**New York State Commission for the Blind**

**NYSDSC Spring 2017 Conference**

**Meet the Presenter**

**Peter Herrig, MS, CRC**

**Associate Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Home Office, Rensselaer**

* **Started in Transition, Senior VRC in the Albany Office and now oversees Employment and member of WIOA Implementation Team**

**Vocational Rehabilitation – Title IV**

**Two agencies in New York State**

* New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB), a division of Office of Children and Family Services
* Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES-VR), a division of the State Education Department

**Vocational Rehabilitation**

* Both NYSCB and ACCES-VR operate under the same Federal Regulations
* Main goal of VR is to assist individuals in obtaining competitive integrated employment
* Certain policies differ between the two agencies

**New York State Commission for the Blind (NYSCB)**

**State vocational rehabilitation agency that provides employment services to New Yorkers who are legally blind**

**The mission of the New York State Commission for the Blind is to enhance employability, to maximize independence and to assist in the development of the capacities and strengths of people who are legally blind**

**What is legal blindness?**

* A visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better or stronger eye with best correction, or
* A restricted field of vision of 20 degrees or less in the better or stronger eye
* NYSCB can assist in determining if someone meets this criteria

**Organizational Structure**

* 7 District Offices and Six outstations
* 65 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
* Transition Specific Counselors, Children’s Consultants
* O&M and VRT Certified Trainers on staff in some offices
* Also maintains an eye registry of legally blind New Yorkers
* NYSCB holds Comprehensive Services Contracts, Placement Services Contracts and hires private vendors across the state

**Overview of Services**

**Children’s Services**

**Independent Living (IL)**

**Adaptive Living Program (ALP)**

**Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)**

**Applying for Services**

Visit the NYSCB website at: visionloss.ny.gov

On the website you will find an application for service, as well as a list of contact information for the district offices.

Feel free to call your local district office for more information.

**Eligibility**

**Eligibility is based on two conditions:**

• Having a disability (which for NYSCB services must include legal

blindness) which results in a substantial impediment to employment

• Requiring VR services to prepare for, enter, engage in or retain gainful employment

**Children’s Services**

* Rehabilitation Services to children who are legally blind, beginning at birth
* A Children’s Consultant works directly with the family and school to develop a plan to meet the individual child’s needs
* Children’s Consultants provide counseling and guidance to the family, advocacy services, educational coordination and vocational coordination
* Children are offered the opportunity to participate in summer camps, year-round recreation programs in order to increase self-confidence and social skills

**Independent Living Services**

* Individuals who are not interested in VR services or competitive integrated employment and are not receiving services through another NYSCB program and need support in carrying out day-to-day activities
* Services are provided through not-for profit organization and low vision specialist
* Service are based on individual need and may include: O&M, VRT, low vision services, adaptive equipment and social casework

**Adaptive Living Program (ALP)**

* ALP services are for people who need training and services to assist them in living at home and in the community
* The primary benefit of this program is to allow senior citizens who are experiencing vision loss to function more independently in daily activities
* Consumers in the program need to be over 55

**Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services**

NYSCB services are individualized based on what the consumer requires in order to achieve their employment goal

**Vocational Rehabilitation**

•Services are provided to students and youth typically beginning at age 14 but services can begin as early as age 10 for some youth who are working with our children’s consultants; there is a strong focus on pre-employment transition services for this age group; these services can include pre-vocational services, work readiness, work experiences and pre-college programs

•Adult services typically start at age 18; There is no upper age limit for someone who otherwise meets the criteria for eligibility and has an employment goal

• There are 7 transition counselors across New York State

• There are roughly 3,600 individuals receiving VR services from NYSCB at any given time

**Most Common VR Services**

* **Low Vision Services-** work with individuals to maximize the use of residual vision.
* **Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (VRT)-** Assist with looking at accommodations such as lighting, physical layout, or use of hand magnifiers, can include some technology and Braille
* **Orientation and Mobility (O&M)-** Assist with navigating safely to and from work or school as well as within the location
* **Assistive Technology (AT)-** Assist with adapting hardware/software to the needs of the consumer. Includes computer training and troubleshooting school/work technology issues

**Additional VR Services**

* Assessment Services
* Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling and Guidance, Referral Services
* Adaptive Equipment and Home Modifications
* Interpreter Services for Deaf-Blind Consumer and Non-English Speaking Individuals
* Medical Restoration Services
* Placement and Post-Employment Services
* Reader’s Services
* Special Expenses Related to Training
* Technological Aids and Adaptive Equipment
* Transportation
* Vocational and Other Training Services (Including College Training)
* Other Goods and Services

**Employment Based Services**

* Placement Services
* Work Experience Training (WET)
* Work Readiness
* On-the-Job training (OJT)
* Work Try Out (WTO)
* Internship
* Job Save Program

**Supported Employment**

NYSCB also offers placement services in conjunction with our community partners for those that we serve that are multiply disabled. Supported Employment allows consumers to receive increased levels of job coaching and support on the job. This service is reserved for those with multiple barriers to employment.

**Youth and Transition Services**

**NYSCB can begin VR services as early as age 10, though typically these services begin at age 14.**

**Services for 10-14 Services for 14+**

•Pre-vocational •Work Readiness

•Work Readiness •Work Experience

•Social and Skill Building Training (WET)

Programs •Pre-College Program

•SEE Program (Summer Employment Experience)

**NYSCB College Support**

• Based on economic eligibility

• Student must apply for SSI when they turn 18

• Student must apply for FAFSA

-PELL grant, Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) and any other comparable benefit

• Coordinated with the IPE (Individualized Plan for Employment) goal

• We can assist with technology, technology training, books, tuition and fees and room and board, currently working to understand impact of Excelsior Scholarship

• Student must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0

• Coordination with Disability Resource Center on campus

**NYSCB College Support Rates**

**Effective Fall 2016**

-Undergraduate $3,235

-Graduate $5,435

-Varying rates for other Graduate programs

Room and Board Up to $4,000 per semester

**NYSCB Youth and Transition Contact**

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**QUESTIONS?**

**COMMENTS?**