

Perkins School for the Blind and the Brooks Free Library

# Planning for Library Accessibility

A guide for using skills, knowledge and technology to meet  
the needs of patrons who are blind or visually impaired



**This guidebook was created to assist public libraries in Massachusetts in developing equal access to information and services through staff training and the use of assistive technology.**

## **Contributing organizations**

**Brooks Free Library** in Harwich, Massachusetts, promotes full and equal access to information and ideas, the love of reading, the joy of learning, and engagement with the arts, sciences and humanities. In keeping with this mission, the library established the Vision Impaired Technology Assistance at the Library (VITAL) program in 2003.

**Perkins Library, Perkins School for the Blind**, is a **free** public library for anyone who has difficulty reading regular print. The library loans audio, large print and braille books and magazines, along with playback equipment to individuals who are unable to read print materials due to a visual, physical or reading disability and to organizations that serve them.

**Perkins Solutions**, the technology products and services division of Perkins School for the Blind, provides digital accessibility consulting services to help organizations create inclusive digital experiences, products and services, as well as Perkins Brailers and individualized assistive technology training.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Since July 26, 1990, when the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law, U.S. public libraries have had an obligation to provide access to the physical library building, and to the programs and services within, to people with all types of disabilities, including those with vision loss or blindness. Today, the public expects that when individuals with a disability visit a library and ask about a particular service, they will be assisted. But, how can a librarian know all the answers for all types of disability questions and accommodations? Of course, they can't, and that's why this handbook has been developed — to assist librarians in providing appropriate services and information for *all* community members.

*Planning for Library Accessibility: A guide for meeting the needs of patrons who are blind or visually impaired*, has been designed to answer many questions about providing library services to people with disabilities. All partners in the creation of this handbook, and its accompanying outreach materials, have considerable expertise with disability-related resources and have been providing a wide variety of accessible services for people with vision loss.

This guidebook provides numerous resources to foster flexibility and creatively develop a unique program with services to meet the needs of community members with disabilities, in particular, blindness and low vision.

We also want to convey that it is okay not to have the answers to all disability-service questions, but that, through this guidebook, you will have the knowledge and resources to know where to turn to gain the most informed answers to questions, which you can share with your library patrons. The resources in this text were compiled by staff from Perkins Library, Brooks Free Library and Perkins Solutions, who work daily with assistive technology and materials to meet the needs of people with vision loss or other disabilities. We hope that you will utilize the collective expertise of these partners to help you as you navigate this enriched path of service delivery.

One important message for those developing programs to serve people with disabilities: Do not work in a vacuum. We encourage you to reach out and ask people with all types of disabilities in your community what their needs may be. Perkins Library, Brooks Free Library of Harwich, and Perkins Solutions have many strategies to assist you in connecting with people with vision loss in your community. Asking people with vision loss what they seek or need is one of the most straightforward strategies you can use. Perkins can connect you to patrons in your town who also use the services of the Perkins Library. You may choose to establish an advisory group and recruit people to help guide you in the right direction. Feel free to collaborate with the partners who created this handbook. You can then develop a solid, responsive, and workable plan to serve those with vision loss and other disabilities in your community.

As you begin the journey, remember that one of the most important principles is that customer service is your primary objective. People with disabilities deserve and expect good customer service, something at which librarians excel. Through the ideas and strategies shared in this *guide*, you and your library team will have many resources to help deliver quality customer service to people with disabilities, and more specifically, those with vision loss. Don't hesitate to reach out to us with questions. We will share our experience and ideas to help you move forward with your library's disability access program. Everyone is entitled to access the programs, services and information from their local library. Let's work together to ensure you can make this a reality in your community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Charlson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kim Charlson  
Executive Director of Perkins Library  
Perkins School for the Blind

## **Acknowledgement**

The publication of this guidebook is the result of collaboration between the Brooks Free Library of Harwich, Massachusetts, and two divisions of Perkins School for the Blind, Perkins Library and Perkins Solutions.

Special recognition goes to Assistive Technology Coordinator Carla Burke at the Brooks Free Library, who, with the unwavering support of Library Director Virginia Hewitt and the Brooks Free Library Board of Trustees, pioneered the VITAL (Vision Impaired Technology Assistance at the Library) program. Special thanks go to the many past and present volunteers of the VITAL program. In this guidebook, Carla has shared her knowledge on developing successful and sustainable assistive technology services in libraries. Our appreciation also extends to Senior Library Technician Joanne Clingan for her contributions on the role of library staff, and to Reference Librarian Jennifer Pickett for her valuable support.

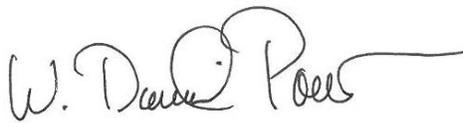
We also extend our gratitude to Kim Charlson, Executive Director of Perkins Library, who has done so much to ensure that library patrons with visual impairments or other disabilities can access a vibrant array of accessible library services. Our thanks also goes to James Gleason, Deputy Director/Special Services Librarian at Perkins Library, and to Outreach Coordinator Debby King for their valuable contributions to this project.

In addition, thanks goes to Cristopher Broyles, Director of Accessibility services at Perkins Solutions, for writing the section on Website and Digital Accessibility Services. Appreciation also goes to Ellen Hall, Perkins Solutions' Business Development Manager, for her contributions to this guidebook's content and resources, to Joe Martini, Director of Assistive Technology, and to Joann Becker, Assistive Technology Specialist, for their advice and guidance on this project.

Many other organizations deserve our thanks for their contributions to this guidebook, including the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, the Library of Congress, the Massachusetts Board

of Library Commissioners, the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, and Sight Loss Services Inc., Cape Cod & Islands.

Several individuals closely associated with the publication of *Planning for Library Accessibility: A guide for meeting the needs of patrons who are blind or visually impaired*, also deserve special acknowledgement. Shelley Quezada, Consultant for the Underserved to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners deserves special recognition for her support of this project and sincere thanks also goes to copy editor Paula Maute.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "W. Dave Power". The signature is written in black ink and includes a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

W. Dave Power  
President and CEO  
Perkins School for the Blind

## **PART ONE**

### **Designing an Assistive Technology Instructional Program for Patrons with Vision Loss**

Today many libraries have assistive technology for their patrons with vision loss, but too often, many patrons do not know how to use it. Library staff may be able to help these patrons by answering basic questions (just as they do for other patrons using library technology), but often, more in-depth training is required. By providing comprehensive instruction in the use of its assistive technology, libraries can ensure that the technology will be used, and that library patrons will access needed services.

Some may assert that this is not a “typical” library function, but it is. In the same way that libraries provide instruction in the use of other electronic resources or computers, libraries can and should provide instruction in the use of assistive technology to patrons who are blind or visually impaired.

Assistive technology provides a way for people with vision loss to access print. By providing assistive technology, and instruction in its use, a library is providing a literacy program to patrons with vision loss. This is not a population that libraries have typically served.

What are the benefits of offering these services to your patrons?

- It changes the lives of people who would otherwise not have access to print, and makes quite a difference in what they can do independently. This in turn fosters their self-confidence and self-esteem;
- It offers new avenues to knowledge, news and entertainment for those with vision loss;
- It provides an extremely positive experience not only for patrons with vision loss, but for the library staff and other library patrons;
- It helps further integrate people with vision loss into the community; and

- It increases library use and enhances the value and visibility of public libraries.

It is somewhat costly, labor intensive and time consuming to provide assistive technology and instruction in its use, but providing this has been shown to draw more people with vision loss to public libraries. This may not result in an enormous increase in the number of library patrons, but it will serve a population that is generally overlooked, and they will appreciate this much-needed service.

Some patrons, after receiving assistive technology instruction at your library, will elect to purchase it for home use. Others will qualify to receive it through state or federal programs. This does not necessarily mean that these patrons will not continue to frequent your library. Indeed, an added benefit to providing such a service is that patrons with vision loss, after receiving instruction in the use of assistive technology, are more likely to participate in other library programs, such as book groups, public talks and readings.

## **The VITAL Program**

VITAL, the Vision Impaired Technology Assistance at the Library program, was established in 2003 at Brooks Free Library in Harwich, Massachusetts. The program's goal is to provide patrons who have vision loss with opportunities to independently access print sources along with other library programs and services. These programs and services are also seen as a means to extend paths to literacy, community involvement and employment.

VITAL uses volunteer instructors to provide free, one-on-one, comprehensive instruction in the use of the library's assistive technology to patrons with vision loss. Since its inception, VITAL has assisted more than 100 patrons with the help of dozens of volunteers. The program has been recognized by a number of local and statewide organizations for its role in improving the lives of individuals with vision loss.

The success of the VITAL program demonstrates that the model works. We believe it can be replicated in other libraries, and so we offer the following guidelines should your library wish to establish a program modelled after our VITAL program. Anecdotal information has been included about the VITAL program at Brooks Free Library throughout this text to illustrate how the suggested guidelines can work.

## **Begin with a Plan**

Your library may have already developed a long-range, strategic plan. Such a plan should include the goal of making your library inclusive, providing services to all members of your community. The plan will direct the choices to be made, and the actions to be taken by your library in providing services to your patrons. Having a concrete plan is also often a prerequisite when applying for grants.

