



Chester J. Culver  
Governor

Patty Judge  
Lt. Governor

Karen A. Keninger  
Director

## BACKGROUNDER

Established in 1925 as the Iowa Commission for the Blind, many Iowans still refer to the Department as the “Commission”.

Today, nearly 69,000 Iowans are blind or visually impaired. But that doesn't mean accepting “limitations” that many people think accompany blindness or visual impairment. The Iowa Department for the Blind believes that Iowans who are blind or visually impaired can lead active and fulfilling lives. The Department supports and encourages independent living and full participation in life – at home, at work and in communities. Vision loss knows no boundaries with respect to age, gender or ethnicity. It should not and does not need to prevent the fulfillment of personal dreams and aspirations.

The Iowa Department for the Blind helps educate, train, and empower blind or visually impaired individuals to pursue life-long goals. With offices in Des Moines, Waterloo and Cedar Rapids, and with field staff statewide, the Department is committed to three goals:

- To improve skills so the blind and visually impaired may obtain or retain competitive employment throughout Iowa.
- To increase confidence and independence in all aspects of daily life.
- To improve access to information, activities and opportunities.

The Department is nationally recognized as a leader in the provision of quality services to people who are blind or visually impaired. These services include innovative and effective vocational rehabilitation, independent living programs, and a world-class library. The benefits to clients are profound in terms of improved attitudes, increased confidence, and greater independence. The collective social and economic impact is also significant. Productive citizens pay taxes and contribute to society and Iowa's economy – lessening or eliminating their reliance on state and federal support.

Much has been done. Yet, much remains to be accomplished. The Iowa Department for the Blind works to educate and inform businesses, family members, service providers, advocacy groups, employers, community and service organizations, and the general public about the true capabilities of people who are blind or visually impaired. It actively seeks ongoing communication, interaction and collaboration with all constituencies.

Always a ready resource, the Iowa Department for the Blind creates opportunities for independence throughout the state. For more information or to make referrals, visit [www.IDBonline.org](http://www.IDBonline.org) or call (800) 362-2587.

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