

# **2025 Convention Agenda**

## “Live the Life You Want”

National Federation of the Blind of Washington

President: Marci Carpenter

Date: February 27- March 2, 2025

Location:

Heathman Lodge

7801 NE Greenwood Drive,

Vancouver, WA 98662

The National Federation of the Blind of Washington 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. Together with love, hope and determination we transform the dreams of blind Washingtonians into reality.

# **Hotel Description**

 When you enter the Heathman Lodge, you are standing in the lobby. There is a stairwell directly to your left that goes to the second-floor mezzanine. Fireplace Lounge is to your left past the stairwell, which leads into Hudson’s Restaurant. In front of you is the front desk, elevators and gift shop are located just to the left of the front desk. As you turn left at the front desk, you will pass the elevator and gift shop. If you continue down the hallway, the pool, fitness room, and sauna are located to the right, as well as the Fort Vancouver Ballroom. There is another elevator past the pool and fitness area at the end of the hallway. If you return to the front desk and face it, the Lewis, and Clark Ballroom, Chief Comcomley, and Sacagawea meeting room is to your right down a long hallway. Hotel rooms are located down both hallways to the left and right of the front desk, there are four floors in the hotel.

# **National Rep Biography: Tracy** **Soforenko**

Tracy Soforenko is a board member of the National Federation of the Blind, the president of the Virginia National Federation of the Blind Affiliate, as well as the chair of the Kenneth Jernigan First Time Convention attendance scholarship Fund. Mr. Soforenko expanded programs in the Virginia affiliate through the creation of Project Resilience, Independence, Self-advocacy, and Employment (Project Rise), as well as the Virginia Silver Bells program. In addition, Mr. Soforenko holds degrees in finance and psychology and is a project manager for the federal government. Tracy lives with his wife Sharon and two daughters in Arlington Virginia where he enjoys cooking, participating in Toast Masters, and hiking.

# **Important Information and Announcements:**

* To navigate this agenda in a fully accessible format with a screen reader, please use the following commands: press jaws key+letter Z to turn quick keys on. Once activated, you can navigate through the headings in this agenda by pressing the letter H, or by pressing 1, 2, or 3 to get to your desired heading level.
* Please remember to clean up after your dog guide and use the dog relief areas located outside of the hotel.
* For the safety of those who may experience serious health consequences from exposure to fragrances, we request that attendees not wear scented products, such as perfumes, colognes, or scented lotions.
* Hotel booking: The rate for convention hotel rooms this year is $122 plus $12 per night amenity fee, and tax. Members must book hotel rooms by February 7, 2025. You can call the Heathman Lodge directly at 360-254-3100 and mention you are with the NFB of Washington convention for this rate or use the online booking link below.

<https://be-p1.synxis.com/?&arrive=2025-02-26&depart=2025-03-03&group=FI0000001MWL&hotel=39403>

* Convention Registration: If you wish to register for the convention, you must do so by February 14, 2025. The registration fee is $30 and there is a choice of four different meal packages: no meals, banquet only, all Saturday meals, or Friday lunch and all Saturday meals.
* [Convention Registration](tinyurl.com/2025nfbwregister)
* If you wish to receive a door prize, you must register for the convention.
* If you are a part of the DSB Explorers birth-13 program on Saturday, all meetings will be in the Sacagawea Room.
* To vote during elections, you must be a current dues paying member of the NFB of Washington.

# **Convention Sponsors**

## **Platinum Sponsors:**

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### **Center for Assistive Technology and Training (CATT) NW**

https://www. wssb.wa.gov/services/northwest-center-assistive-technology-training-catt-nw

#### **What is the CATT Program?**

The Northwest Center for Assistive Technology Training (CATT) Program is a collaboration between the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) and the Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB).

#### **CATT's Mission**

To provide assistive technology devices and training to teachers of blind/low vision children, utilizing a "train the trainer" model, while also providing support/training for other professionals working with blind or low vision children as well as parents/caregivers of a child who is blind or has low vision, including those with additional disabilities.

#### **Who Provides the Technology and Training?**

Assistive technology is provided through APH, and training is provided through WSSB employed trainers serving a ten-state/territory region: Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa.

## **Gold Sponsors:**



### **Department of Services for the Blind (DSB)**

Washington State Department of Services for the Blind provides skills, training, and support to people of all ages who are Blind, Deaf-Blind or Low Vision to help them achieve educational, employment, or independent living goals.

We work with individuals who are Blind, Deaf-Blind, or Low Vision so they can flourish in their homes, communities and workplaces.

