



**New York State  
Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped**

***Plans for the Use of  
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds for  
Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living***

**August 4, 2009**

## **Introduction:**

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided state Vocational Rehabilitation programs with funding to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities and expand independent living services.

The New York State Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped's (CBVH) plan for the use of these funds reflects guidelines provided by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and includes: innovative approaches to expanding employment opportunities to individuals who are legally blind based on evidence-based practices; improvement and expansion of services to New Yorkers who are legally blind, including those with most significant disabilities and other unserved and underserved populations; and preparation of youth transitioning from school to the workplace. CBVH also proposes to make system improvements which will increase the agency's capacity to provide efficient quality vocational rehabilitation services and services to older legally blind individuals. System improvements will include staff development, capacity building in vision rehabilitation professions, outreach and education to consumers and employers, and improvement of agency and system infrastructure including technology.

In developing this proposal, CBVH has tried to balance speed with thoughtful planning and effective reforms, aiming to maximize short-term investments with lasting results.

## Summary of Planned Initial Expenditures

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<b>IL – Part B Initiative</b>	<b>\$152,400</b>	8
ILCs Technology Update	152,400	8
<b>VR Initiatives</b>	<b>\$1,945,190</b>	9
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## **Plans for Use of Independent Living – Older Blind ARRA Funds**

### **Purchase a license to use the American Foundation for the Blind E-Learning Center on Aging and Visual Impairment**

Project Description: Developed and produced by the American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) Senior Site, this web-based training program is intended for service providers who work with older adults who are blind or who have experienced some loss of vision. Purchase of the license to use the AFB E-Learning Center on Aging and Visual Impairment includes 20 on-line courses addressing aging and vision loss, access to six online AFB Press e-books and the Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness, minimum of two webinars per year and access to online experts on a pre-scheduled basis.

Meets the following ARRA guidelines: Improve performance and serve more individuals; maximize short-term investments with lasting results in the area of staff development.

Sustainability: This license is for three years. The skills learned by provider staff will benefit them for the duration of their employment. Consumers will benefit from enhanced service delivery.

Timeframe: This license can be purchased in 60 days.

Cost: It is estimated that a three-year licensing agreement for 150 staff will be \$30,000.00.

Method of Procurement: NYS Purchase Order for proprietary software.

## **Place Closed-Circuit Television Systems in select Senior Citizen Centers and Senior Housing Developments**

Project Description: CBVH will purchase 200-300 closed circuit television systems (CCTV) to be installed in select senior citizen centers and senior housing developments. A CCTV captures the image of reading material and displays it on a monitor that can enlarge the print so that seniors who have experienced vision loss can access print materials. CCTVs also have the capability to convert black letters on a white background to white letters on a black background for better contrast. The CCTV vendor will be required to train staff at the senior location, who will in turn train seniors who need assistance, maintain a list of users, and monitor and maintain the CCTV.

Meets the following ARRA guidelines: Serve more individuals, and maximize short-term investments with lasting results.

Sustainability: CCTV's can last more than ten years with proper care.

Timeframe: 3-6 months

Cost: The estimated cost of this proposal is \$700,000.

Method of Procurement: NYS Purchase Order through State Contract

## **Expand services to more individuals requiring Assisted Living Program (ALP) Services**

Project Description: CBVH contracts with 18 private agencies to provide a wide variety of services to individuals who are at least 55 years old, whose goals do not include employment and who are in need of services to remain living independently. Services include, but are not limited to: low vision services, counseling/adjustment to blindness, community integration, and training in skills needed to retain independence in their homes. CBVH intends to use ARRA funding to increase the number of people receiving these services. Contract agencies will be reimbursed for the services provided.

Meets the following ARRA guideline: Serving more individuals

Sustainability: Skills learned through ALP will be retained by individuals who receive services, and will enhance their ability to continue to live independently.

Timeframe: Contracts can be approved in 3-4 months

Cost: The estimated cost of this proposal is \$950,000.