For information on developing a long-range, strategic plan for your library contact:

- Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC)  
800-952-7403  
Website: <http://mblc.state.ma.us>
- Massachusetts Library System (MLS)  
866-627-7228  
Website: <http://www.masslibsystem.org/>

## **Evaluating the Needs of Your Community**

How many residents in your city or town have vision loss? How many such residents in the surrounding cities or towns use your library? The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) will provide, by zip code, the population of legally blind residents in any city or town in the state. Call

the Boston MCB office at 617-727-5550 and ask for Central Registry. Legal blindness is defined as:

- Vision with correction of 20/200 or less in the better eye; or
- Peripheral field of ten degrees (10°) or less, regardless of visual acuity.

Sight Loss Services, Inc. Cape Cod & Islands, a nonprofit agency serving the blind on Cape Cod, estimates that for every legally blind resident in our area, three additional residents have a loss of functional vision great enough to make tasks of daily living (including reading) difficult.

For an estimate of the number of residents in your community who have significant vision loss, often referred to as “loss of functional vision,” but do not meet the definition of legal blindness, contact the nearest nonprofit agency serving the blind in your area. The MCB should be able to help you locate this agency. Visit [www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/mcb](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/mcb) or call 617-727-5550 to locate the MCB office serving your region.

**Appendix A** provides an extensive list of national, state, and local resources for gathering statistical and demographic data on the community served by your library, and the location of nearby low-vision programs and support groups.

## **Selecting Assistive Technology**

Selecting the assistive technology for your library can seem daunting. Whether it is hardware or software, the number of products to choose from can be overwhelming. People with vision loss access print in various ways: audio, magnification and braille.

When deciding which assistive technology to purchase for your library it is important to speak with residents of your community who will be using the technology. It is also helpful to speak with representatives from the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind, which routinely provides assistive

technology, to determine what technology is being distributed to MCB clients in your area. Visit [www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/mcb](http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/mcb) or call 617-727-5550 to locate the office serving your region to talk with a representative about your needs.

The Veterans Administration (VA) provides assistive technology, along with blind and vision rehabilitation programs to eligible veterans and active duty service members who have visual impairments. To locate the VA Visual Impairment Services Team (VIST) coordinator serving your region and to learn what assistive technology is used by VA clients in your region visit [www.rehab.va.gov/blindrehab](http://www.rehab.va.gov/blindrehab) or call one of the following:

- VA Boston Healthcare System in Jamaica Plain at 617-232-9500,
- Providence VA Medical Center at 401-457-3336,
- VA Central Massachusetts Healthcare System at 413-584-4040.

Manufacturers and vendors selling assistive technology can provide information on various types of assistive technology, but be aware that they may encourage you to purchase their products.

Based on the information you will gather, prioritize the technology you wish to purchase. Since your selection of assistive technology will most likely be influenced by your budget and your patrons' needs, it may not be possible to purchase every assistive technology that could benefit your patrons, but you can make a list for future budgets, raise money and apply for grants to build your program into the future.

In 2003, the VITAL program began with only one dedicated computer, two assistive software programs, and a video magnifier. Each successive year, as funding allowed, the library added additional assistive technology and today, it has a state-of-the-art assistive technology program including screen magnifiers and readers, text to speech software, braille translation software and a braille embosser, a Perkins Brailier, a reading machine and video magnifiers.

See **Appendix B** for a copy of the VITAL brochure and a list of its assistive technologies.

Brooks Free Library's VITAL program also offers one-on-one keyboarding instruction. We believe using volunteer instructors to teach keyboarding, rather than relying on typing or keyboarding software, is a more effective approach to teaching this skill, particularly for those who are not yet independent computer users.

Brooks Free Library has purchased blank National Library Service (NLS) digital cartridges used when downloading books and magazines from the NLS's Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) website. These cartridges can also be used when downloading books from Perkins Library's Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC). The VITAL program assists patrons in registering with Perkins Library and applying for a BARD account. The VITAL program also offers instruction on how to download items from these two sites. Patrons may check out cables and cartridges to use for downloading. VITAL volunteers download materials from these sites for patrons unable to do so.

Brooks Free Library, which is registered with Perkins Library, maintains a collection of talking books, and has three digital players on loan from Perkins Library. Brooks Free Library also has a BARD account, which can be used to demonstrate the BARD website to library patrons.

### **Purchasing Assistive Technology**

While your library's budget may include some money to purchase and maintain assistive technology, more than likely your library will also need to seek other funding sources.

Initial fundraising efforts might include soliciting donations from individuals, businesses and organizations such as the local Lions Club, some of which provide funding to programs that assist people with vision loss. Be sure you have an account into which tax-deductible donations can be deposited. Also explore whether your town's or city's disability commission has funds that might be used to help purchase assistive technology for your library.

Other funding sources include local, state and federal grants for which your library might be eligible.

Brooks Free Library was awarded a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant in FY2006. Grant funds were used to expand the VITAL program and to provide greater library access to patrons with disabilities. A LSTA grant is an incredible funding resource for libraries and well worth pursuing. For more information about applying for a LSTA Serving People with Disabilities grant, contact the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) at 800-952-7403, or refer to their LSTA Grant Fact Sheet: <http://mblc.state.ma.us>

**Appendix C** provides details of the LSTA Serving People with Disabilities grant.

It is essential that you be creative and explore all types of funding sources. Assistive technology can be quite expensive. Even after the initial purchase, funds are needed to keep the technology up-to-date and operational. At the time of purchase, be sure to inquire about any discounts. Most vendors offer discounts to libraries. Shop around. When ordering, remember to ask about warranties and software or product maintenance agreements (SMA/PMA). It is often less expensive to purchase an extended warranty and a SMA/PMA at the time of purchase rather than at a later date.

### **Access to the Library**

Libraries can tap into numerous resources to make their facility, programs, services, and website accessible to patrons with disabilities.

Under the Americans with Disabilities ACT (ADA), people with disabilities are guaranteed the same opportunities as everyone else to participate in mainstream American life. To learn more about the ADA, and how it applies to your library, visit [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov) or call the ADA Information Line at 800-514-0301.

The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) and the Massachusetts Library System (MLS) provide information, checklists, workshops and more, on how to make your library accessible to all.

- **Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners**  
800-952-7403  
Website: <http://mblc.state.ma.us>
- **Massachusetts Library System**  
866-627-7228  
Website: <http://www.masslibsystem.org/>

**See Appendix D** for a comprehensive list of accessibility features and technologies representative of an accessible library published by the MBLC.

The MBLC website provides a statewide library directory that includes over 1,600 libraries and library branches. In addition to address, phone, email, hours, and important staff, the directory will also provide essential information about the library's accessibility features, including: Parking, wheelchair access, mobility aids, adaptive computers, listening systems, magnifiers, CCTV's, and other accommodations.

When complete, library patrons will be able to use the "Massachusetts Libraries" public portal at <http://mass.gov/libraries> or <http://libraries.state.ma.us> to find a library near them having the desired accessibility features.

Website accessibility is a vital issue for libraries to consider. To learn more about website accessibility, visit the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) at [www.w3.org/WAI](http://www.w3.org/WAI).

## **Locating Assistive Technology in Your Library**

One of the decisions you will make once you purchase assistive technology is where to locate it in your library. Placing it in a visible location announces its availability and makes the public aware of your instructional program.

The assistive technology should be located in an area that is easily accessible (if on an upper floor, accessible by elevators), and not too far from the library's mainstream activity.

At Brooks Free Library, most of the assistive technology is located near the public computers in the Reference Department, which enables patrons using the assistive technology to interact with other library patrons.

Recognizing that it often takes people using assistive technology longer to perform computer tasks, the VITAL program's two dedicated computers have no time management software. If your library uses a time management system on your public computers, we suggest that you provide dedicated computers or a timer override system for assistive software users.

Also, if the assistive software is available on your public computers, you will need to consider how your security software and other software programs will impact a patron's use of the assistive software. For example, the time management software on Brooks Free Library's public computers prevents patrons from saving any personal information or settings on those computers. Therefore, time management software is not used on the dedicated computers in the VITAL program. An assistive software program at Brooks Free Library allows multiple users to save preferred settings, and patrons with vision loss using that program are encouraged to do so. This is particularly helpful when users are receiving instruction.

Consideration must also be given to the noise generated by patrons using audio technology. Headphones may be provided, or patrons may elect to bring their own, but in some instances, such as during computer training, using headphones is impractical.

Due to the high noise level created when patrons use the braille embosser at Brooks Free Library, this machine, and a computer loaded with braille translation software, is located in a separate room of the library.

Also, VITAL devices that are used for demonstration only, or that must be checked out before use, are kept on a special shelf at the reference desk.

At Brooks Free Library, resource shelves containing information sheets, applications, brochures, catalogs, and other information of particular interest to patrons with disabilities and their families and friends are located in the Reference Department, along with a sign that reads “INFORMATION SHEETS AVAILABLE IN ALTERNATIVE FORMATS UPON REQUEST.”

Special consideration should also be given to providing:

- Appropriate lighting;
- Adjustable window blinds if outside glare is a problem;
- Wheelchair accessible furniture;
- Large print, color contrasting signage; and
- A relief area for service animals.

### **The Program Coordinator**

Any library that provides instruction in assistive technology to patrons with vision loss will need someone to coordinate that service. We suggest that this coordinator be a paid staff member since the responsibilities and time commitment are generally beyond the scope of a volunteer. Your library will find that this position, and support for funding it, will grow over time as the program’s success, and the need for such a service, is documented.