[www.dsb.wa.gov](http://www.dsb.wa.gov)

info@dsb.wa.gov

800-552-7103

## **Silver Sponsors:**

### *A blue and black text  Democracy Live logo*

### **Democracy Live**

In too many states, voters with disabilities do not have equal access to voting independently and privately from home. Fortunately, there are new accessible at-home voting technologies now available.

The Democracy Live OmniBallot accessible at-home voting system is a fully ADA Section 508, WCAG compliant remote ballot marking solution. The system has been tested to meet the accessibility requirements of over 90 combinations of browsers, operating systems, screen readers and devices. OmniBallot has been deployed as an accessible absentee tool since 2008, in over 5,000 elections, serving more than 2,500 jurisdictions, in thirty-four states and ninety-six countries around the world. OmniBallot has been tested and reviewed by members of most every leading disability organization in the nation.

For further information, please contact Democracy Live:

855-655-VOTE (8683) Toll Free

Email: info@democracylive.com

 [www.democracylive.com](http://www.democracylive.com)

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## **Bronze Sponsors:**

### **OneCourt**

<https://www.onecourt.io/>

### **Disability Rights Washington**

<https://disabilityrightswa.org/>

### **Non-24/Vanda Pharmaceuticals, INC**

[www.vandapharma.com](http://www.vandapharma.com)

### **Irie AT**

<https://www.irie-at.com>

# **Convention Schedule**

# **Preconvention Session: Monday, February 24th, 2025**

## **7:00pm-8:00pm: Rookie Round-up, via Zoom- Marci Carpenter, President, Facilitator.**

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81543327601?pwd=ef5weIdWUlUapJnCFGTdhKqykfdP4p.1>

Meeting ID: 815 4332 7601
Passcode: 797279
One tap mobile
+12532158782,,81543327601#,,,,\*797279# US (Tacoma)

Welcome to the Rookie round-up, a virtual welcome to all first-time convention goers. Delve into the essentials of navigation, networking, and the possibilities for living the life you want. Join us as we uncover the keys to a successful convention experience, setting the stage for newfound connections and informative adventures.

# **Thursday, February 27th, 2025:**

## **5:00 pm-6:00pm: Convention registration and meal ticket pickup, located outside Fort Vancouver Ballroom.**

Note: All evening sessions are in Fort Vancouver Ballroom.

## **6:00pm: NFB Board of Directors Meeting.**

## **7:00pm: Why the NFB- Corey Grandstaff, Facilitator.**

Come join us as we kick off convention with this engaging session as to who we are as an organization, what we stand for, and how being a part of NFB can empower you to live the life you want. Learn about our philosophy, core values, and beliefs regarding the capabilities of blind people.

# **Friday, February 28th, 2025:**

## **8:30 am-11:00am: Convention registration and meal ticket pickup, located outside Fort Vancouver Ballroom.**

## **8:30am-10:50am: Exploring Careers in Human Services: A Path for Everyone- Kris Colcock Facilitator, Marshall, and Howard Room.**

Are you considering a career in Human Services, or looking to make a career change? This seminar is designed for individuals interested in exploring opportunities in this dynamic field, with a special focus on the unique challenges and opportunities that blind or low vision individuals may encounter. Join us for an informative session where we will discuss the wide range of careers within Human Services, including working with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP) and how a Business Relations Specialist can assist in navigating the job market. Together, we will explore strategies for success and empower you to pursue a fulfilling future in this impactful industry.

**Keynote Speaker:** Jenelle Landgraf, MSW: Jenelle Landgraf is the founder and owner of Peaks and Valleys Healing, a practice dedicated to helping individuals navigate life's challenges and find personal growth. With a Master of Social Work and extensive experience in human services, Jenelle is passionate about empowering others to overcome obstacles and build meaningful lives.

## **8:30am-10:50am: Senior Seminar- Kaye Kipp and Bennett Prows Facilitators, grant Room.**

Join our Senior Seminar. Learn about using Alexa in your daily live, learn about accessible small kitchen appliances (there may even be yummy treats made with the appliances), discuss resources for diabetes management, and discuss other resources available for seniors in the NFB and beyond to help you live the life you want.

## **9:00 am-11:00am: Exhibit Hall, Cowlitz/Klickitat Room.**

Step into the vibrant world of our exhibit hall, where a tapestry of venders unfolds, each offering unique insights and solutions aimed to help you live the life you want. Engage deeply in the intersection of innovation and independence tailored for our community. As we pave the way for the future, both through tactile exploration and technological advancements, anticipate a journey filled with discovery and empowerment.

