

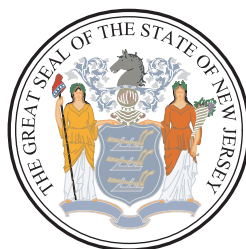


New Jersey
Department of Human Services
Commission for the Blind
and Visually Impaired

2013 Annual Report of the State Rehabilitation Council

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New Jersey Department of Human Services Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

2013 Annual Report - State Rehabilitation Council

New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI) promotes and provides services in the areas of education, employment, independence, and eye health for persons who are blind or visually impaired, their families, and the community.

The Commission recognizes three major thrusts in carrying out this mission, which are:

- (1) Providing specialized services to people with vision problems,
- (2) Educating and working in the community to reduce the incidence of vision loss, and
- (3) Improving social attitudes concerning people with vision loss.

Detailed information about services can be found at: <http://www.cbvi.nj.gov>

Any questions regarding this report, or to request it in alternate formats, please contact Ed Sroczynski at 973-648-7504 or via e-mail at edward.sroczynski@dhs.state.nj.us

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State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) - Chairperson

Dear Governor Christie:

In my role of chairperson, I am pleased to present the 2013 Annual Report of the State Rehabilitation Council of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI). In fiscal year 2013, the SRC continued to expand its outreach to promote public awareness of CBVI's programs and services for the purpose of maximizing the independence and employment of blind and visually impaired New Jersey residents. The SRC works collaboratively with CBVI to develop strategies for improving the quality and number of successful employment outcomes for the agency's consumers.

CBVI and the SRC entered a partnership with an outside consultant to develop a three to five year agency wide strategic plan. The planning team is charged with updating the agency's mission and arriving at a shared vision aligned with creative and innovative initiatives that promote the independence and employment of CBVI consumers.

In October, CBVI welcomed its new Executive Director, Daniel B. Frye. He comes to the agency from the Rehabilitation Services Administration, where he served as a management and program specialist. He was responsible for overseeing the national administration of the Federal Business Enterprise Program and the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youth and Adults.

The SRC membership took an active role in the three state-wide public forums held in Newark, New Brunswick and Cherry Hill. A toll-free phone line was available for consumers and members of the public to offer their comments and suggestions regarding CBVI service delivery and development of the State Plan. SRC meetings continue to be held bi-monthly to build an even closer working relationship between the Council and the Commission.

We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Wood
Chairperson

Executive Director's Report



The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI) and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) are pleased to submit the Annual Report for Federal Fiscal Year 2013 (FFY 2013). We welcome this opportunity to update you regarding our programs, achievements and accomplishments.

The Annual Report is required under Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and represents the ongoing teamwork and collaborative efforts by both the Commission and the SRC. We continually seek to promote the independence of individuals who are blind and visually impaired and improve the quality and scope of employment outcomes. FFY 2013 was another productive and successful year for CBVI consumers' employment outcomes.

The Commission continues to provide quality services to individuals who are blind and visually impaired, and the SRC has been steadfast with its high level of support and contribution of new initiatives. This binding partnership encourages the agency to consistently expand upon its long-term goal to increase the number of blind and visually impaired people to become successfully employed and financially independent.

The Joseph Kohn Training Center upgraded its traditional prevocational model to one that focuses on promoting employment outcomes for program participants. The new twenty-week program includes a comprehensive assessment, personal adjustment training, skills training, career planning and a four-week work experience with a business in the local community, which is scheduled toward the end of the program.

In November, CBVI job seekers participated in a Disability Mentoring Day event at Bank of America's Corporate Headquarters in New York City. The job seekers met with bank staff to learn, first-hand, the day-to-day operations of their chosen field of interest. Corporate recruiters provided guidance to fine tune their resumes, explore career opportunities and experience the interview process. The job seekers left the event with contact information from a recruiter for follow-up as employment and internship opportunities become available.

Our College Prep Experience Program, in session from early July to mid-August, was again highly successful. During the program, students were given the tools and resources for negotiating the transition from high school to college and the opportunity to earn upwards of five credits from Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC), for transfer to the college or university of their choice. Students resided at the Joseph Kohn Training Center where they engaged in group sessions covering communication skills, college life issues, independent travel, assistive technology training, college scholarships, business protocols and hiring practices and career planning.

Equally successful and into its ninth anniversary is the partnership the Commission enjoys with The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) in providing the Work Skills Prep program for transition-age high school students with additional challenges. The program includes class instruction; community based vocational experiences, campus-wide and community recreation activities; and independent living skills assessment, maintenance, and development. An assessment process is employed to gather information that is relevant to each individual student and aid with their transition from school to a productive adult life within the community.

To round out the success of the year, the Commission and the SRC partnered with TACE Region II for an outside consultant to facilitate the development of a three to five year agency wide strategic plan. The planning Design Team is in the process of updating the agency's mission and formulating a shared vision that promotes creative and innovative initiatives that fosters the independence and employment of CBVI consumers. The strategic plan incorporates practical measures to ensure the ongoing provision of quality services that enable consumers to achieve their rehabilitation and employment goals.

We are extremely proud of the accomplishments achieved during FFY 2013 in collaboration with the SRC and anticipate continuing a close partnership on behalf of New Jersey residents who are blind and visually impaired.

Respectfully submitted by,

Daniel B. Frye, J.D.
Executive Director



DEDICATION

Vito J. DeSantis, Executive Director (2002-2013)

The State Rehabilitation Council is pleased to dedicate this report to Vito J. DeSantis for his years of service at the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. He joined the agency in 1984 and served as Manager of the Southern Regional Office and Joseph Kohn Training Center prior to becoming Executive Director in 2002.

Vito's advocacy efforts on behalf of the blind and visually impaired and his vision for CBVI resulted in significant improvement in the quality and scope of services offered to the agency's consumers. His valuable contribution to the agency will be missed.

Even in retirement, Vito continues his efforts on behalf of the blind and visually impaired, working as part of a team of consultants from the Institute for Community Inclusion (based at the University of Massachusetts-Boston) who advise and provide technical assistance to Vocational Rehabilitation agencies around the country.

On his last day of work, Vito sent the following email to the agency's staff. It is reproduced here with his permission:

"Well here it is. My last day before retirement from CBVI. I just want to take this opportunity to let you all know how fortunate I have been to first find a home here at the Commission, and second how honored and privileged I have been to serve as the Executive Director. A bit of advice I have to offer is that whenever you are frustrated with some aspect of the job, remember how important you are to those we serve. Without your efforts the consumer would not be employed, or be able to live independently, or be successful in school or not receive the medical care they require.

