
JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE HEARING FISCAL YEAR 2020 BUDGET

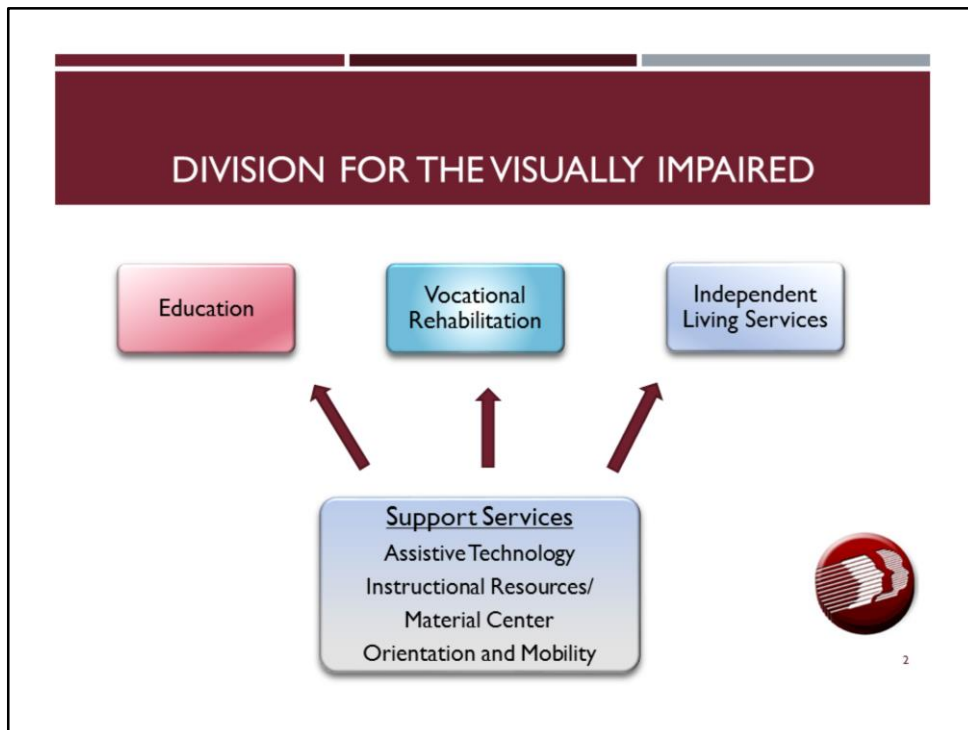


ELISHA JENKINS
DIVISION DIRECTOR

DIVISION FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED
Department of Health and Social Services
FEBRUARY 19, 2019
Legislative Hall, Joint Finance Committee Hearing Room

Good Afternoon, Representative Johnson, Senator McDowell, members of the Joint Finance Committee and members of the public. I am Elisha Jenkins, Director of the Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI). With me today is Sandra Miller, Deputy Director, and Olu Ogunsola, Senior Fiscal Administrative Officer.

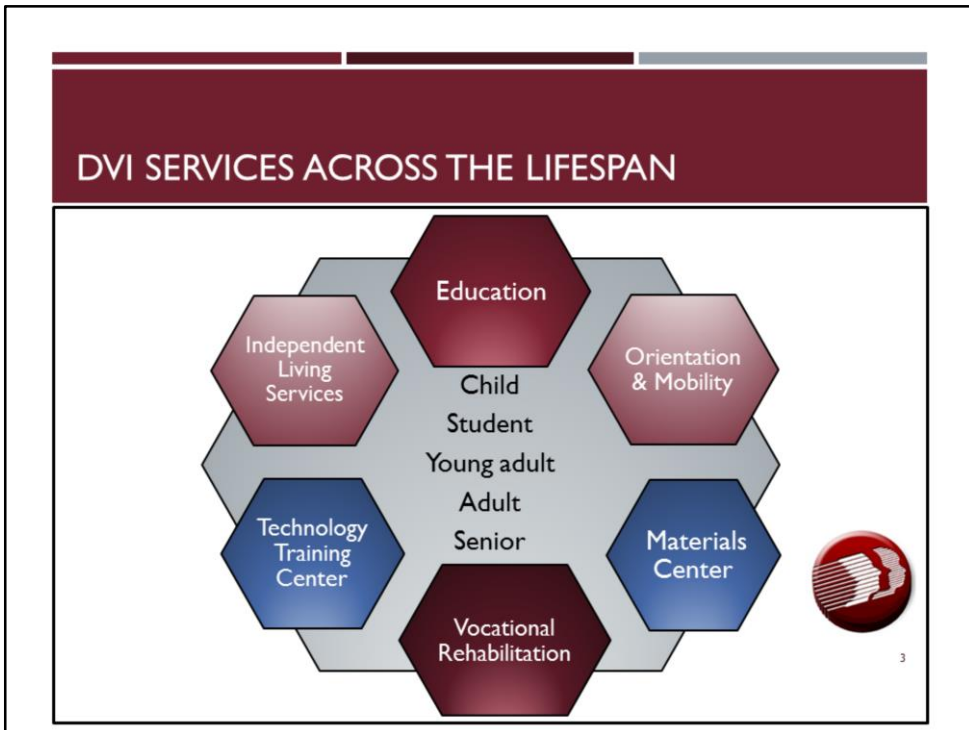
Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today and present our program updates, accomplishments and Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Governor's Recommended Budget.



