

PROGRAM EVALUATION

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT FOR THE BLIND SITE ACQUISITION FOR REHABILITATION CENTER

Research Report No. 261

Legislative Research Commission

August, 1992

KENTUCKY LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION

JOHN A. "ECK" ROSE
Senate President Pro Tem

DONALD J. BLANDFORD
House Speaker

Chairmen

Senate Members

CHARLES W. BERGER
Assistant President Pro Tem

JOE WRIGHT
Majority Floor Leader

JOHN D. ROGERS
Minority Floor Leader

DAVID K. KAREM
Majority Caucus Chairman

ART SCHMIDT
Minority Caucus Chairman

FRED BRADLEY
Majority Whip

TOM BUFORD
Minority Whip

House Members

PETE WORTHINGTON
Speaker Pro Tem

GREGORY D. STUMBO
Majority Floor Leader

TOM JENSEN
Minority Floor Leader

JODY RICHARDS
Majority Caucus Chairman

CLARENCE NOLAND
Minority Caucus Chairman

KENNY RAPIER
Majority Whip

JIM ZIMMERMAN
Minority Whip

VIC HELLARD, JR, Director

* * * * *

The Kentucky Legislative Research Commission is a sixteen member committee, comprised of the majority and minority leadership of the Kentucky Senate and House of Representatives. Under Chapter 7 of the Kentucky Revised Statutes, the Commission constitutes the administrative office for the Kentucky General Assembly. Its director serves as chief administrative officer of the Legislature when it is not in session.

The Commission and its staff, by law and by practice, perform numerous fact-finding and service functions for members of the General Assembly. The Commission provides professional, clerical and other employees required by legislators when the General Assembly is in session and during the interim period between sessions. These employees, in turn, assist committees and individual members in preparing legislation. Other services include conducting studies and investigations, organizing and staffing committee meetings and public hearings, maintaining official legislative records and other reference materials, furnishing information about the Legislature to the public, compiling and publishing administrative regulations, administering a legislative intern program, conducting a pre-session orientation conference for legislators, and publishing a daily index of legislative activity during sessions of the General Assembly.

The Commission is also responsible for statute revision, publication and distribution of the *Acts* and *Journals* following sessions of the General Assembly and for maintaining furnishings, equipment and supplies for the Legislature.

The Commission functions as Kentucky's Commission on Interstate Cooperation in carrying out the program of the Council of State Governments as it relates to Kentucky.

Program Evaluation

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT FOR THE BLIND SITE ACQUISITION FOR REHABILITATION CENTER

PREPARED BY:

OFFICE FOR PROGRAM REVIEW & INVESTIGATIONS

JOSEPH FIALA, Ph. D.
Assistant Director

SHEILA MASON BURTON
Committee Staff Administrator

PROJECT STAFF:

JOHN SNYDER
Program Analyst

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION

Frankfort, Kentucky

Committee for Program Review and Investigations

August 17, 1992

This report has been prepared by the Legislative Research Commission and printed with state funds.

Foreword

In December, 1991, the Program Review and Investigations Committee directed its staff to examine the site chosen by the Department for the Blind for its new Rehabilitation Center for the Blind. This report was adopted by the Program Review and Investigations Committee on August 17, 1992, for submission to the Legislative Research Commission.

This Report is the result of dedicated time and effort by the Program Review staff and secretaries, Susie Reed and Jo Ann Blake. Our appreciation is also to the Commissioner and staff of the Department for the Blind, the Secretary and staff of the Workforce Development Cabinet and to all other persons interviewed for this study.

Vic Hellard, Jr.
Director

Frankfort, KY
August, 1992



SENATE MEMBERS

Charles W. Berger
Assistant President Pro Tem

Joe Wright
Majority Floor Leader

John D. Rogers
Minority Floor Leader

David K. Karem
Majority Caucus Chairman

Art Schmidt
Minority Caucus Chairman

Fred Bradley
Majority Whip

Tom Buford
Minority Whip

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION

State Capitol

Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

502-564-8100

John A. "Eck" Rose, Senate President Pro Tem

Donald J. Blandford, House Speaker

Chairmen

Vic Hellard, Jr.
Director

HOUSE MEMBERS

Pete Worthington
Speaker Pro Tem

Gregory D. Stumbo
Majority Floor Leader

Tom Jensen
Minority Floor Leader

Jody Richards
Majority Caucus Chairman

Clarence Noland
Minority Caucus Chairman

Kenny Rapier
Majority Whip

Jim Zimmerman
Minority Whip

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Brereton C. Jones
Members of the General Assembly
and Affected Agency Heads and Interested Individuals

FROM: Senator Susan Johns, Chairman
Representative C. M. "Hank" Hancock, Vice-Chairman

DATE: December 15, 1992

RE: Program Evaluation Department for the Blind: Site Acquisition for
Rehabilitation Center

Attached is the final report of a study of the Department for the Blind's site acquisition for a new Rehabilitation Center for the Blind. The Committee's staff gathered data through document reviews, site visits, and interviews with DFB officials, Building Committee members and advocacy groups.

The 1990 session of the General Assembly authorized the issuance of \$3 million in bond proceeds, to be combined with \$1.5 million in DFB agency revenues, to secure a new site to consolidate Jefferson County offices and expand service space. Some confusion existed throughout the process regarding the allowable usage for the funds budgeted for the project. The DFB ultimately selected a site on Westport Road for the location of the center. This site has been criticized by some advocacy groups for its inaccessibility.

The report makes no recommendations, but does find that the Westport Road site is accessible to the Department's clients. The report also makes known the fact that until construction contracts are signed, the DFB is free to review their choice of site. During committee deliberations, the Executive Director of the DFB acknowledged that the new site, while being more accessible to statewide clients, would be less convenient for Louisville area clients. To lessen this problem, the DFB indicated it would take steps, such as the provision of transportation and the use of satellite counseling offices to ensure accessibility to the Louisville clients.

