**Blind Field Services Program Report**

**Third Quarter 2023-2024**

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.

**Unless otherwise stated, all data in this report is from the third quarter of the State Fiscal Year (SFY) January 1 through March 31, 2024**

**Total Applications**

Applications as of March 2024: 912

Applications as of March 2023: 917

Applications as of March 2022: 1,047

Applications as of March 2021: 737

Applications as of March 2020: 853

Applications as of 2019: 1,062

**Applications for Students with a Disability (SWD) ages 16-21**

SWD applications as of March 2024: 134 – 15% of the total. This is both the highest number of SWD applications and the highest percentage of SWD applications since this has been tracked.

SWD applications as of March 2023: 111 -12% of the total

SWD applications as of March 2022: 67 - 6% of total

SWD applications as of March 2021: 67 - 9% of total

SWD applications as of March 2020: 103 - 12 % of total

SWD applications as of March 2019: 106 - 10% of total

**Total Number of Open Cases**

BFS currently has 4,208 open cases. Of this number, 685 or 16 % are SWD.

**Successful Closures**

Successful closures as of March 2024: 227

Successful closures as of March 2023: 220

Successful closures as of March 2022: 373

Successful closures as of March 2021: 254

Successful closures as of March 2020: 340

Successful closures as of March 2019: 333

**Hourly and Median Wage Information as of February 2024**

* Average Hourly Wages at time of Employment: BFS has the highest average of all DOR Districts at $28.61 per hour. The Statewide average is $20.73 per hour.
* Median Hourly Wages at Time of Employment: BFS has the highest of all Districts at $22.46 per hour. The Statewide median wage is $18.50.
* Average Hours Worked Per Week at Time of Employment: BFS and the Statewide average is 32 hours per week.
* Median Hours Per Week: BFS and the Statewide average is 40 hours per week.

**Samples of Successful Closures and Hourly Wages**

Massage Therapists $130.00 (self-employed at 13 hours a week)

Physicians, All Other $83.76

Physicians Assistants $79.00

Administrative Services Managers $77.40

Training and Development Managers $64.90

Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers $57.69

Executive Secretaries and Administrative Assistants $51.92

Medical and Public Health Social Workers $47.66

Computer and Information Scientists, Research $42.31

Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education $41.54

Electrical Engineers $40.38

Computer Support Specialists $38.46

Accountants And Auditors $35.00

Registered Nurses $35.00

All Other Teachers and Instructors $35.00

All Other Managers and Administrators $34.62

Computer Programmers $34.00

Genetic Counselors $33.77

Customer Service Representatives $32.97

Social Workers, Medical and Psychiatric $32.69

Chief Executives $32.05

Instructors, Nonvocational Education $31.73

Lawyers $31.25

Social Workers, Except Medical and Psychiatric $31.25

Physical Therapist Aides $31.00

Respiratory Therapists $31.00

Rehabilitation Counselors $30.00

Marriage and Family Therapists $30.00

All Other Teachers and Instructors $29.69

Marriage and Family Therapists $29.00

Instructors, Nonvocational Education $28.85

Marketing, Advertising, And Public Relations Managers $28.50

All Other Teachers and Instructors $27.00

Home Health Aides $27.00

Media and Communication Workers, All Other $26.92

Interpreters and Translators $25.96

Customer Service Representatives $25.33

Business Operations Specialists, All Other $25.00

**BFS Outreach at CTEBVI**

BFS staff including the District Administrator, four Team Managers, and 13 Counselors attended the California Transcribers and Educators for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CTEBVI) 2024 conference in Los Angeles on April 18-21, 2024. The mission of CTEBVI is “Ensuring ongoing high-quality professional development, enriching the community, and meeting the evolving education needs of individuals who are blind or visually impaired”.

BFS staff held two workshops at the conference. One workshop was an overview of DOR Services. The other workshop was DOR Services for Students.

The BFS District Administrator did two additional presentations. The first presentation was to the CTEBVI Student Institute. Students were able to attend this conference through Wayfinder Transitions Services. This program is funded through BFS. There were approximately 30 students in attendance. This was an interactive presentation where we focused on independence and work experience.

 The second presentation was to the CTEBVI Parent Institute. The focus was on starting early to prepare their children for life after high school. Most of the families in attendance had elementary and middle school students. They appreciated the information and would like to talk with successful adults living with blindness and low vision.

The CTEBVI Conference is a very important part of BFS outreach. Many connections were made with high school teachers and other instructors of blind and low-vision students primarily from Southern California. The 2025 conference will be in the San Francisco area.

**SB 105 Mandated Training**

BFS continues to plan for the in-person SB 105 annual training which will be held from September 22-25, 2024, at the Hilton Hotel, Arden West in Sacramento.

**BFS Staff Update**

BFS currently has two openings for QRPs. The application period for the position in Stockton closed on April 19, 2024. The other position in Chula Vista is open until filled. BFS and DOR in general continue to have difficulty recruiting qualified staff for QRP positions. This is an issue with Vocational Rehabilitation programs across the country. DOR in California averages 40 open QRP positions at any given time. DOR is still able to hire QRPs with some difficulty but many of these QRPs often stay for a short time and then move on to other higher paying jobs. Many other QRPs are now at the retirement age and leaving creating many on-going vacancies.

**District Operations Unit Reporting - Invoice Processing**

November 2023 – Total 1009 transactions (invoices) and processing time was 47.8 days, state average for the month was 43.5 days, above the Statewide average.

December 2023 – total of 1338 transactions (invoices) and processing time was 54.7 days, state average for the month was 59.3 days, lower than the Statewide average.

January 2024 – total of 1417 transactions and processing time was 58.1 days, State average for the month was 48.0 days, above the Statewide average.

February and March 2024 – reports have not been released.

BFS is averaging approximately 1,200 transactions per month with an average of 53.7 days processing for time from receipt to warrant, about 8 days over the Prompt Payment Act. BFS is processing an average of approximately 25 percent less than the highest District which is processing an average of 1300 to 1800 transactions and a processing time ranging from 58 days to 71 days from receipt to warrant. During the reporting period BFS was down one accountant of the two that are allocated to BFS. That second position has since been filled. The team was also down one OT-T position which is in the process of being readvertised due to a lack of interest in prior advertisements.