

Division of Blind Services

Independent Living Program

Independent Living Counselor is Christy Westlund

Phone number is 689-282-6821

Email address is [christina.westlund@dbs.fldoe.org](mailto:christina.westlund@dbs.fldoe.org)

The largest age group of people with diminished vision is senior citizens. Often, seniors believe that nothing can be done to help with the inconvenience of having a visual impairment and do not seek the assistance that is available. Some individuals mistakenly believe that services are only for those who cannot see at all or are offered only to those with low incomes. Independent Living Services are available to anyone regardless of their circumstances when, due to having poor vision affecting both eyes, training is needed to address activities that are necessary for independence. Through group and individual training at a local community rehabilitation program, techniques can be learned, devices can be discovered, and independence can be enhanced or regained.

Services include:

- Information, advocacy, and referral to agencies with appropriate services
- Use of low-vision devices that may maximize the use of existing vision
- Assessment and training in the use of software designed for persons with visual impairments so they can effectively use computers
- Training in self-care skills such as cooking, cleaning, measuring, and clothing identification
- Social and recreational opportunities

Form more information about Independent Living Services, or to find the nearest office of the Division of Blind Services, visit <http://dbs.myflorida.com> or call toll-free 1 800 – 342-1828.