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# An Overview of Voice and Message Banking for People Living with ALS



**Anne Marie Doyle, M.A., CCC-SLP**  
**Community Education Manager**  
**Les Turner ALS Foundation**

**The ALS Learning Series is made possible because of the  
Gilbert & Jacqueline Fern Foundation and our industry partners.**



About Us

# Leader in comprehensive ALS care and research.

*Founded in 1977, the Les Turner ALS Foundation is one of the longest-serving independent ALS groups in the country.*

*We are committed to providing the most comprehensive care and support to people living with ALS and their families in Chicagoland so they can confidently navigate the disease, and advance scientific research for the prevention, treatment and cure of ALS.*

## Support Services for people with ALS, families and caregivers

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*Care visits by ALS support services coordinators*

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*Support Group Meetings*

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*Education materials and programs*

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*Access to medical equipment and communication devices*

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*Need-based grant programs and community resources*

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*In-service education for community care*

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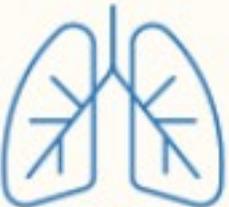


## Lois Insolia ALS Clinic

- Access to enrollment in clinical trials and dedicated clinical trial coordinators
- Chicagoland's first and largest multidisciplinary ALS Clinic, with the highest number of neurologists and dedicated pulmonologists
- Multidisciplinary care that brings together an experienced team of neuromuscular specialists in one clinic to provide comprehensive support



# Educational Resources



**ALS & BREATHING**

[View Guide](#) [View Webinar](#) [My ALS Decision Tool™](#)



**ALS & NUTRITION**

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**ALS & COMMUNICATION**

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**ALS & HOME MODIFICATIONS**

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# MY ALS DECISION TOOL™



**ALS & CAREGIVERS**

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[lesturnerals.org/resources](https://lesturnerals.org/resources)

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# An Overview of Voice and Message Banking for People Living with ALS



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# Agenda

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**Part One:** What is Voice Banking, Message Banking, and Double Dipping?

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**Part Two:** Is it right for me?

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**Part Three:** How do I get started?

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**Part Four:** Project Euphonia

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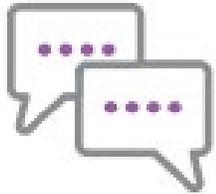
**Part Five:** Questions & Answers

# Part One: What is Voice Banking, Message Banking, & Double Dipping? (Costello & Smith, 2021)



## Voice Banking

**Voice Banking:** Process of recording long script that targets all speech sounds in your language. The recordings are then used to make a computerized voice that will sound like your natural voice



## Message Banking™

**Message Banking:** Process of recording and storing personalized messages, sounds, stories, etc. These are unprocessed and reflect your natural voice the day you recorded.



## Double Dipping™

**Double Dipping:** Process of using recorded messages collected from message banking as your script for creating a computerized voice.

# Voice Banking



Process of recording a randomized script into a voice banking website



Using a computer, Wi-Fi connection, microphone, and quiet space



May need to record anywhere from 50-1600 lines of script depending on the website you use



Fee involved

# Voice Banking Websites

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**Acapela:** <https://mov.acapela-group.com/start-now/>

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**Model Talker:** <https://www.modeltalker.org/register-with-modeltalker/>

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**Speak Unique:** <https://www.speakunique.co.uk/session/sign-in>

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**Voice Keeper:** <https://app.thevoicekeeper.com/>

