



# **ORIENTATION PACKET**

**for New Vocational Rehabilitation  
Professionals Working with Individuals  
who are Blind or Visually Impaired**

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## Letter of Introduction

Dear Vocational Rehabilitation Professional,

Congratulations! You are embarking upon a new and challenging professional role working with individuals who are blind or visually impaired. There is a great deal to learn about blindness, but the most important thing to remember is that there are resources to support you. The National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision (NRTC) provides resources, training, and technical assistance to ensure you are successful in effectively and efficiently serving your consumers.

The NRTC, located at Mississippi State University since 1981, is funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) and serves as a national center of excellence on employment for individuals with blindness or low vision. Our current NIDILRR funding is for a Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Employment for Individuals with Blindness or Other Visual Impairments (details about these projects are available on our website: [www.blind.msstate.edu/research/current](http://www.blind.msstate.edu/research/current)).

Outcomes from NRTC research projects provide information used by professionals ranging from direct service practitioners to administrators of state agencies and federal programs. Research findings have contributed significantly to the literature in the field, and NRTC personnel regularly disseminate this information at national, regional, and state conferences.

In addition to conducting research, training and technical assistance are also key activities for the NRTC. The NRTC contracts with individual states to provide on-site and virtual training for VR personnel, state VR agency program evaluations, and needs assessments. We provide technical assistance through our website, the National Technical Assistance Center on Blindness and Low Vision (NTAC-BLV), ([www.ntac.blind.msstate.edu](http://www.ntac.blind.msstate.edu)) and via phone (662-325-2001) and email ([nrtc@colled.msstate.edu](mailto:nrtc@colled.msstate.edu)).

This orientation packet will familiarize you with the blindness field and our products. We want you to think of the NRTC as your blindness resource! We hope you find the information useful. Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions or comments. We would very much like to hear your feedback.

Please take a moment to register for our quarterly newsletter at [this link](#). We wish you a long and successful career in the blindness field!

Sincerely,  
The NRTC Team



## Misperceptions about Blindness

There are many misperceptions about blindness and about what a person who is blind or has low vision can and cannot do. Many believe a person who is blind cannot cook a meal, clean their house, take care of their children, manage their finances, or work in a competitive job. This is simply not true. With appropriate skills training, tools, accommodations, and opportunities to use those skills independently, people who are blind or have low vision can perform the same daily activities and work in the same broad range of occupations as anyone else. When consumers put these blindness skills into practice, they gain confidence in their abilities and develop a more positive attitude about blindness. In turn, the person who is blind makes life choices and career goals no longer based on perceived limitations of blindness, but on his or her interests, skills, and abilities.

The following are some examples of common misperceptions about blindness:

- **Misperception: People who are blind see only darkness, nothing else.**

Reality: Most people with vision loss are not totally blind. Many retain some usable vision and may be able to distinguish light, color, or movement.

Blindness is a spectrum that can range from very low vision to no light perception.

- **Misperception: People who are blind develop a "sixth sense."**

Reality: People who are blind or visually impaired are not endowed with a sharper sense of touch, hearing, taste, or smell. They develop effective nonvisual or low vision techniques and learn to use sensory information more intentionally when completing everyday tasks.

- **Misperception: People who are blind or visually impaired cannot work or hold a job.**

Reality: With the proper training and accommodations, people who are blind or visually impaired work competitively in a wide range of occupations. Some examples can be found on our website:

[What types of jobs can people who are blind or have low vision do? | NTAC Spotlight on Successful Employment | National Technical Assistance Center](#)

- **Misperception: Most people who are blind are proficient in braille and own a dog guide.**

Reality: Braille is a beneficial skill, but only a small percentage of people who are blind or visually impaired are fluent in braille. Many people know enough braille

for practical use, such as reading notes and labels. Most people who learn braille as adults do not develop the skill to read braille rapidly. Only a small percentage of blind or visually impaired people use a dog guide. Dog guides are valuable tools and companions for those who use them. Dog guides lead the person safely through crowds, across streets, and around obstructions, but the person who is blind does control the dog. When the dog guide is harnessed, it is on duty, and one should not pet, talk to, or otherwise distract it.

