

DHS - Services For The Blind

Enabling Laws

Act 89 of 2016
A.C.A. §25-10-201 et seq.

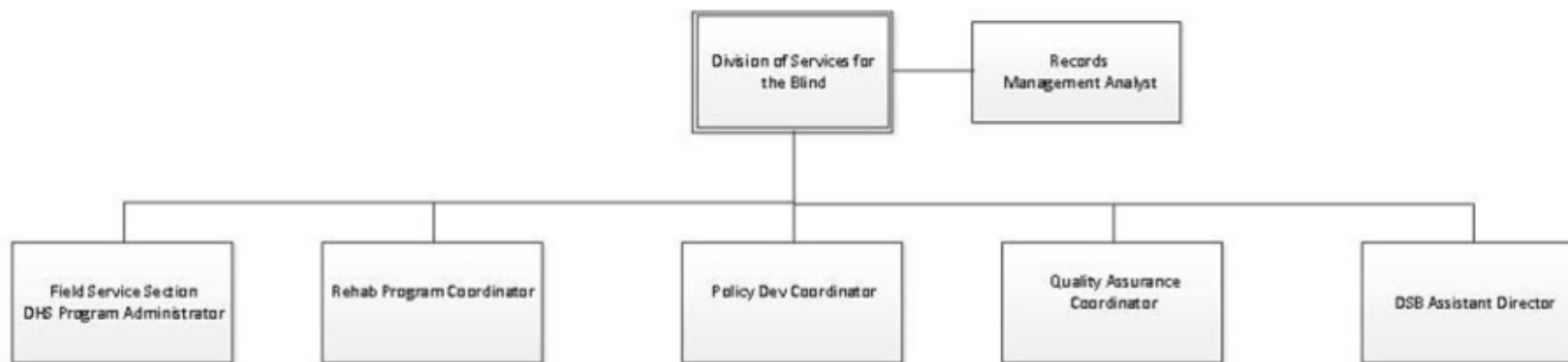
History and Organization

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.

Department of Human Services Division of Services for the Blind



Agency Commentary

The DHS Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) is responsible for the provision of vocational rehabilitation and related 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 Individuals who are Blind (OIB) Program. Specially trained counselors travel the state to arrange for, purchase or deliver services necessary to the vocational rehabilitation goals of blind persons in Arkansas. OIB 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. For VR, the division is required to provide a hard match (not in-kind) of 21.3%, and to maintain its previous year matching level, termed "Maintenance of Effort". For OIB, the match rate is 10%, which DSB is able to supplement by in-kind donations from the medical communities in Arkansas and the technological communities in Arkansas and across the nation.

For the 2017-2019 biennium DSB seeks approval of two* federally funded requests above base level. No additional general revenue is required for the two VR (jobs) program requests.

FEDERAL APPROPRIATION REQUEST:

*(1) PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES - RESTORATION OF 6 "TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT" COUNSELORS FOR BLIND YOUTH PREVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED UNDER MFG.

DSB seeks FY 2018 \$220,892 and FY 2019 \$220,292 in Commitment Item 00 in federal appropriation in fund center 896 to restore six Miscellaneous Federal Grant (MFG) positions to continue career exploration and other direct services to high school age youth and to increase quality and frequency of rehabilitation services to them in their local communities. All six positions are Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors assigned to the pre-employment transition program newly created under the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). One such restored position serves as a credentialed Benefits Counselor, assigned to advise youth and other clients on how to achieve growing independence through managing employment as a natural complement to other benefits with the targeted goal being reduction and eventual elimination of dependence on public support.

Additionally, DSB seeks FY 2018 \$82,085 and FY 2019 \$81,944 in Commitment Item 03, Personal Services Matching, as the calculated match for the six "Transition" Counselors requested above. Finally, the division requests \$65,385 each year in federal appropriation in fund center 896, Commitment Item 02, Maintenance and Operations, for FY 2018 and 2019 for operating expenses for the six L098C Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor MFG Positions requested above. No additional general revenue is required for restoration of these 6 positions or related costs.

*(2) VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM - CONTINUATION

DSB requests \$225,000 in federal appropriation in Commitment Item 02, fund center 896, for FY2018 and FY2019. \$65,000 of this amount is for the AWARE Client Database System annual upgrade and maintenance support each year and \$160,000 is for routine replacements of personal computer desktops, laptops and software licenses.

