

## **Financial Resource Eligibility Requirement Guide for Low Vision and Blind Higher Education Students Information from 2021**

In this guide you will find the eligibility requirements for potential financial resources that are available to low vision and blind undergraduate and graduate students within all U.S. states, territories, and the District of Columbia. The volunteers of the Children and Youth Support and Outreach Team part of the Council of Citizens with Low Vision International (CCLVI) researched and organized this information. Each state and territory was contacted through phone and email in order to receive the information. Our goal was that each state and territory would have provided complete answers to our questions found within Part 1. Therefore, in this updated version we reached out and received the newest information for the year 2021. If you have any additional feedback for this document, please message us on our Facebook page, Low Vision Youth Connections at <https://www.facebook.com/Low-Vision-Youth-Connections-108396660924525>. This document was last updated in 2021. Most information can be found through each state's Department of Rehabilitation; however, some states have this information under other entities such as Division of Blind Services, Commission for the Blind, etc.

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## **Part 1 – Fully Answered State Questions**

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### **Arizona**

#### **1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

We are an employment program. We are not a financial aid program for post-secondary studies. If the client is eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation services and their employment goal requires education beyond high school, we look at the client's economic need for support by VR. (FAFSA, etc....)

#### **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Vocational Rehabilitation has 4 eligibility requirements, 1 of which is a documented disability. For the Sensory disability unit, the client would need to be legally blind or considered low vision for services with a specialty counselor.

#### **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Some VR services require that the client meets the economic need, a formula we use, for VR to fully support those services. Some services do not require the economic need determination.

**4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? How much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Again, we are not an educational financial assistance program. If a client were to receive support for post-secondary training from VR, they would have to maintain an AZ residence. If they live outside of the state, they should apply for that state's VR program.

**5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Any university that VR would support must be recognized by the Federal Department of Education.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money or does it cover full tuition costs?**

This would depend on whether a client meets economic need and whether their employment goal requires a degree beyond high school and what financial aid they are eligible for.

I have attached the AZ VR handbook and the Owner's Guide to Work as well as the Arizona RSA's agency brochure that we use with youth.

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## **Arkansas**

### **1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer Division of Services for the Blind offers financial assistance to eligible consumers based upon their individual employment outcomes. Assistance for advanced degrees requires approval from the Division of Services for the Blind Field Administrator.

### **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer The Arkansas Division of Services for the Blind is a state vocational rehabilitation agency established to serve blind and visually impaired individuals in this state. In order to receive services from this agency, an individual must be classified in one of the following categories:

- Total blindness – any permanent visual condition resulting in a total loss of vision
- Legal blindness – a visual acuity for distance vision in the best eye with the best correction of 20/200 or less OR the widest diameter of visual field subtending an angle of less than 20 degrees
- Visually impaired – a progressive visual condition with a visual acuity of 20/50 in the best eye after correction, which may result in total or legal blindness, OR imminent danger that the individual may become totally or legally blind

### **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer A sliding fee scale based on income will be used to determine the portion of academic training expenses Division of Services for the Blind will pay and the portion the consumer will be responsible for paying. An individual's economic need will not be used to determine eligibility for Vocational Rehabilitation services or payment for any other Vocational Rehabilitation services. Consumers whose considered income before taxes is \$60,000.00 or below are eligible for up to 100% of their academic training expenses to be paid in accordance with other policy guidelines, such as comparable benefits. Consumers whose considered income is greater than this will be required to pay a portion of the costs of their academic training based on the sliding fee scale below:

\$60,000.01 to \$70,000.00 eligible for up to 75%  
\$70,000.01 to \$80,000.00 eligible for up to 50%  
\$80,000.01 to \$100,000.00 eligible for up to 25%

Consumers whose considered income is above \$100,000 will not be eligible for payment of academic training expenses, except for the list of income-disregarded services.

**4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? How much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer Division of Services for the Blind may not impose any durational or other residence requirement that excludes any individual who is present in the state. Therefore, any consumer who is in the state at the time they are requesting services, may receive any services for which they are eligible.

**5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer If a consumer chooses to attend an out-of-state college/university, the maximum amount payable would be the same as that which would have been paid in-state. The consumer would be responsible for paying any cost difference.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money or does it cover full tuition costs?**

Answer Case by case base depending on financial analysis

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## **Colorado**

**1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer The program may pay for tuition up to the doctorate level if the degree is needed to obtain the career goal of the individual.

**2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer 20/70 or worse in the better eye, or totally blind; however, other functional loss may create an impediment to employment and will be considered in determining eligibility for services.

**3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer Individuals who receive Social Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance based on their disability do not financially contribute to services. A financial analysis is completed for all other customers. Based on the results of the analysis, a customer may need to financially contribute to postsecondary education.

**4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? How much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer No residency is required, however, the student can share tuition expenses with their state's division of blind services or vocational rehabilitation with Colorado's department.

**5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer Appropriate costs – The program will cover the least possible cost option. If an individual chooses an option above the least possible cost option, they will be responsible for the difference in cost.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money or does it cover full tuition costs?**

Answer Depends on the specific individual.

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## **Florida**

### **1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer Program may cover the graduate level tuition if the degree is needed to obtain the career goal of the individual

### **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer 20/70 or worse in better eye. Exceptions can be made but vision has to be an impediment to employment. There can also be a visual field loss but needs to be an impediment to employment.

### **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer No financial income stipulations. The program expects clients to use comparable benefits. The individual needs to complete Free Application for Federal Student Aid and if the individual receives the Pell grant, they would need to first apply the grant to tuition. The program encourages students to apply for scholarships.

