that includes a substantial base grant and additional funding based on NLS usership and circulation only of talking books, recorded magazines, and Braille materials.

3. Review the current service offered by the Regional Library and by the subregional libraries.

a) What are the currently defined services and how do the Regional and subregional libraries offer those services?

The Georgia Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped offers the most basic level of service of any of the many Regional Libraries we have observed. The Regional Library concentrates on the circulation of talking books in the cassette book format.

The Braille service is anemic and the recording and Brailling of items of regional and local interest is non-existent. The Regional Library does a commendable job of getting materials to its base of users but has little time to develop outreach programs or to work with the subregional libraries.

Services offered by subregional libraries differ greatly. Like the Regional Library, they all concentrate on the circulation of cassette talking books; however, several also offer recordings of local interest (mostly excerpts from local newspapers). Many offer large print materials, and some have attractive and welcoming sites that include the latest in adaptive technologies.

The facilities offered by the subregionals also vary from small out-of-the-way locations (Savannah) to attractive facilities designed specifically as a center for library users with special needs (Athens, Dublin, Rome). Staffing in the subregionals also varies.

As is noted elsewhere in this report, several subregionals are actively involved in outreach to consumers, to other disabilities organizations, and to service organizations.
b) Analyze the cost-effectiveness of NLS-provided services. Recommend models of service that do not utilize NLS collections, equipment, and other support.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to assess the cost-effectiveness of NLS-provided services since the "value" of the result is the satisfaction and well-being of the human beings who use the service. Our interviews and focus groups with consumers of the NLS services provided by the Regional and subregional libraries confirm the importance of the service to a diverse group of citizens. The lives of the thousands of Georgians who use the NLS services would be poorer, less fulfilling, and lonelier if their shipments of "little green boxes" ceased.

From a practical standpoint, the service is an expensive one; however, the participation of the Federal government makes it affordable. Since the costs associated with selecting and recording materials, packaging materials, mailing materials, and playing materials are all directly supported by the Federal government, states are faced only with the cost of maintaining collections and handling the personal/readers' advisory and fulfillment processes.

Those who suggest that the needs of talking book users could be met by investing the current dollars spent on the NLS program in books on tape simply have not done their arithmetic. As is stated on page 113 of the Background Report, the value of mailing a number of books on tape to patrons without the advantage of the free-matter postal subsidy would nearly match the dollars spent by the State of Georgia on the NLS program.

A very conservative estimate of the cost of building an adequate collection of books on tape to support the program would run another $2,000,000 - $5,000,000 initially with an additional investment of $200,000 - $500,000 per year to purchase new materials. Furthermore, the value of the playback equipment in the field is enormous. All of this is before staff costs in providing the service is considered.

Until an appropriate and simple mechanism is available to deliver talking books directly to the users in their homes
(remember that the majority of people who use this service have significant mobility problems), the state contribution to the NLS program will be a bargain. While this day is coming (see pages 119 - 123 of the Background Report), it has not yet arrived.

e) **How consistent and uniform is the level of service offered by the Regional and subregionals?**

As is noted at several junctures in this report, the consultants believe that the biggest variation in the level of NLS services received by Georgians is not the quality of readers' advisory service or even the variation in the availability of locally produced recordings. The biggest departure from uniform service is that in some areas of the state more people find out about the program because of superior outreach efforts.

It is true that facilities and staffing levels vary significantly and that walk-in patrons find either a richness or a dearth of adaptive technologies at the different subregionals. However, somewhere in excess of 95% of the talking book service is provided through the mails to individuals who seldom or never cross the threshold of a talking book center. The big difference is between those who know about the service and are signed up for it and those who are unaware that the program exists or that they qualify to use it.

d) **What are the educational and professional backgrounds of Regional and subregional library staff?**

Eight of the thirteen subregional libraries are headed by talking book center managers with Master's degrees in Library Science (the count is nine of fourteen if the Regional Library is considered). The host-library directors of subregionals that are not headed by professional librarians are the subregional library directors of record. Subregionals report that the host library directors or another designated professional librarian spend between 10 and 60 hours per month on matters directly related to subregional library service and affairs.
Several of the talking book center managers who do not have master's degrees in library science bring other relevant academic training or experience with them to the job. For example, one talking book center manager was formerly a nursing home activities director.

e) Analyze the average square footage of space allocated for Regional and subregional library daily functions. Identify whether more or less space is required for the Regional Library and each of the subregionals.

The space allocated to subregional services ranges from approximately 1,000 square feet in Columbus and Savannah to over 4,000 square feet in Augusta and Rome. In large part, the space occupied by the talking book centers is driven by the size of the collection, although three of the larger talking book centers, those at Dublin, Rome and LaFayette, also devote considerable space to adaptive technologies and/or "reading" areas for walk-in users.

The consultants believe that many of the subregionals occupy more space than is necessary due to their exceptionally large collections. In our opinion, the best-planned and most efficient use of space among the subregionals is the talking book center at Athens. At about 1,200 sq. ft., it offers a good balance of collection space (using quality compact shelving), workspace for staff and volunteers, and patron space.

Many of the subregionals and the Regional Library could benefit from the installation of new, high-quality compact shelving. Much of the Regional Library's shelving is of the open-face stationary variety. Most of the compact shelving in the Regional facility is in very poor condition and functions badly and only with great physical effort. The State of Georgia should consider a program of providing high-quality compact shelving to subregional libraries. The combination of weeding talking book collections and using high-density shelving could reduce the amount of valuable real estate occupied by subregionals dramatically.

The Regional Library facility is actually close to the size that a true Regional Library facility needs to be. Even the
division between office space and warehouse space is nearly appropriate. The problems with the Regional Library facility are not the number of square feet provided. The problems are the location of the building, the condition of the building, and the terrible equipment that is provided.

While the facility does have some compact shelving in addition to what appears to be World War II government-issue storage stacks, the compact shelving is extremely hard to move. The replacement of the shelving at the Regional Library should be a priority even if a move to a new facility is delayed.

f) Which subregional libraries, including the Regional Library, are visible and accessible to the public? Recommend corrective actions for those subregionals, including the Regional Library, which are not visible and accessible.

Several of the subregional libraries have outstanding facilities. Athens, Bainbridge, Dublin and Rome are all fine examples of what can be done; however, the Dublin model is, in the consultants' minds, the best of the subregionals because of its high visibility. The "special services" area is centrally located very close to the circulation desk. It is truly at the heart of the library operation.

At the other end of the spectrum, the Savannah subregional has inadequate space in a neighborhood branch library typically visited only by neighborhood residents. The opportunity for engaging current library users who are becoming visually impaired or for encouraging people with disabilities to visit the library is very limited at this site.

The Macon facility, while serviceable, presents a foreboding and imposing view to the public as they enter the library building. Although there is a handicapped accessible entry from a hidden parking lot in the rear of the building, the stark door up several steps from the entry hall is not the ideal invitation to potential users with disabilities.
g) **Review the functions of volunteers in the Regional and subregional libraries. Make recommendations for effective and efficient library volunteer programs.**

Following is an account of the use of volunteers in the subregional libraries and in the Regional Library facility:

**Albany** - Extensive use of volunteers (120 hrs. per month) for recording, shelving, and preparing newsletter mailings. One Telephone Pioneer does machine repair on site.

**Athens** - Fairly extensive use of volunteers (80+ hrs. per month), including 3 Telephone Pioneers who do machine repair in-house.

**Augusta** - Uses some volunteers, primarily for preparation of newsletter mailing (about 25 - 30 hrs. per month).

**Bainbridge** - Does not use volunteers - Some machines are sent to telephone Pioneers for repair off-site.

**Brunswick** - Fairly extensive use of volunteers (100+ hours per month), use for newsletter mailing preparation, machine and tape repair, etc. Does not use Telephone Pioneers; however many of the volunteers, including those that do machine maintenance and repair, are associated with the local Lion’s organization.

**Columbus** - Does not use volunteers - Telephone Pioneers may be offering some service in the area in the near future.

**Dublin** - Extensive use of volunteers (about 175 hrs. per month) for checking and rewinding tapes, shelving, duplication, preparing newsletter mailing.

**Gainesville** - Fairly extensive use of volunteers (80+ hrs. per month). Five of the volunteers are Telephone Pioneers who do machine repair in-house.

**LaFayette** - Limited use of volunteers (24 hrs. per month) for a variety of functions including help with newsletter mailing preparation.
Macon - Moderate use of volunteers (about 50 - 60 hrs. per month) including in-house use of Telephone Pioneers for machine repair. Use student volunteers for newsletter preparation.

Rome - Fairly extensive use of volunteers (100+ hrs. per month) including in-house use of Telephone Pioneers for machine repair.

Savannah - Limited use of volunteers (about 20 hrs. per month) in part because TBC site is small and lacks workspace. Send machines to Atlanta for repair.

Valdosta - Very limited use of volunteers (only for special projects). Send machines to Atlanta for repair.

Atlanta - Very limited use of volunteers for telephone answering and tape repair (about 45 hrs. per month) - Send some machines (about 15/month) to Telephone Pioneers off-site.

Albany, Athens, Brunswick, Dublin and Rome all have extremely active and worthwhile volunteer programs. Several of the other subregionals make very effective use of volunteers as well. These operations can be used as models for the other subregionals.

Notably, the Regional Library is among the least active in recruiting, training, and using volunteer assistance. The reasons for this and some possible remedies are presented in the section on ASCLA/NLS Standards.

