

Hello AAVL Members, ACB Members, and Friends,

The Alliance on Aging and Vision Loss (AAVL), a special interest affiliate of the American Council of the Blind (ACB) is developing a project to learn more about the Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) — how they are the same, and how they are different across the country. Since very few of us know what AAAs are and what they do, it is quite possible that many, if not most, AAA's know very little about... us, and therefore, seniors who are blind or have low vision are not benefitting from the services and programs AAAs administer or fund.

As well as finding out more information about what AAAs do, other goals we have in mind are:

- Create more awareness of the specific needs of seniors who are blind or have low vision,
- Create more outreach and communication between AAAs and seniors with vision loss,
- Create or adjust AAA programs and services to ensure inclusion of seniors with vision loss,
- Lessen institutionalization of low vision/blind seniors
- Give blind/low vision seniors more opportunity to influence AAA service provision
- Give people like you around the country the opportunity to advocate for the vision loss community
- And maybe even have some new folks join AAVL/ACB.

## **How You Can Help**

We have a questionnaire we hope you will fill out with a AAA Director or knowledgeable staffer, and return the information to us. Then, we hope you will stay in touch with the AAA to help them implement programs and services equitably to the blindness community, and maintain the new relationship. We also hope you will become a liaison between the AAA and the blind/low vision seniors in your communities. You don't have to do all this alone! The more people you can involve, the better.

## **We'll Be There With You**

If there's one thing the last year has taught us, it is that we can stay in communication — one way or another! Plans for followup information sharing is not finalized yet, but we anticipate periodic get togethers so we can learn from you, and we can all learn from one another. This means sharing AAA services, but it may also mean advocacy training, and other benefits.

## **Next Steps**

Please, either:

Watch the podcast: <https://pnc.st/s/acb-events/325760ad/aavl-and-area-agencies-on-aging-aaa-april-11-2021> or,

Read the \* AAA Project Detailed Instructions document which will give a detailed look at how this will work, and a little training to help you feel more comfortable meeting with the AAA Director. \* Choose a link below to download the AAA Project Detailed Instructions document in your preferred format.

Then, once you have sent us your contact information showing your intention to participate, we will send you the Sample cover Letter you can personalize before sending it on to the AAA Director in your area, and the questionnaire you will be completing with him/her.

Thank you for your interest and efforts on behalf of seniors who are or will be low vision/blind across the country.