
The Funding of Rural Libraries

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ABSTRACT

FUNDING FOR RURAL LIBRARIES comes from a variety of sources. For the purposes of this article, two funding sources will be discussed: federal and state. Local funding issues are as diverse as the communities in which libraries are located. In the case of rural libraries, all funding sources are critical to their survival. However, the notion of federal and state roles and responsibilities to assist rural libraries is the basis of this article.

THE FEDERAL ROLE—HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

One can argue that the federal role in aiding public libraries began in 1802, the year the Library of Congress was created and, as Molz (1990) says, became the “de facto national library of the United States” (p. 2). Although the Library of Congress’ role in providing cataloging information (1901), free matter for the blind and physically handicapped (1931), and MARC data (1969), is of long standing, other federal programs have provided financial and other support to America’s libraries in the last 140 years. The Depository Library program began in 1857. Every member of the House or Senate could designate a library in their area to receive publications for free use by the public. Depository libraries are located in all U.S. states and territories. Other examples of federal involvement with libraries include the much-discussed postal subsidies for free mail for the blind and fourth class (library) rates.

The American Library Association (ALA), representing America's libraries and librarians, argued in the past that increases in postal rates, and especially the termination of postal subsidies, would severely limit the public library role in the "mitigation of isolation for many rural readers and for those who are homebound" (Molz, 1990, p. 7). Federal support programs for libraries continue to be argued over by those who wish to see them eliminated, as well as by the library community which sees these funds as vital elements that are needed to extend library services to underserved segments of the population.

THE LIBRARY SERVICES ACT

The first federal public library grant-in-aid program was the Library Services Act (LSA) signed into law by President Dwight Eisenhower on June 19, 1956. The signing of this act was the culmination of ten years of work by the American Library Association and library supporters across the country. In each of the twelve preceding years, bills were presented in Congress; in 1944, 1946, and 1950 bills supporting federal funding for rural libraries passed the Senate. The 1950 Senate bill reached the House but was defeated by a vote of 164 to 161. It would take five years for supporters to get legislation moving again.

The Declaration of Policy in the Library Services Act states that the purpose of the act is "to promote the further extension by the several states of public library services to *rural areas* [author's emphasis] without such services or with inadequate services" (Gardner, 1971, p. 196). In the early 1940s, Southern states took the lead in passing state laws that supported libraries. There were few libraries in these states, and those that existed were primarily county libraries in rural areas. State aid helped these rural libraries to grow, and the development of state plans for increasing library services was well underway by the time LSA was passed (School of Library Science, University of North Carolina, 1982). Passage of the act had in fact hinged on the issue of states rights. During the hearings held in 1956, Congress asked the ALA representative if the LSA would have any impact on segregation. The representative replied that there were no racial questions in the bill. States rights were clearly written into the bill which satisfied Southern legislators (School of Library Science, University of North Carolina, 1982). The legislation emphatically encouraged the states to develop their own plans. Alabama authorized an amount equal to twenty cents per capita to be spent from state funds to support public libraries. Clearly the act was not to interfere with state or local initiatives or responsibilities in the conduct of public library services. "The determination of the best uses of the funds provided....shall be reserved to the states and their local subdivisions" (Gardner, 1971, p. 196).

Congress appropriated \$7.5 million for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1957. For the next nine fiscal years, this sum remained unchanged. Only states with plans approved by the Commissioner of Education (now the Secretary of Education) would receive funds. The U.S. Office of Education (now Department) established the Federal Library Agency (FLA) in 1938. Created after a successful American Library Association lobbying effort in the 1930s, the agency primarily conducted surveys and provided technical assistance. After enactment of LSA, the agency began to take on the task of grants management (Molz, 1990, pp. 7-8). State library agencies wishing to apply for LSA funding submitted their plans to FLA for approval.

Each state library agency (or its equivalent) was to determine whether or not its library services were inadequate and report the findings in the state plan they submitted to the Federal Library Agency. To be approved, a state plan for the extension of public library services to rural areas had to include policies and methods of administration, which would, in the FLA's judgment, assure use of federal funds to maximum advantage in the further extension of public library services to rural areas. State plans were to target for improvement those areas identified either without such services or inadequate services (Gardner, 1971, p. 197).

