**Dots and Dashes**

**February 3, 2025**

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# **Register Now for the 25th Audio Description Institute!**

Registration opens today for the Audio Description Project’s 25th Audio Description Institute, taking place virtually March 24–28, 1–5 p.m. Eastern. The fee is $575; two scholarships are available (details below). Space is limited — register now.

[**Click to register now!**](http://weblink.donorperfect.com/ACBADInstituteMarch2025)

Registration will close on Tuesday, March 18, 2025. Zoom links to attend the institute will be emailed later that week.

Two full scholarships are available; priority will be given to people with disabilities. To be considered for a scholarship, please send an email outlining how and why you are a strong candidate, including your reason for requesting financial assistance and your plans for implementing what you’ve learned in the ADI. Send the email to Kim Charlson, co-chair of the Audio Description Project, at [kim.charlson@perkins.org](mailto:kim.charlson@perkins.org), by March 2, 2025. Applicants will be notified of the status of their request for assistance by March 10, 2025.

If you have questions, contact Dr. Joel Snyder, [jsnyder@audiodescribe.com](mailto:jsnyder@audiodescribe.com).

# **Leading Disability Organizations:**

# **President Trump’s Blame of Deadly Plane Crash on Disabled Federal Workers Is Baseless, Irresponsible**

WASHINGTON, January 30, 2025 — In remarks today at the White House, President Trump cast potential blame for the tragic and deadly plane crash that occurred last night near Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport on people with disabilities employed by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Soon after the President’s comments, multiple news agencies [reported](https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/30/business/air-traffic-control-staffing-plane-crash.html) that the air traffic control tower was understaffed at the time of the crash. Despite these reports, the White House has [continued to double down on their baseless claims](https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/immediate-assessment-of-aviation-safety/).

In response, the American Association of People with Disabilities, American Council of the Blind, Autistic Self Advocacy Network, Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, United Spinal Association, National Federation of the Blind, and other leading disability rights organizations issue the following statement:

The President’s remarks today suggesting the deadly crash of Flight 5342 may have been the fault of public servants with disabilities are irresponsible, disparaging, and wrong. It is extremely inappropriate for the President to use this tragedy as an opportunity to advance his anti-diversity hiring agenda. The focus of the federal government and the entire nation should be on the emergency response, a thorough investigation, and most of all, supporting the families and communities who lost their loved ones in this tragedy.

People with disabilities proudly serve our nation through government service in every federal department and agency. Disabled employees, like non-disabled employees, are hired because they meet the qualifications needed to do the job. The Federal Aviation Administration has rigorous standards for hiring Air Traffic Controllers and all other FAA employees. Diversity hiring initiatives seek to expand the pool of potential qualified talent for a role – they do not supersede the qualifications and skills that the role requires. The implication that people are being hired to do a job for which they are unqualified is an unfounded lie that further reinforces harmful stereotypes against disabled people.

… **Scott Thornhill, the Executive Director of the American Council of the Blind, stated,**“The tragic accident that occurred last night near Reagan Washington National Airport is one we all are deeply saddened about. This is not a time for political posturing or speculation. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of those who devastatingly lost their lives. We strongly denounce any insinuation that hiring individuals with disabilities had any part in this horrific event.” …

Read the full press release at **https://www.aapd.com/disability-orgs-respond-faa-blame/**.

# **2025 Legislative Imperatives**

The majority of home use medical devices and outpatient equipment utilizes digital display interfaces that are inaccessible to blind, low vision, and deaf-blind users. Class 2 and Class 3 medical devices such as glucose monitors, blood pressure readers, and at-home chemotherapy treatments do not have any non-visual accessibility features like text to speech output, tactile markings, or audible tones built in. As a result, people who are blind, low vision, and deaf-blind cannot independently manage their health from the privacy of their own homes.

Access to websites, applications and online services impacts most aspects of everyday life, and the COVID-19 pandemic has made digital inclusion more important than ever. There is a need for enforcement standards that clearly state websites, applications, and online services must be accessible to people with disabilities. People who are blind, low vision, and deaf-blind face countless barriers when accessing workplace portals, educational platforms, healthcare and public health information, transportation services, shopping, and entertainment over the Internet.

The 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA) guaranteed access for people with disabilities to advanced communications services, telecommunications hardware and software, accessible video displays and user interfaces and digital apparatuses, and required the delivery of audio-described content. For more than 10 years, ACB and its members have worked to implement and enforce the CVAA, and in several key aspects, we have reached the limits of what the CVAA is able to enforce. Once passed, this legislation will update existing requirements for accessible media, video user interfaces, and video conferencing services. ACB urges Congress to reintroduce, support, and pass these bills during the 119th Congress.

