

An Impact Analysis of the Industries for the Blind of New York State & its Affiliated Agencies

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I. Executive Summary

This report presents an assessment of the economic and quality-of-life impacts leveraged by the Industries for the Blind of New York State and its eight affiliated agencies in offering rehabilitation services alongside employment opportunities for individuals who are blind. The primary role of IBNYS is to facilitate New York State’s “Preferred Source Program,” which mandates that state agencies and local subdivisions purchase, where available, commodities "produced, manufactured or assembled" by New Yorkers who are blind. It does this by partnering with a network of qualified manufacturing and service operations across the state that employ individuals who are blind to produce goods and services.

The University at Buffalo Regional Institute, a research and public policy center, was commissioned by IBNYS to assess the statewide economic impact of the IBNYS program in terms of job creation, sales revenues from the production of goods and services, the attraction of new dollars to the state, local business support, and lower costs of rehabilitation for New Yorkers who are blind. The study also projects future employment and economic impacts based on IBNYS’s goal to double the employment of individuals who are blind at its affiliated agencies through the growth of selected products and services, and greater adherence to New York State’s preferred source law.

This assessment is supplemented by a series of “Behind the Numbers” profiles of agency employees, which reveal the diverse quality-of-life impacts experienced by individuals who are blind through opportunities for meaningful employment, career advancement and economic independence.

Among the study’s key findings:

Eight nonprofit organizations across New York State located in Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo, Brooklyn, Elmira, New York City, Rochester and Utica, partner with IBNYS to provide employment opportunities for New Yorkers who are blind through the production and sale of goods and services.

IBNYS agencies directly create jobs for 885 workers, 440 of whom are blind. A significant number of these employees are women and racial and ethnic minorities, suggesting the impact these agencies have on populations that have traditionally faced employment barriers.

These employees work in a great variety of positions, ranging from machine operators and packing clerks to call center representatives and supervisors.

These jobs pay an average hourly wage of \$10.16, about 40 percent higher than the New York State minimum wage, and come with basic benefits including health, dental, pension, vacation and sick time.

Employees receive vocational rehabilitation and training that not only allows them to work and earn their way in life but offers employment mobility. Advancement within agencies is common, and 7 percent of employees who are blind eventually obtain jobs outside the agency in the public or private sectors.

IBNYS agencies generated \$88.3 million in sales last year from over 25,000 orders for 240 different goods and services.

About 60 percent of total sales come from the federal government and other out-of-state buyers, representing new dollars funneled into the New York State economy.

Top-selling goods are office supplies (copy paper, manila file folders, toner cartridges, self-stick notepads), cleaning products (mops, brooms), and work clothing (safety vests, combat shirts, jerseys, textiles). Services in highest demand include switchboard operations, mailbag sorting services, contact center operations and computer tech-

Behind the Numbers: The Human Impact of IBNYS

This report presents case studies of 14 employees of IBNYS agencies, documenting the human impact of opportunities for meaningful employment. Ranging from packers and switchboard operators to supervisors and vice presidents, these employees have been able to support their families, live independently and leverage career advancement opportunities. Most importantly, they are more confident in their abilities and derive a significant sense of satisfaction from the opportunity to work, grow and be productive members of society.

nology training.

Last year, IBNYS agencies purchased supplies from 211 New York State-based businesses, supporting economic growth and employment in their local communities and across the state.

The total annual economic impact of these eight agencies on New York State is \$168 million, reflecting \$88.3 million in direct sales as well as \$80 million in spinoff economic activity in related industries. Put another way, \$100 in sales of blind-made goods and services supports \$90 in additional business and household spending across New York State.

This economic activity supported approximately 266 full and part-time jobs in New York State, above and beyond the 885 employed directly by the eight IBNYS agencies.

The IBNYS model of providing rehabilitation services and vocational training to individuals who are blind in direct support of their employment with the agency contributes to lower per-person rehabilitation costs, some of which are supported by state and federal taxpayer dollars. The per-person cost of rehabilitation at IBNYS agencies averaged \$4,300, reflecting a significant level of service costs offset by the sale of blind-made goods and services.

By 2016, IBNYS seeks to double the number of individuals who are blind and employed by its affiliates through continued sales growth in selected product and service lines, and greater adherence to New York State's preferred source law. The realization of this goal would translate into a 440 new jobs for New Yorkers who are blind at IBNYS agencies.

Such employment growth would support an additional \$8 million in wage income for individuals who are blind across the state and higher average wages based on growth in selected service sectors.

Sales of blind-made goods and services are also projected to more than double to \$186 million over the next five years, resulting in a \$355 million overall state economic impact, up from IBNYS' current impact of \$168 million.

II. Introduction

a. Context for action

There are 362,400 New Yorkers who are blind or visually disabled, about half of which, or 169,000, are of working age. This population, however, faces significant employment barriers. Nearly two in three of those who are of working age are unemployed, and those who are employed are more likely to work only part-time than is the overall population in New York State. As a consequence, individuals who are blind are relatively poor, with 25 percent living in poverty and half within 200 percent of the federal poverty level. This is double or more the rates of impoverishment among nondisabled persons. While these numbers represent an improvement from decades past, there is still tremendous work to be done to increase prospects for sustainable employment, economic self-sufficiency and independence for individuals who are blind in New York State.

Since 1946, Industries for the Blind of New York State (IBNYS) has worked to provide meaningful employment opportunities to individuals who are blind by way of a more than sixty-year-old state law. New York State's "Preferred Source Program" mandates that state agencies and local subdivisions purchase, where available, commodities "produced, manufactured or assembled" by New Yorkers who are blind. IBNYS is the state-designated clearinghouse for this program, providing business development, marketing and customer rela-

tions support to a network of qualified manufacturing and service operations across the state offering employment opportunities along with vocational and related rehabilitative support. Today, these eight agencies affiliated with IBNYS employ hundreds of individuals who are blind and report tens of millions of dollars in annual sales, exerting a powerful impact on the state economy by creating jobs, supporting local businesses and expanding the tax base. Meanwhile, New Yorkers who are blind are given greater opportunities for economic security, career advancement and an improved quality of life.

Yet IBNYS sees significant untapped potential in the program, as many agencies subject to the preferred source law are simply unaware of the program or have inaccurate perceptions of the cost and convenience of purchasing goods and services from IBNYS affiliates. Moreover, IBNYS has identified expansion opportunities within strategic industries and product lines, including office supplies, contact center services and computer training. Through greater enforcement of the preferred source program and the pursuit of growth opportunities IBNYS has set a goal of doubling employment of individuals who are blind at its affiliated agencies within five years.

New York State's Preferred Source Program

More than 60 years ago, New York State passed groundbreaking legislation to improve economic opportunities for New Yorkers who are blind, a population that has historically encountered significant barriers to employment and economic independence.

The state's **Preferred Source Program**, currently codified in **NYS Finance Law §162**, requires state agencies, political subdivisions, school districts, fire protection districts and public benefit corporations to purchase from "approved charitable non-profit making agencies for the blind" when "commodities are available in the form, function and utility" needed. These goods are then exempt from the competitive procurement process, and must be competitively priced under the review of the NYS Commissioner of General Services.

The federal government provides similar opportunities through the **Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act (1938)**, which governs the **AbilityOne program**. Production and service contracts associated with this federal program are a significant source of work at agencies employing New Yorkers who are blind.

b. Project scope

In support of this goal, IBNYS seeks to expand awareness of its program and its associated economic benefits among policy leaders, state agencies and other public stakeholders. Toward this end, IBNYS commissioned the University at Buffalo Regional Institute, a research and policy center within the state's largest public research university, to measure the impact of IBNYS and its eight affiliated agencies on the state economy, as well as the related benefits associated with improved economic security, independence and quality of life for New Yorkers who are blind. This report presents these impacts across four categories:

Workforce development as measured by the number of jobs created by these agencies, particularly for individuals who are blind, and the wages, benefits, vocational training and career advancement opportunities associated with such employment.

Economic output channeled into the state economy through the production and sale of a diverse range of goods and services (from clothing and cleaning supplies to contact centers and green technology).

Related economic benefits including the lower cost of rehabilitation of individuals who are blind and the support of local businesses through collaboration and partnerships with IBNYS's affiliated agencies.

