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# Federal Agency and Federal Library Reports

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## National Commission on Libraries and Information Science

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During 1989, the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) expanded some existing programs and established others. Highlights of the year included the appropriation of funds and the establishment of the organizational structure to develop the second White House Conference on Library and Information Services (WHCLIS); publication of the first statistical tables from public libraries in 45 states using a common set of data elements; a major new effort to address problems of information services to American Indians; the cosponsoring of a symposium on information literacy for educators and librarians; and the creation of a program to deal with national information policy matters.

### Commissioners and Staff

During 1989, two NCLIS commissioners resigned (Margaret Phelan of Kansas and Sally Jo Vasicko of Indiana); the terms of Daniel Carter, Daniel Casey, and Elinor Swaim expired in July; and the recess appointment terms of Wanda Forbes and Charles Reid expired with the adjournment of Congress at the end of November. By the end of the year, no nominations to fill these vacancies were forthcoming from the White House.

In October 1989, Research Associate Robert E. Dugan left NCLIS to assume the position of state librarian of Delaware. During his tenure at NCLIS, Dugan was a major force in stimulating the information policies program. New staff members include James R. Benn, research associate (formerly with the Connecticut State Library), and Linda Hatfield, secretary.

### White House Conference on Library and Information Services

The second White House Conference on Library and Information Services received \$1.75 million in the FY 1989 Dire Emergency Supplemental Bill, allowing work to start on the conference. By the end of September 1989, all FY 1989 funds had been

distributed to states and territories for their pre-White House Conference activities. Congress's appropriation for FY 1990 was \$3.25 million; however, as a result of Gramm-Rudman the actual appropriation was \$3.225 million. Of the \$6 million authorized, \$4.975 million has been appropriated so far.

A small transition staff for WHCLIS was organized during 1989; it is hoped that the executive director position will be filled early in 1990.

The WHCLIS advisory committee is to consist of 30 members: 10 appointed by the president, 5 by the House, 5 by the Senate, and 8 by NCLIS. The public law also appointed the Librarian of Congress and the secretary of education as members. By March 1989, all but two presidential appointments had been made. During 1989, the committee established guidelines for delegate selection criteria, wrote a goal and objectives statement, developed a budget and fund-raising strategies, and commenced publication of a newsletter. These tasks were accomplished with the able support of two staff members detailed from other agencies, four contractors, and eight temporary support staff under the direction of the NCLIS associate director.

### **Information Policies Program**

Following a highly successful July hearing on Congress's Office of Technology Assessment's report *Informing the Nation*, NCLIS embarked on a series of meetings intended to focus on national and federal information policy. The first was held in October, with 95 attendees from both public and private sectors discussing issues surrounding access to public information. A small working group was charged with developing principles of national information policy that can be applied by all organizations with de facto information policies. The transcript from the July hearing will be published in 1990; the guidelines, which will be published in the *Federal Register*, will be the focus of another open meeting.

### **Legislation**

Following the October 1989 Information Policies Forum, the commission adopted a position on the reauthorization of the Paperwork Reduction Act, and communicated its comments to the appropriate Senate and House committees. In January 1989 the commission passed a resolution supporting a national policy on permanent paper, and in August 1989 the Senate passed a joint resolution on permanent paper. The commission continues to push for the House version, which was not yet passed at the end of 1989. At its December 1989 meeting, the commission directed staff to analyze S.1067, Senator Albert Gore's National High-Performance Computing Technology Act, establishing the National Research and Education Network (NREN). At the close of 1989, NCLIS was calling together representatives of various library organizations to develop suggestions for a greater library role in NREN. The commission also directed staff to investigate possible legislative remedies to the serials pricing crisis.

### **Library Services to American Indians**

In January 1989, NCLIS held hearings on the status of library and information services to the American Indian community. Based on these hearings, an interagency

task force was created, bringing together representatives from NCLIS, the Department of Education, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Department of Commerce, and relevant associations. This group is attempting to identify problem issues and to develop a long-term plan of action, including recommendations regarding the improvement of library and information services to all Native Americans. As part of this effort, NCLIS is also represented on the White House Interagency Task Force on Indian Affairs. (The transcript of the January hearings will be available from NCLIS.)

### **Federal/State Cooperative System (FSCS) for Public Library Statistics**

For the first time, public library statistics have become available through a program sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and coordinated by NCLIS. In 1989, 45 states made public library data available according to a set of data elements agreed on by an NCLIS/NCES task force composed of state library and professional association representatives. The first set of tables was distributed by the end of November 1989.

Data coordinators (one from each state) attended the second annual training workshop in December 1989. Committees are working to identify data elements for a "universe file" (describing each physical public library location) required for the White House Conference on Library and Information Services, and on desired improvements in the FSCS system. These are the first data in the history of the National Center for Education Statistics to be collected entirely in computer-readable form. As each state submitted data on either floppy disk or magnetic tape, processing time at NCES was radically shortened. All the states are expected to participate in the 1990 data collection cycle.

### **Information Literacy Symposium**

In April 1989, NCLIS and the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) co-sponsored a symposium on information literacy, bringing together representatives of two dozen national education organizations. The symposium report, containing about 40 recommendations, was sent for consideration at the national level to each participating organization. It is hoped that adoption of the recommendations will make a fundamental change in the way American schools educate children.

### **Glenerin Declaration**

The precepts of the Glenerin Declaration, adopted in 1987 by the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, were examined in 1989 by a group representing the three countries. These countries have decided to move forward with coordinated development of library statistics, with examination of national and international telecommunications support of information resources, with promulgation of the resource-based approaches to learning represented by the information literacy report, and with a coordinated effort to define basic library services for each country's population.

## **WHCLIS Orientation**

NCLIS staff are developing a Hypertext program that all the states and territories will be able to use both in their pre-White House Conference activities and at the conference itself. The program will provide the delegates, who have varying levels of expertise, with information about the key issues. The project is supported by a grant from the Apple Library of Tomorrow (ALOT) program.

## **Recognition Award**

In April 1989, NCLIS gave its Recognition Award to Reader's Digest for its contributions to literacy efforts throughout the country. At the same time, the commission recognized Bessie B. Moore, vice-chairman emeritus, and William Welsh, former Deputy Librarian of Congress, for many years of highly valued work on the Commission.