

Chapter 8 – Blind and Low Vision Services

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MVR Policy 8.1 Visual Medical Services Eligibility

Applied Effective Date: 02/24/2014

Last Edition Date: New Policy

State Authority: **ARM 37.30.2608** Visual Medical Program Eligibility Requirements

Policy Statement:

The individual or guardian must complete and sign an application, financial form and any necessary medical releases to be considered an applicant for Visual Medical Services.

The Blind and Low Vision Services counselor will make the determination about an applicant's eligibility based on the application for services, the financial report or records provided by the applicant and medical information provided by an ophthalmologist or optometrist. An eye examination may be purchased to determine eligibility.

- The following criteria must be met for an individual to be determined eligible for services through the Visual Medical program. The person must have an eye condition that requires the attention of an ophthalmologist or optometrist to prevent blindness, to restore sight or to treat an eye condition due to blindness.
- The person may not be eligible for medical services- from any other state or federal program including vocational rehabilitation.
- The person must be financially in need due to anticipated costs of medical services he requires.

MVR Policy 8.2 Visual Medical Services Scope of Services

Applied Effective Date: 02/24/2014

Last Edition Date: New Policy

State Authority: **ARM 37.30.2605** Visual Medical Program: Services

Policy Statement:

Services provided through the Visual Medical Program must relate to the treatment of a medical condition to prevent blindness, restore sight or provide treatment where the loss of sight cannot be prevented or restored.

The services available through Visual Medical include;

- Diagnostic Services;
- Surgery and treatment services;

- Hospitalization services;
- Prosthetic appliances if determined to be necessary in treatment;
- Transportation costs; and
- Follow-up services.

A plan will be written to show the types of services, vendors, dates and approximate costs for the services. The duration of a plan will be for the current state fiscal year (July 1 – September 30). When feasible, other resources will be used to provide for the medical treatment (i.e. Lions' Clubs, Needy Meds, etc.).

MVR Policy 8.3 Visual Medical Services Closure

Applied Effective Date: 02/24/2014

Last Edition Date: New Policy

State Authority: **ARM 37.30.2608** Visual Medical Program Eligibility Requirements

Policy Statement

Upon request of the consumer, completion of the required medical services, or failure to write new plan for the fiscal year the Visual Medical Program case may be closed. The consumer should be informed of the closure and given information about the Client Assistance program.

MVR Policy 8.4 Older Blind Eligibility

Applied Effective Date: 02/24/2014

Last Edition Date: New Policy

Federal Authority: **34 CFR 367—Independent Living Services for Older Individuals who are blind.**

Authority: **M.C.A. 53-7-303 and A. R. M. 37.30.2301**

Policy Statement:

Eligibility will be determined following an assessment completed by the O&M or the VRT. Medical records are not required unless determined necessary by the O & M or VRT. The eligibility determination will be made following completion of an application and contact with the consumer.

A person may be found eligible if they are 55 years or older, have a significant vision loss and require services of this program to maintain or increase independent living. The person should also have, due to visual disability, extreme difficulty in obtaining competitive employment (including homemaker goal) and have a feasible independent living goals.

MVR Policy 8.5 Older Blind Scope of Services and Independent Living Plan

Applied 02/24/2014

Last Edition Date: New Policy

Federal Authority: 34 CFR 367—Independent Living Services for Older Individuals who are blind.

Authority: M.C.A. 53-7-303 and A. R. M. 37.30.2301

Policy Statement:

Older Blind Services are described in a Service Plan outlining the services requested and necessary to maintain or improve independence. Services are based on the priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice of the individual. Services may include:

- Low Vision assessment and instruction,
- Assistive devices that foster mobility and self-sufficiency. These devices may include low vision aids, white canes, adaptive living aids and assistive devices for recreational activities,
- Mobility and independent living skills training,
- Information and referral,
- Peer counseling,
- Individual advocacy training, and
- Other services necessary for living and participating in the community.

The services to be provided will be included in an Independent Living Service Plan. The consumer may sign the plan. It must be signed by the O & M or VRT. The service plan will show whether functional gain was maintained or achieved following the provision of services.

If the consumer expresses an interest in employment, or it becomes evident that a homemaker goal is feasible, the consumer will be referred to the BLVS vocational rehabilitation program.

Services will be provided to the consumer at least every 180 days or closure of the case will be considered.

MVR Policy 8.6 Older Blind Consumer Rights

Applied 02/24/2014

Last Edition Date: New

Federal Authority: 34 CFR 367—Independent Living Services for Older Individuals who are blind.