Although many states developed plans as a result of the LSA and the funding it provided, Southern states took the earliest advantage of the program. The small number of public libraries in Southern states, coupled with the existence of plans for extension of library service in those states, led to an early flow of LSA funding to those states. In New England and parts of the Midwest, the existence of many small public libraries proved to be a problem (School of Library Science, 1982). In addition, the LSA population cap of 10,000 was too low, and many libraries could not meet the requirements under the legislation. The legislation allowed for the pooling of resources, and in some areas this led to regionalization of library services. It was also clear that a lack of state plans in some regions was not the only issue hindering the extension of the LSA program. New England states, and many of the libraries located in them, looked askance at federal aid and did not request it. For several years, Indiana would not take federal aid because the governor said he "didn't want Hoosiers brainwashed by books chosen by federal bureaucrats" (School of Library Science, 1982). In North Carolina, a library could not qualify for federal or state funding unless there was a trained librarian, promoting the view that a good library required capable staff (School of Library Science, 1982).

The LSA program went forward and, from the funding appropriated, the Commissioner of Education would allocate an amount to each state submitting an approved plan. The plan had to show that the state would provide direct or indirect extension of service for rural libraries,

with a sum equal to the percentage of the total rural population of the United States that was found in that state. In addition, there was a formula for the federal share that would go to each qualified state. The federal share for any state "shall be 100 per cent less the state percentage, and the state percentage shall be that percentage which bears the same ratio to 50 per cent as the per capita income of such state bears to the per capita income of all the states, except that the federal share shall be in no case more than 66 per cent or less than 33 per cent" (Gardner, 1971, p. 197). If this seems at all confusing, it is no less confusing than the formulas used by some states to define state aid for libraries. Inserting language requiring the states to contribute to the cost on a percentage basis in order to receive federal assistance provided incentives for states to support public libraries through state appropriations. Although President Eisenhower signed the Library Services Act (Public Law 84-597), his comments spoke of a "limited Federal program" (Molz, 1990, p. 14).

The act was intended to stimulate the states and localities to provide library services to rural areas or, more precisely, to those areas of 10,000 and under in population. Meant to benefit the 33 million Americans who had no library services, and the 35 million Americans with inadequate services, there was "an almost naive belief that, once library service could be demonstrated to citizens, they would demand that it be continued" (Holley & Schremser, 1983, p. 16). The act was scheduled to terminate on June 30, 1961. Congress authorized \$30 million during the first four years, although less was actually appropriated due to the slowness of some states in preparing plans (Gardner, 1971, p. 199). Congress reauthorized LSA for another five years in 1960 with the same level of funding and with rural libraries still being the focus of the legislation. A growing number of LSA supporters urged that the act be broadened. Representative William Green of Pennsylvania introduced House Resolution 402 in August 1957 to "study the problems of providing adequate public library services to our metropolitan areas..." (Holley & Schremser, 1983, p. 39). This resolution went no further than the House Rules Committee, but it pointed out that the focus on rural libraries was no longer paramount. By 1962, the American Library Association's legislative efforts included three recommended changes in the *Library Services Act*. According to Holley and Schremser (1983):

1. Remove the 10,000 population limit and extend the public library development program to all population groups.
2. Increase proportionally the authorization of \$7.5 million to \$20 million annually.
3. Change the expiration date of the Act from June 30, 1966 to June 30, 1968 (pp. 53-54).

LSA BECOMES LSCA

In 1964, Congress passed an amended act, called the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA). President John F. Kennedy was a supporter of library legislation and, in a message to Congress in 1963 about education, he mentioned libraries six times and outlined three specific programs to strengthen public as well as college and university facilities (Ladenson, 1982, pp. 124-25). The addition of library construction programs to the legislation was a hard fought battle that culminated in the introduction of the Library Services and Construction Act for debate on the Senate floor. The date was November 22, 1963 and, during the debate, news of the assassination of President Kennedy reached the Senate floor. In short order, the Senate suspended after a brief prayer and was not in session again until after President Kennedy's funeral. Charlie Lee, a staff member for Senator Wayne Morse, a supporter of the act, later recalled:

And when we came back into session after the funeral, the act was picked up and [at] that point the sentiment of the Senate had crystallized and the sentiment of the House had crystallized. This bill passed really as a memorial tribute to President Kennedy. It's a macabre association but it did save the construction authority. (Holley & Schremser, 1983, p. 66)

Lee goes on to make the point that, by implication, every library built or renovated using LSCA funding can be construed to be a partial presidential library in honor of President Kennedy. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the act into law on February 11, 1964.

