



OKLAHOMA
Rehabilitation Services

Commission for Rehabilitation Services



Commissioners
Janet Barresi, Theresa Flannery,
Kelsey Lee and Kevin Wallace

Regular Meeting
and Video Conferencing

3535 NW 58th Street, Suite 200
Oklahoma City, OK

September 10, 2025

Empowering Oklahomans with Disabilities

**State of Oklahoma
Commission for Rehabilitation Services
Regular Commission Meeting
September 10, 2025 at 10:30 a.m.**

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services
3535 NW 58th Street, Suite 200
Oklahoma City, OK 73112

Commissioners: Theresa Flannery, Chair; Dr. Janet Barresi, Vice Chair; Kelsey Lee, Member, and Kevin Wallace, Member

Commission link: <https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1616112814>
Phone: 669-254-5252; Webinar ID: 161 611 2814

Sign Language Interpreters are provided for public accessibility.

Public Comment: To sign up to speak virtually, please contact the Assistant to the Commission no later than 5:00 PM on Tuesday, September 9, 2025, at (405) 951-3472 or Kathleen.Arrieta@okdrs.gov. If speaking in person, please sign up on arrival prior to the start of the meeting. Public comments will be limited to three minutes per person.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Theresa Flannery, Chair

2. Statement of Compliance with the Open Meeting Act

Kathleen Arrieta, Commission Assistant

3. Public Comments

Under Oklahoma Open Meeting Laws, the Oklahoma Commission for Rehabilitation Services cannot respond to or discuss any matter not on today's agenda.

4. Presentation of Longevity Certificates

Theresa Flannery, Chair

5. Executive Director's Report

Melinda Fruendt, Executive Director

- a) Certificates of Appreciation
- b) Report includes meetings, events, Workforce, and departmental updates.
- c) Possible discussion

Pg. 6

6. Chief Financial Officer's Report

Kevin Statham, Chief Financial Officer

- a) Financial Status Reports as of July 31, 2025 FY25 Pg. 9 FY26 Pg. 16
- b) FY 2027 Budget Request
 - FY 2027 Budget Request Executive Summary Pg. 23
 - FY 2027 Budget Request Summary Pg. 24
 - FY 2027 Budget Request Operations Funding Changes Pg. 25
- c) Discussion and possible action to approve the budget request.

7. Human Resources Report

Pg. 29

Tom Patt, HR Director

- a) August 2025 Personnel Activity report & current FTE Status
- b) Introductions of new staff
- c) Possible discussion

8. Corrective Action Plan Status with Emergency Rule Update

Pg. 35

Stephanie Roe, Project Coordinator

- a) Possible Discussion

9. Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI) Report

Pg. 40

Tracy Brigham, Division Administrator

- a) Priority Group / Portal Referral Updates
- b) Report includes staffing, field services, and other updates.
- c) Possible discussion

10. Oklahoma ABLE Tech Report

Pg. 47

Allyson Robinson, Director of Accessibility Programs

- a) Report includes the FY 25 Annual Report and other updates.
- b) Possible discussion

11. Science of Hope Initiative, Hope Navigator Update.

Pg. 61

Christopher Lange, DeeDee Fields, Barbara Reed, Hope Navigators

- a) Presentation and Possible discussion

12. Oklahoma School for the Deaf (OSD) Report

Pg. 66

Dr. Heather Laine, Superintendent

- a) Report includes program updates and school news.
- b) Possible discussion

13. Acceptance of Donations to the Oklahoma School for the Deaf (OSD) Pg. 69

Dr. Heather Laine, Superintendent

- a) Donation Report for August 2025
- b) Discussion and possible action to accept the donations.

14. Acceptance of Donations to the Oklahoma School for the Blind (OSB) Pg. 71

Brent Pearce, Superintendent

- a) Donation Report for August 2025
- b) Discussion and possible action to accept the donations.

15. Review of the August 13, 2025 Commission Meeting Minutes Pg. 73

Theresa Flannery, Chair

- a) Discussion and possible action to modify and/or approve the minutes.

16. New Business

Theresa Flannery, Chair

Any matter not known about, or which could not have been reasonably foreseen prior to the time of posting 25 O.S. § 311.

17. Announcements

Theresa Flannery, Chair

- a) 2025 Commission Award Survey call for nominations.

18. Adjournment

Theresa Flannery, Chair

Note: "Possible action" by the Commission includes, but is not limited to, approval, authorization, adoption, rejection, denial, amendment, taking no action, or tabling the item for disposition at a later date or time.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

Oklahoma School for the Blind (OSB), 330 Gibson Street, Muskogee, OK 74403



Executive Director's Report

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT
September 10, 2025

Remembrance

Harlen Minyard passed away on August 21, 2025. Harlen served the state of Oklahoma as a public servant for many years. He worked at DRS within the Central Departmental Services as a Duplicating Equipment Operator, then as an Administrative Technician, and retired in 2012 as an Administrative Assistant. He was a very kind man who always made time to speak to everyone in his path. He will be greatly missed.

Executive

August

19 – OK Inclusive Post Secondary Education meeting.
21 – Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council meeting.
22 – Business Enterprise Services training welcome.
28 – OK Office of Juvenile Affairs and DRS – VR meeting.

September

1 – Labor Day
4 – Tour of Oklahoma School for the Blind with House of Representatives Fiscal staff.
8 – OK Inclusive Post Secondary Education meeting.
10 – Commission for Rehabilitation Services meeting; DRS Executive Team meeting.

Workforce – Stephanie Roe

100 stories in 100 days

CSAVR has launched a new campaign titled **100 Stories in 100 Days**, to highlight the impact VR agencies make in our communities nationwide. These stories will be shared online, on social media, in newsletters, to members of Congress and to the Rehabilitation Services Administration. This campaign is intended to elevate the VR program's success nationally. DRS communications office has shared 35 success stories from Oklahoma for the campaign. Our state has not been highlighted yet, but we are excited to share the success of individuals receiving our services.

Working on Workforce

DRS is providing input in weekly workforce meetings with partners and stakeholders focused on State Workforce system planning and a strategic vision for Workforce Redesign in Oklahoma. These sessions are also assisting the Oklahoma Workforce Commission (OWC) in developing the state's 10-year Strategic Workforce Plan.

WIOA State Plan Modification

Oklahoma Vocational Rehabilitation will submit a Unified State Plan modification in March of 2026 covering PYs 2026 and 2027 (July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2028).

K-12 Resource form for parents and guardians that allows them to easily see and access all workforce services available to them. The K-12 resource flyer distributed during back-to-school events in August included DRS services and eligibility.

Process Improvement (PI) – Lyuda Polyun Federal Report

- Rehabilitation Services Administration-911 (RSA-911) report for the fourth quarter of Program Year 2024 was submitted on time.

AWARE

- Testing a new version of AWARE case management.
- Began the error correction cycle for RSA-911, Quarter 1 – 2025.
- Assisting with Power BI reports and developing a rollout plan for field use.
- Correcting general case errors and other issues that could affect federal reporting.
- Assisting with finalizing Legislative Map data and Legislative Budget reporting data.

Program Standards, Statistical Research, Data Dashboards

- The Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment draft (excepting Recommendations) is complete and in review.
- The legislative map is in review.
- Staff are working on survey reports for OSD Parent Satisfaction and the VIBE summer camps.
- Staff are working with Interpreter Certification Resource Center (ICRC) on a survey about interpreter credentialing.
- Staff built a Business Intelligence dashboard for the Employment Support Services unit mapping Community Rehabilitation Programs services.

Power Business Intelligence (BI)

- Finalizing the Financial Services Division (FSD) Reports.
- Making new reports for the AWARE Team.
- Continuing to work on reports still in Tableau we are needing to move to Power BI.
- Working with FSD on Power BI access and training.

***Respectfully submitted by
Melinda Fruendt, Executive Director***



Chief Financial Officer's Report

Department of Rehabilitation Services Financial Status Report FY 25

As of July 31, 2025

Agency Summary							
	Budget	% of Total Budget	Expenditures	2025 Expenditures in FY 26	% Expended	Encumbrances	% Used
Personnel	97,919,808.00	48.3%	84,811,733.30	581,954.38	87.2%	176,256.97	87.4%
Travel	1,778,060.00	0.9%	1,561,628.17	146,111.08	96.0%	19,208.59	97.1%
General Operating	32,742,683.69	16.2%	17,435,172.16	1,694,566.25	58.4%	7,646,514.39	81.8%
Office Furniture & Equipment	2,120,654.00	1.0%	749,017.47	385,417.72	53.5%	384,664.83	71.6%
Client / General Assistance	57,656,079.00	28.5%	34,104,465.66	1,465,545.35	61.7%	11,875,315.85	82.3%
Indirect Cost	10,407,272.31	5.1%	10,407,272.31	0.00	100.0%	0.00	100.0%
Total	202,624,557.00	100.0%	149,069,289.07	4,273,594.78	75.7%	20,101,960.63	85.6%

Department of Rehabilitation Services **Financial Status Report FY 25**

As of July 31, 2025

All Programs							
Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired							
	Budget	% of Total Budget	Expenditures	2025 Expenditures in FY 26	% Expended	Encumbrances	% Used
Personnel	31,331,077.00	31.8%	26,408,911.68	140,466.60	84.7%	109,137.34	85.1%
Travel	1,305,400.00	1.3%	1,207,259.46	111,391.23	101.0%	165.00	101.0%
General Operating	12,143,842.70	12.3%	7,519,970.04	1,113,578.36	71.1%	2,574,418.71	92.3%
Office Furniture & Equipment	972,614.00	1.0%	450,127.14	181,152.58	64.9%	100,329.19	75.2%
Client / General Assistance	48,471,079.00	49.2%	27,167,154.43	1,135,000.97	58.4%	10,222,099.21	79.5%
Indirect Cost	4,309,513.30	4.4%	4,309,513.30	0.00	100.0%	0.00	100.0%
Total	98,533,526.00	100.0%	67,062,936.05	2,681,589.74	70.8%	13,006,149.45	84.0%
Vocational Rehabilitation Grant							
	Budget	% of Total Budget	Expenditures	2025 Expenditures in FY 26	% Expended	Encumbrances	% Used
Personnel	28,555,136.00	30.9%	23,876,647.86	119,160.35	84.0%	30,943.51	84.1%
Travel	1,279,400.00	1.4%	1,173,197.29	109,184.40	100.2%	165.00	100.2%
General Operating	10,085,304.11	10.9%	6,790,791.35	366,419.65	71.0%	2,123,650.12	92.0%
Office Furniture & Equipment	734,708.00	0.8%	310,407.15	176,652.66	66.3%	100,329.19	79.9%
Client / General Assistance	47,709,667.00	51.7%	26,650,545.31	1,090,616.99	58.1%	10,095,964.48	79.3%
Indirect Cost	4,003,286.89	4.3%	4,003,286.89	0.00	100.0%	0.00	100.0%
Total	92,367,502.00	100.0%	62,804,875.85	1,862,034.05	70.0%	12,351,052.30	83.4%