### **4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? If yes, how much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer The individual has to have a Florida address

### **5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer Depending on client's major. Florida promotes the idea that students attend the closest institution to their place of residence. Therefore, if there is a college close to the residence but it does not offer the desired major, the program would pay for the student to go to a further institution in the state that offers the major. DBS can sponsor private institutions, but only up to the comparable rate of the closest public university to their residence.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money/credit hours? Does it cover book fees and other school fees?**

Answer The program covers a minimum of 12 hours of credits and may be able to cover more than 12 hours. The program may cover book and other fees if financially eligible.

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## **Georgia**

**1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer The program can cover both undergraduate and graduate students depending on the individual's career goal and if the degree is required to obtain the goal.

**2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer The condition has to be a permanent condition and the individual has to have sight of 20/70 in better eye or 40 degrees or less of peripheral vision. The person can also have functional limitations such as issues with sight due to a stroke in order to receive assistance.

**3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer The program takes into consideration the parents income the therefore, the individual needs to submit Free Application for Federal Student Aid documentation. If the individual is eligible for scholarships or grants, the program will deduct those means first from any expenses.

**4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? If yes, how much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer The student has to be living in Georgia if the program is expected to pay for full costs. However, if the student is an out-of-state student, the state of residency will share costs with the state of Georgia.

**5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer The program will potentially cover full costs at in-state institutions and will only pay up to the maximum costs of an in-state institution at a private institution. If housing is expected to be covered then it is preferred the individual attend a college within 35 miles of their place of residency during the freshman and sophomore year of college.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money/credit hours? Does it cover book fees and other school fees?**

Answer The program will cover a minimum of 12 credit hours and can cover more credit hours per semester. The program can cover other expenses such as school fees or housing.

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## **Illinois**

### **1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer Illinois Vocational Rehabilitation is able to provide financial contribution for post-secondary training for customers who are eligible. They should show economic need per the financial analysis, demonstrate the potential for success, and require the training to obtain the required industry recognized credentials for the individual customer's employment outcome goals. Illinois Vocational Rehabilitation provides financial contributions for undergraduate and graduate degrees. The funding can also cover doctorate degrees in order to obtain the individual's career goals.

### **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer Illinois Vocational Rehabilitation is a combined agency, serving all individuals determined eligible. Within the agency is a Bureau of Blind Services Bureau of Blind Services provides services to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. We follow the functional impairment model rather than the medical model. A person with a visual loss is served through Vocational Rehabilitation if their condition seriously limits a specified number of functional capacities and requires multiple Vocational Rehabilitation services over an extended period of time.

The areas of assessment are below

Section 553.150 Determination of Serious Limitation to Functional Capacities should include,

a. For the purpose of determination of the degree of significance of disability, functional capacities shall include:

1. mobility the physical ability of an individual to move from place to place and move the body into certain positions. This includes such activities as: walking, climbing, kneeling, stooping, sitting, standing, and similar activities;

2. self-care the ability of an individual to perform activities related to his or her health and hygiene. This includes such activities as: grooming, bathing, eating, housekeeping, medical management, and money management;

3. self-direction the ability of an individual to organize, control and regulate his or her own personal, social, and work life. This includes such activities as: maintaining schedules and routines, following directions and established rules, organizing activities for oneself, and adjusting to changing circumstances;

4. work skills the ability of an individual to demonstrate skills necessary to perform jobs that exist in the current employment market, regardless of demand for the particular occupation or the individual's prior work experience. This includes such activities as: learning and maintaining work skills, cooperating with others in a work setting, using adequate decision making and problem solving skills, and using academic skills commonly required in the workplace;

5. work tolerance the ability of an individual to consistently and adequately perform a job based on the physical, emotional, environmental, and psychological demands of a specific work environment. This includes such activities as: maintaining

performance on the job regardless of changes in environment such as cold and heat, demonstrating the strength and endurance to perform the job in question, and working the schedule typical of other employees in the same job;

6. Interpersonal skills the ability of an individual to establish and maintain appropriate relationships with other individuals in the workplace. This includes such activities as: engaging in necessary work-related communications, demonstrating behavior that is appropriate and acceptable in the work environment, cooperating with others in a team setting, and showing understanding and tact in dealing with others; and

7. communication the ability to convey and receive information efficiently and effectively. This includes such activities as: hearing and understanding ordinary spoken language; making one's self understood in ordinary conversation; writing or printing short notes and communications; and reading and correctly interpreting short notes, signs, and instructions.

b. A serious limitation to a functional capacity shall exist when it is determined by the rehabilitation counselor or instructor that the customer, because of his or her disability, has functional limitations in performing the major components of the activity or activities listed in subsections (a)(1) through (7) or needs accommodation to perform the activity.

c. The rehabilitation counselor or instructor shall use the criteria of consistency and substantiality when evaluating the degree of limitation to functional capacity. Consistency means that the individual's disability always or almost always limits the individual's functioning. Substantiality means the individual's disability has a major, significant impact on functioning and that the individual cannot perform the activity or finds it very difficult to perform the activity.

### **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer Individuals who receive Social Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance based on their disability do not financially contribute to “cost” services. A financial analysis is completed for all other customers. Based on the results of the analysis, a customer may need to financially contribute to post-secondary education. All customers who have relocated to attend Post-Secondary Education are required to pay for the basic cost of living toward their shelter and meal plan. The monthly current basic cost of living for shelter is \$198.00 and for meal plan is \$189.00. Customers continue to receive Vocational Rehabilitation financial contributions for PSE as long as they remain in good standing with the instruction higher education. Should they fall below the required GPA, Vocational Rehabilitation will provide funding for one more term in which they must raise the GPA to that required by the instruction higher education for the specified major or a cumulative 2.0 on a 4.0 scale. All customers must complete Free Application for Federal Student Aid and receive an award/denial letter from the IHE prior to the start date of the term. Failure to comply results no Vocational Rehabilitation funding.