- **Misperception: People who are blind or visually impaired cannot access print or handwritten materials.**

Reality: Assistive technology, including free mobile apps, has made most print accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired, even some handwritten print. Computer software can translate print into speech, magnify screen images, and enlarge text to a readable size. Occasionally human readers may assist with text that is not recognizable by a computer.

- **Misperception: Feeling someone's face is a common technique that blind people use to "see" what someone looks like.**

Reality: People who are blind follow the same social conventions as those with sight, which means that it is highly unlikely they will want to touch the face of someone they are not intimately acquainted with. In fact, according to many visually impaired people, feeling someone's face does not provide very much helpful information about a person's appearance.

- **Misperception: If you are speaking with someone who is blind or visually impaired, you should avoid using words like "look" or "see" so that you do not offend them.**

Reality: Words referencing sight are frequently used as figures of speech by people of all vision levels, including those who are blind. Telling your blind friend "I'll see you later" is acceptable, as are other phrases using such words.

## Blindness Etiquette

People who are blind want to be treated like everyone else: with courtesy and respect. So, relax and act naturally. Be mindful that the person may access visual and environmental information differently from you. Below are some suggestions from [Perkins School for the Blind](#) that will make your next interaction with someone who is blind easier and more comfortable for both you and the person with vision loss. For additional information on blindness etiquette, our free [T.I.P.S. for Helping People with Vision Problems](#) course provides practical guidance on understanding vision loss, communicating effectively, and offering appropriate assistance.

- **If you think someone who is blind may need help navigating, ask first.**

It is jarring for anyone to be unexpectedly grabbed or pulled, but especially so for someone who cannot see who is doing the grabbing. By asking, you give the person a chance to say, “Yes, please” or “No, thank you.”

- **If your help is accepted, allow the person to grasp your arm just above the elbow.**

That makes it easier for the person to feel your movements and follow on their own terms.

- **If you see someone who is blind or visually impaired about to encounter danger, be calm and clear when you warn the person.**

Use specific language, such as, “There’s a curb right in front of you,” or “The door in front of you is closed,” instead of, “Watch out!” Also, use directional language, such as “to your left” or “directly behind you,” rather than “over here.” Think about what information you would want to know if you could not see.

- **Identify yourself when approaching someone who is blind or when entering a room that the person is in.**

Even if the person has met you before, he or she may not recognize you by your voice. In a group setting, address the person who is blind by name, so they know you are talking to them. Inform the person when you depart so they do not continue the conversation.

- **Do not pet or distract a working dog guide.**

These dogs are busy directing their owners and keeping them safe. Distracting them makes them less effective and can put their owners in danger.

- **Respect each person’s language preferences.**

Both person-first language, such as “a person who is blind,” and identity-first language, such as “a blind person,” are used within the blindness community. When possible, follow the individual’s stated preference.

- **Converse appropriately.**

Speak in a normal voice and speak directly to someone who is blind, not over or around the person to someone else.

## Basics of Blindness and Low Vision: Understanding a Low Incidence Disability

The NRTC created a video to increase understanding about blindness and low vision for students preparing to enter the rehabilitation field. This video would also be valuable for professionals who are new to the field. We suggest viewing this video as a starting point in the onboarding of new staff. This video would be appropriate to view as a group in a new hire orientation or can be viewed individually.

More information about the video, and the video itself, is available on the [NRTC's website](#). The video can also be accessed via YouTube: [Basics of Blindness and Low Vision Video](#)

## NRTC Short Course Recommendations

The NRTC has developed a series of short courses for professionals who work with people who are blind or visually impaired. The courses are available online and completely free of charge. Continuing education credits (CEUs) are provided for most of the courses for the following: Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC), Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals (ACVREP), and National Blindness Professional Certification Board (NBPCB). These courses will help you learn about vision loss and its impact on the human experience. Our recommended course sequence is provided below. We believe these courses can provide a foundation for you as you begin your new profession of assisting individuals with vision loss to achieve positive employment and independent living outcomes.

