Kenneth Jernigan Convention Scholarship

The Kenneth Jernigan Convention Scholarship provides funding support to National Federation of the Blind members who want to attend a [national convention](https://nfb.org/get-involved/national-convention) for the first time.

Eligibility

Active NFB members, blind or sighted, who have not yet attended an in-person NFB National Convention because of lack of funding are eligible to apply.

How to Apply

Starting January 1, 2022, apply online using the [Kenneth Jernigan Convention Scholarship online application form](https://www.nfb.org/form/kenneth-jernigan-convention-scho).

The application will ask for the following information:

* **Contact Information:**Include your full name and both your primary phone where you can be contacted by your state president and your mobile phone you might use at convention, if available. Please include your mailing address and, if you have one, your email address. If you don’t have an email address, please consider if there is a friend or chapter member who might be able to assist with email correspondence.
* **State Affiliate/Chapter Information:** Include your state affiliate, your state president, chapter, and chapter president, if you attend a chapter.
* **Mentor Information:** Include your personal convention mentor and provide that person’s phone number.
* **Funding Request:** Include your specific request and explain how much money you need from this fund to make this trip possible for you. We suggest you consult with other members to make a rough budget for yourself.
* **Essay Questions:**How do you currently participate in the Federation? Why do you want to attend a national convention? What would you receive? What can you share or give? Provide any special circumstances you hope the committee will take into consideration.

If you cannot apply online, you can still apply by writing a letter to your state affiliate president answering the above questions. This letter should be emailed to your state affiliate president. Once you have decided you will apply, please contact your state president in person or by phone to request his or her help in obtaining funding. Be sure to tell the state affiliate president when to expect that your application will be submitted and mention the deadline.

Once your online application has been submitted, your application will be provided to your state president via email. It is still your responsibility to contact your affiliate president. He or she must email a president’s recommendation directly to the Kenneth Jernigan Convention Scholarship Fund Committee at kjscholarships@nfb.org. **Your president must email the recommendation no later than the deadline of April 15, 2022.**If you have applied outside of the online form, the state affiliate president must email both the recommendation and the application letter.

Notification of Award

If you are chosen to receive this scholarship, you will receive a letter with convention details that should answer most of your questions. The committee makes every effort to notify winners by May 15, but you must do several things before that to be prepared to attend if you are chosen:

* **Make your own hotel reservation.** If something prevents you from attending, you can cancel the reservation. (Yes, you may arrange for roommates of your own to reduce the cost.)
* **Register online for the entire convention,** including the banquet, by May 31.
* **Find someone in your chapter or affiliate who has been to many conventions**and can answer your questions as a friend and mentor.

If you do not hear from the committee by May 15, then you did not win a scholarship this year.

Receiving the Award

At the convention you will be given a debit card or credit card loaded with the amount of your award. The times and locations to pick up your card will be listed in the letter we send you. The committee is not able to provide funds before the convention, so work with your chapter and state affiliate to assist you by obtaining an agreement to advance funds if you win a scholarship, and to pay your treasury back after you receive your debit or credit card.

Award Details

The three biggest ticket items you need to cover when attending an NFB National Convention are the round-trip transportation, the hotel room for a week, and the food (which tends to be higher priced than at home). We attempt to award additional funds to families, but, whether a family or an individual is granted a scholarship, this fund can only help; it won’t pay all the costs. Most years the grants were in the range of $400 to $500 per individual. In 2019, ninety grants were offered.

We recommend that you find an NFB member as your personal convention mentor, someone who has been to many national conventions and is able to share money-saving tips with you and tips on navigating the extensive agenda in the big hotel. Your mentor will help you get the most out of the amazing experience that is convention week.

More Information

For additional information, please contact the chairman of the Kenneth Jernigan Convention Scholarship Fund Committee, Tracy Soforenko, at kjscholarships@nfb.org or 410-659-9314, extension 2415.