

# Department of Services for the Blind Budget Concerns 2025

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**Department of Services  
for the Blind**

# Three Main Programs @DSB

- Vocational Rehabilitation Program
  - Serves over 1,000 individuals annually
  - Split state's VR Grant with DSHS DVR
  - Adaptive Skills of Blindness; Vocational Training and Readiness, Support in Career Search; Support Business in Retaining and Securing Talent
- Independent Living
  - Serves over 1,000 individuals who don't intend to work
  - Average age is 83
- Business Enterprise Program
  - Changing business model post-pandemic



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# Independent Living Older Blind Proposed Federal Budget

- No changes in proposed ED budget for IL-OB
- \$33.3 million nationally
- \$750,000 Washington State
  - No COLA for decades
  - 14% increase for WA population aged 65+ from 2020 to 2024
    - Approximately 8.5% of WA aged 65+ experience visual disability
    - Approx 110,000 individuals with visual disabilities 65+



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# Business Enterprise Program (BEP) Budget

- State project funding ended SFY25
- Budget based on vending revenues and allocable VR dollars
  - Vending revenues and profitability of blind-owned vending experienced sharp decline post-pandemic, and still not recovered
  - State buildings not at capacity, too few customers



# Vocational Rehabilitation Program Proposed Federal Budget

- Nationally \$800 million proposed cuts
  - Would reduce DSB's portion of the federal grant by about \$1.5 million, an approximate 12% decrease
  - Unfunded mandates through zeroed out discretionary advocacy and training programs
  - State funding reduction of 4.6% creates added burden
  - Increase in costs of 20%
    - State match impacts could occur Fall 2026



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# Vocational Rehabilitation Program Proposed Federal Budget

- Challenges:

- Majority of work is completed by in-house staff
  - Staff reductions impact ability to provide services statewide
- Order of Selection Waitlist will need to be enacted
- Fewer customers served at a time



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