For questions or further information, please contact Joseph Fiala, Assistant Director, Office for Program Review and Investigations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
FOREWORD	i
TRANSMITTAL MEMORANDUM	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF MAPS	v
LIST OF APPENDICES	v
SUMMARY	vii
SITE ACQUISITION FOR THE KENTUCKY REHABILITATION	
CENTER FOR THE BLIND	1
Functions of the Department for the Blind in Jefferson County	2
Services for the Blind Are Housed in Four Different Sites	4
A DFB Assessment Found Present Facilities Inadequate	6
The FY 90 - 92 Budget Included \$4.5 Million for a New Blind Center.....	7
SITE SELECTION PROCESS	8
The Site Selection Subcommittee Selected Three Existing Buildings	9
The DFB Changed Plans Back to New Construction	10
The DFB Was Misinformed Regarding Allowable Uses for Budgeted Funds.....	11
ACCESSIBILITY OF THE WESTPORT ROAD SITE.....	11
Advocacy Groups and Officials Have Mixed Reactions to the New Site	12
The Westport Road Site Offers Increased Accessibility to Out-of-Town Clients and Visitors	13
CONCLUSION	15
COMMITTEE ACTION	17
LIST OF MAPS	
Map A	5
Locations of DFB Offices and Sites Examined for the New Center	
Map B	14
Distribution of Clients At: KRCB, KVS, and ATS, by District, for the years 1989 through 1991	
LIST OF APPENDICES	
Appendix A	
Response from Department for the Blind	19
Appendix B	
Response from GOPM	23
Appendix C	
Response from Bluegrass Council for the Blind	29
Appendix D	
Response from National Federation for the Blind of Kentucky	33

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SITE ACQUISITION FOR THE KENTUCKY REHABILITATION CENTER FOR THE BLIND

The Kentucky Department for the Blind (DFB) operates several local and statewide programs in Jefferson County for its clients. These programs cover both the Louisville-based District 2 and the entire state. Among these services are three residential rehabilitation programs: The Kentucky Rehabilitation Center for the Blind, Kentucky Vocational Services, and Assistive Technology Services. DFB offices in Jefferson County are scattered in four sites, with an annual lease cost of \$91,000. The 1990 session of the General Assembly authorized the issuance of \$3 million in bond proceeds, to be combined with \$1.5 million in agency revenues, to secure a new site to consolidate offices and expand service space.

A building committee initially identified three sites for renovation. These sites would have allowed for consolidation of offices to occur while major renovation for living space proceeded. However, the Secretary of the Workforce Development Cabinet, on advice of the Finance Cabinet, directed the DFB to locate land for new construction, in accordance with the budget memorandum. After negotiations among the Governor's Office, the Finance Cabinet, the Cabinet for Human Resources, and the DFB, the department chose the site on Westport Road in eastern Jefferson County. The DFB purchased the site from CHR in December, 1991 for \$122,000. Building plans are completed, with

construction scheduled to begin in January, 1993, and completion of the project slated for early 1994.

One of the major points of confusion in this process was the propriety of using money budgeted for new construction for renovation of an existing facility, which was the building committee's original plan. KRS 48.500 gives the Secretary of the Finance Cabinet authority to interpret the executive branch budget. Pursuant to KRS 48.500, the Secretary could have granted a DFB request to use the budgeted money for renovation. However, the DFB made no such request.

The choice of site has been criticized by some advocacy groups, most notably the National Federation for the Blind, on the grounds that it is too remote and inaccessible. Other blind advocacy groups, the directors of DFB offices in Jefferson County, and members of the building committee do not share this view. They concede that the site is not perfect, but maintain it has much to offer. The new site also offers greater accessibility to out-of-town clients, who comprise the majority of the clients in the statewide residential programs.

Despite objections to the contrary, the Westport Road site chosen for the new DFB center appears to be accessible to both the Department's Louisville area clients and its clients from out in the state. Bus service to the site, with over 30 runs per day, is adequate during the hours of operation of the programs to be housed in the facility. Additionally, the Department plans to accommodate clients through the use of state-owned vans and reimbursed cab fare.

Although the site chosen is accessible, other sites examined by the site selection subcommittee, particularly the Farm Bureau Building, may have been more convenient for the DFB's Louisville clients. These sites may have also provided the DFB the opportunity to consolidate offices quickly, saving one year or more of rental costs, while providing more overall client service and living space than the currently planned new constructions. The DFB still has the option to determine whether other sites exist that would be more cost-effective for the DFB and more convenient for its clients without significantly delaying its construction plans.

Committee Action

The Program Review and Investigations Committee's discussion of the staff report on the Department for the Blind's Site Acquisition for its Rehabilitation Center occurred on August 17, 1992. At that time, the report was presented by staff, commented on by affected agencies and advocacy groups, and adopted by the Committee.

Although no recommendations were contained in the report, it was noted that the DFB could reexamine its position. Representatives of the DFB stated that the Department was very happy with the Westport Road site and did not feel it was necessary or efficient to reopen the process. The DFB indicated that actions were being taken to reduce any problems local clients might have. These actions include use of state vans, taxi fare reimbursement and establishment of remote office sites. Committee members encouraged the DFB to move quickly, to ensure continuity of services, while following up

on promises to increase accessibility. The staff report was adopted by the Committee.

SITE ACQUISITION FOR THE KENTUCKY REHABILITATION CENTER FOR THE BLIND

For several years, the Kentucky Department for the Blind and Visually Impaired (DFB) attempted to obtain funding to relocate and consolidate most of its operations in Jefferson County. During its 1990 Session, the General Assembly authorized issuance of \$3 million in bond proceeds for such a project. This appropriation, combined with \$1.5 million of Department for the Blind agency revenues, provided the money to secure a new site.

A building committee, appointed by the DFB, worked for over a year, and ultimately recommended constructing a new facility on property on Westport Road, in Eastern Jefferson County. The DFB subsequently purchased this property from the Cabinet for Human Resources. Design of the building is underway and construction should begin in January 1993. The new facility, which will house 30 clients for residential rehabilitative services and house all DFB client service offices in Jefferson County, should be operational in early 1994. Some advocacy groups have criticized the choice of the Westport Road site, claiming that it is too remote and inaccessible for the blind community.

This paper discusses the DFB's decision to choose the Westport Road site and the reasons the members of the blind community give for supporting or opposing the site. The paper specifically addresses two questions:

1. Is the Westport Road site accessible to the client population?
2. Could the DFB legally change construction plans from the General Assembly authorization in the budget memorandum for the 1990-92 biennium?

