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NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES ANNOUNCES INCREASE IN JOB PLACEMENTS FOR THE LEGALLY BLIND

Commission for Blind & Visually Handicapped Placed 402 Legally Blind Adults in Competitive Fields; Increasing Placements for Third Year in a Row

New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) Commissioner Gladys Carrión, Esq., today announced that the Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH), a division of OCFS, has successfully placed more legally blind adults in competitive jobs than it did last year – reflecting a three-year growth in job placements.

This year, CBVH placed 402 legally blind adults in fields as diverse as law, social work, financial consulting, family divorce mediation, radio, youth services, physical therapy, counseling, teaching, retail, food services, banking and research.

“When only about 37 percent of individuals with disabilities are employed in this country, it is incumbent upon the leaders of our state and nation to ensure that the disabled community is provided full opportunity to contribute in a supportive environment free of discrimination,” said Governor David A. Paterson. “Our work to confront this problem is only beginning, but I am pleased with the growing recognition that individuals with disabilities have the potential to contribute great things to our society. And with New York facing an economic crisis, it is critical that we give those opportunities to all capable individuals who can help make an immediate and positive impact on the future of our economy.”

“We are extremely pleased that with training and adaptive technology our clients can experience the satisfaction of supporting themselves and their families, and contributing their valuable skills and talents to the workplace,” said Commissioner Carrión.

She added: “I am also grateful to our public and private partners who assist with training, and all those employers who

recognize that our consumers, given the opportunity, make significant contributions to the workforce.”

CBVH works with not-for-profit agencies for the blind throughout New York State to provide assessment and technical, training, job placement, and resource assistance to clients to help them achieve economic self-sufficiency and full integration into society.

Michael Godino, a board member of the New York Vision Rehabilitation Association and a former client, said: “I’d like to congratulate CBVH and its partner provider agencies for their great success. Given the quality of service I received, it’s not surprising to me that the number of people placed in competitive jobs is increasing each year. We look forward to greater successes.”

Nancy D. Miller, Executive Director/CEO of VISIONS Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired in New York City, said: “The New York State Commission for the Blind is a leader in providing cost-effective services for blind and visually impaired persons of all ages. The focused interventions and successful collaborations among consumers, providers and CBVH counselors are at the heart of this achievement in employment outcomes.”

In addition to vocational rehabilitation, CBVH assists clients with daily living skills, orientation and mobility training, diagnostic evaluations, obtaining adaptive equipment, job development, job training, and job placement services.

CBVH also operates a Business Enterprise Program, assisting people who are legally blind to own businesses operating newsstands, snack bars and cafeterias in government buildings.

In addition, CBVH provides rehabilitation services to children who are legally blind, including working with and empowering parents, arranging services to supplement educational activities – including providing college scholarships, and ensuring a smooth transition to adult services to maximize their future independence. CBVH also provides children with the opportunity to attend summer camps and year-round recreation programs, which encourage independence and increase self-confidence.

For legally blind individuals who are 55 and older, CBVH has programs to teach the skills necessary to maintain safety and confidence in the home environment.

For more information on services for the blind, call toll free 1-866-871-3000 (TDD 1-866-871-6000) or visit the agency website at www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/cbvh.

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