

GEORGIA DIRECTORY OF LOW VISION SERVICES

Developed and produced by the

Georgia Low Vision Task Force
and the
**Georgia Low Vision Advisory
Committee**
(Georgia Optometric Association)

January 2009

Georgia Low Vision Task Force Directory of Low Vision Services

A directory of:

- 1) eye doctors who provide low vision services
- 2) professionals who work cooperatively to provide low vision services
- 3) general information regarding multiple providers of services for individuals with low vision including references, contact people and independent providers
- 4) educational opportunities in low vision within the state

HOW: The GA Low Vision (LV) Task Force is a grass roots group of doctors and professionals whose mission is to develop comprehensive low vision services throughout the state. This directory is a product of that group's initial efforts. This directory will be used by: 1) professionals who work with individuals with low vision so that they can refer to eye care professionals who have a background in low vision; 2) by eye doctors to refer to other professionals who work in the field with individuals with low vision; and 3) patients, consumers and their families to locate needed resources.

WHY: It is the hope of the GA LV Task Force that doctors and professionals who work with people having low vision will strive to work in an interdisciplinary service delivery model. As defined by the group, interdisciplinary low vision service includes doctors and professionals working together to provide extensive, specialized low vision examinations, therapy in the use of low vision devices in the settings the devices will be used, and finally prescriptions of the devices. To do this, education and rehabilitation professionals who work with people having low vision will be able to complete a goals assessment and preliminary visual evaluations in the habitual setting and provide that information to the eye doctor during the referral for the low vision clinical evaluations. The eye doctor can then evaluate the patient and recommend devices. These devices can be dispensed (under the care of the professional) for training and trials in the habitual settings. Referral back to the eye doctors for final prescription can complete the model. Attached are a list of options for referral to vision rehabilitation/educational services as well as descriptive paragraphs and qualifications for each type of professional. Contact information for referral is also provided.

THANKS: The GA LV Task Force would like to thank those individuals who are interested in participating in a collaborative effort to develop COMPREHENSIVE low vision services by working together, referring to each other and communicating for the betterment of the individuals with low vision. Below is information about the WHY of interdisciplinary low vision services and definitions of the variety of professions who work with people having low vision. Learn what service each discipline has to offer and refer appropriately so visually impaired individuals will have full services in all areas. Thanks also go to the members of the Task Force for their help in organizing this directory.

WHAT can you do? 1) If you find something inaccurate or missing, send an email to Susan Primo, O.D., at sprimo@emory.edu; 2) Volunteer to produce the next generation of this directory.

SUMMARY: This directory has been written to provide the individual with low vision or his/her representative the information necessary to make informed decisions regarding their rehabilitation plan. It is organized into several sections designed to give a low vision individual the information necessary to actively participate in their rehabilitation plan.

The first section is an overview describing the service providers the low vision individual and their family will be interacting with during the course of their rehabilitation plan. The service providers are divided into two categories – providers for all ages and providers that work with children only. These descriptions provide overviews of the education and experience that the service providers have and detail how they may be working with the low vision individual and his/her family.

The second section provides a brief overview of the driving vision regulations in Georgia, particularly as they pertain to the use of bioptic telescopes for driving. It includes links to the current legislation as well as vision forms, etc. from the Department of Driving Services.

The next section provides detailed information on agencies and organizations along with those that have training programs designed to provide low vision individuals skills necessary live and work as independently as possible at home, work or school. These programs provide vocational training, assistive technology information, financing, orientation and mobility training, counseling, braille instruction, youth services, and many more services to the low vision individual and their family.

Finally we have included a list of doctors who perform the clinical low vision examination which is the first step in the low vision individual's rehabilitation plan. Information on low vision devices, low vision device training, warranties and loaners may also be provided. All doctors in this directory are members of the Georgia Optometric Association.

Insurance information for the doctors and service providers has not been included. The rehabilitation plan for each low vision individual is customized for their particular medical/vision condition. Each individual has unique medical/vision coverage. Each individual will be responsible for determining low vision rehabilitation plan cost and coverage with respect to their particular medical and vision insurance coverage. Several programs in the professional development training programs provide low cost or financing options for low income visually impaired individuals and their families.

The Georgia Low Vision Task Force and the Georgia Low Vision Advisory Committee hope you find the information in this directory helpful in referring low vision individuals to the program or specialist that is appropriate for their treatment or the establishment of a rehabilitation plan.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	Page 5
Service Providers for All Individuals	Page 7
Service Providers and Programs for Children	Page 13
Navigating the School System	Page 15
State Rules and Regulations/ Definition of ADA	Page 18
Driving Regulations	Page 19
Professional Development	Page 20
Agencies and Organizations	Page 22
Doctor Listing	Page 57
Survey	Page 65

INTRODUCTION: The Interdisciplinary Nature of Low Vision Services
(from Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals’
webpage www.acvrep.org)

Low vision services are an integral part of the education and rehabilitation of individuals who have partial sight. In order for these services to be effective and of high quality, it is important for the doctor and professional providing the services to be knowledgeable and skilled in low vision service provision, and to adhere to high standards. Doctors and professionals will serve as members of interdisciplinary low vision teams to assure that the services are as complete as possible.

Low vision service delivery systems should be broadly defined to include any service delivery mechanism in the education and rehabilitation of persons with low vision by instruction of visual skills and/or the prescription and use of low vision devices. Service settings include, but are not limited to school delivery systems, university/hospital/rehabilitation centers, nursing homes and day care centers. Low vision services should be interdisciplinary in nature; that is, services require that more than one professional manage individual cases by dialogue. The interdisciplinary team may include, but is not limited to, an eye care specialist, a low vision therapist, and a counselor. These professionals will work together in order to assure that a high standard of service is consistently maintained and, to the greatest degree possible, that the unique needs of the individual with low vision are met.

A qualified eye care specialist, either a specially-trained optometrist or an ophthalmologist, provides the clinical low vision examination. A clinical low vision examination is an important first step for two reasons: (1) to assure that all other avenues to improving vision (medical, refractive, etc.) have been taken, and (2) to assure that the low vision devices provide the optimum optical image. A clinical low vision examination includes:

- the identification and clarification of client goals
- a history
- an assessment of ocular health
- an assessment of visual activities
- an assessment of visual fields
- an assessment of contrast sensitivity
- an assessment of illumination and glare difficulties
- an assessment of binocularity
- an assessment of color vision
- a refraction
- an assessment of low vision devices
- other assessments as deemed necessary such as electro-diagnostic testing, etc.

The eye care specialist will enhance visual performance with spectacles, contact lenses, tinted lenses, or other optical means. Low vision devices are prescribed by the eye care specialist, and are specific to the tasks that the person with low vision desires to perform.

The interdisciplinary low vision team will develop a rehabilitation plan for the individual with low vision that states the goals of rehabilitation and describes how these goals will be met. Because low vision rehabilitation requires the input and motivation of the consumer to succeed, the individual with low vision or his/her representative will be included in the development and approval of the rehabilitation plan.

The interdisciplinary team provides follow-up care to assure that all goals of the rehabilitation plan and the concerns of the consumer have been met. If vision has changed or if new visual goals are identified, the team approach to rehabilitation continues to be implemented as described above.

Service Providers For Individuals with Visual Impairments

(in alphabetical order)

Certified Low Vision Therapist (CLVT)

(from Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals' webpage www.acvrep.org)

Defined: A CLVT develops and conducts a functional assessment of visual abilities for everyday tasks that are important to the individual with low vision. Everyday visual tasks might include reading, writing, moving through space, grooming, watching television, cooking, cleaning, household repair, finding lost objects, or other educational, vocational, or recreational pursuits. The nature and extent of services needed is guided by the results of functional assessment. The functional assessment includes:

- a review of the information from the clinical low vision examination
- an assessment of the individual's functional visual abilities for everyday tasks without and with the low vision devices prescribed by the eye care specialist
- an assessment of the environment in which vision will be used, including but not limiting to lighting, color and contrast, position in space, and time factors associated with the completion of tasks, and the size and distance of objects

The CLVT will implement aspects of the rehabilitation plan which include:

- instruction in the use of visual abilities for daily tasks
- instruction in the use of low vision devices prescribed by the eye care specialist
- instruction in the use of visual environmental cues
- modification of the visual environment to enhance the use of vision
- the use of appropriate psychosocial information to devise motivational strategies to assist consumers in performing desired tasks.

Qualifications: ACVREP offers a certification for low vision therapists. To be eligible for certification, applicants must meet the following minimum criteria:

- Possess at least a bachelor's degree in education, rehabilitation or health care.
- Sign a written statement agreeing to uphold a high ethical and professional standard (including working cooperatively with an eye doctor).
- Pass a written examination to demonstrate knowledge about low vision rehabilitation.

All individuals who are certified by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals may be viewed on the website at www.acvrep.org. Click on "**ACVREP's Current Directory of Certificants**".

Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist (COMS)

(from Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals' webpage www.acvrep.org)

Defined: Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Instruction is a sequential process in which visually impaired individuals are taught to utilize their remaining senses to determine their position within the environment and to negotiate safe movement from one place to another. The skills involved in this teaching include but are not limited to:

- Concept Development, which includes body image, spatial, temporal, positional, directional, and environmental concepts.
- Motor Development, including motor skills needed for balance, posture, and gait, as well as the use of adaptive devices and techniques to assist those with multiple disabilities.
- Sensory Development, which includes visual, auditory, vestibular, kinesthetic tactile, olfactory, and proprioceptive senses, and the interrelationships of these systems.
- Residual vision stimulation and training
- Human Guide Technique through cane and orientation training
- Upper and Lower Protective Techniques
- Locating Dropped Objects
- Trailing

Qualifications (Editor's Note): Orientation & Mobility Specialists can be university trained with a Bachelor's or Masters degree and can have ACVREP Certification. Professional Certification in Orientation and Mobility is offered by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP). The initial application process requires completion of course work from one of the AER approved university/college programs, including an internship, and a passing score on the orientation and mobility certification examination. O&M Specialists are eligible to sit for the low vision therapist certification exam.

All individuals who are certified by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals may be viewed on the website at www.acvrep.org. Click on "**ACVREP's Current Directory of Certificants**".

Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (CVRT) – Formally known as Rehabilitation Teachers for the Blind

(from Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals' webpage www.acvrep.org)

Definition: A CVRT instructs persons with visual impairments in the use of compensatory skills and assistive technology that will enable them to live safe, productive and independent lives. Vision Rehabilitation Therapists work in areas that enhance the vocational opportunities, independent living and educational development of persons with vision loss, and may include working in center-based or itinerant settings.

The skills that may be taught by a Vision Rehabilitation Therapist may include, but are not limited to:

1. Communication Systems (braille, handwriting, recording skills, use of electronic reading systems, use of assistive technology and computer access technology, etc.)
2. Personal Management (grooming, hygiene, clothing organization, medical measurement, socialization skills, etc.)
3. Home Management (organization and labeling, repair and home maintenance, budgeting and record keeping, etc)
4. Activities of Daily Living (cooking, cleaning, shopping, safety, money organization and management, etc)
5. Leisure and Recreation (hobbies, woodworking, crafts, sports, etc)
6. Psychological Aspects of Blindness and Vision Loss.
7. Medical Management (assessment and instruction and training of adaptive medical equipment)
8. Basic Orientation and Mobility Skills (sighted guide, safety techniques, etc)

Qualifications: (Editor's Note): Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapists can be university trained with a Bachelor's or Masters degree and can have ACVREP Certification. Professional Certification in Vision Rehabilitation Therapy is offered by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP). The initial application process requires completion of course work from one of the AER approved university/college programs, including an internship, and a passing score on the orientation and mobility certification examination. CVRT's are eligible to sit for the low vision therapist certification exam.

