

- Orientation and Mobility is a service that has been successful in increasing the independence of the legally blind person. This service develops skills such as orientation to home and place of employment, cane technique, and use of public transportation.
- Specialized Workers provide comprehensive services tailored to meet the particular needs of deaf-blind persons and persons who are both blind and have cognitive impairment.
- Children's Services Workers provide intensive services to legally blind children which may include coordinating community resources, counseling, advocacy at school, and recreation.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

The Commission offers complete vocational rehabilitation services to legally blind persons whose disability has become a handicap to employment.

A Rehabilitation Counselor works with each eligible person to explore his or her career interests and options to develop an individual written rehabilitation plan. Services provided under the plan may include: Work assessment, counseling, job training, and assistance with job placement. Often, adaptive equipment is used to make a previously inaccessible job accessible to a legally blind person.

For more information, call the Office of Information Services, at the main office, at:

(617) 727-5550

1 (800) 392-6450

TDD 1 (800) 392-6556

www.mass.gov/mcb

Regional Offices

Western Massachusetts (Region I)

436 Dwight Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413) 781-1290
1 (800) 332-2772 voice/TDD (toll-free)

Central Massachusetts (Region II)

390 Main Street, Suite 620
Worcester, MA 01608
(508) 754-1148
1 (800) 263-6944 (toll-free)

Northeastern Massachusetts (Region III)

600 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02111
(617) 727-5550
1 (800) 392-6450 (toll-free)

Greater Boston (Region IV)

600 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02111
(617) 727-5550
1 (800) 392-6450 (toll-free)

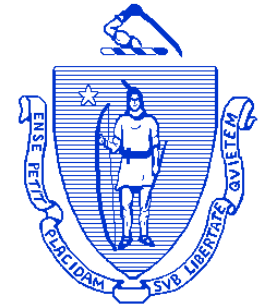
Southeastern Massachusetts / Cape Cod (Region V)

800 Purchase Street, Suite 290
New Bedford, MA 02740
(508) 993-6140
1 (800) 989-4411 (toll-free)

Boston (Region VI)

600 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02111
(617) 727-5550
1 (800) 392-6450 (toll-free)

Massachusetts Commission for the Blind



Information, Benefits and Services Available to Legally Blind Persons

Legally Blind does not necessarily mean totally blind. Most people who are legally blind retain a significant degree of useful vision.

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind is a state agency, established in 1906, to provide a wide range of social and rehabilitation services to legally blind Massachusetts residents of all ages.

Definition of Legal Blindness

- Vision with correction of 20/200 or less in the better eye; or
- Peripheral field of ten degrees (10°) or less, regardless of visual acuity.

Legal Requirement for Eye Care Providers to Report Legal Blindness

Massachusetts law (C.6,s.136) requires that all eye care providers who find a person to be legally blind register with the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind within 30 days of the date of examination.

The reason for this law is to ensure that legally blind persons get the supporting services and benefits they may need. Additionally, the information gathered is of great value in estimating national rates and causes of legal blindness as well as in advancing research related to blindness.

Registration Process

When a report of legal blindness is received from the eye care provider and legal blindness is established, a staff member will contact the person to offer a complete explanation of the services and benefits available.

“Do Not Contact”

Policy

If a legally blind person does not wish to be contacted by the Commission, the person should ask the eye care provider to include this request on the report form.

However the person may contact the Commission at any time to request services. Otherwise, the information reported will be used for statistical purposes only.

Confidentiality

All records and information are strictly confidential and protected by law except in the case of legally blind persons who hold unexpired drivers licenses.

Legal Benefits

- State and Federal Income Tax Exemptions/Deductions.
- Real Estate Tax Exemption.
- Auto Excise Tax Exemption.
- Travel/Identification Card.
- Voting Rights Information.

The Commission offers a variety of other services to legally blind persons.

Independent Living Social Services

Independent Living Social Services are designed to increase independence. A social worker helps the legally blind person to develop an individual plan which may include a wide range of services to meet the special needs of each person. The plan may include advocacy, counseling related to blindness, referral to low-vision services, referral to elder services, rehabilitation teaching, and orientation and mobility.

- Rehabilitation Teaching is a service which helps legally blind persons to learn home management skills which help them function safely and independently in their homes. Rehabilitation Teachers familiarize with safe cooking techniques and adaptive devices which allow them greater freedom in organizing and managing their homes.