

National Federation of the Blind of Arizona

80th Annual State Convention

Theme: 80 Years! One Symphony! Countless Melodies!

August 20 to 23, 2026

Sheraton Tucson Hotel and Suites

5151 East Grant Road, Tucson, Arizona 85712

Hotel phone: 520-323-6262

Donald Porterfield, President

Amy Porterfield, Convention Arrangements Committee Chair, aporterfield@saavi.us

Abdallah Shuli, Tucson Chapter President, Host Chapter

Arizona Affiliate, Host

About the Convention

National Federation of the Blind Pledge

I pledge to participate actively in the efforts 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.

Registration

Registration is available online at www.az.nfb.org. You may also register at the convention. Please see the additional information at the end of the agenda for a description of the hotel and the location of the convention registration table.

If you have any problems registering, please contact your chapter president in advance to make special arrangements. You may also contact Sharonda Goode at sgoode1013@gmail.com or 602-281-5955.

Door Prizes

You must be registered for the convention and present in the room to be eligible to win a door prize. When you register online, you should receive a confirmation email. If you do not receive the confirmation, please contact your chapter president or Sharonda Goode.

Fundraising

Can you feel the energy? A raffle, blankets, auction, and more. There are plenty of opportunities to support our affiliate during the 2026 convention. Whether you are attending in person or listening to the general session from home, you can take part in the fun. Kimberly, Fundraising Chair.

Auction

Have your positive energy ready to bid on fantastic auction items during the banquet. Get your bids ready, it is going to be a memorable evening.

Let us Get Social

As much as we love our convention, we cannot let moments like this pass without sharing hashtag NFBZ26 with the world. Follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/blindarizona/>.

Code of Conduct

We welcome all attendees to our convention and embrace diversity, inclusion, and mutual respect. Out of respect for attendees who react to strong odors, please do not wear perfume, cologne, lotions, or other items with strong scents.

As a member or guest, you represent both yourself and our organization. Please welcome new attendees, attend and participate in sessions, and know that sexual harassment will not be tolerated under any circumstances. If your behavior could make anyone uncomfortable, even if you would not be upset by it yourself, do not do or say it.

NFB National Representative

We are honored to welcome our National Representative, Karl Smith of Utah.

Karl Smith is a longtime leader in the National Federation of the Blind of Utah. He joined the NFB in 1978 and has held a number of leadership positions since, including local chapter president, secretary, and state president from 1981 to 1996. He currently serves as second vice president of the state affiliate and treasurer of the Salt Lake chapter, and has also served as the affiliate's resolutions chair. Professionally, he is the owner and operator of Axis, a company that sells assistive technology and provides training for people who are blind or have low vision. Across his decades in the movement, he has lived out his belief in the competence and confidence of blind people to solve their problems.

Convention Streaming

Although we want everyone to join us in person, we will stream a small amount of our convention online. Please visit our Facebook page or www.az.nfb.org/convention to find streaming options.

Hospitality Suite

The Hospitality Suite is in Suite 340. It is open in the mornings on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, and on Friday evening following the Legislative Seminar. A \$5.00 donation for expenses is requested.

Muslim Prayer Space

A Muslim prayer space is available throughout the convention in Sage.

Thursday, August 20, 2026

7:00 to 9:00 PM: NFB AZ Philosophy Session Room: Canyon Theater

80 Years! One Symphony! Countless Melodies!

Open convention with the conversation that grounds everything we do. This year our theme is 80 Years, One Symphony, Countless Melodies. Each of us lives our own unique melody, and when our melodies come together they create a resounding symphony. Come learn how your melody makes our symphony so beautiful, and how eighty years of blind Arizonans playing together has built a movement that changes lives. Whether this is your first convention or your fortieth, your voice belongs in this symphony.

Friday, August 21, 2026

8:00 AM to 12:00 PM: Registration Room: Catalina pre-function foyer

8:30 AM to 12:00 PM: Exhibit Hall Room: Pima

9:00 AM to 12:00 PM: Access Technology Seminar Room: Canyon Theater

Have Fun! Create! Use Tech! It's Great!

Join the NFBAZ Technology Committee on Friday, August 21, from 9:00 a.m. to noon for the fun side of technology! We will explore Suno, creating music on the Mac, and digital audio workstations such as Logic Pro and Reaper. We will also compare today's smart glasses and demonstrate what they can do. A representative from APH will share their cool tools, and HapWare will demo their product, ALEYE! All in all, we are just gonna have fun. So whether you are a seasoned techie or simply curious, you do not want to miss it!

