**National Federation of the Blind of Arizona**

Increased funding for INDEPENDENT LIVING BLIND REHABILITATION SERVICES

2025 NFBAZ 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 65 years of age.
3. The number of Arizonans over the age of 65 is expected to double by 2030.
4. In 2009, the Department of Economic Security (DES) Independent Living program for the blind, among many other programs, had their funding cut by $500,000.
5. In the past 14 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.
8. Average waiting lists for independent living services have around 200 blind seniors, with yearlong waiting periods. This forces seniors with vision loss to move out of their own homes to assisted living centers, nursing homes, or to require home assistance services.
9. 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, Jordan Moon, at 951-316-5363, or by email at jmoon@saavi.us should you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

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President

National Federation of the Blind of Arizona

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