



For Immediate Release

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Microsoft Awards Career Development Grant to The Austin Lighthouse for the Blind Testing Equipment for IT Certification to Aid the Blind & Visually Impaired

April 8, 2022, Austin, TX - The Austin Lighthouse for the Blind recently reached out to Microsoft about an issue that many of their employees and others who are blind or visually impaired deal with when taking certification exams. While the courses involved are accessible to those with failing or no eyesight, the exams are just the opposite and testing centers in Central Texas are not equipped for their needs.

Central to this challenge was the lack of appropriate proctor training. Proctors who monitor the students during an examination are generally unfamiliar with the nuances of working with blindness or other disabilities. The Austin Lighthouse pursued the matter with Pearson VUE, a testing and certification organization that works with several technology organizations and specifically with Microsoft. It was determined that providing a testing center, specific to individuals with disabilities was feasible and very much needed in our geographic area.

The Austin Lighthouse partnered with Microsoft and requested funding for the purchase of the testing equipment through Microsoft's corporate giving campaign. \$10,000.00 was provided as a grant which allows the Austin Lighthouse to move forward with this venture.

The new Austin Lighthouse Certification Center will provide accessible testing and be open to anyone seeking to secure or reinstate their certifications from organizations such as Microsoft, Cisco, Salesforce, and others. The Austin Lighthouse expects the new testing center to be operational by June 1st, 2022.

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About Austin Lighthouse

Travis Association for the Blind (aka Austin Lighthouse), headquartered in Austin, Texas, has been serving the needs of the blind and visually impaired community of Travis County and surrounding areas since 1934. The Lighthouse's mission is to enhance the opportunities for economic and personal independence of people who are blind or visually impaired by creating, sustaining, and improving employment.

A 501(c3) nonprofit organization, the Lighthouse does this in several different settings, including warehousing and distribution facilities, manufacturing and repair facilities, assembly operations, bottling operations, custodial, retail, and vending operations. By leveraging technology and automation, the Lighthouse employs 253 people who are legally blind to make the products and provide the services required by their customers. The Lighthouse also works with area business and community partners to assist with developing vocational and independent living skills.

Website: www.austinlighthouse.org