Functions of the Department for the Blind in Jefferson County

The Department for the Blind in Jefferson County serves clients in both the Department's District 2 (Jefferson, Oldham, Trimble, Henry and Shelby Counties) regionally, and statewide. These are:

District 2 Services:

- The **Division of Client Services** outreach and counseling office for District 2 provide service plans, job placements, and rehabilitation plans for clients. The counseling office has an average active caseload of approximately 300 clients.

Regional Services:

- The **Center for Independent Living** (CIL) office in Louisville provides blind and visually impaired clients in 15 counties training to enable them to live independently without necessarily achieving a vocational goal. Clients receive instruction in daily living situations, such as

kitchen mobility and training in distinguishing paper money denominations. Although clients can be of any age, this service usually caters to the elderly blind. This program has an average caseload of approximately 200 clients.

Statewide Services:

- The **Rehabilitation Materials Services Unit** dispenses assistive devices and low vision aids statewide.
- The **Kentucky Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (KRBC)** provides personal adjustment services, including help with daily living activities, adaptive communications, orientation and mobility training, and educational and vocational training to approximately 250 clients every year.
- The **Kentucky Vocational Services (KVS)** offers pre-vocational evaluation and career exploration and has served over 500 clients over the past three years.
- The **Assistive Technology Services (ATS)** unit provides rehabilitation engineering training and equipment, serving approximately 100 clients per year.
- The **Division of Kentucky Business Enterprise Program (BEP)** provides statewide training and repair operations from a base in Jefferson County. The program trains approximately five vendors a year and provides for installation, maintenance and replacement of over 2,000 vending machines operated by blind vendors under the Randolph-Sheppard Act.
- The **Division of Kentucky Industries for the Blind (KIB)** is a manufacturing operation in Louisville that employs visually impaired

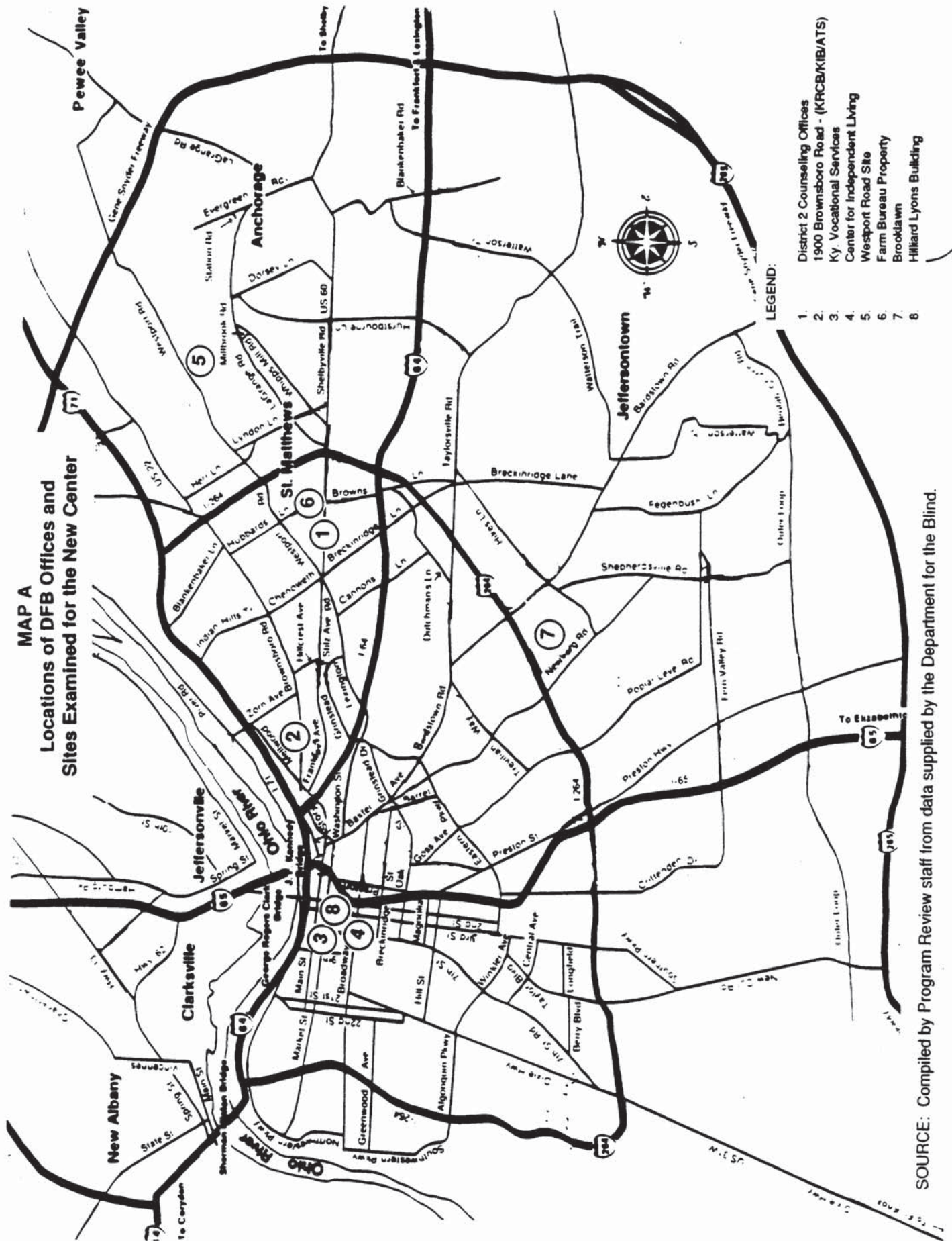
and blind people in line manufacturing. The program earns revenues through contract manufacturing jobs.

Services for the Blind Are Housed in Four Different Sites

The services provided by the DFB in Jefferson County are not centrally located. They are operated from four different locations, one of which is owned by the DFB and three of which are rented, at an annual cost of \$91,000. Map A shows the locations of these properties:

- The Kentucky Industries for the Blind Building, 1900 Brownsboro Road, houses both the Kentucky Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and the Kentucky Industries for the Blind. The Assistive Technology Services Unit operates out of a mobile home on this property. The DFB owns this building and property.
- The DFB rents 2,700 square feet of office space at 201 Breckinridge Lane, which houses the district counseling offices and the Rehabilitative Materials Services Unit. The monthly rent for this office is \$1,795.
- The Kentucky Vocational Services Unit rents 4,970 square feet of office space in the Legal Arts Building (200 South Seventh Street) at \$4,555.83 per month.

