



# 2024

## YEAR IN REVIEW



# Georgia's public libraries are more vital than ever.

Georgia's public libraries are more vital than ever to the health and well-being of our state. Libraries are strong partners in everything that Georgia does, from strengthening early literacy to building a strong economy.

Over the past year, we have witnessed our libraries step up to meet community needs in tough times. When Hurricane Helene devastated so many towns, public library staff read stories in shelters to comfort children, brought books for people of all ages to read, and worked alongside their neighbors to get everyone back on their feet.

Our libraries lead the way with Georgia's youngest readers through engaging early literacy programs like 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten, the Summer Reading Program, and Prime Time Family Reading.

Libraries foster a love of reading for children and teens, but the resources we provide go far beyond books. Many Georgians depend on their local library's computers and Wi-Fi to apply for jobs, complete homework, or access online services. Through Georgia Public Library Service-facilitated funding, our libraries also offer tech for checkout, enabling patrons to stay connected by bringing devices home.

All patrons have access to an extensive digital collection of ebooks and audiobooks, online research and tools through GALILEO, local history resources, and so much more.

With support from GPLS and state funding, libraries are creating new spaces and revitalizing existing ones to foster lifelong learning, creativity, and collaboration in welcoming, modern environments.

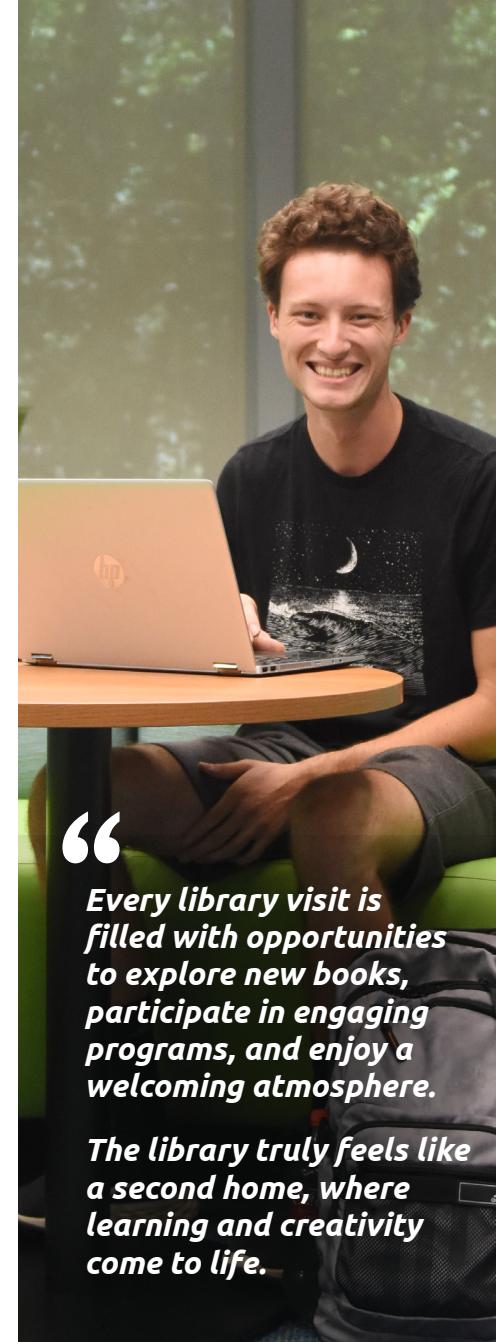
As of September 2024, 66 libraries are receiving financial assistance for new facilities or structural repairs, ensuring they can continue to serve their communities effectively.

Libraries change lives, and through Georgia Public Library Service, we are all working to create a more educated Georgia.

We encourage you to support a strong Georgia by supporting libraries.



Julie Walker,  
Vice Chancellor for Libraries & Archives,  
State Librarian



***“Every library visit is filled with opportunities to explore new books, participate in engaging programs, and enjoy a welcoming atmosphere.***

***The library truly feels like a second home, where learning and creativity come to life.***





# Libraries empower children to become strong readers and lifelong learners.

Georgia's public libraries are a place where children and families can discover the joy of reading, participate in early literacy activities like storytime, or learn everything from gardening to playing the ukulele. These programs help children build literacy, social, and language skills, setting them up for success in school and beyond.

This year, Georgia Public Library Service expanded 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten through additional funding and marketing support. 1,000 Books is now available at nearly all public libraries across the state. The program is a fun and easy way to help children develop pre-reading skills necessary for kindergarten readiness and one of the primary ways GPLS supports the state's Early Literacy Act.

To support children as they enter school, GPLS facilitates the PLAY student library card (PINES Library Access for Youth), giving nearly 550,000 students in Pre-K through 12th grade fines-free access to their local public library for the tools they need to build literacy skills or complete homework. In 2024, PLAY expanded to include 52 public school districts that partner with their library system.

Prime Time Family Reading is designed to engage economically and educationally vulnerable families in early literacy activities. This year, 2,240 children and adult caregivers at 12 libraries came together for shared meals as they learned about the humanities through storytelling and discussions, building a foundation for a lifelong love of reading.

2024 also saw an increase of over 200,000 in children's programming attendance at libraries statewide, including at annual Summer Reading Program events that help close achievement gaps and improve literacy skills. More than 1,353,000 children and caregivers came to the library for programs created just for them.

