

A more formal statement on the role of the state agency in extension declares that:

“Library extension is a major function of the state library. It should include the establishment of standards for library development; advisory and technical assistance to librarians, library authorities, interested citizens and state institutions; and the distribution of books and other library materials.

“The state library must take the initiative in promoting state-wide library planning and the development of all types of library service in cooperation with the library associations and other interested groups. The state library stimulates cooperative and coordinated library systems that result in improved facilities and services for all citizens of the state. . . .”²

The history of America’s public library movement is one of permissive state legislation, allowing local enthusiasm to take action where interested, so that libraries could be supported through tax funds.³ True, New York State began to distribute the “deposit fund” from the federal government in 1838. This was to assist in the maintenance of school district libraries, provided the district matched the \$100 grant, and was intended to provide free reading to all. Ten other states followed suit in supporting school district libraries.

Direct assistance to unserved areas was again promoted by New York State when Melvil Dewey sent out the first traveling library in 1892. This deviated from the pattern set by Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and others in granting some financial aid to existing libraries, in that these traveling library boxes were sent to rural readers who had no other access to libraries.

By 1900 many state governments were beginning to recognize some responsibility to the unserved reader. New York and California state libraries and numerous newly organized state library commissions emphasized the extension of library service. They promoted the founding of small libraries, gave some financial aid where possible, and sent traveling libraries to the remotest readers.⁴

In assisting communities to establish these small libraries, municipal library organizers naturally sought to offer the residents of the village or township approximately the same type of library organization as that found in larger cities. Libraries were shelf-listed, classified, and cataloged and the person or persons in charge given some advice on procedures commonly used in operating a municipal library. Where the state agency had no such field worker, consultant or organizer available, assistance was given by mail. The new service which the

Creating New Local Service in the United States

state agency helped to create fell short on several counts, principally personnel and finance. Volunteer workers, however consecrated, or underpaid local librarians, however devoted, were not equipped to run miniature municipal libraries on the same pattern as large city libraries were operated. Moreover, the basis of financial support proved insufficient.

State agency leaders gradually sought a different pattern, turning to the county unit as the one most likely to provide sufficient financial support for a scattered, isolated population. Maryland led the way and other states followed. In California, with its large counties, both in area and population, J. L. Gillis determined that the resources of the entire State Library had to be placed within reach of every person in California's long 1,100 miles from the Oregon line to Mexico.

"Study clubs and traveling libraries were not sufficient to reach the ranch woman in southernmost Imperial county. Many library workers still clung to the municipality as the answer. Some wanted "the entire state dotted with municipal libraries, just like Massachusetts." But that was not the answer for California, which had a greater number of people living outside of towns than inside. Other librarians thought the township was the correct unit. But there were too many townships and their assessed valuation was too small to furnish adequate funds for library support.

"The ideal sought was a unit that would be *equal*, furnishing the same quality and quantity of service, whether the borrower lived under the shadow of the capitol dome, or in the almost impenetrable forests of northern Trinity county; it would be *economical*, by doing away with the endless duplication, as the first unit would own the books and other library materials most generally needed, with supplementary service coming from the State Library and other libraries willing to lend; it would be *complete*, by having all the library facilities unified and available (later through the Union Catalog). And the unit chosen must be one that would, when all were organized, cover the entire state. Then the slogan would be realized: *EVERY BOOK FOR EVERYBODY.*"⁵

Here the state agency was working on a sounder foundation in creating local service. California counties had a higher assessed valuation than villages and townships. Also, there was legal assurance that trained librarians would be in charge of the newly organized county libraries. Even though neither the state librarian nor the county library organizer were trained librarians, they wrote a strict training requirement into the new county library law.

As Oliver Garceau pointed out, this ideal made California the prototype and recruiting ground for the county library movement throughout the nation, though in many ways, especially in many of its problems, the library serving a single county is the counterpart of the village library now decried as inadequate.⁶ The high vision of *equal*, *economical*, and *complete* library service, first outlined so clearly in California, led state agencies to the next development—multi-county or regional library service.