## **9:00am-4:00pm: *TADA!* Tangible Art and Design Adventures and Tactile Graphics Design and Production, hosted by Center for Assistive Technology and Training (CATT) NW, Sacagawea Room. (Separate registration required). Washington State Teacher Clock Hours and ACVREP Hours available.**

Register [here](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScED_HxrTCcgROiI6VKLt52K2wntLz6zTQFT6w7PPdrhWIRYQ/viewform?usp=sf_link)

TADA! offers ten free online activities for anyone to use with a student of any age/ability who would like to learn nonvisual drawing skills, spatial concepts related to coding, and how to create computer graphics. This full-day session will take you on a hands-on tour of this modern day adventure map and provide a deep dive on how to design and produce tactile graphics.

## **11:00am-12:30pm: General Session/Boxed Lunch, Fort Vancouver Room.**

* Opening Ceremonies.
* Report on our state Activities- **Marci Carpenter, President, NFBW**.

## **12:30 pm-1:30pm: Convention registration and meal ticket pickup, located outside Fort Vancouver Ballroom.**

## **12:30 pm-5:00pm: Exhibit Hall, Cowlitz/Klickitat Room.**

Step into the vibrant world of our exhibit hall, where a tapestry of venders unfolds, each offering unique insights and solutions aimed to help you live the life you want. Engage deeply in the intersection of innovation and independence tailored for our community. As we pave the way for the future, both through tactile exploration and technological advancements, anticipate a journey filled with discovery and empowerment.

## **12:30pm-2:30pm: Volunteering for 2025 National federation of the Blind Youth Programs - Kris Colcock facilitator, Chief Comcomley Room.**

The National Federation of the Blind offers exciting opportunities for youth to learn and grow outside the classroom. This year, the National Federation of the Blind of Washington and the National Federation of the Blind of Oregon are bringing two incredible programs to the Pacific Northwest: NFB BELL Academy and STEM2U. The National Federation of the Blind of Washington and Oregon will each host their own STEM2U program, with this year’s theme, "The Scientific Method," offering youth the chance to engage in hands-on experiments and explore science through nonvisual methods. In addition, the NFB of Washington and NFB of Oregon are partnering to bring the 2025 NFB BELL Academy to the Pacific Northwest, hosted at the Washington State School for the Blind. Learn how you can help make these programs a success by volunteering your time, whether for a few hours or a few days. Drop by this session to discover how you can contribute to these unforgettable experiences for participants.

## **12:30pm-4:00pm: Escape Room- WTBBL Facilitator, Howard room.**

Join us for a specially designed escape room hosted by WTBBL, forge connections with fellow participants and embark on an exhilarating journey. Do you have the skills to escape and join us for the rest of the convention? We hope so! You will be emailed a couple of days before the convention with your time slot as we are only able to accommodate so many people during each escape!

## **12:30pm-2:30pm: Blind Tennis- Murry Elbourn, Chinook Room.**

Join USBTA Board member and former Australian blind low vision tennis player Murray as he runs an introductory session of Blind Low Vision tennis. Learn how to serve, hit the ball, learn how to play. It is a fun and great way to be active and no worries if you’ve never played before, this is a learning session for beginners. Blind tennis balls will be able to be purchased during the session. [Rules of Play – International Blind Tennis Association](https://www.internationalblindtennis.org/rules-of-play/)

## **2:00pm-4:00pm: The 3 Fears of Cooking with blindness/low vision:  Adaptive Culinary Tools and Techniques to Overcome Them-Deborah Erikson, The Blind Kitchen, Marshall/Grant Room.**

People with blindness face challenges when learning to cook or returning to cooking after sight loss. Here are the three fears most expressed: Fear of cutting oneself, Fear of burning oneself, Fear of embarrassing oneself. These are valid concerns and need to be heeded, but there are a lot of adaptive culinary tools, techniques, and specialized knowledge to help face and overcome these fears. Once learned and practiced, people, regardless of blindness, can cook safely, confidently, and independently.

## **2:30pm-3:30pm: Basics of Cane Technique- Colin Wong, Chinook Room.**

Learn about some basic cane techniques. Great for new travelers or if you need a refresher. Learn about different techniques that you can apply in a variety of situations and how a cane truly unlocks independence for a blind person.

## **3:30pm-4:30pm: Rhythm and Flow: Audio Described Dance Aerobics - Northwest association of Blind Athletes, Chinook Room.**

Get ready to move and groove in this engaging Dance Aerobics session! Featuring audio descriptions, this workout combines fun, rhythmic movements with a focus on improving coordination, flexibility, and a touch of cardio. Perfect for all ability levels, this class will leave you feeling energized and smiling.

