

Speakers: Jen, Liz, Audience

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>> JEN: Services - sorry - are for individuals who are blind or have a print disability. So, this is someone who cannot read a standard print book or who cannot hold a book. It could be someone who is blind or has a vision loss, even where the print in the newspaper is too uncomfortable to read. It could be someone with a physical limitation that prohibits a person from holding a book or turning the pages of a book, even if that's after an extended period of time. It could be somebody with a perceptual impairment or a reading disability.

So, think of someone who may have age related eye disease like macular degeneration or complications from diabetes or perhaps someone with arthritis in which they are unable to hold the book or grab the pages to turn of that book. It could also be from the effects of a concussion or a brain injury. And it could be someone also who, for a temporary reason, cannot hold a book due to an injury.

But how do you know though that someone is indeed qualified for these services from an NLS library? We do have an application that does have to be completed for folks to get services from NLS. NLS does have its own application for both individuals and for institutions, which we will talk about more in just a bit. Or your regional library may have their own application to use.

Either way, an application must be completed, and on the application, there is a section to check off for how the person qualifies for services.

So, here is where you'll see the general qualifications for a person such as blind or visual impairment, physical disability, reading disability, et cetera. You won't see though something more specific like arthritis or a brain injury or even autism

because that on itself does not qualify someone on its own. It would be the limited hand mobility from the arthritis or the physical limitation from the brain injury or perhaps the reading disability associated with the autism that would then qualify the person.

But I know you're dying to know who can - who can - how can we know that that person truly qualifies?

So, there is an additional section on the application which must be signed by a certifying authority. This qualified professional is confirming that the applicant does indeed qualify for services. There is no need for background information though. We don't need medical documents, IEPs, anything like that. We just need the signature. The signature is the most crucial part.

So, who is the illustrious certifying authority? It can be a medical doctor, a doctor of osteopathy. It could be a registered nurse, an eye doctor. But it can also be an educator, a certified reading specialist, and a librarian. Woohoo! Yay! So, all of these people can now sign for anybody who is eligible for NLS services. This list also - this list is also included on the application, so there will not be a test at the end. You do not need to remember this. You can reference it later on if you need it.

So, every state in the country does receive NLS services. Some states may have one network library like us in New Jersey. Some states may have multiple regional libraries. And some states may not have their own library but instead receive services from a neighboring state. But no matter where you live, all eligible US residents can receive NLS services regardless of your state. The services are also available to citizens - to US citizens living abroad.

And because we are here in New Orleans, we have used Louisiana Library as our example, and just to point out, Louisiana is part of their state library, just like we are in New Jersey. And to emphasize also what I just mentioned, you can see that while Louisiana, their services, they serve the entire state of Louisiana for audiobooks, their braille book collection though, any braille readers in Louisiana are going to get their books from Utah. So, the books will still be ordered through the Louisiana Library but Utah will be who is sending those books to those patrons.

So, on this slide, it represents the services that we offer in New Jersey and most of which are also available to all NLS libraries. However, every library - excuse me - every library has access to audiobooks and braille books by download and by mail. The audiobooks can be created on the cartridges, and I'm going to try to do this - I don't - is there a pointer on this?

Oh, well, I'm not sure. Oh, that's not what I wanted to do. Excuse me.

Well, I'm just going to point with my finger.

The image up there with the cartridge and I think that's the top right image, so - it's the end of the day. Please apologize. My rights and my lefts, I clearly don't know them right now. But my lovely assistant here will now point to what I am speaking about.

The audiobooks are created on the cartridges, which are essentially a flash drive built into a plastic container, and then those are what's sent out to a patron in the mail. Those use reusable plastic containers. There's no additional postage that's required to send any of this out or any NLS material for that matter, thanks to the Free Matter for the Blind and Handicap Postage that's included.

For those who are receiving the audiobooks by mail, we also loan out the device that they need to listen to the cartridges, as we see here. These devices are on an indefinite loan. That means that the patron can hold onto these machines for as long as they are using the NLS services. The cartridges are what gets circulated back and forth.

Just for a frame of reference, those machines themselves, they're about the size of a hardcover book and they are available as a standard version or as an advanced version.

