

Introduction to

Opening Doors to Opportunity



Oklahoma Department
of Rehabilitation Services



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DRS Publication #99-02

Date: Revised March 2011

DRS is an equal opportunity employer and provider of services and/or assistance and is in compliance with the Civil Rights Acts 1964, and 1991, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Executive Order 112246, as amended. DRS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability or veteran's status in employment or provision of services.

This publication, printed by Southwestern Stationery and Bank Supply, Inc., is issued by the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services as authorized by the Oklahoma Commission for Rehabilitation Services. It was produced by the DRS Public Information Office. A total of 12,000 copies have been prepared and distributed at a cost of \$3,995.09. Copies have been deposited with the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries. For additional copies, contact DRS Central Departmental Services at 405-951-3511.

Available In Accessible Formats

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services

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Opening Doors to Opportunity



Oklahoma Department
of Rehabilitation Services

About the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services

The Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) expands opportunities for employment, independent life and economic self-sufficiency by helping Oklahomans with disabilities bridge barriers to success in the workplace, school and at home. DRS serves more than 70,000 Oklahomans with disabilities each year through vocational rehabilitation, employment, independent living, educational programs and the determination of medical eligibility for disability benefits.

DRS is comprised of five program divisions, Vocational Rehabilitation, Visual Services, Disability Determination, Oklahoma School for the Blind and Oklahoma School for the Deaf. These divisions operate dozens of programs that help Oklahomans lead more independent and productive lives.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR): Employment services for people with any disability, except blindness or diabetes.

Division of Visual Services (DVS): Employment and independent living services for people who are blind, visually impaired or have diabetes.

Disability Determination Division: Determines medical eligibility for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Oklahoma School for the Deaf: Educational programs for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Oklahoma School for the Blind: Educational programs for children who are blind or visually impaired.

For access to additional information about DRS, including information about disability etiquette, interpreters for the deaf, legislative updates, media releases, In the News, policies, publications, video links, other links, success stories and how to access DRS Twitter, visit our web site at www.okdrs.gov/info/about.htm or call 800-845-8476.



Nick Jaques fell 100 feet off a rock cliff and sustained permanent multiple injuries. He spent weeks in the hospital and rehabilitation before moving to Oklahoma. DRS sent Jaques to a job fair where he landed two jobs - a consulting job before he actually graduated and a little while later, the computer programming job he holds now with the internet payroll company, Paycom. He completed his computer science degree in May 2006 with a minor in business administration. "There's no way I would have done it in the amount of time that I did without the support DRS gave me," Jaques said.

Oklahoma Commission for Rehabilitation Services

The commission is the governing board for the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). The commission meets monthly to discuss agency activities and plan for the future. The commission chair leads the meetings, which are open to the public.

The contact person for commission meetings and other information is the DRS Commission Assistant, available at 405-951-3400.

For access to additional information about the Oklahoma Commission for Rehabilitation Services, including information about meeting schedules, agendas and resolutions, visit our web site at www.okdrs.gov/org/org.comm.htm or call 800-845-8476.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Division of Visual Services

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Division of Visual Services provide vocational rehabilitation services to help eligible individuals with disabilities prepare for work and become gainfully employed.

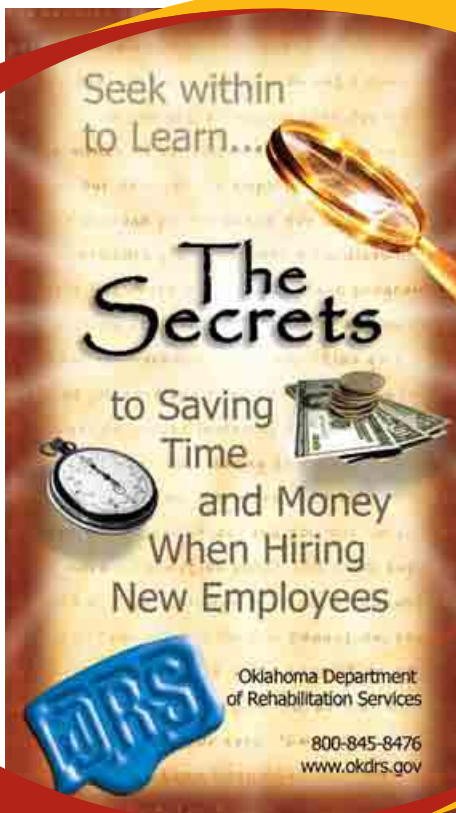
A person may be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services if he or she has a physical or mental disability that is a barrier to employment and requires VR or VS services to prepare for, find, keep or return to work. There must be a chance the person can benefit by going to work.

