

CANADIAN COUNCIL
OF THE BLIND



LE CONSEIL CANADIEN
DES AVEUGLES

2024 Impact Report



CELEBRATING



1944-2024

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Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on 2024, it's impossible not to feel a deep sense of gratitude and pride for all that we've accomplished together. This year marked an extraordinary milestone - 80 years of the Canadian Council of the Blind being *The Voice of the Blind* in Canada. It's a legacy built on advocacy, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to the community we represent and serve.

Throughout our 80 year history, the CCB has been at the forefront of advocating for change and providing essential programs and services to our community. We celebrated this rich history with a special edition of White Cane Magazine, highlighting the stories, achievements, and resilience that have shaped who we are today.

2024 was also a landmark year for eye health in Canada, with the passage of Bill C-284, which established a national strategy for eye care. This significant victory for vision health was only possible because of years of tireless advocacy and the invaluable support of partners, members, and donors like you. The work ahead is just as important as the progress we've made, and the CCB is committed to ensuring that this strategy is fully implemented and continues to reflect the needs and desires of our community.

Every achievement we celebrate is a testament to the power of collaboration and the strength of our shared vision. Whether through the Get Together with Technology (GTT) program, our ongoing advocacy efforts, or the many events and initiatives that connect and empower those living with sight loss, your support is at the heart of everything we do.

Together, we are building a future where every Canadian living with vision loss can thrive. Thank you for being an integral part of our journey and for standing with us as we continue to advocate, innovate, and lead.

With gratitude and best wishes,

Jim Tokos
Board President
Canadian Council of the Blind



2024 was a significant milestone for the Canadian Council for the Blind (CCB) as we celebrated 80 years of being the Voice of the Blind(TM) in Canada. Over the many years, we have made a tremendous impact through our commitment to education, awareness, research, and advocacy.

Our important history began eight decades ago in Toronto, where ten individuals living with sight loss came together to form the Inter-Provincial Council of the Blind in 1944. This initiative eventually evolved into the CCB in 1946.

What sets us apart from similar organizations is our undeniable unique identity. Our National Board consists solely of blind or partially sighted individuals, ensuring our focus remains on genuinely representing the blind community.

Over the years, the CCB has led organizing groups centred around recreation, advocacy, and research pertinent to those with sight loss. Much of this work has been dedicated to advocacy, which is crucial in influencing eye health care, research, and treatment options.

In the Summer of 2024, the CCB published a special edition of the White Cane Magazine titled "Celebrating 80 Years: The Commemorative 80th Anniversary Edition." This edition reflects on the rich history and contributions of the Canadian Council for the Blind, celebrating its legacy while looking forward to a future of continued advocacy and support for the blind community.



Bill C-284

Advancing Eye Health in Canada

The Canadian Council of the Blind (CCB) is proud to celebrate a historic milestone for vision health in Canada—Bill C-284, the Act to establish a national strategy for eye care, has officially received royal assent. This landmark legislation is a pivotal step toward ensuring that all Canadians have access to comprehensive, equitable, and preventative eye care. For the more than 1.2 million Canadians living with vision loss and the millions more at risk of developing eye disease, this legislation represents hope, progress, and the promise of a future where blindness is no longer an inevitable outcome.

The passage of Bill C-284 is the result of years of tireless advocacy. The CCB, alongside other vision health organizations, worked relentlessly to bring national attention to the urgent need for a coordinated approach to eye care. We met with policymakers, engaged healthcare professionals, and most importantly, amplified the voices of those directly impacted by vision loss. But none of this would have been possible without the unwavering support of our donors and partners. Your contributions enabled us to lead these efforts, ensuring that eye health remains a national priority.

