

Adult Illiteracy: State Library Responses

GARY E. STRONG

"I ASKED MYSELF, why the public library? And, then I realized that is where you go to read." These words of an adult learner define the role of the library in literacy services most effectively. This institution has always been concerned with learning—the sharing of human knowledge. The emerging role as information center has not replaced the public library's traditional role as "the people's university." The planning for learner services is often left to the desire of local public libraries while state library agencies are more concerned with the "broader issues of library development." Within the past three years, however, concern for the plight of the adult illiterate has received attention by state governments in library development planning. The purpose of this article is to examine a number of these efforts and to provide an in-depth examination of the efforts of the California State Library in conducting the California Literacy Campaign.

Conference in Urban Literacy: Summary of State Initiatives

As background for the Second National Conference on Urban Literacy held on 17 and 18 June 1985 in Monterey, California, Jean Hammink with B. Dalton Bookseller prepared a summary of state literacy initiatives. Her summary reported that thirty states have some level of interest in adult literacy, though the statewide literacy initiatives vary a great deal from state to state in their degree and scope. The thirty

Gary E. Strong is State Librarian of California, California State Library, Sacramento, California.

states were: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia.

Only twenty states have a formal structure for the coordination of adult literacy service-providers. They are: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia.

Eleven states have the public support of the governor or have appointed a statewide group to deal with adult literacy. These are: California, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Tennessee. With respect to providing state legislation for adult literacy, only nine states have taken steps to propose or approve such legislation. They are: California, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Washington. Six states reported active involvement of the private sector in their literacy campaign—Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, and Texas.

The report indicates that:

Most statewide efforts have been initiated and coordinated by three groups. Leadership in many states has come from the Adult Basic Education Program, the library system, or state volunteer organizations. Second, many states have also responded to initiatives by the United States Department of Education. A letter was sent in 1984 to all governors from former Secretary of Education Terrell Bell. Lastly, many statewide efforts have developed in response to a call for action from Harold McGraw, Jr., President of the Business Council for Effective Literacy, to all governors.¹

Survey Results

In an effort to examine the role of state library agencies and the public libraries of various states, a survey of the chief officers of state library agencies was conducted in August and September of 1985. Several states responded with information concerning their efforts. While responses were not received from all states, this summary provides an account of representative activities.

In Colorado the Colorado Literacy Action was started in January of 1985. Its goals are to create an awareness within the general public of the

State Library Responses

existence of nonliterate adults and of the need for appropriate instructional programs for them. Eight conferences have been sponsored, press releases have been issued, and radio and television interviews focusing on literacy have been conducted. A clearinghouse of human and material resources has been developed and made available for community use. The clearinghouse functions to fill requests for literacy-related information—i.e., methods, materials, program development, and fundraising—and for training and aligning volunteer tutors with programs. The third area of activity is to promote the development of local coalitions that will build on existing resources. Seven programs were reported to be in the beginning stages of development.²

The Connecticut State Library awarded funds to twenty-one public libraries in 1984/85 for literacy activities. Eighteen of the projects were funded to work with the Literacy Volunteers of Connecticut affiliates based in their communities and to acquire materials to support and supplement the local affiliate tutoring programs. The other three libraries were funded for the purpose of initiating a tutor training program. The State Library and Literacy Volunteers of Connecticut held six workshops in 1985 for the purpose of discussing the literacy volunteers program and to explore the role of the public libraries in helping adults learn to read.

Sixteen state-supported institutional libraries were funded for the purchase of high interest/low reading level materials in English. An information packet which included a bibliography of resources, an idea sheet on how libraries could help literacy programs, and the New Readers' Press booklet, "Opening Doors for New Readers," was sent to all public and institutional libraries in November 1984.

Governor William O'Neill has appointed a Connecticut Coalition on Literacy which held its first meeting on 5 December 1985. The coalition has twenty-five members representing the public and private sectors, including the president of the Connecticut Library Association, Association of Connecticut Library Boards, a White House Conference delegate, and the state librarian.³

The Delaware Division of Libraries began programs through the State Library Advisory Council to reach the more than 51,000 Delaware residents who are functionally illiterate by awarding LSCA (Library Services and Construction Act) grants to coordinate efforts of the Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. Another literacy effort is the LSCA funded project "Library Reading Skills." In an effort to fight adult illiteracy in central and lower Delaware, the state library initiated STAR—service to train adult readers. Public libraries throughout the state are providing community referrals for interested volunteer tutors

and students, are providing meeting space for the tutors and students, and are assisting with collection materials suited for the beginning adult reader.

