**Dots and Dashes**

**July 21, 2025**

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# **Online Celebration of Life for Denise Colley**

There will be an online celebration of life for Denise Colley on Saturday, August 2 at 2 p.m. Eastern time. We will celebrate Denise’s life, faith and impact on all of us. Several special presentations are planned. More details will be announced next week.

# **Explore to Achieve More**

The ACB INSPIRE Mentoring Program enters its third year of providing mentorship, access and peer support during the fall of 2025. The leadership development program designed exclusively for prospective leaders is a nine-month exploration of learning and grasping new concepts. Online applications will be accepted from July 18th through August 18th. The 2025-2026 cohort will be selected by September 1st, and the program year will begin on September 18th. Activities will conclude on June 16, 2026. The program culminates with a virtual graduation ceremony during the virtual week of the ACB Conference and Convention.

Prepare to listen to our presentation that will allow you to learn how the program works and ask questions. The presentation will be an informational Community call on Saturday, August 2, 2025 at 4 p.m. Eastern.

INSPIRE refers to “Imagine, Nurture, Support, Prepare, Influence, Reflect, and Evolve.” The ACB INSPIRE mentoring program serves as a roadmap and places an emphasis on aiding and guiding potential leaders to expand their involvement at the local, state and/or national level. Members are urged to apply to become a Guide/Mentor or Explorer/Mentee.

The INSPIRE Experience includes an introductory Guide-Explorer meet and greet; informative orientation training; personalized Guide-Explorer team meetings; interactive quarterly check point meetings; empowerment segments with leaders of the blindness community, as well as other collaborative partnerships; optional office hours feedback sessions; support meetings with the ACB INSPIRE Mentoring Team; sharing of inspirational books, articles, poems, quotes, and other material from the INSPIRE Library; participant communication on the designated ACB INSPIRE email list; and the end of program evaluation survey.

To serve as a Guide or mentor, applicants must be an ACB member for seven years or more; current on membership dues; have at least five years of confirmed leadership experience within ACB, one of its affiliates or chapters; submit name and contact information for a reference during their initial application to the program; have personal knowledge of ACB’s history, mission, purpose, and core values; agree to meet with designated Explorer/mentee at least twice a month; conduct effective goal-setting meetings with a designated Explorer/mentee; agree to keep all communication with Explorer/mentee private and confidential; agree to attend and participate in scheduled group empowerment sessions, including quarterly check point meetings and optional office hours feedback sessions; agree to submit a monthly report to the ACB Mentoring Team on Guide-Explorer progress; and agree to complete an end-of-program evaluation.

To qualify as an Explorer or mentee, applicants must be an ACB member for at least two years (membership in an ACB state or special-interest affiliate, or chapter, is applicable); current on membership dues; demonstrate an eagerness to learn and grow; faithfully attend and participate in goal-setting sessions with a designated guide/mentor; agree to meet with Guide/mentor at least twice a month; agree to attend and participate in group empowerment sessions, including quarterly check point meetings and optional office hours feedback sessions; agree to submit a monthly report to the ACB Mentoring Team on Guide-Explorer progress; and agree to complete an end of program evaluation.

Now is the time to strongly consider becoming a Guide or Explorer! Apply online at [**https://forms.gle/dVWybM91uzHxHGju9**](https://forms.gle/dVWybM91uzHxHGju9).

The application deadline is 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on August 18th.

# **Direct Final Rule Postponed**

The U.S. Department of Energy has placed a 60-day postponement on the Direct Final Rule for building Section 504. This Direct Final Rule would remove accessibility requirements and standards for new DOE-funded buildings, weakening protections for those with disabilities.

The Direct Final Rule was due to take effect on July 15, 2025. However, the rule has been postponed for 60 days for further review. Its postponement is a direct result of many disability rights organizations and members of the public voicing their opposition to this rule. More than 20,000 comments were submitted against the rule. Because of the public opposition and the postponement, the Department is now required to review the comments submitted, which may prompt further evaluation or revision of the rule.

While the postponement is not a final withdrawal of this rule, it is important progress in protecting accessibility rights.