Department of Rehabilitation Services Financial Status Report FY 25

As of July 31, 2025

All Programs Oklahoma School for the Blind							
	Budget	% of Total Budget	Expenditures	2025 Expenditures in FY 26	% Expended	Encumbrances	% Used
Personnel	7,516,825.00	71.6%	7,083,468.25	48,635.49	94.9%	4,602.69	94.9%
Travel	68,200.00	0.6%	50,754.62	11,109.30	90.7%	0.00	90.7%
General Operating	1,704,001.70	16.2%	1,075,670.85	34,903.31	65.2%	438,211.94	90.9%
Office Furniture & Equipment	396,861.00	3.8%	127,218.81	6,532.84	33.7%	161,289.34	74.3%
Client / General Assistance	53,000.00	0.5%	27,286.41	0.00	51.5%	0.00	51.5%
Indirect Cost	757,210.30	7.2%	757,210.30	0.00	100.0%	0.00	100.0%
Total	10,496,098.00	100.0%	9,121,609.24	101,180.94	87.9%	604,103.97	93.6%

Department of Rehabilitation Services Financial Status Report FY 25

As of July 31, 2025

All Programs Oklahoma School for the Deaf							
	Budget	% of Total Budget	Expenditures	2025 Expenditures in FY 26	% Expended	Encumbrances	% Used
Personnel	9,421,685.00	40.8%	7,728,142.77	77,361.56	82.8%	10,015.51	83.0%
Travel	220,700.00	1.0%	194,376.40	8,790.10	92.1%	224.09	92.2%
General Operating	11,360,570.79	49.2%	3,764,101.20	251,763.88	35.3%	3,463,470.68	65.8%
Office Furniture & Equipment	628,419.00	2.7%	145,540.62	194,817.77	54.2%	123,046.30	73.7%
Client / General Assistance	581,000.00	2.5%	213,460.46	75.00	36.8%	128,973.50	59.0%
Indirect Cost	875,517.21	3.8%	875,517.21	0.00	100.0%	0.00	100.0%
Total	23,087,892.00	100.0%	12,921,138.66	532,808.31	58.3%	3,725,730.08	74.4%

Department of Rehabilitation Services Financial Status Report FY 25

As of July 31, 2025

All Programs							
Disability Determination Services							
	Budget	% of Total Budget	Expenditures	2025 Expenditures in FY 26	% Expended	Encumbrances	% Used
Personnel	40,421,259.00	69.5%	35,695,302.10	281,221.91	89.0%	21,258.50	89.1%
Travel	69,500.00	0.1%	26,824.67	2,756.74	42.6%	18,819.50	69.6%
General Operating	4,636,067.04	8.0%	3,073,999.93	148,428.58	69.5%	722,549.66	85.1%
Office Furniture & Equipment	43,059.00	0.1%	7,625.20	185.65	18.1%	0.00	18.1%
Client / General Assistance	8,551,000.00	14.7%	6,696,564.36	330,192.50	82.2%	1,524,243.14	100.0%
Indirect Cost	4,459,114.96	7.7%	4,459,114.96	0.00	100.0%	0.00	100.0%
Total	58,180,000.00	100.0%	49,959,431.22	762,785.38	87.2%	2,286,870.80	91.1%

Department of Rehabilitation Services Financial Status Report FY 25

As of July 31, 2025

All Programs DRS Support Services							
	Budget	% of Total Budget	Expenditures	2025 Expenditures in FY 26	% Expended	Encumbrances	% Used
Personnel	9,228,962.00	74.9%	7,895,908.50	34,268.82	85.9%	31,242.93	86.3%
Travel	114,260.00	0.9%	82,413.02	12,063.71	82.7%	0.00	82.7%
General Operating	2,898,201.46	23.5%	2,001,430.14	145,892.12	74.1%	447,863.40	89.5%
Office Furniture & Equipment	79,701.00	0.6%	18,505.70	2,728.88	26.6%	0.00	26.6%
Client / General Assistance	0.00	0.0%	0.00	276.88	0.0%	0.00	0.0%
Indirect Cost	5,916.54	0.0%	5,916.53	0.00	100.0%	0.01	100.0%
Total	12,327,041.00	100.0%	10,004,173.89	195,230.41	82.7%	479,106.34	86.6%

Department of Rehabilitation Services Financial Status Report FY 25

As of July 31, 2025

Personnel

Salary Expense

Insurance Premium -Health-Life, etc

FICA-Retirement Contributions

Travel

Travel - Agency Direct

Travel - Reimbursements

General Operating

AFP Encumbrances

Bond Indebtness and Expenses

Buildings-Purchase, Construction and Renovation

General Operating

Inter/Intre Agency Payment for Personal Services

Maintenance & Repair

Miscellaneous Administration Fee

Professional Services

Production, Safety, Security

Refunds, Indemnities, Restitution

Rent Expense

Scholarships, Tuition and Other Incentive-Type Payments

Shop Expense

Specialized Supplies & Materials

Office Furniture & Equipment

Library Equipment & Resources

Office Furniture & Equipment

Client / General Assistance

Social Service and Assistance Payments

Indirect Cost

Department of Rehabilitation Services Financial Status Report FY 26

As of July 31, 2025

Agency Summary						
	Budget	% of Total Budget	Expenditures	% Expended	Encumbrances	% Used
Personnel	94,941,599.00	50.9%	6,610,939.97	7.0%	88,201,466.44	99.9%
Travel	1,762,951.00	0.9%	11,330.77	0.6%	2,730.00	0.8%
General Operating	26,032,874.00	14.0%	410,030.99	1.6%	16,935,423.98	66.6%
Office Furniture & Equipment	1,745,538.00	0.9%	-	0.0%	0.00	0.0%
Client / General Assistance	52,319,857.00	28.0%	849,512.03	1.6%	39,022,054.91	76.2%
Indirect Cost	9,776,910.00	5.2%	770,241.84	7.9%	9,006,668.16	100.0%
Total	186,579,729.00	100.0%	8,652,055.60	4.6%	153,168,343.49	86.7%

Department of Rehabilitation Services **Financial Status Report FY 26**

As of July 31, 2025

All Programs						
Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired						
	Budget	% of Total Budget	Expenditures	% Expended	Encumbrances	% Used
Personnel	30,745,704.00	34.1%	2,112,208.08	6.9%	28,594,349.62	99.9%
Travel	1,280,300.00	1.4%	8,198.37	0.6%	2,310.00	0.8%
General Operating	10,110,160.00	11.2%	262,191.44	2.6%	7,155,472.32	73.4%
Office Furniture & Equipment	868,763.00	1.0%	0.00	0.0%	0.00	0.0%
Client / General Assistance	43,190,857.00	47.9%	340,109.81	0.8%	30,939,290.69	72.4%
Indirect Cost	4,031,926.00	4.5%	309,940.61	7.7%	3,721,985.39	100.0%
Total	90,227,710.00	100.0%	3,032,648.31	3.4%	70,413,408.02	81.4%
Vocational Rehabilitation Grant						
	Budget	% of Total Budget	Expenditures	% Expended	Encumbrances	% Used
Personnel	27,947,251.00	32.7%	1,917,127.94	6.9%	25,990,976.76	99.9%
Travel	1,245,300.00	1.5%	7,473.77	0.6%	1,810.00	0.7%
General Operating	9,350,909.00	10.9%	259,997.32	2.8%	6,519,952.25	72.5%
Office Furniture & Equipment	638,193.00	0.7%	0.00	0.0%	0.00	0.0%
Client / General Assistance	42,444,667.00	49.7%	338,507.10	0.8%	30,487,006.48	72.6%
Indirect Cost	3,779,508.00	4.4%	285,362.63	7.6%	3,494,145.37	100.0%
Total	85,405,828.00	100.0%	2,808,468.76	3.3%	66,493,890.86	81.1%

**Department of Rehabilitation Services
Financial Status Report FY 26**

As of July 31, 2025

All Programs						
Oklahoma School for the Blind						
	Budget	% of Total Budget	Expenditures	% Expended	Encumbrances	% Used
Personnel	7,565,178.00	65.9%	604,545.45	8.0%	6,940,632.55	99.7%
Travel	92,200.00	0.8%	2,712.40	2.9%	420.00	3.4%
General Operating	2,797,667.00	24.4%	648.02	0.0%	1,402,322.33	50.1%
Office Furniture & Equipment	184,142.00	1.6%	0.00	0.0%	0.00	0.0%
Client / General Assistance	42,000.00	0.4%	0.00	0.0%	0.00	0.0%
Indirect Cost	794,474.00	6.9%	68,917.07	8.7%	725,556.93	100.0%
Total	11,475,661.00	100.0%	676,822.94	5.9%	9,068,931.81	84.9%

Department of Rehabilitation Services Financial Status Report FY 26

As of July 31, 2025

All Programs						
Oklahoma School for the Deaf						
	Budget	% of Total Budget	Expenditures	% Expended	Encumbrances	% Used
Personnel	9,578,719.00	54.9%	605,143.98	6.3%	8,945,747.19	99.7%
Travel	243,500.00	1.4%	0.00	0.0%	0.00	0.0%
General Operating	5,682,615.00	32.6%	42.85	0.0%	3,847,957.33	67.7%
Office Furniture & Equipment	450,505.00	2.6%	0.00	0.0%	0.00	0.0%
Client / General Assistance	522,000.00	3.0%	0.00	0.0%	24,000.00	4.6%
Indirect Cost	978,977.00	5.6%	77,660.56	7.9%	901,316.44	100.0%
Total	17,456,316.00	100.0%	682,847.39	3.9%	13,719,020.96	82.5%

Department of Rehabilitation Services
Financial Status Report FY 26

As of July 31, 2025

All Programs						
Disability Determination Services						
	Budget	% of Total Budget	Expenditures	% Expended	Encumbrances	% Used
Personnel	38,154,742.00	68.7%	2,622,099.55	6.9%	35,511,470.14	99.9%
Travel	52,001.00	0.1%	0.00	0.0%	0.00	0.0%
General Operating	4,556,250.00	8.2%	116,619.49	2.6%	2,444,387.96	56.2%
Office Furniture & Equipment	207,029.00	0.4%	0.00	0.0%	0.00	0.0%
Client / General Assistance	8,565,000.00	15.4%	506,235.78	5.9%	8,058,764.22	100.0%
Indirect Cost	3,964,978.00	7.1%	313,195.10	7.9%	3,651,782.90	100.0%
Total	55,500,000.00	100.0%	3,558,149.92	6.4%	49,666,405.22	95.9%

