



SUMMER ACADEMY

For Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired:
Enhancing Independence Skills for Students
Transitioning to Post-Secondary Education

Summer Academy Proud Partners

Pennsylvania

**Department of Labor & Industry
Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
*Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services***

Pennsylvania

**Department of Education
Bureau of Special Education
*Pennsylvania Training and
Technical Assistance Network***

Pennsylvania State University

***The College of Education
The College of Health and
Human Development
Conferences & Institutes***

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Throughout this booklet you will see symbols like this one on the left. This is a QR Code.

To access the QR Code using a smart phone or tablet, first download a free QR Reader app, open the app, and then hold the device over the QR Code. QR Codes provide a link to further information about specific program areas of Summer Academy. The QR Code on the left will take you to a video about the Summer Academy Program.

SUMMER ACADEMY COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS

The Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services within Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry's Office of Vocational Rehabilitation along with the Department of Education's Bureau of Special Education, Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN), and the Pennsylvania State University are working partners for Summer Academy for Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired.

Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BBVS)

The mission of BBVS is to assist Pennsylvanians who are blind or visually impaired to secure and maintain employment and independence. There are six district offices of BBVS throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Although BBVS provides services through different programs to individuals of all ages experiencing vision loss, two of these programs provide direct services to the students of Summer Academy and their parents: the **Specialized Services for Children Program** and the **Vocational Rehabilitation Program**.



Under the BBVS **Specialized Services for Children** Program a Social Worker works with the child and their family to provide the following services as needed by the child:

- Adaptive equipment
- Advocacy for educational services
- Low vision evaluation and recommended aids
- Vision Rehabilitation Therapy services regarding adaptive techniques to perform age appropriate activities of daily living
- Counseling and guidance
- Community Orientation and Mobility Instruction
- Transition services, assisting the student with transition from school to post-secondary education or employment by coordinating with the BBVS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

The BBVS **Vocational Rehabilitation** Program helps individuals prepare for, enter into, or retain employment. As early as age 14 the BBVS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor will contact the student and their parents to begin this process. Services offered under this program can include but are not limited to:

- Counseling and guidance
- Adjustment to blindness and vision loss
- Vocational evaluation
- Vocational and college training
- Assistive technology devices and training

- Vision Rehabilitation Therapy to train the individual to independently perform activities of daily living
- Orientation and Mobility training so the individual can travel independently in their community, at college or on the job
- Occupational tools and equipment as needed
- Job placement services
- Low vision evaluation and recommended aids

The **Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services** provides administrative oversight, funding, equipment, and professional staff for the Summer Academy Program.

Bureau of Special Education/PaTTAN

The mission of the **Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN)** is to support the efforts and initiatives of the Bureau of Special Education, within Pennsylvania's Department of Education and to build the capacity of local educational agencies to serve students who receive special education services.

PaTTAN provides training for professionals, parent information, legal information and support services for students including information on accessible instructional materials and assistive technology. There are many resources, training events, and videos available on the

PaTTAN website to assist parents in learning about specific disabilities and educational initiatives. In addition, each regional PaTTAN office has a parent consultant on staff that can provide assistance. PaTTAN provides professional staff, consultative services, and equipment to Summer Academy.

The Pennsylvania State University

Pennsylvania State University is one of the leading comprehensive universities in the United States. Penn State enrolls more than 90,000 students and confers about 20,000 degrees annually. About half of these students are enrolled on the main campus at University Park.

In 2014, The Pennsylvania State University joined the Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services and PaTTAN as a new institutional partner. The **College of Education** and **College of Health and Human Development** sponsor the Summer Academy program. The campus at University Park offers many academic programs, services, resources, and living situations students are likely to experience when attending college and living in a college community.

SUMMER ACADEMY OVERVIEW

The focus of the Summer Academy is to build on students' current skills and enhance independence. The Summer Academy concentrates on skills within the expanded core curriculum for students with visual impairments, including daily living activities, orientation and mobility, self-advocacy and networking, career and vocational exploration, social interaction, low vision rehabilitation, and access technology skills. Summer Academy also offers teambuilding and recreational activities. Social work sessions offer students opportunities for guided pertinent topic discussion.

