

DHS - SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

Enabling Laws

Act 1225 of 2007
A.C.A. §25-10-201 et seq.

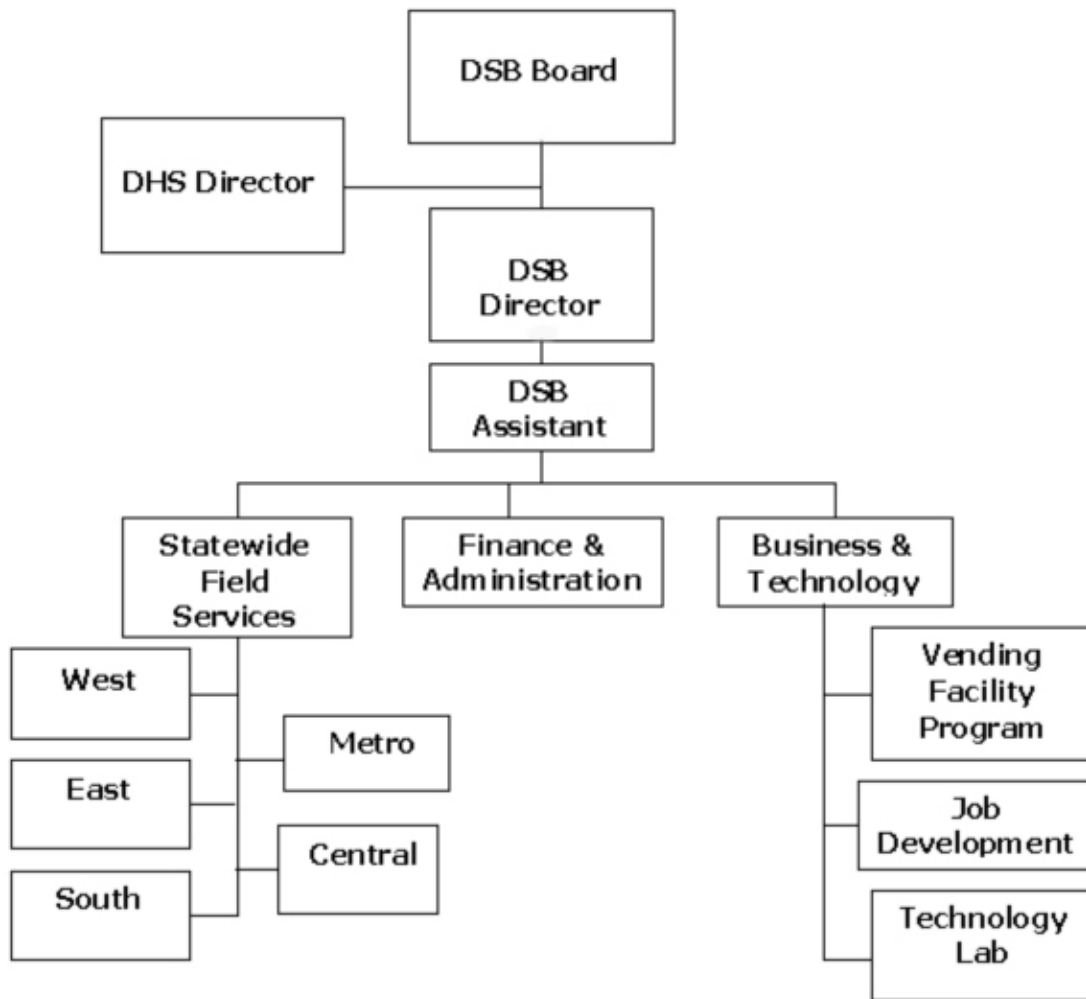
History and Organization

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.

Under the current structure of specialized services, the number and quality of jobs obtained by blind and severely visually impaired persons has grown markedly. DSB has been repeatedly commended nationally for its role in the success of DSB consumers, and reports rank Arkansas among the top states in consistently exceeding federal service standards.



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 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. 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 small amount of additional mandated general revenue with which DSB meets its Maintenance of Effort and secures additional federal funds.

For the 2009-2011 biennium, DSB seeks approval of four federally funded initiatives above base level. No additional general revenue is required.

REHABILITATION TEACHING PROGRAM

DSB requests funded appropriation in operating Fund Center 896 to support the transfer of two positions transferred by the DHS Division of Administrative Services. These positions will be utilized as Rehabilitation Teachers in Harrison and El Dorado to provide instructional services in the home and local communities to persons who are blind or severely visually impaired enabling them to compete for and

retain appropriate employment. Required appropriation includes Maintenance & Operation (Commitment Item 02), Conference Fees and Travel (Commitment Item 09), and Technology (Commitment Item 02) related expenses. No additional general revenue is required.

FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION INITIATIVE

DSB requests funded appropriation in operating Fund Center 896 to support contracts with Centers for Independent Living (CILs) under the Faith-Based Organization Initiative.

Under the initiative, CILs network with Faith-Based Organizations, particularly those who serve a minority population. CILs are contracted to share job-related information and training to better prepare the Organizations to assist their constituents who are blind or severely visually impaired and seeking employment. No additional general revenue is involved.

EQUIPMENT APPROPRIATION

DSB requests funded appropriation 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 (Commitment Item 02) in the event the item exceeds the "M&O" Cost Ceiling and becomes Capital Outlay. Such equipment may include updated technology to provide consumers with Braille or Voice access to print in the DSB Training Lab or other accessible equipment for DSB employees who are blind or visually impaired. No additional general revenue is required.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

DSB requests continuation of miscellaneous federal grant appropriation authorized as a result of the 2007 Annual Review Report from federal Rehabilitation Services Administration. The report required the Division to significantly increase the frequency and depth of on-site monitoring and training provided to rehabilitation counselors and teachers who directly serve blind and severely visually impaired consumers. Positions were transferred within the Department to accomplish this action and DSB requests continuation of supportive appropriation in maintenance and operation (Commitment Item 02) and conference fees and travel (Commitment Item 09) in operating Funds Center 896. No additional State General Revenue is required for this request.

DSB seeks continuation of miscellaneous federal grant appropriation to purchase services for blind or severely visually impaired persons in support of individual plans for employment. Purchased Services may include surgery, technological equipment, training, college or Vo-tech tuition, books, fees, etc. No additional State General Revenue is required for this request.

Audit Findings

DIVISION OF LEGISLATIVE AUDIT
AUDIT OF :
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2006

Findings

Recommendations

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

Employment Summary

	Male	Female	Total	%
White Employees	14	31	45	75 %
Black Employees	0	14	14	23 %
Other Racial Minorities	0	1	1	2 %
	Total Minorities		15	25 %
	Total Employees		60	100 %

Publications

A.C.A. 25-1-204

Name	Statutory Authorization	Required for		# of Copies	Reason(s) for Continued Publication and Distribution
		Governor	General Assembly		
None	N/A	N	N	0	N/A

Department Appropriation Summary

Historical Data

Agency Request and Executive Recommendation

Appropriation	2007-2008		2008-2009		2008-2009		2009-2010					2010-2011						
	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	3,812,072	63	4,510,638	73	4,260,125	74	4,679,027	73	4,972,236	75	4,965,686	75	4,738,556	73	5,035,029	75	5,027,679	75
898 Purchase of Services	2,495,375	0	2,573,558	0	2,373,558	0	2,373,558	0	2,573,558	0	2,573,558	0	2,373,558	0	2,573,558	0	2,573,558	0
Total	6,307,447	63	7,084,196	73	6,633,683	74	7,052,585	73	7,545,794	75	7,539,244	75	7,112,114	73	7,608,587	75	7,601,237	75

Funding Sources		%		%		%		%		%		%		%		%		%
General Revenue 4000010	1,836,105	29.1	1,875,678	26.5			1,912,631	27.1	1,912,631	25.3	1,912,631	25.4	1,922,869	27.0	1,922,869	25.3	1,922,869	25.3
Federal Revenue 4000020	4,471,142	70.9	5,208,518	73.5			5,139,954	72.9	5,633,163	74.7	5,626,613	74.6	5,189,245	73.0	5,685,718	74.7	5,678,368	74.7
Various Program Support 4000730	200	0.0	0	0.0			0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total Funds	6,307,447	100.0	7,084,196	100.0			7,052,585	100.0	7,545,794	100.0	7,539,244	100.0	7,112,114	100.0	7,608,587	100.0	7,601,237	100.0
Excess Appropriation/(Funding)	0		0				0		0		0		0		0		0	
Grand Total	6,307,447		7,084,196				7,052,585		7,545,794		7,539,244		7,112,114		7,608,587		7,601,237	

Agency Position Usage Report

FY2006 - 2007						FY2007 - 2008						FY2008 - 2009					
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	58	11	69	5	21.62 %	69	61	5	66	3	11.59 %	69	60	13	73	-4	13.04 %

Authorized in Act may differ from Authorized reflected on the Appropriation Summary due to Reallocation of Resources (Act 1279 of 2007 section 18(d)), Miscellaneous Federal Grant (A.C.A. 19-7-501 et seq.) and POOL positions (A.C.A. 21-5-214(5)(A)).

