

NDAB Resolution 2021-03:

State 2021 – 2023 Appropriation for the Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) Program

Whereas, demographically, North Dakota is among the states which has the highest proportion of people per capita who are 55 years of age and older, and this is the subpopulation of people who have the highest incidence of significant sight loss that is not medically correctable; and,

Whereas, seniors who receive blindness rehabilitation skills training to adjust to sight loss can postpone or avoid institutionalized care and live more productive and fulfilling lives; and,

Whereas, the appropriation that's made for the older Individuals Who Are blind (OIB) program in the state's budget is critical to meet the costs that this program realizes because, (1) the federal government funds the program in North Dakota at a minimal base level due to the size of our population compared to other states, and (2) travel costs are significant because the vision specialists employed in the program need to meet in the client's home setting to make a proper evaluation to assess the skills training needed for that individual person;

Now, Therefore, be it resolved by the Board of the North Dakota Association of the Blind at its meeting on this Sunday, January 10, 2021, that given the increasing demand for vision rehabilitation skills services available through the Older Individuals Who Are Blind Program, that we,

(1) Strongly Urge the Governor and the 67th State Legislature that convened on January 5, 2021, to maintain and increase the state appropriation that is allocated in the 2021-2023 biennial budget within the HB1012 Human Services budget for the Older Individuals Who Are Blind Program and that our state appropriation for this program would be increased to a 25% match of the federal appropriation that North Dakota receives for this program; And,

(2) urge our federal congressional delegation, Senators Hoeven and Cramer, and Congressman Armstrong, to work to maintain and increase the federal appropriation for the Older Blind Program in the federal budget and that they would work to have the formula for the federal appropriation be based, not only on the state's population size, but also on a state's per capita percentage of people who are 55 years of age and older.