



# Media Release

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Career development program enrollment opens for youth who are blind or visually impaired**

The DHS Division of Services for the Blind and the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired are accepting applications for enrollment in Jump Start, a career development program for youth ages 16-19 years who are blind or severely visually impaired.

The program is designed to expose the students to the world of work, assist them in transitioning from high school to employment or post-secondary education, and increase their confidence in social situations.

This is the only program of its kind in Arkansas. Students from all across the state participate each year.

The three-week summer program is scheduled to begin on Sunday, June 8 through Friday, June 27. However, these dates may be adjusted if snow days are added to the ASBVI school schedule.

DSB arranges part-time jobs for the students in the mornings. To the degree possible, students are placed in jobs in their fields of interest so they can gain insight into their chosen professions. Students who don't have specific career goals at this point in their lives are given other employment according to their experience, skills and abilities.

In the afternoons and evenings they participate in educational and recreational activities. Jump Start students tour the State Capitol and receive hands-on training using accessible voting machines.

ASBVI has partnered with DSB to put on the program, sharing resources and opening up dorms. Participants stay on the ASBVI campus during the week and return home on the weekends.

Applications for Jump Start must be received at DSB no later than April 1. Applications are available through the DSB website at <http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dsb/Pages/default.aspx>. People also can call Ginny McWilliams, area field supervisor, at 1-800-960-9270 or 501-682-0326 for information.