**National Federation of the Blind (NFB) of Ohio-Cleveland**

Presents

A Town Hall Forum on Employing Persons with Disabilities

September 20th, 2018 at 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

Cleveland Public Library, Main

325 Superior Avenue East, 2nd floor, Cleveland, Ohio 44114

Have you ever seen gold ore? It’s basically quartz rock with a few yellow streaks running through it. Who would imagine it could be worth that much? Blind people are the same way, often overlooked in favor of sighted people who are far less qualified. It’s time to see them as they are - one of the world’s great untapped resources!

We offer the largest Job Networking Organization for blind and low vision job seekers in the world. You’ll be amazed at the skills our job seekers have, and if you don’t know how capable blind and low vision people can be, this is a great place to learn!

**Registration will begin at 9:30 A.M.**

**Cost:** Free! There is no charge to employers or job seekers participating in this Forum.

**TOPIC DISCUSSIONS**

**10:00 A.M.**

Open Remarks and House Keepings:

Suzanne Turner, NFB of Cleveland President

**10:10 a.m.**

**Wilbert Turner, NFB of Cleveland Employment Chairperson**

People with vision loss experience a rate of unemployment that far exceeds that of the general population. The American Federation of the Blind reports that in September 2010, the most recent period for which there is data, 75 percent of the estimated 4 million adults in the U.S. who are completely or partially blind are not in the labor force. A number of factors contribute to this high rate of unemployment among the blind, and the exact rate of unemployment itself is difficult to determine.

**10:20 A.M.:**

**Americans with Disability Act (ADA)**

**Attorney Franklin Hickman of Hickman and Lowder Law Firm**

**Discrimination and Unemployment-**Though legislation such as the Americans With Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination against potential employees on the basis of disability, companies can still decline to hire a blind person on the basis that the applicant is unable to perform the duties of the job. However, if the applicant isn't given a chance to prove that he is able to do the required work, dismissing his abilities solely on the basis of his disability is a form of discrimination. A March 2008 article in Forbes Magazine cited discrimination as one of the biggest obstacles to employment for the blind.

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**10:45 A.M.**

**Para Transit and Autonomous Cars**

**Sam Henderson, Supervisor of Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA)**

**Practical Considerations-**Though employers are required under the Americans With Disabilities Act to make accommodations for disabled workers, these workers still face other obstacles to employment that may not be so easy to overcome. For instance, in areas without adequate mass transportation, blind employees may find it difficult or impossible to get to work. Blindness also makes the task of applying for jobs and even finding jobs to apply for more difficult.

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**11:05 A.M.**

Social Security Administration Safe Guards “Working While Disabled”

Kathy Seecamp-Kiker, Work Incentives Program Administrator

The Social Security Administration has several work incentives that can allow you to maintain your cash and medical benefits while working. The threat of loss of disability benefits may keep some blind people from looking for work. If a blind person takes a job and then learns she can't do the work, or she loses the job for some other reason, she's left without income and it may take some time to reinstate SSI, and or SSDI. The good news is that SSA has safe guards that will assist the blind while working.

**11:30 A.M.**

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD (BSVI)

Brandon Wray, Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor

The Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Agency (OOD) is the state agency that partners with Ohioans with disabilities to achieve quality employment, Independence and Social Security disability determination outcomes through its Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR), Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired (BSVI) and Division of Disability Determination (DDD). OOD’s vocational rehabilitation (VR) bureaus (BVR/BSVI) serve Ohioans with disabilities to help them obtain and keep a job. OOD begins working with individuals at age 14 to assist them as they transition into high school, college and the workplace.

**NOON**

**LUNCH Provided for Speakers**

**1:00 P.M.**

Job Evaluation and Exploration

Rosalie Daily, Cleveland Sight Center Manager of Employment Services

The Cleveland Sight Center (CSC) offers several inclusive classes for adults who are visually impaired and blind. These programs cover a wide range of opportunities, including employment training and on-the-job support, access to adaptive aids and technology.

The Cleveland Sight Center’s comprehensive employment services prepare working age adults to either enter the work force and work with sighted coworkers or return to a job after experiencing vision loss.

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**1:30 P.M.**

Scripting, Accessibility, Training and Development

Randy Knapp, Cleveland Sight Center Senior Assistance Technology Specialist

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**2:00 P.M.**

Tips, Techniques and Tools to live well with vision loss

Tom Sawyer, Cleveland Sight Center Community Outreach Manager

**Alicia Howerton, Cleveland Sight Center** Community Relations Specialist

**Closing Remarks**

Attorney Robert Campbell, Cleveland Employment Committee Member

NOTE: There will be technology and Literature available.

Cleveland Employment Committee Members:

Wilbert Turner

Octavia Ealy

Attorney Robert Campbell

Brooke Dowdy

Evelyn Morison-Eaddie

The National Federation of the Blind 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.