All the following courses, as well as additional courses, are available at the NTAC-BLV website: [www.ntac.blind.msstate.edu/courses/](http://www.ntac.blind.msstate.edu/courses/)

1. Basics of Blindness and Low Vision
2. The Low-Down on Low Vision, An Overview
3. Adjustment and Acceptance of Blindness and Low Vision
4. Adjusting to Vision Loss: What Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals Need to Know
5. An Overview of Anatomy and Physiology of the Eye
6. Common Adult Eye Conditions
7. How to Read an Eye Report
8. Working with Employers: Why it is Important and What Successful VR Agencies Do
9. Understanding and Overcoming Transportation Barriers
10. Understanding Social Security Work Incentives: It's Easier than You Think
11. An Overview of Assistive Technology for People Who are Blind or Have Low Vision
12. Assistive Technology in the Workplace for Individuals Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision

## NRTC Resources

The NRTC has developed numerous products for professionals who work with individuals who are blind, visually impaired, and deafblind, as well as products for individuals who are blind or visually impaired themselves. These products are available on our website, and a brief description of some of the resources is provided below.

[www.blind.msstate.edu/our-products/](http://www.blind.msstate.edu/our-products/)

### Resources for Service Providers

- Working with Businesses to Improve Employment Outcomes – an evidence-based practice guide that presents findings from four studies and recommendations for agencies and counselors about working with businesses
- Employment Mentoring Manual – a resource for individuals who are interested in having a mentor and service providers who are interested in starting a mentoring program
- SSDI Beneficiaries who are Blind or Visually Impaired – an evidence-based practice guide presenting recommendations for agencies and counselors
- Job Retention and Career Advancement Resources – checklists and a resource list to help counselors assist consumers who are trying to retain a job or advance in their careers
- NRTC Community Outreach Guides – two separate guides to help professionals plan and implement a white cane awareness day event or an adapted sports outreach event

### Transportation Resources

- Transportation Guide for Persons who are Blind or Have Low Vision – information about finding and using transportation options
- Customized Transportation Plan – questions to generate conversation between a counselor and consumer regarding the consumer's transportation situation to craft a customized, workable plan
- Transportation Briefs – short fact sheets about transportation topics

### Resources for Businesses

- Just Ask: Working Alongside Blind and Low Vision Colleagues – a short video that provides guidance for coworkers and supervisors of people who are B/LV
- A Human Resources Guide for Working with Employees Experiencing Vision Loss – a guide for Human Resources staff who are helping employees who experience vision loss maintain employment filled with guidance and information
- Blind People Can't Perform This Job...Or Can They? – a brief article with findings about attitudes of hiring managers, written for employers

- [Inquiring Mind Video Series](#) – short videos that answer important questions employers have about workers with B/LV

### [Deafblindness Resources](#)

- [Youth with Deafblindness](#) – report that describes the characteristics, school experiences, academic achievements, and after-school experiences of deafblind youth, based on the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2
- [Predictors of Employment for Youth Who are Deafblind](#) – article about factors that predict post-high school employment for youth who are deafblind
- [Predictors of Employment and Job Quality of VR Consumers with Deafblindness](#) – article describing a study that investigated employment outcomes for VR consumers who are deafblind
- [Experiences of Young Adults with Deafblindness after High School](#) – a short article about post-high school experiences of young adults who are deafblind
- [Characteristics, Services, and Outcomes of Vocational Rehabilitation Consumers who are Deafblind](#) – article that provides descriptive information about the characteristics, services, and outcomes of deafblind consumers served by VR agencies

### [Transition Resources](#)

- [Supplemental Security Income \(SSI\) and Work Fact Sheets](#) – fact sheets with general information, examples of calculations, and links to more detailed information for youth with visual impairments who receive SSI benefits and their parents
- [Transition Calendar](#) - a checklist of tasks that students who are blind or visually impaired need to complete as early as middle school in order to be ready to attend college
- [4to24 App](#) – a free resource for parents of children and youth who are blind, have low vision, or are deafblind with additional disabilities. It covers ages 4 to 24 years, to go from preschool age into young adulthood and career.
- [Resources for Job Seekers](#) -
- [Virtual Interview Training Toolkit](#) – a free resource to help service providers quickly access research-based information and practical resources for preparing youth for job interviews using *Virtual Interview Training for Transition-Aged Youth (VIT-TAY)* and other virtual training tools.

