**National Federation of the Blind of Arizona**

Increased funding for INDEPENDENT LIVING BLIND REHABILITATION SERVICES

2023 NFBA Phoenix Legislative Seminar Fact Sheet

The National Federation of the Blind of Arizona is requesting an additional one million, ($1,000,000) dollar appropriation to the Department of Economic

Security, Rehabilitation Services Administration older blind services program.

1. According to the National Federation of the Blind, there are approximately one hundred-seventy-eight thousand, (178,000) blind/low vision individuals living in Arizona.
2. Forty Percent (40%), seventy-two thousand (72,000) of those Arizonans are over the age of 65 years of age.
3. The number of Arizonans over the age of 65 years of age is expected to double in the next three decades.
4. In 2009, the Department of Economic Security (DES) Independent Living program for the blind among many other programs was cut by $500,000.
5. In the past 11 years, the DES Independent Living Program for the Blind has received no additional funding while all other comparable programs have received budget increases to strive towards meeting current population needs.
6. Independent Living services are unduplicated rehabilitation services for blind/visually impaired and deaf/blind individuals. Rehabilitation services for this population are not provided through the medical or insurance systems.
7. While the Title 7 Chapter 2 older blind program, does provide specific independent living programming for blind/visually impaired individuals, it does not cover the scope of services required for independent living needs for seniors with vision loss. of age.
8. With proper training and rehabilitation tools, Senior Citizens who are experiencing blindness or visual impairment are able to maintain their independence in their homes and maintain a quality and productive life after retirement

Please contact our legislative director, Joanne Williams, at 318-497-2782, or by email at jwilliams@saavi.us should you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

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President

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