

Minnesota State Rehabilitation
Council for the Blind



Annual Report

October 1, 2008 - September 30, 2009

Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	2
MISSION AND VISION	3
MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR.....	4
DIRECTOR’S COMMENTS	5
COMMITTEE REPORTS	7
Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee	7
Minority Outreach Committee	11
Vendor Outcomes and Measures Committee.....	13
Deafblind Committee.....	13
Senior Services Committee.....	14
The Child Committee	15
Communication Center Committee	16
TASK FORCES	18
Needs Assesment Task Force	18
APPENDICES	19
Appendix I Council Members.....	19
Appendix II Council Work Plan FFY2009.....	21
Appendix III Federal Standards and Indicators	24
Appendix IV FFY2009 Goals, Priorities, and Strategies.....	26

Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

Annual Report

Introduction

Long before it was required by federal law, blind consumers and Minnesota State Services for the Blind (SSB) recognized the wisdom of developing a partnership. In 1985, the Advisory Council for the Blind was formed. Prior to its existence in federal law, the majority of the membership of the Advisory Council for the Blind was composed of blind consumers with some representation from the business community. The Federal Government mandated the existence of a State Rehabilitation Advisory Council for the Blind in 1992 and the existing Minnesota Advisory Council for the Blind was expanded to comply with federal requirements.

In August, 1998, the Rehabilitation Act was again changed to rename this federally mandated council by deleting the word “advisory” and expanding its duties. The renamed State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B) is now asked to carry out its responsibilities after consultation with the Governor’s Workforce Development Council and in partnership with SSB. The SRC-B’s role is still advisory in relation to SSB; however, SSB’s relationship with the SRC-B is no longer discretionary. The implications of these changes indicate a stronger directive for the SRC-B and SSB to work in a more equal relationship.

The SRC-B has increased responsibilities to work in partnership with SSB to develop, agree to and review state goals and priorities. This is accomplished by evaluating programs for rehabilitation and submitting progress reports to the commissioner and in an annual report to the Governor. The SRC-B still has responsibility for overseeing services provided by public and private agencies, and now must review employment outcomes as well as service outcomes for blind people.

The SRC-B now has a stronger role in coordinating efforts with other state and federally mandated councils. Minnesota has made an effort to avoid duplication of these councils since the early days of our Advisory Council for the Blind. The Minnesota SRC-B has always had members that represented the Statewide Independent Living Council, advocacy organizations for the blind, advocacy organizations for children with disabilities, and representatives of business, industry, and labor. Another responsibility of the SRC-B is to enhance its current organizational contacts to incorporate a system of working with the Governor’s Workforce Development Council.

This report is produced pursuant to federal law, Section 105(c) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which calls for each state rehabilitation council to prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor or appropriate state entity and the Commissioner of the Federal Rehabilitation Services Administration.

Mission and Vision

Mission Statement for the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

The Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind, working on behalf of Minnesotans who are blind, visually impaired, or Deafblind is charged with insuring that State Services for the Blind is in compliance with mandates under Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act. The Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind strives to insure that Minnesotans who are blind, visually impaired, or Deafblind receive the best possible services under the law.

Vision Statement for the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

The State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B) will be a catalyst for the emergence of State Services for the Blind (SSB) as a national leader in the development, implementation and continuous improvement of the quality of service programs and education for persons of all ages who are blind, visually impaired or Deafblind throughout our state.

The SRC-B, in conjunction with SSB, will strive to insure people who are blind, visually impaired or Deafblind are made aware of the full array of services available to them whether aimed at adjustment to blindness training, independent living, employment or education.

The SRC-B will work to make employers aware that people who are blind, visually impaired or Deafblind have tremendous abilities for employment today and must be included in planning for the workforce of the future.

It is our vision that persons who are blind, visually impaired or Deafblind will enjoy full equality of opportunity, education, complete integration in the life of our communities and appropriate employment which fulfills each individual's needs and aspirations.

Message from the Chair

The following document is a presentation to you about a valuable partnership between the state government's multi-service agency for the blind and blind people themselves. We are the Minnesota State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B) and, while we are federally mandated to work with the vocational rehabilitation services, we undertake to give advice regarding all facets of the agency. They include the Senior Services Unit and the Communication Center. In this report, you can find summaries from our very active committees which are the heart of what we do. This could not be accomplished without the involvement of members of the community who volunteer without being appointed to the Council. Their work is appreciated.

I became chair of this Council in February of 2009 and would like to give a big thank you to my predecessor, Rebecca Kragnes. Rebecca worked tirelessly with all our committees to make sure they were on task and monitoring progress with our goals and priorities.

In the past year we completed our three-year needs assessment covering such areas as the needs of seniors, veterans, minorities, transition-age students (starting at age 14), assistive technology, etc. Another endeavor from our agency was to develop a request for proposal for vendors who wish to train SSB staff in their adjustment-to-blindness. Council members and others were invited to submit comments as to how to improve the current training. Our main suggestion was that the training be lengthened. It is being increased to seven weeks of training.

A document reviewing all the Council recommendations to SSB is an attachment to the agency's state plan and is available to the public.

SSB is going through major staff changes. The Council plans to be involved in choosing SSB's new director and plans to help all new staff come to know the importance of a positive partnership between them and us, the blind customers whom they serve. We are proud of our agency's accomplishments but we are most proud of their willingness to listen to us. We look forward to continued cooperation and progress.

Judy Sanders, Chair

Director's Comments

This past year, 2009, was filled with changes at State Services for the Blind and the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind. In February the chairperson's gavel was passed from Rebecca Kragnes to Judy Sanders. During her two years as chair, Ms. Kragnes worked tirelessly to ensure a strong partnership between the Council and SSB. Since assuming the chair in February, Ms. Sanders has continued and strengthened that tradition of partnership. SSB recognizes and applauds the positive and constructive role the chair continues to play in assisting to improve services and outcomes at SSB.

In December of 2008, Bonita Kallestad, representative from the Client Assistance Program, resigned from the Council after many years of service, her resignation resulting from budget cuts at the Client Assistance Program. Over the years Ms. Kallestad played a key role in numerous Council committees and had a special commitment to the Customer Satisfaction and Goals and Priorities Committee.

