Business Enterprise Program
Fact Sheet

What We Do

Georgia's Business Enterprise Program (BEP) provides work opportunities to persons who are blind and who want to manager small businesses such as vending machine routes, snack bars, cafes/grills, and full-service cafeterias. BEP was established in 1944 under its authorizing legislation, the Randolph-Sheppard Act, and opened its first vending facility in 1945. There are currently more than 130 locations. Sales for FY 12 exceeded $8.1 million dollars and generated over $389,571 in sales tax revenue. Perhaps even more notable is that the average income for a licensed blind vendor in Georgia for FY 12 was $35,5871.

Services We Provide

- BEP staff develops sites throughout Georgia on federal, state, municipal, and private property locations. Site surveys are conducted to determine whether a viable food service opportunity exists. BEP staff works closely with property managers to install all necessary equipment and fixtures prior to opening locations. Examples include the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Brunswick, Fort Benning Army Post in Columbus, the DeKalb County Courthouse, the GDOL Sussex Building, Center for Disease Control (CDC), and all 26 interstate rest areas and welcome centers.

- Assessment and initial entrepreneurial training begins in Vocational Rehabilitation and continues after referral to BEP through on-the-job and classroom training.

- Management training is provided in such areas as customer service, merchandising, and employee supervision.

- A minimum six-month trial period is administered during which the candidate's work performance is closely monitored while operating a vending facility.

- Financial and accounting services are provided to licensed blind vendors through its nominee agency, Georgia Cooperative Services for the Blind, Inc.

- Ongoing technical and administrative support is available to those who choose to stay in the program for the duration of their business careers.

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