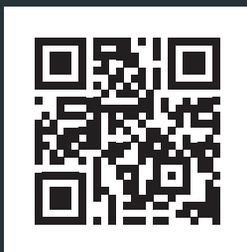




OKLAHOMA
Rehabilitation
Services

ANNUAL

EMPOWERING
OKLAHOMANS
WITH DISABILITIES



www.okdrs.gov



BUILDING TAXPAYERS

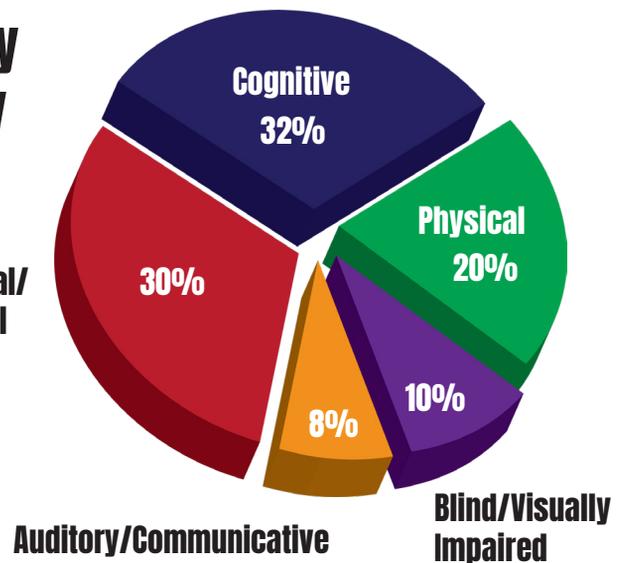
DRS helps Oklahomans with disabilities build an independent future with a job

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services staff are committed to assisting people with disabilities to become employed, obtain education and live independently.

DRS programs help strengthen the state workforce while returning federal dollars to Oklahoma when people leave social welfare programs behind. DRS employees are committed to building a modern, strong state workforce.

Clients by disability

Psychological/
Psychosocial



DRS IMPACT

84,719

Total number of individuals served by DRS in State Fiscal Year 2025.

13,765

Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired cases served by staff in SFY 2025.

\$30,852

Annual average earnings in SFY 2025 of clients who received VR and SBVI services.

1,112

VR and SBVI clients' employment outcomes achieved in 2025.

4,840

Applications for services received by VR and SBVI in SFY 2025.

\$4,628

Average yearly taxes paid by VR and SBVI clients (based on 15% tax rate) in SFY 2025.

3,753

Total number of VR and SBVI clients employment plans completed in SFY 2025.

CASE CLOSURES SAVE TAXPAYERS' MONEY

DRS reimbursed by federal government when clients trade welfare for work

The Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services is reimbursed by the federal government for all case costs for any client who was previously reliant on Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance but is now working.

The reimbursement comes when Social Security determines the client has met its Substantial Gainful Activity earnings level.

In federal fiscal year 2026, that means a person must make \$1,690 per month if they are receiving benefits for a disability other than blindness or visual impairment, and \$2,830 if their disability benefit is due to being designated as statutorily blind. These earnings must be maintained for a minimum of 9 months.

SSA reimburses DRS' Vocational Rehabilitation the entire cost of the case plus a monthly administrative stipend for the months the case was open. SSA officials determined this is a good investment because they estimate that taxpayers save \$7 in return for every dollar they reimburse VR. This is determined based on what the individual would have received over a lifetime of disability benefits.

Per capita, Oklahoma continues to be among the top performing states when it comes to successfully helping people trade a life of disability benefits for a lifetime of quality employment.

During federal fiscal year 2025, DRS received just over \$2.2 million in reimbursement when 187 Oklahomans returned to work.

FEDERAL IMPACT

\$7 to \$1

DRS saves taxpayers \$7 for every \$1 that would have been paid out in benefits over the lifetime of a worker who gets off SSA benefits.

\$4 to \$1

Federal fund match for each dollar the state spends to serve VR and SBVI clients.



OKLAHOMA
Rehabilitation
Services

Agency structure

DRS has eight divisions

- Executive Division
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- Oklahoma School for the Blind
- Oklahoma School for the Deaf
- Management Services
- Financial Services
- Disability Determination

AGENCY LEADERSHIP

Commission for Rehabilitation Services



CHAIRWOMAN THERESA FLANNERY

Theresa Flannery, of Mustang, was appointed by Gov. Kevin Stitt to serve as a member of DRS Commission for Rehabilitation Services.

Flannery is a senior director for social services at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

Prior to that, she worked closely with DRS for 20 years when she was community resources and compliance director at Dale Rogers Training Center in Oklahoma City.

Flannery has received numerous awards for her work to help people with disabilities obtain employment.

She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford. She and her husband, Todd, have two grown children, Samantha and Nickolas.



COMMISSIONER JANET BARRESI

Janet C. Barresi of Oklahoma City was appointed to the Commission by Greg Treat, Oklahoma Senate president pro tempore.

A retired dentist, Barresi was elected as Oklahoma Superintendent of Public Instruction in 2010.

Barresi earned her bachelor's degree in education and communication disorders in 1974 from the University of Oklahoma. She received her master's of science degree in speech and language disorders in 1975 from the OU Health Sciences Center.

Barresi graduated in 1984 with a doctor's degree in dental surgery from the OU College of Dentistry.

Barresi is the widow of John Barresi, mother of twin sons, Benjamin and Joseph, and grandmother to six grandchildren.

