

That All May Read

*A guide to services from Pennsylvania's
Regional Libraries for the Blind and Physically Handicapped*



Eastern Pennsylvania

Free Library of Philadelphia
Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
919 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107-5237
Phone: (800) 222-1754 (toll-free in PA)
Fax: (215) 683-3211
Email: flpblind@freelibrary.org
Website: <http://lbph.library.phila.gov>

Western Pennsylvania

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
Leonard C. Staisey Building
4724 Baum Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-1389
Phone: (800) 242-0586 (toll-free nationwide)
Fax: (412) 687-2442
Email: lbph@carnegielibrary.org
Website: <http://www.carnegielibrary.org/lbph>

Funded by Commonwealth Libraries of Pennsylvania,
Pennsylvania Department of Education

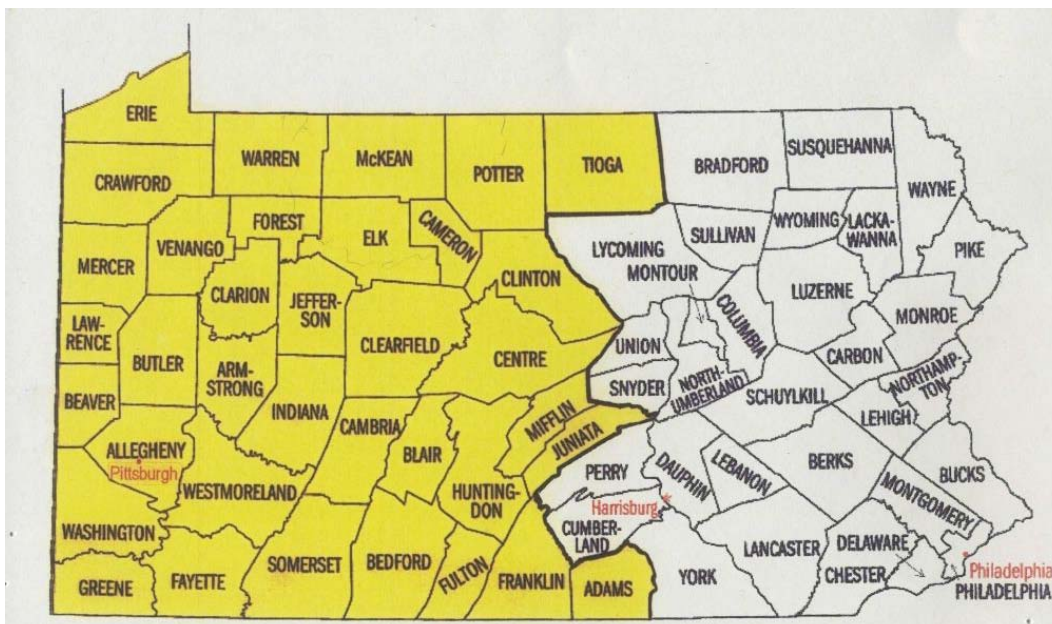
Service Areas

If you reside in one of the following counties of **Western Pennsylvania**, your service is provided by the **Pittsburgh Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped**:

Adams, Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Bedford, Blair, Butler, Cambria, Cameron, Centre, Clarion, Clearfield, Clinton, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Fayette, Forest, Franklin, Fulton, Greene, Huntingdon, Indiana, Jefferson, Juniata, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Mifflin, Potter, Somerset, Tioga, Venango, Warren, Washington, and Westmoreland.

If you reside in one of the following counties of **Eastern Pennsylvania**, your service is provided by the **Philadelphia Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped**:

Berks, Bradford, Bucks, Carbon, Chester, Columbia, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Lackawanna, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Luzerne, Lycoming, Monroe, Montgomery, Montour, Northampton, Northumberland, Perry, Philadelphia, Pike, Schuylkill, Snyder, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Union, Wayne, Wyoming, and York.



**WELCOME to the
Pennsylvania Regional Libraries
for the Blind and Physically Handicapped!**

We are happy that you have joined the thousands of readers who enjoy our **FREE** services every day. We encourage you to make full use of all services we offer.

