# RSA-7-OB for FY-2023

**Form Name** RSA-7 OB

## Award FY 2023

**Report Through:** 09/30/2023

Program:Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind

Submitting Organization- California Department of Rehabilitation

## Part I: Funding Sources and Expenditures in Support of the OIB Program

### Funding Sources and Amounts in Support of the OIB Program for the Reported Federal Fiscal Year (FFY)

1. Title VII-Chapter 2 Federal grant award for reported FFY- $3,370,978
2. Title VII-Chapter 2 carryover from previous FFY- $1,580,756
3. Total Title VII-Chapter 2 Funds (A1 + A2)- $4,951,734
4. Title VII-Chapter 1, Part B Funds- $0
5. Other Federal funds available for expenditure in the reported FFY- $0
6. Total Federal funds (A3 + A4 + A5)- $4,951,734
7. State funds (excluding in-kind contributions)- $0
8. In-kind contributions- $475,071
9. Other non-Federal funds- $0
10. Total non-Federal funds (A7 + A9)- $0
11. Total of all funds available for expenditure in the reported FFY (A6+ A7 A9)- $4,951,734

### OIB Program Expenditures in Reported FFY

1. Funds expended for administrative costs in the reported FFY

1. Administrative expenditures from (1) Title VII-Chapter 2 Federal grant award funds and (2) non-Federal sources used in meeting the match requirement- $943,881
2. Administrative expenditures from all other allowable sources as identified in Part I - A above- $0
3. Total administrative expenditures (1a + 1b)- $943,881

2. Funds expended for direct services during the reported FFY

1. Direct service expenditures from (1) Title VII-Chapter 2 Federal grant award and (2) funds from non-Federal sources used in meeting the match requirement- $3,659,291
2. Direct service expenditures from all other allowable sources as identified in Part I - A above- $0
3. Total direct service expenditures (2a + 2b)- $3,659,291
4. Total funds expended for the program during the reported FFY (B1c + B2c)- $4,603,172

## Part II: Program Staffing

### Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Program Staff

FTE (full time equivalent) is the number of hours per week considered full time for the positions reported below.

FTE for State Agency staff- 40

FTE for Contract/Subgrant staff- 40

1. FTE State Agency
   1. Administrative/Support- 1.00
   2. Direct Service- 0.00
   3. Total- 1.00
2. FTE through contract/subgrant
   1. Administrative/ Support- 11.88
   2. Direct Service- 45.84
   3. Total- 57.72
3. Total FTE (A1+ A2)
   1. Administrative/ Support- 12.88
   2. Direct Service- 45.84
   3. Total- 58.72

### Employees with Disabilities

Employees with Disabilities (agency and contract/subgrant staff)

1. Employees with disabilities other than blindness or severe visual impairments- 24
2. Employees with blindness or severe visual impairments who are older than age 55- 33
3. Employees with blindness or severe visual impairments who are under age 55- 46
4. Total employees with disabilities (B1 + B2 + B3)- 103

## Part III: Data on Individuals Served

### Individuals Served

1. Number of individuals who began receiving services in the previous FFY and continued to receive services in the reported FFY- 1,711
2. Number of individuals who began receiving services in the reported FFY- 2,943
3. Total individuals served during the reported FFY (A1+ A2)- 4,654

### B. Age at Application

1. 55-64- 953
2. 65-74- 1,194
3. 75-84- 1,327
4. 85 and over- 1,180
5. Total (B1 + B2 + B3 + B4)- 4,654

### C. Gender

1. Individual self-identifies as female- 3,113
2. Individual self-identifies as male- 1,536
3. Individuals who did not self-identify gender- 5
4. Total (C1 + C2 + C3)- 4,654

### D. Race

1. American Indian or Alaska Native- 44
2. Asian- 407
3. Black or African American- 477
4. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander- 16
5. White- 2,797
6. Individual did not self-identify race- 676
7. Two or more races- 237
8. Total (D1 + D2 + D3 + D4 + D5 + D6 + D7) Do not include the sum of E1.- 4,654