A study of the methods used by state agencies today to develop county, multi-county service or state-supported regional service shows that the objectives have remained the same, though the means have changed from "hiring a livery rig" to using fast cars and faster airplanes in telling the library story. Publicity methods still rely on the county newspapers, club meetings, and corner "spit and chew" clubs, but have added motion pictures, radio and television interviews, and feature reports.

There is not a state library organizer in the field today who would not agree that this account of "how to organize a county library" is not as valid in essence as it was in the early 1900's—given the proper change in transportation.

"Before you go to a county, inform yourself about county finances, assessed valuation, tax rates, money needed for a county library.

As soon as you reach a county, rush like mad to see all the county supervisors, preferably at home, where they are more comfortable. They must hear the story from you first hand. See the district attorney, the county superintendent of schools, the county clerk and other county officials, even the sheriff for he travels all over the county.

See the editors of the papers, but if possible keep out of print at first, so as to tell the story yourself to the key people.

Get time tables of all means of travel in the county.

Begin to make your schedule, leading up to the next meeting of the supervisors at which the proposal will be presented.

Get the names, addresses, phone numbers of all civic organizations and their officers—women's clubs, Parent-Teachers organizations, Chambers of Commerce, granges, farmers unions, ministers, women's church societies, teachers, any other group that any one tells you about.

Get schedules of all meetings. Watch the papers carefully for information about meetings.

Creating New Local Service in the United States

Make friends with the hotel clerk, the bell boys, the bus drivers, etc. They are all-important in helping you carry out a schedule.

Your time table and schedule will automatically fill up as you do all these things. Then get up at 6 A.M. to telephone into the country to make the appointments you couldn't reach the night before. Catch an early train, or bus, or hire a livery rig to go to the places where you will work today. Interview people in the morning, when the women are more likely to be at home and the storekeepers less liable to be too busy to listen.

Go to a meeting in the afternoon and another one in the evening.

Catch a late train back to town. Go to the newspaper to give them a written story about the meetings.

Write Mr. Gillis. Your other letter writing will be done on the train, or waiting for it, or in the restaurant. Make out your daily report. Make out your expense account. Be sure to sort out your receipts. Go to bed."⁷

In addition to being informed about county finances, field workers today carry a fund of information with them regarding political and sociological compositions of the communities in which they are to work. They also need factual information on the following points:

1. Area of proposed library unit
2. Total income and expenditures of county government
3. Bonded indebtedness
4. Population
 - a. Number
 - b. Characteristics: age, education, occupation, income
5. Chief industries
6. Educational facilities
 - a. Number and types of schools and colleges
 - b. Enrollment by grades
 - c. Expenditures for education
 - d. Expenditures for school libraries
7. Library statistics
 - a. Number and kinds of libraries in area
 - b. Total income and expenditures
 - c. Book stock available
 - d. Staff (number and training)
 - e. Hours open
 - f. Population served.⁸

GRETCHEN K. SCHENK

A sufficient number of larger units of service have been in operation long enough now, so that today's state agency workers are better prepared to discuss openly the attending benefits and problems which result from the organization of multi-county or regional units. Listed among the benefits would be:

1. More trained staff members available for service to citizens.
2. More economical management of book ordering and processing.
3. Cooperative book selection and other professional activities of benefit to readers in the entire area.
4. Larger book pool, better reference materials.
5. Interchange of little used materials.
6. Economy of individual effort (the same book list can be used by many libraries).
7. Better use of local librarian's time for service to public.
8. Professional assistance to local library when and where needed.
9. Better financing of library service.
10. Better use of equipment, using machines to relieve human labor.

