**Section 515.500 Blind Services Planning Council**

a) The Blind Services Planning Council (BSPC) *shall review the actions of the Bureau* of *Blind* Services *and provide advice and consultation to the* *DHS-ORS* Associate Director *on services to* persons who are blind (Section 7 of the Bureau for the Blind Act [20 ILCS 2410/7]).

b) The BSPC shall be composed of 11 members appointed by the Governor.

1) *No fewer than 6 members shall be blind.*

2) *A relative balance between the number of males and females shall be maintained.*

3) Two members shall be sought from each of the major statewide consumer organizations of the blind.

4) One member shall be *from a specific service area* (e.g., Chicago Lighthouse employee, Vending Facility operator, employers of blind individuals).

5) A DHS-ORS employee cannot be a member.

6) Fifty-one percent of the current membership of BSPC shall constitute a quorum.

c) Members shall be reimbursed for actual, necessary and reasonable expenses (e.g., travel for meetings in accordance with State travel regulations (80 Ill. Adm. Code 2800), postage or telephone bills for BSPC business) incurred in the performance of their duties.

d) *Members shall be removed for cause including demonstrated incompetence, unethical behavior and unwillingness or inability to serve.*

e) Terms of Membership

1) Members serving on the BSPC on the effective date of this Subpart shall continue to serve until their terms expire. New members appointed shall serve terms as set out in subsection (e)(2) of this Section.

2) Initially four members shall serve for one year; four members shall serve for two years; and three members shall serve for three years. All subsequent terms shall be for three years.

3) No member shall serve more than 2 consecutive terms.

4) The membership year for the BSPC shall be the same as the calendar year.

f) DHS-ORS shall provide support services (meeting space, clerical service, record storage, supplies, postage) as requested by BSPC, and access to reports, records and information unless prohibited by 89 Ill. Adm. Code 505.

g) DHS-ORS shall ensure the BSPC has the opportunity to review the Bureau of Blind Services' budget prior to its submission to the Bureau of the Budget and any major policy or program change (e.g., changes that have impact on service delivery and staffing patterns) prior to its implementation.

h) Meetings

1) The BSPC shall meet at least four times per year at times and places designated by the Chair. The dates and locations of the meetings shall be published and posted at the DHS-ORS administrative offices at 623 East Adams, Springfield and 100 West Randolph, Chicago in advance of the meeting in accordance with Sections 2.02 and 2.03 of the Open Meetings Act.

2) The last regular meeting of the year shall be the annual meeting, conducted in the same way as any regular meeting except that officers shall be elected and any other items of business that the bylaws prescribe for the annual meeting shall be transacted. New officers assume their duties at the conclusion of the meeting at which they are elected.

3) Special meetings shall be called by the Chair or at the written request of any five members of the BSPC, provided a written notice stating the purpose of such meeting is given to members at least ten days prior to the meeting.

4) Notice, agenda and minutes for all meetings shall be sent to each member of the BSPC at least 15 days prior to the date of the meeting.

5) Meetings shall be open to the public, except that meetings or portions of meetings shall, upon a majority vote of a quorom present, be declared closed in accordance with Sections 2 and 2a of the Open Meetings Act.

6) Any meeting of the BSPC shall be cancelled with approval of a majority of the voting BSPC members.

7) All meetings shall be physically and communicatively accessible to all persons with disabilities.

i) Documents of the BSPC shall be maintained at DHS-ORS administrative offices at 623 East Adams in Springfield for public inspection. DHS-ORS shall provide copies of the documents upon request in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act [5 ILCS 140] and Access to Public Records (2 Ill. Adm. Code 1176).

j) Functions of the BSPC shall include, but not be limited to:

1) facilitating communication and cooperative efforts with blind consumer groups and blind citizens of Illinois;

2) facilitating communication and cooperative efforts between DHS-ORS and all agencies or other service providers which deliver services to blind and visually impaired persons;

3) identifying needs of and problems related to blind and visually impaired persons and making recommendations to the Associate Director and Bureau of Blind Services Deputy Director of DHS-ORS, and to the Governor;

4) recommending programmatic and fiscal priorities for the provision of services and awarding of grants or contracts by DHS-ORS;

5) conducting, encouraging, and advising independent research by qualified evaluators to improve services to blind and visually impaired persons;

6) participating in the development and review of proposed DHS-ORS rules and regulations relating to services for blind and visually impaired persons;

7) reviewing and commenting on budgets relating to services for blind and visually impaired persons;

8) promoting policies and programs to educate the public and eliciting public support for services to blind and visually impaired person;

9) encouraging creative and innovative programs to strengthen, expand and improve services for blind and visually impaired person; and

10) participating in the development of a state plan for blind services and any revision or update in accordance with Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended.

(Source: Amended at 20 Ill. Reg. 10162, effective July 16, 1996)