

# STUDENT TRANSITION

A GUIDE FOR  
MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS  
WITH A VISUAL DISABILITY



KENTUCKY OFFICE FOR THE BLIND  
DEPARTMENT FOR WORKFORCE INVESTMENT  
EDUCATION CABINET

<http://blind.ky.gov>

# MISSION

The Kentucky Office for the Blind's mission is to provide opportunities to individuals with visual disabilities for employment and independence. We offer services to assist their effort to become more independent and productive in the workplace, community, school, and home.

# INTRODUCTION

Your public school is mandated to provide transition services to all students with disabilities up to the completion of their secondary educational program or high school graduation. Those services are designed to prepare you for activities beyond high school such as postsecondary training, employment and independent living. Although your school is ultimately responsible for the provision of transition services, additional agencies such as the Kentucky Office for the Blind (OFB) can provide specialized assistance to you during your transition period.

OFB feels strongly that knowledge and understanding is an essential goal of your transition program. A seamless transition from school to work will contribute significantly to your vocational future, whatever occupation you choose. To support those goals, an OFB counselor is available to participate as a vocational consultant in your transition planning as early as middle school.

More than 47,000 Kentuckians have visual problems that affect their lives at home, school, on the job and in their communities. There are approximately 460 children enrolled in Kentucky schools this year who have significant visual impairments. This includes students your age, from your part of the state, maybe even from your school. Over the years OFB has assisted hundreds of visually impaired students as they completed their transition program and went on to any number of different vocational careers. You are not alone. This handout is written to help you and your parents understand the role OFB will play during your transition from school to work. OFB maintains a good working relationship with the Kentucky Department of Education and the 176 school districts throughout Kentucky. We are here to be your partner and support you in finding employment.

# “Services With You In Mind”

## **WILL I BE ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES FROM THE OFFICE FOR THE BLIND?**

If you qualify for your school transition program because of your visual disability, you may be eligible for services with the OFB. If you receive Social Security based on your vision, you will automatically be eligible for services with OFB. If you have a visual disability that significantly affects your every day functioning, but falls short of your school’s transition eligibility criteria, you still may be eligible for services with OFB.

Contact the local OFB counselor and discuss your visual condition and how it affects you. We are vision professionals and understand the obstacles associated with low vision. We know the questions to ask and will do what we can to make a fair decision about eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services. To assist us in making a timely determination concerning your eligibility for OFB services you can provide the following documents:

- An updated visual examination report,
- Other medical or psychological reports, and
- A copy of your school IEP or 504 Plan, if available.

## **WHAT CAN I EXPECT FROM THE OFFICE FOR THE BLIND WHILE I AM STILL IN HIGH SCHOOL?**

From junior high school through high school graduation you will face academic opportunities that will shape your vocational future. At this point in time you may or may not know what you want to be when you grow up. The classes you are taking and the activities you’re participating in will dramatically affect your vocational future and the choices you make as you plan for it. OFB will be there to advise you, your parents, and your teachers about various career opportunities and what you will need to accomplishment them. That is a big part of who OFB is. We help individuals with visual disabilities go to work. There are many different paths an individual can follow to reach a work goal. The paths you consider will depend on your individual uniqueness. Your counselor will help you understand your distinctive strengths, needs and desires, and make an “informed choice” concerning your future.

Depending on your transition needs, your OFB counselor will ask you and your parents to officially apply for services during your junior or senior year in high school. Depending on your transition needs you may be asked to apply even earlier. If approved for services, you will have been assigned a counselor and have a plan in place by the end of your senior year.

## **PARENTS OF SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN**

### **WHAT IS AVAILABLE IF MY SON OR DAUGHTER HAS SPECIAL NEEDS REQUIRING SPECIAL SUPPORT TO MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL?**

If your student has a visual impairment, complicated by other significant disabilities, and plans to transition directly to work, the Community Based Work Transition Program (CBWTP) may be available. CBWTP is available in some school districts in Kentucky, for students who require the assistance of a special job trainer or coach to make a successful transition directly from school to the world of work. The goal of CBWTP is for each student to obtain a job in the most integrated setting prior to graduation, with the necessary supports in place to maintain that employment beyond high school.

Supportive Employment is available if your child needs long-term support to maintain work in a community setting. The support can be intensive depending upon his or her needs. Like any other employment service the goal of Supportive Employment is to lead your child to employment independence. Working closely with you and your child, OFB will refer your child to the supportive employment provider, develop a plan and pay for the services.

### **SERVICES TO MEET YOUR NEEDS**

OFB provides many different types of services, all focused on providing you with independence and an opportunity to work. You and your OFB counselor will discuss and create a vocational plan very similar to the transition plan you have in high school. Your Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is a mutually agreed upon plan that establishes services and responsibilities focused toward achieving your career goal. The services in your IPE will depend upon your needs, preferences, interests and vocational choice. If you choose to go directly to work based on the training you received in high school, your OFB counselor will assist you in locating the best possible job opportunity. If your vocational choice requires additional training OFB will provide those services necessary to qualify you for your career choice. When you complete your career training, your OFB counselor will assist you in finding and interviewing for jobs.

OFB is required to determine the major disability issues that will interfere with your ability to work. In some determinations it may be more appropriate for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to work with you. In which case, we will refer and assist you in contacting your local OVR office.

The following are OFB services:

- Independent Living Skills
- Vocational Evaluation
- Continuing and Adult Education
- Vocational Guidance and Counseling
- Rehabilitation Technology Training and Equipment
- Post-Secondary Educational Assistance
- Vocational or Technical School Training Assistance
- Supportive Employment
- Campus Orientation and Mobility
- Reading services
- Accessible textbooks
- Kentucky Business Enterprises
- Job Placement Assistance
- On-Site Job Assistance
- Post Employment Support

### **IS THERE A CHARGE FOR THE SERVICES?**

The Kentucky Office for the Blind does not charge for any of the services it provides. If you receive any form of federal or state dollars you may be required by that funding source to contribute a portion of those funds toward your training expenses. Grants from a college or technical school must be used first and OFB may be able to pay the remaining cost based upon the yearly budget the institution calculates. Your OFB counselor will also provide you and your parents an opportunity to contribute to your vocational program.

### **YOUR VISION MAY BE LIMITED, BUT YOUR FUTURE IS NOT**

Every day across Kentucky young high school students with visual impairments are in transition. As students, they are planning and learning, gaining experience and independence to make informed choices about their future. Every year many young people complete this transition and start a productive, gratifying jobs in their chosen career field. They live independently and make important contributions to their community, feeling the satisfaction that comes from knowing they are in control of their own destinies.

The Kentucky Office for the Blind is a state and federally funded agency that provides services with your future in mind. If you, your parents or teacher have questions about the Kentucky Office for the Blind's full range of services you can review our Web page at <http://blind.ky.gov> or call us at the nearest OFB office.

## KENTUCKY OFFICE FOR THE BLIND

Frankfort	502-564-4754	800-321-6668
Paducah	270-575-7315	800-334-6945
Owensboro	270-687-7306	800-334-6929
Bowling Green	270-746-7479	800-222-1215
Elizabethtown	270-766-5126	800-760-6891
Louisville	502-429-4460	800-346-2115
Lexington	859-246-2111	800-291-8424
Florence	859-371-3380	800-334-6895
Ashland	606-920-2000	800-334-6881
Prestonsburg	606-889-1685	800-334-6940
Somerset	606-677-4042	800-895-3863