

**NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF TEXAS**

**72nd Annual Convention**

**“Living the Life You Want at School, Work and Home”**

**November 3-5, 2023**

**DoubleTree by Hilton at Hobby Airport**

**8181 Airport Blvd**

**Houston, TX**

**(713) 645-3000**

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**HOTEL**

This year’s convention is headquartered at the DoubleTree by Hilton at Houston Hobby Airport, 8181 Airport Blvd, in Houston. If you haven’t already made your reservation, you should do so before October 19. Room rates are $92.00 per night, plus applicable tax. You can reserve a room by calling 713-645-3000. Or you can use the following booking link.

<https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/nftb-annual-conference/>

When using the link, please note that it is easier to access using a computer.

If you need assistance making your reservation via the link, please feel free to call our office for help. When you call, be sure to have your method of payment ready. For security reasons we do not maintain a record of any credit cards, so even if you have contacted us to help pay for something in the past, we will not have your credit or debit card information on file.

**COVID PROTOCOL**

Last year, we required those attending our convention to present a negative COVID test. This year, we have eliminated that requirement, but out of an abundance of caution, we will provide masks in all our registration packets. Masks are not required, but we urge you to consider wearing one if possible, to protect those among us who are medically fragile.

We hope everyone stays well throughout the convention, but if you start to experience COVID symptoms, we will have tests available for you. If you find you need a test, you will be able to find one at the registration table or in the back of the general session room.

Thank you for your cooperation. It means a lot that we all care enough about one another to take the steps necessary to ensure that we all go home COVID free.

**ZOOM**

We will be offering certain convention sessions via Zoom for those who cannot join us in person. These include the annual board meeting, the resolutions committee meeting, all general sessions, and the banquet. To participate in our Zoom hosted sessions, you may use the link below. The same link will be used for every session we provide via Zoom.

If you want to participate in these sessions but aren’t able to use Zoom, we can provide you with a call out service. This option provides you with the ability to receive a phone call that will connect you to the meeting with just the touch of one button on your phone. If you need to utilize this service, contact our office prior to November 1, 2023, to request it.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83165531036?pwd=S2N1VUpESitTMzBLWWkrS2Vvd3dHUT09>

One tap mobile

[+13462487799,,83165531036#](tel:%20+13462487799,,83165531036)

**INTERPRETATION**

Interpreter services will be provided for the board meeting, resolutions committee meeting, all general sessions, and the banquet. A Spanish-language seminar will be offered during the afternoon breakout sessions, on Saturday. To access the interpreted meetings, use the link below.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86743142604?pwd=VUNtRWxoZDRuR2lDcjdCSFAvTXVwQT09>

Meeting ID: 867 4314 2604

Passcode: 70

One tap mobile

+13462487799,,86743142604# US (Houston)

Please note that we will not provide phones, headphones, phone charging stations or any other equipment needed to access interpreter services. You should bring your own equipment in order to listen.

**REGISTRATION**

All convention attendees are encouraged to register. Registration with the convention entitles you to the convention room rate and qualifies you to win door prizes. If you have pre-registered for the convention, please go to the pre-registration table located in the Esplanade Pre-function area to pick up your registration packet. Pre-registration closes at close of business on October 30.

If you did not pre-register, you may register and purchase banquet tickets when you arrive at the convention. The onsite registration fee is $35.00, and banquet tickets purchased onsite will cost $50.00 each. Registration is located in the Esplanade Pre-Function area outside the Moody Ballroom and will be open at the following times:

Friday, November 3, from 12:00-5:00 PM.

Saturday, November 4, from 7:30-8:45 AM and from 12:00-1:00 PM.

We will adhere to these timelines strictly so our registration workers can participate in all convention activities.

**EXHIBITS**

Exhibits will be in the Esplanade Pre-Function area and will be open at the following times:

Friday, November 3, 10 AM to 5 PM.

Saturday, November 4, 12-4 PM.

**DOOR PRIZES**

We will draw for a variety of door prizes during each general session and at the banquet. You must be registered with the convention in order to have your name placed in the drawing, and you must be present when your name is called in order to win.

Madison Flores will serve as our door prize chairperson this year. If you have door prizes to contribute, please see to it that you get them to us by Friday, November 3. If you or your chapter plan to contribute cash or gift cards, you may send those in advance of the convention if you wish. That can be done via mail or by using Zelle or PayPal. Our Zelle username is [ncrosby@nfbtx.org](mailto:ncrosby@nfbtx.org). PayPal payments may be sent by using the donate button on nfbtx.org. Please, label any prizes you bring to the convention in print and Braille.