This position requires technical skill and knowledge of assistive technologies for people with vision loss combined with an in-depth awareness of the social services aspect of interacting with people dealing with vision loss. The coordinator must also be familiar with common eye diseases and conditions causing vision loss, and their effect on the patron’s ability to use different assistive technology and software programs. The coordinator will have regular contact with library staff and volunteers, patrons in the instructional program and other library patrons, town employees and social service agencies, vendors and community groups. The program coordinator will also have access to confidential patron information and library records.

Examples of the program coordinator’s essential functions are listed below:

- Keep abreast of available assistive technology, updates and emerging technologies;
- Analyze patron needs in order to recommend purchases of assistive technology and equipment;
- Develop or adapt curriculum for teaching assistive technology;
- Recruit, train and supervise volunteer instructors in the use of the library's assistive technology;
- Conduct community outreach to promote the library's assistive technology and instruction services;
- Perform intake and assessment of each patron's needs;
- Meet with prospective patrons interested in receiving instruction, and demonstrate software and equipment;
- Match patrons and volunteer instructors, and monitor the progress of instruction;
- Maintain a resource information center for patrons with vision loss and other disabilities;
- Perform resource and referral reference services to assist patrons with vision loss in locating agencies and resources that may provide assistance,
- Provide disability and sensitivity-awareness training to staff and volunteers;
- Order and maintain a circulating collection of Perkins Library talking books and suggest purchases of items in alternative formats for the library's collections;
- Record data and statistics for program development, funding opportunities, and the Annual Report and Information Survey (ARIS);
- Make presentations at community and civic organizations serving people with disabilities;
- Prepare printed materials for community outreach, and press releases for local publications, the library website, and the media; and
- Appear on local TV news, cable TV and radio programs to promote the program.

## **Recruiting Volunteers**

Given the budget constraints of many public libraries, volunteers are key to a self-sustaining program that provides instruction in the use of assistive technology to patrons with vision loss. Volunteers, under the supervision of a program coordinator, can perform many of the duties that contribute to the success of the program.

For instance, VITAL volunteers provide instruction in the use of assistive technology to patrons with vision loss. Some volunteers also teach keyboarding to patrons, and download books from the BARD website and the Perkins Library online public access catalog (OPAC), provide audio transcription services, and assist the program coordinator at outreach presentations and with clerical duties.

Recruiting volunteers is an ongoing process since volunteers routinely relocate or move on to other projects.

When recruiting volunteers, the program coordinator should look for individuals willing to make the commitment of time and effort that is necessary to learn, and then teach, assistive technology. It may take a commitment of a few weeks, or many months, depending on the particular assistive technology in your library. It is helpful, though not necessary, if an individual has teaching or social service experience, and/or technology skills.

In addition, the program coordinator should evaluate each prospective volunteer's temperament. Does he/she have the patience, sensitivity, open-mindedness and ability to teach people with vision loss? This may become evident only after a volunteer has been trained and is working with a patron. If it appears that an individual is not a good candidate to teach in your program, alternative opportunities for volunteering within the program should be suggested.

To recruit volunteers, reach out to the public via radio, newspapers, local TV, social media, your library's website and library publications. Contact local organizations such as the Lions Club, Kiwanis, the Rotary, as well as

social groups of retirees whose members are often looking for meaningful volunteer opportunities. Indeed, many members of such groups often have expertise in computers and technology and may well have a background in teaching.

Additionally, agencies serving people with vision loss may be able to refer clients who are familiar with assistive technology and who are looking for volunteer opportunities.

Organizations such as local chapters of the American Council of the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind may be another valuable source of volunteers. To locate the chapters nearest you, contact the national headquarters of these organizations:

- **American Council of the Blind (ACB)**  
Phone: 800-424-8666  
Website: [www.acb.org](http://www.acb.org)
- **National Federation of the Blind (NFB)**  
Phone: 410-659-9314  
Website: [www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org)

And don't forget patrons who have received instruction in your program. Some of the best VITAL volunteer instructors have been patrons who, after completing their instruction, have returned to "give back" by teaching others who, like themselves, experienced vision loss.

## **Training Volunteers**

Brooks Free Library distributes the following forms to prospective volunteers prior to training. Your library may want to consider similar policies when developing an instructional program.

- **VITAL Volunteer Partnership Agreement Form.** When an individual indicates an interest in becoming a VITAL volunteer instructor, or if an employee/representative from an organization asks to be trained in a specific assistive technology in order to become a volunteer instructor elsewhere, they are asked to complete a VITAL Volunteer Partnership Agreement form. By signing this form, the

individual agrees that in exchange for the instruction received, he/she will tutor at least one library patron with vision loss, or one prospective VITAL volunteer, at Brooks Free Library. This allows the program coordinator to supervise and give guidance to the volunteer instructor during his/her first tutoring experience, thus ensuring that he/she has sufficient knowledge of the assistive technology and is comfortable teaching people with vision loss. See Appendix E for a VITAL Volunteer Partnership Agreement form.

- **Emergency Contact Form.** Brooks Free Library requires all volunteers (and patrons receiving VITAL services) to complete an emergency contact form. See Appendix F for an Emergency Contact Information form.
- **Volunteer Gift Policy.** VITAL volunteers are provided with a copy of our VITAL volunteer gift policy, which gives guidance on the acceptance of gifts from appreciative patrons. See Appendix G for the VITAL volunteer gift policy.

In addition, your library may require a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check be done on volunteers.

All volunteers will need to receive disability and sensitivity-awareness training. Contact the following for information, materials and workshops for such training:

- **Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC)**  
800-952-7403  
Website: <http://mblc.state.ma.us>
- **Massachusetts Library System (MLS)**  
866-627-7228  
Website: <http://www.masslibsystem.org/>

Also, an Internet search will identify numerous disability and sensitivity-awareness training materials and curricula.

During disability and sensitivity-awareness training, Brooks Free Library uses, among other resources, two practical handouts titled “When you

meet a person with sight loss...” (see Appendix H) and “Basic Sighted Guide Technique” (see Appendix I).

Brooks Free Library also uses a brochure developed by Cape Cod Community College’s O’Neill Center for Disability Services, “Communicating with People with Disabilities”. You can obtain this brochure by calling 508-362-2131 x4337 or by visiting [www.capecod.edu/web/disability](http://www.capecod.edu/web/disability).

While the program coordinator will generally provide assistive technology instruction to prospective volunteer instructors, an experienced volunteer instructor may also be called upon to perform this task. The amount of time involved in teaching a particular assistive software program or device depends on the complexity of the technology, the program curriculum, and the prospective volunteer’s learning style.

A word about curriculum... By using product manuals, training materials provided by manufacturers, and online resources, the program coordinator can, with a bit of effort, develop a curriculum for your assistive technology instructional program. If your library decides to hire a consultant or company to train your volunteers, ask for a written contract detailing exactly what is included in the training. Too often such training provides only an overview of the technology and does not provide enough information or instruction needed to fully train a volunteer. Ask if a written curriculum is provided with the training. If not, inquire as to whether one can be obtained or purchased.

Once a volunteer has completed the training, and feels ready to begin teaching, he/she can be added to the list of available volunteer instructors.

When matched to a patron who has requested instruction, the volunteer instructor works one-on-one with his/her student, following the curriculum provided by the program coordinator. The time it takes to teach a specific assistive technology is generally fixed by the curriculum, though a volunteer instructor may elect to continue to meet with his/her student for a number of practice lessons.

Following each lesson the volunteer tutor should record the date and time of the lesson, what was taught, and any special notes relevant to the session. A copy of this information should be given to the program coordinator to serve as a guide for both the instructor and the program coordinator when reviewing the progress of the instruction.

Brooks Free Library periodically schedules volunteer appreciation luncheons. Not only is this a way of thanking the volunteers, but it provides them an opportunity to meet and share their experience and approaches. Consideration should be given to providing some sort of expression of appreciation to the volunteers in your program.

## **Publicizing Your Program**

A well-publicized program will ensure that patrons will take advantage of your assistive technology and instruction. Even before your library is ready to begin offering instruction, perhaps even while you are still recruiting and training volunteers, your library can begin publicizing the service, and create a list of interested patrons.

The following is a list of suggested ways to publicize your program. Some cost money, so if you choose this route, you will need to earmark a portion of your budget for publicity and outreach efforts.

- Create a program brochure. Distribute it at your library, community organizations, and at town and city offices, at doctors' offices (particularly those of eye care specialists), at local independent living centers, assisted living facilities and nursing homes, local organizations that serve people with vision loss, and at local chapters of the American Council of the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind.
- Create a "Services for Patrons with Disabilities" page on your library's accessible website. Include information about the types of assistive technology your library offers, your assistive technology instructional

program, and other library information relevant to patrons with disabilities.

