



National Federation of the Blind of Wisconsin
Ben Dallin, President
2541 N Lexington Dr
Janesville, Wisconsin 53545
Phone: 775.934.6181
E-Mail: president@nfbwis.org
Web: www.nfbwis.org

51ST Annual Convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Wisconsin

Marching Towards our Mission!

Sponsored By Beyond Vision

March 27th, 28th, & 29th, 2026

Holiday Inn and Suites Madison West

1109 Fourier Drive

Madison, WI 53717

Reservations: (608) 826-0500

Our National Representative will be Tracy Soforenko, President of the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia and member of the Board of Directors of the National Federation of the Blind.

The National Federation of the Blind is the only organization directed by blind people that believes in our full capacity and has the power, diversity, determination, and love to transform our dreams into reality. We believe in the capabilities of blind people; we take action to advance the aspirations of the blind; and we create a loving community where we learn to be our most powerful selves. Our faith in the capacity and dignity of blind individuals is at the heart of our mission. We know that blindness need not hold you back. We want our community to feel empowered to dream big; and we'll work with determination so those dreams can be realized.

There are no limits to what we can accomplish.

NFB OF WISCONSIN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS:

President: Ben Dallin

First Vice President: Denise Charlier

Second Vice President: Meghan Whalen

Secretary: Laurie Holzmann

Treasurer: Dean Charlier

Board Members: Chelsea Dallin, Kimberly Kiser, Hunter Kuester, Ruben Rodriguez, Nicole Wolf, and Patty Zallar

NFB PLEDGE

I pledge to participate actively in the effort of the National Federation of the Blind to achieve equality, opportunity, and security for the blind, to support the policies and programs of the Federation, and to abide by its constitution

Convention Arrangements: If you have any questions about convention arrangements, contact Denise Charlier, 920-983-7915.

Registration: Registration and packet pickup for preregistered attendees will be open on Friday, March 27, from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm, and Saturday, March 28, from 8:00 am to 8:45 am. If you have any questions contact Dean Charlier, 920-265-9516. Onsite registration is \$25, Saturday Box Lunch is \$25, Saturday Banquet is \$45. If registering onsite, meals will be available on a first come basis until sold out.

Presidential Suite: Anyone who wants to meet with President Ben Dallin is welcome to come to the Presidential Suite. Call Ben at 775-934-6181 to make arrangements.

Childcare Room: Childcare will be open during the general convention sessions. Children may be dropped off no earlier than 30 minutes prior to the start of the session and must be picked up no later than 15 minutes after. Morning and afternoon snacks will be provided. For location and any questions, please contact Debi Meng at 608-558-1589 (Before and during the convention).

Door Prizes: You may be the lucky winner of a great door prize. Names will be drawn throughout the convention sessions and banquet. To be eligible to win, you need only to be registered and to be present in the meeting room when your name is drawn, unless you are in childcare. All donations of door prizes should be clearly labeled in braille and print and turned in to the door prize table in Meeting Room AB.

Basket Raffles: Throughout convention, you will have the opportunity to purchase raffle tickets for a chance to win one of several exciting baskets, each put together by a chapter or division of our affiliate. Each will have a different theme, and these will be announced before and during convention. Purchase tickets at the table outside of general session or at other times from our members!

Exhibits: We encourage all attendees to visit our exhibitors. Learn about employment opportunities, technology, and more! Everyone who visits each table will be entered into a drawing for a special prize!

Our vendors this year include:

Vision Forward

Industries for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Beyond Vision

Blind Cricket

NFBW Auction: You may be the lucky high bidder of a great auction item! All donations of auction items should be clearly labeled in Braille and print and turned in to the door prize table in Meeting Room AB.

PAC Plan: You can be a part of our mission to help blind people live the lives we want. Make recurring monthly donations through direct withdrawals from a checking account or charges to a credit card by signing up for our Pre-Authorized Contribution (PAC) program. Visit our PAC table during general sessions, or visit Nfb.org/pac

Dog Relief Area Information: There are two ways to get to the dog relief area. This is a pet friendly hotel with a pre-established location. If you walk out the front doors of the hotel, take a right, and you will find a sidewalk that wraps around to the right along the side of the building. When the sidewalk ends, you will be at a grassy area where there will be a trash can. When you are at the dead end, there is another door to your right that is by the sleeping rooms. Note that you will need your key card to use this door. If you enter through the side door, you will be in a stairwell. To get back to the lobby, turn left, then immediately turn right. When you reach the end of the hall, make another left, and you will be back in the lobby with the front doors to your right. Please contact Meghan Whalen at 262-844-7938 if you need assistance.

