



RESOURCES FOR OLDER ADULTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS: FOR CAREGIVERS AND SUPPORTERS

(Provided by the Talking Book Program Public Awareness Office)

TALKING BOOK PROGRAM

The Talking Book Program (TBP) provides free library services to qualifying Texans with visual, physical, or reading disabilities. TBP is part of the National Library Service to the Blind and Print Disabled, a program administered by the Library of Congress. The TBP collection consists of more than 145,000 titles, including hundreds of titles in Spanish and other languages.

Phone: 1-800-252-9605 or 512-463-5458 in Austin

Email: tbp.services@tsl.texas.gov

www.TexasTalkingBooks.org

INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES

Help people with disabilities achieve greater independence in the home and community. Multiple programs throughout the state.

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/independent-living-services>

TEXAS TECHNOLOGY ACCESS PROGRAM

Technology information – demonstration centers and “try before you buy” program.

Phone: 1-800-828-7839 or 512-232-0740

<https://ttap.disabilitystudies.utexas.edu/>

NOTE: According to the web site for the Texas Technology Access Program, there isn't currently a demonstration site in Fort Worth. The nearest site would be in Dallas:

TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION OFFICES FOR OLDER BLIND INDIVIDUALS

State agency that provides products and services for people who are 55 years and older with vision impairments

TWC Helpline: (512) 936-3388

Email: oibinfo@twc.texas.gov

www.twc.state.tx.us/partners/independent-living-services-older-individuals-who-are-blind

APH (AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND) CONNECT CENTER

Provides information and resources to assist children, parents, job seekers, adults, and older people who experiencing low vision or blindness.

Phone: 800-232-5463

<https://aphconnectcenter.org>

ACCESSIBLE MEDICAL LABELING

Many pharmacies in the U.S. are now offering accessible medication labels, specifically for their blind and visually impaired patients at select locations, including Talking Labels, Large Print, and Braille. Use the link below to search for a ScriptAbility pharmacy near you or ask your local pharmacy if they offer this service. Pharmacies are gradually considering this service to meet the needs of their customers.

<https://www.envisionamerica.com/products/scriptability/scriptalk/participating-pharmacies/>

AGING AND DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTERS

Twenty-eight centers in Texas that assists individuals in locating resources for people who are older or have a disability.

Phone: 855-937-2372 to be connected to the office in your area.

www.hhs.texas.gov/services/aging/long-term-care/aging-disability-resource-center/find-adrc

SIGHT INTO SOUND

Free audio production service.

Phone: 713-622-2767

www.sightintosound.org

IBUG

Non-profit organization promoting the individual independence, social integration, and educational development of the blind community through accessible technology training.

Phone: 832-453-7139

www.ibugtoday.com

AREA AGENCIES ON AGING

Provides benefits counseling, home safety modification, transportation, meals on wheels and more. Services vary from county to county.

Phone: 1-800-252-9240 to be connected to the agency that serves your county. Be prepared to enter your zip code.

<https://apps.hhs.texas.gov/contact/aaa.cfm>

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/providers/long-term-care-providers/area-agencies-aging-aaa>

DIRECTIONS FOR ME: HORIZONS FOR THE BLIND

One stop source for accessible packaging information

<https://directionsforme.org/>

LIGHTHOUSES FOR THE BLIND

Provides various services for individuals living with vision loss

Austin: 512-442-2329, www.austinlighthouse.org

Dallas/Envision: 214-821-2375, www.envisionus.com/Envision-Dallas/

East Texas Lighthouse: 903-593-3111, www.tylerlighthouse.org

Fort Worth Lighthouse: 817-332-3341, www.lighthousefw.org

Houston: 713-527-9561, www.houstonlighthouse.org

San Antonio: 210-533-5195, www.salighthouse.org

HIMS

Phone: 888-520-4467

<https://hims-inc.com>

Independent Living Aids

Phone: 800-537-2118

<https://independentliving.com/>

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND OF TEXAS

Advocacy and membership organization. Currently has chapters in Austin, Beaumont, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio.

Phone: 866-929-2228 to ask about our Senior Advantage Program that provides support to older adults who have experienced vision loss.

<https://acbtexas.org/>

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF TEXAS (NFBT)

Advocacy organization. Currently has chapters in Arlington, Austin, Big Country (Abilene), Coastal Bend (Corpus Christi), Dallas, Fort Worth, Golden Triangle (Beaumont), Houston, Lone Star (at large), Permian Basin (Midland), Rio Grande Valley (McAllen), and San Antonio.

<https://www.nfbtx.org/>

NFBT PROGRAMS:

Newsline: <https://www.nfbtx.org/newsline.php>

Newsline is a free newspaper and magazine service available by phone, iPhone app, or Amazon Alexa. Talking Book Program staff can sign patrons up for this service.

Silver Bells: <https://www.nfbtx.org/programs-seniors.php>

The Silver Bells program that teaches older Texans who are visually impaired about technology, products, and services that can assist them to remain independent.

For more information on both programs, contact: Liz Wisecarver at lwisecarver@nfbtx.org or call: 346-704-0145

NFB CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN NON-VISUAL ACCESS

Center of Excellence in Nonvisual Access is a concentrated center of expertise, best practices, and resources that enables businesses, government, and educational institutions to more effectively provide accessible information and services to the blind community.

<http://nfb.org/programs-services/center-excellence-nonvisual-access>

COMPUTERS FOR THE BLIND

Sells refurbished desktop and laptop computers at a discounted rate to people with print disabilities. Computers come with a one-year license of either magnification or screen reader software, and Partners with World Services for the Blind to provide assistive technology training.

