

# Business Enterprises Program and Training

**Consumer Handbook**

**2019**

# Department of Rehabilitation is an employment and independent living resource for people with disabilities.

# THE BUSINESS ENTERPRISES PROGRAM

The Business Enterprises Program (BEP) is a food service organization with operations in city, state and federal buildings, and Department of Defense facilities. BEP was created through the Federal Randolph-Sheppard Act of 1936, which authorized a priority for BEP in placing vending facilities on federal property. California State law, enacted in 1945, expanded the federal program to give priority to BEP vending facilities on state property. County and city buildings are not included in this priority, but many county and city governments cooperate with the BEP by making their food service facilities available to the vendors in the program.

The BEP provides vocational opportunities for enterprising individuals with visual impairments who are trained in the operation and management of foodservice facilities. BEP Vendors receive ongoing support from the Department of Rehabilitation (D.O.R.) as long as they remain in the program. This support includes purchasing equipment, providing maintenance and repair of equipment, various training opportunities, upward mobility support, business counseling services, and guidance to assist with their financial responsibilities.

In California the median net monthly income for vendors is approximately $3,700. In addition, vendors have several excellent benefits including health, dental and life insurance, plus a sound retirement program. There are currently about 100 full time vendors operating 250 primary/satellite facilities, with 550 employees throughout the state, with some vendors managing more than one facility. The program opens new locations each year.

BEP provides an excellent opportunity for D.O.R. Consumers to become a small business owner and a productive, self-sufficient participant in the economy.

## BEP Facility Types

BEP vending and food service facilities are recognized for their organized and convenient delivery of various food products. The term food service facility covers a wide range of business operations, including the following.

Dry/Wet Vending Stand – A specialty convenience store, providing manual dispensing of beverages, snacks, prepackaged food items, gifts, souvenirs, sundry items, and services.

Snack Bar – A vending location selling a limited line of refreshment and prepared food items.

Cafeterias – A food service facility providing a broad variety of food and beverages prepared on or off the premises, including hot meals.

Vending Machine Facilities – A vending facility is a combined group automated coin or currency operated vending machines dispensing food, snack, refreshments, or sundry items.

Military Dining Facility – A facility that is teamed with a private company, which prepares meals for military personnel in a cafeteria style environment.

## BEP Vendor

A BEP Vendor is a “Legally Blind” individual who independently operates a vending facility within the state of California, with a license issued by the D.O.R.’s Business Enterprises Program. A Vendor is required to independently secure all business and health permits, applicable policies, hire, pay, and supervise employees, pay federal and state taxes, develop menus, manage inventory, and purchase merchandise for sale in a BEP Facility.

## Consumer Requirements

To become a D.O.R. Consumer and to receive services, an individual must meet the following requirements.

1. A United States citizen
2. At least 18 years of age
3. Legally blind
4. A Consumer of the Department of Rehabilitation

## Recommended Skills

It is highly recommended that a D.O.R. Consumer possess the following social and technical skills in preparation for a future Business Enterprises Program Training.

* Independence to engage in daily living, orientation, and mobility with the ability to use adaptive aids.
* Experience with and ability to use Assistive Technology devices and software independently, as needed.
* Experience and knowledge of Microsoft Office Word, Excel, and Outlook, as well as other software programs to use independently.
* Math skills equivalent for balancing business checking accounts, calculating equations, and assessing sales taxes.
* Work experience that is transferable to operating a foodservice facility, such as business, customers service, retail, food service, and/or other work experience.
* Professional communication and positive interpersonal skills in working with others, such as listening skills, receptive to constructive feedback, workplace etiquette, collaboration, problem-solving, and managing difficult circumstances respectfully and timely.
* Show potential to succeed in the BEP Training Program and assume the entrepreneurial responsibilities of a BEP Vendor.

The Counselor may recommend or request that the Consumer develop the above skills through various seminars, workshops or classes prior to applying for a BEP Training.

## Pre-Training Preparatory Steps

It is recommended that the Consumer take the following preparatory steps showing aptitude, competency, and initiative in preparation for a 20-day Pre-Entry Evaluation (DR 446 Form). All steps provide critical feedback to the Counselor and Consumer to ensure the Consumer’s readiness for the intensive 14-week BEP Training.