### **4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state?**

Answer Rehabilitation Services Administration prohibits residency requirements. Illinois Vocational Rehabilitation is able to provide services to an individual who provides information necessary to initiate an assessment to determine eligibility and is available to complete the application process.

Illinois Division of Blind Services can serve an individual who lives in-state or out-of-state or who plans to attend an institution in-state or out-of-state as long as the individual can travel to Illinois

and meet with the Division of Blind Services in order to create the Individualized Plan for Employment plan. However, Illinois will only pay tuition costs up to the maximum amount of what Division of Blind Services would cover for in-state Illinois institutions.

**5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer The following responses are given with the consideration that all relevant conditions have been met (eligibility, financial, Free Application for Federal Student Aid, etc.. Vocational Rehabilitation is able to provide 100% (less comparable benefits) for tuition, fees, required books and supplies and \$25.00 for consumable supplies for state operate IHE. Illinois Vocational Rehabilitation is able to provide funding to out-of-state or private IHEs holding appropriate credentials at a maximum rate determined annually.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money/credit hours? Does it cover book fees and other school fees?**

Answer Response are given with an understanding that all conditions described above are met. Illinois Rehabilitation provides 100% for tuition, fees, required books and supplies (syllabus must verify) and \$25.00 for consumable supplies per term. Consumable supplies are items such as paper, pens, folders. Vocational Rehabilitation is able to provide funding for expenses that are required by all students – activity fees, technology fees, etc. Illinois Vocational Rehabilitation will provide financial contribution for up to three years to assist a customer in achieving an associate degree or to reach junior standing. Customers have an additional three years to achieve a bachelor's degree.

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## **Kentucky**

### **1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer Undergraduate and graduate full-time tuition is covered up to \$2,500 a semester for tuition and up to \$500 a semester for books. The requirement is that students remain full-time and maintain a 2.0 GPA

### **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer There are no visual acuity requirements, however, eligibility is based on functional limitations.

### **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer Individuals need to submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid form

### **4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? How much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer Decisions will be made on a case by case basis.

### **5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer Students have informed choice as to where they attend. However, the amount of financial support from the agency will not change.

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## **Louisiana**

### **1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer Undergraduate and graduate tuition can be covered.

### **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer Based on functional limitations such as the impact of the person's disability on their life.

### **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer If the person needs assistance for tuition then FAFSA completion is required. Some services are based on financial need and some are not. It depends on the individual's situation.

### **4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? If yes, how much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer The individual needs to live in the state.

### **5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer It is preferred that the student attend a state university. The student can attend another type of institution if the academic program that want is not offered at a public university.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money/credit hours? Does it cover book fees and other school fees?**

Answer It is required that the student enroll as a full-time student where tuition costs will be paid for. The financial services can cover book fees.

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**Maine**

**1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer The program will definitely cover undergrad students, however, for graduate student the individual needs to provide reasons why they are unable to secure a job with only an undergraduate degree

**2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer The program doesn't require legal blindness (20/200 in better eye), instead the program considers how the individual's visual condition impacts functionality.

**3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer The program does not consider the student's income

**4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? If yes, how much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer The individual generally has to have an address in Maine, however, due to rural conditions in the region, the program may also cover individuals who live in states geographically bordering Maine. A Maine resident can attend a school out-of-state, however, the most cost-effective institutions will be prioritized.

**5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer The program will consider the most cost-effective institutions and cover costs accordingly.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money/credit hours? Does it cover book fees and other school fees?**

Answer The program considers covering costs on a case-by-case basis, therefore, the cost coverage can range from the program only supporting a student in only one class ranging to supporting full-time credit hours. However, in most cases the program does expect a student to be registered at least half-time. The program may also consider covering other costs such as housing or transportation.

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## **Massachusetts**

For more information contact the Massachusetts Department of Rehabilitation due to potentially different requirements than those listed below.

### **1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer The program offers assistance to both undergraduate and graduate students.

### **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer The vision requirements are 20/200 in the better eye or visual field of 20% or less. People with vision better than 20/200 may be considered depending if the individual has a rapidly deteriorating progressive condition that leads to legal blindness.

### **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer Once the individual submits FAFSA documentation and it is reviewed, if there is an unmet financial need then the program can assist with tuition financial assistance.

### **4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? If yes, how much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer The individual has to provide proof of residency such as through housing bills, etc.. Generally the student can begin to receive tuition financial assistance through the state the semester after they move to the state.

**5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer The program will provide tuition financial assistance based on tuition rates at in-state institutions.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money/credit hours? Does it cover book fees and other school fees?**

Answer The program will pay a maximum of \$8,200 per semester of tuition and fees, however, the program can pay additional fees for books.

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## **Michigan**

**1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer Both undergraduate and graduate levels can be supported when the vocational goal is backed up by IMI data that suggests there is a demand for an occupation that meets the skills, abilities, and interests of the individual.

**2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer Legal blindness as defined: 20/200 in the better eye with correction, or a visual field restriction of 20 degrees or less in the best eye with correction. Persons could also be served if there is documentation of a deteriorating condition and the visual acuity is 20/100 with a best correction, or a visual field of 40 degrees or less in the best eye with correction.

