# Item 9: SSD Report – Older Individuals who are Blind Program

**Older Individuals who are Blind Program Report**

**August 2022**

Title VII Chapter 2 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, authorizes and funds independent living services to individuals age 55 or older whose visual impairment makes competitive employment difficult to attain, but for whom independent living goals are feasible. The Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) program aims to assist Californians, 55 and older, who are blind or severely visually impaired, live in their community of choice, function at maximum capacity, and feel valued in society.

Below are updates since the last meeting of the Blind Advisory Committee (BAC) in May 2022.

## Program Reviews and Site Visits

OIB has not conducted any program reviews or issued any reports. With COVID-19 limiting travel along with preparation of the next Request for Applications (RFA) process, OIB was exploring methods of conducting virtual reviews. Now that travel restrictions are loosening, OIB anticipates resuming in-person visits in late 2022.

## OIB Services

The fifth year of the current five-year grant cycle began on October 1, 2021. DOR made 3-year awards with an option to extend for two additional years to facilitate funding stability for the grantees. All but two counties in California (Alpine & Inyo) have OIB services available to eligible residents. OIB is adding an additional sixth year to the current OIB grants to facilitate the distribution of $1,000,000 in carry-forward funding as well as to better facilitate the RFA process with an improved timeline strategy.

All OIB grants are in process of being amended for a sixth year of the current grant cycle and will become effective on October 1, 2022. See the current list of OIB service providers at the end of this report as they will remain the same for one additional year.

An Associate Governmental Program Analyst (AGPA) position has been allocated to assist OIB and BFS. The Analyst position recruitment ended on July 30 and OIB and BFS management are working on selecting a qualified candidate. The AGPA position will assist OIB in conducting program reviews as well as keeping current on invoicing and reporting requirements in OIB.

## 7-OB Report

The OIB Program submitted the annual 7-OB report, on time, December 30, 2021. The report can be found at the DOR OIB website if desired.

## OIB Match

For the 2021-22 federal fiscal year the OIB program has match pledges from two match partners. OIB has match pledged from: VISTA Center in Palo Alto and Guide Dogs for the Blind in San Rafael. The OIB program expresses gratitude to these partners for their voluntary match contributions, and desires the BAC make note of these key contributions. OIB has received match statements from these partners that exceed the necessary match for the 2021/22 federal fiscal year.

## Request for Applications (RFA) process

The OIB program is planning to release the next competitive RFA in early 2023. OIB staff is working with internal DOR partners to ensure that the RFA meets and complies with all current guidelines to ensure the RFA will be completed successfully once released.

## OIB Carry-Forward Balance

The OIB program currently has about a $1,000,000 carry-forward balance. The grant funds are awarded annually, but DOR has an additional 12-month period to expend the funds, with some restrictions. Over the past 10 years or so, the carry-forward balance has increased. Many factors have led to this increase, most notably the loss of two OIB program partners. Since 2016 both Lions Oakland and Center for the Partially Sighted have ceased doing business. This loss of program partners caused a significant increase in the carry-forward funds as the programs stopped provision of services and closed their doors. As noted above, the $1,000,000 in carry-forward funding is being distributed to the 17 OIB organizations during the sixth year of the grant cycle through the regular OIB funding formula.

## List of 2021/23 Provider Agencies and their Counties of Service

(Through September 30, 2023)

| Agency Name | Counties of Service |
| --- | --- |
| Access to Independence | Imperial |
| Blindness Support Services | Riverside & San Bernardino |
| Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County | Monterey |
| Community Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired | San Joaquin |
| Center of Vision Enhancement  | Mariposa & Merced |
| Dayle McIntosh Center | Orange & Los Angeles |
| Disability Action Center | Colusa, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, & Tehama |
| Earle Baum Center | Lake, Napa, & Sonoma |
| Independent Living Center of Kern County | Kern |
| Independent Living Resource Center Inc. | San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, & Ventura |
| LightHouse for the Blind | Alameda, Contra Costa, Del Norte, Humboldt, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, & Trinity |
| Lions Center for the Visually Impaired – Diablo Valley | Alameda, Contra Costa, & Solano |
| San Diego Center for the Blind | San Diego |
| Society for the Blind | Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Glenn, Mendocino, Mono, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sierra, Sutter, Yolo, & Yuba |
| Valley Center for the Blind | Fresno, Kings, Madera, & Tulare |
| Visually Impaired Persons Support  | Stanislaus, & Tuolumne |
| VISTA Center | San Benito, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz |