



New York State
Office of
Children & Family
Services

**Commission for the
Blind & Visually Handicapped**

STRATEGIC PLAN

September 2004

I. VALUES

The Strategic Plan of the Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH) is founded on the values of our organization.

We value the worth, dignity and rights of people who are blind, and we will:

- continue to empower the consumer and foster independence and self-sufficiency;
- be non-judgmental toward a consumer's choice of services and goals; and,
- provide quality vocational rehabilitation services that meet and exceed consumer needs and interests.

We value the active participation of consumers in their own rehabilitation programs, and we will:

- assure that the consumer understands and is fully informed of available choices;
- provide for an equitable partnership among consumers, CBVH and service providers; and,
- amplify available services by encouraging consumer involvement in activities such as peer counseling, support groups and mentoring.

We value providing quality rehabilitation services, and we will:

- ensure that the staff resources of CBVH and the provider agencies are applied in the most efficient, non-duplicative, and timely manner possible;
- offer flexibility and choice;
- provide simplified processes that do not hinder a consumer's easy access to services; and
- maintain a formal appeals procedure that consumers can easily access.



II. VISION

Legally blind individuals live independently, pursue meaningful employment and enjoy full integration into the mainstream of society.

III. MISSION

CBVH strives to enhance employability, maximize independence and assist in the development of the capacities and strengths of persons who are legally blind.

IV. GOALS

To achieve its Mission and pursue its Vision, CBVH integrates the themes of its major programs and efforts under three general Goal Statements:

Goal #1...

Be a standard of excellence in rehabilitation services across the total age spectrum of the legally blind population in New York State.

Goal #2...

Increase outreach and expand awareness of services and career opportunities in response to the needs and aspirations of the entire legally blind population in New York State.

Goal #3...

Continually increase productivity by developing, expanding and replicating cost-effective programs and technology.



V. OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

In preparing this Strategic Plan, CBVH reached out to a broad array of consumers, constituents, professionals and stakeholders. The following carefully researched and collaboratively selected series of Objectives and Strategies operationalize the priority activities of CBVH to pursue its goals.

Objectives and Strategies to Achieve Goal #1...

Be a standard of excellence in rehabilitation services across the total age spectrum of the legally blind population in New York State.

Objective A...

CBVH will strive to provide to eligible adult consumers the information, specialized training, education, and support services needed for them to live and work confidently in their communities.



Strategies...

- Develop a program to identify, share and adapt Best Practices with Home Office and District Offices.
 - Develop mentoring resources for CBVH consumers seeking to obtain or maintain employment.
 - Design the Individualized Plan for Employment to be a more effective document to promote consumer involvement, self-determination, and self-advocacy.
 - Develop a function within CBVH to explore more diverse training options and programs.
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- Develop in-state residential assessment and training services to address blindness rehabilitation.
 - Promote the Business Enterprise Program as a viable employment opportunity.
 - Develop means to make basic educational opportunities more effective and accessible; for example, English as a Second Language and Graduate Equivalency Diploma.

Objective B...

CBVH will strive to provide to children and youth who are legally blind the information, specialized training, education, and support services needed for them to live and work confidently in their communities when they become adults.

Strategies...

- Develop a program to identify, share and adapt Best Practices with Home Office and District Offices.
- Dedicate one staff person in each District Office to provide transition services to youth.
- Recruit more legally blind individuals willing to serve as mentors to children and youth who are legally blind.
- Provide technical assistance to facilitate the integration of legally blind children in community-based youth programs
- Expand Children’s Program services available to families to enhance their capacity to support the achievement of their children’s goals.
- Continue to promote Braille literacy.
- Increase the number of Children’s Consultants.



Objective C...

CBVH will strive to increase utilization of available resources in order to maintain its commitment to meeting the rehabilitation needs of older individuals who are legally blind.

Strategies...

- Develop a program to identify, share and adapt Best Practices with Home Office and District Offices.
- Update existing policy pertaining to older consumers to achieve optimal levels of service.
- Build and implement systems to increase cross referrals through other agencies and programs that provide services needed by older CBVH consumers.
- Provide technical assistance and in-service training/consultation to other agencies/programs.

Objectives and Strategies to Achieve Goal #2...

Increase outreach and expand awareness of services and career opportunities in response to the needs and aspirations of the entire legally blind population in New York State.

Objective D...

CBVH will strive to increase the public's understanding and awareness of CBVH's mission in order to provide services to consumers who lack knowledge of the scope of services offered and provided through CBVH.

Strategies...

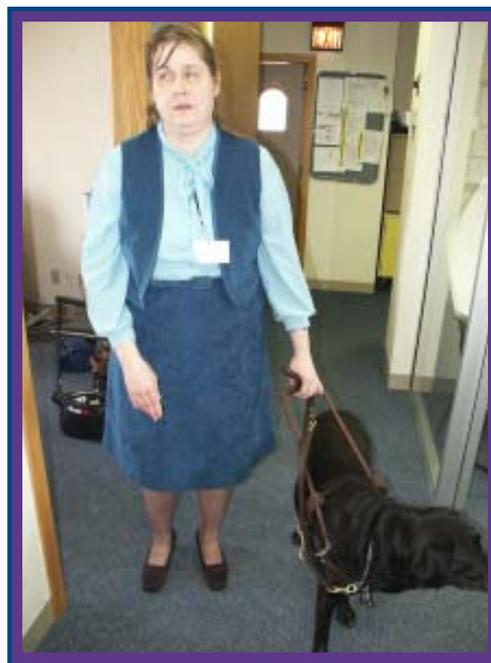
- Build and enhance relationships and collaborative activities with Health Care/Rehabilitation Professionals and their staff.
- Network and work in collaboration with provider agencies to develop ongoing, coordinated programs that educate and enhance the public's awareness of services to blind individuals.
- Enhance the CBVH website to include current information on related programs and services.

Objective E...

CBVH will strive to address the needs of unserved, underserved, and difficult-to-serve groups who are legally blind.

Strategies...

- Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment with the State Rehabilitation Council to identify unserved and underserved residents and their needs.
- Each District Office will establish collaborative relationships between the District Office and OMRDD, OMH, SOFA, VESID, ILCs and other public and private organizations and systems that provide services to individuals with disabilities.
- Develop a program to identify, share and adapt Best Practices with Home Office and District Offices.
- Develop and provide training to staff to enable them to meet the needs of populations identified as unserved or underserved in a more effective manner.

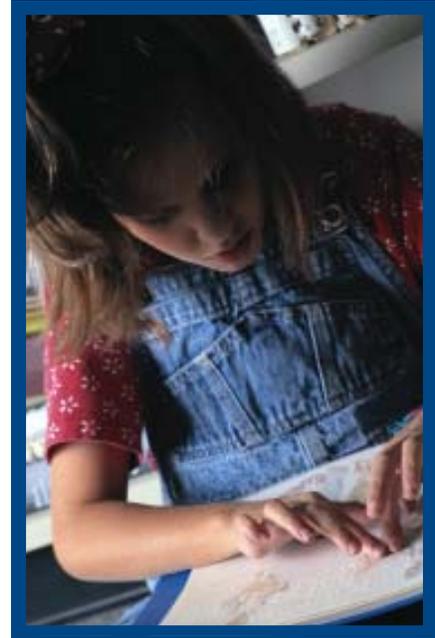


Objective F...

CBVH will strive to encourage and support programs that increase the number of professional and para-professional staff with the skills needed to serve the legally blind population.

Strategy...

- CBVH will work with educational institutions and other training entities in New York State in order to develop programs that prepare professional staff for careers in the blindness field; for example, Occupational Therapists; Orientation and Mobility Specialists; Physical Therapists; Rehabilitation Teachers; Social Workers; Teachers of the Visually Impaired; and Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors.



Objectives and Strategies to Achieve Goal #3...

Continually increase productivity by developing, expanding and replicating cost-effective programs and technology.

Objective G...

CBVH will strive to develop standards of practice for its provider agencies in order to set criteria for higher quality service delivery.

Strategies...

- Review programs and methods of provider agencies to determine best practices in delivery of quality services that result in successful outcomes.
- Develop a program to identify, share and adapt Best Practices with Home Office and District Offices.

Objective H...

CBVH will strive to improve technology services for vocational rehabilitation consumers to enable them to obtain competitive employment.

Strategies...

- Enhance the communication process between the Adaptive Technology Center providers and equipment contractors to facilitate the procurement of equipment to consumers.
- Implement guidelines for equipment repair and train counselors in related procedures.

- Obtain additional technology consultants to assist counselors in making informed and efficient decisions about equipment purchases.
- Establish statewide consultant resources to do repairs and modifications on site.
- Advocate on behalf of transition-aged consumers with local school districts to provide the needed adaptive technology service and devices for both in-school and home use.

Objective I...

CBVH will strive to improve technology tools for CBVH Staff to function efficiently in the provision of services to consumers.

Strategies...

- Develop a procedure to make hardware and software compatible with assistive hardware and software.
- Offer classes on specific use of CARES, Outlook and Word on a regular basis.
- Provide specialized training to enable visually impaired staff to be efficient in current technology tools.
- Monitor the budget environment to propose new equipment and a case management system at the opportune time.



Objective J...

CBVH will strive to assure that policy is consistently implemented across CBVH district offices to provide high quality delivery of customer service.

Strategies...

- Evaluate the application of current policy standards for quality and identify “areas of excellence.”
- Implement or adapt identified “area of excellence” for practice across District Offices.
- Establish a regular schedule of Quality Assurance review.
- Balance staff levels and work assignments to preserve the quality of the prioritized activities.

VI. STRATEGIC PLANNING AS A PART OF THE CBVH CULTURE

The implementation of this Strategic Plan is a component of an ongoing process of continuous improvement. Through constant evaluation of CBVH programs and persistent efforts to develop more effective and more efficient ways to serve our consumers, CBVH will regularly update its Strategic Plan in order to fulfill its Mission and pursue its Vision. CBVH considers the strategic planning process as an essential dynamic for the Commission to excel as a learning organization.

Strategic Management Model





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Rensselaer, NY 12144

Visit our website at:

www.ocfs.state.ny.us

For child care, foster care, and
adoption information, call:

1-800-345-KIDS

To report child abuse and
neglect, call:

1-800-342-3720

For information on the
Abandoned Infant Protection
Act, call:

1-866-505-SAFE

For information on services for
the blind, call:

1-866-871-3000

1-866-871-6000 (TDD)

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George E. Pataki
Governor



Office of Children & Family Services
John A. Johnson
Commissioner