While the use of volunteers can be rewarding and cost effective, the practice also requires careful planning, training, and ongoing supervision. The Florida Regional Library has a full-time paid "Volunteer Specialist" as part of the Regional Library staff.

h) Review and analyze the production of local materials by the Regional and subregional libraries.

As has been noted elsewhere in this report, unlike most regional libraries, the Georgia Regional Library does not produce local materials at all. The subregional libraries at
Albany, Athens, Macon, and Rome do a considerable amount of local production. Most is of local newspapers. Macon, for example, does a separate digest of local news from each of its member counties each week.

Several other subregionals report doing some recording of special materials on demand. In several cases, Sunday school lessons are either recorded or Brailled for an individual on a quarterly basis. The LaFayette subregional makes some locally recorded gospel music available to users.

The quality of the recordings that are produced do not meet the somewhat rigorous NLS recording standards and, with the exception of a diabetes newsletter recorded by the Athens subregional, the materials are not shared outside of the subregional area because of their nature (news is dated very quickly). However, these subregionals provide a service that is highly valued by their customers.

i) What is the type and quality of readers' advisory service offered by the Regional and subregional libraries?

The consultants heard nothing but praise for the level and quality of readers' advisory service offered by the Regional and subregional libraries. Talking book users who attended focus groups or who were interviewed by the consultants over the phone praised the patience, knowledge, and politeness of "their" reader's advisor. It was clear that individual users develop a very special relationship with the readers' advisor who helps them with their selections.

The consultants have concluded that users of NLS services in Georgia receive a high level of service regardless of where they reside. If a problem exists, it is not with the quality of service provided but with the large number of potential users who are not reached because of inadequate outreach efforts.
j) Review the types of outreach activities undertaken by the Regional and subregional libraries - to consumers, to related disability agencies, to service organizations, and to other libraries in the service area. Make recommendations for improving effectiveness.

Several of the subregional libraries do an excellent job of outreach to either consumers or to related disability organizations. Most do a reasonably good job of connecting to local and regional service organizations. Few do an adequate job of outreach to the other libraries in their service area.

In the consultants' opinion, Bainbridge and Brunswick have made the greatest efforts to engage groups of consumers. The outreach program at Bainbridge is arguably the most inclusive as well in that great efforts have been made to reach children as well as adults with disabilities. Brunswick approaches outreach with an evangelical zeal. The talking book center manager and her husband, who is an avid talking book user as well, seem willing to go anywhere at any time to promote the NLS program. Dublin, LaFayette, Macon, and Rome also seem to be particularly well connected to groups that include users.

The subregional libraries in Athens, Bainbridge, Brunswick, LaFayette, Macon and Rome have all done exceptional jobs of making connections with other disabilities organizations in all or part of their service areas. Virtually all talking book center managers reported contact with service organizations, especially, not surprisingly, Lion's clubs.

The relationships between subregional libraries and other libraries in their area range from reasonably good to non-existent. The consultants frequently heard complaints from library directors who said they get no feedback from the subregional library that serves their area. In fact, a few directors were even unsure as to which subregional library served their libraries. A common complaint was that once a person registered for talking book service, she or he became a subregional customer and no longer had contact with the local library.
k) Analyze the level of service offered in the Regional's and Subregional's headquarters county in relation to the service offered to other counties in the Regional's and subregional's service area, paying particular attention to administrative and overhead costs.

Pages 107 - 110 of the Background Report provide information about what the consultants have characterized as the "host county halo effect." While a few subregionals, most notably Bainbridge, do seem to do a good job of reaching all of the counties they serve, the majority of subregionals service their home counties to a greater extent than they serve other participating counties.

The fact that subregionals are generally located in population centers explains part, but not all of the halo effect. Other factors such as the degree to which local libraries subsidize subregional activities (see section 3.m.) also provides a good argument for why subregionals tend to concentrate on serving their home counties. The limited availability of funds for travel also contributes to this situation.

l) How many subregionals offer large print as a service? Descriptive videos? How are these materials paid for?

All of the subregional libraries have provided some large print materials as a service in the past; however, as the following chart shows, the services offered currently differ considerably from subregional to subregional. The Regional Library does not have a large print collection, and consequently, does not show any circulation of these materials.

Furthermore, large print circulation accounts for a significant percentage of the circulation of some of the subregionals and a miniscule portion of the circulation of other subregional libraries. For example, large print accounts for 32.73% of the Dublin Subregional Library's circulation and 29.25% of the Albany Subregional Library's circulation. At the other extreme, large print materials are only 2.47% of the total circulation of the Columbus
Subregional Library and less than 1% (0.58%) of the circulation from the Gainesville Subregional Library. Certainly, the circulation of large print materials is a positive service; however, the circulation figures raise the question of the effect on this non-NLS service on the funding of the subregional libraries. A good argument can be made that large print circulation should be a local, rather than a state-funded program. In fact, almost all of the large print materials are purchased for the host libraries with local library funds. However, it should also be remembered that the State of Georgia provides materials grants in excess of $4 million to public libraries, over a quarter of which flows to libraries that host subregionals.

### 1999 Federal Fiscal Year Circulation

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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>LP-Individual</th>
<th>LP-Deposits</th>
<th>LPM-Individual</th>
<th>LPM-Deposits</th>
<th>Total LPs</th>
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<td>1135</td>
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</table>

LP = Large Print    LPM = Large Print Magazines

Several of the public library system headquarters libraries, including LaFayette and Rome, do have descriptive videos. However, this format has not, to the consultants’ knowledge been included in the circulation reported by subregional libraries.
m) How many subregional libraries receive supplemental funding from the library systems they serve? How many receive in-kind and/or in-behalf support? Distinguish between funding from the county and/or the library in which the subregional is located as opposed to funding which comes from the system or area served by the subregional. Include space and administrative support as part of the local support.

The consultants found no examples of direct support for subregional libraries from library systems other than that provided by host libraries. Several subregionals reported that attempts had been made in the past to secure such funding. Occasionally an individual county or system has indicated willingness to consider the idea; however, all attempts seemed to have failed because of the unfairness of a single county or one participating system providing supplemental funds for the subregional while another county or another participating system refuses to do so.

Library directors are generally of the opinion that NLS service is a state responsibility rather than a local responsibility. The consultants tend to agree with this point of view; however, we also believe that libraries should be open to the idea of directly supporting special programs of service to people with disabilities that are offered through subregionals. This might include services such as rotating collections of descriptive videos.

Most directors of host libraries report that they subsidize subregional library activities heavily. Ten of the thirteen directors of libraries hosting subregional libraries responded to a web survey offered by the consultants. All ten directors indicated that they believe that they provide a staffing subsidy to the subregionals. Nine indicated that they subsidize administration, 8 facilities, and 7 reported utilities subsidies.

As can be seen in the survey results reported above, a few of the host libraries do use state funding for subregional activities to offset a pro-rated portion of their facility and/or utility costs. Others, the majority of host libraries, do not use state funds for this purpose and instead absorb all of these costs in their local library's budget.
Following are the median subsidies reported by the host library directors:

- Staffing: $16,750
- Administration: $8,250
- Facility: $8,750
- Utilities: $1,125

This amounts to an average subsidy of $34,875. Some host directors reported amounts considerably higher than the median amount. In fact, the mean staffing subsidy was nearly double the median at $32,820. This disparity between the mean (average) and the median (mid-point) is partially explained by the fact that several of the subregionals devote a state-paid position or a portion of a state-paid position to subregional activities. While it could be argued that this isn't a local subsidy because the money for the position comes from the State of Georgia, the use of such a position for talking book center operations is strictly voluntary. The libraries that choose to do so are foregoing a well-paid position that could be used for local/regional purposes. The consultants would concur that using a state-paid position in this way is defensible as a local subsidy.

n) If geographic service areas are recommended for subregional libraries, suggest how to redistrict or redistribute the subregions.

The consultants are not specifically recommending redistribution or redistricting of the subregions. However, we recognize that a call for such a plan could, nevertheless, emerge as a result of this study. Therefore, we offer the following guidance based on our observations and analysis of the facts:

First, the consultants see few advantages to a system that serves the entire State with six or eight subregionals instead of the current thirteen. The regions served by each subregional if the State of Georgia was divided into six or eight subregions would be too large to offer effective outreach services. In our opinion, Georgia would be wiser to centralize the entire service instead of creating large, unmanageable service units. Second, the consultants believe that it is important to avoid the splitting of public
library systems, that is, patrons of a single public library system should not be served by more than one subregional.

That said, following are the consultants' thoughts on potential mergers. The Rome and LaFayette subregionals could be merged. However, we have some concerns about this arrangement because service from the Sara Hightower Library, while excellent, has been very local in nature. Outreach efforts to counties outside the host-county have been limited and relations with other libraries in the subregion have often been less than optimal. During the last year, the LaFayette subregional has been very active in promoting NLS services and has been working closely with libraries in its area. However, LaFayette is somewhat isolated and is not a major population center. Any reduction of the fine local service offered to Rome and Floyd County residents would be a greatly missed.

The Athens and Gainesville subregionals could be merged. Of the two subregionals, the Athens talking book center is by far the stronger and would be the better candidate for hosting the merged subregional.

The area now served by the Savannah subregional could be divided among the Brunswick, Dublin, and Augusta subregionals. The Savannah subregional is the weakest in terms of facility (Brunswick's facility problems will be addressed when their host library is remodeled and expanded). The Savannah staff is also the smallest. On the other hand, the Savannah area is growing considerably and has great potential for NLS service.