Summer Academy for Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired has received national recognition as an emerging best practice in Transition Services by the US Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration.



ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY (AT)



Assistive Technology coursework addresses the skills necessary to succeed at college, providing students an opportunity to access on-line course management systems. Instruction includes use of a variety of assistive technology software and hardware solutions, acquisition of materials, and completion of accessible forms. The students download books in different formats, utilize email, and upload assignments. Students develop the following skills: logging in to accounts, sending emails, adding and opening attachments, manipulating files, creating and saving documents in several formats, posting information and commenting on other posts. Instruction focuses on using the latest technology and iOS devices.

Screen Magnification & Screen Reading Software

Students learn how to use screen magnification and/or screen reading software applications such as ZoomText, JAWS, and VoiceOver to navigate the Windows or Mac

operating systems, as well as Internet Explorer and Microsoft Office. Students learn how to configure and save the settings of these software applications to meet their specific needs. Once saved, these settings are used in the PSU computer lab for the duration of the program.

Microsoft Office Suite and Computer Navigation

Students receive instruction on Windows, Mac OS navigation, word processing skills and internet skills necessary to complete coursework throughout the assistive technology curriculum. These assignments incorporate e-mailing documents and working with attachments.

Optical Character Recognition (OCR)

Students learn OCR skills, the process of turning inaccessible printed or digital material into an electronic and accessible format. Students receive training on iOS apps such as the KNFB Reader and computer based applications such as Kurzweil that convert the inaccessible printed materials into large print or braille.

Digital books

Students learn to access the services of BARD, NEWSLINE, Bookshare, and Learning Ally and receive memberships to BARD, the National Library Service (NLS), and temporary membership to Learning Ally. Students learn how to search

for and download DAISY-formatted books to a DAISY Reader (Victor Stream) or iOS applications, log into NEWSLINE to access newspapers and magazines, browse Bookshare, Learning Ally, BARD, and request NLS book cartridges.

Learning Management System (LMS)

Students will receive instruction, utilize, and navigate PSU's Learning Management System using assistive software where appropriate. Students navigate the elements of LMS, such as accessing syllabi and coursework, opening/downloading files, saving course materials to flash memory, participating in discussion groups, attaching assignments, and taking quizzes.

University Library Research

Students access and navigate a university library database. They determine proper research practices and terminology for conducting a search for specific topics on such a database, and use assistive software to navigate during the search process on different databases.

Assistive Devices/Note Taking

Students receive instruction on the use of portable assistive devices, such as iOS devices, and accessible software/apps for note taking, accessing textbooks and/or associated class materials, email, and Learning Management Systems.

Instruction extends to related accessibility features and apps specific to students who are visually impaired, as well as methods for synchronizing and sharing information across various devices.

FaceTime/Skype

Students establish a personal FaceTime or Skype account for personal communication, accessing technical support and participation in instruction.

ORIENTATION & MOBILITY (O&M)



Orientation and Mobility instruction is provided to all Summer Academy students. The ability to travel independently, safely, and confidently is one of the essential skills needed for the student to successfully transition to college life.

While participating in Summer Academy the student will be exposed to lessons in a variety of travel environments they will encounter during their future college experience. The

objectives of Summer Academy Orientation and Mobility lessons are twofold: to provide experiences that build on the student's current skills and to evaluate what additional post Summer Academy instruction may be needed to fully prepare the student for future college life.

Lessons will include exposure to:

- O&M adaptive tools including canes/tips
- Use of orientation aids such as maps, polar-centric directions (north, south, east, west), and GPS devices
- Devices to enhance vision such as sunlenses to control glare, and low vision aids such as telescopes to read street signs and traffic lights and magnification devices to read product labels and menus
- Campus travel and route planning including travel inside campus buildings/locating classrooms or offices and independent mobility in their dorm
- Intersection analysis and negotiation
- Use of public fixed-route bus transportation services and exploration of other transportation resources
- Functioning in a store and/or mall and making purchases
- Functioning in a restaurant and/or "fast food" restaurant
- Soliciting assistance and self-advocacy skills
- Travel at night and in low light environments

Cane Techniques

Students are introduced to and encouraged to use a variety of canes and cane tips for safe and independent travel. Discussion focuses on the benefits of cane travel and helping the student to determine when they should consider using a cane. While at Summer Academy it is mandatory that each student use a cane. Basic cane technique is demonstrated, practiced and utilized throughout the Summer Academy experience. At the end of the program, students are able to make an educated decision regarding whether or not they want to continue being a cane user, and they are able to identify appropriate equipment for their independent travel needs.