With the bill now enshrined in law, our work is far from over—it is only just beginning. The real challenge lies ahead as we move from advocacy to action. Bill C-284 mandates the development and implementation of a National Eye Care Strategy, which will focus on:

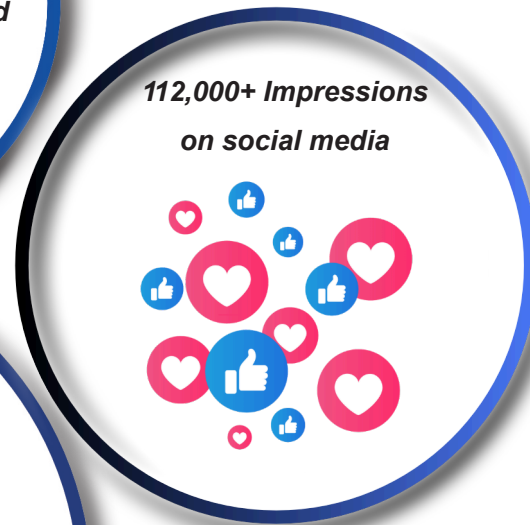
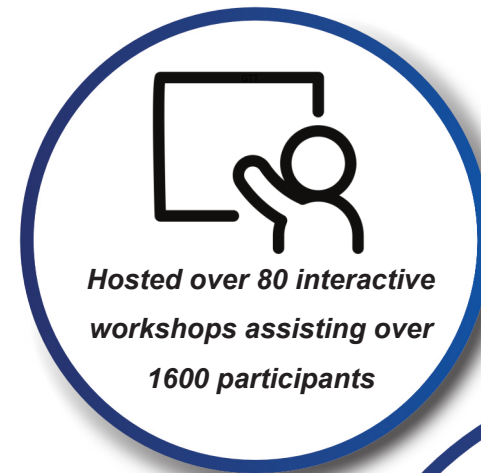
- Improving access to vision care across all provinces and territories.
- Enhancing early detection and treatment of eye diseases.
- Strengthening research and innovation in vision health to drive better treatments and policies.
- Reducing barriers to healthcare access for marginalized communities.

While Bill C-284 provides the legislative foundation, its success depends on how effectively the strategy is developed and executed. The CCB is committed to being at the table every step of the way, ensuring that the voices of those living with vision loss are heard. Our advocacy will now focus on ensuring that the National Eye Care Strategy is fully funded, equitably implemented, and reflective of the needs of our community. We will continue to hold decision-makers accountable, push for meaningful policy changes, and advocate for accessible healthcare services that improve quality of life.

This is a new chapter in our advocacy, not the end of it. We have achieved a significant victory, but there is still much to be done. With your continued support, we will work toward a future where no Canadian has to navigate vision loss without access to proper care and resources.

Thank you for standing with us in this fight. Together, we are not just envisioning a future with better eye care—we are making it a reality.

CCB By the Numbers





Events

White Cane Week, Vision Health Month, & Report on Vision

2024 was an exciting year for the Canadian Council of the Blind (CCB), highlighted by the celebration of White Cane Week, Vision Health Month, and the release of the latest Report on Vision. These initiatives focused on raising awareness, advancing vision health advocacy, and celebrating the resilience and accomplishments of Canadians living with vision loss.

White Cane Week in February brought together CCB chapters across the country for a diverse range of events that emphasized the abilities—not disabilities—of those with vision loss. From open houses and guided walks to community-building activities like media-sponsored bowling events, these activities provided opportunities for the public to learn more about vision loss while fostering community connection. Highlights included an obstacle course hosted by the Chatham-Kent Chapter to raise awareness of local services, a spirited bowling match between the Kamloops Chapter and City Council, and webinars by the BC-Yukon Division on eye health resources.

Vision Health Month in May featured the annual Vision Health Conference in Ottawa, focusing on the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in vision care and accessibility. Attendees were treated to presentations from experts like Dr. Jutta Treviranus, who explored the future of AI in assistive technology, and Dr. Delan Jinapriya, who

discussed how AI is transforming the diagnosis and treatment of eye diseases like glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, and macular degeneration. The conference ended with a Gathering of Stakeholders Dinner, bringing together leaders from the vision health community, government, and advocacy groups for an evening of dialogue and shared commitment to improving vision care across Canada.

