

Where the Sun Shines Bright!

2024

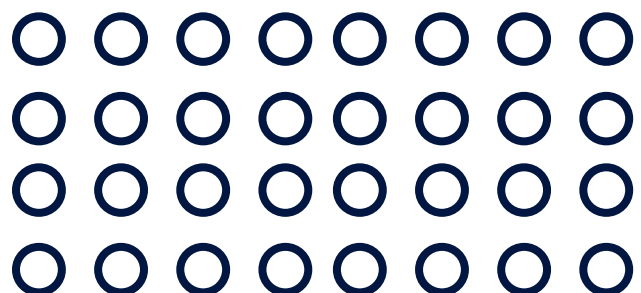
Annual

Report



**American Council
of the Blind**

Together for a bright future



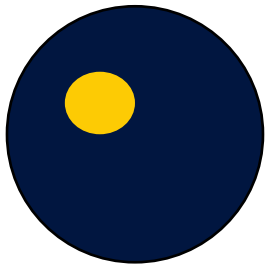


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Letter from the President and Executive Director



Deb Cook Lewis
President



Scott Thornhill
Executive Director



“Where the Sun Shines Bright”

The American Council of the Blind flourished in 2024. Staff, programming, office location, infrastructure, and more experienced progress. The hiring of a new Executive Director and a new Director of Advocacy & Governmental Affairs solidified our staff in the first quarter of the year. ACB's Community platform crossed the 22,000 event mark late in 2024; thousands of participants benefit from this program each month.

Initiatives such as the INSPIRE Mentoring Program, JPMorgan Chase Leadership Fellows Program and others continued to offer opportunities for ACB members to grow in their skills as they prepare to participate and lead in the years to come. Our D.C. Leadership Conference provided a time of embracing advocacy with several legislative imperatives as attendees took to Capitol Hill.

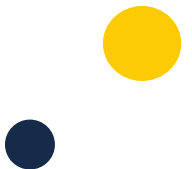
This spring event began with a visit to the Bureau of Engraving & Printing so members could feel the tactile features on the ten dollar bill being developed as the first accessible currency in the United States. Following the BEP tour, another tour, this one of the new ACB offices in Alexandria, VA, took place with a festive reception.

There was even more fun and programming as Jacksonville, FL hosted the 63rd annual American Council of the Blind Conference and Convention in July. ACB welcomed the Blinded Veterans Association as BVA partnered to hold its own convention in concert with ACB. An overflowing exhibit hall, dozens of sessions, strong sponsor support and a joyous time in person and virtually, was capped off by a visit to the Kennedy Space Center.











Thanks to generous supporters and a partnership with the American Foundation for the Blind, ACB presented over \$100,000 in scholarship funding to an impressive group of scholarship recipients. November brought the 4th annual Audio Description Awards Gala. This event celebrated audio description leaders in voice talent, production, accessibility commitment, and more.

While the special events and headline-worthy accomplishments took the prime spots, we also made a strong commitment to improving the infrastructure of ACB's websites and ACB Media assets through targeted grants and a plan to archive for history. Ensuring we are prepared for the future, while being mindful of the present, sums up 2024 for the American Council of the Blind.



2024 Highlights



-  ACB named Scott Thornhill as its new Executive Director.
-  Honored Dr. Margaret Pfanstiehl as part of Women's History Month. Margaret and her husband Cody founded the Metropolitan Washington Ear, an organization that continues to provide services today. They also developed the Ear's audio description program and began offering description at D.C.'s Arena Stage.
-  An ACB affiliate, the California Council of the Blind, led a coalition of disability groups to ensure accessible ballot return for the 2024 elections.
-  Held the third hybrid convention in Jacksonville, Florida (FL) and on the ACB Media Network with over 150 breakout sessions, tours, and an inspirational banquet.
-  Sent a representative to the Rideshare Rally in San Francisco in October, which was organized by the National Federation of the Blind.
-  Held the fourth annual Audio Description Awards Gala, which featured presentations from Roy Samuelson, author and AD producer and narrator, and Kathy Bates, award-winning actor.
-  ACB Media produced 10 broadcasts streams with 185,000 listens on topics of interest to the blind population around the world.
-  ACB members contributed 16,000 volunteer hours.

