

**NC DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION**

Section: D
Title: DSB Career and Training Center
Current Effective Date: 09/19
Revision History: Revised 08/02; 01/05; 08/06; 02/08; 06/09; 04/19

In 1946, a Rehabilitation Center for the Blind was established to provide comprehensive adjustment services to individuals from throughout North Carolina who are visually impaired, blind or deaf-blind. In 2019, the name of the Center was changed to the DSB Career and Training Center (the Center). It is based in Raleigh, NC and is a 24-hour a day facility.

The Division of Services for the Blind’s mission is to enable people who are visually impaired, blind and deaf-blind to reach their goals of independence and employment. The DSB Career and Training Center supports this mission by providing teaching and coaching in a residential, collaborative, interdisciplinary environment. Center services are available to eligible individuals referred by Division Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Transition Counselors. Referrals with urgent needs may receive priority scheduling. Eligible individuals referred by Independent Living Rehabilitation Counselors may also be served based on the availability of program funds and space at the Center. In some cases, referrals from other sources may be made under unique circumstances. Contact the Chief, Rehabilitation Programs and Facilities in these instances.

Counselors send referrals to the Center Admissions Team who determine if the referred individual meets admission criteria as described below under “Referral Guidelines”. The purpose of the admissions review is to ensure that participants are able to safely participate with programming and are able to effectively benefit from instruction and services offered through the Center. All incoming students are provided a copy of the DSB Career and Training Center Student Handbook which lists a description of the dorm accommodations, as well as the dorm and campus rules/expectations. Eligible individuals may receive services related to Center participation including training, transportation to and from the Center, transportation for Center services, dining services, training supplies and weekend maintenance, regardless of economic need.

The Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) gives preference to the DSB Career and Training Center for comprehensive adjustment services and training for eligible individuals. Individuals may choose an approved in-state or out-of-state vendor instead if that vendor will meet their needs related to achieving planned goals. The amount paid to the vendor may not exceed that of the cost of the DSB Career and Training Center. If the cost of the vendor is equal to or less than the cost of the DSB Career and Training Center, then the full cost of the vendor’s service may be paid. If the cost of the vendor is greater than the cost of the DSB Career and Training Center, DSB will only pay the

DSB Career and Training Center rate. Any exception requests should be reviewed and approved by the Vocational Rehabilitation Area Supervisor or their designee, as appropriate.

Referral Guidelines

To be eligible to attend the Center, the individual must:

- Be medically, physically, and psychologically able to participate in planned programming. Medical and behavioral health concerns should be well managed by the individual with the guidance of their home medical/behavioral health team. Nursing staff is available at the Center to monitor general wellness, provide health education to individuals, and to advise in urgent medical concerns.
- Demonstrate that current behaviors will not jeopardize the health or safety of themselves or others.
- Not have any criminal convictions which would prohibit the individual from participating with Center programming. The Center resides on the Governor Morehead School Campus. This campus also houses two schools for children and a preschool. Therefore, in accordance with G.S. 14-208.18, individuals who are registered sex offenders may not be served at this location. Additionally, individuals may not have any convictions related to child abuse or assault on a child. Other types of convictions will be evaluated by the Center Director and Admissions Team on a case-by-case basis.
- Except during SAVVY, Center participants must be at least 18 years of age or older to independently attend programming.
- Be willing and able to comply with Center rules and regulations as detailed in the DSB Career and Training Center Student Handbook.
- Be willing and able to adhere to the following Center Code of Conduct:
 - Center participants are prohibited from visiting or mingling with Governor Morehead School or Wake County Public School students and from involvement in their activities without permission from appropriate school staff.
 - Students will observe and obey all local, state and federal laws.
 - No weapons
 - No cursing or offensive language
 - No threats or aggressive behavior, verbal or physical that endanger your own or other's health and safety
 - No behaviors that result in physical damage of property

- ° No harassment or infringement on any other person's rights, space or property (including making excessive noise)
- ° No possession or use of illegal drugs and/or alcohol
- ° No arriving or remaining on campus behaving in a manner recognizable as being under the influence of illegal drugs and/or alcohol
- ° In compliance with state laws regarding smoking on state-owned property, there is no smoking on campus. The Governor Morehead School has granted an exception for residential Center students who are at least 18 years of age to smoke in one designated area on campus between the hours of 4pm to 7am, Monday to Thursday and 4pm on Friday until 7am on Monday.

