Georgia Libraries for Accessible Statewide Services (GLASS)

Review and Recommendations

Prepared for
Georgia Public Library Service

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3
BACKGROUND AND HISTORY 4
Chronology 4
Previous Studies 5
Himmel & Wilson 5
Georgia Department of Audits 5
NLS Consultant Reports 7
CURRENT STATUS 8
Service Outlets 8
Funding 10
State Grants 10
Federal Funding for Regional and Atlanta Metro Subregional 10
Federal Grants (LSTA) 11
Local Funds 11
GEORGIA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE STUDY 2010 12
The Planning Committee 12
Public Meetings 12
Survey 14
RECOMMENDATIONS 14
IMPLEMENTATION 14
Service Outlets 15
Service Areas 16
Funding 17
Standards 17
The Future of Library Services to People with Disabilities 17
APPENDIX A: HIMMEL & WILSON STUDY 19
APPENDIX B: SURVEY RESULTS 24
Users 24
Service Providers 24
Library Staff 25
Other 25
Comments 26
Scenario Question 26
General Comments 31
APPENDIX C: REFERENCES 35

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), Library of Congress, is a provider of free recorded and Braille materials for blind and physically handicapped individuals. A network of fifty-six (56) regional libraries and sixty-five (65) subregionals now operates throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, U. S. Virgin Islands, and Guam to support this goal (Library of Congress, 2009, p. iii).

The Georgia Libraries for Accessible Statewide Services (GLASS) is a program of the state library agency, Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS), and is supported by a combination of state and federal funds. The Georgia regional library was established in 1931 and the subregionals during the 1970s. Changes in this service delivery model have been recommended in previous studies.

In 2000, Himmel & Wilson Library Consultants pointed out that the regional library was unable to fulfill its function because of understaffing and lack of funding. The subregionals were operating as mini-regional libraries, with much of their efforts going toward mailing materials, leaving little time for outreach. The consultants noted that few public library directors and staff had an adequate understanding of the service.

The Georgia Department of Audits conducted a performance audit on the service in 2002. The auditors recommended more oversight of the subregional libraries for greater accountability. They cited a lack of public awareness of the program and a need for more funding, and noted the inadequate regional library facility. While they did not propose an alternative service delivery model, the auditors indicated that the model in use was not the most efficient.

In 2010 a study committee convened by Georgia Public Library Service explored the changing environment and strategic options for GLASS services. Incorporating information from the previous studies as well as input from users and other stakeholders, the planning committee developed a plan for reconfiguration of the service model. They called for eight (8) service outlets in addition to the regional library, with statewide mail distribution handled centrally by the regional library. The committee also recommended a funding formula for these service outlets.

The Georgia Public Library Service will implement this plan using a phased approach. In FY 2012, the regional library will move to a suitable facility and begin centralized mailing. The number of additional outlets will be decreased to nine (9). Except for the Atlanta outlet, which has been traditionally funded with federal dollars, these subregional libraries and outreach centers will be state-funded using the recommended formula. Additional changes will take place in subsequent fiscal years.

With a shift in emphasis from shipping and receiving to outreach and patron services, the subregional libraries and outreach centers will at last be able to fulfill their intended mission, rather than serving as mini regional libraries. Under this plan, the regional library will be staffed to efficiently distribute materials statewide, perform administration and outreach on a state level, and adequately support the service outlets with training and oversight.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

In 1931, the Pratt-Smoot Act enabled the Library of Congress to serve blind individuals and led to the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS). This program of library service to blind and visually impaired individuals was expanded in 1952 to include children and in 1966 to include individuals with other physical impairment that prevented the reading of standard text. A network of fifty-six (56) regional libraries and sixty-five (65) subregionals now operates throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, U. S. Virgin Islands, and Guam to support this goal (Library of Congress, "Library Resources," 2009). The NLS encourages partnership with *all* public libraries to serve this population with special needs with quality library service.

The Georgia Libraries for Accessible Statewide Services (GLASS) is administered by the Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS), which is in turn a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. The program includes a regional library (RL) in Atlanta and a network of subregional libraries (SRLs) located throughout the state. These subregionals are located in public libraries, and contracts between GPLS and the library systems outline the responsibilities of the parties.

A brief timeline highlights milestones in Georgia's program development.

Chronology

1931	Georgia Regional Library established--18 libraries served blind adults with Braille books
1932	President Herbert Hoover signed Pratt-Smoot Act
1933	Service included LP records
1952	Service extended to children
1966	Service extended to people with physical disabilities
1972	Transition from recorded disks to cassettes
1973-1977	Thirteen subregional libraries established throughout Georgia
1990	American with Disabilities Act passed Congress
c1994	Moved from manual circulation to automated system READS
2000	Himmel & Wilson Study
2002	Department of Audits performance review
2002	Moved from READS to Keystone Library Automation System (KLAS)
2002	Library Consumers' Advisory Council established
2002	Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped changed name to Georgia Library for Accessible Services, GLASS
2004	Follow-up of Department of Audits performance review
2004	Began outsourcing Braille book circulation to Utah State Library Division Program for the Blind and Disabled
2004	Service agreements between GPLS and public libraries
2006	Began process to move Atlanta Metro Library for Accessible Services (AMLAS) to the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library
2008	North Georgia Talking Book Center became an outreach center only, with patron services moving to the Rome Subregional Library

2009 Albany Subregional Library closed and services moved to Bainbridge Subregional Library and Middle Georgia Subregional Library; Hall County closed its subregional library

(Georgia Public Library Service, 2009).

Georgia has a larger number of subregional libraries than any other state. The average by state is less than two, with only four states having more than five subregionals (Library of Congress, 2009).

Previous Studies

The following are recommendations from three reports and studies performed between 2000 and 2010. Where appropriate, progress has been noted in italics following the recommendations.

Himmel & Wilson

A major study of Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH) services in Georgia was prepared for the state library agency (then the Office of Public Library Services) in 2000 by independent library consultants Himmel & Wilson. Shortly after that study was completed, the agency was relocated from the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education (DTAE) to the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia (BOR). The complete findings from this study, summarized here, may be found with the consultants' recommendations in Appendix A.

Summary of findings:

- Service to the target population was relegated to subregionals; other libraries were taking little responsibility.
- The regional library was understaffed, underfunded, and unable to fulfill its function.
- Subregionals were operating as mini regionals.
- Work involved in fulfillment precluded outreach activity by subregional staff.
- Few public library directors had an adequate understanding of the service.
- Libraries were not integrating service to people with disabilities into their overall program of service.
- Library staff lacked the knowledge to respond to the needs of people with disabilities.

Georgia Department of Audits

A performance audit of this service was conducted in June 2002 by the state auditors, yielding this summary recommendation:

> Action should be taken by the Board of Regents to implement a more efficient and effective system for providing library services to the state's blind and physically handicapped citizens.

Specific recommendations are given here, with subsequent progress noted in the italicized portions.

- Library Management:
    - The subregional libraries should be subject to additional oversight and accountability.

        - *A service agreement was implemented in 2004 and revised in 2010. The regional library began requiring from each subregional a plan of service and twice-yearly reports of activity.*

    - Action should be taken to enable the regional library to fulfill its responsibilities as the statewide coordinator of library services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.
        - *Several changes have been made that will facilitate the ability of the regional to do statewide coordination more effectively. These included separating the Atlanta Subregional activity from the regional library, engaging in a strategic planning process, and moving the regional library to an adequate facility.*

- Library Operations:

    - The Board of Regents should re-evaluate the current service delivery structure for providing library services to the blind and physically handicapped citizens of Georgia.

    - The Board of Regents should take steps to make library services more accessible to the blind and physically handicapped.

