

# **The Northeast Georgia Regional Library System (NEGRLS)**

Annual Report-Fiscal Year 2020–(July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020) Abbreviated

## **Affiliated Libraries**

Clarkesville-Habersham County Library  
Rabun County Library, Clayton  
White County Library, Helen

Cornelia-Habersham County Library  
Toccoa-Stephens County Library  
White County Library, Cleveland

## ***COVID-19 Pandemic***

The COVID-19 pandemic left its mark on Northeast Georgia libraries in FY2020, causing library buildings to close for several weeks in response to Governor Kemp's declaration of a Public Health State of Emergency for Novel Coronavirus on March 14, 2020. Scheduled public service hours of 13,809 across all six public libraries in Northeast Georgia Regional Library System were reduced to 10,212 hours. On average, Northeast Georgia's public library buildings were closed to the public for 9 weeks due to the pandemic, and had limited occupancy for an additional 6 weeks. As a result, our libraries circulated fewer physical items and experienced lower in-person program participation, but increased circulation of electronic materials (e-books and e-audio), provided live and recorded virtual programming, and experienced increased internet usage with 24/7 Wi-Fi availability.

## ***SERVICES***

### **PINES**

The Region (NEGRLS) is a member of Georgia PINES (Public Information Network for Electronic Services), an initiative of the State Board of Regents and Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS). PINES is a single automated system shared through 300 Georgia libraries. It provides for all the holdings of these libraries to be accessible to any user in the state. This means that our patrons can check out materials from any PINES library with the card they receive free of charge from NEGRLS, and return the material to any PINES library. This reciprocal system includes circulation, cataloging, and the library catalog itself. NEGRLS libraries had 36,944 interlibrary transactions in FY2020.

### **Circulation**

277,877 items were loaned by NEGRLS affiliated libraries in FY2020. Materials are circulated in a wide variety of formats, including books, e-books, e-audio, magazines, audio cassettes and compact discs, video cassettes, digital video discs, vertical file materials, and audiovisual equipment. Not all formats are available in all affiliated libraries.

### **Reference Services**

The libraries provided reference services consisting of general reference service to all members of the community, help to students, telephone reference assistance, business

reference sources, genealogical research materials and assistance, telephone directories, college catalogs, vertical file materials, and interlibrary loan service. 54,639 reference transactions were reported by the libraries in FY2020.

In addition, direct public access to the Internet via a high-speed connection is available at all affiliated libraries. A public library subset of the GALILEO databases used by the University System of Georgia is also available for in-library and home use.

### **Computers**

134 computers are available to the general public in the affiliated libraries for a variety of uses, including Internet access, word processing, and viewing the library catalog.

### **Programs**

The libraries provided both in-person and virtual programs in FY2020. Among these were weekly story hours, summer reading programs, visits to schools, day-care centers and nursing homes, and special activities for special seasons. Attendance totaled 16,545 for the 125 programs offered.

### **Extension Services**

Limited extension services were available from each affiliated library to homebound patrons in all four counties if requested by qualified users. Patrons eligible for service from the Georgia Library for Accessible Services (GLASS) could receive in-home materials from the Sub-regional GLASS facility.

### **Other Community Benefits**

Some libraries acted as distribution centers for income tax materials, provided photocopy machines for public use, made public meeting rooms available, provided magazine and newspaper browsing areas, housed art exhibits and other special exhibits, provided sites for GED and literacy tutorials, and provided dedicated computers for completing the 2020 U.S. Census online. In addition, the libraries are voter registration sites in accordance with the federal/state voter registration laws.

## ***FUNDING***

### **State Support**

Support from the State of Georgia for the Northeast Georgia Regional Library System was \$635,572 (28% of the total). State grants were used for the following:

1. They provided the basis for regional maintenance and operations. These funds are the cornerstone of our ability to provide regional services (extension, outreach, technical, administrative, assistance to affiliates, state and federal reporting, etc.);
2. They were used to purchase circulating and reference materials for the six member libraries, as well as additional materials needed for the administrative/cataloging unit. Books, magazines, audiovisual materials, and realia were added to the collection;
3. To help pay for the cost of courier service between affiliates; to pay the cost of travel to director's meetings required by state law; to pay the cost of sending certified staff

members on necessary library business and training; and to pay the costs for the administrative facility;

4. To pay state salaries to certified employees. The certified personnel are regional employees who provide regional services such as: administration; interlibrary loan; oversight of outreach and extension programs; assistance and coordination services to affiliates in the areas of children's services, collection development and maintenance; technology services; and technical services (acquiring, cataloging and processing materials for use).

### **Local Support**

The libraries received \$1,535,262 support (66% of the total) from local government funding agencies. Funds from county and municipal governments as well as some Board of Education funds were used exclusively for local library operations. Earmarked funds from the Boards of Education and from library boards were used to purchase additional library materials.

Governmental entities supporting the library program are as follows: Habersham County Commission, Rabun County Commission, Stephens County Commission, White County Commission, Habersham County Board of Education, City of Clarkesville, City of Cornelia, City of Cleveland, and City of Helen.

In addition, \$136,497 (6% of the total) was received from other sources (fines, fees, interest, donations, non-government grants, etc.). Support was also given "on behalf" of some libraries by various other agencies such as the Friends of the Library groups, county commissions, municipalities, and the United Way.

### **Other Interesting Figures for FY2020**

Service Area Population – 117,638 (from Governor's Office of Planning & Budget)

Area Residents with Library Cards – 35,240

Library Public Service Hours – 10,212

Region-wide physical collection – 238,401 items

Region-wide electronic collection – 77,326 units

Library Visits – 198,426

Patron Use of Electronic Resources – 25,661

Interlibrary & Intralibrary Loans Provided to Other Systems – 17,100

Interlibrary & Intralibrary Borrowed from Other Systems – 20,015

Persons Employed by Northeast Georgia Public Libraries – 25 full-time; 17 part-time

Total Income Received by the Libraries - \$2,170,834

Total Operating Expenditures by the Libraries – \$2,077,141

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This abbreviated annual report is provided to all tax-supported funding agencies contributing to the operation of any member library in the Northeast Georgia Regional Library System in accordance with requirements of the *Georgia Code 20-5-46*.