National Federation of the Blind of Maryland

NFB National Convention Key Information

This guide provides information about the National Federation of the Blind National Convention. Individuals should review the information carefully, as it contains particulars about critical meetings, dress code, and other expectations.

Individuals receiving financial assistance from the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland are required to attend certain meetings and events. First-time convention attendees (if not receiving financial assistance) are strongly encouraged to attend all of the meetings that those receiving financial assistance are required to attend. Veteran conventioneers are encouraged to also attend the below referenced activities and meetings.

**General Schedule:**

The NFB Convention lasts six days, with most attendees travelling the day before and after the six-day event. The general schedule is as follows:

* Day 1 (Sunday, July 7, 2019): Seminar Day – various groups and divisions including Parents of Blind Children, Rehabilitation Professionals, Sports and Recreation Division, and others, hold seminars. There are also technology seminars for those interested in learning about assistive technology and/or technology accessibility. The Employment Committee hosts a seminar for job-seekers. The evening highlights include the Rookie Roundup (meeting to orient first-time convention attendees).
* Day 2 (Monday, July 8, 2019): Resolutions Day – Several divisions, groups and Committees hold their meetings and seminars, but the highlight of the day is the meeting of the NFB Resolutions Committee, where an appointed committee discusses and debates important topics in resolution form that will, if passed by the committee, come before the Convention for a vote. Other highlights of this day include the Mock Trial (a legal case is acted out with hilarious results), the National Association of Blind Students meeting, and our Maryland Caucus. This is the first day when individuals can visit Pre-Registration (if already registered) or Registration (if not already pre-registered) to get their badges, agendas, and banquet tickets; it is critical this is done before the Maryland Caucus. This is also the first day for the Independence Market and Exhibit Hall.
* Day 3 (Tuesday, July 9, 2019): Board Meeting and Division Day – The day begins with the Board Meeting of the National Federation of the Blind, where attendees hear about important matters to the blind, the national scholarship finalists introduce themselves for the first time, and some awards are given. Later that day, there are many division meetings, such as blind educators, blind lawyers, and so on.
* Day 4 (Wednesday, July 10, 2019): General Session Opening Day – This marks the first day of the General Session of the NFB National Convention. The morning session highlights include a welcome ceremony and the roll call of states where each NFB affiliate introduces itself. The afternoon session features President Riccobono’s annual Presidential Report, which highlights the organization’s accomplishments over the past year and sets the path for the next year.
* Day 5 (Thursday, July 11, 2019): General Session Elections and Resolutions – This day generally includes a great deal of Federation information and interesting presentations. The Convention holds elections for the National Board of Directors, and the Convention votes on the resolutions to decide whether they become NFB policy. There is usually a party in the evening.
* Day 6 (Friday, July 12, 2019): General Session and Banquet Day – This day also includes many interesting presentations during General session. In the evening, the NFB Convention Banquet features a keynote address by President Riccobono, various awards, and scholarship finalists receiving their awards. The banquet is the final event of the convention.

**Dress code:**

The dress code for the NFB National Convention is generally business casual to business professional. The dress code for the NFB Convention banquet is business professional to dressy. The meeting rooms tend to be a little cold, so attendees may want to bring a sweater or wrap. The sleeping rooms tend to be somewhat of a distance from the meeting rooms, so individuals may want to wear comfortable shoes.

