

NEW MEXICO SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED	No. 464 SUBJECT: Personnel Preparation Program
Effective date: 02/07/08	Replaces policy dated: 01/25/02 Revised: 7/16/10
Distribution: All NMSBVI Staff & NM School Districts	Kind: Board Policy

1. POLICY

High quality, best practice education for all New Mexico students with visual impairment is important to NMSBVI Board of Regents and staff. In an effort to lessen the impact of the TVI shortage in New Mexico, NMSBVI has established a personnel preparation program designed to prepare educators to become Teachers of the Visually Impaired and Orientation and Mobility Instructors. By supporting the development of highly qualified educators, this program will benefit all students who are blind or visually impaired in New Mexico.

2. CERTIFICATION

Coursework is designed to provide certification or licensing in the following areas:

- a. Orientation and Mobility Specialist (O&M) eligible for certification by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Educational Professionals (ACVREP) and for licensure by New Mexico Public Education Department.
- b. Teachers of Students who are Visually Impaired (TVI) eligible for licensure by New Mexico Public Education Department.

3. ELIGIBILITY

The following individuals are eligible to participate in this program:

- a. NMSBVI certified staff seeking additional certification or licensure. Certified staff includes NMSBVI employees licensed by New Mexico Public Education Department as educators and those licensed by New Mexico Department of Health as developmental specialists.
- b. Teaching staff employed by any New Mexico school district seeking initial certification, additional certification, or wishing to complete their certification/licensure coursework.
- c. Other persons interested in becoming TVI and/or O&M specialists who are not presently working for a school district or agency but who have the educational background to meet university enrollment requirements.

Preference will be given to prospective students who are presently in teaching situations serving students with visual impairments and to NMSBVI employees.

4. STIPULATIONS

NMSBVI provides a limited number of scholarships for New Mexico educators, developmental specialists and other persons who have committed themselves to serving New Mexico students with visual impairments.

The teacher of the visually impaired certification program is available through NMSU. Orientation and mobility certification program is available through programs in surrounding states.

In order to receive a scholarship, the home school district, agency; and applicant seeking a scholarship under this program must:

- a. Applicants seeking a scholarship must commit to teach/serve New Mexico's students who are blind/visually impaired for three (3) years following completion of their coursework. Applicants that remain in a position within the State of New Mexico serving students with visually impairments will have the cost of their O&M/TVI coursework canceled at the following rates:
 - 34% of the total amount the first year;;
 - 33% of the total amount the second year;
 - 33% of the total amount the third year.

Applicants that do not remain in a teaching position or serving within the State of New Mexico for a total of three years following coursework completion will be required to repay the total cost, or remaining percentage of the O&M/TVI coursework to NMSBVI.

- b. This program provides ~~for~~ reimbursement of tuition fees only. No other expenses are reimbursable.
- c. Those receiving other financial assistance (grants, fellowships, veterans' benefits, scholarships, etc.) may still be eligible for this scholarship.
- d. Approval of a request for participation in a course or the program of instruction in no way commits or obligates NMSBVI to guarantee a position, promotion, salary increase or any other opportunity once the course of study is complete.

5. APPLICATION

Applicants seeking a scholarship must submit the following to NMSBVI:

- a. Letter of Intent. The letter of intent must include a statement from the applicant that they understand the stipulation regarding the requirement to teach or serve in New Mexico for three (3) years following completion of their coursework.
- b. Resume.
- c. Copies of current certifications/licenses.
- d. Copies of transcripts for any partially completed certification coursework.
- e. An example of their present job description and the proposed changes to the job description that will be put into place after the training/certification is completed. Sample job descriptions for

both district level TVI and Orientation and Mobility specialist are available from NMSBVI or other districts that have these positions.

- f. In addition, all candidates must be accepted into the program by the university providing coursework. This is a separate process from the scholarship process.

When received by NMSBVI, all documents will be reviewed to ensure that the applicant meets the qualifications for the scholarship. Upon verification of information and determination of eligibility, NMSBVI will provide written approval notification to the applicant, via their home school district or agency. This approval notification will include documentation that addresses the stipulations regarding the revision of the job description, and the stipulation that the staff receiving assistance will teach or serve in New Mexico for three (3) years following completion of their coursework, or will repay the cost of their education to the program. This documentation must be signed by the educator receiving assistance, the home school district or agency, and must be returned to NMSBVI thirty (30) days prior to the start of the semester before scholarships are awarded.