

2023



Cecilia Robinson, TSVI
Outreach Programs
Texas School for the Blind
and Visually Impaired

2023 SUMMARY OF PROFESSIONALS IN VISUAL IMPAIRMENT IN TEXAS

A review of education professionals who work with Texas students with visual impairments, including a description of selected characteristics, projections of attrition, and projected future needs.

Table of Contents

Contents.....	2
Introduction	3
Executive Summary.....	3
Characteristics of VI Professionals in Texas	4
Number of VI professionals in Texas	5
Part-time service providers	9
Contract service providers.....	10
Dually certified VI professionals	10
Direct services provided by ESCs	11
Overall perceptions of caseloads.....	12
Cultural diversity.....	13
VI professionals who have a visual impairment	14
Growth in Population of Students with Visual Impairments and Impact on VI Professionals	14
Impact on teachers of students with visual impairments	15
Impact on O&M specialists.....	15
Variance in growth of students with visual impairments and O&M services	15
Attrition.....	16
Attrition factors.....	16
Projected 3-year attrition	17
Projected vs. actual attrition	18
Anticipated Need	19
Posted positions.....	19
Recommendations by knowledgeable professionals	20
Discussion of projected need and teachers of students with visual impairments (TSVIs).....	21
Discussion of projected need and O&M specialists	22
Enrollment to Prepare VI Professionals.....	23
Students registered in Texas programs	23
Summary	26
Appendix	29
Methodology.....	29
References	31

Introduction

Since 1996, the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) has been conducting an annual survey of the Visual Impairment (VI) professionals in Texas. The term “VI professionals” includes teachers of students with visual impairments (TSVIs) and certified orientation and mobility specialists (COMS). Individuals functioning in both roles are referred to as “dually certified.” This report provides information about the results of the survey conducted in September 2023.

To assess the characteristics of and need for VI professionals in Texas, data was collected from the 20 Education Service Centers (ESCs), two Texas university personnel preparation programs, and TSBVI. Data from TSBVI includes VI professionals who provide direct services in the Comprehensive Programs and those who provide statewide training, short-term services, and leadership via the Outreach and Short-Term Programs. More information about how data were collected is included in the Appendix of this report.

Executive Summary

The **total number of VI professionals**, including leadership positions, **increased** from 935 to 983, a gain of 48 individuals.

- The number of **part-time TSVIs increased** by 35 individuals while **full-time TSVIs decreased** by 14 individuals, bringing last year’s total of 643 to **664 or 572.5 FTEs** (increase of 3.5 FTEs) this year.
- There are **347 COMS** providing direct service, equaling **276 FTEs**. The total **increased** by 42 individuals. Three individuals increased in the full-time category and 39 individuals increased in the part-time category.
- **Eighty-four VI professionals are dually certified**, providing both TSVI and O&M services. This is an increase of 3 individuals from the previous year.
- **Approximately 23%** of the total number of VI professionals serving students are **contract service providers**, an increase of 1% from last year (131 TSVI, 98 COMS).

The **cultural diversity** of VI professionals showed both signs of growth and decline.

- The number of **VI professionals who are African American increased** by 12, from 53 to **65**, or an increase of 23 percent.
- The number of **VI professionals fluent in Spanish increased** by 26, from 115 to **141**.
- The number of **VI professionals who are Hispanic increased** by 3, from 150 to **153**, while **Asian American increased** by 4, from 7 to **11** in 2023.

Attrition in the previous year **decreased** from 63 to **40** individuals. ESC consultants anticipate that 119 TSVIs and 36 COMS, or **17% of existing VI professionals**, will retire or otherwise leave the field over the next 3 years.

The number of students with visual impairments increased in 2023.

- In 2023, the total number of students reported in the *Annual Registration of Students with Visual Impairments* was **10,911**, 272 more students than registered in 2022.
- Fourteen ESCs reported an increase in VI caseloads while 5 ESCs' VI caseloads remained the same. Twelve ESCs reported an increase in orientation and mobility (O&M) caseloads; six ESCs' O&M caseloads remained the same. None of the ESCs reported a decrease in either VI or O&M caseloads.

The **total number of university students statewide** entering VI and O&M certification programs at Stephen F. Austin State University and Texas Tech University **decreased by 34 or 20%**, and **70 completed** their program in 2023.

- There are **138 future VI professionals** in a program leading to certification as either a TSVI or COMS. Eighty-nine students are working toward their TSVI certification and 49 are enrolled in an O&M program.
- **Seventy individuals** (51 TSVIs and 19 COMS) **completed a VI certification program in 2023** compared to 90 individuals in 2022.
- **Eighty-eight percent of students** enrolled in SFASU and TTU TSVI and O&M certification training programs **receive funding support** for coursework, an increase of 25% from 2022.

Anticipated Need for VI Professionals

- It is projected that Texas will need 56 to 70 additional TSVIs and an additional 24 to 34 COMS by 2026 to accommodate **student growth alone**.
- Texas is estimated to need an additional 188 to 202 full-time equivalent TSVIs and 72 to 83 full-time equivalent COMS in the next 3 years to replace those who are likely to leave the field **and** respond to anticipated student growth.
- If the university TSVI program completion rates continue to reflect those over the last 3 years, the number of newly certified TSVIs (144) **would fall below the range of anticipated need**.
- Presuming that orientation and mobility students continue to find challenges in completing their programs, and the number of completers continues at a similar rate over the next 3 years (64), **it is likely that the need for a minimum of 72 new COMS by 2026 will not be met**.

Characteristics of VI Professionals in Texas

The survey asked about the number of individuals *functioning* as VI professionals. While many professionals may hold certification as a teacher of students with visual impairments (TSVI) or as an

orientation and mobility specialist (COMS or O&M specialist), this report summarizes data on those with a *current job assignment* as a TSVI or COMS. Although some VI professionals hold *both* TSVI and O&M certifications, only those professionals whose current job assignment includes **functioning** in both roles are considered dually certified for this report.

It is important to note that most VI professionals are not classroom teachers; they are primarily itinerant specialists in visual impairment who work in a variety of schools, community settings, and homes. In addition to direct services, they also provide collaborative consultations to other team members about the impact of specific visual impairments on students in a range of settings and ensure that appropriately modified materials are available. Additionally, they must travel to their students and provide instruction in the home, school, and community environments. Understanding the difference between classroom teachers and VI professionals is crucial when assessing the current and future need for specialists in visual impairment (Correa-Torres & Johnson Howell, 2004).

Number of VI Professionals in Texas

The number of VI professionals increased by 5.1% in the Fall of 2023. The increase was seen in those providing TSVI as well as O&M services.

This information has been collected annually for 27 years. In 2023, the total number of VI professionals was 983. This was an increase of 48 professionals from 2022. The number of full-time teachers decreased by 14 from 495 to 481 while the number of part-time teachers increased about 24% from 148 to 183. The number of full-time orientation and mobility (O&M) specialists increased by 3 to 205 while the number of part-time O&M specialists increased about 38% from 103 to 142. Over the years, the number of VI professionals has increased with an occasional drop. In 2022, there was a decrease of 38 VI professionals (935) compared to 2021 (973) representing a decrease of 25.6 full-time equivalents (FTEs). This is, by far, the largest drop of VI professionals. Additionally, the 2022 *Annual Registration of Students with Visual Impairments* identified a decrease of 254 students (TSBVI, 2022) compared to the previous year. This trend is likely to continue, and the field will continue to grow.

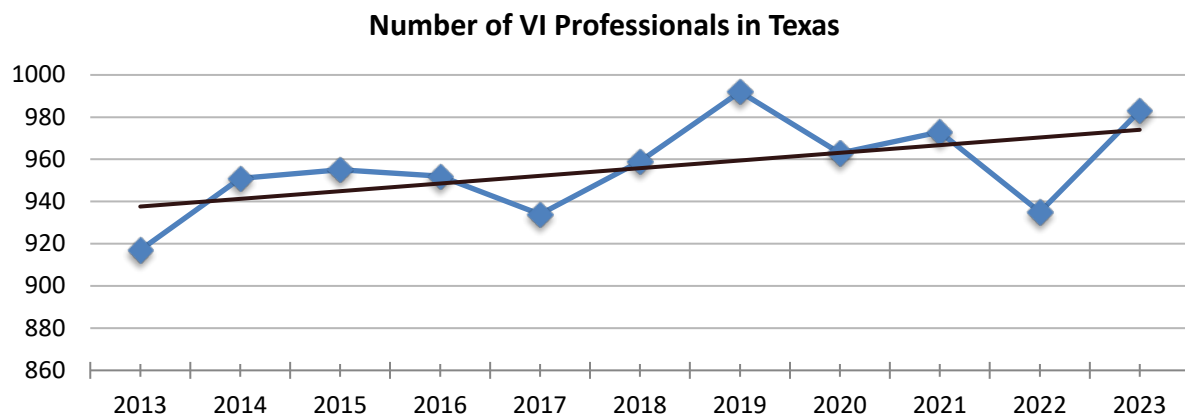


Table 1 below provides further details about VI professionals in Texas within the last 3 years. The term “individuals” includes both full- and part-time VI professionals. The full-time equivalent (FTE) data adjusts for the part-time VI professionals, including those who are dually certified.