Congress reauthorized LSCA several times since 1964 with one notable change in 1977. Continuing a trend away from a focus on rural libraries, Congress again modified LSCA with the addition of a section providing funds for large urban libraries. Called MURL, which stands for Municipal and Urban Resource Libraries, the change provided funds for preselected major libraries in each state whose collections were viewed as resources for a larger area of that state. The focus on major urban libraries was less a retreat from the original goals of LSA to extend service to the unserved than the recognition that library resources in major urban libraries were shared and needed to be improved.

LSA AND LSCA FUNDING LEVELS

As early as 1956, Congress realized that the funding authorized under LSA (\$38 million for five years) would not be enough to solve the problems identified as well as bring new libraries into existence. In 1965, Congress amended LSA under the title of "The Library Services and Construction Act of 1965" to broaden the scope of the act to include grants for the construction of library facilities. Congress also addressed the need

to support urban libraries as well as those in rural areas. The changes required the allocation of funds based on a formula that factored in population and income, the revision of state planning requirements, and an increase in matching funds from wealthier states (Government studies and systems, 1977, pp. 34-35). Funding for LSCA jumped from \$7.5 million in FY 1964 to \$55 million in FY 1965 and reached its highest level in FY 1973, when it stood at \$84.5 million. Congress eliminated the funding for Title II, the construction program, and did not fund it again for more than a decade. In FY 1974, funding dropped to \$49,200,000, but rose again to \$60,200,000 by FY 1977. Since 1977, funding had fluctuated. However the 1980s saw consistent declines in the level of funding. Federal sources as a percentage of public library income was dropping and comprised only 1.0 percent of the total public library income in 1992. U.S. Department of Education library statistics published since 1989 show the trend (see Table 1).

TABLE 1. FEDERAL LIBRARY FUNDING FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Federal Income</i>	<i>Percentage of Public Library Income from Federal Income</i>
1989	\$57,057,775	1.4%
1990	\$55,622,109	1.3%
1991	\$55,819,169	1.2%
1992	\$49,973,390	1.0%

Source: Chute, 1992, 1993; Chute & Kroe, 1994; Podolsky, 1991.

In 1991, the Bush Administration proposed zeroing out LSCA for FY 1992, reasoning that the program had accomplished its mission, and that federal funding was no longer needed. The administration concluded that state and local governments could (and should) provide their own funding to carry on the goals (Cooke, 1992, p. 31). Congress prevailed, however, and continued the funding. This was just one of the assaults on LSCA funding that began in the 1980s and continues today.

LSCA INTO THE FUTURE

During the debate over reauthorization of LSCA in 1990, many in Congress questioned whether the program could continue to survive given the efforts of a succession of administrations in the 1980s to eliminate it. Proponents of LSCA assured Congress that the 1991 White House Conference on Library and Information Services would provide an opportunity to show the resolve of the library community to work together. The community's common goal would be providing all Americans with library and information services, in particular those groups often neglected, underserved, or overlooked. A "Task Force on LSCA Reauthorization" put forth a plan for the restructuring and updating of LSCA. Represent-

ing the American Library Association, the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, and the Urban Libraries Council, the task force proposed an act that was similar in several ways to its predecessors. The act was to be state-based and would support programs based on state plans. However, the act was to be flexible, with as few separate titles as possible, and would support cooperative activities. The task force recognized that, because the fiscal capacity of local governments varies, "federal and state funding is needed to ensure equitable library service" (Task Force on LSCA Reauthorization, 1993, p. 2). The task force proposed using forward funding to provide continuity.

The task force suggested several policy options, and it was left to the states to use their discretion to develop programs that would address them. Title A, as proposed, would deal with access to technology and linkage to the National Research and Education Network, cost sharing of technology, projects emphasizing economic development, and the dissemination of local, state, and federal government information. Title B as proposed would deal with access to special services. Title B included special programs such as lifelong learning, children and youth projects, and national priority projects for native Americans and Americans with disabilities. In addition, Title B included a second emphasis in areas of special demographic concern and addressed rural library problems. The task force included projects for distance learning, information access from remote areas, and library resource delivery to isolated populations in addition to leveraging local support for core library service development for rural areas with a limited tax base (Task Force on LSCA Reauthorization, 1993, p. 4). It also addressed urban libraries under areas of special demographic concern. It is interesting to note that rural areas are the last emphasis identified in the draft. Clearly LSCA is continuing to move away from its original intention of supporting rural libraries to that of a program in which rural areas are but a demographic emphasis at the end of a long list of programs.