The three legislative imperatives will be discussed at our D.C. Leadership Conference. Can’t wait ‘til then? There will be community events dedicated to each one. The dates are Feb. 25, Feb. 27, and March 4, all at 7:30 p.m. Eastern. We encourage you to join to learn more about the imperatives before our D.C. Leadership Conference.

# **Advocacy Update Podcast**

On this episode of the ACB Advocacy Update, Claire speaks with Stephanie Flynt McEben from the [**National Disability Rights Network**](https://www.facebook.com/NDRNadvocates?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZUeMaPC7a8G3RSyrJA6ygKmRdB-CnhzhIa6gknOvU14xb9B3lFY8XbkPQtR-lndqTO9J9MOMMkf9Bc7hilm-ZxPOsag-eQoVmCcqb-0GER2_JhCOP-TKrR1zjMtF_F1NV9bHO7D4O_8J_u4QvJM0G5aVCshvt1gNRYhSs1v8xTdq4fGScc_ANTcorPbYmN5gz8&__tn__=-%5dK-R) regarding the U.S. Census. In the last year, census officials took steps to change the way disability is defined, which would impact the number of people who identify as such. This would then affect government funding for the disability community. Stephanie explains the actions of the disability community, including ACB, to advocate to stop the definition change before more research can be done to protect services to the disability community.

Listen to the podcast at [**https://acb-advocacy-update.pinecast.co/**](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Facb-advocacy-update.pinecast.co%2F%3Ffbclid%3DIwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR3nauw12uHz7ZMTfczFynszSSBoA-7uGnsUrykJNpoeuWeRKvO3eNJvAD4_aem_0owyUoaajKHz8uoz_bC_7w&h=AT2DaHXB2LCF7SDKKODieuRNwu6Sb5bmtXD9DB8qEN2LZXgns2zmGBa1V3gSYJJQHl7hVslt1rJc3Xqgs1FkKd0NyUNSwAuOLWfaAjhvcR4PBmUpUls4MASoVYgtZKJgBQ&__tn__=-UK-R&c%5b0%5d=AT2MpSnDzrHt77PpDhmKK2jrX5QqgJtq9Cr7a12I0SbnLlnmnNAAXc9RbPmrid-S-QJJiuo0R4dytHE_UGCD1eEJl31GjPPrrCTXRh-nfW6qP9DdjErv-ADfssRAMV_UT8YjWQsohVwsdqF__xb_UnURIRTU6uULwLZR1qpbChCtFlioVtlGD3HS36n_yGdv61WZr9EOxmMaDNZcdjXAi4k6A1E).

# **Book Discussion**

You are invited to a book discussion happening on Thursday, Feb. 13 at 7 p.m. Eastern (4 p.m. Pacific, 2 p.m. Hawaii time). This discussion is being sponsored by the Multicultural Affairs Committee, the Jewish Hour, and the Harambee Alliance of the Blind. We wanted to give you time to allow for reading the book so that you may choose to participate in the dialogue. Our book conversation format will allow for all who want to contribute thoughts and opinions to have plenty of opportunity to do so. And of course, even if you aren’t able to read the book and would still like to tune in, we welcome you as well.

The book we’re discussing is “The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store,” by James McBride, DB115655. Reading time is 12 hours, 24 minutes. In addition to winning a National Book Award, James McBride is also the recipient of the 2024 Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction. In this novel he shows his gift for writing about the complexity of human interactions through the creation of memorable characters and enthralling storytelling.

**ACB-Ohio Scholarships**

The American Council of the Blind of Ohio offers several scholarships each academic year. The scholarships are:

* $1,000 Friends of Freshman Scholarship, which is presented to a blind or low vision entering freshman in any field of study.
* $3,000-$5,000 ACB-Ohio Scholarships, which are awarded to one or more blind or low vision student in any field of study, or sighted student in a field of study directly benefiting the blind and low vision community. This scholarship is open to students in trade or technical schools, 2- or 4-year undergraduate degree programs, graduate degree programs, or other post-secondary study, such as for continuing education, special certification, or licensure.

Requirements and application materials can be found at [**www.acbohio.org/scholarships**](http://www.acbohio.org/scholarships). Completed applications must be postmarked no later than **March 31, 2025**, if mailed, or no later than 11:59 p.m. on that date if e-mailed. If you have questions or need clarification, email [scholarships@acbohio.org](mailto:scholarships@acbohio.org) or call (614) 261-3561.