All individuals who are certified by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals may be viewed on the website at www.acvrep.org. Click on "**ACVREP's Current Directory of Certificants**".

Occupational Therapist (OT)

Defined: OT is the therapeutic use of activities of daily living to increase independent function, enhance development and prevent disability. Therapeutic techniques may include adaptation of a task or environment to achieve maximum independence or enhance quality of life.

Activities of daily living which may be addressed by an OT include, but are not limited to, self-care, meal preparation, financial management, functional communication, household management, functional and community mobility, work, socialization, play and leisure activities. They may address issues of low vision and blindness as it relates to an activity of daily living. OTs are trained to work with people of all ages, from birth to death, with all types of disabilities. They also assist with the training of specific low vision devices prescribed by the doctor. The location in which an OT may practice varies.

Qualifications: A registered occupational therapist (OTR) has a minimum of a baccalaureate degree in OT, which includes the study of biological, and behavioral sciences, pathological conditions and specific OT techniques for patients throughout their lifespan (birth to death). A minimum of six months of full-time fieldwork is also required prior to receiving the degree, bachelor's or masters level. The OT is required to pass a comprehensive exam to become registered. Most states require OTRs to be licensed by the state. Requirements to maintain this license vary from state to state, but most involve acquiring continuing education units (CEUs). There are several continuing education courses currently being offered to train OTs about vision rehabilitation. OT's are eligible to sit for the low vision therapist certification exam.

OTs are recognized as independent medical providers. They receive a prescription and orders from a physician. They are required to specifically document the treatment of a patient and are required to develop individualized treatment plans and goals based on the needs of each individual patient.

For more information about occupational therapists, please contact one of the following organizations: The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) at 1-800-SAY-AOTA or www.aota.org or the Georgia Occupational Therapy Association at 919-771-0115 or www.ncota.com.

Ophthalmologist; Low Vision Specialist

Defined: Ophthalmologists who provide services for adults with visual impairments approach low vision as medical rehabilitation, which begins with optical and non-optical devices but includes comprehensive training in activities of daily living and introduction to resources. The ophthalmologist, as team leader, evaluates the patient, explains the disease and discusses the functional and psychological impact of vision loss with the patient and family, recommends appropriate optical devices, and sets forth a rehabilitation plan. The team carrying out the plan may include occupational therapists, rehab teachers, Orientation & Mobility Specialists (O&M), CLVTs, ophthalmic

technicians, social workers and psychologists. Final recommendations for devices may be made at the completion of therapy.

Qualifications: Ophthalmologists are medical doctors (M.D.) who complete four years of undergraduate pre-medical studies, four years of medical school, one year of hospital-based internship, and at least three years of ophthalmology residency training. Medical school and internship focus on all aspects of human physical and mental health - its preservation and the pathology, diagnosis, prevention, and medical and surgical treatment of the entire spectrum of disease, as well as the rehabilitation of those with functional deficits. Ophthalmology residency focuses on the eye and the visual system: the maximization of vision, the prevention and diagnosis of diseases of the eye and of systemic diseases which affect the eye, and the spectrum of medical and surgical treatments, as well as the management of patients with low vision. The American Academy of Ophthalmology has a low vision interest group at www.aao.org.

Optometrist; Low Vision Specialist

(paragraphs taken from American Optometric Association Website www.aoanet.org)

Defined: Doctors of Optometry who specialize in low vision care are skilled in the examination, treatment and management of patients with visual impairments not fully treatable by medical, surgical or conventional eyewear or contact lenses. Each type of low vision problem requires a different therapeutic approach. A thorough examination by an optometrist, which will also include tests to determine the patient's current vision status, may also include a vision rehabilitation program to enhance remaining vision skills. The low vision specialist will ask for a complete personal and family general health and eye health history. In addition, the optometrist will discuss the functional problems with the patient, including such things as reading, functioning in the kitchen, glare problems, travel vision, the workplace, television viewing, school requirements, and hobbies and interest.

Preliminary tests may include assessment of ocular functions such as depth perception, color vision, contrast sensitivity, and curvature of the front of the eye. Measurements will be taken of the person's visual acuity using special low vision test charts, which include a larger range of letters to more accurately determine a starting point for gauging low vision. Visual fields are usually evaluated, and each eye will be examined. The optometrist may prescribe various treatment options, including low vision devices, as well as assist the person with identifying other resources for vision and lifestyle rehabilitation.

Qualifications: Optometrists possess a Doctor of Optometry degree (O.D.) and have completed four years of undergraduate pre-medical studies, four years of optometry medical school and many have completed one or more years of formal post-graduate education in a residency or fellowship program. Optometric education focuses on the eye and the visual system: the maximization of vision, the prevention and diagnosis of diseases of the eye and of systemic diseases which affect the eye, and the spectrum of medical and surgical treatments, as well as the function of the entire body and its impact

on the eye and visual system. Optometrists are independent practitioners licensed by the state to diagnosis and treat diseases of the eye and visual system.

Virtually all optometrists (ODs) complete coursework and/or hands-on clinical training in low vision as part of their four year OD curriculum. They frequently have also completed additional training such as special rotations in clinics or agencies which serve blind and low vision patients (i.e., called externships) during their fourth year of training. Others have completed post-graduate residency training whereby they completed an additional 12 months of training and are residency certified in low vision. Still others have completed a different type of residency program (e.g. primary care) which - though not the main emphasis - included specific hands-on training in low vision. Attaining the status of Diplomate in Low Vision through the American Academy of Optometry is generally considered evidence of the highest level of credentials an optometrist may achieve in low vision. Appropriate clinical experience is also evidence of an optometrist's experience and commitment to providing low vision care. Many OD's who have worked in low vision/blindness programs (i.e., VA Blind Rehab Centers, private or state agencies serving the blind or visually impaired, etc.) or who emphasize low vision care in their practice (i.e. maintain suitable stock of low vision fitting materials, devote significant portions of time to low vision, etc) would also be expected to have a high level of expertise in this field.

For referrals to Georgia Optometric Association optometrists who provide low vision care in GA, see the list of providers at the end of this directory.

Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI)

Defined: Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVI) provide direct and consultative services to and for children with visual impairments in order to assure maximum growth in all developmental areas. Services may include a) evaluation and assessment, b) direct instruction, c) counseling, and d) liaison with parents and regular classroom teachers.

Qualifications: A bachelor's degree from an accredited university with a program in visual impairments; state certification. TVIs are eligible to sit for the low vision therapist certification exam.

Contact: For additional information about vision services in each school system, contact the local director of special education. If you need assistance in contacting the special education director, please consult with the school principal or the school system central office.

Services and Programs Specifically for Children

Please go to individual listings for more information

0-4 years:

Babies Can't Wait (BCW) is Georgia's statewide interagency service delivery system for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities and their families. BCW has a statewide directory of information managed by Parent-to-Parent, Inc. of Georgia. The directory provides information about the BCW Program located nearest to the child and family. To access the directory, call 1-800-229-2038 or (770) 451-5484 in Atlanta. The State BCW Office number is (404) 657-2726 or toll free: 1-888-651-8224. You may also use the Children With Special Needs Coordinator Contact List for information on how to reach local Babies Can't Wait Programs. <http://health.state.ga.us/programs/bcw/>

Georgia Pines is a statewide early intervention program, begun in 1980, for families of children birth to five years of age with a diagnosed hearing and/or visual impairment. Families receive information and training to assist their children to develop to their potential across all areas of development. All services are provided in the home or other natural environment and are free to Georgia Pines families. 800-522-8652; 404-298-4882 (voice and TTY) www.gapines.net

Center for the Visually Impaired BEGIN Program:

Services: Information and referral; programs for pre-school and school-age children, including essential services to enhance development and potential for newborn to early school-aged children with severe visual impairments. Through BEGIN, families learn about their children's visual conditions and become advocates to seek the best opportunities for their children.

404-875-9011 http://www.cviatlanta.org/textsite/wehelp_ec.shtml

National Association of Parents of Children with Visual Impairments:

Services: National organization linking together parents of children with similar visual problems. Parent-to-Parent: provides support and information to parents of children with disabilities. One of the most meaningful sources of support is other parents who have experienced parenting a child with a disability.

800-562-6265 www.spedex.com/napvi/

Central Office 800-229-2038; **Southeast Office** 912-489-1904; **Middle Georgia Office** 478-934-3694; **Southwest Office** 229-436-7774; **Northwest Office** 706-802-5535

Savannah Association for the Blind – Pre-school Program:

Service: Serving infants and pre-school children in Southeastern Georgia.

V.I.P.S. – Serving visually impaired children from birth to five years of age.

214 Drayton Street, Savannah, GA 31401

912-236-4473 www.sabinc.org

5-17years:

Center for the Visually Impaired STARS Program:

Services: Information and referral; programs for school-age children. STARS (Social Therapeutic and Recreational Services) is an educational, recreational and social skills program for students ages six to 21. Through after-school, weekend and summer programs, STARS challenges the isolation and inactivity that many blind or visually impaired youth experience.

404-875-9011 http://www.cviatlanta.org/textsite/wehelp_ys.shtml

Georgia Academy for the Blind:

Service: A residential school for visually impaired, blind, or multi-handicapped children in grades from pre-school through 12th.

478-751-6083 www.gabmacon.org

Georgia Project for Assistive Technology (GPAT) provides a range of assistive technology professional development and technical support services to local school system staff, students, and their families. Funded since 1991 as a special project of the Georgia Department of Education (Division for Exceptional Students), GPAT's mission is to develop and enhance local expertise in assistive technology to ensure that students with disabilities have access to the assistive technology devices and services that they need in order to participate, progress, and achieve in their educational programs.

404-463-3597 www.gpat.org

Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults: Southeast Region
404-766-2820 TDD/TTY; 404-766-9625 phone www.helenkeller.org/national/

National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments:

Service: National organization linking together parents of children with similar visual problems. Parent-to-Parent: provides support and information to parents of children with disabilities. One of the most meaningful sources of support is other parents who have experienced parenting a child with a disability.

800-562-6265 www.spedex.com/napvi/

Central Office 800-229-2038; **Southeast Office** 912-489-1904; **Middle Georgia Office** 478-934-3694; **Southwest Office** 229-436-7774; **Northwest Office** 706-802-5535

Savannah Association for the Blind – Courses for Youth:

Service: Designed to maximize each child's personal growth and independence. These courses are not generally a part of the public school curriculum and include such skills as mobility, orientation and activities of daily living.

912-236-4473 www.sabinc.org

Navigating the School System PK-12

(written by Mary Woodyard, parent)

Navigating the public school system can be an intimidating task for the child with low vision and his/her legal representative(s). Each Georgia public school district is organized in a different way. The titles and responsibilities of the personnel providing services to a child with low vision differ within these school districts. However, there are certain elements common to all Georgia Public School Districts. Understanding these common elements and how the school district your child with low vision will attend is organized is critical for the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of a child with low vision.

The first element to consider is the age of the child. In Georgia, the public school system begins working with children who are legally blind* at the age of three. Parents and infants work with several other agencies including Georgia Pines, Babies Can't Wait and the BEGIN Programs at the Center for Visually Impaired for services before the age of three. These agencies will help you transition your child with low vision to the public school system beginning around the age of 30 months. Your child may still receive services from these Early Childhood Agencies for a period of time while they are also transitioning into the school system. Contact information for these agencies is located in this section.