    - Additional action should be taken to promote awareness of the library services that are available to blind and physically handicapped citizens on a statewide basis.
        - *A statewide publicity campaign was launched in 2005 and included billboards, posters, radio spots, etc.*
        - *Public meetings held as part of the planning effort in 2010 raised the visibility of the program.*

    - Consideration should be given to finding a new location for the regional library.
        - *The regional library has moved into the Georgia Archives building.*

    - The subregional libraries should be commended for the quality of service they provide their patrons.

- Library Funding:

    - Action should be taken by the Board of Regents to ensure that the grant funds provided the subregional libraries are sufficient to meet the library needs of the state's blind and physically handicapped citizens.

    - Action should be taken to ensure that the activity data reported by the subregional libraries is accurate.
        - *Using KLAS has ensured accurate circulation and patron statistics.*

- Consideration should be given to adequately funding and staffing the regional library.
    - *The separation of Atlanta Metro Library for Accessible Services helped clarify staffing and funding needs for regional operations.*

- Steps should be taken to utilize charitable donations made to the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped Trust Fund.

A follow-up review was performed by the Department of Audits in May 2004 to determine the status of audit recommendations. A copy of this performance audit and follow-up review may be found at http://www.georgialibraries.org/glass/.

NLS Consultant Reports

The National Library Service conducts biennial visits to the regional libraries in all states. A report with recommendations is provided following the NLS consultant's visit. The most recent report available (dated April 20, 2009, for the visit September 10-12, 2008) included the following recommendations.

- Public Education: Develop a written public awareness plan with SRL input.
- Consulting Services:
    - Conduct biennial consulting visits to each subregional library.
    - Submit a final written report of observations and recommendations and send a copy to the SRL and its administering agency.
    - Request that the SRL respond within three months of receiving the report, sending a copy to their administering agency.
- Volunteers: Implement a program that recognizes volunteer activities at least annually.
- Administration/Organization: Investigate the feasibility of establishing a Friends group.
- Planning and Evaluation:
    - Keep NLS apprised of proposed changes in service patterns in Georgia.
    - Conduct a patron satisfaction survey and share the results of the survey with NLS.
    - Involve the Library Consumer Advisory Council (LCAC) in the preparation of a patron satisfaction survey.
- Policies and Procedures:
    - Include the LCAC in the process when policies and procedures need to be revised.
    - Provide service policies, procedures and instructional materials in Braille and audio formats.
- Reports, Statistical and Narrative: Conduct a reconciliation with Georgia patron files and the Comprehensive Mailing List System (CMLS) files.
- Personnel:
    - Work toward having all reader advisors possess a bachelor's degree.
    - Send appropriate new staff to the NLS three-day orientation.
- Physical Facilities: Continue to keep NLS apprised of progress in acquiring a facility for the subregional and regional libraries.
- Machine-Lending Agency (MLA):

- Make three attempts to retrieve equipment from inactive readers.
- Perform a reconciliation between MLA's machine files and the Blind and Physically Handicapped Inventory Control System (BPHICS) file and do so every two years.
- Perform a self-audit of the MLA's inventory to verify the accuracy of machine record keeping. If needed, encourage the SLAs to perform self-audits also.

CURRENT STATUS

GLASS is a program of the Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS), which is in turn a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. The program administered by GLASS includes a regional library (RL) in Atlanta and a network of subregional libraries (SRLs) located throughout the state. These subregionals are located in public libraries, and contracts between GPLS and the library systems outline the responsibilities of each party. There are now nine (9) subregional libraries (Talking Book Centers) and outreach centers.

Subregional libraries (SRLs) are located in public libraries in the cities of Athens, Augusta, Bainbridge, Columbus, Dublin, Macon, Rome, and Savannah. The SRL for Atlanta was co-located with the regional library, but has recently moved to the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library. A GLASS directory showing which counties and library systems fall in each subregional Library service area is an appendix to this document.

The regional library serves as the machine lending agency (MLA), the distribution center for the entire NLS collection and the provider for materials in Braille. In addition to administering and promoting the program statewide, the regional library provides consulting, training and assistance to those who provide library services to people with disabilities in Georgia. The regional library also serves as the liaison between local library providers and the National Library Service (NLS).

The outreach center and the SRLs are supported by state grants. The regional library and the Atlanta Metro SRL are supported by federal funds from the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA).

Service Outlets

- Atlanta Metro Library for Accessible Services
  (projected opening mid-2011)
  Atlanta-Fulton Public Library
  Atlanta, GA
  Serves the ten (10) counties of Clayton, Cobb, Dawson, DeKalb, Forsyth, Fulton, Hall, Henry, Lumpkin, and Rockdale.

- Columbus Library for Accessible Services
  Columbus Public Library
  Columbus, GA
  Serves the eleven (11) counties of Chattahoochee, Coweta, Harris, Marion, Meriwether, Muscogee, Stewart, Talbot, Taylor, Troup, and Upson

- East Central Georgia Talking Book Center
  East Central Georgia Regional Library
  Augusta, GA
  Serves the nine (9) counties of Burke, Columbia, Jefferson, Lincoln, McDuffie, Richmond, Taliaferro, Warren, and Wilkes.

- Middle Georgia Library for Accessible Services
  Middle Georgia Regional Library
  Macon, GA
  Serves the fifteen (15) counties of Baldwin, Bibb, Butts, Crawford, Fayette, Houston, Jones, Lamar, Macon, Monroe, Peach, Pike, Spalding, Twiggs, and Wilkinson.

- Northeast Georgia Talking Book Center
  Athens Clarke County Library
  Athens, GA
  Serves the twenty-two (22) counties of Banks, Barrow, Clarke, Elbert, Franklin, Greene, Gwinnett, Habersham, Hancock, Hart, Jackson, Jasper, Madison, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Putnam, Rabun, Stephens, Walton, and White

- Northwest Georgia Talking Book Library
  Rome/Floyd County Library
  Rome, GA
  Serves the twenty-one (21) counties of Bartow, Carroll, Catoosa, Chattooga, Cherokee, Dade, Douglas, Fannin, Floyd, Gilmer, Gordon, Haralson, Heard, Murray, Paulding, Pickens, Polk, Towns, Union, Walker, and Whitfield.

- Savannah Talking Book Center
  Live Oak Public Libraries
  Savannah, GA
  Serves the twenty-two (22) counties of Appling, Bacon, Brantley, Bryan, Bulloch, Camden, Candler, Charlton, Chatham, Clinch, Effingham, Emanuel, Evans, Glynn, Jenkins, Liberty, Long, McIntosh, Pierce, Screven, Ware, and Wayne.

- Southeast Georgia Talking Book Center
  Laurens County Library
  Dublin, GA
  Serves the twenty-seven (27) counties of Atkinson, Ben Hill, Berrien, Bleckley, Coffee, Cook, Crisp, Dodge, Dooly, Glascock, Irwin, Jeff Davis, Johnson, Laurens, Montgomery, Pulaski, Schley, Sumter, Tattnall, Telfair, Tift, Toombs, Treutlen, Turner, Washington, Wheeler, and Wilcox.

- Southwest Georgia Library for Accessible Services
  Decatur County Gilbert H. Gragg Library
  Bainbridge, GA
  Serves the twenty-two (22) counties of Baker, Brooks, Calhoun, Clay, Colquitt, Decatur, Dougherty, Early, Echols, Grady, Lanier, Lee, Lowndes, Miller, Mitchell, Quitman, Randolph, Seminole, Terrell, Thomas, Webster, and Worth.

Presently, all subregional libraries provide an on-site collection, walk-in service, and distribution by mail.

Funding

State Grants

State grants have helped support subregional libraries since their creation in the 1970s. The grant formula has included a base grant amount and additional amounts for the number of counties in the service area, the number of eligible patrons in the service area (based on the population times 1.4%) and the number of active patrons. An additional amount for each circulation was included in the grant formula through FY2008.

