



**Commission
for the Blind**

Business Enterprise Program (BEP) FAQ's

What is BEP?

Answer: BEP is a program that trains legally blind individuals for the opportunity to own and operate their own business.

What are the requirements for entry into the training program?

Answer: US Citizen, legally blind NYS resident, 18 yrs. Or older

Is a business background or experience needed to enter the training program?

Answer: It would be helpful but is not necessary.

Does a person need a high school or college diploma to apply?

Answer: It would be helpful but is not necessary. There is a required math assessment and math remediation through Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), if needed.

How long does it take to become a licensed BEP vendor?

Answer: The time frame varies based on the individual and has varied between 3 months to 2 years to complete. On average, it takes about a year.

What if my credit is bad?

Answer: Credit score does not affect entry into the training program. Background and credit reports will be reviewed and discussed.

Does the applicant need to have computer experience and if so, what skill level?

Answer: Yes, entry level computer skills with email required; Word and Excel are helpful. If needed, computer training is available through VR. Computer training should be done before entering BEP as the initial training activities are online.

Would a trainee or licensed manager have to relocate?

Answer: This is the individual's choice, based on available business opportunities but not necessary.

Would the vendor need to work weekends, holidays, or nights?

Answer: As with any sole proprietor or business owner, nights, holiday, or weekend work may be necessary based on an individual's business goals.

What is the average income of a BEP vendor?

Answer: The pre-pandemic, average income was approximately \$51,000.

What benefits are included?

Answer: Rent and utility-free location, equipment purchases and repairs, annual reimbursement for medical insurance premium up to a maximum of \$3,500, annual distributions with a base of \$1K plus bonus based on years of service, \$50K life insurance policy and liability insurance for business included. There is no vacation, sick or other paid time off included.