Method of Procurement: New Contracts via non-competitive procurement process and approval from OSC

## **SOFA Project – Partner with New York State Office of the Aging to provide training to SOFA staff and aging network staff and volunteers**

Project Description: Growing numbers of senior citizens are experiencing vision loss, including legal blindness. Many of them are in adult homes or nursing homes, receive services through Area Agencies for the Aging (AAA), senior centers, home delivered meals, and other programs. Staff at these programs can benefit from learning how to effectively accommodate the needs of individuals who are legally blind and about private agencies for the blind to which they can refer individuals who need services. Knowledge gained from this training is expected to help staff serving seniors to provide quality services to individuals who are legally blind in their programs, improving seniors' quality of life and enhancing their independence.

CBVH will partner with New York State Office of the Aging (SOFA) to develop two training programs. One training program will be for Long Term Care Ombudsmen staff, local Coordinators, and volunteers (a train-the-trainer approach) who work with 1600 adult homes and nursing homes. The other training program will be for AAA staff who provide direct services and staff and volunteers working in the aging network, which includes but is not limited to 400 Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP) Case Managers and 800 senior centers. A curriculum for the training programs will be developed and a manual and a video will be provided to training program participants.

Meets the following ARRA guidelines: Improving performance and serving more individuals.

Sustainability: Individuals who are trained as trainers will be able to continue the training process for years. The manuals and videos will be available for years.

Timeframe: 6 months for curriculum, manual and video development; training programs to follow immediately.

Cost: The estimated cost of this proposal is \$375,000.

Method of Procurement: MOU with New York State Office of the Aging and existing training contracts and MOU with the State University of New York at Albany.

## **Plans for Use of ARRA Funds for Independent Living, Part B**

**Purchase services of a technology consultant(s) to determine technology accessibility needs of Independent Living Centers and purchase equipment to enhance Independent Living Centers' access to technology.**

Project Description: There are 36 Independent Living Centers (ILC) in New York State. CBVH will contract with its Assistive Technology Centers (ATC) to conduct on-site assessments of the technology accessibility needs of each ILC and make recommendations for the purchase of equipment to meet the accessibility needs identified. CBVH will purchase the recommended technology. Under the contract, the ATCs will also install the purchased equipment and provide initial training to ILC staff. As a result, more individuals who are legally blind will be able to access the technology and related services available at the ILCs.

Meets the following ARRA guidelines: Improving performance and serving more individuals

Sustainability: It is expected that technology equipment, when properly maintained, will continue to function for 3-10 years.

Timeframe: 3–6 months

Cost: \$15,000 for ATC fees, travel costs and equipment installation; \$137,400 for equipment -- Total \$152,400.

Method of Procurement: New contracts via non-competitive procurement process and approval from OSC.

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## **Plans for Use of ARRA Funds for Vocational Rehabilitation**

### **Bronx Veteran's Administration Hospital Switchboard Project**

Project Description: In cooperation with the Association for Vision Rehabilitation and Employment, Inc. (AVRE), CBVH will develop a 7-9 person 24/7 switchboard operation at the Bronx VA Hospital to be staffed and supervised by employees who are legally blind and who will be employed by AVRE. CBVH will provide the workstations and adaptations to the existing alarm monitoring and reporting system which may require switchboard operators to communicate and report extreme emergency situations. Jobs created will pay competitive wages and provide a full range of benefits. Customer service skills gained by employees will be transferable to the for-profit sector should they choose to change jobs.

Meets the following ARRA guideline: Job creation

Number of Jobs created/retained: 7-9

Sustainability: Equipment is durable with a projected life of 5-10 years. CBVH will assist in identifying new employees as turnover occurs.

Time Frame: Expected to be fully functioning in October, 2009

Cost: Estimated at \$155,000: \$15,000 per workstation (6) and \$65,000 for costs associated with inserting one or more notifying devices within the existing alarm monitoring and reporting system so that it is accessible for a wide range of visual functioning.

Method of Procurement: NYS Purchase Order.

**Establish fee for providers who share a job listing resulting in successful placement of a CBVH consumer in that job (PILOT)**

Project Description: CBVH contracts for approximately 200 community-based, competitive employment placements per year with some 48 vendors. Under the current contracts, only the vendor to whom a consumer has been referred can obtain payment when the consumer is placed. Vendors sometimes obtain job listings but have no consumers with the required skill set. Because there is no incentive to share the listing, CBVH consumers may not be offered interviews and the placement opportunity may be lost.