Meet 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 in Arlington Virginia where he enjoys cooking, participating in Toast Masters, and hiking.

Meet Our Title Sponsor: Beyond Vision

Beyond Vision offers a variety of services and products to both private sector and government customers. Our services include call center, machining, assembly, kitting and packaging.

From adaptive technology like screen reader software to engineering workstation adaptations using a 3D printer, there are no barriers to career opportunities on any level. The work environment is entirely inclusive. All co-workers, with and without visual impairment, work and collaborate daily. Just like any competitive business! We are always looking to grow. More sales mean more employment opportunities! Learn more at beyondvision.com.

Friday, March 27, 2025

- 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm Tech Corner, Meeting Room C
Bring your tech questions and tips for discussion in an informal setting and network with other attendees, facilitated by Ben Dallin and Scott Hegle.
- 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm Blindness and Self Defense, Capital Meeting Room
Join us for an interactive introduction to self defense from a blindness perspective. Learn strategies for confident, independent travel and dealing with unexpected situations. Led by blind self defense instructor Jim Turk
- 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm Exhibit Hall, Lobby Hallway

Visit our exhibitors and learn about employment opportunities, fundraisers, and more.

3:30 pm - 5:00 pm Registration, Lobby Hallway

6:00 pm - 10:00 pm Hospitality and Open Mic Night, Meeting Room AB
Come enjoy refreshments and great company to kick off your convention experience, and share your talents on the mic starting after 8!

7:00 pm Resolutions Committee Meeting, Meeting Room C
Dave Hyde, Chairperson

Saturday, March 28, 2026

7:00 am Annual Breakfast Meeting: Wisconsin Association of Guide Dog Users WAGDU, Hotel Restaurant– Meghan Whalen, President

8:00 am - 9:00 am Exhibits, Lobby Hallway

8:00 am - 8:45 am Registration, Lobby Hallway
Registration is \$25, Saturday Box Lunch is \$25, Saturday Banquet is \$45. Meals will be available on a first come basis until sold out.

8:30 am - 5:15 pm Childcare, contact Debi Meng for location.

GENERAL SESSION 1

(All general sessions will be held in Meeting Rooms AB)

9:00 am Call to Order
Invocation
Pledge of Allegiance
NFB Pledge
Welcome and Proclamation: Katie Crowley, Deputy Mayor, Madison Wisconsin

- 9:20 am Meet our Exhibitors!
- 9:30 am Report from the National Federation of the Blind
Tracy Soforenko, NFB VA President, National Board member
- 10:00 am What's New at Wisconsin BEP and Vocational Rehabilitation
TJ Jerke, BEP Director
- 10:20 am Report from the Wisconsin Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Dan Wenzel, Director
- 10:40 am Office of the Blind and Visually Impaired
Deen Amusa
- 11:00 am Building an Accessible Experience at the Milwaukee Public Museum
Dawn Koceja, Community Engagement and Advocacy Officer
- 11:15 am Accessibility at the Overture Center for the Performing Arts
Thomas Klubertanz, Director of Guest Services
- 11:30 am Presentation from our Title Sponsor: Beyond Vision
Jedediah Moss
- 11:45 am Rights and Responsibilities : Guide dogs and Modern Life
Meghan Whalen, Wisconsin Association of Guide Dog Users, President
- 12:00 pm Adjourn
- Lunch** All Lunches will be available outside of Meeting Room AB. Please only take a box lunch if you purchased one and have a ticket in hand.

Lunch Meetings:

Student Group: Calling current and prospective students, come network, share tips and experiences, and explore ways to get involved with the Federation, Contact for Location, Chelsea Dallin, (608) 290-5573

Luncheon and Annual Meeting: Wisconsin Parents of Blind Children WOPBC, Debi Meng, President, Meeting Room C

Luncheon and Annual Meeting: National Federation of the Blind - Wisconsin Badger Chapter, Kimberly Kiser, President, Board Room

12:00 pm - 2:00 pm Exhibits, Lobby Hallway

General Session 2

(All general sessions will be held in Meeting Rooms AB.)