At the age of three, your child with low vision will begin working with the Georgia Public School System. Call the main office of the school district you live within to determine which services are available for your child. The first department to ask for is Special Education or Exceptional Education. Once you have been transferred to Special Education, ask for the Teacher of the Visually Impaired within that district.

This specialist may be a Teacher of the Visually Impaired or an Orientation and Mobility Specialist. Either way they can provide you with the information you will need to schedule an intake assessment. The school will schedule at least one meeting to assess how your child uses the vision he has or how he uses his other senses. Please don't be alarmed if you are unsure how much vision your child has. It is difficult to know at this age with any certainty. The school district's Teacher of the Visually Impaired will determine which programs within their school district your child may be eligible to participate in after this assessment.

In general, the Teacher of the Visually Impaired focuses more on the environment that is close to or "near" your child. This will include his books, lighting in the classroom, blackboard, computers and papers. An Orientation and Mobility Teacher will focus on how your child will move around the school environment that he needs to travel in or his "far" environment. This should include entering and exiting the school, the cafeteria, the playground, as well as his classroom. Some Teachers of the Visually Impaired are also certified to be Orientation and Mobility Specialists.

The Teacher of the Visually Impaired will help set up a meeting to review this assessment with you. This meeting should include the child's parent(s) or legal

representative(s), a case manager for your child from the school system, an administrator from the school your child will attend and the Teacher of the Visually Impaired. In some districts the Teacher is the Case Manager. In some, they are not. There may also be other participants from the school depending on the services that the intake assessments indicate your child will benefit from receiving. The tests that will be performed by the Teacher of the Visually Impaired are detailed under State Rules and Regulations at the end of this section.

Other services that may be beneficial to a child with low vision may be Speech Therapy for any speech issues or Occupational Therapy for any typing training or handwriting help. If the Physical Education for a child with low vision requires modification for safety needs, an Adaptive Physical Education Teacher may also participate. If the child with low vision will require braille instruction, then that person should attend. Another person who may provide helpful services for the child is an Assistive Technology Specialist from the school system.

Because each child has unique needs, the participants in this meeting will vary. However, at the end of the meeting an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) should be produced detailing all of the services and goals that the public school system will be providing your child for the year.

It is critical that you read this document thoroughly before you sign it as it provides the legal framework for your child's education for the next year. Once it has been signed, you will need to have another formal meeting to change its contents.

It is always very helpful to establish a positive relationship with the Case Manager for your child. Some schools call these people Facilitators. This person is responsible for ensuring that the contents of your child's IEP get carried out within the school. It is likely that you will need to meet with one of the service specialists or your child's teachers during the course of their education. Your child's Case Manager or Facilitator can be an effective partner in ensuring that your child's education goals are met.

It is also helpful to meet with your child's teacher before the school year if possible. There is normally a preplanning week before school starts when you can schedule an introductory meeting with your child's teacher. Your child's teacher wants your child to have a successful year. Reviewing seating arrangements and any accommodations that may be necessary for your child BEFORE THE YEAR begins is helpful in helping your child get off to a good start in the school year. You might also want to request that the Teacher of the Visually Impaired meet with you and your child's classroom teacher to clearly establish how your child's needs will be addressed in the classroom.

You should have an annual review of your child's IEP every year. Testing is done to make sure that the IEP is still necessary every three years. It is best to review the results of any testing that has been done before the actual IEP meeting if possible. This gives you time to fully understand the test results before agreeing to any recommended

actions in your planning meeting. Once your child enters middle school, it is highly recommended that they also participate in the IEP meeting.

If you are in the process of moving or evaluating several school districts, you may want to consider how the school systems you are considering deliver their vision services and the resources they employ. Some school systems use what are known as Itinerant Teachers who travel from school to school to deliver Vision Services in the “home school” where your child lives. This service delivery model enables your child to attend school with his/her friends from his/her neighborhood.

Other school systems centralize their students with low vision in one area school. This enables the school to centralize specialized instruction such as braille or orientation and mobility training with several students at one time. This service delivery model allows children with the same disability to socialize with each other and also participate in regular classes.

Some school systems do not have vision specialists or their own. They use a state school for the blind to deliver their vision services. In Georgia, this is the Georgia Academy for the Blind in Macon. There is no perfect service delivery model. The needs of each child with low vision should be evaluated along with the resources available from the school systems you are considering to find the answer that is right for your family.

Helpful general numbers: Division for Exceptional Students 800-282-7552 (lwilliam@doe.k12.ga.us); Regional Educational Service Agency 770-432-2404; State Superintendent of Schools 404-656-2800 (www.doe.k12.ga.us)

* Definition of **legal blindness** is 20/200 or worse in the better eye (with best regular lens correction) or a visual field of 20 degrees or less in the widest diameter of vision.

State Rules and Regulations

On June 14, 2007, the Special Education Rules were passed by the State Board of Education with a date of effect July 1, 2007. State Rule **160-4-7.-05, Eligibility Determination and Categories of Eligibility Rule** had changes to the various categories of eligibility. In particular, *Appendix L Visual Impairment* had some changes that will require districts to provide evaluations to students with visual impairments. Appendix L, Visual Impairment changes are under Additional Requirements of the rule:

- ❑ Evaluations to determine visual impairments must be completed by a teacher certified in the area of visual impairments.
- ❑ The evaluation must include appropriate medical assessments including a current eye report from an optometrist or ophthalmologist; low vision evaluation for children who are not totally blind; functional vision assessment, and educational assessments which may include cognitive levels, academic achievement, and reading ability.
- ❑ Eligibility requirements for braille instruction remain the same (see Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-152; 20-2-240)

Links: www.doe.k12.ga.us-Curriculum, Special Education Services

- ❑ IDEA Rules and Regulations
- ❑ Special Education Rules

Implementation Manual: Practical Guide for implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) and its regulations. This manual is not law and therefore districts, schools, and parents are not required to adhere to this manual.

What is the ADA?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is the most comprehensive federal civil-rights statute protecting the rights of people with disabilities. It affects access to employment; state and local government programs and services; access to places of public accommodation such as businesses, transportation, and non-profit service providers; and telecommunications.

For more information, visit <http://www.ada.gov/q%26aeng02.htm>

DRIVING IN GEORGIA

Obtaining a driver's license in the state of Georgia can be a daunting task. All vision guidelines can be found at: <http://www.dds.ga.gov/rules/index.aspx> and then going to **375-3** (Driver License Services) followed by **375-3-5** (Driver's License Advisory Board) followed by **375-3-5-.08** (Vision).

In general, the rules are as follows:

- ❑ Visual acuity must be 20/60 or better corrected or uncorrected in at least one eye
- ❑ Individuals must have a horizontal visual field of at least 140 degrees between the two eyes or at least 120 degrees if monocular (one eye only)

If visual acuity falls between 20/60 and 20/200, an individual may be eligible for a **bioptic telescope**. This kind of telescope is mounted typically in one eye at the top of the spectacle lens which is called the *carrier lens* as it is the lens that "carries" the bioptic. The telescope is used similarly to a rearview mirror in that a person periodically scans through the telescope; it is probably utilized about 10-15% of the time for spotting while driving.

There are specific certification guidelines and restrictions for bioptic telescope use; please see the above website for complete information. For vision forms, please see www.dds.ga.gov/FormsandManuals/index.aspx and go to Vision Report which is form DS-274.

Professional Development Training Programs

Georgia Project for Assistive Technology

www.gpat.org

Georgia State University: Dept of Educational Psychology and Special Education

404-651-2310 <http://education.gsu.edu/epse/>; recept@langate.gsu.edu

Smokey Powell Assistive Technology Center at

The Georgia Academy for the Blind

478-751-6083 www.gabmacon.org

***Visit each regional school below for areas of study or go to:*

<http://aerbvi.org/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=107>**

University of Alabama at Birmingham

Visual Impairments Program

Department of Special Education

Education Building Room 232 I

Birmingham, AL 35294

Contact: Dr. Mary-Jean Sanspree

Phone: 205-934-3440 or 975-5351

Fax: 205-934-6722

Email: MSanspree@ICARE.OPT.UAB.EDU

Florida State University

205 Stone Bldg.

Tallahassee, FL 32306-4459

VI Contact: Dr. Sandra Lewis

Phone: 850-644-4880

Email: lewis@coe.fsu.edu

VI Contact: Dr. Amy McKenzie

Phone: 850-644-4880

Email: mckenzie@coe.fsu.edu

O&M Contact: Eileen M. Bischof

Phone: 850-644-8407

Email: emb06g@fsu.edu

Rehabilitation Teaching Contact: Lynda Jones

Phone: 850-644-4880

Email: jonesl@coe.fsu.edu

North Carolina Central University

Visual Impairment Training Program
School of Education
1801 Fayetteville St.
Durham, NC 27707

VI Contact: Dr. Brad R. Walker, Director of Vision Impairment Training Program
Phone: 919-530-5179 (NCCU) / 919-715-6342 (GMS)
Email: Brad.Walker@ncmail.net
Fax: 919-715-6852

O&M Contact: Dr. Brad R. Walker, Director of Vision Impairment Training Program
Phone: 919-530-5179 (NCCU) / 919-715-6342 (GMS)
Email: Brad.Walker@ncmail.net
Fax: 919-715-6852

South Carolina State University

Dept. of Human Services
PO Box 7356
Orangeburg, SC 29117

Contact: Shirley Madison
Phone: (803) 533-3956 or (803) 536-8600
Email: smadison@scsu.edu

University of South Carolina Spartanburg

800 University Way
Spartanburg, SC 29303

Contact: Anne Crout Shelley, Ph. D., Director of USCS Graduate Programs

Email: ashelley@uscs.edu
Phone: 864-503-5551

Occupational Therapy Programs**Brenau University**

500 Washington St., SE
Gainesville, GA 30501
Phone: 770-534-6139
<http://www.brenau.edu/SHS/OT/>

Medical College of Georgia

Augusta, GA
<http://www.mcg.edu/sah/ot/>

Agencies and Organizations

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND

100 Peachtree Street, NE
Atlanta GA 30303

The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) is a national nonprofit that expands possibilities for people with vision loss. AFB's priorities include broadening access to technology; elevating the quality of information and tools for the professionals who serve people with vision loss; and promoting independent and healthy living for people with vision loss by providing them and their families with relevant and timely resources. AFB is headquartered in New York and is proud to house the Helen Keller Archives and honor the more than 40 years that Helen Keller worked tirelessly with AFB to expand possibilities for people with vision loss. Additional offices are located in San Francisco, Dallas, Washington D.C., Huntington, WV, and Atlanta.

The Atlanta office specializes in braille literacy, literacy for people with low vision, and the use of technology to promote literacy. In addition, the Atlanta office has a resource library for service providers on issues related to literacy for people with vision loss, and a technology lab demonstrating low tech and high tech tools used by people with vision loss. Training opportunities are offered to service providers throughout the year on topics related to literacy and technology. Other activities include the development of resources and materials that can be used by service providers to enhance their interactions with people who are blind or visually impaired.

AFB's fully accessible web site, www.afb.org, contains a wealth of information for people with vision loss, their family and friends, and professionals in the vision loss field. Sections of interest include CareerConnect(r) (www.afb.org/careerconnect), the Braille Bug (www.afb.org/braillebug), AFB Senior Site (www.afb.org/seniorsite), and AccessWorld(r) (www.afb.org/accessworld). AFB's toll-free number (1-800-AFB-LINE) and e-mail (afbinfo@afb.net) offers information on the non-medical aspects of visual impairment and blindness, and answers questions about the services of the Foundation.