I want to wish you all good luck in the future and God's blessings."

Overview of the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

In April of 1909, the New Jersey State Legislature directed that a single agency be formed “to provide any and all means which shall be deemed feasible for ameliorating the condition of the blind.” The Commission was established in 1910 under the direction of Lydia Young Hayes, a teacher of the blind, who was blind herself; and through the advocacy efforts of Helen Keller. The formation of a single agency to administer to the needs of New Jerseyans who are blind was the culmination of a wave of social consciousness that swept the country in the late 1800s and early 1900s. 2010 marked the 100th anniversary of the agency.

As a result, significant strides have been made toward equalizing opportunities for people who were blind or visually impaired. The Commission, known as the Commission for the Blind until 1982, was at the forefront of that movement and still diligently works to prevent blindness as well as provide services that will assist people with vision loss in reaching their highest personal level of independence and economic self-sufficiency.

The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired strives to ensure access to services that enable individuals who are blind or visually impaired to obtain their fullest measure of self-reliance, while assuring dignity and full integration into their

community. To achieve this, the Commission established specific goals and objectives for serving people living in New Jersey who are blind or visually impaired. In State Fiscal Year 2013, the agency operated with a budget of \$27 million.

The Commission is headquartered in Newark, New Jersey at 153 Halsey Street, with a central administrative unit that includes the Office of the Executive Director, Fiscal and Management Operations and the Coordinators of direct service delivery disciplines. The Program Development, Information Systems, Public Information and Staff Development functions, along with the State Rehabilitation Council and the Board of Trustees, are also a part of the Commission’s central administration.



Major Service Programs Provided By CBVI

Educational Services

Once a child is found eligible for services, CBVI works closely with the child, family members and local school personnel to provide educational services that allow students who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind to participate equally with other students in mainstream classroom activities. These services are provided for eligible children (from birth through high school years) and their families.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Vocational Rehabilitation provides a full range of services to assist persons who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind with the development, acquisition or strengthening of skills to enable them to secure and maintain employment. This can include working in the labor force or operating a business. This program is a federal-state partnership funded by the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Independent Living Services

Independent living/training services are designed to help people of any age who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind gain the skills needed to lead a full and productive life. CBVI provides five general types of assistance/instruction with the program, including: daily living skills, communication skills, orientation and mobility, Braille, and eye health.

Eye Health Services

The Project BEST (Better Eye-Health Services and Treatment) works to save sight and restore vision whenever it is medically possible. CBVI conducts a variety of educational programs and eye health screenings throughout the state to help detect vision problems and to assist residents of New Jersey with restorative treatment. Annually, Project BEST screens more than 42,000 New Jerseyans.



SRC Working Principles and Responsibilities

The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) was established in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. It gives advice to, and works in partnership with, the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency.

The members of the State Rehabilitation Council are appointed by the Governor and convene at least five meetings a year. All meetings and public forums are publicly announced and open and accessible to the general public. The meetings are held in compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meeting Act, NJSA 10:4-6.

The functions of the SRC are to:

- ◆ Review, analyze and advise CBVI regarding performance of its responsibilities of the agency under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act amendments of 1998;
- ◆ Assist CBVI with the development of State goals and priorities, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program;
- ◆ Advise and assist CBVI in the preparation of the State Plan and amendments to the plan, applications, reports, needs assessments, and evaluations required under the Rehabilitation Act amendments of 1998;
- ◆ Conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and consumer satisfaction with vocational rehabilitation services;
- ◆ Prepare and submit an annual report to the Governor and the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) on the status of vocational rehabilitation programs operated within the State and make the report available to the public;
- ◆ Coordinate with other councils within the State, including the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC);



- ◆ Establish successful working relationships among CBVI and the Statewide Independent Living Council and Centers for Independent Living within the State; and
- ◆ Perform other functions consistent with the purpose of this title, as the SRC determines to be appropriate.

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SRC Accomplishments in FFY 2013

The SRC met five times in FFY 2013 to build a more effective working relationship among members, assist with any challenges facing the Commission, advise on new programs being developed and to implement and provide training opportunities.

- ◆ The SRC membership was instrumental in recruiting new members and expanding the scope of its membership.
- ◆ The SRC and the Commission conducted three regional public forums in April, 2013. Interested parties had the opportunity to make comments and raise issues with the administration of the Commission. As a result of an enhanced communication strategy implemented by the SRC, interested parties from around the state were able to participate in the forums by conference call. Recommendations from the public forums are addressed annually in the agency's State Plan forwarded to the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Also, the creation of goals and priorities within the State Plan take into consideration comments from the public to identify areas of need.
- ◆ A past SRC Chairperson assisted Commission staff in organizing a Disability Mentoring Day program at Bank of America's headquarters in New York City on November 14th. Four CBVI job seekers attended along with Commission staff.
- ◆ SRC members worked closely with the Commission to carry out the fourth annual summer College Prep Experience program, in which high school-aged students were able to earn up to five college credits at Raritan Valley Community College while experiencing dorm life at the Joseph Kohn Training Center in New Brunswick.
- ◆ SRC membership was active in educating the community on the unique needs of consumers served by CBVI.



Statewide Impact of CBVI Services

Numbers indicate total served by Commission services and/or programs (Please note that individuals may be served in multiple programs at CBVI):

	COUNTY	ED	IL	IL-OB	VR	PB*
1.	Atlantic	62	144	177	104	42
2.	Bergen	169	90	183	216	27
3.	Burlington	140	77	115	197	15
4.	Camden	182	138	182	284	33
5.	Cape May	20	28	52	38	13
6.	Cumberland	52	65	78	67	20
7.	Essex	190	147	203	316	105
8.	Gloucester	83	59	75	105	8
9.	Hudson	77	91	105	142	92
10.	Hunterdon	33	10	19	25	3
11.	Mercer	85	70	124	142	36
12.	Middlesex	237	163	265	256	99
13.	Monmouth	174	146	266	193	30
14.	Morris	118	67	107	125	77
15.	Ocean	182	104	338	172	16
16.	Passaic	133	91	146	174	81
17.	Salem	19	16	23	19	6
18.	Somerset	76	41	78	74	23
19.	Sussex	32	17	22	26	4
20.	Union	138	94	188	158	34
21.	Warren	14	15	27	16	6

* Explanation of Abbreviations

ED-Education (Ages: 0-21 years),

IL-Independent Living (Ages: 54 years and younger)

IL-OB – Independent Living for Older Individuals who are Blind (Ages: 55 years +)

VR – Vocational Rehabilitation (Ages: 14 years and older)

PB – Project BEST (Serving all age groups)

Project BEST (Better Eye-Health Services and Treatment)



One of CBVI's major objectives is to monitor and restore functional vision for New Jersey residents. Since 1979, CBVI has provided community based eye screenings throughout the State. Formerly known as "Project Prevention," Project BEST targets New Jersey residents in areas where there is limited or insufficient medical care. Businesses and organizations throughout New Jersey can access vision screenings by contacting the Commission's Project BEST Coordinator Sunil Parikh at (973) 648-7400.