AGENCY LEADERSHIP

Commission for Rehabilitation Services



COMMISSIONER KELSEY LEE

Health-care professional and community leader Kelsey Lee was appointed in 2024 to serve on the Commission for Rehabilitation Services.

Lee is chief operating officer of family-owned Sooner Pharmacy in Davis, which has served the community for 40 years.

She has previously served as president of Sara's Project, a child advocacy center serving five counties in southern Oklahoma.

Lee was honored as Davis Citizen of The Year and Murray County Leader of The Year in 2023.

She earned a bachelor's of business administration from Southeastern Oklahoma State University, graduating magna cum laude, and completed a master's of business administration.

Lee is a graduate of Davis High School.



COMMISSIONER KEVIN WALLACE

Former state lawmaker Kevin Wallace is a Wellston native and a 1993 graduate of the University of Central Oklahoma. Wallace co-founded several businesses and continues to serve as a manager at SWT Construction.

Wallace previously owned a small equipment rental company, a small investment firm and co-owned The Wilderness Refuge, a hunting reserve which he sold in 2020. He owns and operates Wallahachie, a real estate holding company and a whitetail deer and cattle breeding operation.

Wallace was elected to the Oklahoma House for District 32 in 2014. He finished his tenure in the House as the Appropriations and Budget Committee Chair in the Legislature in 2024 and afterwards started Executive Strategy Consultants, a government relations firm. Wallace has been married to his wife, Ginny, for 12 years. They have four adult children: Ashlynn, Hailey, Madison and Dalton.

AGENCY LEADERSHIP

Commission for Rehabilitation Services



COMMISSIONER LINDSAY HANNA

Lindsay Hanna has been the chief operating officer at Hearts for Hearing since April 2024.

Hearts for Hearing is a statewide nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering individuals through life-changing hearing services. She is a strategic leader and relationship builder and has spent over two decades advancing healthcare operations, clinical innovation and patient experience.

Hanna oversees the day-to-day administrative and operational functions of the organization. She obtained her bachelor's degree in communication sciences and disorders followed by her master's degree of science in speech language pathology from the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MELINDA FRUENDT

Melinda Fruendt was named executive director of the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services in 2018.

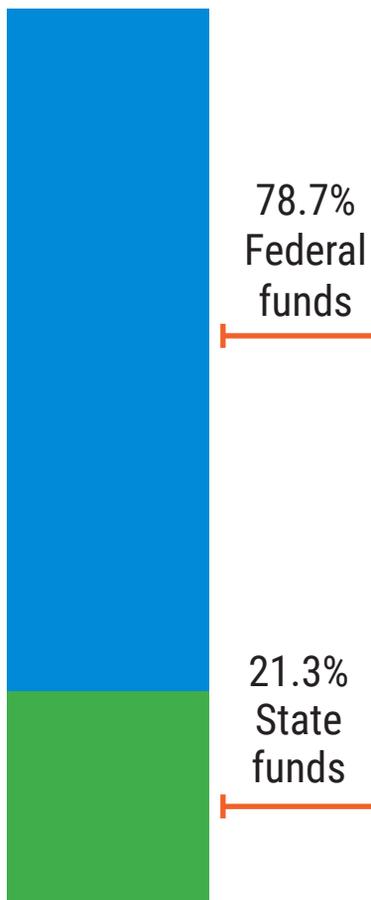
Fruendt's past positions with DRS included chief of staff, executive-level project coordinator and program manager of the Oklahoma Rehabilitation Council.

Fruendt grew up the youngest of six children on a family farm in Chouteau in Eastern Oklahoma and continues to farm and ranch with her husband, Paul, in Guthrie where they have a cow-calf and stocker operation, as well as diversified crops production.

Fruendt holds both a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in agriculture education from Oklahoma State University in Stillwater.

MAXIMIZING IMPACT

Basic support funding



Leveraging dollars to benefit clients, taxpayers

State and federal dollars are used by DRS staff to assist clients to reach their goals of obtaining a career and living independently.

The majority of funding for the Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired is eligible for a federal/state match of 78.7 percent/21.3%.

The Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is state-funded.

The majority of funding for Oklahoma School for the Blind and the Oklahoma School for the Deaf is state appropriations.

Other key OSD funding comes from the Equipment Distribution Program, which provides telecommunications and other equipment to deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind and severely speech-impaired individuals.

DRS utilizes an indirect cost rate as the standardized method for individual programs to pay a fair share of support service (general administration) costs. Statistical information is based on State Fiscal Year 2025.

SFY 2025 EXPENDITURES

	VR/SBVI	Oklahoma School for the Blind	Oklahoma School for the Deaf	Disability Determination	Support Services	Total
State	\$20,638,000	\$7,948,000	\$9,787,000	\$842,000	\$3,167,000	\$42,382,000
Federal	\$52,377,000	\$7,000	\$0	\$45,434,000	\$7,251,000	\$105,069,000
Inter-agency	\$53,000	\$584,000	\$4,721,000	\$0	\$0	\$5,358,000
Other	\$411,000	\$99,000	\$342,000	\$0	\$13,000	\$865,000
Total	\$73,479,000	\$8,638,000	\$14,850,000	\$46,276,000	\$10,431,000	\$153,674,000

Vocational Rehabilitation

Oklahomans with disabilities can achieve career goals with DRS support

DRS staff help Oklahomans with disabilities trade a government check for a career.

Vocational Rehabilitation counselors and technicians work with Oklahomans with any disability, except blindness or visual impairments, to obtain jobs that will allow them to lead independent lives.