Adaptive Mobility Equipment

In addition to the hands-on opportunity to explore the use of canes as adaptive mobility tools, students will use large print and tactile maps, and global positioning systems for orientation, sun lenses and low vision aids to enhance functional vision, and lights to enhance night travel. Students are encouraged to try a variety of adaptive travel aids throughout the Summer Academy experience. Discussions are held regarding preferred and non-preferred devices.

Campus Travel

Students travel daily around the PSU campus. Following a daily schedule just as they would be when attending college, students travel on the campus, locating a variety of buildings and classrooms. Students travel to and eat all meals in the campus dining commons. They are encouraged to use the orientation aids they have been introduced to such as large print or tactile maps of the PSU campus. Each student is provided with the opportunity to be the group leader in planning routes and guiding the group as they travel together on campus.

Use of Public Transportation

Students are provided with instruction in utilizing public transportation. Lessons include accessing bus schedules, route planning, locating bus stops, boarding/exiting the bus, making fare transactions and communicating with drivers to gain information, and monitoring the bus route in transit. Students travel to a variety of community destinations using the local public bus system. Lessons also cover information on additional transportation resources available to the student.

Off Campus Travel

Students travel to local businesses in/around the State College area. O&M instruction includes: route planning,

locating destinations, use of cardinal directions, large print/tactile maps and use of GPS. When planning trips, the students are able to incorporate use of time management skills, making purchases and effectively soliciting assistance.

While at restaurants, they dine independently from instructors, using learned skills to access menus, advocate for their needs, utilize adaptive eating techniques, determine an appropriate tip, pay their bill and retain receipts.

Street Crossing Procedures

Students participate in downtown community travel lessons. They are exposed to the different skills needed to safely navigate street crossings, including locating the curb and crosswalk, monitoring traffic patterns, using various traffic controls and determining when it is safe to initiate a crossing. Students are introduced to the function and procedure involved in using accessible audible pedestrian signals. Evaluation of the student's independent ability to analyze and safely negotiate intersections is a primary objective of these lessons. After Summer Academy, further O&M training may be recommended by the Orientation and Mobility staff.

Night Travel

Students have the opportunity to participate in night travel lessons. Instruction and practice are provided in necessary adaptive techniques different from daytime travel. The use

of various night lights to enhance travel in low light environments is demonstrated to the student and they are given the hands on opportunity to use these adaptive aids.

VISION REHABILITATION THERAPY (VRT)

The Vision Rehabilitation Therapy curriculum focuses on adaptive daily living skill techniques and equipment. Students are given instruction and practice in a variety of daily living skills, including cleaning, cooking, labeling techniques for personal items, laundry and dining out. Students are exposed to a variety of standard and adaptive products. Discussion focuses on making educated, economical and workable choices for their needs when shopping and choosing products. Independence is the focus of instruction in all skill areas.



Labeling

Students are provided instruction and practice in labeling methods. The focus of this instruction is on labeling methodology and the variety of products available on the market. Audible, tactile and large print, and mobile labeling apps are introduced. The classroom arrangement provides various stations of materials where students can explore methods of labeling food, clothing, medicine, laundry and personal items.

Cooking

Students receive instruction in a group format regarding kitchen safety, adaptive cooking products and adaptive cooking techniques. The students are responsible for the preparation of several meals. Learned skills include boiling and draining, preparing a baked dish, cutting and measuring, using a blender, stovetop cooking, microwave cooking, oven cooking, and kitchen clean-up. All classes involve the skills of accessing recipes in large print, braille, via use of an app, or via the internet.

