



Your complimentary use period has ended. Thank you for using PDF Complete.

Click Here to upgrade to Unlimited Pages and Expanded Features

CDBG 2011 Application Form

Project # PS20
(Office Use)

Intensive Residential Life Experience (IRLE) Summer Camp Program

Project Location/Address: N/A

Organization: The Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (VABVI)

Mailing Address: 60 Kimball Avenue

Contact: Ayes Shah Raftery

Title: Director of Development

Phone #: (800) 639-5861

Web Address: www.vabvi.org

Fax #: (802) 863-1481

E-mail: araftery@vabvi.org

I. **CDBG Funding Request:**

II. **Project Summary:** Briefly describe the project or program to be funded with CDBG. (Please use a one or two sentence description – there is room in Section IV for more detail.)

The Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (VABVI) requests a \$2,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) from the Burlington Community and Economic Development Office (CEDO) to fund our ongoing Intensive Residential Life Experience (IRLE) summer camp program. VABVI hosts two IRLE sessions each year, one for teens and one for younger students, that are designed to provide a fun and supportive environment where visually impaired children can gather to learn the skills they will need to excel academically, thrive socially, and succeed in tomorrow's workplace.

III. **Description of Organization:** Describe the capacity of your organization to successfully carry out the program activities. What is your mission, and how do the proposed activities fit with your mission?

Founded in 1926 with the assistance of Helen Keller, VABVI is the only private non-profit organization in the state to offer comprehensive training and support services to individuals who are blind and visually impaired. **Our mission is to enable Vermonters with vision problems, whether blindness or impairment, to achieve and maintain independence.**

The goal of our services is to minimize the impact that living without sight has on the education, mobility, social life, recreation, civic participation, and personal safety of blind and visually impaired Vermonters. By providing our clients and students with training, education, adaptive tools and assistive technology, we enable them to build the foundation of skills that will allow them to overcome their vision loss and live independent and active lives.

Every child deserves the support, tools and materials necessary to succeed, and VABVI is responsible for providing that support to hundreds of children and teens across Vermont. Our Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs) begin work with children and their families as soon as visual impairment is discovered, often in infancy. Our TVIs travel from town to town in order to better accommodate our students and their families in their homes and classrooms, so that our students learn in an environment with which they are familiar and feel comfortable. VABVI also assists parents and families in learning about the resources, teaching techniques and adaptive technology that can ensure the successful development of children in the home, classroom and broader community. Depending on the individual student's situation and preferences, our TVIs assist in the college application and enrollment process, the search for jobs, and in how to adapt to a predominantly-sighted workplace using assistive tools and technology.



Your complimentary use period has ended. Thank you for using PDF Complete.

[Click Here to upgrade to Unlimited Pages and Expanded Features](#)

the academic year, VABVI also hosts the **Intensive Residential** camp. Every year we sponsor two sessions, one geared toward activities which are designed to address the social, emotional and intellectual

Each year's IRLE camp program is designed by our TVIs to provide opportunities for social, recreational and educational outings that broaden the horizons of our students, who travel from across Vermont to attend. The activities and schedule of each IRLE session changes from summer to summer, which allows VABVI to refine our curriculum and keeps things fresh for our students, many of whom attend camp year after year (as long as they still fall within the appropriate age group). Each year, we develop programs that teach our students to think for themselves and make tough decisions, all in an atmosphere that is encouraging, friendly, safe, and fun.

Some goals of the IRLE program are to:

- Improve the daily living skills of our students;
- Help them develop and understand interpersonal relationships;
- Increase their independence and self-confidence;
- Teach advocating for oneself;
- Improve orientation and mobility.

One message that VABVI continually sends to our students is that they can combine assistive technology with critical thinking and daily living skills to complete almost every task that a sighted person can. The students develop sound reasoning skills, learn how to adapt the problem-solving skills they already possess into everyday living situations, and ultimately gain a better understanding of their visual impairment and how it affects their interaction with the world around them.

IRLE also focuses on the transition to adulthood, utilizing activities and inviting guest lecturers that help our students develop the skills that they will need to pursue their dreams, whatever they may be. But because of the challenges presented by living with a visual impairment, many of our students have had almost all of their needs taken care of by their parents whereas some sighted children complain when told to make their bed, many of our students are simply unable to do so until they develop the techniques that will allow them to work around their vision loss. The days that these students spend at IRLE each summer are often the only significant amount of time they spend outside of their parents' care, and they use this time traveling to new places, meeting new people and developing friendships, and practicing activities - such as cooking for themselves - that break down the barriers created by limited vision. IRLE camp participation represents a *huge* leap forward for these students, and we could not be prouder of the results. The benefits of this program are evident in the growth of our students. Each year, TVIs see a great change in their attitudes and self-esteem, as they learn new skills and explore new territories.