Additionally, DSB seeks \$487,267 per year in Commitment Item 10 in operating fund center 896 to address potential contracting needs emanating from recent changes to the Rehabilitation Act under federal WIOA. The act and its recently released regulations strongly encourage Memoranda of Understanding and Memoranda of Agreement with public and private service providers across the state and related contracting.

Finally, the division seeks federal appropriation of \$25,000 for FY2018 and FY2019 in operating Fund Center 896, Commitment Item 11 to provide for possible expenditure for Capital Outlay. 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 or to enable DSB to replace a federally funded vehicle used for itinerant travel to consumer's homes or places of employment should usage demand replacement in accordance with state standards.

No additional general revenue is required for any of the above fund center 896 requests.

In fund center 898, Assistance Grants and Aid Commitment Item 04, DSB seeks to restore the MFG amount of \$800,000 per year in federal VR appropriation to purchase adaptive equipment, braille instruction, surgical procedures and other specialized services to enable job-seekers who are blind to gain independence and secure appropriate employment. No additional general revenue is required for any of the above VR request.

Audit Findings

DIVISION OF LEGISLATIVE AUDIT
AUDIT OF :
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2015

Findings

Recommendations

Audit findings are reported under the DHS Administrative Services Division.

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

**ARKANSAS PLANNING BUDGETING & ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM
STATE CONTRACTS OVER \$50,000 AWARDED TO MINORITY OWNED BUSINESSES
Fiscal Year 2016
Required by A.C.A. 25-36-104**

AGENCY: 0710 DHS - Services For The Blind

Minority Business	Total Contract Awarded	Minority Type per A.C.A. 15-4-303 (2)					
		African American	Hispanic American	American Indian	Asian American	Pacific Islander American	Disabled Veteran
AR SPANISH INTERPRETERS & TRANSLATORS	\$1,120		X				
GODDESS PRODUCTS INC	\$3,246	X					

TOTAL NUMBER OF MINORITY CONTRACTS AWARDED 2

TOTAL EXPENDITURES FOR CONTRACTS AWARDED \$1,885,019

% OF MINORITY CONTRACTS AWARDED 0.36 %

Department Appropriation Summary

Historical Data

Agency Request and Executive Recommendation

Appropriation	2015-2016		2016-2017		2016-2017		2017-2018						2018-2019					
	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	4,787,360	75	6,655,954	82	6,707,870	76	6,101,088	76	7,206,717	82	7,206,717	82	6,104,667	76	7,209,555	82	7,209,555	82
898 Purchase of Services	3,981,703	0	5,819,977	0	5,019,977	0	5,019,977	0	5,819,977	0	5,019,977	0	5,019,977	0	5,819,977	0	5,019,977	0
Total	8,769,063	75	12,475,931	82	11,727,847	76	11,121,065	76	13,026,694	82	12,226,694	82	11,124,644	76	13,029,532	82	12,229,532	82

Funding Sources		%		%		%		%		%		%		%		%
General Revenue 4000010	1,883,424	21.5	1,883,424	15.1		16.9	1,883,424	14.5	1,883,424	15.4	1,883,424	16.9	1,883,424	14.5	1,883,424	15.4
Federal Revenue 4000020	6,885,639	78.5	10,587,835	84.9		83.1	11,143,270	85.5	10,343,270	84.6	9,241,220	83.1	11,146,108	85.5	10,346,108	84.6
Merit Adjustment Fund 4000055	0	0.0	4,672	0.0		0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total Funds	8,769,063	100.0	12,475,931	100.0		100.0	13,026,694	100.0	12,226,694	100.0	11,124,644	100.0	13,029,532	100.0	12,229,532	100.0
Excess Appropriation/(Funding)	0		0				0		0		0		0		0	
Grand Total	8,769,063		12,475,931				13,026,694		12,226,694		11,124,644		13,029,532		12,229,532	

Budget exceeds Authorized in Purchase of Services (FC 898) due to a transfer from the Miscellaneous Federal Grant Holding Account.

Agency Position Usage Report

FY2014 - 2015						FY2015 - 2016						FY2016 - 2017					
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	
76	66	10	76	0	13.16 %	76	70	12	82	-6	7.89 %	76	71	11	82	-6	6.58 %

Budget Number of Positions may exceed the Authorized Number due to transfers from the Miscellaneous Federal Grant Holding Account during the 2015-2017 Biennium.

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.

896 DHS - Administrative Paying Account

The Agency Base Level request for Operations is \$11,121,065 in FY2018 and \$11,124,644 in FY2019 with \$1,073,552 each year in general revenue funding and 76 budgeted Base Level positions.

