
Guidelines for Libraries Serving Persons with a Hearing Impairment

(Prepared by the Roundtable for Libraries Serving
Special Populations)

NEW YORK LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

ABSTRACT

IN 1984, THE NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE for the Blind and Physically Handicapped published *Revised Standards and Guidelines of Service for the Library of Congress Network of Libraries for the Blind and Physically Handicapped 1984*. After review of this document, the Roundtable for Libraries Serving Special Populations (RLSP) within the New York Library Association (NYLA) decided that guidelines for all libraries serving blind and visually impaired persons in New York State should be written. At the annual NYLA conference in 1984, it was proposed that state guidelines be established for other special populations, as well as libraries serving blind, visually, and physically handicapped persons.

INTRODUCTION

The project to develop these guidelines was long term to allow experts in the field to prepare and review the document. Each section of the document was prepared by one group of professionals, circulated to the roundtable membership for general review, circulated again to experts not affiliated with RLSP but knowledgeable in their particular expertise, reread by both groups, and returned to the original preparers for final review and rewriting.

Guidelines for Libraries Serving Persons with a Hearing Impairment or a Visual Impairment was not meant to be established as a long-standing document for use in the New York State libraries which serve special populations, but rather as a document to be updated periodically. Published in 1987, it is available from New

York Library Association, 252 Hudson Avenue, Albany, NY 12210-1802, 518-432-NYLA, 1-800-252-NYLA, Fax 1-518-427-1697.

Two sections of this document, "Guidelines for Libraries Serving Persons with a Hearing Impairment" and "Self Assessment for Libraries Serving Persons with a Hearing Impairment," are excerpted here with the permission of Susan Lehman Keitel, executive director, New York Library Association.

GUIDELINES FOR LIBRARIES SERVING PERSONS WITH A HEARING IMPAIRMENT

Persons with a hearing impairment shall have:

- Access to the full range of library services available to the general public with special provisions made to assist these persons and adapt these services so that they can make effective use of library services.
 - The right to a confidential client-library staff relationship and a nonjudgmental atmosphere.
 - The opportunity to participate in the decision-making process of the library to the same degree as any other patron.
1. The library's written policies on collection development, access to services, shall include an affirmative action statement with respect to disabled individuals.
 - 1.1. The policy statement shall be developed with the advice of an advisory committee that includes at least one person with hearing impairment or a family member or a representative from an appropriate service agency.
 - 1.2. There shall be a budget to carry out the program in accordance with stated goals and objectives.
 2. Library staff shall make available the resources of local, regional, state, and national library systems and networks to persons with hearing impairments.
 3. Library services shall be available to all persons with hearing impairment, regardless of age, degree of deafness, level of communication skills, or accompanying disabilities.
 4. The special needs and interests of persons with hearing impairment and their families shall be recognized in library programs and materials collections. Informational, recreational, cultural, and educational materials shall be provided. These materials shall also be available to all who work with persons with hearing impairments or who are interested in their needs. This availability shall be publicized.
 - 4.1. Services and materials shall be available to parents of children with hearing impairment.

- 4.2. The library collection shall include a full range of viewpoints on the education of the deaf.
- 4.3. Books and pamphlets on sign language, dictionaries of signs, signed books, and wordless books shall be available.
- 4.4. Materials on all aspects of deafness, including legal rights, deaf culture and heritage, shall be represented.
- 4.5. Instructional materials, in all formats, designed specifically for persons with hearing impairments shall be available.
- 4.6. The collection shall include and access shall be provided to periodicals dealing with the educational, legal, socioeconomic, technological, and medical aspects of deafness, as well as periodicals intended specifically for the recreational needs of hearing impaired readers.
- 4.7. Information and referral files shall include information on schools, churches, social services agencies, interpreters, product suppliers, and other organizations serving persons with hearing impairment.
- 4.8. Captioned films and videotapes designed for hearing impaired audiences shall be available and easily accessible through the library catalog. Lesson plans and study guides to accompany some of these films shall be available for teacher and student use.
- 4.9. Captioned filmstrips and other visual aids shall also be available and so identified (marked).
- 4.10. Basic computer literacy skills shall be validated for persons with hearing impairment wherever computers are available for public access. Training for persons with hearing impairment shall be made available.
- 4.11. Libraries shall provide access to telecaptioning devices/decoders for persons with hearing impairment.
5. Programs shall be developed for individual or group enjoyment, development of communication skills, and for encouraging intellectual growth as part of life long learning.
 - 5.1. Libraries shall provide programming on topics of interest to hearing impaired persons.
 - 5.2. Interpreters shall be available upon request when programs are offered to deaf persons.
 - 5.3. Signed story hours shall be offered as a service to children with hearing impairment and also as an awareness program for others.
 - 5.4. Film programs utilizing captioned films, nonverbal films, and foreign films with subtitles shall be offered.