Council terms for Lynette Boyer, Elizabeth Bruber and Rebecca Kragnes all ended during this past year and, reflective of their commitment to the work of the group, each agreed to continue to serve until new appointments are made by the governor.

During 2009 we lost a true professional colleague and friend, Mary Archer, who passed away all too suddenly in September. Mary was supervisor of the Braille section and was instrumental in improving our braille service. She made certain the Council, among other customers, received high quality braille in a timely manner. Mary is greatly missed and we are thankful for having had known and worked with her at SSB.

In June, Chuk Hamilton, SSB Director, announced his retirement and that he would be assuming a temporary position at SSB later in the summer. Chuk had been with the agency for 33 years and felt it was time for a change. We look forward to him working on a variety of projects important to blind, visually impaired and Deafblind Minnesotans. The search for a new SSB director has begun and we hope to have a permanent leader on board in the very near future. DEED leadership has made clear the Council will be involved in that process.

In addition to Mary Archer and Chuk Hamilton, there were numerous other staff changes, including the retirement of long-time Audio Services supervisor Ellie Sevdy. All told, staff with more than 250 years of combined service left SSB in 2009.

While we dearly miss the experience, wisdom and institutional knowledge of former staff, their departure opens the door for new people to join in our important work. In the past year some just outstanding people have come to SSB with fresh ideas and perspectives on ways to improve services and realize the SSB mission: to facilitate the achievement of vocational and personal independence by Minnesotans who are blind, visually impaired or Deafblind.

There were a number of events in federal fiscal year 2009, many being directly aligned with efforts and participation of the Council.

- Together the Council and SSB completed its Tri-Annual Needs Assessment, identifying service needs, goals, priorities and strategies for addressing the needs.
- SSB, following substantial input and advice from the Council, is putting in place a more comprehensive “Introduction to Blindness and Visual Impairment —PHASE II” training program for new staff. This reflects a substantial investment of time and money in its staff and the importance SSB places on a solid foundation in blindness..
- Plans are in place for the prudent and effective use by SSB of one-time American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) dollars to develop the infrastructure of the organization and improve employment outcomes of customers. These plans include specific efforts for the state of Minnesota to develop and implement technology accessibility standards for its systems, including web sites, in order to expand employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities
- Seventy-eight persons achieved an employment outcome in the Workforce Development Unit. We didn’t meet our placement goal for the year and we must do better. ARRA dollars are focused on giving us increased capacity and structures for improved employment outcomes.
- Over 3,000 persons were served by the Senior Services unit.
- Continue work on ensuring the Communication Center has a stable information technology platform to support its services to the people of Minnesota.
- In its ongoing effort to reach out and market its programs, over 10,000 pieces of SSB-related material were passed out at the Minnesota State Fair by staff and volunteers, including Council members.
- We celebrated the 40th Anniversary of the Radio Talking Book with the showing throughout the year on Minnesota Public Television of a specially commissioned program, "ON AIR: 40 years of Radio Talking Book." The program presented all SSB services and highlighted the RTB. It was the subject of a number of DVD release parties held across Minnesota in 2009.

These accomplishments are the result of the input and commitment of the Council, the quality and hard work of SSB staff, the perseverance of customers, and the contributions of our many volunteers. I thank you all.

Richard Strong
Acting Director

Committee Reports

Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee

*Jennifer Dunnam--Chair, Ken Trebelhorn, Steve Jacobson, Rebecca Kragnes, Tom Scanlan.
SSB staff—Pam Brown, Cathy Carlson, and Jennifer Beilke.*

CHARGE: This committee exists to carry out specific duties contained in federal regulation for the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. These include:

1. Conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of and consumer satisfaction with the functions of the Department of Employment and Economic Development; Vocational Rehabilitation services provided within the state (except adjustment to blindness and technology services), and the employment outcomes of persons served.
2. In collaboration with SSB, evaluate the extent to which SSB achieved its goals and priorities, strategies used, and factors that impeded success and performance on the federal standards and indicators.
3. Jointly with other committees of the Council, and in partnership with SSB, develop and, as necessary, revise an annual statement of goals and priorities.

2009 Report

The Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee is to review the effectiveness of and customer satisfaction with State Services for the Blind's Vocational Rehabilitation program and employment outcomes of persons served by SSB. The Committee is also to evaluate the extent to which SSB achieved its goals and priorities and met the standards and indicators set by the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

Customer Satisfaction Survey

The Committee reviewed the Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS) results through March 31, 2009. Five survey items were analyzed to compare the results for years ending 3/31/05, 3/31/06, 3/31/07, and 3/31/08. While there has been some fluctuation in results, no significant changes have taken place from year to year.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY REVIEW
for Customer Satisfaction & Outcomes and Measures Committee
Minnesota Rehabilitation Council for the Blind

Summary	YE 3/31/06	YE 3/31/07	YE 3/31/08	YE 3/31/09
Q1: Overall satisfaction with services provided	81%	82%	84%	83%
Q2: Extent to which services have met expectations	71%	77%	77%	78%
Q3: Comparison with "ideal" set of services	73%	72%	80%	77%
Q5 (now Q4): Satisfied that counselor (staff) understood customer's needs	85%	79%	88%	91%
Q10 (now Q5): How satisfied are you with the time it usually took to get your answer	83%	80%	85%	87%

Additionally, the committee reviews the verbatim comments in response to questions 8 and 9 regarding services customers found most helpful and areas needing improvement. The committee tracks the categories of comments receiving the three highest percentages from quarter to quarter.