The Macon subregional could be expanded to include a few of the counties now served directly by the Regional Library in Atlanta and perhaps a few counties served by the Columbus subregional. Outreach from Atlanta and Columbus have been less than adequate. A few counties now served by the Dublin subregional could be attached to Macon as well, especially if Dublin was given the responsibility for serving a portion of the present Savannah service area.

Finally, the Albany, Columbus, and Bainbridge subregionals could be merged if a number of counties now served by Columbus were attached to the Regional Library in Atlanta instead. However, the Bainbridge subregional,
which is among the strongest in several ways, is probably too far away from the Columbus area to serve it effectively as a subregional. A merger of Bainbridge and Albany is perhaps more practical.

0) Analyze the current relationship of the subregional libraries to the Regional Library in Atlanta; the subregional libraries to NLS; and the Regional Library to NLS.

Because the Regional Library has been largely ineffectual for a considerable number of years, the subregionals have assumed a greater responsibility than is usually observed among subregional operations. As has been stated a number of times in this report, Georgia’s Regional Library has primarily served as the subregional library for the Atlanta metro area.

The consultants believe that the Regional Library is now making a good faith effort to meet its responsibilities as a Regional Library. However, we do not believe that is practical to expect the Regional Library to carry out its appropriate statewide planning, training, and coordination roles unless it receives a considerably higher level of funding from the State of Georgia.

The ongoing weak condition of the Regional Library makes it unlikely that the subregionals will look to the Regional Library for the leadership and guidance envisioned by NLS. It is hard for the subregionals to take the Regional Library too seriously when many of them offer service at levels as high or higher than the Regional Library. The most critical need at the Regional Library is for an additional professional position that would enable the Regional Library director to spend a greater percentage of her time on statewide efforts and work with the subregionals.

The relationship between the Regional Library and NLS appears to be appropriate. Both NLS and the Regional Library are aware of the shortcomings of the Regional Library and are working together to address them. However, given the current Regional Library staffing level and facility, it is unlikely that more than marginal progress will be made.
4 Analyze the role of Atlanta as both the Regional and subregional library. Recommend three (3) models of organization and service.

As is stated many times and in many ways in this report, the consultants believe that the State of Georgia has been operating its NLS services with what can either be characterized as fourteen subregional libraries or fourteen mini-regional libraries. The Regional Library has not been funded at a level that allows it to assume the leadership and coordination roles expected of it under the ASCLA/NLS Standards.

The Regional Library has not been strong enough to offer the subregional libraries the kind of support that they need, and as a consequence, they have expanded their role to act as mini-regional libraries in the areas they serve. This is evidenced in their large collections, bypassing of the Regional for interlibrary loan, and their high degree of independence.

The Regional Library has also been a relatively ineffective subregional. Penetration into the metro Atlanta market has been weak relative to some of the other subregionals, and high staff turnover has created service lapses. The consultants are happy to report that the Regional Library seems to be improving in both its role as the Regional Library for the State of Georgia and as the fourteenth subregional library serving 13 counties in the Atlanta metro region. However, the consultants believe that unless staffing levels and facilities are improved dramatically, progress, especially progress in the Regional Library role, will be marginal at best.

The consultants believe that a new model, or at least a revision of the model now in existence may hold the promise of improved NLS services to Georgia residents. Following are three models that we believe deserve some attention. The models are detailed in sections 10 - 13 of this report.
We characterize the three models as:
1) the centralized model,
2) the decentralized model, and,
3) the centralized fulfillment/decentralized outreach
   and readers' advisory model.

5. Analyze the effectiveness of the Regional Library and
subregional libraries as machine lending agencies.

a) How are the Regional and subregional libraries
fulfilling legal requirements as sublending
agencies?

In general terms, the Regional Library and the subregional
libraries have been relatively effective in fulfilling their
role as machine sublending agencies. The consultants
heard no complaints about the availability of machines or
slowness in repairing machines from the many users that
participated in focus groups or from those who were
interviewed. While some complaints about machines and
equipment were heard, they had more to do with difficulty
using the machine (especially when first entering the
program) and accessories (particularly headphones) that are
not durable.

A few of the subregionals do an exemplary job of tracking
and maintaining machines. There are, nevertheless, some
problems in some network libraries in regard to completely
meeting the legal requirements as machine sublending
agencies. For example, while the machine-lending agency
agreement calls for lending agencies to "maintain inventory
control over all sound reproducers...," the Regional Library
and several of the subregionals were unable to specify a
date at which the last complete machine self-audit was
completed. The Regional and three subregionals thought
that it had been at least five years since a complete audit
had been done.

It should be noted, however, that four subregionals had
completed audits within the last year and that two others
indicated that they do an audit of a sample of assigned
machines each month.
The machine lending agreement calls for the lending agency to "maintain sound reproducers and other reading equipment preferably through the use of volunteer agencies." For a time, the Regional Library and some of the subregionals were having a difficult time finding volunteers to repair machines and numerous broken and dirty machines were piling up in storage closets and on shelves. However, a better and more reliable flow of machines from NLS, better training materials (a video tape on machine maintenance and repair), and a renewed Telephone Pioneers organization in the state have all contributed to reduced backlogs of machines and a smooth supply to end users.

The computerization of machine records (compared to the days of manual record keeping) has also contributed to better tracking of machines.

b) What records are being maintained?

The Regional Library and all subregional libraries appear to be maintaining the records required by NLS including:

- the number of machines received, date of receipt, number on hand awaiting assignment and the model number and serial number of each;
- the number of machines being repaired, model number, and serial number; and,
- the number of machines assigned including access information by type of machine, serial number, and the name of the person or institution holding the machine.

c) What percent of time is devoted to machine inventory record keeping activities?

The amount of time devoted to maintaining machine records is difficult for the Regional Library and the subregionals to estimate because much of the process is integrated into the normal workflow. However, if machine cleaning and repair are not included, estimates for record keeping from the subregionals queried ranged from under 3% to nearly 10% of staff time.
d) Describe methods used to distribute equipment to patrons; methods used to retrieve equipment.

Most subregionals attempt to have personal contact with individuals who are receiving a talking book machine for the first time. In some cases this transaction takes place in a talking book center; however, numerous instances were cited when talking book center employees physically delivered machines to the home and provided a demonstration in how to use the equipment.

The majority of machines, including almost all replacement machines, are sent to patrons through the mail.

The retrieval of equipment is always a challenge for machine lending agencies. Patrons who move or those who pass away are often difficult to track. Equipment is often lost, stolen, or misplaced in group housing and extended care facilities.

Regional and subregional staff use a combination of notification, persistence, and gentle threats to retrieve machines. While not all are recovered, many are. Stories abound regarding the condition and the circumstances under which some machines are recovered. The consultants believe that the Regional Library and all of the subregionals make a good-faith effort to recover machines.

e) What is the date of the last machine self-audit of each subregional library and the Regional Library?

As was reported above, four subregionals report having conducted a complete machine audit within the past year. Two other subregionals do an audit of a sample of machines each month. At the other end of the scale, the Regional Library and three subregionals were unable to identify when the last complete audit was conducted. The date of the last audit for the remaining libraries falls between two and five years.
f) **Recommend models for outsourcing machine inventory responsibilities; models to include both NLS or partial NLS service. What would be the associated impacts on patrons and subregional libraries?**

While several models exist for outsourcing machine cleaning and repair, most do not completely outsource inventory responsibilities, at least not inventory as it applies to machines assigned to individuals. Methods of obtaining machine cleaning and repair cover a broad range from the use of prison inmates to the use of Telephone Pioneers and Lion's Club members.

There is some advantage to maintaining and repairing machines locally; however, there are also arguments for centralizing this service. The consultants believe that the best model would be a centralized repair center staffed by well-trained volunteers. While it would be possible to fully outsource machine repair to a commercial provider, the consultants believe that this process is likely to be more costly than using volunteer labor.

g) **How do the Regional and each subregional library use volunteer repair persons? Include how the Telephone Pioneers are currently involved in the process. How effective is the use of volunteers in this arena?**

Section 3.g. includes an account of how each of the subregionals uses volunteers including the role of volunteers in repairing and maintaining machines. Most Regional and subregional libraries use volunteers to repair machines. Three different volunteer models exist in Georgia. The first is sending machines out to Telephone Pioneers who repair the machines off-site. The second is the use of Telephone Pioneers in the subregional facilities, and the third is the use of Lions' Club members or general volunteers in the subregional facility.

For a time, subregional libraries were finding it difficult to secure assistance from Telephone Pioneers. However, it appears that there has been resurgence in activity among this group and many talking book center managers are reporting good success.
The problem with volunteer repair and cleaning services is that volunteers come and go and interest waxes and wanes. However, the practice of using Telephone Pioneers for this purpose has a long history of success.

6. Review the volunteer production of accessible materials in Georgia.

As was stated earlier (section 3.h.) in relation to ASCLA/NLS Standards, the Regional Library is not currently producing any materials locally. The Regional Library lacks the staff, facilities, and the volunteers necessary to produce supplemental materials. The Georgia Regional Library’s volunteer program is next to non-existent. The work of volunteers in the subregional libraries is covered in section 3.g.

a) What types and numbers of items are being produced?

