

CHAPTER 47

REHABILITATION AND RELIEF OF BLIND AND DEAF PERSONS

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47.01 Definition of blind. As used in this chapter, blind includes persons visually handicapped, as determined by competent medical authority, with the approval of the department.

47.02 Farms at schools for visually handicapped and deaf. The department shall administer the farms connected with the Wisconsin school for the visually handicapped and the Wisconsin school for the deaf. Farm receipts shall be credited and farm expenditures shall be charged to the appropriation of the department.

47.05 Services to the blind. (1) CREATION. A program of services to the blind is established in the department.

(2) DUTIES. The department shall:

(a) Visit the blind in their homes; investigate their living conditions and home surroundings; give them such instruction and assistance as seems likely to improve their condition, increase their happiness, and make them more useful, self-respecting and self-supporting citizens.

(b) Keep a record showing the cause of their blindness, their physical, mental and financial condition, their capacity for educational and industrial training, and such other facts as seem proper and valuable.

(c) Ameliorate the condition of the aged or helpless blind by promoting visits to their homes for the purpose of instruction and by other methods.

(d) Provide vocational rehabilitation services to blind persons determined by the department to be eligible therefor.

(e) Study the causes of blindness, learn what proportion of these cases were preventable, and adopt and enforce preventive measures.

(f) Supply the county authorities with information which may assist in the administration of aid to blind persons.

(g) Assist the blind in obtaining employment, and for that purpose it may establish an employment agency.

(h) Maintain schools for industrial training and workshops for the employment of blind persons, pay the employes suitable wages and devise means for the distribution of their products. It may provide or pay for temporary lodging and support for pupils or workmen received at such schools and workshops.

(i) Maintain a trade bureau to supply raw materials to the blind at cost and dispose of the finished products by co-operative marketing.

(3) WORKSHOPS. The department shall lease buildings or apartments for workshops and provide them with heat and light and water. The rent and the cost of heat, light and water shall be paid by the state. The department may furnish to workmen in the workshops a limited amount of materials and tools required for their employment.

(4) PRIVATE WORKSHOPS AND REHABILITATION CENTERS. The department may receive and accept gifts and donations, including gifts and donations from persons benefited under this section, which may be offered unconditionally, for the purposes of establishing private, non-profit workshop and rehabilitation facilities for the rehabilitation of visually handicapped persons. All moneys received as gifts or donations shall be paid to the state treasurer and shall constitute a special account in the general fund to be used under the direction of the department for the vocational rehabilitation of persons qualifying for this purpose. A full report of such gifts and donations, together with the names of the donors, the amounts contributed by each and all disbursements therefrom shall be included in the annual report of the department.

47.06 Trainees; workshop and schools; transportation; board. The department may provide means of instruction in a workshop or school to any blind residents of the state who desire to learn a trade; and by rule may provide for or make a reasonable allowance for the board of indigent blind persons attending the workshop who are not residents of the city of

Milwaukee, for a reasonable time so as to enable them to learn a trade and become self-supporting. The department may also provide means of transportation from any point within the state for any indigent blind person who is a resident of the state and who desires to avail himself of the privileges of the workshop, schools and other facilities and services of the department.

47.07 "Blind-made" goods. (1) No person shall represent that a product or service is "blind-made" unless the manufacturer employs blind persons to an extent constituting not less than 75 per cent of the total hours worked by personnel engaged in the direct labor of production of blind-made products, or services. Direct labor production shall mean all work required for the preparation, processing, assembling and packing but not including supervision, administration, inspection and shipping or the production of the materials from which the finished product is manufactured.

(2) No person shall sell, distribute or exhibit any product which purports or is advertised to be "blind-made" unless there is attached thereto a label furnished by the department.

(3) The department shall prepare a label which shall be attached to blind-made products and which shall provide for a certification thereon that the product is "blind-made". If such article is manufactured in this state, the manufacturer shall obtain the label, affix it to the product and complete the certification. If such product is manufactured outside this state, the seller in this state shall obtain such label or stamp, affix it to the product and complete the certification. The department shall furnish these labels to vendors of blind-made products at a price covering the cost of producing such labels.

(4) Any person who attaches a "blind-made" label to any product not meeting the requirements of sub. (1) shall be subject to penalty under sub. (6).

(5) Complaints of violation of this section shall be made to the department which shall investigate any such complaints and, when justified, refer the complaint for prosecution to the district attorney of the county where the alleged violation occurred.

(6) Any person violating this section shall be fined not more than \$500 or imprisoned not more than one year or both.

47.08 Business enterprises program; concessions and stands. The department may establish a business enterprise program for the blind. In connection therewith, the department may own, lease, manage, supervise and

operate vending stands and other business enterprises for the use or benefit of blind persons in federal, state, private and other buildings. The share of the supervisory and other expenses of this program to be charged to each enterprise shall not exceed 3% of the gross receipts of such enterprise. The ultimate objective of this program shall be to enable blind persons to own and operate their own business enterprises. To this end whenever the blind person is able to pay for his equipment and stock, the department shall sell it to him at depreciated cost. The department, however, is not required to consummate such a sale until the blind person has operated the concession under department supervision for one year. The contract between the department and the blind purchaser shall stipulate that, in the event of a subsequent resale or in the event of the death of the blind purchaser, the department shall have the option of repurchasing the enterprise, together with all its assets, at depreciated cost, such option to be exercised within 90 days after notice. It shall further stipulate that if, at the expiration of any term of lease, the lessor considers the blind lessee to be unsatisfactory, the latter shall resell to the department at depreciated cost. In such event, the department shall select another blind operator as lessee.

47.09 State concessions; blind persons.

The department may establish, maintain and continue to maintain concession stands in the state capitol, the state office building, the Wisconsin general hospital, and in all new state buildings, other than correctional, mental or educational institutions, to be operated by blind persons chosen and supervised by the department. Upon consent of the custodian of the building, the operator of the stand may also place vending machines in other locations in each of said buildings. During any period in which the department deems that a concession stand would not be profitable in any new state building, other than an educational, a correctional, or mental institution, the custodian of such building shall give preference to blind operators of merchandise vending machines. If no blind operators of merchandise vending machines are available, the department may itself place vending machines in such new state buildings, other than correctional, mental or educational institutions. In the latter case, the profit from such vending machines shall be credited to the department. The blind operators of concession stands in all state buildings, other than correctional, mental or educational institutions, shall have the right to purchase the stock and equipment on the terms set forth in s. 47.08, and to operate them independently.

47.095 Council on blindness. The council on blindness shall make recommendations as to procedures and policies affecting any problem of the visually handicapped before the department. The council shall advise on such services, activities, programs, investigations and researches as in its judgment will contribute to the welfare of visually handicapped persons. The department shall seek the advice of and consult with the council on problems and policy changes affecting the visually handicapped in the department's jurisdiction and the council may initiate consultations with the department. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, the council shall have access to files, records

and statistics kept in the department which relate to matters concerning the visually handicapped.

47.10 Cooperation with federal government. The department shall cooperate, pursuant to agreements, with the federal government in carrying out the purposes of any federal statutes pertaining to vocational rehabilitation of the blind and is authorized to adopt such methods of administration as are found by the federal government to be necessary for the proper and efficient operation of such agreements or plans for vocational rehabilitation of the blind and to comply with such conditions as are necessary to secure the full benefits of such federal statutes.