Benefits of hiring workers with disabilities include higher levels of loyalty and enthusiasm. They bring diverse life experiences, leading to new approaches to problem solving.

VR staff use a wide range of tools that empower clients including in-person counseling, testing and online tools when necessary to see that each client is on a path to start or return to work. DRS staff remove

any barriers to employment for each client.

DRS' employees work with clients on employment goals and networks with employers to make sure their work force is productive. Staff can also assist employers in training the employees and advise on workplace accommodations, if needed. Such accommodations often have little or no cost.

Services can include career counseling, vocational education and training, and medical services if it is determined those services will help a client find employment. They may also receive assistive technology, job placement and coaching.

Oklahomans with disabilities who are employed become taxpayers, building the state's growing modern workforce.

VR Impact in 2025

12,435

Vocational Rehabilitation cases served by staff in SFY 2025.

4,385

Applications for services received by VR staff in SFY 2025.

3,414

Total number of VR employment plans completed in SFY 2025.

997

Employment outcomes achieved by VR clients in 2025.

\$30,730

Average annual earnings in SFY 2025 of clients who received VR services.

\$4,609

Average yearly taxes paid by VR clients in SFY 2025 (based on 15% tax rate.)



To receive more information about VR services, scan QR code or go to www.oklahoma.gov/okdrs/job-seekers/vr.html.

PAVING THE ROAD

McAlester man's life took him on a journey from anxiety to advocacy



Evan Dozier remembers the early grip of anxiety vividly, an overwhelming sense of danger that often led to an intense urge to escape.

"A lot of it started when I got stuck in an elevator as a kid,"

Dozier recalled. "Another time, I was locked in a bathroom.

Those experiences triggered a lot of anxiety."

At age 10, Dozier was diagnosed with Obsessive-Compulsive

Disorder

(OCD) by a behavioral health therapist.

Though he excelled academically, often earning straight A's, the symptoms of OCD made daily life difficult. He struggled to complete homework and frequently tapped his leg, counted items, and repeatedly checked locks to feel safe.

"There was a time I actually tried to jump out of a moving car during a panic attack," he said. "It wasn't

about wanting to die...it was pure panic, just trying to escape. That's how bad it got."

Mental health care was familiar territory for Dozier. His grandmother owned a counseling practice, and both his mother and aunt worked as therapists. His family sought support early on, but the anxiety intensified as he approached college.

"Graduating high school was already stressful," he said. "Then came college and the financial burden was the first major trigger. I remember sitting in a hotel room, overwhelmed by how I was going to pay for it."

His family introduced him to the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), which connected him with Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist Lisa Reich. Reich collaborated with staff at Oral Roberts University (ORU) to ensure Dozier received the accommodations and support he needed.

Still, the path wasn't easy.

"I remember walking back from class and collapsing into the darkest place I'd ever been," he said. "I cried uncontrollably in my room. I felt completely alone.

DOZIER, PAGE 10



DOZIER FROM PAGE 9

I called my mom and said, 'I don't know if I can keep doing this.'"

Reich helped coordinate services after Dozier was diagnosed with ADHD, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, asthma, OCD, and Ples Planus, a condition involving an accessory navicular bone in the foot.

"Lisa was incredible," Dozier said. "She was always upbeat and encouraging. She gave me hope and connected me to so many resources."

Through DRS, Dozier received assistive technology including a laptop and digital recorder, along with academic accommodations such as private testing rooms at ORU's Student Disability Center.

"That made a huge difference," he said. "Being alone during tests helped reduce the pressure from teachers and classmates. I still felt anxious, but it was more manageable than taking tests in a crowded classroom."

Dozier graduated from ORU with a degree in Social Work, then went on to earn his master's in Social Work from the University of Oklahoma. Today, he serves as a counselor for the Choctaw Nation, a role he says feels like a natural fit.

"I absolutely recommend DRS services," he said. "They helped me prepare for college and eventually for employment. That support made it possible for me to pursue an education and a career I'm proud of."



Watch Dozier tell his story by scanning the QR code or go to www.youtu.be/qRuaS97K_iM

SERVICES FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

Oklahomans with visual disabilities can build a path to independence with DRS services

Oklahomans who are blind or visually impaired can turn to DRS to begin their journey toward an independent life.

SBVI staff assist Oklahomans in meeting their own personal work goals through a broad range of services including career counseling; vocational education and training; medical services required to become employable; and assistive technology geared to their specific needs and job placement.

Oklahomans are eligible for SBVI services if their disability makes it difficult to work. They must be able to benefit from DRS services that prepare clients for employment.

Legal blindness occurs when visual acuity with best correction is 20/200 or less or when side vision results in a field restriction of 20 degrees or less.

Individuals who are eligible for services through SBVI must be blind or visually impaired but might also have additional disabilities as well.

Many clients receive living skills training that allows them to navigate their environments, operate computers, manage money and much more. Empowered with these skills, people who are blind or visually impaired are ready to compete in the workplace and enjoy independence.

SBVI Impact in 2025

1,330

SBVI cases served by staff in SFY 2025.

455

Applications for services received by SBVI staff in SFY 2025.

339

Total number of SBVI employment plans completed in SFY 2025.

115

Employment outcomes achieved by SBVI clients in 2025.

\$31,915

Average annual earnings in SFY 2025 of clients who received SBVI services.

\$4,787

Average yearly taxes paid by SBVI clients in SFY 2025 (based on 15% tax rate.)



To receive more information about SBVI services, scan QR code or go to www.oklahoma.gov/okdrs/job-seekers/sbvi.html.



