
JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE HEARING
FISCAL YEAR 2019 BUDGET



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DIVISION DIRECTOR

DIVISION FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED
Department of Health and Social Services
FEBRUARY 20, 2018
Legislative Hall, Joint Finance Committee Hearing Room

Good Afternoon, Senator McDowell, Representative Smith, 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 Debbie Harrington, 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) 2019 budget request.

DIVISION OVERVIEW

For FY 2017, the division's registry included 3,266 residents.

Visual categories of DVI consumers:

- Totally blind - 4%
- Legally blind - 67%
- Severely visually impaired - 29%

Age range of DVI consumers:

- 0-18 – 11%
- 19-54 – 24%
- 55-79 – 30%
- 80 and over – 35%



DVI maintains an electronic registry of almost 3,300 consumers and this past fiscal year we served 911 individuals. We regularly engage in community outreach in an effort to assist all those who may benefit from services. Over the past year, DVI has seen an overall growth of 9%.

DVI works with its consumers in many ways, but its core mission is to provide the tools necessary for an independent life.

EDUCATION SERVICES

School Year 17/18 – 279 Students Served

- 216 - school-aged students
- 63 - birth to 5 years



The agency provides education services based on the expanded core curriculum via an itinerant model to 279 students with visual impairments throughout the state.

Students with visual impairments are taught skills and strategies that enable them to access information in both their academic curriculum and functional environment by DVI's teachers.

Over the past year the Division has had productive conversations with the Department of Education. This ongoing dialogue includes technical assistance, appraisal of the division's strategic plan for education, and evaluating methods for the education of children with visual impairments.

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES AND MATERIALS CENTER

- In FY 2017 the Instructional Resources and Materials Center produced the following:

Braille pages: 31,312

Large print pages: 44,335

Graphic pages: 2,090

Digital pages: 3,162



- Inventory
 - K-12 Equipment – 5,381 items
 - Books – 12,716 books
- Men with a Message



The Materials Center provides accessible instructional resources and materials in braille, large print, digital textbooks and graphics to students with visual impairments.

I'd like to highlight DVI's Men with a Message Program, a partnership with James T. Vaughn Correctional Center, in which inmates are trained as braillists to produce materials for students with visual impairments.

INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES (ILS)

FY 2017 ILS served 483 consumers

New Initiatives:

- Summer Skills Academy
- BELL Academy
- A Matter of Balance Program



In FY 2017, 483 Independent Living Services (ILS) consumers were trained on activities of daily living in a community-based setting.

Traditionally ILS served only adults, but this past year both the Summer Skills Academy and the National Federation of the Blind's BELL Academy were piloted for students.

For older adults, DVI facilitates workshops as a part of the Matter of Balance Program. This fall prevention program provides strategies that decrease the risk of experiencing a devastating fall.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Vocational Rehabilitation served 334 consumers in FY 2017

- Business Engagement
- Americans with Disabilities Act Trainers



In FY 2017 Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) provided employment services to 334 consumers and worked with partners to strengthen our public workforce system.

An important aspect of the VR program is business engagement. VR helps businesses realize the benefits of employing people with visual impairments through technical support and Americans with Disabilities Act training.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

106 consumers served in FY 2017

- Assistive Technology (AT) Centers house 45 assistive technologies
- Equipment Demonstrations
- Virtual Training



We all know that technology has changed our lives. However, few lives have been so dramatically affected as those with visual impairments.

DVI assisted 106 consumers to obtain life-changing AT devices and the technology center is home to forty-five types of devices.

This past year DVI held virtual training sessions, hosted smart glasses demonstrations, and accessibility workshops.

ORIENTATION & MOBILITY SERVICES

DVI's Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists served 271 consumers in FY 2017

- Partner with multiple agencies to ensure Delaware's roadways, crosswalks, and transportation systems are fully accessible
- Sensitivity Training



DVI's Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists provided instruction to 271 consumers of all ages to ensure safe and independent travel in FY 2017.

The team partnered with organizations to expand accessible pedestrian signals, public transportation options and other transit-focused activities for persons with visual impairments.

After a DVI parent raised concerns about the potential for a negative interaction with law enforcement, DVI provided sensitivity training to the police departments of Wilmington, New Castle County and the State of Delaware. This customized training is available to all entities upon request.

BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM (BEP)

- FY 2017 Earnings - \$196,000
- 5 operators servicing 8 locations
- Strategic Planning 2017-2022



The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) provides statewide entrepreneurial opportunities in vending and food service located within government buildings. FY 2017 earnings totaling \$196,000 were a result of 5 operators running 8 locations.

