# National Federation of the Blind of Michigan (NFBMI)

**The Informant**

Vol. 6: The Effective Express

**Date: July 25,** 2025

Affiliate Zoom Link:

<https://zoom.us/j/9612695221?pwd=dHlxZDNwcVVZbUVTYUM5cEU4cDlndz09>

## Message from the President

Happy Friday and welcome to the July issue of “The Informant.” Apologies for the delay in our publication this month, my friends, the Michigan Blind People’s Movement has been active and excited. With so much to look forward to and be grateful for, our efforts in supporting blind people in turning their dreams into reality are blossoming in the summer’s glow and adding a perfume that can be labelled effective. The month of July provides a myriad of reasons to be excited. This issue will outline our work at our national convention, individual chapter and division activities, our plans for our upcoming state convention and the unveiling of programs we have all been waiting for. Yes, my NFBMI family, we are in convention season, and I invite you all to join me on the effective express, as we celebrate our success and hold true to President Riccobono’s call to action: uniting with the Federation family and its message. Your good faith  efforts and voice are both needed and welcomed.

## Important National Updates

### National Resolutions

The National Federation of the Blind outlined the direction and priorities of our organization during our resolutions process in New Orleans. Our national convention, the supreme authority in our organization, voted 21 resolutions into effect that address a wide breadth of issues affecting the nation’s blind.

To learn about our 2025-2026 resolutions, please visit:

<https://nfb.org/resources/speeches-and-reports/resolutions1>

### 2025 National Convention Banquet Speech

During our 2025 convention banquet in New Orleans, President Riccobono gave a riveting speech titled “the Blind Explorers and the Elephant.,” which highlighted common societal misconceptions about the capabilities of the blind and how to address these challenges effectively. The theme of the speech, unity in the face of adversity, is one that resonated throughout the banquet hall and across our 52 affiliates. To read the speech, please visit:

<https://nfb.org/resources/speeches-and-reports/banquet-speeches/creativity-persistence-and-hope-reclaiming-our>

### National Federation of the Blind Radio Network

Have you tried out NFBRN yet? At our 2025 Washington Seminar, President Mark Riccobono shook the room when he unveiled the National Federation of the Blind Radio Network (NFBRN). This all-new, always-on radio network offers updates, presidential releases, classic banquet addresses and so much more Federation content that continue to help blind people raise their expectations. To get connected and learn more, visit <https://nfb.org/resources/publications-and-media/nfbrn>.

### Legislative Updates

Both the Blind Americans Returning to Work Act (HR 1175) and the Access Technology Affordability Act (HR 1529), introduced into the 119th Congress needs your support. By connecting with your representative in Congress, you can be the force we need to ensure that blind people are not penalized for having ambition in employment. If you are interested in learning more about this bill and how your voice can be helpful in working toward this goal, please contact our affiliate legislative chair, Sheila Fulmore, to learn about methods of communicating with their office or attend our upcoming legislative committee meeting.

### New Legislative Updates

#### Social Security Administration:

The National Federation of the Blind responded directly to the Social Security Administration (SSA) on their proposed field office closures and employee reductions. To read our organization’s full response to the SSA’s acting commissioner, visit https://nfb.org/programs-services/advocacy/policy-statements/letter-social-security-administration-regarding-recent

#### Department of Education:

The National Federation of the Blind responded to the Secretary of Education following the federal government’s executive order to close the Department of Education. To read our letter emphasizing the importance of maintaining programs for blind and disabled people, visit https://nfb.org/programs-services/advocacy/policy-statements/letter-secretary-education-regarding-executive-order

#### Library Services

The National Federation of the Blind also sent a letter to chairs and ranking members of the House and Senate respective appropriations subcommittees following the federal government’s executive order aiming to eliminate the Institute of Museum and Library Services, which funds state libraries for the blind and print disabled. To read our full letter to Congressional decisionmakers, visit https://nfb.org/programs-services/advocacy/policy-statements/letter-chairs-and-ranking-members-house-and-senate

### NFB Newsline

Have you registered for NFB Newsline? This service offers access to over 500 publications, weather updates and job listings to blind, deaf-blind and low vision people around the country. Register here:

https://nfb.org/programs-services/nfb-newsline

### Access On Podcast

Our technology podcast, Access On, offers in-depth reviews from industry experts, interviews and more informational content. Subscribe today and stay connected with the latest updates by clicking:

https://nfb.org/resources/publications-and-media/access-on-podcast

## Important State Updates

### The Informant

Visitors and members of the National Federation of the Blind of Michigan can now view this issue and past issues of “The Informant” on the NFBMI Webpage, as well as NFB Newsline. You can access these issues by visiting [www.nfbmi.org/informant](http://www.nfbmi.org/informant) or accessing the Michigan state-specific channel on NFB Newsline.

