

**VII. OPERATIONS REPORT****C. Talking Book Patron Survey Summary – information item**

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The National Library Service (NLS) requests that regional libraries conduct a biennial user survey to assess user satisfaction, identify areas for improvement, and receive notification of user change of address and/or status. In April 2021 a paper survey was mailed to approximately 2,500 active individual users. The anonymous survey could be returned to the Talking Book Service (TBS) via free postage for the blind and contained instructions for completing the survey online or via telephone. Patrons completed 879 surveys for a 35% return rate.

The survey questions were the same as the 2019 survey to allow for comparison between the two sets of responses. However, the question pertaining to gender was removed this year. Other demographics of those returning the survey closely matched the overall demographics of TBS users. Eighty-six percent of the surveys returned were by those 60 – 99 years of age.

The survey was anonymous, but users could include their name with comments or indicate if they wanted to be contacted by TBS Customer Service Representatives (CSRs). All comments received followed up contacts if possible. All comments were compiled and reviewed for themes to address.

The questions and summary of results follow:

<b>Question</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>Notes</b>
How did you learn about TBS?	ICBVI 33%	ICBVI 33%	Id. Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired
How long have you used TBS?	2-5 years 41%	2-5 years 37%	10+ 25% up from 22%
Have you seen or heard a TBS ad on TV or radio?	No 80%	No 67%	Consider other marketing strategies
How satisfied are you with the number of books received?	Very 69%	Very 73%	Some confused by multiple titles on cartridge
How satisfied are you with the types of books received?	Very 65%	Very 64%	More genres added
How satisfied are you with the customer service received?	Very 89%	Very 89%	Patrons love their CSRs!
Do you use the internet?	No 51%	No 56%	Limited access/slow speed
Are you registered to use BARD?	Yes 23%	Yes 19%	Most need assistance
Why don't you use BARD?	No device 36%	No device 36%	More people aware of BARD (8% decrease)
Do you use Newsline?	No 72%	No 66%	More people aware of Newsline (6% decrease)
Overall rating of TBS	Excellent 72%	Excellent 73%	Good 25% up from 24%

How could TBS better meet your needs? Many address issues that are beyond the control of staff. A total of 396 responses were received — top five comments received include:

- All is good/No improvements needed—166 responses
- Requests for more variety or more/less of certain topics and genres—43 responses
- Requests for more books to be mailed out and faster turnaround—35 responses
- Requests for the BARD application to be improved and resources developed to assist users—30 responses
- Requests to have book titles printed on cartridge—25 responses

Lessons Learned:

1. Thirty-three percent of users learn about our services from the Idaho Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. We will continue to strengthen our relationship with them.
2. Although the number of users referred to TBS by libraries is slowly increasing, continued work with libraries to raise awareness of the service and the fact they can help perspective users to enroll is still needed.
3. Statistically, more people are aware of BARD and are using it. Unfortunately, many do not have a computer, tablet, or smart phone. Lack of internet access is also an issue.
4. More patrons are using Newsline to listen to newspapers and magazines.
5. Ninety-seven percent of patrons rate the overall service of Talking Books as excellent (72%) or good (25%).
6. Total percent of youth served is only 2%. With the changes to certifying authorities, we anticipate this number will increase, especially with outreach to school librarians during the summer months.

A sample of comments received:

- TBS has been a blessing in my life.
- My needs are met! Deeply appreciate the service. I like talking to the librarians—nice persons!
- BARD is too confusing. I'm not a robot, I'm 67 years old.
- I'm very happy with my tape recorder. It goes with me wherever I go.
- Through the pandemic, you have saved my life and sanity. Thank you.