## Steps

1. Take the World of Work Inventory through a D.O.R. Counselor.
2. D.O.R. Counselor sets an appointment with BEP Training Officer and Consumer to discuss the BEP Training.
3. Visit two BEP Vendor locations and conduct informational interviews with vendors to become informed about a BEP Facility.
4. Complete and pass a 20-day BEP Pre-Entry Evaluation
(DR 446 Form). BEP Training Officer schedules in conjunction with Counselor.
5. Be invited to interview with the BEP Applicant Review Panel.

## Step 1 – World of Work Inventory

The World of Work Inventory (W.O.W.I.) is an assessment scheduled through the Consumer’s D.O.R. Counselor. It is recommended that the Consumer work with their counselor to complete the W.O.W.I. for feedback of skills and readiness for applying to the BEP Training and career goals.

## Step 2 – BEP Training Conference Call The Counselor will contact the BEP Training Officer to schedule a call to provide a BEP Training infomercial with the Consumer. During the call an overview of the training is provide and may answer questions from the Consumer.

## Step 3 – BEP Vendor Tour and Informational Interview

A BEP Vendor tour and informational interview allows the Consumer the opportunity to meet BEP Vendors and to make a self-assessment to determine whether the BEP is a good career choice.

To maximize the benefits of these visits, questions should be prepared ahead of time that the Consumer would like to discuss with the seasoned BEP Vendors. The Vendors are a great source of learning what life is like as a BEP Vendor.

It is recommended that the Consumer call and make an appointment with the BEP Vendor that operates the facility. Discuss with the BEP Vendor any requirement they may have prior to and during the visit. Dress professionally, no-slip shoes, and be well groomed as if the Consumer worked at the facility. If assistance is needed to locate a BEP facility, the Consumer’s Rehabilitation Counselor may contact BEP Training for local vendors in the Consumer’s area.

## **Step 4 –** 20-day Pre-Entry Evaluation

The 20-day Pre-Entry Vendor Evaluation (DR 446) takes place at an established BEP food service location under the direction of the BEP Training Officer and a licensed BEP Vendor. The Evaluation is for 20 business days, a maximum of eight hours per day, five days a week. The BEP Vendor will evaluate and score the Consumer on 12 categories.

An evaluation period is to be treated like a job, it is “hands on” work and the Consumer will perform the work of a regular employee. The Evaluation is to determine the Consumer’s level of mobility, physical stamina to perform the necessary duties of a BEP business owner, assess “soft” (communication) skills required for foodservice, and the aptitude of the Consumer for potentially independently owning and operating a business.

Full attendance and promptness are mandatory and critical to the success of the Consumer’s evaluation. Excessive tardiness will disqualify a Consumer for consideration to the next BEP Training. Absences or no-shows are unacceptable. Any no-show, other than one caused by a medical emergency that renders the Consumer unable to make a telephone call, will cause the Consumer to be eliminated for consideration to the next BEP Training and referred to their Counselor for further career goal evaluation.

The Counselor will arrange with the Consumer to obtain their **California Food Handler** card through ServSafe online training. This provides the Consumer the required knowledge to properly be prepared to work within a food services facility. ServSafe online food handler’s card can be accessed at the following link on the California Restaurant Association’s webpage: [ServSafe California Food Handler Online Training](https://www.calrest.org/post/servsafer-california-food-handler-training).

Once a Consumer successfully passes the BEP Vendor Evaluation, they may be invited to the Applicant Review Panel Interview.

## Step 5 - BEP Applicant Review Panel Interview

The Consumer will interview before the BEP Applicant Review Panel (A.R.P.). The A.R.P. interviews are conducted approximately four months prior to the start of the BEP Training, held twice a year at the D.O.R. Sacramento office.

The A.R.P. consists of two BEP staff and two active BEP Vendors of the California Vendors Policy Committee. Consumer applicants will be asked to share their knowledge of BEP, general business practices based of their work history and education, and their experience of the Vendor’s Evaluation. All applicants should bring a resume showing all previous work experience, skills, and/or volunteer service.