The subregional libraries in Albany, Athens, Macon, and Rome do a considerable amount of local production. Most is of local newspapers for the respective service areas. Albany does the local newspaper three times a week; Athens does four newspapers weekly; Macon records one weekly newspaper per county served by the subregional each week; Rome estimates it produces 416 issues of weekly newspapers annually. Several do a monthly magazine; several record their newsletter as well.

b) Evaluate the quality of these volunteer productions. Do they meet NLS production standards?

The quality of the recordings that are produced do not meet NLS standards. With the possible exception of the Rome subregional, none of the libraries has the equipment or facilities necessary to meet the somewhat rigorous NLS recording standards.
c) Identify potential sources of persons capable of Braille or recording items for use by the Regional and subregional libraries.

Given the fairly low demand for materials in Braille format statewide, the consultants are recommending that production of Braille materials be outsourced by the Regional Library through a request for proposal (RFP) process. The NLS Directory of Library Resources for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (latest edition) includes a section headed “Other Library Resources,” which lists several organizations actively involved in producing and lending Braille. These organizations, plus Regional Libraries in other states with active Braille programs should be sent the RFP when it has been developed.

The consultants recommend active involvement of consumer groups representing a large variety of disability advocacy and service organizations in planning transitions in the way library services are provided to people with disabilities. These same disability advocacy and service organizations as well as senior citizen volunteer organizations are potential sources for volunteers to record local materials for use by the Regional and subregional libraries. The bigger issues in increasing the amount of recording done at the Regional and subregional libraries will be the availability of adequate recording facilities and meeting NLS standards. The consultants are of the opinion that local newspaper production should continue even if the subregional libraries are unable to meet standards because the service is highly valued by patrons.

The replication of recording facilities at all locations is not practical. Recording of book materials should be centralized either at the Regional Library or at one of the subregionals. Rome might be a candidate for this type of facility since it already has a television studio. If this function is provided for the entire state at a subregional facility, it should be specifically compensated for performing the service.
7. Describe the types of public library activities that are currently provided to NLS certified persons in Georgia’s public libraries.

Pages 126-130 of the Background Report describe the outreach done by the subregional libraries in publicizing the NLS service. These efforts often have included placing deposit collections of talking books and a few machines in public libraries within the subregional service area. All public library headquarters have forms for people to use in applying for NLS service and staff seemed aware of these forms and how to process them.

Most public libraries also offer large print collections and some NLS certified individuals are able to use some large print resources. Virtually all public libraries (although not all branches) offer books on tape that are used by some NLS certified patrons to supplement their talking books.

Many public libraries in Georgia have devices such as CCTV's and assistive programs such as JAWS™ mounted on one or more computer terminals. However, with very few exceptions, public library directors reported that the usage of this equipment is infrequent.

Any service, such as reference/information, which is provided to library users remotely via telephone or Internet, is available to all people with disabilities, including those who are NLS certified. Many libraries have TTYs that can be used by hearing impaired individuals to ask reference questions and to receive answers. Finally, many public libraries provide some Braille signage. Again, little use was reported of these devices and/or accommodations.

A few libraries offer collections of descriptive videos and/or closed captioned videos.

a) Describe and analyze public relations efforts of library accessibility programs.

Several public library directors said they included explanations of special services such as talking books whenever they spoke to community groups. Some libraries include printed statements about accommodating special
needs, such as providing interpreters for the deaf, whenever they produce flyers promoting programs. Most children’s librarians interviewed said they worked with schools and pre schools to make children’s programs accessible to children with disabilities. All of the newer facilities have been built to accommodate access by people with mobility disabilities.

Unfortunately, as was pointed out in the Background Report on pages 125-134, none of these promotional efforts is being planned and coordinated on a statewide basis or in a way that is likely to achieve a sustained impact.

b) How can all persons eligible for NLS service be made aware of the program?

Creating an awareness of the NLS service to those eligible (and their families and friends) should be part of the ongoing educational process to make people aware of the library needs of people with disabilities. Pages 139-140 of the Background Report contain a list of public relations/public awareness suggestions.

c) How might such a program be structured, implemented, and marketed?

The consultants recommend (pages 133-134 of the Background Report) that state or regional specialists provide a number of services, which include a statewide public information effort about library services for special needs populations, demographic information, consulting assistance, and continuing education for library staff. Even with this level of coordination and support provided at the state or regional level, individual public libraries must take responsibility for creating and implementing their own public relations campaigns that target specific groups (organizations, physicians, the general public) in a systematic way. Again, the state or regional specialists should create a model public relations campaign for local libraries to use.
d) How might libraries market NLS services to persons with disabilities and their families?

Again, pages 133 - 134 of the Background Report provide specific recommendations.


e) How can all public library staff be made aware of the NLS program?

In site visits to public library headquarters the consultants found library directors and staff aware of the existence of NLS program although they often had limited knowledge of the users of the service from their area. A greater sharing of information among the Regional, subregionals, and individual public library directors will help to extend “ownership” of the NLS program.

It is important that the staff not only be aware of the program, but also that they feel some ownership of NLS service and service to people with disabilities generally. An introduction to the NLS service and to working with people with disabilities should be part of every new staff member’s orientation. Annual updates and sensitivity/awareness programs should be part of every library’s annual staff development day. The consultants believe that this type of training should be incorporated into the Office of Public Library Services' growing continuing education efforts.

f) Recommend funding strategies for providing these services.

The consultants believe that the Office of Public Library Services should provide primary funding for the staff training aspects of raising public awareness. Local library budgets should provide for library staff time to devote to special needs populations, to attend continuing education, and to partner with local social service agencies.

State funds should also be used to provide a statewide public information effort about library services for special needs populations, to collect necessary demographic information, and to provide statewide consulting services. The Regional Library and the Office of Public Library
Services should partner with other state agencies and with non-profit entities serving people with disabilities to produce and disseminate information about services and programs.

The consultants have also recommended that the Regional Library take the lead in developing a web-site that would provide links to agencies and organizations providing services to people with disabilities. If done well, this site will attract many individuals with disabilities, many professionals who work with people with disabilities, and family and friends who are looking for assistance. The web site could provide a perfect venue for "advertisements" regarding both NLS and general library services available to people with disabling conditions.

8. **Analyze the READS II circulation system.** Determine if it is technologically capable of effectively serving Georgia LBPHs if their service populations increase. Identify other states that use an LBPH statewide circulation system. Identify key features and limitations of these systems.

Page 124 of the Background Report describes the consultants' vision for an automation system to serve Georgia's NLS network libraries. It proposes a system that can be accessed not only by Regional and subregional Library staff, but by public library staff and NLS users as well.

The recent migration of the Regional Library and most of the subregional libraries to the READS II software represents some real progress for Georgia's NLS network libraries. READS II has greater capability than the old DOS version of READS and, after a brief learning curve, is more efficient than READS. However, there are also ways in which the implementation of READS II represents a move in the wrong direction.

READS II is designed as a stand-alone system to be used in a single location and, as was stated above, the consultants believe that Georgia needs to move toward a consolidated/shared automation system, like the Keystone system recently installed in Florida, for all NLS transactions.
Our concern with the READS II system is not its basic functionality; in fact, the consultants believe that the software meets the needs of Georgia's individual network libraries rather well. Our fear is that the design of the READS II system will prevent Georgia's network libraries from moving to the consolidated system that will allow booking of materials to take place by librarians in libraries and by individual patrons located throughout Georgia.

The consultants spoke with the NLS technology specialists in the course of the study to discuss the current and potential long-term capabilities of READS II. Based on these conversations, it is the opinion of the consultants that Georgia should first enter into discussions with NLS about an enhancement of READS II to determine whether the software can be upgraded to provide the security and functionality needed in a shared online circulation system.

While the consultants have some real doubts that this is possible, it was clear that NLS was willing to entertain the thought of further enhancing READS II, and given the State's recent investment in the migration to READS II, it seems prudent to first try the enhancement route.

However, the consultants do not recommend staying with READS II over the long-term if major compromises in the envisioned design of a statewide system are necessary. We believe that both library staff and patrons need access to the booking system and that this access must, at the same time, maintain the integrity of the system and the confidentiality of individual patrons.

Two other logical choices seem open to Georgia at this time. The first would be the consideration of the Keystone "KLAS" system that is being installed in Florida. The second would be a discussion with SIRSI, the vendor involved in the Georgia PINES program, to see if they would be interested in developing a "talking book" module for integration into the SIRSI system.
The consultants suggest that the Georgia Regional Library should proceed as follows:

1. Develop a relatively brief Request for Information (RFI) for distribution to NLS, Keystone, and SIRSI. The Florida Regional Library should be approached for a copy of background documents they used in the process of selecting the Keystone system.

2. Enter into discussions with NLS, Keystone, and SIRSI based on responses to the initial RFI to determine when, and at what cost, a system as described in the RFI might be available.

3. Develop a formal RFP, including technical specifications, for the statewide talking book automation system.

4. Review responses and select vendor.

Georgia should see this as a three to four year process and should target January 2005 as the date for the implementation of a shared system that provides public library and direct patron access to the materials booking system.

9. Address the issue of confidentiality of patron records and other legal issues related to the historical patron data that is maintained by READS and READS II. How have other states successfully addressed these issues?