**NFB-NEWSLINE®**

NFB-NEWSLINE® will have a table in the exhibit hall, and there will also be a special interactive Newsline presentation on Friday afternoon between 2:00 and 4:00 PM. Liz and her team will show you how you can use our innovative audio newspaper and information service to make cooking easier, manage your health better, keep up-to-date about technology for home and work, and even how you might get out of the house by finding a job. Then, they can show you how to manage your screen time and more.

**THE REUNION**

On Friday, from 5:15-6:30 PM, join us for our annual reunion celebration. Food will be served, and the event is open to anyone with a registration wristband. There is no additional charge for this event, but you must be registered in order to participate. We look forward to seeing everyone there.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

The annual meeting of our board will take place on Friday, November 3, from 4:00-5:00 PM. This meeting is open to everyone. Spanish interpretation will be available, and the meeting will be streamed via Zoom.

**BANQUET**

The annual banquet of the National Federation of the Blind of Texas will take place on Saturday, November 4, beginning at 7:00 PM, in the Moody Ballroom. Shawn Callaway, a member of the Board of Directors of the National Federation of the Blind, will be our keynote speaker. Raul Gallegos will emcee the program, and scholarships will be awarded. Wristbands will be checked at the door. Tickets are available online for $45.00 each, until October 30. If you miss the deadline to pre-register and to purchase banquet tickets, a limited number of tickets will be available for purchase onsite for $50.00 each. We must plan with the hotel for this meal function. So please help us by purchasing your tickets early.

**MASSAGES AVAILABLE**

Ta’lia Woodard is a certified massage therapist who is also a Federation member. This year, Ta’lia is offering those attending our in-person convention massages for the incredible price of $20 for fifteen minutes or $25 for twenty minutes. Ta’lia is generously donating fifty percent of all proceeds to our affiliate to support our programs. Her massage station will be set up in the rear of the room during all general sessions.

**LET’S SEE WHO HAS READ ALL THE NOTES!**

Would you like to win $200 for doing something you were already planning to do anyway? Well, here is your chance. When you pick up your registration materials, you will be given a blank index card with your name on it. When you attend certain convention sessions, you will have the opportunity to request a sticker showing you attended that session. Anyone who collects stickers from the following sessions will be entered in a drawing for $200. Here are the sessions you must attend.

1. Either the TXAGDU Meet and Greet or the iBUG session.
2. Newsline at Home and Everywhere Else.
3. Board of Directors Meeting.
4. Resolutions Committee Meeting.
5. Either the Communications Committee, Membership Committee or Texas Association of Blind Students Meeting.
6. Saturday Morning General Session.
7. Saturday Afternoon General Session.
8. One of the breakout sessions scheduled on Saturday afternoon.
9. Banquet
10. At least four exhibitors.

The stickers will not be alike, so you can’t just ask a friend to hook you up with thirteen stickers. You’ll actually have to be present in the sessions to get one for that session. In addition to the thirteen stickers you’ll get if you attend all the sessions you are required to attend to be entered into the drawing, there will be a mystery person in attendance who will have a fourteenth sticker. The first person to find that person will get the extra sticker, and if their name is drawn on Sunday morning, they will get an additional $100.00 in prize money. You are not required to participate in this opportunity to win $200, but if you choose to, you should turn in your card with all thirteen stickers just before the session starts on Sunday morning. The drawing will be held just before we adjourn on Sunday, and you must be present to win.

**AGENDA**

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3**

**10:00 AM-5:00 PM - EXHIBITS**

Esplanade Pre-Function Area

**11:00 AM-Noon - VANDA PHRAMACEUTICALS PRESENTS: NON-24 SLEEP-WAKE DISORDER**

A clear, comprehensive educational program led by a trained expert. Attendees will be able to learn about circadian rhythm, biology, and symptoms of Non-24, its impact on the community, how to become one’s own advocate, and gain valuable information and resources.