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Referral Guidelines:

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors utilize the case management system to refer eligible individuals to the Center. Unless otherwise specified under the DSB Career and Training Center Programs section, individuals must be in status 18 at the time of attendance at the Center.

Referral information is sent to the Admissions Team for review and includes the following information:

- A completed referral form for the Center (formerly the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind) in the case management system. The referral should include information on why the individual is being referred, information on any areas of concern that may impact either scheduling or the provision of services.
- Referring counselors should conduct a criminal background check prior to referring to the Center using both the North Carolina Department of Public Safety website and the National Sex Offender Database note the results from criminal background checks on the referral.
- If the individual has any useable vision, a report documenting a dilated eye exam is needed from within the last 12 months of the time of the low vision evaluation. In cases where the individual has had eye surgery or a substantial change in vision, the most current eye report is needed. Occasionally, an eye report from within 24 months may be accepted based on age and eye condition. For individuals without any useable vision, and for whom the restoration of vision is improbable, an eye report of any age may be accepted.
- A current Health Check List should be available from within the last 12 months which reflects their current health status.
- A Medical Information Form needs to be completed by the individual's physician and submitted to the Nurse Supervisor at the Center. Exceptions may be made for day students who attend for less than five days. All individuals who reside in dorms must have a Medical Information Form regardless of the length of stay.

- Psychological testing reports, when available.
- Documentation that mental health symptoms are managed at a level which allows the individual to learn and benefit from services.
- Completed education and work history forms, when applicable.
- Completed Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), if applicable, which includes the appropriate services to be able to serve the individual while at the Center.
- A copy of the current Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan, if applicable.
- A Financial Needs Survey completed within the last 12 months at the time of attendance to allow for authorizing any needed services, if the consumer is in Status 18.
- The Admissions Committee will review the above information and alert the referring counselor and/or the individual if any additional information is needed.

Once cleared by the Admissions Committee to attend, the assigned Center Counselor contacts the individual regarding scheduling, with the exception of the Evaluation Unit where the EU Administrative Secretary contacts the referred individual. A letter with the scheduling date and additional information will be mailed to the individual with a record kept in the case management system. Completed referrals may be placed on a wait list when programs are at capacity. Individuals and the referring counselor will be notified of the next anticipated service dates.

The referring counselor authorizes for transportation expenses for the initial trip to the Center and the Center authorizes for transportation expenses for other trips for ABLE assessments and training. If the individual fails to attend, the referring counselor will be notified. For SAVVY, follow instructions provided annually by the Chief, Rehabilitation Programs and Facilities.

Admissions Rejections

When incomplete applications are sent to Admissions, a maximum of nine months will be allowed to finalize additional required documentation, for any concerns impacting possible Center participation to be addressed and for the referred individual to accept any offered attendance dates. The Admissions Team will provide information on any additional documents needed. If, after nine months from the date of the referral, documentation has not been completed, concerns impacting participation have not been resolved or the referred individual has not accepted offered start dates, then the referral will be rejected in the case management system. Rejected referrals may be resent at a future date.

DSB Career and Training Center Programs

Adapting to Blindness in a Learning Environment (ABLE) assessments

Assessments for classes and other Center services are conducted at the Center for individuals who are considering participating in the ABLE program. Individualized

reports on each assessment are provided in the case management system which document baseline skills and any recommendations for improving skills. Most assessments occur during “assessment weeks” which are scheduled throughout the calendar year. Individuals who more urgently need services due to work status, training or educational needs or new onset of vision loss may be scheduled sooner. Other specialized assessments not related to determining ABLE program training needs may also be scheduled on an as-needed basis and as schedules allow. Cases must be in at least status 10 when referring for assessments.