DVI's mission is to provide educational, vocational and technical support to empower and foster independence for Delawareans with visual impairments.

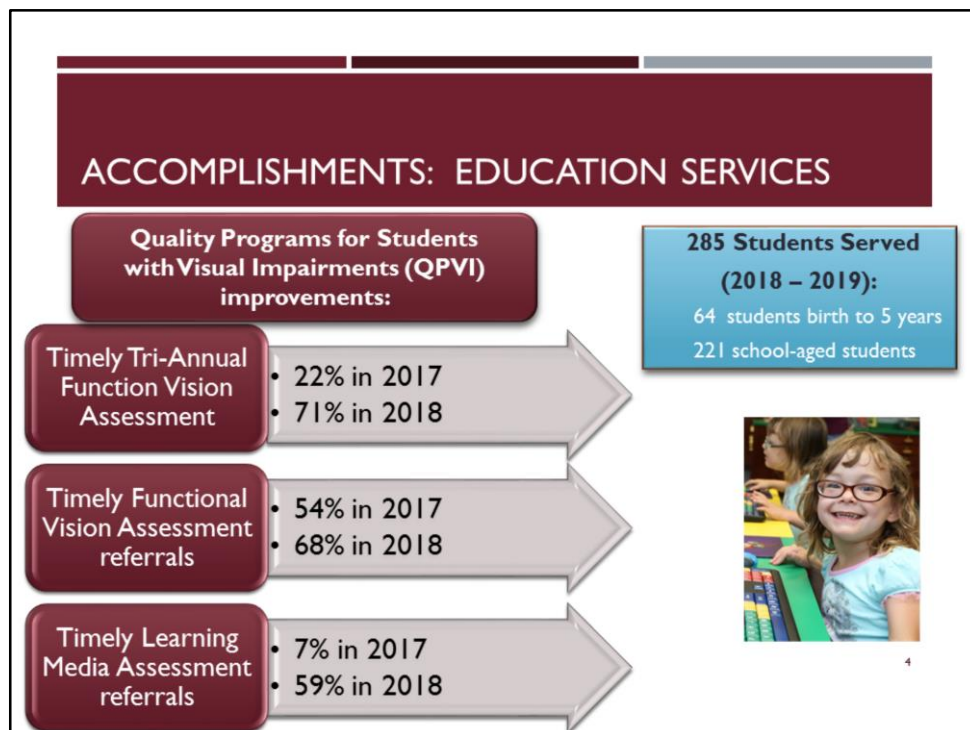
DVI services are designed to meet the vision-related needs of everyone from birth to senior citizens, through three main programming areas:

- **Education:** Our specialized team of educators support families from birth through their school years;
- **Vocational Rehabilitation:** Teens transitioning from high school and adults seeking employment may receive assistance with preparing for, obtaining and maintaining employment; and
- **Independent Living:** Consumers are provided adaptive techniques and access assistive technology designed to promote independence and aging in place.



