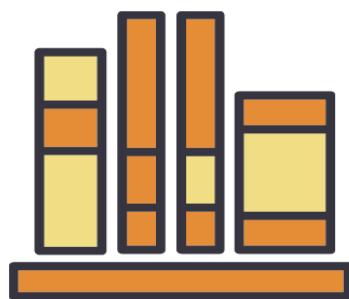




# THE BRAILLE AND TALKING LIBRARY OF TAMPA



**Collection Development  
Needs Assessment**

**Prepared By:**

**The Braille and Talking Library of Tampa Development  
Team Coordinators**

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# INTRODUCTION TO TBAT LIBRARY DIRECTOR AND BOARD

## Purpose of Needs Assessment

The Braille and Talking Library strives to connect with the people of Tampa through resources, technologies, and services. We believe it is important that library resources evolve to meet the needs of its community. To understand library services requests of the Tampa Bay community, the library has undertaken a *Collection Development Needs Assessment*. TBAT Library analyzed community needs by:

- Analyzing library statistics
- Reviewing Tampa demographics
- Obtaining feedback from library users, the Tampa Bay community, and other key informants, including:
  - Library User Survey
  - Key informant interviews with:
    - Staff
    - Library User
    - Focus Groups

“NLS works to ensure **that all may read** by providing eligible patrons access to reading material regardless of age, economic circumstances, or technical expertise. Share the gift of reading, and spread the word about NLS so **that all may read.**”

~National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled

We look forward to the information collected from this assessment because we hope it will help lay down a framework for the library administration and its staff. We expect this assessment helps the library administration be better prepared to provide exemplary services to the Tampa community through the library's collection. The library administration asserts that through this *Community Needs Assessment* of The Braille and Talking Library will improve the lives of its community with the enhancements of the offerings that best aligns to the needs and desires of its patrons.

# METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW

The TBAT Library decided to execute a Collection Development Assessment to find out what services the Tampa community expects from its special needs library to serve its visually impaired community as well as project the needs for the future. Several strategies were utilized to gather input from the community while obtaining a wider representation of Tampa residents.

## Review of Existing Data

The Development Team reviewed and analyzed existing data regarding TBAT Library and for the greater Tampa Bay community using library records and circulation statistics. Census data was pulled to analyze the demographics of Hillsborough county and of Florida to determine the prevalence of visually impaired populations.

## Community Survey

A 6-question community user survey was distributed to library patrons and members of the Tampa community for several weeks in January and early February 2021. The survey was available using different modes of participation (paper-based, braille-based, Web-based). The results of this survey will help improve the collection for TBAT Library users.

## Focus Groups and Interviews with Key Informants

Approximately 30 library stakeholders were identified to take part in focus groups and interviews. These stakeholders included library users and off-site focus groups. Meetings were held at TBAT Library and other various locations in the community. The following organizations had members take part in the focus groups and interviews:

