Staff Training & Continuing Education Policy

Because providing quality services to blind Iowans is a priority of our agency, we are committed to staff training and continuing education. All IDB staff will participate in staff training that consists of blindness skills and philosophy training as outlined in section 1, a new staff seminar and shadowing of staff in different work units as outlined in section 2, and continuing education as outlined in section3.

Staff members who do not successfully complete these requirements will not be retained beyond their probationary period. Continuing education requirements will be included in staff member’s IPPE and completion of continuing education requirements will be required to meet expectations.

# Section 1: Blindness Skills & Philosophy Training

All new permanent full-time staff hired by IDB will complete adjustment to blindness emersion training in our Blindness Empowerment and Independence Center. base Requirements for this training are as follows:

## Indirect Staff

* Actively participate in 20 business classes.
* Actively participate in 1 confidence building activity.
* Make a very small project in Industrial Arts such as a pen holder, phone stand, cutting board, picture frame, etc.
* achieve other milestones as specified in individual goal document.

## Direct Staff

* Actively participate in a minimum of 55 business classes.
* Actively participate in 3 confidence building activities.
* Complete a small Industrial arts project such as an end table, spice rack, etc.
* Achieve other milestones as specified in individual goal document.

At the start of staff training, the staff member, supervisor, and Center Program Administrator will meet and create an individualized goal document based on the staff member's experience and job duties. Goals may be altered by the group as needed. It is expected that an indirect staff member will complete this training in approximately four weeks and a direct staff person will take approximately 12-16 weeks to achieve the needed level of competency to be successful in their jobs.

Some examples of goals that may be included in the goal document for an indirect staff member include but are not limited to:

* Write the braille alphabet on a braille writer.
* Complete a solo travel assignment that contains at least two crossings of a lighted intersection.
* Independently prepare French toast or grilled cheese on a stove top, a baked item or casserole in the oven, thoroughly clean their kitchen including washing dishes and cleaning the floor and prepare a soup or pasta that requires chopping meat and/or vegetables.
* Send an email using Voiceover on an iPhone.

Examples of goals that may be included on a direct staff member's goal document may include but are not limited to:

* Write one page of contracted braille with 90% accuracy using a slate and stylus.
* Type and edit a one-page document using a computer with a screen reader.
* Complete a solo bus travel route.
* Prepare and serve a three-course meal for at least 6 guests.

The Director may alter, defer, or waive this requirement based on previous structured discovery training, experience, or operational needs.

Performance during staff training will be evaluated as follows:

* How has this staff member demonstrated a positive attitude toward blindness? Give concrete examples.
* Has the staff member treated blind students and colleagues as equals? Give examples.
* Has the staff member overcome misconceptions regarding the capabilities of blind people and the hierarchy of sight? Give examples.
* Has the staff member met goals and achieved milestones that they were proud of under learning shades? Give examples.

# Section 2: New Staff Seminar & Shadowing of Staff

New Staff Seminar will consist of 30 hours of small group classes covering the following topics:

* Agency history
* Consumer organizations
* Discussion of agency mission and philosophy
* Agency structure and purposes of each division

All new staff must spend at least one-half day with each of the following staff members as part of their new staff training:

* Library staff
* VR counselor
* VR teacher
* IL teacher
* Rehabilitation technology specialist

In addition, each new employee is expected to do each of the following before the completion of the probationary period:

* Attend at least one meeting of a local chapter of each of the consumer organizations
* Attend one meeting of the Iowa Commission for the Blind Board

# Section 3: Continuing Education Requirements

## Indirect Staff Requirements

All indirect service staff as defined in 0.11 will be required to complete the following continuing education requirements each year:

* Attend and actively participate in at least 5 business classes or all Agency Philosophy Discussions.

## Direct Service Staff and Supervisors Requirements

All direct service staff as defined in 0.12 will be required to complete the following continuing education requirements each year:

* Attend and actively participate in at least 5 business classes or all Agency Philosophy Discussions.
* Attend at least one meeting of each consumer group. This can be a local chapter or state convention.
* Attend at least one meeting of a local support group.

## Instructor Requirements

All instructors (as defined in section 0.5) will be required to complete continuing education training every five years. They will attend center classes for up to one month until they are able to demonstrate the tasks below while wearing learning shades.

* Write one page of contracted braille with 90% accuracy using a slate and stylus.
* Orally recall or write all characters in the contracted braille code with 95% accuracy.
* Type and edit a one-page document using a computer with a screen reader.
* Complete a solo bus travel route.
* Complete one drop off of at least one-mile distance.
* Complete a small industrial arts project requiring the use of at least 3 different stationary machines.
* Prepare and serve a three-course meal for at least 6 guests.

Instructors may test out of class participation if they can complete the requirements without any additional training.