Projected economic impacts associated with the doubling of the employment of individuals who are blind at IBNYS agencies by 2016.

c. What went into this report

A range of data sources and research methods were employed to assess the impacts generated by the eight affiliated agencies of IBNYS.* Data on agency employment and wages, as well as revenues and sales trends related to preferred source products and services, were collected via a two-page **agency questionnaire** (Appendix E) ad-

Agencies Affiliated with IBNYS

Albany

Northeastern Association of the Blind at Albany

Binghamton

Association for Vision Rehabilitation and Employment, Inc.

Brooklyn

New York City Industries for the Blind, Inc.

Buffalo

Olmsted Center for Sight

Elmira

Southern Tier Association for the Visually Impaired

New York City

VISIONS/Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Rochester

Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired — Goodwill Industries, Inc.

Utica

Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired

ministered by the UB Regional Institute during summer 2011. Additional detail on agency employment, wages and sales were culled from the agencies' **annual labor reports**. The total economic contribution of IBNYS agencies to New York State, including projected impacts based on IBNYS's goal to double blind employment, was calculated using **IMPLAN (IMPact analysis for PLANning)**, a widely used input-output model that allows for the estimation of multipliers and total impacts in terms of jobs, wages and economic output resulting from a change in demand for particular services within a local community or state. The modeling system incorporates 2009 county-level data for over 500 industry sectors. The U.S. Census' 2009 American Community Survey supported this report's analyses of the overall employment picture and socioeconomic status of blind or visually impaired populations in New York State.

*IBNYS's affiliate in New York City, VISIONS/Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired, recently began participating in the preferred source program but did not employ any individuals who are blind in a production capacity at the time of this study. The agency has been included in this study to the extent possible.

This report's "Behind the Numbers" case studies documenting the impact of IBNYS on the lives of individuals were informed by **telephone interviews with 14 agency employees**, as well as agency annual reports, newsletters and websites containing background information on these employees. Agency directors and staff provided assistance in the identification of agency employees as candidates for these case studies, as well as additional information on agency employees, rehabilitative programs, products and services.

"Behind the Numbers"

Because numbers tell only part of the story, this report also documents the impacts of the IBNYS program on the lives of individuals—from the sense of satisfaction and confidence that comes from meaningful employment to greater economic independence and a higher quality of life. These impacts are conveyed through profiles of 14 agency employees that appear throughout the report

Behind the Numbers: Randy Sanchez

Age: 26 **Vision Status:** Legally blind since age 14 from keratoconus

Agency: New York City Industries for the Blind

Position: Assistant supervisor, Plastics and Needle Craft Department and Military Apparel Sewing Division

His Story: Randy Sanchez struggled in school after losing his vision at age 14 and eventually had to drop out. He quickly became restless depending on his family, and was eager to work. After gaining his high school equivalency diploma he was referred to NYCIB, and at age 23 got



"This job has really helped my confidence, to say, 'I can do this.' You've got to start somewhere. This is my first step."

his first job. Today, two years later, he provides core support to two busy departments and was recently promoted to assistant supervisor. "It has opened my eyes to the job market and what it requires. It got my feet wet. He adds: "This job has really helped my confidence, to say, 'I can do this.'" He's also saved his earnings to rent his own apartment. Not one to sit still, Randy is already planning his next moves, which include computer training and going to college while maintaining his job at NYCIB. "That's something I am determined to do," he said. While he is proud of what he has accomplished, he says he is inspired daily by those around him who face even greater challenges. "I work with people who are totally blind and they take the trains by themselves. That's just amazing."

III. Providing Opportunities for Employment and Career Growth for New Yorkers Who Are Blind

a. Employing a disenfranchised population

Low employment rates for individuals who are blind is a significant challenge. In New York State, more than 60 percent of those who are blind are without work, compared to 25 percent of those without a disability. This is in line with nationwide trends.

There are many factors behind employment barriers for individuals who are blind. There is the simple factor of bias, as well as an employer’s (or an employee’s) perception of the challenges associated with the unique needs of an employee who is blind, from transportation and getting around the office to securing adaptive equipment and devices and using a computer. Individuals who are blind, some of whom may have only recently lost their sight due to disease or injury, often need vocational rehabilitation to learn how to meet job demands in new ways. For oth-

ers, blindness isn’t their only disability and they may have physical limitations in carrying out the job’s tasks and responsibilities.

Many of those who are blind become so frustrated with the challenges of finding and maintaining a job that they opt out of the workforce and become reliant on public assistance or the support of their families. Moreover, many of those who are employed work only part-time. As a result, New Yorkers who are blind face harsh economic realities, with more than one in four living in poverty and

New Yorkers who are blind and visually disabled are economically disadvantaged on many fronts, being less likely to have a job and more likely to work just part time and live in or near poverty.

	% Age 18-64 Employed	% Age 18-64 Employed Part-Time (among those who are working)	% Population Living in Poverty	% Population Living Within 200% of Poverty
Individuals who are blind or visually disabled	37%	42%	26%	51%
Individuals with no disability	74%	34%	11%	25%

Source: 2009 American Community Survey



Behind the Numbers: Mariann Graley

Age: 54

Vision Status: Legally blind due to retinitis pigmentosa

Agency: Southern Tier Association for the Visually Impaired (Elmira)

Position: Cleaning, assembly and packaging of recycled printer toner cartridges

Her Story: Mariann Graley was born with retinitis pigmentosa, a condition which worsens over time. It wasn’t until her 30s that she began to experience significant challenges with work. She quit her job at a nursing home because she feared she wouldn’t be able to get to a patient if

“This job gives me a sense of self-worth. It’s nice to know that I can get up and come to work and have a job.”

she had to walk between buildings at night. She couldn’t work the cash register at another job. That all changed in 2000, when she joined STAVI to support its new operation in recycling printer toner cartridges (she had also worked with the agency in the 1990s when it produced textiles). With a second income, she and her husband were able to support their children and live comfortably. Yet Mariann says the job provides much more than a stable income. “This job gives me a sense of self-worth. It’s nice to know that I can get up and come to work and have a job.” It’s also a support network. “This is my safety net. I walk in here and I feel comfortable,” she said, adding that she and her coworkers help each other manage the challenges of daily life, and share information on resources and the latest assistive technologies.

Nearly 900 jobs are created by IBNYS agencies.

- 50% are filled by individuals who are blind
- 68% are woman and/or minorities

over half within 200 percent of the poverty level. Beyond financial hardships, the lack of meaningful and gainful employment contributes to a lowered sense of self-worth.

Yet, at IBNYS agencies, individuals who are blind are the norm and account for the majority of workers. Together, IBNYS agencies employ 440 individuals who are blind, or about half of the 885 total agency employees. This total includes workers dedicated to the production of goods and services as well as those indirectly supporting these operations and agency programs such as rehabili-

tation.

Agency employees who are blind account for the overwhelming majority—81 percent—of the labor hours expended to produce preferred source goods and services, making it clear that New York State’s preferred source law generates jobs that are filled primarily by New Yorkers who are blind. Women and racial and ethnic minorities, including immigrants, who are blind are a significant part of the workforce at these IBNYS agencies, accounting for 68 percent of total agency employment, on average. At three of the eight agencies, women and minorities account for between 70 percent and 96 percent of workers. Several agencies employ a significant number of immigrants and minorities who face language barriers.

For many of those employed by agencies affiliated with IBNYS, their job has been a fulfilling entry to the working world (**Behind the Numbers: Randy Sanchez**), and for others a place to turn to for meaningful work after strug-



Behind the Numbers: Neil Parks

Age: 59

Vision Status: Legally blind due to retinopathy of prematurity

Agency: Northeastern Association of the Blind at Albany

Position: Machinist on the safety vest line

His Story: Neil Parks loves to work. “I really do,” says the 59-year-old machinist for NABA. So he was particularly hit hard when he lost his job of 32 years as an independent contractor operating newsstands in various state and federal office buildings, part of the business enterprise program of the

New York State Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped. “It was the worst feeling. I just got so bored.” Determined to get back to work, he brushed up his resume, took a computer training course through the commission and applied for a job with NABA. “I got hired immediately.” Since then, he hasn’t looked back. “I love what I am doing. We’re a good team.” Neil likes to spread that positive attitude around the office. “I try to encourage people, just to be a positive influence,” he said, adding that he helps to train some of the new hires. While most at his age might be eagerly anticipating their retirement years, Neil isn’t in any hurry. “I’m 59, but I’ll keep working as long as I can.”