**General Expectations:**

* All attendees of the NFB National Convention are subject to and required to adhere to the National Federation of the Blind Code of Conduct printed at the end of this document and located at <https://www.nfb.org/about-us/history-and-governance/code-conduct>.
* Attendees are required to register for the Convention. Individuals who fail to register for the Convention are not entitled to the NFB Convention sleeping room rate.
* Attendees are required to wear their badges (received upon registration or pre-registration packet pickup) during General Session and encouraged to wear them throughout the convention. Individuals who fail to wear/present their badges during General Session may not receive a door prize should their name be called, as the badge is used to verify identity.
* The NFB National Convention General Session is set up so that each delegation (state) sits together. States are usually in alphabetical order, or fairly close to alphabetical order. There is a flag at the beginning of the first row of each delegation that lists the name of the affiliate in Braille and large print. The NFB affiliate president generally sits at the flag, and individuals may sit anywhere they wish in the delegation. However, attendees should be mindful that those with mobility devices and strollers may need to sit on the ends of rows or in locations where chairs have been removed. Individuals may not obstruct the aisles, and every individual must have a seat (no prolonged standing is permitted). Some members of the delegation may need to sit in particular seats due to the nature of their work, e.g. photographers, scholarship winners and mentees with their mentors, etc. Attendees should be courteous to others when choosing seats and be mindful that sometimes there is a particular reason why someone might need to sit in a specific seat.
* Attendees are expected to sit with the Maryland affiliate during General Session of the NFB Convention. This is because seats are allocated to each state based on the number of registrants. Should individuals choose to sit with other states and those states have insufficient seating for their own members, non-members of those states may be asked to sit elsewhere.
* Attendees are expected to be courteous to presenters and those around them during General Session and all meetings. Attendees should refrain from having loud conversations during meetings/sessions. Even if attendees are unhappy with something a presenter has said, NFB Members will treat those presenters with courtesy and respect.
* Attendees are expected to attend the Maryland Caucus, where we will discuss matters of importance to the Maryland affiliate.
* Individuals who wish to sit with Maryland at the Banquet must turn in their banquet tickets to the NFB of Maryland President at the Maryland Caucus. Tickets will be returned during General Session.

**Registration and Pre-Registration:**

Individuals were able to pre-register for the National Convention and purchase a banquet ticket between March 1 and May 31. If an individual did not pre-register, he/she may register on-site beginning on Day 2 of the NFB Convention.

* **Pre-registration has the following hours of operation:**
  + **Monday, July 8, 2019 – 9:00AM – 5:00PM - Pacific Registration Desk**
  + **Tuesday, July 9, 2019 – 8:30AM – 5:00PM – Islander Registration Desk**
  + **Wednesday, July 10, 2019 – 8:45AM – 9:15AM and 1:30PM – 2:00PM – Islander Registration Desk**
  + **Thursday, July 11, 2019 – 8:15AM – 8:45AM and 1:30PM – 2:00PM – Islander Registration Desk**
  + **Friday, July 12, 2019 – 8:15AM – 8:45AM – Islander Registration Desk**
* **Registration for those who did not pre-register has the following hours of operation:**
  + **Monday, July 8, 2019 – 9:00AM – 5:00PM - Bayview Court South**
  + **Tuesday, July 9, 2019 – 8:30AM – 5:00PM – Islander Registration Desk**
  + **Wednesday, July 10, 2019 – 8:45AM – 9:15AM and 1:30PM – 2:00PM – Islander Registration Desk**
  + **Thursday, July 11, 2019 – 8:15AM – 8:45AM and 1:30PM – 2:00PM – Islander Registration Desk**
  + **Friday, July 12, 2019 – 8:15AM – 8:45AM – Islander Registration Desk**

**Maryland Caucus:**

**The NFB of Maryland holds a meeting for all convention attendees from Maryland to get together to discuss issues of importance to the members of the National Federation of the Blind of Maryland. The Caucus will take place on Monday, July 8, 2019 beginning at 9:00PM in Tradewinds F. This is a mandatory activity for first-time convention attendees, for anyone receiving financial assistance, and for scholarship finalists. All other Marylanders are strongly encouraged to attend as well. At the Maryland Caucus, individuals will:**

* **Turn in banquet tickets if they wish to sit with Maryland so that NFBMD can facilitate Banquet ticket exchange**
* **Finalize the schedule for who is working at the Maryland table**
* **Discuss any resolutions of significance to Maryland**
* **Hold a membership ceremony for the At-Large Chapter, Parents Division, Students Division, Merchants Division, Seniors Division, and anyone else who missed their brick and mortar membership ceremony**
* **Conduct other important business**

