# Welcome for New Vision Professionals

Welcome to Washington as a vision professional. Here are a few resources to help you navigate the way our state works for services for blind and low vision students.

We are happy to have you on board and look forward to working with you to best serve our students.

If you have any questions, please reach out-we are here to help.

Pam Parker, Interim Superintendent/Outreach Director, WA State School for the Blind

Jennifer Merry, Ogden Resource Center Director, WA State School for the Blind

## Acronyms

* WSSB-Washington State School for the Blind
* ORC-Ogden Resource Center
* APH-American Printing House for the Blind
* WTBBL-Washington Talking Book and Braille Library
* B/LV-Blind/Low Vision
* WSDS-Washington Sensory Disabilities Services
* LIFTT-Learning Independence For Today and Tomorrow
* B3-Birth to 3
* NWABA-NW Association for Blind Athletes
* DSB-Department of Services for the Blind
* MDB-Meet the Definition of Blindness–a central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting glasses or a peripheral field so contracted that the widest diameter of such field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees.
* FDB-Function at the Definition of Blindness-which is visual performance reduced by brain injury or dysfunction when visual function meets the definition of blindness as determined by an eye care specialist or neurologist.

## Statewide contacts

Pam Parker, Statewide Vision Consultant & WSSB Interim Superintendent/Outreach Director  
[pam.parker@wssb.wa.gov](mailto:pam.parker@wssb.wa.gov)  
360.947.3304

Jennifer Merry, ORC Director  
[jennifer.merry@wssb.wa.gov](mailto:jennifer.merry@wssb.wa.gov)  
360.947.3340

Sean McCormick, WSSB Principal  
[sean.mccormick@wssb.wa.gov](mailto:sean.mccormick@wssb.wa.gov)  
360.947.3308

Lee Chandler, Statewide AT and STEM  
[lee.chandler@wssb.wa.gov](mailto:bruce.mclanahan@wssb.wa.gov)  
360.947.3360

Leslie Weilbacher, APH Outreach Specialist – Northwest Region  
[lweilbacher@aph.org](mailto:lweilbacher@aph.org)  
502-515-9102

Erin Groth, WTBBL Youth Services Librarian  
[erin.groth@sos.wa.gov](mailto:erin.groth@sos.wa.gov)  
206-615-1253

Emma Packard, Director Washington Deafblind Project  
[emma.packard@wssb.wa.gov](mailto:emma.packard@wssb.wa.gov)  
360-947-3295

Jessica Chandler, WSSB Birth to 5  
[jessica.chandler@wssb.wa.gov](mailto:jessica.chandler@wssb.wa.gov)  
360.947.3305

Dr. Yue-Ting Siu, CATT-NW  
[ting.siu@wssb.wa.gov](mailto:ting.siu@wssb.wa.gov)  
360.947-3346

Stacey Gibbons, NWABA  
[SGibbins@nwaba.org](mailto:SGibbins@nwaba.org)  
[(360) 448-7254](tel:360-448-7254)

## Resources

### EVE Listserv

“Everyone for blindness/Visual Education”

Welcome to E.V.E.  A Resource for everyone working with blind/visually impaired students in Washington State.  
E.V.E. serves as a listserv and archive for on-going communication regarding the needs of students and programs.

Listserv Guidelines

1. Be respectful.
2. Adhere to [FERPA](http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/reg/ferpa/index.html) and [HIPPA](http://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/index.html) regulations.
3. NO solicitations.  
   [A complete list of guidelines can be found here](https://www.wssb.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2024-02/eve-rules%2002022024.docx)

To subscribe to the list, contact Pam Parker ([pam.parker@wssb.wa.gov](mailto:pam.parker@wssb.wa.gov))

### American Printing House for the Blind (APH)

***Federal Quota***-The Federal Act to Promote the Education of the Blind was enacted by Congress in 1879. This Act set up a system to provide free textbooks and other hands-on instructional materials for students who were blind across the U.S. The Act named the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) as the sole, national central source of these educational materials.

Today the Act continues to be a means for providing adapted instructional materials to eligible students and adults in the United States and its territories. An annual registration of eligible individuals determines a per capita amount of money designated for the purchase of instructional materials produced by the American Printing House for the Blind. These funds are credited to Federal Quota accounts, which are maintained and administered by APH and its Ex Officio Trustees throughout the country.