Contact information:

1-800-AFB-LINE (232-5463)

afbinfo@afb.net

www.afb.org

ALTERNATIVE MEDIA ACCESS CENTER

University of Georgia
332 Milledge Hall
Athens, Georgia 30602-5875

The Alternative Media Access Center (AMAC), an initiative of the University System of Georgia, is committed to removing barriers and providing access to knowledge for individuals with physical, sensory and cognitive print-related disabilities. AMAC works with private institutions, government and non-profit organizations, private industry and other agencies serving individuals with disabilities. AMAC research initiatives and services incorporate digital media and adaptive technology solutions. Students who are eligible to receive alternate media are students who have diagnosed and documented print related disabilities. This means that any student who has a cognitive or physical disability, who can not effectively access printed material may receive their text books through AMAC. AMAC requires that the college or university that the student attends procure and submit proof of the documented disability. Once this has been entered into AMAC's database, the student may begin requesting textbooks.

Books are produced in electronic formats such as portable document format (PDF), Microsoft word document format, braille and audio via Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic (RFB&D). Once AMAC receives the text book, the production center scans the book and converts it to electronic text. If the order requires that the book be transcribed in braille, the braille unit assigns the book to one of its certified transcribers to begin the transcription process.

A major advantage for students who have access to AMAC services is that AMAC continually builds a centralized repository of books. Hence, when books are ordered that have already been produced in alternative media, the book is readily available to the student with no lag time. Further, AMAC guarantees a high quality, professionally produced, timely product which is consistent for students across the state. Finally AMAC provides the users with a variety of assistive technologies which enables them to access the text books that are in alternate media.

For more information, please visit www.amac.uga.edu or call 706-542-1299.

ASSISTIVE WORK TECHNOLOGY

Vocational Rehabilitation Program
Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL)

The Assistive Work Technology (AWT) services of the GDOL Vocational Rehabilitation Program are provided by a team of assistive technology specialists. The AWT team is built around the Regional, and Bi/Tri-Regional organization of VR. Each Bi/Tri-Region has a Rehabilitation Engineer, an Occupational Therapist and a Rehabilitation Technician. Each Region has a Rehabilitation Technologist.

The AWT staff receives referrals from either a VR Counselor or a Rehabilitation Employment Specialist to conduct a cost-free assessment of each client's unique work-related needs for assistive technology required for the client to reach his/her vocational objectives. Clients may require many types of assistive technology services in order to go to work. AWT may also conduct job analyses of employer facilities, job/work requirements, work schedules, tools and equipment, work area, required work skills, mobility inside the work area and ADA concerns. Recommendations are provided to assist the VR Counselor and employer in successful placement of persons with disabilities in the work force.

The assessment may include recommendations to purchase assistive devices(s), modify tools and equipment, or fabricate an assistive device(s). Expanding employment needs may require development of short-term training courses or ongoing training needs. In all cases the assessment will provide information to allow the VR Counselor and the employer to develop a plan to obtain the Assistive Technology required for employment of persons with disabilities. Costs to the employer are determined on a case-by-case basis.

AWT staff is also available, through referral by VR Counselors or Rehabilitation Employment Specialists, to make assessments of the work place, to provide job analyses, or to reduce the occurrence of work place injuries for VR clientele. In this type of assessment, recommendations of new equipment, or modification(s) of equipment and/or schedules, may be part of the report. It is important for the employer to understand staff provide only recommendations and should not be considered an ADA enforcement group.

For more information about Vocational Rehabilitation Services or the Assistive Work Technology Services, contact Rehabilitation Services at 404-232-3910 Voice or 404-232-3911 TTY or see section on Vocational Rehabilitation.

BABIES CAN'T WAIT

Babies Can't Wait (BCW) is Georgia's statewide interagency service delivery system for infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities and their families. BCW is established by Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which guarantees all eligible children, regardless of their disability, access to services that will enhance their development. Additional information about IDEA and national efforts supporting the implementation of the early childhood provisions of the law is available through the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center.

The Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Public Health is the lead agency administering the Babies Can't Wait Program in Georgia. The Division ensures that:

- ❑ services are provided in accordance with federal guidelines;
- ❑ families have access to the services which are needed to enhance their child's development; and
- ❑ training is available to ensure that professionals who work with children and families have up-to-date information.

Babies Can't Wait is administered through 18 District offices throughout the state. Through the 18 offices, children and families in every county in Georgia can access early intervention services. Anyone can refer a child to Babies Can't Wait. In order to refer a child to BCW for an evaluation, contact the district office which serves the county in which the child and family reside. You may use the Children With Special Needs Coordinator Contact List for information on how to reach local Babies Can't Wait Programs.

How to Contact the Program

BCW has a statewide directory of information managed by Parent-to-Parent, Inc. of Georgia. The directory provides information about the BCW Program located nearest to the child and family. To access the directory, call 1-800-229-2038 or (770) 451-5484 in Atlanta. The State BCW Office number is (404) 657-2726 or toll free: 1-888-651-8224.

<http://health.state.ga.us/programs/bcw/>

BLIND AND LOW VISION SERVICES OF NORTH GEORGIA

3830 S. Cobb Drive Suite 125
Smyrna, GA 30080

Description of Services:

Founded in 1983, Blind & Low Vision Services of North Georgia (BLVS) teaches people who are blind or visually impaired how to adapt to their vision loss, so they may function independently in all of their environments.

A non-profit organization under IRS guidelines, BLVS is accredited by the National Accreditation Council for Agencies serving the blind and visually impaired. The rehabilitation staff of BLVS is highly skilled and trained, most having dual accreditation in rehabilitation and orientation and mobility. The doctors who conduct the low vision clinics have completed a residency in low vision rehabilitation.

BLVS offers a variety of individualized services, including a low vision clinic, instruction in a wide variety of independent living skills and communication, orientation and mobility training, computer access technology, and support groups.

Working with the Georgia Department of Labor and other agencies, BLVS offers vocational evaluations and provides clients with employment skills training.

BLVS provides support services as well. A media center offers audiotapes of best selling books and descriptive videos. Speakers are available to provide group presentations. Non-optical visual aids, such as talking clocks, check writing guides and white canes, can be purchased at the agency or ordered via catalogs.

Eligibility:

Any person who is experiencing vision loss to the point that it interferes with their ability to accomplish tasks of daily living, mobility or work, is eligible for services. Funding for services is available on a sliding fee scale, through a Department of Labor – Rehabilitation Services referral, from a Veteran’s Administration referral and through federal, state and local grants programs.

Application Process:

All interested individuals will need to complete an application which includes contact information, and brief information about your current visual functioning and related medical information.

Interested individuals may contact the agency at 770-432-7280 or visit our website at www.blvsgeorgia.org.

CENTER FOR ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENTAL ACCESS

490 10th St.
Atlanta, GA 30318

The Center for Assistive Technology & Environmental Access (CATEA) promotes independence and participation of people with disabilities through assistive technology and environmental access. CATEA, an applied research center of the College of Architecture at Georgia Tech, focuses on the development, evaluation, and utilization of assistive technology and the design and development of accessible environments. CATEA serves people with visual impairments through its research, development, dissemination, training and outreach activities.

For blind and low vision assistive technology product information, visit CATEA's National Public Internet Site on Assistive Technology (<http://assistivetech.net/>). For additional information about all of CATEA's services, please visit the website at <http://catea.gatech.edu/> or contact them at 800-726-9119 or 404-894-4960.

CENTER FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED

739 West Peachtree Street, N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30308

The Center for the Visually Impaired (CVI) is Georgia's largest comprehensive, fully accredited, private facility providing rehabilitation services for individuals of all ages who are blind or visually impaired. Since 1962, the Center has grown to serve as a model of innovative services for people who have a wide range of vision impairments from low vision to total blindness.

The mission of CVI is to offer comprehensive services to promote independence with dignity and the preservation of self worth for individuals of all ages who are blind or visually impaired.

Services include:

❑ **Low Vision Services**

The Florence Maxwell Low Vision Clinic helps people who have vision that is functional to some degree but cannot be fully corrected by ordinary prescription lenses or medical treatment. The Clinic helps individuals ages 5 and older make the best use of their vision through the use of optical and non-optical devices.

❑ **Adult Classes & Training**

The Adult Rehabilitation Services program provides center-based classes in a variety of skill areas to increase independence at home and at work. Services include training in activities of daily living, orientation and mobility, braille, communication skills, assistive (computer) technology, vocational evaluation, job coaching, and job placement, as well as support groups and diabetes education.

Community Adult Services provides comprehensive vision rehabilitation services to blind or visually impaired adults in a community setting (private home, senior center, or hospital).

❑ **Youth Services**

STARS (Social Therapeutic and Recreational Services) is an educational, recreational and social skills program for students ages 6 to 21. Through after-school, weekend and summer programs, STARS challenges the isolation and inactivity that many blind or visually impaired youth experience.

❑ **Early Childhood & Preschool Services**

BEGIN (Babies Early Growth Intervention Network) provides essential services to enhance development and potential for newborn to early school-aged children with severe visual impairments. Through BEGIN,

families learn about their children's visual conditions and become advocates to seek the best opportunities for their children.

❑ **Support Groups**

The Center's clients and their families have access to individual, group and family counseling, which can be a crucial part of the process of adjusting to vision loss. Many group sessions are open to the public.

❑ **Next Steps Towards Independence**

As the first point of contact for new adult clients, CVI's Client Services staff understands the challenges facing families and individuals coping with vision loss. Counselors answer requests for up-to-date information about vision impairment, provide access to other local and national resources, and process referrals for the Center's services.

For more information about any of CVI's programs or services, please call (404) 875-9011 or visit www.cviatlanta.org.

CREDIT-ABLE

Georgia's Alternative Financing Program for Assistive Technology and Home & Vehicle Modifications

Brett Drive Suite 100
Conyers, GA 30094

Credit-Able, the Georgia Assistive Technology Loan Guarantee Program, provides guarantees to enable loans for assistive technology and home & vehicle modifications.

Credit-Able provides these loan guarantees, along with negotiated rates and terms, to help Georgians with disabilities, their families and caregivers, and/or employers or individuals to become independent and involved members of their communities with an improved quality of life.

Community Served

- Georgians with a disability, their family members or legal guardians/representatives who request Assistive Technology, home modifications, or vehicle modifications as defined by the program policies.
- Employers who want to accommodate their worksite for an employee with a disability who is a resident of Georgia.
- Individuals who can demonstrate the ability to repay the loan.

Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology includes a lot of different kinds of equipment. Some examples are home and vehicle modifications, communication devices, adapted computer equipment, hearing aids, ramps and wheelchairs.

Applications and Information

For information or to request an application you can use our online application at www.credit-able.org or contact:

Jackie Wilks-Weathers • Program Director
T: 770-922-6790 • F: 770-922-6769

DISABILITY CONNECTIONS

An Independent Living Center in Middle Georgia

170 College Street
Macon, GA 31201

Disability Connections (DC) is an independent living center serving a 12 county area in middle Georgia to enable all people with disabilities to attain and have access to all opportunities in life. It serves people of all ages with all types of disabilities and is under complete consumer control.

The five (5) core services are:

- ❑ Information and Referral to make sense of information and community resources that relate to disability.
- ❑ Peer Support to connect people with disabilities together with peers who share their own valuable life experiences.
- ❑ Advocacy to empower individuals to advocate in their own lives and advocating for the rights of all people with disabilities.
- ❑ Independent Living Skills Training to give people with disabilities the knowledge and skills to lead a more productive and independent life.
- ❑ Nursing Home Transition to assist people to relocate from nursing homes and other institutions into their own community.