**3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer Books supplies budget plan should be the payer of last resort. Consumers must apply for Free Application for Federal Student Aid. and additional grants or scholarships. We do not require student loans to be accepted.

**4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? If yes, how much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer It is not required that an individual be a resident of the state per regulation, however, it is most efficient and relevant for best service delivery if individuals are Michigan residents. Service delivery to non-state residents should be reviewed and agreed upon on a case by case nature.

**5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer Financial support up to the highest in-state public institution tuition costs

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money/credit hours or does it cover full tuition costs? Does it cover book and other school fees?**

Answer Costs are covered relevant to the highest in-state public tuition rates as comparable to the program of study or training. Auxiliary services such as books and supplies can be supported when necessary.

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## **Minnesota**

### **1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer Through the Work Force Development program, there is financial assistance available for both undergraduate and post graduate education.

### **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer Corrected vision in the better eye can be no better than 20/60. There is consideration for limited field of vision and also for conditions of deteriorating vision such as Retina Pignentosa, Stargardts, glaucoma, etc.

### **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer No answer

### **4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? If yes, how much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer There is no specified time that a resident must live in Minnesota to qualify. If they are currently living there, they qualify.

### **5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer This is not limited to universities and colleges in Minnesota but will follow the student wherever they need to go to receive the training that is decided on.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money/credit hours or does it cover full tuition costs? Does it cover book and other school fees?**

Answer Tuition coverage is based on a fee schedule paying a portion of the tuition (\$278.58 per credit hour for undergraduate credit and \$439.33 per credit hour for graduate classes.

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## **Montana**

**If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer Montana provides assistance for secondary education through the vocational rehabilitation program. Depending upon the employment goal, costs for both post-secondary and graduate school may be covered.

## **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer The vision requirements are that the corrected vision disability creates an impediment to employment. The individual must meet the eligibility requirements for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

## **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer Financial stipulations are 250% of poverty level for income and resources. If income and resources exceed that, there is a possibility of some cost sharing.

## **4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? If yes, how much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer The student does not have to be a resident of Montana, however, they must be a client of the Montana Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

## **5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer Any accredited university that leads to a degree in the field of study for the employment goal is acceptable. Full tuition and fees are paid for colleges and universities that are part of the Montana University System. The maximum paid for private or out-of-state colleges and universities is the highest amount paid for tuition and fees for Montana University System schools unless the field of study is not available in Montana colleges or universities. If the field of study is not available through the Montana University System, we can pay up to the amount paid by the Vocational Rehabilitation program in that state.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money/credit hours or does it cover full tuition costs? Does it cover book and other school fees?**

Answer Up to the full tuition along with fees which may be covered.

Other financial assistance for individuals with blind or low vision attending Montana schools include

Montana State University which has a scholarship available for blind individuals who live in the Bozeman area.

The Montana Association for the Blind has a couple of scholarships available for post-secondary education.

The Buffington Trust (out of Billings Montana) has provided some assistance for post-secondary education.

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## **Missouri**

**1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer If the individual needs the degree for professional goals, the funds will cover tuition potentially at the masters level in addition to the undergraduate level.

## **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer 20/70 in better eye if progressive, 20/200 in better eye if stable condition

## **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer No financial stipulations required

## **4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? How much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer If the individual has moved to the state, they can be covered by the services

## **5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer State universities are covered, if a private university is attended, the funds will only cover the expenses of what would be covered at an in-state institution

## **6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money or does it cover full tuition costs?**

Answer The individual has to be registered as a full-time student and the funding will cover any additional credits beyond full-time, the funds cover fees and books

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## **Nebraska**

### **1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer Nebraska Commission for the Blind does not have a financial requirement or financial needs test. We pay for all, undergraduate school as long as it will help the individual achieve their vocational goal.

### **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer The individual needs to be legally blind or functionally blind.

### **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer No financial income stipulation required. Just that the individual gets acceptable grades.

### **4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? How much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer The individual does not need to be technically resident of Nebraska. They only need to be physically present in Nebraska for us to open a case and to qualify for our services. However, the individual needs to be legally in the USA. If the individual becomes a client, he or she can move to another State and we will still provide services as long as the clients keeps in contact with the counselor and provides the same information all clients are require to provide.

**5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer Any university in Nebraska is cover as long as it will help the individual to achieve their vocational goal.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money or does it cover full tuition costs?**

Answer We pay for all the tuition cost at the state rate equals to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL).

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## **New Hampshire**

**1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer The program can cover both the undergraduate and graduate level tuition if the degree is required for the individual's career goals.

**2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer The vision requirements are 20/70 in the better eye or the individual has a progressive condition leading to blindness.

**3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer The individual has to apply for Free Application for Federal Student Aid and the program's funding is the last option for funding after the student has exhausted all other funding options.

**4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? If yes, how much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer The individual has to have a New Hampshire address but the funding can also cover out-of-state tuition.

**5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer All universities can be covered, however, the limit is \$5,500 per semester at any institution

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money/credit hours? Does it cover book fees and other school fees?**

Answer Any amount of credits can be covered up to the \$5,500 maximum limit per semester. However, an individual can petition the program to receive more funding.

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## **New Mexico**

**1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer Undergraduate and graduate tuition is covered. New Mexico has a lottery and students are expected to take advantage of the scholarship lottery, Vocational services should be last resort to cover tuition

## **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer The vision requirements in New Mexico are: Legally blind, Not legally blind but have progressive condition likely to result in blindness, and functional limitations, for example cannot drive

## **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer There are no financial stipulations in New Mexico. The student needs to submit Free Application for Federal Student Aid.to see if they can apply for other grants. Free Application for Federal Student Aid needs to be submitted by October of each academic year.