- Inform your Massachusetts Commission for the Blind's regional office about your new program. Ask that their counselors distribute your brochure to their clients. A number of patrons of VITAL services at Brooks Free Library have been referred by MCB counselors.
- Contact your local Veterans Agent and the VA's Visual Impairment Services Team (VIST) Coordinator that serves your region to inform them of the program. Ask that your brochure be distributed to their clients. Many veterans are eligible to receive assistive technology equipment and training through the Veterans Administration (VA). Those who are not, and some who are, may wish to use your services instead of, or in addition to, those provided by the VA.
- Contact Perkins Library to request that a mailing about your program be sent to their patrons who live in your target communities.
- Ask your city or town's disability commission to help publicize your program.
- List the service on your local cable station's community bulletin board. This is particularly effective if your station provides audio voiceover of the bulletin board.
- Ask your local cable station to interview your program coordinator, if possible at the library, so as to also videotape the assistive technology in operation.
- Inform your city or town's Council on Aging director about the program, and request that it be publicized in their newsletter.
- Submit articles about your program to local newspapers. Request that each newspaper have a reporter interview the program coordinator, describe the assistive technology and publish pictures of it.
- Submit a Public Service Announcement (PSA) to all local radio and TV stations. If a station airs community programming, ask to arrange an interview with your program coordinator.

- Submit a Public Service Announcement (PSA) to your local affiliate of the Talking Information Center (TIC). Arrange for an interview on one of their community information programs. To locate your local TIC affiliate, or for more information about the Talking Information Center, call the Marshfield TIC at 800-696-9505 or visit [www.ticnetwork.org](http://www.ticnetwork.org).
- Use all social media avenues such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Vine.
- Speak to local community and church groups and ask them to publicize your program.
- As part of your community outreach, visit local assisted and independent living facilities, and nursing homes.

In addition, many patrons will hear about your program by word of mouth, so ask them to spread the word to everyone they know who may need assistive library services.

Publicizing your program is an ongoing task. Be creative and take advantage of any opportunity to publicize the service.

### **Providing Assistive Technology Instruction**

Patrons with vision loss will generally contact the library by phone, though some may inquire about your program in person or by email. While family members or friends may also contact the library on behalf of, or sometimes unbeknownst to, an individual, it is always best to speak directly with the person with the vision loss, if possible.

Patrons who contact your library to ask about your assistive technology and instructional program should be referred to the program coordinator, who should begin the intake process by gathering some basic information such as contact information and cause and degree of vision loss. It is always important to ask whether the patron is legally blind and/or a veteran since he/she may be eligible for services from the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind and/or the Veterans Administration, respectively.

An intake form, such as the one used by Brooks Free Library, may be used to record patron information (see Appendix J, the VITAL Intake form). It should be explained to the patron that providing information is optional and that this information may be used to:

- Help determine which of the library's assistive technologies could best meet the patron's needs;
- Identify what resource information might be helpful for the patron;
- Provide necessary information to the patron's volunteer instructor; and
- Provide data and statistics for program development and evaluation, funding opportunities, and for the Annual Report and Information Survey (ARIS).

If a patron is unfamiliar with your library's assistive technology, the program coordinator should describe the library's various assistive technologies, and then schedule an appointment to demonstrate the technologies, at which time the coordinator and patron can together evaluate which assistive technology best suits his/her needs.

Patrons who schedule a VITAL demonstration at Brooks Free Library are given a resource packet containing a VITAL brochure, handouts about available local, state, and federal programs and services, a Perkins Library application, brochures and catalogs from agencies and companies that service people with vision loss. The packet might also contain additional information specific to the patron's individual needs. After reviewing the information contained in the resource packet with the patron, the VITAL coordinator demonstrates the library's assistive technology.

It may not be necessary to demonstrate all of your library's assistive technology to each patron. Usually only the technology that the patron can use, as determined by his/her cause and degree of vision loss, and interest, will need to be demonstrated.

After a demonstration and evaluation, if a patron requests instruction in the use of any of your library's assistive technology (or keyboarding instruction if offered in your program), the patron can then be matched to a volunteer instructor. It is often helpful to give the volunteer instructor, with the patron's permission, a copy of the patron's intake form. The program coordinator should introduce the patron to his/her volunteer instructor at the first scheduled lesson, and be available to assist during subsequent lessons.

Patrons should be encouraged to take notes during lessons to assist in the learning process. At Brooks Free Library, VITAL program patrons generally take notes using a digital recorder. Because some patrons prefer to record notes on a cassette, the library lends cassette recorders to patrons requesting one. Patrons should be instructed to practice using the technology between each lesson.

Since assistive technology could soon be in high demand at your library, we recommend that libraries have a scheduling notebook in which patrons can reserve a technology for a certain day and time. This eliminates any problem that might arise should more than one patron wish to use a particular assistive technology at the same time. Also, by reserving the technology for a particular day and time, a patron will know that the technology is available when he/she arrives at the library, and can make transportation arrangements accordingly.

### **Transportation Options**

Patrons with vision loss often rely on friends and family members for transportation. Sometimes such help is not available, and for some people, this is never an option. Therefore, your library could provide a list of local transportation options available to your patrons with vision loss. This list might include contact information for some of the following:

- Area transit authority services;
- Your city or town's Council on Aging van;
- Taxi, Uber and Lyft services;

- Full-service transportation companies; and
- Religious or volunteer programs that provide transportation.

The Massachusetts Health and Human Services Transportation website is a helpful resource when searching for transportation options. Visit [www.mass.gov/hst](http://www.mass.gov/hst) and under “Key Resources,” select the “I’m Looking for Transportation” link.

Some of the VITAL volunteer instructors at Brooks Free Library drive their patrons to and from their lessons, but this transportation is arranged privately between the volunteer and patron. It is not a service provided by the library, and thus the library is not liable for any such arrangement.

### **The Role of Library Staff**

A successful assistive technology program requires the support of the entire library staff, from the front desk librarians who greet patrons, to reference desk staff who can help patrons and your volunteers find resources, to the check-out desk staff. To support your program, staff will need initial and periodic refresher training, both in working with people with disabilities and in the assistive technology instructional program at your library. Staff will also identify patron needs, handle inquiries, and catalog and check out materials.

All current library staff should receive disability and sensitivity-awareness training. Newly hired staff should receive this training as part of their job orientation. This training should be given periodically at scheduled staff meetings.

All library staff should have a basic understanding of, and be able to answer, general questions about your library’s assistive technology and instructional program. Patrons requesting additional information should be referred to the program coordinator.

At times staff may recognize patron needs for your assistive technology program, which may come as general, informal comments such as:

- “Large print is not large enough for me anymore.”
- “Spoken CDs are too difficult to handle.”
- “Reading used to be a big part of [my/ or my mother’s / father’s / spouse’s] life.”

Such comments can open the door for library staff to mention the assistive technology services offered at your library, offer patrons a brochure, and introduce them to the assistive technology program coordinator. Be aware that the success of your program should not be measured by how quickly a patron’s inquiry turns into a service. It may take months for a person to process information and to acknowledge that they may benefit from services, and to accept and then manage their vision loss. Time, transportation, and other factors may also initially impede their access to services.

Designated library staff also will need to catalog the library’s assistive technology. Your library’s inventory of assistive technology may include items that can be borrowed by or for patrons with vision loss. The following is a suggested list of assistive technology that can be borrowed from your library, based on that of Brooks Free Library.

- Talking books from the Perkins Braille and Talking Book Library;
- National Library Service (NLS) digital talking book players;
- NLS blank digital cartridges and USB cables;
- Portable video magnifier; and
- Assorted handheld magnifiers.

To catalog the talking books, the Cape Libraries Automated Material Sharing (CLAMS) network cataloger created a fairly generic, basic, bibliographic record in our automated system called “Perkins Talking Books” (Brooks Free Library). This is a “suppressed record” so the public cannot see it on the OPAC, which tends to prevent requests as the collection was created as a “browsing collection”. As new talking books come in, barcodes are put on mailing containers, and a card with a big sticker is inserted over the mailing label that reads “Return to Brooks Free Library, 739 Main St., Harwich, MA 02645.” Then we create an individual item record for each book that we attach to this bibliographic record. The call number field includes the title and author of the item. An item type that is described as “Book – electronic circulating” is used.

If your library chooses to maintain a deposit collection of books from the Perkins Braille and Talking Book Library, your network bibliographic staff member could help you decide which item types and codes to use for these records; you may then create a template to automatically fill in some of the fields when you are creating item records.

Brooks Free Library also circulates NLS players (and other circulating assistive technology items). They are currently attached to a network-wide bibliographic record for “Assistive technology equipment” in the CLAMS network. The CLAMS network cataloger created this bibliographic record so that anyone in our system can easily attach new assistive technology equipment. We circulate our players in canvas bags with a barcode on the players. We use the Call Number field to identify the item (e.g., “Digital Talking Book Player”). All of these catalogued assistive technology items are held at the Reference Desk. These items are loaned for 2 weeks but patrons can request to extend the loan period. Most often these items are checked out at the reference desk, but may also be left for pickup at the circulation desk.

## **Conclusion**

We hope that this section of the guide will help you navigate along the path to designing a program of assistive technology instruction at your library. Designing a program of assistive technology instruction for your library patrons with vision loss will take time, money and effort. It will, however, provide a valuable and much needed service to a largely underserved population. Your patrons with vision loss will have access to print, literacy, and the entire range of library programs and services, enabling them to participate in mainstream library activities.

For more information, contact the Brooks Free Library Assistive Technology Coordinator at:

### **Brooks Free Library**

739 Main Street Harwich, MA 02645

Phone: 508-430-7562

Email: [brooksfreelibrary@clamsnet.org](mailto:brooksfreelibrary@clamsnet.org)

## **PART TWO**

### **Perkins Library and the Programs and Services Offered**

Perkins Library is the free public library for anyone who has difficulty reading regular print in Massachusetts. The library loans audio, large print and braille books and magazines, along with audio playback equipment to individuals who are unable to read printed materials due to a visual, physical or reading disability and to organizations that serve them.