REFUSING TO BE SIDELINED

Family support, determination helped fuel woman's dreams

An undiagnosed genetic disorder robbed Durant-native Stefany Folger of her vision at age 8, but her parents refused to see their daughter pushed to the side.

Folger suffered from Familial Exudative Vitreoretinopathy (FEVR). It is a hereditary condition where the retinal blood vessels do not develop normally. As

a result, scar tissue can develop, which leads to the detachment of the retinas and visual loss.

"Back in the 1970s, they (doctors) didn't have all of the technology and stuff to repair the

retinas like they do now," Folger said. "So, it left my retinas scarred. My parents chose to mainstream me especially through school. They put me in sports."

The parents' push to keep her in public schools and in sports helped Folger.

"It gave me a broader scope of how I am going to survive in this world as a person with a visual impairment," she said. "However, I wasn't the greatest because I could not see to complete the sporting activities. But they wanted me to be just as involved as any other child my age."

The visual challenges were more difficult in public schools because support systems in the 1970s were not as robust as they are today.

“

In third- and fourth-grades, they (the schools) just floated me along. Fifth-grade was when it started getting real.

Stefany Folger

"In school, I was unable to read standard texts or the blackboard," Folger said. "I was unable to fill out worksheets and forms. I began working with visual services and with a rehabilitation teacher who would try to assist me with getting magnifiers, large print textbooks, bold line paper – that sort of thing."

It was the support of her parents, grandparents and DRS' Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired that helped her keep moving forward.

"My dad would encourage me to be involved in whatever I wanted to do," she said. "He wanted me to do my best but have fun doing it. I would bring my work home at night and he would work with me in the evenings until bedtime."

Still, Folger never wanted to feel different, and she said she was slow to embrace using equipment that would assist her but make her appear different than her fellow students.

"In third- and fourth-grades, they (the schools) just floated me along," she said. "Fifth-grade was when it started getting real."

That year, the teacher moved Folger's desk and that of another student to the side of the room. That student would read to her and help her get classwork done.

Things shifted in high school when Folder's attitude changed.

"When I got into high school in my junior and senior years, my grades really picked up," she said. "I really became comfortable with using magnifiers and asking for help when I needed it."

There were still barriers to overcome.

"I was in my senior year English class," Folger said. "The teacher was older and very set in her ways. She presented her lessons, and everything was put on the blackboard. Obviously, I could not see that."

Folger requested an accommodation, asking the teacher to provide the classwork in a written form. The teacher refused and approached a school counselor to tell her Folger would not succeed in her class. The counselor called Folger's mom who agreed to allow her daughter to be moved to a remedial class where students were not expected to go to college.

Folger asked her mother why she agreed to the change. Her mother said Folger's older brother had taken the teacher's English class and knew the outcome if she hadn't allowed the change.

"She said, 'I knew if you remained in that class, she was going to make life horrific for you,'" Folger said.

After graduation, Folger went to college at Southeastern Oklahoma State University where she obtained a bachelor's degree in psychology. She is working toward a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling. She plans to graduate in 2027.

Folger first began working for DRS in 1991. After a few years, she left to raise her three adopted children. She rejoined DRS and now works as a vocational rehabilitation specialist in Ardmore.

"I feel my disability has given me insight into what it is like to have a disability and seek out opportunities for work," she said. "Many times, they (clients) come in, and they have sustained an injury or a progressive disability that has landed them in a spot where they can no longer do what they were doing. I tell them, 'Life seems dark and dim right now, but things will turn around if you are willing to put the work in.'"

Folger credits DRS for making a difference in her life.

"I believe they completely changed my life by offering me the guidance, especially through high school, in looking at my life past high school," she said. "During those ages when I was fighting against the tools I needed, they didn't give up on me. They gently encouraged me."



Watch Folger tell her story by scanning the QR code or go to [www.youtu.be/obRjiNq8Ch8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=obRjiNq8Ch8)

DIGITAL CONNECTION

Library connects patrons to the world and supports students through its AIM Center

Staff of the Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped keep the window to the world open for Oklahomans with disabilities.

OLBPH staff makes it possible for its patrons to connect to thousands of books and periodicals available in audio recorded and Braille formats – all for free. The library provides these services at no cost to eligible individuals with visual, physical or reading disabilities.

Patrons with internet access have the option of getting books and magazines in seconds by using the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) service.

Other patrons get specially formatted audio cartridges and the device needed to play them through the mail. The cartridges typically contain multiple books and are customized for each patron. Postage to

and from the library is classified as “free matter,” so there is no charge at all for users.

The library, through its Accessible Instructional Materials center, provides Braille and large-print textbooks, assistive devices, and tactile manipulatives for students with visual impairments from birth to 12th grade.

For more information services, go to the library’s website at www.oklahoma.gov/olbph. The library, which is operated by DRS’ Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, is part of the Library of Congress’ National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled.

Oklahomans for Special Library Services is the library’s friends group supporting the work of the library.

OLBPH Impact in 2025

4,755

Oklahomans with disabilities who are patrons of the OLBPH.

1,268

Books circulated by library daily to OLBPH patrons.

5,855

Books received weekly by library patrons.

21

Average number of daily inquiries for OLBPH services.

1,238

Children with disabilities served through AIM Center.

1

Average number of days for child to receive in-house books.



To receive more information about library services, scan QR code or go to www.oklahoma.gov/olbph.html

FOUNDATIONAL HELP

Transition services help youth with disabilities build a future of work and independence



Oklahoma students with disabilities can utilize DRS' Transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services to pursue the jobs they want and live an independent life.

