



Legislative Services Agency

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Fiscal Services Division

Fiscal Update Article

Iowa Commission for the Blind Meeting — September 2026

September 22, 2026

Meeting

The Iowa Commission for the Blind (Commission) met on Tuesday, September 8, 2026, virtually.

Director's Report

Director Stacy Cervenka provided the following updates on the Iowa Department for the Blind (IDB):

- The IDB will partner with the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center (VRTAC) to prepare for its 2028 review by the federal [Rehabilitation Services Administration \(RSA\)](#).
- The IDB welcomed Brianna Murray as the new Orientation Center for the Blind Administrator.
- Administrator Murray and Director Cervenka will present at the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind Conference in November.
- In early September, the IDB partnered with the Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) for an orientation session covering passes, fares, paratransit, and route planning. They will provide similar training through four daily seminars to IDB Orientation Center students.
- The IDB will partner with the [Helen Keller National Center \(HKNC\)](#) in establishing a [Support Service Provider \(SSP\) program](#).
- The IDB worked with the University of Massachusetts Boston to offer a Vocational Rehabilitation Technology (VRT) program. It is an optional master's degree that will allow for further training and teaching. Scholarships are available through the University.
- The IDB is partnering with a University of Iowa professor to develop a specialized class for IDB instructors.
- Federal law allows the IDB to apply for reimbursement from the Social Security Administration when IDB clients who are receiving social security benefits return to work and engage in [substantial gainful activity](#). To date, the IDB has received three reimbursements for a total of \$370,000.

Support Service Provider Program — Helen Keller National Center

The HKNC presented the SSP program, which is currently established in 29 states nationwide. An SSP is trained to provide specialized assistance to individuals who are deafblind. The SSPs help relay information, act as guides, and facilitate communication. They are not personal care attendants, case managers, or interpreters.

FY 2028 Budget Request

The Commission reviewed the IDB's FY 2028 budget request. Director Cervenka presented the proposed budget request, including a requested General Fund appropriation increase of \$1,580,593. This is approximately a 49.0% increase compared to the estimated FY 2027 appropriation of \$3,207,190. The increase would fund seven new instructors, two mental health counselors, a new deputy director

position, increased salary and benefits for current full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, and increased operational costs, among other budget items.

The Commission shared concerns with the proposed budget as is. The Commission struck the addition of two mental health counselors and the new deputy director position in the proposal, citing lack of quantitative data and justification for these additions.

The Commission will readdress the budget proposal at its continuation meeting.

Future Meetings

Due to extended discussion regarding the FY 2028 budget, certain items on the agenda were not addressed. The Commission will finish discussing September agenda items at a continuation meeting on September 15, held virtually.

The next Commission meeting will be on December 8, 2026.

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