## **4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? How much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer As long as the student has technically moved to the state and has an address then the student can be a client. Student tuition will be covered at out-of-state institutions but only what would have been covered at an in-state public New Mexico institution as long as students believe they will move back to New Mexico. If New Mexico universities don't offer a specific program that is needed to achieve career goals, then out-of-state tuition and other related expenses will be covered.

## **5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer Equal amount of tuition that would be paid at an in-state institution is given for out-of-state schools or private schools unless program to achieve career goal is not provided through a New Mexico institution

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money or does it cover full tuition costs?**

Answer The tuition covers any amount of the course that the student is taking along with supplies, books, fees, dorm cost, food, transportation, might cover tutoring

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## **North Dakota**

All services with Vocational Rehabilitation are provided on an individual basis, based on their unique interests, abilities, capabilities, priorities, concerns and informed choice. Vocational Rehabilitation is able to assist individuals with pursuing post-secondary education as needed for them to achieve their vocational goal. We are not a financial aid or entitlement program.

**1. Does your state offer financial assistance for visually impaired students seeking post-secondary education programs? If so, is it limited to the undergraduate level?**

Answer For individuals who need post-secondary training to achieve their vocational goal, Vocational Rehabilitation may be able to provide financial assistance.

**2. Are there vision requirements? If so, what are they?**

Answer Vocational Rehabilitation is an eligibility program. To be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation, the individual must have a disability that causes an impediment to employment and they

must want to work. The individual's disability may be physical, mental or cognitive.

**3. Are there financial income stipulations? If so, what are those stipulations?**

Answer For individuals whose Individualized Plan for Employment lists training as a service, the client must apply for federal financial aid. The college provides an award letter which identifies available aid such as grants and expected family contribution. Vocational Rehabilitation has a higher ed worksheet that is completed with the individual which identifies the amount of financial assistance Vocational Rehabilitation will provide for the semester.

**4. Does that student need to be a state resident to receive financial assistance to attend a school in your state? If so, what is the time required?**

Answer Vocational Rehabilitation does not have a residency requirement.

**5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer As long as the individual is able to achieve the degree needed to achieve their vocational goal, Vocational Rehabilitation does not limit the approved school.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money or does it cover full tuition costs?**

Answer That is based on the individual's higher ed worksheet.

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## Ohio

### **1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer Support for post-secondary training is granted in accordance with the agreed upon goal outlined in the Individual Plan for Employment. What level of education is needed is determined by the labor market and industry standard.

### **2. What are the vision requirements? The Vocational Rehabilitation program does not require specific acuities or field deficits in order to be considered eligible. Eligibility is based on three factors:**

Answer A visual impairment or blindness results in substantial impediment to employment;

You can benefit from services in terms of an employment outcome; and

Vocational rehabilitation services are necessary for you to prepare, secure, retain or regain employment.

### **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations? Financial support is influenced by the information supplied on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid needs to be submitted by October. and the resulting Student Aid**

Answer Report student aid report, including the Estimated Family Contribution. In most cases, the individual must meet their Estimated Family Contribution prior to Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities providing financial support for tuition. Exceptions are made for individuals who received social security benefits.

Individuals must also maintain their eligibility for federal educational grants.

**4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? How much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer An individual is required to show that they have a “presence in Ohio” to be eligible for the Vocational Rehabilitation program.

**5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer Students are able to select any university they wish to attend, however financial support is based on tuition rates at the closest state support school. Community college for the first 2 years, and university rates for the remaining years of education.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money or does it cover full tuition costs?**

Answer Financial support is based on tuition rates at the closest state support school. (Community college for the first 2 years, and university rates for the remaining years of education).

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## **Oregon**

### **1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer The program offers assistance to both undergraduate and graduate students.

### **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer The vision requirements are 20/200 in the better eye or visual field of 20% or less. People with vision better than 20/200 may be considered depending on plans for employment or if the individual has a rapidly deteriorating progressive condition that leads to legal blindness.

### **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer The Individual is required to apply for FAFSA.

### **4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? If yes, how much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer The individual has to be present in the state, generally requiring a state address.

**5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer: The tuition financial assistance will only cover a tuition amount that would be paid at an in-state public school. Therefore, if the individual wants to attend a private school, the maximum amount that would be paid at a public school will be paid.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money/credit hours? Does it cover book fees and other school fees?**

Answer There is no limit of tuition costs that can be covered. However, coverage is considered on a case-by-case basis. The program will generally only cover tuition, fees, and books.

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## **Oklahoma**

**1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer Undergraduate and graduate students, appropriate to the individual and their employment goal. The end result must be employment.

**2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer Corrected visual acuities greater than 20/60; or sight which is so ineffective as to seriously limit the ability to engage in the ordinary vocations and activities of life; or vision that meets the definition of legally blind, which is a visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with best correction, or a visual field of 20 degrees or less.

**3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer There are services which are based on economic need, and sponsorship of training is one of them. It is based on the number of people and the amount of income in the household.

**4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? How much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer Oklahoma does not have a residency requirement but the student would have to be available to meet with the counselor and make adequate progress in the case. Again any services we provide would have to result in employment, and Oklahoma would need to secure documentation of the wages for about a year after the client becomes employed.

