HOMEBOUND DELIVERY SERVICES
POLICY & PROCEDURES

Volunteers at the Berkshire Athenaeum deliver books to the elderly or disabled unable to visit the library.

A. VOLUNTEER SERVICE: Homebound Delivery is a volunteer program operating out of the Circulation Department at the Athenaeum. Volunteers for this service do not replace library staff or do tasks previously done by paid staff. The program complements other library services by reaching a population that cannot otherwise use the library. Homebound Delivery cannot operate without the commitment of its volunteer service providers.

B. SERVICE PRIORITY:
B.1. Depending upon demand, priority for service will be targeted to those readers demonstrating the greatest need.

B.2. Non-resident readers will be provided delivery service to the extent that volunteers are available to transport materials outside of Pittsfield.

C. APPLICATIONS: Persons interested in either receiving homebound delivery services or volunteering to provide those services must fill out the appropriate Reader or Volunteer application forms available at the Circulation Department. Completed applications must be returned to the Circulation Department supervisor.

D. REQUIREMENTS FOR HOMEBOUND READERS:
D.1. Homebound readers must be registered borrowers at the Athenaeum. Their borrower cards are kept at the Athenaeum’s Circulation Department along with their Reader Application Form. Readers already registered should return their cards with the Homebound Delivery application. If a reader subsequently has the opportunity to visit the library the card may be requested.

D.2. As part of an application process, the homebound reader must briefly explain their disability and why they qualify for this program.

D.3. Homebound readers who live at home will have volunteers select, check-out, deliver and return books for that reader. Homebound readers who live in senior or disabled housing will have their books delivered and returned by an RSVP volunteer. Library staff or a different volunteer (not from RSVP) will select, check out and check in the books for the RSVP deliveries.

E. REQUIREMENTS FOR DELIVERY VOLUNTEERS:
E.1. An automobile or access to other reliable transportation is necessary for this program.
E.2. After an initial orientation session, and prior to being assigned the first reader, each new volunteer is requested to commit to at least three months of delivery service.

F. TRAINING AND RESPONSIBILITY:

F.1. The volunteers are responsible for not only delivering and returning books for the homebound reader, but for selecting from the library’s collections appropriate books and materials. The volunteer is the reader’s link to the library, although library employees are always available to assist.

F.2. Starting volunteers will be assigned one homebound patron. With time, volunteers begin to know the reader’s interests, likes and dislikes. As part of an orientation process, volunteers will be instructed in book selection and informed about appropriate library services. After that, library staff will always be available for further assistance.

F.3. Once a volunteer is comfortable with the selection and delivery process, a second or additional homebound reader(s) may be requested.

F.4. Volunteers should only select and deliver materials which they might reasonably expect to return on time.

F.5. Volunteers should recognize the limitations of their own schedules and be careful not to accept a commitment they cannot reasonably expect to fulfill.

G. SERVICES AVAILABLE:

G.1. This program is designed primarily for the delivery of books with four three-week loan periods. Items that circulate for two weeks may also be delivered at the volunteer’s discretion.

G.2. Renewals: Materials provided through Homebound Delivery Services are not renewable.

G.3. Holds: Books in circulation may be reserved or placed on hold (See “Holds Procedures: A Supplement to Borrowing Policy & Procedures”). Reserves may be placed on Athenaeum items as well as items belonging to other items in the C/W MARS network using system wide holds. This service should be requested through the Reference Department.

G.4. Interlibrary Loan: Materials not available through the C/W MARS network may often be borrowed or photocopied. This service should be requested by the reader through the Reference Department.

G.5. Volunteers should take advantage of these special services or limited loan materials only if they are flexible enough to deliver promptly and pick up prior to the dates due.

G.6. Homebound readers should be aware that volunteers are provided for the delivery of materials only and are not trained to supply research assistance. Readers should contact the Reference Department directly for their inquiries.

H. IMPLEMENTATION:

H.1. The homebound reader’s library card is kept in the Circulation Department at the Athenaeum. Before any materials leave the library they should be checked out on the reader’s card by library staff.

H.2. Each time Circulation Department staff check out books to a homebound reader they will go into Patron Information on the C/W MARS system and print out all CHARGES for that
The latest CHARGES printout will be placed in the reader’s folder, and any outdated CHARGES sheets will be discarded. A copy of the receipt from the latest transaction will be placed with the materials for the homebound reader.

I. RSVP DELIVERY:

I.1. Each participating nursing home will have two large canvas tote bags (with the library’s name on them) that will be used to transport the books.

I.2. Library staff or in-house volunteers will do the book selection for the nursing homes. Selected books will be stored on office shelves until the morning of the delivery. Items should not be checked out until the day of delivery.

I.3. After they are checked out, a delivery slip will be taped around each item, with the borrower’s name and due date.

I.4. Deliveries are made weekday mornings. Books and printouts should be ready and in tote bags by 9:30 a.m. of the day of delivery.

I.5. When the library is closed for a holiday, the delivery that would have been scheduled for that day will generally be made a day or two later.

I.6. Each nursing home will get one delivery per month. The RSVP volunteer will stop at the Athenaeum twice – once to pick up new books and again to drop off old ones after visiting the nursing homes.

J. FINES: The Athenaeum does not charge homebound readers fines for materials overdue through no fault of their own, nor does it wish to penalize its volunteers. However, the Athenaeum reserves the right to take appropriate punitive measures if materials are consistently overdue or library regulations flagrantly violated. Such measures may include the assessment of fines or dismissal of offending volunteers.

J. TALKING BOOKS: Those unable to read conventional print because of poor eyesight or other disability may qualify for Talking Book services, a federally funded program that circulates books and magazines recorded on cassette through the mail. Even the cassette players are provided and it’s all free to any qualified subscriber. Call the Athenaeum for more information and a special Talking Book application form.