**NFB 2019 Career Fair Information for Jobseekers and Employers**

**By Dick Davis, Chair, NFB Employment Committee**

Dear Jobseekers and Employers:

Welcome to the 2019 NFB Career Fair on Monday, July 8 from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. in South Pacific A & B! If you’re a jobseeker, you’re going to meet around 40 employers who want to hire you. If you’re an employer, you’re going to meet over 200 of the best blind employees the NFB can offer.

This letter is designed to answer your questions and give you guidance on how best to navigate the career fair. The beginning section contains general information of interest to both jobseekers and employers. Then there are separate sections for each.

General Information:

The career fair has two parts. The first, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m., is “open career fair” with over 200 jobseekers circulating around the ballroom where employer tables are located. Jobseekers will go table by table or target specific employers of interest to them. Employers will market their organizations and find jobseekers of interest to them.

At 3:00 p.m. we will ask all jobseekers to leave the room and give employers a break until 3:30. Those who don’t plan to stay for the second portion of the career fair will be able to pack up and leave at that time.

At 3:30, the “appointment only” part of the career fair will begin. Jobseekers who have appointments with employers will re-enter the room and have interviews or in-depth discussions with them. The career fair will end promptly at 5 p.m., after which employers will be able to pack up and leave.

The career fair is in a large ballroom with 40 or more 6 ft. long tables around the outer walls and three open tables for jobseekers in the middle. Each employer will have one table unless they have made prior arrangements with me to have more than one. Employer tables will have two chairs in front and two in back which can be arranged to meet people’s needs. The closest tables to the entry door will be occupied by employers who are convention sponsors. After that, employers will be positioned alphabetically.

Tables will be draped, with each one having an attractive print and Braille sign on it. If an employer wants to have their own drape, we ask that they remove the sign and attach it to their drape so everyone can know their name. Table displays are welcome, as are business cards, literature, swag, and other handouts.

Before the career fair, we will send a chart with table numbers to employers and to jobseekers who have registered online. We will also publish it on the NFB’s internal listservs. Because of limits on what we can ship, we will have some Braille and large type charts available, but not enough for each jobseeker to have their own copy. Jobseekers are encouraged to bring an electronic version of the chart for personal use.

Information for Jobseekers:

Jobseekers who have registered online can enter the career fair simply by providing their last name and state to Employment Committee members and volunteers at the door. Those who haven’t registered yet will need to register at the door (with help from committee members and volunteers) before entering.

We’ll start onsite registration for jobseekers at noon or a little before. Each jobseeker who registers onsite will receive a ticket that will enable them to enter the room. Jobseekers will not be allowed into the room until the doors open at 1:00 p.m.

We’ll have some volunteers present to help jobseekers find tables, but anyone who needs continuous sighted guide assistance is encouraged to bring their own guide or make prior arrangements with Dick Davis, chair of the Employment Committee by texting or calling him well in advance at 612-719-0753. He will do his best to assign you a full-time volunteer, subject to their availability.

We encourage everyone to dress up for interviews. Business attire is best, as it will show you at your best. If you don’t have business dress, please dress as well as you can. Avoid shorts, t-shirts, or other informal attire. Plan to bring a resume and cover letter addressed to each employer. Resumes can be in electronic or paper form.

If you are interested in an employer, you may want to send them your resume in advance and make an appointment to talk to them. Individuals who registered in advance by Friday, June 28 will receive detailed contact information for career fair employers.

After the career fair, we recommend jobseekers send personal notes of thanks to the employers with whom they met. It shows courtesy and good manners. Make sure to follow up with them too; don’t expect them to take the initiative to reach out to you. Remember, if you want a good job, it’s up to you!

Information for Employers:

If you’re new to the NFB Career Fair or want a refresher, we have a special invitation for you. Please join us in Tradewinds E from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m. on Monday, July 8 for an employer orientation. Employment Committee members and a special presenter from the Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind will offer you an informative session on how to successfully employ blind people. This is your chance to ask the kinds of questions you’ve always wanted to ask, and to get answers from the experts.

Following that session, you’ll have time to grab a quick lunch and get your table set up in South Pacific A & B. We intend to open the doors for you as soon as we can after 11:30 a.m., but no later than noon. We encourage you to get set up early. In the past, a few employers have arrived after jobseekers had already entered the room. Not fun!

We’ve received no information about Wi-Fi availability in the ballroom. If we learn that there will be some, we will let you know right away. Generally, ballrooms, because of their movable walls, lack plug-ins. If you need one, please text or call me at 612-719-0753 right away.

This week we are sending out a list of employer contact information to the jobseekers who are registered for the career fair. Please expect some contacts from them before the career fair. They may send you their resumes and ask to set up appointments to talk to you at the fair. We are also sending you a list of all career fair employers, including their contact information, in case you would like to network with them.

While there is water in the room, you may find yourselves tied down by the sheer number of jobseekers you’ll encounter in the first two hours of the career fair. Therefore, we recommend that you bring a beverage of your choice. We’ll come around and distribute snacks to you.

As a courtesy, we ask that you acknowledge all applicants who have left resumes or other contact information with you after the career fair. Virtually all of them have traveled some distance to meet with you.

In Summary:

If you have any questions after reviewing this email, please contact Dick Davis at ddavis@blindinc.org; call at 612-872-0100, Ext. 202; or send a text message to him at 612-719-0753. You may also contact John Dubay directly at jdubay@strategiccontactsolutions.com. For your reference, his cell number is 509-590-3394.

Thank you all for participating in the 2019 NFB Career Fair! We wish you success in all that you do.

Dick Davis, Chair
NFB Employment Committee