10:00 to 11:30 AM: Blind Merchants Division Breakout Room: Sabino

Blind Merchants: Build Your Business, Know Your Benefits

Join the NFBAZ Blind Merchants Division on Friday, August 21, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. in Sabino to explore the path to entrepreneurship and financial independence. Learn how Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) work once you become employed, including what changes when you run your own vending facility, so you can plan with confidence. Get to know our Blind Merchants Division and what it offers, and meet successful vendors who have built thriving businesses and are ready to share what they have learned. Whether you are already in business or just curious about the opportunity, come find out what is possible!

9:00 to 11:30 AM: Senior Seminar and More, including the Cane Walk Room: Catalina Ballroom

Seniors: Fellowship, Fitness, and the Future!

Calling all seniors! Join the NFBAZ Seniors Division on Friday, August 21, from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. in the Catalina Ballroom for a morning of connection, energy, and good company. We will share fellowship with old friends and new, dig into advocacy and how our voices make a real difference, and even get moving together with Zumba! You will also be among the first to meet the new Arizona RSA Independent Living Older Blind (ILOB) program manager and hear the latest ILOB updates, including what they mean for you. Whether you are newly experiencing vision loss or have been living the life you want for years, there is a place for you here. Come for the fellowship, stay for the fun! And join us again at 2:00 that afternoon for Senior Division Water Aerobics at the pool.

12:00 to 12:30 PM: Islamic Friday Prayer Room: Sage

12:00 to 1:30 PM: Lunch Room: Catalina Ballroom

Speakers: Eric Bell, Manager, Disability Services, Phoenix Suns; Karl Smith, National Representative

1:30 to 5:00 PM: Registration Room: Catalina pre-function foyer

1:30 to 5:00 PM: Exhibit Hall Room: Pima

1:30 to 3:00 PM: Student Division Seminar, Arizona Association of Blind Students Room: Sabino

Students: Succeeding in School and Beyond

Join the Blind Student Division breakout session for a practical discussion on succeeding in school and beyond. Topics will include state and national scholarship opportunities, professional interactions and networking, campus resources, resume development, and an introduction to the National Association of Blind Students. Time permitting, we will also have an open question and answer session to answer your questions and discuss the issues that matter most to you.

Mara Ulvested, President, Arizona Association of Blind Students

1:30 to 3:00 PM: Employment Seminar combined with Blindness Professionals Seminar

Room: Canyon Theater

Blindness and Employment Professionals: Tools for Every Age

Join the Blindness and Employment Professionals seminar on Friday, August 21, from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. in Canyon Theater for a session built for those who teach, train, and support blind people of every age, from school-aged students to seniors. We will dig into making math accessible with MathML, share ideas and experiences in round-table discussions, and explore how to support seniors in learning to use AI tools. Whether you are an educator, a rehabilitation professional, or simply passionate about empowering blind Arizonans, you will leave with practical tools you can put to work right away.

Amy Porterfield, Affiliate Board Member and President, Saavi Services for the Blind

2:00 PM: Senior Division Water Aerobics Room: Hotel pool

Make a Splash! Senior Division Water Aerobics

Cool off and get fit with Roger Early for our first-ever convention water aerobics! Join the NFB AZ Seniors Division on Friday, August 21, at 2:00 p.m. at the hotel pool to improve your balance, gain strength, make friends, and have fun, all in the refreshing water. No experience needed, just bring your energy and a sense of fun. Please change into your swimwear before you arrive, in your hotel room or in the conference center restrooms, since there is no changing area at the pool. Come make a splash with us!

3:30 to 5:30 PM: Legislative Seminar Room: Catalina Ballroom

Join us as we engage in a discussion with policy makers at the highest level of state government. How do we as a community move our priorities forward and bring about positive change for Arizona's blind community?