The primary vocational rehabilitation services are counseling and guidance with job placement. However, other services may include physical or mental restoration; vocational, college or other training; assistive technology evaluations, equipment and training; information on disability resources; personal assistance services while receiving VR or VS services; transportation in connection with VR or VS services; supported employment; self-employment assistance; Transition School-to-Work services for youth with disabilities; and other services based on individual needs.

The services a person receives are determined by the person's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). This plan outlines a person's employment goal and the services that are needed to enable the person to achieve that goal.

Employer Services

Many Oklahoma employers are saving time and money by working with DRS to recruit qualified employees who really want to work. As a result, these businesses are rediscovering dependability, commitment and lower employee turnover. At the same time, these employers are getting a return on their state and federal tax dollars invested in vocational rehabilitation programs.



Check out "The Secrets to Saving Time and Money When Hiring New Employees" brochure at www.okdrs.gov/employers/

An Oklahoma study shows that more than 84 percent of individuals served through Oklahoma's Vocational Rehabilitation and Visual Services' programs are still working after two years - the highest job retention rate of any workforce program.

If you want to save time and money, hire and retain capable, well-prepared employees and build a diverse workforce, we can help you free of charge.

For more information about employment services for businesses, visit our website at www.okdrs.gov/employers/ or call 918-581-2083.



Cathlene Brooks first sought assistance from DRS' Division of Visual Services to prepare for work 10 years ago. She works at the Oklahoma Blood Institute in Ada. She uses enlarged screen text to call between 75 and 140 potential donors each day. It is her job to talk them through the front door. "There's life out there, and you can't give up," Brooks explained. "You have to figure out what's best for you in each environment you're in. There's a way to do it."

Ticket to Work

The Ticket to Work Program may be the key to accessing vocational rehabilitation, training, and placement services, as well as other services and supports to help reach employment goals. The program is available for people with disabilities between the ages of 18 and 64 who are receiving Social Security Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income benefits.

While participating in the Ticket to Work Program, people may be able to use a combination of other work incentives.

Employers who hire applicants with disabilities through the Ticket to Work Program can earn payments from the Social Security Administration and tax credits.

Transition: School-to-Work

The Transition: School-to-Work Program helps students with disabilities who are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for employment and life after high school. Services are available through counselors in the Divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation and Visual Services, such as vocational counseling and guidance; vocational assessment and evaluation, work study and on-the-job training. After graduation, DRS counselors and students continue to work toward vocational and employment goals.

Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology Specialists complete assessments focused on how the accommodation or assistive technology will assist clients in overcoming obstacles that interfere with obtaining employment or keeping a job. Assessments include home or vehicle modifications; personal mobility needs, such as wheelchairs; computer access; worksite access or modification needs and activities of daily living needs.

The Assistive Technology Lab provides evaluations and free demonstrations using adaptive equipment and assistive technology. The lab is outfitted with various types of assistive or adaptive technology, including computer software that allows users to hear text through speech synthesizers, screen magnification software and video magnifiers that increase the size of text.

Community-Based Employment Services

The Employment Support Services Unit (ESS) oversees specialized job placement programs and projects serving individuals categorized as having significant or most significant disabilities.

ESS oversees the supported employment program, a specialized type of job placement for people with the most significant disabilities, providing intensive, on- or off-site training that assists the individuals to choose jobs, learn the tasks and keep the jobs.

Employment and Retention Services is a job placement program designed for individuals with significant disabilities who require short term on- and off-site training beyond what is available in typical job placement programs.

The Job Placement contract provides assistance to DRS customers who require some assistance in finding employment in the community.

The Support Services for Employment contract provides employment support assessment, life skills management, community integration and housing modifications. It may be provided to DRS customers with significant disabilities to augment other traditional case services.