MAP A **Locations of DFB Offices and** **Sites Examined for the New Center**



- LEGEND:**
1. District 2 Counseling Offices
  2. 1900 Brownsboro Road - (KRCB/KIB/ATS)
  3. Ky. Vocational Services
  4. Center for Independent Living
  5. Westport Road Site
  6. Farm Bureau Property
  7. Brooklawn
  8. Hilliard Lyons Building

SOURCE: Compiled by Program Review staff from data supplied by the Department for the Blind.

- The Center for Independent Living rents 1,728 square feet at 620 South Third Street at \$1,244 per month.

A DFB Assessment Found Present Facilities Inadequate

In ACCESS: A Needs Assessment (1987, revised in 1989), the Department for the Blind identified current and future rehabilitative service needs of the blind in Kentucky and compared those needs with the adequacy of the Department's existing service delivery sites in Louisville.

The study included 11 findings regarding the facilities. The major findings were:

- The Kentucky Rehabilitation Center for the Blind (KRCB) is potentially unsafe, since the KRCB is located directly above the Kentucky Industries for the Blind, which uses several highly flammable chemicals and highly combustible supplies in its manufacturing operations.
- The KRCB, with a capacity of housing only 14 clients, is too small to accommodate existing needs. The waiting period to attend the KRCB averaged 52 days between FY 1983 and FY 1988. Therefore, those in need of rehabilitative services are waiting too long to receive the basic skills they need to progress and become productive citizens.
- The close proximity of classrooms with dormitories at the KRCB deters the blind from using newly learned mobility skills.
- Overall classroom space for all programs is inadequate, resulting in the housing of the Assistive Technology Services in a mobile home on the KRCB property and

the location of the Kentucky Vocational Services in rental space in downtown Louisville.

- Consolidation of District 2 counseling offices and the Center for Independent Living would allow all offices to share services and expertise.
- The Kentucky Industries for the Blind has a need for additional space. Occupation of the entire building that they presently share with the KRCB would fulfill this need.
- The number of blind and visually impaired persons has increased almost 20% since 1970 (the year the present KRBC was established). Therefore, in order to take advantage of new federal initiatives to fund programs for the blind, present facilities need to be expanded.

ACCESS recommended that all activities of the Department for the Blind in Jefferson County, with the exception of the Kentucky Industries for the Blind, be housed together. The report also recommended a new building for these client services, with a size of approximately 50,000 square feet and an estimated cost of \$5 million.

The FY 90-92 Budget Included \$4.5 Million for a New Blind Center

The 1990-92 Budget Request submitted by the Department for the Blind included a request for \$5 million: "In order to construct a facility to house Rehabilitation Center for the blind clients. Center for Independent Living, KY Vocational Services, and the Louisville General Blind Services Counseling offices. To consolidate all Department for the Blind's programs into a safer and more effective environment" (sic). The DFB requested \$943,400 and \$4,056,600 for FY 1991 and FY 1992, respectively.

The Office of Policy and Management pared down the DFB budget request during negotiations with the DFB. The DFB cut the project size from 50,000 to 45,000 square feet and reduced the estimated project cost from \$5 million to \$4.5 million. In addition, the Department agreed to finance \$1.5 million of the project cost with agency funds derived from money received from the Social Security Administration for successfully rehabilitating clients. The state would issue bonds in the second year of the biennium to raise the remaining \$3 million. These bonds were issued for sale on November 5, 1991, as part of the Property and Building Commissions Bond Project #53. The repayment of these bonds began in FY 1991-92, at a cost of \$337,300 per year for twenty years. The \$1.5 million of agency funds has been transferred to the Rehabilitation Center Building Account.

Site Selection Process

To help select a new site suitable for the consolidation of operations in Jefferson County, the Department formed a building committee of 11 affected or interested parties. The building committee included six employees of the Department, a blind vendor and two officers of advocacy groups. Seven of the committee members were blind.

At the initial meeting of the building committee on October 29, 1990, the Director of the DFB informed committee members that individual agencies could not purchase land without going through the Division of Real Properties in the Finance and Administration Cabinet. At the second meeting of the

committee, the Director informed members that they had the authority to identify property that met the Department's needs, and then work with the Finance Cabinet on the purchase. As a result, the committee appointed a site selection subcommittee to look at potential locations.

The Site Selection Subcommittee Selected Three Existing Buildings

Contrary to the Department's budget request for land for new construction, the site selection subcommittee chose three sites with existing buildings requiring renovation. A June 24, 1991 memo from the subcommittee to the building committee outlined these sites. Map A shows the relative locations of the three sites identified by the subcommittee. The sites, in order of preference, were:

- 1) The **Brooklawn Treatment Center Campus**, located at 2125 Goldsmith Lane. This site consisted of seven buildings located on approximately 20 acres. The buildings included an administrative office building and a dormitory building with a dining hall that would house 24 clients.
- 2) The old **Farm Bureau Building**, located at Hubbards Lane and Shelbyville Road. This 80,000 square foot building had a good location close to business and shopping, but required substantial renovations for dorm rooms.
- 3) The **Hilliard Lyons Building**, located at 528 Guthrie Street in the downtown area. This 54,000 square foot building would have also required extensive renovations for dorm rooms.

The DFB Changed Plans Back to New Construction

Subsequent to the June 24 memo issued by the site selection subcommittee, a problem arose with the Brooklawn site. Brooklawn at one time provided substance abuse rehabilitation services to children and teens, but had lost its Medicaid funding and had suspended operation. At the same time that the DFB was considering purchasing the Brooklawn property, the Cabinet for Human Resources was working with Brooklawn to convert its operation to a children's residential psychiatric facility.

After the subcommittee identified the Brooklawn site, the Office of the Secretary of the Workforce Development Cabinet informed the DFB that the money appropriated must go towards the construction of a new building. According to the former Secretary of Workforce Development, this action was the result of the Finance and Administration Cabinet informing her that the DFB was not following procedures and was not complying with the budget authorization.

