

AGENCY NAME:	SC Commission for the Blind		
AGENCY CODE:	L240	SECTION:	39



Fiscal Year 2014-15 Agency Budget Plan

FORM A – SUMMARY

RECURRING FUNDS (FORM B DECISION PACKAGES)	<p>My agency is submitting the following recurring decision packages (Form B): 938</p> <p>For FY 2014-15, my agency is (mark "X"):</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Requesting a net increase in recurring General Fund appropriations.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not requesting a net increase in recurring General Fund Appropriations.</p>
CAPITAL & NON-RECURRING FUNDS (FORM C DECISION PACKAGES)	<p>For FY 2014-15, my agency is (mark "X"):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Requesting capital and/or non-recurring funds.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not requesting capital and/or non-recurring funds.</p>
PROVISOS	<p>For FY 2014-15, my agency is (mark "X"):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Requesting a new proviso and/or substantive changes to existing provisos.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Only requesting technical proviso changes (such as date references).</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not requesting any proviso changes.</p>

Please identify your agency's preferred contacts for this year's budget process.

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
PRIMARY CONTACT:	Carrie Remley	803-898-8835	CRemley@sccb.sc.gov
SECONDARY CONTACT:	Juan Sims	803-898-7701	JSims@sccb.sc.gov

I have reviewed and approved the enclosed FY 2014-15 Agency Budget Plan, which is complete and accurate to the extent of my knowledge.

AGENCY DIRECTOR (SIGN/DATE):		
AGENCY DIRECTOR (TYPE/PRINT NAME):	James M. Kirby	
	9-30-2013	

This form must be signed by the department head – not a delegate.

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FORM B – PROGRAM REVISION REQUEST

DECISION PACKAGE	938
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Provide the decision package number issued by the PBF system ("Governor's Request").

TITLE	Additional Funds for the Older Blind Program
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Provide a brief, descriptive title for this request.

AMOUNT	\$150,000
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What is the net change in requested appropriations for FY 2014-15? This amount should correspond to the decision package's total in PBF across all funding sources.

ENABLING AUTHORITY	
	<p align="center">Title VII Chapter Two of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, authorizes the delivery of services to older individuals who are blind. This recognizes the existence of a large population of older blind consumers in need of services to maintain personal independence. All 50 states and several territories provide services to older blind consumers. No other consistent source of federal or state funds exists to provide these unique opportunities.</p> <p align="center">The Older Blind Program is funded by a formula grant provided by the Rehabilitation Services Administration of the US Department of Education. Recurring annual funding (10% match) is also provided by the South Carolina General Assembly.</p>

What state or federal statutory, regulatory, and/or administrative authority established this program? Is this decision package prompted by the establishment of or a revision to that authority?

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FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH THE REQUEST	Mark "X" for all that apply:		
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change in cost of providing current services to existing program audience.	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated change in eligibility / enrollment for existing program.	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Change in case load / enrollment under existing program guidelines.	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-mandated program change in service levels or areas.	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loss of federal or other external financial support for existing program.	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exhaustion of fund balances previously used to support program.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Proposed establishment of a new program or initiative.		

RECIPIENTS OF FUNDS	<p>\$50,000 of the funds are designated for personnel, who would have direct contact with the consumers to determine eligibility and coordination of services for the consumers.</p> <p>\$100,000 of the funds support the Program and provide the needed consumer services.</p>
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What individuals or entities would receive these funds (contractors, vendors, grantees, individual beneficiaries, etc.)? How would these funds be allocated – using an existing formula, through a competitive process, based upon predetermined eligibility criteria?

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RELATED REQUEST(S)	N/A
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Is this decision package associated with other decision packages requested by your agency or other agencies this year? Is it associated with a specific capital or non-recurring request?

MATCHING FUNDS	N/A
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Would these funds be matched by federal, institutional, philanthropic, or other resources? If so, identify the source and amount.

FUNDING ALTERNATIVES	No other funding alternatives are available.
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What other possible funding sources were considered? Could this request be met in whole or in part with the use of other resources, including fund balances? If so, please comment on the sustainability of such an approach.