### E. Ethnicity

1. Hispanic or Latino- 783

### F. Degree of Visual Impairment

1. Totally blind (light perception only or no light perception)- 392
2. Legally Blind (excluding totally blind)- 1,521
3. Severe Visual Impairment- 2,741
4. Total (F1 + F2 + F3)- 4,654

### G. Major Cause of Visual Impairment

1. Macular Degeneration- 1,491
2. Diabetic Retinopathy- 264
3. Glaucoma- 816
4. Cataracts- 281
5. Other cause of visual impairment- 1,802
6. Total (G1 + G2 + G3 + G4 + G5)- 4,654

### H. Other Age-Related Impairments

1. Hearing impairment- 851
2. Mobility impairment- 1,018
3. Communication impairment- 63
4. Cognitive or intellectual impairment- 198
5. Mental health impairment- 258
6. Other impairment- 1,199

### I. Type of Residence

1. Private residence (house or apartment)- 3,597
2. Senior independent living facility- 839
3. Assisted Living Facility- 152
4. Nursing Home/Long-term Care facility- 31
5. Homeless- 35
6. Total (I1 + I2 + I3 + I4 + I5)- 4,654

### J. Source of Referral

1. Eye care provider (ophthalmologist, optometrist)- 1,108
2. Physician/medical provider- 169
3. State VR agency- 183
4. Government/public or private social service agency not listed elsewhere- 268
5. Veterans Administration- 11
6. Senior program- 572
7. Assisted Living Facility- 262
8. Nursing Home/Long-term Care facility- 7
9. Independent Living center- 52
10. Family member or friend- 724
11. Self-referral- 716
12. Other- 582
13. Total (J1 through J12)- 4,654

## Part IV: Types of Services Provided and Funds Expended

### A. Clinical/Functional Vision Assessments and Services

1. Total expenditures from all sources of program funding- $98,360
2. Total unduplicated count of persons served – Vision screening/vision examination/low vision evaluation- 904
3. Total unduplicated count of persons served – Surgical or therapeutic treatments to prevent, correct, or modify disabling eye conditions- 5

### B. Assistive Technology Devices and Services

1. Total expenditures from all sources of program funding- $719,273
2. Total unduplicated count of persons served – Provision of assistive technology devices and/or services- 3,048

### C. Independent Living and Adjustment Training Services

1. Total expenditures from all sources of program funding- $2,361,683
2. Total unduplicated count of persons receiving independent living and adjustment training services- 4,401
3. Number of persons receiving the following services:
   1. Orientation and mobility training- 589
   2. Communication skills training- 2,269
   3. Daily living skills training- 2,255
   4. Advocacy training- 1,398
   5. Adjustment counseling and/or peer support services (individual or group)- 1,814
   6. Information and referral services- 3,380
   7. Other independent living services- 1,060

### D. Supportive Services

1. Total expenditures from all sources of program funding- $330,090
2. Total unduplicated count of persons served – Supportive services (reader services, transportation, personal attendant services, support service providers, interpreters, etc.)- 1,266

### E. Community Awareness Activities and Information and Referral

1. Total expenditure from all sources of program funding- $149,885

### F. Total Direct Expenditures

Sum of A1 + B1 + C1 + D1 + E1, total must agree with the direct service expenditures reported in Part 1, B2c- $3,659,291

## Part V: Program Performance Measures and Outcome Data

Provide the following data for each of the performance measures below.

