## Appropriation Summary

**Appropriation:** 896 - DHS--Admin Paying Account

**Funding Sources:** PWP - Administration Paying

### Historical Data

### Agency Request and Executive Recommendation

| Commitment Item              |         | Historical Data     |                     |                         | Agency Request and Executive Recommendation |                   |                   | Agency Request and Executive Recommendation |                   |                   |
|------------------------------|---------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---|-------------------|-------------------|---|-------------------|-------------------|
|                              |         | 2013-2014<br>Actual | 2014-2015<br>Budget | 2014-2015<br>Authorized | 2015-2016                                   |                   |                   | 2016-2017                                   |                   |                   |
|                              |         |                     |                     |                         | Base Level                                  | Agency            | Executive         | Base Level                                  | Agency            | Executive         |
| Regular Salaries             | 5010000 | 2,719,366           | 2,869,147           | 3,005,639               | 2,892,249                                   | 2,903,231         | 2,903,231         | 2,893,749                                   | 2,904,731         | 2,904,731         |
| <b>#Positions</b>            |         | <b>75</b>           | <b>76</b>           | <b>76</b>               | <b>76</b>                                   | <b>76</b>         | <b>76</b>         | <b>76</b>                                   | <b>76</b>         | <b>76</b>         |
| Extra Help                   | 5010001 | 42,295              | 384,174             | 384,174                 | 384,174                                     | 384,174           | 384,174           | 384,174                                     | 384,174           | 384,174           |
| <b>#Extra Help</b>           |         | <b>10</b>           | <b>30</b>           | <b>30</b>               | <b>30</b>                                   | <b>30</b>         | <b>30</b>         | <b>30</b>                                   | <b>30</b>         | <b>30</b>         |
| Personal Services Matching   | 5010003 | 1,020,238           | 1,073,299           | 1,106,779               | 1,087,785                                   | 1,090,478         | 1,090,478         | 1,088,135                                   | 1,090,828         | 1,090,828         |
| Operating Expenses           | 5020002 | 677,598             | 1,359,637           | 1,389,715               | 1,359,637                                   | 1,584,637         | 1,584,637         | 1,359,637                                   | 1,584,637         | 1,584,637         |
| Conference & Travel Expenses | 5050009 | 85,012              | 55,000              | 55,000                  | 55,000                                      | 55,000            | 55,000            | 55,000                                      | 55,000            | 55,000            |
| Professional Fees            | 5060010 | 128,741             | 663,500             | 663,500                 | 663,500                                     | 663,500           | 663,500           | 663,500                                     | 663,500           | 663,500           |
| Data Processing              | 5090012 | 0                   | 0                   | 0                       | 0   | 0                 | 0                 | 0   | 0                 | 0                 |
| Purchase of Services         | 5100004 | 3,876,318           | 4,719,977           | 4,719,977               | 4,719,977                                   | 5,019,977         | 5,019,977         | 4,719,977                                   | 5,019,977         | 5,019,977         |
| Capital Outlay               | 5120011 | 13,832              | 25,000              | 25,000                  | 0   | 25,000            | 25,000            | 0   | 25,000            | 25,000            |
| <b>Total</b>                 |         | <b>8,563,400</b>    | <b>11,149,734</b>   | <b>11,349,784</b>       | <b>11,162,322</b>                           | <b>11,725,997</b> | <b>11,725,997</b> | <b>11,164,172</b>                           | <b>11,727,847</b> | <b>11,727,847</b> |

| Funding Sources                |         |                  |                   |  |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |                   |
|--------------------------------|---------|------------------|-------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| General Revenue                | 4000010 | 1,893,515        | 1,902,128         |  | 1,903,930         | 1,903,930         | 1,903,930         | 1,904,194         | 1,904,194         | 1,904,194         |
| Federal Revenue                | 4000020 | 6,669,885        | 9,247,606         |  | 9,258,392         | 9,522,067         | 9,522,067         | 9,259,978         | 9,523,653         | 9,523,653         |
| Total Funding                  |         | 8,563,400        | 11,149,734        |  | 11,162,322        | 11,425,997        | 11,425,997        | 11,164,172        | 11,427,847        | 11,427,847        |
| Excess Appropriation/(Funding) |         | 0                | 0                 |  | 0                 | 300,000           | 300,000           | 0                 | 300,000           | 300,000           |
| <b>Grand Total</b>             |         | <b>8,563,400</b> | <b>11,149,734</b> |  | <b>11,162,322</b> | <b>11,725,997</b> | <b>11,725,997</b> | <b>11,164,172</b> | <b>11,727,847</b> | <b>11,727,847</b> |

