How to Use Mail-A-Book

Mail-A-Book is an Arrowhead Library System service with collections of books and audio-visual materials that can be ordered by, and mailed to, qualified patrons at no cost to them.

To Order Materials:

Library materials may be ordered in the following ways:

MAIL an order postcard
E-MAIL to mailbook@alslib.info
PHONE 218-741-3840 (ask for Mail-A-Book)
ONLINE FORM on our web page at:
www.alslib.info/services/Mail-A-Book
ONLINE CATALOG www.alslib.info (directions on next page)
ALS LIBRARY APP from App Store & Google Play

Filling out an Order Card or Online Form:

- ✓ **PRINT your name and mailing address on each order card**. (You may use printed mailing address labels.)
- ✓ Include your library card's 14-digit number or write "no card".
- ✓ **List the titles you would like to borrow.** These do not need to be from our catalog. Adding the author, series and other details can be helpful as we search for your request.
- ✓ **Format:** Identify what type of library material you want:
  Book, **Large Print Book, Audiobook on CD, DVD, Music CD, Other**
- ✓ **When Mail-A-Book does not have an item available, we will request it from another library.** This applies to anything that we do not have on our shelves on the day your order is filled.
- ✓ If a title cannot be located at any library, you will be notified.
- ✓ You may choose between these options**:**
  ____ **If my item cannot be sent today, please send something similar.**
  ____ **Do not send a similar item today. I will wait for the requested title(s).**
- ✓ When we substitute, we do our best to find a read-a-like title; however, we do not read the books in advance, and we do not track what you have read previously. We hope to send something you will enjoy. If not, just send it back.
- ✓ We do not regularly substitute Audiobook CDs or DVDs, but you may request that specifically.

Placing Requests Online:

- ✓ Access the General ALS Catalog from our website's homepage **alslib.info** and click on the word **SEARCH** in the upper right corner of the screen. Then **Search the Online Library Catalog**.
- ✓ Log in to your library account with your borrower 14-digit card number and Personal Identification Number (PIN).
- ✓ Search by keyword, title, author, series or subject. Once your search results appear; you can sort or scroll down through your options.
- ✓ There may be more than one page of options. If so, at the bottom of the page there will be arrows and page numbers. (Click < for the previous page / > for the next page.)
- ✓ Titles with **multiple formats** will have pictures/icons to identify them.
- ✓ Take note of disc or book format, print size, and other information that will help you decide on the best material for your needs.
- ✓ Click on the icon/picture of the material or the title to see more information. The details for that item will pop up in a text box (click the X in the upper right corner to close this).
- ✓ Below the description, you will find the individual copies for our entire region. Click on the blue **Request an Item** button for the title you want. The program will choose the first available item for you from any location.
- ✓ ***Mail-A-Book*** is the pick-up location. Then click ***Make Request***.
- ✓ All requests will be mailed at no charge to the patron in a zippered cloth bag with pre-paid postage included for return by mail. (The pre-paid return postage card is already in the outside pocket, under the address card with your name on it.) For things from other libraries, ILL, you will need to follow the instructions on the bookmark if you need more time.

Your Order Arrives in the Mail

- ➢ Library materials, a printed due date slip, and order postcards will arrive in a zippered cloth bag. There may be information about your requests or events.
- ➢ Most materials can be renewed. Mailing times have increased. Be sure to consider the return mailing time. Call if you need help extending the checkout period, we want you to have enough time to complete the use of the items.

Returning Materials

- The postage card with your name should be removed. Leave the **pre-paid return postage** in the plastic pocket on the front of the bag.
- Please, do not toss out the **return postage card**. This postage is paid for when we print it. We do not get a refund for unused postage.
- (If you are **not** returning your items by mail, please leave the postage inside the bag for us to use for another mailing.)
- Place the materials you are returning in the cloth bag. We do not need the due date slip to be included.
- Put your new order card face up in the plastic order postcard sleeve so we can find it easily. Please DO NOT put it inside a book, we might miss seeing it. If you don't have an order this time, leave it blank.
- Close the bag and check the return postage card. Put it in your mailbox, or drop it off at the Post Office, the Bookmobile, an ALS Library or return box.
- Some people qualify for free postage, if so, there is a specific postage card for that. Order cards cannot be used in place of postage cards.
- You may combine items and bags.

Interlibrary Loan Details

- ✓ All materials will be mailed free of charge in a zippered cloth bag with pre-paid postage included for return by mail.
- ✓ **Each Interlibrary Loan (ILL) item will have a colored bookmark with the due date and instructions.** Items should be renewed if you will not be able to return them on time. We want you to have enough time to complete your use of the items you requested, as well as avoiding possible late fees.
- ✓ **Call if you have any questions about extending your checkout period**. We are aware that mail is taking longer, and we are happy to adjust as needed. (It is more efficient to add time than to resend materials you were unable to complete.
- ✓ **Please return the ILL material, its paperwork and the bag by mail or by dropping everything off** at any Arrowhead Library System library or Bookmobile stop. **(**Please, do not toss out the return postage card. This is prepaid postage. We do not get a refund for unused postage. If you are not returning your items by mail, you may leave the return postage card inside the bag for us to use for another mailing.)

Helpful Information:

- You may renew or apply for an ALS library card online, or by phone call.
- If you plan to be away from home, please let us know so your requests can be suspended until you return.
- Please notify us if you have a change of address.
- The Arrowhead Library System is not responsible for any damage done to equipment by the materials it lends to its patrons.
- We fill requests in the order we receive them. As we process your order, we will send each available title as soon as possible. If the materials are already checked out, you will be added to the request list. Once your name reaches the top of the list for that item, we will send it to you. There is no need to request it multiple times, but you can check in to be sure you are on a request list.
- To keep a supply of books on hand, you can stagger your orders so your bags of books cycle to and from your home. We do not limit the number of books or other materials each patron has.
- If your order is taking longer than expected, please let us know. We are always happy to investigate or send something while you wait.
- If you want help finding or ordering materials, we are here for you.
- If you are concerned about privacy, you may limit the amount of information you fill out on the order card to just your library card number or address. **Please print clearly.** We do shred all order cards after use.
- **Please call 218-741-3840 if you have any questions or concerns.**

Who is eligible to use Mail-A-Book?

Mail-A-Book is a tax-supported public library service provided by the Arrowhead Library System. It is available to the following people within ***Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Lake of the Woods, and St. Louis*** *counties of Minnesota:*

- *residents of cities without a public library*
- *rural residents*
- *homebound individuals*