Department of Rehabilitation Services **Financial Status Report FY 26**

As of July 31, 2025

All Programs						
DRS Support Services						
	Budget	% of Total Budget	Expenditures	% Expended	Encumbrances	% Used
Personnel	8,897,256.00	74.6%	666,942.91	7.5%	8,209,266.94	99.8%
Travel	94,950.00	0.8%	420.00	0.4%	0.00	0.4%
General Operating	2,886,182.00	24.2%	30,529.19	1.1%	2,085,284.04	73.3%
Office Furniture & Equipment	35,099.00	0.3%	0.00	0.0%	0.00	0.0%
Client / General Assistance	0.00	0.0%	3,166.44	0.0%	0.00	0.0%
Indirect Cost	6,555.00	0.1%	528.49	8.1%	6,026.51	100.0%
Total	11,920,042.00	100.0%	701,587.03	5.9%	10,300,577.49	92.3%

Department of Rehabilitation Services Financial Status Report FY 26

As of July 31, 2025

Personnel

Salary Expense

Insurance Premium -Health-Life, etc

FICA-Retirement Contributions

Travel

Travel - Agency Direct

Travel - Reimbursements

General Operating

AFP Encumbrances

Bond Indebtness and Expenses

Buildings-Purchase, Construction and Renovation

General Operating

Inter/Intre Agency Payment for Personal Services

Maintenance & Repair

Miscellaneous Administration Fee

Professional Services

Production, Safety, Security

Refunds, Indemnities, Restitution

Rent Expense

Scholarships, Tuition and Other Incentive-Type Payments

Shop Expense

Specialized Supplies & Materials

Office Furniture & Equipment

Library Equipment & Resources

Office Furniture & Equipment

Client / General Assistance

Social Service and Assistance Payments

Indirect Cost

OKLAHOMA COMMISSION FOR REHABILITATION SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ISSUE:

Approval of the FY 2027 Budget Request

BACKGROUND:

At the Commission meeting held August 13, 2025, the Commission for Rehabilitation Services reviewed funding change requests and justifications for the FY 2027 Budget Request.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff requests Commission approval for the FY 2027 Budget Request.

BUDGET IMPACT:**FY 2027 Operations Funding Changes**

Description	State	Federal	Total	FTE
DVR/DSBVI	\$3,000,000	\$9,988,427	\$12,988,427	0.0
OSB	\$617,000	\$0	\$617,000	0.0
OSD	\$794,000	\$0	\$794,000	0.0
TOTAL	\$4,411,000	\$9,988,427	\$14,399,427	0.0

Department of Rehabilitation Services

FY 2027 Budget Request						
Agency Priority	Program	Funding Purpose	State Appropriated Funding	Federal Funding	Total Funding	Requested FTE
1	DVR / DSBVI	Maintain necessary state match and maintenance of effort funding associated with Title I federal funds	\$3,000,000	\$9,988,427	\$12,988,427	0.0
2	OSB	Annual maintenance request	\$617,000	\$0	\$617,000	0.0
2	OSD	Annual maintenance request	\$794,000	\$0	\$794,000	0.0
Total FY 2027 Budget Request			\$4,411,000	\$9,988,427	\$14,399,427	\$0

FY 2027 Operations Funding Change Requests

Agency Priority:	1
Program Description:	Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Requested FTE:	0.0
State Appropriations:	\$3,000,000
Funding Description:	Funding Request for State Appropriations
Purpose:	Maintain Necessary State Match and Maintenance of Effort Funding Associated with Title I Federal Funds

Increased funding maximizes services to Oklahomans with disabilities, enhancing their opportunity to become self-sufficient through employment and becoming independent in their homes and communities. This means more Oklahomans can terminate their dependence on state and federal programs and move towards becoming taxpayers. This funding increase will positively impact the stability of the Oklahoma economy. The ratio of funding available is \$4 federal dollars to every \$1 dollar of state matching funds. Funding this request will allow DRS to fully match all the federal funds available to the State of Oklahoma and keeps DRS in a position to put disabled Oklahomans on a path to independence through employment.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Grant is a formula grant and adjusts for annual economic growth. The SFY-26 match request was not provided and Oklahoma will forfeit \$5,934,674 in allocated but unmatched funding from the FFY-25 grant. The match request to fully meet the federal allocation for the SFY-27 grant year is an additional \$3,000,000. This will allow Oklahoma to match an additional \$10 million dollars in federal grant proceeds to serve disabled citizens. The requested match increase will allow DRS to fund all obligations associated with the Vocational Rehabilitation Federal Grants awarded to the State of Oklahoma. Without the increase Oklahoma will face a \$1,393,787 Maintenance of Effort penalty and face the certainty of forfeiting additional funds from the FFY-27 grant. Not providing this funding will cause the State of Oklahoma to forfeit federal funds and severely reduce the services available to disabled Oklahomans that want to return to work.

DRS continues to work with other state agencies to coordinate services to common participants and to improve efficiencies. The Agency is an active participant in the Oklahoma Workforce System as well as the Governor's Council on Workforce. The Workforce and Opportunity Improvement Act, guiding federal regulation for the Vocational Rehabilitation program, requires DRS to participate with 19 different programs across the State to better prepare individuals for successful employment outcomes. Providing this necessary funding would allow for full access to available funds to continue to serve the existing clients and expand services to better reach underserved populations.

Agency Priority:	2
Program Description:	Oklahoma School for the Blind
Requested FTE:	0.0
State Appropriations:	\$617,000
Funding Description:	Funding Request for State Appropriations
Purpose:	Annual Maintenance Request

The Oklahoma School for the Blind (OSB) in Muskogee provides effective education options for children with all levels of blindness or visual impairments. The goals of the school are to provide an environment that maximizes the learning opportunities for children with disabilities, certify their learning in accordance with State standards and provide a solid foundation of knowledge that the students can lean on well into adulthood. OSB also serves as a resource center to complement the spectrum of services provided within common education for the State of Oklahoma. Communication and literacy are the two most crucial components for learning. OSB provides an education tailored to the needs of the student. Students learn to be literate through braille and experience different levels of communication technology that establish a strong foundation for a lifetime of learning. OSB is 100% state appropriated. They do not receive funding from local ad valorem taxes or the State Department of Education funding formula.

In past years the school received funding to keep up with the teacher pay raises passed by the legislature. HB 1087 expanded the years of service on the Teacher Salary Schedule. However, no funding was provided to pay for the regular or expanded salary schedule increases. Support for the schools has been forthcoming and appreciated in previous years. CPI operations maintenance funding keeps operating budgets economically current and able to provide a safe and healthy learning environment. The CPI request allows for incremental economic adjustments to the school's funding that would not otherwise be available.

As a residential facility, OSB has the same budgetary challenges as all the other local school districts in regard to the rising cost of food, fuel and utilities, but with the additional challenge of operating a residential facility. The Oklahoma Constitution mandates that the State provide for and support the School for the Blind. To remain current, the operations maintenance appropriation request is based on this most recent increase of 2.9% for SFY-27 combined with the SFY-26 unfunded request of 3.4%. The result is an increase of \$617,000 dollar budget request for the School for the Blind. This would allow for economic adjustments to the school's funding that are not otherwise available.

Agency Priority:	3
Program Description:	Oklahoma School for the Deaf
Requested FTE:	0.0
State Appropriations:	\$794,000
Funding Description:	Funding Request for State Appropriations
Purpose:	Annual Maintenance Request

The Oklahoma School for the Deaf (OSD) in Sulphur provides effective education options for children with all levels of deaf or hard of hearing impairments. The goals of the school are to provide an environment that maximizes the learning opportunities for children with disabilities, certify their learning in accordance with State standards and provide a solid foundation of knowledge that the students can lean on well into adulthood. OSD also serves as a resource center to complement the spectrum of services provided within common education for the State of Oklahoma. Communication and literacy are the two most crucial components for learning. OSD provides an education tailored to the needs of the student. Students learn and communicate using sign language and experience different levels of communication technology that establish a strong foundation for a lifetime of learning. OSD is 100% state appropriated. They do not receive funding from local ad valorem taxes or the State Department of Education funding formula.

In past years the school received funding to keep up with the teacher pay raises passed by the legislature. HB 1087 expanded the years of service on the Teacher Salary Schedule. However, no funding was provided to pay for the regular or expanded salary schedule increases. Support for the schools has been forthcoming and appreciated in previous years. CPI operations maintenance funding keeps operating budgets economically current and able to provide a safe and healthy learning environment. The CPI request allows for incremental economic adjustments to the school's funding that would not otherwise be available.

As a residential facility, OSD has the same budgetary challenges as all the other local school districts in regard to the rising cost of food, fuel and utilities, but with the additional challenge of operating a residential facility. The Oklahoma Constitution mandates that the State provide for and support the School for the Blind. To remain current, the operations maintenance appropriation request is based on this most recent increase of 2.9% for SFY-27 combined to the SFY-26 unfunded request of 3.4%. The request results in an increase of \$794,000 dollar budget request for the School for the Blind. This would allow for economic adjustments to the school's funding that are not otherwise available.



Human Resources Report

PERSONNEL ACTIVITY REPORT AS OF AUGUST 31, 2025

FILLED AND VACANT POSITIONS

Personnel Activity = 14 vacant positions filled / 52 positions in Announcement or Selection Process