The Report on Vision Health in Canada served as a call to action, highlighting the ongoing challenges in vision health services post-pandemic and the growing need for a national strategy. With your support, the CCB continues to advocate for better access to eye care, early detection initiatives, and the approval of innovative treatments that can improve the lives of thousands of Canadians. Together, we're working toward a future where no one faces vision loss alone.

Community Events

The Canadian Council of the Blind (CCB) is all about building a strong community for people who are blind or have sight loss. We organize various events that raise awareness and give essential resources and support. These gatherings are important for education, networking, and fundraising, helping us sustain crucial programs that make a real difference in our communities.

Empowering Seniors

Thanks to the Seniors Community Grant from the Government of Ontario, we've held 84 interactive workshops aimed at helping seniors understand technology and accessibility features. Topics like using Siri, voice commands, and screen readers have been covered, and 1,624 participants, primarily seniors, have walked away with helpful insights on cyber safety and how to use accessibility tools effectively.

In addition to workshops, we connected with seniors at four major events, including those at retirement

homes and the Fifty-Five Plus Lifestyle Show, distributing over 1,000 resources that aid those experiencing sight loss.

Eye Care for All

CCB emphasized our commitment to inclusion this year by actively supporting the LGBTQ+ community. While we continue our advocacy for the visually impaired, we also focus on ensuring everyone can access eye care.

A highlight of our efforts was our participation in the Capital Pride Parade, where we shared information about the CCB and showed our support for the LGBTQ+ and visually impaired communities.

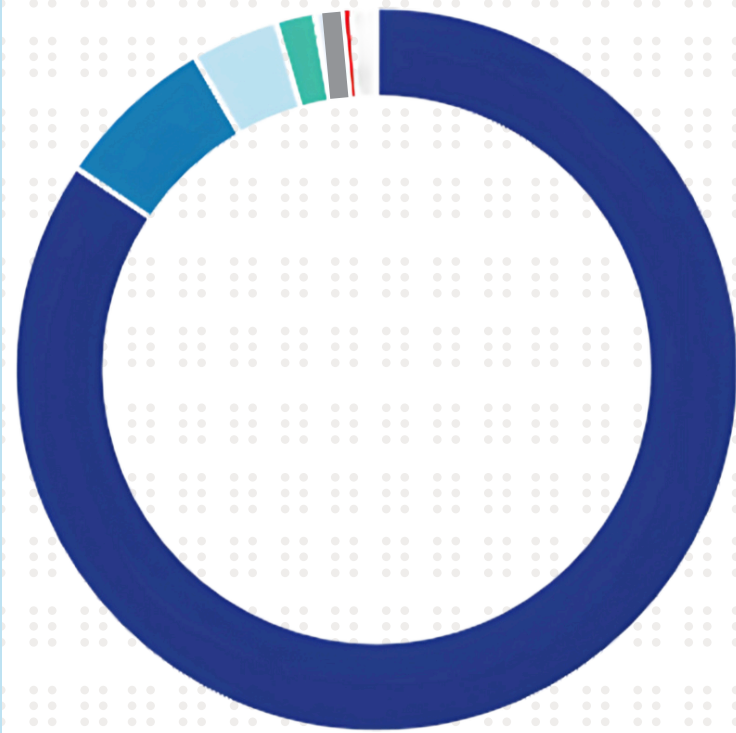
Chapter Involvement

With chapters all across Canada, various community initiatives exist, from community dinners and sports events to reading clubs, which cater to the different needs of visually impaired individuals. With over X chapters, the CCB chapters held over X community events. CCB chapters and the national organization hosted over 300 events, making for an impactful and exciting year. These events included:

- Ski outings
- Information displays
- Book clubs
- Accessible cinema showings
- Bowling events
- And much more!



