**Blind Field Services Program Report**

**Second Quarter 2022-23**

Pursuant to Senate Bill (SB) 105, Chapter 1102, Statutes of 2002, the California Department of Rehabilitation’s (DOR's) Specialized Services Division (SSD) and Blind Field Services (BFS) were established in July 2003 to provide improved specialized, and comprehensive services to people with vision loss. It is the vision of BFS to increase the number of successful employment outcomes for consumers seeking competitive employment and ensure that every blind and visually impaired Californian who wants to work, obtains employment; and every blind and visually impaired Californian who may not believe they can work, is provided the necessary counseling and guidance to overcome their individual barriers to employment.

**BFS Statistics through December 2022**

**Applications**

BFS continues to see a significant increase in applications. As of December 2022, BFS had 643 applications.

Applications as of the same date in 2021; 442

Applications as of the same date in 2020; 346

Applications as of the same date in 2019; 492

**Applications for Students with a Disability ages 1621**

Applications through December 2022; 57 or 9% of the total

Applications from the same date in 2021; 31 or 7% of total

Applications from the same date in 2020; 41 or 12 % of total

Applications from the same date in 2019; 59 or 12% of total

**Total Number of Open Cases**

BFS currently has 4,015 open cases. Of this number 500 or 12.45% are Students with Disabilities.

**Successful Closures**

Successful closures through December 2022; 141

Successful closures as of the same date in 2021; 164

Successful closures as of the same date in 2020; 107

Successful closures as of the same date in 2019; 165

**Hourly and Median Wage Information as of December 2022**

BFS has the highest average hourly wages of all DOR districts at $27.43 per hour. BFS also had the highest average weekly wages of all DOR districts at $912.53. However, BFS was tied with some other districts in 5th place for average hours worked per week at 32. The highest district was 35 hours a week.

**BFS Staffing**

BFS has a current allocation of 108 permanent staff positions. 106 of these are filled or in the process of being filled and include:

1 Regional Director, 1 District Administrator, 9 Field Team managers, 1 Operations Team Manager, 1 Operations Team Lead Analyst, 1 Contract Administrator, 1 Regional Business Specialist, 43 Counselors, 17 Service Coordinators, 4 Procurement Analysts, 20 Office Technicians and 2 Account Technicians. 1 new Analyst position in the process of being hired will work in the Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) program. The BFS Operations Team Lead Analyst is in the process of being re-filled with a Limited Term Analyst position.

BFS was recently allocated 5 new Limited Term positions for up to 2 years. These positions are required to focus at least 50% of their time on Student Services. Three of these positions are for paid Graduate Student Assistants (GSA). These positions are for graduate students working on their master’s degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. These three positions have been filled and are working. The other 2 Limited Term positions are paid Student Assistant (SA) positions and will be open to those working on their undergraduate degrees in various fields. 1 SA will work with the BFS Regional Business Specialist and the 4 Business Specialists assisting with the process of obtaining paid Work Experience with students and adults. The second SA will be working with the Operations Team.

**Training**

BFS continues to plan for the in-person SB 105 training on Wednesday July 12 through Friday July 14, 2023, at the Orientation Center for the Blind (OCB). This training will focus on BFS Counselors and Team Managers. Managers will meet the afternoon of Wednesday July 12. All staff and other participants will attend the all-day training session on Thursday July 13. Friday July 14 will be an open house at OCB with tables having information related to BFS services, tours of OCB, Assistive Technology vendors who want to present and other items to be determined.

Trainings previously mentioned including a California optometrist addressing eye conditions causing blindness and visual impairments are also moving forward and in the planning stages for this year.

**BFS Contract Participation**

* Students in Transition Partnership Programs (TPP) except California School for the Blind (SCB); 8
* Students in TPP at CSB; 13
* Students in other student services contracts including the Foundation of California Community Colleges (FCCC), the American Job Centers of California (AJCC), Student Transition Experience Program (STEP) and other private vendors; 25
* Students in We Can Work (WCW); 5
* Student in College to Career (C2C); 1
* Individuals in Workability III; 7
* Individuals in Workability IV; 5
* Individuals in Mental Health Contracts; 2

**Apprenticeship**

BFS has entered an arrangement with two other partners to provide a Massage Therapy apprenticeship pilot program in the Orange County/Los Angeles area. These partners are hoping to have a minimum of 5 interested consumers. They will start as soon as they have the five BFS students. This program is unique in terms of students obtaining a Federal Department of Labor certificate for 2,000 hours of apprenticeship training with employers working with the college training the students. It allows the students to get paid as an apprentice after three months of starting the training program. The apprenticeship pay gradually increases in pay until the student completes the 2,000 hours and obtains their apprenticeship certificate.