The National Federation of the Blind of Ohio (NFBOH) is honored to present the most happening event of 2023 in the largest metropolitan Buckeye region of the Midwest. We invite you to come by bus, car, guide dog or white cane to the capital city of Ohio where the Capital Chapter is the host and eager to greet you.

Here is a snapshot of activities that will take place at the 77th Annual State of Ohio convention, which will be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Columbus/Worthington Hotel, on November 17th, 18th and 19th, where spacious rooms, double chocolate chip cookies, and Hilton points are waiting for you!

The hotel address is 175 Hutchinson Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43235. You can make reservations now by calling (614) 885-3334. The room rates are only $109.00, taxes are 17.5%, which includes breakfast for 2 occupants per room. By the way, there is comfortable seating in the restaurant where we all will gather for fellowship each morning prior to great presentations during the General Sessions and inspiring Breakout Seminars. The good news is that when you make your reservations, funds are not deducted from your credit card until you arrive at the hotel. The group code is (NFB). To reserve now by calling (614) 885-3334. Be sure to let the hotel know if you need a wheelchair-accessible room or have any additional requirements related to your reservation.

Pre-registration is open now at <https://forms.gle/cnWzoCHD4kqmc81U7>next

The cost for Pre-registration is $25.00 and onsite is $30.00. And to Pre-register for the banquet is $55.00 and onsite is $60.00. Note, registration is a requirement for door prize eligibility and a number of other convention activities. convention attendees (both local and out‑of‑town) are asked to register. Pre-registration ends October 15, 2023.

Our 2023 Ohio Convention theme is, “Stronger Together” which reflects the NFB Philosophy , “The National Federation of the Blind provides encouragement and support to families with blind children and to people who are losing vision or have become blind later in life, by bringing them into a network of tens of thousands of blind people who are living full lives and who can serve as mentors and role models. Together, with love, hope, and determination, the members of the National Federation of the Blind transform dreams into reality.

**The Convention Planning Committee is thrilled to introduce** Tracy Soforenko **as our 2023 National Representative. Tracy has outstanding leadership qualities,** as he previously served as vice president of the Virginia affiliate before being elected president of the Virginia affiliate in 2016. In 2021, Tracy was elected to serve as a member of the National Federation of the Blind Board of Directors. He also serves as the Chair of the Kenneth Jernigan Fund.

Tracy expanded programs for youth in the Virginia affiliate, leading to the creation of Project Resilience, Independence, Self-Advocacy, and Employment (Project RISE) in 2017. This thriving program now serves thirty-five students with a team of thirteen staff and mentors. This fall, the Virginia affiliate is launching a program to share alternative techniques and Federation philosophy with sixty blind and low-vision seniors through the Virginia Silver Bells program.

As Ohio’s oldest organization comprised of blind people, working together to change what it means to be blind, the 2023 Ohio Convention will inspire, empower and celebrate our accomplishments. Join us to learn more about issues confronting blind people today and walk away ready to advocate for change. Showcased at the Convention will be inspirational stories about the work of our movement, our history and philosophy along with dynamic committee meetings.

Take a look at a few convention highlights:

• Network with blind people across Ohio.

• Encourage blind persons to expand their knowledge of resources, such as Braille, Accessibility and Legislative Initiatives.

• Attend Workshops on Effective Strategies for Self-Advocacy, Trends in Transportation and The Latest Development in Technology.

• Attend the banquet that provides scholarships for blind college students.

• Visit Exhibit Hall to explore the latest technology and low-vision products. Exhibitors will be open to shoppers and information gatherers on Sat. November 18,2023 from noon to 4:30 PM.

The gavel will fall on Friday, November 17th, with the opening ceremonies and general session promptly at 2:00 PM. We will have a series of speakers covering a wide range of topics, including a report from our president, our national representative, Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), legislation advocacy and a health and wellness presentations. Of Course, Annette Lutz will have exciting door prizes as well.

