Vision Professionals for Under Served Areas (VIPs-USA)

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Project Outcomes: Project VIPs-USA will prepare 35 fully trained and highly qualified (HQ) teachers of students with visual impairments. The Pacific & Northwest Consortium for Vision Education (PNWCVE) is a hybrid education program hosted through the Visually Impaired Learner (VIL) program at Portland State University (PSU). PNWCVE serves rural and urban schools in Oregon, Montana, Washington State, Idaho, and Hawaii. The VIL program is 41-62-credit, NCATE approved, two-year part-time program and offers Masters and endorsement options. The competencies scholars will acquire include enhanced content related to multiple disabilities and deaf-blindness, culturally and family responsive teaching, and distance mentorship and instruction.

Program Components: The components of the PNWCVE program include coursework focused on research, instructional methods, assessment, integrating assistive technology, professionalism, and collaboration. PNWCVE offers two braille courses and is the first university in the country to teach Unified English Braille code. A total of 600 hours of supervised experience is required for program completion. Collaborating with the National Center on Deaf-Blindness, regional LEAs, and state partners, PNWCVE will enhance its coursework to support students from culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse (CLAD) backgrounds with visual impairments (VI). Program effectiveness will undergo research-focused and objectives-based evaluation that incorporates qualitative and quantitative data measures.