



A Timeline of the History of the Library Equal Access Program & Disability Services at The Seattle Public Library

The Library Equal Access Program (LEAP) has been providing services to SPL patrons with disabilities and supporting access to library resources for over 35 years, and The Seattle Public Library (SPL) has been providing services to patrons with disabilities for over 120 years.

1904 The Seattle Public Library begins sending books to blind patrons throughout the state of Washington in New York Point, a system of tactile writing, similar to braille, developed by William Bell Wait.

1907 Under contract with the Washington State Library, SPL begins making materials available in American Braille, New York Point and Moon Type, a system of embossed symbols based mostly on Latin script.

1931 The Pratt-Smoot act provides funding to make the Central Library's Circulation Department a hub for distribution of braille materials to patrons in Washington, Alaska and Montana.

1989 The Library Equal Access Program (LEAP) is established.

1990 Signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

1992 The Kurzweil Reading Edge is launched. The Reading Edge was a foundational piece of equipment for LEAP that allowed patrons to scan printed materials and have them read out loud back to them.

2014 LEAP receives Safeco grant for Accessibility Kits. Accessibility Kits contain low-tech, handheld writing tools, ZoomText magnification software and JAWS (Job Access With Speech) screen reading software on public computers and dedicated ADA workstations at four branch locations.

2019 LEAP receives funding from The Seattle Public Library Foundation to expand services to include All Abilities Programming, including All Abilities Story Time, which aims to create joyful reading experiences and support early literacy for all kids, including those facing barriers to reading.



2021 LEAP receives funding from The Seattle Public Library Foundation to provide live captioning at select SPL programs and events. For more information about the Library Equal Access Program, please contact LEAP at leap@spl.org, 206-615-1380 V/TTY, or visit www.spl.org/LEAP