### Announcement, BELL Academy

The National Federation of the Blind of Illinois (NFBIL) will hold its 2025 BELL Academy in Springfield, IL August 4-8. BELL stands for Braille Enrichment Literacy and Learning, and includes a week-long residential program for blind youth. Families travelling from outside of Springfield are provided hotel accommodations and meals are included. For more information or to register for this program, please visit:

https://www.nfbofillinois.org/education-programs/bell-academy

### State Convention

The 2025 NFBMI State Convention will take place October 30- November 2 at the Marriott Hotel Auburn Hills Pontiac. The address is 3600 Centerpoint Parkway, Pontiac, MI 48341. For information about the convention and how to register, please visit

www.nfbmi.org/convention.

### State Scholarships

The 2025 NFB of Michigan scholarship program is open and currently accepting applications. If you are a blind student enrolled at a college or university in our state, please consider applying for this opportunity. Each year, the NFB of Michigan supports four students with an invitation to empower themselves with our affiliate as they are welcomed into the Michigan Blind People’s Movement at state convention with our scholarship program. Applicants must be blind, attend a college or university in Michigan and prepare to attend the entirety of the 2025 NFBMI state convention. For details on eligibility or to apply, please visit:

<https://nfbmi.org/scholarship25>

### Auction and Door Prizes

The NFB of Michigan is now accepting donations for door prizes and auction items for our 2025 state convention. Each year, attendees and members are excited and grateful for the generosity of our donors. Likewise, our live auction during our convention banquet is one that has the entire hall jumping with good will and competition. If you are able to support this activity or receive pledges for donations, please contact Pat Pyle, senior division president, or email Donna Posont at

donnabutterfly50@gmail.com.

### Affiliate Board Meeting

The third quarterly board meeting of the NFB of Michigan will take place August 24 at 3pm. The meeting will be held via Zoom on our affiliate line, which can be accessed using the provided link in this newsletter.

### Washtenaw County Open House

The residents of Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and surrounding areas have spoken. Throughout the past few months, questions about how the NFB of Michigan can have an in-person presence in these areas have been on the rise. The NFB of Michigan is happy to announce the 2025 Washtenaw County virtual open house.

On July 31, 2025, at 8pm, join us in the NFBMI Zoom room if you are a resident of this county and are interested in the foundational work of creating a local chapter presence. Leaders that are committed to making this opportunity a reality will be there and happy to converse on what steps need to be taken.

### NFBMI Soundboard Updates and Changes

The monthly NFBMI Soundboard is receiving a fresh coat of paint. For the past year, our monthly Soundboard has been helpful in supporting members that have challenges with BSBP. Recognizing the need for more inclusive programming and support for job seekers, our affiliate is happy to introduce the NFB of Michigan’s “Job Seeker Saturdays.” Every fourth Saturday at 6pm, We are excited to provide virtual, or in-person programming aimed at supporting Job Seekers in their efforts to learn about job opportunities, develop skills that make them employable or connect with individuals that create opportunities for blind people. Our first Job Seeker Saturday, taking place July 26, is titled “Employment Empowerment” and will include interactive discussions about what it means to be considered employable, as well as activities like Job Seeker Jeopardy for prizes.

### Leadership Fellows

The NFB of Michigan applauds its 2025 Michigan Fellows for its leadership throughout the national convention. During the week of July 8, leaders-in-training rose to their roles’ expectations in a new city by leading affiliate projects that supports our members’ memorable experience in “The Big Easy.” A heartfelt thanks goes to Ather Jammoa, Damontae Scott, Faye Chenault-Johnson, Kashonia Graham and Sam Rau for their support in our projects in New Orleans.

### Professionals in Blindness Education (PIBE)

The NFB of Michigan congratulates Ather Jammoa, At Large chapter secretary and affiliate communications chair, on his election to the board of the National Professionals in Blindness Education (PIBE). We are excited for all that Ather will bring the national division in leadership, empathy, and professionalism during his term.

### NFB of Michigan Convention Delegation

The NFB of Michigan delegation stood proudly during our national president’s report at the general session of the 2025 NFB convention. We applaud the leadership and resilience of our members like Jerusalem Crawley, our MIABS President, who was highlighted during the report. To review the 2025 president’s report, please visit:

https://nfb.org/resources/speeches-and-reports/presidential-reports

### National Scholarship Finalists

The NFB of Michigan congratulates all 30 scholarship finalists in the 2025-26 NFB scholarship program. Our delegation was excited to celebrate the accomplishments of these students, including our members Kashonia Graham and Riley Letterman, who were both part of this year’s scholarship class. For a full list of the scholarship finalist and information on the program, please visit:

<https://nfb.org/programs-services/scholarships-and-awards/scholarship-program>

### Blind Gamers Guild

Are you a member of the Michigan Blind Gamer’s Guild? We are excited to invite you all to consider joining this innovative and fun group within the NFB of Michigan. If you are a fan of games, whether it’s on your PC, gaming console or mobile device, the Gamer’s Guild plans to provide fun activities, ideas, resources, and programming for affiliate members to connect on a social level. We are excitedly preparing for our first in-state gaming program, QC Game Night, and would love for all interested to join us for a night of laughs and fellowship. For information about joining the Blind Gamer’s Guild, or BGG, please email:

secretary@nfbmi.org.

