Keeping the Faith: The Public Library's Commitment to Adult Education, 1950-2006

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KEEPING THE FAITH: THE PUBLIC LIBRARY’S
COMMITMENT TO ADULT EDUCATION, 1950-2006

by

Brenda Weeks Coleman

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Studies Office
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

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by Brenda Weeks Coleman

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This study examines the extent to which the conception and implementation of the public library’s educational commitment to adults changed between 1950 and 2006 within the context of the institutional development of the public library and the influences exerted by internal and external forces such as philanthropic organizations, the federal government, the American Library Association, research, the public library planning process, the nontraditional education movement, and changes in public library ideology. Philanthropic organizations such as the Carnegie Corporation and the Ford Foundation’s Fund for Adult Education played pivotal roles in the development of the library’s liberal adult education programming in the 1920s, 1930s, and the 1950s. The Library Services Act, the Library Services and Construction Act, and other federal legislation enacted during the federal government’s War on Poverty fueled the expansion of public library services throughout the country and stimulated interest in compensatory adult education among public librarians. The American Library Association’s interest in adult education waxed and waned throughout much of the twentieth century. However, in 1998 the association formally adopted literacy and lifelong learning as key components of its strategic planning program. This formal recognition promises to provide a more sustained level of support for initiatives in these areas. Two major ALA studies in the 1950s and 1980s and a more recent survey conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics have provided an understanding of the development, extent, and nature of public library services for adults, but more research is needed to provide an accurate picture of the current status of
educational services for adults. The nontraditional education movement of the 1970s, which initially promised to enhance the public library’s adult educational role, failed to have a lasting impact due to professional resistance and a change in institutional emphasis from education to the provision of information. The inclusion of educational services for adults among the roles or service responses outlined in the Public Library Association’s planning manuals during the past twenty years indicate that these services are considered an important part of the public library’s program.

The emergence of the information paradigm in the 1970s has challenged and continues to challenge the “library faith,” the traditional ideology of public librarianship. Using several hundred sources including books, monographs, journal articles, research reports, government documents, conference proceedings, and other primary and secondary resources from the literatures of librarianship and adult education, this historical investigation demonstrates how the public library continues its commitment to the educational principles of the library faith, despite changes in institutional emphases, the challenges presented by the Internet and other technological innovations, the movement to merge librarianship and information science into one field, and the new public philosophy of economic instrumentality.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The Background and Nature of the Problem

Throughout history libraries of all kinds have had a common purpose—"the conservation and organization of the world's resources of recorded thought and fact so as to make them available for present and future users" (Leigh, 1950, p. 12). "The library's underlying and fundamental purpose—the preservation of recorded history and the cumulated knowledge of society—is cultural by definition, in that it preserves and extends the values and wisdom of the society by which it is supported" (Van Fleet & Raber, 1990, p. 456). The public library represented both a symbol and servant of culture (Leigh, 1950, p. 12).

However, the role of the public library can be viewed from a number of perspectives. From the broadest sociological perspective, the library is seen as a social-cultural agency whose fundamental purpose is "to preserve and organize the artifacts of an advanced literate society" (Van Fleet & Raber, 1990, p. 457). From a closely related perspective, the public library can be seen as an agency of acculturation and socialization. Like the public school system, the public library performed "the sociological and psychological role of helping individuals define their place in society and in aiding society in recognizing and preserving its various components" (Van Fleet & Raber, 1990, p. 457). This role is implemented through the provision of educational services designed to help the individual fit into the social framework of a democratic, capitalistic society.

During the earliest stages of public library development, the library's role as an agency of socialization and acculturation was only partially realized. R. E. Lee noted that the first period of public library development, 1833-1875, was devoted to collecting and preserving books of enduring intellectual and literary value. Although their efforts were directed toward fulfilling the basic purpose of preservation, librarians were aware of the public library's educational potential.
Collections were developed with the "clear understanding of the library's educational function—to make available books that would inform and enlighten" (Lee, 1966, p. 13).

Librarians were primarily concerned with the task of establishing the structure for service. They had not yet developed classification schemes and other organizational devices. The concept of personal assistance had not been developed as a professional attribute. The public library was difficult for the average person to use; therefore, the clientele was primarily composed of the intellectual elite of the community who did not require the personal assistance of the librarian to make effective use of the library (Lee, 1966, p. 13).

Library visionaries foresaw the time when the public library's organizational structure and resources would be sufficiently developed to assume the broad mission of acculturation and socialization. The public library would become more than a storehouse of knowledge accessible to only the intellectual elite of the community; it would become "the people's university" (Johnson, 1938). Indeed, the American public library was founded during the middle of the nineteenth century upon the belief that people could use recorded knowledge and ideas to improve themselves and society (Lee, 1966, p. v). "Public libraries were founded to educate through the power of the written word" (Bloom, 1976, p. 380).

In the seminal work, *Foundations of the Public Library*, J. H. Shera wrote that "the public library was created because it was essential to the fullest expression of human life" (1949, p. 247). The central purpose of the public library as envisioned by its founders was "to aid in the improvement of men and women and through them of society" (Shera, 1949, p. 247). The public library was purposefully created as an instrument of informal adult education (Stone, 1953, p. 438). It was seen as an extension of the public school, a means by which motivated individuals from all segments of society could continue their education through reading (Lee, 1966, p. v). Reading was seen as the primary means to self-education, and education was considered the primary instrument for personal and social improvement. "The concept, if not the term 'adult
education’ was enunciated as the prime responsibility of the public library as early as 1850, and was clearly implied by Melvil Dewey in 1876” (Stone, 1953, p. 438).

Underlying the library’s mission of preservation and education has been a fundamental belief in the value of books and reading. “Although the roles of libraries have evolved through time, there has been a consistent unity: books and reading” (Scrogham, 2004, p.72). Melvil Dewey used the phrase “library faith” in the 1890s to describe the librarian’s belief that “‘good’ reading led to ‘good’ social behavior, ‘bad’ reading to ‘bad’ social behavior” (Wiegand, 1999, p. 4).

This generally accepted, yet unarticulated, belief was identified during the review of public library development for the Public Library Inquiry in 1949. C. D. Hardy used Dewey’s phrase “library faith” to describe a basic belief of librarianship derived from the Puritan and humanist traditions (1949, pp. 4-7). The library faith is “a fundamental belief, so generally accepted as to be often left unsaid, in the virtue of the printed word, the reading of which is good in itself, and upon which many basic values in our civilization rest” (Hardy, 1949, pp. 50-51).

Leigh, the chairman and director of the Public Library Inquiry, offered another, yet very similar, definition in the Inquiry’s general report. The library faith as “a belief in the virtue of the printed word, especially of the book, the reading of which is held to be good in itself or from its reading flows that which is good” (Leigh, 1950, p. 12).

Writing in 1964, Kathleen Molz defined the two axioms of the library faith: “one, reading is good, and two, everyone should read” (1964, p. 96). These two axioms formed the basis for library service to the public. The first principle, derived from the Puritan and humanist traditions, exercised a powerful influence on the development of the public library’s collections. If reading was good, then collections should contain only books of enduring quality and relevance. Ephemeral, sacrilegious, unauthoritative, vulgar, and tasteless works should be rejected (Molz, 1964, p. 96).
The purpose of reading and education was redefined during the Protestant Reformation to include the development of insight into social truth as well as insight into divine order (Bloom, 1976, p. 379). The reading of good books had value in two respects, utilitarian, and moral. Reading for practical knowledge was useful in a utilitarian sense. Reading good books to enhance the development of moral and social values was “a morally correct activity” (Raber, 1997, p. 57). For librarians good reading meant more than “a utilitarian assemblage of facts”; it represented “the profession’s commitment to inculcate and develop in the individual patron . . . the pleasure derived from living with books” (Molz, 1964, p. 100). Almost all library services and programs were predicated on the love of books and the implicit faith that casual readers could be guided to become serious, purposeful readers (Molz, 1964, p. 100).

The second axiom, “everyone should read” formed the basis of the public library’s “service to all” philosophy. This origin of this principle can be traced to the American egalitarian ideal. It led to the extension of library services to new and underserved clienteles through branch libraries in urban areas, bookmobiles and deposit collections in rural areas, and the establishment of library collections in prisons, hospitals, and other institutions (Molz, 1964, p. 96).

Profound changes in American society strongly influenced the institutional development of the public library. Political, social, economic, and technological changes compelled the public library to re-evaluate its original mission and to alter its goals, objectives, and practices. As Shera observed, “the aims, methods, and ideals of the library were modified as life itself underwent profound social changes. The library, in common with all social agencies, moved through alternate periods of fluidity and convention but always responded, in greater or less degree, to its environment” (Shera, 1949, p. 248). The public library responded to the demands of the contemporary culture by broadening its mission to include additional goals. The library faith was expanded to include the provision of nonprint materials and active programs of guidance and stimulation to promote use of library materials for educational purposes (Leigh, 1950, p. 19).

Within fifty years of its founding in 1852 the public library had gone from a single purpose
institution to a multipurpose institution, and its clientele had expanded to include children as well as adults (Lee, 1966, pp. 116-117).

The American public library's fundamental purpose, "the preservation of recorded history and the cumulated knowledge of society," served as the basis for the development of other roles (Van Fleet & Raber, 1990, p. 456). Van Fleet and Raber identified five basic roles and the functions associated with those roles:

1. The library as a social-cultural agency in the most fundamental sense acts to preserve and organize the artifacts of an advanced literate society
2. The library as an agency of socialization and acculturation serves to help the individual relate to society on a basic level
3. The library as a social service agency functions to bring the individual into contact with opportunities and services afforded by governmental and other social service agencies
4. The library as a cultural agency brings the individual into contact with the arts and humanities
5. The library as a social agency affords opportunities for recreation and use of leisure time (1990, p. 457).

While the first role is unquestionably sociological and institutional in nature, the other roles are more specifically related to their operational definitions and the library activities chosen to fulfill those roles (Van Fleet & Raber, 1990, p. 456). These five roles can be placed along a continuum with one end representing "the broadest context with general philosophical guidelines" and the other end representing "more narrowly defined areas with specific policy implications" (Van Fleet & Raber, 1990, p. 457). The social-cultural role is broadest and most fundamental. The socialization and acculturation role, in which adult education is included, tends to be broadly defined and to follow more general guidelines. The social service role is somewhat better defined, but not as specific as the cultural and social roles. The cultural role of the library is
more narrowly circumscribed and is seen as synonymous with the arts and the humanities. The social role of the library is the most narrowly defined and is considered synonymous with the recreational function (Van Fleet & Raber, 1990, p. 457).

It is evident that the way in which the terms social and cultural are "specifically defined makes all the difference in what librarians actually do, for whom they do it, and how they do it" (Van Fleet & Raber, 1990, pp. 457-458). However, it is difficult to define any library activity as exclusively educational, informational, recreational, or cultural. There tends to be an overlap in roles because the same or similar activities may be used to fulfill different purposes. For example, individuals may derive informational, educational, cultural, and recreational values from a library program on the cathedrals of Europe. Van Fleet and Raber suggest that "Perhaps the greatest strength of the library has been its ability to offer services without narrowly prescribing the intended purpose of these services" (1990, p. 458).