While the consultants believe that patron confidentiality should be protected, we also believe that confidentiality statutes need to be written in a way that allows libraries and library staff to carry out their public service functions. Patron records should be confidential, but confidential from whom? The consultants contend that patron records should be protected from disclosure to the public but that patron records should be available to library staff in the course of their official duties and activities. Wisconsin includes the "in the course of their official duties" language in its confidentiality of library records statute.
The library automation system that the consultants envision for Georgia NLS services would protect patron confidentiality through system design, user authentication, and password protection. As is the case with most online systems, library staff as well as patron access would be limited to the information they need to complete a specific transaction. Network librarians would have access to a full range of user information; however, patron's access would be limited to viewing their own transaction information, and library staff at other public libraries would be limited to the information they need to assist a patron with the booking of materials.

The design of the automation system, specific policies regarding the type of information that is accessible to patrons and to various types of library staff (what constitutes their official duties), and the frequent changing of passwords should enable Georgia to ensure the confidentiality of patron records while still providing a high level of service.

**SERVICE MODELS**

10. Identify models from other state regional libraries for the blind and physically handicapped, ranking their effectiveness in terms of service and cost.

The consultants believe that Georgia should examine the relative benefits and liabilities of three different service models in determining future directions. The models can be characterized as follows:

1. the centralized model,
2. the decentralized model, and,
3. the centralized fulfillment/decentralized readers' advisory and outreach model.

**The Centralized Model**

The centralized model is the predominant model of NLS service in the United States. North Carolina is an example of a state that is organized in this way. Under this model, a single Regional Library serves an entire state from a single location. Workers in the centralized model are generally
employees of the state; however, there is nothing to prevent the outsourcing of some or all services under this model.

Benefits of the centralized model are:

- elimination of costly duplication of services such as administration
- economies of scale
- statewide coordination and planning
- uniformity of service
- state level visibility and focus
- greater equity in opportunity to access service
- offers patrons a single point of contact
- offers funding agency a single point of accountability
- potential for professional recruitment/management of volunteers

Liabilities of the centralized model are:

- less personalized service
- more difficult to be effective in outreach efforts
- less local visibility of service
- no "local" point of contact for many users
- more vulnerable to state funding cuts
- if sub-standard service is provided, everyone in the state receives sub-standard service
- some level of distrust in "big government"

The Decentralized Model

Georgia is the purest example of the decentralized model of NLS service in the United States. Under this model, all direct service is provided through subregional libraries that cover the entire state. Workers are the employees of host libraries. Because services are decentralized, outsourcing of specific functions is more difficult.

Benefits of the decentralized model are:

- personalized service
- easier to be effective in outreach efforts
- relatively "local" point of contact
- better local visibility than under centralized model
more opportunities for local volunteers
- if sub-standard service is provided by one subregional, people served by other subregionals may still receive quality service
- less vulnerable to state funding cuts than under centralized model
- potential for closer relationships with local libraries and advocacy/support organizations

Liabilities of decentralized model are:

- duplication of service (administrative, reporting, facilities, etc.)
- lack of economies of scale
- lack of uniformity of service
- inequity of opportunity to access service
- lack of statewide coordination
- multiple points of accountability
- greater cost than under centralized model
- potential for dilution of service
- requires more staff than under the centralized model

The Centralized Fulfillment/Decentralized Readers' Advisory and Outreach Model

Florida is moving toward this model. This model centralizes routine processes such as circulation and the shelving of materials as well as support services such as the warehousing of collections, repair and distribution of equipment, and statewide planning, coordination, and training. The model decentralizes interaction with the end-user in selecting materials (readers' advisory) and outreach efforts with individuals, local libraries, and advocacy/support organizations. Because the kinds of services that best lend themselves to outsourcing (routine processes) are centralized, contracts for service are possible.

Benefits of the centralized fulfillment/decentralized readers' advisory and outreach model:

- personalized service
- local points of contact (in individual libraries as well as in subregionals)
Library Services to Georgia Residents with Special Needs
Himmel & Wilson, Library Consultants

- less duplication of services than under the decentralized model
- more uniform service than under the decentralized model
- some economies of scale
- frees professionals at local level from routine clerical functions
- easier to be effective in outreach efforts
- potential for closer relationships with local libraries and advocacy/support organizations
- statewide coordination and planning

Liabilities of the centralized fulfillment/decentralized readers' advisory and outreach model:

- lessens involvement of local volunteers
- requires some retraining of subregional staff and training of public library staff
- requires centralized/shared automation system
- if sub-standard service is provided, everyone in the state receives sub-standard service
- multiple points of accountability
- requires more professional staff than under either the centralized or decentralized models

The consultants believe that the centralized fulfillment/decentralized readers' advisory and outreach model holds the greatest potential for improved NLS services in Georgia. While this model, like the others, is imperfect, we believe that it retains the most important benefits of both the centralized and decentralized models and frees professional staff at the subregional level to do important outreach and readers' advisory work. Furthermore, the model minimizes liabilities and offers greater potential for statewide planning and coordination.

While the consultants are recommending the third model (centralized fulfillment/decentralized readers' advisory and outreach), we believe that any one of the three models can be structured in a way that offers both high-quality NLS service and improved library services to individuals with disabilities that do not qualify them for NLS services. In order to be effective in both roles, each would require a different configuration of the Regional Library's staff. For example, the cost estimate for the decentralized model presumes the addition of staff at the Regional Library to
enable it to carry out its statewide coordination, planning, and training responsibilities. The cost estimate for the centralized model includes the staff necessary to offer outreach services to all areas of the state as well as the staff necessary to provide a high level of core NLS services to the entire state. The cost estimate for the centralized fulfillment/decentralized readers' advisory and outreach model is structured with a higher concentration of clerical staff at the Regional Library and a high level of professional staff in the subregions.

Following then are cost estimates for implementing effective service under each of the three models.

The Centralized Model

Staffing for the centralized model has been calculated using the ASCLA/NLS guidelines for Regional Libraries and applying the total number of individual users being served in the state as reported in the NLS FY 1998 report of state statistics. Two additional professional positions have been added to the total derived from applying the guidelines to provide the Regional Library with an outreach component designed to reach both NLS eligible people with disabilities and to improve services to non-NLS eligible people with disabling conditions. It should also be noted that the number of registered users of the NLS program changes daily. Consequently, it may be appropriate to look at staffing in terms of plus or minus 10% to allow for this fluctuation.

Staff Costs Under the Centralized Model

- 1.00 FTE - Administrator (professional librarian)
- 6.18 FTE - Librarians (professional librarians)
- 10.30 FTE - Readers' Advisors (B.A. or equivalent)
- 6.18 FTE - Other Professionals/Paraprofessionals
- 18.54 FTE - Technical/Support Staff
- 2.00 FTE - Outreach Workers (professional librarians)

44.20 FTE - Total
We have then applied the following rates representing salaries and fringe benefits to the positions:

- Professional Librarians - $45,000
- Paraprofessionals - $35,000
- Technical/Support Staff - $25,000

This results in total staffing costs of $1,453,400

**Other Costs Under the Centralized Model**

- Facility Rental/Utilities - $200,000
- Travel - $15,000
- Other Operational Expenses - $150,000

**Total Cost of the Centralized Model**

This results in an overall cost of $1,818,400. This represents a state expenditure of approximately $0.24 per capita. This compares to a current expenditure of approximately $0.19 per capita. However, it should be remembered that both NLS and the consultants have concluded that the current Regional Library is understaffed even in its role as a subregional. Furthermore, this calculation adds two professional outreach positions that are intended, at least in part, to improve library services to non-NLS eligible individuals with disabilities.

**The Decentralized Model**

The decentralized model is calculated using the ASCLA/NLS staffing guidelines. It applies the rational for calculating Regional Library staffing levels that is outlined on pages 4 - 7 of this report.

**Staff Costs Under the Decentralized Model**

Regional Library staff under this model would include:

- 1.00 FTE - Administrator (professional librarian)
- 1.35 FTE - Librarians (professional librarians)
- 2.25 FTE - Readers' Advisors (B.A. or equivalent)
- 2.18 FTE - Other Professionals/Paraprofessionals
- 6.53 FTE - Technical/Support Staff

**13.31 FTE - Total at Regional**
Staffing in the thirteen subregional libraries based on the estimated number of readers used by OPLS for FY 2001 budget calculation purposes would include:

- 6.77 FTE - Librarians (professional librarians)
- 11.27 FTE - Readers' Advisors (B.A. or equivalent)
- 5.65 FTE - Other Professionals/Paraprofessionals
- 16.91 FTE - Technical/Support Staff

40.6 FTE - Total at Subregionals

This results in total staffing for the Regional Library and the thirteen subregionals of:

- 1.00 FTE - Administrator (professional librarian)
- 8.12 FTE - Librarians (professional librarians)
- 13.52 FTE - Readers' Advisors (B.A. or equivalent)
- 7.83 FTE - Other Professionals/Paraprofessionals
- 23.44 FTE - Technical/Support Staff

53.91 FTE - Grand Total

Applying the same salary and fringe benefit scales as under the centralized model, total staffing costs under the decentralized model would total $1,743,650. It should be noted however, that the number of registered borrowers used for the calculation of state funding for subregionals counts deposit collections as representing four users.

Using individual registered borrower totals recently collected from the subregionals by the consultants results in a somewhat lower staffing requirement, which translates, into lower overall staffing costs. The use of this method of calculating staffing needs generates total personnel costs of $1,255,200. However, this also results in lower levels of overall staffing in the subregionals than now exists.
Other Costs Under the Decentralized Model

Regional Library
  Facility Rental/Utilities - $150,000
  Subregional Facility Value $156,000
  Travel - $20,000
  Other Operational Expenses $200,000

The size of the Regional facility is reduced under this model to reflect the fact that there are fewer staff members at the Regional Library. This, in turn, reduces the facility cost.

