**State of Connecticut**

**Department of Rehabilitation Services**

**Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind**

**Vocational Rehabilitation Program**

**Personal Adjustment Training: This service is offered to clients who are working toward achievement of an employment goal and who desire to learn new ways to perform activities of daily living with limited or no functional vision.  While some of this training can be provided in the home through DORS-BESB staff Rehabilitation Teachers, for people who desire and would benefit from more comprehensive training, we offer the option for you to attend an out-of-state residential independent living program.  Our Rehabilitation Teachers can teach you how to cook safely, do laundry, clean your home, pay bills, grocery shop and care for children.  Mobility Instructors at the bureau can teach you safe travel techniques within your home and community.  The residential centers can teach you many of these same activities, but with the opportunity for more intensive training than what we are able to offer to you in your home.  The bureau can provide funding so that you can attend these programs, including the cost for room and board at the training centers.  Discuss these options with your Counselor and decide which may be best for your situation. Listed below, alphabetically by state are descriptions provided by some of the comprehensive rehabilitation centers that clients of State Vocational Rehabilitation Programs for people who are blind have attended:**

**ARKANSAS**

**World Services for the Blind Life Skills Program**

**Little Rock, Arkansas**

**Phone: (800) 248-0734**

[**http://lwsb.org/index.php/general-overview/personal-adjustment**](http://lwsb.org/index.php/general-overview/personal-adjustment)

**The foundation of healthy personal adjustment is comprehensive training and counseling provided on an individualized basis. Our philosophy maintains that effective and total rehabilitation can only be achieved in a therapeutic, multi-disciplinary environment that is found in a comprehensive residential rehabilitation center. A personalized training schedule is designed to ensure each person achieves a well-rounded and healthy personal adjustment to visual disability. Training and counseling is provided by professionally-qualified rehabilitation teachers, orientation and mobility instructors, personal adjustment counselors, a consulting psychiatrist and psychologist, and program directors and coordinators.**

**Life Skills services at World Services for the Blind include techniques of daily living such as home management skills, clothing care, grocery shopping and money management, and communication skills training that includes Braille, keyboarding, handwriting, money identification, talking calculators/watches/clocks, NLS Talking Books, digital recorders, cell phones and iPhone/iPad use.**

**Orientation and mobility training includes orientation to environments, using the long cane to walk residential areas and busy streets, experience with travel aids such as telescopes and colored glasses, use of public transportation and accessing transportation routes. Clients with guide dogs will integrate their dogs into their training.**

**State-of-the-art electronic and optical devices make up a large inventory of adaptive aids for people with low vision. Training includes learning to read with magnifiers, closed-circuit televisions and other instruments for persons with some usable vision; accessing computers with large-print displays for people with low vision; and voice output or Braille for persons who cannot use their remaining vision for computer-related tasks.**

**Additional services include individual counseling, large and small group meetings for information sharing, and a variety of in-class and after-class activities that incorporate stress reduction and development of self-confidence toward meaningful leisure activities.**

**COLORADO**

**Colorado Center for the Blind**

**Littleton, Colorado**

**Phone: (800) 401-4632**

[**http://coloradocenterfortheblind.org**](http://coloradocenterfortheblind.org)

**Independence Training for Adults**

**The Colorado Center Independence Training Program (ITP) is designed for blind adults (18 years of age and older).  Typically students complete the program in six to nine months while residing in nearby Center owned apartments.  Participants not only build the skills that they need to be independent, but also focus on gaining confidence and belief in themselves as blind people.  The ITP core curriculum includes home management, cane travel, Braille, and technology.  Additional classes available in organizational skills, woodshop, home maintenance, career exploration, discussion groups on blindness and challenge recreation. A key part of ITP training involves the use of sleep-shades.  All students with residual vision wear sleep-shades to strengthen reliance on other senses and use of alternative skills.  This builds confidence in their ability to approach all life situations.**