The foundations of the American public library and the history of its early development have been well documented. Library historians J. H. Shera (1949), Dee Garrison (1979), Sidney Ditzion (1947), M. H. Harris (1973), W. A. Wiegand (1988) and others have made important contributions to the understanding of the public library’s institutional beginnings and the early stages of its development. However, public library developments in the twentieth century have not received the same careful study (Busha & Harter, 1980, p. 96). Wiegand stated, "The twentieth-century American library is one of this nation’s most understudied yet ubiquitous institutions" (1999, p.1). The focus of this study, the development of the public library as an institution for adult education, was not systematically and extensively studied until Lee wrote his dissertation on the topic in 1963. Lee’s study, “The Educational Commitment of the American Public Library, 1833-1956," traced the evolution of the library’s educational commitment within the framework of the institutional development of the American public library. Lee’s book, *Continuing Education in the American Public Library, 1852-1964* extended the study until 1964. Lee’s work has made a valuable contribution to the understanding of the institutional
development of the public library and its evolution as an adult educational institution from its inception in the mid-nineteenth century through the first six decades of the twentieth century.

In the 40 years since Lee's study was published in 1966, the landscape of the public library has changed dramatically as society itself has changed at an accelerated pace. Lee's study predated the rapid advances in computer and telecommunications technology which led to the "information explosion," the automation of library systems, the development of online databases, and the introduction of the Internet. This period was marked by social and economic upheaval beginning with the civil rights movement of the 1960s; the "cultural revolution" and anti-war movement of the 1960s and early 1970s; the "double-digit inflation" of the 1970s; the tax revolt and the "conservative antigovernment" feeling of the 1980s; immigration from Asia and Latin America and the emergence of a powerful information industry in the 1990s (Molz & Dain, 1999, pp. 8-10); followed by terrorism, the threats of terrorism, and the resulting endangerment of intellectual freedom in the new century.

Many questions remain unanswered. Did the "library faith" provide the profession with reasonable, achievable goals? In what ways did the interpretation and implementation of the library's commitment to adult education change between 1950 and the present? How was the educational goal affected by the changes in the public library as an institution? Did the addition of other goals and objectives weaken or strengthen the public library's commitment to adult education? In the 1970s and early 1980s, adult education professors M. S. Knowles (1975), C. O. Houle (1974), and J. R. Kidd (1983) suggested that librarians and adult educators did not enjoy the same close working relationship they once shared. Were these observations valid? In 2007 do public librarians and adult educators work together to achieve common purposes? Is adult education still the central purpose of the American public library or has it been subordinated or displaced by other goals?
The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine how the conception and implementation of the public library's educational commitment to adults changed between 1950 and the present. There were two critical assumptions. First, a clear perspective of the library's adult educational role could be obtained only by studying this aspect in the context of the institutional development of the public library. This investigation examined how the educational objective was affected by changes in the conception of the public library's mission, changes in professional ideology, the addition of other library goals and objectives, and the expansion or reduction of services. Second, the institutional development of the public library was heavily influenced by contemporary culture. The public library, like all other social agencies, responded in greater or lesser degree to its environment. Political, social, economic, and technological changes compelled the library to modify its mission, goals, and objectives. As a tax supported, nonobligatory public agency, the public library had to be responsive to the community that supported it.

Definition of Terms

Readers should be aware that educational terminology has undergone some changes since Lee wrote his dissertation in the early 1960s. Lee defined the term *objective* as "a broad, long-range purpose which provides a rational and desirable sense of direction" (1963, p. 4). Lee defined the *educational goals of the public library* as "the specific ends toward which the educational services of the library are directed" (1963, p. 4). In current usage these definitions are generally opposite in meaning with *goal* defined as the long-range purpose and *objective* defined as the specific end. To prevent misunderstanding, these terms have been redefined as they are currently used in an educational context. The terms used in this study are defined as follows:

1. **Public Library**: A public library is a civic institution organized under state laws, supported by general taxation, managed as a public trust, and open free of charge to the residents or citizens of a community, district, county, or region" (Lee, 1963, p. 3).
2. **Learning:** “Learning is a relatively permanent change in behavior or in behavioral potentiality that results from experience and cannot be attributed to temporary body states such as those induced by illness, fatigue, or drugs” (Hergenhahn, 1988, p. 7).

3. **Education:** “Education is a process by which an individual, either through his own efforts or with the assistance of another individual or a group, purposely develops abilities, acquires desirable attitudes, and gains new knowledge. This process consists of purposeful learning, which is different from random and incidental learning experiences” (Lee, 1963, p. 121).

4. **Formal Education:** “the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded education system running from primary school through the university” (Rubenson, 1989, p. 59).

5. **Nonformal Education:** “Systematic, organized, educational activity outside the established formal system” (Rubenson, 1989, p. 59).

6. **Informal Education:** “All residual educational activity not covered by formal education or nonformal education, for example, self-education” (Rubenson, 1989, p. 59).

7. **Incidental Learning:** “Unintentional learning that takes place during daily experience” (Rubenson, 1989, p. 59).

8. **Library Adult Education:** “The educational process, within the library context, is concerned with intellectual, vocational, cultural, aesthetic, personal, and community development. It does not consist exclusively of fact finding and the pursuit of incidental information, and its primary concern is not relaxation, amusement, escape, or therapy” (Lee, 1963, p.121).

9. **Adult Services:** “An inclusive term designating all services provided to adults in the public library” (McCook, 2004b, p. 184).

10. **Vision:** “A desired state of affairs; has a societal focus” (Zweizig & Rodger, 1982, p. 8).

11. **Role:** “A concrete image for a library service emphasis” (Zweizig & Rodger, 1982, p. 8).
12. **Mission:** “The business the library is in; its purpose and priorities” (Zweizig & Rodger, 1982, p. 8).

13. **Goal:** “A direction in which the library wants to proceed” (Zweizig & Rodger, 1982, p. 8); “A broad, long-range purpose which provides a rational and desirable sense of direction” (Lee, 1963, p. 4).

14. **Objective:** “The specific ends toward which . . . services of the library are directed” (Lee, 1963, p. 4); “Objectives are short range and describe the results to be achieved in a specific time period” (McClure, Owen, Zweizig, Lynch, & Van House, 1987, p. 46); “How far the library intends to proceed—measurable, attainable, understandable, time based” (Zweizig & Rodger, 1982, p. 8).

15. **Reference services:** “The personal assistance given by the librarian to individual readers in pursuit of information” (Dresang, 1982, p. 14).

16. **Educational services:** “assistance with a purpose of teaching or guiding the learning experience” (Dresang, 1982, p. 14).

17. **Recreational services:** assistance in pursuit of leisure time activities” (Dresang, 1982, p. 14).

18. **Function:** “any of a group of related actions contributing to a larger action” (*Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 1987, p. 472).

19. **Educational role of the public library:** “characteristic function that librarians, library trustees, and other library authorities think the library should perform in community adult education” (Lee, 1963, p. 4). The library’s interpretation of its educational role may not correspond to the functions expected by the members of the community or other institutions in the community (Lee, 1963, p. 4).

20. **Educational commitment of the public library:** the public library’s obligation as a tax-supported agency to provide for the continuing education needs of adult residents and to support the public school system in its efforts to meet the needs of school age residents of
the community. Aspects of the educational commitment include the educational role, goals, objectives, and services (Lee, 1963, p. 4).

21. **Social context:** "the sociological, economic, demographic, and even political factors that impinge on adult education" and library services (Rachal, 1989, p. 4).

22. **Literacy:** Definitions of literacy and the ways in which literacy was measured changed throughout the period under discussion. Literacy was traditionally limited to "the simple transmission of reading and writing skills and the first elements of arithmetic" (Lyman, 1976, p. 59). Traditional definitions were prevalent until the 1970s when a practical or functional conception of literacy became predominant. The functional conception defined literacy as "part of an integrated educational process" which encompassed "the areas of fundamental education, technical and professional education, and training for taking part in local and national life" (Lyman, 1976, p. 59).

23. **Adult Lifelong Learning:** "A lifelong learner is typically defined as any adult who is involved in learning activities other than compulsory (K-12) education. This includes those involved in voluntary learning activities, as well as in activities that are required for legal, professional, or other reasons" (as cited in McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 67).

**Methods and Sources of Investigation**

This research project was conducted using a historical research methodology. Data for this investigation consisted of primary and secondary documents derived from the literatures of the library and adult education fields. Resources for the study included books, monographs, periodicals, reports, brochures, regional and statewide publications, government documents, dissertations, and proceedings of annual and midwinter conferences of the American Library Association. The primary databases were ERIC, *Library Literature and Information Science*, and *Dissertations Abstracts International*. Documentary evidence was analyzed for trends or patterns indicating that library adult education had entered a new phase, a period in which the adult educational commitment had been revitalized or a period in which the adult educational...
commitment had been overshadowed by other library goals. All documents were subjected to the usual research considerations of external and internal criticism. In addition, each document was further analyzed by applying some of the particularly pertinent questions contained in the preface to Birge’s 1979 dissertation.

1. For whom and for what purpose was the document written?
2. To what extent were the internal statements reflective of general professional or public opinion versus personal philosophy or assessment?
3. What was the author’s role relative to the program or service being discussed?
4. Was the discussed program an isolated phenomenon, reflective of a trend, or a service fully accepted as appropriate by the community and the profession?
5. Was the program a continuation of or departure from the general practices of the library in which it was initiated? (Berge, 1979, pp. vi-vii).

The author attempted to write a descriptive issue-oriented account of adult education practice in public libraries. Both positive and negative commentary about proposed policy changes and the initiation of new public library services was included in this report. In order to provide a true picture of the changing nature of the public library’s commitment to adult education, it was essential to include total range of opinion and criticism.

Limitations of the Study

The most significant limitation has been the restrictions imposed by the broad scope of the study, both in terms of the time period covered and the diverse nature of the subject matter. This study has dealt with the period from 1950 to the present. Since the Public Library Inquiry served as an important benchmark for the evaluation of library development in the period between 1950 and 1970, the author felt the conclusions of the Inquiry should be included in this examination of the public library’s evolution as an nonformal agency of adult education.

The term, adult services, has been used since the 1940s to describe all aspects of library work with adults including educational services. However, projects within the American Library
Association continued under the heading adult education throughout the 1950s (McCook, 2004b, p. 185). While adult education is a broad term, adult services is even broader. The diversity of services provided to adults in public libraries and the introduction of the planning process in 1980 with its emphasis on community analysis as the means for structuring library services to meet the unique needs of individual communities has made classification or presentation of adult services as a holistic concept very challenging and complex (Heim, 1990b, p. 1). In the overview of the Adult Services in the Eighties project, Heim suggested that adult services should be viewed as a service continuum (Heim, 1990b, p. 2). Services as diverse as library tours for adults with development disabilities to the circulation of computer software to the provision of information and referral services for Hispanic farm workers are part of the adult services service continuum (Heim, 1990b, p. 2).

The research on the scope and nature of adult services has been limited. H. L. Smith conducted the first national census of adult services in 1954. The Adult Services in the Eighties (ASE) project updated Smith's work in 1990. In 2000 the National Center for Educational Statistics conducted a survey of 1,011 public libraries to obtain information on the provision of adult literacy programs, lifelong learning programs, and Internet access. The literature has been descriptive. There has been no attempt to evaluate the quality of services or to determine causal relationships between demographic factors and the provision or lack of provision of services.

In order to maintain a focus on educational services for adults, it was necessary to reduce the scope of the study. The original plan included separate sections devoted to the broad social context of the public library and the institutional status of the public library. The modified plan integrated discussion of the social context and the institutional status of the public library into the discussion of adult education activities in public libraries.