This slide represents the various stages of the lifespan that DVI impacts for individuals who are blind or visually impaired. During the past fiscal year, DVI served 942 individuals which is 3.4% increase from the previous year. DVI works with consumers in many ways, but its core mission is to provide the tools necessary for an independent life.

DVI's service model provides easy access with its "one-stop" design. This is not a linear service delivery model, but one that ensures multiple access points based on individual needs. It promotes collaboration, interdisciplinary planning and continuity of service.



Starting with our youngest consumers, DVI educators teach skills and strategies that enable students with visual impairments to access information in both their academic curriculum and functional environment. Through DVI’s itinerant model, 16 educators currently serve 285 children.

Despite the national shortage of Teachers of the Visually Impaired, DVI is making significant progress on recruiting additional staff and reducing the student/teacher ratio. As our educators complete their Alternate Route to Certification, we move closer to the goal of a 14:1 ratio. What a significant accomplishment!

In addition, the Division continues to be engaged in Quality Programs for Students with Visual Impairments (QPVI) which provides standards and uniformity of practice and program accountability. As seen on the slide above, compared to the first year (2017) in which data was analyzed, our program has made significant improvements.

Our dedicated team is committed to resolving past education challenges, and your consistent support continues to reform the critical work of education for these students.

BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM (BEP)

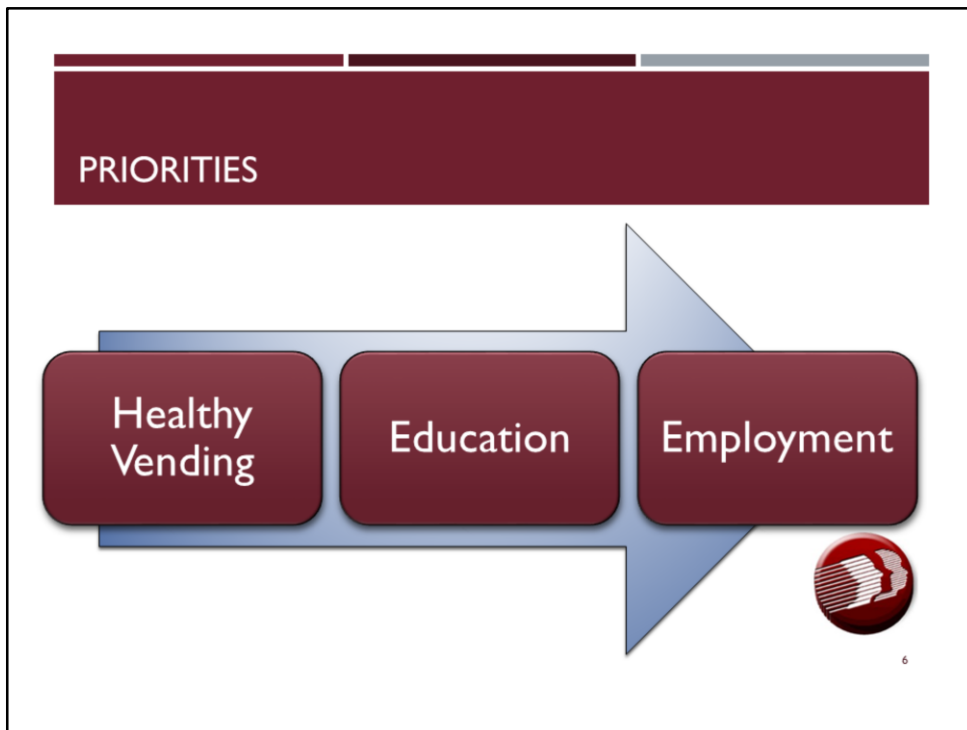
- 5 Business Enterprise Program Operators
- 8 Business Enterprise Program Locations
- Healthy Vending Initiatives

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Another program within DVI is the Business Enterprise Program (BEP). BEP provides entrepreneurial opportunities through the operation of vending facilities on state, federal and other property. According to Mississippi State University, nationally, BEP is one of the most successful programs ever enacted for the employment of people who are blind. In Delaware, there are currently 5 blind entrepreneurs operating 8 locations.

Locally and nationally, there is a steady downward trend in the number of blind entrepreneurs and facilities for them to operate. Another trend in the food service industry is the transition from full-service cafeterias to automated grab-n-go options, which is an area the program is embracing.

