

SCOB DVR Review and Recommendations

How can we work with DVR assist in the issues that Blind individuals currently experience when seeking assistance with employment?

Welcome and Thank you

- * We want to thank you for allowing us to come today.
- * Representing the SCOB here today we have:
 - * Roberto Torrez
 - * Janet Dicky
 - * Josephine Grove
 - * Douglas Tikkanen
 - * Lee Young
 - * Tom Langham (OBVI Acting Director)

Current issues:

- * How to apply for DVR services and level 1-3.
- * BEP program
- * DVR councilors specific focus for Blind
- * Consistency across offices for services
- * Timeliness when obtaining assistance
- * Business focused councilor knowledge

How to apply for DVR services and level 1-3.

- * How to apply?
- * Consistency across offices?
- * Client Status: 1, 2 or 3?
- * Currently employed who knows their position is ending?
- * Brand New client never been employed, or out of work for years now looking to return to work.
- * Recent Graduate completed education and independence training ready to work.

BEP program

- a) Could use some sensitivity training when dealing with consumers who are visually impaired
- b) The program administered more professionally
- c) No individual knowledgeable in working with blind that is capable of advocating, developing, and procurement of new sites.
- d) Staff with business knowledge background
- e) Currently the vendor training not very good
- f) No site development by DVR Staff and the bid process is inconsistent
- g) The failure by the SLA (State Licensing Agency) to consistently follow Administrative codes, Federal regulations, and committee by-laws
 - a) The failure to keep and maintain accountable records of the program assets.

DVR councilors specific focus for Blind

- * Currently councilors are general and not specific to helping the blind.
- * Employment options are BEP, developing your own plan, and/or using an agency to assist with finding employment
- * Ticket to work program
- * Other limited potentials.

Consistency across offices for services

- * This is pretty self explanatory, right now some offices can do things that other offices cannot when it comes to the blind issues this should be consistent in any office.

Timeliness when obtaining assistance

- * This ties into not only whether you are listed at level 1, 2, or 3.
- * This ties into getting items when you are a client like a new laptop or assessable technology assistance or training, other such items in a timely manner before you lose a job, or start a new job etc.

Business focused councilor knowledge

- * When trying to learn or develop a business plan we need this knowledge from our councilor.
- * When entering into the BEP program
- * When trying to market the blind employable individual to organizations instead of telling them how to apply.
- * When trying to market the BEP program to new clients that the blind can establish a new client.

Potential Solutions/Actions

Solutions:

How to apply for DVR services

- * Market the word out more regarding how to apply
 - * Social Media
 - * Email lists
 - * Facebook
 - * Companies who hire blind
 - * Paper materials for them to hand out
 - * Other associations like NFB, NISH, OBVI, etc...
- * Make sure to provide a full list of the services available

Solutions:

Blind client level 1, 2, or 3

- * Who should be at level 1?
 - * Individuals who are currently employed and feel their current positions are at risk.
 - * Individuals who've recently lost their position.
 - * Individuals in college who seek employment.
 - * Individuals who are returning to work after not being employed for a number of years.
 - * Any blind individual who wants to work should be at level 1 automatically.

Solutions: BEP program

- * Use current funds that come back through the program to advance the program further.
- * Create a business focused approach to new clients and land the business so that a blind BEP operator can step into the business.
- * Train the BEP program operators better especially when they are new.

Solutions:

BEP program continued

- * Seek out business professionals who would be willing to mentor BEP individual operators.
- * Ensure that the Bid process is more objective or even biased to help the blind in the program.
- * Provide sensitivity training to the Business Enterprise Program staff, when it comes to working with the blind.
- * Marketing/advocacy provided to develop additional sites.
- * Train current BEP administration about vision issues

BEP Solutions Continued

- * Hire an individual knowledgeable in blindness and is a strong advocate of the business enterprise program. (Janet has a suggestion for this person)
- * Refocus the goal of the SLA from its current;
 - * Recruitment
 - * Training
 - * Placing
- * To a new focus.....

BEP Continued new focus

- * Developing new locations
- * Expanding services in current locations
- * Up-grading facilities of the program and for the future.
- * (DWD60.01) Reorganize the staffing of the SLA to be more accountable, effective and cost effective.
- * Reinstate some of the DVR grant Federal dollars received from the Set Aside funds back to the program.

Solutions:

DVR councilors focus for the Blind

- * May be hard to have someone in every office whose focus is only the blind so solutions:
 1. Create a virtual team of Councilors whose focus is only the blind clients.
 2. Give a regional territory to councilors whose focus is only the blind clients
 3. Train the individuals who are currently responsible for the blind that more effort is necessary when working with the blind

Solutions:

DVR councilors focus for the Blind

- * This is self explanatory.
- * Each office should work in tandem when it comes to how they are working with their blind clients.
- * Teamwork should be used when trying to find employment and potentially even the vendors used to help find the blind employment.

Solutions:

Timeliness when obtaining assistance

- * Each blind individual seeking employment is at level 1 status
- * Each blind individual seeking assistance from DVR is at level 1 status.
- * Expedite authorization for requested assistance for the blind when it comes to items and technology.

Solutions:

Business focused councilor knowledge

1. This helps with BEP client marketing
2. This helps with corporation relations when trying to help the blind client find work.
3. This helps when it comes to marketing blind individuals to companies as qualified candidates for employment
4. This helps marketing to organizations that have a government contract because they can emphasize the desire of the government to have those organization raise their ratio of Disabled or former Veterans to 7% of their workforce and contractors

Other suggestions to help

- * Make sure all councilors know which are responsible for blind clients.
- * Use a system similar to the Federal government when dealing with the blind. SPCC.
- * Examine the structure of the BEP program and who is running it. Is it a business focused individual who can manage it efficiently yet more effectively.
- * Examine your employment vendors, who is able to understand the blind and market them to employers?
 - * Add vendors who understand, can, and will market.

Finally

* Real focus keys to solutions.

1. Focus on Marketing blind employees and the BEP program
2. Improve the speed of getting blind individuals their needed employment funding.
3. Move blind client to Level 1 status immediately.
4. Create a group of councilors whose focus is the blind and blind only. Adjust how you rate their goals, and their success.
5. Foster a culture of communication with blind or vision sensitivity and awareness.
6. Vendors who will market blind employees and BEP program