This booklet, which briefly describes our services, will answer many of your questions so you may want to keep it handy. We also invite you to contact your Regional Library for further information or to discuss your library needs in more detail.

Contents

A Little History.....	4
How the PA Regional Libraries Are Funded and Administered	5
What Is Available From the PA Regional Libraries	6
Service Basics	9
Returning Materials by Mail	11
Playback Equipment	13
Frequently Asked Questions	17

A Little History

At the turn of the 20th century, several public libraries began serving blind readers with braille books. Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and the Free Library of Philadelphia were among those libraries.

In 1931, legislation was introduced by Senator Reed Smoot of Utah and Representative Ruth Pratt of New York to enable the U.S. Congress to appropriate funds to purchase braille books and issue them to registered readers through a network of public libraries. On a hand-shake, the federal government and several state governments agreed to provide such services. The U.S. Library of Congress would provide the materials if the states would provide the libraries and staff. Thus, the Division for the Blind was born.

Three years later, books that had been narrated and copied onto long-playing rigid records were added to the program. These “talking books,” as they became known, were the result of Thomas Edison’s recommendation that his invention of the record should be used for blind readers to *hear* their books. In those days, the record player needed to play talking books was purchased by the reader or by philanthropic organizations. It was several years later that the Division for the Blind began to provide the loan of record players, or talking book machines, to readers.

Over the next several decades, more and more public libraries joined the network, and the service was expanded to include talking magazines and braille magazines. Service to children was added in 1952.

In the 1960s, several changes occurred to the program. 1966 saw the extension of service to individuals whose physical disabilities prevented holding books or turning pages. People with physically-based reading disabilities could also avail themselves of the services. As a result, the Division for the Blind became the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), with a library in every state in the

Union. Audiocassette books and magazines were added to the program in 1968. By this time, every state in the Union was represented by at least one network library for the blind and physically handicapped.

Today, there are 140 regional and subregional libraries across the United States and its territories. Eligible readers range from infancy to centegenarians. Over 75,000 titles (26 million copies nationwide) are available in large print, audiocassette, braille and downloadable formats. More than 75 magazines are available in braille or audiocassette. Web-Braille (downloadable braille materials) are available. Digital talking books – the newest format – is the technology that NLS is now using for audio books. Digital talking books and players will become available in early 2009. This nearly indestructible format will replace the audiocassettes over time, providing readers with very high quality recordings on infinitely reusable cartridges.

How the PA Regional Libreres Are Funded & Administered

Funding for operating the two PA Regional Libraries is provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education through the Office of Commonwealth Libraries. The funds are divided between the two Regional Libraries in order to provide equal services statewide.

The Pittsburgh Regional Library is administered for Commonwealth Libraries by Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. The Philadelphia Regional Library is similarly administered by the Free Library of Philadelphia.

Audio books and magazines, plus the equipment needed to play them, and braille materials are provided by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress. Over 2,000 new titles are provided annually to the two Regional Libraries.

Large print books and described videos are purchased by the Regional Libraries with grants and private donations. Other items acquired with

contributions include adaptive equipment, computer hardware and software, and recording equipment.

The U.S. Postal Service is federally funded to provide free postage for mailing Regional Library materials. Books, magazines, and playback equipment are shipped to and from borrowers using the “Free Matter for the Blind or Handicapped” mailing privilege.

What Is Available From the PA Regional Libraries

The two PA Regional Libraries house more than 75,000 book titles (with multiple copies of each) and offer over 75 magazines in a wide range of subjects. Among the over 50 main categories are biography, cookbooks, health, history, mystery, inspirational, romance, sports, travel, and westerns. *Good Housekeeping*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *U.S. News and World Report* are among the many magazines available. All reading levels – children, young adult, and adult – are represented.

The Regional Libraries offer materials in a variety of media:

- Audio books and magazines
 - Braille books and magazines
 - Described videos
 - Large print books
- **Audio books and magazines** are often called “talking books” to distinguish them from commercial audio books. Audio books and magazines are available in the following formats: audiocassette, digital, and downloadable.