In addition to the audiobooks being sent on these cartridges, braille books can also be downloaded and sent on these cartridges. They can be read on a refreshable braille display. NLS has started loaning out these devices, a braille e-reader, to certain libraries throughout the country, and eventually, all states will have access to them.

New Jersey, we were a pilot library for the program, so we've been circulating them for a little bit now.

What's nice about this is that these devices can be very costly for people to purchase on their own. I think like a couple thousands of dollars. So, by NLS now providing these for patrons to borrow at no cost, at no additional cost, there is - it's just one more way in which NLS is truly ensuring that reading is for everyone.

For those who prefer to read a physical book, there is also a large collection of physical braille books both for children and adults. There is also the ability to download books through a service called BARD, Braille and Audio Reading Download. Braille and audiobooks can be downloaded through a computer and then played on the machine that we just mentioned, or through a mobile app called BARD Mobile. You can browse, download, and play back through BARD Mobile right from your smartphone or tablet. This then allows instance access to NLS books.

Each state may then offer additional services to their patrons beyond these. So, for instance, we in New Jersey, we offer large print books to our kids and teens. So, it's best to always check with your local NLS library to see what they offer.

And just like any public library, there is no cost for any of these services, these NLS services, including any postage that may be needed for any of the mailing materials.

We have all of your typical popular authors and genres available but we also have access to books that are only available for the NLS libraries. These are books that may have never been created into an audiobook for the commercial market, but NLS has recorded specifically for their collection. They are all professional recordings. They go through a very rigorous quality control. And what's also nice is there's no wait list for books, whether by mail or through downloading.

And we also have a very large world language collection that includes both titles recorded here in the US as well as titles recorded in other countries. We currently contain over forty world languages and that number is constantly increasing.

We have access to audio and braille magazines, both by mail and for download in that BARD system. And they are for kids and for adults. And we also have access to a music collection for musical scores, accessible musical scores, and instructional materials.

And now back to Liz, and thank you for your assistance.

>> LIZ: Thank you. Before we go on, I just want to mention that there are some other organizations who, by following these same rules and regulations, also can create materials for folks who are blind or low vision. I just want to highlight a few of them. Like, there's many more than the ones here. For example, most religions have their own nonprofit where they'll have audio versions of their bible or their edition of the Quran or things like that. But in addition to that - oh, and before we go any further, I just wanted to mention, TBBS, TBBC, and NLS, we're like public libraries. We're also like public libraries in that we don't have textbooks. The types of books that we're talking about are the things you'd usually find in a public library. Like, so recreational reading or things that would support homework. For example, you know, a second grader doing a Revolutionary War report, we have that. We just don't have that textbook the second grader is using.

So, I want to mention some of the other organizations out there. Also, as I said, TBBC and NLS libraries, there is no cost or fees. A lot of these other organizations are nonprofits. The cost that they have varies depending upon their current funding. And since they're not our organizations, I don't want to say what their current cost or funding is because I don't want to misstate it. But you can check it on their website.

So, we have here briefly, Bookshare. They provide electronic audio and braille books, including many textbooks.

LearningAlly has audio textbooks as well as other audiobooks. And then NFB-Newsline has audio editions of newspapers and magazines that are available for people.

And I just wanted to show you a picture of our bookshelves of our audio and electronic braille. So, this is what you would see if you wanted to come and browse at our library. So, it kind of would be disappointing unless you were really into computers.

All of our digital books, both audio and braille, are stored on a computer hard drive. It's a system called Digital On Demand. So, when someone calls up and asks for a book, instead of pulling a CD or other physical format, we use this machine to create a cartridge, a flash drive just for that person. When they're done and that cartridge gets returned to us, it gets erased and used for the next person.

Jen mentioned the braille e-reader. The same machine has all that braille stored electronically, so those e-readers can also use the same cartridge. So, we're sending braille books this way. And this is why we can say that there's never a wait list for our digital books.

Now, starting about ten years ago, like, NLS has been - they have been recording books for ages, and when I first started working for them, if say they wanted Harry Potter, even though Harry Potter had been recorded commercially, they wanted to have it available for the people using NLS libraries. So, they would make their own recordings with a different narrator. It was almost a dual system going on.