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 or severely visually impaired. 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) and federal revenue. Other funding which is indicated as various program support include sources such as miscellaneous collections.

Base level positions were changed from unclassified to Professional and Executive Pay Plan to reflect the recommendations of the Pay Plan Study and salaries were adjusted accordingly. Base Level salaries for classified positions reflect the recommendations of the Pay Plan Study. A 2.3% Cost of Living Allowance is reflected in the second year of the biennium. The Base Level request for Regular Salaries may include board member Stipend payments and Career Service payments for eligible employees. Personal Services Matching includes a \$75 increase in the monthly contribution for State employee's health insurance for a total State match per budgeted employee of \$425.

896 DHS - Administrative Paying Account:

The Agency Base Level request for the Operations appropriation is \$4,679,027 for FY2010 and \$4,738,556 for FY2011 with 73 budgeted Base Level positions.

898 DHS - Grants Paying Account:

The Agency Base Level request for the Purchase of Services line item is \$2,373,558 each year of the biennium.

The Agency Change Level request for the Operations appropriation is \$293,209 for FY2010 and \$296,473 for FY2011, with no request for additional general revenue in the 2009-2011 biennium. The following

delineates the Agency Request:

- Transfer 2 positions from the Division of Administrative Services with appropriation to be utilized as rehabilitation teachers in Harrison and El Dorado.
- \$71,950 in FY2010 and \$72,150 in FY2011 is requested for the Operating Expenses line item for telecommunications, rent, rent of office equipment, mileage, meals & lodging, travel expenses, office supplies, data processing supplies and software & licenses.
- \$6,550 in FY2010 and \$7,350 in FY2011 is requested for the Travel line item for additional appropriation to support the transferred positions.
- \$80,000 each year of the biennium is requested for the Professional Fees line item to support contracts with Centers for Independent Living.
- \$25,000 each year of the biennium is requested for the Capital Outlay line item to purchase equipment such as updated technology or other accessible equipment for DSB employees.

The Agency Change Level request for the Purchase of Services line item is \$200,000 each year of the biennium, with no request for additional general revenue in the 2009-2011 biennium. This increase in appropriation is requested for continuation of FY2009 Miscellaneous Federal Grant Appropriation for the vocational rehabilitation program services.

The Executive Recommendation provides for the Agency Request in the Operations appropriation except in the Travel line item where Base Level has been recommended.

The Executive Recommendation provides for the Agency Request in 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		
		2007-2008 Actual	2008-2009 Budget	2008-2009 Authorized	2009-2010			2010-2011		
					Base Level	Agency	Executive	Base Level	Agency	Executive
Regular Salaries	5010000	2,370,437	2,824,400	2,597,251	2,924,567	3,007,957	3,007,957	2,974,454	3,059,740	3,059,740
#Positions		63	73	74	73	75	75	73	75	75
Extra Help	5010001	14,312	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000
#Extra Help		8	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
Personal Services Matching	5010003	706,949	801,238	824,374	940,960	967,279	967,279	950,602	977,289	977,289
Operating Expenses	5020002	559,453	611,550	570,000	570,000	641,950	641,950	570,000	642,150	642,150
Conference & Travel Expenses	5050009	15,465	24,950	20,000	20,000	26,550	20,000	20,000	27,350	20,000
Professional Fees	5060010	136,779	183,500	183,500	183,500	263,500	263,500	183,500	263,500	263,500
Data Processing	5090012	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Purchase of Services	5100004	2,495,375	2,573,558	2,373,558	2,373,558	2,573,558	2,573,558	2,373,558	2,573,558	2,573,558
Capital Outlay	5120011	8,677	25,000	25,000	0	25,000	25,000	0	25,000	25,000
Total		6,307,447	7,084,196	6,633,683	7,052,585	7,545,794	7,539,244	7,112,114	7,608,587	7,601,237

Funding Sources										
General Revenue	4000010	1,836,105	1,875,678		1,912,631	1,912,631	1,912,631	1,922,869	1,922,869	1,922,869
Federal Revenue	4000020	4,471,142	5,208,518		5,139,954	5,633,163	5,626,613	5,189,245	5,685,718	5,678,368
Various Program Support	4000730	200	0		0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Funding		6,307,447	7,084,196		7,052,585	7,545,794	7,539,244	7,112,114	7,608,587	7,601,237
Excess Appropriation/(Funding)		0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0
Grand Total		6,307,447	7,084,196		7,052,585	7,545,794	7,539,244	7,112,114	7,608,587	7,601,237

Budget exceeds Authorized Appropriation in Regular Salaries, Operating Expenses and Conference & Travel Expenses due to a transfer from the Miscellaneous Federal Grant Holding Account.