Audiocassette books and magazines play at a slower speed than commercial recordings and are recorded on four tracks. Because the audiocassettes will not play on a commercially available cassette machine, the Regional Libraries provide NLS audiocassette players

and accessories on free loan. The loan period for cassette books is one month. Cassette magazines do not need to be returned.

More than 40 magazines are available in audiocassette format. Currently readers may subscribe to the cassette editions of magazines such as *National Geographic* and *Smart Computing*; issues are mailed to subscribers directly from the publisher of the recorded magazine. It takes 6-8 weeks for a new subscription to start arriving or a cancellation to take effect.

Digital talking books are produced using flash memory, the same technology found in digital cameras and computer game systems. The book is on a flash memory card surrounded by a protective cartridge which is inserted into the digital player. Digital talking books are the newest service of the two PA Regional Libraries and will be available in early 2009. The loan period for digital talking books is one month.

Downloadable audio books and magazines are available on the NLS website. To get an account for the NLS website, contact the library. These digital audio files will play on the NLS digital talking book player. They will not play on most commercial MP3 players.

Some vendors of commercial players have entered into an agreement with NLS to provide authorization keys to enable registered borrowers to play NLS digital talking books and magazines on these commercial players. Contact the library if you have questions about commercial players that are able to accommodate digital talking books from NLS.

- **Braille books and magazines** are also available. There are nearly 15,000 braille books available to readers. They are housed at the Philadelphia Regional Library, which serves all of Pennsylvania,

West Virginia, and Delaware with braille books. Braille magazine titles range from *Cooking Light* to *Popular Mechanics*.

Both PA Regional Libraries can provide you with access to the NLS downloadable braille service, Web-Braille. Registered readers are able to download the computer braille files for use with “braille aware” devices or braille embossers.

- **Large print books** are just that: books with larger-than-standard-size print. The minimum font size is 14-point, but the vast majority of large print books in the Regional Libraries’ collection are published in 16-point type (the same size as this page.) More than 13,000 large print titles are available. Large print books may be borrowed for one month.

- **Described Videos** are movies and documentaries with narration of the visual elements added. The narrator does not speak over character dialog, but describes actions, settings, costumes and other visual elements. The videos are played on any standard video cassette player (VHS). Patrons supply their own player. Because the collection is small, a patron may only borrow one described video at a time. Videos are loaned to individuals only and are intended solely for personal home use. They are not intended for group viewing. The loan period for described videos is one month.

Service Basics

While visitors to the library are welcome any time, most readers receive materials by mail. How often we ship materials and which types of materials the library sends is up to you!

Shipment Plans

Let us know how often you would like books to arrive in the mail. We currently have three shipment plans, but not every shipment plan can be used for each type of materials available.

Monthly Shipments: Borrowers receive one shipment of books per month.

On-Demand Service: Materials are sent only when the borrower contacts the library.

Send-Return Service: When you return an item, we immediately select another and send it to you. This works best if you only mail a few items back at a time. Remember though: if you send everything back at once, you could be without books for a week or more.

Renewals: The amount of time you have to borrow an item depends on its type; however, loan periods can be extended if you need more time to enjoy an item. Simply call us, and, in most cases, we can renew the title for you.

Ordering books

Simply contact the library to request books by title, author, subject, or book number. Book numbers are especially helpful, as the prefix of each number indicates the media of the book. For example, **BR** and **BRA** indicate that a title is in braille, while **RC** and **CS** indicate audiocassette books. **DB** indicates a digital talking book, while **CL** and

LP are used to indicate large print books, and **DV** is used for described videos. Not every title is available in every format.

Our book collection includes more than 60,000 recorded titles, 17,000 braille titles, 13,000 large print titles, and hundreds of video recordings, so it is sometimes a challenge for readers to find the kinds of books they enjoy. The library provides information about books in a variety of formats to help readers find and order the books they want to read.