The data for FFY09 were as follows:

Question 8: Services customers found most helpful:

COMMENTS	APR-JUN 2008	JUL-SEP 2008	OCT-DEC 2008	JAN-MAR 2009
Highest	Developing and learning job-related skills: 36% (24)	Developing and learning job-related skills: 46% (31)	Developing and learning job-related skills 37% (23)	Developing and learning job-related skills 44% (31)
2nd	Resources 27% (18)	Resources 24% (16)	Resources to help job search 24% (15)	Resources 28% (20)
3 rd	job Search Skills 27% (18)	Job Search Resources 21% (14)	Financial help 24% (15)	Job search skills 27% (19)

Question 9 What about the services could be improved:

COMMENTS	APR-JUN 2008	JUL-SEP 2008	OCT-DEC 2008	JAN-MAR 2009
Highest	Provide more service(s) 52% (33)	Unrelated 49% (33)	Provide more services 50% (30)	Provide more services (41%)
2 nd	Unrelated: 40% (25)	Provide more service(s) 44% (30)	Resources/Financial and Material support 45% (27)	Improve quality of services (21%)
3 rd	Improve quality of service: 18% (11)	Improve quality of service 21% (14)	Improve quality of services 20% (12)	Resources-F&M support (9%)

In addition, the members of the committee also read the verbatim comments to determine if trends or issues specific to SSB arise which may not be apparent from these categories. No significant trends were identified from this data.

For the complete Customer Satisfaction Survey results see:
www.deed.state.mn.us/customersurvey/ssb/index.htm

Progress on FFY09 Goals and Priorities:

Goal and Priority #1: Employment Outcomes

Although the Workforce Development Unit assisted 78 individuals to become successfully employed, RSA Indicator 1.1 was not met. All strategies to assist the WorkForce Development Unit to meet this goal were successfully met and/or implemented.

Goal and Priority #2: Minority Service Rate

By the end of FFY09, 79 persons from minority backgrounds had exited services. SSB did not meet RSA indicator 2.1. All strategies to assist the WorkForce Development Unit to meet this goal were successfully met and/or implemented.

Goal and Priority #3: Deafblind Outreach and Service

During FFY09, 7 individuals with a dual sensory loss secured employment as a result of services from SSB. This goal was met. Additionally, all strategies to assist the WorkForce Development Unit to meet this goal were successfully met and/or implemented.

Goal and Priority #4: Increased customers satisfaction with services

By the end of March 2009, the annual overall satisfaction with services provided by SSB was 83% in response to question 1 on the Customer Satisfaction Survey. This goal was not met. However, all strategies to assist the WorkForce Development Unit to meet this goal were successfully met and/or implemented.

Goal and Priority #5: Increase the number of referrals of transition-age students to SSB. This goal and priority was added in FY09 with the intention of increasing not only the number of referrals of transition-aged students as well as the number who are referred between ages 14-16. The initial measure of whether or not this goal has been met is simply the number of individuals ages 14-21 who were determined eligible during the FFY. Data will also be kept and reviewed on the number of eligible individuals by age group to determine whether referrals are being made at a younger age, as is the focus. In FY09, 57 individuals between the ages of 14-21 were determined eligible for services. This compares to 48 in FY08 and 38 in FY07. The general strategies for meeting this goal were all implemented; however, the strategies specific to outreach to minority and Deafblind populations were addressed in the goals specific to those unique populations.

Goal and Priority #6: Insure every SSB customer has the information needed to make an informed choice in selecting providers for adjustment to blindness training.

During FFY09, 100% of SSB customers attending ATB half time or more indicated that they exercised informed choice in choosing their service provider. This goal was met.

Goal and Priority #7: All VR staff members new to SSB will receive Introduction to Blindness – Phase 1 and Phase 2 training on the essential aspects of blindness and visual impairments.

100% of new VR staff completed Phase 1 and Phase 2 training. This goal was met. All strategies identified to meet this goal were successfully met and/or implemented

Goals and priorities for FFY09 are in Appendix IV.

Standards and Indicators

The performance of the WorkForce Development Unit of State Services for the Blind on the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Standards and Indicators for FY2009 follows.

The numbers reported for FFY2009 are unofficial because the information is still being validated. The RSA requires that at least four of the six indicators of Standard 1 must be met. The RSA requires that the State agency meet or exceed at least 2 of the 3 primary indicators. An explanation about what the standards and indicators cover is in Appendix III.

State Services for the Blind Performance on Standards 1 and 2

Must pass at least 4 of 6 Indicators and 2 of 3 Primary Indicators for Standard 1

Federal Fiscal Year

	2009*	2008	2007	2006
Ind 1.1: Change in employment outcomes(>=0)	-3	-11	-47	-5
Ind 1.2: Percent of employment outcomes (>=68.9%)	48.17%	43.94%	46.6%	48.74%
Ind 1.3: Competitive employment (>=35.4%)	98.11%	97.70%	94.05%	93.54%
Ind 1.4: Significant Disability (>=89.0%)	100%	100%	98.85%	97.70%
Ind 1.5: Earnings ratio (>=.59)	0.668	.648	.69	.717
Ind 1.6: Self support (>=30.4)	36.54	42.94	43.68	30.87
Number of indicators in standard 1 that were passed	4	4	4	4
Number of primary indicators (1.3 to 1.5) in Standard 1 that were passed	3	3	3	3
Ind 2.1 Ratio of Minority to Non-Minority Service Rate (>=.80)**	**	**	**	**

*Not official until approved by the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Approval pending at time of publication.

**The ratio of minority to non-minority service rate is not calculated if fewer than 100 persons from minority backgrounds exit the program during the fiscal year.

Minority Outreach Committee

Rebecca Kragnes – Chair, Connie Lee Berg, Vince Llanas, Fannie Primm, Ken Rodgers, Catalina Roisum. SSB Staff – Pam Brown, Linda Lingen.

CHARGE: This committee exists to recommend specific strategies for increasing and improving services to individuals from minority backgrounds. This committee will provide input to the Customer Satisfaction and Goals and Priorities Committee and the full Council for consideration in the development of annual goals and priorities in conjunction with SSB.

2009 Report

The Minority Outreach Committee continued to focus its input to SSB on finding avenues for outreach into unserved and underserved cultural communities. The committee provided input to SSB on how to improve outreach activities as listed below.