For more information, call 478-741-1425; 1-800-743-2117 Voice/TTY or visit <http://www.disabilityconnections.com/>

disABILITY LINK NW

411 Broad Street
Rome, GA 30161

disABILITY LINK

755 Commerce Dr., Suite 105
Decatur, GA 30030

As a Center for Independent Living, disABILITY LINK NW offers many services for a wide range of disabilities and ages with a variety of services geared to assist people with visual impairments. The Center serves the following counties in **Northwest Georgia**: Bartow, Catoosa, Chattooga, Dade, Fannin, Floyd, Gilmer, Gordon, Haralson, Murray, Paulding, Pickens, Polk, Walker, and Whitfield.

disABILITY LINK NW has two Independent Living Coordinators who are, themselves, visually impaired. Some of the classes offered are Beginning Braille, Contracted Braille, and Job Readiness training. We are currently in the process of offering classes to train people with visual impairments the JAWS program. Other independent living classes may be offered as needed and requested by consumers. We can offer group or individualized trained as needed.

The disABILITY LINK NW center is an Assistive Technology Resource Center (ATRC) for Tools for Life. This program allows consumers to visit the center and try out various devices. The assistive technology devices can many times be purchased at discounted prices. At times, assistive devices can be loaned to consumers for a trial period to decide if the equipment suits their needs. disABILITY LINK NW can demonstrate specialized software such as JAWS as well. As an ATRC, we have use of a double-sided braille embosser and can easily transcribe printed materials into braille format.

The ReBOOT program is another way that disABILITY LINK NW is reaching out to put technology into the hands of consumers. This program offers low-cost or no cost computers to qualified consumers who wish to increase independence through the use of a computer for work or enjoyment. The computers can be adapted to the consumers needs many times.

Through the information and referral program, disABILITY LINK NW can direct consumers with visual impairments to a wide variety of services and groups. We have an assortment of information related to guide dogs, public transportation, orientation and mobility training, local support groups, ADA laws and much more. The center has knowledge up upcoming advocacy events, meetings, and other information that will assist consumers in becoming more active and independent in their community.

Peer Support is another unique way disABILITY LINK NW is helping consumers become independent. This program offers consumers a certified peer supporter (CPS) to assist with reaching goals. Often consumers are paired with a peer supporter who shares the same disability or circumstance.

For more information, please contact our center at 706-314-0008. For general information and other locations, visit www.disabilitylink.org or call 404-687-8890.

EMORY EYE CENTER

Vision Rehabilitation Service

1365B Clifton Rd., NE

Atlanta, GA 30322

The Emory Eye Center's Vision Rehabilitation Service is a full scope multidisciplinary medical model low vision program. The Low Vision Service is one of the few clinical sites in the United States developing and testing the most advanced vision-assisting devices available on the market today. The Clinic helps people of any age who are visually impaired and have only partial sight due to cataracts, macular degeneration, glaucoma, corneal disease, detached retina, stroke and hereditary diseases such as Stargardt's and Retinitis Pigmentosa. The Clinic is investigating a number of new devices available at only a few centers throughout the U.S. which include digital and electronic viewing systems, bioptic and implantable telescopes and Vision Restoration Therapy and specially-designed prisms for visual field loss.

Services provided include a comprehensive low vision evaluation and history with:

- ❑ A complete refraction to ensure the most accurate distance spectacle prescription
- ❑ A variety of near point tools ranging from high plus lenses to microscopic systems and hand-held/stand magnifiers
- ❑ A full range of both portable and desk top electronic magnifying systems for use in distance, near and self viewing modes.
- ❑ Occupational Therapy services for training with the recommended devices

Referral: Patients who have had a dilated eye exam within the last year may be referred by their current eye care provider. A dilated examination is requested prior to the vision rehabilitation exam to ensure the ocular diagnosis is established and all treatment options have been exhausted. Patients can make an appointment with any one of Emory Eye Center's specialists for testing and dilation as well as to determine eligibility for clinical trials.

Other Services: Vocational rehabilitation and Georgia public school low vision examinations are performed with prior approval from the respective agencies.

For more information, call the Emory Eye Center at (404) 778-2020 or visit <http://www.eyecenter.emory.edu>.

FOUNDATION FIGHTING BLINDNESS

Foundation Fighting Blindness (FFB) is the largest, non-governmental source of funding for retinal degenerative disease research in the world. FFB works collaboratively with the National Eye Institute, a part of the National Institutes of Health, to fund the best research leading to treatments and cures. The urgent mission of the FFB is to drive the research that will provide preventions, treatments and cures for people affected by retinitis pigmentosa, macular degeneration, Usher syndrome, and the entire spectrum of retinal degenerative diseases.

More than nine million Americans are losing their vision to RP, AMD, Usher syndrome and other blinding diseases including choroideremia, retinoschisis and the entire spectrum of RDDs. These diseases are inherited and may be passed to future generations. Diseases such as RP, Stargardt disease often strike children, teens and young adults. Macular degeneration is the leading cause of vision loss in people over age 55.

The FFB website: www.fightblindness.org provides a wealth of information on retinal degenerative diseases, current research, clinical trial information, chapter information (including the FFB-Atlanta Chapter), Event information including the Atlanta VISIONWALKS and other signature events in support of FFB-funded research. Other links include Resources (physician referral list), Advocacy and Science. The website is designed to accommodate people with vision and hearing loss.

The FFB-Atlanta Chapter meets on a regular basis (3-4 times per year) at the Piedmont Hospital in Atlanta. Support Group Meetings take place the first Saturday of the month at 11:00am at St. Joseph's Hospital. Chapter meetings include latest research advances, low vision information and resources, and social networking opportunities. Information can be obtained by going to the website at www.fightblindness.org and clicking on Chapters and/ or Events.

National Office

11435 Cronhill Drive
Owings Mills, Maryland 21117-2220
410-568-0150
800-683-5555
FAX: 410-363-2393

Southern Regional Office (NC, SC, TN, GA, AL, MS, LA, AR)

4600 Marriott Drive
Ste. 340
Raleigh, NC 27612

Susan Brumley, Senior Director
(919) 781-8014
sbrumley@fightblindness.org

Anne Arella, Director of Development Southern Region
(919) 781-8014
aarella@fightblindness.org

Jennifer Assaff, Event Manager
(919) 781-8014
jassaff@fightblindness.org

Atlanta Chapter

John (Jack) M. Wilson, Jr., President
gaatlanta@FightBlindness.org

Jim Vacheenas
Board Member & Support Group Leader
jvacheenas@comcast.net

GEORGIA ACADEMY FOR THE BLIND

Dr. Dorothy Arensman, Director
2895 Vineville Avenue
Macon, GA 31204

The Georgia Academy for the Blind (GAB) in Macon provides statewide leadership, campus programming, and outreach services for children and young adults who are blind or visually impaired, as well as for those with multiple impairments. The campus program offers a safe and stimulating learning environment for children ages 3-21. Placement includes both residential and day school options. Outreach services are provided through on-campus evaluations including psychological evaluations.

The Smokey Powell Assistive Technology Center on the GAB campus also provides:

- clinical low vision evaluations and assistive technology evaluations for students who are visually impaired
- training for families and school providers of students with visual impairments
- a loan program for assistive technology devices

Other Services: The GAB is also home to other programs which serve the entire state, including the Department of Education State Consultant for Vision, The Georgia Instructional Materials Center, and Georgia Pines services for children with sensory impairments, birth to age 5. The Academy employs transition teachers to assist students as they move from school to college, work, and life after GAB. A summer program is offered each year with an emphasis on the Expanded Core Curriculum, specifically targeting Assistive Technology.

For more information please see our website: www.gabmacon.org or phone (478) 751-6083.

GEORGIA COALITION is made up of the visually impaired from all the consumer groups and those interested in helping the VI or who work with the VI. Their goal is to work together to improve services and opportunities through a united advocacy group. Please contact Kay McGill for more information at Kay1949@comcast.net.

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (see Assistive Work Technology and Vocational Rehabilitation listings)

GEORGIA RADIO READING SERVICE

The Georgia Radio Reading Service is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization dedicated to providing the visually impaired community with access to the printed word through technology. Books, newspapers and magazines are broadcast daily throughout the state of Georgia via special radio receivers. For more information, contact April Cline at 404-685-2820 or visit www.garrs.net.

GEORGIA REGIONAL LIBRARIES for the BLIND and PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

There are 13 sub-regional libraries located throughout the state from Rome to Valdosta. All provide books in braille and on cassette tape to qualified individuals who are unable to read standard print. For more information, contact Stella Cone at 404-756-4619 (1-800-248-6701) or visit www.georgialibraries.org.

MONS International, Inc.

Low Vision Products and Services

6595 Roswell Road, #224

Atlanta, GA 30328

Mons International, Inc. is an Atlanta-based company dedicated to serving the needs of the visually impaired through locating and/or delivering specialized low vision services, resources, and products. The owner, Wendy Mons, is a University of Texas graduate with a degree in Special Education for the Blind and Visually Impaired and has dedicated her life to working with this specialized group. Mons International was founded in 1986 with the purpose of bringing low vision services to the rural areas in Georgia and to the cities where no services were being provided.

Services: In conjunction with local optometry and/or ophthalmology groups, Mons International currently offers low vision services to both visually-impaired children and adults on a monthly basis in 9 Georgia cities:

- Albany**
- Augusta**
- Bainbridge**
- Columbus**
- Macon**
- Snellville**
- Tifton**
- Valdosta**
- Waycross**

Please visit www.magnifiers.com for the facility's name, address, phone number plus the vocational rehabilitation counselor and his/her phone number for the area. You can also call Marcus at (770) 551-8455 or 1-800-541-7903 to make an appointment.

Other Services: Contractor for Project Independence; Mons International, Inc. also offers Low Vision workshops throughout Georgia to libraries, schools, senior centers, Department of Labor/Rehabilitation Services, universities, and doctors' offices.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF GEORGIA, INC.

315 West Ponce De Leon Ave., Suite 603
Decatur, Georgia 30030

The National Federation of the Blind of Georgia (NFBGA) is a non-profit, volunteer organization of blind persons with the purpose of helping all blind people achieve self-confidence, self-respect, and independence; and acts as a vehicle for collective self-expression for the blind community. The NFBGA works actively to educate the community and advocate for the rights of the blind of Georgia. The NFBGA confronts the fears and stereotypes that result in the under education of Georgia's blind children, the under employment of more than 70 percent of blind working-age adults, and the reduced quality of life for our ever-growing population of older citizens who are blind. Members strive to educate the public that the blind are normal individuals who can compete on terms of equality and are committed to participating actively in the efforts of the organization to achieve equality, opportunity and security for those who are blind.

The NFBGA, established in 1973, is the Georgia affiliate of a national organization with more than 50 affiliates, composed of 700 local chapters, which total over 50,000 members.

Services provided: Public education about blindness; conduct information and referral services; produce and disseminate literature and publications about blindness; assist with acquisition and training on adaptive equipment for the blind; offer advocacy services; promote career training and job opportunities for the blind; and, maintain an environment of mutual support for blind persons and their families.

Goals:

- Operate as a mechanism through which the blind and interested sighted persons can come together to plan and carry out programs to improve the quality of life of those who are blind.
- Provide a means of collective action for parents of blind children by providing them a forum to benefit from the experiences of one another.
- Promote the interests of blind students by encouraging an environment of peer support
- Promote the vocational, cultural, and social advancement of the blind with a variety of outreach and education initiatives
- Work to achieve the integration of the blind into society on a leveled playing field with the sighted by taking action which will improve the overall condition and standard of living of the blind.