Robert "Mitch" Rice lost a leg due to complications with throat surgery. After he recovered, DRS helped him get a comfortable prosthetic leg that would work with his construction job. One week later, he was back in the caterpillar moving rocks. "Idle hands are the devil's workshop," he explained. "It's true of the mind too. If you're out working, you're not dragging yourself through the mud."

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation provides job placement and employment services to people with any type of disability, except those with blindness, visual impairments or diabetes, who are served by the Division of Visual Services. Counselors arrange for and coordinate services, such as medical and psychological assessments, training, assistive technology, job placement assistance, and worksite job training and follow up.

Pages 6 through 9 offer more information about services provided by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

DRS offers a variety of programs and informational services for individuals who are Deaf, hard of hearing, late-deafened, deaf-blind and those with speech impairments. In addition to information and referral about community services and resources, DRS provides VR employment services and interpreter services to eligible consumers and operates the Quality Assurance Screening Test (QAST) program, which certifies interpreters.

Vocational Rehabilitation for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Our counselors have specialized training and are able to provide direct communication with clients with hearing loss by using sign language or other techniques to effectively communicate.

For access to additional information about DRS Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, visit our web site at www.okdrs.gov/org/org.dvr.htm or call 800-487-4042.

Division of Visual Services

The Division of Visual Services provides job placement and employment services to people who are blind, have visual impairments or diabetes. Those with other types of disabilities are served by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Counselors arrange for and coordinate services, such as medical and psychological assessments, training, job placement assistance, worksite job training and follow up.

Legal blindness occurs when visual acuity with best correction is 20/200 or less or when side vision results in a field restriction of 20 degrees or less.

Pages 6 through 9 offer more information about services provided by the Division of Visual Services.

Instructional Services for People Who are Blind

Instructional Services help DRS clients regain or maintain maximum independence and self-sufficiency. Services include instruction in such things as cooking or banking, adjustment counseling, personal and home management, communication methods, adaptive techniques or devices and recreation activities. Individuals may also learn skills in preparation for employment or community service.



Rehabilitation Teaching

Rehabilitation counseling and instruction help Oklahomans adjust to loss of sight while maximizing use of remaining vision and developing practical skills designed to maintain independence. The Division of Visual Services' rehabilitation teachers help individuals learn daily living skills in their homes, such as telephone dialing, time telling, basic meal preparation, clothing identification and care, grooming tips, home safety, teaching others how to guide, locating dropped objects and much more.

Orientation and Mobility

The Division of Visual Services' orientation and mobility specialists provide instruction on a one-on-one basis to help individuals with visual impairments learn to travel safely and efficiently through their environment, using white canes and other independent travel techniques. The instruction may include street crossing, bus travel and evaluation of distance mobility aids to ensure safe and independent travel.

Adult Blind Living Evaluation (ABLE)

Adult Blind Living Evaluation (ABLE) is an evaluation and training program developed to provide Oklahomans who are legally blind an opportunity to develop skills necessary to function more independently with vision loss. The training covers the same skills listed in the VS section, but in a group environment.

This program allows consumers to build confidence and to meet other individuals with similar vision loss.

Older Blind Independent Living Program

The Older Blind Independent Living Program expands independent living services for people who are 55 years old or older and legally blind. Rehabilitation teachers located in Division of Visual Services offices throughout the state provide one-on-one assistance to older people in adjusting to blindness and regaining or maintaining maximum independence and self-sufficiency. Older Blind Program staff present training for businesses, organizations and others to develop greater awareness of the abilities and needs of older Oklahomans who are blind.

The Older Blind Program operates a telephone line which provides recorded information about grocery ads, newspaper articles, television guides and other publications. In the Tulsa area, the number is 918-743-3332. The statewide, toll free number is 800-829-3255.

Business Enterprise Program (Vending Facilities)

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) trains and assists people who are blind or visually impaired in establishing and operating food service businesses in public and private facilities across the state. The Division of Visual Services equips locations, provides initial inventory and offers on-going technical support.