Project Description:

- a. Describe the specific activities to be carried out by your project with CDBG dollars and the accomplishments you plan to achieve. Please distinguish the total number to be served from the number of Burlington clients to be served. Be specific about the tasks / work that CDBG will pay for. Use the table below, adding rows if necessary. You may add narrative below the table if needed for further description.

Specific Service / Activity:	CDBG will pay for:	Unduplicated Total # of Households / Persons to be Served in this Service / Activity:	Unduplicated Total # of Burlington Households / Persons to be Served:	Outcome(s) to be Achieved:
Food and Lodging	\$2,000	20 Children from 20 Households	3 Children from 3 Households	Increased self-confidence, improved social skills, stronger orientation and mobility skills (please see Part III of the application).

lected throughout the academic year to determine what
 ents for the IRLE session the following summer. As such, we
 s are planned this far in advance. However, all IRLE camp
 activities follow the common thread of improving our students' confidence and independent living skills
 by challenging them to overcome the difficulty associated with navigating an unfamiliar environment. In
 practical terms this means that VABVI must necessarily incur expenses for traveling and room and board,
 and at a rate that exceeds the CDBG amount which we request. VABVI will use any funding from CEDO
 to defray those costs and use the savings to expand our rehabilitative services. For budgeting purposes we
 used 2010's IRLE camps as a model for what activities may be planned in 2011.

b. If you plan to pay for staff with CDBG funding, describe what they do in relation to the specific service(s) / activity(ies) described above. All staff that appear in the salary / benefits line items in your budget (Section XV) must be described below. Add rows if necessary.

Specific Service / Activity	Position/Title	Work Related to CDBG-Funded Activity	# of Hours per Week spent on this Specific Service / Activity	% of Hours per Week spent on this Specific Service / Activity to be paid with CDBG

VABVI will not use CDBG funding to pay for staff.

V. Beneficiary Information

a. For each service / activity you identified in Section IV, please project how the Burlington residents will break out into the following income categories. Use the Income Table at http://www.cedoburlington.org/cdbg/income_limits.htm.

Service / Activity:	Unduplicated Total # of Burlington Households / Persons to be Served:	# Extremely Low-Income	# Low-Income	# Moderate-Income	# Above Moderate-Income

Please see below.

b. Please provide a single unduplicated total beneficiary count below:

Unduplicated Total # of Burlington Households / Persons to be Served:	# Extremely Low-Income	# Low-Income	# Moderate-Income	# Above Moderate-Income

c. How will/do you document beneficiary income levels?

VABVI does not collect information regarding our beneficiaries' income levels. However, because our clients meet the Bureau of Census' definition of "severely disabled persons," they qualify as "low to moderate income persons" according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Will this project address?

Vermont schools make great effort to fully include and accommodate blind and visually impaired students in their classrooms. However, certain aspects of visual impairment make it particularly difficult for children living with vision loss to participate alongside their peers ó our students often cannot read a question off the blackboard, catch a ball during gym, or see what is happening onstage during the school play. This factor, combined with the fact that these children are usually the only blind or visually impaired student in their school - often in the entire school district - can lead our students to develop a growing sense of isolation, even leading to depression. IRLE camps help to counter this trend by allowing VABVI's students to build up a support structure made up entirely of peers who face the same challenges.

b. How was this need identified?

The need for a summer camp program to supplement the TVI's work with our students throughout the academic year was first identified by the TVI's themselves when they realized that some of the progress they had achieved throughout the school year was disappearing during the summer vacation. In addition to keeping what our students have learned fresh in their minds, IRLE offers a new experience; while all of our students are used to living in a predominantly sighted world, IRLE camp offers them the opportunity to spend a few days living with peers who face challenges similar to their own.

c. Why is this a funding priority for Burlington?

The IRLE summer camp program should be a priority for Burlington for the same reasons that the city works to provide a quality education to Burlington's sighted youth ó not only because it is right, but because it represents an investment in Vermont's future. The purpose of IRLE camps is to ensure that our students grow up to become fully independent adults, a goal which requires them to be both active citizens and productive members of the economy. In Fiscal Year 2010 VABVI provided services to 88 Burlington residents, including 13 students who attend schools in the Burlington School District, spending an estimated \$119,408.

VII. **Program Goals:** How will this project reduce the number of people living in poverty? Will it help people move out of poverty? Prevent people from entering poverty? Address basic needs of people living in poverty?