Current Projects:

Georgians Empowered through Mentoring Success

The aim of the Georgians Empowered through Mentoring Success (GEMS) program is to link blind and low vision young adults throughout Georgia, ages sixteen to twenty-six, with successful blind and low vision mentors for the purpose of increasing knowledge and participation in the vocational rehabilitation process with a resulting outcome of increased post-secondary academic success, high-quality employment, and community integration.

Blindness Education, Training, & Advocacy (BETA Project)

The purpose of the BETA project is to recruit, train, and empower competent blind persons with the skills and resources to serve as sensitivity awareness presenters, and education advocates (BETA Specialists) within the educational environment of blind students. Blind individuals traveling to various schools throughout Georgia to conduct blindness awareness trainings will help to dismiss the fears and stereotypes held by many that continue to negatively affect our blind youth. In addition, exposure to successful blind adults will help to educate parents and professionals about appropriate accommodations, and help parents set realistic academic expectations for their blind children. Furthermore, we know that the best advocate for a blind child is an educated blind adult. It is essential to have competent blind individuals participating in the education planning of a blind student to ensure the development and implementation of successful real world strategies that foster an effective educational environment for blind students. If you are an education professional that would like a BETA presentation at your school, if you are a parent that needs assistance from a BETA Specialist in developing an appropriate Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for your child, or most important, if you are a blind adult that would like to be trained to conduct effective BETA presentations and serve as an advocate for a blind child, please contact us.

Georgia Audible Universal Information Access Service (AUIAS)

Through digitized speech, NFB-NEWSLINE® Service currently serves as the Georgia Audible Universal Information Access Service, provides daily access to national magazines, newspapers, and television listings to the blind and print disabled citizens of Georgia free of charge, using any conventional touch tone telephone to access high-speed computers and telecommunications technology developed by the National Federation of the Blind.

For more information, call or visit our website at:

(404) 371-1000 (Voice)

(866) 316-3242 (Toll Free)

(404) 371-1002 (Fax)

theblind@nfbga.org

www.nfbga.org (Web Site)

PASS IT ON CENTER

<http://passitoncenter.org/>

The Pass It On Center is a national collaboration for the reutilization and coordination of assistive technology. The Georgia Department of Labor, Tools for Life operates a grant to provide assistance to 12 grantees nationally to demonstrate model efforts to reutilize assistive technology because so many individuals “go without” the assistive technology they need to live, work, learn and play independently. The Pass It On Center is responding to this unmet need by coordinating a national collaborative on AT reuse programs that will provide multi-faceted information on best practices, a national database and home page, a coordinated plan to respond to natural disasters, and a National Pass It On Task Force. The Task Force will galvanize the involvement and support of manufacturers, AT reutilizers, key stakeholders, and individuals with disabilities to work on issues of national importance concerning reutilization of AT such as transportation, vendor and manufacturers roles, and national coordination initiatives. Over the five year grant period, The National Pass It on Center is poised to:

- ❑ Provide coordination and support in the event of natural disasters to assure that reutilized assistive technology can reach those who need it quickly.
- ❑ Provide telephone and email technical assistance through its Rapid Response Solutions Desk to various request.
- ❑ Establish national transportation and electronic networks for the well-coordinated distribution of reutilized AT.

For more information about this program, contact Joy Kniskern at 404-638-0387 or joy.kniskern@dol.state.ga.us.

PROJECT INDEPENDENCE

Marcie Sitton, Project Director

1700 Century Circle, Suite 300
Atlanta, GA 30345

Project Independence for the Older Blind or Visually Impaired provides services throughout the state to senior adults 55 years of age or older experiencing vision loss. Rehabilitation specialists provide instruction in your home environment and in group settings. Peer support groups are available to discuss mutual problems and concerns of vision loss in a supportive setting. A low vision evaluation in designated clinics around Georgia will provide assessment and training to help you remain independent in your own home. Other services may include orientation and mobility training, as well as daily living skills training. Services are available to eligible seniors regardless of income for little or no cost. To be eligible to participate in **Project Independence**, you must meet the following criteria:

- Have a severe visual disability of 20/70 or worse in your best eye with best correction and/or a visual field loss of worse than 120 degrees. This may include a combined vision and hearing loss);
- Be age 55 or older;
- Be in a situation where gainful employment is very difficult to obtain; and
- Be able to benefit from independent living services.

The Georgia Department of Labor/Rehabilitation Services contracts with six service providers for **Project Independence**. Contact the service provider closest to your home in order to discuss your situation and receive assistance.

Project Independence Service Providers:

Center for the Visually Impaired 404-875-9011 or 800-558-5451
Serves Northeast and Central Georgia

Blind and Low Vision Services of North Georgia 770-432-7280 or 800-726-7406
Serves Northwest Georgia

Savannah Association for the Blind 912-236-4473
Serves Southeast Georgia

Mons International 770-551-8455 or 800-541-7903
Serves Southwest Georgia

Walton Options 706-724-6262 or 877-821-8400
Serves East Georgia
Visually Impaired Specialized Training and Advocacy Services VISTAS 706-583-8001 Serves Northeast Georgia

ReBOOT

ATRC-Metro Atlanta - Touch The Future ATRC

4508 Bibb Blvd. Suite B10
Tucker, GA 30084

ReBoot-ATRC is an Assistive Technology Resource Center for Georgians with disabilities, their caregivers, service providers, advocates, and friends. ReBoot-ATRC, located in Tucker, Georgia, provides our state with resources and services relating to assistive technology. ReBoot-ATRC also operates the ReBoot project, a computer recycling program that refurbishes donated computer equipment and redistributes the rebuilt computers to people with disabilities. ReBoot staff also can customize new computers to the individual's specifications and repair computers as needed.

ReBoot-ATRC offers a variety of assistive technology related services, including:

- Demonstration of assistive technology devices including AT for blind and low vision users
- Device re-utilization and recycling programs
- Equipment library (try-before-you-buy) with over 1000 devices
- Information on assistive technology products and vendors
- Multi-level training on choosing and using assistive technology devices
- Assessments matching assistive technology to client's needs

For more information:

Phone 770-934-8432

Fax 770-934-8433

Metro Atlanta Coordinator: Joanne Willis, OTR/L

Email: joannewillis@mindspring.com

Area of Expertise: Computer Training, Learning Lab, equipment library

www.reboot-atrc.org

SAVANNAH ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND, INC.

214 Drayton St
Savannah, GA 31401

Savannah Association for the Blind, Incorporated (SAB) is a private, nonprofit agency serving the general public in southeastern Georgia and coastal South Carolina. The mission of Savannah Association for the Blind, Inc. is to provide rehabilitation services designed to help blind and visually impaired individuals in all walks of life function independently in their homes and in the community. Currently, this mission is being addressed within the framework of interrelated Programs. The services provided are pre-vocational in nature and should be mastered prior to the commencement of any vocational or professional training. These services are designed to assist each person served to function independently in his/her home and in the community. These services are designed to help visually impaired people adjust and cope with their visual loss.

Services:

Visually Impaired Pre-School Services (VIPS)

VIPS provides diversified intervention services designed to best meet the unique needs of visually impaired pre-school children from birth to five years of age, whether or not they have additional impairments. We provide periodic home visits, developmental assessments, vision stimulation activities, and activities of daily living. We also provided several support services; interagency coordination, consultation, and family counseling.

Comprehensive Rehabilitation Training

As a nonprofit organization, Savannah Association for the Blind, Inc. is the only organization providing comprehensive rehabilitation training for blind and visually impaired individuals in Southeast Georgia. These services are delivered by a team of certified professionals. Comprehensive Rehabilitation Training has five key components. They are Low Vision Services, Orientation & Mobility Training, Activities of Daily Living, Communication Skills, and Social Services. Each person served undergoes an extensive functional evaluation in these components, and the results from the evaluations are used to develop an individualized service plan.

Senior Day Services

Senior Day Services provide support for elderly individuals, (and their families, if present), who do not function fully independently, but who do not need 24-hour nursing care. Participants may have:

- some degree of physical disability;
- a social impairment;
- mental confusion;

- ❑ need for some assistance with activities of daily living which fall short of the need for placement in an institution; or
- ❑ returned from a recent hospital or institutional stay.

Senior Day Services is comprehensive and is based on participants' individual needs. The service is family-focused and outcome-oriented with a goal of enhanced independence. As a social model program, Senior Day Services provides activities, which alleviate social isolation among older adults, and fosters socialization and feelings of belonging.

For more information, call (912) 236-4473 or visit www.sabinc.org.

TECH-ABLE

1114 Brett Drive, Ste. 100
Conyers, GA 30094

Tech-Able is a non-profit organization that provides individuals with disabilities, their families and support professionals, information and access to Assistive Technology devices through our Lending Library, Demonstrations, Training Classes and Referral system.

Microsoft has chosen Tech-Able to be a MARC (Microsoft Accessibility Resource Center).

Tech-Able provides the following training and support:

- Lending Library of Low Vision and Blind Assistive Technology
- Demonstration services for both Low Vision and Blind clients
- Basic braille training on site
- Print braille service
- Specialized training for ZoomText, JAWS, PacMate and GPS.
- We are also especially adept at assisting individuals in locating resources in their communities as well as acting as a liaison between consumers and vendors.

We have AT trainers and a Vision Volunteer who provide the often one-on-one style training and services to clients.

For more information:

Phone (Voice and TDD): (770) 922-6768, Fax: (770) 922-6769

Coordinator: Joe Todesco

Email: techable@techable.org

www.techable.org

Area of Expertise: Computer & SW Training - Equipment, Toy, & SW Lending Libraries

TOOLS FOR LIFE

Georgia Department of Labor/VR Tools for Life Program

Vocational Rehabilitation Program

1700 Century Circle B-4

Atlanta, Georgia 30345

Tools for Life is the Georgia Assistive Technology Project which promotes the independence and participation of all Georgians with disabilities and their families through increased access to assistive technology (AT) for living, learning, working and playing.

Tools for Life was established in 1991 under the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1988 (PL 100-497) and now operates under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 (PL 104-394). The law requires states to provide four priority services:

- A program of public awareness to inform citizens about the availability and benefits of assistive technology.
- Improved coordination among public and private partners that provide assistive technology to address gaps in services.
- Technical assistance and training to increase access to AT.
- Outreach to support statewide and community-based organizations that provide AT devices and services to citizens with disabilities.

Assistive technology services include:

1. Evaluation of the technology needs of the individual including a functional evaluation in the individual's customary environment.
2. Purchasing, leasing or otherwise providing for the acquisition of assistive technology devices for individuals with disabilities.
3. Coordinating and using other therapies, interventions, or services with assistive technology devices, such as those associated with existing education and rehabilitation plans and programs.
4. Assistive technology training and technical assistance with assistive technology for an individual with a disability, or where appropriate, the family of an individual with disabilities.
5. Training or technical assistance for professionals, employers, or other individuals who provide services to employ, or otherwise are substantially involved in the major life functions of individuals with disabilities.

For more information, visit www.gatfl.org or call 1-800-497-8665.

VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER

Atlanta, Augusta and Dublin, GA

Overview: The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) provides rehabilitation programs targeting low vision and blind veterans, and is also aggressively pursuing innovative service delivery models. Services are available to veterans who are enrolled in the Veterans Health Administration medical system. The Department of Veterans Affairs has made a commitment to provide world-class rehabilitation training by enhancing services, improving access to care and increasing patient satisfaction for veterans with visual impairments.

