



News

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**NYS OFFICE OF CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES
ANNOUNCES \$2.3 MILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDS
TO HELP TRAIN & EMPLOY LEGALLY BLIND INDIVIDUALS**

Commissioner Gladys Carrión, Esq., of the NYS Office of Children and Family Services today announced the award of \$2,276,139 in contracts to seven agencies across New York State for Innovative Employment and Training Programs for more than 160 legally blind individuals.

The outcome-based contracts are being awarded through OCFS's Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH) and funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

"The release of federal stimulus funds is providing the Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped with a unique opportunity to support the development of market-driven projects across New York State," Commissioner Carrión said. "These projects will provide new and re-entering workers who are legally blind with innovative training and employment opportunities that provide permanent, competitive jobs in today's workforce."

CBVH services enhance the lives of more than 9,500 individuals, including children and elderly, across New York State annually. Vocational programs include transitional services for students ages 14-21, and educational and vocational services for adults age 18 and older who wish to obtain or retain employment.

CBVH currently supports training, placement and other vocational services for over 1,500 new and re-entering workers who are legally blind. These services assist New York citizens who are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services to: maximize the use of any remaining vision; organize and manage their lives at home, school, and work; and travel independently in and around their community and environment. CBVH-trained workers complete their services and obtain employment in diverse fields including food service and maintenance, call center and collections representatives, sales, licensed professions, finance, and entrepreneurial areas.

Commissioner Carrión said: "CBVH has been supporting both career training and placement programs for over 40 years. Changes to the workforce landscape and market demands require new approaches, with direct linkages to employers who need staff trained to meet their requirements. This award will assist CBVH trainees in meeting new and future market demands."

CBVH has seven district offices throughout the state. For more information on rehabilitative and vocational services for the blind, visit www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/cbvh or call 1-866-871-3000 (TDD: 1-866-871-6000).

Contract recipients, location, and amount:

- Aramatic Refreshment Services, Watervliet, \$483,960
- Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired – Goodwill, Rochester, \$292,472
- Elizabeth Pierce Olmsted MD Center for the Visually Impaired, Buffalo, \$170,348
- Goodwill Industries of Greater New York & Northern New Jersey, Astoria, \$399,501
- Helen Keller Services for the Blind, Brooklyn, \$404,540
- Research Foundation of the State University of New York, University at Buffalo, \$175,318
- Visionary Media Company, New York City, \$350,000

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