ABLE program

This program runs August to June, and provides comprehensive, individualized program schedules to participants to assist them with achieving their vocational, educational and independent living goals. ABLE offers the full range of classes and services available through the Center. Admissions and enrollment is on a rolling basis. Individuals begin the program when they are cleared by admissions, ready to enroll and space is available in the program.

Classes are held Monday through Friday for four to six hours per day. Residential students must be scheduled for a minimum of four periods of instruction per day. Class schedules and length of time in selected classes is individualized. ABLE participants must be present and able to participate in training in order to effectively utilize available services in order to achieve future educational and/or vocational success. Therefore, students are required to adhere to the Center’s ABLE attendance policy.

Participants successfully complete their program based on individualized assessments of goal achievements. Training programs are individualized and may last up to 15 weeks. In some situations, participants may be granted extensions beyond the 15 weeks in order to successfully achieve goals. Extension requests may be made by the student, referring counselor or Center staff. Final determinations regarding extensions are made by the Center Director. Factors determining whether an extension will be granted include why the extension is needed, the amount of additional time requested, progress made to date, appropriate conduct during the ABLE program, utilization of Center resources such as study labs, if the Center is determined to be the best environment to complete the goals and whether both the student and their referring counselor agree with the extension.

Referrals for ABLE on consumers eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation may come from Vocational Rehabilitation or Transition Counselors. At the start of the ABLE program, the individual must be in status 18. In some specific situations, an ABLE referral may be sent by an Independent Living Rehabilitation Counselor. See the Independent Living Older Blind DSB Career and Training Center policy for more information.

ABLE2 Work

This program provides opportunities to apply skills through informational interviews, job shadowing, vocational exploration and work experiences in the community. The ABLE2 Work program follows guidelines in the VR Work Experiences policy. Most participants

will have completed the ABLE program and demonstrated the ability to adhere to the Center Code of Conduct as well as the attendance policy. Potential participants must have been determined to have appropriate social and interpersonal skills for the workplace and have the ability to travel independently to and from the work site based on Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists reports. Individuals who have not participated in the ABLE program may also be referred to ABLE2 Work but may require additional evaluations and assessments to determine suitability for the program as well as to assist with an appropriate placement.

For all individuals referred to ABLE2 Work, evaluations/assessments are required to determine the participant's needs and abilities as they relate to a work experience. This may include the following: vocational evaluation, psychological evaluation, low vision evaluation, assistive technology assessment, orientation and mobility assessment, braille assessment (if applicable) and other assessments as needed. Depending upon the work setting, additional screenings such as background checks and drug testing may be required.

Evaluation Unit

The Evaluation Unit (EU) offers individually tailored testing, specifically for individuals who are visually impaired, blind or deaf-blind. Comprehensive evaluations offered in this program address individual's abilities, skills, aptitudes, interests and challenges to independence and employment. Evaluation results provide information to the referred individual and to the referring counselor to assist with developing or revising the vocational goal. Recommendations for other services needed to successfully pursue vocational goals may also be provided. Participants may receive evaluations lasting up to one work week.

The general evaluation includes a vocational, psychological and low vision evaluation, as applicable. This full evaluation is recommended for almost all referrals. When referring individuals who are being considered for college sponsorship, select college evaluation and general evaluation on the referral. When referring individuals who are being considered for the Business Enterprises program, select BE evaluation and general evaluation on the referral.

In some circumstances, individuals may be referred for the following specific types of evaluations:

- Psychological only - in rare circumstances, counselors may elect to refer only for psychological testing. This evaluation addresses cognitive functioning, academic achievement, personality functioning, positive mental health, and adaptive behavior and identify or confirm possible behavioral health issues. Please note that the EU psychological evaluation does not provide psychiatric diagnoses for individuals.
- Vocational only - in some circumstances, counselors may elect to refer only for a vocational evaluation. This evaluation can provide situational testing for specific vocational skills to determine current functioning as well as the potential to master the skills, functional/hands-on evaluations and standardized testing. The evaluation

can enhance the individual's ability to make informed choices about work, determine aptitudes for careers, decide types of work to pursue and help determine if current career goals are the right fit.