Plan of the Study

Chapter I is a brief overview of the study. Chapter II presents a review of the related literature beginning with a discussion of the Public Library Inquiry, an extensive assessment of
the public library's actual and potential contributions to American society. Following this general discussion of the institutional status of the public library, the review then focuses on important works dealing with the development of the public library as a nonformal agency of adult education. Among the works discussed are C. W. Stone's bibliographic survey of library adult education; Monroe's *Library Adult Education: The Biography of an Idea*; and Lee's *Continuing Education for Adults through the American Public Library 1833-1965*. The review concludes with the discussion of the Public Library Association's Goals Feasibility Study, a study using the Public Library Inquiry as a benchmark for comparing the status of the public library in 1970 to its status in 1950 (Martin, 1972).

The ideology of public librarianship, the library faith, serves as the central theme for the paper. Chapter III covers the period from 1950 through 1979. This chapter discusses the library's continuing commitment to the service to all philosophy, its acceptance of a more socially responsible role toward underserved populations, the transition from national standards for public libraries to the adoption of a planning process for public libraries, and the emergence of information services as the dominant objective of public library service. Chapter IV, covering the period from 1980 to the present, discusses the emergence of access to information as the dominant institutional emphasis, the challenges presented by the Internet and other technological innovations of the Information Age, the on-going effort to find balance between technological innovation and traditional services, and the recent movement to restore education as the central purpose of the public library. Chapter V discusses the overarching themes of this study. Chapter VI, the final chapter, presents a summary and the conclusions of the study and implications for the future.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This review of the related literature began with a picture of the institutional status of the public library at mid-century as revealed by the findings of the Public Library Inquiry. This landmark study was conducted by the Social Science Research Council between 1947 and 1949. The study was commissioned by the American Library Association and funded by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation. In the research proposal the American Library Association asked that the council “conduct a thorough and comprehensive study of the American free public library” (Berelson, 1949, preface). The nature of the study was defined as “an appraisal in sociological, cultural, and human terms of the extent to which the librarians are achieving their objectives” and “an assessment of the public library’s actual and potential contribution to American society” (Leigh, 1950, p. 3). Discussion of the Public Library Inquiry provided an objective assessment of the status of the American public library at the beginning of the postwar era and an understanding of the ideological context within which library adult education developed.

Next the review included a number of important works written about the practice of adult education in the field of librarianship. The books and articles presented in this review were selected because they were frequently cited in the literature on library adult education and stimulated further discussion and research. C. W. Stone’s bibliographical essay, “Adult Education and the Public Library,” was one of the first historical reviews of the development of library adult education. It was written in part as an answer to J. H. Shera’s criticism of the library adult education movement in Library Quarterly (Shera, 1952, pp.240-251). Stone’s essay was an honest, straightforward assessment of the achievements and failures of adult educators in the field of public librarianship.

Library science professor M. E. Monroe’s, Library Adult Education: The Biography of an Idea, was selected for inclusion because it is an enduring classic in the field of library adult

Another classic work in the field of library adult education is R. E. Lee’s book, Continuing Education for Adults through the American Public Library, 1833-1964, which was based on Lee’s dissertation, “The Educational Commitment of the American Public Library, 1833-1956.” Lee traced the evolution of library adult education within the context of the institutional development of public libraries from the inception of public library service until the mid 1960s.

The final work discussed in the review is the Public Library Association’s Proposed Public Library Goals – Feasibility Study. This study was undertaken in 1971 to answer these questions “What is the state of the public library today, and what should it be in the last quarter of this century?” The Goals Feasibility Study used the Public Library Inquiry as a benchmark for gauging the development of the public library during the years 1950 to 1970.

The Public Library Inquiry

The Public Library Inquiry was “one of the most significant and far-reaching studies to have ever been made of public libraries” (Pungitore, 1995, p. 56). The research team headed by Leigh conducted 19 separate studies that examined various aspects of the public library as an organization – objectives, administration, structure, finance, operations, personnel, clientele, materials, and problems (Lee, 1966, p. 76; Pungitore, 1995, p. 56). The Inquiry also examined the environment in which the public library operated with studies of the book industry and the mass media (Leigh, 1950, p. ix). “Thus, the problem set for the Inquiry was twofold: to appraise public
libraries in terms of their own stated objectives and to appraise the appropriateness of the objectives themselves against the background of American social and cultural institutions and values” (Leigh, 1950, pp. 3-4).

The Inquiry produced seven published volumes and five shorter reports on specific topics. Three of the books were primarily responsible for the impact of the Inquiry. These books were *The Library's Public* by Bernard Berelson; *The Public Library in the Political Process* by Oliver Garceau; and *The Public Library in the United States: The General Report of the Public Library Inquiry* by Robert Leigh (Pungitore, 1995, p. 56; Williams, 1988, p. 66). Berelson’s book presented a statistical profile of public library users. Garceau examined the participation of public librarians in the local political process. Leigh’s book provided a summary of the entire study (Pungitore, 1995, p. 56).

Berelson conducted an extensive investigation of the characteristics of library users, the extent of library use, and the influence of the mass media. Berelson’s report was based on two separate studies made for the Public Library Inquiry. The first was a national survey of library use conducted by the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan. The second was an analysis by Berelson of all the studies of library book use and users published since 1930 (1949, p. ix). Berelson’s book, *The Library's Public*, presented the major findings and conclusions of the two studies.

Berelson found that book reading was relatively limited with only about 25-30% of adults reading at least one book a month (1949, p.6). The public library supplied about one fourth of the books read by American adults. If a library user was defined as someone who used the public library one or more times a month, about 10% of adults could be considered real users (Berelson, 1949, p.10). A relatively small percentage (20%) of users was responsible for 70% of the books circulated annually (Berelson, 1949, p.101). Nearly half of the books circulated were children’s books. Fiction accounted for almost two thirds of the books circulated. Nonfiction books were borrowed primarily by serious readers, usually students and well-educated adults.
The study showed that young people used the library more frequently than older people; women used it more often than men; and the well-educated made greater use of the library than the less educated. Berelson observed: “The public library serves the middle class, defined either by occupation or by economic status” (1949, pp. 49-50).

Berelson found that the public library was not perceived as a major source of information by the majority of the public. Although students used reference services frequently to complete school assignments, adults seldom used reference services for extensive research. The vast majority (90%) of the questions asked by adults could be answered by simple statements of fact (Berelson, 1949, pp. 70-71). As individuals, librarians appeared to have little influence over the reading tastes and interests of adults, but they did have a significant impact on the reading habits of children (Berelson, 1949, p. 86). Berelson found that the public library was held in high regard by the majority of the public despite the fact that relatively few people used the library or were aware of its programs and services (1949, p. 85). Most adults relied on the mass media, especially the newspaper and radio, for information, education, and recreation (Berelson, 1949, p. 123).

In the final chapter Berelson discussed the implications of these findings for library policy. Universal public service was “practically impossible” and the public library’s attempts “to serve the total community” were likely “to bring disappointment and perhaps deterioration in the quality of its service” (Berelson, 1949, p. 130). Berelson recommended that public librarians redefine their goals “from attempting to serve the total community to providing the minority of ‘serious’ users . . . with the tools which they need” (1949, p. 130). Berelson concluded that the public library “could not contribute much to the political enlightenment of the masses” (1949, p. 130) because the people who needed enlightenment did not use the public library and were unlikely to be attracted to the public library for that purpose (Williams, 1988, p. 67). The mass media would be more effective in reaching the general public. Also the public library should leave recreation and entertainment to the commercial media and focus on educational materials for serious readers (Berelson, 1949, pp. 131-132).
Garceau’s book, *The Public Library in the Political Process*, analyzed the social and political context of the public library. This study employed six methods of analysis, “focusing on structure of the institution, on interest group configuration, on social status, on historical development, on social myths, and on patterns of individual interaction” (Garceau, 1949, p. xxi). The study began with a historical review of the foundations of library government written by C. D. Hardy. It is in this review that Hardy reintroduced the concept of the library faith, the belief in the inherent value of the printed word. This social myth was characterized by two fundamental assumptions. First, the public library was necessary for the maintenance of a democratic society because it served as a source of knowledge and “an essential instrument of education” for an informed citizenry (Raber, 1994, p. 32). The success or failure of a democratic society was perceived to depend upon the ability of the citizens to work together to solve problems in a rational and cooperative manner (Hardy, 1949, p. 51). Second, the library faith reflected “the old rationalist dream that all the people thirst for knowledge and given the means, will educate themselves” (Garceau, 1949, p. 137). It was assumed that Americans would pursue every opportunity offered them to advance themselves materially and spiritually. This would include the opportunity for self-education afforded by reading and the use of public libraries (Raber, 1994, p. 33).

However, the inquiry showed that the second assumption was not valid. Garceau noted that Berelson’s analysis of library use clearly defined the characteristics of the public library’s actual clientele: “few people read books; still fewer read much; and still fewer read for enlightenment” (1949, p. 137). It was evident that a small minority of the population received the majority of public library services. The national survey conducted by the Survey Research Center for the Public Library Inquiry supported Berelson’s conclusion. The survey indicated 18% of the population visited the library during the year-long survey period. Of these 18%, 10% accounted for 71% of all the visits made (Berelson, 1949, pp. 99-101). It was obvious that librarians could no longer defend the public library as a public good “on the basis of active use of self-education
facilities by the masses” (Garceau, 1949, p. 137). However, 75% of the population supported the public library. Although the vast majority of the public never used it, they believed that the public library was an important educational and cultural institution for others to use (Berelson, 1949, pp. 85, 87).

In the discussion of the library faith in practical politics, Garceau noted that the library faith was used in nearly every political campaign carried out by the public library. Garceau argued that the library faith had been diminished by constant repetition and its application to a variety of questionable causes. Often these causes were attempts to capitalize on immediate opportunities, which did not contribute to the advancement of the public library’s goals. Garceau pointed out that the inappropriate use of the library faith tended to emphasize the disparity between ideology and practice and “also led the library to confuse its objectives and lower its standards of performance” (1949, p. 145). The library faith was “an intellectual abstraction of moving eloquence,” but it could not be easily translated into everyday practice (Garceau, 1949, p. 147). To practicing librarians service goals based on the ideology of the library faith were unrealistic and unattainable. Librarians were demoralized or rendered apathetic by the effort to achieve the unachievable. The public library had to operate in the day-to-day world of local politics where the library’s potential was measured primarily in terms of consumer service. From Garceau’s political science perspective, “librarians appeared to have suffered from taking their own social myth, not too seriously, but too literally” (Garceau, 1949, p.147).

Yet, the library faith did retain “a persistent validity” as evidenced by the willingness of the majority of the American public to support an institution that served only a small percentage of the population. As citizens of a democratic society, the American public valued the intellectual attainments of the scholarly minority who did use the library. They did not choose intellectual enlightenment for themselves, but they felt that serious readers should have access to library resources (Garceau, 1949, p. 148). The public library was a symbol of community pride and cultural achievement. As Hardy noted in the first chapter, “When culture is in question, the
knowledge of books, the amount of reading, and the possession of a library—all become measures of value, not only of the individual but also of the community” (Hardy, 1949, p. 51).

Garceau concluded that the library faith still had political potential, “but it must be used strategically and as a social myth, not as a measuring rod” (1949, p. 148). For the public library to remain a viable institution, librarians had to become politically more astute, relating their programs and services closely to the political reality of their communities (Garceau, 1949, p. 149).

