

2012 Program Report Card: Independent Living Services (BRS- BESB Program)

*Quality of Life Result:* All Connecticut residents under 55 years of age with blindness are self-sufficient.

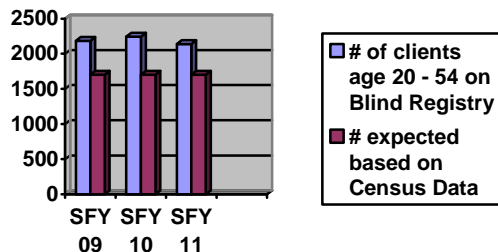
*Contribution to Result:* BRS-BESB Program’s Independent Living service provides social work, rehabilitation teaching, mobility instruction and low vision services to adult clients who are legally blind. By delivering these services, in combination with the provision of adaptive devices such as magnifiers, daily living aids and travel canes, BRS-BESB improves the quality of life by enabling clients to live safely and independently in their homes and communities.

*Actual SFY 11 Program Expenditures:* \$36,069    *State Funding:* \$24,250    *Federal Funding:* \$11,819    *Other Funding:* \$0  
*Estimated SFY 12 Total Program Expenditures:* \$ 45,000    *State Funding:* \$24,000    *Federal Funding:* \$21,000    *Other Funding:* \$0

*Partners:* eye doctors, municipal social services departments, assisted living facilities, Centers for Independent Living, families, caregivers, Department of Social Services, transportation providers, volunteer agencies, housing authorities, faith-based organizations.

**Performance Measure 1:** The number of adult clients under the age of 55 who were referred to BESB relative to the number of clients in this age range who would be expected to be on the BESB Blind Registry using prevalence rates developed by the National Eye Institute in comparison to census data.

FY 09: 2,185 (expected prevalence, 1,702)  
 FY 10: 2,243 (expected prevalence, 1,702)  
 FY 11: 2,140 (expected prevalence, 1,696)



**Story behind the baseline:** Data from a National Eye Institute study on the prevalence of blindness among U.S. adults, combined with population figures provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, indicates that BRS would expect the

number of clients in this age range on the BESB Blind Registry to be 1,696.

The BRS Blind Registry for this age range had been steadily moving upwards over the past two years, from 2,185 in FY09 to 2,243 in FY10. It dipped somewhat in FY11. Nonetheless, this pattern indicates a larger group existing within the working-age population of people who are blind than is predicted by application of the Eye Institute’s prevalence formula to Connecticut’s census data. The overall trend in new referrals during past year suggests that renewed outreach targeted to Connecticut eye doctors would be beneficial.

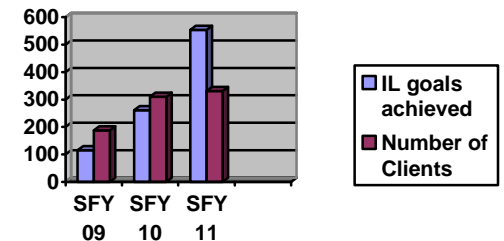
**Proposed Action to Turn the Curve:**

Updated census information showed a slight decline in the state population, but the drop in new referrals declined at a greater rate. The agency will initiate a renewed outreach effort to Connecticut eye doctors to remind them of the mandatory reporting requirements to ensure that all candidates for services are referred.

**Performance Measure 2:** The number of independent living goals for clients under the

age of 55 that were achieved in comparison to the total number of Independent Living Program clients served during the year.

FY 09: 115 goals achieved for 188 clients  
 FY10: 261 goals achieved for 310 clients  
 FY11: 553 goals achieved for 331 clients



**Story behind the baseline:** The Independent Living Program at BESB has focused on providing clients with services that will yield measureable gains in the skills necessary to achieve and maintain independence in their homes and communities and to prepare these individuals to seek employment where feasible. This priority is illustrated by the increased number of clients for whom independent living goals have been established and the increased number of goals achieved.

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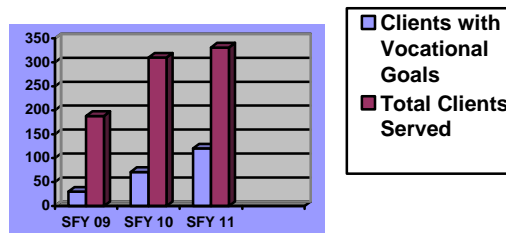
*Partners:* eye doctors, municipal social services departments, assisted living facilities, Centers for Independent Living, families, caregivers, Department of Social Services, transportation providers, volunteer agencies, housing authorities, faith-based organizations.

**Proposed actions to turn the curve:** BRS-BESB sets a high priority on establishing measureable outcomes of increased independence in activities of daily living for clients served. In response to strained funding to serve all eligible clients, in 2011 the agency implemented new strategies to maximize services within existing resources. This included a revision in service delivery protocol on the provision of non-prescription low vision aids, resulting in significant cost savings compared to prior years. Agency Rehabilitation Teachers are now utilized to provide the initial screening assessment of non-prescribed low vision magnification, and often can provide magnifiers and aids to achieve gains in visual functioning within the initial assessment meeting with the client. Services through Low Vision doctors are still utilized in all situations where non-prescribed aids are insufficient to achieve the client's desired goals for increased visual capacity with their remaining vision.

**Performance Measure 3:** The number of Independent Living Program clients under the age of 55 for whom vocational rehabilitation

goals have been established to address self-sufficiency through employment.

FY 09: 30 clients of 188 served  
FY 10: 71 clients of 310 served  
FY 11: 120 clients of 331 served



**Story behind the baseline:** Proficiency in performing independent daily living tasks is an important precursor to the achievement of career success. Independent living services such as teaching clients to safely cook meals, read mail, do laundry, shop for groceries and manage personal finances are provided by BESB Rehabilitation Teachers. Braille and speech access devices are provided in situations where low vision aids are not practical. This Performance Measure illustrates the agency's increasing focus on the achievement of independent living goals that prepare clients for

participation in vocational rehabilitation services and future career success.

**Proposed action to turn the curve:** As the agency serves greater numbers of adults under age 55, the increase in goals established to improve independence in community living has expanded to include a greater emphasis on preparation for employment. There has been an upward trend in the number of clients served as well as an increase in the number of vocational goals established for these clients. In order to achieve even greater success, the agency has reconfigured staff territories of rehab teachers to reduce travel time and increase staff availability to address pre-vocational and vocational goals.