Division	Title/PIN	Date Vacated	Location	Begin date	End date	Ann. #	Action/Incumbent	Date Filled
EXEC	Public Information Officer / 1079	07/01/2025	EXEC	07/28/2025	08/14/2025	26-005	Currently Open	
FSD	Accountant / 0013	05/15/2025	FSD	06/19/2025	07/09/2025	25-117	Quintin Cox	08/11/2025
MSD	Business Analyst / 1083	07/12/2024	MSD	05/22/2025	06/11/2025	25-106	Currently Open	
MSD	Administrative Assistant / 1068	03/31/2025	MSD	05/22/2025	06/11/2025	25-108	Currently Open	
OSB	LPN / 0017	07/09/2025	OSB	08/04/2025	Continuous	26-006	Currently Open.	
		06/12/2025 08/12/2025						
OSB	Direct Care Specialist / 0237, 0298, 0795	07/31/2025	OSD	07/08/2025	Continuous	26-002	Currently Open	
OSB	Teacher / 0531	08/1/2020	OSB	06/04/2025	06/10/2025	25-115	Linda Jackson	08/01/2025
OSB	Teacher / 0426	08/01/2025	OSB	06/04/2025	Continuous	25-116	Lauren Ritchie	08/01/2025
OSB	Teacher / 0546	07/31/2025	OSB	05/15/2025	Continuous	25-100	Currently Open	
OSB	Outreach Coordinator / 0673	07/31/2025	OSB	04/22/2025	Continuous	25-086	Christian Hargrove	08/01/2025
OSD	Sign Language Interpreter / 0186	07/31/2025	OSD	08/18/2025	Continuous	26-007	Currently Open	
	Construction/Maintenance Technician / 0102	07/31/2025	OSD	08/20/2025	Continuous	26-009	Currently Open	
OSD	Speech Language Pathologist / P107653	NEW PIN	OSD	07/17/2025	Continuous	26-003	Currently Open	
OSD	Housekeeping/Custodial Worker / 0712	07/01/2025	OSD	05/07/2025	Continuous	25-097	Currently Open	
	Construction/Maintenance Technician / 0245	05/12/2025	OSD	05/15/2025	Continuous	25-104	Currently Open	
OSD	Fire Prevention & Security Officer / 0733	03/23/2025	OSD	04/07/2025	Continuous	25-081	Stanley Estes	08/18/2025
OSD	Sign Language Specialist / 0261	08/01/2024	OSD	02/24/2025	Continuous	25-071	Currently Open	
OSD	Counselor / 1028	11/13/2024	OSD	01/24/2025	Continuous	25-062	Currently Open	
		11/01/2023 01/01/2025 03/01/2025					Grace Woodall Emily Sherwood Traci Kelley	08/05/2025 08/05/2025 08/04/2025
OSD	Direct Care Specialist (Classroom) / 0648, 0525, 0111	03/01/2025	OSD	12/02/2024	Continuous	25-055	Currently Open	
OSD	Early Development Specialist / 1496	07/31/2024	OSD	09/19/2024	Continuous	25-036	Currently Open	
OSD	School Counselor / 1488	10/06/2022	OSD	07/15/2024	Continuous	25-007	Currently Open	
OSD	Teacher (Vocational) / 0448	08/01/2010	OSD	06/28/2024	Continuous	24-107	Andrea Haigood	08/01/2025
OSD	Dir of Family and Early Childhood Services / 1494	05/10/2024	OSD	05/08/2024	Continuous	24-084	Currently Open	

OSD	Teacher / 0635	07/31/2024	OSD – Chickasha	04/15/2024	Continuous	24-083	Currently Open	
OSD	Sign Language Specialist, 2308 / 1090	07/20/2023	OSD	08/17/2023	Continuous	24-023	Currently Open	
OSD	Direct Care Specialist (Dorm) / 0824, 0778, 0028, 0375, 0115	10/01/2024 12/31/2024 05/28/2025 07/30/2025 08/20/2025	OSD	10/24/2023	Continuous	23-032	Manda Mulrenin	08/01/2025
OSD	Teacher, 2083 / 0890	08/01/2021	OSD	10/04/2023	Continuous	23-079	Currently Open	
VR	Rehabilitation Technician / 0769	07/07/2025	VR26 – Claremore	07/14/2025	Continuous	26-001	Currently Open	
VR	Programs Manager / 0674	07/09/2025	VR – TBD	07/21/2025	Continuous	26-004	Currently Open	
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist / 0500	01/04/2017	VR86 – Ada	05/07/2025	Continuous	25-091	Valeria Oseguera	08/04/2025
VR	Programs Field Representative / 0786	08/31/2024	VR – TBD	05/01/2025	Continuous	25-093	Currently Open	
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist / 0703	06/06/2022	VR23 – OKC	05/05/2025	Continuous	25-094	Currently Open	
VR	Business Services Liaison / 0958	12/19/2016	VR47 – OKC	05/06/2025	Continuous	25-095	Dana Campbell	08/01/2025
VR	Job Placement Specialist / 0925	05/31/2023	VR86 – Ada	05/09/2025	Continuous	25-098	Currently Open	
VR	Job Placement Specialist / 0270	11/30/2013	VR12 – Lawton	05/12/2025	Continuous	25-099	Currently Open	
VR	Behavioral Health Clinician / 0165	03/01/2011	VR13 – McAlester	05/15/2025	Continuous	25-101	Currently Open	
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist / 0056	06/12/2025	VR08 – Enid	05/14/2025	Continuous	25-102	Currently Open	
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist / 0671	05/12/2025	VR77 – Miami	05/22/2025	Continuous	25-111	Currently Open	
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist / 0646	08/01/2022	VR41 – Ponca City	04/25/2025	Continuous	25-090	Currently Open	
VR	Assistive Technology Specialist / 0263	02/01/2025	VR36 – OKC	04/22/2025	Continuous	25-089	Currently Open	
VR	Assistive Technology Specialist / 0085	05/01/2024	VR36 – OKC	04/18/2025	Continuous	25-085	Currently Open	
VR	Rehabilitation Technician / 0756	03/27/2025	VR75 – Lawton	04/18/2025	Continuous	25-084	Kate Whitehead	08/19/2025
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist / 0659	11/30/2024	VR38 – Okmulgee	01/27/2025	Continuous	25-065	Currently Open	
VR	Programs Manager / 1072	12/01/2024	VR – TBD	12/13/2024	Continuous	25-057	Jeremy Lee	08/18/2025
VR	Rehabilitation Technician / 0087	12/20/2024	VR45 – Tulsa	12/12/2024	Continuous	25-058	Currently Open	
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist / 0169	10/01/2024	VR45 – Tulsa	11/19/2024	Continuous	25-052	Currently Open	
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist / 0366	09/05/2024	VR31 – OKC	09/16/2024	Continuous	25-032	Currently Open	
VR	Behavioral Health Clinician / 0034	04/30/2023	VR23 – OKC	06/02/2025	Continuous	25-109	Currently Open	

VR	Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist / 1190	06/09/2023	VR08 – Enid	06/05/2023	Continuous	23-096	Currently Open
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist / 0646	08/01/2022	VR41 – Ponca City	01/24/2024	Continuous	23-038	Currently Open
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist / 0557	02/28/2025	VR80 – Tulsa	11/03/2022	Continuous	23-037	Currently Open
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist / 0567	09/01/2020	VR67 – Tulsa	11/01/2023	Continuous	21-028.1	Currently Open
SBVI	Rehabilitation Technician / 0817	08/31/2025	SBVI91 – Tulsa	08/14/2025	Continuous	26-008	Currently Open
SBVI	Mechanical Systems Technician / 0560	08/11/2017	SBVI33 – OKC	06/03/2025	Continuous	25-114	Currently Open
SBVI	Rehabilitation Technician / 0038	05/12/2011	SBVI90 – OKC	05/19/2025	Continuous	25-105	Currently Open
SBVI	Rehabilitation of the Blind Specialist / 0754	10/01/2018	SBVI – TBD	05/23/2025	Continuous	25-107	Currently Open
SBVI	Vending Machine Technician / 1075	07/11/2020	SBVI33 – OKC	05/23/2025	Continuous	25-110	Currently Open
SBVI	Rehabilitation of the Blind Specialist / 0582	06/28/2024	SBVI91 – Tulsa	05/28/2025	Continuous	25-017	Currently Open

DISCHARGES/RESIGNATIONS/RETIREMENTS = 12
<i>As of August 31, 2025</i>

SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION (Executive/MSD/FSD)

DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Resignation = 1

1 = 8 years 7 months

SERVICES FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED DIVISION

Retirement = 1

1 = 15 years 2 months

Trial Period Discharge = 1

1 = 10 months

OKLAHOMA SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

Resignation = 2

1 = 8 years 8 months

1 = 2 years

OKLAHOMA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

Resignation = 2

1 = 2 years 10 months

1 = 2 years 8 months

DISABILITY DETERMINATION SERVICES

Resignation = 5

1 = 8 years 10 months

1 = 10 months

1 = 13 years 3 months

1 = 9 years 11 months

1 = 11 months

CURRENT FTE STATUS FY 2026

FTE as of August 31, 2025

<u>DIVISION</u>	<u>BUDGETED FTE</u>	<u>FILLED</u>	<u>PENDING</u>	<u>EXEMPT FTE</u>	<u>TOTAL FILLED PLUS PENDING MINUS EXEMPT FTE</u>
Support Services (Executive/MSD/FSD)	82.3	80.00	3.00	(1.00)	82.00
Vocational Rehabilitation	230.0	211.00	21.00	0.00	232.00
Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired	113.0	102.00	6.00	0.00	108.00
VR/SBVI-DP	4.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	4.00
Oklahoma School for the Blind	100.0	94.00	5.00	0.00	99.00
Oklahoma School for the Deaf	131.5	112.00	17.00	0.00	129.00
Total (NON-EXEMPT)	660.80	603.00	52.00	(1.00)	654.00
Disability Determination Services (EXEMPT)	327.20	305.00	0.00	(305.00)	305.00
TOTAL NON-EXEMPT & EXEMPT	988.00	908.00	52.00	(306.00)	959.00

FY 26 Budgetary Limit = 1255

*** Authorized agency FTE limit does not include Executive Fellow and SWIP appointments**

ROUTING TO: Melinda Fruendt, Director
 Kevin Statham, Chief Financial Officer
 Randy Weaver, Chief of Operations
 Tom Patt, Human Resources Program Director
 Mark Beutler, Director of Communications
 Kathleen Arrieta, Executive Assistant
 Brett Jones, Public Information Officer III



Corrective Action Plan Status with Emergency Rule Update

**Corrective Action Plan Status with
Emergency Update
September 12, 2025 Commission Report**

OK-C FFY 2023 Monitoring Corrective Action Plan Update- September 2025

May 9-12, 2023- RSA conducted on-site monitoring with the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services. Focus Areas: 1.) Performance of the VR and Supported Employment programs 2.) Financial management of the VR and Supported Employment programs that supports and maximizes the use of Federal funds.