The subregional facility value above is calculated based on 13 subregional library facilities of 1,200 sq. ft. (which the consultants had indicated would be adequate for a subregional with a reduced collection size) at a $10 per sq. ft. amount (including utilities).

Total Cost of the Decentralized Model

The total cost for the decentralized model totals $2,269,650 using the higher staffing calculation or $1,781,200 if the lower staffing calculation is applied. This translates into statewide per capita expenditures of $0.29 or $0.23 depending on which staffing scenario is applied.

The Centralized Fulfillment/Decentralized Reader's Advisory and Outreach Model

Staffing calculations for the centralized fulfillment/decentralized readers' advisory and outreach model assumes the placement of a full-time professional librarian (current talking book center manager who lack the MLS could be "grandfathered" into these positions) and a part-time paraprofessional in each of the thirteen subregionals. While the Regional Library would gain two additional professional positions to allow it to fulfill its statewide planning and coordination responsibilities, a paraprofessional to coordinate volunteer activities including statewide recording and statewide machine maintenance, and a paraprofessional to provide technical support for the statewide computer network, most
additional Regional Library staffing would be at the clerical level. This reflects the fact that much of the readers' advisory function would continue to happen at the subregional level.

Staff Costs Under the Centralized
Fulfillment/Decentralized Readers' Advisory and Outreach Model

Regional Library staff under this model would include:

1.00 FTE - Administrator (professional librarian)
2.00 FTE - Librarian (professional librarian)
2.25 FTE - Readers' Advisors (B.A. or equivalent)
7.83 FTE - Other Professionals/Paraprofessionals
18.54 FTE - Technical/Support Staff

31.62 FTE - Total at Regional Library

Staffing at the subregional libraries would include:

13.00 FTE - Librarians (professional librarians)
11.27 FTE - Readers' Advisors (B.A. or equivalent)

24.27 FTE - Total at Subregions

This results in total staffing for the Regional Library and the thirteen subregions of:

1.00 FTE - Administrator (professional librarian)
15.00 FTE - Librarians (professional librarians)
13.52 FTE - Readers' Advisors (B.A. or equivalent)
7.83 FTE - Other Professionals/Paraprofessionals
18.54 FTE - Technical/Support Staff

55.89 FTE - Grand Total

Applying the same salary and fringe benefit scales as under the centralized model, total staffing costs under the centralized fulfillment/decentralized readers' advisory and outreach model would total $1,930,750
Other Costs Under the Centralized Fulfillment/Decentralized Readers' Advisory and Outreach Model

Regional Library
   Facility Rental/Utilities - $ 150,000
   Subregional Facility Value $ 104,000
   Travel - $ 20,000
   Other Operational Expenses $ 200,000

The subregional facility value above is calculated based on 13 subregional library facilities of 800 sq. ft. at a $10 per sq. ft. amount (includes utilities). This space is intended to house staff and a small demonstration collection only. Additional space could be provided for adaptive technologies and other assistive devices; however, the consultants believe that all public libraries, not just subregional facilities, should make these kinds of devices available. Therefore, we have not included them in the space allocation.

Total Cost of the Centralized Fulfillment/Decentralized Readers' Advisory and Outreach Model

The total cost for the centralized fulfillment/decentralized readers' advisory and outreach model totals $2,404,750. This translates into statewide per capita expenditures of slightly over $0.31.

11. Analyze the impact of both a centralized model and a decentralized model for delivery of library service in Georgia.

a) What are the benefits of a centralized warehouse of materials and a decentralized readers' advisory service?

The consultants believe that there are many advantages to this approach, especially if the entire state was linked with a shared automated system. As is mentioned on pages 113 - 115 of the Background Report and in section 3.e. of this document, the consultants believe that collections in the subregional libraries are larger than they need to be. All are at least three times larger than dictated by the ASCLA/NLS Standards. While we believe that collections
could be weeded extensively without any significant
damage to service, we also recognize that the collections
reflect the fact that the subregionals have been the primary
NLS service providers in their areas.

The consultants believe that the ultimate success of
centralized talking book fulfillment service and
decentralized readers’ advisory service is dependent on two
factors. The first is the availability of a computer system
that would allow subregional staff, public library staff, and
NLS patrons to request materials online. These requests
would be transmitted in real time to the location of the
centralized collection. Requests would then be filled as
quickly as if the request had been made at the site of the
centralized collection.

The second critical factor is training. Talking book center
managers would need to shift their thinking from being
managers of collections to being professionals that perform
readers’ advisory and outreach functions. Neither of these
roles is new to the talking book center managers; however,
collection management has occupied a considerable amount
of their time in the past, and moving away from this
function would require a real change of focus.

Our contact with subregional library managers assures us
that their primary focus is providing quality service to their
patrons. We believe that they will embrace the concept of
centralized fulfillment and decentralized readers’ advisory
service if they can be convinced that the result will be
better service to the end user. In order to do this, the
talking book center managers must be involved in
designing the system. An imposed move in this direction
that lacks significant input from subregional staff is likely
to fail.

b) What area of the state network could be privatized
or outsourced?

The consultants recommend the centralization and the
outsourcing of Braille fulfillment service and of talking
book fulfillment service. The consultants also believe that
machine fulfillment and repair service could be outsourced,
albeit in a slightly different form.
The outsourcing of Braille services would be, by far, the easiest to accomplish. Numerous other states have contracted (usually with regional libraries in other states) to collect, store, and fill requests for Braille materials. Many factors commend the outsourcing of this service. First, the Regional Library's collection of Braille resources is substandard. A contract for service would result in better availability of materials to Georgia's Braille readers. Second, the Braille format consumes a great deal of space. Outsourcing this service would reduce the amount of space required to effectively house the Regional Library. Third, the experience of other states in outsourcing this service has been good.

The second candidate for outsourcing is the distribution of talking books to readers. We are not suggesting contracting for readers' advisory services. The contract would cover retrieving materials from the shelves based on pull-slips provided, preparing materials for mailing, checking returned materials for damage, rewinding tapes as needed, and reshelving materials. The talking book fulfillment service can be compared to the fulfillment services provided for mail-order merchants. The contract would cover routine clerical functions and the management of these functions. Rhode Island currently contracts for these services; however, the Rhode Island contract goes beyond the clerical functions that are the target of the consultants' recommendations.

While it would be possible to contract for the warehousing of materials as well as for the labor involved in filling requests, the consultants believe that it would be wiser for the State of Georgia to house materials in a building owned or leased by the State on a long-term basis. This would provide the Regional Library with greater flexibility in the length of the contract awarded. The Library could then change contractors without the cost and downtime related to the major task of moving the talking book collection.

The consultants believe that fulfillment services should be centralized; i.e., the main collection for the state should be located in one place and the bulk of materials should be sent to patrons throughout the state from this single location. While subregional facilities might maintain basic collections to meet the immediate needs of new users, the centralization of this function would serve to relieve
subregional host libraries of the burden of providing a large amount of space to house the collection and would free talking book center managers to concentrate on readers' advisory and outreach services.

Most subregionals in Georgia do very little "walk-in" business. The vast majority of materials are mailed. Although mailing from a centralized facility could delay some shipments by a day, in some other areas, service might actually be faster. This is because some materials go from the post office in the subregional's host community to another sorting center before being delivered to the patron.

Outsourcing machine fulfillment and repair is a slightly different matter. The consultants do not believe that a contract with a commercial entity for machine repair would be cost effective. This is because the majority of machine repair is currently performed by volunteers.

However, we do believe that the State of Georgia could benefit from the centralization of repair, cleaning, and shipping functions. Furthermore, we believe that some organizations, including correctional facilities and sheltered workshops might be interested in bidding on this function.

Another approach might be to contract for volunteer management services. For example, a subregional library might agree to recruit, train and manage a corps of volunteers who would repair, clean, and distribute machines to individuals and/or to subregional libraries. Of the three services recommended for outsourcing, machine maintenance and lending is least likely to generate significant savings.

Regardless of whether machine service is outsourced, the consultants believe that it should be centralized. Florida successfully employs a centralized machine lending strategy. Centralizing the machine lending function within the Regional Library would also provide justification for the hiring of a volunteer coordinator who could recruit, train, and manage other volunteers, potentially volunteers who could record materials of regional, state or local interest.

While we do not make a specific recommendation for the outsourcing of the local recording function, it is clear that
Georgia is deficient in the production of local materials. The State of Georgia could explore contracting with another state, with a subregional library, or with a commercial entity to produce local recordings.

c) Examine and analyze the number of subregional libraries currently providing service in Georgia. What are the benefits and drawbacks of increasing, or decreasing the number of subregional libraries in Georgia? If a new model is proposed, where would the geographical boundaries be for the regions?

The information presented on pages 62 - 64 of the Background Report points out the fact that Georgia is quite unusual in maintaining thirteen subregional libraries. In fact, Georgia has more subregionals than any other state. Georgia is also quite unusual in that subregional libraries provide primary NLS service to the majority of the state.

Although it would appear on the surface that reducing the number of subregional libraries might generate some cost savings without substantially harming the level of service, the consultants are of the opinion that such a reduction would be a mistake. In our minds, the major benefits of subregional libraries is their ability to offer more personalized service and to be more effective in reaching out to individuals with disabilities, to advocacy/support organizations, and to public libraries in their service area.