About ten or so years ago, NLS began instead acquiring commercial audiobooks for their collections through contracts that they entered into with the commercial audiobook publishers, for two reasons. One, why recreate the wheel? Why spend, you know, hire a different professional narrator to narrate a book that has already been done, you know, and then instead, they can concentrate their resources on books that have not yet been commercially recorded.

So, an example of a book that NLS has, it's the same that you would see in a bookstore or your library, is "Spare" by Prince Harry, the Duke of Sussex. Now, because of it being in this program and being limited to how you can listen to it, "Spare" is not yet available for our readers because they're still in the process of marking it up and adding digital rights management and stuff like that.

But, as I said, some books are just not commercially recorded, so I am just going to illustrate, like, what that means.

So, up on the screen are four books that a patron may be interested in, a YA book, "Skyjacked" by Paul Griffin. There's two nonfiction books for children. And there's a cookbook. And if you're sitting there and going to start looking on Amazon, I looked at these a week ago. Who knows what's happened in a week. But at that point, this is what would have happened.

Let's say your teen patron comes in for "Skyjacked" by Paul Griffin. They want it in audio. You check your own catalogue. It's not there. So, what do you do? You think about an ILL for your patron and you go to WorldCat and you think up "Skyjacked."

And what would you find? That it's only available hardcover, paperback, e-book. It's not in audio.

At this point, you would have to say no to your patron, but your patron is also someone who, let's say, maybe has low vision or blind or a reading disability and needs that audio and this is going to leave them without an avenue to get that book. Your library doesn't have a copy. You can't get one. But you've remembered our presentation, the charming Liz and Jen show. And you remember NLS libraries.

So, you go to the NLS catalogue. You look it up. And that's where you find the book, "Skyjacked." So, now you have it available for your patron.

Now also, at this point, again from what you've remembered here, you'd be like, huh. Go to the NLS website. You can download the application they have there. Fill it out on the computer. You're familiar enough with this teen that you are like, yep, this person qualifies. Low vision, blind, for another reason. You sign it as a librarian. You email it to your local NLS library. If you've got a relationship with the NLS library, you're calling them up at the same time, saying hey, you know, I've got a new patron for you. They approve everything. You get them that BARD application downloaded onto their phone and they can walk out with the book that they need that same day.

Now, what is frustrating is to find out if NLS has a book, to find out if LearningAlly has a book, to find out if Bookshare has the book, you have to look it up in their individual catalog on their website. It's not in WorldCat. So, the books are there, it's just a matter of finding them and connecting them to your reader.

And this is one good reason to reach out to your local NLS network library to have a working relationship with them, because we can do the work of looking for those accessible books, suggesting alternate titles, and also suggesting to NLS that the book you're looking for needs to be recorded.

And just at this point, I'm just wondering if anybody has any questions on what we've gone over so far?

Okay. And you know, if - oh, one over here. Sorry.

>> SPEAKER: No worries. Hi.

>> LIZ: Hi.

>> AUDIENCE: I just had a quick question. So, for those who might be accessing digital tools, you know, I know that you all have some things that folks can borrow to facilitate that, like certain technology, is that extended to like smart - other kinds of smart devices and things like that? Or is it just like such a specific type of device that NLS has?

>> LIZ: For NLS, you need their player to listen to their books on their cartridge. But you can also use a smart phone, a tablet, or Kindle Fire and get an app and listen to their books that way. There is a handful of devices that have been created and manufactured basically for folks who are blind or low vision. HumanWare, places like that have it.

So, if someone has that device, then they can also listen to our books. What you can't do right now is because you might be thinking, oh, BARD, we're talking about downloading books. If you were to go on the BARD website and download a book and try to play it right now on your laptop or PC, you couldn't listen to it that way. You'd get an error device saying this machine is not authorized to play this book. So, I hope that answers a little bit. Okay. All right.

Anyone else?