One of the first braille and “talking book” libraries in the United States, Perkins Library was established in 1835 by Perkins School for the Blind. In 1931, the Library affiliated with the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) of the Library of Congress.

NLS provides the equipment and the majority of the braille as well as audio books and magazines to Perkins Library. Funding for the Perkins Library (including salaries and operating expenses) is provided by the Massachusetts Legislature and administered through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, along with grants, gifts, and private donations.

### **Worcester Talking Book Library**

Massachusetts has a sub-regional library of the Perkins Library serving the state’s central region, located at the main branch of the Worcester Public Library, at 3 Salem Square, Worcester. This library mirrors many of the services offered by Perkins Library and is responsible for the collection of large print books, available to patrons statewide.

### **Who Is Eligible for Perkins Library Services**

An individual is eligible for services if they meet any of the following conditions:

- is legally blind, defined as having vision of 20/200 or less, or a visual field no greater than 20 degrees;

- is unable to see well enough to read with comfort for extended periods of time, even with correction;
- has a physical condition that makes holding a book or turning pages difficult;
- is certified by a medical doctor as having a reading disability such as dyslexia, which prevents one from reading standard print; or
- is legally blind with a profound hearing loss.

Schools, libraries, hospitals, nursing homes, rehabilitation and assisted living centers, and other organizations serving individuals who qualify, may also apply for a library account. An institution may borrow equipment and materials, at no cost, for use by an eligible individual or in a group setting with eligible individuals.

### **How to Register**

Perkins Library has two applications, one for individuals and one for institutions. Both forms can be obtained at [www.perkinslibrary.org](http://www.perkinslibrary.org), or by contacting Perkins Library. Completed applications should be submitted by mail, email or fax. All patron information is confidential.

**Individual Application Certification:** A certifying authority must complete the *Authorization Form* on the back of the application. Authorization may be made by professional librarians, medical doctors, optometrists, registered nurses, and professional staff of hospitals, institutions, and public or social service agencies (e.g., case workers, counselors, social workers, and rehabilitation teachers).

If a reading disability stems from an organic dysfunction, authorization must be made by a doctor of medicine or osteopathy who may consult with colleagues in associated disciplines.

**Institutional Application:** Organizations serving individuals who qualify for Perkins Library services can register in the name of the institution, with one contact person responsible for the materials.

## What Talking Book Libraries Provide

Reading materials and audio playback equipment are sent to registered patrons at no charge and are delivered and returned, postage free, through the U.S. Postal Service (USPS).

Perkins Library loans books that span a wide array of categories, from the classics, science fiction, and mysteries to recent bestsellers in English and many other foreign languages. Books for both adults and children are available in digital audio, braille, and large print. Perkins Library also offers a selection of over 100 magazines in audio, large print, and braille formats.

Because our books are produced in a specialized format on digital cartridges, we loan digital players free of charge. Individuals borrowing equipment and materials are responsible for the equipment loaned, and must return the equipment to Perkins Library when it is no longer needed.

Patrons can even ask the Library to select titles based on their areas of interest and to send the books automatically. They can request the number of books they wish to have and how often they want them sent.

Patrons can also request titles. The library catalog is available at [www.perkinslibrary.org](http://www.perkinslibrary.org) and patrons can order books online by using their patron ID and password.

A bi-monthly publication, *Talking Book Topics*, sent to every patron, lists the new books that NLS has made available. Patrons who request braille books receive a similar publication, *Braille Book Review*, listing the new braille titles.

Perkins Online Public Access Catalog at [www.perkinslibrary.org](http://www.perkinslibrary.org) provides electronic access to the Library's holdings, and allows borrowers to sign in to order materials online. Patrons can also communicate directly with staff via email ([library@perkins.org](mailto:library@perkins.org)).

## **In Addition to Audio and Braille Books...**

**Large Print:** An extensive large print collection is available to all Massachusetts patrons through the Worcester Talking Book Library ([www.talkingbook.mywpl.org](http://www.talkingbook.mywpl.org)). A free subscription to catalog updates is available in large print and online. Patrons may borrow six large print books at a time per loan period of four weeks.

**Magazines:** Free subscriptions to magazines on digital cartridge or in braille are available. For a complete list, contact Perkins Library.

**Audio Described DVDs:** Described DVDs have a sound track that narrates key visual elements such as characters' actions, costuming, gestures and expressions, and other visual cues without interfering with the dialogue. Over 1,600 audio described DVDs are available to patrons. The loan period is 14 days with a limit of two DVDs at a time.

**NEWSLINE Talking Newspaper Service:** NEWSLINE, a program developed by the National Federation of the Blind, enables users to listen to newspapers and magazines through synthetic voice output via any touch-tone phone or smartphone. NEWSLINE is free of charge to registered Massachusetts library patrons and is accessed by calling either a local or toll-free phone number. This service can also be accessed online via a password-protected website or through an iOS mobile app (Apple iPhone, iPad, and iPod). NEWSLINE offers over 500 publications including 50 magazines on the arts, science, health and fitness, popular culture, national and international news, along with four Spanish-language newspapers.

**Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD):** A free download service for braille and audio books, offers more than 90,000 digital books and over 40 digital magazine titles. Library patrons can sign up for BARD through the Perkins Library. We will verify that the applicant is registered and users will be emailed login information and step-by-step instructions for using BARD.

BARD Mobile apps for iOS (Apple) and Android devices are available for Perkins Library patrons who are registered with BARD. The free apps allow

books to be downloaded directly to a device. YouTube has informative “BARD Mobile: How-To Series” videos that demonstrate how to use the apps on both iOS and Android devices. The videos may be found at <http://bit.ly/BARDYouTube>.

Public libraries can access the BARD program for training and instructional purposes for blind, visually impaired, physically disabled or reading disabled patrons.

The National Library Service’s policy grants minimal access of downloadable titles to public library accounts. A library’s account holder may browse the entire collection.

**The SHELF (Shared Electronic Files) Project:** A catalog of locally recorded titles can be downloaded and played on a Library of Congress digital player. Interested borrowers can access the SHELF Project through the Perkins Library online catalog at [www.perkinslibrary.org](http://www.perkinslibrary.org).

### **Additional Services at the Perkins Library**

**Reference Services:** The Perkins Library Reference Department specializes in providing information on a wide array of subjects in whatever format the patron prefers — large print, braille, email, accessible attachments, or over the phone. People with vision loss who use computers or smartphones receive an electronic version of the file and then use adaptive technology (e.g., screen-reading software) to “listen” as the computer reads aloud the information. Patrons may also use different types of adaptive technology, such as screen magnification devices or braille displays.

**Foreign Languages:** Perkins Library offers a selection of braille and talking books and magazines in more than 60 languages. To browse Spanish titles, select “Spanish” as the language option in the Online Catalog before entering your search terms. The Spanish Application and Spanish Information Sheet are available at the Perkins Library website at [www.perkinslibrary.org](http://www.perkinslibrary.org).

**Recording Studio:** The Perkins Library's Clive W. Lacey Recording Studio produces local interest books utilizing specially trained volunteers as narrators, monitors, reviewers and editors. The books cover topics such as Massachusetts history, people and places, culture, personalities, sports, books by Massachusetts authors, and other titles of a broader New England interest. The studio also offers a fee-for-service program producing recorded materials by request.

**Braille Production:** Perkins Library operates a fee-for-service braille production program upon request. Certified braille transcribers provide customized braille materials serving individuals and organizations such as schools, colleges, government agencies, corporations, restaurants and theaters. The department generates 200,000 braille pages each year including reports, bus schedules, instructional booklets, menus, theatre programs and more. Books and magazines for the Perkins Library collection are also produced.

**Braille Awareness Kit:** The Perkins Library loans outreach kits, which include written materials, braille books and magazines, tools and games to schools, civic groups, services clubs and government agencies in New England interested in learning more about braille and how it enhances the lives of people who are blind.

**Newsletters:** Perkins Library has two newsletters, *Dots & Decibels*, for all patrons, and *PERKIDS*, for younger readers. Both publications are available in large print, braille, audio and electronic format.

**Perkins Braille Repair Program:** Massachusetts residents registered with Perkins Library can have their personal Perkins Braille repaired free-of-charge through this special program.

**Electronic Video Magnifiers Loan Program:** Close-Circuit-Televisions (CCTV) or Electronic Video Magnifiers are loaned to active Massachusetts patrons for as long as they are required. Borrowers need to arrange for pickup and return as the library cannot ship the equipment.

**Recommended Reads:** Each month, a list of accessible books based on a chosen theme is compiled by library staff and emailed to patrons. Recent themes include *Americans in Paris*, *Books Made into Movies*, and *Young at Heart: Teen Books You Might have Missed*. Recommended Reads can be found at the library website.

**Library Without Walls:** Library patrons can join a speaker series or book group discussion from the comfort of their home or office via a conference call. Interested patrons must preregister in order to receive information on how to join the conference call.

