

Rhode Island Talking Books Plus Free Library Services to Institutions

In Rhode Island, local institutions and agencies who serve blind or physically handicapped individuals may apply for specialized reading resources, equipment, and digital download accounts from Rhode Island Talking Books Plus by completing the “Rhode Island Application for Free Library Services to Institutions” located on the Talking Books Plus website at www.olis.ri.gov/tbp. The application must be printed, completed and mailed to Talking Books Plus.

Acceptance of the application qualifies the institution or agency to provide ready access to Talking Books equipment and reading materials in the form of deposit collections at their institution or agency. After notification of acceptance into the Talking Books Plus program as an institutional or agency member, the designated staff member responsible for these services and resources at the facility will need to go online to complete the registration process for a BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) account if the agency wants an account (this is strongly recommended). Please call Rhode Island Talking Books Plus at (401) 574-9310 with any questions about this process.

Deposit Collections and BARD Accounts for Rhode Island Institutions

Purpose: Deposit collections are established in Rhode Island institutions and agencies in order to provide ready access to recorded and braille books and magazines for eligible blind or physically handicapped readers who can share equipment or who require temporary service. Typically, deposit collections are located in Rhode Island public libraries, public or private schools, schools for the blind, nursing homes, retirement centers, and rehabilitation centers. In addition, these institutions and agencies may also apply for BARD accounts (Braille and Audio Reading Download) for staff members. See the definitions below for additional information about Deposit Collections and BARD accounts.

1. Definitions.

- **Deposit Collection.** A deposit collection may contain playback equipment for digital and cassette books as well as representative titles selected for their potential interest to the clients of the institution. The agency should also maintain a

supply of applications for individual service as part of the information file given to all new institutional members. The policies relating to institutions for physical talking-book and braille service will also apply to institutional accounts on the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD).

- **BARD.** The Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) is a password-protected web site that enables eligible readers, upon approval by Rhode Island Talking Books Plus and the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), to download any of the thousands of titles recorded by NLS for our readership. As Web-Braille is merged with BARD, braille books and magazines will also be available from the site.
- **Web-Braille.** Web-Braille is a web-based service that provides access to thousands of braille books, magazines, and music scores produced by NLS. The service also includes a growing collection of titles transcribed locally for cooperating network libraries. The Web-Braille site is password-protected, and all files are in an electronic form of contracted braille that requires the use of special equipment for access.
- **Intellectual Property Protection.** To maintain intellectual property protection, the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) and Rhode Island Talking Books Plus ensures that only eligible readers can receive materials. The U.S. copyright law Chafee Amendment (P.L. 104-107 1.c) permits recording and brailleing of books and magazines, without prior permission, to create special-format materials for blind and physically handicapped residents of the United States. In addition, the United States Postal Service Free Matter mailing privilege requires that the dispatched material be in a special format and that the recipient meets the NLS eligibility requirements.

In the digital environment, the NLS commitment to protecting intellectual property has been taken one step farther. NLS books are produced on flash-memory cartridges, proprietary to NLS, and each book has a software key that enables it to be played only on an NLS or NLS-authorized commercial player.

2. **Institutions already using talking-book services.** Institutional accounts for BARD will be available to Rhode Island agencies that already receive talking book service. These agencies may continue to borrow audiobooks (on cassette or cartridge) and playback equipment, and may also apply to download books from BARD.
3. **Institutions that have not used talking-book services in the past.** Upon receipt of a properly certified institutional application, Rhode Island Talking Books Plus will send appropriate books and playback equipment or, if the application is for BARD only, a notification that the institution may apply online for BARD service. A designated staff member at the institution agrees to oversee the downloading of books, tracks the use of equipment, and handles any necessary returns. An institution may borrow digital players from its service library, when available, or purchase commercial players authorized to play NLS books.
4. **Digital Machine Policy.** The following criteria will be applied to institutional deposit collections applying for service:
 - Any institution currently receiving braille or cassette books from Rhode Island Talking Books Plus may request physical copies of books in digital format. Subject to availability of collections and playback equipment, Rhode Island Talking Books Plus library may lend digital-audiobook cartridges and playback equipment to an existing deposit collection or to a new institutional applicant. The process will be the same as it is for cassettes. In Rhode Island, the formula for determining the number of machines an institution may have is 1 player for every 4 eligible readers or residents. If additional eligible clients of an institution need digital players, each client should request a membership with the individual application form.
 - For the purpose of BARD access, NLS and Rhode Island Talking Books Plus have identified three categories. The Rhode Island Talking Books Plus program, will grant BARD access to institutions in categories A and B, and C (Demo/only account).
 - **Category A.** BARD access may be granted to schools for the blind. Access may also be granted to public or private schools and college / university disability centers, provided that they submit a list of the names of eligible students who will use the

service. The school or center should also submit properly certified applications for students who are not already registered users of the NLS program. The students need not be set up to receive individual service, but the applications should be retained by the library to verify eligibility. Rhode Island Talking Books Plus requires public and private schools to submit a new eligible-student list at the beginning of each school year and certified individual applications as appropriate.

- **Category B.** BARD access may be granted to an employee of a rehabilitation agency, a center for the blind, or a Lighthouse for the Blind who is applying for service to be able to demonstrate to eligible readers how to download books from BARD. This employee does not have to be an eligible reader. Rhode Island Talking Books Plus will approve this type of application as long as applicants accept the BARD web site pledge and understand that they will be held accountable for how the materials they download are used.
- **Category C.** BARD access will be granted to public libraries as demonstration only accounts. Public librarians may help eligible individuals learn to use BARD with the demonstration account. Eligible individuals may sign up for BARD directly and use public libraries as their e-mail and download access source, but they must be served through an individual account, not an organizational account.