

§ 233.70 Blindness.

(a) *State plan requirements.* A State plan under title X or XVI of the Social Security Act must:

(1) Contain a definition of blindness in terms of ophthalmic measurement. The following definition is recommended: An individual is considered blind if he has central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting glasses or a field defect in which the peripheral field has contracted to such an extent that the widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance of no greater than 20°.

(2) Provide, in any instance in which a determination is to be made whether an individual is blind or continues to be blind as defined under the State plan, that there will be an initial examination or re-examination performed by either a physician skilled in the diseases of the eye or by an optometrist, whichever the individual so selects.

(i) No examination is necessary when both eyes are missing.

(ii) Where an initial eye examination or re-examination is necessary, the physician or optometrist conducting such examination will submit to the State agency a report thereof, on such forms and in such manner, as may be prescribed for such purpose. A determination whether the individual meets the State's definition of blindness under the State plan will be based upon a review of such eye examination report as provided for in paragraph (a)(3) of this section, and other information or additional examination reports as the State deems necessary.

(3) Provide that each initial eye examination report and any subsequent re-examination report will be reviewed by a State reviewing physician skilled in the diseases of the eye (e.g., an ophthalmologist or an eye, ear, nose and throat specialist). Such physician is responsible for making the agency's decision that the applicant or recipient does or does not meet the State's definition of blindness, and for determining if and when reexaminations are necessary in periodic reviews of eligibility, as required in § 206.10(a)(9)(iii) of this chapter.

(b) *Federal financial participation—(1) Assistance payments.* Federal financial participation is available in assistance provided to or in behalf of any otherwise eligible person who is blind under the State's title X or XVI plan. Blindness may be considered as continuing until a determination by the reviewing physician establishes the fact that the recipient's vision has improved beyond the State's definition of blindness set forth under its State title of X or XVI plan.

(2) *Administrative expenses.* Federal financial participation is available in any expenditures incident to the eye examination necessary to determine whether an individual is blind.

[36 FR 3867, Feb. 27, 1971, as amended at 40 FR 25819, June 19, 1975]