

# Georgia Public Library Standards

## Introduction

The mission of Georgia's Public Libraries is to provide organized access to information and services for the people of Georgia in order to meet their educational, informational, recreational and cultural needs. The Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) provides resources for public libraries to meet the mission of providing excellence in library services to the citizens of Georgia.

Public library standards are specific criteria by which public libraries can be measured and evaluated. Such standards represent objective, observable measures that indicate the parameters of optimal, full, or essential library service.

Some qualities of library service are difficult to measure because many intangible elements are involved. To be sure, not all the elements of library service are objective; and while their effects may be observable, the actual evaluation of such elements would be very difficult and would be, ultimately, subjective. The evaluation of such elements is left to the management of each library entity.

This document was based largely on the Standards document resulting from the work of the 2000 Planning and Evaluation Committee. The current document eliminates items which are required by law or required by the Georgia Public Library Annual Report and the annual Application for State Aid. It includes, insofar as possible, only objective, observable elements so that the process of applying standards can be as fair as possible. Standards listed herein are to be applied at the Library System level.

The current Standards Committee met on March 31, 2005, June 6, 2005, August 23, 2005 and January 4, 2006 to develop this draft document. Expressed goals for a Standards document were:

- An expression of goals that represent an increase in quality of services;
- A tool to help increase funding, support and awareness;
- A document that commands respect and compels compliance;
- A document that is readable for Trustees and funding authority(ies).

This document is presented in two sections. **Operating Service Standards** are meant as internal tools for Library Directors and staff. **Primary Service Standards** are intended as a document to be shared with legislators and other funding sources to highlight the standards that all libraries are striving to meet.

*Georgia Public Library Standards* are an essential tool for meaningful library evaluation and measurement. They should be beneficial to all Georgia public libraries and the people they serve.

### **2005 GPLS Standards Committee**

Dusty Gres, Ochopee Regional Library System, co-chair  
Gail Rogers, Cobb County Library System, co-chair  
Judy Golden, Houston County Library System  
Lyn Hopper, Chestatee Regional Library System  
Claire Leavy, Lee County Library System  
Claudya Muller, Chattahoochee Valley Regional Library System  
Emerson Murphy, Northeast Georgia Regional Library System  
Nancy Ray, Piedmont Regional Library System  
Lisa Rigsby, DeSoto Trail Regional Library System  
Richard Sanders, Hart County Library System  
Emory Smith, Satilla Regional Library System  
Darro Willey, DeKalb County Library System  
Julie Walker, GPLS liaison

# Operating Service Standards

## Administration

1. The library has a written plan.
  - The plan contains a mission statement which describes the library's purposes in the community.
  - The plan shows goals to be achieved over a period not to exceed five years, and outlines specific actions to achieve the goals.
  - The plan is reviewed, revised and updated annually by the Library Board and Library Director; an evaluation of the library's progress towards the plan's goals, objectives, and timetable is included in the review.
2. The library conducts a community study at least every five years as part of its planning efforts. (New Planning for Results: A Streamlined Approach may be used as a resource.) Elements which should be included are: degree of community awareness of library services; community information needs and wants; demographic analysis; and provision for community input.
3. The Library Director provides financial and statistical reports for review at Library Board meetings and communicates to Board members on matters that affect policy.
4. The Library Director and/or other Board members conduct an orientation program for each new Board member.
5. A minimum operating contingency of 1/12 of the library's annual budget should be kept in reserve by the library or its funding agency(ies) at all times.

## Staffing

6. The library has a permanent, paid Director who meets the State of Georgia certification requirements. All librarians must meet State of Georgia certification requirements.
7. The library has adopted personnel policies outlining the conditions and requirements of employment of library staff; these policies are

consistent with state and federal regulations, are reviewed at least every three years, and are made available to all staff members.

8. The library has a written personnel classification plan with salary ranges for each position and written job descriptions listing the duties of each position, including any educational and experience requirements.
9. Employee performance is evaluated regularly based on the components in the job description.
10. The library provides opportunities for continuing education for its Director and staff in an amount equivalent to specified percentages of gross payroll. Travel costs and library-sponsored staff development programs are included in this measure.

Essential	Full	Optimal
.75%	1%	2%

### **Collection Development/Evaluation**

11. The library has a written board-approved collection development policy, based on community needs, that includes criteria for materials selection, requests for reconsideration of materials, collection specialties and purchase priorities, evaluation, and weeding of the collection.
12. Allowing for local conditions consistent with library collection development policy, and excepting special and research collections, a general guideline is that 3% or more of the library's collection is withdrawn each year to keep the collection current.

### **Public Services and Circulation Services**

13. The library provides without charge an initial library card to any resident of the service area.
14. Every library has a written circulation policy.
15. The library participates in regional and state-coordinated interlibrary loan and resource sharing for circulation and reference services.
16. The library provides for return of materials to any affiliated library.

- 17. The library has a system for reserving/holding items that are not currently available in the branch.
- 18. The library provides reference and readers advisory service to all patrons.
- 19. Alternatives to walk-in service are offered and the effectiveness evaluated yearly. These can include but are not limited to bookmobile, phone/e-mail reference, homebound delivery, deposit collections, and remote access.
- 20. The library provides programming for children and adults appropriate to the mission of the library.