Leigh’s book, *The Public Library in the United States*, incorporated the findings of all the studies and contained the inquiry’s general recommendations. The general report began with a brief description of the purpose, scope, tools of social science, and assumptions of the inquiry (Leigh, 1950, pp. 3-11). Then Leigh defined the traditional library faith and explained how the belief in the “ameliorative function of books and libraries” had served as a source of continuity in the library’s response to the changing demands of various historical periods (Leigh, 1950, p. 13; Raber, 1997, pp. 66-67). Leigh stated that the object of the inquiry was “not to assess the practicality or effectiveness” of the traditional library faith, but “to establish the fact that virtue in books has been the traditional faith of the American librarian” (1950, p.13). The library faith “provided the frame through which librarians viewed the world, judged the condition of libraries, made decisions, took action, and developed structures and means of service” (Raber, 1997, p. 67). Using a modest interpretation of the library faith, Leigh argued that the faith could be justified in terms of the prompt provision of materials for those individuals seeking knowledge for a variety of individual purposes. The traditional faith became unrealistic when the more ambitious interpretation was applied—“the belief in the power of books to transform common attitudes, to combat evils, or to raise the cultural level” (Leigh, 1950, p.14).

After the brief discussion of the library faith, Leigh presented a statement of the current objectives of the public library. This statement was derived from an analysis of the major statements of public library objectives issued during the previous decade (Leigh, 1950, pp. 14-
15). The first statement appeared in the 1943 *Post-War Standards for Public Libraries* (American Library Association, 1943). This statement of objectives was largely based on the objectives devised for the National Plans of the 1930s ("Standards," 1933). The second statement was part of *A National Plan for Public Library Service* issued in 1948 (Joeckel & Winslow, 1948). The third statement appeared in the "Four Year Goals" (1948, pp. 121-122). These three documents were combined into a consolidated statement of objectives that provided a more concise definition of public library objectives, identified specific areas of knowledge and interest with which library public libraries should be concerned, and prescribed appropriate activities for attaining the objectives (Leigh, 1950, p. 16). Leigh noted that if public libraries were considered educational institutions, the second and third parts would "define the curriculum and the method of achieving the objectives" (1950, p. 16). The objectives were defined as:

1. To assemble, preserve, and administer books and related educational materials in organized collections, in order to promote, through guidance and stimulation, an enlightened citizenship and enriched personal lives

2. To serve the community as a general center of reliable information

3. To provide opportunity and encouragement for children, young people, men, and women to educate themselves continuously (Leigh, 1950, pp. 16-17).

The areas of knowledge and interest were (a) public affairs and citizenship, (b) vocations, (c) aesthetic appreciation, (d) recreation, (e) information, and (g) research (Leigh, 1950, p. 18).

The consolidated statement contained a long list of suggested activities. Activities designed to achieve general public library objectives included (a) providing materials of all kinds, (b) selecting and organizing materials to insure ease of use, (c) participating in cooperative arrangements to improve accessibility, (d) providing free materials and services, (e) promoting the use of library materials, and (f) extending library service to all residents (Leigh, 1950, pp. 18-19). Suggested means for attaining educational objectives included (a) providing guidance in the use of materials; (b) using various types of instructional methods (lecture, forums, and discussion
groups); (c) encouraging people to examine important ideas and issues using critical thought processes, not blindly accepting everything they are told; (d) assisting other educational and informational agencies in educating the public for citizenship in a democratic society; (e) providing reliable information on all points of view; (f) participating in efforts to establish and improve community group programs; (g) adapting programs to meet the needs and interests of special groups; (h) modifying services and programs to address the solution of crucial problems; and (i) providing a wide range of accurate, reliable educational and informational materials for community leaders (Leigh, 1950, pp. 18-19).

Leigh (1950) noted a strong relationship between the current, official statement of public library objectives and the traditional library faith and observed, “The individual and social values which derive from a reading of books is [sic] central to both” (p. 19). Leigh (1950) asserted that despite the changing social and cultural environment, “The librarian’s historic faith in the individual and social value of reading good books persists with undiminished vitality” (p. 222). However, the current statement of objectives represented “a significant extension of the traditional definition of purpose” (Leigh, 1950, p. 19). The values attributed to reading books were extended to nonprint materials. Perhaps of greater significance, the librarian’s faith in the power of books and reading to change people’s attitudes and habits was “transformed into a positive program for libraries to guide, stimulate, and promote public use of public libraries materials for educational ends” (Leigh, 1950, p. 19).

Leigh (1950) tested the soundness and accuracy of the consolidated statement of objectives by surveying librarians throughout the country. The Inquiry’s research sample consisted of 60 public librarians representing libraries of all sizes in various regions of the country. Statements were also sent to 19 state librarians, 11 librarians in large cities not included in the research sample, 11 library school professors, 10 university librarians, and other library officials with an expressed interest in public libraries. Eighty percent of the group replied. The vast majority (84%) of the respondents approved the statement of objectives. Sixteen percent
obj ected to certain aspects of the statement (Leigh, 1950, p. 15; Williams, 1988, p. 68). Only two of the dissenting respondents rejected the statement in its entirety. Although opinion was not unanimous, a clear majority accepted the soundness and accuracy of the objectives. The document was accepted as an accurate statement of the aims of most public librarians in the United States (Leigh, 1950, p. 16).

Dissent fell into four categories. The first three categories represented endpoints on a continuum of library opinion. Their objections were related to the extension of public library activity in new directions, not to the basic philosophy underlying the objectives (Leigh, 1950, p. 22). Dissent in the first group centered on the inclusion of nonprint materials and nontraditional library activities such as lectures, forums, discussion groups, and film showings (Leigh, 1950, p. 20). The second area of dissent was the document’s emphasis on public affairs. Some librarians were concerned that an emphasis on public affairs would create an imbalance in library collections and services (Leigh, 1950, p. 22). Dissent in the third group focused on the educational role of the public library. Eight of the dissenting librarians objected to the concept of the public library as a general agency of adult education (Leigh, 1950, p. 21). The fourth category of dissent represented a departure from the majority opinion of what objectives should be. This dissent focused on the place of recreational reading materials in the library’s collection. These respondents were opposed to the current, official statement of objectives because it did not provide a provision for meeting public demand (Leigh, 1950, pp. 22-23).

Leigh conceded that among those librarians who had affirmed the objectives, there were a few who had misgivings. They expressed concern that the objectives were “paper pronouncements rather than actual objectives” and that they did not really guide everyday practice (Leigh, 1950, p. 23). A number of small town librarians approved of the objectives but indicated that they lacked the resources to achieve them. The objectives represented a goal that they could never hope to reach given their current circumstances. Some library school faculty members felt that it was not possible to write “objectives general enough to apply to libraries of
all sizes” without making them too vague for use in constructing practical library policy (Leigh, 1950, p. 23).

Leigh noted that the original documents from which the current objectives were drawn contained statements urging librarians to change people’s attitudes, habits, and ideas. These documents employed the “same word magic” seen in affirmations of the traditional librarian’s faith (Leigh, 1950, p. 20). Such statements seemed to ignore the principle that objectives must be realistic and achievable. Leigh pointed out that librarians tended to ignore “stubborn realities concerning the possibility of accomplishment by stressing the reality of need” (1950, p. 20).

Leigh thought the consolidated statement of objectives had “a consistent logic as a program of general out-of-school education” (1950, p. 20). However, the true test of the validity of the objectives was whether they had a vital connection to personal and social needs and if they actually guided everyday practice. Leigh observed that objectives become “meaningless phrases” when there is a complete and longstanding breach between goals and day-to-day achievement (1950, p. 24).

In order to establish the appropriateness of the objectives as a framework for examining current public library organization and practice, Leigh evaluated the official library objectives against the background of other social and cultural institutions. Although the public library had been traditionally considered a part of the national educational system, Leigh chose to examine the public library as a component of the mass communication system. In chapter three of the report, Leigh began his analysis with a discussion of the communications revolution and a description of the mass media audience. This was followed by a summary of Berelson’s findings about the library’s clientele. Then Leigh described how the communications industry marketed information and entertainment to reach the widest possible audience. Among the devices used to maximize sales were “celebrity-building, personalizing, sensationalism, distortion, avoidance of the unpopular and experimental, and preoccupation with the facts, ideas, and problems of the moment” (Leigh, 1950, pp. 33-41). Although the commercial mass media could and sometimes
did provide information on current public affairs, they were primarily interested in producing profits, not in educating or informing the public.

Leigh reviewed the results of the special study of the mass media done for the inquiry focusing on the effectiveness of the mass media as agencies of public information and education. Leigh found that, despite their great potential in terms of volume and reach, “their actual effect on opinion, attitude, and belief, as well as on factual knowledge, was limited” (1950, p. 46). The commercial mass media were not well suited to perform important informational and educational functions because in most instances “the commercial agencies served popular interests more than transformed them; reinforced widespread attitudes and opinions rather reversed them” (Leigh, 1950, p. 46). Attitudes and beliefs were more likely to be influenced by family members, friends, coworkers, and agencies of organized education. Some members of the Inquiry’s advisory committee questioned Leigh’s interpretation of the study’s findings. They pointed out the effects of propaganda on public attitudes toward Germany during War World II and current perceptions of the Soviet Union (Leigh, 1950, p. 46).

In the concluding sections of the chapter on the communications industry, Leigh explained the purpose of the analysis of the mass media—“to discern the natural and appropriate role of the public library in our society” (1950, p. 46). Leigh concluded that the public library should not compete with the mass media in those areas in which the media were particularly proficient—entertainment, relaxation, and escapism. Instead the public library should concentrate on the social needs neglected by the mass media—personal development and enlightenment. The public library should perform the important communication tasks left undone or slighted by the commercial media. First, the public library should provide and promote the use of the most current, reliable, and authoritative materials and artistic products. Second, the public library’s collections should provide a sufficiently balanced representation of new, unpopular ideas and unusual and experimental artistic creations. Third, the public library should select, organize, and promote the use of materials of enduring quality and relevance. Fourth, the public library should
select, collect, and organize all worthwhile information on topics of interest in every available format—print, picture, record and film (Leigh, 1950, pp. 51-52).

Leigh compared the description of the library’s appropriate functions as determined by this survey with the public library’s statement of historic faith and current official objectives. Leigh concluded that the librarian’s statement of objectives was consistent with the four functions derived from the analysis of the communications industry. The survey of communications agencies validated “the library’s emphasis on reliable materials of cultural, educational, and informational value” (Leigh, 1950, p. 223). The survey findings also tended to emphasize the essential importance of the library’s collection, preservation, organization, stimulation, and guidance functions (Leigh, 1950, p. 223). Leigh observed that the official library objectives seemed to define “the almost inevitable road for public libraries to follow if they are to play their appropriate role as a public agency of communication” (1950, p. 52).

The survey also tended to support Berelson’s recommendation that the public library focus its resources on the group identified as its natural audience—“adults whose interest, will, and ability lead them to seek personal enrichment and enlightenment” (Leigh, 1950, p. 48). This group’s needs were not being adequately addressed by the commercial media. The library’s aim should be to enlarge this audience in cooperation with other agencies of education. Leigh argued that service to this small but influential group would have social benefits for the entire community, because its members generally included the well-educated, intellectually aware, and civic-minded people in the community (1950, pp. 49-50).

What remained to be seen was the adequacy of the public library’s structure, materials, services, organization, financial support, operations, and personnel to carry out its self-proclaimed role. Chapters 4-10 of Leigh’s book reported the findings of the various studies conducted to assess these elements. These chapters provided a general picture of the organization, resources, and services of the American public library.
In the final chapter, Leigh summarized the findings of the various studies and discussed the implications for future library development. The historical and sociological surveys tended to confirm the validity of the official library objectives as planning tools for future development. Leigh offered a concise statement of the public library’s objectives and functions. The objectives were to “serve the community as a general center of reliable information and to provide opportunity and encouragement for people of all ages to educate themselves continuously” (Leigh, 1950, p. 223). The functions or means for achieving the objectives were “to assemble, preserve, organize, and administer collections of books and other materials possessing cultural, educational, and informational value and to promote the public’s use of library materials by active stimulation and skilled guidance” (Leigh, 1950, p. 223).

