

Become a Teacher of Blind and Low Vision Learners



Are you a Washington State teacher looking to become part of a dynamic and in-demand field? The Washington State School for the Blind's Vision Mentorship & Grant Program can help.

In collaboration with OSPI, WSDS, and Stephen F. Austin State University, we provide fully paid tuition grants and mentorship to add a vision endorsement to your certificate.

Over the past nine years, we've helped launch the careers of over 50 new professionals in this field. Come be a part of this growing community and shape the future for blind and low vision learners!

Common questions:

Who is qualified to apply?

Any Washington State certified teacher is eligible for the graduate-level endorsement program. A graduate degree is no longer required.

When is the application window?

Our application window typically opens every January. All applications must be submitted by April 1st. Grants are awarded separate of admission to the program, usually in late April.

What factors decide if I receive grant funding?

The main goal of the grant is to fill vacant positions or to train teachers in regions experiencing considerable caseload growth. Additionally, we look at teaching experience and district support for obtaining practicum hours.

What does the grant pay for?

The grant pays for full tuition to attend the Stephen F. Austin State University online endorsement program for teachers of students with visual impairments. Course fees and books are the responsibility of the student.

Can I be hired conditionally while pursuing this program?

Yes. Many teachers take on a conditional TBLVL role while completing the program. This arrangement helps fill district positions and allows you to earn practicum hours as part of your job, accelerating the completion process.

How do I get mentor support?

Some districts offer on-site mentoring through TBLVLs on staff. However, not all districts have this resource. In those cases, the WSSB Mentorship Program can step in with a team of mentors available for remote or in-person support at no cost, ensuring you have the guidance needed throughout your endorsement program and beyond.

How long is the program and what is required?

The program involves one year of coursework, which includes six courses and a practicum, totaling 21 credit hours. Depending on your needs, you can choose to complete it in one or two years. If you're hired as a TBLVL, much of the 350-hour practicum can be completed through your regular teaching duties, assuming a sufficient caseload. Otherwise, you'll need to coordinate with your supervisor to schedule dedicated time to fulfill the required hours.

How can I get started?

- Speak with your supervisor about your interest and potential employment opportunities
- [Contact Joe Dlugo at the WSSB Mentorship and Grant Program](#)
- Prepare your application and materials by the April 1st due date
- If you are accepted to the program, you will be sent a questionnaire for the grant
- Fill out the questionnaire and return it to be considered for the grant. Grants are awarded in late April

[Apply for the Stephen F. Austin Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments certification program](#)

What if I have additional questions?

[Contact the SFASU program](#)

[Visit the Mentorship and Grant Program web page](#)