THE STATE ROLE—HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The passage of the Library Services Act in 1956 was a landmark in the history of federal public library legislation. It served in large measure to compel the states to contribute to the overall cost of public library service on a percentage basis if they were to apply for a grant. LSA was to become an incentive for increased state aid. State aid for public libraries in the United States also has a very interesting evolution.

Efforts at providing state aid to local libraries goes back much earlier than 1956. "In 1835 New York adopted a law authorizing each school district to levy a tax for the establishment of a public-library collection" (Ladenson, 1982, p. 60). Three years later, New York began an annual

grant program made possible by federal surplus funds that had been turned over to the states. Under the Deposit Act of 1836, states could use such funds for a variety of purposes. In 1890, Massachusetts established a Board of Library Commissioners and authorized a program of state aid. Within a few years, ten states in the New England and Middle Atlantic areas adopted this model (Ladenson, 1982, p. 61). The 1930s saw an increase in state financial assistance to local libraries as a direct result of the Great Depression. Many states began appropriating funds to distribute to public libraries for the purchase of books and other materials. In the late 1930s, new laws were passed in states such as Michigan, Arkansas, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania for state aid programs to help establish county and regional libraries. By the 1980s, virtually all states provided some form of aid to public libraries, and most of them provided some form of direct financial aid.

STATE FUNDING OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) tabulates public library statistics each year, primarily from information supplied by the chief state library officer in each state. The extensive tables give statistics on a variety of public library subjects, from population served and number of librarians with an MLS degree, to the per capita costs for materials and personnel. This article focuses on statistics concerning libraries serving populations of 10,000 or fewer, and in particular, the income sources received by those libraries. In the latest four editions of the NCES report, total state aid to all U.S. public libraries amounted to nearly 8 percent of the total income for all libraries in 1989. In 1990, this rose to 14 percent and dropped in 1991 and 1992 to 13 percent and 12 percent respectively (Chute, 1992, 1993; Chute & Kroe, 1994; Podolsky, 1991). Like federal aid, state aid is only a small portion of the total income of public libraries. By far the largest segment of public library income is provided from local sources.

TYPES OF STATE AID

Ladenson (1982) identifies three kinds of state aid programs for public libraries:

1. grants available to every public library that meets required standards;
2. grants to support the operation of cooperative public or multitype library systems or networks; and
3. grants to assist in the construction of public library buildings.

There can be no generalizations on how the states employ formulas to distribute funds. Each state utilizes a different formula. In one case, Hawaii's state library agency is the sole provider of library services on the

islands. The Hawaiian Library Law, passed in 1955, created a free circulating library called the Library of Hawaii. The service “provides direct operation of all community libraries in the state, including a library for the blind, planning of library programmes in all public schools, centralized ordering, cataloguing and binding for all school libraries, central reference services, bookmobile services and in-service training” (Gardner, 1971, p. 193).

Some formulas are simply based on the population served by the public library. As long as the library meets certain state-set minimum standards, it receives funding based on a population formula. Some states require that local support in the form of tax levies or appropriations must meet a certain threshold. It is difficult to pinpoint what specific states are now doing, for funding formulas, as levels of funding, have changed radically over the past decade. Certain cases, such as the law adopted in Michigan that provided state funding for the entire Detroit Public Library budget, are significant. In this particular case, the legislature considered the library a statewide resource facility and passed the law relieving city taxpayers of the burden of levying local taxes for the library budget (Ladenson 1982, p. 63).

Ladenson (1982) indicates the final report of a study, *Improving State Aid to Public Libraries*, commissioned by the Urban Libraries Council and issued in January 1977, is as valid today as it was when issued. The findings of the study conclude:

1. There is a need and valid rationale for state government to increase aid to public libraries.
2. The fiscal condition of many of the states is such that it permits them to assume a greater proportion of the financial support of public libraries.
3. Library expenditures have not kept pace with similar public expenditures or with inflation.
4. The historical development and growth of public education and public libraries are parallel and represent a comparable response to the same societal needs for education and knowledge.
5. Public libraries have felt the effects of the fiscal crunch more than most local services, because, more than most functions, they have depended on local revenue sources for their funding. (pp. 64-65)

However regressive local property taxes may be, relying on increased funds from state library agencies can be problematic. The passage of Proposition 98 in California and the ensuing state legislation provided for the rerouting of funds earmarked for special districts—including libraries—to the public school system. “General fund libraries also lost support as the library and other departments of the county competed with local law enforcement for funds” (Anderson, 1994, p. 401). The

resulting drastic cuts in state aid affected rural as well as urban libraries in the state. Although an excellent goal, increased state aid to public libraries remains an elusive dream in most states.

