

## ILLINOIS AER Mail – Winter 2021

Greetings Illinois AER Members and Happy Spring!

I hope you are all doing well! It is hard to believe that it has now been over a year since we saw our last “normal” days as we knew them. To say that I missed gathering together and seeing you all for our annual conference is an understatement.

What this past year has taught me is to be grateful and thankful for those around us. I want to take the time now to thank Amy Lund and Diane Tyrrell for all the hard work they have put in to ensure Illinois AER continues to grow through professional development opportunities. Because of their work, people will be able to join webinars throughout the months of March and April to help further their knowledge in the field of visual impairments.

I want to thank Lauren Mehalek for continuing to put together our newsletters to help keep our chapter informed. I also want to thank the whole Illinois AER board for continuing to take on their rolls as we continue to move forward as a chapter and one day be back in person. And I want to thank you, the members for your ongoing support of Illinois AER, sharing your questions and ideas, and recruiting others by helping spread the word about this wonderful field.

I hope this time next year we will have all just met in person at our conference so I can thank you all in person!

Take care,

Jennifer Duncan  
Illinois AER President

### IAER Treasurer Report February 11, 2021

Jasmine Wells

December 1, 2020-February 10, 2021

#### Bal Fwd Checking 76,541.82

#### Income

AER Quarterly Rebate	214.70
<b>TOTAL Income</b>	<b>214.70</b>

#### Expenses

Scholarship recipients	1,500.00
Awards	167.09
<b>TOTAL Expenses</b>	<b>1,667.09</b>

<b>Ending Balance</b>	<b>75,089.43</b>	<b>02/10/2021</b>
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## IAER Board Members

**President:**

Jennifer Duncan  
[duncanj@d62.org](mailto:duncanj@d62.org)

**Secretary:**

Maura Guimon-Warren  
[mguimonwarren@naperville203.org](mailto:mguimonwarren@naperville203.org)

**Members-at-Large:**

Elizabeth Abelson Budzik-[budzike@d62.org](mailto:budzike@d62.org)  
Dayna Brzezowski- [dagrism@gmail.com](mailto:dagrism@gmail.com)  
Sara Edwards- [loveisblind@gmail.com](mailto:loveisblind@gmail.com)  
Kathryn King- [kkin2458@gmail.com](mailto:kkin2458@gmail.com)  
Lauren Mehalek- [lauren.mehalek@gmail.com](mailto:lauren.mehalek@gmail.com)  
Molly Pasley- [mollyclesen@gmail.com](mailto:mollyclesen@gmail.com)

**President Elect:**

Diane Tyrell  
[dtyrrell@thenia.org](mailto:dtyrrell@thenia.org)

**Treasurer:**

Jasmine Wells  
[jasmine.wells@illinois.gov](mailto:jasmine.wells@illinois.gov)

**Past President:**

Amy Lund  
[brailledund@gmail.com](mailto:brailledund@gmail.com)

## Committee Reports

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### IVLC Advocacy Committee



#### **Spring 2021**

The Illinois Vision Leadership Council (IVLC) is a statewide unified group of leaders, within the field of low vision blindness, dedicated to empower educators in the implementation of best practice in order to maximize the potential of students with visual impairments. The focus of IVLC during the 2020-2021 school year has been to continue to explore best practices for remote learning in the field of low vision and blindness as well as support recruitment needs.

There is currently a shortage of vision professionals available to provide services for children and adults who are visually impaired. If you know a high school student, college student, or anyone thinking of changing their career, please share the [WhyEyeTeach webpage](#) and help get the word out about this great field!

If you are interested in attending future IVLC meetings, please email Lisa Tabaka ([ltabaka@ilstu.edu](mailto:ltabaka@ilstu.edu)) or Molly Dunne ([mdunne@nsseo.org](mailto:mdunne@nsseo.org)).

The Illinois Vision Leadership Council's recruitment committee, "WhyEyeTeach", is continuing to spread awareness and helping recruit people into the field! In addition, WhyEyeTeach is now also spreading the word

of current job openings. If you know of any job openings, please Email [WhyEyeTeach@Gmail.com](mailto:WhyEyeTeach@Gmail.com) to have it posted onto our website at [www.whyeyeteach.info](http://www.whyeyeteach.info) under the job openings tab.

If you are submitting a job posting, please make sure it is accessible and title the file with details of the job opening such as name, location, or any other identifying information to help organize the folder when people are searching on the WhyEyeTeach website.

We can't do it alone! How can you help? If you know of any high school students, college students, or anyone looking to change their careers, please spread the word about this great field! Ways to spread the word include going to your districts or agencies on career days, speaking to neighbors, families, or friends who are interested in a new career path, or by sharing our information on social media.

Follow, share, and contact us...

Website- [www.WhyEyeTeach.info](http://www.WhyEyeTeach.info)

Email- [WhyEyeTeach@Gmail.com](mailto:WhyEyeTeach@Gmail.com)

Facebook- [WhyEyeTeach: IVLC Recruitment Committee](#)

Twitter- [WhyEyeTeach](#)

Instagram- [WhyEyeTeach](#)

While you're there use the hashtag #WhyEyeTeach and tell us why you are a vision professional or what you love most about your job!

### Early Intervention Survey

Are you a past or current early intervention provider?

To help compile a list of DT-V & DT-O&M providers in Illinois, please fill out the survey located at <https://tinyurl.com/DTVOMSurvey>. Please only complete this survey if you have not yet responded to the survey that was recently sent out via email.

The results of this survey will only be shared with current vision evaluators to help them contact providers with potential families in need of services.