## Program Performance Data

### Assistive Technology Devices and Services

A1. Enter the unduplicated number of individuals receiving assistive technology devices and services for whom change in functional capabilities was assessed during the reported FFY (Denominator).- 2,728

A2. Enter the unduplicated number of individuals receiving assistive technology devices and services who demonstrated improvement in one or more functional capabilities during the reported FFY (Numerator). Note: An individual who maintained but did not improve their capabilities may be reported here if the individual’s goal was to prevent further decline in their capabilities.- 2,720

A3. The percentage of individuals receiving assistive technology devices and services who demonstrated improvement in one or more functional capabilities during the reported FFY consistent with the objectives for receiving such devices and services (A2 divided by A1). The percentage is calculated by RSA MIS.- 99.71%

### Independent Living and Adjustment Training Services

B1. Enter the unduplicated number of individuals receiving independent living and adjustment training services for whom change in functional capabilities was assessed during the reported FFY (Denominator).- 3,224

B2. Enter the unduplicated number of individuals receiving independent living and adjustment training services who demonstrated improvement in one or more functional capabilities (Numerator). Note: An individual who maintained but did not improve their capabilities may be reported here if the individual’s goal was to prevent further decline in their capabilities.- 3,209

B3. The percentage of individuals receiving one or more independent living and adjustment training services who demonstrated improvement in functional capabilities during the reported FFY (B2 divided by B1). The percentage is calculated by RSA MIS.- 99.53%

### Independence in the Home and Community

C1. Enter the total number of individuals completing a plan of services during the reported FFY (Denominator).- 3,358

C2. Enter the number of individuals completing a plan of services during the reported FFY that reported an increased ability to engage in their customary daily life activities in the home and community (Numerator). Note: An individual who maintained but did not improve their ability to engage in customary daily life activities may be reported here if the individual’s goal was to prevent further decline in their capabilities.- 3,337

C3. The percentage of individuals completing a plan of services who reported an increased ability to engage in their customary daily life activities in the home and community (C2 divided by C1). The percentage is calculated by RSA MIS.- 99.37%

C4. Enter the number of individuals completing a plan of services who reported feeling that they are more confident in their ability to maintain their current living situation as a result of services they received (Numerator).-3,343

C5. The percentage of individuals completing a plan of services who reported feeling that they are more confident in their ability to maintain their current living situation (C4 divided by C1). The percentage is calculated by RSA MIS- 99.55%

### Efficiency Measure

D1. Total funds expended for direct program services during the reported FFY (as reported in PART I B2) (Denominator).- $3,659,291

D2. Number of individuals receiving services during the reported FFY (as reported in PART III A3) (Numerator).- 4,654

D3. The average annual cost per individual served through the program during the reported FFY.- $786.27

## Part VI: Training and Technical Assistance Needs

**Enter a brief description of your training and technical assistance needs, based on challenges you have experienced in implementing the program, and how such training and technical assistance might assist in the implementation and improvement of the performance of the OIB program in your State.**

California’s OIB program is implemented through sub-grant agreements with private, nonprofit community-based organizations (service providers) that have expertise providing effective services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) is the State agency that distributes grant monies to local service providers so the training and/or technical assistance focus is on ensuring consistency in delivery of services and accuracy in reporting. This focus supports DOR’s primary role as the grant management oversight entity. DOR strives to provide program specific training and technical assistance to the service providers through quarterly virtual meetings and continual, multi-modal communication. In-person program reviews, and technical assistance visits. Technical assistance was provided to all service providers in 2023. Much of the technical assistance was consultation on strategies to meet grant performance goals, compliance with regulations, and meeting the needs of consumers as hybrid service delivery has become routine. DOR wishes to continue receiving direction and feedback on best practices in tracking and reporting consumer services and attaining quality outcomes.

DOR continues to participate in technical assistance activities offered by the OIB Technical Assistance Center at Mississippi State (OIB-TAC). DOR staff attended and participated in some of the monthly OIB-TAC Program Manager meetings, collaborating with other state OIB staff and sharing knowledge/learning about different ways of supporting service providers in California.

