

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

Section:	I
Title:	Independent Living Services (ILS) Program
Current Effective Date:	03/08
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Through independent living services, persons of all ages who are blind or visually impaired learn daily living skills and obtain the assistance they need to become self-sufficient. The Independent Living Services (ILS) Program uses Social Workers for the Blind and Orientation and Mobility Specialists to provide a variety of services to individuals to develop their independence:

Adjustment to Blindness services include counseling, training, in-home management, and personal care skills, as well as skills for independent travel. The goal of these services is to enable each person to reach their maximum potential.

In-Home Aide Services Level I - Home Management (formerly Chore Services for the Blind) are provided to legally blind individuals to enable them to remain in their homes and avoid institutionalization. These services include daily tasks such as meal preparation and home cleaning that individuals can no longer do for themselves due to age or multiple disabilities.

Housing and Home Improvement Services are available at county option to provide for essential needs. Assistance is given in locating suitable housing. Minor modifications may be made to remedy conditions which are a risk to health and safety.

Health Support Services include counseling on health and nutrition needs and guidance to appropriate resources to meet those needs.

Information and Referral Services are provided to answer questions and guide individuals to resources which are appropriate to their needs.

These services are funded with Federal funds through the Social Services Block Grant of the Social Security Act and with matching State and county funds. In addition to promoting self-sufficiency, independent living services are provided to prevent abuse, neglect, or exploitation of the individual.

The ILS Program is accessed by contacting Social Workers for the Blind located in the 100 county departments of Social Services. They serve as case managers for all ILS and they provide skills training to meet the demands of daily living. They may also assess the need for adaptive equipment for use by people who are blind or visually impaired.

Orientation and Mobility Specialists are also available in all counties and, by referral, teach safe travel skills to blind and visually impaired individuals of all ages.

Efforts to meet the needs of elderly people who are blind have grown as the number of older residents in the state has increased. Social Workers for the Blind contact rest homes and nursing homes and provide information and training on working with visually impaired and blind patients. Local city and county recreation departments are provided resource information and consultation to integrate blind individuals into their regular programs. Cooperative efforts are continually going on with other agencies, both local and statewide, to inform them and train them in the unique needs of people who are visually impaired and blind. Some of the facets of these relationships include cross-

referral of individuals among agencies, information sharing, and involvement in staff training activities. As an example, individuals of the ILS Program may be referred to the Council on Aging for transportation or nutritional information; to a home health agency for management of health conditions; to a community college program for educational or daily living skills training; to the Library for the Blind and other agencies for large print, Braille, books on tape and machines to play them on; to parks departments for recreational activities; to the Agency for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing for counseling and assistance; and to the Children's Development Service Centers (CDSAs) for services and assessments of children with multiple handicapping conditions.

The ILS Program is also involved in services to groups of individuals in attending Camp Dogwood, the N. C. Lions Foundation camp for people with vision loss. The Social Workers for the Blind also work closely with local Lions Clubs in a public/private partnership of service provision.