

ELIGIBILITY & APPLICATION

I. Policy Summary

The Vision Rehabilitation Specialist (VRS) determines if the applicant is eligible for services provided by the Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) program. Once the client has been deemed eligible for OIB services, the VRS assists the client to complete the necessary application to open an OIB case.

II. Eligibility for the OIB Program

The OIB program provides independent living services to individuals age 55 or older who are blind or have a significant visual impairment.

- To ensure an applicant is at least 55 years old, the VRS must request to see a state-issued identification to confirm the client meets the federal age requirement of the program.

The OIB program is specifically for individuals who do not want to work (for pay).

- If the individual has a significant visual impairment that is impeding work, he/she must be referred to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). A client cannot have a VR case and an OIB case open at the same time.

There is not a residency restriction to the program.

- If a client is a “snowbird” and resides six months in one state and six months in another state; whichever state he/she resides in at the time services are needed must provide the service. If a client has an open case in another state, the VRS must contact the other state (with an *Authorization to Disclose Information* SFN 1059) to determine what services have been provided so there is no duplication of services.

To help determine eligibility, the VRS may need to obtain the applicant’s latest eye report. This will help to determine eligibility requirements as well as the severity of visual impairment.

- To request medical records, the VRS must get an *Authorization to Disclose Information* from the client and file it in the hard copy file.

The applicant cannot reside in a skilled nursing facility, nursing home, or basic care facility and be served by the OIB program.

- If the applicant resides in a skilled nursing facility, nursing home, or basic care facility, refer the applicant to the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind (NDVS/SB). If the applicant prefers the VRS to contact NDVS/SB, then an *Authorization to Disclose Information* (SFN 1059) must be completed prior to the referral being made.
- In the event the applicant resides in a skilled nursing facility or nursing home for rehabilitation and will return to his/her home within 30 days, the VRS can put the individual into the referral module until he/she is discharged home. Enter an anticipated date of discharge in the comments section. A case for the client should be opened after he/she is discharged from the skilled nursing facility or nursing home.
- The client will complete an application when he/she is home.
- If a current client is moving into a skilled nursing facility or a nursing home, the VRS must refer the client to NDVS/SB.
- The VRS should give the client the contact information for NDVS/SB. If the client prefers the VRS to contact NDVS/SB then a Release of Information must be completed and placed in the hard copy file.
- The VRS must follow the *Case Closure* policy NDVRS OP 19-05.

III. Assisted Living Facility

The applicant can reside in an assisted living facility and receive services from the OIB program. Most assisted living facilities have a kitchenette in the apartment. If unsure if the client is in an assisted living facility, contact the State office.

IV. Application for Services

The VRS must complete the *Application for Older Blind Program* (SFN 186). The client must sign and date the application. The VRS must put the SFN 186 in the hard copy file.

V. When to Complete an Application

- The application must be signed prior to the distribution of any equipment. The date the client signs the application is the date the client becomes a participant in the OIB program.

- If a client case was closed in the OIB program and the client is seeking services again, a new application must be completed and the client must sign a new application. At this time a new assessment must be completed.

VI. Inputting Application Information into AWARE ND

The VRS must input the application information into AWARE ND within 14 days of client signature and date. Once the information has been entered into AWARE ND, an office support staff or designated staff member will review the information entered into AWARE ND to verify the accuracy of the information entered.