Research indicates that fifty percent of all incidences of blindness could be prevented with proper medical eye care. CBVI's Project BEST initiative offers a variety of educational programs, eye health screenings and provides vision and diabetes screenings to traditionally underserved populations with the option of linking them up with a full spectrum of CBVI services.

2013 Highlights (Number of people served)

Adult Vision Screening	5,829
Pre-School Vision Screening	25,415
Migrant and On-Site Screening	9,411
Diabetic Eye Screening	1,714
Total Individuals Screened	42,369
Total Number of Screening Events	918
Referred for Further Evaluation	4,327
Referred for additional CBVI services	1,010

Additional Services

Additional referrals were targeted to community based health care providers such as medical facilities providing treatment for chronic diseases including diabetes and hypertension. Approximately 80 individuals who were screened received eye glasses provided by New Eyes for the Needy, Inc.

Project BEST continues to seek alternative funding sources to meet its mission in the face of continuing fiscal challenges. The Project successfully renewed two private grants and one Memorandum of Understanding with the New Jersey Department of Health and increased the number of eye screenings throughout the State.

Schedule and locations of eye screenings can be accessed at: www.cbvi.nj.gov.

Goals for 2014

Project BEST strives to expand services to address the need for access to eye health care in all 21 counties. Working closely with Federally Qualified Health Centers and other community-based medical hubs, and appearing at large public gatherings such as health fairs, Project BEST will continue to return people with vision loss or at risk of vision loss to the workforce, provide education regarding systemic health conditions associated with vision loss, and serve CBVI by identifying residents in need of blindness skills training services.



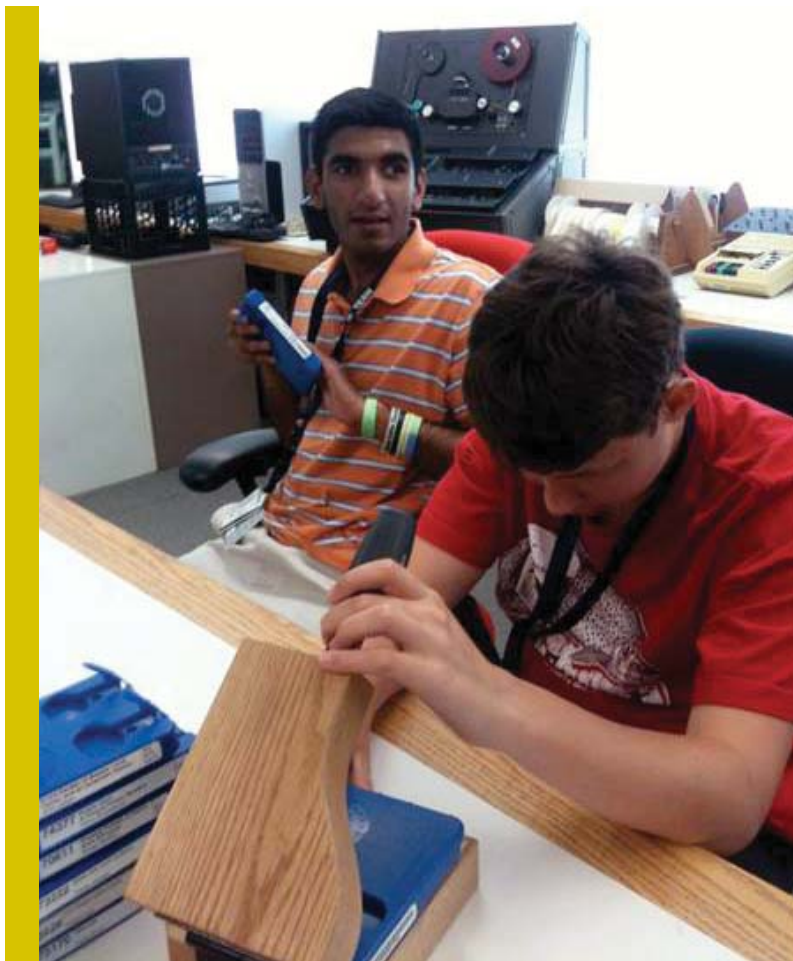
Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The SRC is pleased to acknowledge the contributions of the Commission's staff in assisting our consumers to achieve increased levels of independence and obtain employment. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services are authorized from a federally funded program emanating from the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The VR program is a State-Federal partnership with state government providing matching funds.

VR services provided by the Commission under this program are designed to assist individuals who are blind, visually impaired, and deaf-blind to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment that is consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, interests, and informed choice. The scope of Vocational Rehabilitation Services includes:

- ◆ SRC membership was active in educating the community on the unique needs of consumers serve
- ◆ Assessment for determining eligibility and VR needs by qualified personnel;
- ◆ VR counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice, including referral and services from other agencies;
- ◆ Physical and mental restoration services;
- ◆ Vocational and other training services;
- ◆ Maintenance and transportation related to the rendering of any VR services;
- ◆ Vocational rehabilitation services to family members to assist in achieving the employment goal for an individual with a disability, e.g., family counseling;
- ◆ Interpreter services, including sign language and oral interpreter services, for individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, and tactile interpreting services for individuals who are deaf-blind;
- ◆ Independent living skills instruction including personal and home management;
- ◆ Orientation and mobility services to instruct in methods of independent, safe community travel;

- ◆ Services to assist students to transition from school to work;
- ◆ Job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;
- ◆ Supported employment services;
- ◆ Personal assistance services, including reader services;
- ◆ Occupational licenses, tools, equipment, initial stocks, and supplies;
- ◆ Technical assistance to individuals who are pursuing self-employment;
- ◆ Rehabilitation technology services and devices; and
- ◆ Post-employment services, i.e., short term services required to keep a job.



