**The Equalizer: July 2025**

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* Press the right arrow to move your screen reader into the link.
* Press enter and the link will be activated.

If using JAWS, you can also use the list of links command insert F7 and then down arrow to the link and press enter and the link will activate. On some computers you may also be able to bring up the context menu when on a link by pressing Shift F10 or your applications key then down arrow to Open Link and press enter. To go back to the Table of Contents press the Alt Left Arrow command.

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# NEWS FROM NATIONAL

Dear Members and Friends,

As we move into summer, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible progress we’ve made together over the past two months. From advocacy work to internal improvements, AEBC has been active on many fronts. We received 25 scholarship applications this year, and our dedicated committee is carefully reviewing each one to select the final recipients. At the same time, nominations for Volunteer of the Year have been coming in, with a recipient to be announced at our September Annual General Meeting. Speaking of which, keep an eye on your in-box for our first call message coming in the next few days!

Our advocacy efforts continue to gain momentum. AEBC is actively engaging with federal leaders to ensure the voices of blind, Deafblind, and partially sighted Canadians are heard—particularly around the National Eye Care Strategy. We also shared findings from our election experience survey, which revealed both positive experiences and serious accessibility gaps in Canada’s voting system. On a related note, our advocacy committee is now our strongest yet, with 19 members and growing interest—thanks to the excellent outreach by Hilton and Marcia.

Internally, our organization has never been more focused. The governance committee completed major updates to our policy manual, and the board came together to finalize our niche and messaging framework—all a bold reflection of the team’s dedication and discipline. In late May, we wrapped up our 2024-25 report to our major funder (ESDC) with a long list of exceptional highlights and metrics. This period also saw a fantastic turnout for our virtual Ask Me Anything and Trivia Night, showcasing AEBC’s ability to bring people together across generations and regions. Meanwhile, our communications and social media engagement continue to grow steadily, building our presence and reinforcing our message nationwide.

Looking ahead, we’re preparing to publish AEBC Resource Guides, growing partnerships and positioning AEBC as a training and consulting leader, and diving into opportunities to influence transportation policy—beginning with VIA Rail’s 2026–2029 accessibility plan. We feel great confidence in better aligning our priorities with membership needs and being proactive with our efforts to serve while advocating to remove systemic barriers. None of this would be possible without your time, energy, and belief in our collective vision. Thank you for everything you do to build an AEBC that is not only growing in numbers, but in impact.

Marcia Yale, National President

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# CHAPTER/AFFILIATE HAPPENINGS

## BC AFFILIATE NEWS

From the West Coast and your BC Affiliate Connection:

The BC Affiliate held their annual General Meeting virtually on Saturday June 21, 2025, and I am pleased to report we had a great turnout. Our gathering began with David Brun who gave a presentation on artificial intelligence, what it means and how we can use the various tools available to enhance many things we do in our daily lives. It was good to see several AEBC members in attendance for the presentation. We will continue to explore this subject which seems to be on everyone’s minds, as there is so much information to share and explore. Stay tuned as we plan for future sessions on the subject of AI to happen soon.

**Highlights of the President’s report:**

Several members have been deeply involved in advocacy efforts this year, and for that I am extremely grateful. Whether you participated in focus groups, completed surveys to inform research, attended conferences to promote AEBC, or shared your expertise in meetings with other organizations, your contributions have not gone unnoticed. Many of you serve on national committees or engage in local advocacy work and your dedication is truly appreciated. Planning and executing events of any kind requires a collaborative effort, and we continue to welcome new ideas and volunteers for future activities. We remain committed to addressing key barriers faced by people who are blind, deafblind and partially sighted. Ongoing concerns such as the safety of floating bus stops, limited services for individuals who are deafblind due to funding constraints and persistent transportation issues especially with ride-hailing services are at the forefront of advocacy efforts by the BC Affiliate and remain a work in progress. If you haven’t yet found a way to get involved in this important work, I encourage you to consider how your voice and time could make a difference.

I would like to thank members who chose to let their name stand for elections. I recognize the time commitment required to serve on the executive is not always easy to manage. This year’s Executive remains unchanged as follows.

* President: Chantal Oakes
* Vice President: Betty Nobel
* Secretary: Peg Mercer
* Treasurer: Rita Dilek
* Directors: Louise Johnson, Lisa Lawson and Mary Brunner.

We’ll continue to keep you updated as we have more news to share.

Warmly, Chantal Oakes, President, BC Affiliate

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# FROM THE AEBC BLOG

Our blog has been very active the past couple of months, with new articles from our Writers’ Group and also guest submissions! If you missed out, you can still get caught up using the links below.