**ITP Core Classes Include:**

**-**[**Home Management**](http://coloradocenterfortheblind.org/our-programs/independence-training/home-management/)**: A fun, all encompassing course where students cook simple to gourmet meals, barbecue with charcoal and gas grills, plan dinner parties and personal budgets, learn to shop at a variety of retailers, sew, garden, and plan outings to various venues. Coursework will culminate in the students preparation of a graduation meal for 50 or more individuals!**

**-**[**Cane Travel**](http://coloradocenterfortheblind.org/our-programs/independence-training/travel/)**: Going to work, running errands, and meeting a friend for dinner are everyday things that blind people can do!  Our cane travel curriculum includes how to use public transportation including bus, light rail train; how to cross intersections of all types and difficulty.  Our travel teachers are certified mobility and orientation instructors.**

**-**[**Braille**](http://coloradocenterfortheblind.org/our-programs/independence-training/braille/)**: Braille training is a vital part of every student’s training at the Center.  Our flexible program allows us to tailor Braille training to specific needs, ranging from beginning Braille to mathematical, music, and computer code.  Braille competence allows the student to reach his or her greatest potential and compete equally with sighted peers at school and in the workplace.**

**-**[**Technology**](http://coloradocenterfortheblind.org/our-programs/independence-training/computer-adaptive-technology/)**: We provide students with full training in the latest adaptive technology so that graduates can compete in today’s world. Included are the fundamentals of word processing, screen readers, spreadsheets, electronic note-takers, and Braille displays.**

**-**[**Industrial Arts & Home Management**](http://coloradocenterfortheblind.org/our-programs/independence-training/woodshop-home-maintenance/)**: Each student will learn the basics of woodworking as part of this class. They will learn how to use a click rule in order to measure within 1/16 of an inch and will design, plan and build a final woodworking project. Students will also learn basic tasks such as how to rewire a lamp, fix a leaky faucet, hang a picture, or assemble a bookshelf.**

**-**[**Challenge Recreation**](http://coloradocenterfortheblind.org/our-programs/independence-training/challenge-recreation-activites/)**: We want our students to know that being blind does not need to limit them. Blind people can live full, well-rounded lives. Students go rock climbing, hike in the mountains, ski, plant a garden, raft down the beautiful Colorado or Arkansas River and do much more. In order to be successful, we need to push ourselves even beyond the challenges that blindness provides.**

**-**[**Discussion Groups on Blindness**](http://coloradocenterfortheblind.org/our-programs/independence-training/discussion-groups-on-blindness/)**: The cornerstone of our program is the discussion of myths and misperceptions about blindness. Exploring real-life encounters helps students to deal with all aspects of blindness, equipping them with the confidence and belief in themselves needed to be capable, contributing citizens.  Each day, students meet as a group for 45 minutes and discuss a relevant topic.  Topics may include “why it is necessary to learn self-advocacy skills” to “everyday stereotypes surrounding blindness.”**

**LOUISIANA**

**Louisiana Center for the Blind**

**Ruston, Louisiana**

**Phone: (800) 234-4166**

[**www.lcb-ruston.com**](http://www.lcb-ruston.com)

**TRAINING TODAY FOR A BETTER TOMORROW – CHANGING LIVES AND RAISING EXPECTATIONS**

**The Louisiana Center for the Blind, located in Ruston, provides residential orientation and adjustment training to legally blind adults.  Students receive training generally from six to nine months depending upon individual needs.  The core training curriculum includes Braille, cane travel, computer literacy/keyboarding, home management, industrial arts, independent living skills, seminar, job development and college readiness, and GED and standardized test preparation (if needed).  All classes emphasize the development of self-confidence, problem solving skills, and a positive attitude toward blindness.  The program is designed to give graduates the skills needed for success in employment and education.  Staff members serve as role models for students.  Nonvisual methods are taught through the use of sleep-shades during all classes and other activities.**

**Throughout their training, students live in apartments located eight blocks from the classroom facility.  The furnished apartments are two-bedroom duplexes owned and operated by the Louisiana Center for the Blind.**

