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:
  o TSVI- Undergraduate. Anticipated graduate program fall 2020
  o 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:
  o Undergraduate: TSVI and VRT
  o Graduate: TSVI, VRT, O&M, and CATIS
  o 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: @IllinoisAOAMS
  Instagram: IllinoisAOAMS

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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