In FY2004, additional state funds were requested from the legislature in order to include the Atlanta Metro SRL as a grantee, but no additional funds were allocated. The Atlanta Metro SRL operates with a mixture of state and federal funding.

Federal Funding for Regional and Atlanta Metro Subregional

Regional library and Atlanta Metro SRL services are funded through Georgia's Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) program. The following targets and program activities are part of the LSTA Five-Year Plan for 2008 through 2012.

PROGRAM A: Georgia Libraries for Accessible Services (GLASS)
Targets (Outcomes Expected):

- Georgians with disabilities will effectively use library resources in greater numbers.
- Georgians with disabilities will have increased access to library materials and equipment.
- People with disabilities in the Atlanta subregional area will use walk-in subregional services in increased numbers.

Program Activities:

- Continue to provide and expand consulting, training and support for libraries on working with customers with disabilities.
  Timeline: Throughout 2008-2012
- Move Atlanta Subregional operations to a more accessible and central location, making services easier to use for people with disabilities.
  Timeline: By the end of 2008
- Set up a recording booth at the Atlanta Subregional in order to produce digital recordings of materials of local interest.
  Timeline: 2009
- Continue to promote efficiencies of service in all subregionals with the KLAS automation system and make full use of features acquired through the software upgrade.
  Timeline: 2008-2012
- Set up a model subregional for outreach activities in Atlanta and gradually shift other subregionals' activities to include more outreach by performing more of the order fulfillment centrally.
  Timeline: Set up model for subregionals in Atlanta in 2008; continue shifting of activities throughout 2008-2012

- Make Braille materials available on request.
  Timeline: 2008-2012
- Offer statewide continuing education and development opportunities for the library community in the provision of library services to people with disabilities.
  Timeline: throughout 2008-2012
- Working with other agencies serving people with disabilities, develop and implement a plan to identify more Georgians who would benefit from the services of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.
  Timeline: Immediately and throughout 2008-2012

PROGRAM B: Serving Persons with Disabilities
Targets (Outcomes Expected):

- Georgians with disabilities will effectively use library resources in greater numbers.
- More adaptive technology and special materials will be available through libraries to people with disabilities.

Program Activities:

- Continue to provide and expand consulting, training and support for libraries on working with customers with disabilities of all types.
  Timeline: 2008-2012
- Offer statewide continuing education and development opportunities for the library community in identifying and working with people with disabilities, both in libraries and through outreach.
  Timeline: throughout 2008-2012
- Assess needs and provide minigrants to libraries in need of basic adaptive equipment and specialized materials in order to more effectively serve customers with disabilities.
  Timeline: 2010

Federal Grants (LSTA)
When LSTA funds are available, subgrants may be made to help support programs of the subregional libraries, such as the Summer Reading Program.

Local Funds
In some subregional libraries, local funds from the hosting library system subsidize SRL operations.

GEORGIA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE STUDY 2010

In 2009, Georgia Public Library Service began an internal study of GLASS, beginning with *The State of GLASS*, a report summarizing activities for the previous five-year period, acknowledging issues for the future, and outlining a strategic plan for 2009-2011. This plan anticipated a new configuration for GLASS service outlets and a new funding model. The majority of this study, which included considerable stakeholder input, was completed in 2010.

The Planning Committee

In July 2009, a strategic planning team was assembled to look at the current status and future of library services to people with disabilities in Georgia. The members of the committee included:

- Stella Cone, GLASS Director;
- Susan Cooley, Director of Sara Hightower Regional Library System in Rome;
- Lyn Hopper, Assistant State Librarian for Library Development, Georgia Public Library Service;
- Shirley Robinson, GLASS patron from Atlanta;
- Linda Stokes, Savannah Subregional Library Manager; and
- Julie Walker, Deputy State Librarian, Georgia Public Library Service.

The team called for feedback from the consumer and provider communities through an online survey and a series of public meetings held in various locations in the state. Subregional staff members were also encouraged to solicit feedback from their patrons.

Public Meetings

In order to incorporate input from users and providers of the service, the team held public meetings in twelve (12) locations around the state during January and February of 2010. The locations and number of participants at each meeting are shown here.

- Bainbridge – 40
- Valdosta – 10
- Macon – 8
- Rome – 25
- LaFayette – 7
- Athens – 45
- Brunswick – 15
- Dublin – 7
- Augusta – 35
- Columbus – 20
- Atlanta – 20

Attendees were typically a mix of GLASS patrons, subregional library staff, area service providers, and library directors and staff. The analyses of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) can be summarized as follows:

- People who live within easy driving distance of a Talking Book Center want it to remain as it is.

- **Strengths**: personalized service from committed, knowledgeable staff is the most important strength; others include quick turnaround time, convenience and ease of use.
- **Weaknesses** are that people who live farther away from a subregional may not get the same level of service, mail from Atlanta to South Georgia seems to be delayed, there is duplication of collections, and subregional staff spends too much time processing the mail.
- Some **opportunities** include developing Friends groups for GLASS outlets, partnering with other organizations, and using patrons and subregional staff to train library staff,
- **Threats** include budget/state of the economy, low number of clients, lack of awareness about the service, and keeping up with technology.

At each meeting, participants were invited to respond to a scenario in which there would be mailing from a centralized facility and the 61 library systems would bear some responsibility for patron service. The following concerns were expressed:

- Library systems that don't currently host subregionals would need staff and staff training to meet this requirement.
- Might increase amount of time patrons would have to wait if items were mailed from a central location.
- The personal touch could be lost.
- Having collections at subregionals helps staff with readers' advisory, and knowing what items are moving.
- Some library systems may not be committed to the service and be able to provide adequate service.

Positive responses to this scenario included:

- Duplication of effort would be reduced (subregionals now all do mailing).
- More distributed service would provide positive outcomes, raise awareness, and better integrate patrons into the regular program of library services.
- Central mail distribution would free staff to spend time on personal service to patrons.

When asked to comment on the proximity of various services to the end users, participants generally expressed the following:

- Outreach should be as local as possible, ideally in every county. Some felt a multi-county area was fine, especially since other agencies often cross county lines.
- Readers' advisory could be phone as well as in-person, as long as patrons had a toll-free number and a consistent person to help them.
- Collections could be anywhere, as there are very few browsers.
- Mail distribution could be handled anywhere, as long as delivery times are fast.

GLASS director Stella Cone summed up the results of the public meetings this way in the *Georgia Public Library Service News*: "If there's anything we have learned from these meetings, it's that the personal touch from a trusted readers' advisor is among the most important aspects of what the GLASS network provides" (2010, April, 2).

Survey

An online survey was made available for public comment, and 240 responses were received. A summary of responses may be found in Appendix B. Because the individual comments are critical to obtaining a full picture of the results, they are reprinted in their entirety exactly as they were received.

Responses were separated into four groups, based on self-identification as (1) a former or current user of talking books or other GLASS services, (2) a service provider or educator for people with disabilities, (3) a librarian or employee of a public library, or (4) other.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The planning team met in August, 2010, looked at the results of their discussions, input from the public meetings and survey, and the environmental factors affecting this service, and considered several alternatives for GLASS services in the future. Their recommendations to Georgia Public Library Service at that time were to

(1) consolidate the subregional libraries;
(2) mail books, magazines, and players from one central location to all points in the state; and
(3) transform the subregional libraries into outreach and readers' advisory centers.

The committee envisioned these outreach and advisory centers (OACs) as providing readers' advisory services, programming for children and adults, outreach for the counties served, a deposit collection of materials (optional), walk-in patron service, and training and consulting in their respective service areas. An implementation date of July 1, 2011 was recommended.

At a meeting in October, 2010, the planning team recommended eight (8) OACs in the locations of Atlanta, Columbus, Macon, Athens, Rome, Savannah, Dublin and Bainbridge. The committee discussed the funding formula, and recommended a $50,000 base, plus $1500 per county served, plus $25 per active reader. The OACs would retain access to the KLAS automation system and be responsible for registering new patrons.