“I’m 59, but I’ll keep working as long as I can.”

gling to maintain employment (**Behind the Numbers: Mariann Graley, Neil Parks**). For those who lost their sight later in life, these jobs offer the opportunity to continue doing what they love or learn new skills (**Behind the Numbers: Mecca Meeks**).

b. Supporting economic independence through sustainable employment

While the majority of individuals who are blind in New York State are out of work and likely fully dependent on public assistance, the eight agencies affiliated with IBNYS paid \$8 million in wages to 440 New Yorkers who are blind in 2010. From packers and sorters to customer service representatives and team supervisors, these diverse jobs pay sustainable wages and offer significant benefits. Those employed in the direct production of goods and services earn an average of \$10.16 per hour, or just over \$21,000 annually, 40 percent higher than the state's mini-

IBNYS agencies paid \$21 million in wages to New Yorkers in 2010.

\$8 million was paid to workers who are blind earning 40% above minimum wages, on average

mum wage of \$7.25 per hour. The benefits packages associated with these jobs include health insurance, prescription coverage, vacation time, paid holidays, sick time and, in most cases, pensions and dental coverage. From the perspective of these employees, the income can mean the difference between a life of economic insecurity and a comfortable living, while providing the capacity to live independently, support their families and even send their children to college (**Behind the Numbers: Lay Thaw Shwe, Gary Wagner**).

Behind the Numbers: Mecca Meeks

Age: 31 **Vision Status:** Legally blind since age 24 due to pseudotumor cerebri

Agency: Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ABVI) - Goodwill Industries, Inc. (Rochester)

Position: Fulfillment clerk for document packaging

His Story: After losing his sight seven years ago due to a condition called pseudotumor cerebri, which involves the sudden expansion of the brain and swelling of the optic nerve, Mecca Meeks shut himself off from life. "There was a time I didn't want to go outside and deal with normal life," he said. But Mecca was determined to work, so he came to ABVI in 2009, five years after his vision loss, to get started. First, he took advantage of training services available through ABVI, including its Career & Training program focusing on computer skills and, to maintain his independence at home and in the community, orientation and mobility training and rehabilitation. He had requested to work in shipping and receiving, where he gained experience in the years before his vision loss, and was immediately placed on its production line for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Lead contract, packaging documents and notepads. Mecca is proud of how far he's come—one day not too long ago paralyzed by fear and hopelessness, today aspiring to a supervisory role at ABVI. "This job made me feel whole again. It opened me up and made me want to get involved. The only problem I have is my sight, and I can get past this."



"This job made me feel whole again. It opened me up and made me want to get involved."

c. Building opportunities for career advancement

Meaningful employment, however, goes beyond wages and benefits—it is also about opportunities to learn new skills, experience different challenges and realize career growth and advancement. That’s why vocational training, skills development and continuing education are a core part of the job for many of those employed by agencies affiliated with IBNYS.

Depending on the circumstances surrounding their vision loss, employees receive varying degrees of vocational rehabilitation, which is fundamental to nearly every job. These services include training in adaptive and supportive technologies, as well as rehabilitation for safe mobility, transportation, financial management and computer literacy. Upward mobility is cultivated through targeted skills development, from specialized manufacturing processes to customer service and man-

agement training. For instance, New York City Industries for the Blind actively recruits and trains employees who are blind for highly skilled sewing positions in support of its military textile manufacturing business, while the agency offers a production supervisory training program for those seeking greater responsibility.

Agencies also cross-train employees for different product lines and services, while mentoring and job shadowing programs expose employees to career growth possibilities. The *Career Paths* program at Utica’s Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired offers such services to both current employees (**Behind the Numbers: Victor Huitron**), and even its teen clients just beginning to form career aspirations. The Association for Vision Rehabilitation and Employment in Binghamton paves the way for upward mobility by allowing employees to job shadow across departments, including administration and communications. It also connects its employees to training programs outside the agency, to build



Behind the Numbers: Lay Thaw Shwe

Age: 43

Vision Status: Legally blind since birth due to ocular histoplasmosis syndrome with macular scarring

Agency: Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (Utica)

Position: Sewing department producing linens, towels and other textiles

Her Story: Lay Thaw Shwe and her family landed in Utica in 2006 after spending 10 years in the Tham Hin Refugee Camp in Thailand, for ethnic Karenni fleeing violence and persecution in their native Burma. The Mohawk Valley Center for Refugees in

Utica referred her to CABVI in 2007, where she received vocational and mobility training and soon after began work in the agency’s sewing department, making towels, sheets and linens. Since then, she has been her family’s sole breadwinner, supporting her husband, who cannot work because of a physical disability, and four children ages 10 to 23. Just this year she sent her son off to college. Lay Thaw’s journey from Burma has been long and hard, but CABVI has given her and her family the chance for a more hopeful path. “When I was in Burma, no one cared about me or anyone who is visually impaired,” she said, adding that in her country family is the only source of support and care for those living with blindness. “When I came here, I got a good job. It’s been very good for my family. My children have a chance to go to school, and I can support my family.” On top of this, she has a passion for her work. “I love sewing,” she says.

“My children have a chance to go to school, and I can support my family.”

supervisory or management-level skills, for instance
(Behind the Numbers: Nina Bektik-Marerro).

On average, 7 percent of agency employees who are blind take their skills to employers outside the agency. At one, ABVI- Goodwill Industries, Inc., in Rochester, the percentage is five times this rate, or 35 percent, likely due to the diverse range of jobs at the agency and the high demand for these job skills across the broader Finger Lakes labor market. As an example, one ABVI employee is currently working to leverage her customer service skills, honed by her experience within the agency's contact center, to open her own business **(Behind the Numbers: Betty Grice).**

Behind the Numbers: Gary Wagner

Age: 44 **Vision Status:** Legally blind due to retinitis pigmentosa

Agency: Olmsted Center for Sight (Buffalo)

Position: Switchboard operator for the Veterans Affairs Hospital in Buffalo

His Story: Gary Wagner has always enjoyed working hard and, as a result, opportunities for advancement have always come his way. That's why losing his job as a supermarket manager several years ago was such a difficult experience. "It was very stressful. There just wasn't anything I could do." He remembered as a kid seeing signs for what was then the Blind Association of Western New York, and decided to drop by to see how they could help. Five years later he is a full-time switchboard operator at the Veterans Affairs Hospital in Buffalo, a job for which he underwent extensive training to learn medical terminology, emergency procedures and the inner workings of this complex operation. Along with his wife, Gary has been able to support his three children, and just sent his son off to an Ivy League college. "Without Olmsted, I have no idea where I would be." Beyond a solid career, Olmsted has opened up a whole host of other opportunities for Gary. A voracious reader, he had essentially given up on this hobby until Olmsted connected him to a range of assistive technologies and talking books. Next on his agenda? Returning to school for a college degree.

"I appreciate having a job—and it's not just something that was created for me just because I am blind."



IV. Fueling the Economy of New York State

a. Generating sales revenue

IBNYS-affiliated agencies supply state and federal government agencies and commercial clients with 240 different goods and services. These products range from office supplies to cleaning products to safety vests, while services include contact centers, switchboard operations, sorting and computer training. In 2010, sales of these goods and services totaled \$88.3 million. While services are among the fastest growing business segments for many of these agencies, goods production still dominates overall sales, accounting for approximately 95 percent of total sales revenues last year.

More than half this total, or \$52 million, was generated by sales to federal agencies through the AbilityOne program, as well as contracts with out-of-state commercial clients. These dollars represent new economic output for the state economy—dollars that likely would be lost to other states if not for these agencies and the services and products they offer.