- **Publications** are available to help readers locate the kinds of books they enjoy reading. *Talking Book Topics* is a bimonthly publication listing all of the new audiocassette and digital talking books; this publication is available in large print, cassette, and digital text formats. *Braille Book Review* lists new braille titles; it is available in digital braille, digital text, press braille, and large print formats. Both publications provide annotations about the titles to help readers make their selections.

- **Catalogs** also provide information about the titles in our collection. Readers may search the catalog independently by using our Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) or our Voice-Activated Public Access Catalog (VoPAC).

The **OPAC** lists all of the book titles available directly from the library. You may search the catalog by author, title, word in title, subject, or narrator. When you make your selections, you may indicate whether you would like your choices to be sent immediately or to be placed on your request list for later shipment.

Before ordering through the OPAC, contact the library to obtain your patron ID and select your personal 8-digit password.

The **VoPAC** is an automated phone system that responds to verbal requests for authors and titles. It provides for the same searching options as the online catalog. A patron ID and password are also needed for ordering through the VoPAC.

Annual catalogs of cassette books and braille books are available in large print and either cassette or braille.

You may also simply contact the library by phone, e-mail, fax, U.S. mail, or in person to request books. Our reader's advisors will be able to assist you with both specific and general book requests.

Library selections. Our staff are able to send regular shipments to you, even when you're not able to order materials or contact the library to discuss your reading interests. Our reader's advisors use the subjects, authors, and other preferences indicated on your application to select books or described videos that you might like.

Of course, when borrowers send us request lists or call to inquire about specific titles, we always send these customer requests first. We can also mark your file so the library sends **only** books you have specifically requested; just let us know that you'd like books from your **request list only**.

Returning Materials to the Library

When you are ready to send books or equipment back to the library, simply turn over the reversible mailing card that was used to ship the item to you. The card is pre-printed with the return address of the library and the marking "Free Matter for the Blind or Handicapped" in the upper right-hand corner. The card also has a hole punched into one corner; if the hole is in the upper left corner, the library's address is showing.

There is never a charge to return items to the library. Congress appropriates monies to the U.S. Postal Service for the mailing of these materials.

By law, letter carriers must deliver, but are not required to pick up, library materials. If you have any problems, talk first to your carrier. Should the problem continue, call your postmaster and refer to Section 135, which provides the rules and regulations that govern items mailed as Free Matter.

Please do not put a rubber band around the outside of a mailing container for any reason. These can get caught in the post office machines and damage the equipment.

If library materials will not fit in your apartment mail box, make special arrangements with your apartment manager so that library materials sent to you will not be mistakenly picked up by another tenant or stolen.

If you receive a book that has been damaged or is missing one or more of its parts, please contact the library. We want to make sure that you receive a good copy of the book.

When you return the damaged book, it helps the library if you indicate this on the mailing card. Here's how:

- Flip the book's reversible mailing card so that the library's address shows out. You should be able to feel or see a hole in the upper left hand corner of the card.
- Mark the mailing card anywhere near the hole with an X, a check mark, or even a simple scribble.

That's all that needs to be done. Once the book is returned to us, our shipping department will notice the marks and make sure that the book is inspected carefully before being re-shelved.

Playback Equipment

Because library materials are recorded at a non-commercial speed, readers who request audiobooks from the library will receive a player to use with these books.

Standard Cassette Machine (C1)

- Plays NLS audiocassettes recorded at 15/16 ips (inches per second) as well as commercial books and music recorded at 1-7/8 ips.
- Is equipped with a rechargeable battery as well as an electrical cord which makes the machine portable.
- Includes a Variable Speed Control which allows the user to adjust the speed up or down.
- Has ten controls: 5 at the lower left and 5 on the right of the machine.
- A recorded set of instructions is included. Large print instructions are available from the library.



Easy Cassette Machine (E1)

- Designed for those borrowers who cannot use the Standard Cassette Machine (C1).
- Uses only two controls for easy operation.
- Plays only National Library Service audiocassettes recorded at 15/16 ips.



