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"opening doors to opportunity"

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## DRS Services: Independent Living Services

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## **Independent Living Services**

### **Independence in Family and Community Life**

#### **What are independent living services?**

Independent living services (such as medical equipment, assistive technology, specialized skills training and home modifications) enhance the ability of individuals with severe disabilities to live independently and function within their families and communities.

A Statewide Plan for Independent Living addresses planning, financial support and coordination between programs providing independent living services, Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS).



#### **What impact did a new Statewide Independent Living Plan have on the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services' ability to provide independent living services for those not seeking employment?**

Based on federal Rehabilitative Services Administration guidance, most independent living services will now be provided or coordinated through DRS contracts with the centers for independent living rather than directly by DRS staff. A portion of the funding will support activities of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). DRS will continue to serve eligible individuals currently on our independent living services caseloads under the old plan until those cases are closed.



#### **What independent living services will continue to be available through DRS?**

DRS's Division of Visual Services will provide specialized skills training and related services to help people who have severe vision losses remain in their homes. DRS's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will continue to offer adaptive telephone equipment and other assistance to eligible individuals through the Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program. The new Statewide Independent Living Services Plan does not affect funding for these services.



## **Instructional Services for People Who are Blind**

### **Rehabilitation Teaching**

Rehabilitation teaching helps Oklahomans adjust to loss of sight while developing practical skills designed to maintain their independence. The Division of Visual Services' rehabilitation teachers provide counseling and instruction in the individuals' homes on daily living skills (such as cooking or banking), adjustment counseling, personal and home management, communication methods, adaptive techniques or devices and recreation activities. Individuals also learn skills in preparation for employment or community service.

Legal blindness occurs when visual acuity with best correction is 20/200 or less or when side visions results in a field restriction of 20 degrees or less.

For more information, contact [reboykin@drs.state.ok.us](mailto:reboykin@drs.state.ok.us).



### **Orientation & Mobility**





The Division of Visual Services' orientation and mobility specialists provide instruction on a one-on-one basis to help individuals with visual impairments use white canes and other independent travel techniques.

For more information, contact [reboykin@drs.state.ok.us](mailto:reboykin@drs.state.ok.us).



## **NEWSLINE®**

The NEWSLINE® service reads newspapers over the telephone to Oklahomans who are unable to read standard print due to blindness, visual impairment, a learning disability or the physical inability to hold or turn the pages of printed material.

The service provides newspaper text in synthesized speech. Using the keypad on a touch-tone phone, people with visual disabilities can speed up the reading pace, skip articles and sections, or reread articles. It is available 24 hours a day and is entirely free to eligible individuals.

The national NEWSLINE® was created by the National Federation of the Blind and is funded in Oklahoma by the Division of Visual Services.

For more information about NEWSLINE, contact the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped at (405) 521-3514 in Oklahoma City or (800) 523-0288 toll free statewide.



## **Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped**

The Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped provides free services to Oklahomans who are blind or visually impaired and those with learning disabilities or physical limitations that make it difficult to use standard print.

Thousands of books, textbooks and periodicals in recorded and braille formats and playback equipment are available to library patrons at no charge. The Library's Descriptive Videos collection offers narrated description of film action in popular and classic movies and television programs.

The Library provides textbooks and other instructional materials in braille and other accessible formats for students with visual impairments in kindergarten through grade 12, as long as funds are available to meet the requests.

The Hill is the Library's award-winning sensory garden and walking path designed with special features for people with disabilities, including a tactile map in braille and materials chosen for fragrance and texture.

The Library, operated by the Division of Visual Services, is part of the national network of libraries affiliated with the Library of Congress National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

Oklahomans for Special Library Services (OSLS) is an active organization which supports the work of the library.

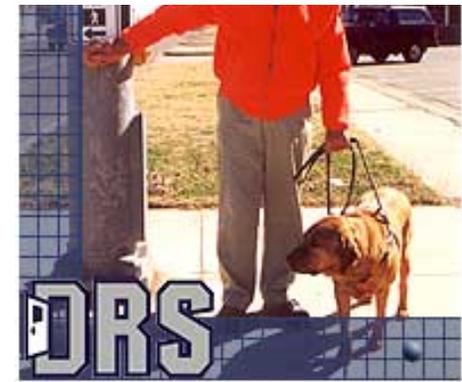
Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped  
300 NE 18th Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105  
(405) 521-3514  
(800) 523-0288 Toll Free  
(405) 521-4672 TTY/TDD

For more information, visit the web site maintained by the [Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped](#) or contact [library@drs.state.ok.us](mailto:library@drs.state.ok.us).



### **Older Blind Independent Living Program**





The Older Blind Independent Living Program expands independent living services for people who are 55 years old or older and legally blind. Rehabilitation teachers located in Division of Visual Services offices throughout the state provide one-on-one assistance to assist older people in adjusting to blindness and regaining or maintaining maximum independence and self-sufficiency.

