**Older Individuals who are Blind Program Report**

**February 2023**

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 November 2022.

Program Reviews and Site Visits

OIB has not conducted any program reviews or issued any reports. The preparation and publication of the next Request for Applications (RFA) process. OIB anticipates resuming on-site visits in Spring of 2023 and will update as regular travel resumes.

OIB Services

The new grant cycle began October 1, 2017. DOR made 3-year awards with an option to extend for two additional years in order to facilitate funding stability for the grantees. All but two counties in California (Alpine & Inyo) have OIB services available to eligible residents. OIB has extended all grants for an additional year and distributed an additional $1,000,000 in carry-forward funding in order to support programs in providing direct consumer services and/or access to consumer devices.

All OIB grants have been amended for the sixth year of the grant cycle and became effective on October 1, 2022. See the current list of OIB service providers at the end of this report.

OIB Match

For the 2022-23 federal fiscal year the OIB program has negotiated 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.

Request for Applications (RFA) process

The OIB program released the competitive RFA on January 5, 2023. OIB staff is working with internal DOR partners to ensure that the RFA meets and complies with all guidelines to ensure the RFA will be competed successfully. The timeline should allow for a re-release of the RFA if necessary to provide the greatest geographical coverage and availability of OIB services across the State. Applications are due February 15, 2023.

Staffing

OIB is in the process of recruiting/hiring an Associate Governmental Program Analyst (AGPA). OIB hopes to have a person hired by the end of March. The position will help support the work of OIB invoice processing, reviewing reports, doing on-site reviews, and working on AB2480 implementation.

List of 2022/23 Provider Agencies and their Counties of Service

(Through September 30, 2023)

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| 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 |