

Independent Living Older Blind

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) is the state agency that is empowering Ohioans with disabilities through employment, disability determinations, and independence. 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.

OOD's Independent Living Older Blind (ILOB) program provides training in the areas of rehabilitation teaching and mobility and orientation training to assist eligible seniors residing in Ohio with severe visual impairments to remain independent. Services are designed to assist individuals to maintain independent living and avoid the costly alternative of institutionally based care.

Professionally trained rehabilitation counselors provide services to consumers through community rehabilitation partners. Services include:

- Orientation and mobility skills training to enable eligible individuals to travel independently, safely and confidently in familiar and unfamiliar environments,
- Skills training in Braille, handwriting, typewriting or other means of communication,
- Communication aids, such as large print, and readers,
- Training to perform daily living activities, such as meal preparation, identifying coins and currency, selection of clothing, telling time and maintaining a household,
- Provision of low-vision services and aids, such as magnifiers to perform reading and mobility tasks, and
- Family and individual counseling services to assist older individuals who are blind in adjusting emotionally to the loss of vision as well as to assisting in their integration into the community and its resources.

Eligibility

Eligibility for OOD's ILOB program is based on three criteria:

- An individual must be 55 years of age or older,
- An individual must have a significant vision impairment that interferes with activities of daily living, and
- Independent living goals are feasible with appropriate services.

Programs provided by Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) are funded, in whole or in part, with federal grants awarded by the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

For purposes of the Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who are Blind (OIB) Program, the federal grant received from DOE in FFY 2019 paid 90% of the total costs incurred under the program. In FFY 2019, OOD received \$1,153,208 in federal grant funds. Funds appropriated by the State paid over the 10% required match or \$130,000 of the total costs incurred under the OIB program.

For purposes of the Independent Living (IL) Program, the federal grant received from HHS paid 90% of the total costs incurred in FFY 2019. In FFY 2019, OOD received funding of \$640,571. Funds appropriated by the State paid 10% or \$71,175 of the total costs incurred under the IL Program.

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