

NC DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND POLICIES AND PROCEDURES VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Section:	B
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ELIGIBILITY, REFERRAL, TRAINING, AND LICENSURE OF OPERATORS IN BUSINESS ENTERPRISES PROGRAM

1. Federal regulations dictate eligibility requirements for licensure as a vendor in the [Business Enterprises Program](#) (BEP).

Licenses will be issued only to persons who are determined by the state licensing agency to be:

- a. [Individual who is blind](#);
 - b. must be at least 18 years of age;
 - c. a citizen of the United States;
 - d. must have no previous convictions of any [felony class A through E](#); and
 - e. certified by the State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) [Agency](#) as qualified to operate a vending facility.
2. A VR counselor who identifies an [eligible individual](#) with an apparent potential and interest in the BEP will acquire written documentation as listed below that the individual meets the minimum criteria for referral and acceptance into the BEP Training (BEPT). Individuals interested in BEPT with deficits in one or more of the skill areas **will not be** allowed to begin BEPT.
 - a. A math achievement level determined to be in the high school range as measured by the wide range achievement test (WRAT IV, PIAT, or other Standardized Achievement Test);
 - b. A written [appropriate mode of communication](#);
 - c. A high school diploma or GED;
 - d. Personal appearance appropriate for a public/retail environment; and
 - e. At least an 8th grade verbal achievement level with a vocabulary adequate for public communication.

The VR counselor will staff the case with the area rehabilitation supervisor at each stage of the referral and acceptance process.

3. The VR counselor will then make a **written referral** of the individual to the chief of business enterprises that includes documentation of the required criteria for referral and acceptance into the BEPT. The BE chief will review the referral for approval and notify the VR counselor of acceptance or denial in writing.

If the individual is accepted into the BEPT, the VR counselor will contact the local BE representative. The BE representative will interview the individual and determine an appropriate site and time for the required "in-stand observation".

If the individual is not accepted into the BEPT, the VR counselor will assess the referral to determine if further information is needed, obtain the information, and begin the referral process over. If the individual is not appropriate or eligible for BEPT, the VR counselor will meet with the individual to assist in the establishment of different vocational goals.

4. At some point prior to formally beginning the BEPT, **every individual must complete an "in-stand" observation** where the potential [trainee](#) is evaluated by a current operator and is exposed to the actual operations of a BEP facility. The BE representative will arrange this evaluation at a facility convenient to the potential trainee at the request of the VR counselor. This evaluation will provide opportunity for the potential trainee to be observed both by the BE representative and an operator. The trainee will work directly with the operator during this time to learn about the requirements of the job of operator and to judge for himself/herself if this type work is of interest to them.

The trainee should not replace a regularly assigned worker in the facility. The trainee should not be expected to perform significant work tasks during this period but to observe and likewise no wages will be paid to the trainee for this period. This period of observation and evaluation should last a minimum of one work week (40 hours) for the location but can be longer with mutual agreement of the trainee, operator, and BE representative. At the end of this period, a report should be made by the operator/BE representative as to the appropriateness of the individual beginning BEPT. **No exceptions will be granted for the "in-stand" observation.**

"In-Stand" Observation Guidelines

The potential trainee completes the "in-stand" portion of BEPT for two reasons: to determine if he/she has the basic personality and skills of daily living to be potentially successful as an operator; and secondly to introduce the individual to a working environment such that he/she can judge its suitability for them as a future vocational option. Opportunities should be made for trainees to observe the operator perform and to practice and experience as much as possible the routine tasks that an operator performs. In general the following attributes should be observed during the week: time management, cleanliness and personal hygiene, sanitation awareness, customer orientation, mobility skills, organizational skills, and written communication skills.

5. After successful completion of the in-stand observation, the trainee will proceed with formal training at the BEPT facility located on the Governor Morehead Campus (GMS).

Formal BEPT Guidelines

- a. Each trainee is required to study and successfully complete an examination on each of the different modules that comprise the BEPT curriculum and the National Restaurant Association (NRA) sanitation certification (ServSafe). The NRA has set the passing score for the ServSafe certification exam at 75%.