IMPLEMENTATION

Based on the findings and recommendations of the study committee, Georgia Public Library Service will implement the following configuration and funding for GLASS services for Fiscal Year 2012.

- GPLS will oversee the closing of the subregional libraries in Valdosta and Brunswick and the outreach center in LaFayette.
- All mailing will be centralized at the regional library, which will be located at the State Archives building in Morrow.
- GPLS will support the regional library and nine (9) additional service outlets:

- five (5) outreach and advisory centers (OACs) in Athens, Atlanta, Columbus, Dublin and Savannah; and
- four (4) subregional libraries (SRLs) in Augusta, Bainbridge, Macon, and Rome.

Service Outlets

- Outreach and Advisory Centers (OACs)
  - Northeast Georgia Talking Book Center (Athens)
  - Atlanta Metro Library for Accessible Services
  - Columbus Library for Accessible Services
  - Southeast Georgia Talking Book Center (Dublin)
  - Savannah Talking Book Center

- Subregional Libraries (SRLs)
  - East Central Georgia Talking Book Center (Augusta)
  - Southwest Georgia Library for Accessible Services (Bainbridge)
  - Middle Georgia Library for Accessible Services (Macon)
  - Northwest Georgia Talking Book Center (Rome)

- Regional Library (RL) in Atlanta

Outreach and Advisory Centers (OACs) will

- maintain a deposit collection of digital books to serve walk-in patrons
- provide readers' advisory service to eligible residents in their service area
- provide outreach to the service area
- maintain enough machines for demonstrations and needs of walk-in users
- enter new patrons and maintain current patron records
- make the initial contact with new patrons
- submit reports to the regional library as required

Subregional Libraries (SRLs) will

- maintain one copy of digital books produced by NLS during the most recent 24 months to serve walk-in patrons
- participate in the Xess program
- complete the online copy allotment, delivery verifications and other reports as required by NLS
- provide readers' advisory service to eligible residents in their service area
- provide outreach to the service area
- maintain enough machines for demonstrations and needs of walk-in users
- enter new patrons and maintain current patron records
- make the initial contact with new patrons
- submit reports to the regional library as required

Regional Library (RL) will

- catalog all talking books produced by NLS
- maintain collections and machine inventory
- distribute talking books, magazines, and playback equipment and accessories
- provide statewide outreach and public awareness
- provide standards, policies, and procedures for the GLASS network

- assist with staff training and development for OACs and SRLs
- provide access to software to maintain collection, equipment, and patron services
- maintain patron access to Braille books and magazines through NLS and a third-party vendor
- coordinate local recording programs in outlets located in Atlanta, Columbus and Rome, and provide a collection development policy for locally-produced books
- maintain deposit collections at OACs
- complete the online copy allotment, delivery verifications and other reports as required by NLS

Service Areas

- Northeast Georgia Talking Book Center (OAC), Athens, GA
  Serves the twenty-two (22) counties of Banks, Barrow, Clarke, Elbert, Franklin, Greene, Gwinnett, Habersham, Hancock, Hart, Jackson, Jasper, Madison, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Putnam, Rabun, Stephens, Walton, and White

- Atlanta Metro Library for Accessible Services (OAC), Atlanta, GA
  Serves the ten (10) counties of Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Dawson, Forsyth, Fulton, Hall, Henry, Lumpkin, and Rockdale

- Columbus Library for Accessible Services (CLASS) (OAC), Columbus, GA
  Serves the eleven (11) counties of Chattahoochee, Coweta, Harris, Marion, Meriwether, Muscogee, Stewart, Talbot, Taylor, Troup, and Upson

- Southeast Georgia Talking Book Center (OAC), Dublin, GA
  Serves the twenty-seven (27) counties of Atkinson, Ben Hill, Berrien, Bleckley, Coffee, Cook, Crisp, Dodge, Dooly, Glascock, Irwin, Jeff Davis, Johnson, Laurens, Montgomery, Pulaski, Schley, Sumter, Tattnall, Telfair, Tift, Tombs, Treutlen, Turner, Washington, Wheeler, and Wilcox

- Savannah Talking Book Center (OAC), Savannah, GA
  Serves the twenty-two (22) counties of Appling, Bacon, Brantley, Bryan, Bulloch, Camden, Candler, Charlton, Chatham, Clinch, Effingham, Emanuel, Evans, Glynn, Jenkins, Liberty, Long, McIntosh, Pierce, Screven, Ware, and Wayne

- East Central Georgia Talking Book Center (SRL), Augusta, GA
  Serves the nine (9) counties of Burke, Columbia, Jefferson, Lincoln, McDuffie, Richmond, Taliaferro, Warren, and Wilkes

- Southwest Georgia Library for Accessible Services (SRL), Bainbridge, GA
  Serves the twenty-two (22) counties of Baker, Brooks, Calhoun, Clay, Colquitt, Decatur, Dougherty, Early, Echols, Grady, Lanier, Lee, Lowndes, Miller, Mitchell, Quitman, Randolph, Seminole, Terrell, Thomas, Webster, and Worth

- Middle Georgia Library for Accessible Services (SRL), Macon, GA

Serves the fifteen (15) counties of Baldwin, Bibb, Butts, Crawford, Fayette, Houston, Jones, Lamar, Macon, Monroe, Peach, Pike, Spalding, Twiggs, and Wilkinson

- Northwest Georgia Talking Book Library (SRL), Rome, GA
  Serves the twenty-one (21) counties of Bartow, Carroll, Catoosa, Chattooga, Cherokee, Dade, Douglas, Fannin, Floyd, Gilmer, Gordon, Haralson, Heard, Murray, Paulding, Pickens, Polk, Towns, Union, Walker, and Whitfield

Funding

Funding for FY 2012 will be distributed to the nine (9) service outlets following the recommended funding formula of a $50,000 base grant, plus $1,500 per county served, plus $25 per active reader:

Athens	Northeast Georgia Talking Book Center	128,340
Atlanta	Atlanta Metro Library for Accessible Services	135,500
Augusta	East Central Georgia Talking Book Center	88,700
Bainbridge	Southwest Georgia Library for Accessible Services	119,480
Columbus	Columbus Library for Accessible Services	82,580
Dublin	Southeast Georgia Talking Book Center	131,720
Macon	Middle Georgia Library for Accessible Services	119,680
Rome	Northwest Georgia Talking Book Library	129,520
Savannah	Savannah Talking Book Center	123,820
TOTAL		**$1,059,340**

Standards

Services provided to NLS-eligible individuals in Georgia should be consistent and of the highest quality possible. To that end, Georgia Public Library Service plans to develop standards for all service outlets based on the American Library Association standards adopted in 2005. The target date for completion of the standards is December 31, 2012.

The Future of Library Services to People with Disabilities

Digital recorded books from NLS are now beginning to replace the cassette format. Once the digital transition is complete (estimated 2015), approximately twice as many talking books will occupy the same space. According to a recently released study of the NLS, the subregional library concept is waning nationwide, with regional libraries expected to take on more of the responsibility for this service (Library of Congress, 2011).

As more individuals are able to access broadband Internet and more materials are available in downloadable audio formats, there will be some decline in the use of the physical items circulated by regional and subregional libraries. These changes in the availability and use of digital materials will have implications not only for space, but for duplicating and recording equipment, outreach and training, and perhaps other aspects of the service. There will be decreased need for facilities that house collections, and increased need for readers' advisory services and technology support.

GLASS and the Georgia Public Library Service will continue to monitor changing external conditions, patron needs, new technologies, and trends in service to people with disabilities in order to best meet the needs of all Georgians for excellent, responsive, and cost-effective library service.

APPENDIX A: HIMMEL & WILSON STUDY

In 2000, Himmel & Wilson Library Consultants were engaged to review Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped services in Georgia. The entire report, in two volumes, is available from Georgia Public Library Service. Findings and recommendations are reproduced here, with subsequent progress noted in the italicized portions.

