Orientation and Mobility Assistant (OMA)

and

Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Assistant (VRTA)

Credential Program

FAQ’s

**Q1: Why was this program developed?**

A: In response to a growing demand for vision rehabilitation professionals in our state, the New York State Commission for the Blind is offering this credentialing program.

**Q2: If I am disabled, will accommodations be made for me to participate in and complete this program?**

A: Yes, the online portion of this program is accessible to the blind and will have closed captioned capability. The educational hub internship locations, vision rehabilitation agencies and testing facilities are handicapped accessible in accordance with the ADA requirements. This is an equal opportunity/affirmative action program and is open and accommodating to everyone.

**Q3: What are the minimum educational requirements needed to enroll in this program?**

A: High school diploma or GED

**Q4: How long will this program take to complete?**

A: The program will take approximately 9 months to complete.

**Q5: Is this program taught online or in person?**

A: Both. Seventy-five percent of the coursework is distance learning while the remainder is supplemented with in-person skill demonstrations, to reinforce that the skills are successfully accomplished prior to the internship. The remainder of the program will be completed in person as an internship at an educational hub location.

**Q6: When are the online classes offered?**

A: Classes will be held during live Zoom meetings during the week, Monday through Friday (times TBD).

**Q7: What is the cost of the program?**

A: The program does not have a tuition cost; however, students are expected to pay for books, materials, and fees associated with travel to and from the educational hub internship locations, including any applicable lodging fees.

**Q8: What is the job outlook for this career?**

A: Students who complete the **NYSCB Orientation and Mobility Assistant (OMA) and Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Assistant (VRTA) Credential Program** will be qualified to perform all tasks up to the specified limit and can work in New York State in the following disciplines:

**Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Assistant**  - working under a Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapist and/or one who possesses a master's degree or bachelor’s degree with specialization in rehabilitation therapy of individuals who are blind with a knowledge of Grade II Braille;  Provision of services are subject to the supervision of a professional Vision Rehabilitation Therapist, as defined above, who has a minimum of three years teaching experience in the profession of Vision Rehabilitation Therapy.

**Orientation and Mobility Assistant** – working under a Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist and/or one who possesses a master's degree or bachelor’s degree with specialization in orientation & mobility instruction. Provision of services are subject to the supervision of a professional Orientation and Mobility Specialist, as defined above, who has a minimum of three years teaching experience in the profession of Orientation & Mobility.

Vision Rehabilitation Therapy Assistants and Orientation and Mobility Assistants (who meet the criteria above) will be qualified to work in New York State and service the NYSCB contract through one of the following entities.

* Contracting Agency providers in New York State:  <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/cb/NYSCB-Private-Agency-Listing.pdf>

1. Independent Living Centers:  <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/cb/Independent_Living_Centers.asp>

**Please note:** You will not be qualified to work with children under the age of 18 with the OMA and VRTA credential.

**Q9: How do I ask further questions not answered in this FAQ?**

A: Email the NYS Commission for the Blind OMA and VRTA Credential Unit at [OMAVRTA.Instructor@ocfs.ny.gov](mailto:OMAVRTA.Instructor@ocfs.ny.gov)

Or call the OMA and VRTA Credential Unit at : (518) 473-1599

**Q10: How do I apply for the program?**

A: Email [OMAVRTA.Instructor@ocfs.ny.gov](mailto:OMAVRTA.Instructor@ocfs.ny.gov) or call (518) 473-1599 and ask for an application and submit it online. A program coordinator will then contact you to submit further information, such as:

* Your resume
* Copy of your highest education certificate (High School diploma, GED, or college transcript)
* Statement of purpose – minimum of two typed pages
* Professional letter of recommendation from an employer or educational institute

The NYS Commission for the Blind OMA and VRTA Credential Unit will review your submittals and if the program’s qualifications are met, they will then contact you to schedule an interview. Until further notice, interviews will be scheduled virtually.

You will be notified by email if the Credential Unit does not feel you meet the program’s qualifications at this time, or if the class enrollment limit is reached.