**Banquet Ticket Exchange:**

Purchasing a banquet ticket grants the purchaser a seat in the banquet hall, but it does not designate a specific table or seat. In order to receive a specific table assignment, individuals need to participate in Banquet Ticket Exchange, where the original banquet ticket is turned in and a new ticket is issued with a specific table assignment. If individuals want to sit together, they should exchange their tickets together. Maryland conducts an affiliate banquet ticket exchange for anyone who wishes to sit with Maryland. To that end, anyone wishing to sit with Maryland at the Banquet must turn in their original banquet ticket at the Maryland caucus to the NFB of Maryland President. The President will provide attendees with their new tickets during General Session. Individuals should be sure to inform the President if they require a vegetarian meal. Additionally, since the NFB of Maryland Caucus occurs on Monday night, it is important for individuals to register or pick up their pre-registration materials prior to the Caucus.

Independence Market, Materials Center, and Exhibit Hall:

**The NFB National Convention features opportunities to explore products and services of benefit to the blind.**

* **The NFB Independence Market is the NFB store, where individuals can purchase a variety of items, including canes, household gadgets, games, watches, slates and styluses, and so much more. Individuals who receive financial assistance from NFB of Maryland and/or the Jernigan Fund are required to work in the Independence Market.**
* **The NFB Materials Center is where individuals can obtain literature about blindness at no charge.**
* **The NFB Exhibit Hall features dozens of vendors who offer products and services to the blind. These include assistive technology, commercial software and hardware, household aids and appliances, blindness services, and affiliates selling everything from scissors to peanuts to instant lottery tickets to snacks.**
* **The NFB of Maryland has a table in the Exhibit Hall located at D7 to provide information about our organization and to sell items. Individuals who receive financial assistance through the NFB of Maryland and/or the Jernigan Fund are required to work at the Maryland Table in the Exhibit Hall.**

The Independence Market, Materials Center, and Exhibit Hall are located in the Islander Ballroom and will be operating during the following dates and times:

* Monday, July 8, 2019 – 9:00 – 11:00AM (Independence Market, Materials Center, and Exhibit Hall Sponsors only)
* Monday, July 8, 2019 – 11:00AM – 5:00PM
* Tuesday, July 9, 2019 – 8:30AM – 5:00PM
* Wednesday, July 10, 2019 – 12:00PM – 1:45PM
* Wednesday, July 10, 2019 – 7:00PM – 9:00PM (Exhibit Hall only)
* Thursday, July 11, 2019 – 12:00PM – 1:45PM

Maryland Table:

**The NFB of Maryland has a table in the Exhibit Hall located at the Islander Ballroom Table D7 to provide information about our organization and to sell items. Individuals who receive financial assistance through the NFB of Maryland and/or the Jernigan Fund are required to work at the Maryland Table in the Exhibit Hall. These individuals should contact NFBMD Coordinator Meleah Jensen at 504-621-4162 to sign up for at least one shift to work the table. The shifts are as follows:**

* Monday, July 8, 2019 – 11:00AM – 2:00PM
* Monday, July 8, 2019 – 2:00PM – 5:00PM
* Tuesday, July 9, 2019 – 8:30AM – 11:00AM
* Tuesday, July 9, 2019 – 11:00AM – 2:00PM
* Tuesday, July 9, 2019 – 2:00AM – 5:00PM
* Wednesday, July 10, 2019 – 12:00PM – 2:00PM
* Wednesday, July 10, 2019 – 7:00PM – 9:00PM
* Thursday, July 11, 2019 – 12:00PM – 2:00PM

Emergencies and Problems:

* If an individual is experiencing a medical emergency, he/she or individuals with them should contact 911.
* Should an attendee experience a non-medical emergency during the Convention, it is strongly recommended that the individual or someone with them contact the NFB of Maryland President at 443-426-4110.
* If individuals experience other challenges, they should also contact the NFB of Maryland President at 443-426-4110.