Table 1: Total VI Professionals Statewide

	2021		2022		2023	
	Individuals	FTE ²	Individuals	FTE ²	Individuals	FTE ²
ESC leadership ¹	26	21.6	29	21.5	29	21.3
TSBVI statewide ¹	30	27	25	20.5	27	21.8
VI and O&M service providers (adjusted for dually certified professionals)	917	848.5	881	829.5	927	848.5
Total VI professionals	973	897.1	935	871.5	983	891.6

¹ TSBVI statewide consulting staff (Outreach and Short-Term Programs) and ESC consulting VI staff provide leadership/technical assistance statewide or within their organization. Educators at TSBVI or at ESCs who provide direct educational service to students with visual impairments are counted as "VI and O&M direct-service providers."

² FTE = (part-time x .5) + full-time for all charts

Direct-service Providers

The total number of direct-service providers in 2023 was 927 individuals or 857.5 FTEs (adjusted for dually certified professionals). There are currently 664 TSVIs and 347 COMS providing services to students with visual impairments across the state.

Below is data regarding full- and part-time direct-service providers. The term “direct-service providers” includes teachers of students with visual impairments (TSVIs), certified orientation and mobility specialists (COMS), and dually certified personnel who work with students on a regular basis, and/or are the teacher-of-record for issues related to visual impairments. This category does not include those who provide vision-related leadership, technical assistance, or statewide services at ESCs or TSBVI through the Short-Term Programs and Outreach Programs.

This survey captures information about the number of individuals working with students with visual impairments in the state of Texas in either a full- or part-time capacity. It does not gather information on the number of districts that employ full- and/or part-time VI professionals. Full- and part-time status is broadly defined. The reference to “full-time” and “part-time” refers to the total employment of the VI professional. Individuals who work part-time in multiple districts are considered “full-time VI professionals.” As a result, the number of “full-time” VI professionals described may vary from the number of districts or educational cooperatives that employ TSVIs on a full-time basis.

For the purposes of this survey, professionals who are certified *and* employed in both visual impairments and orientation and mobility (dually certified) are counted as a part-time TSVI and a part-time COMS. These specialists are embedded in both TSVI and COMS data. Specific information on dually certified VI professionals is listed in Table 4. Information about the number of combined direct-service providers has been adjusted for dually certified professionals.

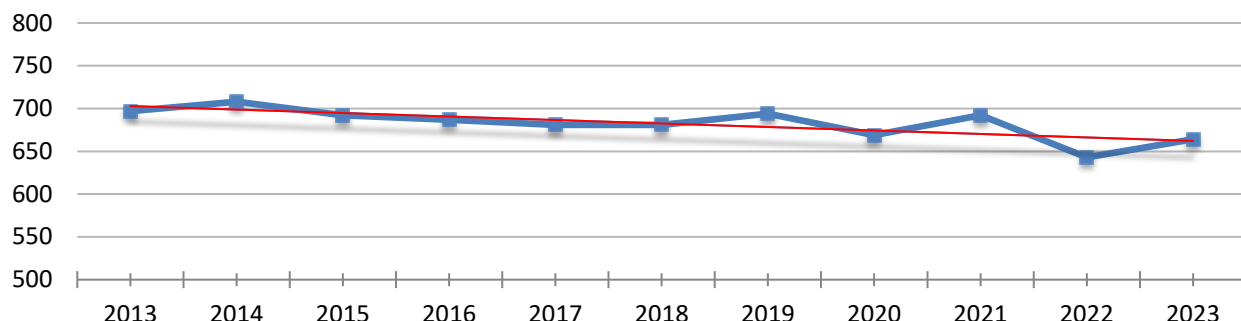
Table 2: Direct-Service Providers: Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVIs)

	2021		2022		2023	
	Individuals	FTE ¹	Individuals	FTE ¹	Individuals	FTE ¹
Full-time TSVIs	516		495		481	
Part-time TSVIs	163		148		183	
Total VI staff	679	597.5	643	569	664	572.5

¹ FTE = part-time x .5 + full-time for all charts

As the table above indicates, the total number of *full-time individuals* who work as a TSVI decreased by 14 while the *part-time* category increased 35 individuals to 183. The total is 664 individuals or 572.5 FTEs.

Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments in Texas



In 2023, the number of teachers increased by 21 from 643 to 664. Except for a steep decrease in 2022, the graph above shows the absence of significant increase, and at times a decline, in the total number of TSVIs across the state. The graph below shows the full and part-time TSVI totals in the last ten years. A decrease in the availability of TSVIs in 2022 seems to follow a reduction of 254 students as identified by *Annual Registration of Students with Visual Impairments*.

Full- and Part-time TSVIs

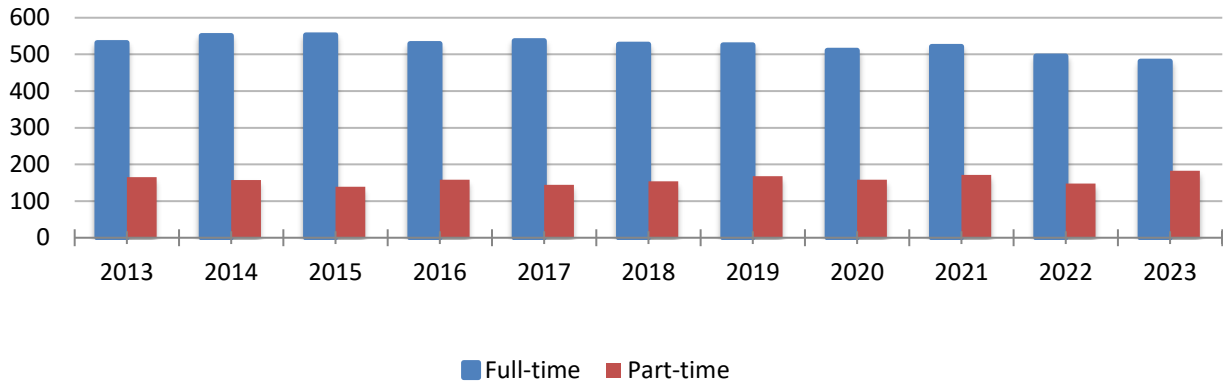


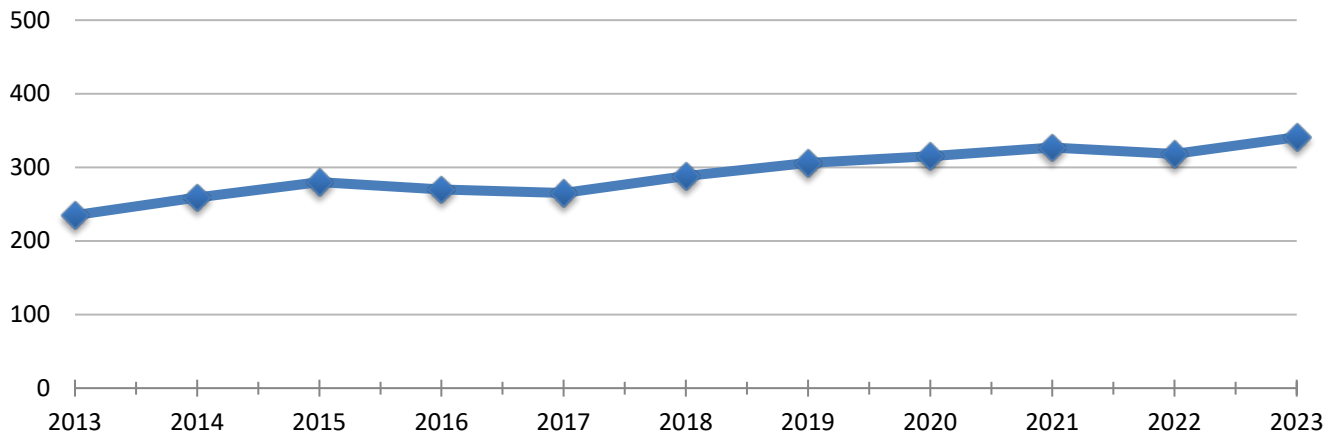
Table 3: Direct-Service Providers: Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMS)