- Must be plugged in to play. The Easy Player does not have a rechargeable battery.
- Automatically rewinds cassettes and changes tracks at the end of every side of the cassette.
- Arrives with an instruction tape. Large print instructions are available from the library.

Digital Talking Book Player (DTBM)

- Lighter and smaller than either cassette players.
- Improved sound quality when compared to the cassette players.
- Plays NLS digital talking books. The NLS books arrive as a plastic cartridge. The cartridges surround flash memory cards that will fit into the digital player in only one way.
- Most NLS books fit on just one digital cartridge. There is no need to take the cartridge out and turn it over.
- Operating instructions are built into the machine. Just turn the machine on, and press any of the control buttons to hear what the control does and how it operates.
- May be played from rechargeable battery or electrical cord.
- Will never lose your place in the book. The machine bookmarks the story automatically.



- Able to download digital books from your computer and play them on the digital machine. Equipped with an extra USB port so that you can play any material already recorded on a flash card with a USB port.
- The advanced model has an extra row of controls to set and retrieve bookmarks and to move through structured levels of a digital talking book.

Accessories for NLS Playback Equipment

Headphones are available for private listening. Basic headphones are available directly from the library. Amplified headphones are available for persons with significant loss and require a separate application with medical certification to be filled out and faxed directly to NLS. Contact your library to obtain the application.

A **remote control unit** is available for persons confined to bed or with mobility difficulty. The remote control unit is used to turn the equipment on and off. A **breath switch** is available for persons with little or no use of their extremities. This switch connects to the remote control and uses a puff of air to turn the equipment on and off. Both types of remote controls require a separate application to be filled out and faxed directly to NLS. Contact your library to obtain the application.

Extension levers attach to the Standard Cassette Machine (C1) and are used by readers who have difficulty manipulating the key controls on the front of the machine. Extension levers are available directly from your library.

A **pillow speaker** is placed under the reader's pillow so that sound is heard only by the reader. Pillow speakers are available directly from your library.

A **solar panel battery charger** is available for readers who do not have access to electricity. This charger uses energy from the sun to charge batteries for the Standard Cassette Machine. Contact the library for additional information.

How to Care for Your Playback Equipment

Common sense care is all that is necessary. Keep the machine protected from food, liquids, and pets. Keep the box for the machine should you ever need to return it for repair.

What should I do if my machine breaks?

If your player is not working properly, call the library first. There may be something we can suggest you try before you need to return it. If not, we can make arrangements to have the machine replaced. If you return a machine without first calling, please include a note to explain why it is being returned. Patrons who return machines without notes may inadvertently have their services cancelled.

How many machines can I have?

The National Library Service permits users to have only one cassette machine and one digital machine. Should you want more, we can provide you with other sources where you can purchase machines as you need.

How long does it take to charge the battery in my machine?

It takes about 12 hours to fully charge the battery. Just leave the machine plugged in without playing it. On a full charge, you should get at least 6 hours of battery life on the standard cassette machine and about 20 hours on the digital machine. We suggest that occasionally you play the machine from the battery until it is drained, then plug the machine back in to charge it up again. Doing this on a regular basis helps to extend the life of the battery.

Frequently Asked Questions

I received a cassette book today, but there is a cassette missing. I have one marked number 1 and a second one marked number 5. I need number 3.

All National Library Service cassette books are recorded on 4 sides as opposed to commercial recordings which are recorded on two sides. This difference is reflected in the numbering of the cassettes. Sides 1 – 4 will be recorded on the cassette marked number 1 and sides 5 – 8 will be recorded on the cassette marked number 5. The number on the cassette shows which side of the book begins on that cassette.

What should I do if I accidentally forget to send one or more tapes of a cassette book back when I've already returned the rest of the book?

Sometimes it may occur that you have forgotten to return ALL of the cassette tapes of a particular book. Should this circumstance arise, simply put the stray cassette into the next green box you are ready to return. Then, mark the mailing card as being “damaged” by placing a mark near the hole in the upper left-hand corner. This way, our stock department will take the new book out of circulation and see the extra cassette inside.