# Voice Banking Example

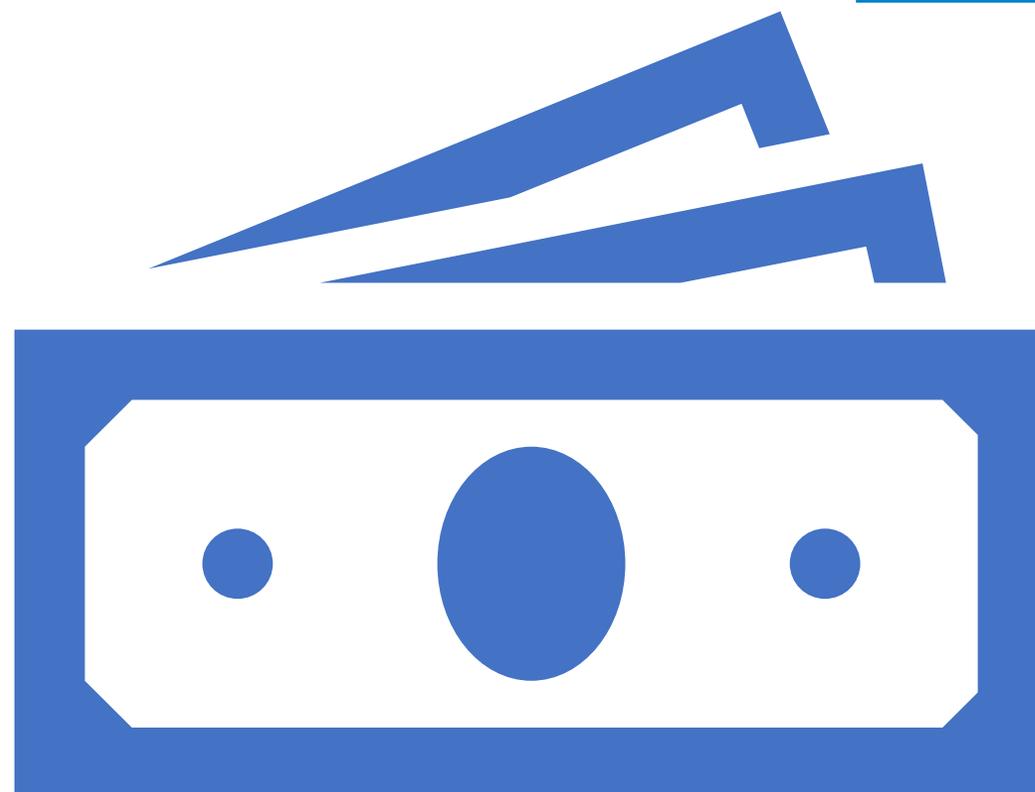
- **Voice Keeper Example:**



- **Speak Unique Example:** [Speak Unique Example](#)

# How much does it cost?

- **Acapela:** \$999
- **Model Talker:** \$100
- **Speak Unique:** \$235-400
- **Voice Keeper:** \$250
- *Reminder, that Team Gleason will help cover the cost of your voice.*



# Message Banking



PROCESS OF  
RECORDING  
PERSONALIZED,  
SPECIAL  
MESSAGES,  
SOUNDS,  
STORIES, ETC.



REQUIRES  
COMPUTER,  
MICROPHONE,  
AND/OR A  
PHONE OR  
TABLET, WI-FI,  
AND QUIET



THESE MESSAGES  
REMAIN  
UNTOUCHED AND  
WILL SOUND  
EXACTLY LIKE YOU.



FREE

# Message Banking Website

mytobii dynamox Store Pageset Central Support Community

Hello Anne Marie!

My Stuff

- My Account
- Compass
- Communicator
- Message Bank
- TD Snap
- Professionals

Notifications

Title	Text	Confidence	Recording	Tags / Categories	
<input type="checkbox"/> How are you doing today? English - United States	How are you doing today?	✓	▶	+ Greetings ✕	🗑️
<input type="checkbox"/> The sun is shining! English - United States	The sun is shining! It's a great day!	✓	▶	+ Greetings ✕	🗑️
<input type="checkbox"/> My name is English - United States	Hi my name is Anne Marie Doyle. It is so nice to meet you today.	✓	▶	+ Greetings ✕	🗑️
<input type="checkbox"/> Good Morning English - United States	Good morning.	✓ 85%	▶ 0:02	+ Greeting/farewells ✕	🗑️