Problems to be overcome would vary with the area. Some or all of the following might have to be considered in promoting new service:

1. Inexperience of political units in working together for joint benefit.
2. Large size of the area and sparsity of population.
3. Poor roads and lack of transportation.
4. Lack of understanding of benefits of regionalization by local governments, local librarians, and trustees.⁹

One of the difficult tasks faced by every state library agency even today is to awaken dormant interest in library service, and arouse a willingness to be taxed for its support. Library movements often have to be sparked by the state agency in order to generate improved service. When Louisiana's first demonstration was developed in 1926, the lack of citizen interest coupled with inertia proved to be a serious problem for the state agency. That more and more state agencies are able to seek out those who possess the necessary convictions and the ability to persuade others in favor of library service, clearly indicates a trend toward stronger extension work. Louisiana's demonstration program has given substance to the theory that once good library service could be shown publicly, it would naturally sell itself. Ever since the first demonstration was organized in Webster Parish thirty years ago, citizen groups request the Louisiana State Library to spon-

Creating New Local Service in the United States

sor demonstrations for one year.¹⁰ The parish governing body (corresponding to the county governing body in other states) agrees to house the demonstration and provide for a tax election at the close of the period. During the demonstration year the state library employs the staff, furnishes all materials and equipment and maintains full control, training local library leaders and citizens in the meaning of adequate library service. The demonstration is in effect an establishment grant. Books, materials, and equipment are left with the new library if the people vote to tax themselves for its maintenance. No such tax election has failed since 1937, and in 1955 one parish voted in favor of the tax only four months after the demonstration began, even though the state library continued its sponsorship to the end of the year.

The Door-Kewaunee, Wisconsin, demonstration, begun in 1950 to run for three years was financed jointly by the state and the two-county region, each paying half the cost.¹¹ The state agency exercised only advisory and fiscal control, making sure that the funds were spent according to law. The regional library board, appointed jointly by the county governing bodies, took immediate charge of the demonstration, selecting personnel and buying equipment. This demonstration was designed to move ahead more slowly than the Louisiana plan, which has had more than twenty-five years' experience on which to base its procedures.

A few facts stand out from the experience with demonstration of various types of services in other states. There must be local demand for such a demonstration, if the service is not to become known as having been imposed by the state. Every demonstration must have a definite termination date, so that citizens will know when state support stops. A demonstration must also provide for the exercise of local initiative and entail some local responsibilities if it is to be supported later through tax funds. Otherwise it is usually a waste of public money.¹²

Demonstrations of service designed to supplement, not supplant, existing library service are described in another chapter in this issue. They must be referred to here, however, from the standpoint of creating new local library service. Vermont, Massachusetts, and other New England states pioneered in demonstrations of supplementary service in the mid-1930's. New York State established a regional service center in Watertown in 1948, also serving only established libraries in three counties. During the next six years, ten new community libraries and six branch libraries were organized in this region. Still, complete coverage had not been achieved. By the end of 1955 the need for regional,

locally-sponsored bookmobile service was apparent and interest was growing. The possibility, though probably very remote, that the service would have to be transferred from state to multi-county support and organization in order to achieve complete region-wide coverage, was also under consideration.¹³

Thus it is apparent that state agency demonstrations of supplementary service must be coupled with effective publicity and promotion by state field workers if complete coverage is to be achieved. Supplementary services are necessary and the trend in that direction grows stronger each year. Yet citizens living in unserved areas in all but a few New England states must continue to look to the state agency for guidance and direction in obtaining modern service. The state agency must pursue its educational campaign to the unserved, though that territory may lie within the boundaries of a regional service center area.

Even when the state agency feels that "Sufficient libraries are already in existence. They need strengthening by taking in surrounding rural areas,"¹⁴ the state agency must still be prepared to assist the strengthened library by "spreading the word." Successful state agencies have been careful to offer advice and information only. Maintaining an impartial attitude for "We'll give you the information and tell you the truth, but you must make up your own mind" has usually been the state agency's most effective campaign weapon against the charge that the agency is "out to raise taxes in the county" or that it is "foisting something we don't want or need" on the unsuspecting populace. Of course, if one or more counties plan to join an already established library system, the librarian and trustees of the established library can actively assist campaigners by being available for consultation in a manner similar to the consultation offered by the state agency.