### QUESTIONS?

Call Perkins Library at 800-852-3133 or 617-972-7240

Email: [library@perkins.org](mailto:library@perkins.org)

[www.perkinslibrary.org](http://www.perkinslibrary.org)

Library Hours: Mon – Fri: 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

(except holidays)

### Perkins Library and You, a Partnership

Perkins Library has designed a special Outreach Display that will be provided to every municipal library in Massachusetts. Perkins will be working with the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners to reach out to the members of the Massachusetts Library System. The display is a clear plastic literature rack that will hold Perkins Library brochures and individual applications for Perkins Library membership.

Libraries are also welcome to customize a deposit collection to loan audio books and equipment.

To order supplies for the literature rack, contact Perkins Library Outreach Coordinator at 617-972-7240 or email [library@perkins.org](mailto:library@perkins.org).

Perkins Library appreciates the opportunity to work closely with libraries across Massachusetts in order to reach as many eligible patrons as possible.

## **PART THREE**

### **Perkins Solutions — Digital Access to Literacy**

Perkins Solutions, the assistive technology division of Perkins School for the Blind, provides a full range of services, including website and digital accessibility consulting, assistive technology products, individualized assessments and trainings and assistive technology workshops for library staff and other interested organizations.

We believe strongly in our mission of increasing independence, literacy and access to employment for people with visual impairments and other disabilities. Our goal is to enable individuals and organizations like libraries, to create digital accessibility and adaptive environments that enable every individual to have equal access to information and services.

This section describes Perkins Solutions' services along with recommendations and guidelines for libraries to consider in relation to developing accessible library services for traditionally underserved populations.

#### **Website and Digital Accessibility Services**

With the recent update of section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, recognition of the need for digital accessibility is increasing and the public's access to digital products is ever growing. Individuals with disabilities comprise an appreciable portion of the population — as much as 20% by some estimates — and libraries are committed to creating environments of equal access for all. In addition, under sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, if libraries receive federal funds, they cannot practice discrimination based on disability. These laws also apply to website accessibility. Guidelines for web accessibility can be found on the World Wide Web Consortium (<https://www.w3.org/Consortium/mission.html>).

That said, though formal evaluations can provide a great deal of detailed information about website accessibility and usability, nearly every organization, including public libraries, can take basic steps to help ensure equal access. Below are three easy methods to check accessibility, which can be performed without any special tools or software.

The first helps to ensure access for individuals with fine-motor control issues, the second helps to ensure access for individuals with color blindness, and the third helps to ensure access for individuals with hearing loss or deafness:

#### 1. Motor control issues:

Are your website, Facebook page and other platforms keyboard accessible? Not all users navigate digital content using a mouse. Some users use only a keyboard. Test the navigation and operation of your site using just a keyboard — all you need to use are the Tab key, the Arrow keys, the Enter key, and the space bar. Are you able to move around the site in full and access all the content — especially the controls, such as drop-down menus, form fields, and radio buttons?

#### 2. Color blindness:

Do your website, Facebook page and other platforms use color to convey or classify information? Remember, some users are color blind. Look around your sites for images, particularly charts and graphs. Do any of them have legends, rows, columns or regions in which color is the only distinction? Another common instance of color usage relates to error messages, such as “incorrectly completed form field” messages. Sometimes the error message will ask the user to correct or complete the items “shown in red”. If a user cannot distinguish red from the other colors, this is problematic. A good remedy is to supplement error messages with triple asterisks or underlines. Thus, if a user cannot distinguish “red”, he/she can simply look for the triple asterisks or underlines.

### 3. Hearing loss:

Do all of the videos on your website, Facebook page and other platforms have captions? Remember, not all users have perfect hearing. Some users have no hearing. So, anything that's spoken in a video should also be captioned. Simply look around the site for videos and play them. Do you see any text? If not, is a captioning button (usually represented as "cc") visible? If yes, what happens when you click that button? Do you see captions then? If the site has no captioning, ask your webmaster or web developer to add them.

If, in checking the three items above, you find what you believe to be accessibility problems, let your web developers know and be sure to stress the importance of correcting the issues in a timely, meaningful way. Potential legal and sales issues could result. The Department of Justice reports that there has been a marked increase in Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) litigation over website accessibility. However, the most critical reason for making your digital content accessible is that it's simply the right thing to do! Everyone should be assured equal access to digital content. It's that simple.

If you would like more information on accessibility reviews and/or assistance with correcting accessibility issues or installing accessibility features on your organization's website or other digital platform, please contact us.

### **Perkins Solutions**

**Tel: 617-972-7308, Toll free: 855-206-8353**

**or go online: [www.perkinsolutions.org](http://www.perkinsolutions.org)**

### **Assistive Technology Products**

Perkins Solutions is a reseller for most of the major manufacturers of blindness and low-vision products known for their quality and durability.

Our innovative range of products include low- and high-tech magnification devices; optical character-recognition (text to speech) devices; specialty software for magnification, screen reading, learning disabilities such as dyslexia; speech recognition; and many other products. In addition, Perkins Solutions manufactures and sells the renowned Classic Perkins Braille and the computer assisted SMART Braille that provides visual and audio feedback to support braille learners. Both devices operate much like an old fashion typewriter and are used to emboss braille characters onto paper.

We routinely partner with libraries to present a comprehensive range of devices and software designed to meet the needs of patrons, and it is important to note that none of our representatives receive commissions on the products or services they recommend or sell to clients.

**See Appendix K** for a list of products that Perkins Solutions provide.

## **Assistive Technology Assessments and Training Services**

Perkins Solutions employs assistive technology trainers who provide assistive technology assessments, evaluations and training to clients with vision and hearing loss and to the organizations that serve them.

Individuals who are registered with Mass Commission for the Blind may be entitled to receive training services and assistive technology devices free of charge. In some cases, a fee for training services provided to individuals, schools, organizations or businesses may apply.

Perkins Solutions also provides training and services to individuals who are deaf-blind (have combined hearing and vision loss) through the iCanConnect.org program in New England, and manages the distribution of assistive technology equipment in over 30 states. The iCanConnect.org is part of the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program (NDBEDP) that provides **free** access to distance communication technologies and training to people with significant combined hearing and vision loss who

meet federal income guidelines. Libraries are encouraged to inform patrons with combined vision and hearing loss about the iCanConnect program.

## **Assistive Technology Workshops for Library Staff**

At various times during the year, Perkins Solutions, in partnership with Perkins Library, offers a mix of both free and fee-based assistive technology workshops for library staff and other interested groups.

Accessibility topics include:

- Knowledge and skills for working with people with disabilities,
- Developing an instructional accessible technology program,
- Maximizing Perkins Library services,
- Hands-on experience working with assistive hardware and software,
- Website accessibility,
- Community networking, and
- Grant writing.

## **Wrap Up: Assistive Technology Instruction**

The goal of this guidebook is to educate, encourage and empower public library staff to successfully create inclusive, welcoming environments equipped to meet the needs of patrons with blindness, low vision, or other disabilities. As underscored, this includes ensuring that libraries have accessible websites, in addition to trained staff and volunteers, and assistive technologies that meet the needs of all members of the community, including those with vision loss.

Planning for library accessibility is not a question of if — but rather when. Federal legislation requires all public libraries to provide equal access to information and services. For libraries that have not begun this process, a critical first step is to include accessibility goals in the library's strategic plan. Equally, it is important for library staff to reach out to and develop

relationships with the local population of people with disabilities, and with the organizations that support them.

Finally, the Brooks Free Library, Perkins Library and Perkins Solutions, offer their advice and experience to libraries in Massachusetts to prepare for the future, which means becoming fully compliant with the ADA and requires libraries to make their services available to all members of the community, including those with vision loss, hearing loss or with other disabilities. We are all partners in this journey, and we look forward to celebrating progress and success in the years to come.

**For more information about website accessibility, assistive technology workshops, training or products contact:**

**Perkins Solutions**

**Tel: 617-972-7308, Toll free: 855-206-8353 or go online:**

**[www.perkinsolutions.org](http://www.perkinsolutions.org)**

## Appendix A

### Agencies for Gathering Demographic Data and Resources to Assist Librarians in Setting up Accessible Library Services

#### US Government and National Organizations

- US Census Bureau:
  - 2014 Disability Statistics Annual Report - Annual Disability Statistics  
<http://www.disabilitycompendium.org/docs/default-source/2014-compendium/annual-report.pdf>
  - American FactFinder (Census.gov)  
<http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>
- Bureau of Labor and Statistics: <http://www.bls.gov/>
- Administration on Aging: [http://www.aoa.gov/Aging\\_Statistics/](http://www.aoa.gov/Aging_Statistics/)
- National Federation of the Blind: <https://nfb.org/>
- American Council of the Blind: <http://www.acb.org/>

#### State Organizations and Agencies

- Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC)  
<http://mblc.state.ma.us/>
- Massachusetts Library System (MLS)  
<http://www.masslibsystem.org/>
- Massachusetts Office on Disability  
<http://www.mass.gov/anf/employment-equal-access-disability/oversight-agencies/mod/>

- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC)  
<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/mrc/>
- Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB)  
<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/mcb/>
- Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing  
<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/mcdhh/>
- Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH)  
<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dmh/>
- Mass Veterans Administration — Blind Rehabilitation Occupational Specialist (BROS)  
<http://www.mass.gov/veterans/>
- Mass Rehabilitation Commission  
<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/mrc/>
- Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging  
<http://www.mcoaonline.com/>
- Perkins Library  
<http://www.perkins.org/library>
- Resource Directory of Massachusetts Agencies and Organizations Serving Individuals Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired  
<http://www.perkins.org/sites/default/files/ResourceDirectory2015%20final.pdf>
- Perkins Solutions (technology, training, website accessibility)  
<http://www.perkinssolutions.org>
- Directory of Low Vision Support Groups  
EARS. (Enrichment Audio Resource Services)  
[http://www.earsforeyes.info/index.php/pages/Directory\\_Support\\_Groups.html](http://www.earsforeyes.info/index.php/pages/Directory_Support_Groups.html)