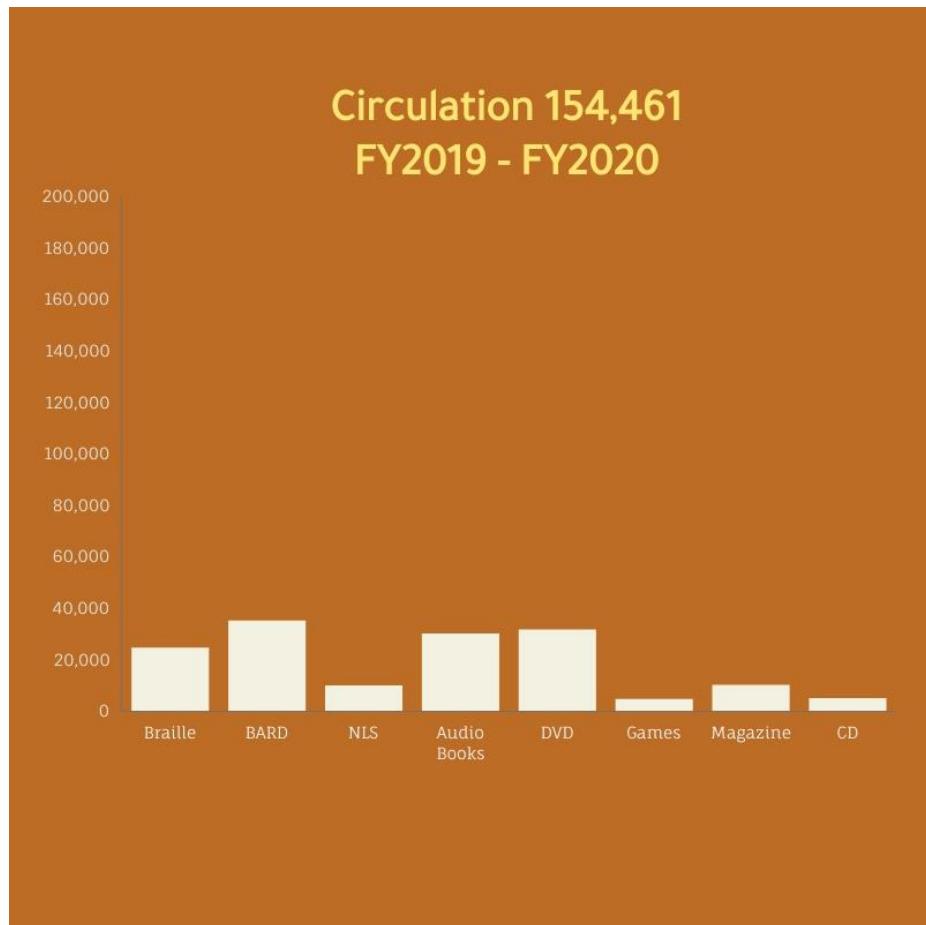
- Rehab Council for the Blind
- Service Providers
- Blind Services Foundation of Florida, Inc.
- Florida Department of Education

## CIRCULATION TRENDS

TBAT Library has had an average circulation of 88,000 items for the past three fiscal years with a stable monthly circulation. Due to the library's Summer Reading Activities Spotlight every summer which runs from June through July, it brings an inflow of school-aged children and their parents or caregivers to the library for an interactive summer read-a-louds directed and given by the staff and volunteers. In addition, the adults also have a reading incentive program that also contributes to an increase in material circulations during this time.



TBAT Public Library had a total circulation of 154,461 for FY2019-2020. Slightly down from prior years.



# DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

## TAMPA, FLORIDA

TBAT Library is a municipal library serving the city of Tampa, Florida.