What should I do if I need the library to temporarily hold my services?

Sometimes situations arise where you would like the library to temporarily hold your services—maybe you're taking a short vacation, planning a move, or just need some extra time to catch up on the books you already have. Simply call your regional library at (800) 242-0586 to let us know. We can temporarily hold your services for up to 6 months and begin again at either a pre-set date or whenever you call to tell us to resume. The only part of our services that we are NOT able to temporarily hold is magazines.

What should I do if I'm going on an extended vacation or living temporarily at a second home?

Some of you may take an extended vacation, stay in a warmer climate through the winter, or have a second home you live in for part of the year and may want to receive your library materials at a secondary address. Call the library at (800) 242-0586, and we will begin mailing materials to your temporary address. You can call us toll-free at (800) 242-0586 from anywhere in the United States to let us know when you will be returning home to Pennsylvania. We will then be able to provide you with uninterrupted library service during your stay away from home. It is important, however, that your primary residence remains in Western Pennsylvania. Your primary residence is defined by where you live for 6 months or more out of the year. If you live at an address outside of Western Pennsylvania for more than 6 months out of the year, please let us know so we can transfer your library service to the appropriate regional library.

What should I do if I want to transfer my library services?

If the situation should occur that you are moving out of Western Pennsylvania—either out of state entirely, or to the Eastern counties—please contact us at (800) 242-0586 to let us know. While the Carnegie Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped serves all eligible readers in Western Pennsylvania, other regional libraries serve readers residing in other states, or in Eastern Pennsylvania. We will be able to transfer your library services to the appropriate regional library.

What should I do if I want to cancel my library services?

If the situation should arise where you want to cancel your library services, please call the library at (800) 242-0586 and ask to speak with our registration department. We will then be able to go over your file with you, cancel out your services, and arrange to send out boxes for your library equipment (cassette player, headphones, etc.) should you need them.

Does the library have audio versions of textbooks?

While it is always worth calling the library at (800) 242-0586 to check on a particular book; unfortunately, we will not be able to provide textbooks. The National Library Service talking book collection is geared towards providing material for the greatest amount of people, so often specialized works, such as textbooks or academic materials, will not be recorded as part of the program.

Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic (RFB&D), located in Princeton, New Jersey, specializes in textbooks and academic material in an audio format. It is completely independent from the National Library Service talking book program. If you have any inquiries about RFB&D, their program, policies, or procedures, please contact them directly at (800) 221-4792.

Do you have any music on tape?

Unfortunately, the Regional Libraries do not circulate any recorded music on tape or CD. However, your local public library is an excellent resource to get recorded music. Simply call your local public library and ask them what kinds of music they have available for you to check out on your public library card. If you need assistance locating your nearest public library, please contact us at (800) 242-0586, and we'll be happy to find that information for you.

Do you have any large print musical scores, or large print or cassette books on how to learn musical instruments?

While the Regional Libraries do not have large print musical scores, or large print or cassette books on how to learn musical instruments, the National Library Service does have a Music Department that circulates this type of material to people already registered with their Regional Library. Simply call the National Library Service directly at (800) 424-8567 and ask for the Music Department. You may have to leave a brief message, including your phone number, so that your call can be returned. Once you're in contact with the Music Department, NLS librarians will assist you in finding the materials you are interested in.

Have we told you everything you ever wanted to know about Pennsylvania's Regional Libraries for the Blind and Physically Handicapped? If not, please contact the library serving your area.

Eastern Pennsylvania

Free Library of Philadelphia
Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
919 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107-5237
Phone: (800) 222-1754 (toll-free in PA)
Fax: (215) 683-3211
Email: flpblind@library.phila.gov
Website: <http://lbph.library.phila.gov>

Western Pennsylvania

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped
Leonard C. Staisey Building
4724 Baum Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-1389
Phone: (800) 242-0586 (toll-free nationwide)
Fax: (412) 687-2442
Email: lbph@carnegielibrary.org
Website: www.carnegielibrary.org/lbph