

# Federal Agencies

## THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

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The National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) was established by PL 91-345 in 1970 as a permanent, independent agency in the executive branch, reporting directly to both the president and Congress. The commission has four major roles: (1) to serve as a "resident expert" for both the executive and legislative branches; (2) to be an "honest broker," bringing together agencies in both branches to focus on problems of common interest; (3) to serve as a forum for the entire library/information community, including both the public and private sectors; and (4) to be a catalyst to help get programs implemented. The commission's primary role is to advise Executive Branch agencies and Congress.

During 1982, NCLIS continued to work closely with Congress to develop new library legislation. NCLIS reviewed testimony received in oversight hearings held by the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education of the Committee on Education and Labor (House of Representatives), on the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA), resolutions from the White House Conference on Library and Information Services, and the opinions of professionals representing broad areas of the library/information community. Draft amendments to LSCA will be based, in large part, on concerns expressed by our community.

### TASK FORCE REPORTS

Several of the commission's task forces completed their work during the year, and the report of the Public Sector/Private Sector Task Force, *Public Sector/Private Sector Interaction in Providing Information Services*, was published and widely disseminated with a request for reaction and response from persons and organizations throughout the library/information community. [For a summary of the *Public Sector/Private Sector* report, see the Special Reports section of Part 1 of this volume.—*Ed.*] The commission received the reports of the task forces on The Role of the Special Library in Nationwide Networks and Cooperative Programs (jointly sponsored by the Special Library Association), on Community Information and Referral (CI&R), and on Library and Information Services to Cultural Minorities. The first of these will be published jointly by NCLIS and the Special Libraries Association (SLA), and the other two by NCLIS early in 1983.

Two surveys performed by the SLA-NCLIS task force disproved the widely held notion that special libraries do not participate actively in networks; approximately half do. Of the 50 percent that do not participate in networking, perhaps half are deterred by lack of information. Among the recommendations included in the report are those for the collection and dissemination of better and more frequent statistics on special library networking activities and for efforts to educate executives of companies and other organizations in which special libraries are located on the benefits of networking. Also recommended are efforts to remove legal and regulatory barriers, as well as network policy and administrative barriers.

The CI&R task force report includes recommendations for: educating all parties—librarians, legislators, and the general public—about CI&R; provisions for CI&R in library legislation at all levels (federal, state, and local); extensive promotional efforts; and research on the impact of CI&R on users and on the application of automation to CI&R.

The report of the Cultural Minorities task force includes 42 recommendations aimed at: determining the library and information service needs of cultural minorities; changing library personnel policies and improving the education of library professionals; improving services and programs; improving the availability of cultural minority specific materials and resources; and funding library programs for minorities.

The commission also received the report of the Intergovernmental Library Cooperation Project, a study sponsored by NCLIS together with the Library of Congress and the Federal Library Committee, on federal libraries and resource sharing. (For more information on this project, see Section 4 of the 1982 edition of the *Bowker Annual*.)

#### NATIONAL RURAL INFORMATION SERVICES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The commission continued to work with the Department of Agriculture, the Inter-mountain Rural Community Learning/Information Service project, and others on a National Rural Information Services Development Program. NCLIS's role in this largely state, local, and private-sector effort has been to assist the library, agricultural extension, and information communities, as well as the federal government, in removing barriers to more effective dissemination of information services to rural areas. As a part of this effort, NCLIS arranged and co-sponsored an exhibit of a model rural information center at the Fourth General Assembly of the World Future Society, and coordinated arrangements for a joint congressional hearing on the changing information needs of rural America, where nearly half of the population now lives. One of the witnesses at the hearing was 12-year-old Jason Hardman, who, frustrated by lack of access to library resources in his hometown of Elsinore, Utah, established a public library for the community on his own.

#### WHCOLIS-RELATED ACTIVITIES

NCLIS has continued its liaison with the White House Conference on Library and Information Services Taskforce (WHCOLIST), which promotes the implementation of resolutions adopted by the 1979 White House Conference. At the third annual meeting of WHCOLIST in Atlanta, Georgia, it was reported that since the previous meeting, 19 states had increased aid to libraries, 21 states had acted to heighten public awareness, and 14 states had expanded library services. The delegates voted in favor of support for the recently adopted national library logo, support for an International Year of Libraries, and a recommendation to amend the "Apple Bill" to include public, as well as school libraries.

## ANNUAL REPORT

The *NCLIS Annual Report, 1980-81*, published in 1982, includes an extensive summary of the history of NCLIS (and of its predecessor, the National Advisory Commission on Libraries) and its accomplishments during the first ten years. It also includes as appendixes a summary of its 1975 Program Document, a bibliography of its publications, a list of the White House Conference resolutions, a bibliography of the White House Conference publications, and the recommended *Elements of a National Library and Information Services Program*. This document (available from NCLIS) will be a valuable reference tool for many years.

## INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

NCLIS continued its involvement in the international community not only by paying one-half of the U.S. national dues to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), but by holding its first commission meeting outside the United States in Montreal, in conjunction with the IFLA conference. In addition, at the request of the American Library Association (ALA), NCLIS has agreed to become the Secretariat for the U.S. National Committee for the UNESCO General Information Program (UNESCO/PGI). Under this agreement, the principal role of NCLIS will be to act as a conduit and focal point for the flow of information among the U.S. National Committee, the UNESCO/PGI, and the Department of State.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

On October 1, 1982, Miss Elinor Hashim, Supervisor of Reference and Technical Services at Perkin-Elmer Corporation, Norwalk, Connecticut, since 1981, was confirmed as the commission's third chairperson. Miss Hashim has worked in public libraries in Connecticut since 1968. From 1956 to 1968 she was employed at the United Technologies Research Center in East Hartford. From 1976 to 1982, Miss Hashim served as chairperson of the Connecticut State Library Board. She is a past president of the New England Library Association, has been active in the American Library Association, serving as a member of the council since 1980, and is also a member of the Special Libraries Association.

During 1982, NCLIS continued its activities as advisor to the executive and legislative branches of the federal government on matters related to library and information policy and programs. In addition to the regular informal meetings of representatives of agency publishing programs, the commission provided advice and assistance to: the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs in the Office of Management and Budget on implementation of the Paperwork Reduction Act; the Office of Technology Assessment on a planned study of technology in libraries; and the Executive Office of the President in planning for the 1983 White House Conference on Productivity. NCLIS also arranged for the National Center for Education Statistics to meet with members of the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) and representatives of other library and information associations in order to identify statistical needs and improve the collection and dissemination of statistical information.

## NEW PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

In July 1980, the commission initiated a planning process that has resulted in the identification of the major program areas that it will support during 1983 and for the next several years. In one program area, the commission will examine the impact of information technology on various segments of the population. An exciting aspect of this

area is the new partnership NCLIS has entered into with International Business Machines, Inc. Two IBM librarians will work with the commission in examining both the anticipated information environment of 1985 and the impact of technology on various segments of the population. They will also help to identify those qualities that make technology more useful and acceptable and will participate in the development of better and more effective mechanisms of communication with major libraries, information centers, and key library and information associations.

IBM and NCLIS also are working together in a cooperative project with the Drexel University School of Library and Information Science to develop a program that will encourage bright young students entering the information field by providing an opportunity for work experience in industry.

In another new program area, the commission will seek ways for libraries to take the leadership in providing library/information services to meet the changing needs of their communities. The commission will focus first on the library/information needs of rural residents and senior citizens.