### [Questions About Vision Loss](#)

An interactive video to educate people about blindness and low vision, featuring people who are blind or have low vision answering common questions. Watch it yourself and use it to educate employers and others!

### **Accessibility Resources**

Provides a list of links to resources and information for making documents, surveys, and the work environment more accessible for people who are B/LV

### **NRTC Publications**

Lists NRTC publications, with copies of most publications available for free downloads

### **Separate vs Combined Agencies**

Provides a review of the research on outcomes for blind and visually impaired consumers served in separate vs. combined agencies

### **External Resources**

Links to programs, services, and other resources related to blindness and visual impairment that may be of benefit to consumers

## Acronyms, Jargon, and Other Resources

| Abbreviation   | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ACB</b>     | American Council of the Blind ( <a href="http://www.acb.org">www.acb.org</a> ) – Consumer group                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>ACVREP</b>  | Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals ( <a href="http://www.acvrep.org">www.acvrep.org</a> ) – Provides certification program information and resources for Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (CVRTs), Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMSs), Certified Low Vision Therapists (CLVTs), and Certified Assistive Technology Instructional Specialists for People with Visual Impairments (CATISs) |
| <b>ADA</b>     | Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>ADL</b>     | Activities of Daily Living – Functional areas that are considered essential for daily functions, such as dressing, eating, or bathing; an instructional area for VRTs or rehabilitation teachers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>AER</b>     | Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired ( <a href="http://www.aerbvi.org">www.aerbvi.org</a> ) – Professional association for service providers of individuals who are blind or visually impaired                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>AFB</b>     | American Foundation for the Blind ( <a href="http://www.afb.org">www.afb.org</a> ) – National nonprofit organization committed to creating a more equitable world for individuals who are blind or visually impaired                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>AHEAD</b>   | Association for Higher Education and Disability – Professional organization for college support services personnel                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>AMD</b>     | Age-Related Macular Degeneration (aka ARMD)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>AOTA</b>    | American Occupational Therapy Association ( <a href="http://www.aota.org">www.aota.org</a> ) – Professional organization that provides state policy and licensure information for occupational therapists                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>APH</b>     | American Printing House for the Blind – Develops and distributes accessible educational materials, assistive technology, products, services, research-based resources, and professional development opportunities to support people who are blind or have low vision, their families, educators, and service providers. ( <a href="http://www.aph.org">www.aph.org</a> )                                                                                           |
| <b>AT</b>      | Assistive Technology                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>AVRT</b>    | Association of Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (formerly MACRT) ( <a href="http://www.avrt.org">www.avrt.org</a> ) – Professional organization for vision rehabilitation therapists from public and private sectors across the US                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>BANA</b>    | Braille Authority of North America – Sets U.S. braille code standards                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>BEP</b>     | Business Enterprise Program – Program to assist persons who are blind to have their own food-service business, funded by the Randolph-Sheppard Act and administered through VR                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Bioptic</b> | A technique to allow people who are visually impaired or legally blind                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

