

## How do I become a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments?

- First, you will need to determine which training program is right for you. Many universities offer training on weekends, in the summer and through distance learning options. To learn more about training programs, visit the university directory on our web site: [www.aerbvi.org/universities](http://www.aerbvi.org/universities).
- Contact each of the programs you are considering. Bachelor's, certification, and master's programs are available.
- Next, find out if financial aid is available. You may be eligible for some type of financial support through the university, your state's department of education, or even your current employer.
- If you are already an educator, you may be able to accelerate your certification. You may only need the vision-specific courses required by your state. Contact your state's educator certification authority for more information.
- If you are already an educator, let your special education director know about your interest. She may be willing to support your efforts and make a position available when you are certified.

### The next step:

We will help you start your career. Contact the **career desk** at the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) at 877.492.2708, ext. 203 or send an e-mail to [careers@aerbvi.org](mailto:careers@aerbvi.org).

Learn more at [www.opennewlives.org](http://www.opennewlives.org). We will help you find training, locate organizations that hire teachers of students with visual impairments, and introduce you to our community – people who are dedicated to showing others how to **open their lives**.



[www.aerbvi.org](http://www.aerbvi.org)





Judith

When I first became a TVI, I had a student who was six years old and was still eating baby food. He didn't know how to feed, bathe, or dress himself, or even how to play appropriately with a toy. His family thought that because he was blind he could never learn to do things for himself.

During his first year of school, this boy not only learned to do all of those things, he also began learning to read braille. Now he has graduated from high school and has a job in the community.

## Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments

Children with visual impairments learn about the world in unique ways. They may learn to read by using a finger, or by using magnification. They learn to cook, dress, and succeed at sports by using adaptive skills and equipment. Learning to use and maximize existing senses requires a highly qualified and skilled professional: a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI).

TVI's are specialized educators who can meet the diverse needs of students with visual impairments. They work closely with parents and educators to adapt the educational environment. They frequently work with children in a one-to-one relationship. TVI's enable students to overcome barriers and create educational success.

### Why should I become a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments?

- You will have an incredible impact on each child's life. TVI's usually focus on one child at a time, addressing their challenges and building on their strengths.
- You will be highly sought after. There are only 6,700 TVI's to serve the 100,000 students who need them. Because of this critical shortage, over 5,000 openings exist currently and more are projected.
- You will be engaged in a challenging career that uses your eclectic talents. As a TVI, you will understand the practical side of a medical diagnosis, listen to and counsel children and their families, and understand how to be a good advocate.
- You have the opportunity to work in traditional and non-traditional settings, in a career that offers endless opportunities for professional stimulation and development.
- You may be eligible for financial assistance to help support your university training. After training, some districts offer signing bonuses.

### What would I do on the job?

As a TVI, you might:

- Teach a toddler to differentiate between a variety of toys and understand the way objects feel in the world around her.
- Help a child who is deaf and blind communicate with her family.
- Open up the world of literacy by teaching a child how to read and write braille.
- Teach a teenager how to use a graphing calculator.
- Help a student with additional disabilities master daily living skills.
- Adapt recreational equipment, enabling blind students to play with their friends.
- Work with other educators to modify materials and the environment so that blind students can participate with their peers.