# Message Banking Example

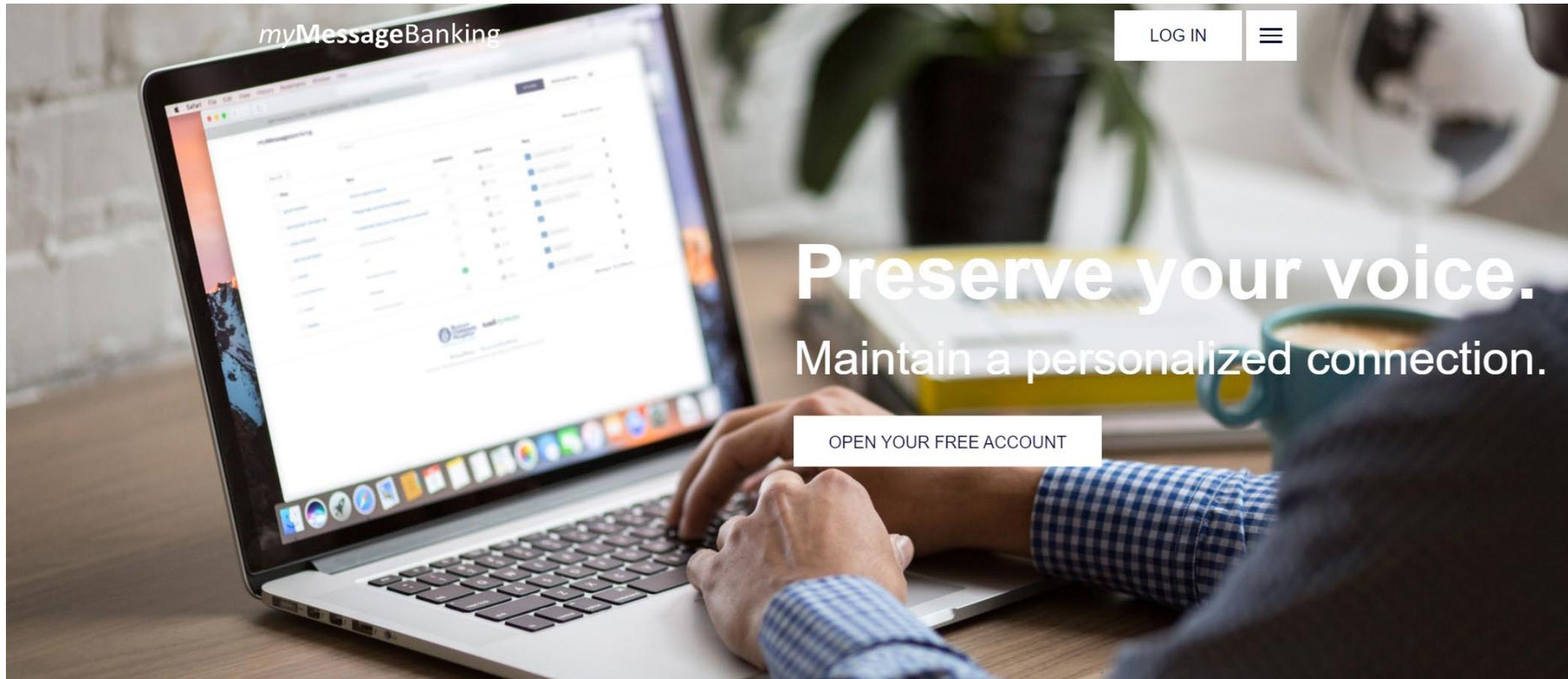
- [My TobiiDynavox Message Banking Examples](#)

# What is Double Dipping?



- **Process of designing a computerized voice based off messages you have previously recorded**
- **Costello recommends recording 550-750 messages**
- **Clinical experience to date has shown speakers think these voices “more clearly approximate their biological voice compared to the voice created through voice banking alone.” (Costello & Smith, 2021)**

# Double Dipping Website



myMessageBanking

LOG IN

Preserve your voice.  
Maintain a personalized connection.