**5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer There are different policies depending on the “type” of university attended. If a training is available in-state, we generally will not pay for a student to attend an out of state or private university unless there is proof that the degree is not available in our state. In that case, we can only pay Oklahoma state rate for tuition.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money or does it cover full tuition costs?**

Answer Again, it depends on the type of training facility; state or regional, private or public, etc. Books and fees may be covered. All students are expected to apply for and utilize comparable

benefits, the most common being Pell Grant (by submitting a FAFSA form). If a student has an economic “surplus” or income over our guidelines, they will have to participate in the cost of services in that amount. According to policy, this is applicable every 30 days in which we are paying for services. Remember, DRS is an eligibility program and not an entitlement program so we have to secure the medical documentation to determine the level of disability a person has before determining if we can even pay for any of these types of services.

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## **Pennsylvania**

### **1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer It is for both undergraduate and graduate students along with business training and technical programs.

### **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer All referred individuals whose primary disability is blindness or other visual impairment should be referred to Blindness and Visual Services. Visual acuity is no greater than 20/70 in the better eye with best correction and/or a restricted visual field of less than a 20-degree field of vision in the better eye or is no greater than 20/70 in the better eye with best correction and/or a significant visual field restriction, along with the prognosis for future vision loss.

### **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer There are financial guidelines and they are outlined in the program's college policy. The policy in summary states that for non-Social Security Income Social Security Disability Insurance customers, receiving financial aid for college training it is necessary to complete a financial needs test online document, only if the customer needs services other than college training. For non-Social Security Income Social Security Disability Insurance customers, individuals need to use the financial needs test to determine financial eligibility and family contribution for Blind Technology Teaching training. The yearly family contribution may be pro-rated per term. The Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor will complete the forms and discuss Financial Needs Test with the customer.

**4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? How much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer Eligibility is based on: Does the applicant have an impairment, Does their impairment and resulting functioning create an impediment to employment, Do they require Vocational Rehabilitation services. Can they benefit from services in terms of an employment outcome.

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## **Tennessee**

**1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer Funding covers undergraduate tuition. Funding will cover graduate tuition if the individual needs graduate certification to accomplish their career goals.

## **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer Funding covers both low vision and legally blind individuals. The eye condition has to be at least 20/50 in the best eye or no greater than 40 degree in the best eye or the individual has a progressive condition

## **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer Program requires a financial needs assessment which will consider how many people live in the home and what is the household income.

## **4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? How much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer The student would need to be a Vocational Rehabilitation customer of their “home state” Vocational Rehabilitation. Then we would be able to collaborate with that Vocational Rehabilitation agency to assist the student. Financial assistance would be considered on a case-by-case basis where the costs for financially eligible students would be negotiated between the two Vocational Rehabilitation agencies after any student grant/scholarship award amounts had been applied. A hypothetical example would be that a student from North Carolina would have tuition covered by North Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation, and books and supplies covered by Tennessee Vocational Rehabilitation.

**5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer Only public institution tuition is covered fully, if students attend a private institution, tuition will only be covered as much as comparable to a public institution.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of credit hours/money or does it cover full tuition costs. Does it also cover books and other fees? Full tuition is covered.**

Answer Book and other school fees may also be covered in addition to full-time tuition is covered in Tennessee.

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## **Utah**

**1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer Within the program, undergraduate students can be approved by the rehabilitation counselor, however, graduate students need a higher level of approval

**2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer The program requires a vision level of 20/70 in the better eye or 30 degrees or less in peripheral level in the better eye. However, if the student has better visual acuity but has limited functionality that causes challenges to employment, they can also be eligible.

### **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer If a person has Social Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance, that individual won't have to contribute to the services. However, if the individual is not receiving this support, they will be asked to provide income information and depending, the program may ask that the individual help to pay for services which is based on a sliding scale.

### **4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? If yes, how much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer The individual has to be living in Utah and have an address in Utah.

### **5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer Public schools are covered in the state, however, if the student wants to attend a private school the student has to have a much higher level of approval the program and the institution has to be on the list of vendors.

### **6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money credit hours? Does it cover book fees and other school fees?**

Answer The individual's tuition and books may be covered. The program will have the client apply for the Pell grant and the program will ask the individual to first cover fees with the Pell grant and then the program will cover the remainder of the costs. The program can cover full-time credit hours but it can cover fewer than full-time credit hours.

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## **Texas**

Texas has a “Certificate of Blindness” that its tuition program is based on. There is a possibility that students that do not have the “certificate” can be covered by these services but it is decided on a case by case basis without the certificate.

### **1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer Funding is provided depending on the individual’s vocational goal and if the individual needs an advanced degree in order to obtain their career goals

### **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer The student has to be Legally blind meaning 20/200 in best eye or 20 degrees or less of visual field or 20/70 in the best eye and progressively getting worse However, to apply for vocational services, an individual has to have barriers to working.

### **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer The program considers the basic living requirement. The individual needs to submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid documentation. If the individual doesn’t qualify for Free Application for Federal Student Aid, the program would consider how much it can pay for the individual.

**4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? If yes, how much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer In order to receive tuition exemption, the student has to be an in-state resident, and therefore, has to live in Texas for 12 months

**5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer Certificate of blindness only covers in-state universities. If an individual goes to a private university, the funding can't cover more money than what is equal to 120 credit hours at an in-state school.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money/credit hours or does it cover full tuition costs? Does it cover book and other school fees?**

Answer With the Certificate of Blindness, funding can only cover 120 hours total for undergraduate students. Certificate only covers tuition and tuition fees, If a student doesn't have the Certificate of Blindness, the agency will see what scholarships are applicable for that individual but won't force students to take out loans.

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## **Washington**

### **1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer Decisions towards the type of services offered, such as support towards higher education or vocational training programs, are individualized and dependent on the vocational goal.