# **Apply for the Friends-in-Art Scholarship**

Friends-in-Art (FIA), a nonprofit organization with the mission of creating spaces where blind and low vision artist and audiences thrive and an affiliate of the American Council of the Blind (ACB), offers an annual $2,000 scholarship to college students who are legally blind.

If you are a high school senior or a college student engaged in the fields of music, visual arts, drama, graphic design, creative writing, and/or some combination of the above, and are blind or low vision, we encourage you to apply!

In addition to being legally blind, applicants must:

* Maintain a 3.0 GPA;
* Be a full-time student or work 32 or more hours per week while attending college part-time; and
* Be involved in their school/local community.

To find out more or to apply, please visit [**https://acb.org/scholarships**](https://acb.org/scholarships).

Be sure to check the appropriate box while completing the application form so that we will know you are interested in applying for the FIA scholarship. Please note that completion of the application process will make you eligible for other ACB scholarships.

**Deadline: February 14, 2025**

Please direct any questions to Peter Altschul, FIA Scholarship Chair, at [**creatingcommonground@outlook.com**](mailto:creatingcommonground@outlook.com).

# **Invitation to Participate in an Online Survey Study at Columbia University**

We invite you to participate in an online survey at Columbia University that explores views on inclusion of people with disabilities in a type of health research called “Precision Medicine Research.” Precision Medicine Research looks at a person’s genetics, environment, and lifestyle. Knowledge from this type of research can help physicians improve prevention and diagnosis of diseases and develop new treatments.

Our study is funded by the National Institutes of Health.

You are invited to participate in this study because you live in the United States and are:

* A deaf adult
* A hard-of-hearing adult
* A blind or low-vision adult
* An adult with a mobility disability

It will take up to about 45 minutes to complete the survey.

The survey will be conducted online (see link below). You can complete the survey on a tablet, computer or smartphone. You can ask another person to help you to complete the study. We can also schedule a one-on-one Zoom meeting to support survey completion. If you need any disability accommodations, please let us know.

[**Click here to participate in our study**](https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/8102215/Links-to-3-Versions-of-the-Trust-Study-National-Survey)

If you have any questions, please contact the lead researcher, Dr. Maya Sabatello, at [**trust-study@cumc.columbia.edu**](mailto:trust-study@cumc.columbia.edu).

# **RADx Seeks Your Input**

For several months, the Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics (RADx) team has been working with folks at the World Health Organization (WHO) to publish a document that expands the reach of our learnings during the Accessible Test program, originally documented in the [Best Practices for the Design of Accessible COVID-19 Home Tests](https://www.access-board.gov/tad/radx/).  The WHO document is heavily based on the original, but with a scope not limited to COVID-19.

Some of you were part of the external consultation group late last year and have already shared your feedback — thank you! Now we welcome our broader network. Please feel free to share this with others you know. Note that this is still a formative version. Glossary definitions and icons in the Symbols section have not been populated, it is not in its final format (text will be larger, section headers will stand out more), and accessibility updates are incomplete. With that in mind, we encourage you to focus your attention on the content, rather than the format or layout (or obvious sections of missing content).

To access the draft document, use the following link: [**Rapid Diagnostic Test Accessibility Considerations: for professional use and self-tests**](https://app.box.com/s/b75uofeunzb27kwlgyh1mod7oylu1v0h) (the PDF contained in the survey is not accessible). To provide your feedback, go to [**https://extranet.who.int/dataformv6/index.php/677212?lang=en**](https://extranet.who.int/dataformv6/index.php/677212?lang=en).

# **EEOC Presents ADA Etiquette and Best Practices**

On Wednesday, March 5th, the Birmingham District Office of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission will host an event on ADA Etiquette and Best Practices via Zoom. Participants will discuss why understanding communication with individuals with physical and mental disabilities is so important for creating inclusive and respectful workplaces. You will also learn the preferred etiquette and manners of interacting and communicating. We will also discuss best practices when handling situations that may arise under the Americans with Disabilities Act. You will learn about reasonable accommodation and the interactive process, addressing concerns about safety, and when it may be permissible to ask disability-related questions during the application and employment process.

Date: March 5, 2025

Time: 12 noon to 1:15 p.m. Eastern time

To register, or for more information, visit **https://tinyurl.com/y8bxxmub**.