OPEN YOUR FREE ACCOUNT

# Equipment Needed

## Voice Banking

- A quiet space
- Microphone
- WiFi connection
- Computer with use of Google Chrome
- Voice Keeper can be completed on your iPhone or iPad using their app

## Message Banking

- A quiet space
- Zoom mic recorder
- AVR app for your phone or tablet
- WiFi connection
- Mytobiidynavox.com account or mymessagebanking.com

# Part One: Review

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## **Voice Banking**

- Requires anywhere from 50-1600 lines of script to be recorded
  - Analyzed by engineers and a computerized voice is designed
  - Costs money
- 

## **Message Banking**

- Can record as many or as few messages, stories, sounds, as you'd like
  - These messages are unprocessed, sound exactly like you
  - Free
- 

## **Double Dipping**

- Takes your banked messages (the more the better; 550-750) and designs a computerized voice based off these recordings
- Costs money

# Part Two: Is it right for me?

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There's no “right” answer

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Everyone has the right to make their own decision

# Things to Consider



How does your voice sound right now?

Do you like the way your voice sounds now? If so, great. If not, then you may not be happy with the way your messages or personalized voice turn out



Do you have the time?

Make sure you have the time/dedication to complete

It doesn't need to be done in one sitting

Avoid: a busier time at work, if you're going on vacation, are you moving, do you have a lot of doctor appointments, etc.

# What if I Speak a Different Language?

Acapela: Available in 19 different languages

Model Talker: English only right now, but can support some personalized messages and names in a Native language

Voice Keeper: English, Hebrew, & Spanish

Speak Unique: English only

# What if I don't like the sound of my voice? Or I already lost my voice.



- **Speak Unique has a voice repair option for persons that are exhibiting a mild to moderate dysarthria (difficulty speaking)**
- **Do you have a family member that sounds like you?**
  - They can always record on your behalf
- **Design your own voice**
  - Speak Unique can design a voice for you based off your gender, age, and regional accent.
- **Do you have previous recordings of your voice?**
  - Speak Unique can make a voice based off your recordings.
- **Many voice banking websites have generic voices for purchase**

# Part Two: Review



There's no "right"  
answer

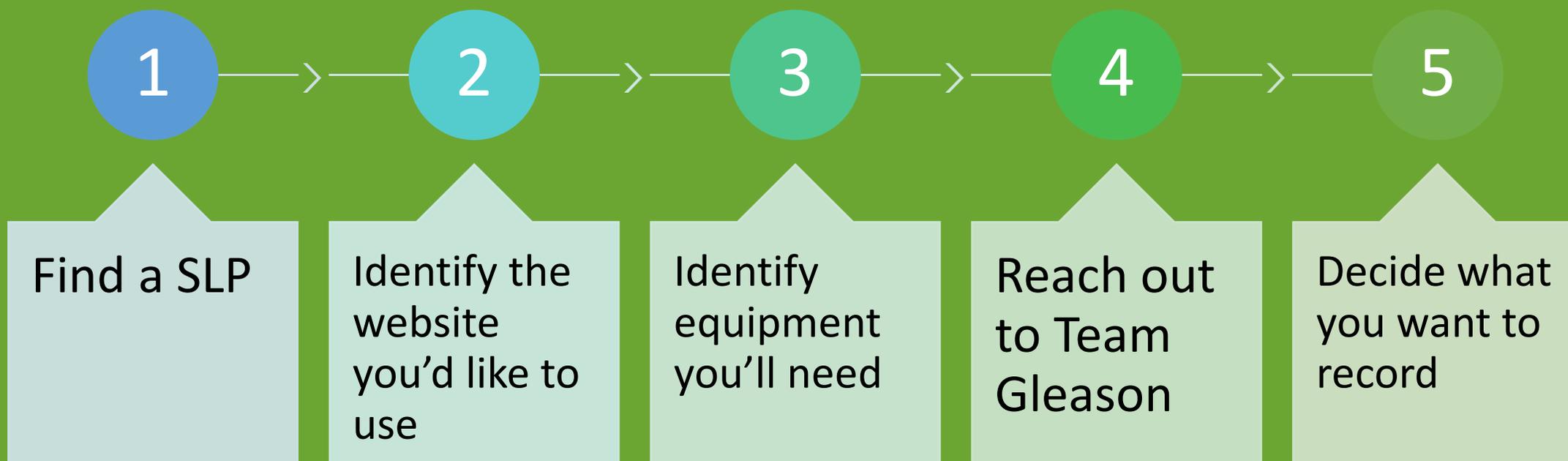


Things to consider:  
Your voice  
Your schedule  
Your preferences



Don't let cost preclude  
you: Team Gleason will  
cover the cost of your  
voice

