Hiring Justification for Roswell Counselor

\* The Commission for the Blind is seeking an exception to hire a Vocational rehabilitation Counselor in Roswell. The following is the justification for granting the exception:

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The position will be essential for the Commission to help blind and visually impaired persons unemployed by the Coronavirus emergency to become employed. It is likely that there will be a significant increase in the number of consumers needing our services. It is also likely that the Commission will need to serve some individuals who have suffered cortical visual impairments due to COVID-19. Failure to fill the position would also result in an unreasonable burden being placed on current counselor staff, which would be inconsistent with 34 CFR 361.12, which requires that the Commission ensure the “proper and efficient administration” of the grant.”

\*The position must be filled for the Commission to comply with federal law. Pursuant to 34 CFR 361.25, vocational rehabilitation services must be “available in all political subdivisions of the State.” The VR Counselor in Roswell serves the southeast portion of the state. Pursuant to 34 CFR 361.45(a)(1), each client’s Individualized Plan for Employment must be “developed and implemented in a timely manner.” Pursuant to 361.45(a)(2), services must be “provided in accordance with the provisions of the Individualized Plan for Employment.” Pursuant to 361.57(b)(1), a client who is dissatisfied with any determination made by the Commission may request an “impartial due process hearing.”

\*The position is primarily funded with federal vocational rehabilitation (VR) funds, with approximately 78.7% of the cost of the position being paid for with federal VR funds.

\*The Commission is mandated to spend at least 15% of its VR funds on Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) by 34 CFR 361.65(a)(3), and a portion of the salary will be paid for with the 15% Pre-ETS reserve.

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The 21.3% of General Fund (non-federal share) used as match for the position is subject to a federal Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirement.

\*A portion of the salary is paid for with the 15% Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) reserve. The Commission is required to spend 15% of its VR funds on Pre-ETS Pursuant to 34 CFR 361.65(a)(3).