Description of Services: VHA has developed several programs for veterans with visual impairments. The Visual Impairment Service Team (VIST) has been established at each facility to offer a variety of services including Ophthalmology, Optometry, Audiology Low Vision Clinical Evaluations, Medical Administration, General Medicine, Pharmacy, Prosthetics, Veterans Benefits, etc. Eligibility for VIST, blind rehabilitation and low vision services is dependent upon the level of visual impairment, military discharge (honorable or general), and VA entitlement regulations.

Types of Services: Blind and visually impaired veterans may receive adaptive training in activities of daily living, communications, computers and advanced technology, independent medical/medication management, low vision, manual skills, and orientation and mobility.

Level of Services: Basic Low Vision services are available at the Atlanta, Augusta and Dublin VAMC's and some of the affiliated outpatient clinics through care provided by the Blind Rehabilitation Outpatient Specialists (BROS) currently based out of the Augusta VAMC. Additional BROS will be assigned to the Atlanta VAMC and its affiliated outpatient clinics in 2008. Intermediate outpatient low vision services are available at the Atlanta and Augusta VAMC. Advanced outpatient low vision services are available at the August VAMC Comprehensive inpatient blind rehabilitation is provided at the Augusta Blind Rehabilitation Center.

Visual Impairment Service Team (VIST) Objectives:

- To inform veterans and their families about services and benefits available through VHA and other resources.
- To ensure the provision of health care, rehabilitation training, and other services to visually impaired veterans.
- To assist the individual in adjustment and management of sight loss in daily life.

The VIST Program services include:

- Comprehensive Eye Examination
- Physical Examination with evaluation and treatment by specialist as necessary
- Hearing Tests
- Review of Veterans Benefits
- Review for the need for Adaptive Aids
- Support and Adjustment Counseling for veteran and family
- Assessment of Rehabilitation and Training Needs
- Resource and Referrals-Vocational rehabilitation, Low vision services, State and private agencies, Dog-guide schools, Recreational programs,
- Support groups

Referral for Services: Veterans experiencing vision loss should contact the nearest VIST Coordinator or eye clinic for further assistance. If eligible, the veteran will be evaluated to receive VIST services, blind rehabilitation and low vision care through the Atlanta, Augusta and Dublin VA Medical Center's (VAMC) and their surrounding Outpatient Clinics (see list of providers at end of booklet).

GA Visual Impairment Service Team Coordinators

Todd Turansky (291-VIST)

[Augusta VA Medical Center](#) (Uptown Division)

1 Freedom Way

Augusta, GA 30904-6285

Direct Telephone: (706) 733-0188, ext. 1-7573
FAX: (706) 731-7165
Main Switchboard Telephone: (706) 733-0188
Toll Free: (800) 836-5561
Messages: (706) 733-0188, ext. 1-7573 or 1-6661
Voice Mail: (706) 823-2222
Pager: (706) 733-0188, # 573
E-Mail: todd.turansky@va.gov

Kendel Prescott (112)

[Atlanta VA Medical Center](#)

1670 Clairmont Road

Decatur, GA 30033

Direct Telephone: (404) 728-4830
FAX: (404) 327-4918
Main Switchboard Telephone: (404) 321-6111
Toll Free: (800) 224-4087
E-Mail: kendel.prescott@va.gov

Angela Williams (9A-00P)
[Carl Vinson VA Medical Center](#)
1826 Veterans Blvd.
Dublin, GA 31021

Direct Telephone: (478) 272-1210, ext. 2658
Main Switchboard Telephone: (478) 272-1210, ext. 2658
Pager: (478) 277-8544
E-Mail: angela2.williams@va.gov

Blind Rehabilitation Outpatient Specialists

Scott Johnson (291)
[Augusta VA Medical Center](#) (Uptown Division)
1 Freedom Way
Augusta, GA 30904-6285

Position: BROS
VISN: 7
Station No. 509
BR-5.0 Institution Name: AUGUSTA VAMC

Direct Telephone: (706) 733-0188, ext. 7573
FAX: (706) 781-6703
Main Switchboard Telephone: (706) 733-0188
Toll Free: (800) 836-5561
Pager: (706) 732-3200
Cell Phone: (706) 533-4260
E-Mail: scott.johnson4@va.gov

Low Vision Clinic – Atlanta VAMC

Mary Lynch, MD – Eye Clinic Director
Gale R. Watson, Certified Low Vision Therapist
[Atlanta VA Medical Center](#) (112)
1670 Clairmont Road
Decatur, GA 30033

Direct Telephone: (404) 321-6111, ext. 1-6789
FAX: (404) 728-4837
Main Switchboard Telephone: (404) 321-6111, ext. 1-6789
Toll Free: (800) 224-4087, ext. 1-6789
E-Mail: Gale.Watson@va.gov

Augusta Blind Rehabilitation Center (291)

Augusta VA Medical Center (Uptown Division)

1 Freedom Way
Augusta, GA 30904-6285

Direct Telephone: (706) 733-0188, ext. 1-6661

FAX: (706) 481-6703

Main Switchboard Telephone: (706) 733-0188, ext. 1-6661

Toll Free: (800) 836-5561, ext. 1-6661

E-Mail: paul.whitten@va.gov

Web Site: http://vaww.visn7.va.gov/ServiceLines/special_programs/BlindRehab/default.htm

<u>Position Title</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Extension</u>
Chief	Paul D. Whitten	6660
Program Assistant	Carolyn Eastman	6662
Secretary	Lillie Williams	6661
Training Coordinator	Tim Johnson	7574
Living Skills	Jannet Eargle	6690
	Genevieve Patterson	6687
	Vicki Stoughton	6674
	Ron Worley	6675
Manual Skills	Herman Jefferson	6695
	Doug Roebuck	6696
	Kathy Wales	6698
Leisure Skills	John Joe	6699
Orientation & Mobility	Chuck Genoe	6610
	John Hofmeister	6609
	Lee Stoughton	6611
Visual Skills	Laurie Hallman	6685
	Laurel Tucker	6673
Family Outreach	Deborah Lovell	6689
Physician Assistant	Joseph Soparas, PA	6688
Nurse Manager	Richard D. Boggan	6612
Nursing Staff	Eunice Miller, RN	6612
	Jacqueline Perry, RN	6612
	Maurice (Moe) Terry, RN	6612
	Colleen McVerry, RN	6612
	Janeen Boney, LPN	6612
	William Kelly, LPN	6612
	Carrie Wright, LPN	6612
	Alicia Canaday, LPN	6612
	Patricia Twiggs, LPN	6612
	Barbara Britton, LPN	6612
Optometrist	Diane Lindsay, OD	6686

Blinded Veterans Association

Bill Murphy, Field Service Representative

Blinded Veterans Association

VA [Atlanta Regional Office](#), Suite 1-1333

1700 Clairmont Rd.

Decatur, GA 30033

Direct Telephone: (404) 929-5338

FAX: (404) 929-5340

Toll Free: (800) 669-7079

Website: www.bva.org

VISUALLY IMPAIRED FOUNDATION OF GEORGIA

6595 Roswell Road, #224

Atlanta, GA 30328

Visually Impaired Foundation of Georgia (vifGA) is a non-profit organization founded in 1997. VifGA's goal is to serve as a comprehensive guide for visually impaired and blind Georgians. The vifGA website lists local resources for the visually impaired and nationally ones that may pertain to residents of Georgia. The website is set up to be interactive so the visually impaired could add their favorite sites, agencies, and up-coming events.

If you choose **Groups and Services** please select from the following:

Age-related Groups

- Support Groups**
- Blind Consumer/Advocate Groups**
- Canine Assistance**
- Low Vision Clinics**
- Recreation**
- Transportation**
- Volunteer Services**
- Miscellaneous**

If you wish to choose from the **Main Menu** :

- Groups and Services**
- Organizations**
- Funding**
- Vendors**
- Special Notices/Future Events**
- Contact Information/Acknowledgments**

To add a listing to the site, please send your requests to: VifGA@magnifiers.com

For more information, visit www.vifga.org or call 770-390-0009 or 1-877-778-4342

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Vocational Rehabilitation is a federally funded agency through the Georgia Department of Labor with a mission to assist individuals with disabilities to prepare for, enter into and maintain employment. These services are open to all disabilities through local Vocational Rehabilitation offices. Vocational Rehabilitation assist individuals with disabilities, at least 16 years of age who wish to obtain employment. Assistive technology is provided to VR consumers only if the device is necessary for the individual to be employed or to maintain employment.

Eligibility:

- Have a disability that significantly impairs the ability to obtain employment
- Be 16 years or older
- Wish to obtain employment – this program is only available to individuals seeking active employment.
- Have income at or below the Federal Poverty Limit

Services Provided (Include but not limited to):

- Career counseling
- Assessment
- Training
- Job Placement
- Assistive technology (includes workplace assessments-see AWT program)

ACCESS LOCAL VR OFFICE:

Go to www.dol.state.ga.us and click on link for VR offices to obtain the address and phone number of Vocational Rehabilitation office nearest you.

OLDER BLIND PROGRAM:

Vocational Rehabilitation also manages the Older Blind Program (Project Independence) which assist individuals 55+ with significant vision loss who need independent living skills, assistive technology and mobility training, to name a few. These services are provided to improve the quality of life for older Georgians experiencing vision loss and are provided through six (6) contractors located around the state:

Blind and Low Vision Services - Smyrna
Center for the Visually Impaired - Atlanta
Mons International – South Georgia
Savannah Association for the Blind - Savannah
Walton Options - Augusta
VISTAS - Athens

These contractors provide services, including low vision screening, for individuals 55 or older regardless of need. Contact individual contractor for any specific requirements.

WALTON OPTIONS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING, Inc.

948 Walton Way
Augusta, Georgia 30901

Walton Options for Independent Living was established September of 1994 in Augusta, Georgia to serve blind, low vision and visually impaired people of all ages . We are a private, nonprofit, consumer-controlled (meaning that the organization is governed by a majority of people who have disabilities), nonresidential Center for Independent Living, as defined by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The mission of Walton Options is to empower persons of all ages with all types of disabilities through information, training, and advocacy. Walton Options has an array of services including specialized training and assistance to persons who are visually impaired or blind. Our services may be provided at one of our center's business locations or throughout the 30 plus county service area depending on need and resources. We collaborate with local vision specialists to meet a diversity of requests and needs.

Services provided:

- Home Skills Training such as cooking, budgeting, personal care, all personalized to your individual goals
- Work Skills Training such as job readiness, resume building, job searching and other skills provided in our *TO GET YOU WORKING* program
- Computer Training such as JAWS, ZoomText, Windows, WORD
- Assistance with purchase of specialized low vision aids or other assistive technology devices including those that support additional disabilities
- Assistance with Low Vision Exams or Other visual acuity assessments
- Orientation and Mobility Training
- Resource Opportunities for Service Animal Selection
- Lending library of various assistive technology for trial before purchase
- Resource lab with provision of computer, CCTV, JAWS, ZoomText, scanners, etc.

Other Services: Many of our programs are at little or no cost to the individual. Walton Options will assist persons in identifying resources to support service costs for any of

the fee based programs when the individual is unable to pay all of the costs. Walton Options receives funding from the Georgia Department of Labor to provide services to persons who qualify for Project Independence. In addition, Walton Options is an Assistive Technology Resource Center providing many services through the Georgia Tools for Life Program.

For more information, please visit www.waltonoptions.org or contact Terry Kendrick or Kathy Pelletier at (706) 724-6262.