Standards and Indicators

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) has established evaluation standards and performance indicators for all state Vocational Rehabilitation programs, which include outcome and related measures of program performance. RSA mandates that state Vocational Rehabilitation programs submit performance data on an annual basis. The state-specific and national data is compiled and analyzed for tracking performance success or need for improving performance levels.

The Evaluation Standards assess Vocational Rehabilitation program impact on employment using Performance Indicators. These indicators measure employment outcomes not just in terms of numbers, but also in terms of their impact on meaningful, quality of life issues, such as salaries and placements within competitive work settings. The New Jersey Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired utilizes the Standards and Indicators to benchmark the quality of services that are provided to consumers. Despite challenging economic conditions, this year the Commission surpassed expectations for both overall Evaluation Standards set by the RSA and exceeded required levels on 4 of 7 Performance Indicators.

Below are the RSA standards and the Commission's performance for the Federal Fiscal Years 2011, 2012, and 2013.

Total number of individuals employed:

RSA expects to see a matching or a yearly increase.

FFY 2011 – 287

FFY 2012 – 284

FFY 2013 – 280

Percentage of individuals who are earning at least minimum wage:

CBVI exceeded RSA goals for this standard.

RSA Standard – 35.40%

FFY 2011 – 94%

FFY 2012 – 89%

FFY 2013 – 94%

Percentage of individuals who achieve an employment outcome after the development of an employment plan:

RSA Standard – 68.90%

FFY 2011 – 74%

FFY 2012 – 71%

FFY 2013 – 68%

Percentage of individuals employed who have a significant disability:

CBVI exceeded RSA goals for this standard.

RSA Standard – 89.00%

FFY 2011 – 100%

FFY 2012 – 98%

FFY 2013 – 93%

Ratio of the hourly wage of individuals employed compared to the state average hourly wage:

RSA Standard – 0.59

FFY 2011 – 0.55

FFY 2012 – 0.56

FFY 2013 – 0.56

Change in the percentage of individuals employed whose current earnings are their primary source of economic support:

CBVI exceeded RSA goals for this standard.

RSA Standard – 30.40%

FFY 2011 – 42%

FFY 2012 – 43%

FFY 2013 – 60%

Ratio of the service rate minority individuals compared to the non-minority rate:

CBVI exceeded RSA goals for this standard.

RSA Standard – 0.80

FFY 2011 – 0.85

FFY 2012 – 0.86

FFY 2013 – 0.95

Participants in the Vocational Rehabilitation program attained employment in the following fields:

5.71%	Management
2.50%	Business and Financial
2.14%	Computer and Mathematical
0.36%	Architecture and Engineering
2.86%	Community and Social Services
1.79%	Legal
4.64%	Education, Training, and Library
3.93%	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media
1.43%	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical
6.07%	Healthcare Support
1.79%	Protective Service
5.71%	Food Preparation and Serving
6.07%	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance
2.50%	Personal Care and Service
10.00%	Sales
15.71%	Office and Administrative Support
0.36%	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry
2.14%	Construction and Extraction
2.14%	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair
6.79%	Production
8.93%	Transportation and Material Moving
5.00%	Homemaker
1.43%	Business Enterprises – NJ (Manager)

Business Enterprises – New Jersey

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is the State Licensing Agency for the Randolph-Sheppard program. The Business Enterprises – New Jersey (BENJ) currently oversees the operation of fifty-three (53) locations in New Jersey. The types of operations include single person operation (dry stand), snack bar, café, cafeteria, vending machines only and two military dining facilities.

Individuals who wish to enter the BENJ program are required to be legally blind, have a high school diploma (or GED) and be a United States citizen. The BENJ staff is comprised of a Manager, seven Field Representatives, and one Senior Therapist Program Assistant.

2013 Highlights:

- ◆ Total gross sales: \$23,998,343
- ◆ Total number of managers served: 55
 - ▶ Total number of consumers evaluated: 7
 - ▶ Total number of consumers trained: 2
 - ▶ Total number of consumers receiving placements: 3
- ◆ BENJ set up temporary contract cafeteria services for a FEMA building for a period of several months, providing two meals daily.
- ◆ Vending operations were arranged for a state building populated by Medicaid, Division of Taxation and CBVI in Freehold, NJ.

2014 Initiatives:

- ◆ A training session is scheduled, with a starting roster of five consumers to be trained.
- ◆ BENJ has made arrangements with the Veteran's Administration to begin operation of a snack bar in their office building located at 20 Washington Place, Newark, New Jersey.
- ◆ BENJ has been contacted by the New Jersey Department of Corrections regarding possibly setting up vending operations in a large classroom training facility located on Jersey Avenue in New Brunswick.
- ◆ The BENJ office is relocating to the Joseph Kohn Training Center in New Brunswick, NJ.



Disability Mentoring Day

In recognition of Disability Employment Awareness Month, the Commission participated in a Disability Mentoring Day event at Bank of America/Merrill Lynch. The event provided the opportunity for CBVI consumers to meet and learn from business professionals. The ninth annual Disability Mentoring Day event was held at the Bank of America corporate headquarters in New York City on November 14, 2013. In attendance were



organizations working directly with individuals with disabilities including the NYC Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, Vision Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired and NJCBVI. Four college students under the Commission's sponsorship were in attendance.

During the morning session, representatives from Bank of America's Global Diversity and Inclusion Department spoke about the firm's initiatives to employ individuals with disabilities. Discussions featured Disability Affinity Groups; which have a mission to foster partnerships, to increase awareness, provide employment opportunities and to promote Bank of America's support for individuals with disabilities. Each job seeker (mentee) was paired with a member of the Bank of America staff. The mentees accompanied their mentors to learn, first-hand, the day-to-day operations of their chosen field of interest.

During the afternoon, Bank of America employees with disabilities shared their stories about how they carry out their job duties including challenges they overcame to achieve success. The panel discussion centered on "Living and Working with Disabilities and Finding the Balance." This was followed by a presentation by the Human Resource staff on completing job applications, interview preparation, effective resume writing and business ethics. Job seekers left the event equipped with recruiter contact for follow-up in their field of interest as employment and internship opportunities become available.

