

X. OLD BUSINESS**A.3 Talking Book Service – Building Capacity - Discussion**

Talking Book Service and Building Capacity

The Commission for Libraries helps build the capacity of libraries through programs and services that are delivered in a variety of ways. The current Management Team members, along with Sue Walker (Special Populations Consultant and TBS Regional Librarian), have been operating with the understanding that statewide programs that cannot be delivered by other entities are one such delivery method whether or not direct service to individuals is involved.

- Talking Book Service is a statewide service similar to the LiLI Databases and STACKS, Idaho's digital repository of government publications. We fund and operate the services, but eligible individuals can access the electronic resources directly without going through an Idaho library. We also provide training and public information about the services to Idaho library staff so they can connect their users with the resources that they need.
- A survey of all types of libraries that was part of the 2008-2012 5-year LSTA plan evaluation showed that respondents who referred users to TBS rated the service highly on a 5-point scale:

Answer Options	Rating Average	Response Count
TBS saved my library money because we did not have to buy as many audio books and other resources for this population.	3.65	80
TBS is essential for my library to serve people in my community who cannot read standard print due to a physical disability.	4.25	80
The ICfL should continue to support the TBS.	4.55	80

- The Talking Book Services is operated in a highly efficient and effective manner:
 - NLS recommends the bachelor's degree for readers advisors; our Customer Service Reps start at under \$13 per hour and retention rates are very high despite the low pay,
 - the TBS Advisory Committee actively helps develop an annual work plan, and
 - Idaho's program is recognized nationally for innovations and excellent service delivery.
- In FY2004, the Board supported a decision to discontinue providing large print books to TBS patrons as budgets were shrinking and more libraries were offering large print options. Today, while many libraries provide audio book formats, their collections can't match the

National Library Service's equipment and extensive book offerings. Over 68% of Idaho's TBS patrons are over 70 years of age and being able to help match readers with more than 96,000 available titles is an important part of the service, as is the no-charge mail delivery for equipment and books.

- IMLS funding supports many states' Talking Book programs. According to information provided at the April 2018 Grants to States meeting, 36 states use LSTA funds to support Talking Book Services. In recent years, 12% of Grants to States funds (approximately \$150 million) have gone to Libraries for the Blind & Physically Handicapped and related activities. 47 states use LSTA funds to support their statewide databases. In Idaho, state funds support the LiLI Databases.