The DFB subsequently contacted the Division of Real Properties for assistance in finding land for construction of a new building to comply with the mandates of the budget memorandum. The Division of Real Properties identified several parcels of land. The Department then selected the Westport Road location, which was previously owned by CHR. According to a former member of the Governor's staff, representatives of CHR, DFB, and the Finance Cabinet met and reached a compromise in which CHR agreed to sell the property on Westport Road to the DFB. The DFB purchased the

three acre property from CHR on December 9, 1991, for \$122,000. Brooklawn has since reopened as a private, non-profit facility, providing a residential psychiatric program for severely emotionally disturbed children. It receives payment for these services from the Cabinet for Human Resources.

The DFB Was Misinformed Regarding Allowable Uses for Budgeted Funds

One of the major points of confusion in the site selection process was the propriety of using money budgeted for new construction for renovation of an existing facility. Although the Department requested and received an appropriation for land for new construction in the budget memorandum, the DFB had the option to request a change in the expenditure of the appropriation. KRS 48.500(1) gives the Secretary of the Finance and Administration Cabinet the authority to interpret items in the Executive Branch budget. Pursuant to KRS 48.500, the Secretary could have granted a DFB request to use the appropriated money to renovate an existing building. However, the DFB made no such request. Instead, the DFB abandoned its efforts to pursue one of the recommended sites, based upon the interpretation of the Workforce Development and Finance Cabinets that the budget required new construction.

Accessibility of The Westport Road Site

The location of the 3.03 acres purchased by the Department for the Blind for its new center is on Westport Road, in eastern Jefferson County. The site

for the planned 35,000 square foot building, which will provide dorm space for a maximum of 30 clients, is approximately four miles west of the Gene Snyder Freeway and 3.5 miles east of the site of the present counseling office in St. Matthews. There are large shopping complexes with grocery stores about one mile away in both directions. Two bus routes serve the site, a regular route with 28 stops per day and an express with six stops every weekday morning and afternoon. There is no bus service on weekends, or past 7:30 p.m. on weeknights. There are sidewalks on the side of the street that runs in front of the site.

Advocacy Groups and Officials Have Mixed Reactions to the New Site

In a November 4, 1991, letter to the governor, the president of the Greater Louisville Chapter of the National Federation for the Blind expressed his group's opposition to the proposed site. In this letter, the Federation suggested that the project should not proceed unless a more suitable site was found. The Federation contends that the site is remote and inaccessible, that it is far from the Crescent Hill corridor that houses the present Rehabilitation Center and the School for the Blind, that bus service is inadequate and will be difficult for the blind to master, and that cab fares will be exorbitant. The Federation also cites the difficulty for a non-driver to travel a mile or more for shopping.

Not everyone in the blind community agrees with the Federation's position, however. Representatives of the Kentucky Council for the Blind, the Bluegrass Council for the Blind and members of the Building Committee

interviewed stated that although the proposed site may not be perfect, it has much to offer. The site is served by two bus routes and, although there is no weekend or evening bus service, the offices that will be consolidated at the site do not currently offer evening or weekend programs.

The directors of the various facilities to be consolidated speak enthusiastically of the new location. For the most part, these offices provide short-term rehabilitative help to their clients. The head of the Rehabilitation Center felt that the expanded space in the building would significantly reduce the backlog of clients waiting to attend the Center. The director of the local counseling office felt that the proximity to the Rehabilitation Center would help both his counselors and their clients both before and after the clients attend the center. The director of the Center for Independent Living stated that clients rarely visit their offices and that the change will have little effect on them.

The Westport Road Site Offers Increased Accessibility to Out-of-Town Clients and Visitors

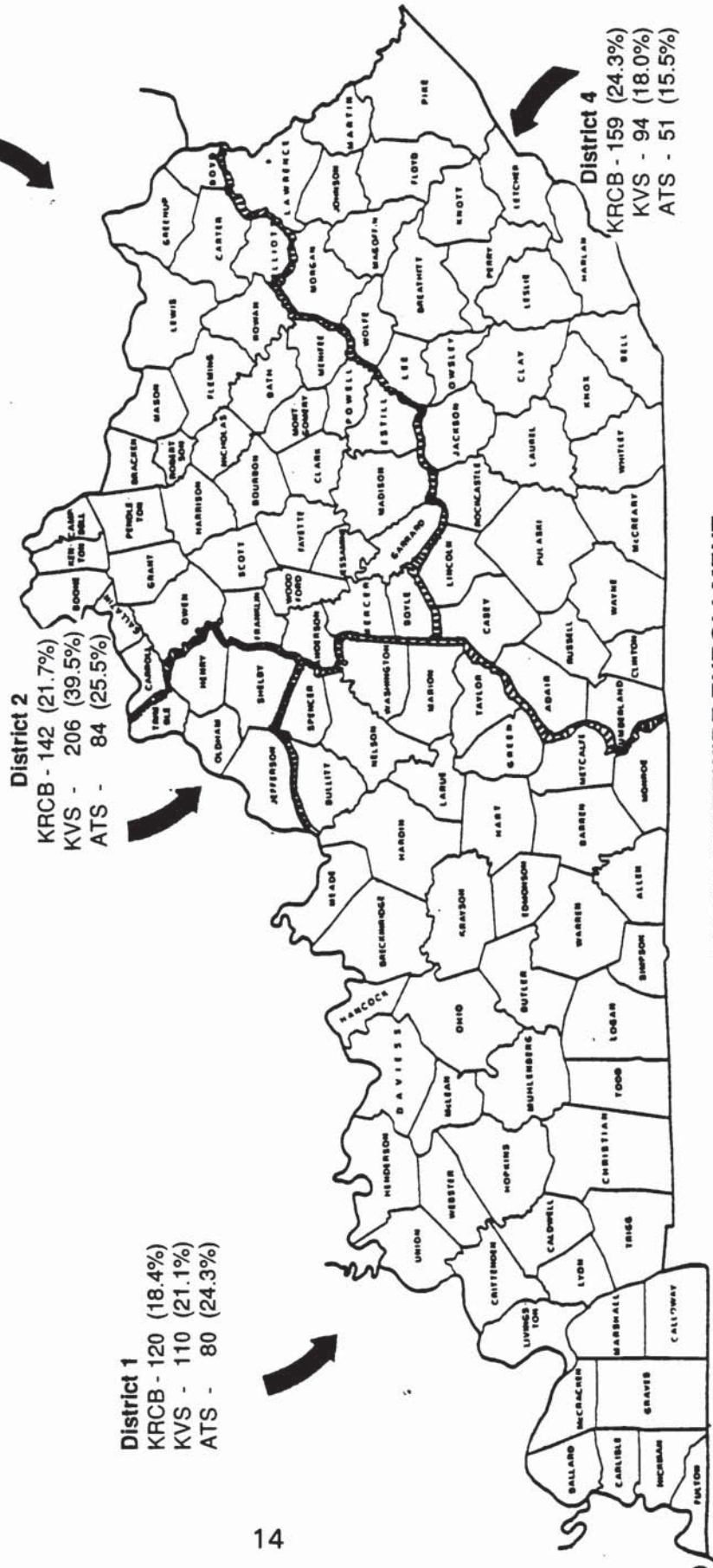
Several of the building committee members interviewed felt that while some of the programs that will be moved to the new center are programs solely for Jefferson County, the Kentucky Rehabilitation Center, Kentucky Vocational Service, and Assistive Technology Services serve clients statewide, and that accessibility for clients and families from the rest of the state must be considered. Map B shows the number of clients served by the three