## **3:30pm-4:30pm: Artificial Intelligence; Can It be a Tool in my Toolbox to Live the Life I Want- Eli Sanchez, CATT NW, Howard Room.**

There are so many artificial Intelligence (AI) options available to us today, many of which can provide tools to help individuals be more independent in their daily lives. Explore a few of these tools, learn about their capabilities, what concerns we need to consider while using artificial intelligence, and even have enough time to practice using some of the models.

## **4:30pm: Resolutions Committee Meeting, Fort Vancouver Ballroom.**

## **7:00pm: Audio described movie, Fort Vancouver Ballroom, hosted by Chris Colcock.**

Join us for an audio described family-friendly movie, movie to be determined.

## **7:00pm: Jam Session, Cowlitz/Klickitat Room, hosted by Humberto Avila.**

Bring your instrument and join us for a night full of impromptu music. Socialize with fellow musicians through jamming or just join for the vibes as a spectator.

# **Saturday, March 1, 2025:**

## **7:00 am-8:30am: Buffet Breakfast, Fort Vancouver Ballroom.**

## **8:00 am-9:00am: Convention registration and meal ticket pickup, located outside Fort Vancouver Ballroom.**

All morning Sessions are in Fort Vancouver Ballroom. DSB Explorer sessions are in Sacagawea Room.

## **9:00am: Why Am I a Federationist- Corey Grandstaff.**

## **9:10 am: NFB National report- Tracy Soforenko.**

## **9:45am: Let Us Ring the BELLS: My Experience at BELL 2024- Kris Colcock Facilitator.**

Students share transformative experiences from last summer’s BELL program. Plunge into a vision of enhanced braille literacy, where each story illuminates the boundless potential of tomorrow’s leaders in learning to live the lives they want.

## **9:55am: Gold Sponsor Highlight, Department of Services for the Blind.**

## **10:00am: Members at-large Chapter Report.**

## **10:05am: Greater Seattle Chapter Report.**

## **10:10am: The Right to Vote Privately and Accessibly: Options so All can Vote-Marci Carpenter, Facilitator.**

The right to vote privately is a right all Americans should have. In Washington, ballots are mailed to individuals. Learn about the advocacy efforts the NFB of Washington is embarking upon so blind Washingtonians can vote privately and in an accessible format from their homes. Voting in an accessible format is more than just accessible voting machines, it is your right to choose how you vote!

## **10:25am: NBPCB: How to become a Structured Discovery Certified Professional Working in Blindness -Colin Wong, Vice President, National Blindness Professional Certification Board.**

The National Blindness Professional Certification Board is the certifying body for Structured Discovery professionals for people working in blindness. Come hear about what Structured Discovery is and how to get your certification in O&M (NOMC), access technology (NCATB), rehabilitation teaching (NCRTB), or braille (NCUEB).

## **10:35am: Clark County Chapter Report.**

## **10:40am: Clallam County Chapter Report.**

## **10:45am: Senior group Report.**

## **10:50am: Platinum Sponsor Highlight, Center on assistive Technology and Training (CATT) Northwest.**

## **11:00am: Access to Medication: Options for accessing Prescriptions safely, accessibly, and with Dignity, Marci Carpenter, facilitator.**

At one point in our lives, all of us will need access to prescription medications. Learn about options so blind people have access to the valuable information found on prescription labels. There are options available, we must get them into every pharmacy and available upon request. You do not know what information you may be missing on your prescription label until you have it in a format you can read independently, privately, and accessibly.

## **11:15am: Partnership panel: Washington Talking Book and Braille Library- Danielle Miller; Department of Services for the Blind- Michael Mackillop; and Washington State School for the Blind- Scott McCallum.**

Gain insights and information with our agency panel, where we will discover their strategic visions, outlining impactful changes for our collective future.

## **11:35am: Client Assistance Program (CAP), Jenn Bean.**

## **11:45am: My Experience with the Meta Glasses and AI- Corey Grandstaff.**

Everyone is talking about Meta glasses, and the Meta AI that comes with them. Although by no means an expert on the meta glasses, this short demonstration will provide just a few capabilities of how this innovative technology can be a tool so you can live the life you want.

## **11:55am: Resolutions.**

## **12:00pm-1:30pm: DSB Youth and Mentors Lunch, facilitated by DSB, Cowlitz Room.**

## **12:00pm-1:30pm: DSB Parent Lunch, facilitated by DSB, Klickitat Room.**

## **12:00pm-1:30pm: Mix and Mingle Boxed Lunch, Fort Vancouver room.**

## **1:00 pm-1:30pm: Convention registration and meal ticket pickup, located outside Fort Vancouver Ballroom.**

## **1:45pm-2:45pm: Parent IEP Training Session- Sharla McKeon, Klickitat Room.**

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) process is so challenging to understand. Come join us at this session provided by NFB trained parent advocate, Sharla McKeon to learn about the best ways you can advocate for your student, what questions you should ask, what terms you should know, and ask any questions you may have as a parent of a blind student.