- The committee continued to learn more about teaching braille and English to blind immigrants and how SSB could impact the various programs in the Twin Cities which teach English language learning (ELL). The committee learned that BLIND, Inc. is now offering ELL and braille classes to blind immigrants. It is anticipated that by offering these classes, students can learn enough English to enter regular ELL classes at the Lehman Center or Northeast Learning Center in Minneapolis.
- There have been continued meetings between the ELL programs and service providers in discuss the challenges in teaching English to students who are blind and have little knowledge of English. At the end of October 2008 staff from the Lehman Center; Blind, Inc.; SSB; and other ELL programs met to discuss these challenges.
- SSB remains an active participant in the planning and implementation of the Hmong Resource Fair.
- SSB continues to meet with the vocational rehabilitation programs at Red Lake and White Earth to learn about the challenges and opportunities in serving the American Indian communities on the reservation and discuss any technical assistance that SSB and the tribal programs can provide to each other. In 2009, training was provided to the White Earth tribal programs on a variety of the Social Security programs available to members of the tribe. The Minority Outreach Committee provided input as to areas to be discussed in the training which included: Ticket to Work, general Social Security programs and using the Plan to Achieve Self-Sufficiency to help fund individual plans for employment.
- The RAMP Project continued to share information on other cultures with staff, Council and committee members. Committee members sent information to the RAMP Project coordinator which was also shared.
- SSB is planning on hosting an open house in September 2009 for parents and transition-age students to learn more about what SSB can provide to these families and students. It was suggested that to encourage African-American families to attend this open house, SSB could do targeted outreach to the two high schools in Minneapolis (North and Washburn) that have a high concentration of African-American students.
- Another suggestion for targeted outreach to African-American families was to provide informational packets to eighth grade teachers at Hale-Field School in Minneapolis (another school with a high concentration of African-American students). This would be a way to provide information about SSB services to families as children are entering high school.

The committee will continue to advise SSB in developing future goals, activities and outreach strategies for FFY 2010.

Vendor Outcomes and Measures Committee

Tom Scanlan--Chair, Michael Malver, Ken Trebelhorn. SSB staff—Jennifer Beilke, Cathy Carlson.

CHARGE: This committee exists to support and advise SSB regarding measuring the outcomes realized by the recipients of training in adjustment to blindness and technology. This committee will provide input to the Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee and the full Council for consideration in the development of annual goals and priorities in conjunction with SSB.

2009 Report

Last year the committee continued the survey of 20 items given to each SSB customer after completing specific training with a vendor. Since the population base is relatively small in statistical terms, especially for a single vendor, the committee was concerned that the highest return possible is needed. The company surveying for the Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee (Strategic Research Group) also surveys for this committee. That provides the maximum response rate by contacting people at night as well as during the day.

The survey results are published in a semiannual report covering 12 months of activity. The report is available in print, braille, tape, and the SSB website so that all customers, SSB staff, vendors, and the public have access to the results.

The data collected showed good customer satisfaction, but some areas of training need improvement. The best results were achieved in travel and computer. The areas that were weakest in the results were for challenging the student, increasing self confidence, and reading/writing braille.

SSB management continued to provide full support for the survey.

Deafblind Committee

Lynette Boyer--Chair, Joni Anderson, Adrienne Haugen, Michael O'Reilly, Kim Williams. SSB staff—Lindsey Baker, Pam Brown, Linda Lingen.

CHARGE: This committee exists to support and advise SSB regarding its services to individuals who are deaf/hard of hearing and blind/visually impaired. This committee will provide input to the Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee and the full Council for consideration in the development of annual goals and priorities in conjunction with SSB.

2009 Report

Note: (The following is a message from the Chair of the Deafblind Committee, not only summarizing the efforts of her committee, but acknowledging the cooperation of staff and the Deafblind Community.)

My report starts off with a big hello and a huge thank you to all the Deafblind Committee for their hard work last year. At the conclusion of last year's DB Committee we had just wrapped up our final

version of the “Step by Step Guide to Getting or Keeping a Job” document both in a simplified English for our ASL users and a more revised version for our hard of hearing users. We voted at our very first meeting to get it approved. I feel confident that we have a working Document that will allow the DB population to understand the policies and procedures that SSB has put in place to do their business. So a big thanks to all of you who helped create and implement that new revised document.

We started our year with wanting to see what other services that were being provided for our Deafblind population here in the twin cities and our state. We worked on inviting different guests to come in and speak during our Deaf Blind committee meetings.

We had the following visitors, Sally Prouty as part of the Deaf Blind Technical Assistance Project; Bruce Hodek and Lee Clark who represented the Department of Deaf, Hard of Hearing services which is under Department of Human Services; Kim Williams and Paul Deeming from Deaf Blind Services of Minnesota; and Jamie Taylor from the Commission Serving Deaf, Deafblind and Hard of Hearing People. Our guests shared about the services they are offering to our Deafblind population here in our state.

We also solicited help from Lindsey Baker, Pam Brown and Linda Lingen to come up with some documents that we could work on revising during this year. We had a hard time coming to an agreement of which of the four documents proposed we would work on. We did finally decide that the document entitled “WHAT IF MY COUNSELOR AND I DISAGREE” would be the one. We started to revise this document, but we did not complete the revisions before the end of the year. We will complete revising this document during the coming year.

I am excited about working with the Deafblind committee for the 09-10 fiscal year. Thank you again for allowing me to Serve State Services for the Blind and help play a small role in accomplishing meeting their goals to better serve the Deafblind citizens of our wonderful state.

Senior Services Committee

Judy Sanders--Chair, Chris Bell, RoseAnn Faber, Harry Krueger, Larry Lura, Coralmae (Coke) Stenstrom, Frances Whetstone. SSB staff—Lyle Lundquist, Richard Strong, Sue Crancer.

CHARGE: The Senior Services Committee exists to assist State Services for the Blind improve and expand services to blind, visually impaired, or Deafblind Minnesotans who are not interested in employment. The majority of this group is seniors. These customers face significant barriers to independence, but they can benefit from services which help maintain or increase their independence. Activities include identifying unmet needs, recommending services necessary to meet these needs and identifying strategies to remove or reduce barriers to their independence.

2009 Report

While the primary concern of the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind (SRC-B) is vocational rehabilitation, there is an acknowledgement of the importance of independent living services through the establishment of this committee.

Our committee met six times during the year. We received updates on the activities of the Senior Services Unit (SSU) and we advised SSB staff on how we believed they could improve independent living services to the fastest growing population of blind citizens in our state. So that this committee can feel more a part of the whole advisory process, we now meet the same day as SRC-B meetings and members are urged to stay and participate in the deliberations of the full Council.