## National AccessAbility Week Articles

For National AccessAbility Week this year, we posted articles every day along with mythbusting trivia all week. If you missed any of the articles and posts, you can find them all linked on this page: <https://www.blindcanadians.ca/post/national-accessability-week-2025>

## Response to Alberta’s CDB Clawback

National Disability Network responds to Alberta's CDB clawback for AISH recipients. Read the letter here: <https://wix.to/PkLMW8O>

## Take Me Onto the Ball Field

Being born with one good eye made sports a challenge, but it never held me back! Discover a member's journey on the ball field and how he found his passion despite the odds. Read the story here: <https://wix.to/tldktjR>

## What is AI and how can I use it?

Explore the world of AI! Discover what artificial intelligence means for people who are blind and how you can utilize it in your daily life. Read it here: <https://wix.to/mVbIbfV>

## 40 Pounds of Salt

Ever felt like you're carrying the weight of the world on your shoulders? "40 Pounds of Salt" takes you on a personal journey that isn't solely about Ozempic. It's about real-life struggles and triumphs. Read it here: <https://wix.to/4u12V7S>

## AIRA and Alexa Rescue

A comical situation ensues when AIRA and Alexa team up to save the day—and maybe my sanity—when technology got a little too “smart”. Read guest writer Wendy's story here: [https://wix.to/HaV5D7M](https://wix.to/HaV5D7M?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAYnJpZBExbVM1MUJ0WXFONHZkMkszSgEeKw8xJxEWNbixYmuqbE68cLaZiPYNxEzesMUwlcB2OvHMO3OPdzg7gPPga7g_aem_yRxYgnZPEZrYYBlWCKna6g)

## AccessFest 2025: A Windswept Welcome

Just returned from AccessFest 2025 and it felt like home! Read about the highlights here: <https://wix.to/8a9cBUE>

## AEBC Members at Braille Literacy Canada

Join us in congratulating Betty Nobel, award winner of the 2025 Braille Literacy Canada's President’s Award! Discover her amazing contributions to braille literacy at <https://wix.to/gTAgDzQ> Also, During Braille Literacy Canada’s recent AGM, AEBC member Diana Brent was welcomed as a new director on their board.

## International Day of Deafblindness

June 27 is now officially recognized as International Day of Deafblindness!

Read the announcement and link to press release here: <https://wix.to/wxwwWEd>

## Advocacy in Thunder Bay

Read about Marcia Yale’s adventures, as she travels to Thunder Bay to explore meaningful advocacy efforts with local partners. <https://wix.to/JCv6qgX>

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# ADVOCACY NEWS

Our Advocacy Committee and AEBC National have been very busy over the past couple of months.

In May, our Advocacy Committee responded to the Accessibility Standards Canada draft standard on Accessible and Equitable AI Systems. The committee also submitted letters of support to newly appointed Ministers as well as submitted feedback to Elections Canada from our member voting survey.

Over May and June, Board members attended the Toronto Telecom Summit and gathered in Thunder Bay to help rebuild partnerships in the disability movement in Thunder Bay and Northwestern Ontario.

In early June, we communicated to our members the outcome of a number of strategic planning activities that reaffirmed the power of our lived experience and the collective strength of our community. The AEBC National Board identified four key advocacy priorities to guide our work moving forward:

1. Accessibility in healthcare
2. Accessibility in transportation
3. Adequate income support
4. Digital accessibility

We then reached out to members to get involved in one of the priority areas and had an amazing turnout of 19 total members at our last Advocacy meeting! There’s still time to get involved. Contact us if you’d like to join in on these important discussions.

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# WHAT WE ARE READING

[Applications open for Canada's new disability benefit program - CBC](https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-disability-benefit-program-applications-1.7567191)

[For Canadians with sight loss, a reimagined card helps restore independence](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/adv/article-for-canadians-with-sight-loss-a-reimagined-card-restores-independence/)

[Halifax's shared e-bike, scooter pilot causing some accessibility issues, say advocates](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/halifax-micromobility-pilot-accessibility-concerns-1.7556287)

[Saskatchewan Exempts the Canada Disability Benefit from Income Assistance Programs](https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2025/june/20/province-exempts-the-canada-disability-benefit-from-income-assistance-programs)

And something fantastic we spotted on YouTube

"Identity"—such a simple word for something so complex. In this powerful reflection, a blind creator explores how people see them only through the lens of blindness—while missing the many layers that make us who we truly are. Have you ever felt reduced to just one part of your identity? Watch now and see beyond the surface: [https://youtu.be/ZPvw2k9z1KM?si=DbhGurLd0qWDqT5q](https://youtu.be/ZPvw2k9z1KM?si=DbhGurLd0qWDqT5q&fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAYnJpZBExbHh1NWhEbXJsR2NJODZkdQEeXQzOloICmLHA4qigBl7ib20thY9-agjUx92VJtDwc5FPUMhr50TQ0aj4QfU_aem_yxJGj3E7NOteTHfnq0NNZQ)

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# UPCOMING AEBC EVENTS

## EVENTS CALENDAR

Check out our [**EVENTS CALENDAR**](https://www.blindcanadians.ca/post/events-calendar) for posted dates and links to information about events.