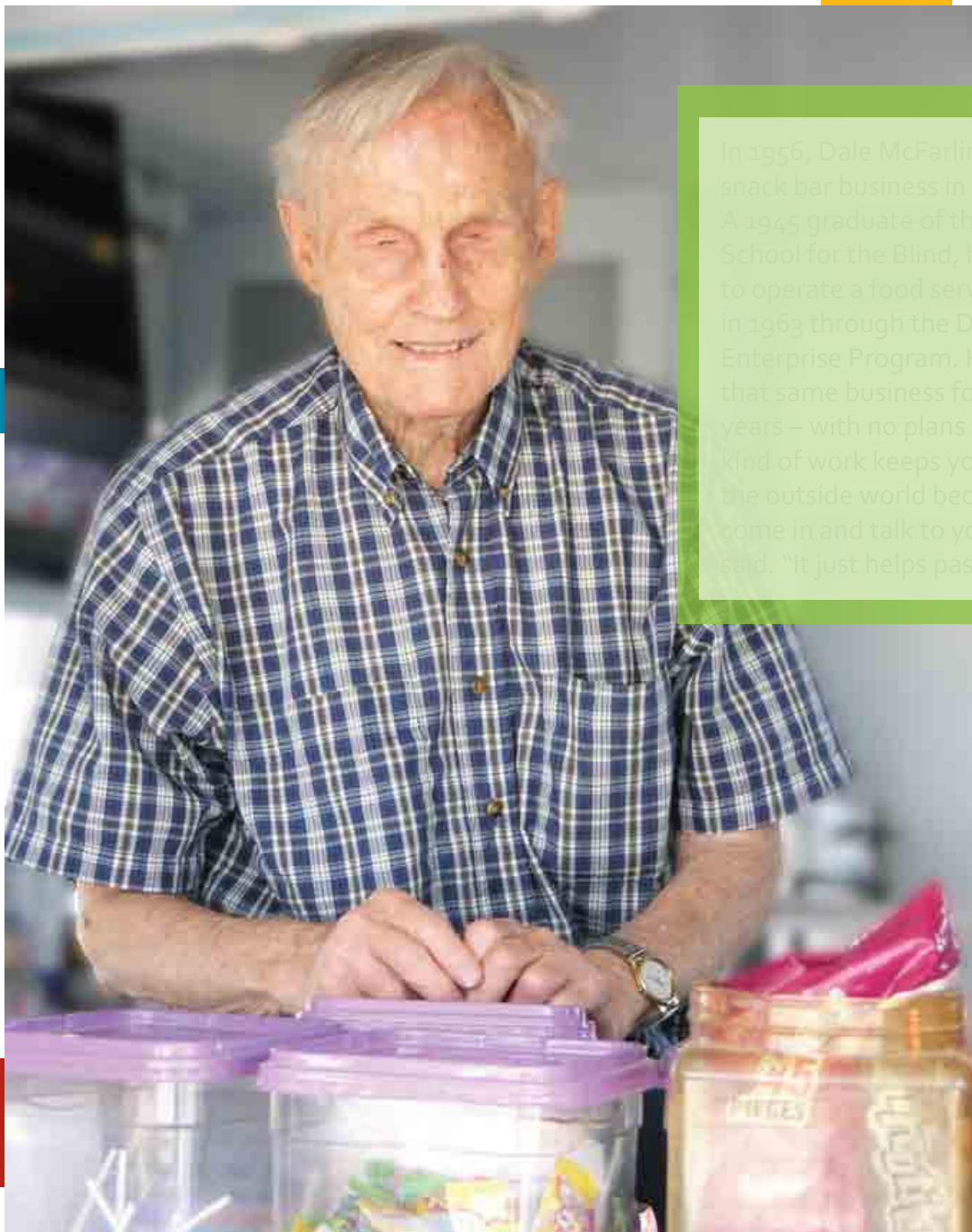
Licensed BEP managers must complete vending facility training courses. They must also pay a percentage of net proceeds to the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services, which matches federal funds to support the program. Total sales generated by BEP managers average more than \$30 million each year.

Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

The Oklahoma Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped provides free services to Oklahomans who are blind or visually impaired and those with learning disabilities or physical limitations that make it difficult to read standard print. Thousands of books, textbooks and periodicals in recorded and braille formats, and playback equipment are available to library patrons at no charge.

The Library's Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) Center provides textbooks and other instructional materials in braille and other accessible formats for students with visual impairments in kindergarten through grade 12.