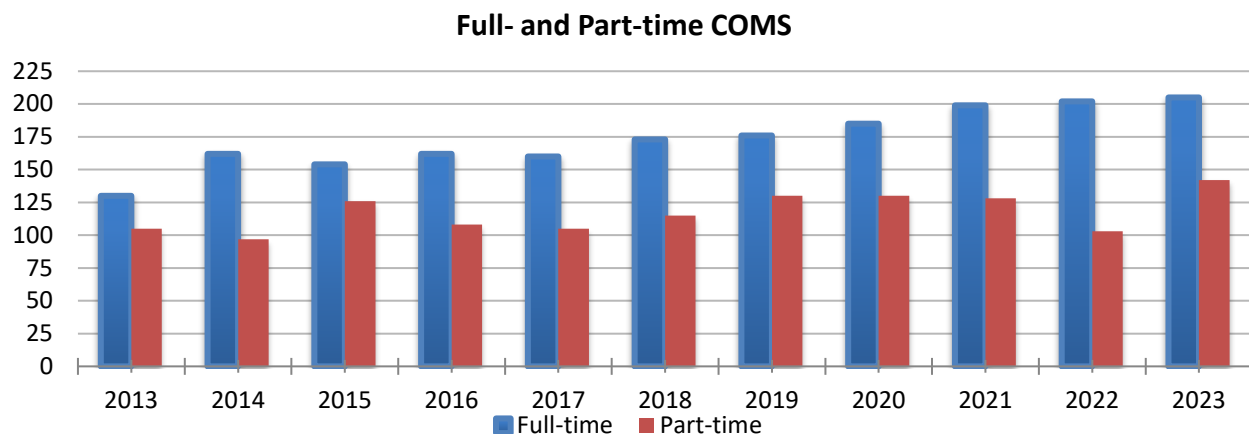
	2021		2022		2023	
	Individuals	FTE ¹	Individuals	FTE ¹	Individuals	FTE ¹
Full-time COMS	189		202		205	
Part-time COMS	124		103		142	
Total O&M staff	313	251	305	253.5	347	276

¹ FTE = part-time x .5 + full-time for all charts

As noted in Table 3 above and the graphs that follow, the total number of O&M specialists increased this year by 42 individuals and the number of FTEs increased by 22.5. A significant growth was seen in the part-time category of an increase of 39 individuals. The full-time category gained a total of 3 service providers.

Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialists in Texas





All initial evaluations of students with visual impairments must include an O&M evaluation by a certified O&M specialist in the home, school and community setting per TEC 30.002. The *2023 Annual Registration of Students with Visual Impairments* reported that 66% of all students with a visual impairment in Texas have been evaluated by a COMS, and 38% receive orientation and mobility services. Compared to 2022, this is a decrease of 3% in evaluations and 1% in O&M services provided to students. Data within the last 5 years indicated that 2020 was the last year with an increase in O&M evaluations. From 2021 to 2023, the number of evaluations decreased each year, most likely due to a lower student count because of the pandemic. As more students are expected to return to school, the number of students to receive an O&M evaluation as well as the number of students to be provided O&M services will likely increase.

Since 2020, the number of students with visual impairment decreased. In 2022, 4,186 students received O&M services, a decrease of 251 students within the previous two years. However, with more students returning to school, it is projected that student growth will be about 1.8% in the next three years. Therefore, increasing the number of COMS FTEs, as seen in 2023, will be essential to ensure that all students have access to an O&M evaluation and receive needed orientation and mobility services.

Part-time Service Providers

There are 325 part-time VI professionals serving students with visual impairments in Texas. Both the number of part-time TSVIs and part-time COMS increased in 2023.

It is important to note that employing part-time VI professionals have advantages and disadvantages. Advantages include supporting districts with a small number of students with visual impairments to meet their local needs. Part-time VI professionals can increase flexibility in districts that have just a bit more, or a bit less, than a full-time VI professional can reasonably handle and still provide quality services. In addition, part-time VI professionals may either be employed by the district on a part-time, contractual basis for VI-only purposes, or may be hired full-time with duties unrelated to visual impairments.

Disadvantages include logistical challenges in meeting the needs of the students. Due to other commitments and/or responsibilities, part-time staff members are at risk of not being able to provide the full caseload management or comprehensive array of services necessary for even small caseloads.

Part-time contract employees may not be able to function as full members of the collaborative educational team if their service hours are limited to only direct hours by the hiring district or co-op, as is frequently the case. It may be challenging to carry out collaborative consultation to the degree needed if service delivery time is limited. Without time for collaboration, part-time VI professionals may not be able to adequately ensure that other team members have the training to assist with generalization of skills learned from the VI specialist (TSBVI, n.d.).

Contract Service Providers

Twenty-three percent of TSVIs and COMS in Texas are contract service providers.

Many VI professionals work for school districts in Texas as contract service providers on either a part-time or full-time basis. According to ESC consultants, 229 VI professionals serve in this capacity. The overall increase in contract service providers is 1% or 23 contractors when compared to last year: the number of contract TSVIs increased by 16 to a total of 131 while the number of contract COMS increased by 7 to a total of 98 individuals.

Contract service providers continue to work for charter schools or private staffing companies. Some of them are retired VI professionals returning to the field. In 2020, and possibly due to the pandemic, 24% of the VI professionals in Texas were contract service providers. It should be noted that VI professionals who serve as private contractors may be difficult for ESC consultants to accurately report their data for the purpose of this document since these service providers may not be directly affiliated with a school district or a regional education cooperative.

Dually Certified VI Professionals

Eighty-four individuals are functioning in a dually certified role in 2023, providing both VI and O&M services to Texas students.

Dually certified VI professionals are those who are certified and function both as a TSVI and COMS. While many professionals may hold both certifications, not all dually certified professionals function in both capacities. This survey gathers data only about those who currently *function* as a TSVI and an O&M specialist.

Table 4: Dually Certified Professionals

	2021	2022	2023
Dually certified	75	81	84

Dually certified professionals are unique and offer districts maximum flexibility. Administrators can modify work assignments according to the needs of the district and the needs of students for a particular year. While these VI professionals may be employed full-time in a district, they must split their time and expertise between two different, although related, professions. An administrator must understand the challenges faced by these professionals to ensure that neither area is slighted.

Direct Services Provided by ESCs

Each regional education service center (ESC) provides an array of services to school districts and for some, that includes direct TSVI and O&M services. There are currently 348 students served directly by the ESCs.

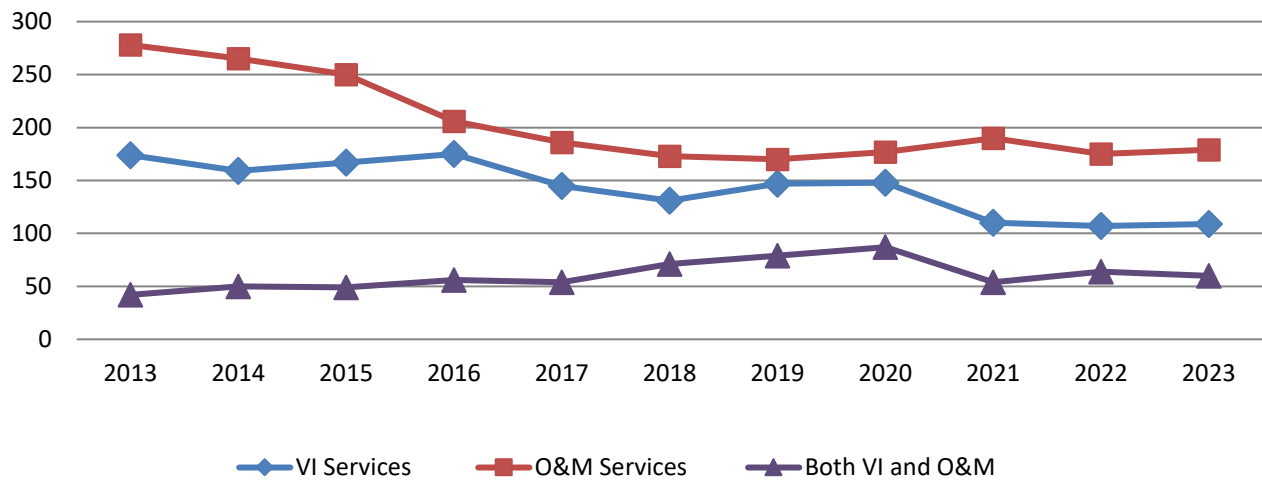
ESCs are a *major* part of the state’s infrastructure that ensure access to high quality VI services. ESC VI specialists are critical players in the provision of leadership, technical assistance, professional development, and specialized materials for the VI professionals, families, and students in their region. They also assist TSVIs and 91 braille transcribers within the state in braille and tactile graphics production. They act as a vital source of information on VI-related issues for special education administrators in the region. A significant portion of Texas’ reputation for leadership in visual impairments is due to the high level of skills and services provided by its VI specialists in regional education service centers.

In the regions where direct services are provided, the ESC staff members are listed on the student’s individualized education program (IEP). ESCs are providing services to 348 students this year, compared to 346 students in 2022. This year, 8 ESCs provide services to students in VI, O&M or both VI and O&M. Table 5 reflects the number of students receiving direct services from the ESCs.