MAP B

DISTRIBUTION OF CLIENTS AT:

Kentucky Rehab Center for the Blind (KRCB)
Kentucky Vocational Services (KVS), and
Assistive Technology Services (ATS), by
District, for the years 1989 through 1991

District 3
KRCB - 232 (35.5%)
KVS - 113 (21.7%)
ATS - 114 (34.3%)



SOURCE: Compiled by Program Review staff from data provided by the Department for the Blind
b:13030

statewide programs, by district, for the years 1989 through 1991. The map shows that the majority of clients in all three programs come from outside the Louisville-based District 2.

The Westport Road location's easy access from the Gene Snyder Freeway makes it a more convenient location for out-of-town clients. In response to criticisms that clients who arrive unescorted in Louisville will face large cab fares to get to the center, the director of the KRCB stated that the DFB pays for the cost of this transportation for its clients. The director of the center also stated that although there is no bus service to the center on weekends, state vans that presently shuttle clients between office locations will be available to provide transportation to clients when bus service is unavailable.

Conclusion

Despite objections to the contrary, it seems that the Westport Road site chosen for the new DFB center appears to be accessible to both the Department's Louisville area clients and its clients from out in the state. Bus service to the site, with over 30 runs per day, is adequate during the hours of operation of the programs to be housed in the facility. Additionally, the Department plans to accommodate clients through the use of state-owned vans and reimbursed cab fare.

However, other sites examined by the selection committee may have been more convenient for the Department's Louisville area clients and may

have been more economically efficient. For example, the Farm Bureau property is within one mile of the present district counseling offices, while the Westport Road site is over four miles from the counseling offices. The Farm Bureau property is also in a more residential area, while at the same time being closer to shopping and social activities than the Westport Road site. The Farm Bureau property also offers more than twice as much square footage as the proposed building on Westport Road. The Farm Bureau, however, has presently reached a sales agreement with a buyer, so this property is no longer available.

The Department for the Blind still has the option to determine whether other sites exist that would be more cost-effective and efficient for the DFB and more convenient for its local clients. The DFB still retains this option because a contract for construction of the new center has not reached the bidding stage.

There are several arguments that favor the DFB's reexamining its position. First, the initial decision to purchase land instead of renovating an existing building was based on a misinterpretation of the statutes. As mentioned earlier, the DFB could petition the Finance Cabinet to change the budget allocation to permit renovation of an existing building. Any change in construction plans requires approval of the Secretary of the Finance Cabinet.

Second, reexamining the choice of site should not be a great burden in terms of time delays, since the DFB has been slow in getting the new construction project underway. If it is determined that the Westport Road site

is the best site, the plans for that building could proceed with minimal delays. Additionally, the DFB has spent approximately \$150,000 of the \$4.5 million available for the new center, some of which could possibly be recouped by selling the land purchased from CHR. The Department has spent approximately \$30,000 on architect's and engineer's fees, which cannot be recovered.

Finally, if an existing facility is found that is similar to those on previous sites examined by the DFB, the offices of the DFB could possibly move into the building after only minimal renovation saving perhaps a year or more worth of rent, while major renovations proceed in other parts of the building. The proposed new Blind Center would not be completed until early 1994. The DFB presently spends over \$90,000 annually in rental cost, so an expedient move could save the Department as much as \$100,000.

Committee Action

The Program Review and Investigations Committee's discussion of the staff report on the Department for the Blind's Site Acquisition for its Rehabilitation Center occurred on August 17, 1992. At this time, the report was presented by staff, commented on by affected agencies and advocacy groups, and adopted by the Committee.

Although no recommendations were contained in the report, it was noted that the DFB could reexamine its position. Representatives of the DFB stated that the Department was very happy with the Westport Road site and

did not feel it was necessary or efficient to reopen the process. The DFB indicated that actions were being taken to reduce any problems local clients might have. These actions include use of state vans, taxi fare reimbursement and establishment of remote office sites.

Committee members encouraged the DFB to move quickly to ensure continuity of services, while following up on promises to increase accessibility. The staff report was adopted by the Committee.

APPENDIX A



Workforce Development Cabinet
Department for the Blind

427 VERSAILLES ROAD
FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY 40601

FAX 502 564-3976
502 564-4754

September 1, 1992

Senator Susan Johns
Chairperson
Program Review & Investigation Committee
Legislative Research Commission
Room 120
Capitol Annex
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

Dear Senator Johns:

Thank you for affording me the opportunity to express my comments to the Program Review and Investigations Committee on August 17, 1992. I commend you and the committee for obtaining the viewpoints of all interested parties on the site selection and interstate vending program issues. I want to assure you the Department will follow up on its expressed intentions.

Concerning the site selection for the new facility in Louisville, the Department for the Blind believes strongly that its choice of the Westport Road site is the best location to serve clients statewide. This location was chosen after several other sites were studied and evaluated for nearly a year.

There is concern in the blind community that moving the counseling unit which is currently located on Breckinridge Lane to Westport Road will inconvenience Jefferson County clients. The counseling unit is only one service of several which will be provided in our new facility. I stated in my comments on August 17th that the Department is planning to have the counselors who are currently at the Breckinridge Lane office maintain an office at the Kentucky Industries for the Blind on Brownsboro Road allowing them to see clients who live or work in that area by appointment.