**The Louisiana Center for the Blind is committed to a strong, positive, constructive philosophy concerning blindness.  Based upon the personal experience of thousands of blind persons, the Center believes that given proper training and opportunity, blind people can compete effectively and on terms of equality with their sighted counterparts in employment, in their communities, in their families, and in society in general.**

**Since its founding in 1985, the Center has received national and international recognition for its innovative programs and positive outcomes.**

**MARYLAND**

**Blind Industries of Maryland**

**Baltimore, Maryland**

**Phone: (888) 322-4567**

[**www.bism.org**](http://www.bism.org)

**Blind Industries and Services of Maryland has four residential programs for blind individuals from middle school through age 55. All programs teach blind and visually impaired people the skills of blindness so they can transition out of dependence, become employed, pursue education or post-secondary education, and regain control of their lives. While enrolled in the ADULT CORE program, students stay in the Camden Court apartments located in central downtown Baltimore, with access to every mode of public transportation available. In addition to Travel training, a full curriculum of Braille, Technology, Independent Living, Woodshop, Fitness, Job Readiness, & Seminar is completed by all participants of the program. Outside of the classroom, confidence building is an essential element of the program for students. Students routinely participate in events such as white water rafting, snow tubing, hiking, air travel, hotel stays, bowling, horseback riding, etc. All CORE students have volunteer experiences and have an active role in shaping their curriculum.**

**The COLLEGE-PREP residential program is a semester-long residential program designed to teach blind students who are planning to enroll or who are currently enrolled at a university or other post-secondary institution, the skills needed to successfully earn their college degree. Program participants reside in BISM housing while taking up to three, three-credit university classes. Students have the benefit of attending college, accessing various types of technologies and study techniques, and have a personal instructor all while receiving blindness skills training.**

**During the summer months, BISM offers two residential programs for blind youths. The “Work for Independence” program has 12 high school students enrolled in an eight-week program. The program mirrors the adult residential program in curriculum and confidence building. The final component of this program is the work experience. Students work twenty-hours a week for the last four weeks of the program in competitive, paid employment. The other program is titled “Independence 101” and is targeted at 10 middle school aged students. The program follows the same guidelines as “Work for Independence” minus the work experience.**

**MASSACHUSETTS**

**Carroll Center for the Blind**

**Newton, Massachusetts**

**Phone: (800) 852-3131**

[**http://carroll.org**](http://carroll.org)

**The Carroll Center Independent Living program provides adjustment to blindness through classes in safe travel (orientation and mobility), adaptive home management and self care, health and information management, adaptive communications and technology, counseling, and resource seminars. The Carroll Center’s comprehensive program is designed for newly-blinded adults or those who have had a significant loss in vision. This intensive program provides training and support to make the physical and emotional adjustments to living with blindness.**

**All students will begin with a two-week evaluation to assess their current skills in activities of daily living, travel ability, use of remaining vision, information management, personal health care, and adjustment to vision loss. Those who are planning to return to work will also be assessed in vocational development, including Standard Vocational Testing, functional skills assessment, review of work history, work experience and educational background, understanding of disability benefits and social security services, and exploration of vocational options.**

**Following the evaluation, clients will participate in an individualized independent living program. This 12-week program will assist students in achieving or maintaining personal independence through a variety of skills in a campus environment:**

**-Individual and group counseling for adjustment to vision loss**

**-Orientation and mobility skills to travel indoors and outdoors, including street crossing, public transportation, and shopping**

**-Communications skills, using digital recorders, Braille, handwriting, computers, personal data assistants, low vision devices, and record keeping systems to manage personal, school, and work information**

**-Manual arts in a woodshop setting to develop organization skills and a systematic approach to manual tasks**

**-Daily living skills, including grooming, cooking, housekeeping, money management, and time management skills**

**-Health care needs, including diabetes management, labeling, organization, and administration of medicine**

**-Low vision skills to maximize the use of remaining vision using lighting, magnifiers, telescopes and other devices**

**MINNESOTA**

**BLIND, Inc.**

**Minneapolis, Minnesota**

**Phone: (800) 597-9558**

[**www.blindinc.org**](http://www.blindinc.org)