Joseph Kohn Training Center

The Joseph Kohn Training Center, (JKTC) is a state of the art residential facility that offers rehabilitation and employment services for blind and visually impaired residents of New Jersey. Located in New Brunswick, the JKTC accommodates up to twenty-four CBVI consumers. There is no fee for participating in the program for New Jersey residents. The mission of the JKTC is to assist blind and visually impaired individuals to lead full and productive lives by providing a full range of services designed to facilitate independence and employment.

Formerly known as the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center, the JKTC expanded its program from 16 weeks to 20 weeks to incorporate additional activities that prepare participants for employment. A two-week comprehensive assessment scheduled at the beginning of the program assists each participant to identify specific areas that need improvement. An Individualized Training Plan is developed which include activities that facilitate personal adjustment and career planning and charts the course of the program. The four-week work experience with a business in the local community scheduled toward the end of the program provides participants with practical experience to facilitate vocational planning. The Center's program curriculum is designed to enable participants to become aware of their abilities, harness their strengths, foster their independence and establish a realistic employment plan.

A basic tenet of the program curriculum focuses on facilitating participants' adjustment to the loss of vision. Each student, regardless of their remaining

vision, is required to involve themselves in all areas of training using sleep shades, which is an instructional tool that fosters sensory development and the mastery of blindness skills. This tool is utilized in the core areas of instruction including:

Braille Instruction/Communication Skills: This training enables participants to utilize Braille to accomplish day-to-day activities including labeling kitchen items, personal folders, grocery lists, telephone numbers, etc. Reading and writing Braille is introduced to all students regardless of their degree of remaining vision. Training also includes literacy and personal communication such as handwriting, use of the telephone, tape-recorder, and electronic equipment for storage and retrieval of information.



Activities of Daily Living Skills: Instruction includes teaching adaptive skills necessary to effectively perform everyday responsibilities such as personal grooming, laundering, sewing, budgeting, grocery shopping and maintaining household cleanliness. In addition, training is provided in both basic and adaptive techniques for safe and independent functioning in the kitchen.

Orientation and Mobility Skills: Instruction methods teach participants to orient to the environment by utilizing non-visual cues and safe cane techniques to facilitate safe travel skills. The Center's environment allows for intensive practice to enable consumers to internalize skills and concepts while progressing towards becoming a safe and confident independent traveler.

Technology Skills: Participants are evaluated to determine their level of skill for accessing the computer with assistive technology. Training is provided to increase computer access by improving their level of proficiency by mastering keyboard skills, basic computer skills and navigating the computer with appropriate adaptive software. Participants learn to navigate the Internet, e-mail and a full range of Microsoft applications including Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access.

Nursing Services: Participants are provided with information about their dietary requirements, eye condition, overall eye health and instruction in adaptive techniques to administer medications safely and independently. The nursing staff addresses participants' health care needs in collaboration with their personal physicians and an in-house dietitian.

Academic Skills: Identifies participants reading and math levels and their level of written proficiency. Individualized instruction enables each participant to raise their academic levels, improve writing skills and is geared toward goals outlined in the participant's employment plan.

Psychological Services: Psychometric testing to assist participants to identify specific strengths and barriers regarding job training and placement. Mental health issues are addressed through short term adjustment counseling and administration of clinically oriented instruments. A group class, facilitated by the JKTC consulting psychologist and other center staff incorporate discussions, lectures, guest speakers and audio-video presentations to address adjustment issues related to vision loss.

Career Assessment and Vocational Counseling: Standardized testing is administered to help participants become aware of their vocational interests, aptitudes, strengths and skill sets. Vocational Counselors work closely with each participant to understand their test results, identify a suitable vocational goal and develop a viable plan for employment. Participants gain practical onsite experience through job shadowing and a work experience in the community at the end of the program.

The Center's philosophy, environment and new curriculum foster a realistic, positive attitude toward vision loss and self-empowerment. Through the program, participants address their adjustment needs, and access the necessary tools and knowledge to pursue an active lifestyle, integrate in their community and obtain employment.

Technological Support Services

CBVI offers New Jersey residents who are blind and visually impaired support to acquire assistive technology that is necessary to gain or retain employment. Assistive technology is defined as any item, piece of equipment, or system, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customized, that is commonly used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

The agency's Technological Support Services department assists consumers to have direct access to computer equipment and other information technology. The goal of the unit is to minimize barriers to task performance by taking into account the consumers specific needs. Technological Services Specialists (TSS) are responsible for maintaining and staffing five comprehensive and up-to-date Regional Technology Assistance Centers (RTAC) located throughout New Jersey.

Each RTAC is stocked with a variety of assistive technology devices and is open to the public by individual or group appointments. Three of these labs are located in CBVI's Regional Offices (Newark, Freehold, and Cherry Hill), the fourth is operated in partnership with the NJ State Library Talking Book and Braille Center and is located in Trenton and the fifth is located at the Joseph Kohn Training Center in New Brunswick.

In addition, the regional TSS staff performs technology assessments and skill evaluations for consumers who are seeking employment and require equipment adaptations to assist in their work

and/or educational environment. The specialists make recommendations suitable for each consumer's unique situation, such that it would enable the individual to efficiently address his/her professional or academic responsibilities.

TSS staff at the Joseph Kohn Training Center conducts an initial skills assessment to determine the appropriate adaptive computer software and training goals suitable to the clients' needs. Training is then



conducted throughout the program in the areas of keyboarding, computer access on a PC or Mac, adaptive software, MS Office programs, and internet access. Prior to the client's completion of the JKTC training program, a full technology assessment is conducted, in connection with the client's educational and/or vocational goals.



Following the evaluation,

both in the regional offices and at the JKTC, a comprehensive report is completed by the TSS, which includes recommendations for equipment, software, integration and/or training. Recommended training is time limited and goals are specifically linked to tasks and learning objectives via vocational training or on the job. The report details the number of training hours anticipated for the consumer to reach proficiency in the needed skill sets. Training services are provided by a service provider under contract with the Commission serving the Northern, Central and Southern regions of the State. Training is provided one-on-one with consumers in their home, at training locations or work-site. Contracted agencies provide periodic progress reports and a final report when training is completed. The TSS staff also will install, setup, and configure recommended equipment for consumers on-site and provide brief instruction on proper utilization of assistive technology.

The Adaptive Technology Loan Program is a CBVI funded project, managed on a day to day basis by the Talking Book and Braille Center. The loaner program is intended to provide computer access and allow for technology training to CBVI VR clients as they move toward job readiness. Equipment available for loan includes desktop PCs, laptops, adaptive software, printers, scanners, and CCTVs. Laptops are only available for students enrolled in remedial college courses.