The Delaware Coalition for Literacy has been formed with the Delaware Division of Libraries as one of the founding members. The coalition, working in cooperation with the national Coalition for Literacy, is an alliance of organizations working together toward the eradication of adult illiteracy in Delaware.⁴

The State Library of Florida has taken a very active role in literacy efforts. More than \$1.5 million in LSCA grants have been awarded to local public libraries in support of local literacy efforts. A literacy consultant is available to coordinate and work with other agencies, organizations, and individuals concerned with adult illiterates and to provide technical and consulting services to libraries interested in initiating and/or expanding services to the adult new reader. Counties may use some of their state aid funds to purchase adult new reader collections.

The Florida State Library and other public and institution libraries have joined the Florida Literacy Coalition, Inc. The Florida State Library is a founding member of the coalition and has representation on the board of directors. Approximately 100 individuals, agencies, and organizations have joined as dues-paying members of the coalition. The Adult Literacy Act (Section 84-336 *Laws of Florida*) creates an adult individualized literacy instruction program for adults possessing less than a fourth-grade education. The Florida commissioner of education has administrative responsibility for implementation of the act in coordination with the State Board of Community Colleges, local school boards, and the Division of Library Services of the (Florida) Department of State. Additional funding may be provided from legislative appropriations as well as private sources in order to achieve maximum benefits for eliminating adult illiteracy in Florida. Several county libraries have been successful in getting local government officials to sign proclamations and resolutions commemorating "National Literacy Week." A number of private industries have supported local and statewide literacy efforts such as B. Dalton Bookseller, United Way, Southern Bell, American Express, and Gannett Newspaper Foundation, among others.⁵

The Illinois State Library coordinates the adult literacy initiative in Illinois under the auspices of the Illinois Literacy Council. The council, appointed by Governor James Thompson in May 1984, is chaired by Secretary of State Jim Edgar serving in his capacity as state librarian. Illinois State Library staff plan and direct the activities of the council, initiate legislative proposals in support of the literacy effort,

State Library Responses

and publish a newsletter and resource materials on behalf of the council for distribution to local programs, state agencies, and the private sector. The Illinois State Library works closely with the Illinois State Board of Education and the Governor's Office of Voluntary Action in promoting coalition building and cooperation among libraries, education agencies, and community-based literacy programs (including Laubach and Literacy Volunteers of America), volunteer organizations, and the private sector.

The Illinois State Library has awarded more than \$.5 million in LSCA grants to library systems or local public libraries to develop and expand literacy programs with a volunteer component. All libraries and library systems receiving funds have coordinated their literacy programs with area education agencies that receive funding for literacy projects through the Illinois State Department of Education. More than twenty-five local or regional literacy councils have been established as a result of these efforts.

The Illinois General Assembly passed legislation in June 1985 appropriating \$2 million for a literacy grant program to be administered by the secretary of state through the Illinois State Library. The legislation was developed by the State Library upon recommendation of the Illinois Literacy Council.

Many local programs and local and regional councils are successfully generating private sector support. The Illinois State Library is providing direction and technical assistance through workshops at two statewide literacy conferences sponsored jointly with the Illinois State Board of Education.⁶

The major effort of the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives (KDLA) Adult Services Program is literacy training. There are currently thirty-five programs, encompassing thirty-five counties, that are directly funded through the state library agency using LSCA Title I funding. An additional nineteen programs have been initiated by KDLA regional staff who have provided training and materials. Additionally, three county libraries are providing literacy programs by using grant funds from the Kentucky Department of Education awarded to KDLA for literacy efforts.

The literacy programs are coordinated by one central office staff person and four regional coordinators. The regional staff are responsible for initiating local programs, organizing local literacy councils, and training volunteer tutors. The statewide library literacy program coordination is accomplished by the adult services coordinator. This coordinating function ensures continuity between programs, equal distribution of materials, and uniform data collection. The regional

coordinators each work in an eight to ten county area. They provide the impetus to start the local program and in many cases actually form the local literacy councils, recruit and train volunteers, and recruit students.

The Kentucky Department for Library and Archives provides grants for literacy efforts to regional library boards. This was begun in 1981 starting with one region, growing to two regions in 1982, and to five in 1983. Currently, fully funded programs operate in five regions. Total funding for these five projects is \$102,000 (FY 1986). The major effort during 1985 is to add uniformity to the locally initiated library literacy programs through the standardization of training and program operation. A guide for local library literacy programs is in the draft stages.

During the summer of 1985, the Kentucky General Assembly meeting in special session created the Kentucky Literacy Commission (KRS 158.790) as a statutory body (the state librarian is a permanent member) and resolved to appropriate state funding for literacy programs.⁷

In Louisiana a state literacy council has been created with representation from the Louisiana State Library. The state library does not provide funding for literacy programs. A Louisiana coalition for literacy has been formed and has applied for a federal grant to hold a state conference on literacy which would involve the state library.⁸

The Maryland Division of Library Development and Services is a member of the Maryland Literacy Council. Programs are assigned to a staff member who has taken a leadership role in encouraging the development of literacy programs, has organized statewide meetings, and has planned workshops and other training.⁹

There are nineteen public libraries presently involved in literacy projects in Massachusetts under LSCA grants from the Board of Library Commissioners. There is not presently a statewide literacy coalition, but activities are supported by the Literacy Volunteers of Massachusetts and the Board of Library Commissioners. Last spring the board published the *Massachusetts Literacy Directory* which includes a listing of all adult basic education preparation classes in the state. Two aspects of the Massachusetts effort have been particularly successful. The first is the computer-assisted literacy project. Supported with LSCA funds, the project provided software programs for use in adult education classes. The second is the provision of technical assistance for Collaboration for Literacy now in its third year.¹⁰

The Library of Michigan is working in cooperation with the Michigan Library Association, the Michigan Department of Education, and the volunteer organization—Michigan Literacy, Inc.—to develop a

State Library Responses

coordinated plan to meet the needs of adult illiterates in the state. Literacy programs in, or coordinated by, local libraries have often proven successful in helping adult illiterates not being reached by school-oriented programs.

The Michigan Library Association provided training at their 1985 annual conference to develop an awareness of the need for literacy programs and to suggest tools to address this need. In addition, the Michigan Department of Education has provided funding for regional and subregional coordinators of a statewide literacy initiative as well as funding for local educational agencies to provide training to adult illiterates.

The Library of Michigan has offered \$125,000 in grants from LSCA Title I to assist local literacy groups. The first awards to public libraries were made in early 1986. Applications were received from twenty-four public libraries. The library will provide office space to "Michigan Literacy, Inc." in an effort to increase communication among the volunteer literacy groups as well as between the literacy groups and state agencies.

The Library of Michigan and the Michigan Library Association have issued in April 1986 a "Literacy Workbook" for use by public library directors. The publication will serve as a reference and as a guide, with data on illiteracy in Michigan, a list of literacy groups, sources for more information, a list of recommended library materials, and an outline of the steps to follow to establish a volunteer literacy program.¹¹

In Minnesota, Governor Perpich has appointed the Minnesota Adult Reading Campaign Advisory Committee. The state librarian is a member of the committee. The committee is charged with recommending to the governor and the Minnesota Department of Education ways that can be used to expand literacy services in the state. A literacy coalition brings together major state level providers of literacy programs and services. State Librarian Bill Asp chairs the coalition. Current efforts include coordinated publicity and long-range planning for expansion of literacy services. There are no LSCA or state funds earmarked for literacy, but several regional public library systems use LSCA Title I grants for this purpose. The Minnesota Library Foundation is considering offering a grant program for libraries of all types to become involved in literacy activities.¹²

The Mississippi Library Commission has used LSCA Title I funds for a literacy program in the First Regional Library. The program created the first literacy trainers in the state and at least one library

community interest group in each of the five counties served by the library system. Tutors were trained and one-on-one literacy training took place in the local branch libraries. The commission has cooperated with the Mississippi Governor's Office of Planning and Policy and other state agencies to fund four library literacy programs.¹³

The New Hampshire State Library is using LSCA money to conduct a workshop and survey the literacy situation. There are no statewide groups on literacy to which any libraries belong.¹⁴

The New Jersey State Library has used LSCA funds for the past ten years to support literacy volunteers programs in public libraries and has been a member of several advisory committees to the Department of Education's Adult Education Division in planning their literacy campaigns. In 1985/86 the New Jersey State Library required a literacy program component in the LSCA urban library grants. There is no statewide coalition nor is there legislation specifically referring to literacy activities.¹⁵

One of the major activities for the New York State Library's Division of Library Development is the statewide development through public libraries of community-based literacy programs for adults and young adults by 1988. Many public libraries have well-developed literacy programs that offer training for tutors and services for students. The New York State Library awarded \$265,000 in 1985 for fourteen literacy projects in library systems. Nearly a dozen other projects under the adult independent learner program in public libraries have a literacy component. It is expected that some of the \$1 million in state aid for outreach programs in 1985 will be used for literacy services in libraries. Work with volunteer organizations, other units of the education department, and other state agencies as part of a state literacy council has moved to expand the literacy effort in New York State. The New York State Literacy Council presented a teleconference in January 1985 at public television stations across the state to increase literacy service providers' awareness of the Coalition for Literacy Campaign, to promote a dialogue between existing local and regional literacy service agencies, and to provide literacy service agencies with the opportunity to establish a basis for continuing contact and cooperation.¹⁶

The State Library of Ohio has participated in several ongoing literacy conferences and organizations. The Ohio Literacy Conference resulted in the establishment of a steering committee which will develop a statewide network of literacy professionals and volunteers. The library also participates in the efforts of the Ohio Library Association through the New Readers' Task Force. In June 1985, the Ohio State Library Board awarded three LSCA Title I grants in which literacy and reading

State Library Responses

skills were the focus. The Statewide Literacy Network is working to identify businesses that are interested in the promotion of literacy in the state.¹⁷

“Oklahoma...Do you Read me?” is funded by the Oklahoma Department of Libraries with LSCA funds for 1984 and 1985. Also cooperating is the Oklahoma State Department of Education’s Adult and Basic Community Education program. Small grants are made available to help public libraries establish local literacy councils. At the state level there is an agency advisory board with representatives from mental health, corrections, Indian affairs, human services, and education.¹⁸

The South Carolina State Library acts unofficially as the coordinating state agency for the state’s adult literacy initiative in cooperation with the South Carolina Literacy Association, a nonprofit organization. The state library supervises a VISTA literacy program and facilitates communication with the South Carolina State Office of Adult Education, the Governor’s Office, the Lieutenant Governor’s Office, Educational Television, and the University of South Carolina and involves public libraries at the local level using LSCA grants and other incentives.¹⁹

The Texas State Library has encouraged literacy activities in public libraries through its Systems Operations Grants to the state’s ten regional library systems. Systems are encouraged to use these funds to support local literacy, adult basic education, English as a Second Language, and GED programs. There is not a state-level literacy coalition or council.²⁰

The Wisconsin Division for Library Services has been primarily involved in the adult literacy initiative through the LSCA grant program. One literacy grant was sponsored by a public library system and one was awarded to a state correctional institution during 1983/84. In 1984/85 six LSCA grants in the literacy area were awarded. There are ten LSCA grants in 1985/86—nine in public libraries and one in a correctional institution—totaling almost \$200,000. Wisconsin does not have a state-level coordinating organization for literacy. The volunteers’ councils, which will follow the Laubach Method, are presently trying to organize themselves on a statewide basis.²¹

It is readily evident that each state has approached the battle to eliminate illiteracy in a very different manner. Each state library agency must assess its role and place in the partnership with other organizations and groups that are addressing the problem. Until recently these forces have all too often worked in conflict—i.e., attempting to solve the same problem. Now, it is obvious that the problem is so large that no

one agency or source of funds can handle it alone. The author turns now to a close examination of efforts in California on the part of the California State Library through its California Literacy Campaign. The strength of this effort has been to build programs in coalition with other organizations and groups to address the issue of illiteracy at the state and local level within California.²²

The California Experience

California is estimated to have at least 2.5 million adults over age sixteen who cannot read and write English well enough to meet their own personal living requirements. (In fact, the California Department of Education estimates the number to exceed 4.5 million persons.) California has many adult basic education programs and a substantial volunteer sector effort which is addressing adult illiteracy. Despite these ongoing efforts' key indicators, such as a high school dropout rate estimated to exceed 100,000 annually, point to the inescapable conclusion that the problem is increasing. The intent of the California Literacy Campaign is to mobilize public libraries with other groups to develop a far larger involvement on the part of Californians and organizations that will be committed to correcting an unacceptable situation—i.e., a severe deprivation to the individual and a serious loss to society.

Under the California Literacy Campaign, illiteracy is defined as the lack of reading and writing skills in English needed to handle the minimal demands of daily living. These are adults who cannot, for example, read traffic signs, product labels, job advertisements, or their children's school report cards; they cannot read to their children; they cannot write checks, fill out application forms, vote, correctly address an envelope, or take a driver's license test.

The purpose of the California Literacy Campaign, as authorized by the California State Library, is to lay the groundwork for a local and statewide long-term structure that will reach and help adults in California attain an English language ability they want and need. The focus of the public library effort through the campaign is on nonreading Californians who speak English. Public libraries are thus targeting their literacy services to those not being served by Adult Basic Education classes or programs in the volunteer sector. The California Literacy Campaign will be successful to the degree that public policy, as established by its local officials, fully acknowledges the damage caused by illiteracy and states endorsement of the need to eradicate it and subsequently commit local resources to help solve the problem.

State Library Responses

The method is to initiate a series of local adult literacy programs through the leadership and coordination of California's public libraries. Local assistance grants from the California State Library enable the public library and its community to collaborate fully in a grassroots effort appropriate to reaching more and more of the adults who need help. Public libraries have a vested interest in a reading and informed public, and public libraries want to take a larger role in forming and strengthening that kind of community. Many of the problems that illiterate adults face involve the inability to obtain the information they need and want and the inability to understand and interpret it. This limits their ability to meet the demands that family and society place upon them. These adults have the right to widespread access to programs that will help them where they live and that respond to their particular situations. Libraries are the perfect vehicle to provide assistance in this area of need.

On 8 November 1983, Governor George Deukmejian proclaimed his support for the California Literacy Campaign, initiated by the State Library. The proclamation declared that "it is in the best interests of our society to help stop the spread of illiteracy in California...do hereby urge the citizens and leaders of our state to join me in supporting this important program."²³ The proclamation has served to raise awareness and to encourage local governments to recognize the campaign and to endorse local public library efforts.

On 22 December 1983 the California State Librarian awarded \$2.5 million to twenty-seven public libraries to begin the California Literacy Campaign. The various public libraries established programs in over 100 communities under the initial grants. Libraries were encouraged to work with the many agencies who had a long-standing and successful involvement in adult literacy services, such as California Literacy, Inc. and its many local councils; affiliates of Literacy Volunteers of America; community-based education organizations; and the California Adult Education Program. Libraries were charged with creating local literacy coalitions and/or literacy councils and to develop resource collections to serve the community in developing an understanding of illiteracy and its problems. Libraries were also encouraged to work with other community partners such as manpower and employment departments; community outreach programs and neighborhood associations; private industry councils; and women's, ethnic, and student groups in organizing their programs.

With the campaign only a few months old, Assemblyman Tom Bates from Oakland learned of the program and of its limited funding outlook under Library Services and Construction Act funding. He

immediately entered an augmentation request into the state budget process in May of 1984. Nearing the end of its budget deliberations, the legislature acted to include \$2,635,000 of state general funds in its budget recommendation to the governor in June 1984. The governor concurred in the proposed budget but required that the California State Library conduct a "program effectiveness review" prior to granting further state funding. The state appropriation was coordinated under the Special Services component of the California Library Services Act (CLSA) and provided the first stable funding available from the state for public library efforts in meeting the need for literacy services in public libraries. The California Library Services Board—which is responsible for administering the CLSA—began immediately to set forth the framework of a state-based program built upon the efforts of the original LSCA projects.

To meet the legislative directive of conducting a program effectiveness review, the state library contracted with Martha Lane, national coordinator of the Volunteer Reading Aides Program of Lutheran Church Women, to complete the program effectiveness review for the necessary budget submittals for the 1985/86 year. Submitted in October 1984, the review stated: "The early accomplishments of the Campaign,...have been truly amazing. Indeed, the California Literacy Campaign has accomplished in eight months what many community-based adult literacy programs would have needed at least two years to do."

There were approximately 3500 adult learners enrolled in campaign projects at the time of the review, most receiving one-to-one tutoring. Approximately 1000 more were referred by the library programs to other community programs more suited to meeting their needs. These referrals included persons too advanced for the projects who were referred to community college or adult school classroom instruction. This referral role of the public library is an important aspect in meeting the campaign's objectives.

The adult learners surveyed were about equally divided between men and women; 53 percent were employed and 51 percent were their family's primary wage earner; 75 percent received no public assistance of any kind. Twenty-four percent had completed eight years or less of schooling. Most heard about the California Literacy Campaign on television or from family members who had learned about it from television or newspapers.

Many adult learners wanted more frequent and longer tutoring sessions. Most expressed a willingness to study via computer (71 percent) or videotape (63 percent) in addition to working with their tutors.

State Library Responses

Clearly, the adult learners were serious about improving themselves and confident that the campaign could help them meet their personal literacy goals.

The review also summarized the tutor training programs under the projects and the establishment of neighborhood learning sites. The projects were reported to have generated at least \$1,298,000 worth of in-kind contributions (including the volunteers' service hours).

It is clear that the CLC projects could not have accomplished so much so quickly without the State Library's (1) provisions for and insistence upon program flexibility (so that each project could tailor its reaching and teaching approaches to the specific needs of its particular illiterate adult populations), and (2) easily accessible, always supportive consultant and technical assistance services.

The report concluded that:

There are some indications that too many tasks were attempted too quickly in the first eight months of the Campaign. There is every indication that, should the Campaign be able to maintain its current level of qualitative and quantitative services, it will be one of the most successful community-based adult literacy programs ever attempted in the United States. Already the California Literacy Campaign has caught the attention of the nation. More important, it seems to be capturing the support and confidence of many of California's functionally illiterate citizens.²⁴

In December 1984, the California Library Services Board authorized the award of CLSA funds under the campaign to seventeen more city and county public libraries to establish local services to adults needing basic literacy tutoring. In addition, funds were awarded to the twenty-seven public libraries originally funded under the LSCA start-up program so that they could continue their services. At that time the program was firmly in place, reaching an estimated 5000 adults at over 400 sites in the state. In addition, public libraries not participating in the campaign were offered funds to establish or add to their collections of materials on literacy and illiteracy. Special bibliographies and buying lists were prepared by staff to support this effort.²⁵

The governor's budget, which was released in early January 1985, included \$3.5 million to continue and to expand the California Literacy Campaign. The program effectiveness review mentioned earlier and the continued attention on the part of the news media were instrumental in securing the increased funding recommendation. That funding was successful through the legislative process and three additional public library programs were added in July 1985.

To address the identified need for increased technical assistance, the *Literacy Technical Assistance Project* final report was issued in February 1985. The purpose of the project was to identify technical assistance needs and resources that would assist community-based literacy programs to better serve adult learners.²⁶

In March 1985, the California State Library sponsored a statewide videoconference, *Illiterate America: A Dialogue with Jonathan Kozol*. Seen across California, the videoconference assisted local areas in focusing discussion on the role of the library in local literacy programs. The videotape has been used in several follow-up activities.²⁷

Following receipt of the program effectiveness review and analysis of the data, it was felt that additional strategies should be developed to attract not only a more complementary mix of tutors but to find means of more adequately penetrating the communities where potential adult learners were. In April 1985, Assemblywoman Teresa Hughes introduced the "Students for Literacy" act. The bill called for the establishment of a state-funded work-study program to bring eligible postsecondary students together with established library literacy programs to provide tutoring and other related services. The program would be administered by the California State Librarian. The bill appropriated \$400,000 to the state librarian for allocation and disbursement to the financial aid offices of postsecondary educational institutions participating in the Students for Literacy Program for the purpose of paying work-study salaries to students selected to participate in the program.

The legislative declaration provided a sound basis for the act:

(a) A literate citizenry is essential to an effective democracy. (b) At least two million, perhaps as many as four million adults in California are functionally illiterate. (c) The California Literacy Campaign has proven effective in helping many of those adults learn to read and write. However, many illiterate adults are not yet being served. There is also a serious lack of males, minorities, and young people volunteering to serve as tutors in the California Literacy Campaign. A larger pool of tutors and other literacy workers who are more similar in age, sex, and background to those in need of tutoring and who could spend more time working with illiterate adults would enhance the effectiveness of the state's efforts to combat adult illiteracy. (d) Work-study programs are a cost effective means of providing postsecondary students with financial assistance necessary to complete their education, while enhancing self-sufficiency and providing valuable work experience. Bringing students interested in aiding illiterate adults together with adults who want to develop reading and writing skills as a part of a work-study program would be beneficial to all concerned.

State Library Responses

The bill passed through the legislature and was forwarded to the governor in July. Governor Deukmejian vetoed the bill, along with numerous other funding measures passed by the legislature, saying in part, "while not issuing a conclusion on the merits of this legislation, I have determined that it cannot be enacted if we are to stay on our prescribed course of fiscal responsibility."²⁸

In an effort to more carefully examine the status of literacy in the workplace, the California State Library commissioned Lenny Goldberg and Associates, Oakland, California, to study the situation and recommend policy and program implications for the California Literacy Campaign. Completed in July 1985, the report examines the relationship between illiteracy and the labor market in California.

The report summarizes the problem of illiteracy as it relates to employment from three points of view. For employers, the problem is experienced as (1) a limited pool of qualified workers, particularly for insurance and financial sectors in large urban areas, (2) reduced productivity among the current workforce, (3) increased training and retraining costs as the result of the limited ability of employees to adapt to change, and (4) health and safety problems.

For the unemployed illiterate and semiliterate individual, the problem is experienced as (1) difficulty of finding and keeping a job, (2) inability to qualify for job training programs, and (3) very limited range of work to choose from. In the case of those who are currently employed, the problem is experienced as (1) inability to adjust when plant closures occur; (2) inability to upgrade skills to adapt to technological change; (3) inability to accept promotions which require literacy skills; (4) likelihood of being trapped in low-skill, low-paid, insecure jobs; and (5) health and safety problems.

The study examines the various efforts to address the problem of illiteracy and its impact on the employment and training sector. The report suggests a number of policies and strategies for relating literacy and employment, with particular focus on the public library program. A number of recommendations were also made with respect to actions for the state library.²⁹

As the California Library Services Board examined the development of the campaign during its August 1985 meeting, it adopted program changes which extended the state's involvement to five instead of the three year support cycle originally proposed. The need to change this basic support to a longer period of time grew out of the increased concern expressed by the various programs that more time was needed to firmly establish a local commitment of resources. The board's action set

in place a funding formula of 75 percent of the state's maximum contribution during year one, 100 percent during year two, 100 percent during year three, 75 percent during year four, and 50 percent during year five. The library's budget request for 1986/87 was developed based on this new funding policy and amounts to over \$5 million to continue the state support and to begin approximately fifteen new programs.³⁰

The California Alliance for Literacy held its first meeting in Los Angeles during October 1985. Initiated by the California State Library and the State Department of Education, the alliance is meant to be a forum for those statewide organizations which are addressing the issue of illiteracy in California. Supported by the governor, the alliance will bring together various players to share information, develop common awareness, and make sure that all are kept informed of the tremendous efforts that are underway.³¹

As the California Literacy Campaign matures, there is increasing demand for accountability. The legislator asks, "How can we be sure that people are learning?" or "Is this any more effective than any of the other programs that are addressing the same problem?" These questions and others are quite valid. The first issue in this discussion is the means of reporting and collecting data from the programs and translating it into usable information for decision-making and policy recommendation. Projects begun under LSCA funding with one set of reporting requirements have now been transferred over to state-based and state-funded programs under another statutory authority. New program sites have been funded as the campaign has expanded.

The program directors and state library staff have learned a great deal about what kind of data are needed, even though each program delivers its services differently. To address this concern, revised report forms and instructions were issued in October 1985 to capture more usable data. The revisions were made after in-depth review by program directors and staff at the state library and report forms are undergoing further revision during the first two quarters of the 1986/87 fiscal year.³²

The continued funding of the campaign is an annual affair with the 1986/87 request forwarded to the governor in October 1985. Results could be reported with pride during hearings with the California Department of Finance. With less than two years of operation, the data begin to tell the story. Taking the statistics from the three months ending 30 September 1985, 7300 adult learners had been instructed during the first quarter of 1985/86; 5550 were being instructed at the end of the quarter; 1700 were awaiting instruction; and 200 had met their goals and left the program. Over 1000 learners had been referred to other programs more suited to meet their individual needs.

State Library Responses

Of the learners, 26 percent were white, 14 percent Asian-Americans, 38 percent Hispanic, 15 percent black, 1 percent Native American, 1 percent Pacific Islander, and 5 percent other. Seventy percent of the learners were age sixteen through thirty-nine; half were women, half were men.

For the same period, programs reported that 3400 tutors were instructing at the end of the quarter and 3900 tutors had provided instruction during the three month period. Programs had trained 1450 tutors during the quarter and 2600 volunteers were awaiting tutor training.

Of the tutors, 79 percent were white, 1.5 percent Asian-American, 9 percent Hispanic, 8.5 percent black, 0.5 percent Native American, 0.5 percent Pacific Islander, and 1 percent other. Fifty-five percent of the tutors were age twenty through forty-nine; 26 percent age fifty through sixty-five; and 18 percent sixty-five years and older. One percent of the tutors were age sixteen through nineteen. Twenty percent of the tutors were men and 80 percent women.³³

The other pressing need is to develop evaluation methods and tools that are not linked to the kindergarten through high school (K-12) educational establishment. Evaluation methods which will allow the learner to more adequately participate in the setting of learner objectives and recording progress toward those objectives will be absolutely imperative if the library-based programs are to retain the confidence of adult learners—many of whom have already failed in the regular educational system. The library role is to build their confidence, provide the learner with basic reading skills, and give the learner the confidence to meet the challenges of living in today's information-based society.

Conclusion

There will continue to be much discussion of the role of the library in providing adult literacy services. A number of state libraries have developed initiatives to address this tremendous challenge. As the United States faces the societal and technological changes of the rest of the century, it is clear that libraries must take a more active role in helping people meet these changes.