**Mentoring:**

The NFB of Maryland Ambassadors Committee coordinates mentoring for first-time convention attendees, new NFB members, and those who request mentoring. Individuals interested in having a mentor should contact Ambassador Committee Chairman Judy Rasmussen at [judyras@sprynet.com](mailto:judyras@sprynet.com) or at 301-946-8345. Individuals who are assigned mentors must communicate regularly with their mentors and attend the Introductory Gathering hosted by the NFB of Maryland.

**Key Meetings:**

The following are the key meetings and activities that will take place prior to and during the NFB National Convention.

* First-time Convention Attendees Conference Call: Thursday, June 27, 2019 at 8:00PM via conference number 1-605-313-4818 and Access Code 720125#. - Mandatory for all individuals receiving financial assistance who are attending their first National Convention; strongly encouraged for all first-time attendees
* Rookie Roundup: Sunday, July 7, 2019 from 8:00PM – 9:30PM in South Pacific Ballroom F – Mandatory for all individuals receiving financial assistance who are attending their first National Convention; strongly encouraged for all first-time attendees – This meeting provides an overview of the convention activities and expectations. It provides an orientation to the events of the week.
* Registration and Pre-Registration Packet Pickup: Monday, July 8, 2019 – Required for all – Attendees register for the Convention, purchase a banquet ticket, pick up pre-registration materials (if pre-registered between March 1 and May 31), and obtain a print or Braille Convention agenda.
* Resolutions Committee Meeting: Monday, July 8, 2019 beginning at 1:00PM in the South Pacific Ballroom - Mandatory for all individuals receiving financial assistance; strongly encouraged for all first-time attendees; strongly encouraged for all Marylanders – Attendees will be able to watch and listen while the NFB Resolutions Committee discusses and debates matters that, if approved by the Committee, will go before the Convention floor. Resolutions, if adopted by the Convention, become the policies of the Federation.
* Maryland Caucus: Monday, July 8, 2019 beginning at 9:00PM in Tradewinds E – Mandatory for all individuals receiving financial assistance; strongly encouraged for all first-time attendees; strongly encouraged for all Marylanders - Attendees turn in banquet tickets for Banquet Ticket Exchange and the affiliate discusses matters of importance to Maryland.
* National Association of Blind Students Meeting: Monday, July 8, 2019 from 6:15PM – 10:00PM in South Pacific Ballroom C & D – Mandatory for all students – discussion of student issues and resources.
* Board Meeting: Tuesday, July 9, 2019 from 9:00 – 11:30AM at South Pacific Ballroom - Mandatory for all individuals receiving financial assistance; strongly encouraged for all first-time attendees; strongly encouraged for all Marylanders – This meeting is when the NFB National Board of Directors discusses issues of importance to the National organization, the scholarship class introduces itself for the first time, various awards are given, and often, we learn where next year’s convention will take place.
* General Session: Wednesday, July 10, Thursday, July 9, and Friday, July 10, 2019 in South Pacific Ballroom E through J (9:30 – Noon on Wednesday; 9:00 – Noon on Thursday and Friday; and 2:00 – 5:00 Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday) - Mandatory for all individuals receiving financial assistance; strongly encouraged for all first-time attendees; strongly encouraged for all Marylanders – This is the annual meeting of the NFB National Convention, where we learn about programs and activities and make decisions as the supreme authority of the organization. General sessions run in morning and afternoon sessions, with a two-hour lunch break from Noon to 2:00PM. Individuals who have registered for the Convention are eligible for door prizes, but they must be present to win.
* NFB Convention Banquet: Friday, July 12, 2019 at 7:00PM in South Pacific Ballroom - Mandatory for all individuals receiving financial assistance; strongly encouraged for all first-time attendees; strongly encouraged for all Marylanders – This is a formal dinner with a keynote address by President Riccobono. The National Scholarship class will also receive their scholarships, several awards will be given, and the major raffles will be pulled. There will also be door prizes, and in order to win, individuals must have registered for Convention and be in attendance at the Banquet.
* NFB Independence Market and Materials Center: (see above for dates and times) - Mandatory for all individuals receiving financial assistance; strongly encouraged for all first-time attendees; strongly encouraged for all Marylanders – This is the NFB store, where individuals can purchase various aids and materials.
* NFB Exhibit Hall: (see above for dates and times) - Mandatory for all individuals receiving financial assistance; strongly encouraged for all first-time attendees; strongly encouraged for all Marylanders – This is where the NFB of Maryland Exhibit Table is located as well as dozens of vendors and other affiliates. Individuals can purchase technology, equipment, aids, household items, snacks, games, t-shirts and NFB swag, and other items.