SSU served over 3,000 people with a very limited budget. It is predicted that the senior population will double in the next 20 years and we are concerned that funding will not keep pace with the ever expanding and increasing need. We did learn, however, that there will be additional ARRA (American Reinvestment and Recovery Act) dollars available to SSU for FY 2010. Our committee explored possible uses for the money. We recommended to the SRC-B and to SSU staff that SSB sponsor a one-week residential adjustment to blindness training program for seniors. We suggested that this be offered to rural Minnesotans and that a real effort be made to involve minorities as participants. The full Council concurred with our recommendation for this use of stimulus dollars.

We continued to encourage an emphasis on teaching non-visual solutions for retaining one's independence. Most seniors have some remaining vision but it is not always stable or reliable. SSB has always been very thorough about finding low vision solutions to accomplish tasks with such tools as magnifiers and large print. Our committee maintained that as a person's vision changed these products (some very costly) do not always retain their value. Therefore, we suggested that recording devices and products such as the KNFB Reader (a device that speaks the printed word) might be extremely useful.

We were pleased to be introduced to the new digital products that will enhance our ability to read. They include the digital radio talking book and the new digital player for recorded books from the National Library Service for the Blind.

Many thanks to those who voluntarily served to make this committee so productive.

The Child Committee

Elizabeth Bruber--Chair, Robin Exsted, Carrie Gilmer, Jean Martin, Nicole Schlender. and Jeffrey West. SSB staff—Pam Brown, Sharon Ostrom.

CHARGE: This committee provides specific advice and counsel to SSB's child services regarding collaborative outreach, information and referral services to:

The committee was inactive during the '08-'09 fiscal year due to child services no longer being offered by SSB. This change in service came about because of budget constraints.

The committee has been reformed to focus on service to transition students between the ages of 14 and 21 years. We look forward to an active 2009-10.

Communication Center Committee

Steve Jacobson--Chair, Julie Bauch, Catherine Durivage, Carol Earle, Wally Hinz, Jean Martin, Jane Toleno, Jo Taliferro, Andy Virden. SSB staff—Dick Strong, David Andrews, Mary Archer, Angela Bodensteiner, Gwen Bighley, Stuart Holland, Hal Schardin, Ellie Sevdy.

CHARGE: This committee exists to help SSB improve and expand the services of the Communication Center for blind, and visually impaired, and Deafblind persons. This committee will provide input to the Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee and the full Council for consideration in the development of annual goals and priorities in conjunction with SSB.

2009 Report

The product of this committee is a report to the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind containing specific strategies for increasing and improving Communication Center services. During FFY 2009 the Communication Center Committee met four times to receive updates and offer input on the projects, staffing changes, and other on-going work of the Communication Center.

Listed below are highlights and accomplishments of the Communication Center in FFY 2009:

- Evolution of Textbook Production – Work has largely been completed permitting the production of books in the DAISY format. This format allows students to navigate recorded material similarly to what can be done with a hard-copy book, providing direct access to specific pages, sections and chapters. Almost all volunteers have now received training and can produce books using this new technology. The Communication Center is now also authorized to receive textbook files from NIMIS taking advantage of the availability of textbooks in electronic format. This reduces the need for manually copying in braille or scanning texts allowing volunteers to concentrate on formatting.
- Braille Transcription of Tests - The braille transcription of Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment Tests continues to be a critical role fulfilled by the Communication Center.
- Huge numbers of print pages were converted to braille and audio to support Minnesota students in K-12 and in post-secondary institutions. Nearly a million braille pages were produced directly or distributed from other sources during this year. This effort has a strong affect on the quality of education of blind Minnesotans and ultimately their potential for employment.
- Newline and Dial-in News Service Improvements - In response to requests of consumers, the Communication Center added procedures to more quickly identify interruption of Newline or Dial-in News in 2009. During the current year, the Advisory Committee monitored the results of these changes and noted significant improvements.
- Dial-in News and Newline Expansion - the Rochester Post Bulletin was added to Newline during the past year. Also, the Brainerd paper has been added to Dial-in News, which additionally involves new toll-free dial-in access.

- Fortieth Anniversary of the Radio Talking Book – during the past year, the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Radio Talking book was celebrated in a number of ways. A documentary was produced and numerous showings were broadcast by Minnesota Public Television. DVD copies of this documentary were produced and are being distributed widely. In addition, celebration events took place throughout the state which provided an opportunity to make more people aware of this service, and indirectly, other services available to blind people.
- Radio Talking Book Receivers – The new digital radio talking book receivers have passed all final tests and are being manufactured. Distribution will begin shortly and will take place over the next year or so.
- Modernization of the Radio Talking Book service permitting greater automation of the broadcasts has been largely completed with overnight broadcasting now making use of the new system. Also being developed are approaches for more flexible listening options for users. Programs are now archived and can be retrieved through a secure web site.
- Annual Volunteer Recognition Events - The Communication Center conducted the annual volunteer recognition events to applaud the work of over 700 volunteers that make possible much of the work of the Communication Center. This year the major event honoring current volunteers was a wonderful meal and a magic show at the Crown Plaza hotel in downtown St. Paul. Over 350 volunteers and their guests were present for this event.
- National and International Involvement - During the year staff and committee members were involved in a number of national and international activities including: the DAISY consortium, testing of new NLS Digital Talking Book machines, National Braille Association, Braille Authority of North America, and the International Association of Audio Information Services. In addition, the Communication Center was asked to consult with representatives of the People's Republic of China as they work to establish a Radio Talking Book service in that country. Dave Andrews, the Project Lead of the Twenty-first Century Project, spent a week in China as a consultant, and a delegation from China also spent a week at the Communication Center learning about this service. These efforts reflect continued leadership by staff members and Communication Center Committee members.
- Staff Changes – This past year saw persons with significant experience leave the Communication Center. Ellie Sevdý retired after more than three decades of supervising the Audio Section and Mary Archer, a twenty year employee who supervised the Braille Section, passed away unexpectedly. Their service went well beyond supervising, extending into advocacy and involvement at a national level in issues that concerned audio and braille production.

