



News Release

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**Federal Stimulus Funds Available through RSC for
Projects Benefitting Ohioans who are Blind in Appalachian Region**

Expressions of interest due Feb. 12, 2010, proposals due Feb. 19, 2010

COLUMBUS (January 27, 2010) – The Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) is seeking proposals for American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus funding for the provision of independent living services to older Ohioans who are blind. The services are to target Gallia, Holmes, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Pike and Scioto counties.

Stimulus funds will be invested in projects that support the Independent Living Services for Older Ohioans Who Are Blind (ILOB) program, which assists citizens age 55 or older whose significant visual impairment makes competitive employment difficult to obtain, but for whom independent living goals are feasible. Projects will provide independent living services, conduct activities that improve or expand services for these individuals and conduct activities to improve public understanding of the issues that these individuals face.

To be eligible, local providers or individuals that offer services for older Ohioans who are blind must submit an expression of interest for funding at www.recovery.ohio.gov/opportunities/state/ by February 12, 2010 and submit a written proposal to RSC by 5 p.m. on February 19, 2010. A copy of the request for proposals is available at rsc.ohio.gov.

The following services or activities should be the focus of project proposals:

- Services to help correct blindness, such as: outreach services, visual screenings, the provision of eyeglasses and other visual aids, the provision of services and equipment to assist an older individual who is blind to become more mobile and more self-sufficient, mobility training and Braille instruction.
- Services and equipment to help an older individual who is blind adjust to blindness, such as guide services, reader services and transportation, as well as any other appropriate service designed to assist an older individual who is blind in coping with daily living activities, including supportive services and rehabilitation teaching services. In addition, other independent living skills training, information referral services, peer counseling, and individual advocacy training may be provided under this RFP.

The ARRA funding is anticipated to be awarded by March 31, 2010, be operational by April 1, 2010 and will conclude by June 30, 2011.

The Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission is a state agency serving Ohioans with disabilities. The Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR) and Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired (BSVI) help people with disabilities get or keep a job. For those unable to work, the Bureau of Disability Determination (BDD) determines eligibility for Social Security disability benefits or Supplemental Security Income.