Suffolk Cooperative Library System
Outreach Services

Valerie Lewis, Administrator of Outreach Services

631-286-1600, x1354   valerie@suffolknet.org

General Outreach Services email: outreach@suffolknet.org

How to Produce your Library's/Organization's Print Materials and Online Resources in Accessible Formats.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990) requires that your organization's programs, services and materials be accessible to all.

Often a library's large print book collection is one of the most heavily circulated collections. It would follow that many of your patrons need large print (or some other alternative) access to your library materials, not just what is available in the large print book section. In an effort to provide important library information to everyone in your community, you will want to provide your library's information in formats that are accessible to all. The library's newsletter is a GREAT place to start! Once you feel comfortable producing the newsletter in accessible formats, please be sure to make all of your other library materials, such as flyers, handouts, board minutes, etc., accessible, as well.

BE SURE TO INFORM ALL STAFF MEMBERS that there is a large print (audio, Braille or Online) version of the newsletter available.

Producing your library's/organization's newsletter in large print is a simple process. The first thing to keep in mind is that it does not have to look the same as your traditional print version. You should try to include graphics that may be important to the print content, but not everything needs a graphic.

Do NOT use glossy paper. Use a matte white paper. You can use 8 ½ x 11 or 11 x 17. The size of the paper does not matter, however, do not use too large of a piece of paper. This will make it more difficult for the patron to hold and read. You can design the layout however you like.

A good font to use is ARIEL or Helvetica. Always use at least an 18 point font. Black print on a matte white background will provide good contrast. Do not use all bold. Do not use all upper case (caps). When you are using the 18 point font, the spacing should automatically go along with what you are doing. If you need to make adjustments in the spacing/leading of the document, you can go into the options and find ""Line Spacing"". You can use this feature when you need to make the document fit the format with which you are working.

Put copies of the large print newsletter in your large print book section. Put large print versions of the newsletter next to the traditional print versions. Make table top signs that say, ""Please Try"" or ""Please Enjoy"" a large print version of our newsletter""".

Be sure to use large print on the table top signs. You will want to have a statement in EVERY EDITION of your traditional and large print newsletters, telling patrons that there is a large print (audio or Braille) version available. If you mail the newsletter out to your community, ask patrons to let you know if they would like to receive the newsletter in an alternative/accessible format. Provide a phone number and/or email address for a specific person at your library, whom patrons can contact if they would like to have the newsletter mailed to them.

ASK FOR FEEDBACK!! Tell patrons you are now producing your newsletter in large print, audio and Braille, and you would appreciate their feedback. This can help you to design a more useful and enjoyable publication.

If you have staff members that visit community events, nursing homes, assisted living environments and/or senior centers, they should bring copies of the large print newsletter when they visit.

When getting started, Do NOT make hundreds or thousands of copies of the large print newsletter. If you send your traditional print version to a professional printer to make thousands of copies, print the large print version in-house…at first. This will give you a chance to see how many of the large print versions are being used. Make 50 copies to start. Put 10 copies next to your traditional version. Put 10 copies in the senior section. Put 10 copies in the large print book section and so on. Once these are gone, print 10 more, etc.

Audio Format

To produce your library's newsletter in an audio format for people who cannot read print…someone who is blind or visually impaired, someone with a learning or cognitive disability or someone who cannot hold a book or turn a page, you can do a Google search for FREE recording software and download the software on to a computer. You will need someone with a clear voice to record the newsletter. ALL print materials must be recorded "'""WORD for WORD"'"'". There can be no adlibbing or extraneous commentary when recording. Before recording your library's newsletter, please contact me about important ""best practices" to use when recording print materials. Do not just pick anyone to do a recording. You want to have several people record the newsletter and then see which one sounds best. Often a person may ""'sound"" fine in one-to-one conversation, but may not be the right person for recording!! You may wish to look to your local high school theater program or a local play house for volunteers to do recordings of your library's materials. Once the newsletter has been recorded, you can make it available as a link in an email and you can make it available on the library's website. You can also burn it to a CD for patrons who do not use computers.

Braille Format

To produce a Braille version of your library's newsletter, contact SCLS Outreach Services. We can provide you with pricing for

Transcribing Print materials into Braille. Braille is very space intensive and will be lengthy, therefore, you will want to offer it ONLY upon request. You can put a statement in your newsletter (each edition) Please let us know (provide someone to contact at the library) if you would like to receive the library's newsletter in Braille. The transcription process is quite fast and can be accomplished in an "on-demand" method.

Website and Social Media Accessibility

Your website and social media feeds are a valuable method when reaching out to patrons and when promoting the library's resources and services. These technologies MUST be accessible to people with disabilities and people using different types of assistive technology, such as screen reader software, captioning, descriptive narration, etc. The following sites provide information and instruction on how to create accessible websites and social media resources.

- webAim   www.webaim.org

- Web Accessibility Initiative   www.w3.org

- National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM)   www.ncam.org

- Easter Seals Technology   www.eastersealstech.org

- Bridging Apps (Accessible Apps)   www.bridgingapps.org

- DO-IT Accessible Website Design
  www.washington.edu/doit/world-wide-access-accessible-web-design