

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Cecelia Hartley](#)
Subject: FW: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)
Date: Wednesday, June 04, 2014 7:55:28 AM

-----Original Message-----

From: sundrupal@capitol.local [<mailto:sundrupal@capitol.local>]
Sent: Tuesday, June 03, 2014 8:25 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Form submission from: Public Input Form for Agencies Under Review (Public/After Publication)

Submitted on Tuesday, June 3, 2014 - 20:25

Agency: DEPARTMENT ASSISTIVE AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES DARS

First Name: Cyral

Last Name: Miller

Title: Teacher of students with visual impairments

Organization you are affiliated with: Central Texas Professionals in Visual Impairment

Email:

City: Austin

State: Texas

Your Comments About the Staff Report, Including Recommendations Supported or Opposed:

I am opposed to the recommendations in Issue 1. Long experience in this field has demonstrated to me that there is a need for knowledgeable supervision and leadership to maintain quality services for such a small population as that represented by blindness. The unique adaptations and social support needed by this particular population are not commonly understood, need specialized training to provide, and take longer to be effectively implemented by clients. There is research evidence that outcomes are more positive in separately structured organizational structures - see Cavanaugh, B. S. (2010). An update on services and outcomes of blind consumers served in separate and general/combined VR agencies. Prepared for the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind by the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision, Mississippi State University. Mississippi State, MS: RRTC-MSU).

I am also opposed to Issue #3. Elder Texans who are experiencing vision loss need skilled support in their homes. Access to a living center might help with some training needs (if there is transportation to get there), but modifying the home environment either for optimum visual contrast and lighting or to support a tactile approach, providing emotional support in the adjustment to late onset blindness that can leave seniors depressed and hesitant about leaving home, and then teaching specific skills for all the many daily living skills needed for independence in the home where they are needed requires a) knowledgeable practitioners and b) vision-related home supports.

Any Alternative or New Recommendations on This Agency:

Blindness rehabilitation is challenging because in addition to needing skilled trainers to work with the visually impaired individual and provide mastery level of unique skills, societal values work against employment in ways that are quite different than what is faced when trying to convince an employer to accommodate for a person with another kind of physical or cognitive impairment. The name of the rehabilitation service might be the same, but

the approach and the specific skills needed by the rehabilitation specialists are not.

An increase in the number of skilled ILS blindness related staff is going to be needed as the wave of boomers predictably develop vision loss and need intensive support. Now is not the time to pull back from a dedicated work force with intelligent and knowledgeable leaders.

My Comment Will Be Made Public: I agree