Transition and Pre-ETS services help young Oklahomans with disabilities build a strong foundation for their lives and can include education, training and work experience. Counselors from the Vocational Rehabilitation and Services for the Blind

and Visually Impaired divisions make access to these services possible by working with high school students throughout the state.

VR and SBVI programs provide career focused preparation activities and services

that are intended to help the youth become integrated in their communities, achieve independence or pursue post-secondary education or competitive integrated employment.

Transition students may participate in Pre-Employment Transition Services without having to apply to vocational rehabilitation or be determined eligible for services.

Students with a documented disability, who are enrolled in a recognized educational program, and between the ages of 16 and 21 are eligible for Pre-Employment Transition Services through vocational rehabilitation under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act. The students can take part in job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on postsecondary education opportunities, workplace readiness training and instruction to self-advocacy.

Transition Impact in 2025

5,047

Potentially eligible students who received Pre-Employment Transition Services.

7,835

Total potentially eligible students and Transition VR participants.

2,788

VR participants in Transition services.

\$14,203,227

Total expenditures for Pre-Employment Transition Services.



To receive more information about Transition services, scan QR code or go to www.oklahoma.gov/okdrs/students/transition.html

SKILLS LEARNED

Programs help jobseekers to live their lives

► Older Blind

The Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Service's Older Blind Independent Living Program expands independent living services for people who are 55-years-old or older and legally blind.

The free services are individualized to the client based on professional assessments. They combine the adaptive skills, assistive devices, therapies and resources a person needs to improve independence and stay living at home.

Blindness rehabilitation professionals teach ways to do daily tasks with little or no sight.

They teach skills for reading, writing,



cooking, housekeeping, safely getting around home and community, using assistive devices, managing medicines, diabetes care, grooming and many other tasks essential in daily life.

► DeafBlind

An individual may be referred for DeafBlind Services if they have both of the following: legal blindness or progressive visual disabilities that will result in legal blindness, and severe to profound hearing loss or significant difficulties communicating in home or in community settings.

There are no age requirements for services. However, it primarily serves adults.

DeafBlind Services staff work closely with other DRS programs to ensure Oklahomans with dual sensory loss have equal access to all services.



► O&M training

DRS' Orientation and Mobility Specialists provide instruction to blind individuals in using white canes and other techniques for traveling independently in their communities.



BUILDING ENTREPRENEURS

Business Enterprise Program offers career path for Oklahomans with visual impairments

Oklahomans who are blind or visually impaired can take control of their futures by becoming entrepreneurs with the assistance of a DRS program.

DRS' Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired division's Business Enterprise Program was created through the federally enacted Randolph-Sheppard Act of 1936 and Oklahoma State Statute Title 7. BEP's mission is to provide employment opportunities for people who at least are legally blind with best correction by establishing food service operations across the state.



These operations may consist of vending machine routes, cafeterias or a variety of different types of snack bars. To accomplish this, the BEP aids entrepreneurs by providing extensive business training, licensing business owners, locating and equipping locations, securing initial inventory and offering on-going business consultation services.

BEP entrepreneurs are educated in food safety, hospitality, marketing and business management. A portion of each business' proceeds is paid to DRS for the licensed vendors' retirement and insurance costs.

BOUNTY OF POSSIBILITIES

School's staff committed to assisting students to have rich academic and social life

Staff of Oklahoma School for the Blind are committed to offering top-flight educational, social and athletic opportunities to students who are blind or visually impaired.

The school serves students preschool-age through 12th-grade, and tuition is free.

OSB students receive specialized educational programs in coordination with state-mandated educational requirements. Students develop independent living skills and receive specialized accessible technology equipment to assist each youth in developing their maximum potential.

Students wishing to pursue music can join the OSB Jazz Band, which is recognized across the state for setting a high bar for excellence.

Specialized instruction is a cornerstone of the school and includes Braille, orientation



and mobility, optimum use of low-vision adaptive equipment, technology and tactile graphic skills. These intensive specializations are not readily available at other public schools in the state.

OSB Impact in 2025

100%

Graduation rate for 2024-2025 school year.

81

Students enrolled (day and residential). Eleven students with multiple disabilities.

1 to 6

OSB teacher to student ratio.

1 to 5

Direct Care Specialist to student ratio.

11,642

Direct services from the school's outreach services.

511

Outreach services to families and schools.



To receive more information about OSB, scan QR code or go to www.osb.k12.ok.us



INDEPENDENTLY SKILLED

Berryhill native credits family and school staff for helping her build foundation for future

Stephanie Glynn was born healthy, but at five-months-old, she was diagnosed as having suffered shaken baby syndrome, which left her blind in her right eye and only able to see up to 20 feet in the left.

"I am very lucky that it only took my vision," she said. "I don't have any cognitive impairments or anything like that, so I was very lucky in this situation. The impact of shaken baby syndrome ranges from case to case. Some people don't survive it."

Glynn, who is 16, grew up in Berryhill, a small town between Tulsa and Sand Springs. She has attended OSB since she was in kindergarten and is now a sophomore.

Glynn is among a small group of students who serve as tour leaders when people ask to visit the school.

“

This school has meant so much to me. It has given me so much independence. It doesn't matter how long I have been here. I continue to learn new things every single day.

Stephanie Glynn

GLYNN FROM PAGE 19

During those tours, one of the top questions she is asked most is “Is it tough being a residential student?” Students at OSB go to classes four days a week. Those who live close to campus commute back and forth to school. Students from greater distances live at the school free of charge and go home for three-day weekends, summers and holidays.