April 2, 2024- Monitoring Report Publication Date

July 1, 2024- CAP Approved by RSA

Performance Findings Overview:

Finding 2.1- Insufficient Internal Controls

- 2.1.1- Data collection and validation of pre-employment transition service **(RESOLVED)**
- 2.1.2- Revised policies specific to Pre-Employment transition services.
- 2.1.3- Deliver training on revised policy to staff responsible for entering information into the DRS case management system, including services related to pre-employment transition services **(RESOLVED)**

Finding 2.2- Provision of Services Unaligned with the Individualized Plan for Employment – Jobs Services

- 2.2.1- Rescind Jobs Contract- Administrative Rule **(RESOLVED)**
- 2.2.2- Deliver training for staff and contractors on changes to contract **(RESOLVED)**
- 2.2.3- Notice and confirmation of completed training **(RESOLVED)**

Finding 2.3 Insufficient Contract Administrative Controls

- 2.3.1- Restructure Pre-Employment Transition Services contract **(RESOLVED)**
- 2.3.2- Develop internal controls and process to monitor Pre-Ets Contract **(RESOLVED)**
- 2.3.3- Develop written internal control process for contract development **(RESOLVED)**

- 2.3.4- Develop and implement written internal control processes that ensure it has determined funds available and remaining after the provision of the required pre-employment transition activities **(RESOLVED)**
- 2.3.5- ODRS will revise procedures and internal control processes that ensure compliance with contract requirements **(RESOLVED)**

Fiscal Findings Overview:

Finding 3.1 Period of Performance Policies and Procedures

- 3.1.1 Make requisite revisions to financial data collection and analysis **(RESOLVED)**
- 3.1.2 Update and implement period of performance policies and procedures **(RESOLVED)**
- 3.1.3 Implement written internal control process to ensure ongoing compliance **(RESOLVED)**

Finding 3.2 Insufficient Accounting of Expenditure

- 3.2.1 Modify systems to identify obligation dates of authorizations and contracts **(RESOLVED)**
- 3.2.2 Update and implement period of performance procedures **(RESOLVED)**
- 3.2.3 Develop internal controls to include compliance with period of performance **(RESOLVED)**

Finding 3.3 Internal Control Deficiencies for Policies – Vendor Monitoring

- 3.3.1 Update contract management and monitoring process **(RESOLVED)**
- 3.3.2 Revise policy for rate setting and evaluating the performance of service providers **(RESOLVED)**

4th Quarter Submission Status- July 30, 2025

Corrective Actions	Past Quarter Status	Current Quarter Status
2.1.1	Partially Resolved	Resolved
2.1.2	Partially Resolved	Partially Resolved
2.1.3	Partially Resolved	Resolved
2.1.4	Unresolved	Partially Resolved
2.2.1	Partially Resolved	Resolved
2.2.2	Partially Resolved	Resolved
2.2.3	Partially Resolved	Resolved
2.3.1	Resolved	Resolved
2.3.2	Partially Resolved	Resolved
2.3.3	Unresolved	Resolved
2.3.4	Partially Resolved	Resolved
2.3.5	Partially Resolved	Resolved
3.1.1	Resolved	Resolved
3.1.2	Partially Resolved	Resolved
3.1.3	Partially Resolved	Resolved
3.2.1	Resolved	Resolved
3.2.2	Unresolved	Resolved
3.2.3	Partially Resolved	Resolved
3.3.1	Unresolved	Resolved
3.3.2	Partially Resolved	Resolved

CAP Quarterly Update Reporting schedule:

- January
- April
- July
- October

July 30, 2025- OKDRS submitted the 4th Quarterly update to RSA. The Rehabilitation Services Administration returned comments and resolved fifteen additional actions on August 20, 2025. ODRS' next CAP progress update is due to RSA on or before October 30, 2025, 30 days following the close of the fourth quarter of the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2025. ODRS has committed to provide supporting documentation to RSA for the last two remaining corrective actions by the end of September to fully resolve the corrective action plan by the end of this Federal Fiscal Year.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Stephanie Roe, DRS Executive Project Coordinator



Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired Report

Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI)
Commission Report
September 10, 2025

New Employees

Bridgett Bills—Assistive Technology Rehabilitation Technician, Shepherd Center OKC

Vacancies

- 2 Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Specialists – Tulsa and SW OK or tbd
- Business Enterprise Program (BEP) Vending Technician
- BEP Mechanical Systems Technician
- Public Information Officer (PIO)—Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (OLBPH)

Field Services

As of August 25, 2025, the production totals for SBVI (to include DeafBlind) field services programs are:

Applications = 395

Average of 32 days from application to eligibility (standard = 60 days)

Plans = 318

Average of 44 days from eligibility to plan (standard = 90 days)

Closures = 103 Successfully employed

The average wage of successful outcomes as of August 25, 2025 = \$17.39

The average number of hours per week worked = 37

Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB)

Applications = 151 Average of 35 days from application to eligibility

Plans = 152 Average of 48 days from eligibility to plan

Goals Met = 146 Completed Services

Rehabilitation Teaching - Actual Svc Hours = 518

Orientation and Mobility - Actual Svc Hours = 625

- SBVI hosted a table at the Inclusive Communication Conference, which was a new conference, and seemed to be a huge success.
- Summer Visually Impaired and Blindness Empowerment (VIBE) was conducted in June and July. Residential training programs were held on the campus of OSB in Muskogee. VIBE instructors were comprised of SBVI instructional staff, counselors and OSB staff. There were also guest speakers throughout the programs. There were a total of 42 participants in VIBE this summer.
- In addition to VIBE, a new Employment VIBE Program will be held October 21, 22 and 23 in Oklahoma City. This program will be focused on assisting clients with resume writing, soft skills, interviewing techniques and advocacy in their pursuit of employment.
- Change Teams continue and stay interviews have been conducted with SBVI and VR staff. These will continue with results given to the DAs for review and consideration.
- Field Services Coordinator (FC) and Programs Managers (PM's) conducted case reviews on Counselor employment cases over the summer and are currently conducting reviews on Older Blind cases.
- SBVI staff continue to participate in DRS/DDS meetings as part of the collaboration to provide services to clients who come off DDS's wait list
- Working with the ORC Employment Committee to develop Self-Employment training for the DRS Counselors and PMs. The training will be on a set of modules to utilize with clients seeking self-employment. Part of this program, as created by the ORC Employment Committee, will also include a business panel to review client business plans for viability. There is no date set for this at this time.
- DRS along with the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) and DHS/DDS have completed all training sessions for DRS Counselors, PM's, DDS staff and dual providers. These training sessions brought new ideas and a fresh perspective to service provision.
- Instructional Staff continue with support groups in areas across the state. They set up speakers and provide topics that are helpful in a variety of areas.
- SBVI staff have been attending Regional IMPACT Meetings with our Business Services Unit across the state. These meetings are designed to strengthen relationships with employers in each part of the state.

- Multiple trainings/conferences have been attended by employees to update skills and gain continuing education units to retain licenses and certifications: American Council of the Blind (ACB), National Federation of the Blind (NFB), Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER), Oklahoma AER and Association of Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (AVRT).

Assistive Technology (AT) Services

The SBVI AT Unit had more referrals in August than in any month in the history of the program. The majority of the referrals have come from clients graduating from high school in May and attending college this fall.

Magan Rowan, AT Specialist IV, has been accepted to present at the 2026 Assistive Technology Industry Association Conference in January. This is an internationally attended conference so this is a very exciting opportunity for Magan and for Oklahoma to be recognized and represented.

Actual Service Numbers/Hours	Jul	Aug
Assessments	29	48
Trainings	71	82
Training Hours	183	158

Business Enterprise Program (BEP)

Facilities in the process of being developed are the Enid Community Corrections Center in Enid, Oklahoma and the Charles "E" Bill Johnson Correctional Center in Alva, Oklahoma. Also in process is the Red Rock Correctional Center in Lawton, Oklahoma. The team placed twelve machines there last week and are awaiting additional machines to be delivered to the warehouse.

Of the large graduating class of 8 new Licensed Vendors (LV's), many have already been awarded new facilities. There are interviews and selections in process for others.

The Oklahoma School of Science and Math reached out to the BEP for a vending services contract. The contract is in the final stages of signatures and will be in place in this month.

BEP Aware is in the final stages of implementation which will greatly improve our inventory process and machine viability which will give us better replacement schedule and less money wasted on machines needing repaired or replaced. The system will keep track of most federal reporting (RSA 15) categories in real time instead of once a year. It gives exact location of machines within each route and keeps track of LV info to verify training, set

aside, gross sales, etc. All this in one software and accessible to all BEP staff with proper securities will be much more efficient than our current system and process.

The conference for LV's was conducted in August and the election for officers of the Elected Committee of Managers (ECM) took place. New officers are: Tim McCann, Chair, Tyrel Burnha, Vice Chair, Rhonda Hutson, Secretary, and Regional Reps are Jeff Penick, David Altstatt, Sr, Tara Brown and Sharon Altstatt. The ECM and LV's updated their by-laws and moved from a 5 person board to 7 with other administrative changes.

We will begin another training class this fall. As always, the assessment process and training process has been reviewed and tweaked as needed for improvement. The vocational evaluation has been further developed and moved to the BEP warehouse. The first mock walk-through was on August 28 to give time for adjustments prior to clients first evaluations in September.

Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (OLBPH)

- HVAC is completed and all staff located at the OLBPH have returned to work in the library.
- Lacey Downs has completed the Certified Procurement Officer (CPO). Congratulations Lacey!
- Duplication on Demand (DoD) - SFY '26 as of 08/25 = 52,781

Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) Center

Prison Braille Program collection is now at 52 Early Childhood books. These are sent out to students aged 0- 5 years for the Book of the Month Club. Inmates have begun working on novels for elementary age students, Grades K- 5th grade. These books, of course, take longer to emboss. We currently have 8 titles (multiple copies per title) in collection with four more titles in the works! The teachers of visually impaired (TVI's) and parents are thrilled to have these in the hands of our braille users!

The AIM team worked hard to replenish our stock and complete inventory over the summer months. This is a popular program and items do not last long at the beginning of school year.

- o SFY '26 as of 08/25
- o Students Birth to 3 years = 243
- o Students PreK to Grade 12 = 145
- o Schools Served = 98

- Studio

In-house, in-booth recordings were halted during AC outage. Studio narrations for Oklahoma Today May/June and July/Aug issues are back on track and soon to be released. Also nearing completion are 3 full-length books and 1 children's book. Worth noting is editing previous recordings, roughly 2/3 of production process, can be done from home. So, the studio crew was able to clear a significant backlog of unfinished works during the AC outage as well.

We recently implemented the use of Adobe AI to scan all book and magazine PDFs for challenging words and give audio pronunciations and International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) pronunciations. This decreases time needed to manually scan documents and research word pronunciations. We still cross-check the AI and are working on training it better, but having the words pulled is speeding up this part of our process.

- Library Services

Library staff are currently undergoing training for Braille and Audio Reading Download 2 (BARD), which is a big update to the BARD website.

On Monday, August 25, the library received 304 new/updated DA2 talking book players capable of downloading books directly to the player from BARD. This is intended for the tech savvy patron and the staff look forward to deploying it in the coming weeks.

Division Administrator Activities:

The DRS team continues work with VR Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Management (VR TAC-QM) for assistance with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) monitoring Report Corrective Action Plan (CAP).