The TSS staff work with outside agencies, businesses and institutions to evaluate work environments with respect to accessibility for visually impaired employees. The specialists also suggest appropriate solutions to outside agencies that would make these workplaces and the software applications they use more compatible with assistive technology.

During the summer months, various programs also are available to clients of transition age (14-21) to assist in their vocational evaluation and transition to adult VR services. Through these programs, short-term technology instruction is provided to clients, based on agreed upon goals.

College Prep Experience

CBVI partnered with Raritan Valley Community College (RVCC) for the fourth annual College Prep Experience Program (CPE). During the program, blind and visually impaired high school students engaged in academic and independent living activities that enhance their potential to succeed as they transition from high school to college. Students were enrolled in college courses at RVCC with the opportunity to earn five transferable credits to a college or university of their choice. Nineteen blind and visually impaired high school students participated in this innovative project which took place from July 8 through August 16, 2013.

All students participated in the RVCC College Experience course, which was collaboratively taught by a Raritan Valley faculty member and a Commission teacher of blind and visually impaired students. The course provided a comprehensive overview of tools and strategies for negotiating college life including: utilizing campus resources, time management, critical thinking, study skills, note taking, test taking strategies, technological resources and listening skills. Each student also was enrolled in a course of their choice selected from the RVCC Summer Course Catalogue.

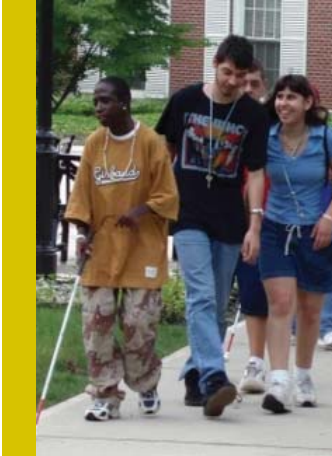
The students resided at the Joseph Kohn Training Center in New Brunswick, where they participated in a variety of activities to supplement their experience at RVCC. The activities included individual and group lessons covering communication skills, independent living skill development, independent travel skills, assistive technology, SAT preparation and career exploration. The students engaged



in panel discussions on a variety of topics; such as transitioning to college, self-advocacy and self-determination, college scholarship opportunities, and career planning including business principles and business protocols. Discussion panels included Commission staff, current college students, Commission college counselors, former Commission consumers who are successfully employed, and representatives from the American Foundation for the Blind and the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce.



Work Skills Prep Program



This summer marked the eighth anniversary of CBVI's partnership with the School of Education at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) to run the innovative Work Skills Prep summer program. The Work Skills Prep Program is for high school students who are blind, deaf-blind, or visually impaired, ages 16 to 21. These students were identified as having additional challenges in gaining employment upon graduation, such as limited work experience or additional disabilities. The goal of the program is to give students the opportunity to learn and/or enhance their skills to become competitive in the job market.

Twenty-four high school students participated in the program that was conducted July 7th through August 3rd. Each student attended one of the two consecutive two-week sessions. Students lived in dorms and attended classes on TCNJ's campus. Students also worked various jobs in locations such as The Talking Book and Braille Center, NJ Manufacturers Insurance Company, Barnes and Noble, Hampton Inn/Hilton Hotels, Trenton Thunder/Riverfront Stadium and Sodexo food service facilities on the TCNJ campus.

The student's class work focused on functional academics stressing Braille/print literacy, use of assistive technology, and person-centered planning. Instruction focused on developing a resume, improving communication skills, dressing for success, and learning about team work. Each student worked at least a half day during weekdays to sample the various job sites and to explore their career interests.

Students learned alternative methods for performing activities of daily living by gaining skills in using assistive technology devices and refining skills to accommodate for low or no vision. All students were required to create a PowerPoint presentation that detailed their goals for the future and the support they will need to achieve those goals. Students were expected to make a formal presentation to their peers, instructional staff, and guests on the final day of classes. Each session included a graduation ceremony that was held on the last Saturday to celebrate the students' talents and accomplishments.



Even with a very busy schedule, there was some time for extracurricular activities. In the evenings, students attended an audio-described movie, went bowling, out for ice cream, made use of the many facilities of the TCNJ campus, or developed their own evening events. Students also presented a talent show and participated in various arts and crafts projects. In addition, students traveled to the Quakerbridge Mall and engaged in other related community activities.

A key component of the Work Skills Prep Program included an assessment of each student's computer skills with adaptive software, vocational skills and interests, and functional academic skills. Each student was interviewed by a staff member on their goals for the future. Assessment reports were shared with the students and their family/guardian, the local school district case manager, and CBVI Education and Transition caseworkers.

Deaf-Blind Services

The staff of Deaf-Blind Services provides transition and vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with dual sensory impairments, i.e., the combination of hearing and vision loss. The agency employs two Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (Deaf-Blind Specialists), one located in the Newark office serving the northern part of the state and the other serving the southern half of the state from the Cherry Hill office. Special attention is given to the unique communication needs of individuals who are deaf-blind. Interpreter services and special equipment also may be provided to help individuals achieve their employment goals. The Deaf-Blind Services staff can provide a full range of services to help individuals who are deaf-blind to prepare for, obtain, or retain employment.

Into its fourth year, the Support Service Providers (SSP) program in collaboration with The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) continues to assist deaf-blind individuals to integrate in their communities. Individuals who are eligible to receive vocational rehabilitation services from the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired may be eligible to receive up to sixteen hours per month of SSP services. SSP's relay visual and environmental information, act as sighted guides and facilitate communication for adults who are deaf-blind. By promoting and supporting employment for adults who are deaf-blind, SSP-NJ encourages community integration through the development and implementation of a statewide network of Support Service Providers.