# Part Three: How do I get started?



# Finding a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP)

- **Although not required for the voice and message banking process, it has been found to be extremely helpful in navigation and completion of the process (Costello & Smith, 2021).**
- **Reach out to your local ALS clinic to see if they have a SLP that can assist you, OR, if they know of a local therapist that can.**
  - In the Chicagoland area, Shirley Ryan AbilityLab can absolutely provide this service for you.
- **If you do not have a SLP, Team Gleason can help support you.**
- **Benefits: they are already knowledgeable on all three processes, they'll have advice on how to complete the process, they may have equipment for you to borrow (or can complete the process in the session), someone to keep you on track, and check in, etc.**

# Reach out to Team Gleason

- **Complete the application on their website, specifically referencing Voice and Message Banking**
- **Within the application they will ask you if you need specific equipment and if you need assistance with finding a SLP**
- **They will also ask if you need assistance with covering the cost**
  - They will cover 100% of the cost



# What should I record?

## Voice Banking

Less freedom in what you record because they are trying to hit all combinations of letters/sounds in the English language

Most companies will provide you with a script, apart from Speak Unique, they allows you choose excerpts from specific stories they support (Alice in Wonderland, Peter Pan, The Jungle Book). Browse by category.

## Message Banking

Laugh

Stories: Family stories or stories that you may read to your children or grandchildren

Cuss words

Family, friends, pet names

“Isms”: You may reach out to family and friends to get a better idea of those things you always say.

Wants and needs

# Part Three: Review

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You do not need to go through this process alone

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Finding a SLP can be helpful

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Team Gleason can provide the cost of voice banking, as well as loan out any equipment you may need

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Equipment is standard across both processes

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Think of carrying around a pen/paper, reach out to family for ideas on what to record, carry a microphone or your phone on you for when you think of something to record

# Part Four: Project Euphonia



## Project Euphonia

Project Euphonia — part of Google's AI for Social Good program — aims to make technology more accessible by **improving speech recognition for people with impaired speech**. These improvements are only possible if we have speech samples to train the system.

Are you a speech and language pathologist?  
We need your help.

Learn more by visiting our website:

[g.co/euphonia](https://g.co/euphonia)



# Research Opportunity via Google

- **Katie Seaver, the SLP at Google is currently working on recruiting a few more participants**
- **Longitudinal study with people that are newly diagnosed with a bulbar onset of ALS and a mild dysarthria (changes in voice).**
- **Involves recording messages every few weeks/months (depending on the changes in your voice)**
- **Paid for every virtual visit**
- **Google engineers hopefully will then be able to have a solution for their automated speech recognition technology**

# Part Four Review

- **Project Euphonia is part of Google Research initiative to make voice recognition technology more accessible for people with disabilities.**
- **Google is looking to expand their technology to improve their automated speech recognition.**
- **If you're interested, you can complete an application**
- **Can reach out to either myself or Katie Seaver at [seaverk@google.com](mailto:seaverk@google.com) for more information**



# Q&A

Please type your questions  
in the Q&A box

[www.lesturnerals.org](http://www.lesturnerals.org)



**Upcoming Webinar:**  
**Home Automation for  
People Living with ALS**

**September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 12:00 CT**

[alslearningseries.org](https://alslearningseries.org)



**Jeffrey Powers**  
**Program Manager, Team Gleason**

# 12th Annual Les Turner Symposium on ALS

• Monday, November 7

KEYNOTE SPEAKER  
Nicholas Maragakis, MD



Learn more and register:  
[lesturnerals.org/symposium](https://lesturnerals.org/symposium)



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