- o Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Management (VRTAC-QM) Intensive Technical Assistance Agreement (ITAA) Meetings
- o Randolph-Sheppard Meetings
- o National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) Executive Committee Meetings
- o Randolph-Sheppard Priority Meetings; DRS/DDS meetings
- o Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council (ORC)
- o ORC Executive Committee
- o Performance Review Meetings

- o Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)
- o Customer Service for Adults Committee
- o CSAVR Operations and Personnel (O&P) Committee
- o VRTAC-QM
- o Change Leader Meetings
- o Randolph-Sheppard Calls
- o Field Coordinator (FC) /Program Manager (PM) Meetings
- o DRS/DDS Sequencing of Services
- o Commission Meetings
- o DRS ETeam Meetings
- o Administrative Rules Meeting
- o OLBPH HVAC Meetings
- o Meetings with Director
- o BEP Coordinator meetings
- o RSA Team 4 Technical Assistance
- o Contract Driver meetings
- o State Use Committee
- o Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) Training Meetings
- o New Employee Academy Welcome
- o Job Placement Protocol
- o AV Equipment Project
- o Sun Building, Tulsa, Tour
- o Staff Retirement
- o BEP LV Monthly Report Meeting
- o RSA CAP Monitoring Report
- o BEP Annual Conference
- o Educational Sponsorship

Report respectfully submitted by Tracy Brigham, SBVI Division Administrator

September 2, 2025



Oklahoma ABLE Tech Report



FY25 Annual Report

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services

July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025

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Alternative Financing Program Report

Descriptive Data

Types of Alternative Financing Loan Models

- A. Direct Loan
- B. Interest Rate Buy-Down Loan
- C. Guaranteed/Interest Rate Buy-Down Loan

Name of Partners

- D. **Lead Agency:** Oklahoma State University - Oklahoma ABLE Tech
- E. **Community-Based Organization:** Oklahoma Assistive Technology Foundation (OkAT)
- F. **Lending Institution:** BancFirst of Stillwater

Loan Program Features

- **Range of loan amounts program generally provides:** There are no minimum or maximum loan amount restrictions for unsecured loans or vehicle loans. Home accessibility modification loans are limited to \$25,000. Loans for the past year ranged from \$204 to \$54,830 with an average loan size of \$10,634.
- **Interest rates provided to borrower:** All loans had an interest rate of 8% fixed over the term of the loan. OkAT was able to buy down the interest rate for BancFirst loans from **8.75%** for secured/guaranteed loans and from **10.49%** for unsecured loans.
- **Repayment terms the program generally provides:** The program generally offers terms of 6 to 60 months (about 5 years) for unsecured and secured loans. Home modification direct loans can have a term of up to 84 months (about 7 years). The shortest loan term was 5 months.
- **Total loan fund capacity as of June 30, 2025:** Total dollars available for closing new loans is **\$1,639,019**
- **Restrictions on types of devices purchased:** The loan program does not restrict the type of AT a borrower can purchase.

Portfolio Performance - Alternative Financing Program (AFP)

- A. **Outstanding loans, for which the principal was not paid in full, as of June 30, 2025, of Guaranteed and Direct loans for which the loan program could incur losses:**

Type of Loan	Number of Loans	Outstanding Principal Balance
Guaranty Loans	99	\$1,072,028
Direct Loans	174	\$400,207
Total	273	\$1,472,235

B. Losses this past year:

- a. Total dollar amount of net losses (money lost on direct loans and guarantee payouts minus recoveries from collateral or payments): **\$127,719**
- b. Number of loans defaulted as of June 30, 2025: **37**

C. Outstanding loans, for which the principal was not paid in full, as of June 30, 2025, of non-guaranteed loans for which the loan program cannot incur losses:

- a. Total number of outstanding loans: **41**
- b. Total dollar amount of principal still outstanding: **\$479,612**

Loan Information

A. Number of Applications received

Application Status for Metro vs. Non-Metro	Metro	Non-Metro	Total
Number of applications approved - loan made	51	39	90
Number of applications approved - loan not made	5	7	12
Number of applications rejected	50	27	77
Total	106	73	179

B. Income of borrowers - Average gross income of all borrowers: \$59,794

Annual Gross Income Range	\$15,000 or Less	\$15,001 to \$30,000	\$30,001 to \$45,000	\$45,001 to \$60,000	\$60,001 to \$75,000	\$75,001 or More
Number of Loans Made	7	18	17	12	12	24

C. Loans closed

Type of Loan	Number of Loans Made	Total Dollar Amount
Direct Loan	38	\$110,086
Preferred Interest Rate Buy-Down Loans	13	\$159,529
Preferred Guaranteed & Buy-Down Loans	39	\$687,424
Total of All Loans	90	\$957,039

D. Type of AT purchased from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025

Type of AT	Number of Devices	Total Dollar Amount
Hearing	91	\$232,399
Vehicle modifications and transportation	30	\$691,658
Daily Living	2	\$127
Environmental Adaptation	9	\$9,681
Vision	7	\$4,985
Speech Communication	0	\$0
Computer Related	2	\$1,185
Learning, Cognition, and Developmental	3	\$101
Mobility, Seating, and Positioning	8	\$16,903
Recreation, Sports, and Leisure	0	\$0
Total	152	\$957,039

E. Purpose of AT

Purpose	Count
Education	2
Employment	24
Community Living	64
Total	90

Creating an Accessible Workforce System for All

Contract Item 1

Provide ad hoc **training and technical assistance** with continued outreach to agency Partners under WIOA.

Training and Technical Assistance Update

- Presented to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) on the ADA Title II digital accessibility update.
- Trained staff member at the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (OKDRS) on PDF remediation. Worked to identify and correct accessibility issues in multiple PDFs, including 7 flyers.
- Presented to Pre-ETS transition counselors on the content of ABLE Tech's self-paced courses. They will use this information to help determine which of their Pre-ETS participants would benefit from taking the courses.
- Provided multiple trainings on accessibility basics and document accessibility including Microsoft Word and PowerPoint to the Oklahoma State University (OSU) Fire Service Training (FST) team.

Contract Item 2

Provide **information and assistance** to the Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development (OOWD) and/or other Workforce entities regarding technology in its existing and possible new digital properties to ensure that Oklahomans with disabilities can fully access all workforce resources provided by its website. Content and applications on the website are designed to connect employers, employees and job seekers to information and programs that help build Oklahoma's workforce.

Information and Assistance Update

- Reviewed a PDF checklist for Oklahoma CareerTech and provided remediation recommendations.
- Provided a quick tutorial on how to use the Color Contrast Analyzer tool to evaluate color contrast for accessibility to staff member at the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (OKDRS).

- Sent staff member at the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (OKDRS) information on accessible whiteboard animation software.
- Provided information on accessible Zoom meetings to Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council (ORC) Program Manager.
- Provided help on multiple accessibility topics to staff member at the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (OKDRS). Discussed how to make links accessible, which accessibility symbol is most appropriate, how to review the accessibility of PDFs, International Association of Accessibility Professionals (IAAP) accessibility certifications, and more.
- Discussed accessibility basics and provided information on the accessibility trainings offered at the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).
- Provided information on the new ADA Title II accessibility regulations to TulsaTech.
- Provided information on ABLE Tech's accessibility trainings at TulsaTech.
- Provided guidance on how to make links and QR codes on a print flyer for a DRS job fair more accessible.
- Provided language about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II accessibility rule to DRS staff member which was then shared with the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics.
- Assisted the Western Workforce Board with reverting their website to an older version after they encountered a fatal site error.

Contract Item 3

Create and disseminate **accessibility-related communications** that apply to employment. These could be tips on the accessibility of digital content and tools or tips on Assistive Technology (AT) devices.

Accessibility-related Communications Update

Provided accessibility information and tips in the ABLE Tech monthly newsletter. You can find the full repository of newsletters on our [ABLE Tech Publications and Newsletters](#) page.

Contract Item 4

Create and host **self-paced training courses** on a separate course catalog with courses available to DRS employees and other state agency personnel. These training offerings would be available at any time, providing flexibility to the training audience to consume it according to their schedule. If the opportunity arises, include these courses in a Course Catalog that will help Workforce Boards and Partners gain mastery in the various dimensions of the Access for All effort.

Self-paced Training Courses Update

All previously created courses continue to be available to the public. Course development continued this year, but additional courses were not posted online. The ABLE Tech team restructured and hired a new Learning Experience Designer. Several self-paced courses will be updated in the coming year with a plan to add more.

Contract Item 5

Present the **TechAccess Oklahoma Conference** - the tenth in a series of annual technology accessibility conferences for web developers, policy administrators, purchasers, etc., to assure public accessibility of OK agencies, higher education institutions and the career and technology education centers.

TechAccess Oklahoma Conference Update

ABLE Tech hosted the 10th annual TechAccess Oklahoma digital accessibility conference on March 4-5, 2025. This year's conference used a hybrid model again. There were 442 registrations total, with over 150 people attending in-person at the new venue, MetroTech's Spring Lake Campus, while the remaining 300+ people attended virtually over Zoom.

It was another amazing lineup of national accessibility experts who agreed to share their expertise with Oklahoma. Additional information about this year's speakers and sessions can be found on the [2025 Speakers](#) and [2025 Sessions](#) pages on TechAccessOK.org, and the recordings of each session are available on the [TechAccess Oklahoma 2025 YouTube Playlist](#).

Planning has already begun for next year's TechAccess Oklahoma conference, which will be held March 2-3, 2026 at the same venue.

Contract Item 6

Continue to use the **Pope Tech enterprise accessibility testing tool** with appropriate web accessibility assessment projects. The tools allow ABLE Tech to create and repeat automated scans on hundreds of web pages. ABLE Tech can use this data to monitor progress over time. ABLE Tech also uses the data to help to scope manual assessments so that overall assessment projects are efficient, effective, and valuable. Each assessment has a technical assistance component as well. ABLE Tech will work with Partner staff to understand and remove barriers to access that they can directly control. Assessment results for vendor-supplied products and services help to shape the conversation around procurement within the Partner, even if only project by project.

Pope Tech Update

Use of Pope Tech has slowed over FY25 as a direct response to the reduced demand from the Access for All initiative. Because of this, Pope Tech was mainly used to monitor and maintain the accessibility of ABLE Tech websites which host the contractual resources mentioned above. It also used extensively in the creation of the PlanYourWayOK.com website which provides information on transition services available for people with disabilities in Oklahoma.

Contract Item 7

Continue to explore integrating technology accessibility into **higher education curriculum**.

Higher Education Curriculum Update

Little quantifiable progress has been made on this contract item in FY25. However, multiple discussions have been had with CareerTech centers, including TulsaTech, about finding ways to integrate the self-paced courses into their course catalogs. Additionally, we have discussed developing either a “train-the-trainer” version of the courses, hosting a workshop series, or both, to help multiply the accessibility knowledge across the state’s classrooms.

Several trainings were also provided directly to college students as part of their classes, and to teachers and professors in both K-12 and higher-ed:

- Presented to Oklahoma State University (OSU) Agricultural Communications (AGCM) juniors and seniors as a part of one of their capstone courses. Topics included Oklahoma ABLE Tech’s core programs and services, the Four Core Skills framework, and social media accessibility best practices.
- Created and provided videos for use in an online Social Issues in Marketing course to introduce students to the concepts of assistive technology and digital accessibility.