BEP is a unique program that relies on an integral partnership between the State Licensing Authority (DVI) and the Blind Vendors Committee. All decisions are made jointly, including which sites to maintain.



Healthy Vending: In FY 2018, the Governor’s Healthy Vending Initiative of providing healthier food and beverage options in the vending machines within state agencies and services centers, continued to see growth with gross sales of almost \$260,000 - a 7.3% increase from the previous year. Following a successful pilot, healthier snack options are now available in all vending machines operated by blind vendors this year.

Education: The education program hosted several events to provide opportunities for students to learn and practice Expanded Core Curriculum skills. Events included Mission Transition Week, Summer Skills Academy and many more. I would also like to thank you, on behalf of our dedicated team of educators, for the Loan Forgiveness Legislation that includes DVI’s Teachers of the Visually Impaired.

Employment: In FY 2018, DVI’s Vocational Rehabilitation Team exceeded both state and federal employment benchmarks and engaged with partners to strengthen our public workforce system. Aligning with the Governor’s priorities, DVI is a core partner in an initiative to ensure all students, including those with disabilities, graduate high school and are career and college ready.

As you may be aware, the Division was selected for review by the Joint Legislative and Oversight Sunset Committee. DVI is looking forward to this opportunity to share even more great information about our agency.

FY 2020 GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET

FY 2020 Governor's Recommended Budget (\$ in thousands)

	GF	ASF	NSF	Total
FTEs	51.0	1.0	19.0	71.0
Dollars (\$)	4,907.9	1,165.4	1,169.3	7,242.6

Budget Definitions:

GF – General Funds
ASF – Appropriated Special Funds
NSF – Non-Appropriated Special Funds
FTEs – Full Time Equivalent Positions

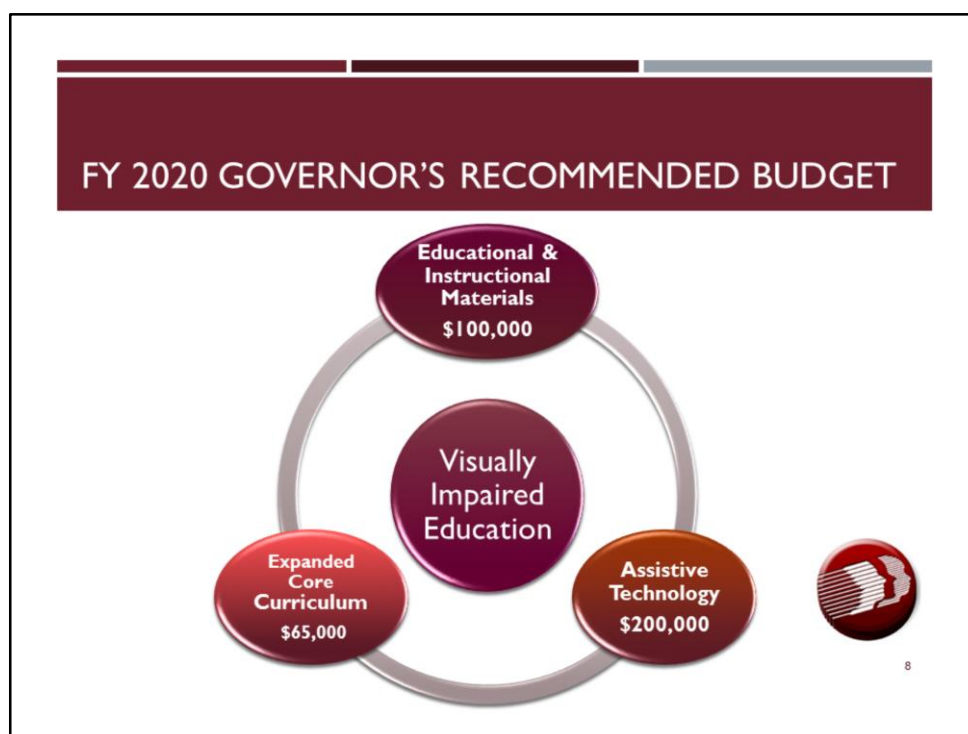


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The slide above shows the budget included in the FY 2020 Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB).