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| <b>Driving</b>   | to drive a car using special assistive telescopic devices                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Bookshare</b> | An organization that provides textbooks and bestsellers in a variety of accessible formats to students and adults ( <a href="http://www.bookshare.org">www.bookshare.org</a> )                                                                 |
| <b>BVA</b>       | Blinded Veterans Association ( <a href="http://www.bva.org">www.bva.org</a> ) – Consumer group                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>B/VI</b>      | Blind and Visually Impaired OR Blindness and Visual Impairment                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>CAP</b>       | Client Assistance Program – Provides advocacy and mediation for VR clients                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>CAT</b>       | Computer Access Technology – Primarily references adaptations for those who are blind or visually impaired                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>CATIS</b>     | Certified Assistive Technology Instructional Specialist for People with Visual Impairments (from ACVREP)                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>CDMS</b>      | Certified Disability Management Specialist ( <a href="http://www.cdms.org">www.cdms.org</a> )                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>CEC</b>       | Council for Exceptional Children ( <a href="http://www.cec.sped.org">www.cec.sped.org</a> ) – Professional association for special education teachers                                                                                          |
| <b>CFR</b>       | Code of Federal Regulations of the United States of America                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>CLVT</b>      | Certified Low Vision Therapist (from ACVREP)                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>COMS</b>      | Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (from ACVREP)                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>CRC</b>       | Certified Rehabilitation Counselor                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>CSAVR</b>     | Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation ( <a href="http://www.csavr.org">www.csavr.org</a> )                                                                                                                              |
| <b>CVI</b>       | Cortical/Cerebral Visual Impairment                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>CVRT</b>      | Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapist (aka Rehabilitation Teacher; from ACVREP)                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>DB</b>        | Deafblind (or deaf-blind) – Individuals with severe visual impairment who also have severe hearing loss                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>DSA</b>       | Designated State Agency (Vocational Rehabilitation Agency)                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>DVM</b>       | Delayed Visual Maturation                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>ECC</b>       | Expanded Core Curriculum – Concepts and skills that require specialized instruction for students who are blind or visually impaired.                                                                                                           |
| <b>EI</b>        | Early Intervention                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>FVA</b>       | Functional Vision Assessment – Done by a vision professional in a natural setting, such as at home or work                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Hadley</b>    | Offers practical help, connection, and support free of charge to anyone with a visual impairment, their families, and professionals supporting them. ( <a href="http://hadleyhelps.org">hadleyhelps.org</a> )                                  |
| <b>HKNC</b>      | Helen Keller National Center for Deafblind Youths and Adults ( <a href="http://www.helenkeller.org/hknc">www.helenkeller.org/hknc</a> ) – Provides training and resources to individuals aged 16 and over who have combined vision and hearing |

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                      | loss                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>IADLs</b>         | Instrumental Activities of Daily Living – Important activities that are not critical for daily functioning, such as cleaning and maintaining a house or managing money                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>IDEA</b>          | Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (education legislation)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>IEP</b>           | Individualized Education Program for K-12 special education students                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>IL(S)</b>         | Independent Living (Services) – Rehabilitation services for persons without vocational objectives                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>IOL</b>           | Intraocular Lens – Surgically implanted lens for the eye (used after cataract surgery)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>IPE</b>           | Individualized Plan for Employment for VR consumers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>JAN</b>           | Job Accommodation Network ( <a href="http://www.askjan.org">www.askjan.org</a> ) – An organization that provides free guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>JAWS</b>          | Job Access with Speech – Speech software program to allow persons who are blind to access text on a computer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>JVIB</b>          | Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness<br>( <a href="https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jvb">https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jvb</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>LB</b>            | Legally Blind – Central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye, with the best possible correction, and/or a visual field of 20 degrees or less                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Learning Ally</b> | An organization that provides accessible audio textbooks for high school, college, and university students ( <a href="http://www.learningally.org">www.learningally.org</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>LMA</b>           | Learning Media Assessment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>LPO</b>           | Light Perception Only – Not able to see details but can perceive the difference between light and dark                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>LRE</b>           | Least Restrictive Environment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>LVA</b>           | Low Vision Aid – An aid or device, such as a talking watch or magnifier, to assist an individual with daily activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>LVE</b>           | Low Vision Exam – Done by an eye care professional in a clinical setting, such as a doctor's office or rehabilitation facility                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>LVT</b>           | Low Vision Therapist or, when certified by ACVREP, CLVT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>NBPCB</b>         | National Blindness Professional Certification Board ( <a href="http://www.nbpcb.org">www.nbpcb.org</a> )<br>– Provides certification program information and resources for National Orientation and Mobility Certification (NOMC), National Certification in Rehabilitation Teaching for the Blind (NCRTB), National Certification in Literary Braille Certification (NCLB), and National Certification in Unified English Braille (NCUEB) |
| <b>NCDB</b>          | National Center on Deafblindness ( <a href="#">Welcome to the National Center</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