## CHAPTER/AFFILIATE CHATS

A recent testimonial from one of our new members! Be sure to join in on our chats which continue over the summer months!

*“Every week, I see there are Zoom meetings during Monday Morsels, but I’ve been a bit afraid to join. However, I tried joining last night and last Thursday—and it was a great experience! Everyone was so welcoming. I listened to your stories, and you listened to mine. I was shy at first, but it felt wonderful to connect with new friends from across the country. Thank you all for your support.”* Taha (Taylor) Al-Hammadi

**National Public Chats**: Join us every Friday at 4PM Pacific, 5PM Mountain, 7PM Eastern

**BC Affiliate Public Chats**: Join us Thursday Nights at 8 PM Pacific

**Halifax Mid-Week Meltdown**: Join us on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 8 PM Atlantic. The Halifax Meltdowns are open to anyone--both members and friends of AEBC. If you are not a member, please email us at halifaxchapter@blindcanadians.ca so we can send you information about the meltdowns.

## TRAINING & EVENT VIDEO REPLAYS

Missed one of our training or other events? There’s a good chance that you will find a video replay on our YouTube channel. Check it out and be sure to Subscribe to our channel and Like our videos!

[https://www.youtube.com/@blindcanadians](https://www.youtube.com/%40blindcanadians)

Also, be sure to check out the video replay of our Ask Me Anything & Trivia event held during National AccessAbility Week! [http://youtu.be/qry1rXYGHIM](https://youtu.be/qry1rXYGHIM?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAYnJpZBExMUkzRlU5ODhmRkRSQkFMWgEeYz_wI9FvteaMFvjH9YHGLI9eum7FAcjLySTwB2btbQsHwOi30dmLA6_nHRc_aem_eyXX7GLvbd9NWLB7jTEAUg)

## AEBC NATIONAL BOARD MEETING DATES 2025

Board meetings for 2025 will be held on the 4th Monday of every month with the exception of August. All meetings begin at 4 PM Pacific 7 PM Eastern. Members are welcome to attend all meetings--alternating attendance as observers and member mashup at the end of a meeting as follows:

July 28, 2025 – members as observers

August 2025 - no meeting

September 20, 2025 – Annual General Meeting – Notice coming soon!

# THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP WITH AEBC

Did you know that we have a lively members-only email discussion group? That members receive our weekly Monday Morsels e-newsletter (bi-weekly for the summer) that is chock full of resources and news geared specifically for our members? And that membership is only $10 a year!? Consider being a part of our AEBC family by joining today! [Visit our website for membership information HERE.](https://www.blindcanadians.ca/membership)

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**ALLIANCE FOR EQUALITY OF BLIND CANADIANS**

The Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians (AEBC) is a national charitable organization committed to empowering blind, partially sighted, and deafblind Canadians to lead a life filled with opportunity, inclusivity, and equality. We advocate, support, and strive to make the world a better place for everyone, regardless of their visual acuity. Together, we can create a brighter and more accessible future for all.

Visit our website at [www.blindcanadians.ca](http://www.blindcanadians.ca) and follow us on social media

Facebook: [@facebook/blindcanadians](https://www.facebook.com/blindcanadians)

Mastodon: [@blindcanadians](https://mastodon.social/%40blindcanadians)

YouTube: [@blindcanadians](https://www.youtube.com/%40blindcanadians)

Bluesky: [@blindcanadians.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/blindcanadians.bsky.social)

LinkedIn: [@alliance-for-equality-of-blind-canadians](https://www.linkedin.com/company/alliance-for-equality-of-blind-canadians)

We aim to bring you timely and informative news from the organization. We appreciate your feedback on our newsletter or submissions for consideration. Contact us at EMAIL Newsletter.

If you are interested in becoming more involved in our advocacy work or joining any of our working committees, please reach out to EMAIL ADVOCACY.

If you’re not already a member and would like to join, [Visit our website for more information HERE.](https://www.blindcanadians.ca/membership)

Did someone forward this newsletter to you? [Subscribe HERE to receive future issues.](https://www.blindcanadians.ca/equalizer)

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