Local Organizations to Check for Demographic Data Could Include:

- Local disability councils and senior centers
- Local schools, colleges and universities
- Local Lions Clubs

## Useful Online Information Resources

- Library services in the digital age (statistical data on library usage)  
<http://libraries.pewinternet.org/2013/01/22/library-services/>
- Edge Assessment Toolkit for Assessing Library Usage  
[http://www.libraryedge.org/sites/default/files/Edge\\_Assessment\\_Workbook.pdf](http://www.libraryedge.org/sites/default/files/Edge_Assessment_Workbook.pdf)

## Appendix B

VITAL Brochure  
Brooks Free Library  
739 Main St.  
Harwich, MA 02645

# VITAL

### Vision Impaired Technology Assistance at the Library

For more information:

Phone: (508) 430-7562 ext.5

Email: [cburke@clamsnet.org](mailto:cburke@clamsnet.org)

Visit us online at [www.brooksfreeibrary.org](http://www.brooksfreeibrary.org)

## **What is VITAL?**

Brooks Free Library offers assistive technology and training for people with vision loss. Patrons have access to the following computer programs: ZoomText Screen Magnifier & Reader, JAWS screen reader, Dolphin Guide screen magnifier/reader, and Kurzweil 1000 Text-to-Speech software. Using these programs, people with vision loss can do word processing, email, search the Internet, access print material and much more.

Non-computer equipment is also available in the VITAL Center. The Library has an Eye-Pal SOLO reading machine and an Optelec video magnifier. For Braille users there is a Juliet Braille embosser, Duxbury Braille Translation software, a Perkins Brailler and a slate & stylus.

The VITAL Center contains brochures, handouts and catalogs of special interest to people with vision loss. While at the library, patrons may listen to Audible Local Ledger using a special radio. NLS talking books and players are available for Library or home use. The Library also has a collection of audio described videos, large print and audio books. Patrons may borrow a Max portable video magnifier to use at home.

## **Training**

Training is provided free of charge. The library also provides instruction in typing, downloading audio books from BARD, using the Victor Reader Stream, as well as in using the accessibility features available on the

iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch. Participants are matched to a volunteer tutor who works with the student one-on-one.

To schedule a demonstration or request training, please call Brooks Free Library's VITAL Coordinator, Carla Burke, at 508-430-7562 ext. 5, or Email: [cburke@clamsnet.org](mailto:cburke@clamsnet.org).

### **How Can I Help?**

Volunteer tutors are always needed! Free training is provided. We would also like to expand our services. To make a tax deductible donation to VITAL, please send your check to:

Friends of Brooks Free Library

PO Box 1456

Harwich, MA 02645

Please include the word "VITAL" on the memo line.

November 2018

## **Appendix C**

### **LSTA Grant Serving People with Disabilities**

#### **MBLC LSTA GRANT: Serving People with Disabilities**

##### **PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Libraries will be eligible to apply for grants ranging from \$7,000 – \$20,000 to plan and implement accessibility projects based on the specific needs identified for a library. A library scan and community assessment must be completed at the beginning of the grant process. These grants will be funded on a two-year implementation schedule. Grant proposals must include the following components.

Libraries will agree to:

- conduct a library and community scan of possible and potential services for their user population;
- develop public relations strategies that attract people with disabilities to the library and outline how they will work in partnership with community agencies serving people in this population and reach out to other local libraries;
- offer training for all library staff in the use of adaptive equipment and how best to serve patrons with a variety of special needs, and promote their services in their community;
- provide equipment, materials and services that allow people to better utilize the library;
- identify a “staff team” who will become experts in the area.

Grants may be used for training, assistive technology, equipment and staffing but not for facilities renovation (e.g. automatic doors, ramps)

## **ELIGIBILITY**

All types of libraries may apply for this grant.

## **INTERESTED?**

Information about the Library Services Technology Act (LSTA) grant rounds, and schedule for the submission of grants can be found online:

<http://mblc.state.ma.us/grants/lsta/opportunities/index.php>

Applicants must submit a Letter of Intent form with the “Serving People with Disabilities” option checked. For more information about this program call Shelley Quezada at the MBLC: 1-800-952-7404 ext. 235 or email

[shelley.quezada@state.ma.us](mailto:shelley.quezada@state.ma.us)

## Appendix D

### List of Accessibility Features and Technologies for Libraries

Wheelchair Accessible  
Entrances

Wheelchair Accessible  
Table(s)

Wheelchair Accessible  
Meeting Room(s)

Accessible Restrooms

Wheelchair for In-library Use

Scooter for In-library Use

Other Mobility Device(s)

Meeting Room with Assistive  
Listening System

Portable Assistive Listening  
System

Assistive Listening Devices at  
Public Service Desk(s)

Screen Reader Software

Braille Translation Software

Braille Embossers

Refreshable Braille Displays

Scanning Systems & Software

Electronic Notetakers

Closed Circuit TV (CCTV) –  
Video/Desktop Magnifiers

Handheld Magnifiers

Learning Disability Software

Speech Recognition Software

Training/Tutorial Assistance

MBLC list of accessibility features and assistive technologies for libraries:  
<http://mblc.state.ma.us/libraries/accessibility/index.php>

## Appendix E

### VITAL Volunteer Partnership Agreement

#### **Brooks Free Library**

739 Main St., Harwich, MA 02645

Phone: 508-430-7562

Email: [brooksfreelibrary@clamsnet.org](mailto:brooksfreelibrary@clamsnet.org)

Website: [www.brooksfreelibrary.org](http://www.brooksfreelibrary.org)

In exchange for the instruction I receive in the assistive technology noted below I will serve as a tutor in the VITAL program at Brooks Free Library. I will tutor at least one vision impaired library patron or one prospective volunteer in the assistive technology indicated below.

Assistive technology: \_\_\_\_\_ Hours of instruction: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Date

If applicable:

In exchange for the instruction noted above, my agency or organization is willing to make the commitment that the above employee will serve as a tutor in the VITAL program at Brooks Free Library for the specified number of hours.

---

Agency or Organization Name

---

Supervisor's Name

---

Supervisor's Title

---

Supervisor's Signature

---

Date

## Appendix F

### Emergency Contact Information Form

#### Brooks Free Library

739 Main St., Harwich, MA 02645

Phone: 508-430-7562

Email: [brooksfreelibrary@clamsnet.org](mailto:brooksfreelibrary@clamsnet.org)

Website: [www.brooksfreelibrary.org](http://www.brooksfreelibrary.org)

#### Emergency Contact Information

Name	Address	Phone Number(s)

In case of emergency please contact the following person(s):

Name	Address	Phone Number(s)	Relationship

Optional Medical Personnel Contact:

Name	Address	Phone Number(s)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G

### **VITAL Guidance on the Acceptance of Gifts**

#### **Brooks Free Library**

739 Main St., Harwich, MA 02645

Phone: 508-430-7562

Email: [brooksfreelibrary@clamsnet.org](mailto:brooksfreelibrary@clamsnet.org)

Website: [www.brooksfreelibrary.org](http://www.brooksfreelibrary.org)

### **VITAL**

#### **Guidance on the Acceptance of Gifts**

The Brooks Free Library discourages VITAL volunteers from accepting gifts from library patrons.

Should a gift be offered, the volunteer may either decline to accept the gift or accept it in the name of the VITAL program, whereupon it will be shared among all the volunteers or used in some way to benefit VITAL.

The services offered through the VITAL program are free to library patrons and in no way should a patron be made to feel that a gift is necessary.

If a patron would like to make a donation to VITAL, it should be explained that checks may be made out to the Friends of Brooks Free Library with the word VITAL written on the memo line.

Please mail checks to:

The Friends of Brooks Free Library

P.O. Box 1456

Harwich, MA 02645

This information regarding how to make contributions to VITAL may also be found in the library's VITAL brochure and on [www.brooksfreelibrary.org](http://www.brooksfreelibrary.org).

## Appendix H

### When you meet a person with sight loss...

- Always identify yourself, especially when entering a room.  
Don't say, "Do you know who this is?"  
Always let the person know when you are leaving his/her presence.
- Don't avoid using words such as "see" and "look". They are a part of everyday conversation. Most people lose their vision late in life and have used these words throughout their lives.
- Talk directly to individuals with sight loss. Avoid the tendency to speak through a companion. Unless they are also very hard of hearing, they can hear and speak for themselves.
- Avoid the tendency to shout; many individuals with sight loss have normal hearing.
- When describing items to individuals with sight loss, try to give a clear word picture, including details such as color, texture, size, etc.
- When giving directions be clear and concise. Orient individuals according to the way they are facing; for example, "The bathroom is the third door on your left." Avoid using words such as "over there" or "right here".
- During activities, allow enough time. It may take individuals with sight loss a little longer to complete an activity until they are familiar with it.
- Be organized. Use the same procedures and consistent labeling methods. Tactile markings may be helpful; some people with sight loss find that bright or contrasting colors help them find objects.
- Never leave a door ajar. Keep corridors clear of clutter. Keep chairs pushed into the tables. Remember to tell the individual if any furniture has been moved.