The Agency Change Level request for Operations totals \$1,905,629 in FY2018 and \$1,904,888 in FY2019 and includes the following:

- Restore Positions (6): Regular Salaries and Personal Services Matching of \$302,977 in FY 2018 and \$302,236 in FY 2019 to restore six Miscellaneous Federal Grant (MFG) positions. All six positions are Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors assigned to the pre-employment transition program newly created under the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

- Operating Expenses of \$290,385 each year broken down as follows:
 - \$65,385 each year in support of the six L098C Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor MFG Positions requested above.
 - \$160,000 for routine replacements of personal computer desktops, laptops and software licenses.
 - \$65,000 for the AWARE Client Database System annual upgrade and maintenance support each year.
- Professional Fees of \$487,267 each year to address potential contracting needs emanating from recent changes to the Rehabilitation Act under federal WIOA. The act and its recently released regulations strongly encourage Memoranda of Understanding and Memoranda of Agreement with public and private service providers across the state and related contracting.
- Capital Outlay of \$25,000 each year 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 or to enable DSB to replace a federally funded vehicle used for itinerant travel to consumer's homes or places of employment should usage demand replacement in accordance with state standards.

898 DHS - Grants Paying Account

The Agency Base Level request for the Purchase of Services line item is \$5,019,977 each year of the biennium with general revenue of \$809,872 each year.

The Agency Change Level request for the Purchase of Services line item is \$800,000 per year to restore appropriation currently approved through a Miscellaneous Federal Grant to purchase adaptive equipment, braille instruction, surgical procedures and other specialized services to enable job-seekers who are blind to gain independence and secure appropriate employment.

896 DHS - Administrative Paying Account

The Executive Recommendation provides for the Agency Request.

898 DHS - Grants Paying Account

The Executive Recommendation provides for Base Level.

Appropriation Summary

Appropriation: 896 - DHS--Admin Paying Account

Funding Sources: PWP - Administration Paying

Historical Data

Agency Request and Executive Recommendation

Commitment Item		Historical Data			2017-2018			2018-2019		
		2015-2016 Actual	2016-2017 Budget	2016-2017 Authorized	Base Level	Agency	Executive	Base Level	Agency	Executive
Regular Salaries	5010000	2,603,306	3,057,681	2,904,731	2,822,913	3,043,805	3,043,805	2,825,813	3,046,105	3,046,105
#Positions		75	82	76	76	82	82	76	82	82
Extra Help	5010001	42,361	384,174	384,174	384,174	384,174	384,174	384,174	384,174	384,174
#Extra Help		12	12	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Personal Services Matching	5010003	1,020,733	1,147,844	1,090,828	1,078,131	1,160,216	1,160,216	1,078,810	1,160,754	1,160,754
Operating Expenses	5020002	947,098	1,650,022	1,584,637	1,584,637	1,875,022	1,875,022	1,584,637	1,875,022	1,875,022
Conference & Travel Expenses	5050009	72,801	55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000
Professional Fees	5060010	55,413	176,233	663,500	176,233	663,500	663,500	176,233	663,500	663,500
Data Processing	5090012	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Purchase of Services	5100004	3,981,703	5,819,977	5,019,977	5,019,977	5,819,977	5,019,977	5,019,977	5,819,977	5,019,977
Capital Outlay	5120011	45,648	185,000	25,000	0	25,000	25,000	0	25,000	25,000
Total		8,769,063	12,475,931	11,727,847	11,121,065	13,026,694	12,226,694	11,124,644	13,029,532	12,229,532

Funding Sources										
General Revenue	4000010	1,883,424	1,883,424		1,883,424	1,883,424	1,883,424	1,883,424	1,883,424	1,883,424
Federal Revenue	4000020	6,885,639	10,587,835		9,237,641	11,143,270	10,343,270	9,241,220	11,146,108	10,346,108
Merit Adjustment Fund	4000055	0	4,672		0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Funding		8,769,063	12,475,931		11,121,065	13,026,694	12,226,694	11,124,644	13,029,532	12,229,532
Excess Appropriation/(Funding)		0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0
Grand Total		8,769,063	12,475,931		11,121,065	13,026,694	12,226,694	11,124,644	13,029,532	12,229,532