It is also the intent of the Department to work with other state agencies to utilize available rent free offices by appointment in other parts of Louisville, a procedure we utilize with our counseling offices in all parts of the state. This will make our counseling services more accessible to Jefferson County
Senator Johns

September 1, 1992
Page Two

clients. Therefore, the Department is proceeding with its plans to build our facility on the Westport Road property.

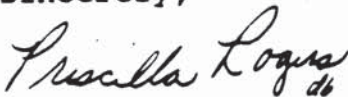
The Department will begin working soon with appropriate state and city transportation officials to petition for a traffic light near our new rehabilitation building. This will enable people who are blind and visually impaired to cross Westport Road safely. Further, we will be working with TARC to have a bus stop in front of the building. I may be calling you for assistance concerning both matters.

I am planning to assemble all the parties involved concerning the interstate vending program to discuss a viable plan for the future of this program. It is our understanding that any plan must not include any new general fund dollars nor affect services to general blind population. Of course, we will include the Transportation Cabinet officials during these meetings. We will also keep the committee informed on the progress.

I want to take this opportunity to express appreciation for the comprehensive report prepared by the LRC staff. Their input and professionalism was exemplary.

Thank you for your time. I very much enjoyed the opportunity to meet and talk to you. I look forward to working with the committee in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Priscilla Rogers" with a small "db" written below the name.

Priscilla Rogers
Executive Director

db

cc: Secretary Huston
Workforce Development Cabinet

APPENDIX B



Brereton C. Jones
Governor

*Governor's Office
for
Policy and Management*

Claude M. Vaughan
State Budget Director
(502) 564-7300
FAX (502) 564-6684

August 12, 1992

The Honorable Susan Johns, Chairperson
Program Review and Investigations Committee
Legislative Research Commission
Capitol Building
Frankfort, KY 40601

Dear Senator Johns:

After reviewing the two staff reports concerning the Department for the Blind and its operation of the Interstate Vending Program and site acquisition for a Rehabilitation Center in Jefferson County, I would like to offer the following comments.

As stated in my March 26 communication to Ms. Alice Hobson, the Governor's Office for Policy and Management remains fully supportive of the Department for the Blind and the manner in which it operates the Interstate Vending Program. Through its contract with a commercial vendor, the Department has been able to receive annual commissions of approximately \$450,000. These dollars, in turn, provide the Department with the opportunity to access federal funds at a ratio of more than 3 to 1 and generate over \$1 million in federal funds match per year.

The income generated from interstate vending revenues and a portion of the federal money is used in the Business Enterprise Program to benefit those operating vending sites under the federal Randolph-Sheppard Act. Moreover, the additional federal dollars benefit blind and visually impaired individuals through the numerous services provided by the General Blind Services Program. Without the revenue available from the present interstate vending contract, the Commonwealth of Kentucky would have to appropriate additional General Fund dollars to the Department for the Blind or require that the Department shift funds from other programs benefitting the blind and visually impaired.

Extending the blind vendor program to the interstate rest areas would result in the loss of another source of funds for the Commonwealth. Because the commercial vendor pays corporate sales and property taxes, Kentucky receives approximately \$130,000 in tax revenues each year from the present vending program. Blind vendors, however, are exempt from these taxes and, as a result, the state would lose this tax revenue.

284 Capitol Annex
Frankfort, KY 40601

At the present time, the Department for the Blind assumes minimal cost to maintain interstate locations. The LRC draft report indicates that under the blind interstate vendor scenario operating costs could rise significantly to more than \$400,000 the first year and \$300,000 in subsequent years. This would also require providing more General Fund dollars to the Department or shifting funds between programs. Given the current fiscal condition of the state, increasing the General Fund appropriation to establish a blind interstate vending program while maintaining the current level of services is simply not a viable option and would be opposed by this office. Because General Fund dollars remain insufficient to match the available federal funds, the opportunity to provide a greater level of services to a maximum number of clients would be forfeited. To disadvantage a majority of the Department's clientele in order to benefit a very few would not be a prudent course of action. Therefore, the Governor's Office for Policy and Management does not support changes in the current operation of the Interstate Vending Program.

We also are concerned about the draft report's conclusions regarding the site acquisition for the Department's rehabilitation centers because we believe the draft report presents no real evidence that the Westport Road site is disadvantageous. Instead, it notes that the location is, in fact, more convenient for out-of-town clients (who comprise a significant majority of individuals served by the programs to be consolidated) as well as accessible to the Department's Louisville area clients. Additionally, the report acknowledges the adequacy of bus service to the site and the Department's willingness to provide shuttle service to clients during those hours when bus service is unavailable. A number of interest groups within the blind community are quoted in support of the proposed site, stating that it has much to offer.

The argument that an existing site would allow the Department for the Blind to move after minimal renovation (while major renovations proceed in other parts of the building), thus achieving a sizeable saving on present rental costs, is inaccurate. First, the process of identifying another site, negotiating for its purchase, and completing even minimal renovation would require a substantial amount of time and the Department would encounter approximately the same delay as it now does in the construction of the new facility. Second, it is beyond comprehension to suggest that the Department would choose to bring blind clients onto a site undergoing major renovations.

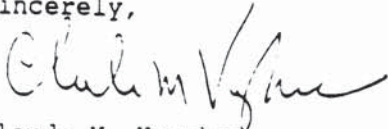
The draft report, in addition, concludes that the initial decision to purchase land was the result of a misinterpretation of the statutes. However, discussions with representatives of the Department for the Blind and the Workforce Development Cabinet indicate that this is an erroneous conclusion. Certain key individuals involved with the site selection process were not interviewed for this report and others assert that the Department was fully aware of its option to renovate an existing facility. For a variety of other reasons, the Department chose instead to proceed with the construction of a new building and selected the Westport Road location as the site.

The Honorable Susan Johns
August 12, 1992
Page 3

I would like to reiterate that we believe that the draft report contains no compelling argument that the site selected for construction of the new rehabilitation facility is unsuitable or inappropriate. Moreover, we believe that the draft report's principal claim that the Department should reexamine this decision because the site selection process was flawed is, itself, incorrect and inaccurate.