Table 5: Students Receiving Services from ESCs

	2021	2022	2023
VI-only services (3 regions)	110	107	109
O&M-only services (7 regions)	190	175	179
Both VI and O&M services (3 regions)	54	64	60
Total	354	346	348

Students Receiving Services from ESCs



The provision of direct services from an ESC depends on many factors, including population size, region/district agreements, regional service delivery options, and fiscal constraints. While many factors can affect the number of students served by ESCs, the local districts' capacity to meet the needs of their students is a primary one. Statewide, the number of posted positions in 2023 was 66.5 compared to 60 positions in 2022. This may explain the small increase in VI and O&M services and a decrease in both services provided by the ESCs.

Overall Perceptions of Caseloads

Sixteen ESCs reported an increase in TSVI caseloads, and thirteen ESC reported an increase in COMS caseloads.

Since 2010, this survey also asked about ESC specialists' perceptions of overall regional changes in caseloads. The survey did not ask about specific districts or how many districts within a region experienced a change. The ESC specialists were asked to use their professional expertise in their estimates.

Table 6: ESC Specialists' Perception of Regional Overall Changes in Caseloads

2023 Caseloads	TSVIs	COMS
Increases	16	13
Decreases	0	0
No significant change	2	4
Unknown	2	3

This year, 16 of the 20 education service centers (ESCs) reported increased caseloads for TSVIs and 13 had increased caseloads for their COMS. Compared to 2022, four more ESCs saw an increase in TSVI

caseloads and an additional 2 ESCs experienced an increase in COMS caseloads. None of the ESCs reported a decrease in both TSVI and COMS caseloads. Two ESCs reported that TSVI caseloads in their region did not have a significant change while 4 ESCs reported no significant change in the COMS caseloads. This year, the number of posted positions increased by 6.5 to a total of 66.5 compared to 60 in 2022: 2.5 TSVI and 6 COMS were added; dually certified positions decreased by 2.

Cultural Diversity

Texas saw an increase in all culturally diverse groups, with the largest increase in the total number of Spanish-Speaking VI professionals.

Texas is a diverse state and requires a diverse workforce to serve its citizens. This survey asks about Hispanic, African American, and Asian-American VI professionals in relation to services provided. It also queries the number of VI professionals fluent in Spanish. The result from the survey is as follows:

Table 7: Culturally Diverse VI Professionals

Hispanic VI Professionals

	2021	2022	2023
TSVIs	84	89	101
COMS	33	41	33
Dually certified	9	20	19
Total	126	150	153

Spanish-Speaking VI Professionals

	2021	2022	2023
TSVIs	68	73	85
COMS	25	29	35
Dually certified	6	13	21
Total	99	115	141

African American VI Professionals

	2021	2022	2023
TSVIs	49	33	40
COMS	27	20	25
Dually certified	0	0	0
Total	76	53	65

Asian-American VI Professionals

	2021	2022	2023
TSVIs	6	5	6
COMS	3	2	5
Dually certified	0	0	0
Total	9	7	11

This year, the total number of *Spanish-speaking VI professionals* increased by 26, bringing the total to 141 compared to 115 in 2022. This increase includes an additional 12 TSVIs, 6 COMS, and 8 dually certified professionals. The number of Spanish-speaking VI professionals has been increasing since 2021. They now represent 14% of the professionals in the field who are fluent Spanish speakers. The total number of *African American VI professionals* increased by 12 individuals: seven TSVIs and 5 COMS. From 2021 to 2022, though, the total number decreased by 23 individuals (16 TSVIs and 7 COMS). The total number of Asian-American VI professionals increased by 4 this year: 1 TSVI and 3 COMS. *VI professionals who are Hispanic* increased by 3 to a total of 153. This increase includes an

additional 12 TSVIs, a decrease of 8 COMS and 1 dually certified VI professional. ESC consultants and TSBVI staff were also asked to provide the number of *Native American* and *Caucasian* VI professionals working in their region/school. This year, Texas did not have any VI professionals identified as *Native American*. The number of *Caucasian* VI professionals was 672 representing 68% of the VI professionals in Texas. Two VI professionals were reported in the *Other* category. Recruiting and retaining ethnically and culturally diverse educators continues to be an important goal in Texas to reflect the student demographics.

VI Professionals Who Have a Visual Impairment

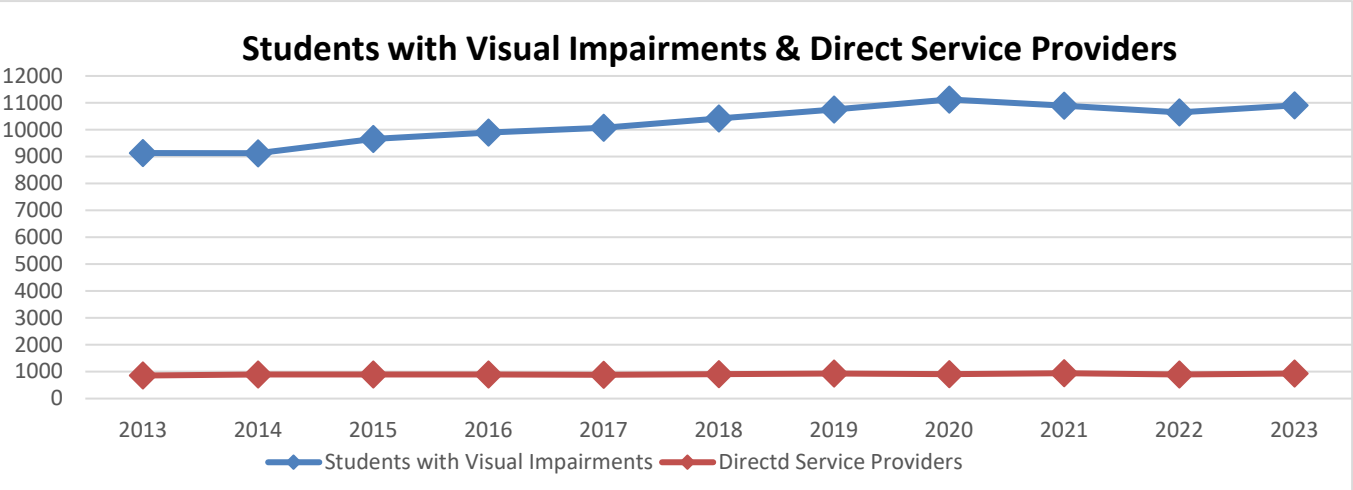
Currently, twenty-seven VI professionals who are blind or visually impaired provide VI/O&M leadership or direct services to students in Texas.

TSBVI and the ESCs were asked how many VI professionals on their campus or in their regions have a visual impairment. In 2023, there were a total of 27 VI professionals in Texas who are blind or have a visual impairment. Compared to 2022, this is an increase of one individual. The total includes direct service providers and TSBVI statewide consultants.

Growth in Population of Students with Visual Impairments and Impact on VI Professionals

In January 2023, there were 10,911 students with visual impairments in Texas, an increase of 272 students from 2022. This is the first increase in the number of students with visual impairments on record since 2020. The increase of about 2.49% of students coincides with the ending of the pandemic as students gradually return to school. Before the pandemic, Texas typically saw a steady increase in student enrollment each year. Although the state only experienced an increase in 2023, data collected within the last 10 years continues to project that student population will continue to increase by an average of approximately 1.8% per year over the next 3 years for a total of 11,861 students by 2026.

Below is a graph that displays the growth in the number of students with visual impairments and the number of direct service providers (TSVIs and COMS) over a 10-year span. Texas has generally seen an increase in students each year with a slight drop in 2014 and again in 2021 and 2022. The largest amount of growth was in 2015, with a 5.8% increase in the number of students.



Impact on Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments

It is projected that Texas will need approximately 56 additional full-time equivalent TSVIs (or 70 individuals) by 2026 to accommodate student growth alone.

This year, the student-to-teacher ratio was 18.7 students per TSVI full-time equivalent (FTE) position compared to 18.4 in 2022. Looking back over the past 10 years, caseloads have increased by 1 student to an average of 17 students per TSVI FTE. If this average ratio is applied to the number of expected new students, it is projected that Texas will need approximately 56 additional individuals by 2026 to accommodate student growth. Given that 75% (-2% from 2022) of TSVIs are working full-time, it will take more individuals to meet the expected need for 56 FTEs. If the current average ratio of full- to part-time teachers continues, the number of TSVIs needed will be closer to 70 individuals.

Impact on Orientation and Mobility Specialists

It is projected that Texas will need a minimum of 24 additional full-time equivalent orientation and mobility specialists (or 34 individuals) to meet expected student growth over the next three years.

Information about students with visual impairments is collected each January and includes information related to orientation and mobility services. The 2023 *Annual Registration of Students with Visual Impairments* indicated that the percentage of students receiving O&M services was approximately 38%, a decrease of 1% from the previous year. It is anticipated that by 2026, 4,607 students will be receiving O&M services, an additional 409 students.

In 2023, the average student-to-COMS ratio is 16.8 students per FTE. The average ratio seen over a 10-year period is about 17 students per FTE. Using this average to help predict need, by 2026 Texas will need an additional 24 full-time equivalent (FTE) orientation and mobility specialists to meet expected student growth.

