

NDAB Resolution 2022-03:

State 2025 – 2027 Appropriation for the Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) Program in North Dakota

Whereas, demographically, North Dakota is among the states that 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 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 is made for the Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) program in the state 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 rate 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, be it resolved by the North Dakota Association of the Blind in Convention assembled at the Enchanted Castle in Regent, ND on this Sunday, June 9, 2024, that we, given the increasing demand for vision rehabilitation skills training services available from the Older Individuals Who Are Blind Program, strongly urge the newly elected Governor and the 69th State Legislature that will convene on January 7, 2025, to maintain and increase the state appropriation that is allocated in the 2025-2027 biennial budget within the SB2012 Human Services budget for the Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) Program and that our state appropriation for this program be increased to a 25% match of the federal appropriation that North Dakota receives for this program.

Further be it resolved that we urge our elected federal congressional delegation, to work to maintain and increase the 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.