State Rehabilitation Council Goals for FFY 2014

- ◆ The SRC will continue to meet at least five times in FFY 2014 to maintain its effective working relationship among members and provide training opportunities.
- ◆ The SRC Chair will work collaboratively with agency administration, the SRC Chair for the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and the Technical Assistance and Continuing Education (TACE) to develop training on the role and responsibilities of new Council members for Councils of both agencies.
- ◆ The SRC members with visual impairments will participate in Commission sponsored programs and activities to share their knowledge base and expertise with consumers and to serve as mentors and role models.
- ◆ The SRC will continue to be involved in public outreach so that agencies and individuals will better understand blindness and visual impairments.
- ◆ The SRC will assist CBVI in implementing initiatives to enhance the Summer College Prep Experience and Work Skills Prep Programs to maximize students' success as they transition from high school to employment and higher education.
- ◆ The SRC will assist CBVI to expand the new Life 101 program designed to assist freshman and sophomore high school students to develop basic life skills that facilitate the next step of their transitional plan.
- ◆ The SRC and CBVI will collaborate to develop a program that enables high school students who are blind and visually impaired to develop skills of independence, expand their career awareness and facilitate their transition to adulthood through the implementation of career preparation and mentoring services.
- ◆ The SRC will assist CBVI with the development and implementation of a comprehensive statewide needs assessment, to evaluate VR service needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, minorities with disabilities who have been unserved and underserved by the VR program, as well as those served through the statewide workforce investment system. The needs assessment will also evaluate the effectiveness of community rehabilitation programs. Results of this needs assessment will be included in the 2014 CBVI State Plan and will be addressed by the Agency over the course of the next three years.
- ◆ The SRC will continue to collaborate with the Commission to facilitate the development of a three to five year agency-wide strategic plan to incorporate innovative and practical measures to insure the ongoing provision of quality services to enable CBVI consumers to achieve their rehabilitation and employment goals.
- ◆ The SRC will revamp and expand SRC sub-committees to foster collaboration and address the agency's VR initiatives. • The SRC's Policies and Procedures sub-committee will continue to review agency's policies and procedures and make any necessary recommendations for improvements to the agency's administration of services.



Success Stories



Tara Carty

At age five, Tara Carty was diagnosed with diabetes, which was precipitated by a chicken pox virus that infected her pancreas. Her diabetic condition eventually resulted in total blindness, kidney failure and a below the right knee amputation.

Tara first applied for CBVI services in the fall of 2006. At that time, she lived in a small house in Highland Lakes, with her mother and aunt. When the CBVI VR counselor arrived there were broken concrete steps, no neighborhood sidewalks and no access to public transportation. These conditions coupled with medical limitations and limited access to resources caused Tara to be

confined to the house.

When she was asked about her goals, Tara requested adaptive devices for sewing tasks and access to adaptable reading devices. The counselor explored Tara's options for developing a plan for employment. Tara offered, "Maybe, I could work as a Greeter at Wal-Mart." The counselor recognized that Tara had more to offer and more choices available for her than she realized. Tara was guided to explore her options and practical steps that would expand her world and enable her to establish a realistic career path.

Shortly after the visit, Tara enrolled in a program where she learned to access the computer with adaptive technology. Her ability with computer skills was immediate and it became her lifeline to the world. CBVI provided her with a loaner computer and arranged for additional training to build on her proficiency with adaptive technology skills.

Tara was encouraged to consider the option of attending college as a step toward establishing her career path. At first glance this prospect was daunting given the necessity of regular dialysis treatments, moving out of the house to live on campus and separating from her family. After much consideration, Tara applied to Caldwell College in nearby Caldwell, New Jersey.

Prior to beginning college, Tara applied for and was awarded a scholarship offered through the National Federation for the Blind (NFB). She traveled to Detroit to attend the NFB Convention where she met a number of motivated blind and visually impaired professionals. Tara recalled that the experience served as a wake-up call and solidified her commitment to forge ahead with college studies and establish her career path. Upon her return home, she was awarded an additional scholarship through the NJ State NFB Chapter. Tara attended the state convention where she widened her network of friends and met her future husband.

Tara began her first semester at Caldwell College in the fall of 2009. Her adjustment to college life was challenging at first, but her steadfast determination enabled her to make the adjustment fairly quickly. She learned that living on a college campus afforded her access to an additional social network, increased mobility and the opportunity to develop her career path. Tara chose to major in English based on her strong interest in reading and writing. Tara accessed all of the tools and resources at her disposal and diligently pursued her degree. She graduated with a grade point average, of 4.0 in the spring of 2013.

Tara currently resides with her husband in Rutherford. She reflects on her journey and extends her heart-felt gratitude to CBVI for assisting her to open up the opportunity to significantly transform her life.

Success Stories



Sean O'Keefe

Success is achieved through ambition, hard work and determination. This is the motto of 22 year old Sean O'Keefe, a second year graduate student/research assistant at the University of Texas at Austin. Visually impaired since birth, Sean's steadfast determination and positive attitude has enabled him to overcome challenges and set out on the road to success.

Diagnosed with ocular albinism shortly after birth, Sean was not the recipient of special treatment from his family. His parents sought to access the resources that would afford their son the same opportunities as his sighted counterparts. His mother accessed CBVI sponsorship and Sean received educational services throughout grammar school into his undergraduate studies.

At an early age, Sean discovered a natural love for mathematics. He recalls, "Honestly I am mostly where I am because I enjoyed mathematics to the extent that I would read the textbooks for entertainment and complete problems that hadn't even been assigned. In eighth grade we started learning algebra, that's when I really started teaching myself math. I just thought it was much more fun and logical than the arithmetic I had done earlier."

As an adolescent, Sean participated in the CBVI sponsored LEAD program for a period of three years. Sean was initially reserved and shy but he willingly assumed leadership roles as he was given additional responsibilities. When he completed the program, Sean volunteered to provide peer support for other LEAD participants.

During his senior year of high school, Sean became aware of the benefits of using a white cane. In addition to increased independence and the obvious safety benefits the cane alerted the public that he had a visual impairment. Around the same time, Sean attended the CBVI sponsored summer precollege program held at Drew University and subsequently began his college studies.

With CBVI's assistance and support, Sean made a smooth transition to college. Upon receiving his undergraduate degree, he was awarded a THRUST 2000 fellowship for University of Texas graduate engineering students. In 2012, Sean began his graduate studies. Now in his second year, he is looking forward to pursuing a Ph.D. and eventually teaching chemical engineering. "I have enjoyed working as a teaching assistant in transport phenomena this semester, and it seems like the type of thing I would want to continue doing."

Sean credits his success to his determination to learn and work hard on anything he is assigned to accomplish, and his inspiration to find creative solutions for challenges on his path. Sean acknowledges that he will have to put in a number of years of research in chemical engineering before he attains a higher education teaching position. In keeping with his motivation and determination to overcome challenges, it is clear that Sean is well on his way to securing employment in an occupation that is both meaningful and aligned with his natural skills and talents.

