



# NFB

## National Federation of the Blind

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### National Association of Blind Merchants

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **NCSAB Partners with Blind Merchants Association**

**Colorado Springs, Colorado (January 25, 2013)** — The National Association of Blind Merchants is proud to announce that the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) will be providing an entire day of staff training on Monday, May 20<sup>th</sup> as part of the annual Business Leadership and Superior Training (BLAST) Conference.

Over the past decade, BLAST has become the principal conference for blind vendors and state licensing agency management and staff. Each year we have expanded curriculum, sought out the most dynamic speakers, added networking opportunities, team-building exercises, and top notch tours and entertainment. This year we are expanding the staff training element. Terry Smith, Business Opportunity Specialist for our National Federation of the Blind Entrepreneurs Initiative, has been working with our NCSAB leadership to develop a dynamic, timely, continuing education agenda. Targeted sessions will be conducted the entire day of Monday, May 20<sup>th</sup> to include such topics as: “Vocational Rehabilitation 101: What BEP Staff Need to Know,” “Dispelling Those Randolph Sheppard Myths: What the Randolph Sheppard Act Really Says,” “Strategies for Effective Negotiations,” “Branding: The Nuts and Bolts,” “Moving Beyond Advocacy: What the NFBEI Can Do For Your State,” and “Making the RSA Self-Assessment Tool Work for You.”

According to Nicky Gacos, President, National Association of Blind Merchants, “Agency management and staff have been playing a significant role in BLAST for more than a decade. We typically have as many as 35 state agencies represented. We have been proud to offer state agency folks time for exclusive round tables during each BLAST. We will

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continue that tradition in Indianapolis in addition to the new targeted agency training. Many of our partners from state agencies have indicated a need for expanded training. I'm glad that Terry and NCSAB are working to add this element to what continues to be the go-to conference for everyone in and around the Randolph-Sheppard community."

When announcing this BLAST training component, David DeNotaris, President of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) said, "As President of the National Council for State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB), we are proud, honored and excited to be asked and able to participate in Indy Super BLAST 2013! We are confident the staff training, exceptional learning experiences, and networking opportunities will educate, inform and inspire all in attendance."

This NABM/NCSAB sponsored training kicks off three and a half days of continuing education customized to meet the needs of both state agencies and blind vendors. General sessions and breakout training will include: "Customer Service in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," "Social Media: The Tools for Profit," "Selling Value, Not Price," "Shut Up and Speak: Non-Verbal Communication – What the Blind Should Know," and "Live Well USA: The Most Imaginative Partnerships for Healthy and Profitable Vending and Concessions." We are continuing to seek input from blind vendors and our agency partners as we build the agenda for Indy Super BLAST 2013.

Training at the BLAST Conference will begin at 8:00 a.m. on Monday morning, May 20<sup>th</sup>, and conclude at 12 p.m. on Thursday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>. We will also be hosting the largest Randolph-Sheppard Tradeshow in the history of our program. It will occur Tuesday afternoon, May 21<sup>st</sup>, from 12:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m.

Register now at [www.blindmerchants.org](http://www.blindmerchants.org). Conference registration fee is \$200.00, or save \$50.00 with early bird registration before April 15, 2013. For assistance with registration and for further information, call 866-543-6808. Hotel rooms are available at the low rate of \$124.00 per night plus applicable taxes. Room rates are effective from Friday, May 17<sup>th</sup> through Thursday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Reserve your room at the Indianapolis Marriott Downtown by calling 1-877-303-0104, under BLAST 2013 or National Association of Blind Merchants. You can also reserve your room online by visiting [https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome\\_ei\\_new&eventID=9700023](https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome_ei_new&eventID=9700023).

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### **About National Association of Blind Merchants**

The National Association of Blind Merchants (NABM), a division the National Federation of the Blind (NFB), is a membership organization of blind persons employed in either self-employment work or the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Program. We provide information regarding rehabilitation, social security, tax, and other issues which directly affect blind merchants. NABM serves as an advocacy and support group.