- Low vision only - in rare circumstances, counselors may refer for low vision services only. See the VR Low Vision Services policy for more information.

Cases referred to the Evaluation Unit are typically in at least status 10 at the time of referral but may be accepted as early as status 02. Referred individuals who are under 18 years of age may be evaluated during the summer SAVVY program for teens or may attend at other times when accompanied by a parent, guardian or other authorized chaperone.

In some circumstances, individuals who are either not eligible to be served at the Center based on eligibility criteria or who are unable to travel to the Center, may receive vocational and psychological testing in their local community. Contact the Admissions Chair at the Center for consideration for off-site testing.

IL Week

This program offers individuals referred by Independent Living Rehabilitation Counselors an opportunity to participate in a one-week intensive training to begin learning new skills or to enhance skills acquired from field-based services. Participants may receive instruction in assistive technology, braille, orientation and mobility, communications, consumer education and techniques for daily living. Low vision evaluations may be available upon request. Participants also attend workshops and engage in recreational activities.

SAVVY

SAVVY (Summer Adapting to Blindness Vital to Visually-Impaired Youth) is a four-week program which provides visually impaired teens with job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education, workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living and instruction in self-advocacy including peer mentoring. Eligible students participate in one of three programs:

Youth in Transition (YIT) – assists teens with developing skills and confidence for greater independence, workplace readiness and with career exploration. YIT is recommended for rising sophomores, juniors, seniors or current year high school graduates between the ages of 14 and 21. Other individuals may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

World of Work (WOW) – helps prepare teens for success in future employment by providing real-world work experiences. It follows the VR Work Experience policy. WOW is recommended for rising juniors, seniors or current year high school graduates and between the ages of 16 and 21.

College Prep (CP) –helps prepare students for college life through classroom instruction, visits to college campuses, homework, group projects and peer mentoring. Participants must be rising seniors or current year high school graduates and between the ages of 14 and 21. Rising seniors must provide an official copy of their high school transcript and a letter of recommendation from a teacher or guidance counselor. Current year high school graduates need a copy of the email or letter confirming the teen has applied to a college.

All SAVVY program participants also participate in daily recreational activities, educational seminars, team-building workshops and community inclusion activities which reinforce classroom instruction.

SAVVY cases may be in status 10 at the time of participation, but status 18 is preferable.

Special Training

Special training students may participate exclusively in technology training without the need for additional Center-based services. Short term training on various technology devices and software applications such as screen enhancement and reading software, mobile devices, braille technology, accessibility training in using the internet and productivity software is available. The length of training is typically one to two weeks but can be tailored to meet individualized needs.

DSB Career and Training Center Classes

A variety of classes are available to assist individuals with meeting their specific goals. The length of class instruction depends on each person's identified needs and the Center program they attend. All classes offer hands-on instruction and practice. While the areas required for everyone's specific plan will vary, available classes include:

Adult Basic Education – This class can assist individuals with improving performance in grammar, spelling, composition, handwriting, reading, science, history, vocabulary development and elementary arithmetic. Additional topics may include business math, use of adaptive aids such as talking calculators and GED preparation.

Basic Computers – This course offers opportunities for individuals to improve keyboarding skills, utilize the internet and email, MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint and gain experience with productivity tools while employing screen enhancement and/or screen reader software.

Braille – Braille instruction may include uncontracted and contracted braille for United English Braille (UEB), slate and stylus or braillewriter, braille technology such as note-takers and displays and Nemeth/UEB math.

Career Education – Topics include the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), researching appropriate work accommodations, self-advocacy, soft skills, workplace conflict and emotional intelligence. Students create or revise existing resumes, cover letters and references and engage in career exploration and labor market research. Everyone creates job search accounts, learns how to fill out applications and practices interviewing skills.