Okey dokey. So, moving on then to like partners and partnerships and like, basically, working with your local NLS regional library to connect readers to those who need these books. As I showed with the "Skyjacked" example, it can be as simple as being aware of the collection and how to sign up patrons. It can be as simple as letting your patrons know about these like secret books that they would think otherwise just don't exist and letting them know what print disabilities are.

One thing that we've found is that people think it's just for people who are blind and total vision loss. They don't realize that low vision is as simple as, in all honesty, as you know, no longer being able to read the print in the paper and reaching for those, like, big magnifiers that they get to read the newspaper.

So, just people realizing this is also for - for them. But there's other opportunities that are also available. One reason is just how we operate. As I said, each state is different. So, you know, New York is going to do things different from New



Jersey who is going to do different from Colorado. Because - but in all of it, you've got one library or maybe only two or three that are taking care of the entire state. So, while we have a community of readers, we don't have that same community of readers that you have at the local public library or academic library or school library. And we don't have that same type of partnership that you guys have with your local communities and organizations because we're taking care of the whole state. So, we don't have that local stuff going on.

So, one great way that you can like work together is to make sure people at the local level have access to this. So, what we're going to do is just go through a handful of some of the things that we've done in New Jersey.

>> JEN: And I'm going to stay sitting for this just because we're going to go back and forth a bit, so it'll be a little clunky if we try to cross back and forth.

So, on the screen here is an example of one of the partnerships that we had. It's an ASL story hour we've hosted at our library. We've worked with our state's division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing, the local School for the Deaf, the local special needs school, and homeschoolers. We invited a variety of people as readers, including local dignitaries, deaf storytellers, even New Jersey authors.

This particular photo is from when we had the mascot from a local minor league baseball team reading and acting out "Casey at the Bat."

>> LIZ: Outspoken Library, now, one of our goals with outreach is to spread the word about our library and the services. And so, one way we did that a few years ago was something we called an Outspoken Library kiosk. TBBC supplied computers that had accessible software as well as being a gateway to information about TBBC and its services.

So, our partners for this were basically groups where we decided where people would go to use the internet and people who would be qualified for our services.

The picture here is a kiosk we had at the New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home because we worked with a lot of VA because of vets with either returning from combat with injuries or just from being older, and then we also had a lot of these at public libraries.

>> JEN: We've also worked with summer camps, local schools, and local blind or low vision summer camps as well. We've provided services for braille literacy camps. We've partnered with public libraries and school libraries to support those summer camps, provide books and activities throughout the summer for campers as well.

One other thing I wanted to mention, not necessarily related to summer camps, but for schools in general or for public libraries, we also work with, and again, this is for New Jersey specific, but your state may do something similar or have other partnerships, but we also have a large print collection for our children and teens. And what we often promote is rather than perhaps having to purchase a large print collection for your kids or teens in your school or your public library that may not be within your budget and you may only need one or two copies for a particular reader, contact us and work with us because that may be another partnership for us where we would have that collection to be able to loan to your readers who would need it, and then that would save budget on your end for something else you could perhaps use and we could help and partner in that way as well.

>> LIZ: And public libraries. We work with public libraries so much because basically, where are the readers? Public libraries. Our patrons are often older adults who are new to vision loss. I think the last time we ran the stats, it was something like 70% of our patrons are 75 or over and have joined our library because of things like macular degeneration and eye issues because of diabetes and things like that.

So, we're talking about people who are readers and are already using library services. It's just now that they think that reading is no longer available to them because of what's going on.

Now, public libraries and other institutions who serve print disabled folks can have something that's called an institutional account with their NLS network library. So, they sign up as a special account, an institution, and once they do so, they can have, again, this varies by state so definitely reach out to your state to see how they will - you know, what they can have available. But you can have those machines that we showed. One or two of those can be at your library. You can have a couple of the audiobooks on cartridge.

What makes that nice is that if you do have someone who is interested in our services, instead of just talking about it, you can demonstrate to them how the machine works, how the book works, and also even have some maybe like braille books on again to have displayed to show people how that is.

Now, then we can work with the public library on programs or presentations. It can be something as simple like a fanfare event because now you're an institutional account. It can just be a general program about our services. We've also had just story hour at the library using braille materials and toys for that story hour.