### Demographic Data:

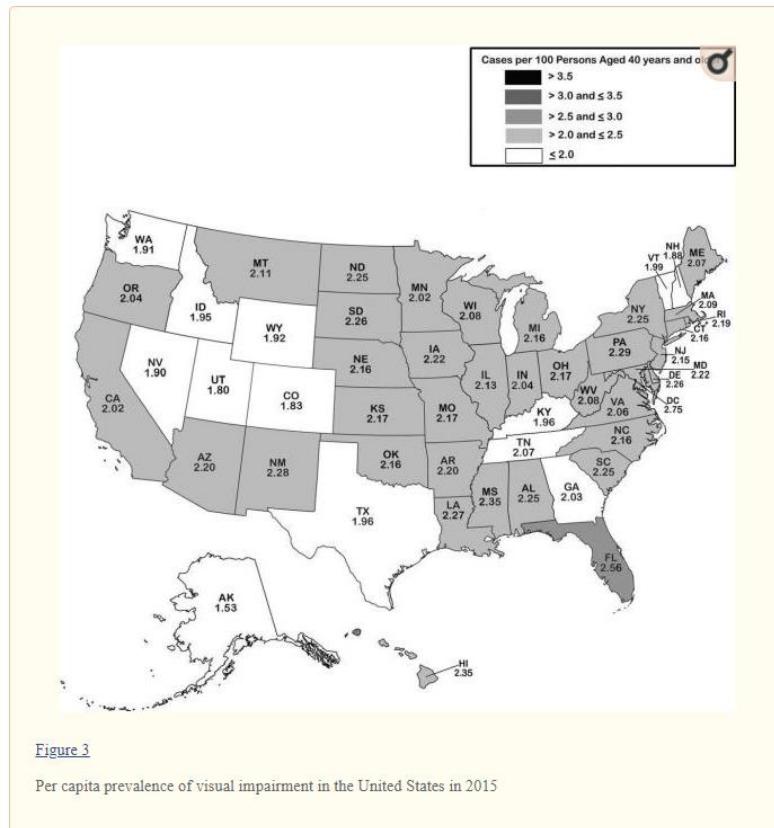
#### I. Published Sources

Demographic data suggests that Florida would benefit from more special libraries that cater to print disabled individuals. There are a total of 538,105 individuals with a visual disability in the state of Florida according to a 2019 American Community Survey by the United States Census (Disability Characteristics Survey, 2019).

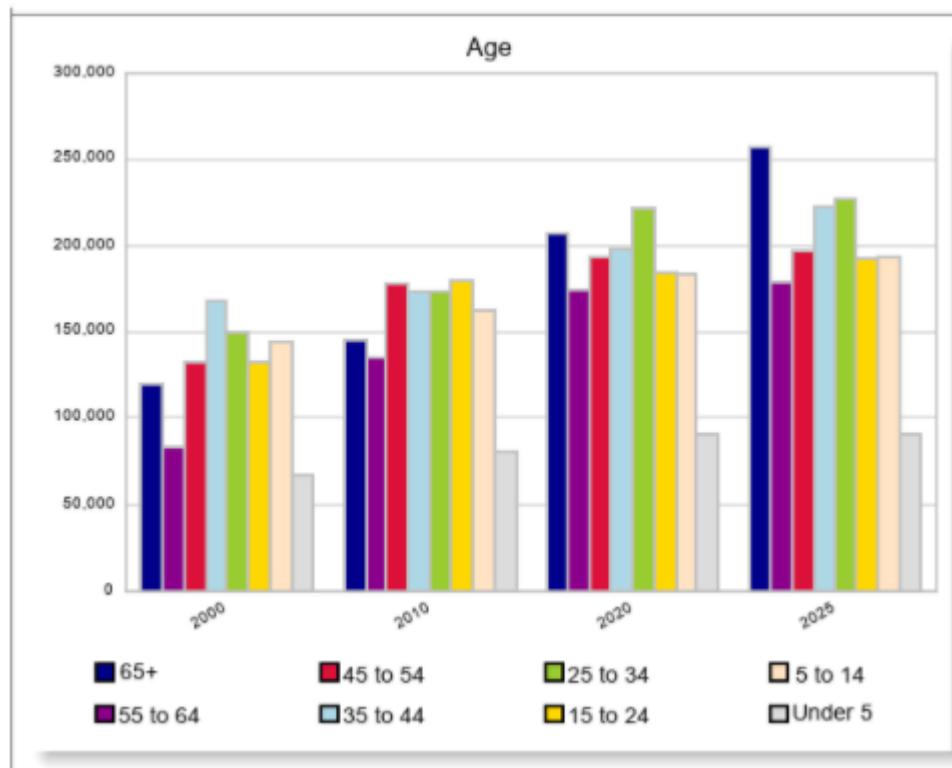
US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health States that Florida had the highest per capita prevalence of visual impairment compared to other states in a 2015 study.

**Geographic Distribution of the Estimated Number of Cases of VI and Legal Blindness in the US in 2015 and 2050**

In 2015, the 3 states with the highest per capita prevalence of VI were Florida, Hawaii, and Mississippi (2.56%, 2.35%, and 2.35%; [Figure 3](#)). In 2050, states projected to have the highest per capita VI prevalence are Florida, Hawaii, and South Dakota (3.98%, 3.93%, and 3.70%; [Figure 4](#)).



The high rates of visual impairment in the state of Florida correlate with the high populations of individuals over 65 in the state.

