

Become a Vision Professional!

What is a vision professional and what might they do?

- **Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVI)**
 - Teach a middle school student with low vision to use a magnifier to read a graphic novel
 - Teach a student with multiple disabilities how to use apps on a tablet to reinforce language skills
 - Instruct a student who is blind to read and write braille, a life-long literacy skill
- **Orientation & Mobility Specialist (O&M)**
 - Empower a teenager who has low vision to read a bus schedule on an app or with a magnifier, catch the appropriate bus, and meet friends at the mall food court
 - Orient a 30-year-old blinded veteran with a dog guide to her new job site
 - Teach a four-year-old how to use their cane to move around their pre-school
- **Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (VRT)**
 - Train an elderly man to identify, organize and label his medications
 - Help a young woman select a coordinated outfit for a job interview
 - Describe to a blind individual how to safely remove a casserole from the oven

What would I like about my job?

- **Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVI)**
 - Enjoy work that is different, interesting, and challenging every day
 - Work one-on-one with children ages birth through 21 years
 - Learn from and collaborate with other professionals to maximize student success
- **Orientation & Mobility Specialist (O&M)**
 - Instruct on one-on-one basis both indoors and outdoors
 - Empower and equip an individual with a visual impairment to re-enter their world
 - Enjoy free daily workouts as part of your job duties
- **Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (VRT)**
 - Use creative solutions to solve individuals' vision loss issues
 - Experience something different every day
 - Make a major difference in the lives of individuals who have lost their vision

Potential employment opportunities include (not limited to):

- **Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVI)**
 - Individual public school districts or multi-district cooperatives
 - Residential schools for the blind
- **Orientation & Mobility Specialist (O&M)**
 - Outdoor, indoor, rural, and urban environments
 - Schools and job sites
- **Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (VRT)**
 - Rehabilitation centers
 - Assisted living and nursing home facilities

How do I become a vision professional?

- Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TSVI)
 - Obtain a Bachelor's or Master's in Education with concentration in Visual Impairment or Blindness and teaching certificate
- Orientation & Mobility Specialist (O&M)
 - Bachelor's degree (in any field), Master's degree or graduate certification in O&M
 - Passing a certification exam is usually required
- Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (VRT)
 - Bachelor's degree (in any field), Master's degree or graduate certification in VRT

Universities with Visual Disability Programs in Illinois

Illinois State University

- Programs include:
 - TSVI- Undergraduate. Anticipated graduate program fall 2020
 - Online stand-alone course SED 432 Educational Impact of Neurological Visual Impairment in Children. Offered first time summer 2019 open to those with licensure as a special educator including TSVI, O&M, PT, OT, or SLP
- Contact Information: Mindy S. Ely, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Low Vision/Blindness Programs
Phone: 217-899-1193 and Email: msely@ilstu.edu
Website: <https://education.illinoisstate.edu/vision/>

Northern Illinois University

- Available grant funding that pays all tuition, fees, \$5,520 annual stipend, and health insurance
- Programs include:
 - Undergraduate: TSVI and VRT
 - Graduate: TSVI, VRT, O&M, and CATIS
 - Certificate of graduate study: CATIS
- Contact Information: Stacy Kelly, Ed.D., TVI, COMS, CATIS, Associate Professor
Phone: 815-753-4103 and Email: skelly@niu.edu
Website: www.vision.niu.edu

For more information or to become a part of a professional community:

Illinois Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (IAER)

Email: ILAEREmail@gmail.com

Website: <https://aerbvi.org/about/chapters/illinois/>

Facebook: Illinois AER

Twitter: @IllinoisAER

Instagram: IllinoisAER

Illinois Association of Orientation & Mobility Specialists (IAOMS)

Email: ContactIAOMS@gmail.com

Facebook: Illinois Association of Orientation & Mobility Specialists- IAOMS

Twitter: @IllinoisAOMS

Instagram: IllinoisAOMS

Illinois Vision Leadership Council (IVLC)

Email: IVLC20200@gmail.com

Facebook: IVLC- Illinois Vision Leadership Council

Why Eye Teach (A sub-committee of IVLC in charge of Vision Professional recruitment)

Email: WhyEyeTeach@gmail.com

Website: www.whyeyeteach.info

Facebook: WhyEyeTeach: IVLC Recruitment Committee

Twitter: @WhyEyeTeach

Instagram: WhyEyeTeach

Information included in this handout was provided by the Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER)

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