USE OF STATE AID

State funding provides little more than a supplement to local funds. "States generally have assumed a role that is primarily as provider of standards for local libraries in matters of finance, facilities, and personnel" (Dubberly, 1992, p. 39). State library agencies enforce standards by requiring audits, certification of librarians, as well as mandating certain collection standards. Libraries seeking federal funds through their state library agencies are usually required to meet these minimum standards to be considered. Interestingly, the role of state library agencies in promoting library services in their states is an outgrowth of the federal LSA legislation of the late 1950s. As mentioned earlier in this article, to qualify for federal funding, a state plan for the extension of library services to rural areas had to be reported to the Federal Library Agency. In effect, federal funding followed state plans for improving rural library services, often through financial incentives (Curley, 1990, p. 66). Traditionally, the concern of state governments was service to rural and unincorporated areas. Curley indicates that by the 1980s nearly all the states provided some form of support for library service.

A comparison of NCES statistics for state funding shows that in 1989, one type and size of library had a higher percentage of state funding than the national average. The figure reported was 9.6 percent state funding for libraries serving fewer than 1,000 individuals. Given that there were 915 libraries in this group, for a total state funding income figure of \$883,728, each library would average just over \$965 in state funding. By comparison, that same year, eighteen libraries serving 1 million or more individuals garnered 14.3 percent of the total state income. This income totaled \$88,794,684 for an average of nearly \$5 million per library. Although the reasons for this seeming imbalance vary, it is clear that per capita state funding for these large urban libraries is nearly five times that of the smallest libraries. As Curley (1990) points out, "the pattern varies widely from support for cooperative or regional services to direct per capita aid. In a few states, modest aid to major urban libraries has been achieved, in recognition of service borders or resources of more than local importance" (p. 66). Some state library agencies have made a conscious decision to provide major funding to urban libraries because these libraries are under pressure to loan materials through interlibrary loan to smaller libraries across the state. In this respect, funding the larger libraries provides benefits to even the smallest rural libraries in terms of access to materials. However, the issue of "fairness" often crops up and,

for most state library agencies, "the prevailing pattern has been small support to virtually all communities rather than significant aid for the special few" (Curley 1990, p. 66).

STATE RESPONSIBILITIES—THE PENNSYLVANIA MODEL

The small amount of funding for public libraries from state library agencies does not diminish its importance. State plans for library services clearly delineate the responsibilities the local libraries have and what standards must be met. By implication, the quality of library services is monitored by state library agencies in order to determine whether the local libraries meet the state standards. The creation of cooperative arrangements within states, underwritten by state library agency funding, is an indirect benefit to even the smallest library. In Pennsylvania, the state-wide system, called ACCESS Pennsylvania, allows users of more than 1,326 participating libraries to borrow freely from other participating libraries across the state. A database on CD-ROM identifies each unique title held in the state and its location. More than 3,200,000 distinct titles are now in the database. Small rural libraries may access the database either by viewing the discs and requesting materials via interlibrary loan or by sending requests to their district library. Pennsylvania has twenty-eight district libraries which are given additional state aid to help the smaller libraries in their region. Located in all regions of the state, nearly the entire populace is served by a district library. As one of the most rural states, Pennsylvania has created a system that utilizes state aid to assist larger libraries in providing service to smaller ones.

Direct aid to libraries in Pennsylvania has been based on a formula that is quite complicated. Several types of aid are identified depending on whether a library is a county system as well as how many people it serves. In addition, the formula includes a "local effort" component that provides local libraries with some leverage to acquire more local funds. If local funding rises to a certain level, it can be partly matched by the state, making the formula more of a "carrot and stick." In this way, state aid is designed in part to leverage more local funding. Indirect aid, such as the funding for district libraries, provides services from the larger resource libraries to the smaller libraries. In order to participate in any state aid program however, local libraries must meet certain state standards. These include everything from the number of books and periodical subscriptions per capita to the qualifications of the librarian based on library size and population served. Libraries that do not meet the standards do not qualify for state aid. Even though the level of state aid remains relatively low, local libraries continue to rely on it as an important source of operating income.