“To that question I say ‘yes,’ but it is also so rewarding and so worth it to gain the experience and the skills such as doing your own laundry and cooking your own food,” she said. “That is what they teach you down in the dormitories. They teach you how to live independently.”

Those lessons have given Glynn the confidence to travel to new places and cross busy streets. She is fluent in Braille and math Braille.

“This school has meant so much to me,” she said. “It has given me so much independence. It doesn’t matter how long I have been here. I continue to learn new things every single day.”

The specialized school offers Glynn the chance to participate in extracurricular activities such as playing goal-ball, being a cheerleader and becoming a member of Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA).

“Those are all things that I might not have been able to do in public schools because a lot of public schools do not accommodate people with disabilities,” she said.

Her love of FCCLA has shaped her career goals. She wants to attend Oklahoma State or Northeastern Oklahoma State University to pursue a teaching degree. Glynn has always wanted to be a teacher, but until two years ago, she said she was uncertain what grade or subject she wanted to specialize in.

“I have decided I want to go to college,” Glynn said. “I want to be a family and consumer sciences educator. Being able to teach the next generation is something I am so passionate about. It really means a lot to me.”

She would be teaching students how to



cook, do laundry, create a budget, manage finances and live independently.

“You can rent your own apartment and live independently as long as you have obtained the skills,” Glynn said.

Those who are blind or have visual impairments may be uncertain of whether they can flourish as a residential student. She said the OSB student body has a sense of community because of the unique challenges the students face.

“You are not alone in this situation,” Glynn said. “You have friends around you who are struggling with the same things you are and who may be thriving with the same things you are thriving with. You have this bond you won’t find anywhere else.”

The school’s student population is small compared to public schools in Tulsa, or even to ones in Muskogee, which is the home to OSB. She said students all know each other, and the sense of community has helped grow her confidence.

“I am very lucky to have the support system I have here and at home.” Glynn said. “My family is amazing. The teachers here are amazing. I have gained so many skills. I feel very confident that if someone gives me a job to do like take notes or speak at a public event, I can do it.”



ON A QUEST

OSB students compete in show of cane skills

Oklahoma School for the Blind students who are blind or visually impaired show off their white cane skills each year in an annual competition known as the Oklahoma Regional Cane Quest.

In 2025, OSB staff had a record 44 students ranging from third-grade through 12th-grade competing in the event. Cane Quest is a national program of the Braille Institute of America, based in Los Angeles.

During the Cane Quest event, contestants, with white canes as their guides, identify obstacles and changes in surfaces, such as drop-offs at stairs or curbs, in a quest for medals and prizes.

Contestants who use a long white cane demonstrate their orientation and mobility skills. They are divided into three categories based on age and ability. They are also classified into two visual classifications.

More than 85 volunteers from across the state scored performance or partnered as a teammate or shadow with each contestant in the 2025 competition.

Oklahoma law requires drivers to completely stop their vehicles 15 feet away from pedestrians who are visually impaired and identified by their use of white canes or dog guides. People who violate this law are guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for up to three months or \$100 fine or both.



INDEPENDENTLY SKILLED

OSD staff work to build communication skills

Developing communication skills and learning to advocate for themselves are at the heart of the educational experience for students who attend the Oklahoma School for the Deaf.

OSD staff and students communicate with each other use both American Sign Language and English. Maximized bilingual development is the goal for each student.

Many students use cochlear implants or hearing aids, and building spoken English skills is an essential part of their learning. For students with IEPs, speech and language services are available to support this development.

Students who attend OSD must meet all state graduation requirements. Classes at OSD are delivered in a bilingual setting that incorporates both American Sign Language



and English. Teachers and staff are highly skilled in meeting the unique communication and learning needs of every student.

Students receive full educational and social experiences. They perform in school programs and plays. They have prom and homecoming events for all sports. They compete with other schools on sports teams, leadership programs and academic teams.

OSD is a four-day-a-week program. Those who live close to campus commute back and forth to school. Students from greater distances live at the school free of charge and go home for three-day weekends, summers and holidays. OSD serves Oklahoma students from preschool to 12th grade.

OSD Impact in 2025

100%

Graduation rate for 2024-2025 school year.

101

Students enrolled (day and residential). Six students with multiple disabilities.

1 to 4

OSD teacher to student ratio.

1 to 4

Direct Care Specialist to student ratio.

571

Total youth taking part in schools, programs, external services and camps.

53,179

Total number of people taking part in online ASL classes.



To receive more information about OSD, scan QR code or go to www.osd.k12.ok.us

POWER OF LANGUAGE

El Reno native has built a strong base for her life with school's bilingual communication

Marcella Sankey is confident in what her next step will be after she graduates in May from the Oklahoma School for the Deaf.

The OSD senior is headed to college to study art.

The El Reno native, who is a proud member of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes and Deaf, has attended OSD since kindergarten.

"It (OSD) has taught me ASL in English," she said. "I have learned how to read and write. I have learned how to communicate and advocate for myself."

Sankey, who never attended public school, lives an active student life, competing in basketball and volleyball. She is also a cheerleader and a member of Family Career Community Leaders of America.

OSD staff has built a foundation for students, creating a bilingual learning environment using both American Sign Language and English.

"Everyone here at OSD signs all the time so there is access everywhere," she said. "I have learned ASL and English to better communicate with everyone."

One member of the OSD staff has made a big impact on Sankey's life.

"There is a dorm staff member - Kizzie Crouch," she said. "I look up to her. I feel very connected with Kizzie. She is Native American. She's Deaf, and she is helping me on my journey."