- Finding 1: Public library services to individuals with special needs have been largely relegated to the 13 subregional libraries. Only a few public libraries other than those that host subregionals offer adequate services to people with disabilities.

    - Recommendation 1A: The state of Georgia, through the Office of Public Library Services and the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped needs to undertake a comprehensive program of training, consulting assistance and targeted program support that will result in an improved level of library service to Georgia residents with disabling conditions.
        - *Some training has been done, but the regional library has never been sufficiently staffed to provide a comprehensive training and assistance program.*

- Finding 2: Georgia's Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is understaffed, underfunded, and unable to fulfill its statewide mission. The regional library in Atlanta serves primarily as Georgia's 14th subregional library.

    - Recommendation 2A: Georgia should reorganize its Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped over the next five years to separate it into six distinct functional areas. They are:
        1. Statewide coordination of services to people with disabilities
        2. Special needs consulting and training
        3. Machine lending and repair
        4. Talking book fulfillment service
        5. Braille fulfillment service
            - *Now outsourced to Utah State Library Division Program for the Blind and Disabled*
        6. Readers' advisory service and special services (recordings for the blind, Braille on demand, etc.)
            - *There is still a need for this at the regional library level.*

    - Recommendation 2B: Georgia should move toward outsourcing functions 3, 4 and 5. Outsourcing of Braille fulfillment service is probably possible within two years. Outsourcing of machine lending and repair services may also be possible within two to three years. Outsourcing of talking book fulfillment service should be targeted for five years from the implementation of these recommendations.
        - *GLASS has outsourced provision of Braille materials only.*

- Recommendation 2C: The Georgia Regional Library for the Blind should work with NLS to develop a web-accessible version of the READS II software that would allow consumers and library staff in any library in Georgia to place requests for talking book materials from any location in the state.
    - *GLASS has moved to the Keystone Library Automation System (KLAS), which has a Web version of the catalog for patrons.*

- Recommendation 2D: The Department of Technical and Adult Services should seek new quarters to house the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped for the next five to seven years. Such facilities should meet NLS standards and should be more accessible and hospitable for walk-in use than the current facility.
    - *GLASS has moved the Atlanta Metro Library for Accessible Services (AMLAS) into the Atlanta Fulton Public Library's Central Library, which is on a MARTA line. The subregional is fully ADA-compliant and accessible to people with disabilities.*
    - *The regional library has recently moved into the building housing the Georgia Archives in Morrow.*

- Finding 3: Georgia's subregional libraries operate as mini regional libraries rather than as the outreach entities they were originally intended to be. This is in large part because they have been unable to depend on an appropriate level of support from the regional library.

    - Recommendation 3A: The 13 Georgia subregional libraries should work with the Office of Public Library Service and with the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped to transition over a five-year period into entities that provide outreach services, training and assistance to public libraries in providing all types of library services to individuals with disabling conditions. Planning for this transition should fully involve consumer groups representing a large variety of disability advocacy and service organizations.
        - *In November of 2008, the Subregional in LaFayette became an outreach center only, with patron services moving to the Rome Subregional Library.*
        - *Plans for the future reflect a shift in focus for subregional and outreach units from fulfillment to patron services and outreach.*

    - Recommendation 3B: A guiding principle in the transition of subregionals from direct service providers into outreach/support organizations should be the maintenance of high-quality NLS/talking book service. Talking book center managers should be involved in the development of requests for proposals for contracted services and in the development of training to prepare library staff members to use the online request system.

        - *The need for the latter was obviated by the transition to KLAS.*

- Finding 4: The workload involved in providing basic talking book center service frequently impedes the ability of subregional libraries to conduct necessary outreach efforts.

    - Recommendation 4A: Subregional libraries should move from being direct service providers to being outreach/support organizations over a five-year period of time by gradually reducing the number of counties they serve over the five-year period. Each subregional should be asked to shift a specific number of counties (probably two or three per year depending on the number currently served by the subregional) to service by the regional library each year.
        - *As a result of reconfigurations over the last two years, the regional library has picked up additional distribution for several counties (parts of Albany, parts of LaFayette, all of Hall County). Also, since the move to KLAS, the regional library serves as the backup distribution center for all subregionals.*
        - *Plans call for full statewide distribution from the regional library in the near future.*

    - Recommendation 4B: The state of Georgia should continue to provide support to subregional libraries under the current formula during the transition period. The shift of counties will require that the State provide some additional support for the regional library during this period. At the end of the transition period, subregionals should receive ongoing funding for outreach and support activities. This support should come in the form of a personnel grant dedicated to these services. Outreach workers would be responsible for the areas currently covered by the subregionals.

    - Recommendation 4C: Host libraries that desire to continue to act as subregional libraries for the counties within the host library's public library system area should be allowed to do so; however, state support for this service should be limited to a formula based on the estimated population of NLS-eligible users in the area. Host libraries and/or the public library system would be expected to subsidize these operations.

- Finding 5: A relatively small number of public library directors have an adequate understanding of the NLS service. At least some of the dissatisfaction with the NLS service that was expressed by directors in the course of this study is based on a misunderstanding of the scope and purpose of the program.

    - Recommendation 5A: The consultants believe that this report and the meeting with library directors will go a long way in providing library directors with a better understanding of the NLS program; however, we also recommend that the Office of Public Library Services invite representatives of LC/NLS to make a formal presentation at a directors'

meeting. One component of the presentation would be an opportunity for the NLS staff to answer questions submitted to NLS by the directors in advance.

- *NLS' Deborah Toomey spoke at the Public Library Directors' Meeting in January 2007.*

- Finding 6: Georgia's organizational structure of a regional library and 13 subregional libraries is neither the most efficient nor the most effective mechanism for providing talking book service.

    - Recommendation 6A: The state of Georgia should develop three requests for proposals (RFPs): one each for Braille fulfillment service, machine lending and repair, and talking book fulfillment service. The target for the first two RFPs should be two to three years into the implementation of recommendations. The target for the talking book fulfillment service should be five years into the implementation of recommendations. This will allow time for NLS to come to some firm decisions on the future format of talking books, which will have an impact on the nature of the RFP.
        - *Braille only has been outsourced. The regional library and subregionals have continued to handle machine lending and fulfillment, but some subregionals will become outreach centers in fiscal year 2012.*

    - Recommendation 6B: The Office of Public Library Service, the Georgia Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and the subregional libraries should jointly work toward a system in which some consumers place their own requests for talking books and others place requests through their local libraries. This will require the development of specialized software and extensive training.
        - *This feature is currently available with KLAS.*

- Finding 7: The majority of Georgia's public libraries are doing an inadequate job of integrating services to people with disabilities into their regular program of service.

    - Recommendation 7A: The function of the outreach workers in subregional areas should not be limited to outreach and support for users of the NLS program. Rather, the outreach workers should be regional experts in services to all disability communities including but not limited to the visually and hearing impaired, individuals with developmental and learning disabilities and people with mobility limitations.

- Finding 8: Library staff members in most of Georgia's public libraries lack the knowledge and resources to adequately respond to the library and information needs of people with disabilities.

- Recommendation 8A: Outreach workers should be required to provide training and consulting services to all public libraries within the area currently served by the subregional library.

APPENDIX B: SURVEY RESULTS

An online survey was made available to the public by the GPLS study committee beginning in December 2009. The survey was publicized in several ways, including at the public meetings, in the agency newsletter, in subregional newsletters, and by e-mail to a number of listservs. A total of 240 responses were collected. Survey respondents self-identified as belonging to one of the following four (4) groups: former or current users of talking books or other GLASS services (92 respondents, or 38.3%); service providers or educators for people with disabilities (28, or 11.7%); librarians or employees of public libraries (79, or 32.9%); and "Other" (41, or 17.1%).