Authority: M.C.A. 53-7-303 and A. R. M. 37.30.2301

Policy Statement:

Consumers will be provided with information regarding their rights for grievances and fair hearings and the Client Assistance Program at application and closure. If services are denied, the consumer will be provided with information about their rights.

MVR Policy 8.7 Reduction of Service Population

Applied Effective Date: 02/24/2014

Last Edition Date: New Policy

Federal Authority: 34 CFR 367—Independent Living Services for Older Individuals who are blind.

Authority: M.C.A. 53-7-303 and A. R. M. 37.30.2301

Policy Statement:

When administrative staff have determined there are insufficient fiscal or personnel resources to appropriately serve all qualified applicants, services will be diminished or eliminated according to severity of the visual disability.

Category 1 is the most severe and Category 5 the least severe.

1. Consumers already accepted in the Older Blind Program
2. Consumers who are totally blind
3. Consumers who are legally blind
4. Consumers who are low vision (best acuity with correction 20/80 or less in better eye) or functional limitations that affects four or more areas on independent living
5. All other consumers

When the reduction in services is initiated, consumers in the program will continue receiving services and new referrals or applicants will be placed on a waiting list to be served based on severity of visual disability and date of referral or application.

MVR Policy 8.8

Older Blind Closure

Applied: 02/24/2014

Last Edition Date: New

Federal Authority: 34 CFR 367—Independent Living Services for Older Individuals who are blind.

Authority: M.C.A. 53-7-303 and A. R. M. 37.30.2301

Policy Statement:

At the consumer's request or when it is determined that the consumer has achieved their maximum independent living functional capacity the case will be closed. The consumer will be notified of the closure of their case. Consumers will be notified of their ability to re-apply when services are needed again, their rights to grievance and the Client Assistance Program.

MVR Procedure 8.1 EMPLOYMENT OUTCOME: HOMEMAKER

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Definition of Homemaker as an Employment Outcome

A homemaker is an individual who has the skills and abilities to maintain a home and actively functions in that capacity.

Identifying Homemaker as an Employment Outcome

An individual with the goal of homemaker must have: substantial service and/or training needs in and significant responsibility for the activities specified in two of the four core areas. This means that the individual must:

1. have an interest in performing homemaker activities.
2. have significant limitations in functioning that require substantial vocational rehabilitation services (*training in homemaker activities*) in two or more core areas.
3. have the responsibility to do the homemaker functions.

The Regional Administrator, Counselor Supervisor or Chief of Field Services must approve a homemaker goal prior to the development of the IPE in the general Vocational Rehabilitation program.

Homemaker Functions in Core Areas

Homemaker functions have been grouped into the following four core areas:

1. Financial Management: significant responsibility for writing checks, balancing checkbook, developing and maintaining a budget, banking, record keeping and paying bills.
2. Meal Management: significant responsibility for planning and preparing meals for self and/or others.

3. Home Management: significant responsibility for cleaning and maintaining the household including but not limited to: minor household repairs, interior home cleaning, exterior home maintenance, cleaning and mending clothing, preparation of shopping lists and/or shopping, medication identification and organization.

4. Family Care: significant responsibility for a dependent child(ren) or incapacitated adult living in close enough proximity to allow for daily care. The consumer must be involved in providing regular physical care to the family member however the family member can live in a separate setting nearby. Or, will allow another family member to engage in employment.

Scope of Service Provision

Service provision (i.e. orientation and mobility, rehabilitation teacher, adaptive equipment purchases) will be limited to those areas in which the individual has significant responsibility and rehabilitation needs related to vision loss or other secondary disability.

Self-care and independent living activities are not considered as core activities of homemaker. Self-care activities can include but are not restricted to grooming skills (personal hygiene, care of hair, makeup, and shaving, clothing identification, dressing, taking medications, setting thermostats), social skills (eating techniques, table manners), communication skills (dialing a telephone, handwriting), and mobility skills. Independent living activities include recreational activities, personal e-mails, looking at photos, surfing the web, downloading audio books.

Case Closure

The counselor must be able to document those substantial services provided that significantly impacted the client's ability to successfully perform homemaker activities for a Status 26 closure. Substantial services by the O&M and/or VRT include at least a clear assessment, documented training and follow-up.

Homemaker must be the original vocational goal on the IPE or substantial services towards the goal of homemaker must be provided after the goal is changed to homemaker by amendment.

If additional VR services are not needed, and/or services had no impact on the client's ability to perform homemaking activities, the case must be closed Status 28. Changing the vocational goal to homemaker for the sole purpose of obtaining a 26 is prohibited.