Laundry and Cleaning

The students are given the opportunity to explore a variety of laundry and cleaning products. Discussions are held regarding the best products for their needs. Students evaluate products for ease of packaging, manipulation of the product and cost effectiveness. Instruction is provided regarding the importance of maintaining a clean, healthy environment, adaptive cleaning and laundry techniques, and the proper utilization of all products. Each student is responsible for their own laundry and maintaining a clean dorm room and bathroom during their stay at Summer Academy.

Dining Out and Cafeteria Dining

Students are given the opportunity to dine at a restaurant independently. They are required to seek adaptive methods of accessing the menu, applying condiments, communicating with the wait staff, ordering independently, computing the tip and paying the bill.

Financial Management

(Provided by HealthCare First Federal Credit Union)

Experts in finance provide lessons on financial management. Discussion focuses on use of ATMs, debit and credit cards, how to acquire and maintain good credit, the importance of a good credit score and identity theft. Students participate in on-line banking, checking of balances, and maintaining a ledger. All students are given the opportunity to use a talking ATM. The students are exposed to a variety of adaptive equipment, such as large print check registers, check writing guides, adaptive wallets and electronic money identification devices. Methods for tactile identification of paper money and coins are demonstrated and practiced. Students participate in a financial management program using an account set up for instructional purposes in which they have the responsibility of spending money on necessary activities by cash or debit, recording purchases in a register in their preferred method and managing a small budget.

Hiring of Readers and Drivers

During this class, students learn about various sources and appropriate questions to ask when seeking a reader or driver for their needs. Students role play interviewing each other and discuss qualities of an appropriate reader or driver applicant.

VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Career and Training Exploration

The purpose of the vocational development program is to assess and increase students' knowledge and abilities related to career preparation. Areas of focus include:

- Building knowledge of disability-related accommodations
- Preparing for college and work
- Researching career goals
- Problem-solving in the classroom and workplace
- Developing soft skills (i.e. social interaction, presentation skills, following instructions, managing time, etc.)

Students will be introduced to the course by taking a vocational interest inventory. Students will use assistive technology to complete the practical vocational exercises in the following areas:

- Using assistive technology skills for career exploration and job readiness exercises
- Mock interviewing
- Problem solving
- Exploring career and educational choices
- Working as a team
- Understanding one's own disability
- Advocating for one's needs and accommodations in college and at work
- Completing self-guided career research assignments in a simulated college/professional environment. This includes preparing and presenting research findings to fellow students, instructors, and other professionals.

Career Day Event

Several working professionals who are blind or visually impaired meet with the students to share insights and tips related to how vision loss impacted their educational and career success. Students will have opportunities to ask questions and network with these professionals in a

meaningful way to help influence and inspire their own vocational goals.

Integrated "Online Course"

Students will participate in an online course using PSU's learning management system. Students will be expected to complete their work during study hours. Reading assignments are chosen from college-level textbooks. Students will use online discussion boards and complete short-answer assignments. During study hours, instructors will be available for students to pose questions.

SOCIAL WORK



Group Sessions

Students are provided a forum to openly discuss the beginning of the transition process to college and/or the workforce. The Social Work program enhances and supports students' social and emotional health. Students participate in educational and interactive group sessions, exploring topics such as self-confidence, self-advocacy, stress management, living away from home, independence and healthy relationships. The sessions are designed to improve self-awareness and self-esteem, providing additional social/emotional tools that are necessary for success in college and in life. These groups provide a supportive, non-judgmental and safe environment for free expression.

Individual Sessions

Social Workers are available to meet individually with students if any specific issues or concerns arise during their Summer Academy stay. At individual meetings, Social Workers offer support and assist students in developing problem solving skills.

Parent Education

On Summer Academy arrival day, Social Workers lead a group session with family members to introduce the skills students will learn while at Summer Academy. This session focuses on challenges the students may face, and offers guidance for ways parents can support their child while adjusting to being away from home, especially during the first week.

On closing day, Social Workers lead an educational group session for family members, providing specific information regarding the skills students learned at Summer Academy. The importance of practicing and maintaining independent living skills in every aspect of their lives is emphasized. Social Workers guide families on how they can encourage and support their children as they become more independent and begin the transition to college and the workforce. A statewide resource booklet is provided to students and their parents for additional guidance.

