

## Low Vision/Blind

Assistive technology devices related to individuals who have low vision or are blind, include such things as: assistive devices that magnify or brighten, and products that can be touched, felt or heard. The goal for this type of assistive technology is to maximize the visual environment, and to increase the independence of people who are blind at home and in the community. These devices may be anything from books written in Braille, to magnifiers that enlarge pictures and letters. Here are a few of the assistive devices that can help you in your home:

**Modified Time Pieces:** For those who are blind or have low vision, special clocks are available with a talking function that announces the time for you. Many time pieces also come in enlarged print for those with low vision. Wristwatches are also available in Braille or with the talking function. Alarm options are included on most of these models.

**Television and Reading:** Voice narrated videos are available. Between the dialog sections of these videos, a narrator describes the actions and movements of the characters, as well as the setting of the scene. Books and publications of all types are also available in enlarged print or in audio cassette versions. The North Dakota School for the Blind has books and videos available (see Additional Resources Section).

**Writing Supplies:** When trying to write straight or maintain margins, writing guides are often used. These guides come in various styles. Some conform to checks, envelopes, signatures, or standard letter format. Special paper and notebooks that have bold black lines also help individuals with impaired vision.

**Telephones:** Large print phones and flashing light ringing systems can be very helpful for individuals with impaired vision. Braille phones and voice dialing phones are available. A voice dialing phone will automatically dial a number when a specific name is spoken. Speed dialing is available on most models.

**Magnifiers:** These devices assist people with impaired vision in their daily life by enlarging reading materials or magnifying a given object. Magnifiers are also available for use with your television set.

Things you can do to make life easier:

- Keep things in a designated place so that you always know where to find them.
- Color code items in your home or office with bright colors to make locating things easier. Brightly colored appliances and supplies are also easier to locate.

- When purchasing new appliances, look for those with enlarged print writing or talking functions.
- You can keep your home safe by using storage units to reduce clutter.
- Use a jumbo-sized marker with your message board. It forces people to write larger, making it easier for you to see.
- When using Directory Assistance, the number you are requesting can be automatically dialed for a small charge.
- Always check to see if materials are available in large print or audio versions. Many businesses and agencies offer these services.