

Blindness Agency Parity Pledge

Our agency, the _____, was created and exists to help blind people. We believe that those in whose name we serve should be represented in parity in the governing board of directors and agency management. This parity will result in blind people having a significant contribution to help guide the services our agency provides and guiding the most effective ways to give it. This parity is the desire of the blind community as expressed in Resolution 2020-05, passed by the Convention of the National Federation of the Blind. Therefore, we pledge ourselves to the values and commitments that follow:

We are managed by executives who are compensated for their work, and those executives, in turn, are managed by a board of directors. We believe that blind people must be a part of any blind agency's management team at both of these levels. While setting any particular percentage may appear to be arbitrary, we know that without a number it is impossible to measure whether we are meeting our goal of significant involvement. We therefore pledge that this agency will assure, in five years or less, that at least half of our management team be composed of people who are blind. We further pledge that within the same five-year period that our organization will commit that a minimum of fifty percent of its governing board of directors be composed of people who are blind.

To underscore the importance of parity representing those we serve, we pledge to amend our bylaws to ensure that the parity, once achieved, will continue as a hallmark and point of pride in our agency in perpetuity.

We believe there is no better way to demonstrate our commitment to the constituency we serve than to have blind people contributing by being part of our management. Our agency's current operation and its goals for the future must be informed by those we serve, and we must, in appearance and in fact, be guided by blind people's experience and aspirations at every level.

The effect of blind inclusion and parity will ultimately help our agency address the accessibility needs of those we serve. They will help ensure that every document we create will be accessible. With our full community engaged, we will strive to see that our presence on the World Wide Web is exemplary and demonstrates that websites can be both visually attractive and completely usable with screen reading technology. Furthermore, our commitment to accessibility will extend far beyond the written word. When we produce charts, graphs, and documents with pictures, we will use state-of-the-art technology to make these accessible for the blind.

We value the feedback and active participation of blind people in the development and implementation of the services we provide. In addition to reaching parity on our board and management team, we pledge also to create a working committee of the consumers we serve to meet regularly throughout the year and advise on best practices in our programs and services. The members of this independent advisory committee and the chairperson of the committee will be chosen by the consumers themselves and meet at least quarterly with senior management to build an agency which will continue to grow in responsive, relevant, and blind-positive ways.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Print Name

Print Title