Initially, APH was chartered to emboss tactile books and to produce simple “tangible apparatus.” Today, APH continues this proud tradition by producing hundreds of textbooks in a variety of media and by manufacturing and maintaining an extensive inventory of commercially-unavailable instructional kits, aids, tools, supplies, software, and electronics.

#### Who is eligible?

There is no chronological age limit for eligibility. In order to be eligible for registration in the Federal Quota Program, students and adults must meet the following requirements:

**Meet the Definition of Blindness (MDB)** –  a central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting glasses or a peripheral field so contracted that the widest diameter of such field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees,

-or-

**Function at the Definition of Blindness (FDB)** which is visual performance reduced by brain injury or dysfunction when visual function meets the definition of blindness as determined by an eye care specialist or neurologist.

**Be enrolled** in a formally organized educational program of less than college level. School-aged students must be enrolled with the registering school or agency on the first Monday in January. Adult students must be registered for at least three months of instruction during the preceding calendar year (an accumulation of 12 weeks).

*Census*-Each year we submit a census to APH for our share of Federal Quota funds. To assure all students eligible are included, please register your students in ORC Online. Only the FDB and MDB students are eligible to receive Quota Funds. The ORC serves all students.

***Materials***-Many items from APH are available with Quota Funds. Order in ORC Online. Examples include textbooks, LED Light Boxes, JAWS, kits and devices including the new Mantis Q40. We are unable to provide embossers, MATT Connect or embosser paper.

***APH Catalog***- Catalogs are available to order in print and available in an accessible format online. To order a catalog or view the catalog online, use [this link](https://media.aph.org/app/uploads/2025/07/Products-Catalog-2025-2027-accessible-UA.pdf).

***APH Website***- The new APH website includes information on backorder materials and how many are in stock. Not all materials in the APH catalog are available through the ORC, but most are and if you don’t see something that is Quota eligible in ORC Online, you can email [irc@wssb.wa.gov](mailto:irc@wssb.wa.gov), to find out about availability from the ORC. [aph.org](https://www.aph.org/)

## Ogden Resource Center

### ORC Online

***Parent permission***-Required for all students registered in ORC Online, the form is available in multiple languages. [orc.wssb.wa.gov/Home/Forms](https://orc.wssb.wa.gov/Home/Forms)

***Account holder***-ORC Online requires an account holder for each district or agency serving students. The account holder is responsible for all materials borrowed from the ORC. There is only 1 account holder per district although each account holder may choose to share the log-in with other staff as necessary. The form to update the account is available [wssb.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-08/AccountHolderRegistrationForm.docx](https://www.wssb.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-08/AccountHolderRegistrationForm.docx).

***Teacher accounts-***Account holders may create sub-accounts for teachers to order materials for specific students.

***Student management***-The account holder and any sub-account teachers are responsible for maintaining students registered in ORC Online. Students need to be updated whenever information changes or annually.

***New students***-Parent permission is required before a student can be registered. Parent permission must have a signature (not typed) and can be emailed to [irc@wssb.wa.gov](mailto:irc@wssb.wa.gov) for processing or mailed to the ORC. An electronic signature form is available at [tinyurl.com/ORCParentPermission](https://tinyurl.com/ORCParentPermission)

***Transferring students***-Contact Jennifer, [jennifer.merry@wssb.wa.gov](mailto:jennifer.merry@wssb.wa.gov) to have students transferred to a new school.

***Ordering materials***-Materials need to be ordered under a student name. Searching in ORC Online includes several options. The catalog number search works well if you put in the middle part of the catalog number, for example, type 1947 to search for catalog #B-A1947-00. Also, when searching ISBN numbers, remove all dashes.

### ORC Materials

***Consumables vs Non-Consumables***-Many items available from the ORC are consumable including kits and lite boxes as well as workbooks. However, some materials are non-consumable and need to be returned to the ORC when the student is done using them. These items include textbooks, Mantis Q40, Chameleon 20, braillers, etc. Return labels are available to download on [the ORC website](https://www.wssb.wa.gov/services/ogden-resource-center) under the heading ORC Mailing Labels.