Task Forces

A variety of SRC-B task forces met and completed their assigned activities during the year. The Technology Task Force report is included below. Other task forces were convened to work on items such as putting together the annual report, revising the Council work plan and the committee structure charters, designing and evaluating SSB needs assessment process and revising the Council resource plan.

Needs Assessment Task Force

Jean Martin--Chair, Jan Bailey, Elizabeth Bruber, Jennifer Dunnam, and Steve Jacobson. SSB staff—Jennifer Beilke, Pam Brown, and Cathy Carlson.

2009 Report

Over the last three years, the State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind's Needs Assessment Task Force (NATF) has evaluated the process SSB used to conduct a needs assessment in FFY2005 and reviewed the FFY2010 state plan needs assessment document. The NATF identified additional sources of information for review to determine if there were gaps in services that needed to be addressed. Information was provided and reviewed regarding referral sources, the number of transition students in caseloads, the number of Social Security beneficiaries referred and served, and the number of successful and unsuccessful closures.

Anecdotal information suggested that SSB was serving fewer students with vision loss in the state than had been served in the past and fewer than those who could potentially be eligible for services. Data was reviewed on the number of students served by SSB over a 6-year period so that trends could be examined. The NATF reviewed information on the total number of SSB customers and referral sources. Information on the number of Social Security (SSA) beneficiaries served by SSB we reviewed with particular interest in changes since the implementation of Ticket to Work. Data on the reasons for unsuccessful closures was provided and reviewed. For both transition students and all SSB customers, the top two reasons for an unsuccessful closure after an Individual Employment Plan was developed were unable to locate and refused services.

Other SRC-B Committees were asked whether other customer needs or gaps in services were identified so they could be included in this needs assessment activity. No other additional, specific customer needs were identified.

The NATF identified three areas of potential need: (1) enhance outreach to transition students; (2) increase overall outreach and marketing efforts; and (3) develop strategies to increase the number of employment outcomes and decrease the number of unsuccessful outcomes. SSB management has also been concerned about these areas and has taken various steps to address these issues. SSB and the NATF will begin a new three-year cycle of activities to evaluate current services, identify any gaps in services, and recommend service improvements.

Appendices

Appendix I Council Members

Member

Jan Bailey

Connie Lee Berg

Lynette Boyer

Joan Breslin-Larson

*Joined June 2008

Elizabeth Bruber

Chuk Hamilton

*Resigned July 2009

Steve Jacobson

Bonita Kallestad

*Resigned December 2008

Rebecca Kragnes, Chair

*Term ended February 2009

Michael Malver

Jean Martin

*Resigned August 2008

Fannie Primm

Judy Sanders, Chair

*Term began February 2009

Tom Scanlan

Coralmae Stenstrom

Richard Strong

*Term began July 2009

Jane Toleno

*Resigned October 2008

Ken Trebelhorn

Vacant

Jeffrey West

Representing

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Project

Deafblind Community

MN Department of Education, Special Education

Parent of Blind Child

Director, State Services for the Blind

Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Client Assistance Project

Disability Advocacy Group

Recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

MN Department of Education, Special Education

Business, Industry, and Labor

Statewide Independent Living Council

Disability Advocacy Group

Disability Advocacy Group

Acting Director, State Services for the Blind

Business, Industry, and Labor

Community Rehabilitation Program

Parent Training and Information Center

Business, Industry, and Labor

**STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
FOR THE BLIND
MEMBERS
FFY 2009**



Picture

Back row: Richard Strong, Jeffrey West, and Ken Trebelhorn.

Middle: Coralmae (Coke) Stenstrom, Steve Jacobson, Rebecca Kragnes, Tom Scanlan, and Liz Bruber.

Front: Michael Malver, Lynnette Boyer, Jan Bailey, Judy Sanders, and Joan Breslin-Larson.

Not picture: Fannie Primm and Connie Lee Berg.

Appendix II Council Work Plan FFY2009

June-2008

The Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee reports progress to the Council on achievement of goals and priorities.

Review and act on report of the Task Force on Council Committee Structure. The Chair notifies members and the public at large in writing of the July 15 deadline to submit applications for committees.

Client Assistance Project annual report.

The Budget Task Force meets and makes recommendations at the August meeting for the resource plan for next fiscal year.

The Needs Assessment Task Force submits a written/oral report on their progress.

July-2008

Applications for committee appointments must be submitted to the Council chair or SSB designee by July 15.

August-2008

The Budget Task Force makes recommendations for the resource plan for next fiscal year. The Council acts on the recommended resource plan.

The Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee review results of the Statewide Customer Satisfaction Survey and report to the Council.

The Chair, with Council approval, appoints Council committee members and chairs.

The Chair appoints a task force to create an annual report.

The Chair appoints a Coordinating Councils Task Force to address the federal requirement of collaboration. The Task Force determines the councils appropriate for coordination and the methods to be used to carry out that coordination in keeping with the requirement in the Rehabilitation Act.

The Chair appoints a Needs Assessment Task Force.

September-2008

Chair reminds the Annual Report Task Force members to submit their section of the annual report to SSB by 10/15.

October-2008

The Chair reports on current member terms and upcoming vacancies.

The Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee reports progress to the Council on achievement of goals and priorities.

The Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee reviews results of the Statewide Customer Satisfaction Survey and reports to the Council.

November-2008

The Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee, after receiving data around November 3, reviews preliminary VR effectiveness data and sends a draft report to the Council by 11/7.

The Annual Report Task Force delivers draft Annual Report to SSB by 11/7.

Council members review and comment on the draft Annual Report by 11/14.

SSB sends revised draft of Annual Report to Council members by 11/21 to ensure action at December meeting.

Council members must comment on VR Effectiveness Report by 11/14.

SSB sends comments on VR effectiveness to Council members by 11/21 to ensure action at December meeting.

December-2008

The Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee reports progress to Council on achievement of goals and priorities.

The Council approves Annual Report and VR Effectiveness Report.

Annual Report and VR Effectiveness Report are produced for distribution by December 31.

The Chair appoints a task force to review the Council's annual work plan.