- 5.5. At least once a year the library shall have a display or exhibit which draws attention to services available to persons with hearing impairment, to their families, and to their employers.
6. Libraries shall provide alternative methods for the delivery of services to hearing impaired persons who would otherwise be unable to use the library services independently.
 - 6.1. Libraries shall support and cooperate with programs designed to meet the needs of persons with hearing impairment in other community institutions.
 - 6.2. Delivery of materials by mail shall be an option.
7. Libraries shall identify and cooperate with other agencies providing services to persons with hearing impairment.
 - 7.1. Librarians providing services to hearing impaired residents of institutions shall act as advocates to assure their freedom to read materials of their own choosing and the right to information.
 - 7.2. Library staff shall serve on boards and committees of agencies which serve the hearing impaired.
 - 7.3. Library staff shall participate in training activities and community programming of agencies which serve persons with hearing impairment.
8. Libraries shall provide facilities that allow persons with hearing impairment to access their libraries independently.
 - 8.1. *New York State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code*, Vol. 9, Title 9, Subtitle S, Chapter 1

Effective January 1, 1984, the following provisions for persons with hearing impairments *must* be included in new construction and major alterations, additions, and conversions:

- a. In all buildings in which fire alarms are required, such alarms must be audible and visual.
 - b. All public phones in buildings must be equipped with receivers that are T-switch compatible. In banks of phones, at least one must be equipped with a volume control.
 - c. Areas of public assembly with audio-amplification systems must also have listening systems to assist persons with a hearing loss (e.g., audio loop or FM system).
- 8.2. Community rooms shall be available for use.
 - 8.3. The communication needs of persons with hearing impairments shall be considered when arranging meetings.

- 8.4. Hearing guide dogs shall be allowed access to the library with owners.
- 8.5. Conspicuous and clearly worded directional signs shall be provided.
- 8.6. Orientation programs shall be provided so that persons with hearing impairment become aware of the wide scope of library resources.
- 8.7. Libraries shall provide access to telecommunication devices (TTY's) to assist in meeting the information needs of persons with hearing impairment.
9. Libraries shall design and implement a staff development program to improve the awareness, sensitivity, and communication skills of library staff in regard to persons with hearing impairment.
 - 9.1. One library staff person shall be responsible for the training and development of staff.
 - 9.2. Programs shall be conducted at staff meetings and other in-service training sessions.
 - 9.3. Visits to other agencies and service providers shall be arranged.
 - 9.4. Relevant professional literature shall be available and its use promoted.
10. Libraries shall energetically publicize programs, materials, and services for persons with hearing impairment.
11. Libraries shall provide materials and programs to make the public sensitive to the needs and concerns of persons with hearing impairment.

SELF ASSESSMENT FOR LIBRARIES SERVING PERSONS WITH A HEARING IMPAIRMENT

The following questionnaire is designed for a self assessment for libraries serving persons with a hearing impairment. The codes used are *Y* meaning "yes," *N* meaning "no," *N/A* meaning "not applicable."

1. Do you have a written policy statement on library services for persons with a hearing impairment?
Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
2. Do you have an advisory group on library/disability issues that includes at least one person with a hearing impairment or member of a family or service agency representative concerned with persons with hearing impairment?
Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

3. Does your budget specify funds for programs, materials, and services for persons with hearing impairment?

Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

4. Do you access disability related databases?

Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

5. Are services and materials available to parents of children with hearing impairment?

Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

6. Do you collect materials in the following formats?

Captioned filmstrip Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

Captioned films Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

Signed or nonverbal films Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

Captioned videotapes Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

Signed or nonverbal videotapes Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

7. Which of the following disability related materials do you collect?

Books Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

Periodicals Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

Directories Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

Vertical file materials Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

Catalogs of special products Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

Literary Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

Sign language materials Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

Instructional materials Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

8. Nonprint collections of materials about disabilities include:

16mm films Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

Videotapes Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

Other (please specify) Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

9. Do you have computerized equipment designed or adapted for use by persons with a hearing impairment?

Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

10. Do you provide access to decoders?

Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

11. Do you offer equipment demonstrations and training?
Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
12. Do you have equipment for loan?
Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
13. Do you have microcomputer software packages designed or adapted for use by persons with a hearing impairment?
Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
14. Do you provide programming on topics of interest to both the deaf community and hearing impaired persons?
Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
15. Are interpreters available upon request when programs are offered to persons with a hearing impairment?
Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
16. Are signed story hours offered?
Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
17. Are film programs using captioned films, nonverbal films, or foreign films with subtitles offered?
Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
18. What other kinds of programs have been offered?
Group visits to
the library? Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
Programs on
disability issues? Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
19. Does the library have a display or exhibit which draws attention to services available to persons with a hearing impairment, to their families, and to their employers at least once a year?
Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
20. Are there alternative methods of delivery of services to hearing impaired persons who cannot use the library independently?
Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
21. Does your staff develop a knowledge of, and cooperate with, other agencies providing services to persons with hearing impairment?
Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

22. Is there a visual component to the emergency warning system?
 Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
23. Is there an amplification control on public telephones for use by persons with hearing impairment?
 Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
24. Do you have listening systems to assist persons with a hearing loss in any area of public assembly which has an audioamplification system?
 Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
25. Are elevators equipped with visible warning devices?
 Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
26. Are access symbols and other relevant directional signs posted?
 Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
27. Are orientation programs provided?
 Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
28. Is access to telecommunication devices (TTYs) provided?
 Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
 If yes, the number is: () _____
29. Do you have staff members who are assigned to provide special library services for persons with disabilities?
 Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
30. Do you have at least one library staff member who is fluent in American Sign Language?
 Y _____ N _____ N/A _____
31. Is there an ongoing program of attitude awareness training for staff?
 Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

If yes, does this training include:

Professional staff	Y _____	N _____	N/A _____
Clerical staff	Y _____	N _____	N/A _____
Security guards	Y _____	N _____	N/A _____

32. Are sign language classes offered?

Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

33. Do you publicize programs, materials, and services for persons with hearing impairment?

Y _____ N _____ N/A _____

34. Do you provide materials and programs to make the public sensitive to the needs and concerns of persons with hearing impairment?

Y _____ N _____ N/A _____