It is for the above stated reasons that GOPM cannot support the conclusions contained in the LRC reports. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to these draft reports. Should you desire further information or have additional questions, please contact this office.

Sincerely,



Claude M. Vaughan
State Budget Director

cc: Secretary Kevin J. Hable
Secretary Joseph W. Prather
Secretary William Huston
Secretary Don Kelly
Dr. Joseph Fiala

APPENDIX C



BLUE GRASS COUNCIL OF THE BLIND, INC.
248 EAST SHORT STREET
LEXINGTON, KY 40507
(606) 259-1834



M E M O R A N D U M

TO : JOHN SNYDER, LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION
FROM : JEANE GROW, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (VOLUNTEER) *JG*
DATE : AUGUST 13, 1992
SUBJECT : KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF THE BLIND SITE SELECTION REPORT

LET ME BEGIN BY LETTING YOU KNOW HOW EASY THE REPORT WAS FOR ME TO READ. THANKS SO MUCH.

MY RESPONSE WILL BE BRIEF.

I DO NOT AGREE THAT WE HAVE OTHER OPTIONS. WE AS A COMMITTEE SPENT MUCH TIME BEFORE WE SELECTED THE WESTPORT ROAD SITE. THIS SITE WE FELT WOULD BE THE BEST WE COULD FIND FOR THE FUNDS WE HAD TO SPEND.

RENT WAS DISCUSSED AT LENGTH, BUT WE DECIDED THE BETTER OPTION WAS TO BUILD A NEW CENTER THAT WE COULD EXPAND IN THE FUTURE IF IT BECAME NECESSARY.

WE ALSO WOULD BE ABLE TO DESIGN THE CENTER FOR OUR NEEDS. THE PRESENT CENTER IS MUCH TOO SMALL, AND WITH THE NEW CENTER WE WILL BE ABLE TO DOUBLE THE CLIENTS THAT SO DESPERATELY NEED THIS RE- ADJUSTMENT PERIOD.

I SPEAK FROM EXPERIENCE, WHEN MY VISION WENT DOWN IN 1982, I SPENT TEN WEEKS IN THE CENTER AND WILL ALWAYS BE GRATEFUL THAT THE CENTER WAS THERE . MY WHOLE LIFE CHANGED, AND TODAY I LIVE A VERY ACTIVE AND PRODUCTIVE LIFE.

TO DELAY BUILDING THE NEW CENTER WOULD BE TRAGIC. THE BACK LOG OF CLIENTS WAS TREMENDOUS TEN YEARS AGO AND IS EVEN WORSE NOW.

I DO UNDERSTAND THAT THE BLIND POPULATION IN LOUISVILLE ARE NOT ALL PLEASED WITH THE SITE. I DO SYMPATHIZE WITH THEM, BUT WE MUST REMEMBER THIS CENTER IS TO SERVE THE ENTIRE STATE OF KENTUCKY.

I WOULD POINT OUT THAT THE CENTER SERVES ALL TYPES OF PEOPLE. MANY COME FROM RURAL AREAS AND THE CITY IS A VERY FRIGHTENING EXPERIENCE.

THE TRAUMA EACH OF US GO THREW WHEN WE MAKE THE DECISION TO LEAVE THE SECURITY OF OUR HOME AND TRAIN' WE NEED ALL THE SECURITY THAT I FEEL THIS LOCATION WILL OFFER. I FEEL SURE MANY IMPROVEMENTS WILL BE MADE IN THE SURROUNDING AREA IN THE FUTURE.

THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THE CHANCE TO VOICE MY CONCERNS.

APPENDIX D

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF KENTUCKY
Statement of Concerns

Proposed location of new Department for the Blind Building

For several months, blind Kentuckians have expressed deep concern about the chosen location for the new Department for the Blind building to be constructed on Westport Road in Louisville. This structure is intended to house the rehabilitation center, as well as those counselling offices and rehabilitation services which presently occupy rented space in several buildings around the city. Such consolidation might prove to be cost effective if the building could be placed in a less isolated area than the one accepted by the Department for the Blind. It should be pointed out here that CHR chose to renovate the old L&N building in downtown Louisville rather than use this particular Westport Road property. This was done for the convenience of their clients. Yet, the Department for the Blind is willing to settle for an inferior location rather than take sufficient time to fully investigate the matter so that the end result would reflect forethought as well as expertise.

The Westport Road site meets the two considerations given priority by the Department for the Blind: 1. It is large enough to accommodate the proposed building; and 2. It is cheap enough to fit within the bounds of the appropriated funds. But what about the priorities of those blind Kentuckians who will be using this building and its services? While it is true that these are available for the use of all Kentucky's blind and visually impaired citizens, the largest population of them live in Louisville and Jefferson County. This is true because there are more job opportunities as well as available transportation. Many of these individuals will be denied a part of the independence they presently enjoy. Although city buses run on Westport Road, extensive mobility training/reinforcement will be necessary in order for local blind people to master the difficult routes and transfer points involved when traveling in that area. Going there to consult with their counselors or to purchase aids and appliances will no longer be feasible for them. The current practice of just dropping in to visit blind residents at the rehab center will come to a halt. Attending community based meetings at the facility will no longer be likely, since cab fares to that remote area would be prohibitive.

The only blind people from out in the state who will be visiting the building are those who attend the short-term adjustment program at the Center or the one to two weeks of vocational evaluation. They will be driven there by someone or come to Louisville by bus. Hopefully, someone will warn bus riders about the exorbitant cab fare required to cover the distance from the bus station to the new building. Because of the isolation of the

area, blind residents will be driven where they need to go by staff people using five state vans assigned to the Department for the Blind. Certainly, state government will pay a high price for the operation of these vans and the salaries of professionals to drive them. No longer will blind residents be able to practice their newly-learned mobility skills by taking a short walk alone to get ice cream, visit a blind person in the neighborhood, go shopping at the grocery or drug store. Although the Department for the Blind talks about the building of crosswalks and sidewalks, there simply is no nearby place for non-drivers to go.

If plans for this new building go forward--and the Department for the Blind is determined that they will--blind residents there will be denied the rewards of community interaction, which is a very important part of their training. Although the negative impact of this decision will be far reaching, the brunt of the loss will be felt by the large concentration of blind people living in the surrounding area.