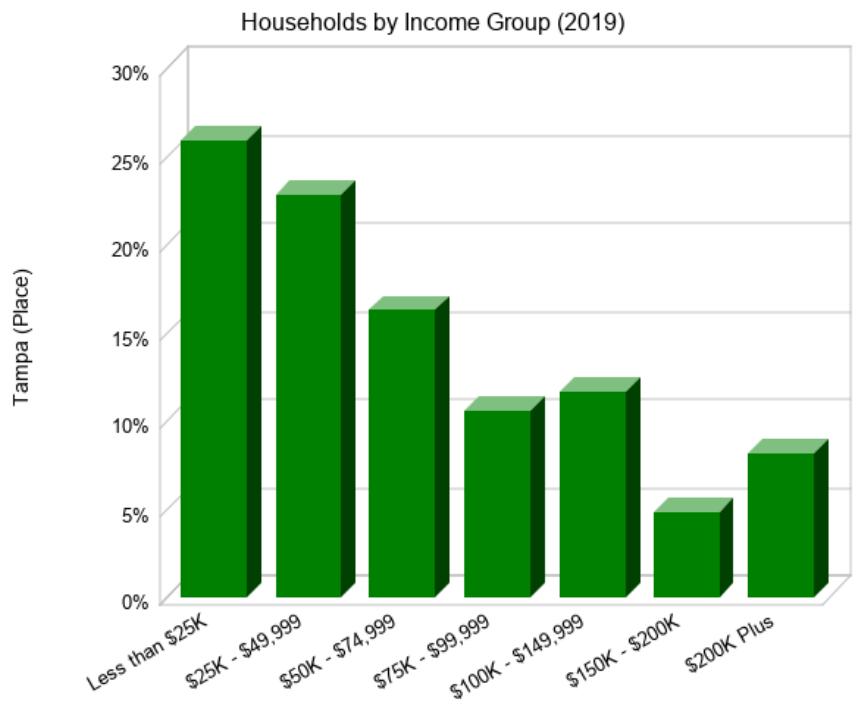


The graph above was taken from *DemographicsNow* owned by the Gale Business database. It depicts the population by age in Hillsborough County, Florida. The significant increase in the 65+ population is important to note since this population is the most prone to experiencing visual impairment and other disabilities. This fact is supported by the CDC:

American adults aged 40 years and older are at greatest risk for eye diseases; as a result, extensive population-based study data are available for this age group. The major eye diseases among people aged 40 years and older are cataract, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and age-related macular degeneration. These diseases are often asymptomatic in the early treatable stages. The prevalence of blindness and vision impairment increases rapidly with age among all racial and ethnic groups, particularly after age 75 (Prevent Blindness America, 2002) (Vision loss and age).

The poverty levels of a community must also be considered when determining patron needs. According to 2019 Census data, 12.7% of Florida's population sits below the poverty line ([census.gov](https://census.gov)). In comparison, Tampa city has a slightly higher poverty rate of 17% ([census.gov](https://census.gov)). Examining the statistics of poverty in relation to age group indicates that seniors are affected by poverty the most. In Tampa, 22.4% of the population of 60

and over live below the poverty line, compared to 17% in the 18 to 34-year-old population (census.gov).



The graph above was taken from DemographicsNow of the Gale Business database and shows the high poverty rates of Tampa, Florida.

# COMMUNITY INPUT

## Focus Groups and Interviews with Key Informants

The comments from participants focus on our library's circulation development for books, magazines, and videos via:

- Cassette tape
- In Braille
- In large print to eligible borrowers throughout the state
- Descriptive videos
- Videos with audio descriptions

### Books, eBooks, and other materials

When it came to discussing the condition, availability, and accessibility of the materials these were the issues that came up:

- Lag time in receiving materials at home
- Desiring newer reading technology
- Lacking books and videos in other languages
- Limited collection in young adult titles in braille and talking books

## APPENDICES

### Community Survey

The purpose of this survey is to gain feedback on the quality and abundance of materials being offered by our library for blind and differently abled patrons. This survey will be given to patrons at the library, any caregivers for patrons and shared throughout Hillsborough County disability services institutions. The survey will be available using different modes of participation (paper-based, braille-based, Web-based). The results of this survey will help to improve the collection.