**Georgia Optometric Association
DOCTORS**

ATHENS:

Jon L. Forché, O.D., F.A.A.O.
Five Points Eye Care
698 S. Milledge Ave
Athens, GA 30605
Phone: 706 543-2020
FAX: 706 549-6618

Low Vision Examination Completed By: Doctor

Low Vision Devices Available: hand, stand, pocket magnifiers, aspheric microscopes, prism compensated reading glasses, spectacle mounted telescopes, loupes, bioptics, hand-held telescopes, bar magnifiers, office offers CCTV demonstrations and vendor referral.

Loaner Program: No

Requirement to Purchase at Office: No

METRO-ATLANTA AREA:

Brian Burke, O.D.
Jon L. Forché, O.D., F.A.A.O.

Blind and Low Vision Services of N. Georgia
3830 S. Cobb Drive Suite 125
Smyrna, GA 30080
770-432-7280
www.blvsgeorgia.org

Low Vision Examination Completed By: Doctor

Low Vision Devices available: prescription illuminated aspheric hand, stand, and pocket magnifiers, aspheric microscopes, prism compensated reading glasses, spectacle mounted telescopes, loupes, bioptics, hand-held telescopes, dome (bright field) magnifiers, glare reducing filters, contrast enhancing filters. Office offers CCTV demonstrations.

Other Services: Orientation/Mobility (O/M), Occupational Therapy (OT), Rehab specialists, social workers, support groups, adult and pediatric programs, vocational rehab.

Loaner Program: No

Requirement to Purchase at Office: No

Susan A. Primo, O.D., M.P.H., F.A.A.O.
Kenneth J. Rosengren, O.D., F.A.A.O.
Thao M. Vu, O.D.

Vision Rehabilitation Service
Emory Eye Center
1365B Clifton Rd. NE, Suite B1100
Atlanta, GA 30322
Phone: (404) 778-5820
Fax: (404)778-5609
www.eyecenter.emory.edu

Low Vision Examination performed by: Doctor

Low Vision Devices Available: hand, stand, and pocket magnifiers, prism reading glasses, aspheric microscopes, hand held and spectacle mounted telescopes, sunglass and contrast enhancing filters, full range of closed circuit television systems from pocket to desk top, and head mounted video display system.

Occupational Therapy available at office

Loaner Program: No

Requirement to purchase at office: Yes

Paula Gorlin, O.D.
Total Vision
875 Lawrenceville Suwanee Road
Lawrenceville, GA 30043
(770)963-0370
Fax: (770) 682-3719

Low Vision Examination Completed By: Doctor

Low Vision Devices Available: Prescription illuminated hand, stand and pocket magnifiers, Sunglasses (NoIR, Cocoons), Contrast Enhancing Filters, Aspheric Microscopes, Prism Compensated Reading Glasses, Hand Held Telescopes, Closed Circuit TV- Both Pocket & Desktop.

Loaner Program: No

Required To Purchase At Office: No

Daniel Gottlieb, O.D.
5462 Memorial Dr., Suite 101
Stone Mountain, GA 30083
(404) 296-6000
dr.gottlieb@gottliebvisiongroup.com

Low Vision Examination Completed By: Doctor

Low Vision Devices Available: hand, stand, and pocket magnifiers, prism compensated reading glasses, bioptic telescopes, aspheric microscopes, field enhancement devices, sunglasses (NoIR, Corning), office prescribes CCTV's in-house

Loaner Program: No

Requirement to Purchase at Office: No

David Sweeney, O.D.
InSight Your Vision Source!
5380 Roswell Rd, NE
Atlanta, GA 30342
Tel 404-250-1680
Fax 404-781-8100
email: sweeneyeye@mindspring.com
www.visionsource-insight.com

Low Vision Examination Completed By: Doctor

Low Vision Devices available: prescription illuminated aspheric hand, stand, and pocket magnifiers, aspheric microscopes, prism compensated reading glasses, spectacle mounted telescopes, loupes, bioptics, hand-held telescopes, dome (bright field) magnifiers, glare reducing filters, contrast enhancing filters. Office offers CCTV demonstrations.

Other Services: Occupational Therapist (OT) helps train a person to use devices and lighting to function better with activities of daily living. O.T. also provides tips to make the most of a person's remaining vision to improve independence, safety, and quality of life at home, work, and while traveling

Loaner Program: No

Requirement to Purchase at Office: No

Brian E. Saunders, O.D.
South Cobb Eye Center
6108 Mableton Parkway
Mableton, GA 30126
Phone: 770 948-7770
FAX: 770 941-0299
E-mail: dr613@Bellsouth.net

Low Vision Examination Completed By: Doctor

Low Vision Devices Available: hand, stand, and pocket magnifiers, prism compensated reading glasses, bioptic telescopes, aspheric microscopes, sunglasses (NoIR, Corning), office prescribes CCTV's in-house

Loaner Program: No

Requirement to Purchase at Office: No

Timothy Spence, O.D., F.A.A.O.
Center for Visually Impaired
739 West Peachtree Street, N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30308
www.cviatlanta.org

Low Vision Examination Completed By: Doctor

Low Vision Devices available: prescription illuminated aspheric hand, stand, and pocket magnifiers, aspheric microscopes, prism compensated reading glasses, spectacle mounted telescopes, loupes, bioptics, hand-held telescopes, dome (bright field) magnifiers, glare reducing filters, contrast enhancing filters. Office offers CCTV demonstrations.

Other Services: Orientation/Mobility (O/M), Occupational Therapy (OT), Rehab specialists, social workers, support groups, adult and pediatric programs, vocational rehab.

Loaner Program: No

Requirement to Purchase at Office: No

Stephen L. Rothbloom, O.D.
1655 Spring Road
Smyrna, Georgia 30080
Phone: (678) 842-9544
E-Mail: drrothbloom@bellsouth.net
Web Address: www.drrothbloom.com

Low Vision Consultations and Evaluations Completed By: Doctor

Low Vision Devices Available: Magnifiers for Reading Books, Newspapers, Mail and Religious Study, TV Enhancing Glasses, Driving Telescopes (Bioptics), Sun Filtering Lenses to Enhance Outdoor Vision, Software to Magnify Computer/Internet Viewing, Portable Electronic Reading Devices for Work, School and Home Digital Magnifiers and CCTVs.

Other Services: Low Vision Consultant to Cobb County School System

Evaluation Policy: Non Electronic Low Vision Devices Returned Within Two Weeks and in Perfect Condition Refunded in Full; Electronic Low Vision Devices Returned Within Two Weeks and in Perfect Condition w/ Original Packing Refunded Less a 15% Restocking Fee.

Loaner Program: No

Purchasing Requirement: All Low Vision Devices Dispensed From Our Office Come With Instructions On Their Use and Maintenance From Knowledgeable Professionals.

Scott Williamson, O.D.
179 Handley Rd., Suite C
Tyrone, GA 30290
(770) 486-1020
tyronei@bellsouth.net

Low Vision Examination Completed By: Doctor

Low Vision Devices Available: hand, stand, and pocket magnifiers, prism compensated reading glasses, bioptic telescopes, aspheric microscopes, sunglasses (NoIR, Corning), office prescribes CCTV's in-house

Loaner Program: No

Requirement to Purchase at Office: No

MIDDLE GEORGIA:

William Taylor, O.D.
684 First St.
Macon, GA 31201
(478) 743-2020

Low Vision Examination Completed By: Doctor

Low Vision Devices Available: hand, stand, and pocket magnifiers, prism compensated reading glasses, bioptic telescopes, aspheric microscopes, sunglasses (NoIR, Corning), office prescribes CCTV's in-house

Loaner Program: No

Requirement to Purchase at Office: No

SOUTH GEORGIA:

Krystal Bragg, O.D.
Georgia Eye Institute
420 Gentilly Place
Statesboro, GA 30458
(912) 489-3606

Low Vision Examination Completed By: Doctor

Low Vision Devices Available: hand, stand, and pocket magnifiers, prism compensated reading glasses, telescopes, aspheric microscopes, sunglasses (NoIR, Corning), office prescribes CCTV's in-house

Loaner Program: No

Requirement to Purchase at Office: No

Alan G. Peaslee, O.D., M.S.
Affinity Health Group, LLC
Dept. of Ophthalmology

2225 HWY 41 North
Tifton, GA 31794
(229) 391-4180
Fax (229) 391-2929

And

4380 Kings Way
Valdosta, GA 31602
(229) 244-2068
Fax (229) 244-2358
aPeaslee@affinity-health.com

Low Vision Examination Completed By: Doctor

Low Vision Devices Available: full range of devices including hand, stand, pocket magnifiers, aspheric microscopes, prism compensated reading glasses, spectacle mounted telescopes, loupes, bioptics, hand-held telescopes, bar magnifiers, CCTV. Referral for O&M services is also available.

Loaner Program: limited

Requirement to Purchase at Office: No. Products are offered primarily through Mons International and other sources as needed.

Other Services:

Office participates in Project Independence for visually impaired GA residents over age 55. Office is also a contract provider for GA Dept of Labor Vocational Rehab

Steven M. Wilson, O.D.

PO Box 3211
Valdosta, GA 31604
229-244-3000 Office
229-244-1934 Fax
swilson@wilsonseyecenter.com

Low Vision Examination Completed By: Doctor

Low Vision Devices Available:

Other Services: Certified State of Georgia Low Vision Site for Rehabilitation Services, Certified Occupational Therapist on staff with emphasis in Low Vision Rehabilitation, Orthoptics, and Vision Therapy

Loaner Program: No

Requirement to Purchase at Office: No

SURVEY FOR INCLUSION IN NEXT ISSUE OF GA LOW VISION TASK FORCE DIRECTORY

Please Check One: New Information Updated Information

1. Do you currently provide low vision (LV) services in your office?
 Yes (If yes, go to #3) No (If no, go to #2)

2. Do you have an interest in providing these services?
 Yes (If yes, go on to #3) No (If no, go on to #11)

Describe your background and formal education in low vision.

If you have none, would you be interested in acquiring formal training?
 Yes No If you do not provide services currently, go on to #11.

3. How much of your time is devoted to LV services? _____

5. Do you have support staff working with you in LV? Yes No
 o if yes, describe their backgrounds:

o if no, would you be interested in selecting staff to attend training? Yes No

6. Check the following low vision devices that you have available in your office:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hand magnifiers | <input type="checkbox"/> prism compensated reading glasses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stand magnifiers | <input type="checkbox"/> spectacle mounted telescopes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aspheric microscopes | <input type="checkbox"/> pocket magnifiers <input type="checkbox"/> handheld |
| <input type="checkbox"/> monocular telescopes | <input type="checkbox"/> bioptic telescopes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telemicroscopes | <input type="checkbox"/> loupes <input type="checkbox"/> bar magnifiers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Field enhancement devices List: _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses: List: _____ | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Zoom Text or other computer enlargement devices | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CCTVs; do you prescribe these in your office or refer to vendors? | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other electronic devices List: _____ | |

7. Do you have a loaner program for trial of LV devices? Yes No

8. When you prescribe LV devices, are patients required to purchase from your office? Yes No

9. In your LV evaluation, which of the following components are routinely included:
- Distance acuity with LV charts (i.e., Feinbloom, logMAR, etc)
 - Near acuity with LV charts (i.e., Sloan, MN Read, etc)
 - Trial frame refraction (who does this refraction? _____)
 - Goal-oriented functional history
 - Some means of calculating near add
 - Goal-oriented, performance based eval with different categories of LV devices

10. Would you like to be included in future mailings? Yes No

11. Please Include:

Name: _____ e-mail: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ FAX: _____

12. Additional Comments.

Return to: Susan A. Primo, O.D., M.P.H.
Emory Eye Center, 1365B Clifton Rd., NE Suite B1100
Atlanta, GA 30322
(404)778-5820 or sprimo@emory.edu