# Richmond Seminar

The National Federation of the Blind of Virginia is a powerful force advocating for blind Virginians. Please join us for the Richmond Seminar on January 21-22, 2019 to ensure our voice is heard in the offices of the General Assembly.

If you have never attended a Richmond Seminar, we strongly encourage you to attend and participate in representative democracy in action. Everyone is assigned to a team with an experienced leader. The General Assembly members and their staff are very receptive and welcoming. They know we are organized, articulate, and well versed in the subject matter.

We will put everyone on the team to work, sharing our issues and answering the questions of legislators and their staff.

The issues we will bring to Richmond are still under consideration but will most likely include:

* Expanding resources for the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired;
* Disabled Parents Bill of Rights; and
* Ensuring an equal education for blind and low vision students.

The final list of issues will be presented at the board meeting on Monday, January 21. We have bills being drafted that will need co-sponsors

A meeting with our elected legislators in their home districts will go a long way in establishing the recognition that is needed for our visit to Richmond. All Chapter members are encouraged to participate. If you intend on doing a meeting or need help setting one up, please contact Tracy Soforenko.

Our board meeting is scheduled for 1:00 PM Monday afternoon, January 21, which is Martin Luther King Day. A lunch will be available at the cafeteria on the premises. The Board Meeting will be held in the large conference room at the Library and Resource Center on the DBVI campus at 401 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA 23227.

Our General Assembly visits will be Tuesday, January 22. The affiliate will reimburse transportation expenses and hotel expenses.

Chapter presidents should arrange cost effective transportation for their chapter members. Individuals are expected to share hotel rooms and must obtain hotel reservations themselves at the NFB of Virginia rate. If you need assistance identifying a room share, please contact Joe Orozco via email: jsorozco@gmail.com.

Hotel rooms are available at the Delta Hotel. The complete contact information is:

Delta Hotels by Marriott Richmond Downtown

555 East Canal Street

Richmond, VA 23219

The group rate is $129 plus applicable taxes. You may begin making reservations at any time by calling the reservations line at 844-781-7397 and referencing NFBVA. Please note reservations must be made no later than Sunday, January 6, 2019. Note guests will receive a $10 discount toward parking.

If you run into any problems with making reservations or need assistance at the hotel, please call our Operations Coordinator, Joe Orozco.

# Assistance for Washington Seminar

Every year, the affiliate president will receive a few requests for Washington Seminar assistance from affiliate members. I am putting some ground rules in place to help clarify expectations.

If you are planning to request assistance, please send your request to me in email. Your request should factor in the following:

1. What are my total expected costs:

What should I expect to pay for Washington Seminar factoring in expected costs for travel, lodging, meals, and other expenses? I have no idea how much it costs to get from your home to Washington DC and the Holiday Inn Capitol. You need to do the research. Many people choose to share rooms and you will start seeing roommate requests posted to our announce list starting soon. Please be aware that the deadline for hotel reservations at the Holiday Inn Capitol is December 28, so act fast

1. What can I afford myself

 No one will be going to Washington Seminar for free. Individuals requesting financial assistance should expect to make a contribution to your Washington Seminar expenses. You should be factoring in this expense into your budget.

1. What is my chapter or division contributing?

Your chapter is a resource for financial assistance. Do not come to the Virginia Affiliate requesting financial assistance if you have not asked your local chapter. I will be following up with chapter presidents to understand how you are contributing at the chapter level to programming and fundraising. If you are receiving funding from a division such as NABS or VABS, please also factor that into your request.

1. How much are you requesting from the affiliate

 After considering other sources, how much are you requesting from the Virginia affiliate. Please note that we do not provide funding in advance.

Mark Roane will provide funding at Washington Seminar but you need to work locally to get your travel and room expenses addressed. You should definitely expect to attend the Great Gathering In on Monday, January 28 from 5:00 PM to 7:00 Pm. I expect that the majority of our Congressional appointments will be conducted on Tuesday, January 29 with some appointments on Wednesday, January 30. It is not Mark's job to hunt you down at Washington Seminar and it is not Mark's job to provide you funds as you walk into the hotel.

Speaking of selling, fundraising is the means through which we have the resources to provide financial assistance. When I talk to your chapter president, I am checking to determine if you are engaged in the chapter and affiliate fundraising.

We are asking that requests are submitted no later than Friday, January 11, 2019. You should be planning in advance, booking your hotel room and taking advantage of early transportation discounts.

We want to have a strong showing in Washington and we hope this guidance clarifies the process. However, if you have questions, contact:

Tracy Soforenko

President, National Federation of the Blind of Virginia

202 285-4595

Tracy.soforenko@gmail.com <mailto:Tracy.soforenko@gmail.com>

[www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org) <<http://www.nfb.org>>

[www.nfbv.org](http://www.nfbv.org) <<http://www.nfbv.org>>

# Washington Seminar

The Washington Seminar is an annual event of the National Federation of the Blind where hundreds of members of the NFB come together in Washington, DC to learn about and advocate for legislative initiatives that will improve the lives of blind Americans.

Approximately three legislative initiatives are chosen for priority attention each year. These initiatives are selected from official positions of the NFB and can address concerns in the following areas: relevant civil rights issues; educational programs and services; rehabilitation of the blind for competitive employment; the operation of vending facilities by blind persons on public property; specialized library services for the blind; the organization and funding of federal programs; Social Security Disability and Supplemental Security Income programs; and other timely topics.

More than five hundred people from the fifty states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico typically attend.

