

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

"Expecting Excellence Everyday"

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 17, 2013
TO: Wardens
FROM: Thomas G. Finco, Deputy Director
Correctional Facilities Administration 

SUBJECT: Talking Books -- Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

This memorandum updates and supersedes previous communications regarding the Talking Books -- Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, issued by this office. A copy of this document may be found in the Document Access System (DAS).

Offenders who meet eligibility requirements are eligible to receive free library services through the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP), now a service administered through the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA). Offenders housed at the Detroit Reentry Center are serviced by the Wayne County Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (WCRLBPH).

The purpose of this communication is to provide information and clarification on how qualified offenders confined to the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) may access this service.

Application Process:

The *Application for Free Library Service for MDOC Inmates* is available on the LARA webpage at http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-61256_28313_54234-304943--_00.html a copy of the application is also attached to this memorandum.

1. An offender who wishes to participate in the program may obtain a copy of the application from the librarian in the facility where s/he is housed. The offender will be asked to fill in all sections of the application, except the section which is labeled "TO BE COMPLETED BY CERTIFYING AUTHORITY".
2. Once the offender has filled in the application, s/he is to return the application to the facility librarian.
3. The librarian will forward the application to Health Care so that the offender's eligibility for participation in the BSBP /WCRLBPH program may be certified.

Certification Process:

1. The Medical Service Provider will review the application and certify that the offender does or does not meet eligibility requirements.
2. If certification cannot be verified by a review of the offender's medical records, the offender shall be scheduled for a health care encounter to evaluate eligibility. The offender shall be responsible for any co-pay triggered by this health care visit.
3. Health care staff shall complete the application with the certification section must be completed by the Medical Service Provider. The completed application shall be returned to the facility librarian.
4. On receipt of the completed application, the facility librarian will forward a copy of the application to the offender applicant. If the disability is certified by Health Care, the original signed copy of the completed application will be forwarded to the BSBP /WCRLBPH.
5. BSBP /WCRLBPH will accept and process only those offender applications that are complete, including certification of eligibility by health care. Additionally the application must be received from an authorized sender. The only authorized sender is a MDOC librarian. Applications received from other sources will not be processed.

Program Eligibility:

Offenders, who are certified and approved to receive services through the BSBP/WCRLBPH, will be eligible for services and equipment available through the program. Please note, some services and equipment which are available to civilian patrons have been determined to present a risk to the safety and security of MDOC facilities, prisoners will not be permitted to receive those services or equipment.

If eligible, the offender will be permitted to possess the following equipment which is owned by the United States Government (Library of Congress), but which is permanently loaned to the eligible individual:

1. Digital Talking Book Machine. The Library of Congress is making this machine available to qualified individuals. This machine is equipped with a power cord, rechargeable battery, a speaker, and a headphone jack. Each machine has a unique serial number. Offenders who are in General Population may possess and use this machine to listen to materials loaned from the BSBP/WCRLBPH during their leisure time and in the housing unit. To minimize noise and distraction of others, offenders will not be permitted to use the speaker but will be required to listen to the recorded materials via their

personal headphone/ear buds only.

2. Standard Cassette Book Machine (4 track). This machine is equipped with a power cord, rechargeable battery, a speaker, and two headphone jacks. Each machine has a unique serial number. Offenders who are in General Population may possess and use this machine to listen to materials loaned from the BSBP/WCRLBPH during their leisure time and in the housing unit. To minimize noise and distraction of others, offenders will not be permitted to use the speaker but will be required to listen to the recorded materials via their personal headphone/ear buds only. (Note material which requires this machine is being phased out of the circulating library of the BSBP/WCRLBPH. Once this conversion process is completed, offenders will be asked to return their loaned Standard Cassette Book Machine to the library).
3. Books and magazines on digital cartridge and cassette. Offenders will be permitted to receive and use materials on digital cartridge and cassette that are available through BSBP/WCRLBPH's circulating library. Note: Offenders are permitted to receive recorded materials only as identified in PD 05.03.118 *Offender Mail*. Recordings from not approved vendors, including "Learning Ally" and other private vendors will be rejected.
4. Braille books. Eligible offenders will be permitted to receive and use Braille books which are available through BSBP/WCRLBPH's circulating library, and other approved vendors as identified in PD 05.03.118 *Offender Mail*.
5. Loaned digital cartridges, cassettes and Braille books shall be returned to the library in the container provided. Please ensure that books are returned when the offender has finished with them; this ensures that the publications remain in circulation and minimizes the trading back and forth of loaned material between offenders who are eligible for the program and with those offenders who do not meet eligibility requirements.
6. Loaned and personal blank and rewriteable cassettes, flash drives and computer diskettes are prohibited, additionally described movies are prohibited. Offenders are not permitted to receive or possess these materials.
7. Headphones. Offenders are not permitted to receive or possess headphones that are available to non-offender users of BSBP/WCRLBPH services. These headphones have been evaluated and have been determined to present a security risk in MDOC facilities. To use the "Talking Book Machines" available through the BSBP/WCRLBPH, offenders must use personal headphones or ear buds as allowed per PD 04.07.112 *Offender Personal Property*.
8. External speakers including "Pillow Speakers". Offenders are not permitted

to receive or possess external speakers available to non-offender users of BSBP/WCRLBPH services. These speakers have been evaluated and have been determined to present a security risk to our facilities.

Control of equipment and materials loaned though the BSBP/WCRLBPH and Library of Congress Programs:

1. Offenders are expected to follow BSBP/WCRLBPH and Library of Congress rules regarding the care and use of loaned materials, including the requirement that these materials are for the use of eligible individuals only.
2. The serial number of equipment permanently loaned to an offender, through the BSBP/WCRLBPH and Library of Congress Programs, must be recorded on the offender's Personal Property Receipt (CSJ-241). The offender shall be allowed to retain the equipment throughout his/her incarceration and on discharge or until s/he becomes disqualified for participation in the program.
3. Distribution of the Talking Book Machine shall be managed by facility library staff. BSBP/WCRLBPH will issue and exchange the machine only through the library.

Note: Replacement of the talking book machine will be as a one-for-one exchange only. Talking Book Machines remain the property of the Federal government and are loaned only to eligible, active library patrons. Machines may not be loaned to other individuals, sold or traded, thrown away or dismantled.

4. The Talking Book Machine shall be stored if an offender is prohibited from possession of the item due to his/her placement in segregation. To ensure that publications remain in circulation, any cassette or digital books found in a segregated offender's property shall be turned over to the facility librarian, who will be responsible for returning the books to the BSBP/WCRLBPH. Loaned BSBP/WCRLBPH library material shall not be put into storage.

Your assistance in sharing this information with the appropriate staff in your facilities is appreciated.

Attachment

c: Regional Prison Administrators	M. Martin, CFA
Regional Health Administrators	N. Killough, CFA
Librarians	J. Bridgford, OSA
E. Mize, CFA	S. Chinault, BSBP, LARA