If anyone has questions about this guide, they may contact Ronza Othman, President, NFB of Maryland, at 443-426-4110 or at [President@nfbmd.org](mailto:President@nfbmd.org).

# Code of Conduct

Our code of conduct outlines the policies and standards that all National Federation of the Blind members, especially our leaders, are expected to adopt and follow. To report a potential violation of this code, please consult section IX below. Reports can be filed using the [code of conduct grievance report form](https://www.nfb.org/about-us/history-and-governance/code-conduct/grievance-report-form) or by calling our dedicated voicemail box at 410-659-9314, extension 2475.

## I. Introduction

The National Federation of the Blind is a community of members and friends who believe in the hopes and dreams of the nation’s blind. The Federation knows that blindness is not the characteristic that defines you or your future. Every day we raise the expectations of blind people, because low expectations create obstacles between blind people and our dreams. You can live the life you want; blindness is not what holds you back. To help carry out the Federation’s vital mission, this Code of Conduct sets forth policies and standards that all members, especially Federation leaders, are expected to adopt and follow.

## II. Diversity Policy

The National Federation of the Blind embraces diversity and full participation as core values in its mission to achieve equality, opportunity, and security for the blind. We are committed to building and maintaining a nationwide organization with state affiliates and local chapters that is unified in its priorities and programs and is directed by the membership. We respect differences of opinion, beliefs, identities, and other characteristics that demonstrate that blind people are a diverse cross section of society. Furthermore, the organization is dedicated to continuing to establish new methods of membership and leadership development that reflect the diversity of the entire blind community. In promoting a diverse and growing organization, we expect integrity and honesty in our relationships with each other and openness to learning about and experiencing cultural diversity. We believe that these qualities are crucial to fostering social and intellectual maturity. Intellectual maturity also requires individual struggle with unfamiliar ideas. We recognize that our views and convictions will be challenged, and we expect this challenge to take place in a climate of tolerance and mutual respect in order to maintain a united organization. While we encourage the exchange of differing ideas and experiences, we do not condone the use of demeaning, derogatory, or discriminatory language, action, or any other form of expression intended to marginalize an individual or group. The National Federation of the Blind does not tolerate discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship, marital status, age, genetic information, disability, or any other characteristic or intersectionality of characteristics.

## III. Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy

The National Federation of the Blind will not tolerate discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, background, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship, marital status, age, genetic information, disability, or any other characteristic or intersectionality of characteristics. Harassment on the basis of any of these characteristics similarly will not be tolerated. Although this Code of Conduct establishes a minimum standard prohibiting discrimination and harassment, nothing in this Code should be interpreted to limit in any way a person’s right to report abuse or harassment to law enforcement when appropriate.

Sexual harassment is prohibited by state and federal law and also will not be tolerated by the National Federation of the Blind. Complaints of harassment may be lodged by a female against a male, by a female against a female, by a male against a male, or by a male against a female. Sexual harassment is defined as “unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, sexually motivated physical contact, or other verbal or physical conduct or communication of a sexual nature.” The following conduct is either considered conduct that by itself is sexual harassment, or that has the potential risk of causing sexual harassment to occur, and this conduct is therefore prohibited:

* unwelcome inappropriate physical contact or touching;
* repeating of sexually suggestive jokes/references/innuendoes and comments about an individual’s body/sexual prowess/physical attributes/dress;
* the use of sexually derogatory language/pictures/videos toward/about another person;
* the use of inappropriate sexual gestures;
* sexually suggestive propositions; and
* explicit or implicit threats that failure to submit will have negative consequences.