Our Division's FY 2020 GRB is:

- \$4,907.9 [Four Million, nine hundred seven thousand, nine hundred dollars] in General Funds;
- \$1,165.4 ASF [One million, one hundred sixty five thousand, four hundred dollars] in Appropriated Special Funds (ASF) spending authority; and
- \$1,169.3 [One million, one hundred sixty nine thousand, three hundred dollars] in Non-Appropriated Special Funds (NSF).



The FY 2020 GRB includes:

\$100,000 for Educational and Instructional Materials.

Obtaining accessible versions of instructional materials is critical for student success. With the long standing partnership with the Department of Correction's Men with a Message Program, the Instructional Resources and Materials Center transcribes, produces, or purchases braille, large print, graphics or digital pages.

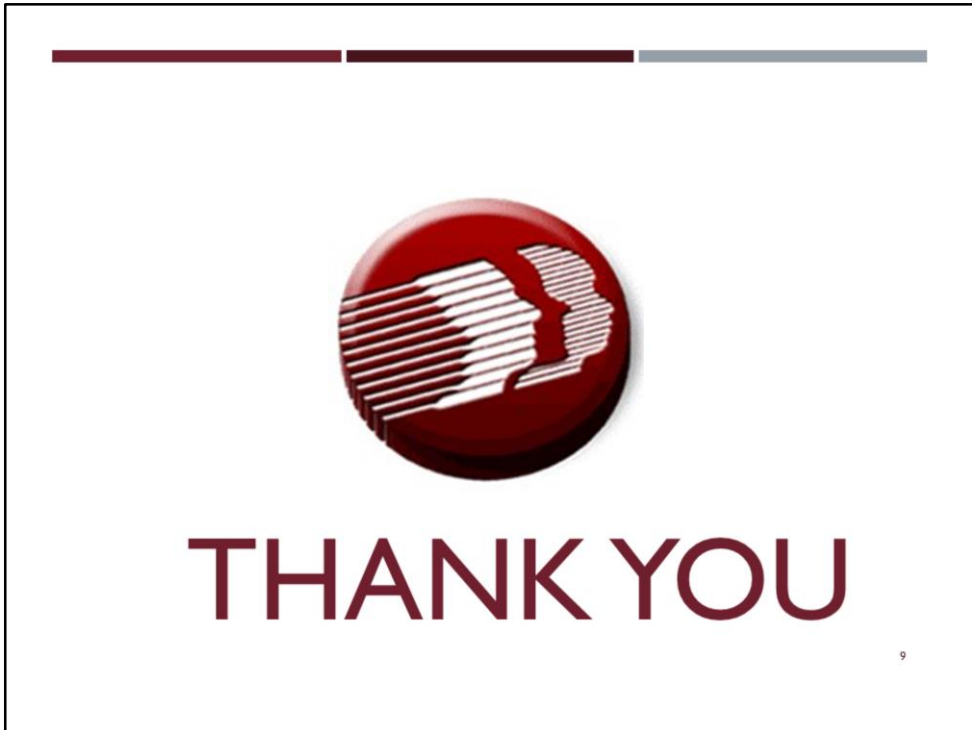
\$200,000 for Assistive Technology

Students with visual impairments face unique challenges in the educational environment. Not only must they be able to access text information across all curricular areas, but they also must be able to participate fully in instruction that is often rich with visual content. A student's need for assistive technology will likely change and evolve throughout his or her education, and in most cases, no single tool meets all students' needs.

\$65,000 for Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC)

The expanded core curriculum which is the body of skills needed by students with visual impairments to participate fully in school, work and daily life - is not an optional part of a student's educational program but, perhaps, the most essential part. Without these critically important skills, students who are visually impaired cannot access the standard core curriculum or engage in many of the activities that are basic to their own well-being. Expanding DVI's ability to systematically incorporate the nine domains of the ECC into programs currently offered dramatically affects the preparation of students with visual impairments.

The Division remains committed to continuing to explore flexible and creative options to ensure the students' needs are met, and collaboratively engage with stakeholders and aspires to continuously improve and expand our services.



Thank you for your continuing support of the Division for the Visually Impaired.
I'm happy to answer any questions that you may have at this time.