**The BLIND, Inc. Adult Comprehensive Program is a full-time, six to nine month training program for adults who are blind or have experienced recent vision loss, and it focuses on the pre-employment and daily living skills essential for personal independence.**

**At BLIND, Incorporated, classes are schedule with a curriculum for each teaching area--braille and assistive technology (communications class), cane travel, home and personal management, industrial arts, career exploration, and seminars on blindness. The primary goal is to integrate what is being taught in the classroom into each person's everyday life so he/she gains experience using each skill, becomes comfortable using that skill, and comes to understand that blindness need not be a barrier to personal success in life.**

**Challenging activities are planned so that students can get out into the community and use the skills that they are learning. Apple-picking, rock climbing, hiking to Minnehaha Falls, going out for lunch, canoeing, snow tubing, cutting down Christmas trees to decorate the Center, participating in Martin Luther King Day marches, attending the Minnesota State Fair, celebrating Valentine's Day, and touring area museums are just a few of the many options. Extended trips which may take two or three days to go dog sledding in northern Minnesota or on camping trips also occur. Students are permitted to attend National and State Conventions of the National Federation of the Blind to become familiar with the organized blind movement in action. Travel to Washington, D.C. for the National Federation of the Blind's annual Washington Seminar may also occur, where there is the additional opportunity to check out the sites of interest in our nation's capital, ride the Metro Transit System, and meet with our elected officials in Congress.**

**At BLIND, Inc. students come to understand themselves and their potential as they learn alternative techniques for completing the daily tasks they once thought required eyesight. They come to realize that they can deal with blindness and they refuse to let it stop them from following their dreams.**

**Lighthouse for the Blind**

**Duluth, Minnesota**

**Phone: (800) 422-0833**

[**http://www.lighthousefortheblind-duluth.org/Programs.htm**](http://www.lighthousefortheblind-duluth.org/Programs.htm)

**Lighthouse Center for Vision Loss is a comprehensive training facility located in Duluth, Minnesota – less than three hours north of the Twin Cities. The Center mostly serves residents of Minnesota and Wisconsin, but welcomes clients from all over the United States.**

**The Adjustment to Blindness training is design to enhance the independence and quality of life of individuals with vision loss. In addition, the Center also offers training via Skype for technology to individuals anywhere.**

**The Center features:**

* **State-of-the-art technology instruction;**
* **Student apartments located on the Duluth** **Lakewalk;**
* **An on-site store offering a wide range of assistive devices that can make life easier for individuals with low vision. The Center’s professional staff provides one-on-one customer assistance over the phone or in person;**
* **Innovative recreational programming that has included self-defense training, tandem biking and more;**
* **“Safe at Home with Vision Loss” -- a pilot project being funded by Minnesota Department of Human Services to help more seniors with vision loss remain living safely and independently in their own homes.**

**NEBRASKA**

**Nebraska Center for the Blind**

**Lincoln, Nebraska**

**Phone: (877) 809-2419**

[**www.ncbvi.nebraska.gov**](http://www.ncbvi.nebraska.gov)

**The Nebraska Center for the Blind is a six to nine month comprehensive program which provides highly effective pre-vocational rehabilitation training to blind individuals. The training provided is based on the techniques utilized by highly successful blind persons, and is designed to build confidence. This includes training in the alternative skills of blindness, such as Braille, communications, technology, cane travel, basic wood‑working and home repair, home management, apartment living, philosophical counseling, and vocational development and placement. On average, 92% of individuals graduating from the Nebraska Center for the blind achieve their vocational goals, and the majority of these graduates obtain and maintain competitive employment.**

**Individual and group instruction, as well as independent learning experiences are utilized in the acquisition of blindness‑related skills, employing the tried and true method of structured discovery learning. During the training, all clients use sleep-shades to eliminate the desire to rely on inadequate vision, thereby building self-confidence and helping them learn how to think and function successfully as a blind person.  These instructional approaches and experiences equip individuals with the ability to communicate, travel independently, manage household duties, and function competitively in the work place.**

