



Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library
A State Library Services Program

Profile at a Glance
2016

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Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library (MBTBL)
Minnesota Department of Education
A State Library Services Program

Purpose:

To provide a specialized statewide public library service to Minnesotans of all ages who cannot hold, handle or see well enough to use conventional print materials.

Background:

Since 1933, the [Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library \(MBTBL\)](#), located in Faribault, has provided a specialized public library service statewide to Minnesotans with visual, physical, or reading disability. Library materials are sent to over 10,000 Minnesotans annually. Caregivers, educators, school districts, and students receive information and support from the library.

MBTBL works in partnership with the [National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped \(NLS\)](#). NLS administers a free national library program for people who cannot read standard print library materials. The program was established by an act of Congress in 1931. Over time federal mandates have expanded the definition of people eligible for service. The [current federal regulations](#) for this program are outlined in the *Federal Register* for June 7, 1974, as amended October 2, 1981.

NLS selects and produces full-length books and magazines in audio and in braille. Library materials are distributed to a network of designated libraries throughout the United States. These materials are circulated to eligible patrons. There are no age restrictions. Pre-school through adult-level materials are available. All services are free of charge including postage costs to mail materials to patrons and return them to the library.

The library's collection is similar to what is available in a medium-sized public library. In addition to the NLS collection of audio and braille materials, the library offers large print books and descriptive videos to eligible patrons.

The library partners with other state agencies to provide this specialized public library service. The Communication Center, State Services for the Blind, inventories, distributes and repairs the specialized talking book players provided by the NLS and loaned to MBTBL patrons throughout the state.

Because the MBTBL is located on the Minnesota State Academy for the Blind campus, MBTBL also provides school library services to the Academy's students and the staff and to the deaf-blind students of both State Academies.

Accountability:

The MBTBL is responsible for meeting National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped's standards set forth in the [*Revised Standards and Guidelines of Services for the Library of Congress Network of Libraries for the Blind and Physically Handicapped*](#). The MBTBL reports to State Library Services at the Minnesota Department of Education. It is the only public library in the state that reports to a state agency.

Profile at a Glance 2016

Staff:

Number of MBTBL employees: 8 FTE

Individuals:

10,182

Institutions:

889

Patron distribution:

Top 10 counties based on number of patrons

Hennepin County, MN	2,033 patrons
Ramsey County, MN	1,023 patrons
Dakota County, MN	554 patrons
St. Louis County, MN	419 patrons
Anoka County, MN	355 patrons
Washington County, MN	308 patrons
Olmsted County, MN	226 patrons
Stearns County, MN	182 patrons
Rice County, MN	176 patrons
Otter Tail County, MN	149 patrons

Age distribution (Active patrons only):

Age Range	Females	Males
0-14	57	54
15-24	173	169
25-64	2,181	1,150
65-99	4,186	1,492
100+	89	17

Disability distribution:

- Blind and visually impaired = 88.9%
- Reading disability = 5.2%
- Physical disability = 5.4%
- Deaf/Blind = less than 1%

Book Circulation:

FFY 2016 (October 1, 2015-September 30, 2016)

- Digital books:
 - 262,528 items circulated to 6,111 patrons
 - 44 items per patron
- Braille books:
 - 3,639 volumes circulated to 501 patrons
 - 7 items per patron
- Cassette books:
 - 2,042 items circulated to 421 patrons
 - 5 items per patron
- Large print books:
 - 1,655 items circulated to 152 patrons
 - 11 items per patron
- Described videos:
 - 92 items circulated to 9 patrons
 - 10 items per patron
- Playaway digital books:
 - 22 items circulated to 8 patrons
 - 3 items per patron

Total items circulated: 274,879

Minnesota Braille and Audio Reading Download (MN BARD):

Audio materials downloaded by patrons: 74,210

Braille materials downloaded by patrons: 3,826

Interlibrary Loans to other NLS network libraries:

42 items to 25 other network library patrons

Volume:

On average 1,338 items were checked out each business day and 1,080 items were checked in.

Equipment:

- 7,645 digital talking book players out to patrons
- 4,344 cassette talking book players out to patrons
- 1,382 digital talking book players inspected or repaired by State Services for the Blind staff or volunteers at an in-kind cost of \$35.80 per machine = \$49,475
- 110 cassette talking book players repaired by State Services for the Blind staff or volunteers at an in-kind cost of \$35.80 per machine = \$3,938

Items in Circulating Collection:

- Digital books: 185,075
- Cassette books: 7,630
- Braille books: 34,770
- Large-print books: 7,392
- Described videos: 361
- Playaway digital books: 351

Assistive Technology Available at MBTBL:

- Braille embossers
- JAWS (screen reader)
- ZoomText (screen magnifier)
- Refreshable braille display
- Kurzweil 1000 (text to speech software)
- CDesk (BARD download manager)
- Duxbury Braille Translator (text to braille)

Volunteers:

- Work site for Minnesota State Academy for the Blind, Faribault Work Experience and STEP Programs: 4-6 hours/week during school year
- Other Volunteers: 9-10 hours/week