**2023 NFB Washington Seminar Career Fair**

**Instructions for Job Seekers**

The 2023 Washington Seminar Career Fair will be a face-to-face event held in the “Congressional 2” room of the Holiday Inn Washington-Capitol at 550 C Street Southwest in Washington, D.C. It will occur on Monday, January 30, 2023, from 1:00 to 3:00 PM Eastern time. There will be two groups of job seekers attending:

* Pre-registrants will receive a Word file containing employer registration information after Tuesday, January 24 and will be able to research and contact employers before the career fair, as well as follow up with them afterward.
* Walk-ins can register at the Employment Committee table at the entrance to the career fair by providing their name, phone number, email, and state. By doing so, they will receive the employer Word file after the career fair. They will need to provide their contact information to employers directly.

Individuals who do not pre-register or provide us with registration information at the career fair will not be able to get the employer information. It is for registrants only.

Those job seekers who have attended our recent career fairs will see this as a departure from our established registration system. However, because of the unique nature of the Washington Seminar, we feel this approach will attract the most people. This career fair is open to job seekers who are not attending the Washington Seminar and are coming in from D.C. and surrounding communities.

Job seekers will enter and leave through one door. Please line up outside and have your registration confirmation available either in print form or on your cell phone so our door monitors can see it. That way you will be able to enter immediately when the doors open at 1:00 PM. If you have not pre-registered, the door monitors will direct you to the Employment Committee registration table right inside the room. You must register to get detailed contact information for employers.

Historically, this career fair has been laid out with employers around the periphery of the room in alphabetical order. Each employer will have a regular sized table. A large print and Braille sign will be on each table. Job seekers will walk around the room talking to the employers about what they can offer in terms of skills and experience. Employers will be at their tables until 3:00 PM, when the career fair ends. Please arrive early and budget your time so you can see every employer.

How many employers? Sixteen at the time of this writing. All of them want to hire blind people. Will they interview you and offer you a job on the spot? Not likely, as there won’t be enough time for that. Be sure to ask them what their next steps will be, and get their business cards, so you know exactly who you met. Make sure to follow up with them after the career fair; don’t just wait for a phone call.

What the employers will be expecting from each of you:

* Resumes: before, during, and after the career fair, in paper and electronic formats.
* Appropriately dressed and well-mannered individuals.
* Employer research by people who pre-registered.
* Elevator speeches.
* Plenty of energy that will impress the employers.
* Qualified people who can describe how they can help employers.

In addition to the above, job seekers should be able to talk about the nonvisual and visual techniques they are able to use to get the job done. That includes screen readers, Braille output devices, scanning technology, and the use of services like Aira and Be My Eyes that can enable them to read print. The employers present will understand that blindness is a continuum with varying degrees of vision, but it may be necessary for you to explain further.

It helps to think of ways in which your blindness can be a benefit to the employer. For example, many blind people have problem-solving and management skills that sighted people lack. It helps to provide examples of challenges you have successfully conquered. Unique experiences can be a powerful selling point.

Sometimes blind and low vision people, because of job discrimination and other factors, have difficulty getting the required work experience that many employers have come to expect. Describe ways in which the higher education you have can be substituted for work experience.

Since not every employer offers remote employment, consider the possibility of jobs with one or two days in the office or relocation to a place with better mass transit. Ask if employers offer benefits like relocation expenses. While there is a worker shortage in this country, don’t assume that a job seeker can demand and get what an employer is unable or unwilling to give.

Remember that being out of work for an extended period devalues a job seeker, so if someone offers you a job, even if it isn’t the exact one you were seeking, consider taking it for the work experience and advancement possibilities.

Many employers offer internships or summer work programs, so if you are looking for that kind of employment, please ask them.

Your contact people for this career fair:

* Rachel Kuntz, Job Seeker Liaison: rachelrkuntz@gmail.com, 937-245-0547
* John Dubay, Employer Liaison: jdubay@leadsatscale.com, 509-590-3394
* Dick Davis, Committee Chair: dickblind@gmail.com, 612-719-0753