Under this policy, harassment can be verbal, written, or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his or her race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, marital status, citizenship, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law; or that of his or her relatives, friends, or associates, and that a) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment; b) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s performance or involvement in the organization; or c) otherwise adversely affects an individual’s opportunities for participation/advancement in the organization.

Harassing conduct includes epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts including bullying; denigrating jokes; and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group that is placed on walls or elsewhere on the organization’s premises or circulated by email, phone (including voice messages), text messages, social networking sites, or other means.

## IV. Social Media and Web Policy

All members of the Federation, but especially officers and board members of the Federation as well as those in leadership positions such as state affiliate presidents and their boards, division presidents and their boards, and local chapter presidents and their boards should follow these recommended guidelines when making comments online, posting to a blog, using Facebook/Twitter/LinkedIn/YouTube/Pinterest/Instagram/similar tools, and/or using other platforms that fall under the definition of social media:

* Promote the mission and branding message of the organization in comments/posts.
* Recognize that you are morally and legally responsible for comments/pictures posted online.
* Be aware that the audience includes members and nonmembers of the NFB, both youth and adults, representing diverse cultures and backgrounds.
* Refrain from using profanity/derogatory/offensive language or making political endorsements that might reasonably be attributed to the Federation.
* Post/respond with integrity. Though you may disagree with a post, be respectful and factual. Do not fight or air personal grievances online.
* Do not post materials that are inappropriate for children/minors to view/share/read.

## V. Conflict of Interest Policy

NFB officers, national board members, state affiliate presidents and their boards, division presidents and their boards, and local chapter presidents and their boards (hereafter Federation leaders) are expected to take appropriate responsibility to protect the Federation from misappropriation or mismanagement of Federation funds (including funds of an affiliate, chapter, or division in which Federation leaders assume leadership roles).

Federation leaders are expected to disclose the existence of any potentially conflicting personal financial interest or relationship to the full National Federation of the Blind Board of Directors and seek its review and approval, as specified below. For example:

* A Federation leader must seek board review and approval of his or her receipt of salary or compensation of any kind from the Federation (including an affiliate, chapter, or division).
* A Federation leader must seek board review and approval of receipt by his or her spouse, parent, child, sibling, or other close relative of salary or compensation of any kind from the Federation (including an affiliate, chapter, or division).
* A Federation leader must seek board review and approval of any ownership interest exceeding 5 percent in or of any salary, compensation, commission, or significant tangible gift from any commercial venture doing business or seeking to do business with the Federation (including an affiliate, chapter, or division). This process will also apply to the review of such interests involving spouses, parents, children, siblings, or other close relatives.
* In reviewing matters brought pursuant to this section, the officer or national board member seeking national board review and approval will refrain from voting.
* Federation leaders shall take appropriate steps to avoid unauthorized or inaccurate appearances or official endorsement by the Federation (including an affiliate, chapter, or division) of any product, service, or activity that has not been so endorsed. For example, because the Federation never endorses political parties or candidates for elected office, any Federation leader participating in the political process must take care to avoid creating an appearance of official Federation endorsement.

## VI. Policy While Interacting with Minors

For purposes of this Code of Conduct and consistent with most legal standards, a minor is any individual under the age of eighteen. While interacting with any minor, a national officer, national board member, state affiliate president and their boards, division presidents and their boards, and local chapter presidents and their boards (hereafter Federation leaders) shall recognize that a minor cannot legally give consent for any purpose even if said minor is verbally or otherwise expressing consent. For example, a minor may say that they consent to physical interaction. However, such consent is not valid or legal and should not be accepted. A parent or guardian must be informed and consulted about any action requiring consent from the minor. Federation leaders shall report any inappropriate interactions between adults and minors to the minor’s parents and law enforcement when appropriate.

