



**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED  
153 HALSEY STREET, PO BOX 47017  
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07101**

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

**PURPOSE**

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI) is requesting information to assist with the development of a Request for Proposal (RFP) to provide career preparation and mentoring services to high school students who are blind and visually impaired ages (14-21). CBVI seeks input from organizations that perform such services at the district, county, regional or statewide levels and other interested, relevant parties to offer information for the development of the RFP.

This Request for Information (RFI) serves to assist CBVI to identify qualified vendors to coordinate and administer career preparation and mentoring services and develop a cost analysis for arriving at the terms of the contract agreement. The cost analysis will be based on criteria as detailed in the Department of Human Services Contract Reimbursement Manual (CRM 3). The cost analysis will be based on the price for a variety of services to analyze the "going rate" for each service. This includes estimated costs for administering a program that enables high school students who are blind and visually impaired to develop skills of independence, transition to adulthood and prepare for employment. In addition, the RFI will enable CBVI to identify qualified agencies with experience serving individuals who are blind and visually impaired in geographic areas served by the Commission. All data collected will be analyzed to arrive at the costs for providing the services stated below and to identify qualified vendors to consider for the request for proposal.

**BACKGROUND**

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired (CBVI) is the designated State agency to provide rehabilitation services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. CBVI's mission is to enable individuals within the State with vision loss to achieve their maximum potential and full integration into the mainstream of social and economic life of the community. CBVI promotes and provides services in the areas of education, employment, independent living and eye health through informed choice and partnership with persons who are blind or visually impaired, their families and the community.

The Commission recognizes three major tenants for carrying out its mission:

- (1) providing specialized services to persons with vision problems,
- (2) educating and working in the community to reduce the incidence of vision loss and
- (3) to improve attitudes concerning people with vision loss.

### **Education Services:**

CBVI provides educational services from birth through high school for eligible children and their families. Educational services are designed to enable students with vision loss to participate equally with other students in regular classroom activities. This is facilitated by Adaptive equipment which is loaned to students' through the Commission's George F. Meyer Instructional Resource Center. Children with both vision and hearing impairments and children who are visually impaired with additional disabilities are offered specialized services to address their special needs. These services include evaluating a child's level of impairment and functioning, consultation with family members, training staff, and providing the school district with specialized adaptive equipment and materials. The equipment is loaned through the Commission's George F. Meyer Instructional Resource Center.

### **Independent Living Services:**

Independent living/training services are designed to help people of any age who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind gain the skills needed to lead a full and productive life. CBVI provides five general types of assistance/instruction with the program, including: daily living skills, communication skills, orientation and mobility, Braille, and eye health. CBVI conducts a variety of educational programs and eye health screenings throughout the state to help detect vision problems and to assist residents of New Jersey with restorative treatment.

### **Vocational Rehabilitation**

Vocational Rehabilitation services at CBVI assists youth and adults who are blind or visually impaired to develop, acquire and upgrade their skills for securing and maintaining employment. Services are offered to individuals who choose to work in the labor force, operate a business, manage a home and for those requiring supported employment services. VR services are offered to high school students starting at age fourteen, college students, individuals seeking employment, and individuals in job jeopardy in relation to their visual impairment.

## **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

CBVI welcomes comments and suggestions regarding the following components and activities considered for the development of a program to serve high school students who are blind and visually impaired to prepare for entry in the labor market. The program will focus on providing positive peer to peer mentoring as well as developing supervised mentoring relationships with competent adults who are blind or visually impaired with a successful career history. Another key component of the new program will be to develop part-time employment opportunities in students' community to allow for the development of soft-skills and knowledge of the world of work. The program needs to serve all referred CBVI consumers statewide, and develop activities to promote acquisition of skills in the following areas:

- Self-care, grooming, personal management
- Safe, independent travel skills
- Appropriate social etiquette
- Assertiveness development
- Access to community resources
- Problem solving/critical thinking development
- Career awareness, job seeking skills strategies
- Personal awareness
- Career exploration
- Work expectations
- Soft skills development
- Resume development
- Interviewing skills
- Accessing and maintaining employment
- Onsite work experiences
- Maintaining relationships with peers and mentors

## **DISCLAIMER**

Please note that this is a Request for Information (RFI), not a Request for Proposal (RFP). Responses to this RFI will not lead directly to a contractual relationship between a provider agency and the State of New Jersey, Department of Human Services or the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. It is anticipated that the information received in response to this RFI will be used to develop appropriate documentation in support of future contracts. While it is anticipated that many of the respondents to this RFI will be potential contractors, CBVI solicits information from any interested party on the topics described above.

## **SUBMISSIONS IN RESPONSE TO THE REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

Responses to this RFI must be directed to:  
New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired  
153 Halsey Street, PO Box 47017  
Newark, New Jersey 07101  
Attention: Ed Sroczyński

Or via email:  
[edward.sroczynski@dhs.state.nj.us](mailto:edward.sroczynski@dhs.state.nj.us)

973-648-7504

Responses to this RFI must be received no later than February 28, 2014 via mail or email.

**NOTE TO RESPONDERS: PLEASE ANSWER ONLY THOSE  
QUESTIONS THAT APPLY TO YOUR PROGRAM  
WE APPRECIATE YOUR HELP.**

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION RESPONSE FORMAT**

Organization Name:

Address:

Contact Person & Title:

Phone, email, other contact information:

Brief description of your organization's goals and mission statement:

**Qualifications**

Does your organization presently provide independent living/vocational services for:

- Individuals with disabilities, including those with multiple, complex disabilities.

Does your agency presently provide these services to people who are blind or visually impaired?

What state(s)/counties/areas do you serve?

Do you have contracts/agreements with the State of NJ, with another State, with School districts or other entities? If so, please indicate what services your organization provides and the dollar amount of these contracts.

What are the qualifications of staff that provide independent living/vocational services to people with disabilities and especially those with visual impairments?

What is your training staff/client ratio?

What curriculum do you use?

What are your training hours?

Do you have the ability to provide services to clients throughout the workday, evenings, and weekends?

**Costs Analysis**

Do you have a price list? If so, please submit.

Do you charge an hourly fee or other predetermined fee to provide specified services?  
If so, please indicate:

What is the average hourly cost for administering independent living/vocational activities?

What is hourly rate and the overall average cost for training a student?

What is the cost for providing services to a student who has multiple disabilities (per service, per hour)?

**Additional Comments**

We encourage your comments and ideas for best providing creative independent living/vocational services indicated in this RFI.

Feel free to attach any other information or materials to this submission that you believe would be helpful.

Thank you for your assistance.

Ed Sroczyński  
973-648-7504  
Edward.sroczyński@dhs.state.nj.us