VABVI's *most fundamental purpose* is to enable blind and visually impaired Vermonters to achieve and maintain independence; such independence necessarily includes the ability to support oneself financially. Because of the everyday difficulties associated with vision loss, without proper training blind and visually impaired individuals can have great difficulty finding employment. However, with the proper training and instruction there are no limits to what our students can achieve, and IRLE summer camps help them understand that. Though the goals of the IRLE program are actually more ambitious, at minimum we aim to equip our students with the tools they will need to keep themselves out of poverty (some of VABVI's former students have gone on to become practicing attorneys). Depending on the individual student's situation and preferences, our TVI's also assist in the search for jobs and in the college application and enrollment process.

a. Are you targeting any specific disadvantaged population/group of people? If so, who are they? (i.e., people with disabilities, minorities, women with children living in poverty, people with limited English proficiency, at-risk youth, etc.)

How do you make sure your programs are accessible to all and culturally appropriate? What equal opportunity efforts do you make in hiring and, if applicable, Board recruitment?

VABVI employs several visually impaired individuals whose insight and experiences help shape our policy and programs. In addition, roughly half of our Board members are disabled or have close family members who are. VABVI also benefits from the advice of our 16 member Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) which offers consults with our Board and staff on a regular basis (CAC members are people with disabilities or members of the immediate family of children with disabilities).

IX. Impact and Evaluation:

a. How do you define success? How do you measure it? How many of your beneficiaries achieve it?

At VABVI we measure our own success by the success achieved by our clients and students. Evaluation of IRLE is conducted after the conclusion of each camp by our TVIs in consultation with the students' parents. We look for increases in confidence, self-esteem, and the students' willingness to engage in new activities and take on new responsibilities. Our TVIs use this analysis to build on the students' gains at camp and incorporate new learning strategies into their work with the student throughout the academic year.

b. If this is an existing project:

1. What were your projected accomplishments for your most recent completed funding period or fiscal year?

This year's camp for teenagers emphasized a "City Navigation and Mobility" theme while the camp for younger students focused on improving their Daily Living Skills.

2. What were your actual accomplishments for that period? If you did not meet projections, please explain (i) why and (ii) how you will overcome that issue in the future.

According to a review of feedback from participants and their families, last summer's IRLE was a resounding success. While many students missed their families, almost every one of them reported that they felt better equipped work and play independently.

X. Community Participation & Partners

a. How are the community and/or program participants involved in decision-making and in identifying the program need, design and/or evaluation?

All of VABVI's programs fall within the purview of the Board of Directors, a group comprised of local business and community leaders, many of whom are disabled themselves or have close family members who are disabled. As noted above, VABVI also benefits from the advice of our 16 member Consumer Advisory Council, which is made up of people with disabilities or those who are members of the immediate family of children with disabilities. Regarding our evaluation of IRLE, VABVI relies on the expertise of our TVIs but also on input from the campers themselves and their families.

b. What other agencies or sectors (i.e., government, private) do you work with on this project/program?

The Blind and Visually Impaired (DBVI) with employment-
visually impaired Vermonters into the workforce helps to
activities are included in the camp; DBVI offers helpful
VABVI also partners with Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports
g disabled children the opportunity to enjoy a variety of
outdoors recreational activities that they otherwise might not be able to experience. In the summer of
2009 VABVI and VASS worked together to take our teenaged IRLE campers on a sailing trip on Lake
Champlain.

XI. Sustainability

a. How will this project have a long-term benefit to the City of Burlington?

(Please see Section VII) The rehabilitation of individuals experiencing vision loss has a much greater impact - and is more empowering - than alternatives such as assisted living. Research conducted by Prevent Blindness America shows that of the \$51.4 billion spent annually on adult vision problems in the United States, nearly \$11 million is directed toward caregiving and assisted living facilities. With every individual that VABVI enables to become independent, we strengthen Vermont with the addition of a citizen who is actively contributing to society and not thought of as a burden by themselves or by others.

b. If the project ends, will that benefit continue?

If the IRLE program ends VABVI will still do our best to maximize the positive impact we make through our work with students throughout the academic year, though we would have lost a powerful tool in the effort to enable our students to achieve and maintain independence. (Please note that there are no plans to end the IRLE program in the foreseeable future.) It is also worth noting that the skills that we teach IRLE camp participants will benefit them for years to follow.

c. If CDBG funding ends, will the project be sustainable (i.e., able to continue)?

VABVI has hosted IRLE camps since 1990. If we do not receive CDBG funding or if this funding is later withdrawn, then VABVI will continue to host IRLE camps with the help of other municipalities, foundations and businesses.