>> JEN: We also work with our state's Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired to offer eligible New Jersey residents the ability to borrow certain assistive technology. The equipment and training is provided by CBVI, but we at TBBC are the ones who schedule and provide the delivery of the material.

We loan laptops loaded with appropriate blind and low vision accessibility. We also loan CCTVs which are closed circuit televisions. And also help aid a person in the ability to take documents, books, checkbooks, whatever it may be, and putting them under the device to increase the font size, background color, et cetera.

>> LIZ: LEAP, Library Equal Access Program, is another thing that we worked with with the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. It makes sense. We have overlapping clients. And this program includes training and workshops on how to use accessibility features on computers and iPads and iPhones. Sometimes it's about software that's been added like JAWS to computers, or sometimes it's just about the existing accessibility that's available in an iPhone or iPad.

This was really great because it combines a bunch of different things. There's the CBVI. They provide the trainers because this is their expertise. They also provide a loan of the computers and the laptops during the training and sometimes also a loan of one of the CCTVs Jen was talking about.

But then the question is, well, where do you have these trainings?

Now, we're just located in Trenton, so you can't, say, have the training here because that would be too far for people to

get to. So, what we did is we turned to local - we turned to public libraries throughout the state and, working with the public libraries, the training takes place at those public libraries. So, the people who are in their community can come, get the benefit of this specialized training, and it also makes people realize, oh, the library is still for me. It's still some place I can go to.

>> JEN: We do also provide trainings for schools and libraries. These trainings and workshops have - can be about NLS services and/or how to use NLS services, be it how to browse the catalog that Liz was mentioning or how to order books or how to use and download from BARD and BARD Mobile that we were talking about earlier.

We have worked with staff development staff, teacher in services, staff training, training to local public libraries. This could also be training on how to be an institutional library that Liz was just talking about. So, really, the opportunities are endless and truly reach out to your library.

>> LIZ: Community organizations, and of course, we work with a lot of community organizations. Sometimes it's just doing a basic presentation, places like senior centers, low vision groups, and nursing homes, just to name a few of those. These are sometimes setup working with the local public library, that the public library might call us up and say hey, I know a group who could be - who would be interested in a presentation.

Other times, if the group has called us up, then we'll reach out to the local public library and say hey, we're going to be in the neighborhood because we're doing this presentation. Is there an opportunity to work together with this?

>> JEN: And then for festivals, we've had exhibit tables at local book festivals, back to school nights, open house type of events, school transition fairs, but also, think outside the box. Maybe like a farmers market, community events.

While it may seem like common sense to think of places like vision fairs and senior expos, you never know where you might meet someone who could use these services, so really any opportunity is truly a good one.

>> LIZ: And then we just wanted to also mention conferences. We go to a lot of conferences. Here are some photos from the

most recent one we went to, the New Jersey Association of School Librarians.

And then with that, do we have any questions on that so far?

Okey dokey. What we'd - now that we've talked about some of our partners and partnership things, I'd like you guys to brainstorm. If you want to talk to the person next to you, do it yourself, Jen is going to pass out some post-its. And just take the few minutes, let's say, until 3:39 because I'm going to be precise for five minutes. And write down some ideas of, you know, possible partners or partnerships.

And then when you're done, just put them on the big blue post-its. There's one on either side of the room. And we'll take a look and see what some of the things you've come up with are.

The question was about a change for certifying authority. For those of you who have maybe sat through something like this, like four or five years ago, the way the rule used to be was who could certify authority was very different. And one of those differences was that the only people who could sign for reading disabilities or learning disabilities was an actual doctor, an MD or a doctor of osteopathy.

You can tell I'm the lawyer for the law nerd in stuff. So, those laws and regulations are in International Treaty. The International Treaty is actually the Marrakesh Treaty, and it was ratified in 2019, I believe. And when it was ratified, one of the things was we agreed - we, the United States and NLS, agreed to certain international standards of what print disability was and was not, and one of the end results of that treaty and what was going on was to no longer have a different standard of who could sign for reading disability, so it could now be anyone who was on that list, and also expanded it to include the people in the school setting, such as, I think, school psychologists might have always been there, but certified reading specialist was added as was educator or you know, teacher.

