



Worcester Talking Book Library (WTBL)

7000-9402

WTBL is a sub-regional library of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress. Located inside of the Worcester Public Library, WTBL provides large print for children and adults as well as digital audio, braille children's books, audio described DVDs and magazines, and the necessary equipment needed to access these materials. All materials and equipment are delivered and returned postage free through the U.S. Postal Service.

This year, WTBL was part of a 12 million dollar renovation that took place at the Worcester Public Library. Library users have taken advantage of this, especially to learn accessibility features on personal technology like smartphones and tablets.

- WTBL is using ARPA funds from the MBLC to benefit the community. WTBL plans to purchase an outreach van to go to out into the community and events to tell residents about the services offered by the library. In addition, promotional materials will be created in Spanish to reach non-English speakers in the community that could benefit from WTBL. With ARPA funding, the MBLC also issued ten hot spots to WTBL to distribute to library users. The library has had patrons with various levels of vision use the hotspots with great success.

- As the Worcester Public Library reopened to the public and began offering programming, WTBL followed suit and offered programming of its own. In addition to an art exhibit co-sponsored with Arts Worcester and Audio Journal, WTBL is offering monthly accessibility training. Attendees learn how to utilize their smart phones and tablets and the accessibility features that are offered on them.

- WTBL users have shown increasing interest in children's books prompting the library to add Wonder Books to its collection. These are interactive books where children can follow along with the text and hit buttons to hear the words read to them. The books feature group narration, music, and feel like an in-person story time at the library. For adults, the Dial A Story program that started in May offers stories, poetry from local poets, WPL programming, and old-time radio shows.