About two out of every five dollars of agency sales reve-

nues, on average, come from New York State and its local governments. For several agencies, state and local government represent less than one-fifth of total sales volume, despite the fact that these agencies offer high-demand product lines for businesses, such as copy paper, self-stick notes and janitorial cleaning products. These numbers suggest significant opportunities to expand product and service contracts with state and local government.

b. Providing products and services for government and business

The diversity of products and services offered by IBNYS affiliates reflects a significant level of innovation in product line development to leverage growth opportunities and better respond to client demand. Within the past eight years, New York City Industries for the Blind has added a foreign mailbag sorting service and a military textile manufacturing division (**Behind the Numbers: Daniel Rodriguez**). Binghamton's Association for Vision Rehabilitation

Behind the Numbers: Nina Bektic-Marerro

Age: 26 **Vision Status:** Legally blind due to damaged optic nerves

Agency: Association for Vision Rehabilitation and Employment (Binghamton)

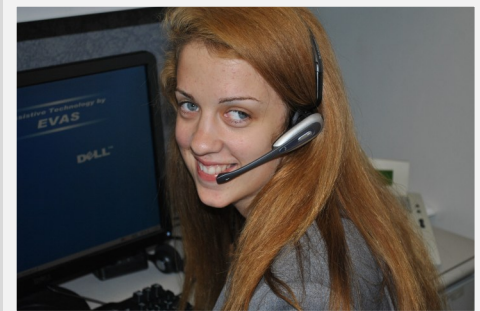
Position: Supervisor for switchboard operation at the Bronx Veteran's Administration (VA) Medical Center in New York

Her Story: In an interview about her life story, Nina Bektic-Marerro humbly turns the conversation to her staff at the Bronx VA. "I have an amazing staff. They are all so dedicated to what they do," she says. But there's no denying that Nina's story is nothing short of inspirational. At age 26, she has endured more hardship, and accomplished more, than most will in a lifetime. She grew up in Sarajevo during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, for many years living as a refugee. At age 14, benign brain tumors and hydrocephalus damaged her optic nerves. She recently lost her husband and is now the single mother of a young son. Yet since joining AVRE in 2008, she has been on the fast-track of personal and professional growth. She was quickly promoted to a supervisory position, a role in which she thrives. This winner of the 2011 National Industries for the Blind Milton J. Samuelson Career Achievement Award is now taking NIB's Effective Supervision training and will soon complete her master's degree in public administration. Referring to her education and training, she says, "I

"As a supervisor, I have authority to make things better. I feel more satisfied."

come to work and try to make it happen. It's really a beautiful thing that everything in my life ties together."

And she still finds time to advocate for the rights of individuals with disabilities on her college campus and for New York's Serbian community. She's not planning on slowing down. Next on her list is earning her PhD, and she will soon be publishing a book on her life experiences, *The Physiology of Hardship: If It's Not One Thing—It's Another*.



and Employment has expanded with several new product lines, including convenience pack copy paper, file folders and various hair care, cleaning and kitting projects for the military and New York State government (**Behind the Numbers: Ken Fernald**). These agencies also offer their products in a wide range of colors and sizes to meet customer specifications.

For business generated through IBNYS and New York State’s preferred source program, top-selling products include office supplies ranging from copy paper to toner cartridges, work clothing such as safety vests and jerseys, and supplies including exam gloves for the Transportation Security Administration, which are delivered to airports throughout the country. As one example of the important production role these agencies play for government and private sector clients, the Northeastern Association for the Blind at Albany is a major supplier of work clothing and the largest producer of safety vests in New York State. In 2009 -10, it manufactured 53,000 vests, along with thousands of cases of coveralls (**Behind the Numbers: Charlotte Laramie**).

For the federal government and other out-of-state buyers,

IBNYS affiliates generated \$88 million in sales in 2010

\$52 million	federal government and other out-of-state buyers
\$36 million	New York State and local governments

Top-Selling Products and Services

IBNYS (New York State and local government)

- Office supplies
- Work clothing
- Exam gloves
- Switchboard and call center operations
- Janitorial supplies

AbilityOne (Federal government)

- Armed services apparel
- Cleaning products and supplies
- Switchboard operations
- Mailbag sorting services

Behind the Numbers: Victor Huitron

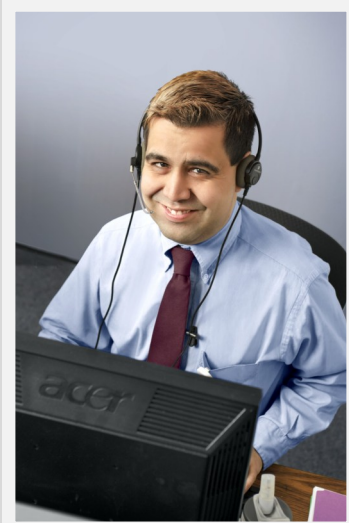
Age: 27 **Vision Status:** Legally blind since birth due to optic nerve atrophy

Agency: Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (Utica)

Position: Bilingual customer service representative for the contact center

His Story: After moving to Utica from California in 2008, Victor Huitron struggled to get on his own two feet. “It was scary at first,” he says, recalling the challenges of finding a place to stay and navigating the winter weather on his own. “I was determined to do this for myself. If you are disabled, you can do things if you put your mind to it.” So he applied to CABVI and started out as a packer on the glove line. With a background in customer service, Victor had his sights set on a job in CABVI’s new contact center. Through the agency’s *Career Path* program, Victor gained related experience as a data entry clerk for the sales and marketing department, while also receiving computer and other vocational training. “It was a great opportunity. It showed me there are a lot things you can do.” Victor would next like to earn his college degree. Although he’s not sure what area of study he’ll pursue, he’s certain of one thing: “I want to experience something bigger.”

“I was determined to do this for myself. If you are disabled, you can do things if you put your mind to it.”



top sales generators are clothing for the armed services, such as combat shirts and military neck tabs, as well as cleaning products, exam gloves and other supplies.

For both state and federal customers, top services are switchboard operations, sorting services and contact centers. For some agencies, adaptive computer technology services represent a sizable component of services provided to state and local government clients. New York City Industries for the Blind’s foreign mailbag sorting service represents one of the largest services provided to the federal government by IBNYS affiliates.

c. Supporting spillover effects for greater overall economic impact

The \$88 million in sales revenues generated by these agencies is just the first tier of economic impacts that accrue to New York State as a result of IBNYS and its affiliates. The production of these goods and services relies on the supply of a range of intermediate goods and services, which contributes to additional levels of economic activity and employment in related industries. Many of these raw

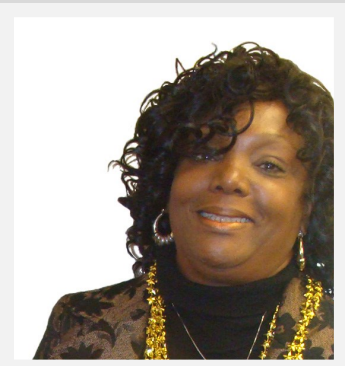
materials and services are purchased from businesses in the local community or in other parts of the state. Last year, IBNYS agencies purchased supplies from approximately 210 New York State-based businesses (see Appendix D), supporting economic growth and employment in their local communities and across the state. Moreover, as agency employees spend their wages in the community on living expenses such as housing, groceries, entertain-

Total Economic Impact of IBNYS Agencies	
Direct product and service sales	\$88.3 M
Secondary sales	\$80.2 M
Total Economic Output	\$168 Million

Source: IBNYS agency reports and IMPLAN

IBNYS agencies support 266 jobs across New York State above and beyond 885 direct employees.

Behind the Numbers: Betty Grice



Age: 48

Vision Status: Legally blind due to scardiosis

Agency: Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ABVI) - Goodwill Industries, Inc. (Rochester)

Position: Contact center representative

Her Story: Betty Grice has a “dream list” and, thanks in large part to ABVI, she’s checked off nearly every item on it: 1) Managing her vision and health; 2) Finding her own apartment; and 3) Getting a job. “I couldn’t have done it without ABVI,” she said, recounting her long journey since suddenly losing her vision eight years ago. “I couldn’t even pour a cup of coffee.” ABVI

helped her locate and get set up in an apartment, navigate public transportation, operate assistive technology and even purchase professional clothing. She’s also come to terms with her vision loss, even though she never knows when the scardiosis, an immunodeficiency disease that attacks the body’s organs—in her case, the eyes—will strike again. In terms of her career with ABVI, she briefly worked in the sewing department before moving into its contact center, where she is able to leverage her 30+ years of customer service experience. The last item on her list is opening her own coffee shop—and she’s almost reached that goal, as she nears completion of an entrepreneurial training program offered by the state’s Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped. “My dream will be complete. I will have accomplished everything that I wanted to accomplish.”

“I couldn’t have done it without ABVI.”

ment and transportation, they support economic activity and jobs in those industries.