Users

Of the 92 user respondents, 71 identified their counties of residence as follows. Each received one (1) response unless otherwise noted. Appling, Atkinson, Bibb, Brooks (3), Bryan, Camden (2), Carroll, Charlton, Chatham (11), Chattooga, Clarke (4), Cobb (3), Colquitt (2), Columbia (3), Decatur (5), DeKalb (2), Dougherty (4), Early, Fulton (3), Glynn (5), Grady, Gwinnett, Henry, Laurens, Liberty, Lowndes, McDuffie, Richmond (6), Spalding, Troup, and Walton. One respondent reported recently moving to Brevard County, Florida.

When asked if they had visited their Talking Book Center in the past year, 29 of the 71 responses were positive, leaving 42 (59.2%) who had not. Computer access was reported by 58 (81.7%) of the 71 respondents to this question.

Responses to the scenario describing a central warehouse for shipping and regional library headquarters locations for patron service and outreach were as follows: Definitely (would meet their needs)—34.7%, Probably—19.4%, Not Sure—11.1%, Probably Not—11.1%, and Definitely Not—23.6%. Comments related to this question are provided below, as well as general comments.

Service Providers

Those identifying themselves as a service provider or educator for those with disabilities numbered 28. Of those, 14 selected one of the following counties for the location of their agency or institution: Camden, Catoosa, Cobb, Decatur (4), Dougherty, Fayette, Floyd, Glynn, Miller, and Richmond (2).

Respondents reported providing service to people with blindness/low vision (12), physical disabilities (6), reading disabilities (5), deafness/hard of hearing (4), deafness and blindness (3), and other disabilities (5). There were two write-in responses: "MOID," and "97 yo woman with double hearing aids and low vision due to macular bleed."

Responses to the scenario describing a central warehouse for shipping and regional library headquarters locations for patron service and outreach were as follows: Definitely (would meet their needs)—4, Probably—5, Not Sure—2, Probably Not—3, and Definitely Not—3. Comments related to this question are provided below, as well as general comments.

Library Staff

Seventy-nine (79) respondents self-identified as a librarian or employee of a public library. Systems represented included Atlanta-Fulton Public Library, Cherokee Regional, Chestatee Regional, Cobb County (5), Coweta County, DeKalb County (2), Gwinnett County, Hall County, Henry County (2), Jefferson County, Kinchafoonee Regional, Live Oak Public Libraries, Middle Georgia Regional (2), Oconee Regional, Ohoopee Regional, Sara Hightower Regional, South Georgia Regional, Southwest Georgia Regional (14), Three Rivers Regional (2), Uncle Remus Regional, and West Georgia Regional (5). Two write-in responses were "West Georgia for home but GPLS for work" and "Ephesus Public Library" (which is in the West Georgia Regional System).

Seventeen (17), or 32.1%, selected administration as their primary job function. This was followed in frequency by circulation (12), reference (7), Talking Book Center (5), children and youth (5), outreach (2), and adult services (1). Four (4) selected other, specifying retired, assistant/receptionist, manager, and branch manager.

Forty-two per cent (42%), or twenty-one (21) of those responding, felt that sending and receiving mail delivery of talking books and materials could be located anywhere in the state. Other services they thought should be close by.

Responses to the scenario describing a central warehouse for shipping and regional library headquarters locations for patron service and outreach were as follows: Definitely (would meet their needs)—6, Probably—15, Not Sure—7, Probably Not—7, and Definitely Not—16. Comments related to this question are provided below, as well as general comments.

Other

Those who self-identified as "other" (41 respondents) were asked to specify their affiliation. Among the listings were library board member, parent of child with disabilities, caregiver, friend or family of a user, future user, interested library patron, and concerned citizen.

"Other" respondents were from the following counties: Camden (5), Clayton, Columbia, Decatur (7), DeKalb, Fayette, Floyd, Glynn (2), Gordon, Hall, Harris, Long, Miller (2), Mitchell, Murray, Paulding, Richmond, Seminole (3), and Washington. One wrote in "Islamabad, Pakistan."

Responses to the scenario describing a central warehouse for shipping and regional library headquarters locations for patron service and outreach were as follows: Definitely (would meet their needs)—5, Probably—4, Not Sure—8, Probably Not—5, and Definitely Not—11. Comments related to this question are provided below, as well as general comments.

Comments

Comments are grouped by respondent category. Comments on the scenario question are followed by general comments.

Scenario Question

The scenario question read as follows, with slight variations by audience:

Here is one idea for service that the planning committee has come up with: One centralized warehouse in the state for shipping and receiving talking books and machines. Each of the 61 library systems in the state would serve as a customer service center (for machine replacement, small collection of talking books, and speaking to local groups about the service). Under this scenario, you (patrons) would have telephone access to staff who could help you select books, your talking books would be sent from a central warehouse, and you would be able to go to your local public library system headquarters for machine replacement and a small browsing collection. Would this plan meet your needs (the needs of people in your service area with disabilities)?

User Comments

- User is usually too busy or not knowledgable.
- Need personal contacts
- send more books each month
- SC offers this approach. The biggest negative that I have heard, is about variability in delivery.
- I have been well pleased with my providers. Everyone has been extremely polite,knowledgeable,and interested in fullfilling my needs. Thank y ou so much for this service.
- very happy with program and staff
- talking book
- service in Savannah has been excellent. Would not like to see service leave.
- I couldn't live without talking books. They are a very important part of my life. My local librarian is a very important connection between myself and any issues.
- i am not very mobile but my family members are completely mobile and supportive. they are my champions.
- completely satisfied with service
- Would lke service to be left local staff are always helpful & friendly.
- Excellent Idea
- after the closing of the dougherty library for the blind book service has plumated, it used to take two days to get a book now it takes up to two weeks, and in some cases the books requested never arrive.
- IT DEPENDS ON HOW WELL THE PUBLIC LIBRARY WOULD KEEP UP THE MACHINES AND HOW WELL THE SMALL BROWSING COLLECTION WAS KEPT UP.
- At my age, I prefer person I am familiar. I have had conversations with other libraries on the phone. I found many of the people answering phones were rude and impatient.
- I have developed a personal relationship with the Augusta TBC staff, and would like to maintain that personal relationship. Audrey Bell and her

assistants are a great help and are very responsive to my requests for talking books. They keep me well supplied with the books that I enjoy listening to.

- This seems to be the best use of funds at a time when funds are hard to come by. I do not see, however, why the machine replacemet could not just be mailed. A couple of extra days is not going to kill anyone - even an old man like me.
- I like the idea of being able to select books at local library.
- I choose my own books online, so the above plan probably would not effect me one way or the other.
- Please leave service in Bainbridge.
- Leave service in Bainbridgem much needed.
- The assistance in ordring book needs to be local. Community services such as speakers and newsletter is a plus to the patrons. A centralized warehouse for shipping is feasible.
- Enjoy Services & Likes the Digital Players.
- We need to have our library close to us for shipping and other means. This would be detramential if it were located elsewhere. It would take much longer to have recorded books, etc., shipped from a place that is not local. I have been using my local Library for the Blind for over 20 years and the staff and everything is excellent.
- Loose the personal closeness that exists with the local librarian.
- I moved to GA from MN and we only had one library for the entire state. Everyone in the state was served well, and I think this a fine approach for saving money.
- Please leave system the way it is, it works fine.
- If a person is mobile and can easily get to a local library, it would be important for them to have a library to visit. This encourages a person to travel independently, and helps keep them mobile. If a person has a computer or doesn't have one at all, this makes it possible for them to keep up with correspondence or homework, if they are a student. If these services are located in an accessible area, it encourages me to get out and this keeps me from becoming a couch potato. I would hate to see all of the library services for the blind removed from a local level. This also encourages socialization which to me is an important part of life. I enjoy being able to download books from the Bard Website, however, if my computer or device was out of order, where would I go to get books quickly. I understand that a centralized location might be a better way to send out books, but the local library should not be totally phased out.
- I WOULD LIKE TO CONTINUE GETTING THE NEWSLETTER BY E-MAIL. I ENJOY USING THE DIGITAL TALKING BOOK MACHINE. IT IS LIGHTWEIGHT AND THE AUDIO SOUND IS GREAT!
- I truly believe that the system is just fine the way it is and do not believe it should be changed at all.
- Please leave the system that works alone. It is hard enough blind to get around. The current staff has been a tremendous help for me.
- I am on crutches, and cannot carry a machine in and out, and the staff very kindly assist me with this. Also, I listen to the books every night when I go to bed [since December 1992], and when the machine acts up or needs cleaning, I can get same day machine changes. This is a big help, as I cannot watch TV or read for more than a few minutes without getting double vision.

