

Worcester Talking Book Library (WTBL)

Fund: 7000-9402

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, and the necessary equipment needed to access these materials. 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. All materials and equipment are delivered and returned postage free through the U.S. Postal Service.

Response to the Pandemic

Despite many libraries needing to suspend services during the pandemic, the Worcester Talking Book Library was able to continue to circulate items safely. They maintained a skeleton crew that came in three days a week to get items out to library users. Many users expressed thanks for continued access to a vital service for them, especially those who were isolated from their families and friends.

In May, the entire staff returned to the office full time and to normal operations. The library has continued to do outreach virtually and over the phone and has connected with new people and new libraries and other institutions in the central MA area that can use the services that WTBL provides. Two newsletters have been circulated to patrons and the library has revamped their Facebook presence to reach more potential users.

Continued funding of the WTBL will assist in finding ways to do outreach to those who will benefit from the library's services, and to purchase and add items to the large type collections which patrons and libraries regularly use. The library is also looking ahead to reopening for in person services, developing ideas for their public space and potential patron programming.

