

Piedmont Regional Library System Standards

Adapted from Georgia Public Library Standards - 2015

<https://www.georgialibraries.org/lib/publiclibinfo/GPLs-Library-Standards-2015-05112015.pdf>

Approved by Piedmont Regional Library System Board of Trustees, January 2019

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. Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) provides standards which are an essential tool for meaningful library evaluation and measurement. The Piedmont Regional Library System (PRLS) strives to meet or exceed optimal GPLS Library Standards in all areas.

Operating Service Standards

A. Administration

1. All member libraries operate under the Strategic Plan of the Piedmont Regional Library System.
2. All library managers provide financial and statistical reports for review at county library board of trustee meetings.
3. Each library manager participates in an orientation program for each new county library board member, conducted by Piedmont Regional Library System staff.
4. A minimum of one month's expenses should be kept in reserve by each library or its primary funding agency at all times.

B. Staffing

5. The Piedmont Regional Library System has a permanent, paid director who meets the state of Georgia certification requirements. All master's level librarians in libraries must meet state of Georgia certification requirements.
6. All member libraries have 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. All member libraries have 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 encouraged 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. All member libraries follow the PRLS written, board-approved collection development policy, based on community needs. The policy 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. All member libraries provide without charge an initial library card to any resident of the service area.
13. All PRLS libraries follow PINES circulation policies.
14. All member libraries participate in regional and state-coordinated interlibrary loan and resource sharing for circulation and reference services.
15. All member libraries have a system for reserving/holding items that are not currently available.
16. All member libraries provide reference and readers' advisory service to all patrons.
17. All member libraries provide 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 by PRLS, 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. All member libraries provide on-site and off-site programming for children, teens and adults appropriate to the mission of the library.
20. All member libraries 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. All member libraries provide 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 per 2,000 population	1 per 1,500 population	1 per 1,000 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. Minimum days and hours of service for PRLS member libraries are as follows, with consideration always given to weekend and evening hours.

Minimal	Essential	Optimal
30 hours	55 hours	72 hours

PRLS will 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 boards of trustees exercise authority in a county system and include 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's regional headquarters. Library managers are responsible for individual libraries.
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. According to state standards: 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	Essential	Optimal
FTE per 1,000 population	.3	.4	.5

PRLS NOTE REGARDING STAFFING STANDARDS

In recognizing that staff and patron safety are of utmost importance, the PRLS Board recommends a ratio of at least two staff hours per open hour so the time that staff members work alone is minimized.

System MLS to Support Staff Ratio

	Minimal	Essential	Optimal
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.

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.

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.

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Addendum-Consequences of Deviation from Standards

From Zero-Based Budgeting State Reimbursed Position Guidelines published by the Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS):

GPLS, in consultation with the leadership of Georgia's public libraries, has determined that the most important function of state grants to public libraries is the provision of qualified professional librarians in every library system, as well as the essential support staff in areas such as finance and technology services required for optimal public library service. State funding of professional and allied professional positions ensures that every library system in the state is directed by a trained, experienced librarian (O.C.G.A. 20-5-45), and that essential system support services are handled by individuals with degrees from accredited programs, or the appropriate level of education and training to ensure consistently high-quality service across the state. This has long been a commitment by the state of Georgia to public libraries.

The Piedmont Regional Library System Board of Trustees recognizes and supports this commitment. Regional office staff are available for consultation on all aspects of quality public library service, including, but not limited to:

- Setting optimal library open hours
- Staffing levels
- Selection and hiring of library staff, including job description and advertising assistance as well as qualification, education level, and salary level recommendations
- Budgeting
- Customer service
- Children's services and programs
- Collection development, including selection of library materials
- Library management
- Public access technology assistance

Refusal to recognize and support this commitment to high-quality service by any member library may result in governing board action, up to and including expulsion from the Piedmont Regional Library System.