In a study of the policies and practices of stimulating the establishment of permanent library service in unserved rural areas, Paxton P. Price reported for the Joint Committee of the American Library Association and Rural Sociological Society that state agencies were using the following methods in 1955:¹⁵

	<i>Policy</i>	<i>Practice</i>
1. Expanding existing city or town library into larger sized libraries such as:		
a. township-wide size	11	13
b. county-wide size	25	19
c. multi-county size	24	10
d. regional size	18	6

Creating New Local Service in the United States

	<i>Policy</i>	<i>Practice</i>
2. Creation of separate county libraries <i>excluding</i> city or town libraries therein	6	11
3. Creation of multi-county libraries including only unserved areas	2	2
4. Creation of county libraries including city or town libraries therein	29	25
5. Creation of "Regional" or area libraries whose boundaries do not coincide with county boundaries	14	5
6. Creation of regional libraries centered around a major or secondary trade center	10	5
7. Establishment of regional branches of State Library agency to give direct service to unserved individuals in rural areas	11	6
8. Establishment of regional branches of State Library Agency to give "wholesale"-type service to libraries, which, in turn, would extend services to rural residents	16	5
9. Organization of libraries in a section of the state for express purpose of extending service to unserved rural residents through these libraries	12	9
10. Organization of library service units primarily financed by:		
a. local funds	25	25
b. state and/or federal funds	11	10
11. Providing permanent service to rural residents by giving bookmobile service directly from the State Library agency	9	4
12. In cooperation with public libraries providing deposit stations unattended by personnel in small population centers	6	8
13. Providing branch libraries in rural population centers sponsored by the State Library agency in cooperation with local public libraries, paid with local library funds	9	7
14. State Library agency library materials distributed by mail in quantity "packages" to unserved population centers, on a time-rotation basis, unattended by library-paid personnel	17	22
15. Giving personal, direct, mail-order type library service to individual borrowers from State Library agency	34	44
16. Use of library service demonstration from State Library agency to:		
a. one county	10	5
b. multi-county	11	5
c. regional area	8	3
d. in cooperation with city library extending service to rural surroundings	11	3
17. Giving state monetary assistance to support extending service to unserved rural areas through:		
a. city or town library	7	10
b. county library	17	14
c. multi-county library	14	8
d. regional library	9	4
e. federation of city libraries	3	1
f. non-tax supported libraries	3	1

GRETCHEN K. SCHENK

	Policy	Practice
18. Giving state <i>service</i> assistance (such as centralized book ordering, cataloging, professional personnel) to support a program of extending service to neighboring rural areas:		
a. city or town library	9	8
b. county library	10	9
c. multi-county library	9	5
d. regional library	6	3
e. federation of city libraries	3	0
f. non-tax supported libraries	2	2
19. Give monetary <i>or</i> service assistance to unserved rural areas for library service demonstrations during time of grant under local management to produce:		
a. limited or minimum service (\$1.00 per capita)	2	1
b. reasonably good service (\$1.50 per capita)	2	1
c. superior service (\$2.00 per capita)	0	0
20. Giving monetary <i>or</i> service assistance to unserved rural areas for library demonstrations during time of grant under local management:		
a. 5,000 to 10,000 population	4	3
b. 10,000 to 25,000 population	4	3
c. 25,000 to 50,000 population	9	5
d. 50,000 to 100,000 population	5	3
21. Subsidizing scholarships for library school students native to state	7	8
22. Subsidizing installation of library training in native state educational institutions	2	2
23. In-service training program for local non-professional librarians to be conducted by some official state agency or institution	27	26

This tabulation provides an excellent overview of the trends in extending service to unserved areas. While forty-four state agencies still make it a practice to give direct personal mail-order service, only thirty-four admit that it is an established policy. Conversely, many modern policies have been agreed upon by the state agencies but have not been put into practice yet, chiefly for lack of funds and personnel.