- Presented to higher-ed faculty members at the OK Learning Innovation Summit (OKLIS) Virtual Session on the ADA Title II accessibility regulations on February 7th and a similar presentation on February 21st to higher-ed staff members.
- ABLE Tech’s course catalog continues to be used for providing professional development through the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education’s Council for Online Learning Excellence (COLE).

Contract Item 8

Create and maintain a **curated set of technology accessibility resources**. The resource set will serve as reference material for the Workforce Development System. The resources will be a combination of material created by ABLE Tech and material from reliable third parties. ABLE Tech will group resources by content type or topic area, such as document accessibility (Word, PDF, etc.), web accessibility, procurement, etc. ABLE Tech will actively curate this content, updating as needed.

Accessibility Resources Update

ABLE Tech continued to create and maintain the digital accessibility resources available on its [Digital Accessibility Resources](#) webpage. In an effort to reach compliance with the recently updated Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II digital accessibility rule, ABLE Tech plans to redesign and update this collection of resources throughout FY26.

Contract Item 9

Update the **Access for All certification course** content and move it into the library of self-paced courses.

Access for All Certification Course Update

Due to the restructuring of multiple state agencies involved in this project and the reduced demand from the Access for All project at the state level, this project still did not occur in FY25. However, we have discussed the future of this project with DRS and have plans to move forward in FY26.

The current plans include updating and relocating the information contained in the Access for All certification course to a newly designed Training section on the ABLE Tech website.

Contract Item 10

Prepare and submit a **year-end progress report** to the DRS on outcomes achieved toward the Contract.

Year-end Progress Report Update

This Annual Report fulfills the requirements of this contract item.

AT, AEM, and ICT Accessibility for Pre-ETS

Contract Item 1 – Course Materials

Oklahoma ABLE Tech continues to add courses on digital accessibility to its course catalog. Visit the [course catalog](#).

Contract Item 2 – AT Devices, Information, and Training to BEST STEP Campers

- “[AT in the Workplace](#),” a self-paced course, was developed to support transition related training at the Pre-ETS BEST STEP camps. The course introduces various types of AT that might be used in the workplace.
- Five hundred (500) ABLE Tech packages were distributed to all BEST STEP campers. Included were a “Goal Setting Worksheet” and guidance on how to access the self-paced course. All participants received a low-tech AT device as an example and for use as needed.
- Postcards were created to share information about the course catalog and how to borrow AT devices for short-term loans to make informed decisions prior to AT acquisition. These, too, were disseminated to BEST STEP campers.

Contract Item 3 – Training and TA to Pre-ETS Staff

- Information was provided to Pre-ETS staff on how to use the video and materials.
- Through communication with the director and associates, information on how to implement the use of the several materials and course were provided.

Contract Item 4 – Assist with Providing Information about Pre-ETS to the Public

The course, “AT in the Workplace,” is available to the public. It will be marketed to Pre-ETS participants and other transition-focused groups (e.g., public schools).

Contract Item 5 – Prepare and Submit Data and Reports

Relevant data was entered into the NATADS system for the Administration for Community Living.

Contract Item 6 – Year-End Progress Report

This report meets this deliverable.



Science of Hope Initiative

DRS Commission Report: Science of Hope Initiative

Presented September 10, 2025

A Brief History

In 2022, the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services initiated its engagement with the Science of Hope, following Governor Stitt's designation of Hope as one of four key benchmarks in the state's Top Ten vision. Since that time, DRS has worked with intention to integrate the principles of Hope into the fabric of its organizational culture and service delivery. This effort reflects a long-term commitment to cultivating a future-focused, strengths-based approach across all divisions.

The initiative began with *Leading with Hope* training in 2022 for the DRS Executive Team and upper-tier supervisors. In early 2023, six individuals from Executive and Professional Development completed formal Hope Navigator Training, positioning them to guide DRS-specific implementation.

Between 2023 and 2024, more than 600 DRS employees participated in training focused on the Science of Hope. These sessions introduced core concepts—including goal setting, pathways thinking, and agency (willpower)—and helped establish a shared language and framework across divisions.

Beyond Hope Academy

In early 2024, DRS launched its first Beyond Hope Academy (BHA)—a four-month immersive experience for employees ready to deepen their understanding and application of Hope Science.

This interactive learning experience included visits with Dr. Angela Pharris (a lead developer of Hope Science training), DHS staff implementing Hope in their system, and the Workforce Hope Community Center.

All six graduates completed formal Hope Navigator Training in April 2025, joining the original six to form a 12-member cross-divisional Navigator team.

Vision in Progress

Twelve Hope Navigators now serve across Executive, Professional Development, SBVI, VR, and OSB. Representing a range of roles and perspectives, this team plays a key role in advancing DRS's Hope-centered vision. Their efforts are intentionally focused on increasing visibility, strengthening staff engagement, and embedding the principles of Hope into everyday practices. Current initiatives include:

- **Hope Benches** are being installed at DRS offices and schools statewide. Each bench features a plaque with the five Science of Hope questions—plus a matching braille version for accessibility. Visitors are invited to pause, reflect, and—if inspired—record a short video sharing their goals, stories, or Hope moments using #okdrshopebench. The first bench celebration will be held in October 2025 during the Commission meeting at the Oklahoma School for the Blind. Other locations will roll out on their own schedules.
- **Opportunities for Hope** is a monthly video series launching in January 2026, designed to help DRS supervisors integrate Hope Science into their everyday leadership. Each episode explores practical ways to nurture hope in teams, featuring guest voices, success stories, and real-world strategies. The series supports ongoing development and counts toward supervisor credit requirements.
- **DHS Hope Summit** DRS Hope Navigators have been invited to attend the upcoming DHS Hope Summit, hosted by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. This event brings together agencies, partners, and community leaders who are advancing the Science of Hope across Oklahoma. It will feature cross-agency collaboration, shared learning, and inspirational sessions aimed at deepening impact and spreading hope-centered practices statewide.
- **Hope Nuggets in Breaking Barriers:** Beginning in 2026, *Hope Nuggets* will transition into a regular feature within the *Breaking Barriers* newsletter. This shift builds on our 2024–2025 email initiative, where we shared brief quotes and hope-centered catchphrases as gentle reminders that hope is alive and within reach. Moving forward, incorporating these messages into the newsletter allows for broader reach and continuity. We also plan to expand *Breaking Barriers* as a platform for uplifting stories, staff spotlights, and agency-wide encouragement.
- **Hope-Centered Language and Goal Tools:** DRS continues to integrate Hope Science into daily practice by using hope-centered language across trainings, emails, and meetings. This

intentional shift reinforces a shared vocabulary grounded in goals, pathways thinking, and willpower. *Hope Goal Worksheets* have naturally become a helpful tool within Professional Development trainings, they've been embraced as a meaningful way to support personal and professional growth—encouraging staff to reflect, plan, and connect through various training topics.

- **Hope Navigator Engagement and Local Implementation:** Hope Navigators are actively leading local efforts such as bulletin boards, classroom messaging, “Hope Moments” in unit meetings, and other creative engagement in their home offices. These activities are supported through quarterly Hope Navigator Think Tank meetings, where the group collaborates on internal strategies and culture-building ideas to amplify Hope throughout the agency

Future-Focused Visioning

The Hope Navigator team continues to serve as a creative engine for agency-wide culture-building. Through quarterly Think Tank meetings and informal collaboration, Navigators have generated a wide range of forward-thinking ideas aimed at deepening engagement, increasing visibility, and expanding the reach of the Science of Hope across Oklahoma DRS. While not all concepts are actively in development, each reflects the team’s continued belief in our agency’s capacity to lead through innovation and shared purpose.

- **Hope tri-fold brochure and logo** – In development materials will help clearly explain the Hope framework and visually align DRS’s public image with Hope-centered values.
- **Client welcome video** – Early concept designed to introduce DRS services using language rooted in goals, support, and future-building.
- **School involvement** – Includes potential outreach events at OSB and OSD, as well as a student-led effort at OSB where uplifting “Hope messages” are being shared daily. Future plans may include a Jr. Navigator’s program.
- **Second Beyond Hope Academy cohort** – Under consideration to grow leadership and deepen internal expertise.
- **Formal recognition as a Hope-Centered Organization** – Long-term goal through the University of Oklahoma’s Hope Research Center.

The Point...

What began as training has grown into a cultural framework that's shaping how DRS staff communicate, support one another, and serve clients. With twelve Navigators now active and creative ideas moving forward across the agency, the Science of Hope continues to evolve into something meaningful, actionable, and uniquely DRS. We appreciate your continued support.

"Hope is the belief that tomorrow can be better than today, and that you have the power to make it so."

— Dr. Chan Hellman



Oklahoma School for the Deaf Report

Oklahoma School for the Deaf
Report for the DRS Commission September 10, 2025
Dr. Heather Laine Superintendent

We launched the 2025–2026 school year with the theme **“Bridging Generations, Building Bison Futures”** to inspire and guide our students.

Currently, OSD has **105 students enrolled**, with additional enrollments expected in the coming weeks. One exciting highlight is the growth of our preschool program—we anticipate a total of **nine preschoolers by January**.

Our **Family Engagement and Early Language Supports (FEELS)** program continues to thrive, with **about 80 families enrolled**. Through FEELS, our early development specialists provide home and community visits across the state, supporting families of children ages 0–5 who have been identified with hearing loss.

In addition, our **Educational Consultants in the Outreach Program** are actively partnering with rural public school districts across Oklahoma. They are currently serving **112 students statewide**, offering resources and consultation to support the success of Deaf and Hard of Hearing students in their local schools. The number of students will grow more.

July:

July 7–11 – A five-member Student Life team, along with Dr. Laine, attended the **National Student Life for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Conference** in St. Augustine, Florida. The team participated in a variety of workshop sessions covering topics such as behavior, mental health, after-school programming, building connections, and more. It was an enriching opportunity to learn and network with other schools.

July 21–23 – A team attended the **Oklahoma State Special Education Conference** in Oklahoma City. Sessions focused on IEPs, IDEA, transition, and other key areas. The team found these sessions highly informative and valuable. Our **Educational Consultant**, Hailey Weigt, and **Early Development Specialist**, Alexandra Gunter, presented one of several **mini workshop sessions** to help attendees better understand the services we provide to students with hearing loss across the state.

August:

Teachers and staff returned for training sessions prior to the start of the school year with students on **August 11**.

During the week of **August 3–9**, we hosted both **football and volleyball camps**.

- **Football Team** – The team currently holds a **2–1 record**, with wins against Arkansas and Louisiana (forfeited), and one loss to Life Christian Academy. They have six more games scheduled this season, beginning with Alabama this coming weekend.