The A.R.P. interview is based on a scoring system. Each panel member will score the applicant. The A.R.P. score is added with the score of the Vendor Evaluation (DR 446). Acceptance into the BEP Training is be based on the Consumer having a passing score of 70% or higher. If the Consumer’s A.R.P. Interview is successful, the Consumer will be accepted into the next BEP Training.

If the Consumer’s A.R.P. score is less than 70%, the Consumer will work with their Rehabilitation Counselor to (Title 9, Section 7212(i)):

1. Establish a plan of classes, training, business, and/or work experience, which may increase the Consumer’s ability to successfully re-apply for a future BEP Training.

Or

 2. Re-evaluate the Consumer’s choice to become a BEP Vendor
 and assess other potential vocational goals.

## BEP Training

The BEP Training is offered twice a year at the Department of Rehabilitation Sacramento headquarters at 721 Capitol Mall, Sacramento, California. The training is an intensive 14-week business program to prepare the Consumer for the food service industry and is comprised of two components.

1. Classroom Education and Training
2. Occupational Skills Training

## Classroom Education and Training

The in-class training curriculum covers the following, yet is not limited to:

* ServSafe Manager Certification, Sanitation and Safety, Injury and Illness Prevention Program, Worker’s Compensation, and Liability
* Labor Laws and Harassment Prevention, Payroll and Taxes, Monthly Operating Report, and Record Keeping
* Daily Cash Reports, Quarterly Sales Taxes and Payments
* BEP Regulations, Procurement Process, and Vendor Operating Agreement and Obligations
* Inventory and Cost Controls

## Occupational Skills Training

The Occupational Skills Training (O.S.T.) takes place at a designated BEP Vendor facility in Sacramento and may include other areas in California. O.S.T. provides practical experience in operating a facility using the skills and knowledge learned in conjunction with classroom curriculum. O.S.T. will introduce the Consumer to the types of facilities available in the program and is an important part of the Consumer’s final grade.

## Consumer Conduct

The BEP Training is a business program and requires professionalism, courtesy, and thoughtful communication. BEP Training Consumers are expected to maintain a professional demeanor in all interactions. Behavior that is disruptive in training or discourteous to a D.O.R. employee, the BEP Training Officer, BEP Vendor, customers, or suppliers while in the classroom or at an O.S.T. assignment, will not be tolerated. Consumers may be placed on probation or dismissed from training, at the discretion of the BEP Training Officer. Dress codes for the classroom and O.S.T. assignments must be followed as well.

## BEP License

To graduate from the BEP Training, the Consumer will be required to complete and pass the following exams and assignments with a grade of 70% or higher (DR 454 Final Appraisal).

* ServSafe Managers Exam (75% or higher)
* Two-part Midterm Exam
* Three Additional Exams
* Occupational Skills Training
* Simulated Selection Panel Interview
* Business Plan and Resume
* Weekly Modules, Quizzes, and Homework Assignments

Once a Consumer has successfully passed the BEP Training, with a score of 70% or higher, they are awarded a California BEP License.

## BEP Facilities and Application Process

When a BEP Facility becomes available, a Vending Facility Announcement (DR 460) is sent to all BEP Vendors and Licensees. An interested Vendor or Licensee must complete and send their application (DR 462) to the BEP Sacramento office, prior to the final filing date as specified in the announcement.

Interviews and selections are conducted by a non-D.O.R. Selection Committee Panel. The panel usually consists of three representatives provided by the facility location that controls the property on which the BEP Facility is located, also known as the Contracting Agency. The BEP Facility is awarded to the highest scored applicant. It should be noted that the average timeframe for a new BEP Licensee to operate their first BEP Facility may vary, on average, between two to twelve months.

## Become a Consumer

To become a Consumer of the Department of Rehabilitation, please contact a D.O.R. Rehabilitation Counselor. A Counselor will work with the Consumer to evaluate and provide important feedback of skills in preparation for the application process for a future BEP Training.

## Department of Rehabilitation Links to Services

Additional information about the Department of Rehabilitation or the Business Enterprises Program may be found on the following web pages.

Click on the link for: [Department of Rehabilitation Blind Field Services](http://www.dor.ca.gov/SSD/Blind-Field-Services.html)

Click on the link for: [Business Enterprises Program](http://www.dor.ca.gov/BEP/index.html)