The tabulation also indicates in the "Policy" column that more state agencies are accepting the leadership role indicated when the citizens of La Mesa wrote a letter to the governor "thanking him for Mr. Gillis." As Laura C. Langston has pointed out—"The consultant staff must keep themselves alert to the latest developments in the science of librarianship and to library policies and programs in other states. Above all, they must keep themselves approachable and easily accessible to everyone in the state interested in libraries."¹⁶

Generally speaking, the trend is away from "cataloging and classifying the library" as being among the field workers' chief duties, to offering more assistance through group training, workshops, and insti-

Creating New Local Service in the United States

tutes. The leadership role is particularly evident in such activities, since only the state agency can, as a rule, sponsor such undertakings. Lacking a strong state agency, some state library associations have had to provide some measure of this in-service training until such time as the state agency could begin to function more effectively.

Another discernible trend is evident in movements to recruit superior extension personnel for state agencies. Developments are uneven, of course, superior state agencies attracting superior personnel. Yet more emphasis is being placed on finding vigorous thinkers and inspiring doers to develop new services to unserved areas. Salaries for state agency staff members are beginning to equal those found in large libraries.¹⁷ This trend must of necessity continue so that this difficult and demanding field may be staffed by the best available talent. The fact is being recognized that state agency work is not "everybody's dish," and that extension positions, because of the peculiar and exacting demands made on the personnel, fall into the special, or rare, and therefore highly priced classifications.

If America still has many millions of people without public library service and even more millions with only token service, inadequate, poorly supported state agencies are largely responsible.¹⁸ The trend toward supplying stronger state agency leadership has been noticeable in several states. In 1952, Governor Earl Warren chose the new state librarian from a list of candidates supplied by a committee from the California Library Association. The Texas Library Association continues its work to strengthen the state agency by bringing the need for outstanding state leadership to the attention of the Texas Library and Historical Commission.¹⁹ Eventual enactment of the Library Services Bill has focused attention not only on the creation of new local services by the state agency, but on the strength and leadership of the state agency itself. In time to come more citizens should eventually be able to "thank the governor"—or other appointing body—for improved state leadership.

Perhaps few citizen groups outside of La Mesa have ever thought to express their thanks to the Governor "for the county library law," but more are beginning to have reasons for doing so. Each legislative year brings more evidence that reading is no longer being considered merely an urban habit and libraries an educational luxury.³ Ceilings on tax support for rural libraries are being raised²⁰ and some states, such as Alabama, merely specify that the support for libraries developed by the state agency shall be allocated from available funds.

To study trends in the extension role of the state agency, it is ad-

visible to compare recommendations made in 1944 with those in actual practice today. At the Institute on Library Extension, P. A. T. Noon submitted some recommendations to make the state library agency a vital force in library extension. Among those were:

1. A state-by-state survey of state library agencies and library needs throughout each state. (Not yet accomplished, though Library Services Bill will help. Author.)

2. State-wide library planning. (Being encouraged by the possibility of Federal Aid. Author.)

3. State aid to libraries for the development of larger unit libraries and the promotion of bookmobile service. (This has been accomplished in a number of states, i.e., Missouri. Author.)

4. Full cooperation between library organizations and the state library agency. (More evidence of this throughout the nation, i.e., Montana, Idaho, Mississippi, etc. Author.)

5. Acknowledgment of the absence of traveling libraries and complete revision of all library laws permitting the use of appropriations for demonstrations and experiments. (This occurred most recently in Michigan. Author.)

6. Recognition of the enormous responsibility of the direction of a state library agency. (Discussed above. Author.)

7. Inclusion in all library-school curricula of courses on state-wide agencies—their functions and philosophy, the organization of county and regional libraries, including bookmobile service. A course in rural sociology is strongly recommended. (Pressure of circumstances is bringing this about. Author.)²¹

If any conclusions can be drawn from the above indication of trends in the work of the state agency in establishing new local services, they would possibly center about two points:

The continued use of personal contacts in developing new services; the education of the potential user in what modern library service can offer today.

The additional use of experience-demonstrations, visual presentations through motion pictures and television, as well as by word of mouth.

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Creating New Local Service in the United States

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