- b. The BEPT consists of different modules concerning various aspects of facility management. Successful completion of each module is required with an overall average of 90% or better.
 - c. A final exam is given at the completion of the training modules and a score of 90% or better is required.
 - d. The BEP trainer will forward training progress reports to the VR counselor, area VR supervisor, BE representative and the chief of BE at the end of each week during the training period.
6. Upon successful completion of the formal training program, the trainee should continue into the next phase of training, on-the-job training (OJT) for BE. If the trainee has not successfully completed the training program, he/she should be referred back to the VR counselor for further services.
 7. At this point the potential operator should decide what level of license he/she wants to try to attain. All BEP locations are categorized into one of four levels and operators must be licensed at the appropriate level for the facility to which they apply.
 - Level I have no food service preparation on site and include only service via vending machines or counter service that includes coffee, fountain drinks, prepackaged sandwich and snack items, candy and cigarettes. Level 1: three to four weeks
 - Level II service is similar to a deli operation where hot and cold food is prepared on site such as salads, fresh sandwiches, breakfast items, and desserts. Level II: three to four additional weeks
 - Level III service includes all of the above with the addition of a grill and deep fat fryer. Level III: one to two additional weeks
 - Level IV service is all of the above and includes a cafeteria operation. Level IV: three to six additional weeks

Most BEP facilities are Level I or II facilities and trainees are encouraged to complete at least Level II.

8. On-the-job training is done in existing BEP facilities by the operators assigned to those facilities. Various training sites are available statewide and are listed in a separate document. Some sites offer more than one level of training and can train at either level. OJT expenses for the trainee are not subject to the needs test and as such it is expected that travel and maintenance expenses during this period will be sponsored by the VR program. Trainees will be paid by the operators of the facilities for hours spent in the facility not to exceed 40 hours per week. The rate of pay will be the federal minimum wage. Operators will be paid a wage reimbursement/tuition fee of \$500 per week through the VR program.

The OJT trainer is required to submit the following documentation to the VR counselor on a weekly basis for payment of this fee.

- An original, signed and dated invoice (DSB-5065-BE-ia) that documents the trainee's hours of training;
- OJT checklist that documents the trainee's progress

The VR counselor will process the invoice for payment on a weekly basis upon receipt of the required documentation. Facility operators are required by employment law to make timely payments to employees, including trainees. The operators must receive reimbursement from DSB in a timely manner in order to continue to provide training opportunities and maintain their business operations and stock.

- Each operator who is interested in acting as a trainer for OJT purposes must sign the agreement for training (DSB-5064-BE [On-the-Job Training Agreement](#) with [instructions](#)). BE representatives who have operators who do training should present the agreement to the operator and seek signature from the training operator. No OJT will be done on sites where operators have failed to agree to these provisions. Please forward these signed forms to the central office of BEP where they will be maintained in the personnel files of operators who wish to act as trainers.
- Each trainee is asked to evaluate the training provided him or her. The Evaluation of Training Form will be used in OJT settings and at the VR Center for the Blind as trainees complete segments of training (DSB-5056-BE [Training Evaluation](#) with [instructions](#)). BE representatives should provide a supply of these forms to each training operator for presentation to trainees as they finish training. The BEP trainer will have these forms available.
- The VR counselor should coordinate the trainee's movement into OJT with the BE representative. Orientation and Mobility instruction may be needed for sites that are new to the trainee and should be arranged by the VR counselor as well. Estimates for OJT time frame guidelines are as follows and can be changed if necessary (DSB-5057-BE [On-the-Job Training Checklist for Levels I & II](#) with [instructions](#)) (DSB-5058-BE [On-the-Job Training Guide for Levels I & II](#)). Any extensions of the OJT training period must be approved in writing by the BE chief. The OJT trainer must submit a written request that includes a justification for the extension to the BE chief. A copy of the request shall be provided to the VR counselor and the local BEP representative.
- During OJT, the BE representative should contact the trainee once per week to determine progress and to assist the trainers with paperwork/evaluations. At the conclusion of the OJT, the training operator will make a recommendation to the BE representative as to whether the trainee is to be licensed at that level.
- The final recommendation for licensure begins with the BE representative after receipt of the OJT evaluation and review of all other training documentation. A recommendation should be made by the BE representative through the area VR supervisor to the chief of BE. No individual should be recommended for licensure that does not meet the minimum eligibility requirements as noted at the beginning of this section. Documentation should be provided along with the recommendation as necessary.

14. Any exceptions to the training policy as outlined in this document must be approved by the chief of BE in advance. Recommendations for exceptions to policy should come through supervisory channels to the chief of BE. No exceptions will be granted for the "in-stand" observation, module completion, or OJT.
15. Once a trainee has successfully completed at least Level I training, he/she is eligible to apply for and be awarded any advertised facility vacancy. These awards of facilities above Level I will be made contingent on successful completion of the more advanced training. Trainees should be made aware that interview questions are geared to the needs of the facility not the experience of the applicant.
16. [Post-Employment Services \(PES\)](#) are available through the VR program for current operators in the BEP who are interested in applying for and being awarded locations at a higher licensing level. Such operators will be required to complete further training at the BEP location at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind or OJT training in an appropriate licensed BE location. There is no economic needs test for upward mobility training. In the event that the VR program declines to sponsor this training, the operator may contact the chief of BE to request sponsorship.