Financial Data



CCB's Funding Sources

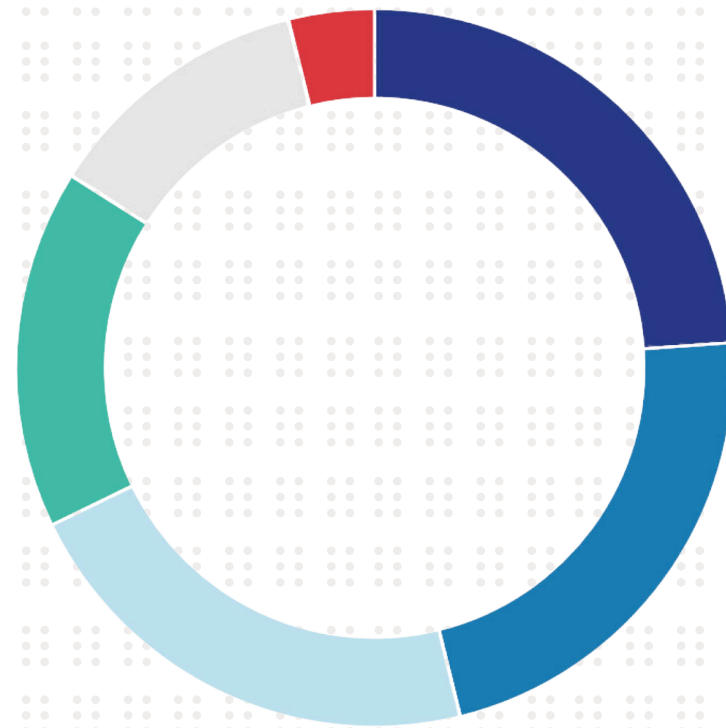
- ● Individual Donations
- ● Corporate Partners
- ● Other Fundraising
- ● Eye Health Program
- ● Investments
- ● Membership Fees
- ○ Miscellaneous

Individual donations are a crucial source of funding for the CCB, and have allowed us to offer our programming and services to the blind and low vision community for over 80 years.

CCB's Program Spending

The CCB spends every dollar donated to the organization responsibly and with purpose. Our most recent financial statements are available online at: ccbnational.net/about-us. Our financial statements are audited by KPMG in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards.

- ● Chapter Support
- ● Skills & Training Development
- ● Eye Health & Future Vision
- ● White Cane Events
- ● Public Education & Awareness
- ● Accessibility & Advocacy



The Impact of Your Support

Ed Lada

GTT Member & Sr. Methods Engineer

I was born with retrolental fibroplasia (RLF) and always had poor eyesight. At the age of 60, I became a member of the CNIB. I did try to learn how to deal with my vision loss on my own for about 6 years, but was not making a lot of progress. At the age of 66 we moved to a new farm in Port Perry and I reached out to the CNIB and met up with Jill Tanaka a specialist in independent living skills. She put me in touch with the Canadian Council of the Blind (CCB) and the Get Together with Technology (GTT) program. This started my journey into JAWS screen reader training and the wonderful support from David Greene and other GTT members.

Learning JAWS was a challenge. I kept trying to use what little vision I had but after a few minutes, there was just too much eyestrain. To help with this, David and the GTT introduced me to the screen Curtin. No way to cheat, I had to learn the keyboard. David was very patient and week after week, I kept learning how to use my computer and JAWS. Today I am still able to work part-time as faculty in the Aerospace Program at Centennial College. This has been made possible because of the support I received from the Get Together with Technology program.

The weekly meetings I attend through the GTT group are invaluable to me. Not only do I learn about assistive technology but the other life skills discussed are an added bonus. Where else can you learn how to walk with your spouse in a crowded Walmart and how to use an iPhone? Please do let all the staff know how much their work is appreciated and how the support and feedback from other blind members is so invaluable to me and all the other participants.

The CCB GTT Program is a national training and support program that facilitates increased independence with the help of efficiently-utilized accessible technology



Because of donors like you the Get Together with Technology program is able to continue to serve the low vision community and help those experiencing vision loss navigate our ever changing digital world.



**Awareness
Collaboration
Prevention**

**The Voice of the
Blind in Canada**

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DONATE TODAY!



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