

*Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired*

**ANNOUNCEMENT OF PUBLIC MEETINGS**

During the fall of 2018, the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) will conduct several public meetings providing stakeholders an opportunity to make comments regarding DBVI programs and services. DBVI seeks input regarding agency strategic planning, development of agency policies and procedures, and implementing services and supports to potentially eligible and eligible individuals who are blind, vision impaired, and deafblind. DBVI is particularly interested in comments regarding the following programs, services, and divisions:

- Independent Living/Rehabilitation Teaching
- Low Vision Services
- Deafblind Services
- Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired Programs
- Rehabilitation Technology Services
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services
- Library and Resource Center Services
- Virginia Industries for the Blind
- Virginia Enterprises for the Blind

<p><b><u>Roanoke Public Meeting</u></b> <i>Lions Club</i> 501 Elm Avenue, SW Roanoke, Virginia 24017-3916 Wednesday, October 17, 2018 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm</p>	<p><b>Bristol Office - Virtual</b> 111 Commonwealth Ave., Suite 200 Bristol, Virginia 23201 November 7, 2018 11:00 am – 12:00 pm</p>
<p><b><u>Richmond Area Public Meeting</u></b> <i>Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired</i> Burton Conference Room 401 Azalea Avenue Richmond, Virginia 23227 October 24, 2018 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm</p>	<p><b>Roanoke Office - Virtual</b> 1202 Franklin Road, SW Roanoke, VA 24016 November 7, 2018 11:00 am – 12:00 pm</p>
<p><b><u>Fredericksburg Area</u></b></p>	<p><b>Staunton Office - Virtual</b> 1076 Jefferson Highway Staunton, VA 24401 November 7, 2018 11:00 am – 12:00 pm</p>

***In Conjunction with the National Federation of the Blind State Convention***

Fredericksburg Hospitality House  
Hotel and Conference Center  
2801 Plank Road  
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22401  
November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
5:00 pm – 6:00 pm

**Virtual Meeting Public Meeting**

*Attend in person at one of DBVI's six regional offices OR by teleconference at 804-249-4111 conference code 8030*

**Richmond Office - Virtual**

*DBVI Library and Resource Center*  
401 Azalea Avenue  
Richmond, Virginia 23227  
November 7, 2018  
11:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Fairfax Office - Virtual**

11150 Fairfax Boulevard Suite 502  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
November 7, 2018  
11:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Norfolk Office - Virtual**

6325 N. Center Drive, Ste.  
131 Interstate Corporate Center,  
Bldg. #18  
Norfolk, VA 23502  
November 7, 2018  
11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Written and e-mail comments may be submitted prior to December 31, 2018 to Susan K. Davis, Policy and Training Coordinator, DBVI, 397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA, 23227, [Susan.Davis@dbvi.virginia.gov](mailto:Susan.Davis@dbvi.virginia.gov) 804-371-3140/1-800-622-2155 (Voice/TTY).

Individuals requiring interpreters or other special accommodations should contact Susan K. Davis (800-622-2155) at least two weeks prior to the meeting to request the preferred accommodation.

Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired  
College Sponsorship Policy Summary  
Fall 2018

During the 2018 Public Comment cycle, the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) seeks comments, suggestions, and recommendations from interested stakeholders regarding possible revisions to the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program policy regarding college sponsorship. In order to provide access to post-secondary education to as many individuals as possible, DBVI is considering revision of the VR College Sponsorship Policy. Proposed revisions to the policy and a link to the existing VR Policy Manual are contained herein.

**VR Policy Manual link:** See Chapter 8, College and other Post-Secondary Training <https://vdbvi.org/publications.htm#policies>

**Proposed Policy Highlights:**

Local public college is defined as a public school (usually a community college) within the student's "community of residence", meaning within 40 miles of home or requires no more than one hour to commute to school.

DBVI will sponsor college at the most cost effective local public college rate while students earn an Associate's Degree. 2.0 GPA required for sponsorship of transfer to a four-year school. Sponsorship of private or out of state college policy remains unchanged.

DBVI will not sponsor room and board expenses while a student is earning an Associate's Degree at the most cost effective local public college rate.

Regional Manager must approve exceptions to the most cost effective local public college rate and sponsorship of room and board expenses.

DBVI sponsorship of tuition, room and board, and other expenses will be determined based on published cost of attendance for the school being attended by the student.

Comparable benefits will include Expected Family Contribution (EFC), SSI or SSDI (for room and board expenses) and other non-merit grants and scholarships.

Requirement that student provide results from FAFSA to VR counselor no less than 90 days prior to beginning of academic year (increased from 30 days).

DBVI will sponsor post-secondary training in order to prepare an individual with the skills and abilities necessary to be a competitive candidate for suitable employment where the specific degree is the commonly recognized standard for entry into that field.

### **Proposed Policy:**

The DBVI VR Program provides employment services to eligible individuals who are blind, vision impaired, or deafblind to assist them in going or returning to work. Helping individuals keep their jobs is also a significant component of DBVI's VR Program.

DBVI sponsors post-secondary education when an individual's vocational goal requires a post-secondary degree as the commonly recognized standard for entry into competitive integrated employment or when an individual cannot advance in employment without a post-secondary degree.

Proposed revisions include consideration of college sponsorship at the lowest public college rate. For the purpose of this policy, DBVI defines a local public college as a public college within a student's "community of residence" meaning no further than 40 miles from the student's home or no more than a one hour commute for the student.

Beginning fall of 2019, eligible students entering college as freshmen will receive sponsorship from DBVI to attend at the tuition rate for the most cost effective local public college. This tuition rate will continue until the student attains an Associate's Degree. Students must earn a grade point average of 2.0 or better each semester in order to receive ongoing sponsorship. DBVI's private school and out-of-state school policies will still apply. During the

time DBVI sponsors the student at local public college rate, the agency will not sponsor room and board expenses.

Based on informed choice, students may elect to go directly to a four-year college with DBVI sponsoring up to the local public college rate until the student earns 60 credits towards their degree. The student is responsible for any remaining cost.

There are times when an individual's personal circumstances may require an exception to policy. When an individual's disability(ies) related functional limitations cause them to require specialized transportation or otherwise causes them undue hardship in commuting to and from school each day, DBVI may consider an exception to the college sponsorship policy. Need for the exception must be documented by the student and the exception must be approved by the local DBVI Office Regional Manager.

In order for DBVI to consider sponsorship of post-secondary education, students must complete the DBVI financial determination form that calculates the student's participation in cost of services. Additionally, students must provide DBVI with the student's FAFSA results no later than 90 days prior to beginning of an academic year. DBVI will consider all comparable benefits including the student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC), SSI or SSDI (for room and board expenses), and other non-merit grants and scholarships before sponsoring any college expense.

Stakeholders may comment in person during one of DBVI's Public Meetings or in writing to Susan K. Davis, MS, CRC at [susan.davis@dbvi.virginia.gov](mailto:susan.davis@dbvi.virginia.gov).