

# 2018-2022 GLASS Strategic Plan

## Analysis and Plan Development

### Introduction

Georgia Libraries for Accessible Statewide Services (GLASS) is the state's talking book and braille library, a network library of the National Library Service for Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) program. GLASS serves eligible readers, those who are unable to access traditional printed materials for reading. GLASS is comprised of a regional library, one subregional library and the GLASS distribution center. GLASS libraries serve over 15,000 patrons in Georgia. Through its technology, programs and outreach efforts, GLASS strives to reach and positively impact the lives of more eligible readers in Georgia. We hope to achieve an outcome of engaging Georgians with print-impairment in a range of library activities that positively impact their lives in regards to leisure, entertainment, health, employment and civic engagement.

As GLASS staff worked to develop a strategic plan, many factors were evaluated. We began by looking at the mission of GLASS. We evaluated our role as a cooperating library in the NLS system. We considered the priorities of our funding agencies, the Institute of Museum and Library Services and, as a unit of Georgia Public Library Service, the State of Georgia. This document lists the key priorities of each of these agencies. We talked to our patrons and to our partners who provide public library services in Georgia. We used a formal approach to initiate conversations about how the talking book library can help a community meet its needs and fulfill its aspirations. We then looked at the environment in which our library operates, noting external factors that will influence how GLASS develops and delivers its services. Additionally, GLASS surveyed its customers in 2016 to assess customer satisfaction with the current level of services.

The culmination of this collection and data analysis lead to the plan to chart the path for GLASS over the next five years. The GLASS strategic

plan includes input from hundreds of people and consideration of numerous priorities.

GLASS has broken its essential functions into three program priorities:

**GLASS– The Library** --daily operations, planning, collection management, cartridge reproduction

**GLASS–Outreach**--the outreach program including the administrative-office based activities, newsletter, and social media

**GLASS–Promotion of Accessible Library Services**-- in all of Georgia’s libraries by staying alert to technologies and policies that can help patrons access all library services in Georgia’s public libraries.

## GLASS Mission/ Vision/ Values Statements

### Mission

GLASS supports accessible library services in Georgia by promoting the use of assistive technology and by providing accessible reading materials to those who, due to a disability, are unable to read standard print.

### Vision

Accessible books for every life, every reader, every day.

### Values

Service, Accessibility, Inclusion, Community

# Survey of External Environment

## Priorities of sponsoring agencies

### National Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS)

#### Program Initiatives

#### Short Term (1 to 3 years)

- BARD Express—software that will enable BARD patrons who have problems downloading and unzipping books to bypass that process. Expected to be released this summer.
- Duplication for Demand (D4D)—hardware that, when coupled with a library's circulation system, will enable libraries to readily duplicate titles for their patrons. Libraries will then be able to choose their level of participation as they move toward a shelf-less paradigm. Levels on the continuum will enable libraries to:
  - duplicate copies of digital talking books for which NLS has not provided a physical copy;
  - duplicate, when needed, copies of titles that are not available on their shelves (libraries maintain collections limited to the newest titles);
  - opt out of copy allotment for some new titles; or
  - no longer maintain a collection but provide service by duplicating all titles on demand.

Libraries will be invited to participate at any of the four levels identified above, but are not required to participate. More information regarding this project will be available in the fall of this year.

#### Medium Term (3 to 5 years)

- If NLS's authorizing legislation is amended to enable it to do so, NLS will pursue acquiring refreshable braille displays that it will lend to braille readers the way digital playback machines are now lent to audio readers. Braille books can then be produced on cartridge (the

way audiobooks are now being produced) and provided to libraries to serve braille readers. These braille readers will also have the opportunity to download braille books from BARD. Braille magazines would become part of the Magazine on Cartridge (MOC) program.

- NLS is in a position to acquire from publisher's electronic text (eText) of many titles now offered in print. Combining this text with Text-to-Speech (TTS) software, patrons could download a title not selected for recording by human voice. Conversely, this eText could also be coupled with a braille translation program to provide an electronic braille file of the book. (See refreshable braille displays above).

### Long Term (5+ years)

- NLS is beginning to develop its next generation of digital players. These players will have wireless capability, so a patron will be able to download a title directly from BARD to the player and a library will have the capability to "push" books to a patron's player.
- Parallel to the player development, NLS is investigating development of an infrastructure to support wireless delivery of books. What this will mean for network libraries is that physical collections will no longer be required once everyone in its service area has wireless capability. However, the other functions and roles of network libraries will become more important than ever.

The estimated timeline for these developments is three years to develop the new player and infrastructure, two years to disseminate, and another two years to fully implement.

These were the goals laid out at the conference. NLS plans to maintain a dialog with all stakeholders as these projects move forward to identify and resolve issues and concerns.

### Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Purpose per 20 U.S. Code § 9121

(1) to enhance coordination among Federal programs that relate to library and information services;

(2) to promote continuous improvement in library services in all types of libraries in order to better serve the people of the United States;

- (3) to facilitate access to resources in all types of libraries for the purpose of cultivating an educated and informed citizenry;
- (4) to encourage resource sharing among all types of libraries for the purpose of achieving economical and efficient delivery of library services to the public;
- (5) to promote literacy, education, and lifelong learning and to enhance and expand the services and resources provided by libraries, including those services and resources relating to workforce development, 21st century skills, and digital literacy skills;
- (6) to enhance the skills of the current library workforce and to recruit future professionals to the field of library and information services;
- (7) to ensure the preservation of knowledge and library collections in all formats and to enable libraries to serve their communities during disasters;
- (8) to enhance the role of libraries within the information infrastructure of the United States in order to support research, education, and innovation; and
- (9) to promote library services that provide users with access to information through national, State, local, regional, and international collaborations and networks.

**GLASS's goals, as unit of the State Library, must be aligned with the purposes and priorities of LSTA, as follows:**

- 1) expand services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats, in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages in order to support such individuals' needs for education, lifelong learning, workforce development, and digital literacy skills;
- 2) establish or enhance electronic and other linkages and improve coordination among and between libraries and entities, as described in 20 U.S.C. § 9134(b)(6), for the purpose of improving the quality of and access to library and information services;

- 3) (a) provide training and professional development, including continuing education, to enhance the skills of the current library workforce and leadership, and advance the delivery of library and information services, and (b) enhance efforts to recruit future professionals to the field of library and information services;
- 4) develop public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations;
- 5) target library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills;
- 6) target library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children (from birth through age 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with 42 U.S.C. § 9902(2)) applicable to a family of the size involved;
- 7) develop library services that provide all users access to information through local, State, regional, national, and international collaborations and networks; and
- 8) carry out other activities consistent with the purposes set forth in 20 U.S.C. § 9121, as described in the SLAA's plan. 20 U.S.C. § 9141(a)(1-8).

# Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) Priorities

## Empowering libraries to improve the lives of Georgians

### Key elements from the GPLS Strategic Plan

- Serve as trusted advisors to library community
- Develop a supportive community for Georgia's public libraries
- Ensure equal access to information and technology
- Foster a culture of learning statewide

### Objectives

- Serve as trusted advisors to library community
  - Provide leadership that facilitates and promotes excellence in library administration and in the professional expertise of librarians and other staff.
  - Provide professional consulting services to public library administrators, staff, trustees and Friends of libraries.
  - Provide leadership training to ensure the success of the next generation of public library administrators.
  - Maintain the highest standards in the oversight, utilization and accountability in the distribution of state and federal library funds.
- Develop a supportive community for Georgia's public libraries
  - Provide opportunities for collegial knowledge sharing, especially with library administrators.
  - Foster financial stability for public libraries by maximizing public, political and financial support for the services they provide.
  - Communicate and advocate with funding partners at local, state and national levels to ensure adequate resources are available for public library services.
  - Provide leadership and assistance to library trustees, staff and Friends of libraries in the creation and implementation of effective local, state and national advocacy efforts.
- Ensure equal access to information and technology
  - Ensure the equitable distribution of state public library grant funds and the effective utilization of federal library funds.

- Coordinate collaborative purchases to leverage available funding for the maximum benefit of all public libraries and library systems in the state.
- Encourage cooperative ventures and new thinking in resource sharing.

**Foster a culture of learning statewide**

- Provide expertise and educational opportunities needed to ensure that public libraries can provide optimal service at every Georgia library.
- Reinforce the library's role in supporting education at every level, from early literacy to workforce development and the support of lifelong learning.
- Develop and manage partnerships with other agencies, including other units of the University System of Georgia, to provide and support enhanced library programs and services.

# Community Conversations- Listening to GLASS Stakeholders

Summary from GLASS Library Consumer Advisory Committee, June 2016

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>Actionable Items, Ideas, and Specific Requests</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Survey patrons to determine wants and needs</li> <li>- Have volunteers give personalized training</li> <li>- Have tutorials and how-to's</li> <li>- Workshops for current and potential GLASS patrons</li> <li>- Hands-on training</li> <li>- Machines hand-delivered to houses, perhaps by volunteers</li> <li>- Follow up calls from GLASS Atlanta</li> <li>- Allow new and potential patrons to arrange appointments with staff</li> <li>- Telephone tutorials</li> <li>- 24-hour hotline, perhaps volunteer staffed</li> <li>- Reach out to public schools</li> <li>- Follow up with patrons</li> <li>- Ask people what they want</li> <li>- Create a culture of expectation</li> </ul> |
|---|--|





## GLASS Patron Satisfaction Survey

In August through September 2016 GLASS staff surveyed GLASS patrons regarding their impressions of GLASS services. The survey was distributed in a variety of formats including e-mail and telephone interview of patrons who call the libraries. Georgia's subregional library, Southwest Georgia Library for Accessible Services collected data from their patrons using the same survey tool. A total of 377 responses were collected. The survey was very much like the one taken in April of 2014, allowing for a comparison of the responses.