Financial Summary

REVENUE

Contributions & Grants	\$770,841
Program Fees	\$574,975
Membership Dues	\$59,172
Net Investment Return	\$338,977
Other Income	\$1,195,643
Thrift Stores	\$372,971
TOTAL REVENUE	\$3,312,579

ASSETS

Current Assets	\$425,567
Investments	\$4,424,419
Other Assets	\$916,382
Property & Equipment	\$48,312
TOTAL	\$5,814,680

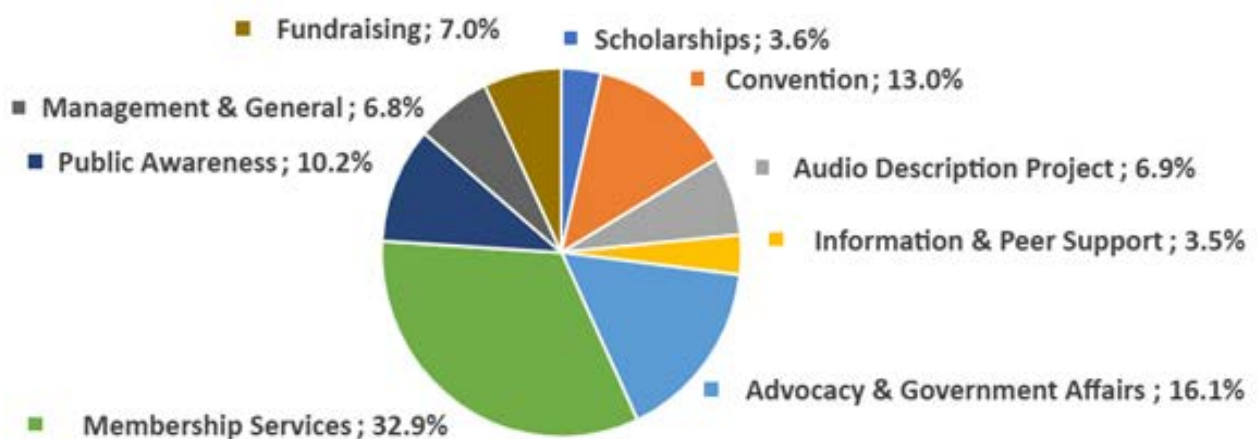
EXPENSES

Program Services	\$2,976,828
Management & General	\$234,334
Fundraising	\$242,089
Total Expenses by Function	\$3,453,251
TOTAL NET	\$(140,672)

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

Current Liabilities	\$1,370,044
Net Assets (Unrestricted)	\$3,013,151
Net Assets (Restricted)	\$1,431,485
TOTAL	\$5,814,680

ACB Program Expenses



ACB Program Updates

Advocacy and Governmental Affairs

Held the annual Leadership Conference with in-person and virtual components. ACB advocated to move timely legislation along, including the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act and the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act. Worked in coalition with other disability organizations to move key legislation, such as the Websites and Software Applications Accessibility Act and the Communications, Video, and Technology Accessibility Act, further along the process in the 118th congress.

Membership and Organization Services

Strengthened affiliates through weekly calls for the Presidents, formalized and individualized leadership training, and provided American Council of the Blind (ACB) board liaisons to affiliates to promote consistent communication and support. ACB's community platform held 5,000 events with 182 individuals accumulating 16,000 volunteer hours. The community events were social, educational, topic-driven, teaching braille, crafts, languages, exercise classes, meditation, discussions, seminars on diabetes, peer support, assistive technology training, and so much more. Since its inception in 2020, this platform has held more than 22,000 events.



Convention

The American Council of the Blind's 63rd Annual Convention was a hybrid event, featuring virtual sessions throughout the convention, and an in-person portion with 200 workshops, seminars, and business meetings, exhibitors, and tours. All eligible ACB members had the opportunity to participate in discussions about proposed resolutions, then could vote on the resolutions and elect board members during ACB's business meetings. The Convention included informative breakout sessions on issues of interest to the community. Individuals could attend live sessions or listen to the podcasted sessions.

Public Awareness

Increased Spanish language content for events, presentations, and awareness initiatives. The fourth annual ACB Audio Description Awards Gala was broadcast live on YouTube and Peacock, allowing ACB to extend its reach across the nation. ACB Media's 10 internet streams had over 185,000 listening hours. ACB's social media presence resulted in over 16,000 followers across five platforms with consistent engagement on daily posts. ACB's website and the Audio Description Project website allow ACB to keep the public aware of ongoing activities, current initiatives, and news important to people who are blind, low vision, or who are connected to someone in the community.

ACB Scholarships and Awards

In 2024, ACB awarded \$116,200 across 28 scholarships to blind post-secondary students. Scholarship amounts ranged from \$4,200 to \$8,100. Many attended the conference where they networked with others who share similar life experiences. The JPMorgan Chase Leadership Fellows and DKM First-timer Awards were awarded to seven deserving future leaders empowering their growth through mentoring, training, and peer development. The awardees had the opportunity to attend ACB's Convention to connect with one another and develop leadership skills.

