Around 30 years ago, Librarians began to purchase a small supply of reading glasses for use in the Library. Staff realized that many of the customers who borrowed glasses could not afford to buy pairs for themselves. As demand grew, the Library looked for a way to allow customers to keep their glasses. The Library found an affordable solution, purchasing discounted pairs through the eyeglass recycling program at the Lions Club.

Last August, Sharon Marsh, a faculty member at Ivy Tech Community College and employee of the IU School of Optometry, overheard a Library customer request a pair of reading glasses from a Library employee. In the Optometric Technology program at Ivy Tech, Marsh teaches a class where students make glasses with reconditioned frames and optical quality lenses. Marsh reached out to Community Engagement Librarian, Bobby Overman, to see if the Library would be interested in receiving donations of these glasses.

The Library currently distributes around 500–600 pairs of glasses a year. Donations from Marsh’s students allow the Library to supplement its annual Lions Club purchase with high-quality glasses in common strengths. Customers especially appreciate the glasses cases that are often included with the glasses from the Ivy Tech program. Students in the program love the idea that the eyeglasses they make are more than just practice—and the Library is thrilled to be able to distribute free eyeglasses to people who need them.

Patrons can request a pair of glasses from any information desk at the Main Library or Ellettsville Branch. Learn more about Library accessibility offerings.