## Other External Considerations that May Impact GLASS

- Space renovations at Atlanta-Fulton County Public Library, Central Branch; possibly moving GLASS Atlanta
- Disposal of materials at GDC
- Transition to more digital content for NLS; External sources such as Bookshare
- Potential shift in funding from federal and state sources; prepare to respond
- Respond to opportunities that further collaborations with PINES may offer
- Local recording

# GLASS Strategic Plan 2018-2022

## ACTIVITY: GLASS Library

### Project Description:

GLASS is Georgia's talking book and braille library, a network library of the National Library Service for Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) program. GLASS serves eligible readers, those who are unable to access traditional printed materials for reading. GLASS is comprised of a regional library, one subregional library and the GLASS distribution center. GLASS libraries serve over 15,000 patrons in Georgia. Through its technology, programs and outreach efforts, GLASS hopes to reach and positively impact the lives of more eligible readers in Georgia. The goal of GLASS is to achieve an outcome of engaging Georgians with print-impairment in a range of library activities that positively impact their lives in regards to leisure, entertainment, health, employment and civic engagement.

### Targets:

- Enroll at least 20% of Georgia's eligible readers, per the NLS definition of eligibility and formula for calculating the percent of population that is eligible for services.
- Circulate materials to eligible readers in Georgia in a variety of formats
- Contribute local content to the NLS BARD collection by recording books in the GLASS Atlanta studio
- Improve reader's ability to access GLASS holdings through upgrades to the online catalog
- Provide programming that meets the special needs and interests of persons with vision impairment or other qualifying condition
- Provide programming targeted to young readers, furthering opportunities for early literacy development
- Introduce Assistive Technology to Seniors
- Develop training for GLASS staff to enhance their understanding of public library resources, with an emphasis on what resources are of particular benefits to eligible readers
- Arrange workforce development opportunities for persons with disabilities in cooperation with the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency.

This effort supports the goal of targeting library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to

individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills. It also serves the purpose of targeting library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children from families with incomes below the poverty line. This activity is the primary focus of the GLASS program and its highest priority activity.

## ACTIVITY: GLASS Outreach

### Project Description:

Outreach is an essential element in promoting awareness of GLASS resources and services. Print-impairment is often age-acquired and something that people do not think about until they need it. GLASS works closely with agencies that serve persons who are vision-impaired or print-impaired. Outreach requires constant attention and becomes a project of its own with a desired outcome of making sure that people in our state are aware that GLASS is a service that can meet the needs of print-impaired Georgians. Through the use of outreach specialists, a strong online presence, an informative newsletter, online professional development for librarians and an active social media presence, GLASS has the opportunity to positively impact the lives of readers who may have lost their ability to use standard printed materials.

### Targets:

- Keep stakeholders informed about GLASS services and offerings
- Inform public libraries on how to enroll a patron
- Inform libraries about non-NLS materials and eligibility

This activity supports the goal of developing library services that provide all users access to information through local, state, regional, national, and international collaborations and networks. It further supports the goal of developing public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations. This activity is essential to effectively delivering GLASS library services and is second in priority to the operation of the talking book library and provision of its services to patrons.

## ACTIVITY: GLASS Promotion of Accessible Services

Project Description: GLASS is uniquely poised to educate and promote the development of accessible services within Georgia's public libraries. As part of the State Library, GLASS staff has access to library directors from across the state. Through educational sessions and through curation of available online resources GLASS serves as a resource for concerns regarding ADA compliance, Section 508 compliance and best practices in regards to accessible library services.

### Targets:

- Assure that Georgia Public libraries offer accessible services within accessible buildings and use accessible techniques to develop their online resources
- Develop and distribute accessibility checklists for public libraries
- Partner with GALILEO to create a representative portal related to accessible resources

This effort supports the goal of targeting library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills. It also serves the goal of targeting library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children from families with incomes below the poverty line. Additionally, this activity supports the goal of providing training and professional development, including continuing education, to enhance the skills of the current library workforce and leadership, and to advance the delivery of library and information services. Efforts to partner with GALILEO support the goal of establishing or enhancing electronic and other linkages and improving coordination among and between libraries for the purpose of improving the quality of and access to library and information services.

## Evaluation

GLASS will measure its effectiveness in reaching its targets by setting metrics for evaluation, by establishing dates and by assigning responsibility for activities aimed at achieving targets. GLASS will focus on outcomes within communities, considering those ideals that patrons and stakeholders highlighted. The Federal funding source has asked that libraries to prove the impact of their services. Georgia Public Library Service is developing tools to collect program data and evaluate outcomes.

GLASS staff will develop timelines to go along with outcomes assessment. These activities will focus GLASS priorities. GLASS is dedicated to serving our patrons while executing our mission, maintaining our values and pursuing our vision.