DDS DECISIONS IMPACT OKLAHOMANS, OTHERS

Staff knows decisions affect people's lives

Staff of the DRS' Disability Determination Services understand that decisions on whether Oklahomans are medically eligible for Social Security disability benefits are fundamental for people looking to build a secure future.

DDS staff understand those needs and prioritize quickly processing cases as well as delivering accurate decisions.

DDS makes medical eligibility determination on applications for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for the Social Security Administration (SSA).

These determinations are based on federal rules and regulations. All applications for benefits must be submitted through the SSA office.

For each disability claim, a team of para-professionals, disability specialists and medical/psychological consultants review

each applicant's medical and work history.

The team determines whether applicants meet federal medical eligibility criteria for disability or blindness.

DDS' claim processing time averages 161 days.

During Federal Fiscal Year 2025, DDS was on track to meet their budgeted workload, processing 97.6-percent of their allotted cases as of Sept. 15, 2025. DDS staff also processed cases for Georgia and Texas.

DDS has also placed a priority on saving taxpayers money by investigating potentially fraudulent claims.

The Cooperative Disability Investigations unit investigates individual disability claims and identifies third parties to prevent fraud in SSA's SSDI and SSI disability programs and related federal and state programs.

DDS' budget is federally funded.

DDS Impact in 2025

65,256

Disability cases completed.

66,882

Budgeted case workload for FFY 2025.

99.6%

Oklahoma decision accuracy rate on cases.

97.6%

Processed budgeted workload.

161

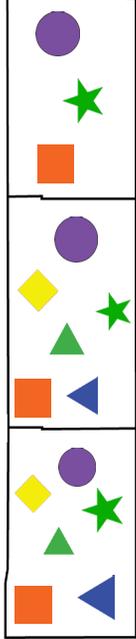
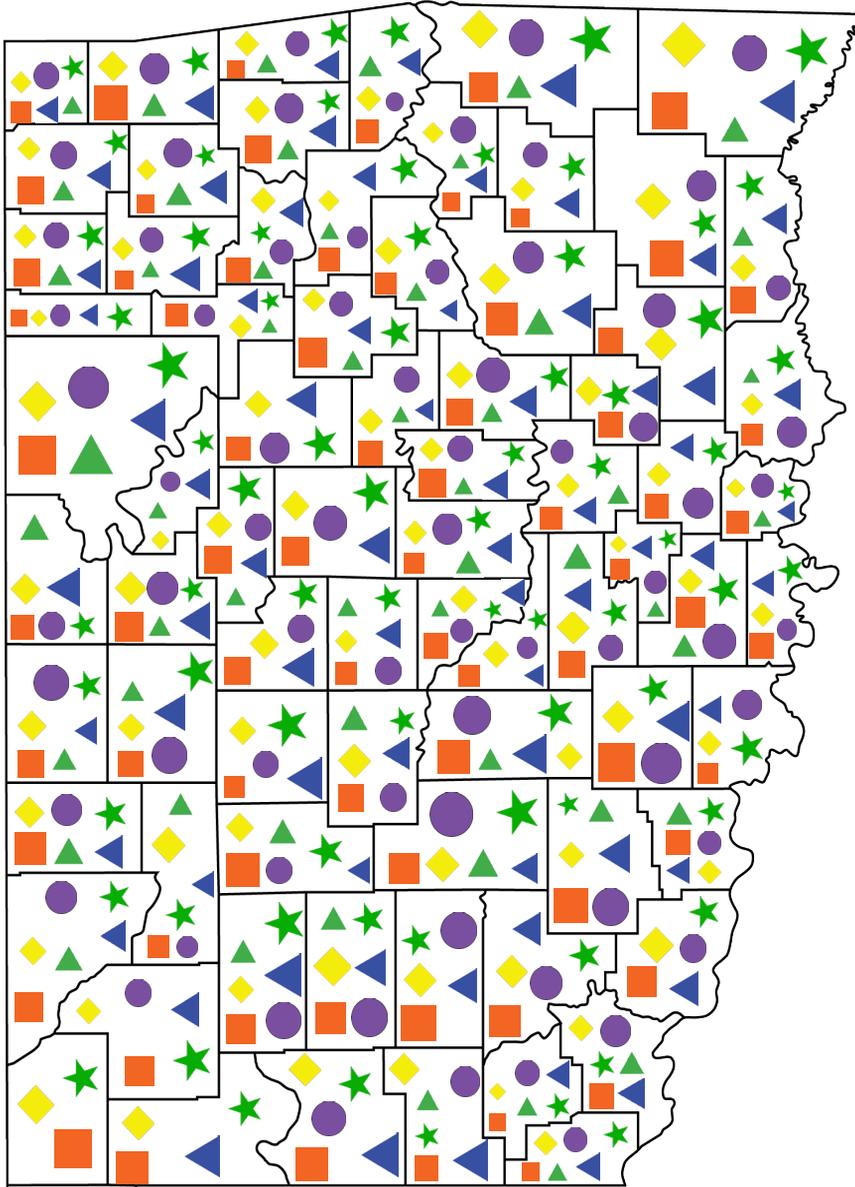
Average processing time (days after receipt of cases).

*Numbers based on Federal Fiscal Year estimates as of Sept. 15, 2025.



To receive more information about DDS services, scan QR code or go to www.oklahoma.gov/okdrs/independence/dds.html

DRS IMPACT BY COUNTY



Guide to the map

The map includes symbols that show if Oklahomans from the county received services from the following DRS divisions.

