



annually
circulates

over
103,000
items

Worcester Talking Book Library

Fund: 7000-9402

The Worcester Talking Book Library (WTBL) is a sub-regional library of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress. Located inside of the Worcester Public Library, WTBL provides large print for children and adults as well as digital audio, braille children's books, audio described DVDs and magazines, as well as the necessary equipment needed to access these. In addition, the library also provides readers advisory services to vision-impaired and physically disabled individuals of all ages who are unable to read standard print materials due to a visual, physical, or reading disability. WTBL provides these services to individuals as well as the institutions and organizations who serve them free of charge. All materials and equipment are delivered and returned postage free through the U.S. postal service. The library loans books in a wide variety of subjects in the English language and multiple foreign languages.

Why the Worcester Talking Book Library is Important

The library's services enable blind, vision-impaired and physically disabled individuals of all ages to enjoy the pleasure of reading and pursuit of life-long learning opportunities equal to that of sighted individuals. The library provides free door-to-door delivery of audio, large print and braille materials including books, magazines and newspapers to those who are unable to visit the library, allowing them to read independently in formats that are most comfortable to them.

The Worcester Talking Book Library also provides daily, personalized reader advisory services by phone or email to readers of all ages, especially the elderly, who can no longer travel to the library. Daily walk-in library service, which includes the use of adapted computers with screen magnification or speech output, is also available. Library staff assists patrons who do not own PCs or are unfamiliar with computer technology procedures by downloading e-books from the National Library Service (NLS) BARD site. The Worcester TBL annually circulates over 103,000 items and responds to over 8,500 inquiries made by phone, letter, email and outreach visits.

How a Lack of Funding has Affected the Worcester Talking Book Library

- Scale-backs in the number of large print book purchases.
- Reductions in the bi-monthly printing and mailing of new large print book catalogs to library patrons.
- Cutbacks in purchase of outreach materials and outreach visits to promote the program and less staff attendance at state and national library conferences.

What the Worcester Talking Book Library Would Do with Increased Funding

- Overhaul and update its web site in a way that is more user friendly to patrons.
- Perform more outreach to members of the community who may be unaware of the services provided.
- Add to its popular large print title collection.
- Add new technology to circulate, such as hot spots, which will enable patrons to access the internet from their homes, better utilizing the services that Talking Books provides.