Leigh recognized that many of the public library’s problems could be attributed to lack of adequate funding. The Inquiry’s major recommendation was the development of library systems for the pooling of resources and personnel. Leigh recommended a 50-60% increase in public library funding for the period from 1950 to 1959. This increase could be achieved by working to secure state and federal funding for public library development (Leigh, 1950, pp. 226-231). Leigh also endorsed Berelson’s recommendation that the public library not seek to serve everyone in the community but concentrate on serious readers. The study recommended that public libraries focus on “(1) serving known users, (2) collecting quality, scholarly materials rather than popular, mass appeal items, and (3) maintaining an information/education emphasis that would discourage purely recreational use of the library” (Leigh, as cited in Pungitore, 1995, p. 57).

The Inquiry report provided an explanation of the reasoning behind its recommendations. In regard to the educational objective, the findings of the study suggested that the public library was not the “people’s university,” but it served as an instrument of self-education for a small but important segment of the population (Lee, 1966, p. 77; Leigh, 1950, pp. 107-108, 225-226). Public libraries could work to enlarge their natural constituency, but the efforts would be time-consuming and costly and would result in only modest increases in library use. The authors of the
report recommended that public libraries focus on providing adequate informational and educational services to the small segment of the population that actively used the library’s services (Lee, 1966, p. 77; Leigh, 1950, pp. 48-49). In this way the public library would make a social contribution “much greater than the gross numbers involved” (Leigh, 1950, pp. 48-49).

A partial basis for these controversial recommendations was the finding that actual practice often did not reflect stated objectives (Pungitore, 1995, p. 57). Small public libraries, which constituted the majority of public libraries, did not have sufficient resources to provide the materials or services called for in public library objectives. However, limits in size and budget were not the only impediments. The library director’s concept of service was a significant factor in the small library’s inability to meet stated objectives. Instead of building collections of authoritative reference works written in a readable style, library directors chose to emphasize current, popular fiction and nonfiction. Directors chose the politically expedient role of the public library as a recreational reading center rather than attempting the more difficult, yet more socially useful role of the library as a community information center (Leigh, 1950, pp. 90-91, 231).

When the Inquiry’s findings and recommendations were first published, the majority of public librarians disagreed with the controversial recommendations. They felt that these recommendations were suggesting that the public library community discard the pretense that the public library was the people’s university and acknowledge its elitist tendencies. A great deal of the controversy about the Public Library Inquiry concerned the omission of the recreational objective. Leigh explained that the authors chose to omit the recreational objective, not because they considered it unimportant, but because commercial enterprises were well-equipped to carry out that function. There were other more important social needs that the library should address (Asheim, 1950a, p. 276).

Some librarians did not believe the distinction between education and recreation was as clear-cut as the Inquiry seemed to indicate. L. A. Martin said that librarians had the desire “to be both more popular and more purposeful at one and the same time. While these two aims are not
necessarily antithetical, they can work at cross purposes” (1950, p. 47). Martin also noted that librarians were torn between the calls to provide educational services and to serve the desires and wants of their communities. “No respectable librarian would admit these days to giving people only what they want; no sound librarian would in practice give the people what they do not want” (1955, p. 12).

The Inquiry’s other recommendations were less controversial. The recommendations calling for the formation of larger units of service and for increased federal funding were met with approval. Both of these recommendations had been advocated by library leaders in the 1943 and 1948 statements of public library objectives. The Inquiry’s inclusion of these recommendations may have led to their eventual adoption as part of the 1956 standards (Pungitore, 1995, p. 57).

C. W. Stone

In 1953 C. W. Stone traced the development of library adult education in a bibliographic essay written partly in response to Shera’s critical article in Library Quarterly. Stone identified and assessed the importance of some of the trends in public library practice that contributed to the library’s place in the field of adult education. Despite the prevalence and diversity of library adult education programs, Stone believed the then current trends in programming were based on old ideas. There was evidence of a cultural lag in the general acceptance of adult education as a library responsibility. Yet, a significant amount of good work had been achieved despite the lack of adequate support. Stone attributed the “modest but encouraging gains” of the 1940s to foundation grants, the efforts of a small group of dedicated librarians and adult educators, and the stimulus of World War II (Stone, 1953, pp. 437-438).

Given the origins of the public library and its stated purpose as an instrument of adult education, Stone had difficulty understanding why the educational work of the public library had not been given a higher priority. Beginning with Learned’s The American Public Library and the
Diffusion of Knowledge, and concluding with Leigh's *The Public Library in the United States*, Stone identified significant works addressing the educational role of the public library, analyzed the various viewpoints of the authors, and characterized them as liberal or conservative in their approach to library adult education. Generally, the library literature reflected a more conservative conception of library adult education than did literature in the field of adult education (Stone, 1953, pp. 439-446).

Stone identified negative factors that impeded the development of library adult education during the years between 1925 and 1950.

1. Lack of sound research
2. Stress on promotion and expansion of the library’s own services, programs, and projects rather than a thoughtful formulation, cooperation, and integration of efforts for the solution of community problems
3. Departmentalization rather than diffusion of responsibility within the library
4. Continuing insistence upon the importance of the individual without reference to the associations which establish that importance
5. Complete neglect of many significant areas
6. Emphasis on techniques rather than problems
7. Failure to train a corps of professional workers able to do the jobs necessary (Stone, 1953, p. 446).

Stone realized that “by any quantitative measure” library adult education “would surely be judged almost complete failure” (1953, p. 446). Yet, “the potential importance of the public library’s role in adult education” had nevertheless increased over the previous 25 years (Stone, 1953, p. 446). Among the positive trends Stone noted in librarianship were (a) greater availability of library services, (b) improved collections, and (c) greater willingness to collect materials in all formats. Positive trends in library adult education included (a) more public library services for young adults and older adults, (b) discussion of public affairs, (c) involvement with community
organizations, (d) some efforts to revise library school curricula, (e) services to business and labor; (f) literacy classes and reading clinics, (g) leadership training, (h) program planning, and (i) community study (1953, pp. 446-448). In Stone’s opinion, two areas were critical to the future importance of the public library—community study and program planning (1953, p. 448).

In conclusion, Stone placed library adult education functions in three categories: generally accepted, somewhat questionable, and controversial. Generally accepted functions included (a) promoting self-education opportunities, (b) providing materials and information to other educational agencies, (c) exhibiting materials, and (d) furnishing information related to community development. Somewhat questionable functions included program planning assistance for community groups and library sponsorship of group activities such as book discussions, special classes, film forums, concerts, and lectures. Controversial functions were the assumption of a leadership role in informal community adult education and the use of library resources to advance positive social change. Stone ended the essay with a warning that the public library faced obsolescence if it did not respond to current social trends—trends that seemed to demand that the public library take up the more controversial tasks (1953, p. 451).

M. E. Monroe

Monroe’s dissertation, The Evolving Conception of Adult Education in Three Public Libraries: 1920-1955 (1962) and the book Library Adult Education: Biography of an Idea (1963) traced the evolution of the concept of library adult education in three public libraries—Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, the Kern County Free Library in California, and the New York Public Library. Monroe interpreted the development of library adult education in these three library systems as it related to the nation-wide growth of the concept between 1920 and 1955 (Monroe, 1962, p. 1). The purpose of the study was to examine how the concept had changed over time, whether the changes reflected consistency of purpose, and whether the library’s collections played a significant role in determining the services developed as adult education (Monroe, 1962, p. 1).
Monroe’s dissertation was written partly in response to the articles written by C. W. Stone and J. H. Shera. Shera’s 1952 article criticized the library adult education movement and implied that the movement had made few contributions to the field of public librarianship. Shera challenged librarians to undertake a historical review of the significance of library adult education. Stone’s bibliographical survey was written in part as an answer to the challenge presented by Shera (Monroe, 1963, p. 3). Stone’s essay presented a balanced assessment of the impact of the adult education movement on public librarianship. Stone concluded that adult education had made and was continuing to make valuable contributions to the field. Monroe acknowledged the importance of Stone’s contribution to the preliminary planning for the dissertation; however, the plans for the dissertation called for a more extensive study to explore the significance of library adult education for public libraries (Monroe, 1962, p. 16).

The Evolution of Library Adult Education

Monroe stated that the conception of library adult education had evolved through three major periods of library service development: “first, planned reading programs and the readers’ advisory service; second, library services to community organizations and agencies; and, third, library-sponsored group programs” (1963, p.12). To most librarians these services were adult education. These three periods were clearly evident in the three library systems Monroe studied and in library systems throughout the country (1963, p.12).

Monroe indicated that a discernible pattern of development was apparent for each of these service areas. First, the service was identified as library adult education and was justified as part of the library’s educational role. Second, this aspect of service was intensely developed under the stimulus of the adult education concept. Third, this area of service lost its designation as library adult education and became integrated into standard public library service with responsibility being shared among all the staff. The pattern would then begin again with a new area of service identified as library adult education (Monroe, 1963, p. 12).
As the conception of library adult education evolved, it grew to encompass a number of elements: emphasis on reading for educational purposes, focus on the content of library materials as ideas to be used for individual and social improvement, and recognition of the library’s responsibility to advance the goals of a democratic society. Tying the library’s adult education services to the use of library materials helped to ensure that these services became an integral part of the library’s services to adults (Monroe, 1962, abstract).

As early as the 1940s librarians began to view adult education services as part of the larger adult services program; however, the term “adult education” was still used to refer to the library’s educational objective for adults (Monroe, 1962, abstract). Planned reading programs and reader’s advisory service, library services to community organizations and agencies, and library sponsored group programs had become an accepted public library service to adults by 1955 (Monroe, 1963, pp. 12-13). By the mid 1950s the broader term “adult services” was beginning to replace the more specific term “adult education” as the designation for these areas of service (Monroe, 1963, p. 13).

References Services as Adult Education

Reference was the first library public service area to become professionalized and, as such, served as the model for the development of other professional services to adults (Monroe, 1963, p. 450). Monroe analyzed the relationship between reference services and adult education. In the 1920s the libraries Monroe studied did not make “any sharp distinctions between the reference and information services and the field of adult education” (1963, p. 450). W. S. Learned’s conception of the public library as the “community intelligence center” tended to treat the two areas as one with the subject specialist providing information and advisory services (Monroe, 1963, p. 450). The librarians interviewed for Monroe’s study tended to favor the inclusion of advisory services as part of the reference department. M. E. Hawes in 1934 “questioned whether advisory service offered without subject expertness could be dignified as adult education” (Monroe, 1963, p. 450). Reference service and adult education were closely
related in that both relied on "subject expertness to fulfill the information objective of the library's educational goal" (Monroe, 1963, p. 451).

Monroe recognized "an extensive overlap" between reference and advisory service and attributed their interconnection to "their common basis in a continuum ranging from subject-centered research to a purpose-centered guidance" (1963, p. 451). The continuum encompassed the inexperienced reader who needed the librarian's assistance to make use of the library's resources and the research expert who needed little assistance but was dependent upon the quality and extent of the library's collections. It was difficult for any one library to serve the needs of every user. Some libraries attempted to serve the full range of need from scholarly research to informal guidance, but inexperienced readers often did not receive the close guidance they required. Most libraries chose to focus on the average user and offered a mid range of reference and advisory service. Others such as the New York Public Library divided the responsibility for service by assigning scholarly research assistance to the reference department and information, advisory, and reading stimulation services to the circulation department (Monroe, 1963, p. 451).

