



MARYLAND BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM FOR THE BLIND

**Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)**

The Maryland Business Enterprise Program for the Blind (BEP) is authorized by the Federally mandated Randolph-Sheppard Act that provides persons who are blind with the training, licensing, and oversight to manage the operation of vending facilities on Federal, Military, DOD and State property and at business partner locations.



DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES

OBVS

The Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), Office for Blindness & Vision Services (OBVS) has rehabilitation counselors, technologists, case managers, and teachers who are specially trained to help blind, vision impaired or deaf-blind people achieve employment and self-sufficiency. OBVS can also assist legally blind individuals over age 55 who have independent living, but not employment, goals.

OBVS also administers the
Maryland Business Enterprise Program for the Blind (BEP).

About BEP

BEP prepares individuals whose primary disability is vision loss to operate successful retail concession and food service operations in public facilities.

BEP-licensed business operators manage approximately 50 long-term, successful businesses in Maryland State, county, and federal agencies such as:

- * State office buildings in Annapolis and Baltimore
- * National Institutes of Health
- * Internal Revenue Service
- * U.S. Food & Drug Administration
- * Motor Vehicle Administration
- * Social Security Administration
- * US Coast Guard
- * Fort George G. Meade

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR BEP?

To be eligible for the BEP Training Program, a candidate must:

- * Be a legally blind U.S. Citizen
- * Have at minimum a high school diploma or GED® equivalent
- * Have an aptitude for business management
- * Have practical skills and meet the legal criteria for operating a business supported by federal law
- * Be referred by a DORS OBVS counselor



BEP Training

Training to become a licensed BEP manager includes successfully completing a three-phase program, consisting of:

- * An eight-week New Manager Training course conducted by BEP staff at DORS' Workforce & Technology Center in Northeast Baltimore.
- * Formal food service training with certified instructors and chefs. Prospective BEP managers will learn all aspects of a food service operation and become certified by the National Restaurant Association in food service sanitation.
- * On-the-job training consisting of three to six months of extended internship at various BEP facilities under an experienced manager. This provides the new managers the opportunity to implement all skills learned prior to licensing.

Interested in BEP?

**If you already have a DORS counselor,
ask your counselor about BEP!**

OR, GET STARTED by **REQUESTING DORS SERVICES**

Go to **dors.maryland.gov** and select **Request DORS Services**.

You will be contacted to set up an intake meeting where a DORS counselor will gather and provide information regarding your eligibility for DORS services.

This form can be completed by anyone – the job seeker, a family member, a medical provider, a social worker, etc.

Technology Helps BEP Vendors Build Success

Many BEP managers use today's technologies to perform daily job duties, for example:

- * Laptop computers with adaptive software
- * Digital talking cash registers
- * Talking bill identifiers, scales, thermometers
- * Braille note takers

DORS is a Division of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)

Contact Information:

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Notice of Non-Discrimination

The Maryland State Department of Education Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) does not discriminate based on age, ancestry, color, creed, gender identity or expression, genetic information, marital status, mental or physical disability, national origin, race, religious affiliation, belief or opinion, sex, or sexual orientation in matters affecting employment or in providing access to its programs and activities.

The Vocational Rehabilitation program receives 78.7% of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For the Federal fiscal year 2023, the total amount of grant funds awarded was \$52,041,475.

The remaining 21.3% of the cost (\$14,084,922) was funded by State appropriations.

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