In this way, IBNYS agencies support significant levels of additional employment and economic activity in the state. Altogether, the \$88.3 million in sales generated last year by IBNYS agencies yielded nearly \$80 million in additional economic activity for New York State, or a total of \$168 million in economic output. Put another way, \$100 in sales of blind-made goods and services generated \$90 in additional business and household spending across New York State. This economic activity also supported approximately 266 full and part-time jobs across New York State, above and beyond the 885 employed directly by the eight IBNYS agencies.

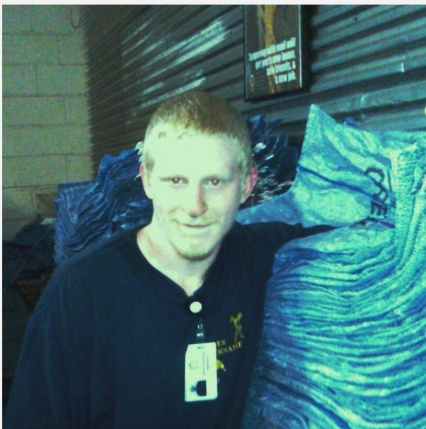
Yet these economic impacts on employment and output do not reflect the significant amount of public savings generated by the employment of New Yorkers who are blind. In addition to paying income taxes, these individuals are also less likely to rely on public programs such as Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid and Medicare. A recent study conducted for the National Industries for the Blind found that for every dollar taxpayers spend on the federal AbilityOne program, \$3.33 is re-

Partnering with businesses in the community

Last year, IBNYS agencies purchased supplies from 210 businesses based in their communities or across the state. When IBNYS agencies rely on local businesses for the supply of goods and services, they create a series of important economic impacts. In addition to direct economic activity, these linkages support operational efficiencies and creative business partnerships. For instance, the Olmsted Center for Sight's shredding and recycling service is based on a partnership with a Buffalo-based record storage company. Olmsted provides the labor for shredding and sorting while the storage company supplies logistics and trucking support (**Behind the Numbers: Frank Pezzimenti**).

Local business partnerships also contribute to agglomeration economies and clusters of related firms for overall economic growth. They help reduce transportation costs for businesses and facilitate the transfer of technologies and innovative processes between firms.

turned to taxpayers in savings and increased tax payments. The study was based on a nationwide survey of individuals who are blind that measured changes in the use of public benefits and federal taxes paid before and after the start of employment.



Behind the Numbers: Daniel Rodriguez

Age: 26

Vision Status: Legally blind since birth

Agency: New York City Industries for the Blind

Position: Foreign mailbag sorting service for U.S. Postal Service

His Story: Daniel Rodriguez's first experiences in the workforce were challenging. "I tried to get jobs, but no one was calling me back," he said, adding that being out of work and dependent on the federal SSI program "just wasn't doing it for me." But Daniel's potential was clear to his managers at NYCIB soon after he joined its military sewing division in 2009. "I went through 90 days of training and learned six machines. I

proved to them I was reliable." And when a higher level job opened up in the agency's new mailbag sorting service for the USPS, he was quickly recommended. Today, he sorts about 500 mailbags a day. He has also taken an important step toward independence, having saved up enough money for an apartment. "I finally see myself leaving my parents' house and being more independent." This hard worker plans to take advantage of training and advancement opportunities at the agency. In the meantime, he is exploring his entrepreneurial side, working with a friend to open up a music studio in New York City.

"This job has made my life better."

d. Reducing the cost of rehabilitation for individuals who are blind

Last year, nearly 7,000 New Yorkers who are blind received rehabilitation services through IBNYS's affiliated agencies in support of greater opportunities for economic security and independent living. Among these are the agencies' 440 employees who are blind, many of whom received intensive job training and vocational rehabilitation to carry out their jobs producing goods and services. These agencies also served thousands of others in the community with programs ranging from career development and job placement to orientation and mobility training and assistance with adaptive technologies.

Many of these services are provided pursuant to a federal-state program administered by the Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH) within the state's Office of Children and Family Services. With the goal of supporting the capacity of individuals who are blind to work and live independently, the federally-funded program provides a range of services regardless of economic need, including job training, post-secondary education, career assessment, job placement, rehabilitation technology, transportation, and mobility and orientation training.

CBVH partners with nonprofit agencies, including IBNYS agencies, private vendors and other community resources, to provide these services.

The per-person cost of rehabilitation at IBNYS agencies (not including VISIONS/Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired) averaged \$4,300, reflecting a significant level of service costs offset by the sale of blind-made goods and services. In addition to these sales revenues, a range of other funding sources support the cost of rehabilitation at IBNYS-affiliated agencies. These include CBVH funding from the state (which covers about one-third of agencies' rehabilitation costs, on average), as well as private donations and client fees for services outside the CBVH program.

By leveraging funding for rehabilitation toward the production of goods and services, IBNYS agencies help to offset the cost of rehabilitation in New York State. In this way, IBNYS agencies provide an option for New York State and New Yorkers who are blind that lowers the overall cost of rehabilitation that would otherwise be more fully supported by taxpayers.

Behind the Numbers: Ken Fernald



Age: 45 **Vision Status:** Legally blind due to juvenile macular degeneration

Agency: Association for Vision Rehabilitation and Employment (Binghamton)

Position: Vice President of Operations

His Story: Ken Fernald has been legally blind for most of his life, but he's never seen this as a disability. "It's an inconvenience. I just need to find my way around that obstacle." With that kind of attitude, it's not surprising that Ken has found such success in his career. He joined AVRE as a packer on its manila file folder line in 1990 and quickly progressed, first to a quality assurance lab technician, then to director of industries and new business development, finding time along the way to earn his degree in business administration from Broome Community College. In 2004, he was promoted to vice president of operations, with oversight of everything

"I see blindness as an inconvenience more than a disability. I just have to find a way around that obstacle."

from business development to quality control to purchasing and production. Under his direction over the past decade, the agency has increased sales from \$2.2 million to more than \$11.5 million with the addition or expansion of several product lines, including three switchboard operations, convenience pack copy paper, carbonless forms, file folders, hair care, and cleaning and kitting projects. While Ken credits a great deal of his success to the opportunities AVRE has provided him, it's clear Ken has a powerful drive that extends to all aspects of life. Not only did he recently complete a National Industries for the Blind graduate-level certificate in business management from the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business, but he's also taken up long-distance running.

V. Projections for Even Greater Economic Impacts

a. Gauging the untapped potential

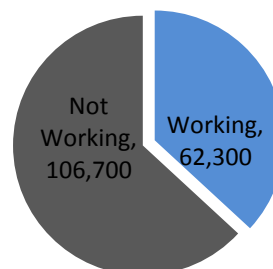
In New York State today there are approximately 106,700 individuals who are blind between ages 18 and 64 who are not working—that’s 63 percent of this population either unemployed or out of the workforce. For sure, these numbers reflect the significant challenges New Yorkers who are blind continue to face in accessing meaningful, gainful employment. Yet they also represent a powerful untapped market of human capital and economic resources for New York State.

As a realistic gauge, what if the employment picture for

If New York’s population of individuals who are blind mirrored its nondisabled population in terms of employment, the number of employed individuals who are blind would double.

New Yorkers who are blind mirrored that for individuals without disabilities, or a 74-percent em-

With 106,700 New Yorkers of working age who are both blind and not working, there exists great untapped potential.



Source: 2009 American Community Survey

ployment rate (with 26 percent of individuals without a disability either unemployed or out of the workforce), according to the latest American Community Survey of the U.S. Census? That would translate into 124,300 New Yorkers who are blind between the ages of 18 and 64 working—an additional 62,000 in the state’s workforce, or double the current level of blind employment.

Behind the Numbers: Charlotte Laramie

Age: 64 **Vision Status:** Totally blind

Agency: Northeastern Association for the Blind at Albany

Position: Machinist, safety vest product line

Her Story: Charlotte Laramie has been working for NABA for the better part of 30 years, starting with the agency in 1983, leaving for a few years, and then returning to work in 1992. She’s a critical part of the agency’s manufacturing department, operating machines to put the reflective edging on safety vests for the New York City Transportation Authority, as well as vest labels, belts and back panels. She also sews safety flags and helps assemble neck tabs for military uniforms. “I’m flexible—I enjoy working on the machines,” she says. Born without her right eye, her vision in her left eye recently deteriorated and she is now totally blind. But she doesn’t let this get in her way. She says her job helps support her and her husband and has contributed to her quality of life. “It keeps me busy. I like my job,” she says matter-of-factly. In addition to her decades of service to NABA, Charlotte also finds time to run the Albany team of the Upstate New York Blind Bowling Association, with her team placing at the top among teams competing across the state last year.