**Technology Services**

- 21. The library will expand accessibility to library programs for the sight and hearing impaired through the provision of appropriately trained staff and assistive software or devices.
- 22. Each library facility will provide free public access to GALILEO and other resources of the Internet.
- 23. The library will provide public access computers as follows:

Essential	Full	Optimal
1/2000 population	1/1500 population	1/1000 population

- 24. The library system will employ, contract or have access to hardware and software technical support equivalent to at least one FTE per 75 computers. Such support staff shall be proficient in such areas as hardware and software support, network maintenance and support, and web design, as dictated by the needs of the library system.

**Access and Facilities**

- 25. The Library Board adopts policies which strive to comply with the ideals of the profession and the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

**26.** Library service is offered at a geographic location requiring no more than 15 minutes travel time (one way) in densely populated urban areas and 30 minutes (one way) elsewhere.

**27.** Library hours are fixed, posted, and include morning, afternoon, evening, and weekend hours based on users' and potential users' disposable time. One library in the system must be open at least one evening a week (until at least 8pm) to satisfy this measure. Minimum days and hours of service for a library system are as follows, with consideration always given to weekend and evening hours. At least one library per library system must be open:

Essential	Full	Optimal
40 hours	55 hours	72 hours

## **Primary Service Standards**

### **Governance**

- 1.** The library is established in accordance with the provisions in the Official Code of Georgia.
- 2.** Each library system must have a governing board of trustees. There may be affiliated boards of trustees for member libraries.
- 3.** The county Library Board of Trustees exercises authority in a county system and includes at least one appointed representative from each local governmental agency financially supporting the library.
- 4.** The Regional Library Board of Trustees exercises final authority in a multi-county system. This board consists of trustees serving on member-county library boards who are appointed by each county library board of trustees according to the Constitution and Bylaws of the library system.
- 5.** In a regional library system, county Boards of Trustees serve as an advisor to the regional library Board of Trustees, suggesting policies and programs, preparing budget reports and requests and acting as representatives to the local governing officials in cooperation with the regional Library Board of Trustees.
- 6.** All Library Boards of Trustees must approve and review, at least every three years, a written local Constitution and Bylaws document that outlines its purpose and Board operational procedures.
- 7.** The Constitution and Bylaws must be on file at the Georgia Public Library Service and all amendments must be filed immediately after adoption.
- 8.** The Library Board with ultimate authority is responsible for setting policies under which the Director administers the library. The study, development and evaluation of policies are the responsibility of the Director and staff in conjunction with the Board. The policies are reviewed at least every three years.
- 9.** The Library Board of Trustees with ultimate authority is legally responsible for policy-making in areas such as budgets, personnel, and contracts as is specified by the Official Code of Georgia.

- 10.** All Library Boards make annual and other reports to their funding agency (ies) and to the Board with ultimate authority, which submits all required reports to the Georgia Public Library Service.
- 11.** The library Board of Trustees with ultimate authority shall meet at least four times per year with the Library Director or the Director's representative in attendance.
- 12.** All meetings should be conducted under the Georgia Public and Open Meetings law. (GA Code Annotated, Title 50, Chapter 14).
- 13.** The Library Director is responsible for personnel administration and all day-to-day operations of the library system.
- 14.** When filling all staff vacancies (including that of the Library Director), the Director, the staff, the governing Board or a committee appointed by that governing Board conducts a legal and open search process.
- 15.** The Library Board, Director and staff comply with the Official Code of Georgia and all other state, federal, or local laws and regulations which pertain to public libraries and their operations.
- 16.** The Library Board reviews and adopts an annual budget, which has been developed by the Library Director with input from the library staff.
- 17.** The library receives financial support from its funding authority(ies) sufficient to achieve the essential level of service in accordance with its plan and the standards in this document.
- 18.** The public library is supported by funds from local governments on a permanent basis; special grants and donations supplement, but do not supplant, the responsibility of the local funding authority to support the library.
- 19.** The library system employs public service staff in proportion to population as detailed in the table below. Population density per library system is considered in determining the appropriate standard. Staff numbers refer to full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. Forty hours per week constitutes one FTE. Additional staff may be required according to the service responses the library chooses. Libraries with specialized collections and/or services, or those serving populations with unique needs, may also require additional staff.

**Staffing Standards**

	Essential Level Staff per 1000 pop.	Full Level Staff per 1000 pop.	Optimal Level Staff per 1000 pop.
1000+ persons per sq mile	.5	.6	.65
250 - 1000 persons per sq mile	.45	.55	.6
50 - 250 persons per sq. mile	.4	.5	.55
Under 50 persons per sq. mile	.35	.45	.5

**MLS to Support Staff Ratio**

	Essential Level	Full Level	Optimal Level
Under 100 persons per sq. mile	1 to 4	1 to 3	1 to 2
Over 100 persons per sq. mile	1 to 3	1 to 2	1 to 1.5

**20.** The library spends a minimum of twelve percent (12%) of its total annual budget (as reported in the Georgia Public Library Annual Report/Application for State Aid) on materials.

Essential	Full	Optimal
12%	16%	20%

**21.** The library maintains a current, thoroughly-weeded collection of materials appropriate to community demand. The library strives to meet or exceed national averages for volumes per capita as reported the Public Library Data Service, published by the Public Library Association.

**22.** The library maintains a collection of current periodicals appropriate to community demand.

## **Physical Facilities**

\*\*Standards developed by the Construction Committee will be inserted here.

The building is clean, safe, uncluttered and easy for all to use.

