Youth Low Vision Program

POLICY STATEMENT

The Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP) provides a low-vision exam and a maximum of two wearable low-vision devices biennially, prescribed by a low-vision practitioner for children ages birth through 13 enrolled in a qualified educational program (including Early On, home school, alternative school, and registered online school programs).

PURPOSE

The Youth Low Vision (YLV) program assists children in fully utilizing their residual vision in the classroom and other activities with their peers.

FRAMEWORK

History of the YLV Program

DEFINITIONS

Referral Information: Verbal or written request for services minimally including a name, date of birth, and contact information.

Date of Referral: Date verbal or written referral information is received.

Referral Period: The period between the Date of Referral and the Date of Application, not to exceed 30 days.

Date of Application: The date when necessary information is obtained to place the individual into application status in the electronic case management system (ECMS).

Service Period: Biennial; once every other fiscal year (October 1 to September 30).

Wearable Devices: Corrective low-vision devices that aid in fully utilizing remaining vision. Wearable devices may include but are not limited to prescription glasses, prescription reading glasses, microscopic, bioptic telescopic glasses, prescription sports glasses, and custom contact lenses (includes after-care and a two-year prescription).

PROCEDURE

Reasonable Accommodations

BSBP rehabilitation professionals provide reasonable accommodations to participate in the referral and application process when necessary.

Outreach

Rehabilitation Professionals will ensure program information, including access to the BSBP Website - YLV and accessible versions of the Referral for BSBP Services Form, Verification of Educational Status for YLV Services, and YLV Parental or Guardian Consent forms, are readily available throughout the state, including Michigan schools and Optometrists.

The BSBP Website is also recommended for community partners and citizens to obtain additional information on programs and services offered.

Establishment of Referral

Referrals for YLV services can be submitted by multiple sources including a Teacher Consultant of the Visually Impaired (TCVI), a parent or guardian, physicians, or other programs or agencies involved with the youth.

BSBP's objective is to process referrals within three (3) business days of receipt of referral information.

When a referral for YLV services is received, BSBP contacts the parent or guardian to review the program, initiate an application, and establish a case within the Electronic Case Management System (ECMS).

Establishment of Application

To establish an application, BSBP requires the completion of the following forms during the 30-day referral period:

- Verification of Educational Status for YLV Services

- YLV Parental or Guardian Consent

If the referred individual is unable to be contacted, or indicates they are no longer interested in services, the referral is to be closed by the 30th day from the *Date of Referral*. The individual may initiate a new referral at any time.

Upon completion of the application process, the parent or guardian is provided a welcome packet to confirm enrollment in the Youth Low Vision Program.

Eligibility

The Youth Low Vision program has limited program funds available, which prioritizes BSBP's support to households whose income is less than $150,000 annually.

Eligibility for the YLV program is based on verification of the following:

- A youth between the ages of birth through 13 years old.
- Enrollment in an educational program as documented on the Verification of Educational Status for YLV Services.
- An eye report, or other supporting documentation (i.e. Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) or 504 plan), noting visual acuity is 20/70 or less in the best-corrected eye or has a visual field restriction of 40 degrees or less in the best eye with a documented deteriorating eye diagnosis.
    - In the case of infants and young children, if a diagnosis of visual acuity is unable to be determined, eligibility is based on the low vision provider's assessment of vision loss equating to program eligibility requirements.

Youth Low Vision Services

The low vision exam and purchase of low vision devices should occur during the same service period. BSBP will explore comparable benefits before authorizing the maximum benefit for eligible participants, not permitted to exceed the following parameters:

- Low Vision Exam $250.00
- Contact Lenses (two-year prescription) $200.00
- Complete Pair of Glasses (frames, lenses, tint, coating) $500.00
- Customary Telescopic or Microscopic Device $1,500.00

> **Note:** Comparable Benefits may include but are not limited to private or public health/vision insurance or private funding. Private funding includes service organizations such as Lions Club, Rotary, etc.

Planning and delivery of services are documented in case notes in the ECMS this includes but is not limited to:

- Coordination, date of exam, report summary, and recommendations from the low vision exam.
- Consultation with parent or guardian, TCVI, physicians, or others engaged in the arrangement of service delivery and purchase of recommended devices.
- Exploration and use of comparable benefits available to subsidize the cost of providing services.
- Confirmation that purchased items were received including any applicable warranties.

Upon completion of service delivery, the parent or guardian is notified of the recommended low vision devices authorized by BSBP and the anticipated date of their next low vision exam.

Biennial Review for YLV Services

A BSBP YLV case may remain open through the age of 13. YLV students remain able to receive services provided they continue to meet eligibility criteria.

BSBP staff initiate a biennial review by contacting the TCVI and/or family to determine the need for services.

> **Note:** It is at the discretion of BSBP staff to request updated testing if there is an indication of need.

Replacement of Lost or Broken Devices

BSBP may replace a lost or broken device once within the two years that it was purchased. BSBP staff will ensure that all warranties or replacement plans are utilized before replacing items, including insurance policies, school policies if a sports or school activity is involved, homeowners and tenant insurance, etc. Rehabilitation professionals or management may deny a replacement request

based on the circumstances of breakage, loss, frequency of occurrence, or the availability of BSBP funding.

Case Closure

Upon turning 14 years of age, the youth is no longer eligible for YLV services, and the case will be closed. At closure, the student and parent or guardian are referred to the Vocational Rehabilitation program (VR) for engagement in Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).