CBVH proposes to offer a \$2000 one-time payment to a vendor that shares a listing when the listing results in a permanent job for a consumer who is receiving placement services through a different vendor.

If successful, this program will increase the placement of blind consumers in community-based employment and decrease the length of time consumers are waiting for placement.

Jobs may be listed on an existing Yahoo group's listserve available to all CBVH placement vendors. Outcomes will be reported via standard forms.

Meets the following ARRA guideline: Job creation

Number of Jobs created/retained: 25 placements

Sustainability: Based on program success, CBVH will continue funding through Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) funds

Timeframe: 2-4 months to implement

Cost: \$2000 fee x 25 placed = \$50,000

Method of procurement: NYS Purchase Order through process currently being established.

## **Employer Needs Based Vocational Training – Aurora of CNY**

Project Description: Aurora of Central New York plans to provide five CBVH consumers per year with an opportunity to participate in a new Vocational Skills Training program under the Comprehensive Services Contract. CBVH has been negotiating with Aurora to identify the training needs of local employers, especially those of medical offices as Syracuse is rich in the medical care industry (administrative/clerical positions), and to develop relationships that will lead to eventual internships and job opportunities after the completion of training. Aurora plans to collaborate with an existing customer service/clerical training program, the Syracuse Educational Opportunity Center (EOC), to provide the training. This program already has established ties with the medical care industry. Aurora will provide additional training support and coaching to CBVH consumers while they attend this training program, and will attend to all access and adaptive technology issues. Upon completion of the classroom training, consumers will participate in internships within real employment settings (medical offices), to be followed by direct job placement.

Meets the following ARRA guidelines: Expand services and increase performance.

Number of Jobs created/retained: Five per year.

Sustainability: VR funds. Initial investment will be able to be used again during subsequent trainings for additional consumers. Initial relationships developed with employers will grow as word spreads about the success of the program, leading to more job opportunities.

Timeframe: Will begin fall 2009. Training is 10 to 12 weeks, followed by a two to four week internship, followed by job placement services.

Cost: Equipment costs of approximately \$30,000. Possible stipends for consumers during internships (to be determined following release of Federal guidelines).

Method of procurement: NYS Purchase Order.

## **Expand Supported Employment Services to Individuals on a Waiting List for Services through Goodwill of New York and New Jersey**

Project Description: Goodwill of New York and New Jersey currently operates the only blindness specific supported employment program in New York City. The program is currently serving 27 consumers, seven over its contracted number, and has 11 individuals waiting for service, with additional referrals expected. CBVH sub-allocates its Supported Employment allotment to NY State Education Department's Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) which administers all Supported Employment contracts. The current allocation of funds to serve CBVH consumers is insufficient. It is expected that by providing funds to support ten additional individuals in supported employment, Goodwill will be able to meet the needs of additional consumers referred by CBVH.

Meets the following ARRA guideline: Increase and expand services to underserved individuals with most significant disabilities

Number of jobs created/retained: A total of seven jobs will be created --- one full-time job developer, and one full-time job coach will be hired by Goodwill to meet the needs of these consumers. In addition, at least five of the ten CBVH consumers served will achieve successful supported employment in positions paying at least minimum wage and located in an integrated community-based setting.

Sustainability: Program will be sustained through Supported Employment and regular Vocational Rehabilitation funds.

Timeframe: 60-90 days

Cost: 300 hours per consumer @ \$55.65 per hour x 10 = \$166,950 (based on VESID contract rate for supported employment)

Method of procurement: Single Source Contract subject to OSC approval.

## **Leadership Training Program for Transition Age Youth**

Project Description: CBVH will hold a five-day residential leadership training program for 25-30 legally blind high school sophomores, juniors and seniors. Successful men and women who are legally blind will serve as role models in helping youth realize their abilities and obligations to pursue meaningful employment and contribute to society. Presenters will be individuals who are nationally known in leadership development and have experience with individuals with disabilities. Participants will gain access to vital resources related to self-advocacy, leadership, social skills and assistive technology. Throughout the program, small “working groups” will explore personal leadership and career planning. Each participant will create a personal development plan that will be focused on employment. Participants will receive one year of follow along and mentoring to implement the plans. The training program will be held in the Albany area, and include youth from all parts of New York State.

