

# IS A CAREER AS AN ORIENTATION & MOBILITY SPECIALIST RIGHT FOR YOU?

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## WHAT IS AN ORIENTATION & MOBILITY SPECIALIST (O&M)?

An O&M Specialist is a trained expert who specializes in working with individuals who are blind, have low vision, or who have visual limitations. An O&M Specialist assists individuals in achieving their life goals for education, employment, hobbies, and independence.

## IF YOU HAD A CAREER AS AN O&M SPECIALIST, WHERE COULD YOU WORK?

You might work in a school, a home, or in the community.



### IN A SCHOOL, you would:

- Teach students to travel safely and independently using strategies such as tactile map and long cane skills.
- Collaborate with professionals (for example, occupational and physical therapists) and family members to structure the environment to promote safe and independent travel.
- Assist students with recreational and physical education activities to promote inclusion with peers.



### IN A HOME, you would:

- Motivate students to engage in purposeful movement to explore their environment.
- Help a family create routines that promote safe and independent exploration of a student's home environment.
- Co-create plans with families for independent travel across the home, school, and community.



### IN THE COMMUNITY, you would:

- Assist a student in exploring a variety of modes of transportation, such as a bus or a train.
- Show a student how to use a smart phone, magnifier, telescope, or other technology to navigate public places, such as restaurants and grocery stores.
- Teach a student to cross busy streets to get to an after-school job or a friend's house.
- Help a student locate places and things in their environment, such as the bus stop or the coffee shop.

## YOU MIGHT ENJOY THIS WORK IF YOU LIKE TO:

- Connect with others
- Explore new environments
- Build confidence in others
- Solve problems creatively
- Teach people to be as independent as possible
- Stay physically active. O&M Specialists are always on the move!

## VOICES FROM THE FIELD: MEET A CERTIFIED O&M SPECIALIST (COMS)



Every day, I get to engage in creative problem-solving in constantly changing environments. This ultimately leads to student independence.



Autumn Booths, COMS  
Capital Area IU 15

Scan or click the QR code to  
watch the interview.



## HOW TO BECOME AN ORIENTATION & MOBILITY (O&M) SPECIALIST IN PENNSYLVANIA:

1. Complete a bachelor's degree.
2. Enroll in a university program for three to four additional semesters, which includes a practicum/internship.
3. Take a test to earn a credential.
4. Apply for certification as a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist through the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals (ACVREP).

### Higher Education Opportunities in Pennsylvania for Orientation & Mobility Certification:

- Drexel University, Blindness and Low Vision Studies Programs  
Elkins Park Campus, PA 19027  
<https://tinyurl.com/DrexelBLVS>
- University of Pittsburgh, Visual Impairment and Blindness Studies Programs  
Pittsburgh, PA 15260  
[tinyurl.com/225epx84](https://tinyurl.com/225epx84)



Pennsylvania programs typically offer distance education classes, with in-person components, and offer grants and/or stipends for tuition.

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*This publication was adapted with permission from The Association for the Education and Rehabilitation for the Blind and Visually Impaired Flyer on Orientation and Mobility. [Online]. Available: <https://www.aerbvi.org/certified-orientation-mobility-specialist-coms/>*

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