

To: Distinguished Members of the Appropriations
Committee

First, I want to express how impressed I was to see our Connecticut Government at work. The dedication and thoughtful questions expressed by the committee members made me proud.

I am writing on behalf of Connecticut Braille Association as the Workshop Director in response to the budget proposal by the Governor as it relates to the Board of Education and Services for the Blind.

Connecticut Braille Association was formed in 1960 in response to an expressed need by the Board of Education and Services for the Blind for certified braillists to Braille textbooks for Connecticut visually impaired students. We have worked closely with BESB since that time.

I receive many calls from people with problems associated with being visually impaired as well as the problems that care-givers experience. We have been fortunate to be able to refer them to BESB for solutions to these problems. We receive call backs from people that are so grateful that their problems were able to be solved by a dedicated agency.

Because BESB is an agency that covers all ages, we have been able to help them over the years with some of the following problems they were presented with :

A college student who had no Braille textbook to start the college year.

An elderly diabetic man who needed a Braille manual.
Transcribing a phone book for a visually impaired adult working in a city office.

Transcription of a bead catalog for a visually impaired adult in order for her to keep her job.

Providing children's books with Braille for an integrated program of young sighted and visually impaired students.

Providing patterns for a visually impaired adult knitting helmet liners for soldiers.

Brailleing a Blue-Cross Blue-Shield contract for a policy holder.

Menus for restaurants in Connecticut.

Braille programs for the Theatre.

Providing a Braille journal for a CT student who had raised a Guide Dog and wanted to give the new owner of the dog a copy of the puppy's early life with her.

Providing large type instructions for hospital employees as to how to talk with a blind patient.

CBA has also been able to work closely with BESB to help former inmates who became certified braillists in prison continue brailleing after they were released from prison.

CBA has been able to pay a modest stipend to these "graduates" as I call them so they can continue with their skills to help provide Braille materials to our students.

The above are some of the many examples that we have experienced where people within the agency were able to easily communicate with each other to provide services for adults and children in the community.

Please keep the agency together in one place so we can all work together to continue to serve the special needs of the blind and visually impaired in the State of Connecticut.

Thank for your consideration of my request.

Micki McCabe, Workshop Director
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