**Seeking: Blind Mentors for 2021 LIFE Program**

Are you ready to be an agent of change with blind and vision impaired youth of Virginia?

The Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (VRCBVI) is seeking blind college students or young professionals to be peer mentors for our 2021 Learning Independence, Feeling Empowered (LIFE) Program. LIFE is a five-week residential summer program for high school-aged blind and vision impaired youth who want to learn and build confidence in the skills of blindness. Students of the LIFE program participate in daily classes, which include cane travel, Braille, cooking skills, cleaning, access technology, computer skills, and job readiness. During the last three weeks of the program, the students will have the opportunity to participate in a three-week work experience. In addition to classes and the work experience, the students participate in evening and weekend confidence building activities in which the mentors work closely with the students. As mentor, you and your students will challenge yourselves and the misconceptions of blindness by participating in events like rock climbing, white water rafting, high ropes courses and much more!

If you are enthusiastic about giving back to the next generation of blind and vision impaired youth and you want to have fun while working, then being a mentor in the 2021 LIFE Program is the place for you. Mentors must be available June 13 through August 13, 2021. The 2021 LIFE Program will take place on the campus of VRCBVI in Richmond, Virginia. Please note mentors will be hired for the in-person 2021 LIFE program, only. If VRCBVI is required to offer a virtual program, mentors will be notified immediately.

Please see below for the Job Description for further details.

**Mentoring candidates will:**

* Possess excellent blindness skills specifically the ability to travel independently using a long white cane or dog guide while communicating with and monitoring a group of high school age students
* Be available from June 13, 2021 to August 13, 2021
* Be able to work 40 hours a week, including evenings and weekends
* Be able to communicate effectively with co-workers and supervisor
* Possess maturity, patience, and the ability to work as part of a team
* Enjoy teaching and have an enthusiastic sense of adventure
* Reside in the dorm apartments on the VRCBVI campus
* Pass a background check

Rate of pay: $12.98 an hour plus room and board at VRCBVI.

To learn more or to apply, please contact Amy Phelps by email at [amy.phelps@dbvi.virginia.gov](mailto:amy.phelps@dbvi.virginia.gov) or by phone at (804) 371-3052.

To apply please email the following to [amy.phelps@dbvi.virginia.gov](mailto:amy.phelps@dbvi.virginia.gov):

* 1. A copy of your Commonwealth of Virginia Application for Employment by going to <https://virginiajobs.peopleadmin.com/user/new> to login or create an account, then proceed to “[Click here](https://virginiajobs.peopleadmin.com/postings/9275)
* [https://virginiajobs.peopleadmin.com/postings/9275](https://virginiajobs.peopleadmin.com/postings/9275 )  to create and save your application but not apply to a job.” After completing your application, go to print view where you can email the application or send a hard copy

1. Cover Letter
2. Resume
3. Three professional references
4. 500 word essay explaining why you would be the best candidate for the position and the role mentoring has played in your success

**All applications must be complete and received by March 15, 2021.**

PEER MENTOR JOB DESCRIPTION

**KSAs and/or Competencies required to successfully perform the work:**

* Knowledge of and demonstrated proficiency in blindness skills used in academic, social and employment settings.
* Knowledge of basic acceptable behavior as it relates to youths.
* Ability to secure the confidence, respect, and cooperation of youths and exercise tact, initiative, and good judgment in dealing with them.
* Ability to perceive, observe, and address problems as they arise.
* Ability to participate in and provide guidance to students in planned confidence-building activities.
* Displays a high level of initiative, effort, attention to detail and commitment by completing assignments efficiently with minimal supervision.
* Demonstrated proficiency with Microsoft Office Suite including Microsoft Word, Internet Explorer, Excel, and PowerPoint.
* Demonstrated strong oral and written communication skills.

**Education, Experience, Licensure, Certification required for entry into position:**

* Prefer applicant with a college degree; currently enrolled in college and in good standing or equivalent combination of training and experience.

**Core Responsibilities:**

**85% Mentoring/Instruction:**

* Applies knowledge of program rules and practices and blindness skills while providing instruction to students and modeling blindness skills and problem solving skills as related to independent living and academic success.
* Fosters independence by providing supportive encouragement (mentoring) and instruction in self-advocacy to youths in a one-on-one or small group situation and gives instruction, advice, and assistance.
* Plans and leads evening and weekend confidence-building activities; exercises situational judgment and discretion while providing supervision during group trips and social functions.
* Confers with supervisor, case manager, or instructional staff regarding special problems; attends staff meetings.
* Plans, implements, and leads group activities such as Conversations About Blindness classes to teach advocacy skills and problem solving.
* Collects, records, and reports student data; maintains logbooks via computer and prepares incident reports and/or related institutional forms.
* Participates in and provides instruction during selected aspects of the LIFE Programs, including confidence-building activities, ACE Academy, Mock Interviews, Conversations About Blindness, and other aspects of program as assigned.
* Provides guidance and direction to blind transition age students.
* Provide initial on-the-job guidance for students in their community-based work experience.
* Substitute teaching as needed.

**10% Evaluation:**

* Informally evaluates students on their preparedness for living independently, employment readiness, and academic success through observations during class time and during evening activities.
* Communicates findings and recommendations both orally and in written format, as they relate to students’ goals.

**5% Communication**:

* Reports to supervisor and center counselor observations regarding students existing skills, present needs, and any instructional recommendations and strategies.
* Provides accurate written documentation such as journal entries, final reports, incident reports, etc.
* Participates in all assigned student staffing’s to discuss observations and recommendations for promoting independence, academic skills and employment-readiness activities.