Success Stories



Jessica Calvo

“It’s not about the obstacles you may have in life; it’s how you choose to handle them, you must have the optimism and mental strength to never give up.” These are words to live by according to 24 year old Jessica Calvo. Diagnosed with microphthalmia at only three days old, Jessica was left with light perception in both eyes. At 6 months, she had a cornea transplant which blocked out light perception in the right eye. At the time, Jessica’s family was shocked, didn’t know how to handle her vision loss, and was uncertain about her future.

Jessica’s parents decided to take a proactive approach and reached out to CBVI for assistance. Jessica participated in early intervention services until the age of three. Her parents attended the Parents of Blind Children conferences to network with parents of other blind children and to facilitate their adjustment to having a blind child. At the same time, Jessica was expected to perform household chores along with her siblings.

After entering pre-school and kindergarten, Jessica received braille instruction, orientation and mobility and independent living services. In the 5th grade, she began assistive technology training and was evaluated to determine the appropriate assistive technology she would need during high school and college.

Jessica was an honors student from elementary school through high school and she received many recognition awards. She was also named Chemistry student of the year during her junior year. Jessica received a number of college scholarship opportunities and accepted a scholarship to attend Caldwell College. During college, she maintained a GPA above 3.5 and graduated in 2012 with magna cum laude status. Since September of 2012, Jessica has held a part-time position as a Spanish teacher at Verona High school in Verona. She hopes to attain a full-time teaching position and pursue a master’s degree to further her career.

Jessica attributes her career choice to teachers that believed in her and gave her the strength to reach her goals. She also credits her success to her parents who have always inspired her to overcome challenges. “As a young girl, my father always pushed me to overcome any obstacle that I may have had and always told me I could do anything I set my mind to. There have been times in my life when I thought it would be easier to quit, but my parents never let me fall and always had hope in me.”

Jessica offers her formula for success. “There are people that may view visual impairment as an obstacle or a barrier to prevent them from achieving their goals. However, I feel that visual impairment is not the true obstacle that we are faced with; it is merely something that we must live with. By utilizing the appropriate services, you will be able to live your life as you want to live it, without letting the visual impairment become a central factor in how you live.”

Did you know?

- ◆ The NJ State Library Talking Book and Braille Center offers an array of leisure reading and magazines in digital audio, Braille and some large print. Call 1-800-792-8322 or visit: www.njsltbbc.org
- ◆ Bookshare.org offers thousands of leisure reading and academic materials in text to speech and embossed Braille formats. www.bookshare.org
- ◆ Learning Ally is a major provider of academic books on all levels in DAISY-format CD or download. www.learningally.org

If you are blind or visually impaired you may be entitled to:

- ◆ Newspaper reader services from NFB – NEWSLINE, sponsored by CBVI at 1-888-882-1629
- ◆ A telephone accessed listing of employment opportunities over NFB – JOBLINE at 1-800-414-5748

The Commission may be able to assist with:

- ◆ Vocational Rehabilitation to help you obtain employment
- ◆ Rehabilitation teaching to help you perform daily living tasks
- ◆ Orientation and Mobility instruction to assist you in traveling independently
- ◆ Referral to community resources for housing, financial assistance and other supported services
- ◆ The Commission will respond to your concerns if you are dissatisfied with the services you receive. Call the Office of the Executive Director at 973-648-2325
- ◆ The Client Assistance Program can assist you in resolving any disputes regarding provision of VR services by calling 1-800-922-7233
- ◆ Para-transit can provide transportation to work, medical appointments, etc. Call the NJ Transit Office of Special Services at 1-800-772-2287 to get the phone number for your county



SRC Meeting Dates – 2014

The public is invited to all meetings, which will start at 9:30 a.m. at:

Joseph Kohn Training Center
130 Livingston Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
(732)937-6363

- ◆ February 7th
- ◆ April 4th
- ◆ June 6th
- ◆ October 3rd
- ◆ December 5th

SRC meetings are held in compliance with Section 105 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and also are in compliance with the NJ Open Public Meeting Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6.

Regional Offices and Facilities

For a complete description of CBVI services, please visit the web site at <http://www.cbvi.nj.gov>

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE:

153 Halsey Street, 6th Floor P.O. Box 47017
Newark, NJ 07102
Phone: (973) 648-3333 Fax: (973) 648-7364

Daniel B. Frye, Executive Director
daniel.frye@dhs.state.nj.us

John C. Walsh, Coordinator of VR Services
john.walsh@dhs.state.nj.us

NORTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE:

153 Halsey Street, 5th Floor Newark, NJ 07101
Phone: (973) 648-2111 Fax: (973) 648-7674
Manager: Jose Morales
jose.morales@dhs.state.nj.us

CENTRAL REGIONAL OFFICE:

100 Daniels Way
Freehold Township, NJ 07728
Phone: (732) 308-4001 Fax: (732) 308-404
Manager: John Reiff
john.reiff@dhs.state.nj.us

SOUTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE (SRO):

2201 Rt. 38 East, Suite 600 Cherry Hill, NJ 08002
Phone: (856) 482-3700 Fax: (856) 482-3770
Manager: Jack Thompson
jack.thompson@dhs.state.nj.us

SRO - HAMMONTON OFFICE:

40 N White Horse Pike Hammonton, NJ 08037-1894
Phone: (609)704-6000 Fax: (609) 704-7109

DEAF-BLIND SERVICES: 153 Halsey Street, 6th
Floor Newark, NJ 07102 Phone: (973) 648-3549 Fax:
(973) 648-2201

Manager: John C. Walsh
john.walsh@dhs.state.nj.us

JOSEPH KOHN TRAINING CENTER:

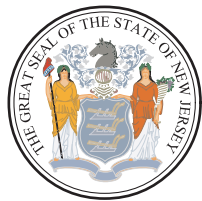
130 Livingston Avenue New Brunswick, NJ 08903
Phone: (732) 937-6363 Fax: (732) 247-6628
Manager: Diana Cortez
diana.cortez@dhs.state.nj.us

BUSINESS ENTERPRISES – NEW JERSEY:

Joseph Kohn Training Center
130 Livingston Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ 08903
Phone: (732) 937-6363 Fax: (732) 247-6628
Manager: Del Basha
delavar.basha@dhs.state.nj.us

GEORGE F. MEYER INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCE CENTER:

375 McCarter Highway Newark, NJ 07114
Phone: (973) 648-2547
Manager: Amelia Ricciardi
amelia.ricciardi@dhs.state.nj.us



**New Jersey Department of Human Services
Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired**