



Library Legislation Discovered

HENRY T. DRENNAN

MUCH FEDERAL LEGISLATION not specifically written for library purposes is available for the support of various kinds of library activities and interest. The *Catalog of Federal Education Assistance Programs* is the most comprehensive guide to these laws.¹ This article, then, is concerned with nonlibrary programs for libraries; it aims to develop a brief rationale for utilizing such legislation as a source of support for change, sets forth some guidelines to strengthen applications for assistance to funding sources, and provides examples of programs and program settings which may utilize such federal grant programs.

The rationale for relating libraries to programs not specifically enacted for library purposes lies within the library's essential power of valence—the ability to evaluate and assemble the realms of knowledge within its systemic organization. Sometimes we can only recognize a systemic organization by its spectacular moving parts. But libraries are a social invention, quiet in purpose and activities, whose quality of valence permits the socialization of knowledge.

Librarians have been unaware of, or perhaps reluctant to admit, the superiority of the invention which they have created and the organization they conduct. Libraries seek, value and have access to new knowledge. Through them new knowledge is attached to the armature of public understanding. The systematizing thrust of libraries places them in a seeking mode. Even libraries which are by the nature of their clientele most limited in their scope and most particularized in depth—i.e., special libraries—consistently seek and contain information which is somewhat extramural.

New tasks bring new ties. The leadership of the American Library Association (ALA) and librarians are developing a substantial interest in literacy, bilingualism and reading as a competency. The publication

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of Lyman's study by the ALA (with research supported by the Office of Education) illustrates this heightened concern.² With new tasks comes the need to involve other disciplines, e.g., the large joint Adult Basic Education-Library Literacy Project, funded by the Office of Education and conducted in five Appalachian states by the Appalachian Adult Education Center of Morehead, Kentucky. Through such literacy projects a number of federal grant programs have shared "nonlibrary" programs: Adult Basic Education (ABE), Bi-lingual Education, Indian Education, Johnson O'Malley Funds (administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs) and Right-to-Read participate in projects for literacy initiated under specifically library-purpose titles, principally the two sections of Title II-B of the Higher Education Act (HEA) and the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA).

A demonstration of library service designed by and for Indians is, among other things, concerned with library support for literacy. The National Indian Education Association (NIEA), with multiple federal program support, operates the demonstration at three reservation sites and cooperates in a fourth. These projects are with the Mohawks at Akwesasne, St. Regis, New York; the Navajo at Rough Rock, Arizona; and the Dakota Sioux at Standing Rock, South/North Dakota.³ A cooperating project linked by technical assistance is at the joint reservation of the Arapahoe and Shoshone people at Wind River, Wyoming.

American Indians are a geographically and culturally isolated people. They are guardians of a tribal culture and language, but they pay a high social price for this inheritance. Approximately 47 percent of the Arapahoe and Shoshone people at the Wind River Reservation are unemployed. Thus most are disadvantaged. More than one-half of the high school students have serious computational difficulties, and nearly 60 percent have serious reading problems. It is probable, although unreported, that these learning problems are more pronounced among older adult tribal members.⁴ At Standing Rock, 79 percent of the adults had speaking ability in one of the three Siouan dialects but only 17 percent could write in their own language. Eighty-three percent of the Navajos speak their own tongue but only 29 percent had writing skills.

Thus, literacy in their own language is not a simple problem for many functionally illiterate Americans. English—the dominant cultural, commercial and governmental language of the United States—is a second language for millions of people, including Indians. The largest group disadvantaged by language is that of Hispanic

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heritage citizens. In Lyman's sample of urban new adult readers nearly all (99 percent) spoke English but a significant component spoke Spanish (16 percent) and 9 percent spoke other tongues. Thus, one-fourth of those people learned English as a second language.⁵

Despite new initiatives, supportive library services for the bi-lingual have far to go. At Standing Rock, South Dakota, the members of the Sioux tribe assisted in the research design of new library services for the reservation. They reported that previous traditional library services did little to meet their information needs: 58 percent of the adults cited prohibitive rules in the library, 44 percent found a lack of Indian-oriented materials, 55 percent noted unsuitable space or inadequate hours, and 55 percent complained that the library was closed when the Indians could use it.

In a major study of Spanish-speaking persons and library services in five states of the Southwest, data were developed reflecting Mexican-American preceptions of their local public library services.⁶ Only 3 percent of the respondents discussing public libraries could recall that they had ever participated in special library programs devoted to the Spanish speaking. Thirteen percent were aware of the existence of bilingual programs offered by their libraries. Twenty-five percent knew of the presence of Spanish-language collections, yet another 25 percent had no knowledge of their existence. Seventy-five percent reported that their public library did not operate a Spanish-language information center.

However, attaining literacy is not exclusively the problem of the bilingual. Most functional illiterates are native English speakers. A wide range of federal programs continues to struggle with the problem of functional illiteracy. Adult Basic Education has enrolled 5.5 million persons in state grant programs in the decade 1965-74.⁷ A Harris Associates Survey conducted for Right-to-Read estimates that 30 million Americans remain or are becoming functionally illiterate.⁸ Functional illiteracy is one of the most intractable, irreducible problems that education has yet to face; its magnitude and intractability are a crisis for the library and a threat to the survival of millions of people.

Some libraries are conducting programs to promote literacy. For example, the Free Library of Philadelphia operates reading support centers in its branches and has, at this writing, just concluded a conference which included many of the Philadelphia associations in the fight against illiteracy. A number of federal programs—ABE, LSCA,

HEA Titles II-B and II-A, and Right-to-Read—are sharing in the Library/Adult Basic Education Project conducted in Appalachia.

Many Appalachian whites are rural mountain people who live in an isolation which fosters their culture and to some degree inhibits its degradation. But with this isolation comes a restrictive backwardness that places a heavy premium on the family, and balks at the introduction of fresh viewpoints. Thus, in such isolated, rural areas communication is more personal than in other regions. Neighbors are the primary source of information because of a conscious sense of alienation and an associated lack of knowledge about the sources of information. Rural people are ear oriented. Librarians may need to use audiovisual media as a necessary prelude to competency with print. Any effective library delivery system must emphasize individualization and personalization of materials delivery in order to become congruent with the communications style of its desired constituency.⁹

The Appalachian Adult Education Center (AAEC), in its first major report on the Library/Adult Basic Education (ABE) Project, found that neither libraries nor ABE presented appropriate print in a satisfactorily usable form nor, in the case of ABE, used it as an instructional media:

Both specializations (libraries and ABE) suffer from a lack of emphasis on coping skills. ABE tends to offer traditional preparation in skills without utilizing the daily contact of print which teaches the transfer of knowledge to everyday tasks. The AAEC has found that only a minority of libraries stress the materials which deal with coping skills. [This] material tends to be pamphlet-type and library-collected information for referrals. Those librarians who are repository-minded are likely to feel that pamphlets are of no consequence—not to mention bothersome—and that community information is outside the service limits of the library. Unfortunately, adults cannot concentrate on upgrading while pressing everyday problems interfere. Readily available information for the relief of pressures and knowledge of how to use it looses the adult to proceed toward her or his goals.¹⁰

Nevertheless, the Library/ABE project has made librarians more aware of the nature of the disadvantaged adult and the limits of his life. Librarians at the project's sites understand the problems of reaching the disadvantaged and are pleased with their initial successes. Yet many of the libraries of rural Appalachia contain collections woefully inadequate to meet the coping needs of a disadvantaged population.

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Their budgets, despite federal support, are inadequate for building coping collections.

The opening paragraphs of this article stressed the ability of the library to acquire and organize diverse kinds of knowledge and its need to work with other educational interests in operations. The Library/ABE project was specifically designed to experiment in this setting. Librarians wishing to learn the operational characteristics of such combinations will be interested in the project's field experience.

The AAEC found that any successful cooperation required an understanding of differences and an ability to accommodate them. That is, the participants must be goal oriented. For instance, the greatest difference the AAEC observed between the libraries and the schools (the parent body of ABE) was that the state education agency acted in a more regulatory manner than did the state library agency. The library agency functioned almost universally in an advisory capacity. Federal education funds (as contrasted with federal library funds) carried more constraints. At the state and local levels public education carries more clout; it commands more jobs.

These differences may not be pleasant or flattering to either agency but they appear as institutional behavior and should elicit no surprise.

In the AAEC experience, one result of these differences in organization and community status is a problem in approaching the proper level of administrator in each institution to effect coordination without being offensive, i.e., (1) going over the head of the appropriate person, or (2) trying to combine forces between a lower echelon school person and a high echelon library person, or (3) approaching the wrong functionary and raising territorial hostilities.¹¹

OLDER AMERICANS

Every tenth American is an older American. The record of the library profession's concern for this growing societal segment remains mixed and the prospects for the future are indifferent.¹² This is not to indicate that legislative support is not promising; it is.

The most recently enacted title under LSCA concerns the elderly. It is contained in the Older Americans Comprehensive Service Amendments of 1973 and offers an extensive opportunity for the development of special library services. These amendments were based on the expressed interest of the delegates to the White House

Conference on Aging and on their specific recommendations in support of libraries and continuing education.

The amendment entitled Title IV, Older Readers Services, authorizes the appropriation of federal funds, none of which have been appropriated, for these supportive library activities: "(1) the training of librarians to work with the elderly; (2) the conduct of special library programs for the elderly; (3) the purchase of special library materials for use by the elderly; (4) the payment of salaries for elderly persons who wish to work in libraries as assistants on programs for the elderly; (5) the provision of in-home visits by librarians and other library personnel to the elderly; (6) the establishment of outreach programs to notify the elderly of library services available to them; and (7) the furnishing of transportation to enable the elderly to have access to library services." The title contains no requirement for local or state matching funds.¹³ That this magnificent piece of legislation should go unnoticed by the library profession is puzzling.

Just prior to the 1971 White House Conference on Aging, a national survey sponsored by the Cleveland Public Library queried public librarians on their plans for future program development. Their responses in terms of the weight they would give to services for various age groups foreshadowed the relatively neutral stand with which they might view legislative opportunities for program development. Table 1 is derived from the survey and reports public librarians' planning preferences for the present (at the time of the survey) and the future. The shift is significantly away from younger groups in the direction of older patrons but it does not extend substantially to the elderly. Seventeen percent of the libraries moved their first preference from children but only 3 percent more gave a preference to developing programs for the old.

Two principal federal sources assist library service programming for the elderly through state and local governments. The largest amount granted comes through the Library Services and Construction Act. About \$1.1 million for support of services to the aging for public and institutional libraries came from LSCA in the period 1966-72.¹⁴ This allocation to the aging represented about 0.3% of a total of more than \$312 million appropriated for LSCA. The Older Americans Act (OAA) serves as the other principal source of federal funds utilized for library services to the aging. The \$307,809 from OAA (reported for the same period) allocated to nine projects somewhat exceeded, with its share of 0.32 percent of total Administration on Aging (AOA) outlays, the 0.3 percent of funds expended by LSCA.

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TABLE 1

PUBLIC LIBRARIANS' PLANNING PREFERENCES

	Target Age Groups				
	1-5	6-12	13-20	21-64	65+
Present (1971)	16%	18%	7%	54%	5%
Future (1971-1976)	9%	8%	9%	66%	8%
Change	-7%	-10%	+2%	+12%	+3%

Source: *National Survey of Library Services to the Aging*. Cleveland Public Library (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, Bureau of Libraries and Educational Technology), Dec. 1971.

Prior to 1966, no state library agency reported budgeting funds specifically for the aging. Since that time, in the period 1966-72, seven state library agencies reported an expenditure of \$385,295. This was less than 1 percent of their combined total budgets. In 1971 these states funded projects at an average outlay of \$18,750 per project. Seventy-two of 244 public libraries budgeted specifically for the aging; their total budget outlay was \$957,719. Whether the total contained either state or federal funds is unascertainable. At no level of government can these allocations be described as robust.

The realities of funding and lack of attention to program services for the aging should not deter librarians from promoting the needs of older persons. Both LSCA and AOA are available to libraries as programs which will respond to good proposals. The problem, in part, seems to be lack of interest. In the recent competition for grant assistance from the Library Research and Demonstration Program (HEA, Title II-B), only one of the 180 applicants proposed to work in the area of the aging, and that application was a technical proposal concerning the indexing of gerontological materials.

Whatever the stance of the library profession with regard to programming for older adults, the recorded sentiments of elders exhibits a preference for library services. In a 1973 survey of special federal library programs, older adults ranked second among groups using the programs frequently. Table 2 is derived from a wider presentation of target group preferences and illustrates the attitudes of older citizens toward special programming. In addition, older citizens do have specific program preferences and suggestions for improvements as illustrated in Table 3. These suggestions reflect the concern of older citizens for mobility and accessibility. Their feeling

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TABLE 2

ATTITUDES OF THE AGED TOWARD SPECIAL PROGRAMMING IN LIBRARIES

Attitude	Older Citizens 65+
Very favorable, many use it	66.6%
Some use it and like it	18.7%
Unfavorable, few use it	0.0%
Many are unaware of it	10.4%
Other	4.1%

Source: System Development Corporation. *Evaluation of LSCA Services to Special Target Groups, Final Report, 1973*. Table IV C33, p. IV-100.

TABLE 3

SUGGESTIONS OF OLDER USERS FOR IMPROVING PROGRAMS

Suggestions for Improvement	Percentage of those 65+ Making Suggestion
Publicize project more widely	15.9
Transport users	12.3
Make project more accessible	11.3
Add a bookmobile	11.3
Add specific topical material	6.8
Conduct classes	6.8
Make it more comfortable	5.6
Change location	4.5

Source: System Development Corporation. *Evaluation of LSCA Services to Special Target Groups, Final Report, 1973*. p. IV-100.

that the projects are not sufficiently publicized is also a form of care about accessibility. Librarians need to be aware of these feelings in designing programs.

There are elements of which library planners should be aware in Table 3 and in one of the resolutions from the education section of the 1971 White House Conference on Aging. The older patrons of special programs gave a fairly high rating to the concept of conducting classes in the library; they gave an equal rating to the need for specific materials. In the resolution from the conference they urged: "The expansion of adult educational programs having a demonstrated record of success should receive higher priority with due consideration being given to experimental and innovative programs."¹⁵

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The supporting text of the education section stated: "One of these [developments] may be observed in the phenomenal growth of the Community College . . . the new breed of Community College is by franchise and by budget allocations, designed to make community services and adult education a principal part of an overall program. . . . Already there is evidence that community colleges are beginning to take seriously their responsibility, for providing educational services to older persons."¹⁶

Librarians should be aware of the program possibilities for community colleges and library-based nontraditional learning under the sponsorship of the AOA. Community colleges are expanding their services and courses geared to older adults. Twenty-six community colleges in 15 states operate "retired senior volunteer programs"; more than 140 community colleges offer preretirement educational services; 340 community colleges offer programs for second careers, for basic education, for recreational endeavors, and for cultural enrichment.¹⁷

The requirements of older Americans in an educational setting may be unfamiliar to most of us and may require some study for program planning. Librarians should not be unduly concerned about developing a special program environment for a specific age group. For fifty years or more, school and public libraries have successfully created an optimum environment of facilities and materials for children. Their success has been so pervasive and recognized that the early difficulties in planning and the necessary adjustments have faded into the customary. Unlike the successful programming of services to children, services to elders have not yet received the intensive concern and planning requiring many years of purpose. Yet the aged are also deserving and now, unlike children, are an increasing segment in American society. Within the next fifty years the number of older adults will double.

We need to think of the educational services for these patrons and the optimum learning and physical environment that must be established. First, we must confront the myth in our youth-oriented society that older persons cannot learn.¹⁸ Older people need to learn. No age group is exempt from the opportunities and critical variables of society. Older persons are necessarily committed to grappling with survival factors. Their energies are economized and their learning commitments are oriented to these areas. They need to learn second careers, to redirect their activities and interests into new channels, and to learn to accept greater degrees of dependence. Older people can

learn new skills and new roles because they have been learning all their life. The program challenge is with the planner.

Learning involves memory and not all kinds of memory decline with age. Vocabulary size grows through life. Older people suffer a decline of short-term memory. The greatest change comes in memory which involves the formation of new associations, e.g., learning a new language. Memory losses may be associated less with the processes of aging than with the level of activity. The inquiring mind remains an examining mind.

Modes of thought of older people differ from those of the young. Older adults generalize less from specific data to abstract concepts; yet even this may merely reflect the type of education received in an earlier America. Creative thinking declines early in our lives, as early as the thirties. Yet it does not disappear and throughout history creative work has been achieved by older adults, e.g., Michelangelo and Pope John XXIII. Picasso said, "A long life is necessary to become young." Lethargy in older people may be caused by a dull physical environment and declining physical energy. Our social and physical environment must be studied to seek supportive elements for drive-associated behavior.

An extensive survey and demonstration project for supportive library services for older adults in Kentucky, conducted for the Office of Libraries and Learning Resources, studied in considerable detail the library's physical setting as related to the physical capacity of the elderly.¹⁹ Some innovations in library design have not been useful to older persons. Open shelves are a boon to the browser but they are a problem in economy of energy for the elder. Vision is at a premium in library (and learning) use and deterioration of vision (the changing shape of the eye permits less light) is a barrier to the elderly. Almost all (94 percent) of the older persons queried in the Kentucky project reported the use of reading glasses. Sixty-eight percent reported having had an eye check-up within two years (the maximum period for safety). Thus nearly a third of the respondents may be wearing glasses without adequate correction. Libraries are lighted for persons with "normal" vision. Older people require more light. We adapt our environment for children; we have not significantly altered it for elders.

Bifocals provide an awkward problem for all. For those who wish to read shelves they are quite difficult. Reading book titles and catalog numbers either must be done with one's nose almost on the spine of the book (difficult when they are on top or bottom shelves), or one must

back up far enough to try to focus with the distance lens—a real difficulty given the width of stack aisles. Perhaps hearing is not as critical for library use, but it is critical for general learning. For those people aged 65-79, the rate of hearing impairment is forty times greater than for those 18-24 years of age.

Selecting the proper card from the catalog to look for a book can be painful and fumbling. In the 65-79 age group, 50.3 percent of the men and 44.0 percent of the women in the United States are afflicted with a mild form of osteoarthritis. Orthopedic defects can make retrieving a book awkward. When the elderly patron finds the proper stack location the chances are two out of three that it will not be at waist level. The patron must bend down head towards the floor or perhaps ascend a stool—if one is handy. A lessened sense of balance and reduced tactile sense in the extremities contribute to fear of falling.

Despite these degenerative aspects of aging, the Kentucky respondents reported general good health. Twenty-two percent are limited in some of their physical activities; 31 percent reported no limitations. Fifty-eight percent felt themselves to be in excellent or good health, 2 percent rated their health poor, and 38 percent thought it fair.

Late in 1974 the Tulsa City-County Library was designated an information and referral center for older citizens in its three-county metropolitan area. The designation illustrates the national mandate of the AOA to concern itself with the survival needs of its constituency and the public library's response to purposefully strengthen the survival chances of its older patrons.

Older citizens are communication isolates. Childers writes that aging Americans more than any other disadvantaged group, are isolated in their environment.²⁰ He notes the isolating disabilities that remove the elderly from civic society: the loss of friends which reduces the first-hand information sources (invariably the primary source in any age group); the impaired mobility and sensory capability that reduce input, with the associated problem of the need to master new supporting systems; and the decline of income that increases the need for current information to retain their physical environment (a large percentage of them are homeowners).

Most important to the elderly, the library can be a free, ready, reliable information source. The elderly are:

forced to rely more and more on public programs for life support—social security, Medicare, free transportation, etc. To a

lone individual though, these programs appear to be numerous, varied and sometimes contradictory. Finding his way through them in order to receive all of his just entitlements is a bewildering and endless process. There is a critical need for information services that will dispense information on the various social agencies and their programs in an aggressive manner—not waiting till the client approaches, but trying to anticipate his needs and making contact with him first.²¹

Childers' comments briefly describe a model for information and referral through public libraries. Interest in the inauguration or strengthening of such services is, as he notes, high in the library profession. To place that interest in interaction with the real world one must confront the varied facts of information needs in our society.

URBAN INFORMATION NEEDS

A considerable amount of detail, structured within a metropolitan social framework, is available on urban information needs. The most recently completed comprehensive examination of information needs describes the citizens of Baltimore by a carefully selected sample of all socio-economic strata.²² Such a wide-ranging frame of inquiry is unique in library research for attention has been devoted, understandably, to publics with the most critical needs. By focusing on the information needs of the disadvantaged we have limited our ability to assist them (and other publics) within the general context of informational characteristics. Warner's Baltimore study with its "wide-angle" perspective has given us a broader picture.

The study hypothesizes that the context of need is now unfavorable to users and particularly to the disadvantaged:

1. Some social service agencies communicate ineptly with their clients or set up bureaucratic barriers.
2. Practitioners working in social services are often uninformed about their clients' life styles and misunderstand needs.
3. Some social service agencies inflate their records by deliberately serving the easy to reach.
4. Electronic media in the United States contain little information that is useful in decision making. Typical findings show that high print media users are the only respondents who possess accurate knowledge for decision making.²³

The Baltimore study indicated a number of things about the saliency

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of problems and the respondents' perceptions of their obduracy as opposed to the effectiveness of information and intervention as correctives. The agenda of problems is probably familiar to all of us. Three of the problem areas—the schools, the neighbors and the cost of food—are seen as unyielding to mere information. The difficulties with the schools and the neighbors were perceived as reducible through some form of personal intervention. The respondents gave much less weight to information alone as a corrective to a complaint than they gave to “needs for help,” that is, to the effect of personal intervention. Of the fifteen most cited complaints, only two were identified as likely to be assisted through “information”: “househunting” and “unemployed—looking for a job.”

Information-seeking characteristics of the respondents are important for those planning the design or redesign of information services. Table 4 depicts the Baltimore respondents' choice of information sources and the degree of effectiveness they impute to the sources. Personal contacts are the basic information-seeking technique of the Baltimore respondents, as of almost all information seekers. Personal contacts are the source most frequently used, and with the highest success rate. In addition, they are the most economical. Important to our consideration are these factors:

1. All of the print sources had a success rating exceeding their nonsuccess rate. None of the electronic sources had a success rate that exceeded their nonsuccess rate.
2. Libraries barely intruded on the information-seeking horizon and their effectiveness was held to be minimal.

The minimum intervention of libraries in information-seeking has convinced many public librarians that they must search for viable delivery systems to support their newly sought vulnerable constituencies.

If libraries are the least often cited, newspapers are the most frequently cited media sources. Yet, their success rate is scarcely higher than their nonsuccess rate. It would be useful to know success ratios by economic status for differing media sources, but the investigators were unable to establish clearly such ratios.

Most success was obtained by the educated, those with the highest incomes and those in professional/managerial positions.²⁴ In other words, as sources of information in problem solving, the media and libraries are now, at least in one city, counterproductive for the economically disadvantaged, the illiterate and the uneducated.

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TABLE 4

INFORMATION SOURCES AND FREQUENCY OF USE FOR FIFTEEN
MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEMS (1973)

Sources	Total (N = 947) Frequency of use	(N = 247) Successful	(N = 700) Non- Successful
Personal Contacts	59%	74%	54%
Media			
Television	26	26	27
Radio	14	12	14
Newspapers	38	40	37
Magazines	15	22	12
Books	7	8	7
Libraries	2	2	3

Source: Warner, Edward S., *et al. Information Needs of Urban Residents, Final Report*. Baltimore (Maryland) Regional Planning Council, U.S. Office of Education, Division of Library Programs, Dec. 1973, p. 171. (OEC-0-71-4555)

Robert Yin and others have paid close attention to the phenomenon of decentralized urban services. Neighborhood information services conducted by public libraries have come under his study.²⁵ A positive outcome of the decentralization of urban municipal services has been improved services and an increased flow of information. Related to this finding, Yin and Yates held that "given a choice between a federally initiated or a locally initiated policy the results support locally based policies"²⁶ because federal support was not a major condition of success, and the complexity of the neighborhood services setting calls for hand-tailoring of an innovation to its local environment. Despite these perceptions, we should not ignore the design of the major library information project, the Neighborhood Information Project, that is federally funded. That each city designed its own services does speak for the flexibility of the federal government in its approach to the specificity of local environment.

However, in studying neighborhood information services, Yin does see a federal role. He and his associates propose that, while federal funds have in the past established and supported information and referral services (at least in a demonstration period), federal funds should be available on a more selective basis to cover "the costs of retraining or of purchasing new equipment where a library system has

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already made a commitment to use its own staff and funds to operate an information and referral service."²⁷

Basically, the public library with its branch system is seen as a positive component of decentralized services because of its information capacities:

1. Libraries specialize in providing information. However, its information domain should be widened. At present it is book-bound.
2. The library is accessible in a spatial and temporal sense. The library has longer hours of service than any other public service except for emergency service.
3. The library has an explicit charter to serve all residents.
4. Although the branch has a specific neighborhood character, it has a wider resource base as part of a city-wide system.²⁸

In the urban information study of 1973, an urban public rated consumer concerns near the top in a ranking of perceived problems. Of the ten most frequently cited urban problems, six were consumer related.²⁹ Responding to those concerns, which have grown sharper since the study, a consumer education agency is now being established in the U.S. Office of Education under Public Law 93-380 (the Education Amendments of 1974). Preliminary planning for grant and contract support from the Office of Consumer Education includes the consideration of the eligibility of these groups as applicants under the program: institutions of higher education, state and local education agencies, and other private and public organizations and institutions. Libraries are specifically included in this preliminary planning.

Some activities envisaged in the planning stage include: support and encouragement for the development of new improved materials, curricula and teaching techniques in model education programs; the development and maintenance of programs in consumer education at the elementary, secondary and higher education levels; the dissemination of curricular materials and other consumer education programs throughout the nation; the provision of training programs for teachers, other educational personnel, public service personnel, community and labor, leaders and government employees at the federal, state and local levels; the provision for community consumer education programs; and the provision and distribution of materials in consumer education by the mass media.

The three most difficult urban problems seem to be: (1)

neighborhood, (2) consumer, and (3) housing and household maintenance. All of these areas contain a consumer quotient. For instance, the item "housing and household maintenance" in the Warner report includes: "Rental problems, utilities service and househunting." The consumer category is described in the study as:

Need information about services
 Complaints about rip-offs
 Services unavailable, inconvenient
 Poor product quality.³⁰

Consumer complaints are most frequently voiced by persons in clerical or sales positions, while the cost of food is of greatest concern to the elderly. Indeed, the cost of food is perceived by all respondents as the most intractable problem.

One finding of the Warner report is that the poor suffer more. The less educated, lower-income respondents in the survey had more crisis needs, fewer actual contacts with appropriate sources, less ability to make contacts, less ability to obtain solutions, and less belief that solutions are obtainable. Those with more formal education are more likely to rely on print than broadcast media and more likely to make choices based on cost rather than convenience. The print user commands more exact and usable information.³¹

Our studies are not complete enough to provide a safe grasp of the information needs of rural people; consequently, comprehensive data on the consumer needs of geographically isolated persons are unavailable. Their consumer needs have been described in a position paper written for the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. Ann Hayes and Anne Shelby tell us that geographical remoteness is remoteness from the consumer advantages of urban areas. Economic self-sufficiency is a lost art:

Rural people in many areas are caught between a latter-day pioneer philosophy which teaches self-sufficiency and independence, and the present reality of an interdependent society in which self-sufficiency is not possible. . . . Although assaulted through television commercials by the consumer standards of urban middle class. . . the rural consumer has little choice of what product he will buy, where he will buy it, or how much it will cost. He is easy prey for the unscrupulous salesman (who is particularly effective in rural areas because of his "personalized delivery system").³²

There is a need for information on the rights of the consumer,

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consumer hot lines, the Better Business Bureau, how to avoid fraud, buying insurance, food, clothing, land and farm equipment. Mail service supporting an information system could strongly reduce chicanery and uncertainty in the provision of consumer services for geographically isolated people. Librarians interested in strengthening consumership should consider the expansion of coping materials for consumers through mail order delivery.³³

RFD (Rural Free Delivery) has been a friendly set of initials to country people since 1896. But only recently have state library agencies, rural library systems and others, assisted by new technologies, begun to design and implement mail delivery systems.³⁴ The Appalachian Adult Education Center, in its *Library Service Guides Series*, has produced a compact handbook of practice on MOD (mail order delivery) which aims to introduce librarians and others to the application of rural mail service. While the booklet is directed to serving disadvantaged adults, the processes and mechanics of the service are largely the same for all potential mailbox patrons.

The U.S. Postal Service is such a universal agency in our lives that we may forget that, when we enlist the postman for the library, we are utilizing a federal program. In a future that foresees scant energy resources we should not simply regard MOD as an alternate delivery system; it is an energy source whose costs must surely be a concern of government. At this time the most comprehensive treatment of MOD is contained in the study recently completed by Mary Jane Reed of the Washington State Library.³⁴ Reed believes that MOD attains its optimum capacity in the rural countryside where a high proportion of the population has difficulty reaching a library because of distance. But we should not lose sight of the ability to serve urban and other difficult-to-serve populations through the intervention of MOD. The use of mailing lists based on socio-economic characteristics can direct specific types of materials to neighborhood target groups. Accessibility of materials and knowledge remains a problem for certain groups of potential library patrons. Elderly persons, residents of nursing homes, the physically handicapped, and those in correctional facilities have all shown interest in libraries' efforts to make programs more accessible.

The opportunity to use MOD for selected target groups has the potential of enabling both urban and rural libraries to offer specifically designed services to distinct publics, thus defining more precisely the rather unbounded target area to which the library feels committed.

Up to this point, the legislation mentioned here has stressed the opportunities for the library to embrace a role of equity and

reformism, but much of it can be used for cultural and creative purposes as well. Certainly, mail order delivery has that possibility and should be so used.

Participation in the programs of the National Endowment for the Humanities gives the library the opportunity to offer creativity and culture in its community. The National Endowment emerged, in 1973, as the principal federal program in monetary terms assisting libraries through discretionary grants. In addition to its rather surprising debut as a substantial supporter of libraries was its parallel achievement in attracting none of the critical attention more familiar library discretionary programs have incurred. These have often been charged with the weakness of being one-shot commitments that left the recipient with not much beyond a heritage of lost investments after the act and an activity that fitted into no area or statewide plan. Evidently sustaining discretionary programs under the cachet of the humanities does not arouse the uneasiness that developmental programs can generate with their public policy goals. We should certainly regard the advancement of culture as an important public policy objective. But such public planning terms as target groups, the disadvantaged, minorities, objectives, and process and product evaluation are more difficult to assimilate than the cultural and learning orientation that the endowment takes.

The 1974 report of the National Endowment for the Humanities lists a total of \$3,954,042 in grants to libraries in seven states. Twelve grants were made in these states and one grant was made to the ALA. The largest number of grants were received by academic and special research libraries, although public libraries were not ignored. A cursory analysis of the grants does not reveal any unifying pattern beyond the objective of sustaining the humanities through libraries. However, there is some evidence that the endowment is now thinking of experiments in integrated approaches to wide-area programs which will involve statewide or regional library systems.³⁶

A description of federal programs accessible to libraries beyond this brief notice would be useful, but the list would be very extensive. The following programs must be mentioned (all administered by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare): Bilingual Education, which is now moving into the area of training; Indian Education, which has had some library activity and the potential and need for more; and the Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education, which stresses nontraditional and innovative approaches to the solution of

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educational problems. About 10 percent of the applications directed to the fund are from libraries or for library purposes.

Most of the programs described in this article require the submission of an application which includes some description of a problem and how the proposer will approach its solution. In the writer's experience in reading proposals most of the applicants who are new to the process seem so close to the problem that they fail to adequately study it in terms of its literature or describe it with enough specificity for the reader to grasp it. Often related to this is the applicant's determination to do good by a strong commitment to solve the problem—a commitment often so strong that he fails to specify just how he will shape the solution. The world is full of problems and unless some record is made of the manner of the solution, the project is mere local detail without the ability to offer help elsewhere.

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