Budget exceeds Authorized Appropriation in Regular Salaries, Personal Services Matching, Operating Expenses, Capital Outlay, Purchase of Services and Number of Positions 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		2017-2018	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL	2018-2019	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL
BL	Base Level	6,101,088	76	6,101,088	100.0	6,104,667	76	6,104,667	100.0
C01	Existing Program	25,000	0	6,126,088	100.4	25,000	0	6,129,667	100.4
C06	Restore Position/Approp	855,629	6	6,981,717	114.4	854,888	6	6,984,555	114.4
C08	Technology	225,000	0	7,206,717	118.1	225,000	0	7,209,555	118.1

Executive Recommendation

Change Level		2017-2018	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL	2018-2019	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL
BL	Base Level	6,101,088	76	6,101,088	100.0	6,104,667	76	6,104,667	100.0
C01	Existing Program	25,000	0	6,126,088	100.4	25,000	0	6,129,667	100.4
C06	Restore Position/Approp	855,629	6	6,981,717	114.4	854,888	6	6,984,555	114.4
C08	Technology	225,000	0	7,206,717	118.1	225,000	0	7,209,555	118.1

Justification

C01	CHANGE IN EXISTING PROGRAM CAPITAL OUTLAY-DSB seeks federal appropriation of \$25,000 for FY2018 and FY2019 in operating Fund Center 896, Commitment Item 11 to provide for possible expenditure for Capital Outlay. 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 or to enable DSB to replace a federally funded vehicle used for itinerant travel to consumer's homes or places of employment should usage demand replacement in accordance with state standards. No additional general revenue is required.
C06	RESTORE POSITION/APPROPRIATION- DSB seeks FY 2018 \$220,892 and FY 2019 \$220,292 in Commitment Item 00 in federal appropriation in fund center 896 to restore six Miscellaneous Federal Grant (MFG) positions to continue career exploration and other direct services to high school age youth and to increase quality and frequency of rehabilitation services to them in their local communities. All six positions are Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors assigned to the pre-employment transition program newly created under the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). One such restored position serves as a credentialed Benefits Counselor, assigned to advise youth and other clients on how to achieve growing independence through managing employment as a natural complement to other benefits with the targeted goal being reduction and eventual elimination of dependence on public support. Additionally, DSB seeks FY 2018 \$82,085 and FY 2019 81,944 in Commitment Item 03, Personal Services Matching, as the calculated match for the six "Transition" Counselors requested above. Finally, the division requests \$65,385 each year in federal appropriation in fund center 896, Commitment Item 02, Maintenance and Operations, for FY 2018 and 2019 for operating expenses for the six L098C Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor MFG Positions requested above. No additional general revenue is required for restoration of these 6 positions or related costs. Additionally, DSB seeks \$487,267 per year in Commitment Item 10 in operating fund center 896 to address potential contracting needs emanating from recent changes to the Rehabilitation Act under federal WIOA. The act and its recently released regulations strongly encourage Memoranda of Understanding and Memoranda of Agreement with public and private service providers across the state and related contracting. No additional general revenue is required.
C08	TECHNOLOGY MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS: DSB requests \$225,000 in federal appropriation in commitment item 02, fund center 896, for FY2018 and FY2019. \$65,000 of this amount is for the AWARE Client Database System annual upgrade and maintenance support each year and \$160,000 is for routine replacements of personal computer desktops, laptops and software licenses. No additional general revenue is required.

Change Level by Appropriation

Appropriation: 898 - DHS-Grants Paying Account
Funding Sources: PWP - Administration Paying

Agency Request

Change Level		2017-2018	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL	2018-2019	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL
BL	Base Level	5,019,977	0	5,019,977	100.0	5,019,977	0	5,019,977	100.0
C06	Restore Position/Approp	800,000	0	5,819,977	115.9	800,000	0	5,819,977	115.9

Executive Recommendation

Change Level		2017-2018	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL	2018-2019	Pos	Cumulative	% of BL
BL	Base Level	5,019,977	0	5,019,977	100.0	5,019,977	0	5,019,977	100.0
C06	Restore Position/Approp	0	0	5,019,977	100.0	0	0	5,019,977	100.0

Justification

C06	RESTORE POSITION/APPROPRIATION-In fund center 898, Assistance Grants and Aid Commitment Item 04, DSB seeks to restore the MFG amount of \$800,000 per year in federal VR appropriation to purchase adaptive equipment, braille instruction, surgical procedures and other specialized services to enable job-seekers who are blind to gain independence and secure appropriate employment. No additional general revenue is required.
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