The Chair reminds committees to review goals and priorities during January.

January-2009

All committees assess progress on goals and priorities relevant to their committee and submit recommendations to the Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee.

The Coordinating Councils Task Force provides feedback on their activities to the Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee, if any.

February-2009

The Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee reports progress to the Council on achievement of goals and priorities.

The Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee reviews Statewide Customer Satisfaction Survey and reports to the Council.

The Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee and SSB begin drafting goals and priorities for next fiscal year.

The Council elects Chair and Vice Chair.

The Chair appoints a Budget Task Force to get update on current status of expenditures and to propose any necessary refinements in the Resource Plan for the current fiscal year at the April SRC-B meeting. This group will also meet in the summer and make recommendations for the Resource Plan for the next fiscal year at the August SRC-B meeting.

The Chair appoints a task force to review the SRC-B New Member Orientation Packet and make updates as needed.

The Work Plan Task Force reports on revisions to the annual work plan for Council approval.

March-2009

The Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee and SSB provide a joint draft of the goals and priorities to the Council by March 3.

Council members must provide comments on the goals and priorities update to SSB by March 13.

SSB will summarize and distribute comments on the draft goals and priorities no later than March 20 to ensure Council action at the April meeting.

April-2009

The Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee and SSB present goals and priorities for next fiscal year for joint approval. The fiscal year begins October 1.

The Budget Task Force makes recommendations for any necessary changes to the Resource Plan for the current fiscal year.

The Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee reviews Statewide Customer Satisfaction Survey and reports to the Council.

The Chair appoints a Task Force on Council Committee Structure to review committee structure and report recommendations on changes necessary at the June SRC-B meeting.

In even numbered years, the Council, in partnership with SSB, agrees on a pool of impartial hearing officers.

May-2009

The task force on Council Committee Structure meets to review the committee structure and propose changes to the Council.

Approved by SRC-B
February 2, 2008

Appendix III Federal Standards and Indicators

Standard 1:

For any given year, calculations for indicators 1.1 through 1.6 for Designated State Units that exclusively serve individuals with visual impairments or blindness are based on aggregated data for the current year and the prior year, i.e., two years of data (34 CFR §361.81(4)). The Designated State Unit must pass four of the six indicators in Standard 1 and must pass two of the three primary indicators (1.3 to 1.5).

Indicator 1.1

The number of individuals exiting the VR program who achieved an employment outcome during the current performance period compared to the number of individuals who exit the VR program after achieving an employment outcome during the previous performance period.

Required Performance Level: DSUs performance in current period must equal or exceed performance in previous period.

Indicator 1.2

Of all individuals who exit the VR program after receiving services, the percentage who are determined to have achieved an employment outcome.

Required Performance Level: For the general and combined DSUs, the level is 55.8%; for agencies serving individuals who are blind, the level is 68.9%.

Indicator 1.3

Of all individuals determined to have achieved an employment outcome, the percentage who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or business enterprise program (BEP) employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage.

Required Performance Level: For the general and combined DSUs, the level is 72.6%; for agencies serving individuals who are blind, the level is 35.4%.

Indicator 1.4

Of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the percentage who are individuals with significant disabilities.

Required Performance Level: For the general and combined DSUs, the level is 62.4%; for agencies serving individuals who are blind, the level is 89.0%.

Indicator 1.5

The average hourly earnings of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage as a ratio to the State's average hourly earnings for all individuals in the State who are employed (as derived from the Bureau of Labor Statistics report "State Average Annual Pay" for the most recent available year).

Required Performance Level: For the general and combined DSUs, the level is a ratio of .52; for agencies serving individuals who are blind, the ratio is .59.

Indicator 1.6

Of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or BEP employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the difference between the percentage who report their own income as the largest single source of economic support at the time they exit the VR program and the percentage who report their own income as the largest single source of support at the time they apply for VR services.

Required Performance Level: For the general and combined DSUs, the level is an arithmetic difference of 53.0; for agencies serving individuals who are blind, the level is a difference of 30.4.

Standard 2:

If a DSU had fewer than 100 individuals from a minority background exit the VR program during the reporting period, the DSU must describe the policies it has adopted or will adopt and the steps it has taken or will take to ensure that individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds have equal access to VR services, in lieu of calculating the ratio described below (34 CFR §361.86(b)(2)(iii)).

Indicator 2.1

The service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all individuals with disabilities from non-minority backgrounds.

Required Performance Level: All agencies must attain a ratio level of .80.

Appendix IV FFY2009 Goals, Priorities, and Strategies

Jointly Adopted by SSB and the SRC-B

This document contains the goals, priorities and strategies for FFY2009 that were jointly adopted by SSB and the SRC-B at its April 2008 meeting. A new goal and corresponding strategies focusing on transition students was adopted. Previous goals five and six have been renumbered.

GOAL AND PRIORITY #1: Employment Outcomes—SSB will meet RSA Indicator 1.1.

SSB has identified a number of strategies for meeting this goal—

1. Each Counseling Supervisor will ensure staff of the WorkForce Development Unit (WDU):
 - a) agree to specific paid closure goals by September 30 of each year for the following year;
 - b) actively participate in all relevant workforce-related activities to ensure customers are provided current, accurate information about employment demands, trends and opportunities; and
 - c) assess individual training needs to improve staff counseling and placement skills.
2. Develop and implement written expectations for placement activities.
3. The newly hired marketing and outreach coordinator will dedicate 25% of his time to and will work with WDU staff on targeted VR outreach activities: i.e., presenting information on SSB services at various professional conferences; contacts with community based organizations; mailings to ophthalmologists; etc. Effectiveness will be measured by comparing referrals from FY07 through FY09.

GOAL AND PRIORITY #2: Minority Service Rate—By the end of FFY09, at least 100 persons from minority backgrounds will exit services annually and SSB will meet RSA Indicator 2.1.