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| 2:00 pm | Call to Order |
| 2:05 pm | The National Federation of the Blind of Wisconsin
Presidential Report
Ben Dallin, President, National Federation of the Blind
of Wisconsin |
| 2:20 pm | Talking with AI: How Chat Bots Help Blind Users
Scott Hegle |
| 2:40 pm | Transportation in Wisconsin, Opportunities and
Challenges
Jedediah Moss |
| 2:50 pm | Building Your Employment Toolbox: A Panel Discussion
Moderated by Chelsea Dallin, Dan Wenzel, Cheryl
Orgas, Aaron Schuh |
| 3:25 pm | Adjourn |

- 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm Wisconsin Parents of Blind Children, Meeting Room AB
Debi Meng, President
Guest speakers, learn about topics such as braille, technology, and special opportunities for blind children.
- 3:30pm - 4:15 pm Blindness and Self Defense, Capital Meeting Room
Join us for an interactive introduction to self defense from a blindness perspective. Learn strategies for confident, independent travel and dealing with unexpected situations. Led by blind self defense instructor Jim Turk
- 4:15 pm - 5:00 pm Blind Cricket clinic, Capital Meeting Room
Presented by Meghan Whalen and Tina Gruchow
Stop by and learn about this exciting sport, and participate in hands-on demonstrations!
- 3:30 pm - 4:15 pm Financial Literacy, Meeting Room C
Come with your questions on Social Security, Able Accounts, electronic payments and banking, and tax breaks related to blindness.
Facilitated by Ben Dallin
- 4:15 pm - 5:00 pm Growing a More Welcoming Federation, Meeting Room C
Come share your ideas and learn how to make new members and friends feel at home. Facilitated by Tracy Soforenko
- 5:00: Adjourn
- 6:45 pm until the End of Banquet: Childcare, contact Debi Meng for location
- 7:00 pm **Marching Towards our Mission!** Annual Banquet, Meeting Room AB, Master of Ceremonies: Patty Zallar
Invocation
Banquet Address: Tracy Soforenko
Pledging Our Way to the Future!
Drawings

Adjourn

9:30 pm Fund Raising Auction, Meeting Room AB

Sunday, April 6, 2025

BUSINESS SESSION 3

(All general sessions will be held in Meeting Room AB)

8:00 am Annual Business Meeting
Invocation
Secretary's Report
Treasurer's Report
Nominating Committee Report
Elections
Committee Reports
Legislative Report
Chapter & Division Reports
Resolutions Committee Report
National Convention
State Convention
Miscellaneous Business

11:00 am Adjourn

Special Thanks from the State President:

I am honored to take the opportunity to thank our members, friends, families, guest speakers, and exhibitors for attending the 51st annual convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Wisconsin. Your help, suggestions, ideas, and presence truly made this convention possible and memorable. We are very grateful for the support of our Title Sponsor, Beyond Vision. A very special thank you to Tracy Soforenko for joining us from Virginia to share his knowledge, wisdom, and experience. This convention has certainly been filled with opportunities to learn, grow, and come together to change what it means to be blind. Everyone, please have a safe journey back to your homes and we hope to see you all very soon. Go in peace.

INCLUSIVITY, DIVERSITY, AND SOCIAL CONDUCT

- The National Federation of the Blind of Wisconsin seeks to provide

a convention in which all participants can come together in an environment of mutual respect and professionalism. We recognize a shared responsibility to create and uphold that atmosphere for the benefit of all. Some behaviors are therefore specifically prohibited:

- harassment or intimidation based on race, religion, ethnicity, language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, physical appearance, or other group identity
- sexual harassment or intimidation, including unwelcome sexual attention, stalking (physical or virtual), or unsolicited physical contact
- public drunkenness and associated behaviors (e.g., belligerence, yelling, hostility, destruction of property)

We are committed to diversity, equity, and the free expression of ideas. These principles have been delineated in our Code of Conduct found at nfb.org/code-conduct.

For safety and support, visit

<https://nfb.org/programs-services/safety-and-support>