## Part VII: Narrative

### **A. Briefly describe the agency’s method of implementation for the OIB program (i.e., service delivery provided in-house, through sub-grantees/contractors, or a combination) incorporating outreach efforts to reach underserved and/or unserved populations. Include any updates from the prior year’s report. List all sub-grantees/contractors.**

Implementation: Through a statewide competitive grant process, DOR provides core comprehensive independent living services (ILS) to individuals aged 55 years and older who are blind and visually impaired. In 2023 services were provided by 17 service providers across California. Services are provided to consumers in various locations; in their home, virtually, at a service provider’s office, or in a consumer’s local community. DOR desires to fund services in all of the 58 counties within California, in order to have a robust Title VII, Chapter 2 program throughout the state. Awards for each county are determined by a formula based on the population of persons aged 55 and older who are blind or visually impaired residing in the county, along with the geographic size of the county. However, in the 2017 competitive process one county did not receive any service provider applications; and, for another county, the service provider was unable to serve the county and relinquished the award. Both counties are remote and have small populations, so, finding a service provider for those counties was not possible. Each OIB service provider is awarded base funding of $10,000, to ensure they have reasonable funds to operate, regardless of the number of counties served. The October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023, federal fiscal year is the sixth year of a six-year grant cycle. DOR conducted a competitive award process in 2023 and after three solicitations secured 16 service providers who will provide OIB services to the entire State in 2023!

Outreach Efforts to Unserved and Underserved Populations: The OIB service providers are encouraged to utilize methodologies that help to ensure eligible consumers are aware of services and to focus on unserved and underserved population groups. The outreach strategies of the 17 service providers to identify local needs of sub-population groups within their geographic area have been met with innovative and effective efforts that include:

* providing translation services for non-English speaking populations;
* incorporating gender and ethnic appropriate ILS promotional information via various media; specialty publications, ethnic-specific print, radio, and public service announcements;
* conducting in-person and virtual ILS informational visits to eye care medical specialists and physicians serving targeted population groups in underserved and unserved communities to increase referrals for services;
* conducting in-person and virtual presentations at adult day health centers, health/social service organizations and homes for seniors located in unserved and underserved ethnic, linguistic, or economic communities;
* providing ILS information, including brochures, mailings, virtual meetings, and telephone calls, to organizations, agencies and businesses serving target populations;
* utilizing ‘mentors’ to orient and demonstrate non-visual skills to members of targeted population sub-groups living in residential facilities;
* attending health and disability fairs and participating in culturally based social activities and support groups by virtual and in-person methods;
* hiring staff and recruiting volunteers who are representative of various cultures and languages of diverse populations, to identify and respond to service barriers (i.e., transportation, geography, cultural sensitivity, and translation services); and
* distributing ILS information to faith-based organizations and establishments located in underserved and unserved diverse communities.

Notably, two of California’s 17 service providers served over 64% of their consumers among ethnic minority groups. six additional service providers are serving over 48% minorities. Particularly, Access to Independence (A2I) and Blindness Support Services, Incorporated (BSSI), are making concerted efforts to reach the Hispanic population of the diverse San Diego/Imperial Valley and Inland Empire areas respectively. Both A2I and BSSI employ a racially and ethnically diverse staff, which continues to help ensure success in serving the diverse population in their service area. The data reflects that 39.9% of consumers served by the 17 service providers during the 2022-23 grant year were from underserved minority populations. This is an increase from 37.3% in the prior grant year. The ongoing adjustments in outreach and service delivery practices appear to have contributed to the increase in services to some of the underserved minority communities. Below is a list of the OIB service providers, listed in descending order by percentage of diverse consumers served, by each provider including their office location and counties served.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **OIB Service Providers** | **Race/Ethnicity %** | **Office Location** | **Counties Served** |
| Access to Independence | 94.4% | San Diego | Imperial |
| Blindness Support Services, Inc. | 64.7% | Riverside | Riverside, San Bernardino |
| Lions Center for the Visually Impaired | 62.5% | Pittsburg | Alameda, Contra Costa, Solano |
| Valley Center for the Blind | 59.0% | Fresno | Fresno, Kings, Madera, Tulare |
| Independent Living Center of Kern County | 52.9% | Bakersfield | Kern |
| San Diego Center for the Blind | 51.5% | San Diego | San Diego |
| Dayle McIntosh Center for the Disabled | 49.1% | Anaheim | Los Angeles, Orange |
| Lighthouse for the Blind | 48.0% | San Francisco | Alameda, Contra Costa, Del Norte, Humboldt, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, Trinity |
| Community Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired | 30.2% | Stockton | San Joaquin |
| Center of Vision Enhancement | 29.7% | Merced | Mariposa, Merced |
| Blind and Visually Impaired Center of Monterey County | 26.4% | Monterey | Monterey |
| Independent Living Resource Center | 26.3% | Santa Barbara | San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura |
| Society for the Blind | 26.3% |  | Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Glenn, Mendocino, Mono, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Sierra, Sutter, Yolo, Yuba |
| Vista Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired | 16.9% | Palo Alto | San Benito, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz |
| Disability Action Center | 9.9% | Chico | Colusa, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama |
| Visually Impaired Persons Support | 9.5% | Modesto | Stanislaus, Tuolumne |
| Earle Baum Center | 6.3% | Santa Rosa | Lake, Napa, Sonoma |