In Texas, full-time equivalent positions can be quite different from the number of individuals needed to equal the FTEs, especially with O&M specialists. In 2023, 60% of COMS were employed full-time compared to 66% in 2022. These O&M specialists work full-time in a single district or contract with several districts. If the current ratio of full- to part-time individuals is applied, the number of individual O&M specialists needed to result in 34 FTEs is likely to be closer to 34 individuals.

Variance in growth of students with visual impairments and O&M services

It is unknown how many of the projected 11,861 students with visual impairments may need O&M services by 2026.

The gap in the average growth rate of students (1.8% per yr.) and the lack of change typically seen in O&M average caseloads remains a concern. This year, 38% of the total number of students received

O&M services. This is a decrease of 1% or 109 students when compared to last year. The number of students who may demonstrate educational needs for O&M services over the next three years is challenging to anticipate given that as of January 2023, about 13% of current students had not been evaluated by an O&M specialist.

Attrition

It should be noted that the attrition data collected in this survey specifically addresses those who have left the field. The data does not include those who move from school employment to private contractual work, change districts, or retire and re-hire in the same or a different district.

Total attrition decreased by 23 individuals this year. Specifically, the ESCs reported that 29 TSVIs, 8 COMS and 3 dually certified VI professionals left the field. This year’s attrition total of 40 individuals is the lowest within the last three years. In 2022, 63 VI professionals left the field compared to 48 professionals who left the field in 2021.

The VI field’s attrition rate in 2023 (4%) is significantly lower when compared to the annual attrition rate (13%) of certified teachers in Texas. Although the VI field includes O&M specialists who do not have to be certified teachers, this comparison is still a good indicator of the high commitment VI professionals have to their field and the students they serve. In addition, VI professionals in Texas have the added benefit of being paired with a trained, experienced mentor. Support is also offered at both the region and statewide level through education service centers and the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Outreach Programs. All these factors may help explain the lower attrition rate in Texas for VI professionals compared to other teaching fields.

Table 8: Attrition within the Past Year (1-Year Attrition)

	2021	2022	2023
TSVIs	37	50	29
COMS	8	11	8
Dually certified	3	2	3
Total	48	63	40

Attrition Factors

Students with visual impairments are a low-prevalence and extremely diverse population. VI professionals are critical to student learning, therefore, a change of just one VI professional in a single district can have a dramatic effect on the annual yearly progress of their students.

Retention of VI professionals is of critical concern. Unlike other disciplines, even in other high-need subject areas, when a VI professional is unavailable, often there is no one else in the district with the

specific expertise needed to assess and meet the unique educational needs of students with visual impairments.

Factors that consistently impact recruitment and attrition of general and special education classroom teachers influence VI professionals as well. Administrative support, workload, caseload, working conditions and support in their new role are among attrition factors reported in the most current research. Additional considerations unique to the attrition and retention of the VI professional are:

- VI professionals have a unique skill set and can be difficult to find.
- TSVIs make up less than 0.2% of certified teachers in Texas and O&M specialists are an even smaller group. Consequently, most administrators and educators are unaware of the VI field and the specialized services that a VI professional provides.
- Most VI professionals are mid-career professionals and are likely to have shorter careers in their second field.

In 2023, the attrition rate for VI professionals was 4%, a decrease of 2% from 2022. About 5% of TSVIs and 4% of O&M specialists left the field. This may appear to be a small change; however, the loss of 40 individuals this year can have a critical impact on students given that the number of students is likely to increase each year but only a limited number of qualified service providers may be available.

Projected 3-year Attrition

ESC consultants project that, overall, 168 VI professionals will leave the field within the next 3 years.

Projected attrition data is valuable for predicting and preparing for the needs of VI professionals in the near future. VI specialists at the ESCs are the best and only source for information on future attrition for VI professionals. Collecting accurate data regarding a VI professional's retirement plans can be challenging. In general, VI consultants at the ESCs must rely on others for the information. Some professionals may be reluctant to share their plans, or their plans may change in the interim period. Others may retire from their job but take another contractual job in another district. Historically, projection totals are below actual attrition, especially for TSVIs. ESCs tend to project that a higher number of COMS will leave the field, and this year was no exception. In 2021, it was projected that 34 COMS would leave the field by 2023. The actual attrition was 11 COMS. Eighty-five TSVIs were predicted to leave as well; instead, 40 left this year.

Individuals who function as dually certified have both VI and O&M expertise. Projecting the attrition of dually certified personnel appears to be especially difficult with a reliable degree of accuracy. This is a fluid group. Based on district need, an individual may function as dually certified one year but not the next. The information below includes individuals who are dually certified in both categories (and cannot be added). The "Overall" data reflects all VI professionals and has been adjusted for dually

certified VI professionals. It is important to note that the data addresses individuals who will leave the field. The data does not include those who move from school employment to private contractual work, change districts, or retire and re-hire in the same or a different district.

Table 9: Projected 3-Year Attrition

Projections made in:	2021	2022	2023
TSVIs ¹	85	109	132
COMS ¹	23	34	36
Overall¹	108	143	168

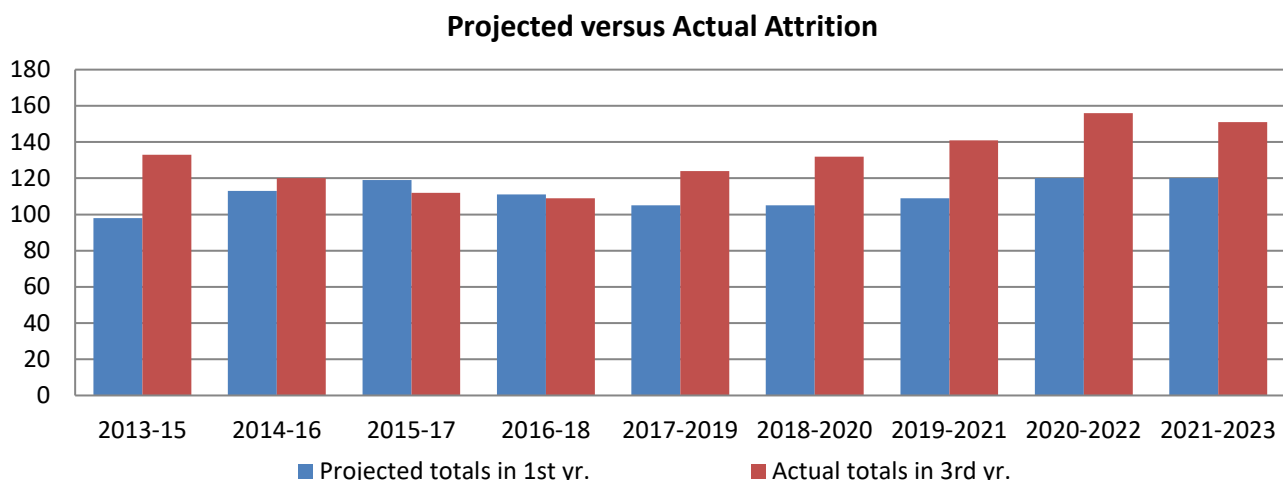
¹Projections by ESC consultants reflect job expertise, not assignment. As a result, TSVIs and COMS include data for dually certified staff and cannot be totaled. "Overall" includes all VI professionals and is adjusted for dually certified VI professionals.

In 2023, VI specialists at the ESCs estimate 168 VI professionals will leave the field over the next 3 years, a loss of 132 TSVIs and 36 COMS. The projected number of TSVIs estimated to leave is the highest total in 10 years. If the 168 total is proven to be correct, we can expect that 17% *existing* VI professionals will retire or otherwise leave the field prior to 2026.

Projected vs. Actual Attrition

VI professionals at the ESCs are the best and only source for statewide information on attrition over the past year and projected attrition over the next three years.

Although ESC projections are the most accurate source available, real attrition has often been underestimated. As illustrated in the graph below, ESC-estimated three-year attrition numbers are typically under the actual totals; however, projections were extremely close to the actual number of VI professionals who left the field between 2016 and 2018. Looking at the 3-year time frame, in 2021 it was projected that 108 people would leave the field by 2023. The field lost 151 VI professionals this year, a difference of 43 individuals. This is the largest gap in the most recent projected vs. actual attrition data. In 2022 and 2021, the field lost 31 and 21 additional individuals respectively.



Anticipated Need

Interpreting and understanding the need for educational professionals traditionally relies on several factors, including the number of posted positions and recommendations from knowledgeable professionals. Below, Table 10 and the graph that follows, are data from each of these areas. The expected student growth of 950 students over the next 3 years should be kept in mind when considering the anticipated need for VI professionals who will serve them.

Posted Positions

This year the number of existing vacancies, after all typical hiring had been completed, increased from 60 to 66.5.

