

Information on aids and services for the print impaired

(Last Updated: September 2011)

Note: “print impaired” does not need to be a visual problem, just anything that makes it hard or impossible to read print (e.g.: holding the book, turning pages, etc.) Many of the resources listed here require a note from your social worker, librarian, doctor or other health professional that you are print impaired.

The Library of Congress runs the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped - <http://www.loc.gov/nls/> . They loan (for free) a wide variety of books, magazines, etc. in Braille, large print, audio or via download from their website. They provide free loans of equipment for the audio material. The program is administered by regional libraries. To obtain information and an application form in NY: NYS Talking Book and Braille Library 800-342-3688 <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/tbbl/>

Another source of educational and/or technical books is Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic. Their services are free. They offer many books in audio CD format. They will also record books you request (given enough time and a copy of the book). RFBD 800-221-4792 <http://www.rfbd.org/>

Print impaired users can listen to national or local newspapers and magazines by calling a toll-free number. For more information about the Newline service sponsored by the National Federation for the Blind go to http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Newspapers_by_Phone.asp or call 866-504-7300

WXXI (Rochester’s PBS station) runs “Reachout Radio” on a side-band. If you’re certified print impaired, they provide (for free) a special radio and a schedule of what they read when. This includes newspapers and magazines from news to sports to cooking as well as books.

A resource for downloading books in electronic format from the web is: www.bookshare.org . In order to be a member, you need to be certified as print impaired. For \$50/year you have access to thousands of books including many recent best-sellers.

Books in audio formats (cassette, CD, digital files, etc) are also available commercially and at public libraries.

Almost any book/magazine/document in electronic format can be copied to and read on a hand-held device called the Bookport Plus. The Bookport Plus can also be used as a recording device. It supports many file formats including TXT, PDF, DOCX, DAISY, HTML, Audible and MP3. This hand-held reader can be purchased from the American Printing House for the Blind (<http://www.aph.org>). A similar device called the Victor Reader Stream is sold by Humanware (www.humanware.com)

The KNFB Mobile Reader is a camera-equipped cell phone which is capable of taking a picture of any written material and reading it back to the user. They can be contacted at www.knfbreader.com

After testing many software programs for accessing Microsoft Windows applications with speech and/or Braille from the PC, I found the program JAWS for Windows to be the most robust. For information contact: Freedom Scientific 800-444-4443 <http://www.freedomscientific.com/> They also make Magic, which is a versatile screen magnification program for Windows, as well as both portable and desktop CCTV's for enlarging text.

Some clinics deal specifically with low vision care and can fit a person with very specialized glasses, magnifiers, etc (for watching movies, TV, etc.). This kind of service is not provided by most vision care centers or ophthalmologists. In Rochester, ABVI (Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired) provides some services and may refer you to a specialist.

There are also many commercially available "talking" gadgets (watches, talking scales, etc.), which aren't specifically made for the blind, but are usually inexpensive and easy to get hold of - - and great conversation pieces.

Below is a list of contact information and catalogs for these and other adaptive aids. Each contains products for low vision or blind people, including aids for home and professional life and recreation. Some also contain products for mobility or dexterity problems and other physical limitations. The catalogs are free, but they (obviously) charge for the merchandise.

Library of Congress

National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped – free loan or download of audio and Braille books and magazines – or through your state library system
<http://www.loc.gov/nls>

Bookshare

A good source of books is:
www.bookshare.org

Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic

866-RFBD-585 (866-732-3585)
<http://www.rfbd.org/>

National Braille Press

Braille books for PCs, general & children's print/Braille books
888-965-8965
<http://www.nbp.org>

American Printing House for the Blind

Bookport Plus and other Products for the visually impaired.
800-223-1839
<http://www.aph.org>

National Federation for the Blind

Newspapers and magazines read over the phone
866-504-7300
[http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Newspapers by Phone.asp](http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Newspapers_by_Phone.asp)

American Foundation for the Blind

Services and products for the visually impaired – national
800-232-5463
<http://www.afb.org>

The Lighthouse

Services and products for the visually impaired – national
800-829-0500
<http://www.lighthouse.org>

Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ABVI)

Services and products for the visually impaired – local
422 South Clinton Ave.
Rochester, NY 14620
585-232-1111
<http://abvi-goodwill.org>

Humanware (Pulse Data)

PC-based Braille and speech products, Braille printers, OCR, CCTVs, "VictorReader Stream", etc.

800-722-3393

<http://www.humanware.com/>

Kurzweil

Kurzweil-NFB handheld reader: CCD camera with OCR and speech

http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Handheld_Reader.asp?SnID=852333960

Freedom Scientific

Jaws for Windows, Braille / speech / large-print software, PDA's and portable note-takers

800-444-4443

www.freedomscientific.com

Sighted Electronics

Braille printers

800-666-4883

<http://www.sighted.com>

Other low vision information and resources

<http://www.lowvision.org/>

ViewPoints



A weekly program about products, services & daily living tips for the visually impaired

www.ViewPointsPlus.net

contact@ViewPointsPlus.net

Maxi Aids

Catalog of adaptive aids

800-522-6294

<http://www.maxiaids.com>

Independent Living Aids (ILA Can-Do)

Catalog of adaptive aids

800-537-2118

<http://www.independentliving.com>

LS&S Group

Catalog of adaptive aids

800-468-4789

<http://www.LSSgroup.com>

Audible

Audio books players

<http://www.audible.com>

Radio Shack

talking watches, large bright clocks, tape players, etc.

<http://radioshack.com/>

Dragon Naturally Speaking

Is a computer program you can use for speech input so you don't have to use the mouse or the keyboard. This is to help problems with the hands, not with vision.

<http://www.nuance.com/naturallyspeaking/>