|                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                | <a href="#">on Deafblindness</a> )                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>NCLB</b>    | National Certification in Literary Braille (from NBPCB)                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>NCRTB</b>   | National Certification in Rehabilitation Teaching for the Blind (from NBPCB)                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>NCSAB</b>   | National Council of State Agencies for the Blind ( <a href="http://www.ncsab.org">www.ncsab.org</a> )                                                                                                             |
| <b>NEI</b>     | National Eye Institute ( <a href="http://www.nei.nih.gov">www.nei.nih.gov</a> )                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>NET</b>     | National Employment Team – Program of CSAVR focused on business engagement                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>NFB</b>     | National Federation of the Blind ( <a href="http://www.nfb.org">www.nfb.org</a> ) – Consumer group                                                                                                                |
| <b>NIDILRR</b> | National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research – Federal government’s primary disability research agency (formerly NIDRR)                                                      |
| <b>NIMAC</b>   | National Instructional Materials Accessibility Center ( <a href="http://www.nimac.us">www.nimac.us</a> )                                                                                                          |
| <b>NLP</b>     | No Light Perception                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>NLS</b>     | National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled ( <a href="http://www.loc.gov/nls">www.loc.gov/nls</a> )                                                                                                |
| <b>NOAH</b>    | National Organization for Albinism and Hypopigmentation ( <a href="http://albinism.org">albinism.org</a> )                                                                                                        |
| <b>NOMC</b>    | National Orientation & Mobility Certification (from NBPCB)                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>NRA</b>     | National Rehabilitation Association                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>NRTC</b>    | The National Research and Training Center on Blindness and Low Vision ( <a href="http://www.blind.msstate.edu">www.blind.msstate.edu</a> )                                                                        |
| <b>NSF</b>     | National Science Foundation ( <a href="http://www.nsf.gov">www.nsf.gov</a> ) – Funding source for research grants                                                                                                 |
| <b>O&amp;M</b> | Orientation and Mobility – Service provided to those who are blind or visually impaired to help them travel safely and efficiently using a white cane, human guide, and/or dog guide                              |
| <b>OIB</b>     | Title VII, Chapter 2 – Older Individuals who are Blind Program, also known as Independent Living for Older Individuals who are Blind (ILOIB) – Administered by state VR agencies and funded by RSA                |
| <b>OIB-TAC</b> | Older Individuals who are Blind Technical Assistance Center ( <a href="http://www.oib-tac.org">www.oib-tac.org</a> )                                                                                              |
| <b>OSEP</b>    | Office of Special Education Programs – Federal office with oversight for educational programs for children with disabilities                                                                                      |
| <b>OSERS</b>   | Office on Special Education and Rehabilitative Services – Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. An office within the U.S. Department of Education whose principal components are OSEP and RSA. |

|                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>OT</b>      | Occupational Therapist                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Perkins</b> | Educational services and resources for children with visual impairment and cerebral/cortical visual impairment. ( <a href="http://www.perkins.org">www.perkins.org</a> )                                          |
| <b>Pre-ETS</b> | Pre-Employment Transition Services – Mandated by WIOA, requires 15% of state VR funds be spent on Pre-ETS programming                                                                                             |
| <b>PWD</b>     | Person with a Disability                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>RCB</b>     | Rehabilitation Counselor for the Blind                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>RESNA</b>   | Rehabilitation Engineering Society of North America ( <a href="http://www.resna.org">www.resna.org</a> ) – Certifies assistive technology specialists                                                             |
| <b>ROP</b>     | Retinopathy of Prematurity                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>RP</b>      | Retinitis Pigmentosa                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>RSA</b>     | Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) – Federal agency charged with oversight of VR programs for people with disabilities, including older blind adults                                                    |
| <b>RT</b>      | Rehabilitation Teacher – Also known as VRT or, if certified, CVRT or NCRTB                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>SSP</b>     | Support Service Provider, also called a CoNavigator, is a trained individual who provides environmental, visual, and other information access to a person who is deafblind.                                       |
| <b>TVI</b>     | Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments. An educator with specialized preparation in addressing the educational needs of students who are blind or have low vision. Credentialing requirements vary by state. |
| <b>US</b>      | Usher Syndrome – A condition that causes vision and hearing loss                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>VA</b>      | Veterans Affairs (aka U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs)                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>VRC</b>     | Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>VRT</b>     | Vision Rehabilitation Therapist – Also known as Rehabilitation Teacher (RT) or, if certified through ACVREP, CVRT                                                                                                 |
| <b>WBU</b>     | World Blind Union ( <a href="http://www.worldblindunion.org">www.worldblindunion.org</a> ) – Global association consisting of organizations of and for the blind in 190 countries                                 |
| <b>WIOA</b>    | Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014                                                                                                                                                                  |