

Updated State Library Plan for LBPH (December 2021)

This document outlines the State Library's revised plan for the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH), which incorporates feedback and goals as discussed with Secretary McCaw, Senator Osten, and the LBPH Advisory Committee. This revised plan is fully supported by both the State Library Board, our governing authority, and the National Library Service (NLS), our LBPH federal partner.

Delivery of Materials and Equipment

Existing Service: LBPH will continue to provide free reading materials to any Connecticut adult or child who is unable to read regular print due to a visual, physical, or reading disability via mail order and digital download, the service model for all NLS Network Libraries across the nation.

Expanded Service: Patrons wishing to physically drop off or pick up equipment or reading materials will no longer be tied to one location, but may now visit any of the following locations during business hours:

- 75 Van Block Avenue, Hartford (home base for deliverIT CT, our statewide delivery service)
- 231 Capitol Avenue, Hartford (the State Library's "main branch" location)
- 786 South Main Street, Middletown (home base for our Division of Library Development (DLD))
- 198 West Street, Rocky Hill (by appointment)
- Any public library in CT (advanced notice for pick up required, so items can be processed and delivered to the library by LBPH). To enhance this service delivery at local libraries, the State Library will be sending communication and engage in follow-up with each library to ensure that this process is smooth at the local level.

Additional Planned Expansion of Services

LBPH has historically been a transactional service, facilitating access to reading materials. ***This is not and will not be going away. But there is room to grow too.*** The State Library will expand its service by: increasing communication and engagement with new and existing LBPH patrons; fostering a sense of community among LBPH patrons across the state; and deepening our partnerships with public and private affinity groups, including CT public libraries. To achieve this goal, the State Library, under the able leadership and guidance of Director Matt Geeza and the LBPH staff, will immediately implement the following:

Communication and Engagement:

- **Relaunch the LBPH Newsletter** (suspended during COVID) and make it available in standard type, large type, and audio formats via the LBPH website and accompanying all book deliveries
- **New Mobile Outreach Van**, allowing the State Library to take events, programming, staff, and resources to any location across the state
- **On Location, One-on-One Training** (via the Outreach Van) at veterans' facilities; senior centers; public libraries; and any other requested location in CT. Focused on training individuals, groups, and librarians how to use NLS services and equipment.
- **Sharable, ADA-compliant training videos** focused on how to use various NLS services, such as Talking Book players and BARD

- **Quarterly Public Engagement Programs** promoting LBPH to eligible borrowers; professional groups and organizations that have contact with eligible individuals; and friends and relatives of eligible users
- **CT Blindness Awareness Month campaign**, including an author event
- **Outreach Request Form**, embedded on LBPH website, for libraries, individuals, and organizations to request outreach from LBPH

Community:

- **Monthly Virtual Book Club** hosted by LBPH staff and for LBPH patrons
- **Summer Reading Program**, expanded to ensure participating libraries are cognizant of blind and reading disabled children and young adults in their community wishing to participate
- **Author Talks** presented virtually or in person (at State Library facilities such as 75 Van Block, veterans' facilities, public libraries, or other locations across the state)

Partnerships:

- **Training for Libraries/Librarians:**
 - o **LBPH Training** for new library directors, circulation, reference, and programming staff members, including an overview of the NLS and LBPH; completing applications for potential LBPH patrons; using and troubleshooting playback equipment; and more
 - o **Targeted Training on NLS's Service Expansion** to children and adults with reading disabilities
 - o **Delivery of Large Print and Recorded Books**, in coordination with CT public libraries offering homebound services
 - o **Cultural Competencies for Librarians Serving the Blind Veterans Community**
 - o **ADA Compliance for Library Programming, Space Expansions, and Other Services**
 - o **How to Provide Summer Reading Programs and Services to Children and Young Adults Who are Blind**
- **Creation and Establishment of Regional LBPH Hubs** – NLS encourages readers to use as many local library services and become involved with as many library activities as possible. Beyond the trainings above, the State Library will partner with 6+ libraries across CT, where LBPH information kiosks are available, staff receive in-depth training on NLS and LBPH services, patrons can meet with the LBPH Director, and more.
- **Other Existing and Potential Partnerships:** CT Statewide Education Resource Center; Hartford Healthcare; National Network Libraries of Medicine; Veterans' Affairs; My Place CT; CT 2-1-1; and Access to Justice Commission's Working Group on Libraries

The State Library is committed to serving LBPH patrons not only through the existing model, but also through expanded services. This is where we will start but, like all library services, this is just the start. As this program develops, we welcome the input of the Advisory Committee, LBPH patrons, community partners, and others on ideas for refining and further expanding our services.