

NOBLE

The **North of Boston Library Exchange (NOBLE)** serves 25 libraries – 17 public libraries, seven academic libraries and one special library – in 29 locations, primarily in the near Boston north suburbs. We provide a library management system, training, and consulting for the staff of our member libraries and electronic resources and authentication for their users.

NOBLE During the Pandemic

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the network expanded online borrower card application functionality, extended card expiration dates and item due dates and holds to allow access to online resources, turned off notices and automatic renewals and reactivated once library services resumed, and consulted with libraries on options and best practices for holds, transits and quarantining items.

For library users, NOBLE updated notices to include details about how materials were being quarantined, suspended fine policies for public libraries, and customized hold pickup notifications for curbside services.

For library staff, NOBLE hosted 232 Zoom meetings and training sessions with a total participation of 2,449 during the first five months of the pandemic.

eResources

To streamline access to electronic resources, NOBLE provided access to expanded vendor databases during the pandemic and allowed cards with blocks (expired, overdue fines/lost item max) to access LEA content. In addition, they relaxed restrictions on eCard use and expiration policies. The network invested \$453,818 from our libraries into shared ebooks, audiobooks and magazines in FY20, more than double the prior year's investment, and invested an additional \$33,520 from the MBLC's LEA grant program to acquire a collection of classic and standard fiction and nonfiction ebook and audiobook titles. To inform patrons of online resources, they promoted them on local radio and social media.

From March 1 st through the end of August, use of ebooks increased 73% over 2019, use of audiobooks increased 23% and use of online magazines doubled. Even as libraries have reestablished some services, autumn ebook and audiobook usage combined is up 33% over last year, indicating a continuing need for the service and the funding to support it.