- Ask individuals with sight loss about their functional vision. Some individuals who appear to be confused may simply need orientation to a room or task.
- An individual's functional vision is affected by lighting, glare and color contrast. Individuals who may see objects one day and bump into them the next day may see better on a sunny day; others will prefer cloudy days to avoid glare. Individuals who are very light sensitive may be more comfortable with sunglasses and/or a visor.
- If an individual has a dog guide, remember that the dog is a working dog, not a pet. Don't divert its' attention.
- Use proper sighted guide techniques. Don't push an individual; let him/her take your arm to follow you and the motion of your body. (Refer to "Basic Sighted Guide Technique" document)
- When serving or eating with individuals with sight loss, tell them what is being served and how the food is arranged on the plate. Many people find the "clock" system a useful way to provide this information. Say "Your hamburger is at 6:00, French fries at 10, and ketchup at 3."

Most people are quite familiar with standard table settings. If possible, use light colored plates on a dark tablecloth or placemat or dark plates on a light surface. The contrast will help individuals to feel more comfortable at the table.

If dining out together read the individual the menu and prices. Ask if they want any help with their food.

- Encourage independence. You may offer assistance if it seems needed, but if your offer is declined, do not insist. **If your offer is accepted, ask the person how you can best help.**
- Remember to always treat the individual with dignity; just as you would like to be treated yourself.

- Relax. When you are comfortable dealing with individuals with sight loss, they will be more comfortable.

Sources: Vision Community Services/Massachusetts Association for the Blind/American Foundation for the Blind/O'Neill Center for Disability Services at Cape Cod Community College

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## Appendix I

### **BASIC SIGHTED GUIDE TECHNIQUE**

**Sighted Guide Technique** refers to a method by which a person who is visually impaired and a person who is sighted can walk together safely and comfortably. Specific techniques and movements are prescribed, to allow the pair to negotiate a variety of travel situations safely, comfortably, and efficiently.

The person who is visually impaired may be someone with partial sight or no sight at all. Many people who have reduced vision, can usually move independently the majority of the time, but may require assistance in dark or unfamiliar areas.

The Sighted Guide Technique requires a minimal amount of practice to master. However, it does require some time and effort. Once you are at ease with the technique, you will be able to negotiate most areas, without interrupting conversations and without unnecessary verbal directions. The experienced follower will be able to teach a novice guide quickly, and the experienced guide will be able to guide most people who are visually impaired with comfort.

**NOTE:** Throughout these instructions, the person who is sighted will be referred to as the "guide," and the Person who is visually impaired will be referred to as the "follower."

## CONTACT AND GRASP

**GUIDE:** Touch the follower's elbow, forearm, or hand with the back of your hand.

**FOLLOWER:** Grasp the guide's arm, above the elbow, with your fingers on the inside of the arm, near the guide's body, with your thumb on the outside, near you.

Use a firm grasp, but do not use excessive pressure.

When the follower is...

A. a child: Follower: Grasp the guide's wrist.

B. in need of some physical support: Guide: Bend your arm at the elbow.

C. much taller than the guide: Follower: Rest your hand on the guide's shoulder.

## PROPER STANCE

**GUIDE:** Stand with your arm relaxed at your side, or bent at the elbow.

**FOLLOWER:** Your arm should be bent at the elbow, placing you one half step behind the guide.

Keeping the elbow bent for long periods of time can be uncomfortable for the guide. Experienced guides and followers can often travel just as well with the guide's hand dropped to a vertical position.

**NOTE:** Walk at a pace that is comfortable for both people. The guide should not be "dragging or towing" the follower and the follower should not be pushing the guide.

## TURNING AROUND

When turning around in a small space...

**GUIDE:** Bring your arm behind you.

**FOLLOWER:** Slide your grasp to the guide's wrist.

Follow directly behind the guide as the guide turns.

Resume your proper grasp and stance once the turn is completed.

## CHANGING SIDES

To avoid obstacles...

**GUIDE:** Ask the follower to change sides.

Bring your arm behind you.

**FOLLOWER:** Grasp the guide's arm with your free hand, above your other hand.

Release your original grasp, and slide that hand across the guide's back, to the free arm.

Bring your second hand across, to the guide's other arm.

Once again, assume the proper grasp and stance.

## FINDING CHAIRS AND SITTING DOWN

### Method One

**GUIDE:** Position the follower towards the chair, so that the follower's knees just touch the front of the chair.

For some followers, it may be helpful to describe the back and arms of the chair, and whether the chair is on rollers, swivels, or reclines.

**FOLLOWER:** Bend down to the chair.

Sweep the chair's seat with one hand to ensure that it is clear of obstacles.

At the same time, locate the back and arms of the chair, thus familiarizing yourself with the orientation of the chair itself.

Sit down.

### Method Two

**GUIDE:** Place the follower's hand on the back of the chair.

For some followers, it may be helpful to describe the back and arms of the chair, and whether the chair is on rollers, swivels, or reclines.

**FOLLOWER:** Locate the seat of the chair, thus familiarizing yourself with the orientation of the chair itself.

Bend down to the chair.

Sweep the chair's seat with one hand to ensure that it is clear of obstacles.

Sit down.

### NEGOTIATING DOORS

**GUIDE:** Tell the follower if the door needs to be pushed or pulled, and which side the hinges are on.

Begin opening the door.

Let the follower hold the door if indicated. A simple statement such as, "Your door," will alert the follower as to the need for an appropriate action.

**FOLLOWER:** If the door is opening on your side, maintain your grasp, while supporting the door for yourself.

If the door is opening on the guide's side, place your free hand above your original grasp, as if you are beginning to change sides. Brace the door with your (newly) freed hand.

After you have passed through the door, reverse this process, and assume your original grasp.

## NEGOTIATING STAIRS

**GUIDE:** Stop just before the stairs.

Tell the follower if the stairs go up or down.

Allow the follower to use the handrail if possible.

Move your arm forward, bringing the follower to the edge of the stairs.

The follower will now be beside you.

Step onto the first step, ahead of the follower.

Stop at the end of the stairs, and tell the follower when you are at the end.

**FOLLOWER:** Bring your toes to the edge of the stairs.

Start a full step after the guide.

With time and experience, both the guide and the follower will become comfortable with a brief pause, instead of full stops, and with a minimum of verbal directions. A simple statement such as, "Stairs down or stairs up," should suffice.

## ENTERING CARS

**GUIDE:** Guide the follower to the door, and place the follower's hand on the door handle itself.

Indicate whether it is the front or back door.

Indicate which way the car is facing.

**FOLLOWER:** Open the door.

Hold the door open as you locate the top frame of the car.

Sweep the seat with your hand before sitting, to ensure that it is clear of obstacles.

**BUCKLE UP!**

Sources: The Maryland School for the Blind and the Greater Baltimore Medical Center.

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## Appendix J

### VITAL Intake Form

Name:

Date:

Address:

Home Phone:

Cell Phone:

Email:

Date of birth:

Veteran:  Yes  No

Cause and degree of vision loss:

Legally blind:  Yes  No

Computer skills:

Typing skills:

Would like demonstration of:

JAWS  ZoomText  Guide  Kurzweil 1000

Braille DBT/embosser  iPod Touch/iPad

Victor Reader Stream  Video Magnifier  EyePal Solo

NLS digital player  Other

Would like instruction in:

JAWS  ZoomText  Guide  Kurzweil 1000

Braille DBT/embosser  iPod Touch/iPad

Victor Reader Stream  Video Magnifier  EyePal Solo

NLS digital player  Typing  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Would like to learn the following:

Word Processing  Email  Internet  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Scheduling preferences:

Day (s):

Time(s):

Transportation:

Best time to contact by phone:

Preferred format for information provided:

Print  Large Print  Email  Cassette  Braille  Email  Other

Special needs/notes:

Where did you hear about VITAL?

VITAL  
Intake Form Continued

Student:

Instructor:

Teaching:

Schedule of instruction:

(Include lesson date, time began/ended, material covered and any special notes.)

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## **Appendix K**

### **Categories of Specialty and Mainstream Technologies**

#### **Provided by Perkins Solutions**

#### **Types of Software**

Screen Reading

Magnification

Learning Disability

Speech Recognition

Keyboard Skills Training

Braille Translation

Deaf/Blind Communication

#### **Electronic Video Magnifiers**

Video/Desktop

Video/Desktop Magnifiers (near and far viewing)

Video/Desktop Magnifiers with built in text to speech capability

Handheld and Transportable Video Magnifiers

#### **Audio Players**

Audio/Digital Book Players

#### **GPS Devices**

Specialty GPS Devices

#### **Tactile Solutions**

Tactile Graphic Sketch Pads

#### **Text to Speech Solutions (also known as OCR - Optical Character Recognition)**

Cameras

Scanners

### **Braille Technology**

Braille Notetakers

Refreshable Braille Devices

Braille Writers

Braille Embossers

### **Mainstream Technologies**

#### **Apple Products:**

iPhones

iPods

iPads

MacBook

#### **PC Computers:**

Tablets

Laptops

Monitors

Printers

#### **Accessories**

Specialty track balls and switches

Large print keyboards

Mounting devices

Laptop/phone cases