This survey consists of one page and six questions. The survey will ask you to answer based on your experiences at the Braille and Talking Library of Tampa. For Braille users: At the end of the questionnaire, you will find three sheets of paper suitable for your braille typewriter. To answer a question, please write the question number together with your preferred answer. 1-very dissatisfied, 2-dissatisfied, 3-satisfied, 4-very satisfied

1. How would you rate the library's collection overall? (4 possible answers left to right- very dissatisfied to very satisfied range)

1                   2                   3                   4

2. How would you rate availability of material in braille? (4 possible answers left to right-very dissatisfied to very satisfied range)

1                   2                   3                   4

3. How would you rate availability of material in "talking book" format? (4 possible answers left to right-very dissatisfied to very satisfied range)

1                   2                   3                   4

4. How would you rate availability of equipment loans-such as digital players and accessories? (4 possible answers left to right-very dissatisfied to very satisfied range)

1                   2                   3                   4

5. How would you rate the library's juvenile books collection-age 4 to 12? (4 possible answers left to right-very dissatisfied to very satisfied range)

1                   2                   3                   4

6. How would you rate the library's magazine and periodicals collection? (4 possible answers left to right-very dissatisfied to very satisfied range)

1                   2                   3                   4

## Community Survey Results

### How would you rate the library's collection overall?

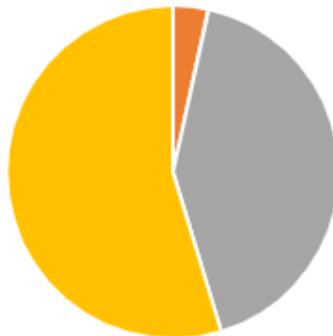


■ 1- very dissatisfied ■ 2-dissatisfied ■ 3-satisfied ■ 4-very satisfied

**250 responses 61% satisfied**

Asking the blind or differently-abled community for feedback on the library's overall collection will allow us to assess how they feel about not only books and resources specifically designed for accessibility, but how the library caters to their family and caretakers as well.

### How would you rate availability of material in braille?

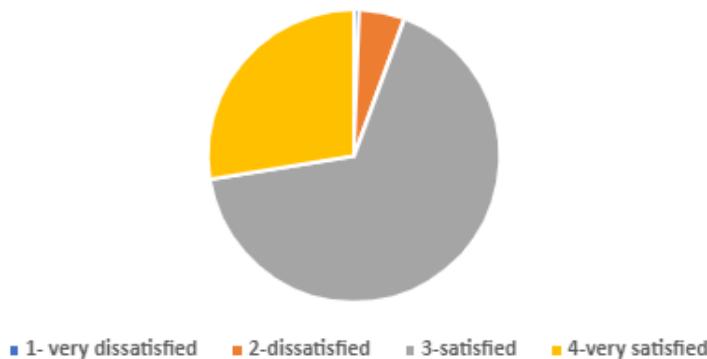


■ 1- very dissatisfied ■ 2-dissatisfied ■ 3-satisfied ■ 4-very satisfied

**117 responses 54% very satisfied**

Approximately half of the number of overall responses came from our patrons that either utilize braille material or know someone that does. We had 4 responses of dissatisfied patrons, but overall, most patrons were satisfied with the majority of responses very satisfied. We attribute these successful numbers to the focus on acquisition of braille material that was undertaken during the 2019 fiscal year.

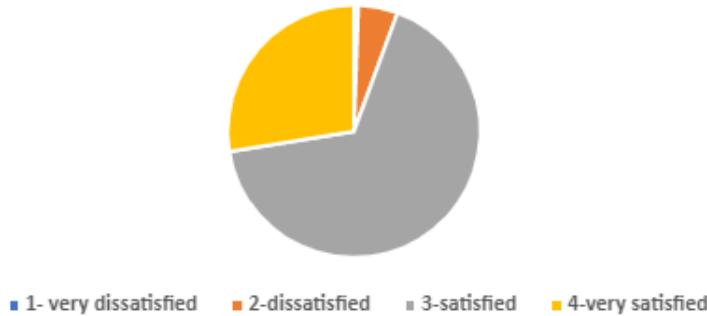
### How would you rate availability of material in "talking book" format?