Speakers to be announced

5:30 to 6:30 PM: Hospitality Suite light meal Room: Suite 340

6:30 to 8:00 PM: Resolutions Committee Room: Sabino

Jordan Moon, Legislative Chair

8:00 to 11:00 PM: Hospitality Night, Rodio round-up Come play games for the whole family, Yes there will be bingo as well Room: Catalina Ballroom

9:00 to 10:00 PM: Nominating Committee, closed meeting Room: Sabino

Bob Kresmer, Nominating Committee Chair

Saturday, August 22, 2026

8:00 to 9:00 AM: Registration Room: Catalina pre-function foyer

8:30 AM to 5:00 PM: Youth Track Room: Pima A

9:00 AM to 12:00 PM: Morning General Session Room: Catalina Ballroom

9:00 Call to Order

9:05 Invocation

9:10 Presentation of Colors and Pledges

9:20 Opening Ceremony

9:40 Convention Welcome, Amy Porterfield, Convention Chair

9:50 Membership Celebration

10:00 Jason Lilly

10:15 Kate Scally Howell, Director, Tucson School for the Blind

10:30 Why Become a BEP Vendor? Alan Curry, Arizona Association of Blind Merchants

10:45 The Governor's Council on Blindness and Low Vision: What It Is and How to Get Involved, Bob Kresmer

11:00 Fit Break

11:05 Resolutions Committee Report

11:45 Why I Am a Federationist panel

12:00 to 2:00 PM: Lunch and Division Meetings

Seniors Division: Catalina Ballroom A and B

Diabetes Action Network: Catalina Ballroom C

Arizona Parents of Blind Children: Mesa B

Arizona Association of Blind Students: Canyon Theater

Blind Merchants Division: Sabino

Chapter Building (At-Large, Northern Arizona, West Valley): Private Dining Room

2:00 to 5:00 PM: Afternoon General Session Room: Catalina Ballroom

2:00 President's Report

2:30 National Representative Report, Karl Smith

3:00 Nominating Committee Report and Elections, Bob Kresmer

3:30 Why Choose Structured Discovery Training? panel

3:50 Fit Break

4:00 NFB STEM 2 You and Youth Slam, Ashleigh Moon

4:20 NFB BELL Academy, Amy Porterfield

5:00 Adjourn

6:00 PM: Reception Room: Catalina pre-function foyer

7:00 PM: Banquet Room: Catalina Ballroom

Keynote Speaker: Karl Smith, National Representative; Scholarship Awards, Scholarship Chair; Auction, Donald Porterfield and Jordan Moon

Sunday, August 23, 2026

7:00 to 8:00 AM: Worship Service Room: Sabino

7:30 to 8:00 AM: Youth Track Room: Pima A

8:00 AM to 12:00 PM: Business Meeting and Chapter Reports Room: Catalina Ballroom

Chapter Reports: East Valley, Phoenix, Tucson, and others; Treasurer's Report, Affiliate Treasurer

2026 to 2027 Events

Blind Equality Achievement Month, Phoenix Seminar, Washington Seminar, 2027 National Convention, 2027 NFB BELL Academy, and 2027 State Convention.

Hotel Layout and Information

Location and Surrounding Streets

The convention hotel is the Sheraton Tucson Hotel and Suites, at 5151 East Grant Road, Tucson, Arizona 85712, near the intersection of Grant Road and Rosemont Boulevard. Grant Road is a major six-lane street, so please use the signalized intersections and marked crossings.

The Lobby

You enter the lobby through sliding glass doors under a covered vehicle drop-off. Just inside, there is a set of two steps or a ramp. To the right of the entrance is a carpeted lounge. Down the ramp or steps to the left is the check-in desk, and to the right of the check-in desk is a pantry and market. The main level of the lobby is tiled. To the right of the bottom of the ramp are low and high-top tables, and past the tables is the bar. Across the lobby from the main entrance is a wall with an elevator. To the left of that elevator, a set of doors leads out to the courtyard, toward the executive offices and the Glowbal Restaurant. To the right of the elevator, another set of doors leads out to the courtyard and toward the guest rooms.

Getting to the Convention Space

There is a drop-off and pick-up area for the convention space, west of the main hotel entrance. There are two easy ways to reach the convention space.

By the outdoor sidewalk: From the main lobby, step outside, turn right, and follow the sidewalk. Where the sidewalk widens, continue to the glass doors of the convention space on your right. This is a short, flat walk. Entering here puts you on the first floor, where registration is located.

Through the hotel: From the main entrance, go down the few steps to the left of the ramp, past the check-in desk and the pantry and market, and out the door to the left. Follow the walkway with the building on your left, past the executive offices and rooms 102 to 109. The walkway ends at a T intersection; just before it are an elevator and an exterior stairwell. Take the elevator to level 2R, the rear entrance to the second floor of the convention space, or take the stairs.

About the courtyard elevator: On the outdoor courtyard elevator, the 2R button opens the rear door onto the second floor of the convention area. The 2 button goes to the second floor of the hotel, from which a short set of stairs leads up to the second floor of the convention area.