## Dates

Monday, January 28, through Thursday, January 31, 2019

## Location

[Holiday Inn Washington-Capitol](https://ichotelsgroup.com/redirect?path=rates&brandCode=HI&regionCode=1&localeCode=en&GPC=NB8&hotelCode=WASSM&_PMID=99801505)
550 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024
202-479-4000

# Agenda

## Great Gathering-In—Monday, January 28, 2019

The Great Gathering-In is the very exciting opening session of Washington Seminar. It will begin Monday afternoon at 5:00 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Washington-Capitol (Capitol Ballroom) and will adjourn promptly at 7:00 p.m.

## Congressional Appointments—Tuesday, January 29 through Thursday, January 31, 2019

Legislative appointments should be made for Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in the Senate and House office buildings. A meeting for NFB members to review progress and provide guidance will occur on Wednesday evening.

### The full 2019 agenda will be available closer to the event.

You can review the [2018 agenda in HTML](https://nfb.org/washington-seminar-agenda), the [2018 agenda in PDF](https://nfb.org/images/nfb/documents/pdf/washington_seminar_2018/2018_washington_seminar_agenda.pdf), and [2018 agenda in BRF](https://nfb.org/images/nfb/documents/pdf/washington_seminar_2018/2018_washington_seminar_agenda.brf).

## Reservations and Room Rates

Please reserve your room at the Holiday Inn Washington-Capitol (550 C Street, SW Washington, DC 20024) by Friday, December 28, 2018. Check in at our booking rate begins Friday, January 25, 2019 with a check out by Friday, February 1, 2019.

The rate is $196 per night. This rate does not include DC sales tax, currently 14.95 percent.

You can [begin booking reservations online by using this link to the Holiday Inn Washington-Capitol website](http://ichotelsgroup.com/redirect?path=rates&brandCode=HI&regionCode=1&localeCode=en&GPC=NB8&hotelCode=WASSM&_PMID=99801505) that includes our booking code. You can also make reservations by calling 1-877-572-6951 and referencing booking code NB8.

Credit card information is needed at time of your reservation. The individual cancellation policy is seventy-two hours prior to the date of arrival to avoid a one night's room plus tax cancellation charge on the credit card provided. If your departure date changes, you must inform the hotel seventy-two hours in advance of your departure to avoid a $100 fee.

## Legislative Agenda and Fact Sheets

The 2019 legislative agenda and fact sheets will be available closer to the event.

You can review the 2018 legislative agenda and fact sheets below:

* [Legislative Agenda of Blind Americans - Priorities for the 115th Congress, Second Session](https://nfb.org/2018-legislative-agenda) ([PDF](https://nfb.org/images/nfb/documents/pdf/washington_seminar_2018/2018_legislative_agenda.pdf)) ([Audio](https://nfb.org/images/nfb/audio/2018_legislative_agenda/01_legislative_agenda_of_blind_americans.mp3))
* [The Accessible Instructional Materials in Higher Education(Aim High) Act](https://nfb.org/aimhighfactsheet) ([PDF](https://nfb.org/images/nfb/documents/pdf/washington_seminar_2018/2018_aim_high_fact_sheet.pdf)) ([Audio](https://nfb.org/images/nfb/audio/2018_legislative_agenda/02_accessible_instructional_materials_in_higher_education_act.mp3))
* [The Access Technology Affordability Act](http://nfb.org/access-technology-affordability-act) ([PDF](https://nfb.org/images/nfb/documents/pdf/washington_seminar_2018/2018_ataa_fact_sheet.pdf)) ([Audio](https://nfb.org/images/nfb/audio/2018_legislative_agenda/03_the_access_technology_affodability_act.mp3))
* [Opposition to the “ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017” (H.R. 620)](https://nfb.org/oppose-hr620-fact-sheet) ([PDF](https://nfb.org/images/nfb/documents/pdf/washington_seminar_2018/2018_hr_620_fact_sheet.pdf)) ([Audio](https://nfb.org/images/nfb/audio/2018_legislative_agenda/04_opposition_to_the_ada_education_and_reform_act_of_2017.mp3))
* [The Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled](http://nfb.org/marrakeshfactsheet) ([PDF](https://nfb.org/images/2018_marrakesh_treaty_fact_sheet.pdf)) ([Audio](https://nfb.org/images/nfb/audio/2018_legislative_agenda/05_the_marrakesh_treaty.mp3))
* [Combined Legislative Agenda and All Fact Sheets BRF](https://nfb.org/images/nfb/documents/pdf/washington_seminar_2018/combined_2018_fact_sheets.brf)

## Frequently Asked Questions

The 2019 frequently asked questions will be available closer to the event.

You can review the 2018 frequently asked questions below:

* [The Accessible Instructional Materials in Higher Education(Aim High) Act](https://nfb.org/aim-high-act-faqs) ([PDF](https://nfb.org/images/nfb/documents/pdf/washington_seminar_2018/2018_aim_high_faq.pdf))
* [The Access Technology Affordability Act](https://nfb.org/ATAA-FAQS) ([PDF](https://nfb.org/images/nfb/documents/pdf/washington_seminar_2018/2018_ataa_faq.pdf))
* [Opposition to the “ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017” (H.R. 620)](https://nfb.org/oppose-hr620-faqs) ([PDF](https://nfb.org/images/nfb/documents/pdf/washington_seminar_2018/2018_oppose_hr620_faq.pdf))
* [The Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled](https://nfb.org/marrakesh-treaty-faqs) ([PDF](https://nfb.org/images/nfb/documents/pdf/washington_seminar_2018/2018_marrakesh_treaty_faq.pdf))

## Hotel Restaurants

The [Holiday Inn Washington-Capitol houses four food and beverage options](https://www.ihg.com/holidayinn/hotels/us/en/washington/wassm/hoteldetail/dining) from the Capitol Bistro, which is a full-service restaurant, to the 21st Amendment Bar and lounge.