

# Georgia Public Library Standards - 2015

## 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 people 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 minimal, essential or optimal 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 and the Standards Committee that met on March 31, 2005, June 6, 2005, August 23, 2005, and January 4, 2006. The current document omits items that 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 Standards Committee met on February 29, 2012, and March 21, 2012 to develop this draft document. This document was revised by RPLAC, December 2014, and further in March of 2015.

This document is presented in three 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. **Physical Facility Standards** are intended for both library directors and staff and legislators and other funding sources to highlight the standards that all libraries strive to meet with regard to physical buildings.

*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.

# Operating Service Standards

## A. Administration

1. The Library operates under a strategic plan.
  - The plan contains a mission statement that describes the library's purposes in the community.
  - The plan shows goals to be achieved over a period not to exceed three years and outlines specific actions to achieve the goals.
  - The plan is reviewed, revised and updated annually by the governing library board of trustees and library director; an evaluation of the library's progress toward the plan's goals, objectives and timetable is included in the review.
  - The library conducts or uses a community study as part of its planning efforts. For current best practices, consult GPLS.
2. The library director provides financial and statistical reports for review at governing library board of trustees meetings and communicates to board members on matters that affect policy.
3. The library director and/or other governing library board of trustees' members conduct an orientation program for each new Board member.
4. A minimum of one month's expenses should be kept in reserve by the library or its funding agency(ies) at all times.

## B. Staffing

5. The library has a permanent, paid director who meets the state of Georgia certification requirements. All librarians must meet state of Georgia certification requirements. An interim or acting director must also meet state of Georgia certification requirements.
6. 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.
7. The library has a written personnel classification plan with a starting salary for each position and written job descriptions listing the duties of each position, including any educational and experience requirements. These are reviewed at least every three years.

8. Employee performance is reviewed at least annually based on the components in the job description.
9. Each library staff member is required to attend training that meets continuing education needs.

Minimal	Essential	Optimal
10 hours annually	20 hours annually	40 hours annually

### **C. Collection Development/Evaluation**

10. The library has a written board-approved collection development policy, based on community needs, that includes criteria for materials and electronic formats selection, requests for reconsideration of materials including electronic formats, collection specialties and purchase priorities, evaluation, and weeding of the collection. This policy will be reviewed at least every three years and made available to all staff members and the public.
11. Allowing for local conditions consistent with library collection development policy, and excepting special and research collections, a general guideline to keep the collection current is that three percent or more of the library's collection is withdrawn each year.

### **D. Public Services and Circulation Services**

12. The library provides without charge an initial library card to any resident of the service area.
13. Every library system has a written circulation policy that will be reviewed at least every three years.
14. The library participates in regional and state-coordinated interlibrary loan and resource sharing for circulation and reference services.
15. The library has a system for reserving/holding items that are not currently available.
16. The library provides reference and readers' advisory service to all patrons.
17. The library provides help for people requiring appropriate assistance with computer tasks including online applications and one-on-one computer assistance.

18. Alternatives to walk-in service are offered, and their effectiveness is evaluated at least annually. These services can include but are not limited to bookmobile, phone/email reference, homebound delivery, deposit collections and remote access. Services for those with print impairments are also offered and evaluated annually or more frequently if necessary.
19. The library provides on-site and off-site programming for children, teens and adults appropriate to the mission of the library.
20. The library will expand accessibility to library programs for those with disabilities through the provision of trained staff and access to assistive software or devices.

## **E. Technology Services**

21. Each library facility will provide free public access to GALILEO and other resources of the Internet.
22. Each library will have the minimum essential bandwidth needed to conduct business and provide public access computing as follows:
  - Broadband equaling-10 Mbps is the minimum standard for business traffic – ILS, patron transactions, financial reports and all data moving across the network to conduct the business of the library.
  - Each library building should offer the following asynchronous bandwidth for public internet access, with a plan for an annual upgrade to match customer demand:

Minimal	Essential	Optimal
20 Mbps download / 5 Mbps upload	50Mbps download / 10 Mbps upload	100Mbps download / 15 Mbps upload

Every library is a wireless hotspot, with the ability to gather appropriate metrics and filter for content.

23. The library provides public access computers, devices and the minimum bandwidth needed to conduct business and provide public access computing, evaluated annually. Library-provided hardware should encompass:
  - Devices with productivity software suites
  - Devices for Internet access
  - Devices for OPAC/library resource access only
  - Devices for children’s resources only

The library will provide public access computing capacity as follows:

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

24. The library will follow a computer replacement plan as follows:

Minimal	Essential	Optimal
5 years	4 years	3 years

25. The library will support virtual services according to its community's needs. All services should be made accessible to those with print and other impairments.

26. All library-provided hardware will have centralized URL filtering that enables the library to comply with the provisions of the Children's Internet Protection Act.

27. The library system will employ, contract or have access to hardware and software technical support for local area network, library-owned equipment, bandwidth management, traffic-shaping, and filtering at the following minimum levels:

- Small systems (under 50,000 population served) – 1 FTE
- Medium systems (50,000-100,000 population served) – 2 FTE
- Large systems (over 100,000 population served) – 3 FTE

## **F. Access and Facilities**

28. The governing library board adopts policies that strive to comply with the ideals of the profession and the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.