God bless.

Okay, if when you're done, you'll just put it on the little blue post-its and then the lovely Jen will go and share some of your ideas for partnerships.

And all ideas are good ideas. We did not bring gold stars or anything like that to, you know, play favorites.

>> JEN: All right. I will travel over this way.

Excellent. Everybody had a chance? All right. So, I'll read through some of these. We have a lot of really good ones. Let's see, we have the school system. Hospital/social workers. Nursing homes. Back to school night with our school district. Senior housing. Military hospitals. Braille institutes. Senior centers. Book clubs. Rehab facilities. Local dyslexia schools. COAST Council on Aging in St. Tammany. Did I pronounce that right?

The local school districts. Schools for the visually impaired. Retirement senior facilities. Prisons/correction facilities. Nursing homes. Community food banks. Churches. Homeless shelters. Eye doctors. Rehab centers. Back to school night. Make sure I got - hospitals. School book club. Senior, senior, braille. I think - I think I got everybody. If I missed anybody, let me know. I think I got them all. Excellent.

>> LIZ: Okay, the green light is on so it's working. I don't always trust technology.

Now, Jen will tell you, I like plans and I like lists and I like checklists and I like - I was going to say I like being organized. I like pretending to be organized. I don't know if it's always as organized as it should be. And so, I like having an outreach plan to kind of like just put structure to something I'm doing.

One of the projects we have in New Jersey is something called the BARD Pilot Project. So, our plan was about working with public libraries to promote BARD. And BARD is the website that you can use to download our books instead of waiting for them in the mail.

So, with BARD, you can either download it on a computer to a flash drive and play in our machine or you can download an app and then use it on like a smartphone or tablet. And what we wanted to do is have public libraries be more aware of this, but also, we wanted to give a place where people could go with - go with questions, because who here has helped somebody with a computer question in the library? Like a question about using their phone or tablet or computer?

Okay. I mentioned we are in one place and everyone else is not in that one place. We're in Trenton. Everyone else isn't. So, when we get calls from our patrons, and also remember, most of them are over seventy, it's all on the phone as they're trying to figure out how to download something or how to work on their own phone or tablet.

So, we have great staff who can walk through that, but basically, it's easier in person to be able to do that and so what better way to work with public libraries than to have our patrons go some place where they could ask those questions, you know, in person and get this assistance?

But I mean, we love our public library so we're not about to like just say, okay, people, go visit them, and not give the public libraries a heads up. I mean, I'd have to change my name and move out of the country. No one would like that.

So, the plan was how to get public libraries invested in this, what would be necessary to make it possible, and also realizing, you know, libraries can't just do what they want. They have boards and powers that be that they have to answer to. What would they maybe need to have in place to make this work?

So, what are some of the things that we had to look about and include?

So, the rationale, why we wanted to do this, which I just mentioned, statistics. You know, a lot of, you know, managers and stuff, they just love those numbers.

So, for BARD, that meant looking up statistics for things like how many people have low vision? How many older adults are experiencing this each year? Does that number keep growing? You know? And some of the places that we looked at for those stats are listed here. Disabilitystatistics.org, the Census, the CDC, the National Eye Institute.

Now, if we were doing a different type of reach out - work out a plan, like if - Jen is our children's libraries, so she wanted to do something where she was now going to be working with schools about signing up more kids with reading disabilities, the statistics we would be looking at would be wildly different, because then we would be looking at the ones for reading disabilities and for kids, what age was it usually diagnosed, and things like that.

Then we would look at identifying potential partners. So, yes, libraries, but also like senior citizen - senior centers, adult daycares, nursing homes, places like that. Etiquette and communication, that would also differ based on the group that you are working with. There's a lot of, say, communication tips for, you know, interacting with somebody who is blind or something like that in terms of greeting them and stuff like that.

A focus group, if possible, bringing in a focus group, say that local low vision group, to make sure that what you think they need is what they actually need so that you'd be finding out, like, oh, we thought they might need help with computers but it's really learning about the accessibility features on the iPhone. Or it could be the exact opposite; they could be saying, I hate that iPhone my, you know, grandkids gave. I want to be able to work on the computer.

