

Rhode Island Vision Services Joint Task Force

RE: September 16, 2021 Information Request

1. Multi language learners:

Students who are blind or have visual impairments that Sherlock Center serves who have diverse language needs. (Based on information provided by teachers)

- a. 2 Students who are bi-lingual
- b. 23 students live in homes with bilingual families
- c. 3 students are reported to live with parents/caregivers who are non- English speaking.

2. Staffing Shortages:

- a. RI has reported shortages in special education teachers almost every year since 1998.
- b. The following states reported vacancies in schools the area of special education, vision services:
 - i. 2018 - 2021 – Delaware, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, West Virginia (US DOE, Teacher Shortage Areas, retrieved from <https://tsa.ed.gov/#/reports>)
 - ii. Anecdotally, TVI/COM shortages are illustrated in the National job postings found on Indeed.com: COM have 5000 + available postings and TVI have 706 available jobs posted (retrieved Oct. 1, 2021, Indeed.com)

3. Variation in Compensation:

The variation in compensation is based on the geographic region, the organization size and type, funding source, number of days worked per year, experience and certification. Sherlock Teachers of the visually impaired (TVIs) are part of the Howard Teacher Union, work 182 days per year and have an average salary of \$92,200 including professional study increments and longevity. (See attached schedule) Sherlock Certified Orientation and Mobility specialists (COMs) are non-union, work 180 days per year and have an average salary of \$59,188.

In New England, most TVI's and COMs work in private or nonprofit agencies. A small number of TVIs work in LEAs and therefore, may be part of a union. Generally, TVIs work a school year calendar and salary ranges vary from \$31,000 – \$103,000 (Brusegaard, 2019). COMS typically work a full calendar year. Salary ranges were not available for New England region.

Nationally, the majority of TVI and COMS work in private or nonprofit agencies. The 5th Biennial Compensation and Benefits Survey (VisionServe Alliance, NIB & NAEPB, 2018*) showed the following average salary ranges:

TVIs salaries are based on a school year calendar with a range of \$54,375 - \$62,324.

COMs salaries are based on a full calendar year and have a range of \$58,782 - \$67,278.

**See attached for more details.*

A National Survey is currently underway to replicate and expand on the National Plan for Training Personnel (NTPT) study conducted in 2000. Information being studied includes: salary ranges, provision of services, vacancies, etc.

4. A Sampling of Vision Education Services Across the Country

Information collected from presentation to the RIVESP Advisory Board on 8/28/20, contact with UCEDD directors and a pilot study (State of the States: Identifying Personnel Preparation Needs, Pilot State Fact Sheets) conducted in 2019 by Callie Brusegaard. Most information is reflective of Teachers of the Visually Impaired. Information for Orientation and Mobility Specialists was not readily available.

State	Salary Info	Model	Funding
California	Salaries vary depending on the location because cost of living varies so much in our State. TVI/OM Salary range \$56,000 – \$103,000 per year based on experience	LEAs hire their own. In some regions they pool resources and create regionalized services and programs. California also has the State Special Schools, which include the California School for the Blind and the California School for the Deaf. These are residential programs.	All special education services are a blended funding model in California. The federal dollars are distributed to an intermediary regional entity called a SELPA (Special Education Local Plan Area). SELPAs then distribute funding to the LEAs based on their regionalized local plan. In the last 5 years, CA switched to a local control funding formula for education, so state dollars go directly to the districts (with a few exceptions). To fund special education most districts utilize Federal, State and Local Dollars.
Connecticut	TVI Salary Range \$68,000-\$130,00 Average salary \$75,000 OM Salary not provided	Statewide services (~80% of students) (Board of Education & Services for the Blind) Remaining districts hire their own staff, but many are transitioning to statewide services in the coming year.	Funded legislatively – school districts do not pay for BESB services.
Massachusetts	TVI Starting salary in the \$40K range OM Salary not provided	Mixed Delivery system: Main Service provider is a nonprofit. Private agency (Perkins or Carroll Center) or educational consortiums that the district is an active member. Some directly hired by school district.	Reimbursement from the state through a program called Circuit Breaker for student costs (they receive back approximately 80% of the costs) - these costs could include specialized services such as TVI/O&M and technology.

Maine	TVI Salary Based on experience and qualifications. New hire receives a \$1,000.00 sign on bonus and an additional \$1,000.00 after a satisfactory performance rating upon completing 2 years employment. OM Salary not provided	Statewide services provided by Education Services for Blind Children (statewide), Catholic Charities	Funded legislatively – money appropriated to Division for the Blind School districts do not pay for services
New Hampshire	TVI Range \$31,000-\$57,000 Average Salary \$50,000 OM Salary not provided	Private profit and non-profit agencies. School districts hire their own staff Independent contractors.	Not provided
New York	TVI Range \$35,000-\$70,000 Average Salary \$60,000 OM Salary not provided	Not provided	Not provided
Louisiana	TVI salaries offered to personnel varies across the state based upon the LEA's contribution to salary in addition to the state base. OM Salary not provided	TVI and O&M personnel are employed by various agencies in Louisiana; public (LEAs & state agencies), not-for-profit, and for profit. LEAs may hire their own.	A combination of federal, state, and local funds are used by LEA's to fund services. Not-for-profit agencies often depend upon philanthropic support from outside agencies and may also charge a fee for services. For profit agencies depend upon a fee-for-service model to fund services.
Vermont	TVI Range \$38,000-\$66,000 Average Salary \$50,000 OM Salary not provided	Statewide services provided by Vermont Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired	Department of Education (35%) School districts (65%)