The Hill is the Library's award-winning sensory garden and walking path designed with special features



In 1956, Dale McFarlin opened his snack bar business in Agra, Okla. A 1945 graduate of the Oklahoma School for the Blind, he was licensed to operate a food service business in 1963 through the DRS Business Enterprise Program. He's operated that same business for more than 50 years – with no plans to retire. "This kind of work keeps you in touch with the outside world because people come in and talk to you," McFarlin said. "It just helps pass the time."

for people with disabilities, including a tactile map in braille and materials chosen for fragrance and texture. The garden was built and is primarily maintained with grant funds.

The Library is part of the national network of libraries affiliated with the Library of Congress National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

For access to additional information, visit our web site at www.library.state.ok.us or call 800-523-0288.

For access to additional information about DRS Division of Visual Services, visit our web site at www.okdrs.gov/org/org.dvs.htm or call 800-845-8476.

Disability Determination Division

The Disability Determination Division makes medical eligibility determination on applications for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for the Social Security Administration (SSA). These determinations are based on federal rules and regulations. All applications for benefits must be submitted through the SSA offices.

SSDI pays disability benefits to individuals who are insured due to contributions to the Social Security trust fund through Social Security tax on their earnings. SSDI also makes payments to certain people with disabilities who are dependents of insured individuals.

SSI provides for payments to persons, including children under the age of 18, who have disabilities and limited income and resources.

The SSA, which makes decisions about eligibility for disability benefits, defines disability as the inability to engage in substantial gainful activity because of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment which has lasted or is expected to last at least 12 months or is expected to result in death. Disability Determination Division operations are fully funded with federal dollars by the SSA.

For access to additional information about DRS Disability Determination Division, including information about the Social Security topics, an application and a video about the disability determination process, visit our web site at www.okdrs.gov/org/org.ddd.htm.

Oklahoma School for the Blind

Located in Muskogee, the Oklahoma School for the Blind (OSB), also known as Parkview School, provides residential and day education, and outreach programs at no charge for Oklahoma children who are blind or visually impaired from infancy through 12th grade. OSB's goal is to help students reach their maximum potential.

Residential and Day School Education

OSB offers a fully accredited academic program with specific skill training, remediation and reinforcement of academic skills as well as access to specialized equipment and recreational activities for residential and day students. Specialized instruction includes braille, orientation and mobility, optimum use of low vision, adaptive equipment and technology and tactile graphic skills.

The secondary school program includes college preparation, vocational training and a work-study program. In addition, students may receive assessment, counseling, physical therapy and health care services. Recreational activities include student organizations and interscholastic athletics.

Teaching materials and instructional styles are adapted to meet the needs of each student. Students learn independent living skills to enable each student to attain maximum independence and strengthen social skills and self-esteem.

OSB transports students home for weekends and holidays.



Kenneth Poore is legally blind from an undeveloped optical nerve and has involuntary eye movement. With the assistance of glasses, magnifying glasses and computer screen enlargers, Poore can see to read, write and accomplish almost anything. DRS sent Poore to a home inspection course and provided computer software. He now owns Ken-Do-It Home Inspections and Handyman, LLC and serves as a board member of the Boys and Girls Club in Ada. "We do a full line of construction as well as remodels and repair," Poore said. "Right now, I am working on getting my electrical and heating and air license."

Outreach

The school serves as a resource center for students statewide with visual impairments who do not attend OSB. Outreach staff provide consultation, curriculum assistance, classroom modifications and assistance with technical equipment. Students receive free evaluations on academic achievement, orientation and mobility, low vision, psychological profiles and living skills. Early intervention services are provided to young students to help them prepare for school.

For access to additional information about Oklahoma School for the Blind, visit our web site at www.osb.k12.ok.us or call 877-229-7136.

Oklahoma School for the Deaf

The Oklahoma School for the Deaf (OSD) in Sulphur provides residential, early intervention and outreach education services at no charge to students who are Deaf and hard of hearing. OSD also provides preschool programs for children who are Deaf at regional sites in Edmond and Chickasha.

Residential and Day School Education

At the main campus in Sulphur, OSD offers educational, vocational and campus life programs for residential and day students from infancy to 12th grade. Educational programs and support services address students' intellectual, physical, social and emotional needs through curriculum, extracurricular activities, transition programs, counseling, physical therapy, speech and language therapy, hearing tests and health care services.

