



**Request for support from the Government of Canada in  
the 2015 Budget**

to

**Transition book distribution  
to Canadians with vision loss  
from physical mail delivery to electronic delivery**

**August 6, 2014**



## Transition of CNIB library book distribution from physical mail to e-delivery

### The Proposal:

Funding currently provided by the Government of Canada to Canada Post to support the 'Literature for the Blind' program will be made available to support a phased transition of CNIB's library book distribution from physical mail delivery to wireless digital distribution. **This proposes a transfer of existing funding rather than a request for net new funding resources.** CNIB would continue its collaboration with Canada Post as its primary mail delivery supplier to effect this transition. As Canada Post transitions to a community mailbox delivery system throughout the country, it is now more important than ever for CNIB and Canada Post to work together to recognize efficiencies and resolve the challenges of Canadians with vision loss, particularly seniors and those with other physical disabilities, who may have difficulties accessing their community mailbox. The rationale for Government of Canada support is presented below.

### The Situation:

CNIB Library's primary book distribution media is by mail via Canada Post. Over one million books are distributed by CNIB annually to its blind and partially sighted clients. This represents over two million pieces of mail. The Government of Canada provides approximately \$8.25 million per year<sup>1</sup> to Canada Post to cover these mailing costs under its 'Literature for the Blind' program.

Over the past eight years, the Government of Canada, through HRSDC, has provided grant funding to CNIB to transition its library collection of (now) 90,000 published works from analogue cassettes to digital files and to provide the supporting technology infrastructure. Thus, the government's leadership prevented the CNIB Library alternative format collection, the largest of its kind in Canada, from becoming obsolete as cassette tapes and the equipment needed to produce them neared the end of their lifecycle. Today, now that all CNIB alternative format books and other materials are created and stored digitally, CNIB is positioned to take the next logical step and distribute its books digitally, downloading them straight to the homes of Canadians who are blind or partially sighted thus removing the need for and cost of physical mail delivery. This would be beneficial not only to the almost 30,000 Canadians with vision loss using the CNIB Library service but would create savings for the Government of Canada and efficiencies within CNIB.

### The Benefits:

- **Service delivery improvement for Canadians who are blind or partially sighted**

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<sup>1</sup> The amount provided by the Government of Canada to Canada Post for the 'Literature for the Blind' program is approximately \$11 million/year. (Source: Neil Brodie, Treasury Board Secretariat) For the purposes of this proposal, we have assumed \$8.25 million (75%) is used for CNIB book distribution program.

A digital delivery service will allow CNIB to download books and other materials to its clients nationwide within a day of request and more cost effectively.

- For clients *with* computer access, books can be delivered directly to their computer, iPhone, Android and other wireless devices.
- For clients *without* access to or unable to use a computer, often people with vision loss in their older, senior years, the library has developed the capability to download to a WiFi-equipped reading device, which does not require a computer in the delivery channel. This delivery model, the basis of the proposal, was successfully piloted with 100 clients of CNIB across the country this past year. The following testimonial from one of these clients is indicative of the positive reception for the initiative.

“I turn on my DAISY player (audio reading device) and the books are waiting for me on my electronic bookshelf! The player reads out the list of titles to me, and I decide which ones I want to keep. To read one, I just hit play. When I’m finished, I press a button and it’s taken off my bookshelf. If some books don’t interest me I delete them and the next morning, like magic, I have new ones to choose from.”  
 - Gerry, CNIB Library user