SUMMARY	<p>Historically, the Older Blind Program has assisted as many as a thousand consumers during a fiscal year. However, since 2011, our Older Blind Program services have been significantly compromised, as a result of budget reductions.</p> <p>In 2005, we had the opportunity to provide technical training opportunities for older individuals, and necessary low vision equipment such as Closed Circuit Televisions (CCTVs). While many consumers benefitted, the technical training was eliminated from the Older Blind Program’s service options in November of 2011, and we do not have the option of providing much needed devices associated with low vision.</p> <p>The average cost to serve the Older Blind Program consumer prior to 2011, ranged from \$500.00 to \$1500.00, depending on the unique needs of the consumer. Following 2011, the average case service amount spent per consumer is about \$150.00 to \$250.00, which covers the cost of a low vision assessment and basic low vision devices.</p> <p>Instead of serving an average jurisdiction of four counties, each counselor is responsible for ten or more counties. This subsequently increased the wait time for consumers, and ultimately limits the overall number of individuals we can serve annually.</p> <p>While we make every effort to maintain quality standards with a limited budget, the number of senior consumers served was reduced by approximately fifty percent (54% decrease in the number of applicants and a 56% decrease in the number of eligibility determinations this past fiscal year compared to 2011).</p>
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Approximately 69,678 older individuals are receiving services through the Older Blind Program nationwide, which was a 3.1% increase from 2009, and about one in six persons, over the age of 65, experience some type of age related vision loss and may qualify for services. (2010 RSA Title VII Chapter 2 Annual Report).

In South Carolina, there are approximately 43,640 blind individuals over the age of forty, and 83,557 individuals over the age of fifty with a visual impairment...specifically related to Macular Degeneration. (Vision Problems in the U.S. 2008, Prevent Blindness America).

The South Carolina population, age 65 and above, is higher than the national average. Nationally, the population of individuals age 65 and older makes up 13.7% of the U. S. population. However, in South Carolina the figure is larger, which necessitates additional financial assistance for our Agency. The Palmetto state's population, at or above age 65, is 14.7%, or 694, 387 persons. Also, there has been a **30% increase** in the population in South Carolina of people age 65 and above since 2000 (485,845 in 2000 versus 631, 874 in 2010, United States Census Bureau). Approximately 65% of consumers served by our Program are over age 75.

The Older Blind Program is extremely cost effective and serves a consistently increasing older population. A minimal one-time expenditure provides most independent living services for a person to remain in his/her home as compared to an approximate \$36,500.00 annual cost for a person to receive nursing or residential care. (Based on SC Medicaid rates of \$100.00 per day).

We now have over a hundred referrals awaiting services, and the average waiting period is two to three months when it was only about two weeks prior to the budget reduction. Without sufficient funding for this essential program, we can only anticipate the challenges in addressing the needs of older blind consumers in the years ahead will increase.

Provide a summary of the rationale for the decision package. Why has it been requested? How specifically would the requested funds be used?

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METHOD OF CALCULATION	<p>The amount requested was calculated by determining the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Average cost to provide basic Independent Living Services to Older Blind Program consumers ▪ Staff salary and fringe ▪ Associated shared costs within the agency
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How was the amount of the request calculated? What factors could cause deviations between the request and the amount that could ultimately be required in order to perform the underlying work?

FUTURE IMPACT	<p>The state will not incur any MOE with this decision package. No other funding has been obtained for this Program, and this Program is funded through a Federal grant with a 10% match from state funds.</p> <p>The consumer waiting list for this program continues to expand, and we anticipate the number of individuals in need of services will only increase if the request is not honored.</p>
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Will the state incur any maintenance-of-effort or other obligations by adopting this decision package? What impact will there be on future capital and/or operating budgets if this request is or is not honored? Has a source of any such funds been identified and/or obtained by your agency?

PRIORITIZATION	<p>Defer action.</p>
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If no or insufficient new funds are available in order to meet this need, how would the agency prefer to proceed? By using fund balances, generating new revenue, cutting other programs, or deferring action on this request in FY 2014-15?

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INTENDED IMPACT	<p>The Older Blind Program’s goal is to restore and enhance the independence of older blind seniors in South Carolina. Additional funds would permit us to take the necessary actions to eliminate the waiting list, and assist referrals more expeditiously.</p>
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What impact is this decision package intended to have on service delivery and program outcomes, and over what period of time?

PROGRAM EVALUATION	<p>The Program Manager reviews Program goals pertaining to referrals received, referrals processed, eligibility determinations, development of service plans, and total number of consumers served on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. Performance measures, and compliance with state regulations and agency established policy, are also reviewed by Quality Assurance and submitted to the Commissioner and the Management staff. The results outlined in the Quality Assurance Reports are used to assess the need for performance improvement and to evaluate the effectiveness of service delivery and the strategic planning process. The results of the performance review findings are used by the Manager to establish short and long-term organizational direction and priorities, and improve performance.</p>
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How would the use of these funds be evaluated? What specific outcome or performance measures would be used to assess the effectiveness of this program?