Address: 1201 S Sherman St, Suite 206, Richardson, Texas 75081

Phone: 214-340-6328

www.computersfortheblind.org

STAP PROGRAM

Specialized Telecommunications Assistance Program provides landline, mobile phones and tablets (iPads and Kindles) to qualified Texans with disabilities.

For regions that do not have a STAP specialist, contact:

Contact: Sonia Khurana, Interim STAP specialist

Phone: 409-904-2368

Email: STAPContractor6@hhs.texas.gov

<https://dhhs.hhsc.state.tx.us/providers/contractors.asp?ptype=STAP>

Blindness, Education, Screening and Testing (BEST) program

BEST provides free vision screenings and financial assistance to Texas residents for medically urgent eye treatment with a referral from your ophthalmologist.

Email: BESTprogram@hhs.texas.gov

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/blind-visually-impaired/blindness-education-screening-treatment-best-program>

MYSTIC ACCESS

Supports and empowers blind and visually impaired users of assistive technology through providing comprehensive, professionally produced audio tutorials and personalized one-on-one and group training opportunities.

Phone: 716-543-3323

www.mysticaccess.com

Vispero

Phone: 727-803-8000

<https://vispero.com/>

Christal Vision

Phone: 800-299-0700

www.christal-vision.com

LEARNING ALLY

Provides new, integrated tools to help educators drive sustainable transformational change in literacy leadership and student achievement.

<https://learningally.org>

BOOKSHARE

Makes reading easier by customizing an experience to suit peoples learning style and find virtually any book they need for school, work, or for just the joy of reading. Free to qualified US students of any age and the schools that support them. Small fee if not in school.

www.bookshare.org/cms

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND (APH)

Unique products and services to support all aspects of daily life without sight.

www.aph.org

NATIONAL BRAILLE PRESS

Empowers the blind and visually impaired with programs, materials, and technology supporting braille literacy and learning through touch. National Braille Press is the premier braille publisher in the US specializing in producing original braille works.

www.nbp.org

AIRA

Aira is a visual interpreting service.

<https://aira.io/>

Be My Eyes

A free app that connects blind and low-vision people with sighted volunteers and company representatives for visual assistance through a live video call.

<https://www.bemyeyes.com/>

KNFB READER

Mobile app for blind, low-vision, dyslexic, and other print-disabled users that converts text to speech or text to Braille.

<https://nfb.org/programs-services/knfb-reader>

SEEING AI

Seeing AI is an artificial intelligence application developed by Microsoft for iOS. Seeing AI uses the device camera to identify people and objects, and then the app audibly describes those objects for people with visual impairment.

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/ai/seeing-ai>

YOU DESCRIBE

Free, web-based platform for adding audio description to YouTube content.

<https://youdescribe.org/>

TIPS TO HELP AN OLDER ADULT WITH A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

- Use appropriate window coverings and adjustable lighting to limit glare
- Paint door trim; replace covers on outlets and light switches; and put contrasting tape on steps to increase the use of contrast.
- Avoid the use of throw rugs and low-lying furniture to prevent falls.
- Use at least a 14-point font on white or light-yellow paper for handouts.
- Provide enlarged, tactile versions of playing cards and board games.
- When walking with an older adult with vision loss, offer your arm for the person to hold onto. Walk about 1/2 step ahead of the person to avoid objects in the pathway. This assistance is called “human or sighted guide.”
- Talk directly to the person with vision loss, “What would you like to drink?”
- Offer a tour and orientation to the facility, including how to find restrooms and point out landmarks that can be used to get around easily.

- Describe the place setting and food arrangement on the plate in terms of a clock face.
- Use clear, verbal descriptions when giving directions. Not “over there.”
- If you move things around, let people know.

TIPS FOR ASSISTING PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR HAVE LOW VISION

- Approach, Ask, Assist:
 - Approach: if you suspect someone may need a hand, walk up, greet them and identify yourself.
 - Ask: "Would you like some help?" The person will accept your offer or tell you if they don't require assistance.
 - Assist: listen to the reply and assist as required. Not all people who are blind or vision impaired will want assistance - don't be offended if your assistance is not required.
- Address people who are blind or have low vision by their names so they know you are speaking to them.
- Let the person who is blind or have low vision know that you have entered the room.
- Do not walk away from a person who is blind or have low vision without indicating that you are doing so - it is embarrassing and frustrating to talk to thin air.
- Let the person who is blind or have low vision take your arm.
- In dangerous situations say "STOP" rather than "LOOK OUT"
- Do not relocate objects or furniture without telling the person who is blind or has low vision.
- Do not fill glasses or cups to the brim.
- Use ordinary language when directing or describing and be specific. Do not point or say "over there". Direct people who are blind or have low vision to their left and right, not yours.
- Use words like "look" and "see"; they are part of everyone's vocabulary. Otherwise, both you and the person who is who is blind or have low vision will feel awkward.
- Describe the surroundings and obstacles in a person's pathway (remember to look up as well as down). Warn of the presence of over-hangs, such as kitchen cupboards, jutting side mirrors of cars, or trees.
- Do not leave doors ajar. Close them or open them fully.
- Be aware that the person who is blind or has low vision will be disadvantaged by not seeing what is going on. Talk about what is happening.
- Ask people who are blind or have low vision what they want or need. Do not direct questions through their companion.
- If people who are blind or have low vision extend their hands to shake, do so.
- When seating people who are blind or have low vision, put their hands on the back of the chair and they will then be able to seat themselves.