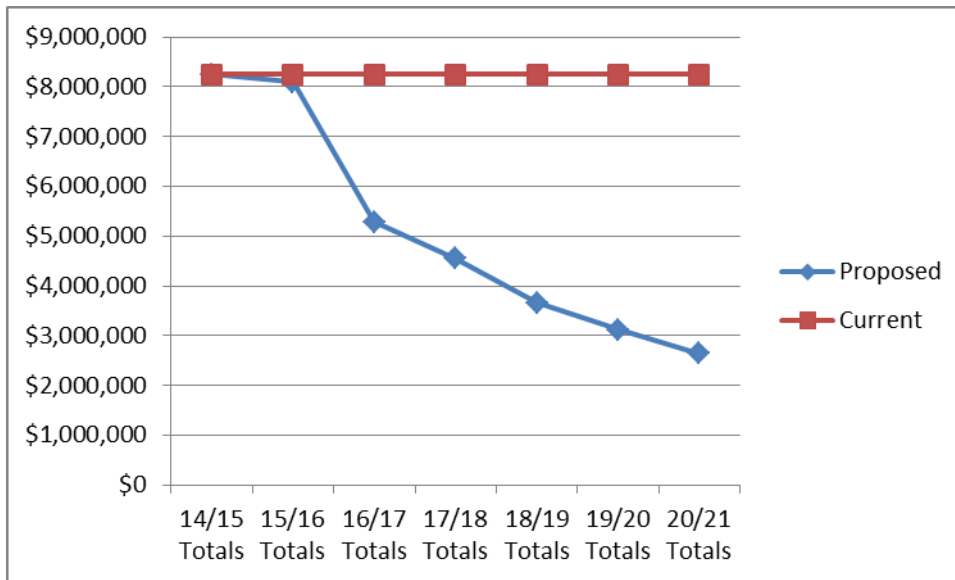
- **Cost savings**

This proposal will reduce the costs to the Government to support the ‘Literature for the Blind’ program. Once fully implemented by year 5, **an estimated annual savings of \$5.6 million for the Government of Canada is anticipated.** A comparison between annual costs to the Federal Government of the current physical delivery and the proposed e-delivery model over the duration of the 5-year transition is summarized in the tables below.

Further, when this transition is completed, digital delivery will significantly and positively impact CNIB’s costs for book distribution to Canadians who are blind or partially sighted, including the cost to purchase one million CDs and their customized packaging annually, and the resources required to support CD book production and distribution.

Cost Savings to Government of Canada

	14/15 Totals	15/16 Totals	16/17 Totals	17/18 Totals	18/19 Totals	19/20 Totals	20/21 Totals
CNIB Clients being migrated (with planned decline by natural attrition)	23,000	21,000	19,000	17,000	15,000	13,000	11,000
Current Model							
Federal Government Costs - Physical Delivery	\$8,250,000	\$8,250,000	\$8,250,000	\$8,250,000	\$8,250,000	\$8,250,000	\$8,250,000
Proposed Model							
Federal Government Costs - (Physical and Internet)	\$8,250,000	\$8,099,171	\$5,282,724	\$4,551,079	\$3,665,132	\$3,120,000	\$2,640,000
Federal Savings Per Year	\$0	\$150,829	\$2,967,276	\$3,698,921	\$4,584,868	\$5,130,000	\$5,610,000



- **Alignment with Government of Canada themes**

- Supports fiscal sustainability by significantly reducing the estimated \$11 million total cost to the Federal Government to support the 'Literature for the Blind' program. The 5-year phased transition to electronic delivery is intended to reduce to negligible the need to physically deliver CNIB's books and other materials, thus virtually eliminating the cost associated with 2 million postal transactions per year, once the transition from physical mail to e-delivery is completed.
- Canada Post's decision to eliminate door-to-door service makes it even more important for CNIB Library to deliver its services electronically so that clients of the Library, most of whom are elderly can continue to have their books 'delivered' (electronically) straight to their homes.
- Helps Government support vulnerable Canadians by providing the tools and training to improve their access to information and knowledge.
- Aligns with Canada's digital economy strategy to accelerate adoption and use of digital technologies.
- Supports Government's desire to reduce barriers and increase opportunities for full participation of people with disabilities in Canadian society and to stimulate productivity and increase opportunities for innovation.
- Supports statement by Environment Canada in *Canada's Emissions Trends*, October 2013 that 'The government's approach is to encourage strong economic growth and job creation while achieving our environmental objectives'. Moving from CDs to digital distribution reduces carbon emissions by 91%. For CNIB, the environmental savings are equivalent to 3000 barrels of oil, according to Rogers based on publicly available information.

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