Who is Eligible for Homebound Services?
Any patrons with physical or mental impairments or a disability that prohibits the patron from visiting the library

Antique Service
A 1967 ALA survey found that many public libraries across the United States already had programs in place to reach homebound patrons.

Homebound Programs in Iowa Today
A questionnaire was distributed to Iowa Public Libraries to:
Gauge services provided
Identify goals for the future
Patrons served by individual Homebound Programs: 0 – 128 participants
Cost to Patrons: unanimously zero cost
Staffing:
• volunteers
• employees
Materials NOT available:
• Delivery and return methods:
  • door-to-door
  • Postal Service

Observable Weaknesses
• Little has changed operationally and in services offered to patrons
• Lack of consistency across libraries

"Hopefully, in the future library schools will develop this area more fully. A few of the schools should offer sixth year specialist programs for librarians who wish to work with the homebound or institutionalized, and all library schools should have some offering at the master’s level.”

Adapting Homebound Programs for the Future
A majority of homebound patrons are elderly community members, a population generally considered to be less digitally literate than most. As we move into a more technological society, digital options will become increasingly familiar and accessible to all patrons.

Tools for the Future
Tablets and other devices
✓ must operate with or without internet access
✓ offer ability to change font sizes
✓ may be desirable to patrons who have limited use of hands
✓ can be used to
  • allow access to the digital catalog
  • provide a connection to the world
  • supply access to digital newspapers (current and historical)
  • lend with preloaded eResources

Services for the Future
Informational lessons provided at care facilities about digital services
Optional digital delivery
Online book discussion groups

Keep in Mind
Though many homebound patrons will become increasingly comfortable with new technology, maintain traditional services for patrons with varying levels of digital literacy

Outcomes
Community development
Support for life long learners