

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services

Annual Report of Independent Living Services for Older Blind Individuals 2015

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Policy Development and Program Standards

Introduction and Methodology

From July to October 2015, a client survey was conducted of older blind individuals who had received independent living services from the Visual Services Division of the Department of Rehabilitation Services. The survey was designed to measure the perception of personal outcomes of past program participants.

For purposes of this report, the federal fiscal year 2015 findings will not be trended against previous findings. Between 2012 and 2013 the methodology changed from a 5-point Likert scale to a 3-point Likert scale, in order to simplify the response options. In 2014, most of the questions were rephrased to allow simple yes/no responses, with the option of 'No change' or 'Not Applicable' where reasonable. This was done in order to make it easier for the target population to understand and respond to the questions. A further methodological change occurred in 2015. Starting in July of 2015, the Older Blind telephone survey will now be conducted on a continuing basis throughout the year, in hopes of increasing the response rate. The survey design and questions were also updated at this time.

The 2015 report includes 137 cases, with 109 cases closed as 'Goals Met' and 28 closed as 'Goals Not Met'. Clients classified as 'Goals Not Met' include individuals who: did not want further services; moved; were non-compliant; were unable to participate; could not be located; or had cases closed for 'other' reasons.

The target population for the study was designated as all cases closed in FFY2015, less clients who were reported deceased at the time of case closure and those who were found to have no qualifying impairment. Due to the small size of the target population, random sampling techniques were not applied, resulting in attempted contact with all 137 clients. Surveys were administered via telephone.

Of the 137 clients, 62 completed at least part of the survey and were designated as the respondent population. This level of response results in an effective response rate of 45.3%, a decrease from last year's response rate (58.3%).

Total population sizes, number of staff working with the population, and average caseload size are reported below. For FY2012, FY2013, and FY2014 caseload size was calculated by dividing the total number of cases (open and closed) by the number of teachers. In FY2010 and FY 2011, only the closed cases were used to calculate this average. Including both open and closed cases provides a more accurate reflection of caseload size.

Population and Caseload Size

	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015
Total Closed pop.	151	204	177	139	137
Total pop.	*	355	447	456	522
Teachers	14	18	17	17	14
Caseload Size	21	20	26	27	37

Response percentages based on the target population (137) are listed below. It should be noted that percentages for FY2013 are based on the full closed case population.

Responses

	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015
Answered	55.0%	44.1%	45.7%	58.3%	45.3%
Disconnected	15.2%	20.1%	18.0%	8.6%	15.3%
No Answer	14.6%	16.2%	13.0%	13.0%	30.6%
Deceased since Case Closure	4.6%	3.4%	5.5%	4.3%	0.7%
No Interest	9.3%	13.7%	13.5%	10.1%	6.7%
No Phone	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	-	-
Incorrect Number	-	2.5%	1.0%	5.7%	1.4%
Excluded	-	-	3.3%	-	-

Demographics

Other than living situation, demographics are reported for the whole target population, rather than the respondent population. Most clients were female (72.3%). Regarding the age of clients, most were 89 and up (29.2%). The majority of the clients reported macular degeneration as an eye problem (62.8%). The largest group of clients reported a date of onset before services of ten years or more (10.9%), of those who reported date of onset. Other significant health problems experienced by clients included Cardiac and Other Circulatory (53.3%); Musculoskeletal (38.0%); Other, Non-Visual Impairment (28.5%); and Diabetes Mellitus (24.1%). The largest number of respondents reported living alone (48.4%). Demographics are detailed in the tables below.

Gender of Clients

	Frequency	Percentage
Female	99	72.3%
Male	38	27.7%
	137	100%

Age of Clients

	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015
55 to 65	7.9%	8.8%	6.2%	15.1%	10.9%
66 to 73	12.6%	8.8%	10.2%	13.7%	13.1%
74 to 81	20.5%	16.2%	20.9%	22.3%	21.2%
82 to 88	27.2%	32.4%	29.9%	26.6%	25.5%
89 and up	31.8%	33.8%	32.8%	22.3%	29.2%

Date of Onset before Services

	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015
<1 year	3.3%	2.9%	2.8%	2.8%	3.6%
1 – 3 years	16.6%	19.6%	13.6%	9.2%	8.8%
4 – 6 years	15.2%	8.8%	7.9%	2.8%	6.6%
7 – 9 years	5.3%	5.4%	2.3%	2.8%	4.4%
10 + years	14.6%	17.7%	20.3%	21.3%	10.9%
Not Recorded	45.0%	45.6%	53.1%	61.1%	65.7%

Eye Problems

	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015
Macular Degeneration	63.6%	66.7%	68.4%	55.4%	62.8%
Glaucoma	13.2%	13.2%	9.0%	13.0%	11.7%
Diabetic Retinopathy	7.9%	7.4%	7.3%	8.0%	9.5%
Cataracts	1.3%	2.9%	1.7%	0.0%	3.6%
Other, Visual	13.9%	14.2%	12.4%	17.2%	11.7%
Not Recorded	0.7%	2.0%	1.1%	6.4%	-

Other Significant Problems (The percentage of respondents who reported significant physical problems in addition to vision loss.)

	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015
Hearing Impairment	16.6%	16.2%	9.0%	20.9%	13.9%
Mental Impairment	6.0%	4.4%	2.3%	4.3%	3.6%
Cancer	7.9%	7.8%	7.9%	10.1%	9.5%
Cardiac and other	36.4%	47.5%	39.0%	51.8%	53.3%
Diabetes Mellitus	23.8%	23.5%	20.9%	22.3%	24.1%
End Stage Renal Disease	9.3%	6.4%	2.8%	7.9%	8.0%
Musculoskeletal	29.8%	35.3%	30.0%	34.5%	38.0%
Neurological Impairments	7.9%	6.4%	7.9%	14.4%	10.2%
Respiratory or Lung	9.9%	9.8%	7.9%	12.2%	8.0%
Other, Non-Visual	14.6%	17.6%	19.8%	25.9%	28.5%
Data Not Recorded	1.3%	2.0%	1.1%	0.0%	-

Living Situation – Respondent Population Only

	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015
Alone	30.5%	34.9%	35.8%	27.3%	48.4%
Spouse	35.4%	37.2%	29.6%	36.4%	24.2%
Other Relative(s)	14.6%	19.8%	24.7%	16.9%	19.4%
Non-relative	19.5%	8.1%	9.9%	19.4%	8.1%

Survey Question Results

Confidence, Independence, and Mobility

Throughout the survey, three questions focused on confidence, independence, and mobility. The percentages for these questions are shown below (excluding missing data and not applicable responses).

Questions	Yes	No
Do you feel more confident in your ability to maintain your current living situation as a result of the services you received?	96.1%	3.9%
Has your personal independence been reduced for reasons unrelated to your vision loss? (For example, relocating from your own private residence or needing to employ a caregiver for events or health reasons not related to your vision loss.)	32.2%	67.8%
Do you feel you are better able to move safely around your residence and community as a result of the services provided?	83.7%	16.3%

Equipment

Three additional survey questions focused on equipment. Respondents were asked, “What equipment were you provided by your teacher?” A large number of respondents reported receiving glasses, magnifiers, readers, and talking clocks and watches. Fewer respondents reported receiving kitchen aids, clothes color detectors, writing aids, canes, and other miscellaneous equipment. Only two clients reported receiving no equipment.

As a follow-up to the previous question, clients were asked if they still use the equipment they were given by their teacher. Percentages were calculated (excluding not applicable responses).

Do you still use the equipment?	Percent
Yes	55.9%
Some, but not all	35.6%
No	8.5%

The last question focusing on equipment, asked clients if they were able to resume activities they had given up as a result of their vision loss via the use of DRS provided

equipment. Percentages were calculated (excluding not applicable responses), and are displayed below.

Do you feel that you have been able to resume activities you had given up as a result of your vision loss through the use of this equipment? (Such as canes, CCTVs, magnifiers, adaptive cooking items, large button telephones, clocks, etc.)	Percent
Yes	81.6%
No	18.4%

Interactions with Other Blind or Visually Impaired

An additional set of questions asks about whether clients had an opportunity to meet other blind or visually impaired persons during their training, and whether it was or would be helpful. Percentages were calculated excluding missing data, and are shown below.

Question	Yes	No
During your training, did you meet other blind or visually impaired persons?	30.5%	69.5%
(If yes) Was this helpful?	94.1%	5.9%
(If no) If you did not meet other blind or visually impaired persons, would you find it helpful to do so?	21.1%	78.9%

OLBPH and Newslines

Two items on the survey are about client use of the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (OLBPH) and Newslines. The questions are phrased to elicit a yes/no response; if the client responded no, a sub-question was asked regarding whether they were informed about the availability of the service. Percentages are calculated by excluding missing data.

Question	Yes	No
Have you used the free library services through the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped?	59.7%	40.3%
(If no) Were you informed about the availability of services through the library?	76.0%	24.0%
Have you used Newslines, a no cost service which allows you to use a telephone to select and read newspapers in Oklahoma and around the nation?	3.3%	96.7%
(If no) Did you know about the availability of Newslines?	35.6%	64.4%

Conclusions

From July to October 2015, a client survey was conducted of older blind individuals who had received independent living services from the Visual Services Division of the Department of Rehabilitation Services. The survey was administered by telephone, with attempted contact with the entire target population of 137. At least part of the survey was completed by 62 clients, for a response rate of 45.3%.

A high percentage of respondents (96.1%) reported they feel more confident in their ability to maintain their current living situation as a result of the services they received and 83.7% reported they feel they are better able to move safely around their residence and community as a result of the services provided.

Most respondents (91.5%) reported that they still used at least some of the equipment they were given and 81.6% reported that they have been able to resume activities they had given up as a result of their vision loss through the use of this equipment.

A majority of the respondents had used the services of The Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (59.7%), and of those who hadn't used the services, a majority (76.0%) had heard about the services. On the other hand, only 3.3% of respondents had used Newline, and of those who hadn't used it, most had never heard of it (64.4%).

Only 30.5% of respondents reported meeting other blind or visually impaired persons during their training, but a significant majority of those who did reported this was helpful (94.1%). Conversely, only 21.1% of those who did not meet other blind or visually impaired persons during their training indicated they believed it would have been helpful.