## 29. Levels of Library Service

### a. **A Member or Branch Library:**

- is open 30 or more regularly scheduled hours weekly
- has paid library staff
- has an organized collection of library materials accessible through an on-site catalog
- is in separate quarters with defined space used solely for library purposes
- has a minimum of 1,000 gross square feet
- has a telephone on site that is not shared
- has minimum essential bandwidth needed to conduct business and provide public access computing
- has at least one computer dedicated to patron use

Member or branch libraries do not include administrative office buildings, service outlets, bookmobiles, separate meeting/classroom buildings, processing centers or warehouses. A member or branch library is eligible for state & federal grants.

### b. **A Library Service Outlet:**

- is open 15 – 29 hours weekly
- has paid library staff
- has an organized collection of library materials
- is in separate quarters with defined space used solely for library purposes
- has a telephone on site that is not shared
- has minimum essential bandwidth needed to conduct business and provide public access computing
- has at least one computer dedicated to patron use

### c. **A Book Deposit:**

- has no set hours of operation
- has no paid library staff
- has a rotating collection of materials and no on-site catalog
- has no telecommunications or limited/borrowed telecommunications access
- is located in a shared and/or borrowed space

If all criteria for a member or branch library, or a library service outlet, are not met, the facility is automatically classified as a book deposit.

30. Library hours are fixed, posted, and include morning, afternoon, evening and weekend hours based on users' and potential users' disposable time. One library in each county system must be open at least one evening a week (after 6:00 p.m.) and one weekend day 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:

Minimal	Essential	Optimal
40 hours	55 hours	72 hours

The library should provide virtual services that are available 24/7.

# 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 at a level defined by the governing board.
4. The regional library board of trustees exercises final authority as the governing board 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 advisers 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 governing library board of trustees 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 governing library board of trustees is legally responsible for policymaking 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 governing board, which submits all required reports to the Georgia Public Library Service.
11. The governing library board of trustees 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 Open Meetings Act (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-1).
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 designated hiring body, 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 that 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 a minimal, essential or optimal level of service in accordance with its mission, 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 library's strategic plan. Libraries with specialized collections and/or services, or those serving populations with unique needs, may require additional staff.

### Staffing Standards

Staff per population:	Minimal Level	Essential Level	Optimal Level
FTE per 1,000 population	.3	.4	.5

### System MLS to Support Staff Ratio

	Minimal Level	Essential Level	Optimal Level
Under 100 persons per square mile	1 to 4	1 to 3	1 to 2
Over 100 persons per square mile	1 to 3	1 to 2	1 to 1.5

20. The library spends a minimum of 10 percent of its total annual budget (as reported in the *Georgia Public Library Annual Report/Application for State Aid*) on materials. GPLS will convert to a per capita basis.

Minimal	Essential	Optimal
10%	13%	16%

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 circulations per capita and visits per capita as reported by the Public Library Data Service, published by the Public Library Association.

# Georgia Public Library 2012 - Physical Facility Standards

## Physical Facilities - The Building

Library facility standards are based on the library's mission statement and service goals. Major service factors to consider in developing a facility plan are: collection size, use of technology, adult and children's programming, seating, and meeting room space. One size or configuration does not fit all libraries. Architectural formulas (0.6 square feet per capita) for space allocation described in this section should be used to determine actual facility size and design. In addition, the following list should be utilized in developing a future facility plan or evaluating an existing facility so that the library will:

1. Comply with federal, state and local building codes, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) and the 2012 *Georgia Accessibility Code* <http://ada.georgia.gov/georgia-accessibility-code>
2. Have emergency manual and a disaster preparedness plan
3. The library ensures that all buildings have the required emergency facilities provided in accordance with the appropriate codes: fire alarms and extinguishers, emergency evacuation routes and exits
4. The library reviews the value and replacement cost of its buildings and their contents on a regular basis and either self-insures or purchases property and casualty insurance in an amount adequate to protect the library in the event of loss or damage to such property
5. Review existing and future facilities to provide a safe, secure environment
6. Have a plan and annual budget for the maintenance of building and grounds
7. Have convenient and adequate parking based on applicable building codes and anticipated usage
8. Have exterior signage identifying the facility as a library that is clearly visible from the street
9. Feature well designed signs and graphics including the display of the International Symbol of Accessibility, where appropriate
10. Sustainable design should be a part of every library building program so that the building can function efficiently without wasting energy during its lifetime. Incorporate changes to existing and future libraries to move toward sustainable

buildings by addressing environmental issues, e.g. conserving water, using recyclable materials

11. Have adequate provision for current electrical, data and telephone connections
12. Have controlled temperatures and humidity for the benefit of users and staff as well as the protection of library property
13. Have adequate interior and exterior lighting in all areas
14. Have an after-hours book return that is fireproof in a safe, well-lit area
15. Have furnishings and equipment adequate to the needs of users and staff
16. Have adequate space to meet its service, operation and storage needs
17. Have adequate noise control
18. Have meeting space available for library programming and for use by community groups, if such is a part of the library's plan
19. Be located and designed with input from all stakeholders, including users, staff, and governing officials, and provide accessibility to the greatest number of users
20. Review space needs assessment every five years.