

# **State Services for the Blind**

## **THE FOUNDATION SKILLS**

The 17 Foundation Skills are those required of *all* workers in the high-performance workplace of the 21st century.

The skills are grouped in four clusters along with Orientation & Mobility: Basic Skills, Thinking Skills, People Skills, and Personal Qualities

### **BASIC SKILLS**

#### **Reading:**

1. Identify relevant details, facts, and specification in what is being read;
2. Locate information in books and manuals, from graphs and schedules;
3. Find meaning of unknown or technical words and phrases;
4. Judge accuracy of reports; and
5. Use computer to find information.
6. Technical ability for sustained reading at the 7<sup>th</sup> grade level using Braille or ink print.

#### **Writing:**

1. Communicate thoughts, ideas, information, and messages in writing;
2. Record information completely and accurately;
3. Create documents, including letters, manuals, reports, and graphs;
4. Check, edit, and revise documents for correct information, appropriate emphasis, grammar, spelling, and punctuation; and

5. Use computers to communicate information.

**Mathematics:**

1. Use numbers, fractions, and percentages to solve practical problems;
2. Make reasonable estimates of arithmetic results without calculator;
3. Use tables, graphs, diagrams, and charts to obtain numerical information;
4. Use computers to enter, retrieve, change, and communicate numerical information; and
5. Use computers to communicate data, choosing the best form to present data (e.g., line or bar graph, pie charts).
6. Ability to use measurement tools and read / interpret (adapted) graphic maps, globes, gauges, graphs, diagrams, and charts in primary learning medium using low vision and blindness techniques.

**Speaking:**

1. Organize ideas and communicate oral messages appropriate to listener and situations;
2. Select appropriate language, tone of voice, gestures, and level of complexity appropriate to audience and occasion;
3. Speak clearly; ask questions when needed.

**Listening:**

1. Listen carefully to what a person says, noting tone of voice and other body language to understand content and feelings being expressed; and
2. Respond in a way that shows understanding of what is said.

## **THINKING SKILLS**

### **Creative Thinking:**

1. Use imagination freely, combining ideas or information in new ways; and
2. Make connections between ideas that seem unrelated.

### **Problem-Solving Skills:**

1. Recognize problem, a gap between what is and what should or could be;
2. Identify why it is a problem;
3. Create and implement a solution; and
4. Watch to see how well solution works and revise if needed.

### **Decision Making Skills:**

1. Identify the goal desired in making the decision;
2. Generate alternatives for reaching the goal;
3. Gather information about the alternatives (e.g., from experts or books);
4. Weigh the pros and cons of each alternative (i.e., gains/losses to yourself and others, approval/disapproval of self and others);
5. Make the best choice; and
6. Plan how to carry out your choice and what you will do if negative consequences occur.

### **Visualization:**

1. See a building or object by looking at a blueprint, drawing, or sketch; and
2. Imagine how a system works by looking at a schematic drawing.

## **PEOPLE SKILLS**

### **Social:**

1. Show understanding, friendliness, and respect for the feelings of others;
2. Assert oneself appropriately, stand up for yourself and your ideas in a firm, positive way; and
3. Take an interest in what people say and why they think and act as they do.
4. Ability to effectively interact socially with others and communicate one's thoughts to enable constructive daily living interaction.

### **Negotiation:**

1. Identify common goals among different parties in conflict and the ways they depend on each other;
2. Clearly present the facts and arguments of your own position;
3. Listen to and understand other party's position; and
4. Create and propose possible options for resolving the conflict, making reasonable compromises.

### **Leadership:**

1. Communicate thoughts and feelings to justify a position;
2. Encourage, persuade, or convince individuals or groups;
3. Make positive use of rules (e.g., "Robert's Rules of Order") or values of the organization;
4. Exhibit ability to have others believe in and trust you due to your competence and honesty.

## **Teamwork:**

1. Work cooperatively with others; contribute to the group with ideas and effort;
2. Do own share of tasks necessary to complete project;
3. Encourage team members by listening to them, providing support, and offering tips for success, as appropriate;
4. Resolve differences for the benefit of the team; and
5. Responsibly challenge existing procedures, policies, or authorities.
6. Knowledge of services, agencies, and organizations that are available to people with vision impairments and the ability to obtain books and personally useful services.

## **Cultural Diversity:**

1. Work well with people having different ethnic, social, or educational backgrounds;
2. Understand the concerns of members of other ethnic and gender groups;
3. Base impressions on a person's behavior, not stereotypes;
4. Understand one's own culture and those of others and how they differ; and
5. Respect the rights of others while helping them make cultural adjustments where necessary.

## **PERSONAL QUALITIES**

### **Self-Esteem:**

1. Understand how beliefs affect how a person feels and acts;

2. Listening to what you say to yourself to identify any irrational or harmful beliefs you may have; and
3. Understand how to change these negative beliefs when they occur.
4. Knowledge of personal visual loss and functioning

**Self-Management:**

1. Assess your own knowledge and skills accurately;
2. Set well-defined and realistic personal goals; and
3. Monitor your progress toward your goals.
4. Knowledge of assistive devices, techniques, and resources for maximizing visual efficiency.
5. Ability to set goals, organize tasks toward meeting goals and carry out plans commensurate with personal, daily living, or work (employment) needs.
6. Ability to articulate a realistic vocational / career goal or vocational education plan.
7. Ability to manage daily living tasks using established low vision and blindness techniques.
8. Ability to manage eating and other personal care needs using established low vision and business techniques.
9. Ability to participate in active leisure and recreation activities.
10. Competence in practical skill areas: telephone usage, time, and money skills.
11. Knowledge of proper prevention of and procedures for responding to emergencies.
12. Demonstrates a well-developed knowledge of self.

### **Responsibility:**

1. Give a high level of effort toward reaching goals,
2. Work hard to become excellent at job tasks. Pay attention to details. Concentrate at doing tasks well, even unpleasant ones; and
3. Display high standards of attendance, honesty, energy, and optimism.

### **ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY**

1. Technical ability to move about one's living, neighborhood, community, and work environments.
2. Technical ability to use all major forms of public transportation.
3. Technical ability to travel to specified destinations in an unfamiliar community of at least moderate size (approximately 50,000) and return to point of beginning.
4. Ability to locate and read survival symbols in order to access public places (elevators, restrooms, restaurants, etc.).

*ADAPTED: Lawrence Jones: Job Skills for the 21st Century: A Guide for Students*