XII. Consistency

a. What Consolidated Plan objective does this project support?

Objective EO-1.3 Though only 21 children participated in last year's IRLE summer camps, successful completion of the program improves access to economic opportunity to more individuals than the students themselves; by providing these children with the skills needed to support themselves financially and otherwise, IRLE camps ensure that their family members will not have to shoulder any additional economic burden, thereby helping to improve access to economic opportunity for everyone living in the household or in the students' close family.

b. What other City plans, if any, does this project support or complement?

The Burlington School District already contracts VABVI's Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs) to provide instruction to thirteen blind or visually impaired children in Burlington schools. The IRLE program is specifically designed to supplement the instruction that the BSD already pays for these children to receive.

XIII. Readiness to Proceed



Your complimentary use period has ended. Thank you for using PDF Complete.

2011 and be completed by June 30, 2012?

me and August, meaning that the project will have already started long before June 30, 2012.

[Click Here to upgrade to Unlimited Pages and Expanded Features](#)

and completion dates?

c. Are there any other conditions that may affect your ability to begin or complete this project?

We do not foresee any circumstances under which VABVI will not host IRLE camps in the summer of 2010.

XIV. Financial Narrative

a. Why should CDBG resources, as opposed to other sources of funding, be used for this project?

Blindness can represent a fairly large barrier to economic opportunity and IRLE provides visually impaired youth with the skills to work around that barrier, exactly in line with one of the purposes of the CDBG. VABVI continually solicits funding from sources other than the Community and Economic Development Office; and while we regularly receive funding from enough sources to remain financially sustainable, we always endeavor to provide the highest quality services to the greatest number of people, and like any prudent non-profit we are constrained by what is financially possible. The more funding we receive the better equipped we will be to provide young Vermonters who are coping with vision loss with the tools they will need to compete in tomorrow's colleges and workforce. VABVI has never received CDBG funding.

b. Describe your use of community resources. For example, will your project be matched or leveraged with other funding sources or resources (such as volunteers) that don't appear in the budget summary below?

VABVI is extremely fortunate to enjoy strong community support; we are especially thankful for the individuals who donate their time to volunteer with VABVI, recording audio transcriptions of books, preparing mailings, and driving our clients as part of our Volunteer Transportation program. During Fiscal Year 2010, 252 transportation volunteers traveled over 140,000 miles and donated 9,450 hours of their time, bringing clients to doctor's appointments, on shopping trips, and to visit friends. VABVI could not make such a positive impact without this support network made up of dedicated friends and neighbors.

c. Has your organization had any significant changes in funding levels over the last year? If so, please describe.

VABVI has not had any significant changes in funding levels over the last year.

d. What percent of Agency funds are used for administration vs. program costs?

During Fiscal Year 2010 only 10 cents of every dollar donated to VABVI went toward administrative costs.

XV. Budget

a. Summary

Project		Agency	
Current	Projected	Current	Projected



Your complimentary use period has ended. Thank you for using PDF Complete.

Click Here to upgrade to Unlimited Pages and Expanded Features

		\$ 2,000	\$ 0	2,000
	0		64,595	\$ 113,209
	0		648,848	648,848
	0		0	0
	1,500	10,000	1,465,472	1,568,468
Program Income	0		0	0
Other	0		577,598	629,364
Total	\$ 1,500	\$ 10,000	\$ 2,562,311	\$ 2,708,409

b. Proposed Project Budget Sources

CDBG	\$ 2,000
Other Federal – please specify funder and program (i.e., HUD – Emergency Shelter Grant, etc.)	
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
State – please specify funder and program (i.e., Department of Health – AIDS Prevention, etc.)	
	\$
United Way of Chittenden County	\$
Private – please specify (i.e., individual donations, foundations, faith-based organizations, etc.)	
National Life	\$ 5,000
Key Foundation	\$ 2,000
Citizens Bank	\$ 3,000
Other – please specify (i.e., fee-for-service, etc.)	
	\$
	\$
TOTAL	\$ 10,000

c. Proposed Budget Uses

<u>Line Item</u>	<u>CDBG</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Total</u>
Housing, Food	\$ 2,000	\$ 3,250	\$ 5,250
Transportation (Bristol Tour Bus, public transportation fees)	\$ 0	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
Tickets to Lake Monsters Game, Ropes Course Fees, and to various Museums (Previous trips went to the Boston Museum of Science and the Perkins Tactile Museum)	\$ 0	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports Equipment Rental	\$ 0	\$ 500	\$ 500
Misc / Petty Cash	\$ 0	\$ 250	\$ 250
TOTAL	\$ *	\$ 8,000	\$ 10,000