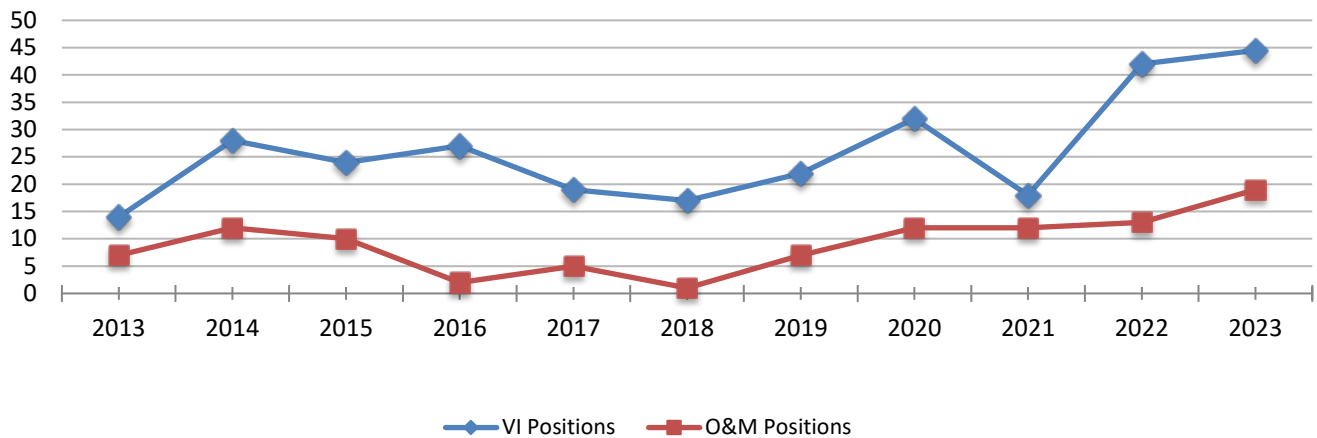
The respondents at each ESC and at TSBVI were asked how many part- or full-time positions were posted in their regions or at TSBVI in September 2023. These data were collected in September and reflect numbers after all regular hiring for the academic year had been completed. These positions remained unfilled and active because districts were unable to find a VI professional, or the positions were opened after the start of the school year.

Table 10: Posted Positions

	2021	2022	2023
TSVIs	18	42	44.5
COMS	12	13	19
Dually certified	2	5	3
Total	32	60	66.5

Previous formal and informal data indicates that vacancies alone are not a strong indicator of actual need. The reasons vary. Many administrators will identify a need and encourage an existing educator to become VI certified rather than post a vacancy. Likewise, the need for a private contract TSVI or O&M position may not necessarily be posted.

Posted Vacancies for VI Professionals



Recommendations by Knowledgeable Professionals

The projected need for additional COMS continues to grow with ESCs estimating a long-term need of 172 TSVIs and 129 COMS by 2026.

Regional VI consultants are the experts in visual impairments for their region. VI consultants and TSBVI staff were asked how many TSVIs, O&M specialists, and dually certified personnel were needed in their area based on projected student growth and how many staff are expected to leave the field. The survey asked about projected need, not about positions available.

There are two ways to assess the shorter- and longer-term projected needs: either by job assignment or by professional expertise. The terms “TSVI” or “COMS” indicate a type of expertise as expressed through the certification in a professional discipline. Those in the “dually certified” category hold both certifications and function in both professional disciplines.

Functioning as a dually certified VI professional primarily reflects district need and therefore is a job assignment and not a unique discipline. Dually certified assignments are also very fluid and vary from year to year. For the purposes of this section of the report, the data reported will be by *professional expertise*, not by job assignment. Understanding the need by expertise informs future training and funding needs. Dually certified VI professionals function as part-time TSVIs and part-time COMS. As such they will be added to both areas as part-time TSVIs and O&M specialists.

Projected Shorter- and Longer-Term Need for VI Professionals

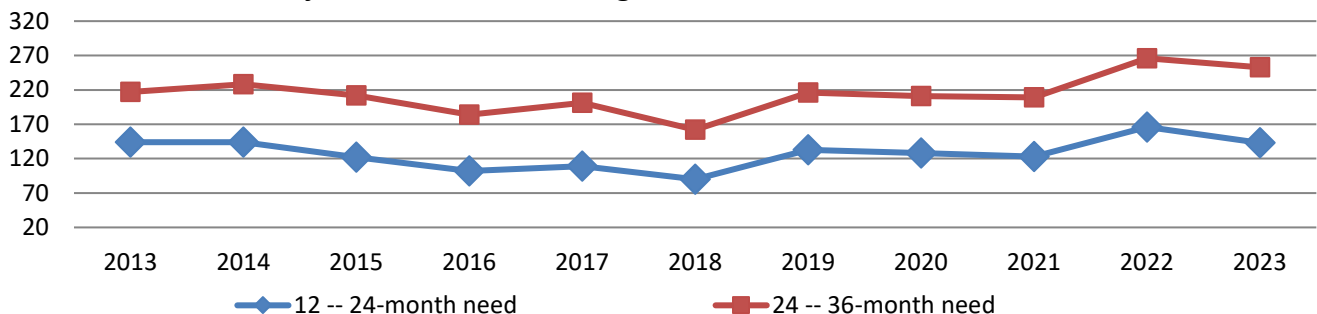


Table 11: Projected Short-Term Need: 12–24 Months

	2021	2022	2023
TSVIs¹	90	119	107
COMS¹	52	67	49
Overall¹	123	166	143

- 1 Projections reflect job expertise, not assignment. As a result, “TSVIs” and “COMS” include data for dually certified staff in both categories and cannot be totaled. “Overall” includes all VI professionals and is adjusted for dually certified VI professionals.

Table 12: Projected Longer-Term Need: 24–36 Months

	2021	2022	2023
TSVIs¹	152	201	172
COMS¹	88	104	129
Overall¹	209	266	253

- 1 Projections reflect job expertise, not assignment. As a result, “TSVIs” and “COMS” include data for dually certified staff in both categories and cannot be totaled. “Overall” includes all VI professionals and is adjusted for dually certified VI professionals.

The projected short-term and long-term need for VI professionals went down this year. The total decreased with ESCs projecting a need for 143 VI professionals within one to two years and 253 within the next three years. The ESCs’ long-term need estimation peaked in 2022 at 266. From 2020 to 2022, the number of students returning to school went down. 2023 was the first year that Texas experienced student growth. This might explain why the projections by the ESCs went down this year for both TSVIs and COMS.

Discussion of Projected Need and Teachers of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVIs)

Texas is projected to need between 188 and 202 TSVIs in the next 3 years to accommodate both attrition and student growth.

As discussed in the Growth of Students with Visual Impairments and Impact on VI Professionals (pages 14-15), Texas will need between 56 to 70 additional TSVIs to meet the anticipated growth in the number of students with visual impairments.

In addition to meeting the needs related to expected demographic increases, Texas will need to replace TSVIs who leave the field. It is projected that 132 individuals with VI expertise (TSVIs and dually certified professionals) will leave the field prior to 2026.

Combining projected growth and attrition, Texas will need between 188 and 202 new teachers of students with visual impairments in the next 3 years to replace those who are likely to leave and respond to anticipated growth. The ESC projection of 172 TSVIs needed in that time falls below this range.

Table 13: Projected Need and TSVIs

Number of TSVIs needed to meet student growth	56 - 70
Number of TSVIs needed due to attrition	132
Total FTE needed by 2026	188 - 202

In the Fall of 2023, 89 people were seeking VI certification through a university program in Texas. Forty-six were working under an emergency permit. Consequently, these TSVIs are already working with students and included in this count as TSVIs. If the university TSVI program completion rates continue to reflect those over the last 3 years, the number of newly certified TSVIs (161) **would fall below the range of anticipated need.**

Discussion of Projected Need and O&M Specialists

Texas is projected to need up to 83 additional O&M specialists over the next three years to accommodate both attrition and student growth.

This year, the projected short-term need for certified orientation and mobility specialists (COMS) decreased by 18 to a total of 49. The projected long-term need increased by 25 to a total of 129. It is important to consider the following factors when estimating the future need for O&M specialists:

- TEC 30.002 requires that initial evaluations of students with visual impairments include an O&M evaluation.
- Approximately 13% of current students with visual impairments have not had an O&M evaluation to determine whether they need O&M services.
- Currently, there are no reliable statistical projections on the percentage of students with visual impairments who will need O&M services *at any given time*.

Table 14: Projected Need and COMS

Number of COMS needed to meet student growth	24 - 34
Number of COMS needed due to attrition	49
Total FTE needed by 2026	72 - 83

As discussed in the Growth of Students with Visual Impairments and Impact on VI Professionals (pages 14-15), Texas will need between 24 to 34 additional O&M specialists to meet the anticipated growth in the number of students with visual impairments.