### **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer In order to be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation services from the Washington State Department of Services for the Blind, an individual must demonstrate functional limitations to employment due to their visual disability which aren't resolved through use of corrective lenses. The functional limitations must require substantial services over time, and must be services within the scope of our federal grant and the services lead to the employment goal. Acuity is considered but is not the determiner for eligibility. In fact, a person may have no residual vision whatsoever and found ineligible, if they have all their adaptive skills mastered and have resolved any functional limitations to employment due to their visual disability.

### **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer Eligibility and services do not have a financial needs requirement.

**4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? How much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer We support Washington residents and those residents in state-border areas who are able to meet with the agency staff in person and locally.

**5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer If higher education is part of the necessary set of services for a vocational goal, we can provide tuition support up to an equivalent amount that might be expended at a local state university of Washington or Washington State University. In-state programs have primary consideration. Comparable benefits and financial aid are considered as the first and primary source for tuition supports before agency supports can be made available.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money or does it cover full tuition costs?**

Answer The program covers full tuition. For more information about the scope of our services can be found in our program policy, within the Washington Administrative Code 67-25

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## **West Virginia**

### **1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer The program looks at the individual's career goal. If the career goal requires a master's degree, this level of degree would be considered. Medical schools and law schools are options depending on individual basis.

### **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer Visual acuity of 20/50 in the best eye, or angle of vision or 60 degrees or less in better eye, or the person has a degenerative eye condition.

### **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer Economic need policy is enforced which uses standard exemptions. Free Application for Federal Student Aid information is required from the individual.

### **4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? How much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer There are no residential requirements.

### **5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer The academic institutions have to be approved, accredited, and a vendor of the agency. The funding won't go above certain tuition levels.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money or does it cover full tuition costs?**

Answer Funding covers 30 hours or more per year. The funding covers some book fees and pays basic tuition fees.

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## **Virginia**

**1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer The program can cover individuals at both the undergraduate and graduate level. However, if a student wants to be supported at the graduate level, the individual needs to show that the degree will advance the person's career and show that they have had success working in their field after graduating from an undergraduate program. The student's career goal has to be discussed with and approved by the program counselor.

**2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer The program considers functional limitations when deciding if an individual is eligible.

**3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer The program requires Free Application for Federal Student Aid documentation and looks at Expected Family Contribution and depending on these factors and other scholarships received, an individual may be required to financially

contribute depending on a standard cost of participation policy. If an individual receives Social Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance, they are not expected to financially contribute.

**4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? If yes, how much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer As long as an individual is available to participate in services in Virginia, they are eligible. Therefore, they are not required to have a Virginia address but need to be able to travel to the state to meet with program employees such as individuals who live in bordering states or who have family living in the state and who may plan to live in Virginia after graduation. As usual, eligibility is decided on a case-by-case basis.

**5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer The program requires that any institution that is covered financially is on an approved list of vendor institutions which are accredited programs and universities. The program looks at what institution is the best financial option. Therefore, if a private institution is preferred over a public institution, only the maximum costs of a public state institution will be applied and the individual will have to cover the rest of the expenses.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money/credit hours? Does it cover book fees and other school fees?**

Answer The program can potentially cover all costs including tuition, fees, books, transportation, and housing costs but the amount of costs that can be covered is decided on an individual basis.

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## **Wisconsin**

### **1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer Funding can potentially cover graduate students. According to the agency “Everything is determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the individual's disability, job goal, and circumstances. There are occasions where advanced training could potentially be supported.

### **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer There are no specific vision requirements. It depends on the individual's disability itself and the amount of functional limitations that determines eligibility for Department of Vocational Rehabilitation.

### **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer The grant amount will depend on the individual's remaining financial need after financial aid is determined based on information the individual entered in their Free Application for Federal Student Aid, not to exceed \$5,000. An individual can submit an Exception Request if they feel they require more funds than the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation training grant. However, individuals need to be aware that additional funds can cause an over award and a potential need for repayment to the school.

**4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? How much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer According to the agency, typically, the student applies for services in the state where they have primary residence.

**5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer Students can attend any college in Wisconsin.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money or does it cover full tuition costs?**

Answer According to the agency, "After the Financial Aid award information is provided, the calculated Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Training Grant is not to exceed \$2,500 per academic term or \$5,000 per academic year for full time attendance, as defined by the institution. Up to \$208.34 per credit for part-time attendance can be granted. Graduate school will be calculated at \$277.78 per credit.

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## **Wyoming**

**1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer Funding can be provided for tuition if that degree will fulfill a need for a vocational goal. We can provide funding for the graduate level if it fulfills a vocational goal. There are some other

financial assistance programs for college for blind and visually impaired students.

## **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer The program doesn't have vision requirements but instead looks for a functional vision impairment that interferes with work.

## **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer The agency has a financial needs assessment to determine if the individual is able to contribute to the employment plan.

## **4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? How much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer If the student wants to attend college out-of-state, but the same program is available in-state, the agency will pay what would have been paid for at the in-state program tuition rate.

## **5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer The program can cover universities outside of Wyoming, if they are vendors for the State of Wyoming. If the student wants to attend college out-of-state, but the same program is available in-state, the agency will pay what would have been paid for at the in-state program tuition rate.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money or does it cover full tuition costs?**

Answer The program generally requires students to attend full-time, but can make exceptions that are usually disability related. Funding covers other school fees and covers books up to \$500.

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**Part 2 – Partially Answered State Questions**

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**Alabama**

Alabama does sponsor Vocational Rehabilitation consumers for college. The students can qualify for 100% tuition but it is based on a case by case basis.