LOW VISION REHABILITATION

(Provided by Salus University Graduate Students and Faculty)

Low Vision Rehabilitation addresses the functional vision of individuals with low vision. Students who have some remaining vision have the opportunity to explore a variety of low vision rehabilitation options for maximizing functional vision in any of the areas listed below. Prescriptions for optical devices are issued by a low vision specialist through a clinical low vision eye examination. If a student requires such an examination, it is arranged through the Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor.

Near/Distance Magnification

Students are introduced to a variety of near and distance magnification optical devices. Students are encouraged to try the wide range of devices for various near and distance tasks they encounter during Summer Academy. Students determine whether or not magnification would be beneficial to them at the current time.

Lighting and Glare Control

Students are encouraged to explore various strategies for controlling lighting and glare. Students evaluate whether or not task lighting and/or glare control would be beneficial to them.

Contrast Enhancement

Students are encouraged to explore various strategies for maximizing contrast. Students share techniques and methods they use to enhance contrast in their everyday environments.

Visual Field Enhancement

Students with peripheral visual field loss are encouraged to explore various strategies for enhancing their functional visual field. Students evaluate whether or not visual field enhancement would be beneficial to them.

Visual Efficiency Skills

Students are encouraged to implement visual efficiency skills such as tracing, tracking, scanning, alignment, localization and eccentric viewing. Students develop strategies to use their vision most efficiently.

TEAMBUILDING AND RECREATION



A wide variety of teambuilding and recreation experiences are integrated throughout the program and are conducted both on and off campus. The goal of all experiences is to increase self-confidence, encourage cooperative support, and promote teamwork. These traits are aids in everyday life and can be directly applied to any social, educational or employment context.



Activities include dancing, canoeing, volleyball, rock-climbing, swimming, self-defense and a high-ropes course. Several “new” sports specifically designed for the blind or visually impaired are introduced, such as Beep Baseball, Beep Kickball, and Goal ball. Participation allows for continued growth and development of self-confidence for students.

Structured teambuilding activities are incorporated into the early part of the program to insure the students have an opportunity to get to know each other and begin to develop leadership skills. Often times, our students have very limited opportunities to interact with peers who are blind or visually impaired. Teambuilding activities and the Summer Academy experience foster friendships that last a lifetime.

Summer Academy: STEM Extension Week

**In partnership with The Pennsylvania State University,
Science U and Materials Research Science &
Engineering Center**

This program is funded by the National Science Foundation and is part of the effort to address the national shortage of qualified persons working in STEM fields. Summer Academy students are given the opportunity to experience the applications of science, technology, engineering and math in the real world through hands-on activities. Students also learn about careers in STEM fields.

ASK THE DOCTOR

A guest optometrist provides a lecture involving functional implications of the students' individual visual conditions. Students are encouraged to ask the eye doctor specific questions regarding their personal visual condition. Information is provided regarding how to handle a doctor visit without a parent or guardian.

RESIDENTIAL LIFE

Summer Academy students reside on the PSU main campus in a residence hall for the duration of the program. Males and females are housed on separate floors with an attendant on duty on each



floor nightly. All meals are eaten in a dining hall on campus providing a large variety of food selections suitable for those with dietary restrictions.

Resident Assistants (RAs) are with students at all times. The RAs are successful college students from a variety of university programs across the state. Many of them have visual impairments themselves and are former students of the Summer Academy Program. RAs assist students as needed, living in the residence hall, eating in the dining hall, attending classes throughout the day, and serving as mentors for the students. Prior to the start of the Summer Academy, the Resident Assistants participate in a four day training program to develop strategies to enhance the educational experience for participants who are blind or visually impaired. All Summer Academy staff and RAs are in compliance with the requirements of the Pennsylvania Child Protective Act of 2014.

SUMMER ACADEMY PACKING CHECKLIST:

- Portable fan - The residence hall is not air conditioned
- Towels and washcloths
- Toiletries, including soap and shampoo, and feminine hygiene products
- Pillow(s) and pillowcase(s), blanket and towels - PSU Housing supplies sheets only
- Backpack
- Summer clothing suitable for both hot and cool weather, as well as clothing suitable for activities.

