Welcome to the NFB National Job Fair!

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NFB Employment Committee

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This is a brief primer for those of you who plan to come to the NFB National Job Fair or one of our local ones.

When you enter the ballroom, you will find that employers are arranged around the outside of the room. Since the tables are distributed on a first come, first served basis, we will not know before the convention who will be located where.

We send out a list of employers on the NFB listservs and put it on our Employment Committee Website, <http://employment.nfb.org/> , so you’ll have that for guidance. You can use the list to do research on employers and decide which ones you want to talk to. Since most blind jobseekers have smartphone technology and can download the employer list, there will not be as many hardcopy Braille and large type lists this year, although there will be a few to share.

We will have a limited number of sighted and blind persons cruising the room who will be able to direct you to specific employers, but they will not be able to lead you from table to table. If you need sighted help, it’s a good idea to bring someone. However, employers are more likely to hire you if you can demonstrate independent travel skills.

Now comes the adventure. Explore the tables, ask which employer is at each one, and talk to them about what they do. (You should know something about them if you did some research.) If you are interested in working for them, offer them a resume and a cover letter (both personalized if possible) explaining why they would be interested in hiring you. You will want to ask for their business cards, which will contain their personal contact information.

Do not expect a full job interview. They will look at your resume, probably ask you a few screening questions, and decide what they want to do next. It’s okay to ask them what the next steps in the process are. Here are some possibilities:

* If they plan to stay at the convention, they may set up an interview with you later in the week.
* They may take your resume and others back to their office, screen them more thoroughly, and set up a phone interview with you at a later date.
* They may explain how to apply at their online site, and assuming you pass the online screening, contact you for an interview at a later date (this is common with state and federal agencies).
* They may hire you on the spot (rare, but it could happen).
* They may decide not to interview you, and may or may not send you a letter thanking you for your interest and saying they will keep your resume on file.

Always send them a follow-up letter thanking them for visiting with you at the Job Fair and stating your interest in working for them. If you both hit it off at the Job Fair, you might want to follow up in a couple of weeks to learn the status of your application. You can contact them once after that, but do not pester them.

Finally, be patient! It can take months to get a job, and the fact that you didn’t hear from them immediately doesn’t necessarily mean they’re not interested in you. In any follow-up contacts with them, always be pleasant and polite.

If you are unable to attend the Job Fair, is it still okay to contact the employers? Yes, it is. Call them after the fair and explain that you were unable to attend, but are interested in working for them. Their contact information is on the list. Remember that you are representing yourself and the National Federation of the Blind, so please be respectful.

Are you on the Jobs listserv? If not, you should be, as you will learn about more job openings that way. Go to [www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org), search for “listserv” and find “Jobs” partway down the list. You should definitely explore the information on our Employment Committee website, <http://employment.nfb.org/>

I hope this information helps you during the NFB National Job Fair and that you get a good job as a result.