- Local service understands me personaly as well as my needs.
- The present service available in VALDOSTA SUBREGIONAL LIBRARY IS EXCELLENT/GREAT Persons (Diane Jernigan) that respond immediately to any and all needs... I've been using this library for many years and have become very familiar with Diane and her work. Please DON'T MAKE ANY CHANGES!! (IT AIN'T BROKE - DON'T FIX IT!!!) Thank you, Cranford C.Sutton, P.O. Box 337, Willacoochee, Ga. 31650
- I very much prefer having someone in my own town that I know and can call to talk to about certain books I want to read. And about talking book machines difficulities or problems. If every blind person in Georgia was trying to call one central location, there would be multiply problems, such as busy signals, the person not having the time required to talk to you, and even possible not knowing each other, a person would not be as helpful as someone in your own hometown. Calling someone out of town in a central location is so impersonal that you have a big loss of communication. Please don't take away our talking book center in Macon, Georgia.
- speech impairment~ Phoning wouldn't work
- It is extremely important that there be no reduction in library services. Please don't disguise budget cuts as an attempt to "supposedly" improve services. It is quite often impossible for the disabled to access necessary services already, and eliminating those which are closest, only causes more inconvenience, which could cause less usage, and be more reasons for additional cuts.
- I use the download site a lot, but I would expect to have the same library services as my sighted peers. It would, however, be acceptible for my talking book machines to be mailed from a central location if the turn around could be quick enough.
- Do not want to talk to a strange person on the phone. You would not have enough $ to pay people to stay. People would always be leaving and you would have to train new people.

Service Provider/Educator Comments

- No more than a central WAREHOUSE (not library) would fit the needs of patrons who do not have vision problems.
- I agree that local access is much easier for those that cannot travel. We were told at the Camden library that we would have to go to Brunswick to sigh Ms. Mildred up for the program--that is inconvenient for she nor I have a vehicle.
- Not all headquarters locations are 'local' to the patrons. This could involve quite a bit of 'getting a ride' logistics. In areas without transport assistance, public transit, etc, the dollar cost would be high and the service infrequently used. However, having a collection at all in the public library is a great idea!
- This sounds very accommodating.
- What makes you think that people with disabilities do not deserve the same level of service as your clients without a diability?
- The individuals who patronize the library appreciate the opportunity to browse and choose books in the same manner their sighted counterparts are offered.
- Receiving the NLS player by mail as new clients, the people I work with are often at a loss in learning exactly how to use the machine. They appreciated the fact that I deliver the machine to them and show them, sometimes repeatedly, how to use it.

Library Staff Comments

- For the same reason that you do not offer sighted people service on this same basis. Why not have reference questions all answered from one central location? Why not have all books shipped from a central warehouse somewhere? Because the quality of service would be reduced. Because local, personal library service is better than a centralized, impersonal approach.
- The patrons I know who need talking books do limited driving because of failing vision. I know they could use the telephone service to request books.
- I hate to say it but customers do not want to go to a central branch.
- Local libraries and non center library systems need support with training and information in order to serve the local population
- Local libraries do not have the time or personnel to send them out to speak or work outreach. You also need someone that knows everything about the TBC program to speak to groups.
- This is pretty much the way it used to be. The way it is now is an improvement over the way it used to be. The way it is now treats talking books patrons like the rest of the library's customers instead of separate but equal which worked out so well for the segregationists.
- Many patrons would probably stop using the service-as it would eventually become a hassle to go through "too many hoops".
- Persons who have disabilities need personal services if at all possible.
- Circulation Staff is not Familiar enough with LBPH to offer their patrons assistance. Time is also an issue.
- Our patrons enjoy the current speedy and friendly service they receive from our library, which handles all the services for people in our area with disabilities. They appreciate a local library that allows them to drop off and pick up materials and also speak personally with someone about questions or problems they have.
- This is an awful idea! All talking book services should remain as they are. Many individual library systems do not have the resources and staff to help with talking books. This is why the Subregional libraries are so valuable throughout the state.
- These patrons are already at a disadvantage and they need the comfort and security of local services and familiar voices.
- Most of our patrons have a transportation problem, so would have a hard time getting to their local library.
- You are assuming that the local library has adequate space and staffing to house a physical collection and provide specially trained staff.
- Public libraries and their staff are already overwhelmed as they try to meet patrons' ever changing needs. Last year public libraries' budgets were cut by the state and this year it appears there will be more cuts. Serving the blind and disabled takes skill, time and money. Will public libraries be given the tools that they need to serve the blind and disabled? The above plan sounds good on paper but we must be sure that these patrons won't fall through the cracks. Meeting these patrons needs is just as important as meeting the needs of our other patrons.
- Ours is a very small community, but there are a few who would benefit from, and use, this type of service.
- There has been no proof from GPLS/GLASS that centralized warehouse service will provide faster more reliable service with reduced costs. Although this has

been requested for at least 3 years the state sill has not sent any empirical data to support this suggested scenario.
- Most of our disabled patrons do not visit the Rome Library, so most services could be handled long-distance.

"Other" Category Comments

- System headquarters is quite a distance from many who need the service -- it would be better if local libraries could distribute the equipment.
- Driving to the library is also an issue; therefore, electronic format and delivery of materials would be far preferable.
- maybe if the blind knew about it,they 'ed use the speaking book.
- Everyone should have an opportunity to have access to materials to help them self.
- I do not have an opinion about warehousing but I do have one on the usefulness of this program. I think it would be a travesty to stop providing Books on Tape to students and adults. It is a wonderful opportunity for those with disabilities in reading. It will be wonderful to get the tapes into digital--so much easier for everyone. I know that there are few funds and you are searching for a cheaper way to dispense them but if you have to make changes, do, but do not stop the program.
- I am unfamiliar with the current system in place, however, being able to talk to an actual staff member and getting what you need from your local library is a good idea.
- I am an library employee
- people with disabilities need the personalized help that they can get locally.
- Small rural libraries just don't have the staff to handle another mission. It would be fine if the state were going to fund 61 new positions.
- Leave it local - We need this.
- Macon or Atlanta would mean a week's delay on their turn around.
- Keep the Bainbridge Center Open.
- LEAVE SERVICE WHERE IT IS!
- This population is already coping with challenge and to take away this valuable resource would definitely decrease the leve of service.
- Have to realize that locals can ALWAYSA serve clients better.
- The talking book center in Richmond Co. gives wonderful service. People from surrounding county, go to the library in Augusta for their books selections. They would not be able to go to Atlanta (if you moved it there) and they would not have quality of service they have now.
- Don't want it to impede the personal nature and rapport that we develop with local librarians.
- There are a number of people here in Calhoun who have either depression or bipolar disorder. Because of these problems and/or the meds we take, it is sometime just not safe to drive. This makes it hard to get to the library to select audio books in the first place, let alone having them returned on time..
- I feel this would limit accessibility to talking books. An individual should be able to go to the library in his/her own town/city and get talking books while there just as any other patron obtains books at the library.
- Personal service is important to those with disablities. As a former parent of a disabled daughter, we needed someone to ask us what our specific needs are and how to meet our needs. We don';t need people who don't understand

disabilities to tel us what we needed. Please listen to those who are disabled and their families. They need to be understood for a change and to be respected for their needs and desires.