Actual and Budget exceeds Authorized Appropriation in Purchase of Services due to a transfer from the Miscellaneous Federal Grant Holding Account.

Change Level by Appropriation

Appropriation: 896 - DHS--Admin Paying Account

Funding Sources: PWP - Administration Paying

Agency Request

Change Level		2009-2010	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL	2010-2011	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL
BL	Base Level	4,679,027	73	4,679,027	100.0	4,738,556	73	4,738,556	100.0
C02	New Program	135,000	0	4,814,027	102.9	137,400	0	4,875,956	102.9
C06	Restore Position/Approp	46,500	0	4,860,527	103.9	46,500	0	4,922,456	103.9
C07	Agency Transfer	109,709	2	4,970,236	106.2	111,973	2	5,034,429	106.2
C08	Technology	2,000	0	4,972,236	106.3	600	0	5,035,029	106.3

Executive Recommendation

Change Level		2009-2010	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL	2010-2011	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL
BL	Base Level	4,679,027	73	4,679,027	100.0	4,738,556	73	4,738,556	100.0
C02	New Program	133,400	0	4,812,427	102.9	135,000	0	4,873,556	102.8
C06	Restore Position/Approp	41,550	0	4,853,977	103.7	41,550	0	4,915,106	103.7
C07	Agency Transfer	109,709	2	4,963,686	106.1	111,973	2	5,027,079	106.1
C08	Technology	2,000	0	4,965,686	106.1	600	0	5,027,679	106.1

Justification

C02	DSB seeks operational support for 2 DHS/DSB Teachers for the Blind transferred internally within DHS to provide local teaching services and technological support to blind and severely visually impaired consumers from the Harrison and El Dorado area. This will increase contact hours and decrease travel. In addition, DSB requests funded appropriation to provide for Capital Outlay. This request is for federally funded equipment in the event that items normally purchased under Maintenance and Operation (Commitment Item 02) exceeds the cost limit and becomes a Capital expense item. DSB seeks funded appropriation for federally funded contracts with Centers for Independent Living (CILs) to provide outreach to Faith Based Organizations for job related information and referral services for minority individuals who are blind or severely visually impaired.
C06	DSB requests continuation of the operational support (Commitment Item 02 and Commitment Item 09) required for the five positions that were internally transferred within DHS to enable DSB to comply with restructuring plan required following 2007 Annual Federal Review.
C07	DSB seeks funded appropriation for two DHS/DSB Teachers for the Blind transferred within the Department. These positions will provide local teaching services and technological support to blind and severely visually impaired consumers in the Harrison and El Dorado area of Arkansas.
C08	DSB requests funded appropriation to provide for computers and software for the two DHS/DSB Teachers for the Blind requested to provide teaching services and technological support to blind and severely visually impaired individuals in the Harrison and El Dorado areas. The C08 change level is included in the DSB IT plan dollar amounts on Page 8 under In House Hardware and Page 9 under In House Software.

Change Level by Appropriation

Appropriation: 898 - DHS-Grants Paying Account

Funding Sources: PWE - Grants Paying

Agency Request

Change Level		2009-2010	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL	2010-2011	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL
BL	Base Level	2,373,558	0	2,373,558	100.0	2,373,558	0	2,373,558	100.0
C06	Restore Position/Approp	200,000	0	2,573,558	108.4	200,000	0	2,573,558	108.4

Executive Recommendation

Change Level		2009-2010	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL	2010-2011	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL
BL	Base Level	2,373,558	0	2,373,558	100.0	2,373,558	0	2,373,558	100.0
C06	Restore Position/Approp	200,000	0	2,573,558	108.4	200,000	0	2,573,558	108.4

Justification

C06	The request seeks funded appropriation to purchase services for blind or severely visually impaired persons in support of individual plans for employment. Purchase of services includes specialized supplies, equipment and services necessary for these individuals to complete their rehab plans for employment. Examples may include surgery, technological equipment, training college or Vo-tech tuition, books, and fees.
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