DVI explores opportunities to expand business and promote independent operations for BEP and blind vendors. In FY 2017 planning efforts resulted in the development of strategic goals for the next five years – the most significant being the introduction of legislation allowing blind vendors access to contracts within residential facilities and schools.

LOOKING AHEAD

- Governor's Action Item
- Outreach and Awareness
- Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment
- Education



The Division will continue to work on:

- **Healthy Vending:** In July, DVI piloted one of Governor Carney's action items - healthy vending - with a goal to increase healthy options to 40%. DVI is working with the Division of Public Health to ensure the transition allows for greater healthy vending yet does not affect the income of blind vendors.
- **Outreach:** The Division will continue to expand outreach efforts through community event participation and increased social media presence.
- **Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA):** DVI will complete a CSNA and analyze the results. The purpose of this CSNA is to assist in the effort to increase independence by providing a base of evidence on which priorities, goals and strategic planning can be developed.
- **Education:** DVI is committed to improving and enhancing our statewide education services and achieving outcomes defined in its strategic plan.

FY 2019 GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET

FY 2019 Governor's Recommended Budget (\$ in thousands)

	GF	ASF	NSF	Total
FTEs	46.0	1.0	21.0	68.0
Dollars (\$)	\$4,445.2	\$1,165.4	\$1,169.3	\$6,779.9



The slide above shows the budget included in the FY 2019 Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB).

Our Division's FY 2019 GRB is:

- \$4,445.2 [Four million, four hundred forty five thousand dollars] in General Funds;
- \$1,165.4 ASF [One million, one hundred sixty five thousand dollars] in Appropriated Special Funds (ASF) spending authority; and
- \$1,169.3 [One million, one hundred sixty nine thousand dollars] in Non-Appropriated Special Funds (NSF).

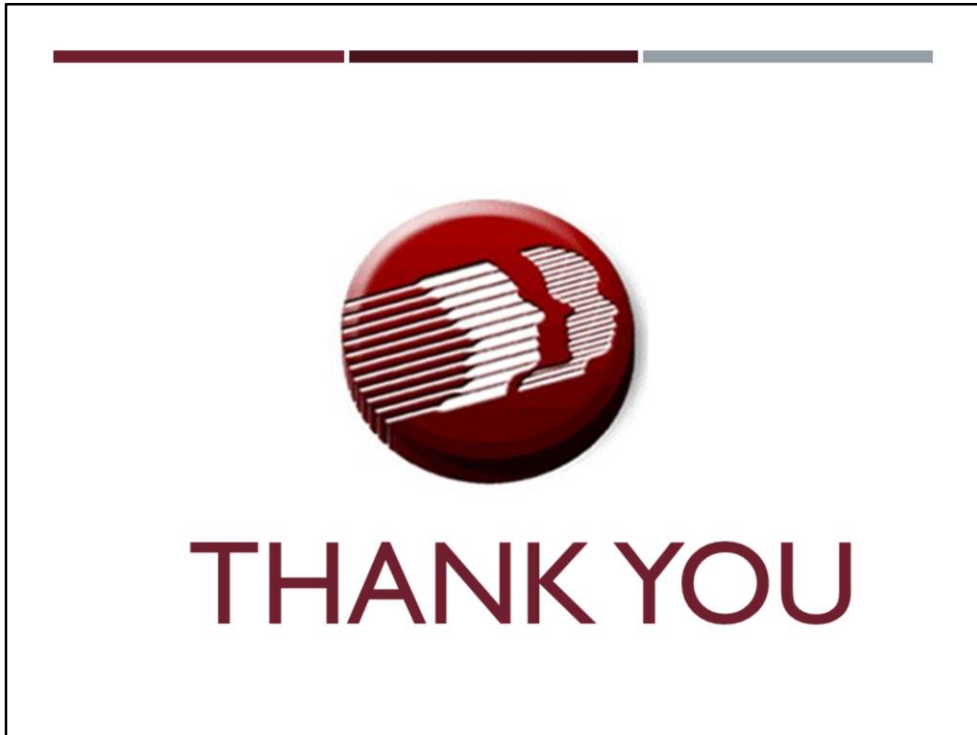
FY 2019 GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET

\$219,400 for
Contractual Services
for Teachers of the
Visually Impaired (TVIs)



The FY 2019 GRB includes: \$219,400 for contractual Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI) to support the Division's Educational program. These funds will be added to the Division's base budget. This funding request will allow us to maintain the Fiscal Year 2018 level of service while we continue to explore free or low cost program improvements that meet the goals set by the Governor's Action Plan.

The agency remains committed to continuing to explore flexible and creative options to ensure the students' needs are met. We have heard our stakeholders, are collaboratively engaged and aspire 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.