The public library and state libraries have a significant opportunity to accept new roles and to expand existing roles in meeting the library, learning, and information needs of their citizens. The California Literacy Campaign has drawn much attention for libraries from the news media, community organizations, and government officials. It has been a means of better explaining what libraries do and how they can

help people in the community. There are, of course, dangers. Libraries might have to make difficult choices among their various traditional programs *v.* new endeavors. They may be faced with new clientele requiring services and information for which libraries are not prepared. But libraries have always indicated that they want to serve the "whole community" and that they want to "reach out."

In a study of "how libraries help," completed for the California State Library in October 1985, Brenda Dervin and Benson Fraser found that a surprising number of individuals used their library for something they call "literacy services." Further, it was found that these individuals were helped in more ways by their visit to the library (the one in which they used "literacy services") than others surveyed. They were the highest in reporting the help *felt connected/not alone*; and near the top for *got ideas/understandings*; *found directions/got skills/reached goal*; and *got support/emotional control*.³⁴

Each state must evaluate its resources and determine its role in addressing the plight of the adult illiterate in its state. All trends point to a responsible willingness by more and more states to stop ignoring the issue of adult illiteracy and working to involve libraries in solving it.

References

1. National Conference on Urban Literacy, 2d sess. "Report." Monterey, Calif., 17-18 July 1985, pp. 5-6.
2. Chandler to Strong, personal communication, 13 Aug. 1985.
3. Owens to Strong, personal communication, 9 Sept. 1985; and Walters to Strong, personal communication, 9 Dec. 1985.
4. Short to Strong, personal communication, 12 Dec. 1985.
5. Wilkins to Strong, personal communication, 14 Aug. 1985.
6. Lamont to Strong, personal communication, 10 Sept. 1985.
7. Gleich to Strong, personal communication, 17 Dec. 1985.
8. Jacques to Strong, personal communication, 6 Aug. 1985.
9. Travillian to Strong, personal communication, 14 Aug. 1985.
10. Quezada to Strong, personal communication, 10 Dec. 1985.
11. Fry to Strong, personal communication, 20 Dec. 1985.
12. Asp to Strong, personal communication, 30 July 1985.
13. Woodburn to Strong, personal communication, 28 Aug. 1985.
14. Adamovich to Strong, personal communication, 31 July 1985.
15. Weaver to Strong, personal communication, 6 Aug. 1985.
16. Shubert to Strong, personal communication, 22 Aug. 1985.
17. Cheski to Strong, personal communication, 15 Aug. 1985.
18. Vesely to Strong, personal communication, 30 Aug. 1985.
19. Callahan to Strong, personal communication, 7 Aug. 1985.
20. Crosby to Strong, personal communication, 8 Aug. 1985.
21. de Usabel to Strong, personal communication, 14 Aug. 1985.

State Library Responses

22. See these for more information on the California Literacy Campaign: Strong, Gary. "Public Libraries and Literacy: A New Role to Play." *Wilson Library Bulletin* 59(Nov. 1984):179-82; and Ruby, Carmela. "'It's Bad When You Can't Get Your Dreams': The California Literacy Campaign." *Public Libraries* 23(Winter 1984):116-18.
23. Governor, State of California, "Proclamation," 8 Nov. 1983.
24. Lane, Martha A., et al. *California Literacy Campaign: Program Effectiveness Review*. California State Library, 1984.
25. Strong to Directors of public libraries not participating in CLC, personal communication, 1 Feb. 1985.
26. Bennett, Al, and Mayhand, Edna. "Final Report: Literacy Technical Assistance Project." Sacramento, Calif.: 1985, (unpublished).
27. "Illiterate America: A Dialogue with Jonathan Kozol." Sacramento: California State Library Foundation, 1985, VHS videotape, 90 min., color.
28. California, Legislature, "Students for Literacy Act," State Assembly, reg. sess., 1985, Bill 718; and *California State Library Newsletter*, no. 58, Oct. 1985, p. 1.
29. Goldberg, Lenny, and Assoc. *Literacy, Employment and the California Economy: A Study and Recommendations for Policy and Program for the California Literacy Campaign*. Oakland, Calif.: Goldberg, Lenny, and Assoc., 1985.
30. California Library Services Board. "Minutes of Meetings: 14, 15, 16 August." [Sacramento, Calif.], 1985, pp. 27-35.
31. California Alliance for Literacy. "Agenda and Accomplishments." Los Angeles, 29 Oct. 1985.
32. Strong to California Literacy Campaign Program Coordinators, personal communication, 11 Oct. 1985.
33. California Literacy Campaign. "Statistical Summary," July-Sept. 1985.
34. Dervin, Brenda, and Benson, Fraser. *How Libraries Help*. Stockton, Calif.: University of the Pacific, Dept. of Communication, 1985.

This Page Intentionally Left Blank