STATE AID UNDER ATTACK

In the 1970s, California's Proposition 13, a tax limitation referendum, sent a shock wave throughout the country. The success of this referendum led to movements in other states to do likewise. For public

libraries, it was a time of decreasing state aid as states reduced tax support for state library agencies. Many states reallocated LSCA funds to replace state aid while still maintaining the premise that those federal funds were being spent to meet the goals of the act. Many states still handle LSCA funds in this manner, and it has turned "into a swap of federal for state and local dollar" (White, 1992, p. 49). The climate of tax cutting continues, and Draconian measures in Massachusetts, New York, and other states have been widely reported. Herb White (1992) comments that "low taxes are considered more important than good libraries, but obviously low taxes and good libraries, while absurd, sounds best of all" (p. 48). Further reductions in state aid in the 1990s, particularly in California, caused major problems for libraries throughout the state. Urban as well as rural libraries were affected. In 1993, California Governor Pete Wilson shifted \$2.6 billion in property taxes away from libraries, supposedly to benefit public schools in the state ("Governor slashes county...", 1993, p. 13). The State Librarian of California, Gary Strong, stated in 1993 that a shift of \$2.5 billion in tax dollars would mean a reduction of anywhere from 25% to 50% of library funding ("CA Libs survey...", 1993, p. 20). Other states are also experiencing major budget cuts in state library funding. Until recently, Ohio had an enviable record of supporting public libraries through state appropriations. In 1993, the Ohio Library Council (OLC) began facing major multimillion dollar cuts in state funding. Ohio reduced the Library and Local Government Support Fund (LLGSF) by \$31.1 million in 1995 ("OLC facing cuts...", 1993, p. 16), severely affecting urban as well as rural libraries.

The news is not all grim. In mid 1994, the New York legislature appropriated \$81.3 million to its libraries, the largest appropriation in New York history. The governor signed the 1995-96 proposed budget ("NY gives \$81.3 M to Libraries," 1994, p. 21). Some California libraries have struggled back, having been reprieved with additional state funding. Not all efforts to increase state aid to libraries have met with resounding success throughout the country, but there are hopeful signs.

CONCLUSION

Given the fact that the majority of public libraries in the United States rely on local funding for the bulk of their operating income, it is no wonder that most libraries continue to focus their efforts on increasing local funding. Continued reductions in LSCA funding and a climate of federal budget cutting renders the entire program a target for elimination. What remains to be seen is whether a case can be made for a new act that promotes technology or whether there should be a reevaluation of the role of the federal government. Ronald Dubberly, director of the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library, in an address to a conference sponsored by the Florida State University School of Library and Information Stud-

ies and the Center for Professional Development and Public Service, talked about the roles of federal, state, and local governments in providing for an effective public library future. The federal government should be actively involved in research on service effectiveness, service needs, as well as delivery methods and a developmental role. "The federal government's developmental role should encompass the formation and demonstration of service delivery models. Experimentation with multitype library delivery systems, services to rural residents, and many other areas need funding and evaluation" (Dubberly, 1992, p. 44). Dubberly examines the federal role in the area of technical development, standards, and telecommunications. He clearly states the importance of the federal role in providing assistance to rural libraries. His view of the role of state government is that it should be "predominately responsible for the functions of oversight and coordination of public library services. Planning for shared systems and service delivery improvements, ensuring fiscal and staff competence, and confirming that service delivery levels meet or exceed minimum standards," are also important state roles (Dubberly, 1992, p. 44). This explanation of roles parallels much of the contemporary practice, especially in the area of state roles. It is in this area of funding that the similarities cease.

Dubberly talks about the federal role in funding public libraries in terms of providing direct per capita funding to library systems for *compensatory* [his emphasis] services. This is the basis of a unique new methodology. "Compensatory funding for public library services would be an extension of similar federal funding for public education needs at a local level. This approach uses a funding formula that provides additional monies for augmented services directly to the disadvantaged. These could include all who are unable to use public library services due to illiteracy; insufficient learning skills and/or language proficiency; geography; physical abilities; and/or income level" (Dubberly, 1992, p. 45). The role of state governments in the new funding partnership would be to fund "public library services throughout each state at a moderate level. This level of funding would be sufficient to provide highly adequate service in all geographical areas based on individual state standards" (p. 45).

Many may consider these ideas to be radical, however there is a strong case to be made for changing the paradigms as Dubberly points out in his address. Whether or not changes can be made in the way public libraries are funded, and whether there is still a case to be made for rural libraries, remains to be seen. The future for rural libraries is not hopeful without significant changes in the way funds are allocated as well as increased funding being made available from state and federal governments.

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