“I’m flexible. I enjoy working the machines.”

b. Doubling employment for those who are blind though growth industries

It is the strategic goal of the IBNYS program to make headway in this regard and double employment of persons who are blind at affiliated agencies over the next five years through continued sales growth in selected segments and greater compliance with New York State's preferred source law. If this goal is achieved, an additional 440 New Yorkers who are blind are projected to be employed by IBNYS agencies, with the majority working directly in the production of goods and services.

It is estimated that IBNYS growth in selected product segments will create dozens of new jobs by 2016. High-growth product and service segments were identified as those seeing the sharpest spike in consumer demand over the past five years. These include switchboard, contact center and adaptive computer training services and, for products, office supplies (convenience pack copy paper); apparel ("mil-spec" clothing, recycled disposable coveralls); and supplies (exam gloves) (**Behind the Numbers: Terry Borden**). IBNYS agencies currently employ 78 individuals who are blind in these business segments, which

Employment of individuals who are blind at IBNYS agencies is projected to double to 880 jobs by 2016.

represents a 44 percent increase from five years ago. Assuming sales trends for these product lines continue over the next five years, these product and service segments will contribute a total of 113 jobs by 2016.

While growth in high-demand segments will propel agencies forward over the next half decade and create jobs, greater compliance with the state's preferred source law will be needed for IBNYS agencies to achieve the goal of doubling employment of persons who are blind by 2016. The bulk of anticipated employment growth at IBNYS agencies—or 405 jobs of the projected increase of 440—will occur as a result of greater observance of New York State's Preferred Source Program and sales growth across all product segments. Sales to state and local agencies have experienced significant growth in recent years. Total sales volume increased by about 40 percent during the five

Behind the Numbers: Frank Pezzimenti

Age: 54 **Vision Status:** Legally blind

Agency: Olmsted Center for Sight (Buffalo)

Position: Assistant supervisor for manufacturing and shipping and receiving operations

His Story: Frank Pezzimenti remembers vividly how he felt as a young man when the manager of a company tore up his job application in front of him after learning of his visual impairment. "I told myself, 'I'm not going to deal with this the rest of my

"I can do a lot of things a sighted person can do. All you have to do is give me a shot."

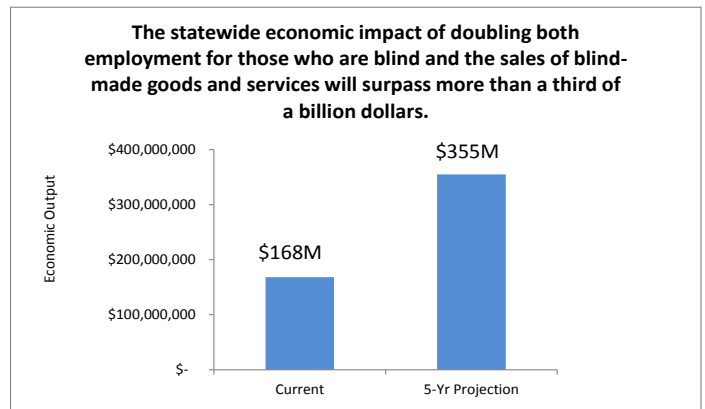
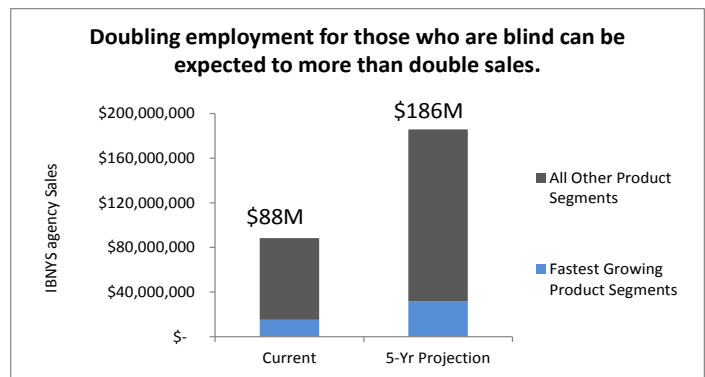
life." After several years without work, Frank came to Olmsted in 1987, and he hasn't looked back since. "I was hired on the spot," he said. Today, he does just about everything needed to run the manufacturing workshop for Olmsted. "If I can do it, I'll do it." Mostly he oversees shipping and receiving operations, but he also helps with sewing jobs and related contracts for local businesses. He has taken advantage of several career development opportunities during his years with the agency, including computer classes and training in assistive devices. Now he's thinking about taking advanced computer training. Reflecting on his years of experience with Olmsted and his professional and personal growth along the way, this former Employee of the Year says, "I can do a lot of things a sighted person can do. All you have to do is give me a shot."



c. Total economic impacts from increased employment

Doubling employment of persons who are blind will have a range of direct and indirect impacts for the IBNYS program, as well as for New York State. Most directly, wage income for agency employees who are blind will at least double to \$16 million or more by 2016, assuming no wage increases beyond inflation. Wage income could grow even more as individuals who are blind are increasingly employed in higher-paying service jobs. For instance, the doubling of service jobs across these agencies, which pay an average of \$14.58 per hour, would push up the overall hourly wage for all employees who are blind by about 10 percent, or over \$1 per hour.

Total sales of blind-made goods and services are projected to more than double to \$186 million (current dollars) over the next five years. This spike reflects sales generated by these agencies' fastest-growing business segments, estimated at a 45-percent increase in sales volume for every employee who is blind. Projected sales revenues also take into consideration such factors as the adoption of new technologies and economies of scale for greater efficiency and employee production.



By 2016, as increased sales revenues and greater employee wages cycle through industries in New York State, IBNYS agencies will contribute to a \$355 million overall state economic impact, up from \$168 million today.

Behind the Numbers: Terry Borden

Age: 61 **Vision Status:** Totally blind due to glaucoma

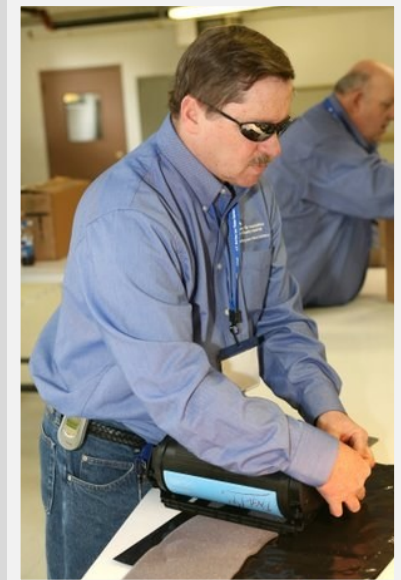
Agency: Southern Tier Association for the Visually Impaired (Elmira)

Position: Cleaning, assembly and packaging of recycled printer toner cartridges

His Story: Born without any vision in his left eye, Terry Borden lost all vision 11 years ago when glaucoma struck his right eye. But he's never let that stop him from doing what he wants. Only recently did he quit water skiing. In his spare time he fixes ham operator radios and scales roofs to install antennas. "If anybody says I can't do anything, try me," he says. Terry applies that same attitude to his job at STAVI. He started there when he was only 17, leaving after a few years when he moved out of the area to start a family. He returned to the agency in 2002 to join its

toner cartridge recycling line, and today helps to train new hires. Terry also volunteers a significant amount of his time to help individuals who are blind across the globe learn about new assistive technologies that can improve their quality of life. He has built several websites that offer podcasts and demonstrations of new devices, and also facilitates online discussion forums. "I have always liked to come up with new ideas on how to do things. I really like to help other people."

"If anybody says I can't do anything, try me."



VI. Conclusion

This study finds that the IBNYS program is making a significant difference not only in the lives of the hundreds of individuals who are blind and employed at the program's affiliated agencies, but for the overall economy of New York State. IBNYS's eight affiliates are an economic engine for the state, together employing close to 900 workers, generating \$88 million in sales, contributing \$168 in economic output to the state economy and stimulating economic activity through business partnerships, new product development and growth.

