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**PROFESSIONALS NEEDED TO WORK WITH VISUALLY IMPAIRED  
OCFS / CBVH & Hunter College Team Up to Offer Free Tuition**

The NYS Office of Children and Family Services' Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH) and Hunter College are offering a unique career opportunity to upstate New Yorkers. Free tuition grants made possible through federal economic stimulus funds are being offered for students who are accepted in the Hunter College Distance Learning Rehabilitation Teaching / Orientation and Mobility (RT/O&M) Master's Degree Program and the O&M Advanced Certificate Program.

The Hunter College Distance Learning Program prepares professionals in vision rehabilitation therapy (VRT) to work with individuals with visual impairments. The RT Master's Degree with Orientation and Mobility (O&M) prepares professionals in both VRT and O&M specializations for working with learners with visual impairments.

According to OCFS Commissioner Gladys Carrión: "In these difficult economic times, when upstate, in particular, is suffering from a loss of jobs, we are excited to offer this opportunity. These education grants will make it possible for people to pursue a rewarding career without having to relocate. As the population ages, there is a growing need for vision therapists to help people cope with vision impairments and enjoy productive lives. This collaboration with Hunter College is an important first step."

Hunter College will provide training off-site via its existing Distance Learning VRT/O&M Master's Degree Program. This program will use field instructors, accredited by Hunter College, to conduct the required lab courses in upstate communities and will provide classroom sessions using distance education technologies. This will alleviate the need for travel to on-campus classes in New York City. All upstate students participating in the program will receive a stipend of \$443 for their first semester to be spent at their own discretion, in addition to free tuition grants.

Students complete all fall and spring courses via online learning methods. Classes are held in the late afternoon, evenings and on weekends. Participation in the blindfold / low vision skill labs requires students to attend courses on-campus for two weeks during the summer semesters. Internship hours are also met during the workday.

Upon completion of the program sequence, candidates will be eligible for national certification from the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals as vision rehabilitation therapists (VRTs) and/or O&M specialists.

For more information about the program and admission requirements visit:

<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/school-of-education/programs/graduate/special-education/blind-visually-impaired/upstate-programs>