

**RCW 74.18.010 Intent.** The purposes of this chapter are to promote employment and independence of blind persons in the state of Washington through their complete integration into society on the basis of equality, and to encourage public acceptance of the abilities of blind persons. [2003 c 409 § 2; 1983 c 194 § 1.]

**Findings—2003 c 409:** "The legislature finds and declares the following:

(1) Thousands of citizens in the state have disabilities, including blindness or visual impairment, that prevent them from using conventional print material.

(2) Governmental and nonprofit organizations provide access to reading material by specialized means, including books and magazines prepared in braille, audio, and large-type formats.

(3) Access to time-sensitive or local or regional publications, or both, is not feasible to produce through these traditional means and formats.

(4) Lack of direct and prompt access to information included in newspapers, magazines, newsletters, schedules, announcements, and other time-sensitive materials limits educational opportunities, literacy, and full participation in society by people with print disabilities.

(5) Creation and storage of information by computer results in electronic files used for publishing and distribution.

(6) The use of high-speed computer and telecommunications technology combined with customized software provides a practical and cost-effective means to convert electronic text-based information, including daily newspapers, into synthetic speech suitable for statewide distribution by telephone.

(7) Telephonic distribution of time-sensitive information, including daily newspapers, will enhance the state's current efforts to meet the needs of blind and disabled citizens for access to information which is otherwise available in print, thereby reducing isolation and supporting full integration and equal access for such individuals." [2003 c 409 § 1.]