#### Popular items include-

* Textbooks, Braille and Large Print
* Braillers-including Perkins, Smart Braillers, Light Touch, Extended Keys and Unimanual
* Mantis Q40 & Chameleon 20
* Light Boxes/Mini Lite Boxes
* Joy Player
* Juno

### JAWS/ZoomText/Fusion

The ORC offers JAWS and the subscriptions now come from APH and are for Fusion/JAWS/ZoomText. The subscription is good for up to 2 devices and must be registered in the student’s name. To request a license, please email the ORC, [irc@wssb.wa.gov](mailto:irc@wssb.wa.gov), with your request and include the student name. The student must meet the following criteria in order for the ORC to provide a license with Quota Funds.

Our criteria for a JAWS license remains the same:

1. Be registered in ORC Online.
2. Be MDB or FDB.
3. Braille user.
4. Have basic computer skills & have a laptop with Windows to run the program.

To order ZoomText/Fusion from the ORC, here are the criteria:

1. Be registered in ORC Online.
2. Be MDB or FDB.
3. Have basic computer skills & have a laptop with Windows to run the program.
4. Have a demonstrated need for zoom, voice, and two other features such as DocReader tool, OCR with Camera.
5. If a student does not meet the criteria, but would benefit from the software, the request will be considered and evaluated by an expert designated by the ORC director.

### Braille Access Center

***Braille Production***- [wssb.wa.gov/services/braille-access-center](https://www.wssb.wa.gov/departments/bac/)

Providing transcription services since 1996, the Braille Services Team is a collaborative partnership between the Washington State School for the Blind/Ogden Resource Center, Correctional Industries and the Washington Corrections Center for Women.

To order braille textbooks or other items from the Ogden Resource Center, submit an [Alternate Media Request](https://www.wssb.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2023-02/2023-24%20In-State%20Alternate%20Media%20Production%20Request.pdf) along with a print copy of the book and a purchase order.

#### Braille Certification/UEB Resources

Anyone providing braille instruction and/or producing braille in Washington state must provide proof of UEB certification in accordance with WAC 181-82-130, Assignment of persons providing instruction of Braille to students.

[apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=181-82-130](https://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=181-82-130)

Information regarding the Washington State Unified English Braille Competency Exam and other questions can be found here, [wssb.wa.gov/services/unified-english-braille](https://www.wssb.wa.gov/services/unified-english-braille)

## Special Education Technology Center (SETC)

Located at Central Washington University in Ellensburg, the SETC has a lending library that includes some of the more expensive APH materials including the MATT Connect.

## [cwu.edu/setc/lending-library](https://www.cwu.edu/setc/lending-library)Northwest Center for Assistive Technology Training (CATT-NW)

***Coordinator***-Dr. Ting Siu, [ting.siu@wssb.wa.gov](mailto:ting.siu@wssb.wa.gov), 360.947.3346

[Northwest Center for Assistive Technology Training (CATT-NW) | Washington State School for the Blind](https://www.wssb.wa.gov/services/northwest-center-assistive-technology-training-catt-nw)

**CATT-NW AT Resources**: [AT Resources](https://sites.google.com/wssb.wa.gov/cattresources)

## Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB)

***On-campus***- WSSB offers both day and residential student services.

Students who live within 45 miles or one hour from the school will reside at home and are day students. Parents wish­ing to enroll their child as a resi­dent student may request such placement through the IEP process as part of the need for more intensive residential services.

The goal of Residential Services is to provide an environment that encourages each student to reach their maximum potential and to strive for independence. Students will grow in social awareness, self-confidence, and learn to appreciate creative leisure.

[irwin.wssb.wa.gov/](https://irwin.wssb.wa.gov/)

***Short Courses***-Available to students state-wide, short programs through WSSB for B/LV students. Some programs will be in person and on campus and others will be online.

[irwin.wssb.wa.gov/services/short-courses](https://irwin.wssb.wa.gov/services/short-courses)

If you have any questions, please email [wayne.oshiro@wssb.wa.gov](mailto:wayne.oshiro@wssb.wa.gov)

***Outreach***- The Outreach Department provides several vital services to students and staff outside of the WSSB campus.  Our mission is to fill the gaps of service that may be needed in school districts around the State of Washington and to continue to develop new strategies to better serve students who are blind or low vision. Our department has teachers positioned within all regions of Washington State.

## Outreach Services, Ages 3-21

WSSB Outreach offers contractual services from a Teacher of Student with Visual Impairments (TSVI), Orientation and Mobility (O&M) and Assistive Technology to school districts around Washington state on an as needed basis.