## Chapter/Division Updates

Flint Genesee Chapter

Please join us for our monthly chapter meeting! We meet every third Thursday from 5:30 PM to 6:45 PM at the Flint Public Library. If you're outside the Flint area, you're welcome to join us via the Michigan Zoom line. We value your presence and participation!

A big congratulations to the members of the FLINT Genesee Chapter who attended the National Convention in person this year!

Special salute to Jessie Davis of the FLINT Genesee Chapter a proud veteran and this year’s Jernigan Award winner. Jessie was honored on stage during the Veterans Ceremony. Thank you for your service and leadership!

Kudos to our chapter treasurer, Gail Bowman, who represented the FLINT Genesee Chapter on the Mayor’s Podcast this month. When asked how the community could support us, Gail clearly stated our need for a building in downtown Flint. Thank you, Gail, for being a strong voice for our chapter!

Community Picnic – You’re Invited!

Everyone is welcome to our Annual Community Picnic on Saturday, July 26, from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM at Cook Park, Flint, MI. Bring your friends, family, and neighbors. Let's enjoy food, fellowship, and fun together!

### Michigan Blind Seniors Advocating for Seniors (MBSAS)

Hello Michigan Seniors!  We will have our next meeting on Monday, July 28th at 8:00 PM.  We'll be sharing our convention experiences!  Several of our members attended the convention in person.  Several of our members listened online.  Robert will also be sharing information on how seniors can receive training through the Michigan bureau for the blind.  Hope to see you there.

### New Wayne County Chapter

On Monday, July 21 the New Wayne County Chapter organized a sense-sational tactile tour in Greenfield Village. Included were tours of the print shop, hat shop, weaving shop and the old General Store. If you are interested in participating in the future we can schedule another tactile tour.

Join us Saturday, August 2, noon to three for our regular monthly chapter meeting which will be held at the Caroline Kennedy library, 24590 George Street in Dearborn Heights.

### Michigan Association of Blind Students (MIABS):

The Michigan Association of Blind Students was well-represented at our 2025 national convention. Huge thanks to Shaneice Milledge, board member, for her representing of our division and commitment to connecting with student division members across the country. Congratulations to our president, Jerusalem Crawley, for his advocacy and to our 2025 scholarship winners, Kash onia Graham and Riley Letterman for all their hard work. We invite all students to join us for our monthly meeting, where we will be discussing our state convention activities.

## Committee Reports:

### Resolutions Committee

The 2025 NFBMI resolutions committee is searching for members. If you are passionate about helping the Michigan affiliate determine its official position on issues affecting the blind, consider joining or submitting a resolution for consideration. To learn more about resolutions committee participation and your role at our state convention as a committee member; contact maryann Murad, chair at:

[secretary@nfbmi.org](mailto:secretary@nfbmi.org).

### Communications Committee

The Communications Committee thanks everyone who was able to attend our meeting on July 3, 2025. Please join us at our next meeting on Friday, August 1, 2025 at 8:00 PM. A member from each chapter and division from the state of Michigan should attend this meeting.

### Membership Committee

Please all membership coordinators and chapter and division presidents; be sure to add new members to the portal asap! Also, be certain to update the status of those who are not current members as well. This is crucial at the chapter and division level, affiliate level, and national level also! Keeping your portal updated monthly is extremely important. Thank you and please reach out if you need assistance!

Maryann Murad, Membership Chair

[Secretary@nfbmi.org](mailto:Secretary@nfbmi.org)

### Convention Committee

The convention planning committee held a productive first meeting on July 24, where we discussed the confirmed logistics of convention, reiterated registration information and brainstormed potential content. We encourage members that are interested in participating in a specific presentation or topic to email President@nfbmi.org to discuss further.

## Important State Affiliate Dates

* 07/26/2025: NFBMI Job Seekers Saturday (08:00)
* 07/28/25: MBSAS (Michigan Blind Seniors Advocating for Seniors) (8PM)
* 07/31/2025: Washtenaw County Open House (08:00 PM)
* 08/01/2025: NFBMI Fund Raising Committee Meeting (06:00PM)
* 08/01/2025: NFBMI Communications Committee Meeting (08:00PM)
* 08/05/2025: NFBMI At Large Chapter meeting (08:00PM)
* 08/08/2025: MI-ABS Meeting (07:00 PM)
* 08/11/2025: NFBMI Youth and Family Committee Meeting (07:00PM)
* 08/14/2025: Convention Committee Meeting (07:00PM)
* 08/19/2025: At Large Chapter Philosophy Discussion (08:00PM)
* 08/21/2025: Flint Genesee Chapter Meeting (05:30 to 06:45PM)
* 08/21/2025: Legislative Committee Meeting (07:30PM)

With Love, Hope and Determination

Robert Parsons, Jr., M. A., CRC, CVRT, LLPC

President, National Federation of the Blind of Michigan

(269) 216- 8640

[www.nfbmi.org](http://www.nfbmi.org)

“Without struggle, there is no progress.” – Frederick Douglas