General Comments

The survey asked the User, Library Staff, and Other groups: "What else would you like to tell us?"

User Comments

- I need face to face contact, phone, and internet useage
- Ability to receive books sent to my home when ordered specially.
- i order around 50-60 selections and only recieve four!.. every month. need more books sent ,
- The BARD service is a fantastic benefit. I would like to see one blank cassette provided to all digital talking book player users.
- Since moving to FL I can't seem to get my records moved to Cocoa (Brevard) Library so I can get books here. I asked over a week ago for this tobe done.....help!!
- As long as no one loses their job I am ok with the decisions made.
- I now choose my own books and download the digital ones. I order cassettes online and always receive excellent service. If anything else occurs to me, I'll advise.
- Other sources of talking books
- Talking magazine articles
- digital book players need to be white or nearly white with large black numerals and letters. this need is evident in my use of coffee makers, telephones, etc. a black machine housing is very frustrating to me and to my sister who is also visually impaired.
- make digital books for the digital players available for download via a central site, the current site is not very easy to navigate and is extreamly outdated. in my case it shows i still have books checked out from 1996 this is not possible and obviously an issue with the leecounty post office has occured. givin the time mentiond in the above question it is getting to a point where i dont want to deal with your service.
- COULD SOMEONE ELSE PICK UP BOOKS OR GET MACHINE REPLACEMENT FOR YOU? SINCE IT IS NOT ALWAYS EASY TO GET OUT.
- Leave it like it is.
- Trouble searching for books on internet
- want to put my books on my MP3 player from my computer as the public libraries are allowing!!!
- Some local groups are acting as though they speak for evryone on this issue. They do not speak for me. No one speaks for me.
- I am very pleased with the player and ability to down load books as well as receive the talking books.
- I absolutely love your service! I am 47 years old and have been reading Talking Books since I was 11. I have lived in New York and have been a patron of all of their three libraries. I lived in Richmond Virginia for 13 years, and now I am here in Atlanta for a year and a half and I love your website! It is very user friendly! I also love the DTBM. I am still having difficulty downloading books from Bard, but am still working on it. Beverly Williams

does an excellent job and is an asset to Glas and Diane Sims is wonderful. Keep up the good work! Bruce Weiss
- Have a page to promote services on facebook. Advertise new books, upcoming events etc.
- Consolidation has been tried before in all manner of services for the blind. It has not worked before and is not the suitable avenue to persue.
- have a larger salection of books in digital format
- Would like to have plastic delivery cases of tapes coded in Braille to identify title of book.
- Why change a system that works perfectly when there are other areas that you could change without any interruptions to those who can get around freely. The disable have a hard enough time as it is why make things difficult. I enjoy the personal care that I receive and am afraid that will all be gone.
- Please, keep it local if you can! I cannot go to the meeting at the Augusta Library in person, on the11th February, as my car will be in the shop getting needed repairs. Thank you for listening...
- current localized is best for me because they know me and understand my needs.
- Hold a workshop to assist us in learning how to download and use the BARD (digital book) system.
- I have a real big problem with the news I heard about the meeting on Tuesday, January 26th in Macon. It was open to the public, but the talking book center did not mail the patrons a letter advising us of the place, time and date of the meeting. How can we participate and have any say in the meetings, if we don't even know when or where they are going to be. In my mind this seems like a gigantic oversight on the part of the talking book center and I would like for the head of the talking book center to be advised of this oversight. My name is Jody Bassett, 2769 Nowell Dr., Macon, GA 31216. Phone # 478-788-0567
- I would like all correspondence sent by Email instead of print from my local library and from NLS or in Braille. I was very excited to have the opportunity to fill out this form, but the original letter was in print and had to be read to me.
- Keep the local system open
- You have a wonderful staff at Valdosta now.

Library Staff Comments

- Assistance or training for public library staff on available assistive technologies for computer access. Our system has some technologies available, but maintaining them and keeping them current has been sporadic over the years. Would be nice if it was something standard across the state with a dedicated computer at select branches or all branches. Realize this would be costly and possibly not doable, but would be nice ;)
- Accessible computers in the local library are a key need.
- Perhaps outreach to churches and local organizations to promote the service. It is hard to promote from withing the library.
- Printed information and regular updates would be helpful to ensure that everyone has the latest information.
- Having the equipment and books sent out from a central location would not be a problem, but not having someone who knows the patrons personally

and can physically take them large print books or a machine because they don't want to be without a machine for the weekend or holiday.

- Educate us reference librarians on what you do so that we can help promote this service.
- Local service provider will enable our customers a better personal experience. People like to know and think they are more than just a number or mailling address.
- Don't change anything about the talking book centers! Leave them as they are!!
- I do believe that books and machines could be sent from a central location, but patrons like the personal touch when it comes to people they talk to about choosing their books. I'm not sure how cost effective it would be or if there would be sufficient staff time to be directed to talking books patrons at 61 locations.
- We already serve a few Talking book patrons. They enjoy visiting their local public library and their library in Athens. These patrons are a joy to work with. From their feedback the Athens TBC appears to be meeting their needs. We are happy to help these patrons in any way that we can.
- We need GPLSand GIASS to respond to requests for statistical data within a 5 day period and we need accountability, quarterly reporting of all subregionals and regional libraries for accountability purposes and GPLS/GLASS to conform to NLS Standards and Guidelines.
- Our patrons appreciate our quick service and having to wait for items to be sent through the mail from the northern portion of the state is not an option for them. Currently if they call for an item, they can generally receive it the next day in the mail. If they request an item from a centralized location, it could take a week or more to receive the item. Our patrons would quickly become dissatisfied with the service. They also like to be able to come in and get the item of their choice immediately, which would not be an option to them. LBPH service is the only library these patrons have and to take it from them would be like taking all of the items in every collection from every library in Georgia and sending the items to Atlanta for people to request and have shipped to them. It seems like you would be taking advantage of LBPH patrons because of their disability, when you would never consider taking items that non-disabled patrons use and centralizing those items.
- Would patrons be able to order materials from the catalog at the library or do they have to stick to what is available at the library and if they want something else they must call the number?

"Other" Category Comments

- There is a volunteer organization willing to assist with local distribution.
- Evaluate all technology options when considering updates to the system. Internet-downloadable audio formats could be very helpful.
- Why isn't Camden County Library listed in your list of libraries????
- maybe transportation.
- Handicap access doors and computers.
- I am unable to get out of the house much, so the use of downloadable books would be a great benefit. I currently use a relatives library card that live out of state to access her library to down load books. Its a great service to someone

who is homebound or not able to leave their home very often to go to the library.

- continue to provide the tapes in some way on a digital media.
- I am unfamiliar with the whole process of talking books. In my opinion, the availability should be more known.
- Better
- This program is a true lifeline for the visually impaired. As such, it must be continued. I don't see any problem with a centralized distribution system for the books, but there must be reasonable access to human assistance.
- Reading is the most relaxing pasttime of all! Thks for getting rid of those cassettes with their defective tapes, and frightful players, both of which interrupted the enjoyable experience. Digital recording is the way to go. A wonderful escape from the unpleasant experiences that life offers at times.
- If you could work this out to have internet access for this it could be helpful in giving the staff more time for callers..
- I feel that Talking book centers should be expanded locally. New books and Cds should be obtained. Many of the tapes are worn out. Obtaining new ones should be a priority rather than coming up with one centralized warehouse.
- Listen to people with disabilities with your mind and your heart!

APPENDIX C: REFERENCES

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