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**Alaska**

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation covers tuition for its clients, depending if they are in an approved plan with their Vocational Rehabilitation counselor.

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**California**

Program will pay 100% of the student's remaining cost of educational needs at a public university, after financial aid has been accounted and applied.

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## **Connecticut**

Individuals who are blind or significantly visually impaired and who have been found eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, may be able to obtain some level of funding (based on policy requirements) to assist with higher education training if that training is necessary to achieve the employment outcome that has been agreed upon.

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## **Delaware**

Division for the Visually Impaired has a Vocational Rehabilitation program that could financially support a student's tuition if they are found to be eligible for that support.

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## **Hawaii**

Depending on the individual circumstance and employment goal, eligible Vocational Rehabilitation participants in Hawaii may be able to get partial or total financial assistance with tuition.

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## **Idaho**

The program provides tuition for the Vocational Rehabilitation clients when appropriate to assist them in meeting their vocational goals. Each vocational rehabilitation case and plan is handled individually. Contact: Mike Walsh (208)334-3220.

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## **Iowa**

Iowa Division of the Blind supports Vocational Rehabilitation clients where post-secondary training is needed to meet their Individualized Plan for Employment goals.

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## **Kansas**

Tuition assistance may be provided to individuals with a documented disability, eligibility is based on several criteria.

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## **Maryland**

The best way to find out more about Division Of Rehabilitation Services is to review the website:

<https://dors.maryland.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

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## **Nevada**

The program covers tuition if the student's major is appropriate and matches the individuals' skills, interests, and abilities, and if the degree is needed to reach an agreed upon employment goal and if the career goal is listed as a service in an Individualized Plan for Employment. The program applies a financial needs test in Nevada in order to determine at what percentage, if any, the client must contribute toward costs.

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## **New Jersey**

Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is the designated Vocational Rehabilitation agency for individuals in New Jersey who are blind, deaf-blind, and visually impaired. For eligible Vocational Rehabilitation consumers, Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is able to provide tuition assistance to those with an approved employment goal that requires post-secondary training, subject to our policies and federal regulations. Tuition assistance is also a needs-tested Vocational Rehabilitation service, and is subject to the results of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid data and available comparable services and benefits, as Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is the last dollar paid. Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired maximum fee schedule for tuition is set annually based on the cost of attendance at New Jersey City University.

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## **Rhode Island**

Rhode Island will work with eligible individuals Rhode Island residents toward vocational goals including assistance with tuition – however there are specific financial conditions and criteria. Our blind services unit Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired adheres to the regulations of our parent agency Office of Rehabilitation Services Tuition assistance from Office of Rehabilitation or Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired is not free. There is however a program for all Rhode Island residents who are eligible called The Promise Grant. A free tuition program administered by Community College of Rhode Island which is not limited to those with vision impairments and neither are they given preference. Aside from that there is a scholarship tuition assistance program the Gerald Shapiro Fund) that is awarded based on need to a blind visually impaired student enrolled at the University of Rhode Island. And oversight of this scholarship is independent of our agency managed at University of Rhode Island. Specific to Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Below is a link to the Office of Rehabilitation regulations Vocational Rehabilitation is where you will find the information on tuition assistance.

<http://www.ors.ri.gov/Regulations.eff%206.19.18.html>

We will pay \$100 per credit for students open with Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

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## **South Carolina**

The program will only assist Vocational Rehabilitation clients.

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## **South Dakota**

The state has a “free tuition law” where any visually impaired individual who resides in South Dakota has not moved to South Dakota solely for education receives free tuition and fees at any South Dakota Board of Regent college or university. In terms of vision requirements, if the student receives Social Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance they are automatically eligible.

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## **Vermont**

The state offers tuition assistance programs.

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### **Part 3 – States That Did Not Respond**

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The following states Mississippi, Louisiana, New York, North Carolina and Indiana did not respond.

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### **Part 4 - United States Territories and District of Columbia**

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[American Samoa](#)  
[U.S. Virgin Islands](#)  
[Washington D.C.](#)

The following territories Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and Puerto Rico did not respond.

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#### **American Samoa**

As a territory, American Samoa does not have funding for this type of support, however, students with low vision or blindness are referred to the vocational rehabilitation programs within Hawaii.

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#### **U.S. Virgin Islands**

The United States Virgin Islands has no tuition assistance program strictly related to low vision or blindness.

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## **Washington D. C.**

### **1. If the state has financial assistance programs, is it just at the undergraduate level?**

Answer The program looks at the vocational goal of the individual and can potentially cover both graduate and undergraduate students.

### **2. What are the vision requirements?**

Answer The vision requirements are based on the definition of legal blindness stated by Social Security. Therefore, the person has to have 20/200 in the better eye.

### **3. Are there financial income stipulations? What are those stipulations?**

Answer The program conducts a financial needs assessment for each client.

### **4. Does that student technically have to be an in-state resident in order to receive financial assistance to attend a school in that state? If yes, how much time do they have to live in the state to be a resident?**

Answer The program requires that an individual have a Washington D.C. address.

### **5. Are only certain universities covered? If so, what are those universities or what are the rules about tuition at specific types of universities?**

Answer Institutions generally need to be within Washington D.C., Maryland, or Virginia. However, the program looks at local schools first and also considers the best comparable program financially.

**6. Does the tuition program only cover a certain amount of money/credit hours? Does it cover book fees and other school fees?**

Answer The program looks at local public rates of schools. The program will generally not cover living expenses.

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**End**