Reference service provided a more comfortable context for advisory service than adult education for many librarians. The reference services approach to advisory services was more acceptable because it emphasized the fulfillment of the reader's already recognized need. De Laveaga, head of the reference department at Kern County Free Library, felt that serving the purposeful reader was "just as educational" as helping the inexperienced reader articulate his or her need (Monroe, 1963, p. 452). Much of the opposition to adult education lay in the "fear that the anticipation of the reader's need of which he was not yet fully aware might lead to substituting the librarian's purpose for the reader's purpose in the advisory service ..." (Monroe, 1963, p. 452). Most librarians, including those involved in adult education work, wanted to avoid the condescending social work approach to advisory services. Education was seen as the individual's choice, not something imposed by society upon the individual (Monroe, 1963, p. 452).
Jennie Flexner, readers' adviser at the New York Public Library, had a different perspective—a conception of advisory service grounded in adult education principles that went well beyond the reference service approach. Flexner argued that advisory services should be designed to help readers identify and articulate their needs, to gain awareness of the great ideas contained in books, and with the librarian's assistance use these ideas to further their growth and development. This was not a process in which librarians imposed their ideas upon the reader; it was instead a process of mutual exploration. Readers had to be willing and able to think in a creative manner about their own needs. Working within the framework of the individual's needs, interests, and capabilities, the librarian had to stimulate and guide the reader toward the fulfillment of his or her self-imposed goals. The advisory service sought to encourage the reader to use books independently and to develop an appreciation of a wide range of books (Monroe, 1963, p. 453).

The reference approach to advisory services was less demanding. Library techniques for providing information to purposeful readers were well defined. Library techniques for fostering creative thinking in casual readers were not so well defined. Many librarians did not know how to help the reader identify and articulate his or her needs without intruding into the reader's personal concerns or imposing their own ideas on the reader. Librarians were counseled to avoid offering suggestions and solutions to problems outside their area of expertise. Instead, they were urged to find ways in which library materials could appropriately be used to address readers' needs (Monroe, 1963, pp.453-454).

Marion Hawes viewed the advisory function as "the heart of the library's adult education service" (Monroe, 1963, p. 454). Hawes counseled librarians to avoid a condescending attitude by "stressing the mutuality of search by the librarian and the reader" (Monroe, 1963, p. 454). The librarian was to explore ideas with the reader as a colleague, not as authority on the subject. Hawes also stressed the use of community group programs to provide an intensive educational experience. By developing awareness of social and economic problems within the community
and the impact of these problems on various groups, librarians could anticipate readers’ needs without intruding into the personal concerns of individuals. Hawes advocated an approach that made people “conscious of the need to know—as an opportunity to understanding and self-development—and then supplying the materials to fill the need” (Monroe, 1963, p. 454).

R. A. Beals, director of the New York Public Library, believed that reader’s advisory service was “the unique library function in adult education” (Monroe, 1963, pp. 371-372). However, Beals did not feel that reader’s advisors were as well-trained and competent as reference librarians. Both advisory services and reference services benefited from the development of subject departments in which the two functions were combined. Librarians who were experts in their fields of knowledge were the most effective advisors and reference workers (Monroe, 1963, p. 372). Beals understood and accepted the adult education vision of library service as the diffusion of knowledge and supported Learned’s concept of the public library as the community intelligence center. In Beals’ opinion “the library’s role in adult education was to infuse authentic knowledge into the thinking and decision-making of the community” (Monroe, 1963, p. 454). The provision of program planning services, cooperative programs, and library sponsored programs on crucial community issues were seen as essential elements in that role. The role of community intelligence center formed “a sound basis for the reference-advisory continuum in the context of adult education” (Monroe, 1963, p. 454).

*The Library’s Role in Community Adult Education*

As a community agency, the library viewed its adult education activities as part of the broader educational program of the community. In the book *The Public Library—A People’s University*, Alvin Johnson proposed three possible roles for librarians in community adult education programs—ancillary, independent, and leadership roles (as cited in Monroe, 1963, p.13-14). The ancillary role was most prevalent in the 1920s. In the ancillary role, the library supported the educational programs of other community agencies. It provided materials, facilities,
and personnel to assist in program planning but did not initiate educational programs for adults (Monroe, 1963, pp. 13-14, 454-455).

In the independent role, the library conducted its own educational programming. The independent role began with services to individuals through the readers’ advisory program. The advisory program consisted of “sustained guidance in an educational experience with books” (Monroe, 1963, p. 455). The independent role was further developed by the introduction of library sponsored group programs. Advocates of group programs believed the library had a responsibility to offer programs on important issues and ideas to fulfill its educational commitment to the community. Group programming would serve the dual purpose of meeting the educational needs of the community and stimulating interest in the library’s resources. Group programming would have the additional benefit of improving librarians’ program planning and leadership training skills. Community volunteers were encouraged to develop their leadership skills by participating as group discussion leaders (Monroe, 1963, pp. 14, 455-456).

The community leadership role emphasized the participation of the public library “in the analysis of community problems and their solution” (Monroe, 1963, p. 456). The leadership role was a cooperative approach in which libraries (a) maintained an ongoing dialogue with other community agencies, (b) encouraged community groups to develop and implement programs designed to meet the community’s needs, (c) assisted other agencies with program planning, (d) cosponsored group programs on important topics, (e) stimulated interest in community issues through publicity and public relations activities, and (f) provided informational and educational resources to address the community’s current concerns (Monroe, 1963, pp. 14; 457-458). Johnson challenged the public library to assume a leadership role in educational programming for adults, and some libraries responded by taking a cooperative approach and focusing on important community issues. These public libraries sought to promote greater use of their resources (personnel, materials, and facilities) through active participation in “significant community activities in which people were purposefully engaged” (Monroe, 1963, p. 458).
Library Adult Education and Ideas

In the early stages of library education development, the educational objective was embodied in the readers' advisory services. Readers' advisory services were directed toward individual clients. The objective was to stimulate readers' interests and guide their reading in a sustained, individualized program designed to achieve growth in reading skills and appreciation of good literature. The notion of reading books to explore ideas and values was not widely accepted, although some libraries had emphasized “putting ideas in books to work” in their efforts to develop “purposeful readers” and to encourage the reading of nonfiction rather than fiction (Monroe, 1963, p. 461). The notion of using the ideas contained in books to promote critical thinking and analysis was not fully realized until the development of library sponsored group discussion programs. Group programs were designed to encourage discussion and debate of ideas. Keppel first suggested the use of book discussions groups with adults at the 1929 ALA annual conference, but the idea did not catch on until Lyman Bryson in 1936 and Alvin Johnson in 1938 began to advocate this approach. By the 1940s group discussion programs were becoming an accepted educational approach for adults (Monroe, 1963, pp. 459-460).

In using the group discussion method, librarians were careful to avoid the imposition of viewpoints. Group leaders encouraged the exploration of various opinions on important issues and guided group members toward a better understanding of the different viewpoints, but did not attempt to direct the group toward a consensus opinion. Librarians attempted to maintain the “library’s traditionally neutral role in the area of ideas” (Monroe, 1963, p. 460).

Of course, the public library was not truly neutral. As a democratic institution it reflected the ideas and values of a democratic society. However, the public library did not make a bold statement regarding its democratic responsibilities until the period just prior to World War II. Strong patriotic sentiment and national consensus on the values of democracy compelled the library “to review its neutral role in regard to the values of democracy” (Monroe, 1963, p. 461). The Adult Education Board had already recognized the importance of developing methods to
stimulate critical and creative thinking about democratic values in relation to the current crisis. In 1939, the Adult Education Board presented the first Library Bill of Rights for ALA Council approval (Monroe, 1963, p. 50). With approval of the Library Bill of Rights, ALA emphasized "the library's responsibility for developing a deeper understanding of democracy" (Monroe, 1963, p. 461). To preserve its neutral stance while acknowledging its democratic responsibilities, the library developed two safeguards: "making available materials on all viewpoints on an issue and drawing a distinction between its commitment to democracy and its role in public issues—not to tell people what to think, but to propose what was important to think about" (Monroe, 1963, p. 462). In Monroe's view, librarians should make "socially significant materials" available and encourage the public to read these materials, but they should not attempt to influence the reader's opinions (1950, p. 463).

Monroe asserted that "the emphasis on socially significant materials which arose during World War II . . . was closely related to the adult education responsibility of the public library" (1963, p. 463). Although statements by ALA and individual library systems acknowledged that the selection and promotion of socially significant materials should be a part of the practice of library adult education, relatively few libraries were willing to take responsibility for identifying or promoting "socially significant" materials. Many librarians felt that choosing which materials to emphasize was a form of censorship and an attempt to influence the public's thinking by focusing more attention on some issues than others. Monroe contended that the reluctance of public libraries to commit themselves to a socially active role created a schism between library adult education and the adult education movement in the early 1950s. Some members of the newly formed Adult Education Association of the U.S.A espoused a social philosophy which called for "social action on behalf of reasoned social change" (Monroe, 1963, p. 463). Social activism was a controversial topic that most public librarians were not comfortable with the idea of social activism in the 1950s.
Although librarians were hesitant to give up the tradition of neutrality, they recognized the importance of the ideas contained in their collections. They believed that these ideas could be used to solve the problems of individuals and society as a whole. They recognized the potential of ideas to bring about changes in the thinking and behavior of individuals. Librarianship assumed that adult Americans were capable of using critical judgment to evaluate and select those ideas having merit from the multitude of ideas presented to them. Library adult education was based on the assumption that adults, particularly undereducated adults, could benefit from the guidance provided by the readers' advisory services and group discussions to become more proficient in critical thinking and evaluation. Neither library adult education nor public librarianship advanced the notion that librarians should tell adults what to think (Monroe, 1963, p. 464).

*The Role of Materials in Library Adult Education*

Monroe found that the role of materials in library adult education changed with the evolution of the public library's educational commitment (1963, p.466). Monroe described five stages in the changing relationship of materials to adult education programs. The first stage was the simple provision of library materials. The second stage was the broadening of educational services as the result of efforts to make library services more democratic and to create greater awareness of the library's resources and services. The third stage was further development of services as librarians recognized their responsibility to use library materials to "train for excellence" and to guide purposeful readers in achieving their goals (Monroe, 1963, p. 466). The fourth stage was the development of services to special clienteles with the realization that these groups required an approach tailored to their specific needs. Library materials should be selected and presented in ways relevant to the group's background and purposes. The fifth stage involved the development of library sponsored or cosponsored programs on community issues. These programs came into existence with the recognition that the solution of social problems depended upon the capability of the average citizen to critically evaluate important ideas in whatever form they may be presented. With the appearance of nonprint formats (films, filmstrips, television
programs, etc.) in the 1940s, librarians began to emphasize ideas rather than books. All stages of the library’s educational commitment stressed the use of the library’s materials and resources (Monroe, 1963, p. 466).

Monroe saw the relationship between library materials and the reader evolving in three phases. First, the library provided materials to support the adult education activities of other community agencies. Second, library materials were used as resources in the library’s own educational programs for adults. The librarian’s responsibilities expanded to include conducting the learning experience as well as selecting and compiling appropriate resources (Monroe, 1963, p. 470). In the third phase, librarians developed techniques to make more effective use of library materials in a wider range of educational situations (Monroe, 1963, p. 470). Among techniques developed to stimulate interest in learning and to guide learners in systematic learning experiences were planned reading programs, program planning assistance, and book or film discussion programs. The techniques were designed to accomplish educational outcomes through the use of library materials. The desired outcomes involved development of the individual and social improvement (Monroe, 1963, p. 15). The third phase emphasized “the library’s responsibility for the use of materials as the justification for its involvement in the adult education process” (Monroe, 1963, p. 471). The development of library adult education services stemmed from “the library’s responsibility for administering its collection to fulfill its educational objectives” (Monroe, 1963, p. 471).