## Change Level by Appropriation

**Appropriation:** 896 - DHS--Admin Paying Account  
**Funding Sources:** PWP - Administration Paying

### Agency Request

| Change Level |                   | 2015-2016        | Pos       | Cumulative       | % of BL      | 2016-2017        | Pos       | Cumulative       | % of BL      |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------|
| <b>BL</b>    | <b>Base Level</b> | <b>6,442,345</b> | <b>76</b> | <b>6,442,345</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>6,444,195</b> | <b>76</b> | <b>6,444,195</b> | <b>100.0</b> |
| C01          | Existing Program  | 25,000           | 0         | 6,467,345        | 100.4        | 25,000           | 0         | 6,469,195        | 100.4        |
| C08          | Technology        | 225,000          | 0         | 6,692,345        | 103.9        | 225,000          | 0         | 6,694,195        | 103.9        |
| C10          | Reclass           | 13,675           | 0         | 6,706,020        | 104.1        | 13,675           | 0         | 6,707,870        | 104.1        |

### Executive Recommendation

| Change Level |                   | 2015-2016        | Pos       | Cumulative       | % of BL      | 2016-2017        | Pos       | Cumulative       | % of BL      |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|--------------|
| <b>BL</b>    | <b>Base Level</b> | <b>6,442,345</b> | <b>76</b> | <b>6,442,345</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>6,444,195</b> | <b>76</b> | <b>6,444,195</b> | <b>100.0</b> |
| C01          | Existing Program  | 25,000           | 0         | 6,467,345        | 100.4        | 25,000           | 0         | 6,469,195        | 100.4        |
| C08          | Technology        | 225,000          | 0         | 6,692,345        | 103.9        | 225,000          | 0         | 6,694,195        | 103.9        |
| C10          | Reclass           | 13,675           | 0         | 6,706,020        | 104.1        | 13,675           | 0         | 6,707,870        | 104.1        |

### Justification

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| C01 | Maintenance and Operations- Commitment Item 02. DSB requests funded federal appropriation of 25K for 2016 and 2017 in operating Fund Center 896 to provide for Capital Outlay (commitment item 11). The request is to enable DSB to purchase equipment that is normally purchased as Maintenance & Operation (M&O) in the event the item exceeds the M&O Cost Ceiling and becomes Capital Outlay and to enable DSB to replace a federally funded vehicle used for itinerant travel to consumer's home for places of employment. No additional general revenue is required. |
| C08 | Maintenance and Operations- Commitment Item 02. DSB requests \$ 65K in fund center 896 funded federal appropriation for 2016 and 2017 for AWARE Database System annual upgrade and maintenance support. No additional general revenue is required. DSB requests \$160K in fund center 896 funded federal appropriation for 2016 and 2017 for routine replacements of personal computer desktops, laptops and software. licenses. No additional general revenue is required.  |
| C10 | Reclassify eleven E039C DHS/DSB Teachers for the Blind to L098C Certified Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Counselors.   |

## Change Level by Appropriation

**Appropriation:** 898 - DHS-Grants Paying Account  
**Funding Sources:** PWE - Grants Paying

### Agency Request

| Change Level |                        | 2015-2016        | Pos      | Cumulative       | % of BL      | 2016-2017        | Pos      | Cumulative       | % of BL      |
|--------------|------------------------|------------------|----------|------------------|--------------|------------------|----------|------------------|--------------|
| <b>BL</b>    | <b>Base Level</b>      | <b>4,719,977</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>4,719,977</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>4,719,977</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>4,719,977</b> | <b>100.0</b> |
| C05          | Unfunded Appropriation | 300,000          | 0        | 5,019,977        | 106.4        | 300,000          | 0        | 5,019,977        | 106.4        |

### Executive Recommendation

| Change Level |                        | 2015-2016        | Pos      | Cumulative       | % of BL      | 2016-2017        | Pos      | Cumulative       | % of BL      |
|--------------|------------------------|------------------|----------|------------------|--------------|------------------|----------|------------------|--------------|
| <b>BL</b>    | <b>Base Level</b>      | <b>4,719,977</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>4,719,977</b> | <b>100.0</b> | <b>4,719,977</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>4,719,977</b> | <b>100.0</b> |
| C05          | Unfunded Appropriation | 300,000          | 0        | 5,019,977        | 106.4        | 300,000          | 0        | 5,019,977        | 106.4        |

### Justification

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| C05 | ASSISTANCE, GRANTS, AID- COMMITMENT ITEM 04. DSB requests unfunded appropriation of 300K in commitment item 04. Due to lack of funding, over 750 blind and severely visually impaired Arkansans over age 55 are on a waiting list for equipment and services such as training in cane travel. Without these services, they are at great risk of falls, medical complications and premature institutionalization. The funding will purchase those services from World Services for the Blind. DSB will also contract with DHS Aging & Adult Services to train service providers to observe client risk and provide minor services. |
|-----|---|