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Service to Individuals with Disabilities

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I. Washington County Library resources:**a. Staff trained to serve individuals with disabilities**

Staff training for service to patrons with disabilities will be provided one-on-one during initial orientation, at Branch staff meetings, at WCL sponsored workshops and at workshops offered outside the library system. If you have any questions about library service for individuals with disabilities, please bring them to your Library Manager or supervisor.

b. Most WCL buildings are handicapped accessible; if a user has special needs, call the branch to verify level of accessibility.**c. Collection (Search in the catalog: Any keyword)**

Books on tapes and CDs

Popular with all library patrons, books on tapes and CDs cover a range of fiction titles as well as various nonfiction topics.

Large Print materials

Large print books and other publications use large type and increased spacing between lines to make the print easier to read.

d. Adaptive equipment****Arkenstone Reading Machine (RH Stafford Branch Library)**

A "reading machine," by Arkenstone, is available at the RH Stafford Branch Library. The library user places a book on the scanner, which scans the material, and reads print aloud. The user can listen to the text as it is read. Instructions on how to operate the system are available in a variety of formats, including print, Braille, and audiotape. Headphones let the user listen in private. A color monitor allows people with very low vision to follow the printed word as it is being spoken by the machine. For someone having difficulty learning to read, the pace of the "speaking" can be slowed down and the screen will highlight each individual word as it is spoken, to allow the reader to follow along. The reading machine can create an audiocassette for the user to take home. (The library user provides a blank audiocassette.) This equipment is also called "Arkenstone Open Book."

Electronic Print Magnifier (Park Grove Branch Library)

A machine that electronically enlarges print and visual images in library materials. The magnifier can also aid customers with their personal needs: writing letters or checks, reading bills or letters, enjoying photos, reading prescriptions on bottles. Magnifies a printed page up to 60 times its original size and projects it on a large TV screen.

Pocketalker**All branches.**

A portable device that can be worn by someone who has difficulty hearing. A microphone amplifies speech so that the person can hear what is being said. The small device can help someone ask a question or enable a child to take part in a storytime.

Magnifying lens, handheld**All branches.**

A hand-held magnifier enables people to enlarge and read print materials in the library.

** In each library, a designated person is in charge of the special equipment, trains staff members on use, troubleshoots when there are problems, and keeps supplies and signage up to date. Please contact the Community Relations Librarian at Washington County Library administrative offices when there are equipment problems you can't solve.

e. Signs to aid/inform individuals with disabilities

- Braille signs in all county library buildings mark room locations. (OA, PG, RH Stafford, WW)
- Informational signs in all libraries let users know about service for individuals with disabilities. (See examples.)

f. Signers will be provided for library-sponsored programs, upon request.

Please call the Community Relations Librarian if you receive a request for a signer: 651-275-8521.

g. Homebound Service

Library materials are delivered and picked up by a library volunteer on a mutually agreed upon schedule at no charge to patron. Washington County residents who have difficulty getting to the library are eligible.

Library loans, renewals, holds and overdues are in the client's name. Clients are notified by phone, email or mail if an item is waiting for them at the library. The client then notifies his/her volunteer. Upon request, library staff members assist volunteers in locating materials that meet the homebound client's needs. Occasionally a client or volunteer phones the library and asks staff to gather specific materials for a volunteer to pick up. At checkout, a volunteer says, "I'm a homebound volunteer borrowing these for {name of client}." Library staff member brings up the name of the homebound individual and loans the items.

Homebound service publicity includes bookmarks and posters found in branch libraries. Posters and bookmarks can also be used in library displays at community events, and at the Washington County Government Center. News releases are sent to newspapers from time to time.

If someone volunteers for Homebound Service, please forward their name and phone number to the Community Relations Librarian, 651-275-8521. The Community Relations Librarian: 1)Phones the volunteer; 2)Adds to the Homebound master list (computer database) their name, address, phone(s), cities willing to serve; 3)Explains how service works; 4)May match up volunteer with a client who is waiting for homebound service, or may say, "At the moment, we don't have any requests for volunteer service, but its always nice to have a list of volunteers to choose from. We will add your name to the list of volunteers and will call you when we need your help. Thank you for volunteering!"

If someone requests Homebound Service, please forward his/her name and phone number to the Community Relations Librarian, 651-275-8521. Community Relations Librarian does the following: 1) Interviews client by phone; writes library resource preferences on Homebound Record. 2) Matches client with volunteer (geographically), or if there are no volunteers, may involve putting up signs in a branch(es) asking for a volunteer. Phones volunteer and explains service. 3) Writes the match in Client and Volunteer sections of Homebound notebook. 4) Adds Block to client's record in WCL

database, with name of Homebound volunteer and the status of the informed consent form for the client. 5) Sends written confirmation to client, volunteer, branch manager (Sample forms in appendix.). 6) Sends client a library card, if needed. 7) Phones client and volunteer in about a month to see if service is working well for both people.

The Homebound Volunteer arranges a schedule convenient with client, tells library staff the client's name when checking-out, delivers and picks up library materials for client, and notifies Community Relations Librarian of questions or a wish to discontinue volunteering.

The Homebound Client receives service, phones volunteer as needed, phones Community Relations Librarian if any questions or wishes to discontinue service.

h. Special Request for Accommodation

Persons wishing to use the services of Washington County Library, and all County Departments, may make a special request for accommodation by filling in the form: "Public Request for Accommodation."

How to respond to a patron request for a special accommodation:	
Patron	Indicates to staff member that he/she is unable to make use of the library because of a disability
Manager	Speaks with patron, by phone or in person, to assess the specific needs of the individual. Asks patron to fill out form: "Public Request For Accommodation"
Patron	Fills out form, and returns to the library.
Manager	Resolves; or if unable to resolve locally, forwards to Deputy Director.

II. Other resources

- **The Communication Center** The Communication Center of State Services for the Blind is a special library and transcription service providing reading material in alternate formats to citizens of Minnesota who have difficulty reading normal print. This provides them with the

tools needed to enrich their lives and gain personal independence through access to information.

For a detailed description of their services, go to the **Minnesota State Services for the Blind** website (<http://www.mnssb.org/>) Click on **Communication Center**.

- **Minnesota Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped** (1-800-722-0550)
Provides books on tape and books in Braille -- free of charge, to those who qualify.

--Application form is available via the Internet: <http://www.loc.gov/nls/pdf/index.html>

--To check the online catalog of the Minnesota Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped: <telnet://lbph.lib.mn.us> (Works at WCL.)

Some web browsers do not support a telnet connection. If you cannot connect using this address, use the Run command located on the Start menu. At the prompt, type the numerical address: <telnet://156.99.133.190>. Click OK. The catalog prompts you for a username and then for a password. Type OPAC for the two prompts. This allows anyone to view the catalog. Online help screens are available. You must be an eligible user to order materials. (Also works at WCL.)

- **Minnesota Relay** The Minnesota Relay provides telecommunications access for Minnesotans who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, speech impaired, deaf-blind, or mobility impaired. With the use of specially trained communication assistants (CAs) and specialized equipment, Minnesotans who are deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech disabled can communicate with users of standard telephones. Either party can initiate calls through the relay.

For more info on how the relay service works: Go to the **MN Department of Commerce Web Site** (www.commerce.state.mn.us). Click on their link to **Minnesota Relay**.

- For an extensive list of links and resources (both state and national) that can help people with questions about disabilities, disability organizations and disability services, go to the Pacer website: <http://www.pacer.org/text/links/index.htm>.

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