The Essential Nature of Library Adult Education

Monroe concluded that “library adult education was a movement, a set of principles, closely related to the broader adult education movement but embodied in a series of particular library services” (1963, p. 12). There was a consistent philosophy informing the practice of library adult education, the belief “that public librarianship had a responsibility to stimulate and guide the community to use of the library’s materials for the best growth of the individual in
terms of his needs and interests and for the well-being of the community and society as a whole" (Monroe, 1963, pp. 443-444).

By the 1950s library adult education was seen as a philosophy that encompassed all adult services. All services for adults contributed to the adult education purpose to some extent, but some aspects of adult services were considered more educational than others. Those services which involved a close advisory relationship between the librarian and reader in a sustained learning experience were seen as the heart of library adult education. While the guidance function was most closely identified with adult education, the importance of the stimulation function can not be overemphasized. The stimulation function played a significant role in increasing the adult reader's awareness of and interest in the intellectual content of library materials. Casual readers began to realize that the ideas in library materials were relevant to their life situations and had real significance for them in terms of personal growth and civic competence. Readers were encouraged to make "broader and more critical use of library materials" related to their individual purposes (Monroe, 1963, p. 472).

Effective library adult education depended on the librarian's "knowledge of the reader, his interests and needs, as well as . . . the library materials to meet these needs" (Monroe, 1963, p. 474). Librarians developed a sense of professional responsibility that prevented them from misusing their knowledge by attempting to practice the skills of other professionals. Librarians limited their activities "to guidance in the selection of useful materials, discussion of its best use, or referral to other agencies" when appropriate (Monroe, 1963, p. 474). To avoid an authoritarian approach, librarians developed skills in facilitative learning—"a mutual searching and planning with the reader that resulted in mutual learning, one of the marks of adult education" (Monroe, 1963, p. 474).

By 1955 library adult educators had developed a set of professional values. Library adult educators recognized the library's responsibility: (a) to provide information and guidance in the use of library materials to meet users' personal, vocational, social, and cultural needs; (b) to
promote awareness of the wide variety of needs addressed by the library's materials and to stimulate interest in using those materials and services appropriate to the individual's needs; (c) to serve as a leader in community efforts to develop and sustain an environment for learning and informed decision making, to stimulate awareness of critical problems, and to provide the resources needed to understand and solve these problems; (d) to assist readers in making the best possible use of library materials by supplying reliable information and encouraging the use of critical evaluation skills in interpreting the information; (e) to develop library collections and services to fulfill these responsibilities and to promote the development of appropriate materials or essential services in areas where they are absent (Monroe, 1963, p. 475).

These values evolved from a merger of perspectives to produce a concern for both the reader and the use of library materials. The educational perspective emphasized the library's role in enhancing the personal development of library users. The library-materials viewpoint emphasized using the ideas in library materials. Librarians with their knowledge of the subject matter and educational skills were able to select appropriate materials to meet the reader's immediate needs and to promote his or her personal and intellectual development (Monroe, 1963, p. 476).

Although library adult education tended to emphasize the individual, it also recognized a responsibility to society. As a social institution, the public library had a responsibility to use its resources (a) to create and maintain a learning environment within the community, (b) to preserve the knowledge of society and make it available for use now and in the future, (c) to promote informed decision making and reasoned action, and (d) to increase the capability of citizens to make sound judgments (Monroe, 1963, p. 476).

The Contributions of Library Adult Education

Monroe discerned two major contributions of library adult education to librarianship. First, it provided the impetus for the professionalization of public library services for adults. Library adult education was responsible for the professionalization of the services designed to
meet the educational, recreational, and cultural needs of adults through the use of library resources. The information function had been professionalized through the development of reference services in the late nineteenth century (Monroe, 1963, pp. 483-484).

Library adult education created unity of purpose for the educational, recreational, and cultural objectives and reduced the library's major responsibilities to two: "service in the discovery and the diffusion of knowledge" (Monroe, 1963, p. 484). It provided many of the concepts and skills needed in the dissemination of information. Library adult education provided the context for the development, testing, expansion, and revision of professional knowledge "in the areas of reading guidance, service to community groups, and library-sponsored programs" (Monroe, 1963, p. 485). Although the skills of reference service were developed independently, reference services and reading guidance shared a common basis and represented different points along a continuum "ranging from subject-centered research to purpose-centered guidance" (Monroe, 1963, p. 451).

Public relations and extension services "became truly professionalized . . . under the influence of library adult education" (Monroe, 1963, p. 485). Public relations work had been rejected by many librarians because it carried the connotation of "salesmanship." Extension services were burdened with the connotation of "quantity instead of quality." Library adult education gave more positive connotations to these two areas. Extension became associated with the "development of book accessibility" (Monroe, 1963, p. 485). Public relations and publicity became closely associated with the stimulation function—making people aware of the library's resources and how these resources could improve their lives. Public relations and publicity provided the rationale for the development of exhibits, displays, and reading lists (Monroe, 1963, p. 485).

Library adult education made a number of important contributions to the philosophy of public librarianship. It made librarians aware of their responsibility for stimulating interest in socially significant material. It added the stimulation function to "the already recognized
functions of information, instruction, and guidance” (Monroe, 1962, abstract). It helped to improve the quality of adult services as librarians learned to adapt techniques and services to the needs and interests of various clienteles. The problem-solving focus of library adult education contributed to the realization of the public library’s community leadership role by encouraging the library to promote the use of library materials and resources to improve community planning and decision-making (Monroe, 1962, abstract). Monroe concluded the following:

Library adult education . . . contributed to public librarianship some major elements of professionalization of adult services: a philosophy that relates its function to the needs of society, ethical principles regulating the discharge of that function, a growing body of knowledge and professional technique that require judgment rather then rule-of-thumb application, the recognition by society that this professional service is appropriately provided. (Monroe, 1963, p. 486)

The second major contribution of library adult education was assistance in narrowing the gap between the library’s programs and services and the educational needs of society (Monroe, 1963, p. 483-484). The adult education movement provided the framework for library adult education. When the library adult education movement emerged in the 1920s, educational services for adults were not guided by a well-defined set of principles. The educational objective had existed since the beginning of public library service, but it lacked a coherent rationale. There were few service techniques and no trained specialists to carry out this objective. It depended largely upon the quality of the library collection for its implementation (Monroe, 1963, p.12). The services developed under the influence of library adult education helped the public library justify its existence as a publicly supported institution. The library’s educational services for adults were recognized as a social benefit (Monroe, 1963, p. 484). The library’s role in adult education was interpreted by a number of important figures in the field of adult education such as W. S. Learned (1924), F. P. Keppel (1926), M. A. Cartwright (1935), L. L. Bryson (1936), Alvin Johnson (1938), C. O. Houle (1957), and M. S. Knowles (1962).
Monroe's study validated C. W. Stone's argument that adult education was making "a fundamental contribution to public librarianship" (Monroe, 1963, p. 487). The study also confirmed Stone's contention about the existence of "a serious cultural lag between the insights of library adult education and their acceptance by public librarianship" (Monroe, 1963, p. 487). Monroe identified a cultural lag between "the philosophy of public librarianship and the educational needs of society as they have evolved under democracy, technology, increased leisure, and critical world revolution" (1950, p. 487). From 1920 to 1955 library adult education helped librarianship to respond more effectively to the needs of its clientele in times of rapid change. Adult education helped to clarify the principles that guided public librarianship and contributed philosophy and programming that helped to strengthen the library's institutional response to the needs of a changing society, thus narrowing the gap between the library's services and actual social needs (Monroe, 1963, p. 487).

Monroe's study documented for the period of 1920-1955 what Shera (1949) had observed about the early development of public librarianship in this country; the public library's mission had evolved "from a narrowly conservational function" to a broad program encompassing informational, educational, cultural, and recreational objectives, which reflected "transformations in society itself" (p. 209). The role of the public library in helping people adjust to social change was a source of controversy. Librarians believed their proper role was to provide resources for informed decision-making and action; they were opposed to the library taking a leadership role in social change or social engineering. C.W. Stone's proposal that library resources be used to promote awareness of social ills and to identify channels for desired social change was not recognized or accepted by the majority of librarians engaged in the practice of library adult education (Monroe, 1963, p. 488; Stone, 1953, p. 451).

In response to Shera's harsh criticism of library adult education, Monroe asserted that "library adult education, rather than distorting the historic role of the public library, has provided both an enriched philosophy and the necessary library service forms and skills to realize its
historic role” (Monroe, 1963, p. 489). Library adult education emphasized the development of critical evaluation skills, stimulated the awareness of important social issues, and guided readers to a deeper understanding of those issues through the use of library materials. Librarians as adult educators directed the public’s attention to important issues and provided information on all aspects of the issues, but did not presume to tell people what to think. Library adult education developed a wide range of services and programs to meet the needs of a clientele with diverse needs and abilities. Monroe held that society’s needs were the driving force in developing these services and programs (1963, pp. 489-490).

Monroe acknowledged that there were flaws in both practice and theory. In their eagerness to meet a perceived need, library adult educators were sometimes too quick to accept “partial answers and imperfectly developed techniques,” instead of waiting for research-based answers to fundamental professional questions and proven techniques (Monroe, 1963, p. 490). Differences in values and flaws in library adult education practice limited the acceptance of library adult education philosophy. Library adult education, like the broader adult education field, was sometimes “prone to live on its abundant capital of energy and enthusiasm” (Monroe, 1963, p. 490).

Leigh identified and defined the “library faith” as the librarian’s belief in the power of books “to transform common attitudes, to combat evils, or to raise the cultural level” (Leigh, as cited in Monroe, 1963, p. 490). Books were seen as having an almost magical quality, as if exposure to books was sufficient to produce the desired effects. Library adult education also recognized the potential power of the ideas contained in books and developed techniques to put this power to use. Library adult education provided the key to make the librarian’s faith in books and ideas more of a practical reality. Under the auspices of adult education, librarians developed adult services that used the facts, ideas, and descriptions of human experiences in library materials to enrich and broaden the education of adults from a variety of backgrounds (Monroe, 1963, p. 490).
Lee discussed the evolution of the public library’s commitment to adult education within the context of the institutional development of the American public library in the dissertation, “The Educational Commitment of the American Public Library, 1833-1956,” and in the book, *Continuing Education for Adults through the American Public Library, 1833-1964*. The time span 1833-1964 was divided into six periods which represented relative stages in the institutional development of the public library. The first stage, which lasted from 1833 to 1875, dealt with the establishment of the public library and the emphasis given to the collection and preservation of books. In the second stage, 1876 to 1897, the public library emphasized the organization of resources for efficient functioning. The major emphasis in stage three, 1898 to 1919, was the extension of services to a greater proportion of the population. Service to the individual was the institutional focus in the fourth stage, which lasted from 1920 to 1940. In stage five, 1941-1956, the public library emphasized the strengthening of democracy through the promotion of an enlightened citizenry. The sixth stage, 1957-1964, dealt with the then current period of library development. The major institutional emphasis for that stage was still emerging and was not yet clearly evident when Lee wrote his book in 1966. In each of the stages, Lee discussed the educational commitment and services of the public library in relation to the major institutional emphasis of the period.

