

# How to Accommodate Library Patrons with Communication Disabilities:

## **What are Communication Disabilities?**

Communication disabilities are disabilities that complicate or hinder someone from being able to express themselves to those around them. Examples of communication disabilities can include:

- Blindness
- Deafness
- Speech Disabilities, such as stuttering or mutism

While not being fluent in a language can be viewed as a disability, it's not considered to be a communication disability by itself.

## **How can you help those with communication disabilities?**

There are a few basic ways to offer services and accommodations to those with communication disabilities. These include:

- Providing auxiliary aids to help make communication easier
- Consider the nature, length, complexity and context of what is being expressed, and if there are ways of expressing a concept that is less complex
- Create a welcoming, listening environment by making it clear those with communication disabilities will have ample time to frame ideas without judgement by staff

## **What are Auxiliary Aids?**

Auxiliary Aids are materials or services that assist those with disabilities. Examples of Auxiliary Aids for those with communication difficulties include:

- Having materials in a range of formats such as providing Large Print, Braille, Electronic, or Audio versions of materials in addition to providing written and printed materials
- Having on staff, or being able to arrange for, helpers such as qualified readers, notetakers, or interpreters for those who need them
- Offering devices that can be used to help with communication, such as real-time captioning, type-to-talk devices, speech-to-speech transitioners, picture cards, or paper and pencils