College Prep – This class covers completing a college admissions application and Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), scholarship opportunities, visiting college campuses, interacting with disability services, the ADA, soft skills such as time management, taking responsibility, prioritizing, communication and collaboration; notetaking devices and other assistive technology for success in higher education.

Consumer Education – Topics covered in this class include banking services, management of checking and savings accounts, online banking, budgeting, establishing credit and credit recovery, interest rates, identity protection, and online shopping.

Cooking – Training concentrates on creating healthy, simple, and affordable meals using a variety of adaptations for individuals with visual impairments. Students practice safe kitchen strategies that build on tactile and sensory awareness.

Keyboarding – Individuals learn touch typing keyboarding skills. They utilize correct techniques and develop speed and accuracy. This skill is essential for success in other classes which utilize computers as well as to meet many career requirements.

Mobile Devices – This class teaches mobile device built-in accessibility features and use of apps for people who are visually impaired or blind to assist with effective and efficient communication, recording information and completing work tasks.

Orientation and Mobility – This class includes instruction in pre-cane skills, cane skills, community travel, technology for travel, public transportation, alternative travel options, community accessibility guidelines, self-advocacy and other individualized services to enable individuals to become independent travelers.

Techniques of Daily Living - Instruction and hands-on practice utilizing adaptive techniques is provided in household management, housekeeping tasks, cleaning, laundry, measuring, personal self-care, ironing, basic sewing, safety with cleaning products and tools, labeling, organizational methods and eating techniques.

Practical Applications Course - Participants take initiative with implementing various class skills including money management, time management, transportation access, mobile devices and technology via preferred activities as the modality. They also develop a personalized resource portfolio and are required to independently visit places of interest in their local community.

DSB Career and Training Center Services

Center Counselor Services

Each individual is assigned a Center Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor upon referral acceptance. The Center Counselor is the individual's and referring counselor's primary contact at the Center starting with initial scheduling to completion of the ABLE Program. They also can amend VR service plans and create authorizations for some VR services. The Center Counselor works with the individual to plan a training program which will meet their particular needs. This role can assist individuals connect with community resources and act as a liaison between Center staff and the referring counselor.

Deaf-Blind Services

The Center offers services for individuals who are blind, visually impaired or who have combined vision and hearing loss. Individuals who require assistive listening devices in order to effectively communicate in Center programming have access to assistive listening devices while at the Center. Interpreter services are available for those whose primary mode of communication is sign language. Individuals use their preferred communication mode including American Sign Language (ASL), ASL with close vision, tactile ASL, Signed English, Signed English with close vision, Signed English with tactile, fingerspelling, Braille, speech with ALD or hearing aids, or print on palm. Video phones are available in the residential and training facilities.

Participants and staff may utilize services of the Raleigh District Office (RDO)-based Deaf-Blind Specialist to determine how the individual can most effectively participate in programming and achieve future goals. A referral in the case management system is needed and is completed by the Center Counselor or the referring counselor. Referrals to the RDO Deaf-Blind Specialist may be made during the time the individual attends the Center even if the individual is already being served by another DSB Deaf-Blind Specialist in the individual's home area.

Dining Services

Food services are generally available Monday through Friday. Balanced meals are provided to consumers who are currently enrolled and receiving services at the Center. Accommodations can be made for consumers who are on special diets, have other nutritional needs or dietary requirements issued by their medical provider. Consumers should notify a Center Nurse of any restrictions and submit dietary orders prior to their enrollment date. Guests and visitors may purchase meals at the regular dining hall rates.

Low Vision Services

The Center offers low vision assessments as well as training on low vision techniques and devices. All individuals with any useable vision who attend the ABLE program will

receive a basic evaluation by the Low Vision Program Specialist. To receive low vision services, individuals must have a current eye report. Participants may also receive services from a consulting Low Vision Optometrist on an as-needed basis. Participants with useable vision who attend special programming such as SAVVY and IL Week are scheduled for low vision services as time allows. Occasionally, some individuals may be referred only for low vision services. See the VR Low Vision Services policy for more information.