**During training clients stay in individual furnished efficiency apartments which are located in downtown Lincoln. Living independently in an actual apartment brings the real world challenges of daily life to the skills of blindness being developed in the training environment, and helps solidify the individual’s sense of self‑sufficiency. The Center also initiates and encourages a variety of classroom based activities as well as off‑site activities.  Such activities have included pumpkin carving, the preparation of a full Thanksgiving meal at the Center, and collecting food items for the “Food Drive”. Other experiences include non-visual tours of museums, trips to the local water park, and community service and other volunteer efforts.**

**Center clients must be capable of functioning in an intensive training program.  The Nebraska Center for the Blind training is an intensive, five day per week, eight hour a day program, based upon high expectations, demanding a true commitment to learning, and requiring attendance at all major areas of the center program.  Each day, Monday through Thursday, clients are scheduled for a one hour Braille class, as well as one hour communications class, primarily focused on computer skills, but also providing training in other critical communication skills, such as the use of a telephone, various types of office equipment, and handwriting. Clients also receive two hours of cane travel, two hours of home management, and two hours of shop.  Friday’s schedule consists of individual philosophical counseling, philosophy class that focuses on the issues related to blindness, a vocational seminar and independent assignments.**

**PENNSYLVANIA**

**Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh**

**Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

**Phone: (412) 368-4400**

[**www.bvrspittsburgh.org**](http://www.bvrspittsburgh.org)

**Personal Adjustment to Blindness Training (PABT) teaches persons who are blind, vision-impaired or deaf-blind how to use their other senses, special equipment and new techniques to live independently. General curricula have been established, but each person benefits from an individualized program.**

**Instruction is offered in:**

**-Communications: audio devices, handwriting, Braille, computer use**

**-Household management:  safe cooking, laundry**

**-Mobility: shopping, safe travel skills, public transportation**

**-Personal grooming:  makeup, shaving, eating**

**-Exercise: coordination, balance, cardio fitness**

**-Sensory training: study and use of human senses**

**-Leisure time skills: crafts, bowling**

**-Wellness classes: proper nutrition, stress management**

**-Individual or group counseling**

**Enrollment is open throughout the year. The PABT residential program averages 8 to 12 weeks, with classroom instruction from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. Meals are provided, and staff are available in the building seven days a week. Various evening and weekend entertainment events are offered.**

**SOUTH DAKOTA**

**South Dakota Rehabilitation Center for the Blind**

**Sioux Falls, South Dakota**

**Phone: (800) 265-9684**

[**http://dhs.sd.gov/sbvi/sdrc.aspx**](http://dhs.sd.gov/sbvi/sdrc.aspx)

**The South Dakota Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (SDRC) is located in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. All programs are administered and staffed by the Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired, a division of the South Dakota Department of Human Services.  SDRC’s purpose is to provide learning opportunities through various programs to assist individuals with disabilities to overcome barriers to personal fulfillment; whether these barriers are physical, vocational, attitudinal, or social. SDRC’s staff teach independent living skills and preparations for employment.**

**The skills of blindness training at SDRC includes communications and Braille, computers with assistive technology, home management, orientation and mobility, home mechanics, creative arts, personal counseling, group counseling, diabetes education, recreation and other life skills activities.**

**This program consists of individualized training for persons whose visual impairment is creating functional limitations in their daily lives.  Services are identified and provided via teaching and counseling in such a manner to assist the individual in achieving their highest level of independence. The duration of the training is individualized and determined through monthly progress meetings. Students live off campus in one-bedroom apartment units while attending the training program. Apartments are not supervised but alternatives can be arranged as necessary.**

**Each person in training has regular progress meetings with staff and the rehabilitation counselor to report progress, set goals, and project further training needs.  Upon completion of training, students return to their homes to utilize the skills learned in their everyday lives.**