Georgia has the largest number of subregionals, but its subregionals also serve some of the largest geographic areas covered by subregional libraries. A reduction and realignment of subregionals would result in an increase in the size of service areas. This would reduce the ability of subregionals to offer the very personalized service and outreach service that is their strength.

The consultants believe that a centralized Regional Library or a Regional Library that serves the majority of the state with subregionals that serve relatively small territories in a few major metropolitan areas (a model employed in a number of states) would result in better service than a network composed of six or eight subregionals covering the entire state.
The Request for Proposal also asks the consultants to comment on the idea of having a larger number of subregional libraries. While we believe that the cost of operating subregional libraries speaks against expanding the number of subregionals, the idea of providing more localized service is an attractive one that deserves some attention.

We cannot support the creation of additional subregional libraries in Georgia; however, we believe that it is possible to "localize" some NLS services by involving local public libraries in the readers' advisory function. As was stated in section 11.a., a sophisticated shared online circulation system and extensive staff training would be required to make this approach practical. In addition to providing far more NLS-eligible individuals with truly local service, this approach would also have the positive effect of increasing the contact between local library staff and people with disabilities. This, in turn, might result in greater sensitivity to the library needs of people with disabilities and the development of focused services to address those needs.

d) Identify the costs and space requirements involved in centralizing LBPH service.

The ASCLA/NLS Standards document provides guidelines for facilities. They call for a variety of staff work spaces, storage areas for materials and equipment, a shipping and receiving area, and so forth. While the consultants have generally followed the guidelines in determining the space for a centralized Regional Library facility, we believe that the ASCLA/NLS guidelines are somewhat dated, and therefore, inflated. While certain office and clerical functions do consume a considerable amount of space, modern modular office systems can be designed in efficient configurations that do not require the 125 - 150 sq. ft. per person that are called for in the guidelines.

The guidelines also fail to mention the use of high density shelving. While high-density compact shelving is not appropriate for the entire Regional Library collection, it makes a great deal of sense for the storage of older editions of talking books that are in less demand, archival copies, and so forth.
Following then is the consultants' calculation of the space required to provide NLS service to all of Georgia from a central facility.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reception Area</td>
<td>200 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Room</td>
<td>400 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director's Office</td>
<td>250 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian's, Readers' Advisors and Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/Paraprofessional Staff Workspaces</td>
<td>2,479 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical/Technical Staff Workspace</td>
<td>1,854 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Workspace</td>
<td>1,000 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording, Tape Duplication And Storage</td>
<td>600 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipping and Receiving</td>
<td>1,250 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment and Supply Storage</td>
<td>800 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment Repair Area</td>
<td>500 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference Room</td>
<td>500 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Lounge</td>
<td>300 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,133 s.f.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Book Stacks</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,000 s.f.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20,133 s.f.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cost of facilities will depend greatly on where the facility is located. If the vast majority of talking book fulfillment service was centralized, the Regional Library would not have to be in Atlanta.

In addition to variations in cost per square foot based on location, warehousing space for book stacks is likely to be at a different rate than fully finished office space. For purposes of estimating facilities cost for the models presented in section 10, we have estimated an aggregate rental rate of $10 per square foot per year. Therefore, the cost estimate for renting the centralized facility of approximately 20,000 square feet described above is $200,000 per year.

Our calculations for a Regional Facility under either of the other two models envision a facility of approximately 15,000 square feet at an aggregate of $10 per square foot per year.
If Georgia decided to build a new facility to house a centralized Regional Library, it might anticipate spending somewhere between $2,500,000 and $4,000,000 on the facility.

12. **Recommend three (3) models of service to special needs populations, including justifications based on cost, effectiveness, and impact on customers.**

The consultants believe that all three models presented in section 10 of this report could be implemented in a way that would improve library services to all special needs populations while ensuring the provision of high quality NLS service.

It is our opinion that the model referred to as the centralized fulfillment/decentralized readers' advisory and outreach model offers the greatest potential for improving service to people with disabilities who are not eligible for NLS service. While the approach is the most costly of the three models, it alone provides a full-time specialist in services to people with disabilities in fourteen areas of the state. The presence of staff at the subregional level that would be able to devote a significant amount of their time to outreach efforts has great potential.

Time spent working with individuals with disabilities, organizations that provide support and advocacy services, and with public libraries is likely to produce greater awareness of libraries among people with disabilities and the organizations that work with them. This arrangement is also likely to make local library staff more aware of the library and information needs of individuals with disabilities in their communities.

The model referred to as the decentralized model is, in the opinion of the consultants, somewhat less effective in reaching people with disabilities that do not qualify them for NLS services. While a few of the outstanding subregional libraries have demonstrated that it is possible for subregionals to provide a broader array of services, the demands of meeting the needs of NLS patrons tends to overwhelm efforts to reach out to others.
Even the subregionals that do an exceptional job of offering high-quality walk-in services to people with a variety of disabilities generally fall short in their efforts to raise awareness among the public libraries in their service areas. This is why the consultants believe that the previous model, which frees subregional staff to do more in the way of outreach is preferable.

The centralized model has the least potential of the three for meeting the library and information needs of people with non-NLS disabilities. However, this model could work if the staff included several outreach workers with statewide responsibilities. The addition of this staff (which exceeds what is specified in the ASCLA/NLS Standards) is practical given the fact that the centralized model achieves some economies of scale in providing core NLS services.

13. **Recommend three (3) models for providing NLS network service, including justifications based on cost, effectiveness, and impact on customers.**

The consultants believe that all three models presented in section 10 of this report could be implemented in a way that ensures that high quality NLS services are available to all Georgians who are eligible.

Again, the consultants believe that the option referred to as the centralized fulfillment/decentralized readers' advisory and outreach holds the greatest promise for achieving excellence. It is, however, also the most expensive of the three options.

This model achieves some efficiencies and economies of scale by centralizing routine processes. In turn, these savings are invested in a higher level of outreach and readers' advisory at the local level.

The centralized/decentralized structure frees subregional staff from the routine functions of filling requests, inspecting and repairing tapes, and reshelving materials. This makes staff available to handle readers' advisory and outreach functions. The talking book center managers would be expected to spend a significant portion of their time working with individuals and groups in the communities and counties in their service area. The
expected result would be the identification of additional NLS eligible individuals as well as better relationships with organizations, including public libraries, that provide referrals to the program.

In the consultants' opinion, the decentralized model is the second best option if Regional Library staffing is increased enough to allow it to carry out its statewide planning, coordination, and training functions. This additional staff would enable the Regional Library to assist and work with the subregionals in the development of long-range plans and marketing plans aimed at identifying potential NLS users and creating greater public awareness of the NLS program.

Several of the current subregionals have demonstrated their ability to offer quality core services and outreach services. Most of the subregional libraries that have succeeded in this juggling act have done so because they have received good support from their host library. The budget that is provided for the decentralized model assumes a level of state funding sufficient to carry out both core services and outreach service at a reasonable level.

Numerous states have demonstrated that it is possible to provide quality NLS services using the centralized model. However, given Georgia's poor support of its Regional Library, the consultants wish to make it clear that quality service is only possible under the centralized model if adequate staffing is provided. The consultants recommend staffing based on the NLS guidelines plus two additional full-time professional outreach positions.

Job descriptions for the workers filling the outreach positions would include the expectation that much of the work week would be spent "in the field." The jobs would include responsibilities related to both NLS-qualified and non-NLS qualified individuals with disabilities. The centralized option, while probably the least effective of the three models presented, would also be the least expensive to implement.
14. Identify training needs for network staff in Georgia.

Training is addressed on pages 141-149 of the Background Report. Some additional information on training needs is provided below.

Because most of the staff members at the Regional Library have been in their positions for a relatively short period of time, most of their specific training has been very basic and has been related to what they need to know to do their jobs. However, as the Regional Library staffing has become somewhat more stable, some additional training opportunities have been made available to them.

Field trips to other agencies such as the Center for the Visually Impaired to learn about sighted guide training and eye diseases have recently been conducted. Similar field trips with other organizations and more direct involvement of staff with NLS activities are planned.

Several subregional librarians/talking book center managers have been quite active in NLS activities and have attended regional conferences. Whenever possible, such field trips and in-service programs need to be opened to subregional staff as well. Other training needs are listed on pp. 144-146 of the Background Report.

15. Identify training needs for other public library staff not currently associated with LBPH service.

Training for public library staff not directly associated with NLS service is addressed on pages 146-148 of the Background Report.

16. Recommend methods for increasing the sensitivity of other public library patrons toward people with disabilities.

Increasing the sensitivity of other public library patrons is addressed on page 149 of the Background Report.
17. **Identify attitudinal barriers limiting the provision of public library services to persons with disabilities in Georgia. Recommend models of service from other states.**

Attitudinal barriers limiting the provision of public library services to persons with disabilities are addressed on pages 150-152 of the Background Report. Programs in Florida and Massachusetts were identified as potential models for Georgia to emulate in addressing attitudinal barriers. In both of these states the state library agency assumed responsibility for coordinating a program of staff training and development in providing library services to people with disabilities. The consultants recommend that Georgia follow the general outline and approach used by both Florida and Massachusetts.

First of all, these states assumed responsibility for addressing the issue on a statewide basis, but did so in the framework of preparing staff at the local library level. Georgia's recent emphasis on continuing education and training can and should integrate content related to services to individuals with disabilities.