- **Volleyball Team** – The team has been practicing diligently and recently played two games in Arkansas. While they lost both matches, their skills and teamwork continue to improve. They have more games coming up for this month and October.

OSD News as of September 2, 2025:

We have a senior enrolled in the welding program at **Southern Tech in Ardmore**. Our team worked hard to make this opportunity possible, and he is greatly enjoying the class.

This month, we recognize **Deaf Awareness Month**. In honor of this, here is a piece of history about the Oklahoma School for the Deaf:

Ellsworth Long, a Deaf graduate of both the **Kansas School for the Deaf** and **Gallaudet University**, played a key role in founding the **Territorial School for the Education of the Deaf** in Guthrie in 1898, alongside his wife. In recognition of his contributions, one of our campus buildings is named **Long Hall**.

The **football field construction** is progressing well. The track has been completed, while the field, bleachers, and lights are still in progress.

Several additional projects are underway across campus:

- **Road Improvements** – Repairs are being made in several areas, including behind the gym, along with sidewalk upgrades in select locations.
- **Parking Lot by the Superintendent's House** – Construction has begun but is not yet complete.
- **Auditorium Seat Replacement** – This project is scheduled to begin in October.
- **Griffing Hall Elevator** – The current elevator is being removed as part of the replacement project. For safety, no students are housed on the 2nd or 3rd floors at this time.
- **Blattner Hall** – Middle and high school boys have now relocated from Griffing Hall to Blattner Hall.
- We have three new Suburbans and are waiting for a new mini-bus to arrive.

We are offering **free online ASL classes**! Registration will close on **September 28**, and classes will begin on **September 29**. These classes are **self-paced**, allowing you to learn at your own speed. You can register at <https://courses.osd.k12.ok.us/>

The **OSD Foundation** will host its **annual benefit golf tournament** on **Monday, October 20**, at **Oak Hills Golf & Country Club** in Ada.

Submitted by Dr. Heather Laine



Oklahoma School for the Deaf Donation Report

OSD Donation Report

August 2025

Donations Under \$500.00

Date	Name	Cash	Fund	Explanation	Property Value
8/4/2025	Kidoodles		Career Class	Career exploration	\$ 151.95
8/11/2025	Walmart		Dorm	Hygeine products for dorm students	\$ 99.02
8/19/2025	Taylor Potts		Classroom	Teacher needs	\$ 43.61
Subtotal Cash Under \$500.00		\$ -		Subtotal Property Under \$500.00	\$ 294.58

Donations Over \$500.00

Date	Name	Cash	Fund	Explanation	Property Value
Subtotal Cash Over \$500.00		\$ -		Subtotal Property Over \$500.00	
Subtotal Cash Combined				Subtotal Property Combined	\$ 294.58
Total donations for August 2025				\$294.58	



Oklahoma School for the Blind Donation Report

OKLAHOMA SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND DONATION REPORT

August 2025 Donations

Donations under \$500

Date	Name	Cash	Fund	Property	Value
8/20/2025	Ryan White cotton/box of probes for medical clinic			probes	\$ 83.00
8/20/2025	Bissland Chiropractic/school supplies			supplies	\$ 265.00
8/27/2025	Boulevard Christian Church / personal hygiene items			supplies	\$ 350.00

Subtotal of Cash (under \$500) donated in August 2025	\$ -		Subtotal prop.	\$ 698.00
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Donations \$500 and over

		\$ -	
8/4/2025	Patsi Nix Smith/Clinic	\$ 2,000.00	216
8/14/2025	AERBVI Okla. Chapter/Braille Challenge & Cane Quest	\$ 500.00	701

Subtotal of Cash (\$500 and over) donated in August 2025	\$ 2,500.00		Subtotal prop.	\$ -
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TOTAL DONATION AMOUNTS August 2025	\$3,198.00	
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Commission Minutes

August 13, 2025



OKLAHOMA
Rehabilitation Services
Oklahoma Commission for Rehabilitation Services

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
August 13, 2025

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 10:40 a.m. by Commissioner Flannery with a quorum present: Theresa Flannery, Dr. Janet Barresi, Kelsey Lee, and Kevin Wallace.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

Commission Assistant Kathleen Arrieta confirmed the Commission for Rehabilitation Services follows the Open Meetings Act.

PRESENTATION OF LONGEVITY CERTIFICATES

Theresa Flannery, Acting Chair

The Commission presented a longevity award to Diana Burch, Secretary, Vocational Rehabilitation in Lawton, 30 years with DRS.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Melinda Fruendt, Executive Director

In the Executive Director's absence, Randy Weaver, COO, gave the report.

Report highlights:

Meetings and Events Attended in June, July and August:

- Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth (OCCY)
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Technical Assistance
- Workforce Partnership Meeting; Workforce Commission
- Council of State Governments – Southern Legislative Conference
- Governor's Council on Workforce and Economic Development
- Welcomed teachers and staff back to school at Oklahoma School for the Deaf (OSD) and Oklahoma School for the Blind (OSB).

Other Information:

- June data in AWARE will soon be finalized in preparation for year-end RSA reporting.
- The Quality Assurance team performed a comprehensive study of Pre-ETS transition services to evaluate DRS internal policy and practices for students who need services to gain employment skills.
- The Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (OLBPH) report is complete, has passed accessibility, and is in the final review stages.

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT

Kevin Statham, CFO

- Financial Status Report for FY 2025. As of June 30, 2025, the agency spent \$149.1M of the \$202.5M budget, with remaining encumbrances of \$44.M which represent 95.4% of the budget.
- FY 2027 Budget Request - The budget request for State appropriated funding is \$4,411,000 and will be submitted for approval at the September 10, 2025 Commission meeting.
- FY 2026 Expenditure Limits and FTE Budgetary Limit

A motion was made by Commissioner Wallace and seconded by Commissioner Lee to accept the FY 2026 Expenditure Limits and FTE Budgetary Limit. Commissioner Barresi voted no. Commissioners Flannery, Lee and Wallace voted in the affirmative and the motion carried.

HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

Tom Patt, HR Director

As of June 30, 2025, eight vacant positions were filled, and 59 positions were open. There were six separations which included retirements, resignations, and discharges. There were 972 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.

As of July 31, 2025, seven vacant positions were filled, and 60 positions were open. There were 11 separations which included retirements, resignations, discharges, and a death. There were 972 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR) SERVICES REPORT

Mark Kinnison, Division Administrator

Priority Group Update as of August 12, 2025

- 16 Clients on July 2 and 23 Clients on August 6 were released off the Priority Group 3 waitlist.
- Priority Groups 1 and 2 are open.
- Priority Group 3 is closed, clients waiting: 6
- Total clients on waiting list: 6

Portal Referral Update:

- 71 applications received:
 - o 36 active referrals
 - o 21 referrals pending assignment
 - o 7 new applications taken
 - o 2 referred to another agency or program
 - o 3 were closed or refused services
 - o 2 were closed for other reasons

Report Highlights:

- As of August 1, 2025, the VR program has completed 3,665 applications, 2,577 plans for employment, and 776 successful outcomes, and is on track to surpass last year's totals in all areas.
- Wages on successful outcomes are \$17.49 per hour, with an average of 33.5 hours worked per week.
- Training is taking place with the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMASS Boston. DRS has partnered with Developmental Disabilities Services on this initiative.

UPDATE ON SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI) AND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (SSDI) REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

Jason Price, Program Manager

Report highlights:

The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Reimbursement Program has seen the SSDI reimbursements decline, but this seems to be a national trend. As of July 31, 2025, the VR reimbursement program transitioned 122 clients off SSDI, returning \$1,551,164,46 to the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS).

SERVICES FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED (SBVI) AND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (VR) TRANSITION SERVICES

Renee Sansom Brisco, Transition Coordinator

Report highlights:

- Partnering with University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) to provide a new summer program that will provide high-quality supports for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Working with Rise Staffing to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Work-Based Learning (WBL) as a pilot program in the towns of Jenks and Broken Arrow.
- New Tutoring and Financial Literacy contracts are being developed with Payne County Education Center, ReadWrite Center, Core of Knowledge, Behoove, and Mathnasium.
- The summer programs were a great success and increased the skill sets of individuals with disabilities for successful employment around the state:
 - o Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) Camps were in Ada, Davis, Noble, Waukomis and Tulsa.
 - o Building Employment Skills for Today (BEST) and the Summer Transition Employment Program (STEP) camps served over 403 clients and 289 worked in STEP summer internships.

OKLAHOMA REHABILITATION COUNCIL (ORC)

Carolina Colclasure, Program Manager

Report highlights:

- Six positions will expire in the Council, and the ORC Program Manager will meet with the Director of Appointments at the Governor's office to review the vacancies.
- The Employment Committee met with the DRS Business Services Program (BSP).
- The Strategic Plan was reviewed at the following Committee meetings: Executive; Program and Planning (P&P), and Employment.

ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS TO THE OKLAHOMA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF (OSD)

Dr. Heather Laine, Superintendent

The donations for June 2025 totaled \$1,968.81, and the donations for July 2025 totaled \$1,196.97.

A motion was made by Commissioner Lee and seconded by Commissioner Barresi to accept the June and July 2025 OSD donations. All Commissioners voted in the affirmative and the motion carried.

ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS TO THE OKLAHOMA SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND (OSB)

Brent Pearce, Superintendent

The donations for June 2025 totaled \$7,036.20, and the donations for July 2025 totaled \$200.00.

A motion was made by Commissioner Lee and seconded by Commissioner Barresi to accept the June and July 2025 OSB donations. All Commissioners voted in the affirmative and the motion carried.

ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS TO THE OKLAHOMA LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

Kevin Treese, Program Manager III, SBVI

The donations for June 2025 totaled \$75.00, and the donations for July 2025 totaled \$50.00.

A motion was made by Commissioner Lee and seconded by Commissioner Wallace to accept the June and July 2025 OLBPH donations. All Commissioners voted in the affirmative and the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF THE OKLAHOMA COMMISSION FOR REHABILITATION SERVICES 2026 MEETING SCHEDULE

Theresa Flannery, Chair

A motion was made by Commissioner Flannery and seconded by Commissioner Barresi to approve the 2026 Commission meeting schedule. All Commissioners voted in the affirmative and the motion carried.

APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 4, JUNE 11, AND JUNE 20, 2025 COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Theresa Flannery, Chair

A motion was made by Commissioner Lee and seconded by Commissioner Barresi to approve the minutes from June 4, June 11, and June 20, 2025, Commission meetings as submitted. Commissioner Wallace abstained. Commissioners Flannery, Barresi and Lee voted in the affirmative and the motion carried.

ADJOURN

Theresa Flannery, Chair

A motion was made by Commissioner Flannery and seconded by Commissioner Barresi to adjourn. All Commissioners voted in the affirmative and the meeting was adjourned.