Psychological Services

Psychological services available for individuals enrolled in Center programming include individual counseling and group counseling. The Center Staff Psychologist provides the majority of these services. A consulting Ph.D. psychologist may also provide individual and group counseling to individuals who meet economic needs criteria. Individuals who present with emergent mental health concerns may be seen for a consult by the Staff Psychologist or consulting psychologist and referred to community resources as needed. Eligibility to attend Center programming requires the individual to be psychologically able to participate with planned services.

Recreation Services

Recreational Therapy – Individuals referred to the ABLE Program are assessed for participation in Therapeutic Recreation and those who are interested in and appropriate for Recreation Therapy are provided the opportunity to enhance social skills, gross/fine motor skills, sensory integration and stimulation, and decision-making through individual and/or peer group interactions. Recreation Therapy is generally scheduled during the evening. Participants engaging in physical fitness activities may improve endurance through strengthening, conditioning, health and wellness programs. Medical approval as noted on the Medical Information Form is required for participation in physical fitness activities.

Evening Recreational Activities – These activities are offered to all individuals attending programming at the Center. The purpose of the activities is to expose individuals to various adapted sports, games, crafts and recreational opportunities for the blind and visually impaired on campus as well as in the community. Activities are generally scheduled in the Cox Dormitory Recreation Area. Individuals are encouraged to exercise and apply newly learned knowledge, skills and abilities from classroom instruction during scheduled activities and community outings. Individuals are also encouraged to plan and participate in independent recreation and leisure activities on and off campus, as appropriate.

Residential Services

Individuals who need to reside on campus to receive services are provided accommodations in the Cox and Milsap dormitories. Dorm rooms are single occupancy with shared bathrooms. The residential program offers individuals the opportunity to

practice and apply newly learned skills from classroom instruction. Individuals are encouraged to use the computer lab, braille lab, laundry facilities, recreation room and fitness areas.

A dorm supervisor and residential life training staff are on duty whenever classes are not in session to provide assistance to students. Individuals check in on Sundays after 3:30pm and are expected to check out on Fridays after 2pm. Exceptions are noted on the Center's annual calendar. Residential staff are available for assistance with transportation to and from the Center and the bus/train station until Center Orientation and Mobility staff have cleared the individual for independent travel.

All individuals must be medically cleared to stay in the dorms. On dates the Center is holding classes, anyone who is enrolled in Center programming or participating in Business Enterprise Program training, may reside in the dorms, Sunday through Thursday night, regardless of the location of their permanent residence. During SAVVY and IL Week, all participants are expected to stay in the dorm in order to fully participate in activities.

Some individuals may reside in the dorms on the weekend which begins Friday afternoon and ends Sunday afternoon. Requests for weekend stay are reviewed by the Admissions Committee. In addition to weekday requirements, all individuals must have additional medical clearances due to minimal staffing. A maximum of five people can reside in the dorm on the weekend. Individuals must live at least 150 miles one way from the Center. Occasionally, individuals who live less than 150 miles away from the Center have extenuating circumstances which necessitate a weekend stay. Requests for extenuating circumstances are reviewed by the Center Director who determines if an exception can be made. Weekend maintenance is paid at State per diem rates and includes all meals from Friday dinner to Sunday lunch.

Wellness Services

The Center has a nurse available either on-site or on-call 24 hours a day during class days and on check-in days. The primary purpose of nursing is to provide guidance and education on healthy living so participants can effectively participate in Center instruction and services as well as effectively function in future employment settings. Nursing is not able to diagnose or treat conditions. Individuals with emergent health concerns will be referred out to emergency departments, urgent care facilities or doctor's offices. Nursing may administer specific medications when a doctor's order is available. Individuals requiring assistance with medication or health management will be assisted with obtaining the necessary skills to independently manage health conditions in a manner that can be utilized while at work.