## **1:45pm-2:45pm: Student Meet-up- Colin Wong facilitator, Cowlitz Room.**

Join the leaders of tomorrow for fun activities, connections, and resources. This session is for all students, whether you are young or embarking on furthering your education.

## **1:45pm-2:45pm: NewsLine, Access your News in Many different formats, Bennett Prows and Chris Higley, Fort Vancouver Ballroom.**

We all need access to on-demand news to know what is really going on in the world today. NewsLine, a free newspaper reading service, offered by NFB can be accessed in many different formats. Learn about access through the app, on your touch-tone telephone, using Alexa, on your computer, etc. The options are limitless!

## **2:45 pm: Break**

## **3:00pm-4:20pm: Unlocking Multimedia Accessibility with OCR and Visual Interpreter Apps, - Center for Assistive Technology and Training (CATT) NW, Cowlitz Room. Washington State Teacher Clock Hours and ACVREP Hours available.**

Explore the power of visual interpreter apps and OCR technology to enhance multimedia accessibility for Blind and low vision individuals. This session will provide practical demonstrations and strategies to navigate visual content effectively, empowering attendees to interact with print and digital information with self-directed interdependence.

## **3:00pm-4:20pm: Sightless Self-defense – stan Miller and Steve Jackson, Chinook Room.**

Learn the basics of sightless self-defense including being safe when you are out and about, learn how to handle someone coming into your space, learn the cover-up position, and learn how to react when someone does get physical with you.

## **3:00pm-4:20pm: Understanding Social Security: Overpayments, Wavers, and Re-Considerations- Kris Colcock, Klickitat Room.**

Overpayments from the Social Security Administration are an unfortunate reality, but recent policy changes offer ways to minimize their impact. Join us for a session focused on navigating overpayments, understanding fault regulations, and exploring strategies to reduce the financial burden. Learn about waivers and reconsiderations and gain practical tips for handling overpayment issues to better manage your budget and make informed decisions.

## **3:00pm-4:20pm: The Philosophers Corner – Kaye Kipp, Facilitator, Fort Vancouver Ballroom.**

Dive into the topic of Blindness, disability, or characteristic by focusing on Kenneth Jernigan’s speech Blindness, handicap or characteristic and the Lefthanded dissertation. Learn more about the NFB philosophy through this engaging discussion so you can continue living the life you want once the convention ends.

## **4:30pm-4:50pm: Legislative action in the NFB: Our Focus in 2025, Suzie Prows, Legislative Director, NFB of Washington.**

One role of NFB members is to advocate for federal, state, and local legislation to enhance the lives of the blind. Learn about the federal and state issues the NFB of Washington is focusing on throughout this legislative year.

## **4:50pm-5:05pm: What does It mean to be a member of the NFB- Tracy Soforenko.**

You have made the decision to become a member of the NFB. What does it mean to be a member? What is your role? How can you become a part of the movement? How can you contribute to enhancing the lives of the world’s blind?

## **6:45 pm: Banquet, Fort Vancouver Ballroom.**

* Master of Ceremonies- Nikki Palm and Corey Grandstaff.
* Music Performance- Jason Consolacion.
* Auction- Bennett Prows.
* Banquet Address- Tracy Soforenko.
* Presentation of Scholarships- Nikki Palm and Bennett Prows.

## **9:00pm-10:30pm: Karaoke Night- hosted by Humberto Avila.**

Get ready to unleash your inner rock star at our karaoke night! Belt out your favorite tunes and let the good times roll as we celebrate the joy of music and comradery.

# **Sunday, March 2nd, 2025**

All Morning sessions in Fort Vancouver Ballroom.

## **9:00 am: Announcements.**

## **9:05 am: Elections.**

## **9:20am: Annual Treasurers Report- Corey Grandstaff, Treasurer.**

## **9:35am: Chapter Building and Engagement.**

Participate in an activity to build the capacity of your local chapter. Learn about setting goals for the chapter, developing a chapter budget, and finding ways to engage members in chapter activities. Brainstorm ideas so the NFB of Washington can further build membership in this important movement.

## **10:05am: Mentoring a New Member of the NFB, Nikki Palm.**

When we have a new member of the NFB, it is not just about collecting dues and plugging them into a committee. Learn about ways you can engage with new members, mentor them as they grow to understand our philosophy, and help them feel a part of this community.

## **10:30 am: Adjourn.**