Shauna Jatho, RN BSN, Nurse Educator

Vanda Pharmaceuticals

Ballroom A

**12:00-5:00pm - REGISTRATION**

Esplanade Pre-Function Area

**12:00-1:30 PM – TXAGDU MEET & GREET AND BUSINESS MEETING**

Elizabeth Campbell, President

Tampico/Monterrey Room

**12:30-2:00 PM - iBUG PRESENTS A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A BLIND PERSON: USING ACCESS TECHNOLOGY FOR GREATER INDEPENDENCE IN YOUR HOME**

The folks at iBUG will demonstrate useful apps that you’ll use from the time you wake up in the morning until you go to bed at night. Check the news, your email, and social media. Learn to exercise. Buy groceries and everything else online. Do banking, use payment systems, and use entertainment apps to enjoy TV, movies, books and music. Then, of course, learn how to use AI to be more productive.

Ballroom A

**2:00-4:00 PM - NEWSLINE: AT HOME AND EVERYWHERE ELSE**

Want to learn more about how NFB-NEWSLINE® TEXAS allows you to incorporate new recipes into your daily routine, help you find a job, keep healthy, or do research? This interactive program will allow you to find all the practical uses for this innovative tool. Everyone is not only welcome but encouraged to stop by for a chance to learn more.

Hosted by NFB-NEWSLINE® TEXAS.

Liz Wisecarver, Program Coordinator

Acapulco/Cancun Rooms

**4:00-5:00 PM – BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

This is an open meeting. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend.

Ballroom C

**5:15-6:30 PM - THE REUNION**

Everyone who is registered is welcome to attend this dinner/hospitality event. Bring your wristband. This is a complimentary hospitality event to celebrate our homecoming.

Moody Ballroom

**6:45-7:15 PM - RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE MEETING**

Resolutions should be submitted to the chair at [gcrosby@nfbtx.org](mailto:gcrosby@nfbtx.org) no later than November 1. Resolutions must be submitted in final form. The committee will not edit resolutions during the meeting.

Glenn Crosby, Chairperson

Ballroom C

**8:00-9:00 PM - COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

Liz Wisecarver, Chairperson

Ballroom C

**8:00-9:00 PM - MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

Yolanda Harris, Chairperson

Cancun Room

**8:00-10:00 PM - TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF BLIND STUDENTS**

Demetria Ober, President

Ballroom E

**9:00-11:00 PM – BINGO: A NIGHT OF FUN HOSTED BY THE HOUSTON CHAPTER**

Stacie Gallegos, President, NFBTX Houston Chapter

Ballroom A

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4**

**7:30-8:45 AM - REGISTRATION**

This will be your final opportunity to purchase banquet tickets.

Esplanade Pre-Function Area

**7:30-8:45 AM - NFB-NEWSLINE® LEADERSHIP BREAKFAST**

This breakfast meeting is for a chapter representative and Newsline ambassadors only. Chapter presidents should notify Liz Wisecarver who is representing their chapter by October 31.

Moody 1 Ballroom

**MORNING GENERAL SESSION**

Ballroom C

**9:00 AM – CALL TO ORDER**

**9:05 AM - INVOCATION**

**9:10 AM - CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM**

**9:20 AM – WELCOME TO HOUSTON**

Stacie Gallegos, President

National Federation of the Blind of Texas, Houston Chapter

**9:30 AM - MEET THE SCHOLARSHIP CLASS of 2023**

Lara Sowell, Chairperson

National Federation of the Blind of Texas Scholarship Committee

**9:45 AM – FEELING RIGHT AT HOME: A MESSAGE FROM OUR NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE**

Shawn Callaway, Board Member

National Federation of the Blind

**10:25 AM – A CONVERSATION WITH TWS-VRS**

This will not be a recitation of facts and figures. Rather, it will educate our membership, while bringing important issues of service to the forefront.

