Dear Superintendent,

With Veteran's Day approaching, providing services to military personnel is forefront in everyone's mind, as it should be at ALL times. Making sure veterans know of the services that are available is often a challenge to those who provide them.

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) began in 1931 to serve the many World War 1 veterans who returned with vision problems that resulted from mustard gas exposure injuries. In 1930, identical bills were introduced in Congress by Representative Ruth Pratt (H.R. 11365) and Senator Reed Smoot (S. 4030). The Pratt-Smoot Act became law on March 3, 1931.

As you will find, after perusing the enclosed material, the NLS is a tax-supported, mail-order public library of audio books and braille available for anyone who has difficulty reading standard print material due to a physical or visual disability. The United States Library of Congress and the Illinois State Library, a division of the office of Secretary of State Jesse White, partner to provide this library service to residents of Illinois.

Recently, an exciting new service began for individuals who own an iOS device such as an iPad, iPod or iPhone or any Adroid device. Books can now be downloaded directly to this equipment. There are no limits to the number of books a person can access and the books can be kept by the individual if they choose to build their own private library.

We hope you will share this information with your local veterans. I will gladly send you multiple copies of any brochures to have on hand for the veterans.

Another project under the auspices of the office of the Secretary of State is the Illinois Veterans History Project. The Illinois Veterans History Project was launched by Secretary of State Jesse White to create a permanent record of the names and stories of Illinois war veterans and civilians who served our state and country during war, so that their contributions will not be forgotten. We hope you will encourage veterans to participate in this important project. I have also included a form for your use.

If I can answer any specific questions regarding the Talking Book and Braille Service, please call me at 217-782-9435.

Best wishes,

Sharon Ruda
Associate Director
Braille and Talking Book Program for Veterans

The braille and talking book program offers talking books at no charge for veterans who have difficulty reading regular print. You protected our freedom. Now enjoy the freedom to read your way.

What Is the Braille and Talking Book Program?

The braille and talking book program is a free library service administered by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), Library of Congress. The program is provided through a nationwide network of cooperating libraries that lend reading materials to residents of the United States and its territories and U.S. citizens living abroad who are unable to read or use regular print materials because of a visual or physical disability.

Talking books, audio magazines, and the digital talking-book players needed to use them are provided free of charge, by mail, for as long as you're in the program. NLS patrons may also download reading materials through the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) web-based service or through the BARD Mobile app for smartphones and tablets. And veterans have preference in the lending of materials and equipment! If you have been honorably discharged from the U.S. armed forces and are blind, have low vision, or have a physical disability that prevents you from reading regular print materials, you may access this service, which promotes independence, wellness, and quality of life.

“When I run across other veterans that are curious about what I’m doing, I usually take the time to show them the BARD Mobile app. Most veterans haven’t been exposed to having a disability for very long, so they’re very curious. And the app gives them an opportunity to be able to enjoy books, to access the content that they may be missing.”

Dan, NLS patron since 2004

To learn more, or to sign up, visit www.loc.gov/ThatAllMayRead.

Apply for the service today!
Call 1-888-NLS-READ (1-888-657-7323)
or visit www.loc.gov/ThatAllMayRead.
Am I Eligible for NLS?

Any resident of the United States or U.S. citizen living abroad who is unable to read or use normal print materials as a result of temporary or permanent visual or physical disability may receive service through NLS.

This includes the following people:

- Blind individuals whose visual acuity, as determined by competent authority, is 20/200 or less in the better eye with corrective lenses, or whose widest diameter of visual field subtends an angular distance no greater than 20 degrees.

- Individuals with other physical disabilities, including:
  - Those whose visual disability, with correction and regardless of optical measurement, is certified by competent authority as preventing the reading of standard printed material
  - Those certified by competent authority as unable to read or unable to use standard printed material as a result of physical limitations
  - Those certified by competent authority as having a reading disability resulting from organic dysfunction and of sufficient severity to prevent their reading printed material normally

How to Sign Up

NLS service is local. Cooperating network libraries across the United States provide accessible reading materials directly to eligible patrons. To apply for service, complete the online form at www.loc.gov/ThatAllMayRead and an NLS representative in your service area will contact you. To speak to a librarian in your area during regular business hours, call 1-888-NLS-READ (1-888-657-7323) (toll free) and follow the prompts. Your call will be connected to the appropriate library.
Services for Persons with Print Impairments

Special library services funded by the Illinois State Library make it easier for persons with print impairments to access vital information.

Talking Book Program

- The Talking Book and Braille Service provides a tax-supported audio and braille library service via mail or digital download to any Illinois resident who is unable to read standard print material due to a permanent or temporary visual or physical disability.

- The Library of Congress provides free braille and audiobooks and playback equipment.

- More than 70,000 digital titles — some in foreign languages — are available, including best-sellers, light fiction, westerns, classics and nonfiction. Over 100 magazine titles are also available with new titles continually added to the collection.

- More than 16,000 patrons in Illinois will read nearly 700,000 books this year. Anyone who is permanently or temporarily unable to hold or read regular print material comfortably due to a physical or visual disability is eligible for the service, regardless of age. Registered patrons also may borrow descriptive videos and old-time radio shows. Contact the Illinois State Library Talking Book and Braille Service for additional information (see reverse side).

Illinois Radio Information Service

- Radio Reading Services in Illinois are supported in part by grants from the Illinois State Library, a division of the Office of the Secretary of State.

- In Illinois, 11 stations provide current information from local newspapers. Free closed-band receivers allow patrons to listen to broadcasts of local news, grocery ads and other information not available through the Talking Book Program. For more information, contact the Talking Book and Braille Service or visit www.ilbph.org for a list of stations.

NFB-Newsline®

- The Illinois State Library Talking Book & Braille Service, in cooperation with the National Federation for the Blind, sponsors NFB-NEWSLINE®. This service provides subscribers toll-free access to audio versions of more than 500 newspapers, including the "Chicago Tribune," the "Sun-Times" and the "Daily Herald" from any touch-tone telephone anywhere in the U.S.

- Free and available 24/7, NFB-NEWSLINE® allows readers to select the newspapers and articles they want to hear.

The Illinois State Library Talking Book & Braille Service, Radio Information Services and NFB-NEWSLINE® are free to eligible Illinois patrons.
Contact the Illinois State Library
Talking Book & Braille Service

800-426-0709
800-757-4654

www.ilbph.org