



# Iowa Department for the Blind

## Small Government That Changes Lives

### What IDB Does for Iowans

First and foremost, we work every day to help blind Iowans of all ages to understand that blindness or vision loss need not ruin their life, make them less competent, or dash their dreams. We bring hope to a situation that seems hopeless. We provide the mentoring, skills training, education, and tools to help Iowans born blind or experiencing the onset of vision loss at any point of their lives break down all barriers to their having a full and complete life.

We also:

- Turn tax-users into taxpayers
- Bring in almost four federal dollars for every state dollar invested
- Reduce the usage of public assistance programs by assisting those on such programs to go to or return to work
- Provide equipment to businesses and their employees so they can continue to do their jobs
- Provide financial support disability related skills training, counseling and guidance, and other crucial services to put youth through apprenticeships, college, and other post-secondary education
- Put blind youth and adults on the road to careers that will sustain them and their families
- Assist budding entrepreneurs to realize their dreams of starting their own businesses which ultimately provide job opportunities for others.
- Supply blind and low vision K–12 students with high-quality educational materials in alternative formats so that they can receive a free and appropriate public education
- Work with students and schools to help blind students work on grade level and obtain age-appropriate independence and social skills.
- Give all blind and low vision Iowans access to daily newspapers, books, and magazines
- Assist seniors losing vision to stay in their homes, remain independent, and enjoy their retirement.
- Help blind Iowans get the access technology and support they need and cannot afford through grants and no interest loans

### Return On Investment: A Case Study

Client Bill opened a case at age 14 and received the following services from IDB:

- Participated in Transition Program
- Attended the Orientation Center
- Earned a bachelor's degree
- Received assistive technology equipment and training

Total cost for all case services: \$298,662

Ten years later, Bill got a job earning \$24,415 per year with benefits.

- Bill began paying \$4,368 per year in taxes.
- Bill stopped drawing SSI, which saved taxpayers \$8,700 per year.
- Bill stopped using Medicaid which saved taxpayers \$18,893 per year.
- Bill was no longer eligible for food stamps which saved taxpayers \$1,296 per year.

Bill's employment was a yearly net gain for taxpayers of \$33,257.

Even if Bill never received a raise or moved up to a higher paying position, taxpayers were paid back what they spent on Bill's rehabilitation after he worked for 9 years. If Bill worked to age 65, even if he never got a raise and entitlement costs never increased, taxpayers would still have a net gain of \$1,397,444.

## Keeping Older Iowans Losing Vision in Their Homes Saves Money and Promotes Self-Determination

Category	Cost
Monthly cost of a semi-private nursing home room in Iowa:	\$6,874
Monthly cost of in-home homemaker care in Iowa:	\$18/hour (\$3,432/month)
Total Average Cost per client for Independent Living training and devices from the Iowa Department for the Blind:	\$1,669.21

Our Independent Living services and strategies help to delay or eliminate the need for older individuals who are blind or have low vision to enter assisted living, require home care services, or enter a nursing home. We also work with individuals who prematurely and voluntarily moved into a nursing home and have expressed they want to receive blindness skills training so that they can move into a less restrictive setting. Our teachers help the individual through training and build strategies to transition them in the care facility back into a home or apartment within their community of choice.

Independent Living services are provided to help persons served to adjust to their blindness and increase their ability to care for their individual needs while living at home and in their community. This training teaches daily living skills, provides opportunities to connect with other seniors who are losing vision, and experience freedom from isolation. The goal of our Independent Living program is to provide the training, tools and resources that these Iowans need to learn to live a fulfilling and productive life.