We collaborate extensively with agencies and organizations in Washington who also provide vital services to students who are blind or visually impaired.

### Outreach Access Services

Serving Teachers Statewide

The Washington State School for the Blind Outreach Department continues to offer a comprehensive range of statewide services to support educators of students with blindness and low vision. As our field continues to grow, we remain committed to providing diverse, accessible support to educators across the state, free of charge.

#### Our mission:

The mission of Outreach Access Services is to provide statewide support for all who educate learners with blindness and low vision ages birth to 21, to help provide quality resources and to increase access to equitable services in Washington.

#### What we do:

* [Teacher-to-teacher collaboration](https://www.wssb.wa.gov/services/outreach/outreach-access-services#t2tcollab)
* [Professional development](https://www.wssb.wa.gov/services/outreach/outreach-access-services#prodev)
* [Mentorship & grant program](https://www.wssb.wa.gov/services/outreach/outreach-access-services#mentor)
* [Access technology & STEM](https://www.wssb.wa.gov/services/outreach/outreach-access-services#ats)
* [Student formal assessment in unserved areas](https://www.wssb.wa.gov/services/outreach/outreach-access-services#stuformal)

Need a hand in any of these areas?  [Outreach Access Services Request Form](https://tinyurl.com/wssb-oas-request)

#### Our team

The OAS team is made up of 9 educators with many decades of combined experience in educating students with blindness and low vision. They hold certifications in various specialties, including Teaching Students with Blindness and Low Vision (TBLV), Orientation and Mobility (O&M), and Certified Assistive Technology Instructional Specialists (CATIS). In addition, several teachers hold degrees and certifications in multiple areas across birth-21 special education.

#### Services

##### Teacher-to-teacher collaboration

Our field is extraordinarily broad in scope, with even experienced teachers finding it difficult to gain and maintain expertise in all areas of instruction and curriculum. The OAS team has specialized knowledge across the gamut of content areas. We’re thrilled to work with you to help make your students successful.  [Request teacher-to-teacher collaboration](https://tinyurl.com/wssb-oas-request)

##### Professional development

We’re here to empower teachers. Find OAS teachers providing the latest insights and knowledge at events across the state and in webinars. Stay tuned, as we will post our PD schedule regularly throughout the 2024/25 school year. We will also advertise our professional development offerings on the [EVE list serve](https://www.wssb.wa.gov/services/eve).

##### Mentorship & grant program

Looking to join the amazing world of teaching students with blindness and low vision? Are you new to the field and would like some support? The OAS Mentor Program will help you get to where you want to be. We offer direct support, resources, and even grant funding. Visit the [Mentorship & Grant Program](https://www.wssb.wa.gov/services/vision-mentorship-and-grant-program) web page and join the program that has launched the careers of over 40 new Washington TSVIs since 2017.

##### Access Technology & STEM

Technology is a vast realm that evolves at extraordinary speeds. We can help you navigate the ever-changing possibilities by providing consultation, support, and professional development. Have a concern or need resources? Visit the [OAS Access Technology & Stem web page](https://www.wssb.wa.gov/services/oas-access-technology-stem) or complete an [Assistance Request form](https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=Z1VXsHPvYUeXZOA239DhL3zkHpj8r59Bo9vsggmWfLVUOTZWNVFWNVJSTTZVWURaSzdQQldYTTNaQSQlQCN0PWcu).

##### Student formal assessment in unserved districts

The current demand for educators of students with blindness and low vision is extraordinary. Despite strong efforts to bring new teachers in the field, open positions can lie vacant. In these situations, maintaining student assessment schedules is vital. We’re here to help your district document student need by providing formal assessment services for vision and orientation and mobility free of charge. [Request assistance for a formal assessment](https://tinyurl.com/wssb-oas-request)

**Focus Forums - your go-to source for fresh ideas and collaborative learning.**

The WSSB Outreach Access Services (OAS) team will host Focus Forums on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the 1st and 3rd weeks of each month. These one-hour Zoom sessions will cover specific topics related to teaching in the Blind/Low Vision field. Information on upcoming topics will be available on EVE and the OAS page of the WSSB website, allowing you to register in advance.

Each forum will feature OAS team members who will share the latest insights on the topic and facilitate group discussions. You are welcome to join these sessions to ask questions, share your thoughts, or simply listen in.

