

**JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE HEARING  
FISCAL YEAR 2025 BUDGET**



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Department of Health and Social Services  
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Good Morning Senator Paradee, Representative Williams, members of the Joint Finance Committee and members of the public.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today and present our accomplishments and Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Governor's Recommended Budget.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS



### Education Updates

- Program leadership
- Teacher recruitment
- Senate Bill 32

### Digital Accessibility

- Tools & resources
- Partnerships



**Education Updates:** The Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) employs itinerant Teachers of the Visually Impaired, or TVIs, who teach children to access their core curriculum and help schools provide support to students with visual impairments. An Education Administrator was recently hired to oversee the program. And, thanks to a successful job reclassification, DVI is recruiting for an assistant administrator to support the program. TVI student caseloads were redesigned, using a team model, to eliminate service gaps and ensure a structured approach to mentoring. The model was successfully piloted during the 22/23 school year and fully implemented this year. In addition to structural changes, it is important to highlight teacher recruitment efforts. Over a two-year period, four certified TVIs accepted employment elsewhere and one retired. Through aggressive recruitment efforts, DVI has maintained a student a teacher ratio of 16:1, significantly lower than the required 28:1. Finally, Senate Bill 32, which added students with visual impairments and blindness to the list of programs conducted on a 12-month schedule passed last session. DVI would like to thank you for making this change and ensuring the TVIs work schedule was accurately represented.

**Accessibility:** DVI has been providing training and resources to the Department of Health and Social Services employees who regularly create forms, documents, emails, and flyers, using Office 365 and copiers, that will be shared with walk-in customers co-workers. DVI actively participates on the State Council for persons with Disabilities, Digital Accessibility Committee and works closely with the Department of Technology and Information, Digital Accessibility Senior Manager in support of statewide accessibility efforts.

## FY 2025 GOVERNOR'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET

### FY 2025 Governor's Recommended Budget (\$ in thousands)

	GF	ASF	NSF	Total
FTEs	47		18	65
Dollars (\$)	\$5,588.3	\$1,050.0	\$1,484.0	\$8,122.3



**Budget Definitions:**

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

The slide above shows the budget included in the FY 2025 Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB).

Our Division's FY 2025 GRB is:

- \$5,588.3 [Five Million, Five Hundred Eighty-Eight Thousand, Three Hundred dollars] in General Funds (GF);
- \$1,050.0 [One Million, Fifty Thousand dollars] in Appropriated Special Fund (ASF) spending authority; and
- \$1,484.0 [One Million, Four Hundred Eighty-Four Thousand dollars] in Non-Appropriated Special Funds (NSF).

These funds will allow us to maintain the FY 2024 level of service while we continue to explore no and/or low-cost program improvements.

## LOOKING AHEAD



- Business Enterprise Program
- Community training
- Person-centered approach



The Business Enterprise Program (BEP), an entrepreneurial initiative provided through the DVI vocational rehabilitation program, has doubled the number of participants in the past year. This program helps people who are blind to become business owners and to access prioritized state and federal vending contracts. DVI is pursuing new vending opportunities, across the state, to assist the vendors to increase their business and income.

Sensitivity training, designed show people what it's like to have a visual impairment, is something DVI offered for many years. Prior to the public health emergency, training was expanded to community partners and offered in regular intervals. DVI has increased face-to-face training to organizations such as police departments and the HOPE Center. As a result of this training, police departments have learned how a visually impaired person may respond differently to police directives. We look forward to furthering expansion during FY25.

No agency is an island, and as such, working in a collaborative way with all DHSS agencies – in addition to other state departments – is imperative to the well-being and success of our constituents. DVI has been training its staff on a person-centered approach and has found this approach to be very beneficial to constituents. DVI intends to update internal processes and training will continue into the upcoming year.

DIVISION FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

THANK YOU



Thank you for the opportunity to share with you the challenges and opportunities facing the Division for the Visually Impaired.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have.