

New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Mission

As a leader and unifying entity in the field of educating students birth-high school who are blind or visually impaired, NMSBVI is a statewide network of services that ensures all students who are blind or visually impaired will become independent productive members of their communities by identifying and providing quality education and collaborating with students, families and partners to provide outstanding training, resources and support services.

NMSBVI has condensed its mission to this:

Every student, every day in the right setting with appropriate materials taught by a highly qualified teacher of the visually impaired.

Did you know?

- New Mexico was the first state to integrate orientation and mobility into its Birth-3 program and make it available statewide to children birth to three.
- Strategies and techniques for teaching orientation and mobility to very young children were developed in New Mexico and are now being replicated in other areas of the country.
- The Air Force will relocate any of their personnel to New Mexico who request the transfer if the family has a child with a visual impairment so that the child can access VI services in our state.
- New Mexico is one of two states that has a partnership between a university and school for the blind to train teachers of the visually impaired.

NMSBVI Strategic Plan Goals

1. We will foster an atmosphere of creativity that results in innovative practices and programs.
2. We will create a training system that results in sufficient numbers of specialized staff in the field of blindness and visual impairment for the state of New Mexico.
3. We will create a system to convey and receive information about blindness and visual impairment educational services, trends, research, etc. to all those involved or interested in serving students who are blind or visually impaired.
4. We will build a system of data-driven decision making that will be used collaboratively to determine goals, services and settings for educating New Mexico students with blindness or visual impairments.
5. We will develop a system that supports the successful transition of students with blindness or visual impairment and their programming across settings.
6. We will acquire community support and the resources essential to advance the success of each student with blindness or visual impairment.

Birth-3 Years: An average of 750 families are served yearly; approximately half have been diagnosed with a visual impairment and half have at risk conditions that may/may not result in a visual diagnosis.

- NMSBVI works in a collaborative team model with providers of other agencies in New Mexico providing direct services to children birth to three who are blind/visually impaired or who are considered to be at risk for a visual impairment diagnosis.
- All VI services are provided by NMSBVI as determined by an IFSP: Individualized Family Service Plan.
- Services are integrated into the state's Family, Infant and Toddler program (FIT) which provides early intervention services for children birth to three and their families. NM Dept. of Health (NM DOH) and NMSBVI have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place that defines roles and responsibilities.
- NMSBVI provides a vision screening tool, mandated by NM DOH FIT to be used to screen the vision of all children referred to a FIT agency for developmental evaluations.
- NMSBVI provides vision screening and training on reservations as requested.
- NMSBVI provides statewide training related to vision development and vision loss for families, doctors, and providers of services for children ages birth-3.

Early Childhood Program Preschool (ECP): 60 students enrolled on site; 25-30 served using an itinerant model in a public school setting in greater Albuquerque area.

- Children, ages 3 through kindergarten, who are blind/visually impaired and need daily instruction from a teacher of the visually impaired.
- Placement and services are determined by IEP decision; all students have a Lead Education Agency (LEA) or public school member on their IEP team.
- ECP site is a clinical site for university physical, occupation and speech therapy programs, nursing and pediatrician rotation. It serves as a lab school for HED programs whose students need observation hours.
- Handle with Care: Shaken Baby Prevention Program

Residential Campus: 40 Students have received services on the residential campus.

- All students placed on campus by IEP team decision; LEA is a member of the student's IEP team.
- Students placed on campus for specific vision related needs: Braille, Orientation and Mobility, technology, life skills, employability skills, etc.
- Length of placement varies depending upon goals, needs and school district's ability to meet student's need.
- Transition plans to return to LEA are part of every IEP meeting.
- Unique programs include (but are not limited to):
 - Jump Start: an extra year of instruction for a student during middle school to help develop organizational skills, study skills, blindness technology skills and social skills; to provide remediation instruction in literacy (Braille and/or print), math (Nemeth, abacus) to help a student succeed in secondary education.
 - Post School Program: for students utilizing the alternative assessment and the ability option for graduation who have reached the age of 18. This program focuses on group home living, employability skills, community access.
 - Career Preparation Program: For students who have completed the academic portion of their high school education but who need additional skills to become employable or to attend college successfully.

Outreach Services to Public, Private and Charter Schools and to Hospitals.

- 12 School districts currently receive mentorship support services for vision impairment programs.
- 17 School districts currently receive technology support for specific students with visual impairment.
- 65-75 students will receive assessments through our Low Vision Clinics this year.
- 28 teachers in New Mexico are enrolled in our personnel preparation program through NMSU to become teachers of the visually impaired.
- 1175 students around New Mexico receive adaptive materials including Braille books and state tests through NMSBVI's resource center.
- Mentorship support services from NMSBVI are available to any teacher of the visually impaired or orientation and mobility specialist in the state. Services include:
 - District needs assessment to review students with visual impairment in a district; level of services provided; discussion of unmet needs
 - Assistance with functional vision and learning media assessments
 - IEP participation
 - Consulting, training for teams
 - Support school districts' efforts to find resources to provide services to VI students
 - Currently: 19 school districts are receiving mentorship support services from NMSBVI
- Technology support
 - Assessment, training for student and team
 - Lending Library for districts to use prior to ordering equipment for student
- Instructional Resource Center
 - Braille production (tests, textbooks, other materials)
 - American Printing House Quota Fund Registry/Supplemental Registry
 - Resource Center lending library
- Low Vision Clinic (Partnership with medical profession)
- HED (Higher Education Department) Personnel Preparation Program for Teachers of the Visually Impaired (Partnership with NMSU)
- Provide VI training (district level and statewide) to families and professionals who provide VI services to students.

Needs:

- A funding plan to support the school when the permanent fund distribution decreases from 5.5 to a 5.0 distribution.
- Support to build capacity in school districts to meet the needs of district students who are blind/visually impaired. This support could take several forms:
 - FTEs to place mentors in quadrants of the state
 - Financial support for our partnership with NMSU (two professors, scholarships)
 - Fully fund low vision clinic
- Funding request made to HED: 777,326