Regional VI consultants project that 49 people with O&M expertise (O&M specialists and dually certified professionals) will leave the field by 2026. If the expected student growth is combined with the 3-year projected attrition and based on statewide average student-to-teacher ratios, it is likely that Texas will need between 72 and 83 additional full- and part-time O&M specialists over the next 3 years. The projected longer-term need of 129 made by the ESC consultants, who know their regions best, falls well above this range. It is imperative for districts to ensure that all students with visual impairments receive an initial orientation and mobility evaluation and consideration by an O&M specialist of their need for an evaluation every three years. Only then can the educational team members be assured that those who need O&M instruction will receive it.

In 2023, a total of 19 students completed an O&M program, a decrease of 9 students from the previous year. In 2022, 28 students completed an O&M program representing the highest number of completers within the last 3 years. In 2020, the pandemic halted O&M internships and prevented students from completing their program and certification. Similar circumstances likely held students back again in 2021 as the pandemic continued to restrict some internship placements. Presuming that orientation and mobility students continue to find challenges in completing their programs, and the number of completers continues at a similar rate over the next 3 years (64), ***it is likely that the need for a minimum of 72 new COMS by 2026 will not be met.***

Enrollment to Prepare VI Professionals

Texas is fortunate to have two collaborative partners who train VI professionals: Texas Tech University (TTU) and Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU). Both schools have graduate programs for TSVIs and O&M specialists. SFASU also has an undergraduate program for orientation and mobility specialists. In fact, SFASU's undergraduate O&M program is the only one of its kind in the country. Both universities support and provide courses for VI and O&M students using a combination of virtual learning and in-person courses.

The combination of virtual and in-person options, and supportive funding has had a major impact on the number of VI professionals in Texas. Enrollment increased substantially with the development of distance learning options in 1998 and proved to be essential during the COVID-19 pandemic.

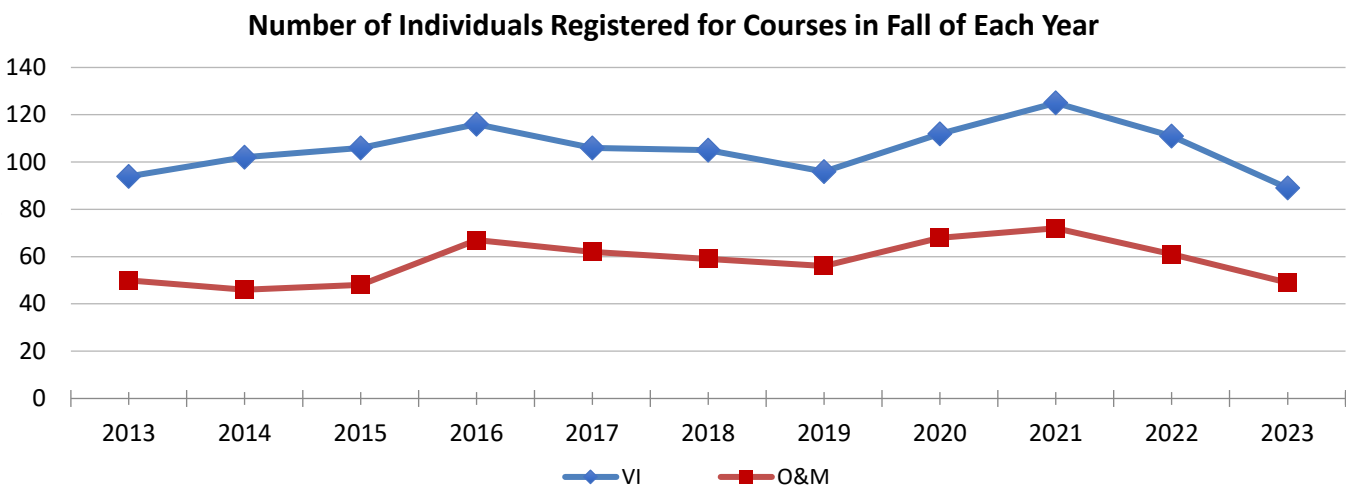
Students Registered in Texas Programs

The total number of Texas students registered for courses leading to VI or O&M certification decreased in 2023.

As noted in the chart below and graph that follows, a total of 138 students registered for courses leading to certification in 2023. The total number of students decreased in both the VI and O&M programs: 22 in VI and 12 in O&M. Eighty-nine students are seeking VI certification and 49 are en route to O&M certification. Despite a decrease in the number of students, the data continues to reflect both a growth in awareness of the VI field and an increase in knowledge of the preparation programs available in Texas that led to VI and O&M certification.

Table 15: Number of Students in Training Programs

	2021	2022	2023
Visual impairments	125	111	89
Orientation and mobility (including undergraduates)	72	61	49
Total	197	172	138



Students completing Texas certification programs

Fifty-one individuals completed VI training and 19 completed their O&M program in 2023.

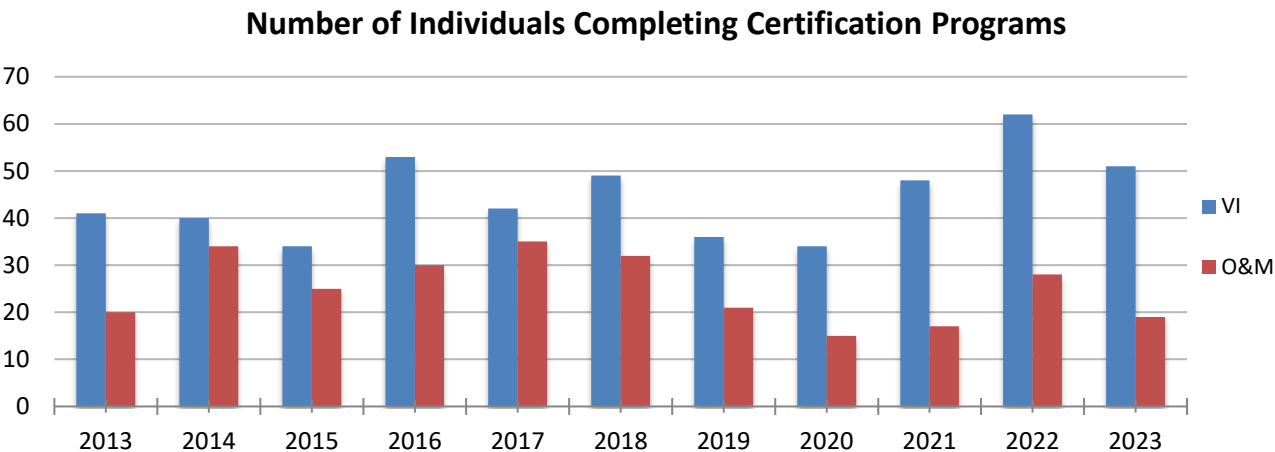
Table 16 and the graph below show that in 2023, a total of 70 Texas residents completed their certification programs. This is a decrease of 20 individuals or 22% from 2022. It includes graduates of both the TSVI and O&M program. The number of TSVI and O&M program completers in 2022 was the highest within the past 3 years, with a total of 62 TSVI and 28 O&M completers. It should be noted that unlike students seeking VI certification, who may be eligible to work as a TSVI under an emergency permit before completing their program, O&M candidates must complete their entire program and obtain certification before they can start working as an O&M specialist in Texas public schools. It is especially important to consider that during the pandemic, O&M students might not be able to

complete their internships, their university programs and, essentially, the certification process which would have allowed them to support the growing number of students eligible for O&M services.

In addition, O&M certification is a national certification and valid in any state. It is also applicable for all age groups, not just for the birth to age twenty-one population served by the public school system in Texas. It is hoped that school districts will be able to consistently hire graduating O&M specialists, otherwise positions could be filled outside of education and/or the state.

Table 16: Number of Individuals Completing Certification Programs

	2021	2022	2023
Visual impairments	48	62	51
Orientation and mobility (including undergraduates)	17	28	19
Total	65	90	70



University Students receiving Financial Assistance in Texas Certification Programs

Overall, a higher number of students enrolled in the SFASU and TTU VI and O&M training programs received financial support through Texas grants.

In 2023, 88% of students in personnel preparation programs (VI certification and O&M) received financial assistance. Seventy-two percent of those in the TSVI certification programs and 28% students enrolled in the O&M programs received assistance. Tuition support continues to be a strong incentive for enrollment, especially considering that gaining a certification to work with students with visual impairments does not typically lead to an increase in salary.

Table 17: Percentage of Students Receiving Support through Texas Grants

	2021	2022	2023
Percentage of students receiving TX stipends	72%	63%	88%

While enrollment in the VI and O&M university programs decreased in 2023, it should be noted that stipends continue to support most of those enrolled, and funding will remain an essential factor in the training of new TSVIs and COMS. In addition to the need for continued funding for student tuition going forward and as the university programs continue to grow to meet statewide shortages, there is also a need for increased program operation funding, particularly funds to hire additional full-time faculty to improve program quality and meet teacher candidate needs.