I am going to start talking faster to get through this. I thought I was talking fast from New Jersey but there's still stuff to get through, so bear with me.

You want to identify your roles and responsibilities of who is going to do what, what does TBBC do, what does the local library do. Is it going to involve staff? Is it going to involve volunteers?

One of the things that we work on for the BARD Pilot Program that is considered not just what staff members are involved, but is it going to be all staff members or only some? And if it's only some, how do you make that known to people that you know, okay, Taylor is our expert in this but in order to use this, you need to be here maybe like Tuesdays or Thursdays because Wednesday, Taylor is not here.

What is your timeline? And this can be not just about implementing and running the joint project but when to do things, what your timeline that way is. Like, for example, we get so many calls about outreach in January because anyone want to guess - does anyone know what January is?

Yes, it is Braille Literacy Month. So, we are so popular in January. But there are other times we can be popular too and that you can promote things to your patrons.

Just to name two others, May, Healthy Vision Month. So, that's some time you can do it. Or because we're looking at the



formats that we're using, June, National Audiobook Month. So, there's other things that you can look at for your timeline.

Figuring out objectives and goals. So, for BARD, our objective was to have patrons visit their local library for assistance and to create that community. So, what are you looking at? Increased visits by patrons. And also the goal of those patrons, knowing that they are welcome at their local library.

Scale, how big or small do you want to start? What kind of support do you want to have in place? Again, what kind of training?

For us, for BARD, part of the training was also how the whole website works because it can be a little clunky at times. It's not like, you know, for how to work, as I mentioned earlier, you can't just download the book to the computer and play it. You're actually downloading, unzipping, putting it on a cartridge. There's a few steps in terms of going through it. So, that would be part of like what training is available and what resources we would have to support that training, and then how you want to - what kind of assessments and evaluations you would want to have for that.

We also had talking points prepared, not just for us but for the libraries to be able to use, and again, this will differ depending upon the audience and what you're doing. So, using the BARD Pilot Program, if you're presenting this to your board, talking points are things like the population is aging. There's an increase in folks with print disabilities. This group is underserved. Here is this free service that is going to meet their needs. So, what's the cost going to be? The cost is just going to be the training you need to do with your staff. It's not like you're adding all these thousands of dollars of audiobooks or something because those are free from us.

It can be a bit different when you're talking to community partners because then you're just starting with hey, here are these free library services, and these services can enrich your lives. And to the patrons, it's just like we're at the library, we have these free services, come in and talk to us.

If the outreach plan had been, again, working with the school and reading disabilities, then the different audiences you'd be talking about are what's your message to the schools, how is that going to be different to the principal, something different

to the staff, something different to parents, something different to students.

You know, like students, you're not going to say, "Guess what? We have all of these great things for your homework." You're going to be like, "No, we have fun books."

But to the teachers, it's going to be, "We have homework books."

And finally, publicity and public relations. Talking points as part of the PR plan but we also like to put together templates and stuff like that for the public libraries to take and to go into customize.

Photographs and graphics. You saw the photographs that we have here that we then share with the public libraries. Some of them are ours. Others are from NLS. NLS has its own collection of photos that they've taken that people can use.

We also have things like press releases ready to go, social media posts, letters and email blasts, and even like basic PowerPoints and flyers that people might want to be able to have to use at their library.

A lot, and I am actually - I said I would be here at 3:50 and it is 3:50, so I am really proud of my fast talking. I am from Jersey, what can I tell you?

So, what I'm going to ask you to do over the next ten minutes is to break out into groups. That said, if you all don't want to break into groups, I respect that. With everything going on, if you want to work solo, you know, you do what you're comfortable with.

But what I am going to ask is you know, if you want to get into groups, you know, Jen has big post-its that we can use. You can either do it by yourself or if you want to work with somebody to brainstorm a potential partner. We've got all those potential partners that you all just, you know, came up with. You can use one of them or maybe you've even thought of something else in the last couple of minutes.