Friday evening will see a flurry of activities. First and foremost, our Hospitality Suite located in the Fairfield Room will open its doors at 5:30 PM. Your host will be the Cincinnati Chapter, and they will make you feel relaxed and right at home. They are also planning some enjoyable activities for your visit. Snacks and beverages will be available for your comfort.

The At-Large Chapter, the Ohio Association of Blind Students, the Ohio Communities of Faith, Ohio Community Service and the Ohio Association of Guide Dogs Users Divisions will hold their annual business meetings that evening. The Nominations and Resolutions Committee meetings will also take place. Moreover, sign-up for the evening event facilitated by Wilbert Turner. The details will be coming soon.

Saturday morning, November 18th, at 7:00 to 8:45 AM, we will begin with parallel breakfast meetings in The Cross woods Bar and Grill. The Diabetes Action Network (DAN) will have their breakfast meeting in the restaurant, then convene to the Arena District Room, the Blind Parents Group will have breakfast in the restaurant and quickly move to the Buckeye I and II Room. Finally, the Scholarship Breakfast Meeting will take place as well in the same restaurant. If you are interested in becoming a member of this division, you should highly consider attending these meetings.

The gavel falls again promptly at 9:00AM to continue general sessions. We will break at 12 noon for lunch. Note: Boxed Lunch Pick-up (tickets required) will be outside of the NFB Registration Area. Be sure to order your boxed lunch when you register for the convention. The Ohio Association of Blind Seniors Division will conduct their annual business meeting, and The afternoon promises provocative workshops on promoting leadership, membership building, and successful employment strategies. The Exhibit Hall will be quite exciting, with vendors attending such as, HIMS, Leader Dogs for the Blind, The American Red Cross and Time-Touch-Take Medication System(TTT), just to name a few. These and more on-hand Vendors will be available to us from 12:00 noon to 4:30 PM demonstrating their high-tech and low-tech products for blind and visually impaired users. Chapters and divisions will also have the opportunity to hold fundraisers in this exhibit area.

Saturday night’s banquet will surely be the highlight of the convention. This is an opportunity for fellowship and for all of us to share a meal together. Our keynote speaker for the evening will be our national representative, Tracy Soforenko. We will have our Gavel Awards ceremony to celebrate chapter and division accomplishments from the past year. The finale of the banquet will be the announcement of the 2022 scholarship winners. Be sure to order your banquet meal when you register for the convention. Don’t worry, the night is not over – plans are in the works for an exciting after-banquet activity.

Sunday, November 19th is the day we relax a little, reflect on the past few days, and think about where we are headed in the future. Elections will be held for the members of the Ohio Board of Directors. All NFB members are eligible to vote if their dues are in good standing.

Finally, our Convention Planning Committee, is committed to making your convention experience memorable and quite enjoyable. Therefore, our goal is to bring you the most up-to-date information on the Convention. So please feel free to contact the Committee Chairs with any questions, concerns and or, requests for accommodations at SMTurner.234@gmail.com. However, to apply for convention assistance, complete form: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScJDEcdGity71z53goy68Yy_eqpynfVQjIktBgOhjdqmP2c4A/viewform?usp=sharing>

The Ohio Affiliate Board will be ready to greet you bright and early at 9:00 AM on Friday morning with your registration packets, agendas and to preview the weekend activities. Please bring all donated door prizes to the registration table as well. For those who are generously providing the convention with auction items, a policy on Auction Guidelines will be coming soon. Please read it carefully and follow the instructions.

Suzanne Turner and President Payne are Co-Chairs of convention arrangements, and they will make sure that the hotel facility--which includes staff, accommodations, guide dog relief areas, meeting rooms, dining areas, and common areas--is as blind-friendly as possible. Lastly, volunteers will be available to assist and direct convention attendees to pinnacle points and conference rooms.

The Convention Planning Committee along with our Affiliate Executive Board, will be on-hand to welcome you and we are excited and looking forward to seeing you at the 2023 Ohio Convention! Together, with love, hope, and determination, the members of the National Federation of the Blind transform dreams into reality. You can live the life you want.