**Note: Summer Academy provides students with 7 T-shirts for identification purposes. Students wear a designated colored T-shirt every day and are required to do laundry every Saturday night.*

- Clothes hangers, if needed
- *Note: Laundry detergent and money for laundry is provided by Summer Academy (if special detergent is required, please provide.)*
- One casual outfit suitable for the dance - Typical attire is a summer sundress for girls and casual shirt and pants for boys. No jeans or shorts, please.
- Bathing suit
- Water shoes or old shoes that can get wet for canoeing day
- Comfortable athletic shoes
- Rainwear or umbrella
- Sunscreen
- Hat, if desired
- Jacket or windbreaker
- Alarm clock
- Headphones for music

- Spending money, if desired

All required activities and meals are paid for by Summer Academy. Each dormitory room has a micro-fridge. If desired, extra snacks and beverages can be brought from home or purchased at a local store. Students are allowed to visit the PSU bookstore and other stores to make purchases using their own money.

- Refillable water bottle

Throughout campus, there are filtered water fountains that can be used to refill water bottles.

**Note: Weekend activity facilities are "no waste facilities" and therefore refillable water bottles are required.*

- Necessary medications, including over-the-counter medications must be on hand for the duration of the program.

Summer Academy staff cannot obtain or administer any medication, prescription or over-the-counter.

Items that are NOT permitted at the Summer Academy and that you should NOT bring:

- Firearms or weapons of any kind
- Incense, candles or any other device with an open flame
- Alcohol, drugs and drug paraphernalia

ALTOONA BBVS

1130 12th Avenue - Suite 300
Altoona, PA 16601
814-946-7330 Voice • 866-695-7673 Voice
814-949-7956 TTY • 866-320-7956 TTY

Counties Served

Bedford	Columbia	Montour
Blair	Fulton	Northumberland
Cambria	Huntingdon	Snyder
Centre	Juniata	Somerset
Clinton	Lycoming	Union
	Mifflin	

ERIE BBVS

4200 Lovell Place
Erie, PA 16503
814-871-4401 Voice • 866-521-5073 Voice
814-871-4599 TTY • 888-884-5513 TTY

Counties Served

Cameron	Erie	McKean
Clarion	Forest	Mercer
Clearfield	Jefferson	Potter
Crawford	Lawrence	Venango
Elk	Warren	

HARRISBURG BBVS

Forum Place
555 Walnut Street - 8th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101
717-787-7500 Voice • 866-375-8264 Voice
717-787-1733 TTY • 888-575-9420 TTY

Counties Served

Adams	Franklin	Lebanon
Cumberland	Lancaster	Perry
Dauphin	York	

PHILADELPHIA BBVS

444 North 3rd St. - 5th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19123
215-560-5700 Voice • 866-631-3892 Voice
215-560-5725 TTY • 888-870-4473 TTY

Counties Served

Bucks	Delaware	Montgomery
Chester	Philadelphia	

PITTSBURGH BBVS

531 Penn Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
412-565-5240 Voice • 866-412-4072 Voice
412-565-3678 TTY • 877-255-5082 TTY

Counties Served

Allegheny	Butler	Indiana
Armstrong	Fayette	Washington
Beaver	Greene	Westmoreland

WILKES-BARRE BBVS

300 G Laird St.
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702
570-826-2361 Voice • 866-227-4163 Voice
570-826-2023 TTY • 888-651-6117 TTY

Counties Served

Berks	Luzerne	Sullivan
Bradford	Monroe	Susquehanna
Carbon	Tioga	Northampton
Lackawanna	Pike	Wayne
Lehigh	Schuylkill	Wyoming

CENTRAL OFFICE

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BSE/PATTAN- HARRISBURG

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Harrisburg, PA 17112
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BSE/PATTAN - EAST

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Malvern, PA 19355
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BSE/PATTAN - PITTSBURGH

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412-826-2336 • 800-446-5607 in PA only





pennsylvania

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & INDUSTRY
BUREAU OF BLINDNESS & VISUAL SERVICES

*Auxiliary aids and service are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.
Equal Opportunity Employer/Program*