Secondary school students receive vocational and technical training and work experience through Occupational Training Opportunities for the Deaf and other vocational programs.

Students are transported home by the school for weekends and holidays.

Outreach

The School for the Deaf also serves as a resource center for the needs of Oklahoma students who are Deaf, but do not attend classes at OSD. Outreach staff administer speech and language, psycho-educational and audiological assessments to children across the state. Families of pre-school children who are Deaf receive early intervention assistance. OSD also provides on site consultation to public school districts, in-service training for teachers and special cultural, academic, and social programs, including those offered in the summer.

For access to additional information about Oklahoma School for the Deaf, visit our web site at www.osd.k12.ok.us or call 580-622-4900.

Contacts

Note: for additional information about or from any listed DRS office, e-mail info@okdrs.gov unless otherwise specified.

Oklahoma Commission
for Rehabilitation Services
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Oklahoma City, OK 73112
405-951-3471 Office

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services
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Suite 500
Oklahoma City, OK 73112
405-951-34009 Voice/TTY
800-845-8476 Toll Free

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
3535 NW 58th St
Suite 500
Oklahoma City, OK 73112
405-951-3400 V/TTY
800-845-8476 Toll Free

Division of Visual Services
3535 NW 58th St
Suite 500
Oklahoma City, OK 73112
405-951-3400 V/TTY
800-845-8476 Toll Free

Oklahoma School for the Blind
3300 Gibson St
Muskogee, OK 74403
918-781-8200
877-229-7136 Toll Free in Oklahoma
www.osb.k12.ok.us/

Oklahoma School for the Deaf
1100 E Oklahoma St
Sulphur, OK 73086
580-622-4900 V/TTY
www.osd.k12.ok.us/

Oklahoma Library for the Blind
and Physically Handicapped
300 NE 18th St
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
405-521-3514 Voice
800-523-0288 Toll Free
405-521-4672 TTY/TDD
E-mail: library@okdrs.gov
www.library.state.ok.us/

ABLE Program
405-522-3333 Voice/TTY
918-551-4908 Voice/TTY

Assistive Technology Lab
2401 N.W. 23rd St, Ste. 91
Oklahoma City, OK 73107
405-522-3398 Voice
800-523-0288 Toll Free

Business Enterprise Program
8 N.W. 8th St
Oklahoma City, OK 73102
405-231-1060 Voice/TTY

Corporate Relations Team
444 S. Houston,
Suite 200
Tulsa, OK 74127-8990
877-739-4319 Voice

Employment Support Services
2401 NW 23rd St
Suite 47
Oklahoma City, OK 73107
405-522-6536

Older Blind Independent Living Services Program
918-742-8989 Voice/TTY/TDD
Telephone Information Line:
918-551-4900 Tulsa
800-829-3255 Statewide Toll Free

Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing –
Oklahoma City Office
2401 NW 23rd Street
Suite 47
Oklahoma City, OK 73107
405-522-7930 Voice/TTY
800-833-8973 Voice/TDD
405-522-7948 Fax

Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing – Tulsa
Office:
8740 E 11th Street
Suite F
Tulsa, OK 74112
918-836-5556 Voice/TTY
918-835-2358 Fax

Transition:
School-to-Work
5813 South Robinson
Oklahoma City, OK 73109-8521
405-635-2768 Voice
800-845-8476 Toll Free

Ticket to Work Outreach
2401 N.W. 23rd. Street,
Suite 47
Oklahoma City, OK 73107
405-522-7971

Online Resources

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services
www.okdrs.gov

Application for DRS Services
www.okrehab.org/org/org_app_for_services.htm

Commission Meeting Schedules
www.okrehab.org/org/comm/org.comm_agendas.htm

Disability Resource Guide
www.okdrs.gov/guide/indexmanuel.html

DRS State Plan
www.okdrs.gov/info/stateplan.htm

Legislative Updates
www.okdrs.gov/info/leg_updates/legislative.htm

Oklahoma Disability Statistics
www.okdrs.gov/info/ok_statistics.htm

Oklahoma Library for the Blind
and Physically Handicapped
www.library.state.ok.us

Oklahoma School for the Blind
www.osb.k12.ok.us

Oklahoma School for the Deaf
www.osd.k12.ok.us

Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
www.okrehab.org/org/org.dvr.sdhh.htm

