



Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist (COMS)

What might I do as a Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist?

- Teach independent travel skills to individuals with vision loss
- Orient a college student who is blind to locate classes, cafeteria, dorms, and the library on a college campus
- Explore a helicopter with a child who is blind in order to help her gain understanding of a difficult-to-grasp concept
- Empower a teenager who has low vision to read a bus schedule with a magnifier, catch the appropriate bus, and meet friends at the mall food court
- Teach a man who is visually impaired to cross two busy streets to get to the gym after work
- Instruct a young adult in the use of an electronic GPS device
- Teach long cane travel skills to a student who is visually impaired so he/she can maneuver independently through his/her school
- Orient a 30-year-old blinded veteran with a dog guide to her new job site
- Encourage an infant who is totally blind to engage in purposeful movement towards a musical toy
- Provide sensitivity training to the public regarding visual impairments



A Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS) walks with an adult woman who is blind. The COMS is instructing the woman in the use of a long white cane.

Why would I like this job?

- Instruct on one-to-one basis both indoors and outdoors
- Watch an individual smile as he/she sheds the weight of doubt and fear
- Empower and equip an individual with a visual impairment to re-enter the world
- Be creative and problem-solve
- Enjoy free daily workouts as part of your job duties

Lessons run the gamut from encouraging an infant to crawl across the living room floor to instructing a senior to cross four lanes of traffic. Each day brings a different adventure!

How do I become an O&M Specialist?

- SFA offers an undergraduate training program in O&M as part of a bachelor's degree in rehabilitation services
- Master's degree or graduate certification in O&M is also available
- Programs include coursework plus a practicum and internship
- The SFA Visual Impairment Preparation program offers distance education classes for graduate work and on-campus coursework for undergraduate work

Opportunities available to apply for grants, stipends, or financial aid to fund tuition and training

Where would I work as an O&M Specialist?

- Outdoor, indoor, rural, and urban environments
- Schools, homes, and job sites of those who are blind or visually impaired
- Airport, bus and train terminals
- Assisted living and nursing home facilities
- Rehabilitation centers
- Hospitals

The world is my classroom. I have no desk, I have no chair, but I get to go almost anywhere.

Potential employers include, but are not limited to,

- Individual public school districts or multi-district cooperatives
- Government or private agencies for people who are blind or visually impaired
- U.S. Veterans Administration
- Rehabilitation agencies/centers
- Schools for the blind/residential schools
- Dog guide schools
- Private contract/self-employed
- Camps for people with disabilities

For more information:

Stephen F. Austin State University Visual Impairment Preparation Program

Perkins College of Education

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<http://www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/122.asp>