And then just discuss one element of outreach that you want to concentrate on. One or two. You know, it just seems there are so many things up there, that that's why I said only a few. I know we've passed those slides but Jen, she's got the nice

handwriting, not me. There's the post-its up there with the different outreach elements as a refresher.

So many sheets. So many sheets that we brought from New Jersey.

What we're going to do is I'm just going to demonstrate really quickly what we're talking about. And then, you know, work together. And let's say at about four o'clock, report back. Now, see, there's the thing. If you're working by yourself, you can't say, oh, you're the one reporting back. You're reporting back on yourself. Though, in all honesty, I used to be the world's biggest introvert so I'm not going to force anyone to do anything they're not comfortable with.

But let's say if I was doing this, like, what partnership? I would be thinking like, okay. You know, we're talking about older adults. They've lost - they've lost their sight. They used to be able to get out and now they can't. Oh, visiting nurses. Visiting nurses might be going to see people who qualify for our services, so I'm going to work with the local visiting nurse organization.

And what area do I want to concentrate on thinking about now? Well, because I'm going to be asking these - the visiting nurses to take care of this, what types of things can I provide to the visiting nurse association to make it as easy as possible?

So, maybe I might want to put together a flyer, thinking of, okay, make sure I've got large print. What's the right type of contrast for colors? What's the most essential information to have on that? Oh, do I want to try a QR code to - for NLS resources? Maybe I want to try to think about getting a grant to get magnifier bookmarks with the library's logo on it for something like that to use.

So, that's just my example. And again, you know, at about four o'clock, we can report back on some of our ideas.

>> JEN: I can walk around too with the post-its that we have of just the main bullet points so you all can see them.

>> LIZ: To share with the rest of the room, raise your hand and Jen will come over with the microphone.

Or if you just prefer not to share, that works too. I'm sure you all have good ideas and stuff like that. So - okay, we have brave volunteers over there.

>> AUDIENCE: So, we were talking about two things that are local to our communities, our Council on Aging or Meals on Wheels. And so, we thought a good way to promote services would be to partner with those local organizations and bring it to them through a service they're already receiving. So, partner, let's say, with Meals on Wheels. We create materials that would be sent along with them when they receive their meal, and then they could sign up and receive what they needed through that already established delivery service.

>> LIZ: Awesome. And yes, I am going to go back to my boss with like, oh, here's some cool ideas and partnerships.

>> JEN: That was an excellent idea.

>> LIZ: Anyone else?

>> AUDIENCE: I'm going to call out this group because they also had a very similar idea and I think it's wonderful.

>> LIZ: Okay but you might have to be - do the talking.

>> AUDIENCE: If they choose to talk, they can, but I just wanted to acknowledge that they also had a wonderful idea.

>> LIZ: Okay. Anyone else?

>> AUDIENCE: I had the start of an idea pop into my head while they were talking, so not fully formed. But partnering with maybe a local service animal training organization to bring awareness of just like how that communication can be shared, of many sharing literature, flyers, some training, kind of overlap, inviting them to the library space, inviting - having you go to their space to just kind of connect to that community more through those services.

>> LIZ: Another great idea, thank you.

Okay, and I am promising to get everybody out of here on time if not early. So, the last thing I just wanted to share is here is a graphic that we created and kind of like a good example of like the type of like stuff you can have in your PR kit.

We use it a lot and basically we get - we get a lot of emails and letters from folks about our services and what it means to them. And what we did is we took different quotes and words from these emails and letters and created this word cloud to show both what people think and value about these services. You know, "Books," "Helpful," and the positive impact these services have had. And it just shows you that what you can bring to people, it is very meaningful to their lives.

So, some of the quotes are like, your books on play are an absolute blessing to her. I don't know what she would do without it. Listens to her books daily. These library services are a lifesaver.

And basically, then that's a wrap. That's it. Again, the PowerPoint and handouts are on the conference app and at the conference website. If you have any questions, Jen and I are here. We also brought a handful of some of NLS applications if anyone wants to take a look at that. And we did bring some braille ABC cards and braille bookmarks and some stuff like that.

So, thank you guys very, very much.

>> JEN: And - feel free to leave your materials on the table. We can come around and grab them from ya'll.