Deafblind Services: Services available through the Division for Blind Services (DBS)

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Abstract: This article provides an overview on the programs the Division for Blind Services offers to people who are deafblind.

Key words: Division for Blind Services, Deafblind, Deafblind Program Specialists, Deafblind Community Based Apartment Program

Students in their transition years between school and beyond, their parents and professionals may often wonder what services are available to them after their school career is complete. Deafblind Services are available to DBS consumers who have both vision and hearing loss through two avenues including the Deafblind Community Based Apartment Program for adults and for individuals of all ages through our Deafblind Program Specialists.

Deafblind Community Based Apartment Program

For students who are planning to work in competitive employment and who have the potential to maintain their own apartment, the Deafblind Community Based Apartment Program may be one of those options to consider. This program is available to individuals who are interested in work and who need training to support their employment and independent living goals. Assessments are conducted and an individual employment plan is developed to address any skills identified in the areas of Adjustment to Deafblindness, Independent Living, Travel, Communication, Support Systems and Vocational Skills. The training program is based on the results of the assessment. The program is located in an apartment setting in Austin to provide an integrated approach to living and working. It is important to know that services are based on eligibility and not an entitlement. Our consumers must be willing to participate in their own goal setting and carry a lot of responsibility for goal achievement.

Deafblind Program Specialists

Deafblind Specialists are available statewide to consult with DBS staff providing suggestions for programming. The core service is to provide an assessment of the consumer’s requirements for access to work, school or home environments as a result of a dual sensory impairment.
Based on the assessment, recommendations specific to the individual’s hearing and vision loss are made that include the identification of:

- Specialized adaptive equipment
- Education and training programming strategies
- Resources

The Deafblind Specialist may also assist in registration for the Helen Keller National Center, participate in specialized statewide training programs, or collaborate with other service providers within the state/national to access and improve services for individuals with deafblindness.

You can access the Deafblind Services through the DBS office closest to your community. If you need assistance in locating the closest office, go to www.dars.state.tx.us and click on Office Locator, Blind Services and enter your zip code. For general questions about Deafblind Services, you may contact Elaine Sveen, Manager, Deafblind Services at 512-326-1088.