

BALANCE for Blind Adults

JOB POSTING

Celebrating 30 years, BALANCE provides specialized support for people who are blind or partially sighted in the City of Toronto, including customized and individualized vision rehabilitation services and community access facilitation.

With a new 4 year strategic plan in place, BALANCE is poised to deliver more comprehensive services to a wider group of participants than ever before. Serving adults aged 16+, BALANCE is funded through the Toronto Central Local Health Integrated Network, and also receives donations to support special projects and program enhancements. BALANCE specializes in services to people with other special needs in addition to blindness or visual impairment.

For more information, please visit [www.balancefba.org](http://www.balancefba.org)

**Date:**

June 16, 2016

**Job Title:**

Orientation and Mobility Instructor/Independent Living Skills Instructor (DUAL preferred, O/M Instructor priority)

**Term:**

One year contract, Full-time (maternity leave)

**Location:**

Office is located on the Bloor subway line at Dundas West station. Work is itinerant with clients living in the City of Toronto.

**Summary:**

**Orientation and mobility is the ability to move safely and independently through/within the environment. Independent Living skills Instructors teach activities of daily living skills, adaptations and strategies/techniques with the development of home and personal management, independence, communications/basic technology, indoor orientation, and leisure activities**

Orientation & Mobility Instructors (60% FTE) teach, on a one-to-one basis, a set of specific indoor and outdoor travel skills to be used in a variety of environments, both familiar and unfamiliar, so that participants can move safely, maintain orientation and have independent mobility. The goals set and skills taught are agreed upon by instructor and participant depending on personal mental and physical limitations, ability to learn, the living situations, current and anticipated future travel needs and on other disabilities or circumstances that may influence, affect travel abilities or goals. An O&M instructor facilitates the process of utilizing sensory information to establish and maintain one’s position in the environment.

O&M instructors teach awareness of the physical environment using travel situations and exercises with and without use of the mobility cane. They have knowledge of adaptive mobility systems, methods and techniques to teach O&M skills.

O&M instructors instruct participants in the development of skills and knowledge that enable them to travel independently, according to their assessed needs and personal IPPs.

The ILS instructor (40% FTE) teaches concepts, skills and techniques necessary for a person with a visual impairment to select and use assistive technology and or independent living skills to live safely, efficiently, independently and with confidence. Instruction is based on the individual’s assessment, evaluation, and Individual Program Plan (IPP)

A BALANCE ILS instructor provides instruction in home and personal management, selection and use of assistive technology, activities of daily living and leisure, indoor orientation skills and communication techniques to develop self advocacy skills.

The O&M instructor is expect to **teach**:

* Use of senses: improve sense of touch, co-ordination, motor skills
* concept development (body imagery, laterality, temporal, body image)
* spatial awareness concepts (environmental)
* sensory development /perception (sensory training, echo location, sensory awareness, sensory stimulation, use of sensory and motor skills together, gross and fine motor skills related to independent travel)

The O&M instructor is expected to **assess** the O&M needs of visually impaired people and provide direct instructional services to participants in accordance with the evaluation

* develop goals and objectives to meet participant needs
* ability to assess individual needs, establish realistic and appropriate goals and objectives to design and implement a program for each participant
* Evaluate O&M skills and related vision specific needs such as sensory, cognitive, social, motor and self help skills

The O&M Instructor **plans, and implements** programs (program development)

* Develop, implement individualized O&M instructional program based on assessment
* Knowledge of IPP procedures and goals and objectives development, assessment organization, planning and program evaluation strategies
* Provide consultation, support services, in service training, public education to other agency personnel, family, friends and community at large
* Develop in each participant a level of safe travel skills to better enable them to live as independently as possible
* Prepare and use equipment and materials such as tactile maps, models, distance low vision devices, adaptive mobility devices, and long canes for the development of O&M skills
* Teach to travel with proficiency, safety, independence and confidence in familiar and unfamiliar, indoor/outdoor environments

The ILS Instructor is expected to:

* Conduct ILS assessments and evaluations focusing on long/short term needs/goals which include strengths, skills of participant and an estimation of length/frequency of instruction necessary to meet identified needs
* Plan, create, develop, implement and organize individualized program plans (IPPs) including goals and objectives, lessons, and regular monitoring assessments based on identified student needs. Develop, implement and maintain a regular instruction schedule for each participant
* Facilitate to provide and co-ordinate community based individualized instruction using self management and problem solving skills
* Teach skills and techniques by providing ILS instruction to learn
* Adaptive techniques and skills needed for independent living in personal, household management, communications, education, leisure activities, orientation and movement in immediate environment
* Selection and use of low vision devices and techniques
* Teach participant/family psychosocial adjustment to impaired vision
* Transferable personal management, home management, communication, and other skills appropriate to the individual
* Monitor and report participant progress using IPP and team input
* Manage and organize information such as assessment, lesson report, IPPs, and other data
* Use communication and team work to consult, educate, and provide in service training to BALANCE staff, other agencies, public, employers, family, friends etc.

**Job Requirements mental demands/physical demands/environmental factors**

* Interpersonal skills that use tact, patience, courtesy and respect
* Knowledge of current methodologies and techniques associated with instructing the blind and visually impaired person
* Independently analyze situations accurately and adopt an effective course of actions
* Work independently with little supervision
* The O&M instructors at BALANCE are required to build community access facilitation approaches into their work in orientation and mobility

**Working conditions**

* Daily travel on public transit
* Work out of doors
* Able to travel out of doors in inclement weather
* Physically fit
* Ability to think clearly in stressful situations
* Flexibility in work, instructional schedule
* Work flexible hours, depending on the needs of the clients

**Qualifications: (Education, Training, Experience)**

**Knowledge and Skill Requirements**

* Knowledge of adult education principles
* Demonstrated understanding of vision loss in adults
* Excellent communications and interpersonal skills
* Ability to build trusting relationships with participants
* Ability to utilize computer and software programs, in particular Microsoft Office Suite.
* Excellent facilitation skills both in groups and individual situations
* Good organization and time management skills.

**Education and Experience**

* Graduate of an approved program in Orientation and Mobility, and Vision Rehabilitation Teaching, with certificates, diplomas or degrees; as appropriate (O/M only requires relevant certificate only)
* 1 year experience with blind or visually impaired adults preferred
* A valid driver’s license is preferred
* Training related to working with adults with additional vulnerabilities and/or in the social determinants of health, is an asset
* Social support services experience is an asset

**Work Environment**

* Willingness to work flexible hours
* Willingness to work in a variety of settings-client home, workplace, transit stations, restaurants, recreational facilities, grocery stores, shopping malls, etc.
* Travel is required within the city of Toronto

Closing Date for Applications:  July 8, 2016

Please send cover letter and resume, and mention how you learned of this position, to: info@balancefba.org.

BALANCE strives to establish and maintain an inclusive workplace and believes that the diversity of our workforce is an invaluable asset. BALANCE is committed to following recruitment and selection practices based on merit, transparency, accessibility and inclusion ensuring that all candidates are given a fair opportunity for employment with BALANCE.

We thank all applicants for their interest in BALANCE, however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted, after the due date for applications.