**“That All May Read”:**

**“Read Different” seminar to promote Talking Books to the broader disability community**

The Florida Braille and Talking Book Library (the Library) is a bureau of the Florida Division of Blind Services (DBS) but serves many others with a “print disability”. The Library works in cooperation with the nation-wide network of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) (Library of Congress) to provide free services throughout the state. Many believe the Library’s services are only for the blind/visually impaired because of its official name and affiliation with DBS. However, recently, NLS broadened the definition of “print disabled” and greatly expanded access to individuals with disabilities other than visual impairments. It also simplified its application and streamlined the certification process.

Our See Different team is planning a virtual statewide “Read Different” seminar on June 7th. It will be a showcasing event designed to highlight the Braille and Talking Books Library and its many valuable, enjoyable and life-enhancing services. It will include information and testimonials dispelling common myths about eligibility being only for blind/visually impaired. Another benefit of this info-packed presentation is providing in-depth information about the recently streamlined certification process in hopes of sharing this great resource with many of those our network partners serve!

**Eligibility**: People that meet at least one of the following criteria are now eligible for Talking Book services thanks to the criteria expansion:

1. An individual who is blind or has a visual impairment that makes them unable to read print books comfortably.
2. An individual who has a perceptual or reading disability.
3. An individual who has a physical disability that makes it hard to hold or manipulate a book, focus, or move the eyes as needed to read a print book.

**Certification:** The following professionals may now certify eligibility:

* Medical professionals (such as doctors of medicine or of osteopathy, ophthalmologists and optometrists, psychologists, registered nurses and therapists)
* Professional staff of hospitals, institutions, and public or welfare agencies (such as educators, social workers, caseworkers, counselors, rehabilitation teachers, certified reading specialists, school psychologists, superintendents, or librarians)

Because our “Read Different” event will contain a lot of information in a short period, we would like to meet with you in advance for a stakeholder’s meeting where we will go into more detail about how the library’s services can directly benefit your consumers, encourage you to invite them and agencies serving them to the event, and answer your questions directly.

We are committed to getting this free, yet priceless resource into the hands of eligible patrons and their families, and ensuring access to reading material, regardless of age, economic circumstances, or technical expertise. In short, we want to share the gift of reading and are anxious to spread the word about the Talking Books Library so that all may read! We look forward to networking for the good of those we all serve!

Please visit <http://dbs.myflorida.com/library>  or <http://www.loc.gov/nls> to learn more. Additionally, find attached both individual and institutional applications for Talking Book Library Services for your convenience.

Do not hesitate to contact us if you have further questions or need clarification: Sila.Miller@dbs.fldoe.org.

Thanks!