Meets the following ARRA guideline: Students with disabilities who are transitioning from school to the workplace were listed by RSA as a group of traditionally underserved individuals for whom ARRA funding would be appropriate.

Sustainability: This project has the potential for long-term benefit as selected youth will increase in self-confidence, responsibility and self-reliance which will ultimately prove beneficial in education, career planning and employment.

Timeframe: The Leadership Program will be held in the summer of 2010 and will begin on Monday at noon and end on Friday at noon. Presenters and group leaders will arrive on Sunday to participate in team building activities.

Cost: \$50,000. Costs will include publicity expenses, dormitory space, all meals for participants and presenters, travel costs for all, presenters’ fees, and payment for an individual to provide year long coordination of follow-up services to participants.

Method of Procurement: CBVH staff and all participants will be reimbursed for travel expenses pursuant to NYS travel procedures (travel, per diem). Presenter fees, college dormitory space, meals, and two overnight supervisory staff will be paid by NYS Purchase Order and non-employee travel vouchers. Follow-up services will be paid through NYS Purchase Order.

## **Servers for CBVH Consumer Information System**

Project Description: CBVH recently implemented an electronic case management system, called the CBVH Consumer Information System (CBVH-CIS). The system operates on existing NYS Office for Technology (OFT) servers which are shared by other applications from other State agencies. These servers are near their end-of-life, according to OFT staff. This results in periodic slowdowns on the CBVH-CIS across the system which limits the ability of CBVH district office staff to effectively complete consumer applications, authorizations, and other consumer-related service documentation, potentially delaying services to legally blind consumers. CBVH proposes to use ARRA funding to purchase new servers which will stabilize the operation of the CBVH-CIS.

Efficiencies gained should free counselors to do more career exploration and placement.

Meets the following ARRA guidelines: VR State Agency Infrastructure including Technology: Upgrading hardware and enhancing servers needed to support new or improved case management systems.

Number of Jobs created/retained: Increased efficiencies will allow staff more time to devote to vocational planning and placement.

Sustainability: This will be a one-time purchase, with recurring costs estimated at \$40,000 annually, which can be funded from existing federal funds. Additional servers will continue to support a more efficient and effective operation.

Timeframe: This purchase can be made within 60 to 90 days.

Cost: \$165,000

Method of Procurement: NYS Purchase Order, State Contract with Projected Expenditure Request Form (PERF) and Plans to Procure (PTP) Request and OFT approval.

## **CBVH Staff Development**

Project Description: Four training programs for CBVH staff will be held in the next year for the purpose of enhancing staff knowledge through additional instruction in the areas of assistive technology, the new CBVH case management system, employer development and job placement skills and interest inventory software.

Meets the following ARRA guidelines: It is expected that additional training for CBVH Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors on effective and innovative evidence-based vocational rehabilitation practices will enhance counselor skills and eventually improve employment outcomes for individuals who are legally blind.

Number of Jobs Created/Retained: Will allow CBVH to retain quality staff while increasing their skills in providing services and enhance their ability to help consumer's find employment.

Sustainability: Employment outcomes are expected to increase as staff skills are enhanced.

Timeframe: Four training programs will be offered to CBVH staff during the Federal Fiscal Year 2010.

Cost: \$100,000. Cost includes travel for CBVH staff and costs for delivering training.

Method of Procurement: CBVH staff will be reimbursed for travel expenses pursuant to NYS travel procedures (travel, per diem). Presenter fees and other costs will be paid by NYS Purchase Order.