Information and Peer Support

ACB provides vital information and referral services to individuals and family members experiencing vision loss who are seeking support in a number of areas, including accessible technology services, daily living skills, and advocacy-related inquiries. Many callers are looking for someone they can talk to about how to deal with vision loss. ACB has built a virtual peer support community event platform to address these needs.

Audio Description Project (ADP)

ACB's Audio Description Project sponsors a broad range of activities designed to build awareness of audio description. In 2024, the ADP held its fourth Audio Description Awards Gala, celebrating the media industry's advancement of audio description; served on the FCC's Disability Advisory Committee; sponsored its annual essay contest for students; conducted sessions of the Audio Description Training Institute; and participated in the UniDescription Project's effort to create audio description for national park service brochures.



State Affiliates

Alabama Council of the Blind	ACB of Minnesota
Arizona Council of the Blind	Mississippi Council of the Blind
Arkansas Council of the Blind	Missouri Council of the Blind
California Council of the Blind	ACB of Nebraska
Colorado Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired	Nevada Council of the Blind
ACB of Connecticut	New Jersey Council of the Blind
Delaware Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired	ACB of New Mexico
District of Columbia Council of the Blind	ACB of New York
Florida Council of the Blind	North Carolina Council of the Blind
Georgia Council of the Blind	North Dakota Association of the Blind
Hawaii Association of the Blind	ACB of Ohio
Illinois Council of the Blind	Oklahoma Council of the Blind
ACB of Indiana	ACB of Oregon
Iowa Council of the United Blind	Palmetto Council of the Blind
Kansas Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired	Pennsylvania Council of the Blind
Bluegrass Council of the Blind	South Dakota Association of the Blind
Kentucky Council of the Blind	Tennessee Council of the Blind
Louisiana Council of the Blind	ACB of Texas
ACB of Maine	Utah Council of the Blind
ACB of Maryland	Vermont Council of the Blind
Bay State Council of the Blind	ACB of Virginia
Michigan Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired	Washington Council of the Blind
	Mountain State Council of the Blind
	ACB of Wisconsin
	Wyoming Council of the Blind

Special Interest Affiliates

Alliance on Aging and Vision Loss

American Association of Blind

Teachers

American Association of Visually

Impaired Attorneys

ACB Diabetics in Action

ACB Families

ACB Government Employees

ACB Lions

ACB Next Generation

ACB Radio Amateurs

ACB Students

Blind Information Technology

Specialists

Blind LGBT Pride International

Braille Revival League

Council of Citizens with Low Vision

International

Friends-in-Art of ACB

Guide Dog Users, Inc.

Independent Visually Impaired

Entrepreneurs

Library Users of America

Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of

America

Visually Impaired Veterans of America

**ACB wishes to extend a
special thanks to all our
generous contributors with
particular thanks to the
following foundations:**

Aid Association for the Blind of the District of
Columbia

Consumer Technology Association
Foundation

Delta Gamma Foundation

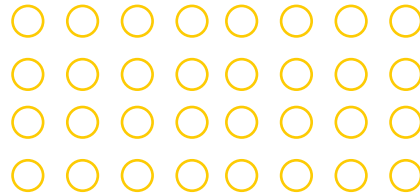
Dr. Scholl Foundation

Royal Bank of Canada Foundation

The Gibney Family Foundation

The Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation

Board



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Staff & Consultants

ACB Staff



Executive Director: Scott Thornhill

Chief Financial Officer: Nancy Marks-Becker

Special Projects Manager: Dan Spoons

ACB Editor: Sharon Lovering

ACB Media and IT Manager: Rick Morin

Administrative Assistant: Nancy Feela

Administrative Assistant: Hannah Park

Director of Advocacy and Governmental Affairs:
Claire Stanley

Advocacy and Outreach Specialist: Swatha
Nandhakumar

Audio Description Project Coordinator: Tabitha
Kenlon

Associate Director of Development: Jo Lynn
Bailey-Page

Development Officer: Kolby Garrison

Manager of Membership Engagement: Cindy Hollis

Membership Services Administrative Assistant:
Natalie Couch

HR & Payroll Specialist: Sayuree Naik

Thrift Store General Manager: Chris Sawyer



Consultants

ACB Media Coordinator: Larry Gassman

Resource Development Consultant: Bill Reeder

Accounting Consultant: Lane Walters

Communications Consultant: Mike Johnson

AD Television Listings Coordinator: Timothy Wynn

ADP Webmaster: Fred Brack

