**WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR BOOKSHARE MEMBERSHIP?**

THIS TUTORIAL EXPLAINS WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO BECOME A BOOKSHARE MEMBER.

BOOKSHARE'S ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA ARE BASED ON THE CHAFEE AMENDMENT TO U.S. COPYRIGHT LAW. THE CHAFEE AMENDMENT MAKES IT LEGAL FOR BOOKSHARE, A NON-PROFIT ENTITY, TO PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE VERSIONS OF BOOKS AND PERIODICALS TO PEOPLE WITH PRINT DISABILITIES. BOOKSHARE’S ELIGIBILITY CATEGORIES ARE THEREFORE DEFINED BY THE WORDING OF THE CHAFEE AMENDMENT RATHER THAN BY EDUCATION LAW.

THIS CHART DESCRIBES WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO BECOME A BOOKSHARE MEMBER. A PERSON WITH A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT, SUCH AS BLINDNESS OR LOW VISION, WILL MOST LIKELY QUALIFY FOR BOOKSHARE.

THE SECOND CATEGORY IS A PHYSICAL DISABILITY THAT AFFECTS ONE’S ABILITY TO READ PRINT. FOR EXAMPLE, IT COULD BE A DISABILITY THAT MAKES IT DIFFICULT FOR SOMEONE TO HOLD A BOOK OR TURN PAGES. A PERSON WITH THIS TYPE OF DISABILITY TYPICALLY QUALIFIES FOR BOOKSHARE.

THE THIRD CATEGORY OF DISABILITY IS A SEVERE LEARNING OR READING DISABILITY THAT AFFECTS THE PERSON'S ABILITY TO READ STANDARD PRINT. SEVERE DYSLEXIA IS ONE EXAMPLE.

PROOF OF DISABILITY IS REQUIRED OF EVERY PROSPECTIVE BOOKSHARE MEMBER. THOSE WHO WISH TO SIGN UP FOR AN INDIVIDUAL BOOKSHARE MEMBERSHIP WILL FIND A PROOF OF DISABILITY FORM ON THE BOOKSHARE WEBSITE. THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED BY A COMPETENT AUTHORITY AND SUBMITTED TO BOOKSHARE AS PART OF THE SIGNUP PROCESS.

IN THE CASE OF A STUDENT WHO WILL BE PART OF AN ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERSHIP,THE DECISION REGARDING ELIGIBILITY MUST BE MADE BY THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY(IES) WORKING MOST CLOSELY WITH THAT STUDENT, AND BOOKSHARE REQUIRES THAT THE SCHOOL KEEP THE PROOF OF DISABILITY FOR EACH QUALIFYING STUDENT ON FILE.

IN THE CASE OF A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT, A COMPETENT AUTHORITY MAY BE A TEACHER OF THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED, A SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER, FAMILY DOCTOR, OPHTHALMOLOGIST, OR OPTOMETRIST.

FOR SOMEONE WITH A PHYSICAL DISABILITY THAT PREVENTS READING, A COMPETENT AUTHORITY COULD BE A SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER OR RESOURCE SPECIALIST, A FAMILY DOCTOR OR OTHER MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL, OR A PHYSICAL THERAPIST.

IN THE CASE OF SOMEONE WITH A SEVERE LEARNING DISABILITY THAT AFFECTS READING, THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY CAN BE A LEARNING DISABILITY SPECIALIST, SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER, SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST, NEUROLOGIST, PSYCHIATRIST, OR CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST WITH A BACKGROUND IN LEARNING DISABILITIES. IN ADDITION, THOSE WHO ARE MEMEBRS OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE FOR THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED IN THE U.S. OR SIMILAR NATIONAL BODY IN OTHER COUNTRIES, OR OF LEARNING ALLY, MAY SUBMIT CERTIFICATION OF THESE MEMBERSHIPS FOR CONSIDERATION AS PROOF OF DISABILITY.

PEOPLE WITH AUTISM, EMOTIONAL DISABILITIES, ADHD, AND INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES, AND THOSE WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS, DO NOT QUALIFY FOR BOOKSHARE UNLESS THEY ALSO HAVE ONE OF THE PRINT DISABILITIES DESCRIBED ABOVE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT THE QUALIFICATIONS PAGE OF THE BOOKSHARE WEBSITE.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OTHER BOOKSHARE TOPICS, VISIT THE BOOKSHARE WEBSITE, THE BOOKSHARE CHANNEL ON YOUTUBE, AND BOOKSHARE ON FACEBOOK.