Division	Symbol
Vocational Rehabilitation	Green Star
Services of the Blind and Visually Impaired	Blue Triangle
Library for Blind and Physically Handicapped	Yellow Diamond
Oklahoma School for the Blind	Green Triangle
Oklahoma School for the Deaf	Purple Circle
Disability Determination Services	Orange Square

DRS served 84,719 individuals during State Fiscal Year 2025 (July 1st, 2024 through June 30th, 2025). An additional 47,009 individuals outside of the state of Oklahoma participated in OSD's free online ASL classes.

DRS IMPACT BY COUNTY

County	VR	SBVI	OSB	OSD	DDS	OLBPH	Total by county
Adair	36	18	5	24	346	34	463
Alfalfa	22	3	4	7	45	17	98
Atoka	133	9	0	30	220	27	419
Beaver	16	0	0	7	39	0	62
Beckham	110	19	3	12	258	38	440
Blaine	46	2	1	14	136	16	215
Bryan	181	24	7	32	931	51	1,226
Caddo	110	18	1	37	467	37	670
Canadian	312	35	2	168	1,271	225	2,013
Carter	177	50	13	73	814	68	1,195
Cherokee	102	12	8	56	600	67	845
Choctaw	51	18	4	58	315	25	471
Cimarron	10	3	1	3	10	5	32
Cleveland	558	59	6	215	2,196	440	3,474
Coal	65	6	0	27	87	9	194
Comanche	414	63	6	111	1,972	168	2,734
Cotton	12	1	3	19	73	13	121
Craig	38	8	7	18	268	33	372
Creek	199	35	0	70	940	130	1,374
Custer	169	19	2	35	306	53	584
Delaware	59	14	9	55	586	65	788
Dewey	23	3	1	3	47	3	80
Ellis	20	1	0	0	42	3	66
Garfield	336	49	10	57	901	93	1,446
Garvin	145	21	2	77	496	36	777
Grady	142	17	1	68	617	61	906
Grant	12	1	3	5	75	4	100
Greer	45	1	1	1	85	6	139
Harmon	6	2	1	2	45	4	60
Harper	10	0	0	0	31	8	49
Haskell	87	7	1	10	212	13	330
Hughes	69	9	2	24	252	25	381
Jackson	104	2	6	20	331	25	488
Jefferson	17	3	0	8	123	9	160
Johnston	78	6	0	13	176	11	284
Kay	129	14	6	31	721	60	961
Kingfisher	30	4	0	8	137	20	199
Kiowa	91	2	0	6	168	11	278
Latimer	41	6	0	11	109	13	180
LeFlore	139	30	4	48	940	40	1,201
Lincoln	50	10	0	39	503	64	666

County	VR	SBVI	OSB	OSD	DDS	OLBPH	Total by county
Logan	92	12	0	38	403	79	624
Love	38	9	0	9	122	7	185
Major	29	8	8	10	61	19	135
Marshall	81	11	2	9	264	19	386
Mayes	182	8	10	29	624	44	897
McClain	72	16	0	46	496	61	691
McCurtain	101	34	2	13	568	46	764
McIntosh	39	14	2	22	394	37	508
Murray	114	13	6	137	170	33	473
Muskogee	102	56	27	71	1,368	167	1,791
Noble	12	7	3	11	130	19	182
Nowata	48	5	2	10	122	16	203
Okfuskee	32	3	2	20	167	25	249
Oklahoma	2,572	274	38	879	11,124	1,196	16,083
Okmulgee	133	16	4	27	632	53	865
Osage	94	9	5	34	388	68	598
Ottawa	90	14	13	31	716	44	908
Pawnee	47	2	5	14	260	32	360
Payne	224	32	5	49	851	135	1,296
Pittsburgh	252	35	2	36	729	74	1,128
Pontotoc	305	56	4	110	661	63	1,199
Pottawatomie	193	29	9	96	1,279	137	1,743
Pushmataha	69	18	0	17	214	20	338
Roger Mills	10	1	0	12	19	5	47
Rogers	245	42	8	102	792	122	1,311
Seminole	127	15	7	38	457	35	679
Sequoyah	51	21	5	30	782	74	963
Stephens	84	21	0	52	680	63	900
Texas	17	2	4	13	120	5	161
Tillman	8	1	0	6	112	8	135
Tulsa	1,759	301	52	506	7,869	882	11,369
Wagoner	145	22	11	23	430	74	705
Washington	148	28	2	57	682	108	1,025
Washita	63	5	0	7	182	16	273
Woods	80	7	3	5	79	15	189
Woodward	86	13	0	19	244	44	406
OK unknown	5,047*	0	0	3,263	0	0	8,310
Out of State	42	39	0	0	0	18	99
Total by program	17,227	1,803	361	7,353	52,082	5,893	84,719

- The school counts include students at the physical locations, student outreach, camps, and other training and equipment programs.
- The OK School for the Deaf continues to offer free ASL classes online. This has resulted in large variances in service numbers for OSD since the online ASL classes became available. During SFY 2025, 6,170 Oklahomans participated in the ASL classes along with 47,009 individuals outside of Oklahoma. The ASL participants outside of Oklahoma have been excluded from the count of individuals served.
- The OK Library for the Blind count includes library patrons and students served through the AIM Center.
- SBVI counts include job-seeking clients and participants in the Older Blind Independent Living Program.
- *Pre-ETS services are provided to potentially eligible students, as required under WIOA, throughout the state. The specific county of residence is not available for the participants, and they are counted under VR - OK Unknown.



OKLAHOMA Rehabilitation Services



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