## VII. Alcohol and Drug Policy

Although alcoholic beverages are served at some Federation social functions, members and Federation leaders may not participate in any such functions in a condition that prevents them from participating safely and from conducting Federation business effectively or that might cause embarrassment to or damage the reputation of the Federation. The Federation prohibits the possession, sale, purchase, delivery, dispensing, use, or transfer of illegal substances on Federation property or at Federation functions.

## VIII. Other General Principles

In addition to the other policies and standards set forth herein, national officers, national board members, state affiliate presidents and their boards, division presidents and their boards, and local chapter presidents and their boards (hereafter Federation leaders) shall adhere to the following standards:

* Federation leaders shall practice accountability and transparency in all activities and transactions.
* Federation leaders shall foster a welcoming environment at NFB meetings, events, and conferences that is a cooperative and productive atmosphere for all members and nonmembers.
* Federation leaders shall interact with NFB staff in a professional manner and follow proper channels of authority and communication.
* Federation leaders shall positively promote the NFB through verbal and written communication.
* Whenever possible, Federation leaders and members are strongly encouraged to handle conflicts or complaints involving other members privately, directly, and respectfully. Nothing in this standard is intended to limit a Federation leader’s or member’s right to pursue organizational change through appropriate methods or to limit anyone’s right to file a complaint for violation of this Code when necessary.

## IX. Violations and Complaint Procedure

Violations of this Code of Conduct, after first being established through the process set forth below, are subject to disciplinary action by the Federation. Such disciplinary actions may include but are not limited to counseling, verbal and/or written reprimand, probation, suspension, or termination of officer/leadership duties, and/or suspension or expulsion from the Federation.

* Any complaint for a violation of this Code of Conduct shall be filed with the Office of the President. Complaints may alternatively be filed with the chairperson of the National Federation of the Blind Board of Directors or an executive officer of the Federation: vice president, treasurer, or secretary. The President shall appoint a committee of no more than four persons to investigate the complaint and provide a recommendation for action or lack thereof. The committee shall be comprised of persons not directly involved in the matters being raised and who can be unbiased about the individuals and issues addressed in the complaint. Every effort shall be made to appoint a committee reflecting the broad diversity of individuals in the Federation. If the alleged complaint involves the Office of the President or if there is a conflict of interest by the Office of the President, a vice president or the chairperson of the board shall be designated to handle the investigation process as outlined.
* Complaints and supporting documentation shall be treated as confidential to the fullest extent possible.
* All complaints shall be filed as promptly as possible. Except under extreme circumstances, no complaint shall be accepted or investigated after a year from the time of the alleged violation of this Code.
* Complaints that turn out to be false and used for the purpose of harassing, intimidating, or retaliating against someone will be subject to the same kind of disciplinary action enumerated above.
* Any person dissatisfied with the resolution of a complaint may file an appeal with the National Federation of the Blind Board of Directors, which may, in its discretion, take such action as it deems necessary. No national board member shall participate in the consideration of an appeal under this Code if such board member is the subject of the complaint or if such board member cannot be unbiased, impartial, and fair while considering the matter.

## X. Minimum Standard

This Code of Conduct is intended to outline a minimum set of standards expected of Federation members. It sets forth the spirit that the Federation expects of all of its participants toward each other and toward those who work with the Federation at all of its levels. It is intended to be interpreted broadly to instill a respectful, cooperative, and welcoming spirit in members and in the activities of the Federation.

## XI. Federation Pledge and Acknowledgement of Code of Conduct

I, (Federation leader), pledge to participate actively in the efforts of the National Federation of the Blind to achieve equality, opportunity, and security for the blind; to support the policies and programs of the Federation; and to abide by its Constitution. I further acknowledge that I have read this Code of Conduct and that I will follow its policies, standards, and principles.