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WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE - WIC

DIVISION 10. STATE DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION [19000 - 19806] (*Division 10 added by Stats. 1969, Ch. 1107.)*

PART 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS [19000 - 19098.5] (*Part 1 added by Stats. 1969, Ch. 1107.)*

CHAPTER 3. Division of Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing [19095 - 19098.5] (*Chapter 3 added by Stats. 2002, Ch. 1102, Sec. 6.)*

19095. (a) (1) There is hereby established in the Department of Rehabilitation a Division of Specialized Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

(2) For purposes of this chapter "division" means the division established pursuant to paragraph (1).

(b) The purposes of the division shall be as follows:

(1) To assist persons who are blind and visually impaired and deaf and hard of hearing in gaining competitive employment.

(2) To enlarge economic opportunities for persons who are blind or visually impaired and deaf and hard of hearing.

(3) To enhance the independence and self-sufficiency of blind and visually impaired and deaf and hard-of-hearing persons.

(*Added by Stats. 2002, Ch. 1102, Sec. 6. Effective January 1, 2003.*)

19095.5. (a) The division shall be under the direction of a deputy director, who shall be appointed by the Governor.

(b) The deputy director shall have extensive background in, or knowledge of, services to the blind and visually impaired and the deaf and hard of hearing.

(c) The deputy director shall report directly to the directorate of the Department of Rehabilitation and shall be a member of the department's executive management, taking part in all departmental planning and decisionmaking.

(*Added by Stats. 2002, Ch. 1102, Sec. 6. Effective January 1, 2003.*)

19096. (a) Commencing July 1, 2003, the division shall be charged with the administration of the following programs and services:

(1) All staff within the division, including rehabilitation counselors, rehabilitation counselors for the blind, staff of the orientation center, and staff of the business enterprises program.

(2) Orientation centers for the blind, provided for pursuant to Article 1 (commencing with Section 19500) of Chapter 6 of Part 2.

(3) The Business Enterprise Program for the Blind, provided pursuant to Article 5 (commencing with Section 19625) of Chapter 6 of Part 2.

(4) Contracts for services with organizations serving the blind and visually impaired and the deaf and hard of hearing.

(5) Programs for the blind under Subchapter 7 (commencing with Section 796) of Chapter 16 of Title 29 of the United States Code.

(b) The division shall also provide additional rehabilitation services to its blind and visually impaired and deaf and hard-of-hearing clients, to the extent that funds are available.

(c) The program managers shall report to the deputy director of the division established pursuant to this chapter.

(d) The division shall be responsible for administrative functions, including, but not limited to, the following:

(1) Develop, implement, and oversee policies related to blind and visually impaired and deaf and hard-of-hearing consumers, including timely provision of assistive technology services.

(2) Develop and implement mandatory orientation training programs for new rehabilitation counselors for the blind, rehabilitation counselors for the deaf, and counselor teachers.

(3) Develop and implement ongoing mandatory training for rehabilitation supervisors of blind-designated units.

(4) Establish minimum professional competencies for rehabilitation counselors for the blind, rehabilitation counselors for the deaf, and counselor teachers, and provide continuing in-service education to rehabilitation counselors for the blind, rehabilitation counselors for the deaf, and counselor teachers.

(5) Provide support and assistance to field staff on issues related to the cases of blind and visually impaired and deaf and hard-of-hearing consumers.

(6) Provide technical assistance to the department related to the assistive technology needs of blind and visually impaired and deaf and hard-of-hearing employees and consumers.

(7) Establish and maintain within the department's Internet Web site, a communications system for staff serving blind and visually impaired and deaf and hard-of-hearing consumers for the purpose of sharing resource information, effective practices, and problem solving.

(e) Any program administered in whole or in part by the State Department of Education relative to the transition from school to work for blind and visually impaired and deaf and hard-of-hearing secondary education students shall be conducted in partnership with the division.

(Added by Stats. 2002, Ch. 1102, Sec. 6. Effective January 1, 2003.)

19097. (a) Subject to the control of the director, all employees of the department providing services to persons who are blind and visually impaired administered by the division pursuant to this chapter shall be under the exclusive direction and supervision of the deputy director of the division.

(b) The division shall establish criteria and train counselors and supervisors working with persons who are blind and visually impaired and deaf and hard of hearing to ensure they have the specialized knowledge and skills to meet the needs of these persons.

(Added by Stats. 2002, Ch. 1102, Sec. 6. Effective January 1, 2003.)

19097.5. The department shall report annually in the fourth quarter of each calendar year to the Blind Advisory Committee on the amount of state and federal funds allocated to direct services governed by this chapter.

(Added by Stats. 2002, Ch. 1102, Sec. 6. Effective January 1, 2003.)

19098. The Director of Rehabilitation shall, on or before July 1, 2005, and every other year thereafter, report to the Legislature and the Governor on the programs administered by the division. The report shall include statistics on competitive employment placements of persons who are blind or visually impaired.

(Added by Stats. 2002, Ch. 1102, Sec. 6. Effective January 1, 2003.)

19098.5. The Director of Rehabilitation shall establish the Blind Advisory Committee to advise the Director of Rehabilitation on means to increase competitive employment, enlarge economic opportunities, enhance independence and self-sufficiency, and otherwise improve services for persons who are blind and visually impaired. A majority of the members shall be blind or visually impaired. Members of the committee who are not blind or visually impaired shall have experience in services to the blind. The committee shall develop, in conjunction with stakeholders, an annual work plan to identify and address areas for improvement in services provided by the division to persons who are blind and visually impaired.

(Added by Stats. 2002, Ch. 1102, Sec. 6. Effective January 1, 2003.)