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For Immediate Release

## **APH Secures \$10 Million Grant to Advance Employment Opportunities Using the Monarch for Individuals who are Blind or Low Vision**

**Louisville, KY (January 9, 2025)** – American Printing House for the Blind (APH) is pleased to announce it is the recipient of a five-year, \$10 million federal grant from the Department of Education. This is the largest grant APH has received in its 166-year history. APH is one of 27 grant recipients awarded under the most recent Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) program. The DIF Program focuses on preparing individuals for competitive, integrated employment, enabling youth and adults with disabilities to be paid fair wages while gaining employment in some of today’s most in-demand fields.

In September 2024, APH introduced the Monarch, a groundbreaking, assistive technology braille device that renders tactile graphics integrated with braille on the first-of-its-kind multiline display. Braille access has long been recognized as critical for individuals who are blind, low vision or deafblind in achieving and maintaining competitive integrated employment. This project, known as Monarch RISE: Resources for Inclusion, Skills, and Employment, will evaluate the effectiveness of the Monarch in supporting competitive integrated employment and identify targeted improvements for future advancements in technologies that support braille and tactile graphics. Empowered by the DIF grant, APH will distribute 250 Monarchs to employment and educational professionals and individuals seeking competitive integrated employment who are blind or low vision across the United States. [Learn about the Monarch.](#)

“This grant gives us the opportunity to test how our new, innovative braille and tactile graphics technology will create access to gainful employment for individuals who are blind, low vision, or deafblind,” said Paul Schroeder, Vice President of Impact and Outreach. “With this grant, we can demonstrate how the Monarch will provide the support for young adults to pursue higher education and rewarding careers through the power of ready access to braille and tactile graphics.”

Monarch RISE’s five-year grant will:

- Evaluate the current effectiveness of the Monarch in advancing employment.
- Draft proposals for targeted improvements of the Monarch prioritizing optimization within an employment context.

- Develop and launch an innovative app for the Monarch to better meet individuals' employment needs.
- Support individuals in exploring, achieving, and maintaining competitive integrated employment empowered by the Monarch and innovative training.

APH's goal is to break barriers and broaden access for employment and education for individuals who are blind or low vision. APH is working to create a 21st century workforce of people with disabilities through innovative applications of advanced braille technology like the Monarch.

Email questions to [RISE@aph.org](mailto:RISE@aph.org).

[Learn more about 84.421F: DIF - Creating a 21st Century Workforce of Youth and Adults with Disabilities Through the Transformation of Education, Career, and Competitive Integrated Employment](#)

### **About American Printing House for the Blind**

American Printing House for the Blind is a worldwide leader in designing innovative lifelong learning solutions for children and adults who are blind or low vision. In this fast-changing world, we believe in the power and necessity of learning to open the doors to educational success, satisfying employment, social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal well-being. We level the learning playing field by providing specialized technology, materials, products, and services that are essential for education and life. American Printing House for the Blind is headquartered at 1839 Frankfort Avenue in Louisville, Kentucky. For more information, please [visit the APH website](#).

### **Additional Information**

The contents of this release were developed under grant number H21F240052 from the Department of Education. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. (Authority: 20 U.S.C. §§ 1221e-3 and 3474). 100% of the total costs of APH's DIF-F project will be financed by the \$10 million grant. No percentage of the total costs of the project will be financed by non-governmental sources.