At a time when many businesses are offshoring jobs and contracting in other ways, IBNYS agencies are planning over the next five years to double employment and create hundreds of additional jobs for a population largely excluded from the state's labor force. This growth will stem from innovation, continued growth of successful product lines and increased awareness of and adherence to New York State's preferred source law. As this happens, economic contributions to New York State stand to double or more.

These ambitious goals are critically important in light of the significant employment barriers that continue to challenge New Yorkers who are blind. In New York State, there are over 100,000 working age individuals who are blind but not in the labor force. With the right training, supports and work opportunities, many of these individuals could be gainfully employed. Highlighting the critical role played by IBNYS and its affiliated agencies, this population represents significant untapped potential not only for driving the state economy but for building economic independence and improving the quality of life for New Yorkers living with blindness.

Perhaps the greatest growth potential lies in IBNYS's goal to increase observance of New York State's preferred source law, which creates demand for blind-made goods and services and, in turn, jobs for employees who are blind. Currently, IBNYS agency sales to the federal government and other out-of-state buyers outnumber those to state and local agencies to which this state law specifically applies. IBNYS sales to state-level public agencies within

New York totaled only \$11 million last year, despite \$1.2 billion in total supplies and materials spending across state agencies alone in 2009-10. While this category includes a broader mix of supplies and materials than what IBNYS agencies could supply today, just 2 percent of this \$1.2 billion total is more than double the amount being captured by IBNYS agencies. Moreover, state trade flow data reveal that relatively small proportions of total statewide demand for selected commodities produced by IBNYS agencies are fulfilled by in-state producers such as IBNYS affiliates. Instead, these sales largely benefit out-of-state producers. In addition to growth potential for IBNYS, this represents a tremendous opportunity for New York State and local government to better position themselves as channels for economic development within the state through their purchasing decisions.

Appendix A: Data Notes

Economic Impact

Estimates are calculated using IMPLAN (Impact Analysis for Planning), an input-output tool that traces the flow of spending across more than 500 inter-related economic sectors of an economy until these dollars are fully leaked out of a study area and therefore produce no additional impacts. All of this spending and the employment it supports produces direct, indirect and induced economic impacts, as described below, with total economic impacts equaling the sum of all three.

Direct impacts in this study are the expenditures made by IBNYS consumers on blind-made goods and services causing additional changes in the state's economy due to IBNYS agencies being interrelated to other businesses within the state.

Indirect impacts reflect successive rounds of purchases and spending resulting from businesses buying goods and services from one another as a result of consumers making purchases of blind-made goods and services. Indirect impacts measure the changes in demand for the products and services sold by IBNYS suppliers as the demand for blind-made goods and services increases.

Induced impacts are those associated with higher levels of spending among households due to the employment impacts associated with direct impacts. Demand for blind-made goods and services not only supports demand for the goods and services of IBNYS suppliers but their employees too. The wage income associated with this impact supports household spending on housing, groceries, entertainment and more. Induced impacts reflect the increased demand for goods and services among households.

Total economic output generated by IBNYS agency sales reflects a multiplier of 1.9, derived from IMPLAN and based on the industry-specific linkages for similar organizations across New York State. The total employment impact reflects a multiplier of 1.3, derived from IMPLAN and based on the industry-specific linkages for community services and rehabilitation organizations across New York State. Because manufacturing operations tend to be associated with higher employment multipliers and because not all community services and rehabilitation organizations are engaged in manufacturing as IBNYS agencies are, this is a conservative estimate for IBNYS agencies wider impact. Economic impact figures calculated for this study are in 2010 dollars.

IMPLAN also provides trade flow data showing for hundreds of commodity categories the proportion of total demand by all users within a study area that is supplied by producers located in the study area. The study area for this study was New York State.

Population and Demographics of New Yorkers who are blind

Estimates are from the 2009 American Community Survey of the U.S. Census Bureau. The population of individuals who are blind and visually disabled encompasses those having "serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses." The survey was administered during the 2009 calendar year. Prior to 2008, this annual survey reported only the population of those with a sensory disability, which combined persons with a vision disability with those reporting a serious hearing difficulty.

Projections

This analysis presents a conservative estimate of employment growth within IBNYS agencies' fastest growing product lines by assuming growth over the next five years will at least match aggregated employment growth over the past five years. This approach was taken for two reasons. First, while aggregated employment across all agencies' fastest-growing segments increased over the past five years, not all individual agencies reported employment increases over the past five years in their fastest growing product lines. Two agencies actually reported a net employment decline, with one citing state cuts on their otherwise growing product area. Secondly, two other agencies saw either no employment growth and/or net employment decline in the first four years of the five-year evaluation period, but reported employment increases within their past fiscal year. While using this higher, one-year growth rate to project future increases would have resulted in slightly larger projections in these instances, growth trends over a longer horizon, albeit more conservative here, may be more dependable, particularly given the absence of consistent upward employment trends within these growing sectors.

Sales for agencies' fastest growing product lines were projected five years out by assuming the ratio of sales per worker will grow as much over the next five years as it did over the past five years. Sales in all other product lines were projected out by assuming sales per worker would remain steady at the current aggregated level across the IBNYS agencies.

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Appendix C: Distribution of New Yorkers Who are Blind, by County

The table below shows the number of individuals who are blind living in New York State by county and age. Counties are arranged in descending order, based on the total number of individuals who are blind residing in the county. Only 38 of New York's 62 counties are shown on the table since current estimates are not available for relatively smaller counties having total populations of less than 65,000. Nonetheless, these counties are home to the large majority (over 90 percent) of the individuals who are blind living in New York State.

These figures are based on a sampling of the full population with

within each county and are not census counts of the complete population. Therefore, an estimate of zero individuals who are blind under the age of 18, as in the case of Schenectady and Warren Counties, is an indicator that no individuals who are blind were captured by the sample to allow extrapolation to the entire population and not that there are no blind children living in these counties.

County in New York State	Under 18 years	18 to 64 years	65 years and over	Total
Kings	1,761	24,821	32,981	59,563
Queens	1,640	16,796	23,053	41,489
Bronx	3,295	18,595	15,480	37,370
New York	809	14,985	13,280	29,074
Suffolk	1,155	8,985	10,576	20,716
Nassau	813	9,111	10,619	20,543
Erie	1,591	8,581	8,194	18,366
Westchester	546	5,868	6,470	12,884
Monroe	972	7,645	3,880	12,497
Onondaga	643	3,706	4,236	8,585
Richmond	281	2,638	3,052	5,971
Albany	392	2,877	2,455	5,724
Orange	169	2,975	2,571	5,715
Dutchess	262	3,015	2,245	5,522
Broome	464	2,484	1,939	4,887
Oneida	467	2,971	1,341	4,779
Niagara	441	2,737	1,462	4,640
Ulster	323	2,341	1,855	4,519
Rockland	765	2,145	1,400	4,310
Rensselaer	589	2,033	1,449	4,071
Jefferson	318	1,286	1,280	2,884
Oswego	208	1,314	1,219	2,741
St. Lawrence	144	1,493	1,038	2,675
Sullivan	635	1,067	908	2,610
Saratoga	282	1,060	1,221	2,563
Chautauqua	550	937	875	2,362
Steuben	73	1,089	954	2,116
Schenectady	0	846	1,224	2,070
Cattaraugus	77	761	1,097	1,935
Chemung	247	689	618	1,554
Ontario	225	748	549	1,522
Wayne	220	743	542	1,505
Putnam	159	686	624	1,469
Clinton	209	755	475	1,439
Cayuga	32	503	860	1,395
Warren	0	534	518	1,052
Tompkins	67	537	281	885
Madison	31	133	417	581
Total in these counties	20,855	160,490	163,238	344,583

