

**Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD)** is the state agency that partners with Ohioans with disabilities to achieve quality employment, independence and Social Security disability determination outcomes. It is accomplished through its Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR), Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired (BSVI) and Division of Disability Determination (DDD). A fourth area is the Division of Employer and Innovation Services (EIS), which is responsible for establishing and maintaining partnerships with employers.

### **Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired**

OOD's Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired provides vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to eligible individuals with blindness and low vision to assist them to attain and maintain competitive integrated employment. OOD works with adults seeking to enter the workforce or retain a job, and with youth beginning at age 14 to assist them as they transition from high school, to college and/or the workplace.

**Applying for Services** - An individual who is interested in applying for VR services can begin the process online by visiting [OODWorks.com](http://OODWorks.com). This website provides information about OOD's services and includes a self-assessment designed to assist the individual to decide if VR services are the right fit. Individuals with disabilities can also contact any of OOD's field offices to begin the process.

**Eligibility** - Once an individual has applied, OOD will determine eligibility for services.

In order to be eligible:

- The individual must have a visual impairment,
- The impairment must result in a substantial barrier to employment,
- The individual is presumed to benefit from VR services in terms of an employment outcome, and
- The individual must require VR services to gain or retain employment.

**Services and Employment** - Once determined eligible, the individual is provided career counseling and guidance to help identify an employment goal. OOD purchases services from providers in the community; closely monitoring to make sure they meet the needs of the individual. OOD, along with its network of providers, works with employers to match individuals who are job ready with available job openings. Once the individual has maintained stable employment for at least 90 days and is satisfied with their job, OOD will close the case. If the individual experiences difficulties on the job later, short-term post-employment services may be available or the individual can reapply for VR services.

**Additional BSVI Programs** - BSVI administers the Business Enterprise Program (BEP) and supports the independence of individuals with disabilities through the Independent Living Older Blind (ILOB) and Personal Care Assistance (PCA) programs. Additionally, BSVI partners with Ohio's Centers for Independent Living (IL) and Community Centers for the Deaf (CCD). BSVI is also charged with the implementation of recommendations identified by the Workforce Integration Task Force (WIT), which supports employment and self-sufficiency of individuals who are deaf, blind or deafblind.

#### **Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities**

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