**Blind Field Services Program Report**

**Second Quarter 2023-24**

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.

This report contains data from July 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023, unless otherwise stated. Data was gathered from Aware and the DOR Dashboard.

**BFS Statistics through December 2023**

**Applications**

As of December 2023, BFS had 565 applications, which is the second highest number of applications for this 6-month period in the past five years.

Applications as of the same date in 2022; 643

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 (SWD) ages 16-21**

Applications through December 2023; 80 or 14% of the total applications. This is both the highest actual number and highest percentage of applications since this data collection started.

Applications from the same date in 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 4,166 open cases. Of this number 573 or 14% are Students with Disabilities.

**Successful Closures**

Successful closures through December 2023; 141

Successful closures as of the same date in 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 2023**

BFS had the highest average hourly wages of all DOR Districts at $28.88 per hour. BFS also had the highest average median hourly wages of all DOR Districts at $22.56 per hour.

Top paying BFS Placement for the second quarter of 2023-2024. All individuals are working an average of 32 hours per week.

Massage Therapists $65.00

Registered Nurses $53.24

Lawyers $50.00

English Language and Literature Teachers, Postsecondary $50.00

Operations And Systems Researchers And Analysts, Except Computer $48.08

Claims Examiners, Property And Casualty Insurance $47.12

Property And Real Estate Managers And Administrators $41.35

Law Teachers, Postsecondary $38.46

Marketing, Advertising, And Public Relations Managers $35.00

Network Systems and Data Communications Analysts $34.62

Child, Family, and School Social Workers $33.87

All Other Clerical And Administrative Support Workers $33.65

Bookkeeping, Accounting, And Auditing Clerks $33.65

Lawyers $31.63

Biological Scientists $30.30

Customer Service Representatives $30.00

Sales Agents, Real Estate $30.00

Customer Service Representatives, Utilities $29.37

Truck Drivers, Heavy Or Tractor-Trailer $29.00

All Other Therapists $28.85

Detectives And Investigators, Except Public $28.85

Real Estate Brokers $28.85

Rehabilitation Counselors $28.85

Tax Examiners, Collectors, And Revenue Agents $28.00

Rehabilitation Counselors $26.75

**BFS QRP Updates**

* Mitchell Ham has been promoted to QRP in the Victorville office. He replaces Ed Crespin who retired in October.
* We are in the process of hiring for QRPs in Chula Vista and Stockton.
* Anthony Houston, a BFS QRP was appointed to the Disability Advisory Committee (DAC).

**Training**

Three BFS counselors have been selected to attend the Vision Specialist in Vocational Rehabilitation Certificate at Mississippi State University. Only 14 people nationwide were accepted to this year’s cohort. This is a one-year certificate program and consists of four graduate courses designed to train rehabilitation professionals to be more effective in their work with people who are blind or have low vision. The counselors selected are Cindy Farias, Melissa Sanders, and Jennilee Ruggirello. RSA will be sponsoring two of the counselors and DOR will sponsor the third counselor.

**CTEBVI**

BFS will be sending Southern and Central California BFS staff to this conference in Los Angeles in April. Two DOR workshops have been accepted.

**SB105 Fall 2024 Conference**

BFS is in the process of negotiating the contract at the Hilton Hotel in Sacramento. When the dates are set, a save the date notice will be sent to all BFS staff and community partners.

**Apprenticeship**

BFS participated in an apprenticeship fair in Los Angeles County for National Apprenticeship Week in November. At this event, a BFS consumer received an award for being the first blind participant to complete the remote Medical Coder and Biller pre-apprenticeship training through Healthcare Career College. This consumer recently obtained the opportunity to interview with an employer to complete the 2000 hours of paid apprenticeship training. You will be provided an update on this at our next meeting. We hope this consumer is successful and provides similar opportunities for paid apprenticeships and full-time employment with employers upon the completion of the apprenticeship.

**Strengthening the emphasis on employment**

BFS now only serves individuals who are pursuing employment, we are in the process of rebranding the name “Blind Field Services”. The goal is to find a name for BFS that emphasizes employment. A survey is being developed for BFS staff to vote on new name options. The results of the survey will be shared with the BAC and other partners.

**District Operations Unit Data**

DOR completed 120,246 authorizations for the first six months of 2023-2024. Of that number BFS completed 8,999 authorizations. As far as the volume of authorizations, BFS is 7th out of the 14 Districts. The median number of authorizations is 8,499 per District and the average is 8,588 per District.

However, this number does not reflect the complexity of the authorizations. For example, a routine authorization would be for services such as school, books, transportation, clothing, Orientation and Mobility training and similar items. Complex authorizations involve obtaining multiple bids and other time intensive procedures. As you can see below, BFS has a much higher proportion of complex authorizations compared to the other Districts. Some of these more complex authorizations are listed below:

Assistive Technology Assessments/Evaluations

Total DOR authorizations 713

BFS Authorizations 391

Next highest District 83

Assistive Technology Devices

Total DOR authorizations 1,731

BFS Authorizations 1,409

Next highest District 68

Assistive Technology Training

Total DOR authorizations 1,419

BFS Authorizations 1,205

Next highest District 53

Independent Living Services

Total DOR authorizations 753

BFS Authorizations 531

Next highest District 43

Orientation and Mobility Services

Total DOR authorizations 566

BFS Authorizations 556

Next highest District 3 (only five other Districts have authorized this service)

Rehabilitation Technology Services

Total DOR authorizations 171

BFS Authorizations 129

Next highest District 37

Vision Services

Total DOR authorizations 1,392

BFS Authorizations 848

Next highest District 150