

Talking Books

The Talking Book and Braille service (TBBS) supports the activities of the Illinois Network of Libraries Serving the Blind and Physically Handicapped in providing excellent public library service to any Illinois resident who is unable to read standard print material due to a permanent or temporary visual or physical disability.

Talking Book Basics:

- Talking Book library service consist of books, magazines, and music material in digital, audio and Braille formats.
- Materials are mailed directly to the patron's home and returned by mailing back. No postage is required (all items qualify as Free Matter for the Blind and Physically Handicapped).
- Established in 1931 and administered by the Library of Congress, the National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped serves all eligible residents of the United States.
- Talking Book programs are tax supported through grants, so there in no out of pocket expense for patrons.

Who is eligible for Talking Book and Braille Service?

- Service is provided to all Illinois residents who are blind, visually impaired, or have a physical disability that prevents the reading of standard print.
- Conditions may be permanent or temporary (resulting from injury or surgery).
- Some reading disabilities also qualify, such as dyslexia. (Reading disabilities must be certified by a medical doctor).

Examples of qualifying visual disabilities:

- Low Vision
- Blindness
- Glaucoma
- Severe Cataract

- Diabetic Retinopathy
- Macular Degeneration

Examples of qualifying physical disabilities:

- Muscular Dystrophy
- Parkinson's Disease
- Cerebral Palsy
- Paraplegics
- Arthritis
- Stroke or Brain Injury

How to apply:

- Call to request an application (1-800-426-0709) or download one from the TBBS website.
- Complete application by providing contact information, secondary contact, and reading preferences.
- Ask a doctor, nurse, social worker, or librarian to verify the disability by signing the application.
- Mail the completed application to the ISL TBBS (Illinois State Library Talking Book & Braille Services) in Springfield: 300 S. Second Street Springfield, IL 62701-1796
- A Reader Advisor will call to set up the account and help the patron select books.

Digital Players

- Once the account is set up, patrons will receive a free digital player in the mail.
- The machines are easy to use, sturdy, and portable.
- The rechargeable battery lasts approximately 29 hours.
- The large navigation buttons have built-in audio instructions.
- Additional features include a headphone jack, a USB port, tone and speed controls, sleep and bookmark functions, and much more!
- High Volume Players are now available for patrons who are also hearing impaired.

Materials available

- Over 84,000 digital audio books are available.
- 70 digital magazines
- Braille books and magazines – over 15,000 adult and juvenile titles available from the Utah State Library Program for the Blind and Disabled.
- Descriptive DVDs – 200 movies with added narrative description for low vision viewers
- Old Time Radio Shows – available on cassette
- Newsletters and Booklists – Talking Book Topics, Braille Book Review, and state newsletters as well as monthly book lists
- The Inter-library loan (ILL) can also be used to find materials that are not found in the collections listed above.

BARD

- Braille Audio Reading Download is an online digital collection maintained by NLS (National Library Services).
- Talking book patrons may download audio and Braille books and magazines to a USB flash drive or book cartridge.
- BARD gives patrons free, immediate access to thousands of titles. Books can be downloaded 24/7, with no due dates, wait lists, or download limits.
- BARD contains over 70,000 books and 100 magazines, with new titles added weekly.

BARD MOBILE

- The BARD Mobile app allows patrons to download BARD books and magazines directly to your iOS, Android, or Kindle Fire devices.
- The free app is available for download from iTUNES, Google Play, or Amazon stores. It turns your device into a personal, portable library.
- BARD Mobile is easy to use:
 - Compatible with Voice Over and TalkBack
 - Controls are similar to the talking book digital player

BARD Express

A new way to download for Windows computers! (Not compatible with Apple operating systems).

No more unzipping files to access BARD!

Simplifies searching, downloading, and transferring BARD books and magazines to a cartridge or USB flash drive to play on the digital player.

The free BARD Express app is available for download from a link on the BARD Main Page under "Additional Links".