## **Increase the Availability of Orientation and Mobility (O&M) specialists and Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (VRT) in Upstate NY**

Project Description: The limited number of vision specialists in Upstate New York potentially affects service delivery to individuals who are legally blind. In order to begin to enhance availability of instructors, CBVH will collaborate with colleges and universities to train and place Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Specialists and Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (VRTs) in New York State. If feasible, CBVH will partner with provider agency personnel and colleges to establish training programs. Colleges that currently provide these programs may be contracted to provide training via distance learning technology. Graduates will qualify for national certification through the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP) or the National Blindness Professional Certification Board (NBPCB).

Meets the following ARRA guideline: Improve capacity in order to increase services to consumers.

Number of Jobs Created: An estimated ten jobs will be created. Graduates will be available to fill vacancies with upstate comprehensive services contractors or serve as private vendors. Consumers who receive training as the result of this initiative will have enhanced skills necessary to obtain employment.

Sustainability: The long term benefit of the program will be the increased number of instructors in the field who will offer training into the foreseeable future. In addition, communication and partnerships will be established between the training institution(s), CBVH and organizations that offer O&M and VRT, so that future potential instructors may be funded beyond the ARRA programs.

Timeframe: Negotiations with potential partners will begin immediately with the first trainees to be enrolled by January 2010.

Cost: \$100,000. Costs will include the cost of distance learning technology, training time for program instructors and mentors, books, materials and tuition, as well as student travel and per diem costs, if necessary, for student's time spent physically on campus.

Method of Procurement: The cost of training time for instructors, mentors, books, materials and tuition will be paid for by NYS Purchase Order. Travel and per diem costs will be reimbursed pursuant to NYS travel procedures. Lodging will be prepaid using NYS Standard Vouchers or other necessary purchase orders.

## **Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Internships in CBVH Field Offices**

Project Description: There is currently a national shortage of qualified Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors. By offering paid internships for graduate students, CBVH will enable more students to complete training and gain an understanding of vocational counseling issues related to blindness. This will increase the pool of candidates to fill CBVH counselor vacancies.

CBVH will support paid internships in CBVH district offices for graduate-level rehabilitation counseling students from the University at Buffalo and other rehabilitation counseling programs in the state. The following costs are based on the University requirements for students to fulfill a 600 hour internship program (80 days at 7.5 hours per day). Total cost is estimated at no more than \$12,320 per student. CBVH will provide additional training opportunities to supplement the interns' field office experience at an estimated total cost of \$7,000 (\$3500/year).

Meets the following ARRA guidelines: Staff development training for rehabilitation professionals; increasing consumer employment outcomes.

Number of Jobs created/retained: Twelve (six per year) temporary internship positions and unknown quantity of enhanced consumer employment outcomes based on intern performance and increased availability of qualified vocational rehabilitation professionals.

Sustainability: CBVH will maintain an ongoing commitment to the rehabilitation counseling programs for future internship opportunities. VR funds will be used to support internships beyond the project.

Timeframe: Four semesters, Fall and Spring academic years 2009-2011

Cost: \$154,840 maximum

Method of procurement: Sole Source contract

## **Training for Assistive Technology Scripters**

Project Description: Many employers have customized, or proprietary, software that is used by their employees. This proprietary software is often incompatible with the assistive technology used by blind job seekers and thus creates an obstacle to hiring. Scripts are computer programs that bridge the gap between the two.

With few individuals available in New York with the programming knowledge and training to develop scripts, CBVH counselors and employment specialists from CBVH contract agencies have difficulty building a relationship and developing jobs with an employer because they cannot find scripting services within acceptable timeframes. As a result, potential placements are often lost.

CBVH proposes to enter a contract with the ATCs to provide training to ATC staff in scripting services in MAGic, JAWS, Window-Eyes, and/or ZoomText. This will create a broader network of individuals capable of developing computer scripts for these adaptive software packages, enabling individuals who are legally blind to perform jobs requiring access to previously inaccessible proprietary software. The availability of enhanced scripting services is expected to result in more individuals being hired for jobs, and more individuals retaining jobs when they may have no longer been able to perform job duties due to changes made in proprietary software. Following completion of the training, CBVH anticipates being able to contract with the ATCs to provide the previously unavailable scripting services.

Meets the following ARRA guidelines: Filling unmet needs; expanding capacity; employment and job retention

Number of Jobs created/retained: Non-quantifiable at this time.