Juanita Barker, Director of the Office of Blind Services

Texas Workforce Solutions - VR Services

Wendy Franklin, Program Support Mgr., Region 5 Houston

Texas Workforce Solutions - VR Services

Michele Dobbins, Regional Blind Support Specialist

Region 5 Houston

Texas Workforce Solutions - VR Services

**11:00 AM – AIRA: A SERVICE OFFERING FROM THE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM**

Marty Watts, Vice President of Sales

AIRA

**11:15 AM – VETARAN’S UPDATE: THE VISOR PROGRAM FOR BLIND VETS**

Amy Wheeler, VISOR Program Director

**11:30 AM – THE ABLE ACCOUNT: AN UPDATE**

Anna Mallett, Outreach Specialist, Texas ABLE Program

**11:40 AM – BE BOLD: A PANEL DISCUSSION**

Emily Gibbs, Director of Youth & Education Services

National Federation of the Blind of Texas

Mika Baugh, Project Planner for Youth Programs

National Federation of the Blind of Texas

Kayleigh Joiner, Assistant Program Coordinator

National Federation of the Blind of Texas

**NOON - ADJOURN**

**SATURDAY AFTERNOON**

**GENERAL SESSION**

Ballroom C

**2:00 PM – CONFIDENCE, LEADERSHIP, ADVOCACY, AND SOCIAL SKILLS (CLASS): A NEW WAY TO MENTOR BLIND YOUTH**

Daniel Martinez, Board Member

National Federation of the Blind of Texas

**2:15 PM – WHAT’S NEW AT THE TALKING BOOK PROGRAM?**

Jaclyn Owusu, Public Awareness Coordinator

Texas Talking Book Program

**2:25 PM - Get Lundy: An Alexa Skill To Simply Your Next Home Search**

Justin Lundy, Founder, Lundy.io

**2:40 PM – HOW TO MAKE THE DREAM OF HOMEOWNERSHIP A REALITY**

Ashley Graves, Realtor

Steel Door Realty

**2:55 PM – ADJOURN**

**BREAKOUT SESSIONS & COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

**3:00-4:00 PM – DEI: Revitalizing Our Diversity Programs**

Demetria Ober, our chairperson of the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee will join Shawn Callaway and Norma Crosby for a discussion of ways to encourage diversity in our affiliate. This is an open meeting, and we invite people to bring their ideas and their willingness to work. While our affiliate is diverse, we can always do better. Help us do that.

Room 1859

**Each of the following breakout sessions will last from 3:00-5:00 PM.**

**FEELING AT HOME AS AN INDEPENDENT BLIND PERSON: A SPANISH LANGUAGE SEMINAR**

This interactive program is facilitated by members of our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee. Join us for this annual celebration of being together and building the Federation.

Tampico Room

**BETTER HOMES & GARDENS**

Glenn Crosby and Thomas Rodriguez host a hands-on program to show you how blind people can garden and keep their homes in order. Join our gardener and handyman for tips and tricks you can use.

Cancun Room

**LEARNING MORE ABOUT HOMEOWNERSHIP**

Ashley Graves, and a lender will be available to share additional information about purchasing your own home. The general session was just a warm up. This session will allow you to ask all the questions you want about how first-time buyers might be able to get the home of their dreams. Financing options, neighborhoods, and anything else you want to know can be addressed in this informal session.

Monterrey Room

**The following breakout session will run from 3:30-5:00 PM.**

**MAKING YOUR HOME SMARTER**

Join Raul and Stacie Gallegos for an interactive program that will provide information about using smart devices to make your life easier. Bring your curiosity and questions.

Acapulco Room

**SATURDAY EVENING**

**7:00 PM - BANQUET**

Raul Gallegos, Master of Ceremonies

Moody Ballroom

**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5**

**7:30-8:30 AM - LONE STAR CHAPTER BREAKFAST**

This is the annual, face-to-face, meeting of our at-large chapter. Chapter members are welcome, and convention attendees who live in a rural area and want to know more about the chapter are invited to attend as well. If you plan to attend, please RSVP by Monday, October 30. To RSVP, notify our chapter president, Lara Sowell, at [lsowell@nfbtx.org](mailto:lsowell@nfbtx.org).

**GENERAL SESSION**

Moody Ballroom

**9:00 AM - CALL TO ORDER**

**9:05 AM - INVOCATION**

**9:10 AM - PRESIDENTIAL REPORT**

Norma Crosby, President

National Federation of the Blind of Texas

**9:30 AM - ELECTIONS**

**9:45 AM - SECRETARY’S REPORT**

Louis Maher, Secretary

National Federation of the Blind of Texas

**9:55 AM – TREASURER’S REPORT**

Lara Sowell, Treasurer

National Federation of the Blind of Texas

**10:10 AM - RESOLUTIONS**

Glenn Crosby, Chairperson

National Federation of the Blind of Texas Resolutions Committee

**10:35 AM - CHAPTER REPORTS**

**11:00 AM - A REPORT FROM NEWSLINE**

Liz Wisecarver, Program Coordinator

**11:10 AM - FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**11:15 AM - ADJOURN**