Thank you!

### Mini Grants/Stipends

Greetings IAER Members!

Available funds running low for professional development opportunities? How about implementing the programs your students/clients need? Well IAER is here to help!

Members are **each** allotted \$100 awards for use toward IAER conference expenses and \$200 awards to **national and international** conferences (e.g. ICEVI, International AER, CEC, AFB, APH, etc.)! This is a great way

to offset the rising cost of hotel stays, food, and registration and is one of the benefits of joining AER! We have **\$2000 available** for conference expenses!

We still have \$2000 available in mini-grant funds! Priority is given to new and innovative programs but **please don't let this discourage you from sending in an application!** We have ample money for mini-grants, even if you have applied for a specific program in the past. As a member, you can use this money for planning quality programs for students, clients, and families.

Last, but not least, the Volunteer Direct Service grant is available for this fiscal year. If you or someone you know is traveling to provide services or programming in another country or area of the USA, please apply for this grant! More information is available at <https://aerbvi.org/about/chapters/illinois/>

If you have any questions, please see the contact information below.

Email: [mollyclesen@gmail.com](mailto:mollyclesen@gmail.com)

Address:

Molly Pasley  
300 High Oak Dr.  
East Peoria, IL 61611

Molly Pasley  
IAER Mini-Grant/Stipend/Volunteer Service Grant Chair

## Resource Updates

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### Chicago Lighthouse for the Blind Transition

We are excited to offer our youth summer opportunities that are both virtual and in-person.

- The First Jobs Program will begin with a virtual training week June 28-July 1 followed by 5 weeks of paid internship
- The Summer in the City Virtual program will be completely virtual July 18-23. There will be art classes, city tours, fitness classes, technology, theater games, cooking and much more!
- The Summer in the City in-person program August 8-13 will provide many wonderful experiences travelling on foot/bus/train throughout the city of Chicago. There will be art classes, city tours, fitness, technology, theater games, cooking and much more!
- Photography for All is only available to CPS students at this time. This will be a combination of virtual and in-person learning. The first training week will be virtual. Youth will be taught by Apple engineers in the use of accessibility features and editing software. Photos will be taken using iPads (provided) and final work will be shared in showcases. Students will travel throughout the city to take photographs.

Here are the links to the new event pages with the registration form buttons:

<https://chicagolighthouse.org/event/first-jobs-program-2021/>

<https://chicagolighthouse.org/event/summer-in-the-city-2021-virtual/>

<https://chicagolighthouse.org/event/summer-in-the-city-session-2/>

<https://chicagolighthouse.org/event/photography-for-all/>

For additional information, please contact

Shelle Hamer, M.Ed., MA

Director of Youth Transition Programs | The Chicago Lighthouse North

Cell Phone: 847.508.0600

[shelle.hamer@chicagolighthouse.org](mailto:shelle.hamer@chicagolighthouse.org)

## Northern Illinois University Update

### **Northern Illinois University Visual Disabilities Program Update**

Please see our national advertisement below and share widely with your networks.

**Training for a Rewarding Career  
Generous Student Financial Assistance**

**Teaching Adults who are Blind or Visually Impaired and Providing Orientation and Mobility Services  
for Those Adults**

**AND**

**Teaching Children who are Blind or Visually Impaired, Providing Orientation and Mobility Services for  
Those Children, and/or Specializing in Assistive Technology for Children who are Blind or Visually  
Impaired**

Northern Illinois University (DeKalb, Illinois) offers a nationally regarded program at the graduate level for individuals who wish to join a rewarding career in teaching children or adults who are blind or visually impaired as a teacher of students with visual impairments, orientation and mobility instructor, or assistive technology specialist for children with visual impairments or a vision rehabilitation therapist for adults who are visually impaired. There is an overwhelming need for professionals who specialize in instruction for people who are visually impaired. As a consequence, there are many job opportunities in all regions of the United States. Individuals who choose this career path can anticipate having no difficulty obtaining life-long employment with great job security! In addition to numerous job opportunities, good pay, and excellent job security, individuals who choose this career path experience a sense of fulfillment not commonly found in other careers. These professionals play a significant role in the lives of children who are visually impaired, adults who are visually impaired, and their families.

Generous student financial assistance is available. We will pay all in-state or out-of-state tuition, all fees, health insurance, and a stipend of \$5,520 per calendar year for qualified individuals who wish to come to Northern

Illinois University to enroll in the Visual Disabilities Graduate Program focusing on special education for children who are blind or visually impaired with an additional emphasis in assistive technology.

**For more information, go to the following YouTube link:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUfWnBbNZMg>

**And, the following webpage:**

<https://www.cedu.niu.edu/seed/graduate-programs/masters-visual-disabilities.shtml>

**Interested individuals can contact the Project Director, Stacy Kelly, at the following e-mail:**

[skelly@niu.edu](mailto:skelly@niu.edu)

Or by calling 815-753-4103

Admissions requirements are as follows:

Online application

GRE scores of 30%tile verbal and 30%tile quantitative

Official transcripts of all previous academic work

GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale

ACT score of 22 or successful completion of the Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP)

Two letters of recommendation

Personal statement

The direct link to the online application can be found on the page,

<https://www.niu.edu/grad/admissions/apply-now.shtml>.

Students progress through the program in cohorts. Each cohort begins in the fall of each academic year. The generous financial assistance is awarded on a first come, first served basis to qualified applicants. Be sure to notify Stacy Kelly ([skelly@niu.edu](mailto:skelly@niu.edu)) of your intent to apply to ensure that your name is included in the pool of candidates!