

Resolution in Support of Broadband as a Human Right

Whereas broadband networks and services drive robust, resilient, and effective societies and economies;

Whereas broadband is essential for life including education, workforce, healthcare, and is a fundamental element of an inclusive and sustainable world;

Whereas the global pandemic has heightened the awareness of the problems that the lack of access to broadband and digital connectivity has had on Georgians forced to work from home, connect to online schooling, connect to telehealth resources, access information and maintain a reasonable quality of life;

Whereas the inability to provide in-person library services during the pandemic magnifies inequities for people without the equipment, the capacity to access and the confidence/skills to effectively use broadband and acquire digital literacy;

Whereas communities of color, low-income residents, rural, indigenous, older residents, people with disabilities, and people experiencing homelessness are more likely to be without a strong connection to the internet and without the equipment and skills to access reliable resources;

Whereas Georgia's libraries provide no-fee broadband access in communities and are essential to communities with no or limited broadband access;

Whereas an increasing number of information resources, including government resources and services, are available solely online;

Whereas the Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative identifies large portions of the state that still lack broadband access in 2021

(<https://broadband.georgia.gov/maps/gbdi-unserved-georgia>);

Whereas over half of homes lack the infrastructure for robust broadband access (with over half of homes being connected not at all or only via smartphones);

Resolved, that the Georgia Library Association (GLA), on behalf of its members:

1. affirms universal access to affordable high-capacity broadband is essential and therefore a basic right for all;
2. advocates for legislative and regulatory policies through which libraries can affect positive change toward such universal access;
3. spurs each members to educate their communities about the role that libraries play in broadband access and to advocate to those communities for more equitable broadband access for everyone; and
4. urges the GLA Executive Board to proactively partner with those advocating for more inclusive and expansive broadband access.