The Convention Space: First Floor

The first floor holds registration and the main convention entrance. As you enter from the convention or parking lot entrance, the conference center elevator is on your right and the stairs are on your left. The Sabino room is straight ahead, behind the registration area. The stairs on the left have two paths: ascending stairs up to the second floor, and, to the right of or behind them, descending stairs down to the lower level where the Canyon Theater is located.

Canyon Theater (Lower Level)

The Canyon Theater is on the lower level, or basement, of the convention area. From the first floor, take the descending stairs located to the right of or behind the main staircase, the same staircase whose ascending steps lead to the second floor. If you come from the restaurant into the first floor of the convention area, the stairs down to the Canyon Theater are on the right side of the room.

Sabino Room (First Floor)

The Sabino room is on the first floor of the convention area, straight back from the convention entrance, behind where registration is set up. If you come from the hotel through the restaurant, shorelining the left wall, Sabino will be on your left as you enter the convention area, just before the restrooms.

Second Floor: Stairs, Elevator, and Piano

When you reach the second floor, the conference center elevator is to the right of the stairs. Between the stairs and the elevator there is a baby grand piano and a sitting area, a helpful landmark. Coming off the elevator into the conference area, the hallway to Catalina C, Sage, and Pima is straight ahead and then to your right; Catalina B and Catalina A are straight ahead, with their doors on the right before that hallway.

The Catalina Ballrooms (Second Floor)

The Catalina ballrooms form an L shape. From east to west, the order is Catalina A, then Catalina B at the turn of the L, then Catalina C at the far west end.

From the stairs nearest registration: Catalina A is across from the stairs and to your left, Catalina B is straight ahead on the curve, and Catalina C is down the hall straight ahead, on the left.

From the second floor rear doors (the hotel route): the Catalina rooms are on your right, starting with Catalina C, then Catalina B at the curve, then Catalina A.

Sage, Pima, and Mesa (Second Floor)

From the top of the main stairs nearest registration, the Mesa room is along the wall to your left. Going straight ahead, you face a hallway with the Catalina ballrooms on the left and the Sage room on the right, with the Pima room farther down the hallway on the right.

Private Dining Rooms (Glowbal Restaurant)

A couple of small breakout sessions will be held in private dining rooms inside the Glowbal Restaurant. These private rooms are along the left wall as you walk through the restaurant from the hotel courtyard. Their doors slide open like barn doors or sliding closet doors.

Restrooms

On the second floor, the restrooms are near the elevator: coming back out of the main ballroom hallway they are on your left, and coming from the top of the stairs they are on your right before you enter the hallway between the ballrooms. On the first floor, restrooms are near the Sabino room.

Guest Rooms

From the lobby, exit to the left of the elevator, toward the northwest just past the pantry, to reach rooms 102 to 109, which are on the left side of the hall. Exit to the right of the elevator, toward the northeast, to reach rooms 164 down to 141, on the right side of the hall. This right-hand exit is also the easiest way to reach the grey tower.

The Grey Tower

The grey tower is at the back of the property, set at an angle toward the north and west. Its rooms are numbered 120 to 140. The easiest way in is through the door to the right of the lobby

elevator, following the hallway past rooms 164 to 141. Coming from the restaurant side, the tower room numbers run from 120 up to 140.

Hospitality Suite

The Hospitality Suite is in Suite 340, on the third floor of the grey tower.

Pool and Fitness Center

From the courtyard, continue straight ahead to find the fitness center building on your left and the swimming pool ahead on the left.

Smoking Area

The designated smoking area is outside the lobby doors, to the north and west of the covered entrance, in the rock area of the parking lot. A bench in the rocks marks the spot.

Dog Relief Area

The dog relief area is at the back of the property. Use the south exit if you are on the east side of the hotel, or the east exit from the grey tower area.

How the Hotel Is Laid Out

This hotel is built around a central courtyard. The guest rooms and restaurants line the outside walls, while the fitness center, pool, and seating areas sit in the open courtyard in the middle. To reach many rooms and amenities, you will step outside into the courtyard, but you remain within the hotel walls. A tip on doors: horizontal handles generally keep you inside the hotel, while push-bar handles may take you outside the hotel entirely.

Nearby Restaurants and Services

The hotel sits near Grant Road and Rosemont Boulevard, with restaurants, coffee shops, pharmacies, and grocery stores within walking distance along Grant Road, in addition to the on-site Glowbal Restaurant and Bar. A detailed guide to nearby dining and services is provided separately.