Summary

This report reviewed characteristics and indicators of need for VI professionals in Texas. In September 2023, Texas had 983 individuals (891.6 FTEs) providing vision-related services, either directly to students or in a leadership and/or technical-assistance capacity. After adjusting for 84 dually certified professionals, there are 927 individuals providing direct service either on a full- or part-time basis. The total includes the following **full- or part-time individuals**:

- 664 teachers certified in visual impairments (TSVIs) or 572.5 FTEs, an increase of 21 individuals or 3.5 FTEs
- 347 certified orientation and mobility specialists (COMS) or 276 FTEs, an increase of 42 individuals or 22.5 FTEs
- 84 dually certified professionals, an increase of 3 individuals from 2022, and is the highest total on record within the last 3 years

In addition, there are:

- 56 regional or statewide leadership or technical-assistance specialists; approximately 43.5 FTEs
 - 29 individuals or 21.3 FTEs are at the regional education service centers (ESCs)
 - 27 individuals or 21.8 FTEs are at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired either in Outreach or Short-Term Programs

With a current total of 29, the number of individuals providing leadership and technical assistance at the ESCs remained the same as in 2022. The time available to assist districts and families decreased slightly: ESCs reported 21.3 FTEs this year and 21.5 FTEs in 2022.

The total number of VI service providers available to serve students in 2023 increased to 927 individuals (adjusted for dually certified professionals) from 881 in 2022. The number of *full-time TSVIs decreased by 14* to a total of 481 individuals; *full-time COMS increased by 3* to a total of 205

individuals. The *part-time category had an increase*: TSVIs increased by 35 to a total of 183; part-time COMS increased by 39 to a total of 142.

The VI field saw an increase in the number of VI professionals fluent in Spanish (+26) and those who are African American (+12). The number of Hispanic VI professionals increased by 3 while Asian American VI professionals increased by 4. None of the VI professionals was Native American. Although there were indications of growth in the cultural diversity of the VI field, continued efforts to expand diversity to reflect the student demographic are still needed.

This report uses a knowledgeable informant model and considers the recommendations of the VI specialists at the regional ESCs to be the best indicators of real need in Texas. These professionals have extensive knowledge of their districts and region. ESC estimates continue to indicate a growing need for additional VI professionals over the next three years. Their projected longer-term need overall for VI professionals is 253 (adjusted for dually certified professionals). This is a decrease of 13 individuals in the longer-term need of 266 made by the ESCs in 2022.

An examination of **attrition, projected attrition**, student population growth and need within the past year continued to yield striking results. This year's attrition total is 40 individuals, a decrease of 23 individuals from last year. Attrition for the last 5 years is 48.8 across all VI professionals.

The **projected 3-year attrition** is estimated at 168 or 17% of all VI professionals. In 2022, the projected attrition was 15% of all VI professionals. This is the highest number seen over the last two years, with the increase projected including TSVIs (+22 from 2022), COMS (+2) and those who are functioning in a dually certified role (+1). Although the ESC VI consultants are the best predictors for attrition and we have seen the projected vs. actual attrition gap almost close in the past, even they have significantly underestimated attrition for VI professionals over the past several years. Therefore, it is likely that as retirements are realized, attrition over the next 3 years will continue to be a pertinent factor in planning for an adequate number of VI professionals.

A long-term examination of growth patterns predicts that the number of students with visual impairments needing services will continue to increase by at least 1.8% each year, or by 950 additional students over the next three years. It is expected that Texas will have at least 11,861 students with visual impairments by 2026. Therefore, Texas could see a need for 70 additional full-time equivalent TSVIs and 34 full-time equivalent COMS by 2026 to **accommodate student growth alone**.

Considering the average projected increase in the statewide student population each year in addition to anticipated attrition, Texas could see a need for **188-202** additional full-time equivalent TSVIs and **72-83** full-time equivalent COMS by 2026. Although falling into the lower end of the range, the longer-term need estimated by the ESCs closely parallels these projections for both TSVIs and COMS.

Clearly, based on student growth and projected attrition, Texas continues to have a need for VI professionals. University certification programs are working diligently to meet that need. In 2023, the statewide total number of students entering VI and O&M certification programs at Stephen F. Austin State University and Texas Tech University decreased by 34 students (22 in TSVI programs, 12 in O&M programs) to a total of 138 individuals. Eighty-eight percent of students are receiving financial support. Seventy students (51%) *completed* their university programs (51 in VI and 19 in O&M). In 2022, 52% completed the university programs, an increase of 19% of the total number of those completing VI and O&M programs when compared to 2021. Since 2020, the decline in those completing their programs may likely be related to challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite an increase in the number of students completing both the TSVI and O&M programs in 2022 and 2021, the trend of an imminent shortage of new VI professionals continue across the state. Please refer to the Executive Summary on page three for more information.

Appendix

Methodology

The annual survey of VI professionals in Texas asked about the number of people *functioning* as VI professionals. These individuals may be TSVIs, O&M specialists, or both. Those *functioning* in both roles are referred to as being dually certified. The VI professionals provide instruction to students in a direct or consultative capacity and/or provide leadership or technical assistance from regional education service centers (ESCs) or Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI). Those who provide leadership or technical assistance may have full- or part-time positions.

TSBVI serves as a statewide resource, with a concentration of students and VI professionals. As a result, TSBVI data were collected separately from that of the ESCs. Unless otherwise noted, TSBVI data are included in the data presented in this report. Data from TSBVI includes information about TSBVI professionals who provide direct services via the Comprehensive Program and who provide statewide training, short-term services, and leadership via the Short-Term Programs and Outreach Programs.

This survey captures information about the number of *individuals* working with students with visual impairments in the state of Texas in either a full- or part-time capacity. It does *not* gather information on the number of districts that employ full- and/or part-time VI professionals. Individuals who work part-time but in multiple districts are considered “full-time VI professionals.” The reference to “full-time” or “part-time” refers to the total employment of the VI professional, not to how long a specific district employs a VI professional.

Texas employs both full- and part-time VI professionals. Full-time professionals are those who work at least .6 FTE or more. Part-time professionals are those who work .5 FTE or less. This method has been used by TEA and is considered to be an adequate estimate of the number of full-time equivalent VI professionals. Part-time VI professionals are a significant proportion of the Texas VI workforce (24% of the TSVIs and 41% of the O&M specialists).

When relevant, information about full-time equivalent (FTE) positions is also presented. The number of FTE staff was determined by multiplying the number of people employed in part-time positions by .5 and adding the result to the number of people employed as full-time VI professionals (part-time X .5 + full-time = FTE).

The descriptive and needs data reflect statewide totals of a combination of TSVIs and O&M professionals. Data on each profession is also included separately. When appropriate, data on dually certified VI professionals are also presented.

For the purposes of this survey, professionals who provide both O&M and VI services (dually certified) are counted as part-time TSVI and part-time O&M. Although they may be full-time employees of a district or cooperative, dually certified professionals are considered part-time TSVIs and part-time O&M specialists. As a result, dually certified individuals appear on both the TSVI and O&M tables as part-time professionals. This results in a variance between the data listed in the Statewide Totals table (Table 1) and the combined totals of the Direct-Service Provider tables (Tables 2 and 3). Simply adding together the discipline-specific totals would result in double-counting some individuals. Statewide totals are adjusted for dually certified professionals.

References

- Correa-Torres, M., & Johnson Howell, J. (2004). Facing the challenges of itinerant teaching: Perspectives and suggestions from the field. *Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, 98, 420–433.
- DiSchiano, Zach (October 2017). 4 Key Factors Impacting Teacher Retention. Retrieved from <https://www.tasb.org/news-insights/4-key-factors-impacting-teacher-retention>
- Griffin-Shirley, N., Pogrund, R., & Grimmet, E. (2011). View of dual-certified vision education professionals across the United States. *Insight*, 4, 15–21.
- Ingersoll, R., & Merrill, L. (updated 2014). *Seven trends: The transformation of the teaching force*. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED566879>.
- Morath, Mike, TEA Commissioner of Education. Pocket Edition 2022-23 Texas Public School Statistics. Retrieved from <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/2019-20-TEAPocketEdition.pdf>
- Morath, Mike, TEA Commissioner of Education. Pocket Edition 2020-21 and 2021-22 Texas Public School Statistics. <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/brochures/pocket-edition>
- Smith, Todd G., Ph.D. (May 2021). Employed Teacher Demographics 2014-15 through 2020-21. TEA PEIMS data. Retrieved from <https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/employed-teacher-demographics-tgs210603.pdf>
- Landa, Jeremy B., Ph.D. (March 2023). Employed Teacher Attrition and New Hires 2011-12 through 2022-23. TEA PEIMS data. Retrieved from: <https://tea.texas.gov/reports-and-data/educator-data/employed-teacher-attrition-and-new-hires.pdf>
- Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. (2023). *Annual registration of students with visual impairments and Deafblind Child Count*. Austin, TX <https://www.tsbvi.edu/db-child-count-vi-registration>
- Texas Education Agency: Teacher Recruitment and Retention Data Reports <https://tea.texas.gov/about-tea/news-and-multimedia/correspondence/taa-letters/teacher-retention-data-reports-certification-exam-reimbursements-teacher-talent-strategies>