**178 responses 67% satisfied**

Patrons were overwhelmingly satisfied with the audio book selection or "talking books". The librarian in charge of the audio book area utilized a grant during the 2019 fiscal year to increase the selection of requested titles by patrons.

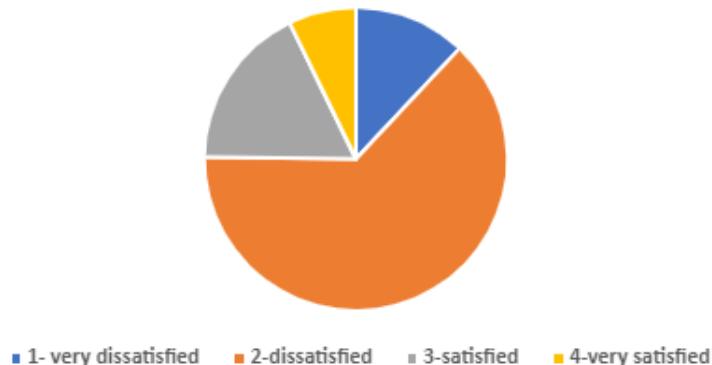
### How would you rate availability of equipment loans-such as digital players and accessories?



**178 responses 67% satisfied**

Patrons that utilize audio books were also overwhelmingly satisfied with the availability of equipment loans such as digital players and accessories. The grant utilized during the 2019 fiscal year included funding to expand this area.

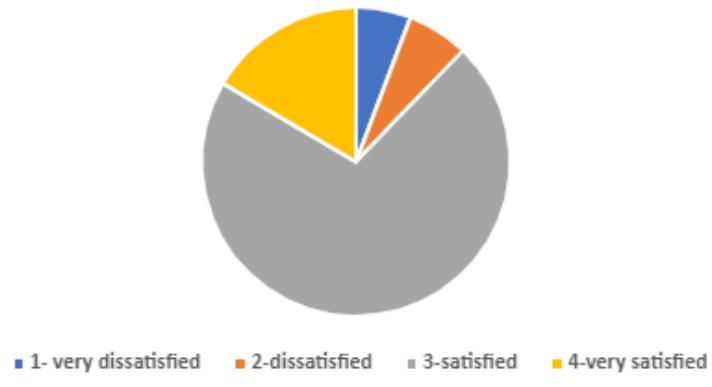
### How would you rate the library's juvenile books collection-age 4 to 12?



**125 responses 63% dissatisfied**

This survey question had the least number of respondents which can be attributed to the number of juveniles or their caretakers that participated in the survey are lower than the overall patron counts. While all of the other survey responses were positive, this question was rated overwhelmingly in the dissatisfied category. This data is invaluable as it will allow us to focus our energies where our patrons need it most, in the juvenile books collection-age 4 to 12.

### How would you rate the library's magazine and periodicals collection?



**139 responses 71% satisfied**

The library's magazine and periodicals collection, while limited in selection for in-person browsing, has a strong following online and the majority of our patrons utilize our mail-order catalog and online ordering to have their favorites delivered. The number of satisfied patrons in this area speaks to the process and encourages us to maintain the service.

## Library User Focus Group/Interview Questions (Conducted Over Phone)

1. Are you pleased with your library materials overall?
2. How do you request books from TBAT Library?
3. If yes, were the materials you found physically located here at the library, or were they electronic materials, or a combination of the two?
4. How helpful is our staff?
5. Do you have access to the computer?
6. Do you use the BARD website (the Braille and Audio Reading Download) that allows immediate access to the National Library System (NLS)?
7. If so, how do you use BARD? Mobile App? Website?
8. What age group do you belong to? Teen? Adult? Senior?
9. Would you prefer using your smartphone or tablet instead of the Talking Book Machine that plays books?
10. Do you have other comments, concerns, or questions regarding the materials offered by TBAT Library?

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