### **Briefly summarize results from your recent evaluations or satisfaction surveys conducted for your program.**

Service providers, as a whole, report a 99% or higher level of positive consumer outcomes which indicate a very high level of consumer satisfaction. The evaluation of the reporting requirements for OIB is an in-house program evaluation activity. Careful documentation of service provision and consumer outcomes helps measure performance and effectiveness and identify technical assistance needs. Furthermore, the evaluations augment accountability, strengthen quality assurance, and identify where program policy revisions are needed. The evaluation process includes all components of the data collection requirements established by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). When monitoring programs, DOR focuses significant time on reviewing services, methods of service delivery, successful outcomes, and consumer satisfaction. Overall, the OIB service providers report a high percentage of consumers who are very satisfied and feel more independent because of the services they received. Ongoing virtual and on-site monitoring will continue to promote accurate documentation of outcomes and follow-up with consumers to ensure they are completing services and meeting goals. This review process also allows DOR to consult with the service providers on many of their program aspects, helping ensure that the objectives established in grant agreements are being tracked and adjustments are made with a focus on providing comprehensive OIB ILS services that meet consumer needs. Service Providers provide self-evaluation narratives twice a year to help identify and adjust any aspects of program design, service delivery, and other important aspects of providing the best possible services to consumers.

### **C. Briefly describe the impact of the OIB program, citing examples from individual cases (without identifying information) in which services contributed significantly to increasing independence and quality of life for the individual(s).**

Below are a few examples of OIB service providers’ narrative reports, edited for brevity and clarity, about their consumers.

San Diego Center for the Blind (SDCB): A 77-year-old student at San Diego Center for the Blind taught Italian as a profession and has always enjoyed reading. When she began to lose her vision several years ago, it was a major change and one that greatly affected her ability to read what she wanted, when she wanted. Reading was a source of fulfillment, so she signed up for Talking Books. Reading once again she enjoyed the rhythm of her life. With that problem solved, she began to move towards other ways of living a fulfilling life while adjusting to vision loss. What she decided on was not a brief sequence of steps. It required time for her to learn how to access SDCB's online classes during the pandemic, with diminishing vision and depth perception challenges, and to participate in orientation and mobility classes. She began to understand the related movements of navigating through space, time, and the energy of those around her. After a while, she was so confident in her orientation and mobility skills that she decided to learn ballroom dancing. The consumer said she is now "gliding" through adjustment to vision loss better than before: rising to meet challenges, stretching herself and her independence and having fun.

LightHouse for the Blind: A 73-year-old woman came to Lighthouse due to significant vision changes. LightHouse AT Specialists introduced the consumer to Ruby 7. With the funds provided through OIB, Lighthouse was able to purchase the item and provide training on the device. This tool helped the consumer be more independent with everyday tasks such as grocery shopping, reading the mail and volunteering. Additionally, the consumer will be volunteering with Lighthouse to train and mentor other clients coming through the program.