The Florida Regional Library has also worked closely with the Florida Library Association to provide training for staff in providing service to people with disabilities. The replication of this model might also be a viable approach for OPLS.

Massachusetts took a different approach in emphasizing library planning that includes services to people with disabilities. The facet of this approach that is exceedingly important is that in planning to serve a targeted population, such as people with disabilities, a library must consider not only how it will provide a service, but also how it will get the targeted population to use the service, or how it will market the service. Georgia lacks a statewide marketing plan for services to people with disabling conditions. Such a plan is badly needed.

The consultants believe that Georgia should create its own model of service to people with disabilities by building on the approaches used in Florida and Massachusetts. It should address the issue on a statewide basis by assigning responsibility for addressing training issues to a person within the Regional Library. While this could be the
Regional Librarian, more staff would be required if she is expected to provide the needed leadership, encouragement, and coordination. At the minimum, one additional professional position is necessary at the Regional Library if there is to be any hope of the Regional Library assuming this role.

As part of this leadership and coordination, the Regional Library needs to encourage the participation of representatives of consumer and advocacy groups in training sessions. The Regional Library also needs to work with those responsible for training within OPLS and with the library community to develop programs that prepare library staff to work with people with disabilities.

Finally, the Regional Library needs to be active with the subregionals and with the public libraries of the State in an effort to develop a model public relations program, including a marketing plan, that is directed toward raising the visibility of library services to people with disabilities and to support and advocacy organizations.

PATRON SERVICES

18. Review and analyze reasons why eligible Georgians are not using the NLS program.

Pages 153 – 156 of the Background Report provide a review and analysis of reasons why eligible Georgians do not use the NLS program.

19. Review and analyze reasons why current NLS network patrons do or do not use their local public libraries.

Pages 157 – 159 of the Background Report provide a review and analysis of why current NLS network patrons do or do not use their local public libraries.

20. Review and analyze reasons why Georgians with non-NLS disabilities do or do not use public libraries.

Pages 159 – 161 of the Background Report provide a review and analysis of some of the reasons why Georgians with non-NLS disabilities do or do not use public libraries.
21. Which patron needs are being met by current services on both the Regional and subregional level? Which needs are not?

A discussion of the patron needs that are and are not being met by the Regional Library and by the thirteen subregional libraries can be found on pages 161 – 162 of the Background Report.

In addition to the needs addressed in that section, the consultants wish to point out the fact that Georgia’s program of producing recordings of local and regional interest is very weak. While some of the subregionals do an outstanding job of recording local newspapers, many books by Southern and Georgia authors are not available through NLS. Many of these books that have a local focus or distribution in print are not available as commercial books on tape either. This leaves talking book users with little opportunity to enjoy materials that they may well find interesting and enjoyable.

22. Collect and analyze the patron satisfaction level with services offered by network libraries in Georgia.

Pages 162 – 163 of the Background Report contain a brief overview of focus groups and telephone interviews that were held with network patrons. The focus groups and interviews reveal a high level of satisfaction among users. Users were most critical of what was or wasn’t selected by NLS for recording and with certain narrators.

Patrons were most pleased with the personal attention and with the relationships they were able to develop with Regional Library and subregional library staff providing readers’ advisory service.

23. Identify whether patrons feel they have a voice in the type and quality of service they receive. Collect and analyze the opinions of disabled persons about their local public library. Identify reasons why they do not use their public library. Recommend corrective actions.
Most of the NLS users that attended focus groups or that were contacted by telephone had some understanding that the Federal government was involved in the program. Most also understood that there was a connection between the subregional library and a local public library. Their understanding of the involvement of the State of Georgia or the mechanism that funds subregionals was minimal.

It is the opinion of the consultants that many users simply accept the program as it is and do not feel empowered to influence change. However, there were generally a few individuals in each focus group who did feel that they could have a voice in the type and quality of service they receive. In a few instances, some of the focus group participants knew each other and had attended sessions sponsored by their subregional library in the past. These participants seemed more likely to offer concrete recommendations for improvements both for NLS services and for other services.

This points out an important factor related to patron advisory committees and/or user forums. People who aren’t exactly sure how things work are sometimes hesitant to criticize or to offer their honest opinions for fear of appearing uninformed. Those who develop an understanding of the program are both better able and more likely to offer informed opinions for improvements. The consultants strongly recommend that the Regional Library and all subregionals establish patron advisory committees or at least launch an effort to hold periodic user forums.

The consultants also conducted several focus groups with individuals with disabilities who are not NLS users and conducted a sizeable number of telephone interviews with representatives of advocacy and service organizations that work with individuals with disabilities. Several of those interviewed brought their perspectives both as individuals with disabilities and as professionals working with individuals with disabilities.

Many of the reasons that people with disabilities do not use local public libraries are exactly the same as the reasons that prevent the general population from using libraries. Some people simply do not want to use the library or perceive that the library has nothing that is relevant or useful to them. Other people with disabilities, like their friends and neighbors, get their information and
recreational reading materials from other sources. Another common reason that both people with disabilities and the general population avoid libraries is that they are intimidated by either the facility or the institution. The source of this intimidation can range from a bad childhood experience to imposing architecture.

While many people with disabilities are quite mobile, as a group, they are more likely than the general population to have mobility limitations.

Public libraries wishing to attract all types of users must confront these issues. Both intimidation and the false notion that the library has nothing of relevance are best defeated by familiarity. Getting people into the library facility and helping them get familiar with the resources, equipment, and facilities is a major step in the right direction. Participants in one of the non-NLS user focus groups suggested a "peer-counseling" approach. Under this approach the library might schedule specific times when people with disabilities could get a tour and instruction in using the library from one of their peers. Libraries should attempt to recruit employees and/or volunteers with disabilities to assist with this task.

Libraries also need to be cognizant of the mobility problems. Making services available remotely via the telephone or Internet is a step in the right direction. Libraries should design special highly accessible web pages for people with disabilities.

24. **Recommend new services which the Regional and subregional libraries, as well as all Georgia public library facilities, should consider offering.**

Some of the most important "new services" that libraries should consider offering have more to do with public awareness and familiarity with existing services than with launching new efforts. Offering special orientation sessions for people with disabilities using the peer counseling approach is a critical step in the right direction. Making sure that the library has resources that are both relevant to individuals with disabilities and accessible to them is also of critical importance. Offering accessible remote services to individuals who are unable or find it difficult to go to the library is a third "new" service.
a) What other agencies/organizations can best provide these services?

Public libraries need to build better relationships with organizations that serve people with disabilities in their communities. The consultants believe that the Regional Library should be the focal point for a major web-site that links organizations serving people with disabilities. The consultants identified over 100 Georgia-based web sites relevant to people with a variety of disabling conditions. No single Georgia web-site was located that had anywhere near this number of relevant links.

As in most states, organizations serving people with disabilities are generally rather narrow in scope, i.e., they concentrate on a specific disability or on a particular group of individuals. By building the major web resource serving Georgians with disabilities, Georgia's libraries can develop partnerships to expand and extend their service offerings.

The specific agencies with which libraries should partner will vary from locale to locale. In some instances, a close alliance with the United Way as an umbrella organization may serve a library well in its efforts to serve people with disabilities. In other instances, specific alliances may be the most fruitful. For example, those communities that are served by an Independent Living organization may find that it can be the source of finding employees and/or volunteers to serve as peer counselors. Other communities that are home to a major organization or institution that serves people with disabilities may find that an alliance with this organization makes the most sense.

The consultants believe that the Regional Library should be playing a role in helping individual libraries develop a service and marketing plan that addresses the needs of people with disabilities.

b) How can public libraries dovetail with these other agencies to provide service to all individuals with disabilities?
Perhaps the greatest failure of Georgia's public libraries has been in adopting a "build it and they will come" philosophy. Libraries need to become more aggressive and more persistent in pursuing community contacts. The development of the local service and marketing plan would be a major step in the right direction. Such a plan would identify organizations to contact (or at least a method of determining what organizations to contact), a specific message to that organization (e.g., "we need help" or "we can offer help" or "how can we help?"), and a specific plan for follow-up.

DEMOGRAPHICS

25. Analyze the demographics of Georgia and identify the number of residents with disabilities, in the state and by individual county.

The majority of the content on pages 3 - 61 of the Background Report deals with the demographics of disabilities both nationally and in Georgia.

a) What percent of Georgia's population is eligible for NLS service?

While pages 3 - 61 of the Background Report provide specifics on eligible populations, the overall percentage of Georgians eligible for NLS services is likely a slight bit below the 1.4% national estimate used by NLS. This is because there is a very close correlation between the types of disabilities that qualify individuals for the NLS program and age. Georgia's elderly population is slightly below the national average. However, the disparity between Georgia's aging population and the national figure is small enough to make the NLS figure of 1.4% usable.

b) What percentage of eligible Georgian's is currently using the NLS service?

The consultants estimate that 13.3% of Georgia's eligible NLS users are currently registered for the service. Some additional eligible individuals receive some service through deposit collections but may not be registered.
c) What percentage of Georgia's population has some type of disability? What percentage is elderly?

The consultants estimate that 9.1% or approximately 473,000 people in Georgia's work age population (ages 15 - 64) have either a work disability or a mobility limitation. Approximately 9.68% of Georgia's total population (or about 745,000 individuals) is over the age of 65.