



Accessible Books for the Visually Impaired

As part of the Lions Reading Action Program, clubs and districts have an important opportunity to address inequalities related to literacy, particularly among individuals with vision loss. Through our partnership with Bookshare, the world's largest online accessible library of copyrighted content for people with print disabilities, Lions can help individuals with print disabilities have the same ease of access to print materials as people without disabilities.

Around the world, and particularly in developing countries, there is a severe book famine for people who are unable to read standard print books due to print disabilities like blindness, low vision, physical disabilities and severe learning disabilities that affect reading, such as dyslexia.

Bookshare's diverse collection of more than 175,000 titles in the U.S. and more than 70,000 titles in most other countries is accessible to people with print disabilities; it includes educational materials, textbooks, work- and career-related books, bestsellers, literature, children's books, and newspapers and magazines.

Using computer software, tablet computers, assistive technology devices, phones, and MP3 players, Bookshare members can listen to books with high quality text-to-speech voices, read books in digital Braille, or enlarge and highlight words as needed. Currently, over 200,000 members in more than 40 countries access Bookshare.

An award from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, provides free access for all U.S. students with a qualified print disability. With additional partners, we could reach more people who can benefit from this resource, particularly individuals in underserved communities in the U.S. and around the world.

There are many ways for Lions to get involved as a district, as a club, or as individuals:

- **Reach out to individuals with print disabilities** including veterans, seniors, and students (and their parents) to raise awareness about Bookshare. Distribute flyers at places like schools, churches, senior centers, veteran centers, ophthalmologist offices, eye clinics, and dyslexia centers.
- **Sponsor Bookshare subscriptions** for eligible individuals in underserved communities. Seniors, veterans, or students outside the U.S. may not be able to afford a Bookshare subscription.
- **Contribute image descriptions** to textbooks (U.S. only).
- **Scan and/or proofread books** to be added to the Bookshare collection (U.S. only).

To learn more about Bookshare, visit www.bookshare.org. For further information about these projects, visit <http://communications.bookshare.org/lions>, or contact us at programs@lionsclubs.org.

