# **RESOLUTION 2023-03**

# **Regarding National Federation of the Blind of Colorado NFB-NEWSLINE® Support for and Expansion of Critically Needed Services**

WHEREAS, NFB-NEWSLINE® is a free audio news service for anyone who is blind, low-vision, deafblind, or otherwise print-disabled, providing access to more than 500 publications, emergency weather alerts, job listings, and more; and

WHEREAS, with funding from the Colorado General Assembly, under a partnership with the Colorado Talking Book Library, the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado manages the NFB-NEWSLINE® program in Colorado, thus enabling people who are blind or otherwise print-disabled to read and have on-time access to the Denver Post, Colorado Springs Gazette, Grand Junction Daily Sentinel, Fort Collins Coloradoan, Colorado Springs Independent, and numerous other regional, national, and international newspapers and magazines; and

WHEREAS, on-time and independent access to these sources of information is essential to increase employment; enhance education; and provide on-time access to entertainment, religious, political, cultural, and community life; and

WHEREAS, on-time access to information by blind school-age children, working-age adults, blind veterans, and blind seniors is critical for the full integration of the blind into society on terms of equality; and

WHEREAS, under the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado’s Project Literacy programs, NFB-NEWSLINE® has been a significant tool for bringing news and information to remote areas of our state; and

WHEREAS, there are well over 100,000 blind people in the state of Colorado, many of whom are isolated and completely unaware of the tremendous set of services provided by NFB-NEWSLINE® under Project Literacy; and

WHEREAS, information about the latest and most innovative access technologies is still not easily available to many blind, low-vision, or otherwise print-disabled people in Colorado, regardless of whether they live in urban or rural settings; and

WHEREAS, there is a demonstrated need for additional funding in order to meet the needs of Colorado’s growing population of blind, low-vision, and print-disabled citizens; and

WHEREAS, the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado has determined that there is a great need to expand its current Project Literacy Program by providing an expanded array of information and literacy support services throughout the entire state of Colorado through which blind and print-disabled people can be introduced to a variety of literacy and communication-related assistive technologies and blindness-related services, provided with introductory training, and helped to find and use additional resources in or near their communities; and

WHEREAS, expansion of the Project Literacy program would enable the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado to employ a full-time staff member who could work to market and facilitate monthly information-sharing sessions, focus groups, and meet-ups; and

WHEREAS, increased funding for Project Literacy could be used to provide support for a technical assistance line where people who are blind/print-disabled could call with questions about the ever-changing array of access technologies and receive timely follow-up training and support: Now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado in convention assembled this 29th day of October, 2023, in the City of Lone Tree, Colorado, that this organization respectfully ask the Colorado General Assembly to increase the appropriation of funds from the Colorado Disabled Telephone Users Fund supporting NFB-NEWSLINE® to $250,000 for Fiscal Year 2025 and thereafter to provide direct support for the expansion of NFB-NEWSLINE® and the Project Literacy program in Colorado; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this organization cordially invite access technology providers, the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, public and private schools, civic organizations, and community libraries to partner with the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado in order to enhance the quality of life for all blind and print-disabled citizens no matter where they live in the state of Colorado.

Resolution unanimously adopted.