# **RESOLUTION 2023-02**

# **Regarding Equivalent Certifications from the National Blindness Professional Certification Board (NBPCB) by the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and its Blind and Low Vision Services (BLVS)**

WHEREAS, every blind Coloradan deserves high-quality vocational rehabilitation (VR) services that empower and inspire them to live the lives they want; and

WHEREAS, in Colorado, there exists a significant need for qualified and competent instructors to fill vacant positions providing adjustment-to-blindness training for blind consumers, and in fact, there is a shortage of such qualified professionals; and

WHEREAS, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE), through its Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), provides support and training for Coloradans with disabilities, the end goal being to “achieve employment success”; and

WHEREAS, DVR’s Blind and Low Vision Services (BLVS) provides specialized training to Coloradans who are blind, visually impaired, or deafblind to “become independent at home, in the community, and in employment”; and

WHEREAS, the National Blindness Professional Certification Board (NBPCB), established in 2001, today provides certifications in access technology, orientation and mobility, rehabilitation teaching, and Unified English Braille--certifications which promote a positive philosophy of blindness and emphasize the importance of positive blind role models; and

WHEREAS, while the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, recognizes certifications by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation Professionals (ACVREP) and accepts substitutions for the Academy’s certifications, it does not recognize any of the certifications from the NBPCB; and

WHEREAS, the pathway to obtaining certifications issued by ACVREP continues to be problematic for blind applicants and marginalizes blind people within the professional community affiliated with ACVREP; and

WHEREAS, the NBPCB was established to administer certifications for blindness rehabilitation professionals in a way that does not discriminate against blind instructors and thus treats all certificants equally, regardless of whether they are blind or not; and

WHEREAS, since 2001, professionals holding certifications from the NBPCB have been successfully training blind adults and blind youth in Colorado and across the country through vocational rehabilitation programs that are primarily funded by the United States Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration, thus demonstrating the efficacy and validity of certifications from the National Blindness Professional Certification Board; and

WHEREAS, by failing to recognize certifications from the National Blindness Professional Certification Board, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Blind and Low Vision Services denies equitable employment opportunities to individuals certified by the NBPCB and limits the instructional approaches from which consumers can choose: Now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado in convention assembled this 27th day of October, 2023, in the City of Lone Tree, Colorado, that this organization urge the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Blind and Low Vision Services to accept certifications issued by the National Blindness Professional Certification Board (NBPCB), to treat these certifications as being equivalent to certifications issued by the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation Professionals (ACVREP), and to require their contractors to accept NBPCB certifications wherever they accept ACVREP certifications.

Resolution unanimously adopted.