# **Advocacy Update**

On this week’s ACB Advocacy Update, Claire and [**Beyond Vision**](https://www.facebook.com/BeyondVisionWI?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZUMox8K7RBL-FYKyc-4cppYvpQk5TKBFlG0hOd8lkRMz91IqHlZ26OnIssNRfXo83UxHpQCpBD92bVA-IWmUG5jY0e72B82nQuFM46DopxGiLZ8WseNetXRg2_AO4iuLmoYga65V6-ZwFubPhfaiF7r_-AtWlrVIs2DxP24bLX54lqYBzqXGRcZHILW8nldQkc&__tn__=-%5dK-R) CEO Rob Buettner talk about their experiences at the 2025 [**VisionServe Alliance**](https://www.facebook.com/VisionServeAlliance?__cft__%5b0%5d=AZUMox8K7RBL-FYKyc-4cppYvpQk5TKBFlG0hOd8lkRMz91IqHlZ26OnIssNRfXo83UxHpQCpBD92bVA-IWmUG5jY0e72B82nQuFM46DopxGiLZ8WseNetXRg2_AO4iuLmoYga65V6-ZwFubPhfaiF7r_-AtWlrVIs2DxP24bLX54lqYBzqXGRcZHILW8nldQkc&__tn__=-%5dK-R) conference that was held in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Listen to the podcast at [**https://acb.org/advocacyupdate**](https://acb.org/advocacyupdate?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAYnJpZBEwbXFtYjJJektNNG9yWlh5agEenlxsFIkBpynWulbpToAZDkA1XCKDaAqrp34xOmo5Z5BVVEydYn0ZR6foAy0_aem_NN1_bTrQKSnbGi8NbPtp9g).

# **BITS Presents: The Mentoring Hour!**

Got tech questions? We’ve got answers! Whether you’re a novice or an expert, join Blind Information Technology Specialists (BITS) for The Mentoring Hour — your go-to community call for all things access technology.

We kick things off with listener-submitted questions (send yours to askbits@bits-acb.org), then open the floor for live discussion.

When? The 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month at 11 a.m. Eastern

Where? Streamed live on ACB Media 5 and available in Clubhouse

Bring your questions, we bring the answers!

Don’t miss this excellent opportunity to learn, share, and connect with the BITS community — because together, we make technology work for you!

# **AFB Names Migel Medal Honorees**

On June 30th, the American Foundation for the Blind announced the recipients of the 2025 Migel Medals. They are Dr. Bernadette Kappen and Lukas Franck!

The AFB Migel Medal was established in 1937 by the late M.C. Migel, AFB's first chairman, to honor professionals and volunteers whose dedication and achievements improve the lives of people who are blind or have low vision. This year’s honorees will be formally recognized during a special awards luncheon on November 13 at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, Virginia.

Read the complete press release at [**https://tinyurl.com/4vhuybra**](https://tinyurl.com/4vhuybra).

# **Workforce Engagement Survey**

* Are you between the ages of 18 and 65?
* Are you someone with blindness or low vision?
* Are you presently unemployed and not looking for work?
* Do you currently reside in the U.S. legally?

If you answered YES to these four questions, we invite you to the Workforce Engagement Survey.

We are an interdisciplinary research team comprising blind, low vision and typically sighted scientists affiliated with the Envision Research Institute and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. We are investigating strategies to enhance the labor force participation of working-age, legally blind Americans. Over 57% working-age Americans living with vision loss are unemployed and not seeking work. Why so many of them choose not to participate in the labor force is still a conundrum. To address this knowledge gap, we are conducting a nationwide survey of working age, legally blind adults who are unemployed and not seeking work about the deterrents, motivations, and outcomes of labor force participation. Findings of the survey will guide the development of research strategies, best practices, and programs to make the labor market more attractive and inclusive of Americans with vision loss.

If you have questions, contact Dr. Rakesh Babu at rakesh.babu@envisionus.com.

If you are interested in participating, complete the online form at the below link:
[**https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/59PQ6CX**](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/59PQ6CX)

Please complete the survey by this Friday, July 25th.

# **Looking for Accessible Beaches?**

A New Guide Reviewing Beach Accessibility on Martha's Vineyard has been released for the 2025 season! It reviews the accessibility all Island public beaches for people of all abilities. It includes many recent improvements ranging from parking to on-beach accessibility and other features that towns and other beach operators have made. It is designed for individuals with mobility and visual disabilities and the elderly, but it should universally benefit all beachgoers who bring their families as well as their gear to the beach.

This beach-by-beach profile can be viewed at <https://www.hamv.org/accessiblebeaches>. The guide was developed by the Beach within Reach Initiative, a coalition of Healthy Aging Martha's Vineyard, Dukes County Associate Commissioner for Disabilities, and by the regional Independent Living Center, Cape Organization for the Rights of the Disabled (CORD).