The Older Blind Program operates a telephone line which provides recorded information about grocery ads, newspaper articles, television guides and other publications. In the Tulsa area, the number is (918) 743-3332. The statewide, toll free number is (800) 829-3255.

Older Blind Program staff present training for businesses, organizations and others to develop greater awareness of the abilities and needs of older Oklahomans who are blind.

Legal blindness occurs when visual acuity with best correction is 20/200 or less or when side visions results in a field restriction of 20 degrees or less.

Older Blind Independent Living Services Unit  
3010 S. Harvard, Suite 210  
Tulsa, OK 74114  
(918) 742-8989 Voice/TTY/TDD

Telephone Information Line:  
(918) 743-3332 Tulsa  
(800) 829-3255 Toll Free

For more information, contact [mksanders@drs.state.ok.us](mailto:mksanders@drs.state.ok.us).



## Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Unit provides services to individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing and, some cases, to those who are Deaf-blind or those with speech impairments. In addition to information and referral about services and resources, the Unit, which is part of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, operates the following programs:

### Oklahoma Telecommunications Program

The Oklahoma Telecommunications Program provides special equipment at little or no cost for individuals with hearing or speaking problems that prevent them from using the telephone.

Equipment available to assist with telephone communications include telephones with amplified handsets, ring signalers that flash when the telephone rings, loud bell ringers that adjust the loudness and frequency of the ring and Teletypewriters/ Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf. Also called TTYs or TDDs, these typewriter keyboards connect to telephones, enabling people to type messages to others with the same equipment. Qualified individuals may be provided other equipment for telecommunications, home, personal safety and other needs.

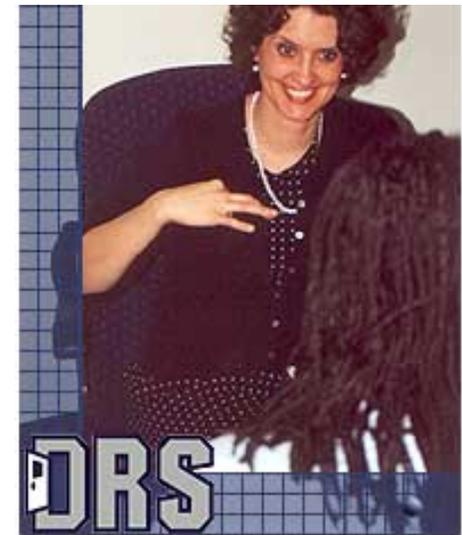
Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
Oklahoma School for the Deaf  
1100 E Oklahoma Street  
Sulphur, OK 73086  
(580) 622-8812 Voice/TTY  
(580) 622-5850 Fax  
(866) 309-1717 Toll free Voice/TTY

For more information, contact [pbaldwin@drs.state.ok.us](mailto:pbaldwin@drs.state.ok.us).



### Interpreter Services Program





The Interpreter Services program provides manual, oral and tactile interpreters to assist people who are deaf, hard of hearing or Deaf-blind with communication during critical or emergency situations and with all contacts with the Department of Rehabilitation Services.

The Oklahoma Department of Education maintains an independent list of interpreters which can be accessed in Microsoft Word format: [Department of Education Interpreter List](#)



### **Senior Citizens Hearing Aid Project**

People age 60 and older who have a hearing loss of 35 decibels or greater in the better ear may be eligible for hearing aids at little or not cost to the individual. As long as funds are available, services through the project include hearing testing, hearing aid evaluation and the purchase of one or two hearing aids. Senior citizens may apply through their local ElderCare office or by contacting the Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Unit.



### **Augmentative Speech Device Program**

Augmentative speech devices, individually prescribed by a licensed speech/language pathologist, are purchased for

Oklahomans of any age with severe speech or voice disabilities through this program when all other funding sources have been exhausted.



### **Oklahoma Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST)**

The Oklahoma Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST) is the method used by the Department of Rehabilitation Services to test and evaluate the proficiency of individuals requesting Oklahoma certification as interpreters for the deaf. If you would like to complete the application for certification, it is available for download in Microsoft Word format [drsQASTapp.doc \(157 KB\)](#)

If you would like to get a copy of the latest list of all certified Oklahoma interpreters, it is available for download in Microsoft Word format [oklacertint1.doc \(664 KB\)](#)



### **Services for People Who are Deaf-Blind**

The Division of Visual Services provides advocacy, information and referral, evaluation, and guidance and counseling services for individuals who are deaf-blind and their families. Tactile, vibratory and other equipment which assists people in communicating and receiving environmental information is available.

Individuals may be referred for deaf-blind services who are legally blind (or have progressive visual disabilities that will result in legal blindness) and severe to profound hearing losses (or significant difficulties communicating in home or community settings). There are no age requirements for services; however, this program primarily serves adults.

Deaf-blind services staff work closely with other DRS programs to ensure that Oklahomans with dual sensory loss have equal access to all services and programs.

For more information, contact [reboykin@drs.state.ok.us](mailto:reboykin@drs.state.ok.us).





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