Sustainability: Following training, scripters will be hired on a fee for service basis through existing CBVH contractual arrangements.

Timeframe: 3-6 months

Cost: \$40,000 (based on best estimates of tuition plus travel and per diem allowances)

Method of procurement: New Contracts via non-competitive procurement process and approval from OSC

**Purchase a comprehensive Vocational Assessment tool specifically designed for use with legally blind individuals**

Project Description: CBVH counselors working with consumers interested in obtaining employment often need to evaluate the consumers' vocational strengths and weaknesses in order to help them identify an appropriate vocational goal. The Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation System (CVES) was designed by Jack Dial, Ph.D. with input from the Texas Commission for the Blind. It is used to assess vocational functioning of persons unable to be administered traditional tests requiring vision. It describes and predicts vocational potential and provides information useful in developing individual plans for employment. CBVH will purchase the evaluation system and training for 12 agencies contracted to provide Diagnostic Vocational Evaluation services as a sole source contract. As the developer of the system, Dr. Dial (and his staff) is the only person licensed to train and certify evaluators in the use of the CVES, which is solely available through his company, Clinical and Consulting Neuropsychology.

Meets the following ARRA guideline: Increase consumer employment outcomes by matching consumer vocational strengths with employment goal(s).

Sustainability: The evaluation system will be an effective tool for years. Contract agencies will be required to document that there is a staff person capable of utilizing the evaluation system.

Timeframe: 3 - 6 months

Cost: The cost to purchase the system and provide training to 12 contract agencies is estimated to be \$109,400, including: consultant fee and related travel and per diem estimated at \$13,400 and \$96,000 to purchase the CVES systems.

Method of Procurement: Sole Source and NYS Purchase Order after OSC approval.

## **Equipment Purchase -- CBVH Assistive Technology Centers**

Project Description: CBVH has seven contracts with private not-for-profit organizations to operate Assistive Technology Centers (ATC) around New York State. These ATCs provide assessment and training services to legally blind individuals referred by CBVH. ATC services are focused on technology which makes print and computer-based information accessible to CBVH consumers for the purpose of furthering the consumers' education and employment opportunities. CBVH is responsible for providing a broad array of equipment which the ATC uses to conduct consumer assessments. CBVH proposes to use ARRA funding to purchase a new, upgraded, array of assessment equipment for each of the seven ATCs. This will enable consumer assessments to be more relevant to contemporary educational and employment standards.

Meets the following ARRA guidelines: VR State Agency Infrastructure including Technology; improving the accessibility of technology for disabled consumers.

Number of Jobs created/retained: This purchase will affect the ability of an average of 250 legally blind individuals, on an annual basis, to attain employment, or access educational services which will lead to employment.

Sustainability: This will be a one-time purchase.

Timeframe: This purchase can be made within 30 days.

Cost: \$65,000

Method of Procurement: NYS Purchase Order

## **Mobile computer skills and assistive technology training in Suffolk County (PILOT)**

Project Description: CBVH consumers who reside in Suffolk County have limited access to assistive technology and advanced software training. There are only two to three private vendors available on an occasional basis and they can only provide services in consumers' homes, which is less than an optimal setting. The nearest CBVH Assistive Technology Center is in Hempstead, which can be several hours' travel from Suffolk. This situation impacts the ability of Suffolk consumers to gain the skills they need to obtain in order to reach their vocational goal.

The Suffolk Independent Living Organization (SILO) proposes to establish a mobile computer lab that will bring assistive technology and advanced computer training to Suffolk residents either on an individual or small group basis. Public facilities such as libraries will be used for the small group training. SILO currently employs one Half-Time instructor who will move to Full-Time status for this project.

CBVH will use this opportunity for both adult and transition age consumers, and anticipates needed training for approximately 25-30 individuals per year at a rate of two to three trainings each.

Meets the following ARRA guidelines: Expand services to unserved/underserved individuals; workforce preparation

Number of Jobs created/retained: moves one job from PT to FT basis

Sustainability: Based on program success, CBVH will continue funding through VR fee for service funds

Timeframe: 60-90 days

<u>Cost:</u> 3 laptop computers plus all adaptive and standard software =	\$27,000
CCTV-- Amigo Color AF	2,000
Half time instructor	<u>20,000</u>
	\$49,000

Method of procurement: State Contract for Equipment, Purchase Order or T-Contract for Instructor

## Equipment Reserve for Short-Term Needs

Project Description: Access to print is a necessity for CBVH consumers headed to school or work. Newly hired employees and students beginning post-secondary education often need adaptive equipment quickly. Consumers waiting for employment who live in rural areas or who do not have access to practice facilities need a means to reinforce their technology and office skills.

CBVH plans to establish two centers, possibly in conjunction with the Technology Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities (TRAID) project, to loan equipment to consumers. TRAID is a federally funded project administered by the NYS Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities (CQCAPD) to provide information, borrowing and referral services to improve access to assistive technology and services to individuals with disabilities through community based organizations. Equipment to be purchased by CBVH for loan to its consumers will include but not be limited to: desktop and laptop computers; access software; closed circuit televisions; printer/scanners and scanning software; note-taking devices; and reading machines. Implementation of this project will enhance service delivery and the speed with which consumers acquire needed equipment.

TRAID has identified two of its locations, one at SUNY Buffalo and the other at Westchester Institute for Human Development on the campus of the Westchester Medical Center, as having the capacity to house the centers.

Meets the following ARRA guidelines: Capacity building; filling unmet needs

Number of Jobs created/retained: Two half-time positions as coordinators. Job retentions - estimated at ten per year (based on a reported average of 100 incidents of equipment breakdown on the job and an estimated percent of breakdowns resulting in job loss).

Sustainability: Existing VR funding

Timeframe: 3-6 months

<u>Cost:</u> Equipment up to \$200,000 for both TRAID centers -	\$400,000
Equipment Management Services for both TRAID centers	<u>60,000</u>
TOTAL	\$460,000

Method of procurement: Equipment through Purchase Order; Equipment Management services through T-contract.

## **Conduct a Statewide Needs Assessment for Individuals who are Deaf-Blind**

Project Description: Deaf-Blind individuals represent a small segment of the population of consumers eligible for services from CBVH, but these individuals' needs are complex and compounded by dual sensory loss affecting communication. CBVH will prepare a Request for Information (RFI) to identify potential vendors who can conduct a comprehensive state-wide needs assessment of individuals who are deaf-blind and procure/manage interpreter services required to complete the assessment. CBVH intends to utilize the results of the assessment to develop or improve services to address the needs identified.

Meets the following ARRA guideline: Improve services to unserved/underserved population

Sustainability: This project is a one-time project. The result of the project will have long-term results because service provision to individuals who are deaf-blind will be improved.

Timeframe: 3 – 6 months

Cost: It is estimated that the needs assessment will cost:

Consultant	\$ 50,000
Interpreters	<u>100,000</u>
	\$150,000

Method of Procurement: Assessment through single source contract: based on results of an RFI; interpreters through Invitation for Bid (IFB).

## **Outreach and Education**

Project Description: CBVH proposes development of a comprehensive three-year outreach and education plan including, but not limited to: brochures, public service announcements, and presentation materials.

CBVH proposes to secure services to assist in the development of a comprehensive plan. With potential employers and consumers in mind, the study and resulting plan will identify the best strategies to reach and educate targeted stakeholders including, but not limited to: various populations of individuals who are legally blind, parents of children who are legally blind, eye health providers, potential vision rehabilitation service providers, and community leaders. Development of this outreach and education plan will include promotion of CBVH's community-based vision rehabilitation partners receiving the vast majority of CBVH referrals.

Meets the following ARRA guidelines: Potential job creation and retention.

Number of Jobs created/retained: Non-quantifiable at this time.

Sustainability: CBVH staff will provide continuing outreach through visits with employers, consumers, potential consumers, medical professionals, displays at public events, and public speaking engagements. All developed strategies will be durable in nature.

Time Frame: To begin procurement process immediately upon approval with several weeks to develop and then implement in the fall.

Cost: Estimated up to \$100,000 for development and initial implementation

Method of procurement: To be determined.