Georgia's public libraries play a key role in the state's early literacy framework, partnering with the Sandra Dunagan Deal Center for Early Language and Literacy for Prime Time Reading grants, Georgia City Solutions for the Mayor's Reading Club, and the Georgia Council on Literacy.

When state leaders seek ways to improve literacy, Georgia's libraries are an integral voice at the table.

## Libraries support youth and families.

**↑19%** increase in children's program attendance, including 200,000 more participants

**↑5%** increase in youth materials checkouts, including 700,000 more items borrowed

**545,971**  
students with PLAY cards across 52 school districts

**23,532**  
children registered for 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten



# Building and improving library spaces.

Public libraries are creating new spaces and revitalizing existing ones to foster lifelong learning, creativity, and collaboration in ways that meet the unique and evolving needs of their communities.

This year, Sequoyah Regional Library System designed a Third Place in the Hickory Flat Public Library for families and students from nearby schools to gather and connect.

The Braselton Library, part of Piedmont Regional Library System, expanded to have rooms for local groups to host activities.

The Middle Georgia Regional Library created a new branch in a busy shopping mall to reach potential patrons in a convenient space.

With support from Georgia Public Library Service and state funding, 26 public library facilities are being planned, designed, or built as of September 2024. Additionally, more than 60 libraries received financial assistance for structural repairs such as roofing or HVAC, or technology upgrades like faster Wi-Fi or computers.

Every year, GPLS partners with libraries to propose projects for funding to the Georgia Legislature.

Once projects are approved, GPLS provides expertise on the planning and funding of construction, remodeling, energy conservation, emergency preparedness, and accessibility, helping libraries become dynamic community hubs with services and resources to support learning at any age.

**Libraries are dynamic community hubs.**

**26** libraries being planned, designed, or built

**60+** libraries undergoing structural repairs

**\$42,314,155**  
Capital Projects Expenditures  
including \$12.3 million (state)  
and \$30 million (local)

**\$2.65** million in  
reimbursements  
for Major Repair and Renovation





# Libraries bridge the digital divide.

This year, libraries updated, upgraded, and expanded technology to provide patrons with the tools they need to navigate today's increasingly digital world.

In 2024, \$3.6 million in state funding enabled Georgia's libraries to purchase 6,600 technology items across 408 library facilities with the support of Georgia Public Library Service.

These upgrades included expanded Wi-Fi infrastructure, computers tailored for early literacy, 3D printers, scanners, and self-checkout machines.

GPLS purchased devices to replace outdated tech to benefit students and job seekers, such as Chromebooks laptops, web conferencing cameras, and Launchpad literacy tablets.

Cardholders can check out many of these devices for at-home use for work, school, or entertainment purposes. Demand for laptop and Launchpads increased this year as laptops saw a 91% increase in checkouts and Launchpads saw a 39% increase.

GPLS assists libraries in securing discounts through the federal E-Rate program, enabling all libraries to provide free high-speed internet, averaging 733 megabytes per second statewide. In 2024, this assistance saved public libraries \$4,553,588 in internet service payments.

Internet at the library is an essential service across the many rural regions of Georgia that lack basic connections. This access, along with public-use computers, allows patrons to search for jobs, apply for retirement benefits, get homework done, or stay connected to friends and family.

GPLS also partners with the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide free self-service benefits kiosks at public libraries, providing convenient access to Georgia Gateway to review, change, or renew social service benefits.

By expanding access to technology, Georgia's public libraries continue to be vital resources for individuals and families, promoting digital literacy and providing pathways to opportunity.

**Georgia's public libraries increase connectivity.**

**100%** provide free high-speed internet

**9,860** public-access internet computers

**Libraries expand technology access.**

**30,981** Launchpad checkouts

**30,846** Laptop checkouts

**16,542** Hotspot checkouts

# Libraries are improving lives and transforming communities.



**45,523,832**

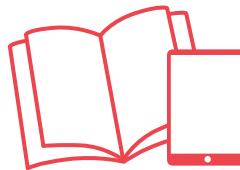
**Total Library Visits**

In-person  
18,204,458

Website  
27,319,374

**↑6%** **increase in library visits,**  
including almost 400,000 more  
in-person visits

**↑13%** **increase in program attendance,**  
totaling 2,050,306 participants



**35,731,298**

**Total Checkouts**

of physical and digital materials, including items such as:

Youth materials

Talking books

Experience Passes

**14,883,936**

**591,003**

**52,044**



**10,999,006**

**Total User Sessions**

Computer  
4,133,709

Wireless  
6,865,297

**1,072,391** **GALILEO sessions** provided access  
to trusted online resources

**613,876** **users of digitized materials**  
in the Digital Library of Georgia



# Georgia's public libraries - FY2024

More Georgians are using public libraries.

Scan to learn more about the impact of Georgia's public libraries.



**4,907,368**  
Library Cardholders

**↑26%** increase in cardholders eligible for Georgia Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled

**↑18%** increase in PLAY student card partner school districts



**408**  
Facilities  
**50** Bookmobiles and outreach vehicles



**\$210,894,893**  
Local 79.7%

**\$47,427,638**  
State 17.9%

**\$5,965,708**  
Federal 2.3%

**\$467,088**  
Other <1%

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**\$264,755,327**  
Total funding for Georgia public library services





**Strong libraries  
need your support.**

**Volunteer, donate, advocate:** [georgialibraries.org/support](http://georgialibraries.org/support)



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**Stay connected**