Valley Center for the Blind (VCB): A client came to VCB seeking guidance and help while feeling lost after losing her vision. She relied on her sister and niece to take care of her in every way possible. Just in this last year, she reported her independence has increased in ways she could have never imagined. She is now cooking family meals, maintaining her household, and independently using her computer to surf the web which has given her the tools she needs to be more independent. Her journey is far from over, but she is proud of her progress.

### **D. Briefly describe the community awareness/outreach efforts and information and referral activities conducted with Title VII-Chapter 2 funds and other funds and the outcome of those activities.**

All 17 service providers have relationships with other organizations in their respective communities. The following are two examples submitted by California’s OIB service providers to highlight some of the ways in which they provide community awareness and Information and Referral to better connect in their communities. These narratives, edited for brevity and clarity, give a good representation of the community awareness and information and referral efforts that service providers use to better connect in their service areas. These efforts have been employed in many communities across the State by the below and other OIB service providers.

Visually Impaired Persons Support (VIPS): We have been successful in maintaining collaborative relationships with Disability Resources Agency for Independent Living (local CIL), Valley Mountain Regional Center (local non-profit organization serving the IDD population), and Behavioral Health and Recovery Services & High-Risk Health Services. We are doing presentations about our services for retirement communities, service clubs, in-home care businesses, and others who are interested. We continue to help clients sign up for other services such as the Braille and Talking Book Library, local Paratransit, and California Phones. We provide and/or help clients fill out paperwork to obtain items such as currency readers and disabled parking placards. We have also worked with Social Workers to assist our clients. VIPS participated in an information fair focusing on the Hispanic and other underserved communities in our city. We contacted some other agencies at the event and hope to work with them more in the future.

Blindness Support Services (BSS): BSS had held various presentations and attended health fairs in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. BSS staff have participated in a blindness and low vision workshop which was facilitated at Rolling Start in Victorville to assist with home visits for one-on-one consumer training. This resulted in reaching underserved seniors in need of services.

### **Briefly describe capacity-building activities, including collaboration with other agencies and organizations (other than with sub-grantees) and the outcome of these activities on expanding or improving the program.**

After three challenging years of COVID-19, service providers have pivoted and adjusted to their “new normal” through adapting curricula, hybrid services and utilizing effective strategies of doing business to increase service provision capacity. An additional benefit of these capacity building efforts is that the methodologies can continue being utilized which enhances the service provider’s ability to serve consumers who reside in the hard-to-reach areas of California.

DOR continues providing technical assistance and consultation to service providers on delivering comprehensive ILS services that meet the needs of OIB consumers. Service providers deliver a wide variety of services, work to stay connected with other OIB service providers, and collaborate with service organizations in their community. To further collaborative relationships, DOR connects service providers with one another when a provider needs guidance. DOR chooses a provider with expertise in the area of question and connects the service providers to each other. Service providers collaborated to cross train staff and refined service delivery, strengthening their respective programs.

Despite ongoing challenges of service provision through the pandemic, service providers continue to make adaptations and adjustments in their methods of collaboration. The following service provider narratives, edited for brevity and clarity, describe some of the diverse collaborative methods utilized to expand services and bring awareness to communities about services available for the unique needs of consumers who are blind or visually impaired.

Vista Center for the Blind (Vista): Vista works in collaboration with Bay Area Older Adults to provide recreational and mobility opportunities as well as social opportunities for Vista’s consumers. This opportunity connected Vista with the Chinese Community and helped grow the existing Chinese support group from 3 to 17.

Society for the Blind: Society for the Blind has collaborated with the Earl Baum Center in co-facilitating monthly support group meetings of the Ukiah Support Group in Mendocino County to provide resources to community members. Society collaborates with Sierra Services for the Blind in Nevada County with an ongoing partnership to serve older adult clients by delivering peer-counseling services over the phone, in-person support groups, and individualized in-home instruction on daily living skills, technology support, and orientation and mobility.

## Part VIII: Signature

Please sign and print the name, title, and telephone number of the IL-OIB Program Director below.

I certify that the data herein reported are statistically accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signed by: Joe Xavier

Title: Director, California Department of Rehabilitation

Date Signed: 12/20/2023