Do you have a topic you would like covered in a Focus Forum? Email [Kirsten Dlugo](mailto:kirsten.dlugo@wssb.wa.gov) to share your topic idea.

#### Access Technology & STEM

Have a question or need a technology consult?  Complete an [assistance request form](https://forms.office.com/r/yfx9LUEjVW).

As part of our commitment to expanding statewide services from WSSB Outreach, we continue to provide comprehensive support for access technology needs across the state. Our assistance options include both in-person and virtual visits, assessment offerings, professional development, and a focus on promoting STEM education.

Our tech support team features Krista Bulger, Lee Chandler, and Joe Dlugo. We look forward to connecting with you and working together to deliver an accessible educational experience for your students.

\*Looking for Bruce McClanahan’s resources? Visit our [Statewide Technology Legacy Content page](https://www.wssb.wa.gov/services/statewide-technology).

Have a question or need a technology consult?  Complete an [assistance request form](https://forms.office.com/r/yfx9LUEjVW).

***Birth to 3***- The Washington State School for the Blind’s Birth to 3 Program is committed to providing specialized services for infants and children who are diagnosed with low vision or blindness, no matter where they live in the state. It is well documented in research of learning, that almost 80-90% of what a child learns in the first 3 years of life occurs through the use of vision through incidental learning.  When a child does not have vision, they will still learn to play with toys, crawl and walk through their environments, explore the world, and build meaningful relationships with their families, however they may do this in a different way through the use of other senses.  Because vision plays such a critical role in how a child learns and the loss may impact all developmental areas, it is critical that early identification and appropriate interventions supports begin immediately to support children, and families, to reach their full early learning potential!

Contact [Jessica Chandler](mailto:jessica.chandler@wssb.wa.gov) for more information.

***Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow) LIFTT)***- The purpose of the LIFTT Program is to provide participants with an opportunity to experience and practice independence in a teaching environment before they venture into more independent settings as young adults. Instruction is not aimed at teaching “basic independence skills”. Rather, it is designed to expand the student’s present levels of basic independence skills in such areas as effective personal budgeting and money management, management of personal time, making informed career choices, attending college or vocational schools and maintaining good student standing, getting work experiences or a job and exhibiting good work habits. Participants in the LIFTT Program deliberately spend a good deal of their time unsupervised by staff. If they did not, they would not be able to learn to assume some personal responsibility for their day to day activities.

Contact [Corey Grandstaff](mailto:corey.grandstaff@wssb.wa.gov) for more information.

## Additional Agencies:

### WTBBL

The Washington Talking Book & Braille Library builds community and provides equal access to information and reading materials for Washington residents unable to read standard print.

[wtbbl.org](https://www.wtbbl.org/)

### WSDS

WSDS partners with schools, families and agencies to support children and youth who are deaf/hard of hearing, blind/low vision, or deafblind, by providing assessment services, training, and consultation. Services are funded through the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and are available throughout every region of the state.

[wsdsOnline.org](https://www.wsdsonline.org/)

[**Department of Services for the Blind**](https://dsb.wa.gov/)

Department of Services for the Blind serves children and youth who are blind or have low vision from birth through age 21. They provide services towards building the foundation of a productive, independent and successful childhood, youth, and adulthood.

Contact [debbie.brown@dsb.wa.gov](mailto:debbie.brown@dsb.wa.gov) or [deja.powell@dsb.wa.gov](mailto:deja.powell@dsb.wa.gov) for more information.

### NWABA

NW Association for Blind Athletes’ mission is to provide life-changing opportunities through sports and physical activity to individuals who are blind and low vision.

Contact Stacey Gibbons at [SGibbins@nwaba.org](mailto:SGibbins@nwaba.org) for more information.

**Attachments/Links**

* Electronic Parent Permission: [tinyurl.com/ORCParentPermission](https://tinyurl.com/ORCParentPermission)
* [ORC Online Account Holder Registration](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.wssb.wa.gov%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2F2021-08%2FAccountHolderRegistrationForm.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)
* [Parent Permission-English](https://orc.wssb.wa.gov/Home/Forms)
* [Alternative Media Request In-State](https://wssb.azurewebsites.net/wp-content/uploads/wssb/orc/2021-22%20In-State%20Alternate%20Media%20Production%20Request.pdf)
* [UEB Exam](https://www.wssb.wa.gov/services/unified-english-braille)