

TEXAS WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS—  
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES



# TEXAS CONFIDENCE BUILDERS

— TEXAS —  
**WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS**  
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*Texas Workforce Solutions comprises the Texas Workforce Commission, 28 local workforce development boards and our service-providing partners. Together we provide workforce education, training and support services, including vocational rehabilitation assistance for the people of Texas.*

# TEXAS CONFIDENCE BUILDERS

*is a training philosophy used by Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS) to help vocational rehabilitation customers adjust to blindness, become independent, as well as find and retain employment.*

*"We gain strength, and courage, and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face... we must do that which we think we cannot."*

■ Eleanor Roosevelt

Since 1931, Texas has been working with thousands of people who are blind or visually impaired by providing needed blind services.

By using a variety of skills, alternative techniques and available technologies, people who are blind or visually impaired are fully capable of leading an independent and productive life. Choosing an education, career, family, hobbies, recreation, or even travel are easily within the grasp of every person who learns and masters the core skills that are based on the Texas Confidence Builders philosophy.

TWS-VRS staff, both Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired (OIB), work in partnership with customers to help them achieve employment and personal independence by providing training programs focused on individual customer needs.



## A Break with Tradition

In the past, people who were blind or visually impaired, learned a set of skills and techniques designed for a certain set of activities, goals, or circumstances. This approach may work for a short term, but new skills must be learned to overcome new challenges.



By teaching a solid foundation of basic skills, TWS-VRS is helping people who are blind or visually impaired be prepared for new situations as they occur.

## Building Confidence

Texas Confidence Builders focuses on three principal areas to help customers feel empowered and develop confidence in themselves: learning, thinking positively and building skills.

## Learning

Based on the Texas Confidence Builders philosophy, TWS-VRS staff will help our customers learn about their vision loss—beginning with their own vision loss and medical condition(s). Armed with facts, customers are better able to analyze their situation more realistically and plan for their future accordingly.

*Believe in yourself.*

## Thinking Positively

Developing a healthy attitude is the key to opening a door to new possibilities. Texas Confidence Builders will benefit the customers most when they have an attitude of belief in themselves and a positive outlook towards their future. Learning blindness skills can increase personal independence and make the accomplishment of tasks easier, but the acquisition of skills is not enough. If customers do not develop a belief in themselves on an emotional level and the confidence to move forward, they will most likely fail to practice the skills they have learned. They may continue to believe blindness skills are inferior to sighted techniques and feel embarrassment, shame or fear when using them. By having a positive attitude and using learned skills together customers can achieve their employment and/or goals for independence.

## Building Skills

While receiving TWS-VRS services, all customers are expected to achieve basic abilities that cover six aspects, also known as “The Big Six,” of the Texas Confidence Builders philosophy:

1. Adjustment to Visual Impairment
2. Independent Living Skills
3. Travel Skills
4. Communication Skills
5. Vocational Skills
6. Support Systems

*Take chances.*

The Texas Confidence Builders philosophy is designed to incorporate “The Big Six” as well as other empowerment areas that all customers need to master to successfully achieve their personal and vocational goals. Self-empowerment cannot happen without internalizing the belief that we are competent and capable of achieving our goals. By partnering with our customers to master “The Big Six”, we provide them with the opportunity to acquire the self-confidence and skills they need to achieve true self-empowerment.

### “The Big Six”

#### *1. Adjustment to Visual Impairment*

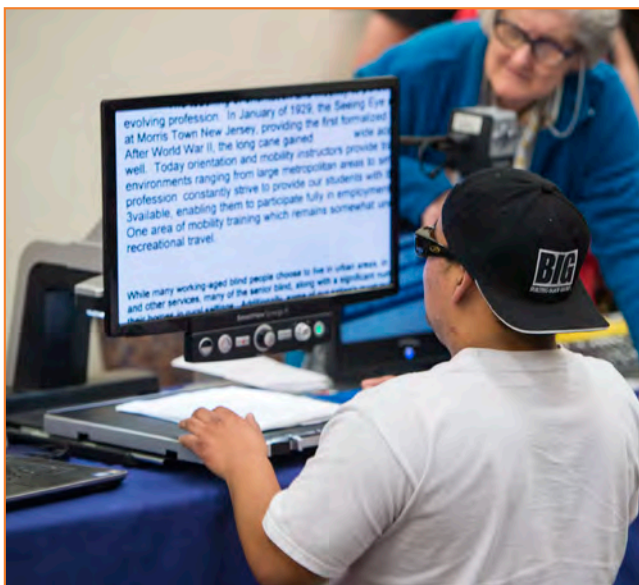
Customers learn to understand and accept that it is respectable to be blind,



realistic self-confidence based on personal competency and high expectations is promoted, and the program ensures that people who are blind or visually impaired enjoy the same opportunities as other Texans to pursue independence and employment.