SSB has identified a number of strategies for meeting this goal—

1. Carry out the in-service quality training grant plan for training on cultural diversity.
2. Provide information to staff on cultural diversity training opportunities and various community cultural events and encourage attendance.
3. The newly hired marketing and outreach coordinator will work with SSB WDU staff in outreach activities to Minnesota's community-based organizations representing minority groups, with emphasis on community-based organizations serving African-Americans.
4. Work with CRPs, vendors and other community organizations to develop innovative approaches to effectively serve non-English speaking SSB customers. Strategies include surveying CRPs and individual vendors that offer braille instruction regarding their willingness to participate in training related to teaching braille to non-English speakers.

GOAL AND PRIORITY #3: Deafblind Outreach and Service—Enhance services for persons who have a dual sensory loss, including persons who are Deafblind. During FFY09 at least six individuals with a dual sensory loss will secure employment as a result of SSB services.

SSB has identified a number of strategies for meeting this goal—

1. Develop training opportunities for new staff on understanding Deafblindness and competency in serving SSB customers who are Deafblind.
2. The results of the FFY07 needs assessment and customer satisfaction survey administered to each SSB customer with a dual sensory loss or who is Deafblind will be reviewed periodically by SSB staff and the Deafblind Committee of the SRC-B. Any new recommendations on goals and strategies will be brought to SSB management and the SRC-B.
3. Develop specific resources for service delivery in skills of blindness by individuals who are proficient in ASL so that Deafblind customers have a choice of vendors for their services.
4. To increase and improve communication between Deafblind customers and SSB, the Deafblind Committee of the SRC-B, in cooperation with SSB, will review and revise standard written communications to determine their effectiveness with ASL users and develop additional materials as needed.
5. Promote collaborative efforts with other state agencies, which provide services to individuals who are Deafblind, so that specific vocational needs, like the need for supported employment, can be met.

GOAL AND PRIORITY #4: Increase customer satisfaction with services provided—by the end of FFY09 the annual overall satisfaction with services provided by SSB will be at or above 85%. (Q1 on the Customer Satisfaction Survey, “What is your overall satisfaction with the services provided?” The scale is from 1 to 10 where “1” means “very dissatisfied” and “10” means “very satisfied”.)

SSB has identified a number of strategies for meeting this goal—

1. Customer satisfaction surveys will be administered quarterly to approximately 60 SSB customers as part of the DEED customer satisfaction initiative. The surveys are conducted by the Strategic Research Group of Columbus, Ohio.
2. SSB and the SRC-B Customer Satisfaction & Goals and Priorities Committee will continue to review and analyze the data on a quarterly basis including specific customer comments.
3. Based on the analysis of the customer satisfaction survey results, recommendations for program improvements will be brought to SSB and the SRC-B to assure that services are available that meet customer needs.

GOAL AND PRIORITY #5: Increase the number of referrals of transition-age students to SSB.

SSB has identified a number of strategies for meeting this goal—

1. Develop and implement a statewide plan for contacting Special Education teachers, teachers of the blind/visually impaired, and other IEP team members in designated school districts to facilitate regular information meetings with SSB counselors.
 - a) Develop and implement specific outreach activities to high schools in Minneapolis and St. Paul to focus on both transition-age and minority populations.
 - b) In conjunction with DBSM and the Deafblind Technical Assistance project, develop and implement a plan for contacting Special Education teachers, teachers of the Deafblind and other IEP team members in designated school districts to facilitate regular information meetings between these personnel and the SSB Deafblind counselor.
2. Develop and implement an annual SSB Information Fair and open house for families, students, and teachers to include presentations about the various programs, informed choice, time for questions and answers and perhaps one-on-one time with counselors and Communication Center staff.
3. Develop and implement a plan to encourage and provide enrichment activities to students in all areas of adjustment to blindness training as part of an employment plan.

GOAL AND PRIORITY #6: Insure every SSB customer has the information needed to make an informed choice in selecting providers for adjustment to blindness training.

During FFY09 100% of SSB customers attending ATB half time or more will indicate that they were given the opportunity to choose their provider.

SSB has identified a number of strategies for meeting this goal—

1. During FFY09 SSB counselors will complete the “Choosing ATB Training” form with each customer who is considering ATB training. Counselors will ensure that all customers are provided information, in an accessible format, about options for receiving adjustment to blindness services, and strongly encourage each customer to tour each community rehabilitation program. The “Choosing ATB Training” form is signed by the counselor and customer. The customer affirms that they received the information they needed to make an informed choice in the selection of the provider. A copy of the form will be sent to SSB’s State Director, and the information will be compiled and reported semi-annually to the SRC-B.
2. SSB and the Vendor Outcomes and Measures Committee of the SRC-B developed and implemented a customer satisfaction survey for customers who completed adjustment to blindness training. During FFY09, each SSB customer will be surveyed six months after completion of adjustment to blindness training or at time of case file closure, whichever comes first. Each month an estimated ten to fifteen customers will be contacted to complete the telephone survey of eighteen questions.

The data gathered from the completed customer satisfaction surveys will be formatted, posted externally on the SSB website, and made available on tape for customer review when selecting a service provider to meet their rehabilitation needs. ATB providers will be able to use the results for continuous improvement of their services. The results will be reported to the SRC-B and will be used to identify customer needs and areas for service improvements.

3. SSB will continue to require individual vendors who provide training to SSB customers on access and assistive technology to pass a test, developed by SSB staff, on the software programs they wish to teach in order to be on the list of approved vendors. In addition, each individual vendor and CRP trainer must take and pass an adult learning course which was developed for SSB by Century College, a school within the Minnesota State College and University System. That course provides training on learning styles, teaching methods, multiple intelligences, and how to write individualized training plans and learning objectives.

GOAL AND PRIORITY #7: All VR staff members new to SSB will receive Introduction to Blindness —Phase 1 and/or Phase 2 training on the essential aspects of blindness and visual impairment.

SSB has identified a number of strategies for meeting this goal—

1. Supervisory staff will ensure all new VR staff will complete **Introduction to Blindness —Phase 1** training within three months of hire.
2. Supervisory staff will ensure all new Rehabilitation Counseling staff will complete **Introduction to Blindness—Phase 2** training within three months of hire.
3. **Introduction to Blindness—Phase 2** training will be discussed with and encouraged for career development for current staff that would otherwise not be required to attend.

Approved by the SRC-B and SSB
April 3, 2008