

Blind Services Foundation of Florida Inc.

Annual Report 2020-2021

Our primary project during this fiscal year involved funding and, to a degree, overseeing a Rate Study which was contracted with San Diego State University. We have met once with representatives of that university and representatives of the Division of Blind Services to set out the initial parameters of the study. While our funding covered the fiscal year from July 2020 till the end of June 2021, the actual study itself will not be completed until the end of the calendar year.

Essentially, this study aims to look at the current values of a variety of contracted services delivered by local agencies serving people who are blind, who have low vision or are deaf and blind. These current costs will be compared with a range of other parameters within the state and across the country to try to decide what changes seem appropriate to implement a system that optimizes the cost of services delivered by these agencies in a number of areas and to a range of populations.

The Blind Services Foundation also continued to spend time working on the project that we had funded over the previous two years. This project involved the development and assessment of a vocational tool designed to test the current work readiness of people who are blind or have low vision. There is a good deal of interest at the national level to adopt this tool for use across the country. It is also being employed in Canada and in Denmark and, within Florida during this fiscal year, more than fifty individuals have been evaluated. Additional work was also done this year to refine the tool and the manual which accompanies it. The Division of Blind Services also worked with the Department of Education to encourage the legislature to pass a law that would have allowed DOE to copyright the tool and pertinent additional documents and place it in the Creative Commons on the internet. This would have and, hopefully, will provide protection for the state while making the tool available to those who would like to use it.

The Blind Services Foundation has completely updated our web site this year. We have also prepared and approved a new brochure. We are currently at work on a new poster that we hope to use to increase our fund raising by encouraging various entities to display it.

The Blind Services Foundation continues to have a majority of its Board who are blind or have low vision. We meet four to five times a year and our budget committee develops and implements a budget each year. All of our meetings are open and are publicly noticed.

It is an honor for all of us to have the opportunity to serve people who are blind in this state with our work on the Foundation Board. We believe that the projects we have funded since our inception have done a lot to make the lives of people who are blind in Florida better! We appreciate the opportunity to serve!