Source: 2009 American Community Survey

Appendix D: IBNYS Agency Business Partnerships

Business Name and Address	Nature of Business and/or Products Supplied	Business Name and Address	Nature of Business and/or Products Supplied
3N		Five Boro Printing	Cards labels
A to Z Rental	Industrial Tools	Focus on Fun	Photography services
A. Fleisig Paper	Packaging	FRANKLIN TRAFFIC SERVICE, INC.	Freight paying service
Abacus Information Systems, Inc.	Tech support	Fullers Printing	Hang tags
ABF Freight System, Inc.	Shipping Services	GARDEI INDUSTRIES	Fabric blanks
ABTECH	Computer Sales and Service	GENESIS DISPOSABLES, LLC.	Paper wipes
Air Temp Heating & Air Condi	HVAC	Global Synergizers Inc.	Production parts
Aladdin Packaging	Plastic Bags	GRAPHIC PAPER NY, INC.	Paper Supplier
Algonquin Studios	Web support	Great Lakes Plastic	Production parts
Alran Sales Co., Inc.	Textiles	GW CANFIELD & SON	Printing
AMD - RITMED Inc.	Surgeons gowns	H.Arnold Wood Turning	Wood Handles
Aramark Uniform Service	Uniform Laundry Service	H.L. Treu Office Supplies	Office Supplies
Avenue Art & Frame	frames	H.Z. Enterprises, Inc.	Electronic Recyclers
B & W Electrical Contractors	Electrical Construction	Heart Wired Products	
Benton Announcements Inc.	Tags	Henry Frank Inc.	Footwear
Binghamton Industrial Sup Inc.	Parts & Equipment	Horwitz Paper	Industrial Supplies / Cleaning Supplies
Binghamton-Ithaca Express Inc.	Shipping Services	HUDSON VALLEY PAPER COMPANY	Paper
Bokland Custom Visuals	Vest Panels	IMPERIAL PACIFIC LTD.	Kit component supplier
Boulle Electric	Electrical Contractor	Information Packaging	Packaging
Brownsville Paper Company	Pressboard Paper	KEYSTONE ASSOCIATES	Design Services
Buffalo Thermograph	Lales	Long Island Stamp	Cards/Labels
Buffalo Time Clock, Inc.	Time card	Main textile	Textile
C TECH	High Tech low vision devices	MALCHAK SALVAGE CO., INC.	Wood Pallets
CABVI	Purchase Gloves	Material Handling Products Corp.	Electric Lift Truck Purchase / Service
Capital Staple Co. Inc.	Box spray	MAXI AIDS	Low Vision supplies
Chianis & Anderson, PLLC	Design Services	MAYFLOWER TRADE LLC.	Blankets
Clear View Bag Co. Inc.	Plastic bags	MECHANICAL SPECIALTIES, INC.	Machined parts
Compensation Guidance Svcs Inc.	WC review	MOUNTAINSIDE MEDICAL	stethoscopes)
Cook Brothers Truck Parts Co.	Parts & Equipment	MSI MOLDING SOLUTIONS INC	Oil Pans
Cooley Business Group	Phone systems	NEMF	Pallet Shipments to NYC
Cull Martin & Assoc., Inc.	Printing/Design	New York Marking Devices Corp	Ink stamps
Davis Aircraft	Buckles	NORTHLAND COMMUNICATIONS GROUP	Telephone service
DJ Moore	Printing and catalog work	ONONDAGA PRINTING EQUIPMENT CO	Machine Parts
Dobmeier Janitor Supply, Inc.	Chemicals	PACKAGING DYNAMICS, LTD.	Packaging
Dunn Electric Supply Co, Inc.	Electrical Components	PALLET SERVICES, INC.	Pallets
Dynamic Pak	Bar code labels	PARLOR CITY PAPER BOX CO.,INC.	Paper Board Boxes
E.B. Wood	Heat transfer	Passion Sewing	Mfg parts
Edgewater Machine Company	Needle threaders	Premier Packaging	Packaging
EKLUND SYS FOR BUSINESS, INC.	Office Equipment Maintenance	Printing Methods	Packaging
Electronic Business Products		Prolift	Warehouse supplies
Ellis Paper Services	Brokerage Paper Service	Qualtech Reprographics	Packaging
Elmira Business Machines	Time Clock Service	Quartier Printing	Creative Services
Evans Mechanical, Inc.	Mechanical	R&R Sales Co.	Packaging Materials
F.E. Jones Construction, Inc.	General Construction	R.P. Fedder, Corp.	Filter Purchases

Business Name and Address	Nature of Business and/or Products Supplied
RFI - RESOURCES FOR INDUSTRY	Prongs for Binders
Robinson Lumber	Facility Supplies
Rochester 100 Inc.	Packaging
ROGERS SERVICE GROUP, INC	Moving/Storage Services
Rosen's Uniforms	Trooper shoes
S.M Cristall Co. Inc.	Sewing notions
Safeguard Business Systems	Bags for retail store
SERVPRO OF BROOME	Disaster Cleaning Services
Southern Tier Custom Fabricators	Sheet Metal Fabrication
Specialty Box and Packaging Co	Kit component supplier
Spinergy	CD Label Printing
Sportsmaster	Uniforms
Stanley Paper Co. Inc.	Paper, tape
SUN VALLEY PRINTING	Printing Services
Sunset Printers	Product Literature Printing
SYNERGY TOOLING SYSTEMS	Cutting Dies
SYRACUSE CORRUGATED BOX CORP.	Packaging
TapeCon	Packaging Material
TEALS EXPRESS, INC.	Shipping Services
THE MID-YORK PRESS, INC.	Packaging
Thinking Outside the Square	wood parts
THOMPSON & JOHNSON, INC.	Fork Truck Repairs
Tony's Sewing Machine	Machine repair
Transeal LTD	Plastic pockets
Upstate Office Furniture	Office Furniture
US MATERIALS HANDLING CORPORATION	Equipment
Vasco Brands, Inc.	Industrial Supplies / Cleaning Supplies
Windsor United Industries, LLC	Display Cases- retail Store
XONITEK CORPORATION	Software support

Source: IBNYS Agencies, 2004-09

Appendix E: Sample Questionnaire

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this important initiative to assess the economic and quality-of-life contributions of the Industries for the Blind of New York State.

Please answer the questions below to the best of your ability using data and information from your **latest completed fiscal year** (for most, this will be the fiscal year ending sometime in 2010 or 2011). Please enter your answers in the yellow boxes provided and **return your responses via e-mail to entress@buffalo.edu no later than Friday, July 22.**

Any questions about this survey should be directed to Sharon Ana Entress of the UB Regional Institute at 878-2429 or entress@buffalo.edu.

1. By employing both blind and sighted workers, your agency makes important contributions to the economy of your region and New York State overall. Please tell us about employment at your agency.

	<i>Workers Who Are Blind</i>	<i>Workers Who Are Sighted</i>
Number of workers	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Total annual wages paid	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
What percentage (approx.) of workers who are blind at your agency go on to work in private- or public-sector jobs outside the agency?	<input type="text"/>	
What percentage (approx.) of all workers at your agency are women and/or minorities?	<input type="text"/>	

2. Your agency's sale of blind-made goods and services creates jobs and valuable vocational rehabilitation opportunities for New Yorkers who are blind. Please tell us about the blind-made products and services your agency sells.

Approximately how many different blind-made goods and services does your agency sell?

What are the top three blind-made goods and services produced by workers at your agency in terms of sales generated?

What proportion of all product and service sales reflect purchases from out-of-state buyers, including the federal government?

What goods and/or services do out-of-state buyers most often purchase?

Approximately how many businesses in New York State supply your agency with the goods and services it needs to produce blind-made goods and services?

Among your suppliers located in New York State, are there any unique or innovative business partnerships that you would like to tell us about? If so, please provide the details.

3. We are exploring how employment opportunities for persons who are blind could expand in coming years. Tell us more about the fastest-growing business segment at your agency.

What segment of blind-made goods and/or services at your agency has seen demand grow the fastest in recent years?

How much in sales did this growing segment generate...

...in your last fiscal year?

...in the year prior to that?

...five years ago?

How many blind persons did this growing segment create jobs for....

...in your last fiscal year?

...in the year prior to that?

...five years ago?

Please tell us about any other potential opportunities at your agency that could expand employment options for individuals who are blind, including new business partnerships, products or customers.

4. Because the cost of rehabilitating individuals who are blind is partially covered by the production of blind-made goods and services and donations, your agency lowers the cost of rehabilitation, which would otherwise be more fully supported by New York State taxpayers, an important economic impact across the state. Please provide us with the following figures to help us estimate your rehabilitation costs per person.

What were total expenses for your agency last year?

What were total expenses at your agency for rehabilitation and the production of blind-made goods and services last year (please include employee wages in this figure)?

How many persons who are blind received rehabilitation services from your agency last year?

Approximately what percentage of total rehabilitation costs at your agency are covered by New York State?