## ***2. Independent Living Skills***

Customers gain the confidence to manage dozens of day-to-day tasks, such as gaining the personal skills to independently prepare a meal, cleaning their home or laundry, preparing a budget and taking care of personal finances. Through Texas Confidence Builders, customers learn to be self-sufficient in managing their own medications, accessing health-related services, and dealing with doctors and other professionals. Customers also learn



various methods for organizing information such as meetings, appointments, addresses, music collections, recipes and tools.

Customers also learn a variety of non-visual ways to organize and access information. These skills help customers become more confident, self-reliant, and gain a sense of control of their life. All these are vitally important to people who want to be independent, make their own choices, and lead their own lives.

### **3. Travel Skills**

Customers meet this challenge head-on by learning a variety of travel techniques. Customers learn to develop travel skills using a white travel cane by confidently navigating a variety of settings. Customers learn how to negotiate city sidewalks, cross busy intersections, ride various modes of



transportation, maneuver through a bustling airport, or just take a quiet walk on a country road. Developing a sense of confidence in the ability to travel where and when a customer wants is the goal in this skill area.

*Become empowered.*

#### **4. Communication Skills**

Customers learn how to communicate with the medium that is suited for them. For example, use of Braille is an important skill because, regardless of the customer's future circumstances, it gives the individual a dependable method of receiving, organizing and sharing information. Use of technology is another big part of communication. Through Texas Confidence Builders, customers develop the skills to use computers, calculators, adaptive aids, and other "high tech" devices that are of growing importance in everyone's daily life. Even average activities such as using a phone, telling the time, or signing your name to a document are essential elements of everyday communication that must be learned. Texas Confidence Builders provides our customers with the opportunity to develop the skills to do these tasks independently.

## ***5. Vocational Skills***

Customers first come to TWS-VRS to gain assistance in obtaining or maintaining a job as their primary goal. TWS-VRS offers employment services designed to assist people who are blind or visually impaired achieve their employment goals. Employment services are customized to the needs of each customer and may include self-evaluation (determining personal strengths, concerns, priorities, limitations, interest, likes, and dislikes), exploring various occupations, or developing job-seeking skills. Some customers participate in “job shadowing” where they can follow someone who is already working in a specific job, or some choose to participate in volunteer work as a means of finding out if an occupation suits them. Customers that master and embody the Texas Confidence Builders core skills will come through with outstanding prospects in the job market – whether it’s landing a first job or moving up the organizational ladder.

*Live to the fullest.*

## ***6. Support Systems***

Customers learn information about other agencies and resources that can help them reach their goals. Customers also learn



the importance of social activities and hobbies to maintain a work-life balance. TWS-VRS encourages customers to explore their employment and personal interests and assists them in developing techniques and resources to do the things they love.

## **Your TWS-VRS Office**

To locate your Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation Services (TWS-VRS) office, visit: <https://twc.texas.gov/find-locations>



## Texas Workforce Solutions- Vocational Rehabilitation Services

101 East 15th Street  
Austin, Texas 78778-0001  
800-628-5115

### **Equal Opportunity Employer/Program**

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Relay Texas: 800-735-2989 (TTY) and 711 (Voice)

Texas Workforce Commission accepts calls made through any relay service provider.

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For purposes of the Vocational Rehabilitation program, the Federal Vocational Rehabilitation grant pays 78.7 percent of the total costs of the program. In Federal fiscal year 2020, the Vocational Rehabilitation agency anticipates receiving \$287,666,847 in Federal Vocational Rehabilitation funds. Funds appropriated by the State pay 21.3 percent of the total costs (\$77,856,466) under the Vocational Rehabilitation program.

For purposes of the Independent Living Services for Older Individuals who are Blind program, Federal funds paid 90 percent of the total costs incurred under the program. In Federal fiscal year 2020, the agency received \$2,159,283 in Federal grant funds for this program. Funds appropriated by the State paid 10 percent (\$239,920) of the total costs incurred under the Independent Living Services for Older Individuals who are Blind program.