When the public library was founded in the mid-nineteenth century, its educational objective was to serve as means of continuing education for adults, primarily for those adults who had completed a common or elementary school education. The public library was established to serve people who had the ability and motivation to make use of the library’s resources. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the educational objective broadened to include the concept of self-education. Librarians believed that learning should continue beyond formal schooling. The public library was seen as a “means by which adults, particularly those forced to
leave school to earn a living, could continue their education through their own efforts, at their own rate, and to the extent of their own abilities" (Lee, 1966, pp. 112-113).

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the educational objective was modified to reflect the widespread availability of elementary school education and the growing opportunities for secondary school education. The public library attempted “to provide adults—particularly those who were either unable to attend high school or unable to complete it—with the means to continue their education” (Lee, 1966, p. 113).

Between 1920 and 1964 the educational objective evolved to reflect the increase in the educational level of the adult population. Gradually less attention was given to remedial education and greater emphasis was placed on encouraging adults to use their leisure time in creative and fulfilling ways. No particular group of adults was the focus of the library’s efforts. “The aim was to provide all adults with the means to educate themselves continuously” (Lee, 1966, p. 113).

Lee observed that the educational objective of the public library could be divided into two parts: “what is intended and for whom” (Continuing Education 113). To the question, “what is intended,” the answer was “to provide a means of self-education.” The intent of the educational objective remained basically the same throughout the period from 1850 to 1964. What changed was the part of the objective that specified for whom educational services were to be provided. This aspect changed as the average level of educational attainment rose (Lee, 1966, p. 113).

As the educational objective changed over time so did the perceived educational role of the public library. Between 1850 and 1885 the role was to serve as “a supplement to the public school system” (Lee, 1963, p.162). In the years between 1885 and 1915, the public library was seen as playing a complementary rather than a supplementary role to the work of the public school. Library leaders sought to enhance the library’s status by promoting the notion of the public library as “a people’s university; a community institution whose educational role was to
take up the education of citizens at the point where it was discontinued by the public schools” (Lee, 1966, p. 114).

The library’s educational role slowly changed during the years between 1920 and 1956 in response to the proliferation of adult education agencies and programs. The public library community no longer saw the library’s role as a complement to the work of the public school system. The public library assumed a more cooperative role as it participated with other adult education agencies in the sponsorship of programs for adults (Lee, 1963, p. 114). During the 1950s and early 1960s, the guiding philosophy of library adult education was integration with the community. Public libraries worked with community groups, assisted in the planning of community activities, sponsored educational programs in conjunction with other community agencies, and developed their own programs based on analyses of community needs and interests (Lee, 1963, p. 114).

Lee identified five specific educational goals that were pursued by public libraries between 1850 and 1964. Civic enlightenment and personal development were enduring purposes throughout this period. From about 1850 to 1890 libraries stressed moral betterment. From 1930 to 1950 vocational improvement was a major concern. Community development became an important goal during the years between 1957 and 1964 (Lee, 1966, p. 114).

Lee noted a gradual change in the number and type of educational services provided by the majority of public libraries in the period from 1850 to 1964. From 1850 to 1875, collecting books was the primary aim. The education objective was implemented by providing a collection of educationally worthwhile books. Adults could use these books free of charge at the library, but they could not borrow books for reading at home (Lee, 1966, p. 114).

As library collections grew larger, services expanded to include the provision of materials and personal assistance. Librarians sought to make the collections easier to use by developing procedures for classifying and organizing materials, by adopting more flexible operational policies, and by helping readers locate and select books. The development of circulation
procedures allowed adults to borrow books for more in-depth reading and study at their convenience (Lee, 1966, p. 115).

Between the turn of the century and the beginning of World War I, services increased to include the provision of materials, personal assistance, and stimulation. To make library materials more accessible to the public, public libraries established substations and branches and organized traveling libraries. Librarians began to use publicity to increase awareness of the library's resources and services. Various methods were devised to encourage adults to read educationally worthwhile materials. Book talks, book lists, and book displays were some of the methods used to motivate readers (Lee, 1966, pp. 114-115).

Between 1920 and 1956 the provision of materials, personal assistance, and stimulation were the most commonly provided educational services. The majority of the libraries in the country limited their services to these areas. However, some large and medium-sized libraries chose to offer other educational services. During the 1920s and 1930s, a number of libraries provided guidance to individual readers. During the 1940s and 1950s, informal educational programs were offered for groups of adults (Lee, 1966, p. 115).

The individual reader was emphasized during the period between the end of World War I and the beginning of World II. Research studies of various types were conducted to discover more about adult reading interests and habits. In line with this emphasis, some libraries provided guidance for individual readers. Readers' advisory service was a distinctive educational service in which librarians assisted readers in planning individualized reading programs and in selecting books based on the client's reading ability and interests (Lee, 1966, p. 115). Lee noted that reader guidance was "the first conscious attempt by librarians to direct a systematic learning process" (1966, p. 115).

In the period after World War II, some libraries began to provide educational services and programs for adult groups. The majority of library-sponsored programs for groups were developed to promote the use of the library's materials for educational purposes. Examples of
group programs included book and audio-visual programs, discussion and forum programs, and
program planning institutes. Librarians also made the public aware of the educational
opportunities provided by other adult educational agencies in the community and supplied printed
materials to support these programs and courses (Lee, 1966, p. 116).

Between 1957 and 1964 librarians sought to integrate the adult educational aim into all
the library’s services and programs. Local community needs and concerns became the focus for
many of the educational services and programs provided through the public library. More and
more frequently services and programs were planned and cosponsored by the library and other
community agencies. Services and programs for groups became an accepted part of library work
with adults. Librarians were more willing to experiment with new techniques and methods for
presenting the library’s own programs (Lee, 1966, p. 116).

Four distinct phases in the development of the public library as an educational institution
emerged from Lee’s findings. During the first phase, the central purpose of the public library was
to serve as an instrument of continuing education for adults. Although the first public library was
organized in Peterborough, New Hampshire, in 1833, the establishment of the Boston Public
Library in 1854 marked the effective beginning of the public library movement. The goal of the
Boston Public Library was to provide “a means by which adults could continue to learn through
their own efforts” (Lee, 1966, 116). This goal reflected three beliefs. First, adults were capable
of self-directed learning and were motivated to seek self-improvement and intellectual
development. Second, books were the principal instruments for transmitting knowledge, and
reading was the means for acquiring understanding. Third, few adults could afford to purchase
the books they needed to pursue their educational goals. These beliefs formed the rationale for the
development of public libraries in the United States from approximately 1855 to 1875 (Lee, 1966,
116).

During this first phase, librarians clearly understood the library’s educational objective
and the manner in which it should be carried out. They did not see teaching or instruction as one
of their duties. Instead they believed their educational responsibility consisted of providing the appropriate type of books from which adults could obtain for themselves the knowledge they needed. The library's clientele was relatively small and homogeneous, and the majority of its patrons were capable of self-directed learning. Little personal assistance was needed or offered (Lee, 1966, p. 117).

During the second phase, from approximately 1875 to 1920, recreational reading and reference became established functions of the public library in addition to education. Recreational reading began to appear in the 1870s. The rationale for the provision of recreational reading (popular fiction) was the belief that this type of reading would eventually lead to an interest in serious books. Thus, recreational reading was seen as "a steppingstone to the library's primary objective—education" (Lee, 1966, p. 117). Reference services were introduced in the 1880s as a corollary to the development of reference tools such as indexes and guides. These services were simple and consisted of answering questions, finding facts, and directing patrons to books that might contain useful information (Lee, 1966, p. 27).

The educational objective remained dominant during the late 1870s and throughout the 1880s. However, around 1890, recreational reading and informational reference service began to take up more and more of the librarian's time. The distinction between the educational objective and the recreational reading objective became less clear as librarians began to deal with a more diverse clientele composed of persons with varying reading interests and abilities. The reference function was becoming more complex. By the 1890s libraries had begun to develop special reference collections. In larger libraries, a separate library department was organized to provide informational reference services. As recreational reading and reference service placed greater demands on their time and energy, librarians became confused about which objective—education, recreation, or reference was primary. Without a clear perception of which objective was most important, librarians had difficulty deciding how much time and how many resources should be allotted to each (Lee, 1966, p. 117).
After 1900 the public library movement grew rapidly, and librarians were serving a larger, more diverse clientele. As a result, librarians began to direct their efforts toward extending library coverage, increasing the circulation of books, and meeting more of the recreational reading needs and wants of the public. Librarians were less concerned with whether or not recreational reading led to educationally appropriate reading. Recreational reading was seen as socially useful in and of itself because it provided a wholesome outlet for people’s energies. Thus, the library’s recreational objective began to overshadow the library’s educational purpose (Lee, 1966, p. 117).

The third phase, following the end of World War I, marked a period of reappraisal of the library’s objectives. A small group of librarians sought to reinstate the educational objective as the library’s central concern. By adapting the educational ideals of the early public library movement to the needs of the 1920s, this small band of librarians was able to make substantial contributions to the development of library adult education. A larger number of libraries were able to operate successfully as adult educational agencies. The American Library Association, with financial assistance from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, was responsible for many of the achievements during this period. The association encouraged and assisted libraries in their efforts to develop educational services for adults. Although adult education programs in public libraries were more successful during this period, still only a minority of librarians were devoted to the library’s adult educational commitment (Lee, 1966, p. 118).

The depression of the 1930s was a period of financial crisis for public libraries. Budgetary problems resulted in a reassessment of essential library services. The educational objective received renewed emphasis because library leaders felt that educational services represented a public good that would win more financial support for the library than recreational services. Between 1933 and 1938, the American Library Association adopted two sets of standards for public libraries. Each of these statements focused increased attention on the importance of the library’s educational objective (Lee, 1966, p. 118).
During the period between the end of War World II and 1956, library educational services for adults increased in number and improved in quality as the result of a series of efforts (Lee, 1966, p.118). Two attempts were made to devise new standards for public libraries. The first set of standards was derived from the Public Library Inquiry and appeared in the summary volume, *The Public Library in the United States*, published in 1950. The second set of standards was prepared by the American Library Association and published as *Public Library Service: A Guide to Evaluation with Minimum Standards* in 1956 (Lee, 1963, p. 133). In each of these documents the educational objective was emphasized by its position at the beginning of the list of objectives (Lee, 1966, p. 118). Two surveys were undertaken to determine the nature and extent of adult educational activities in public libraries. The first survey examined adult educational activities in rural libraries. The second study surveyed educational activities in public libraries serving communities of over 2,500 population (Lee, 1963, p.155). The American Library Association, with support from the Fund for Adult Education, undertook a series of adult education projects. The projects stimulated the development of new and innovative educational services. These efforts were instrumental in persuading libraries to allocate more staff time and resources to adult educational activities and in increasing awareness of the library's educational responsibility (Lee, 1966, p. 118).

During the fourth phase, between 1957 and 1964, the informational and educational goals became more prominent and the recreational goal became less important. Reference and informational services grew in importance because more students were using the public library. Recreational reading declined in importance due to the increase in the number and variety of other recreational outlets available to adults. The educational objective was broadened as education began to be seen as an integral part of many of the library's services and activities and as community needs and concerns became the focus for the library's adult educational services. Educational programs for adults often involved cooperative efforts with other community agencies and the utilization of a variety of techniques. These programs tended to be more
meaningful to adults because they were focused on community concerns (Lee, 1966, pp. 118-119). Lee saw considerable progress in the period between 1957 and 1964 but felt that there was “a need for further refinement of the meaning of library adult education—a need to explore and discuss not only the ‘how’ but also the ‘why’ and the ‘what’ of such education” (1966, p. 120).

The PLA Goals Feasibility Study

In 1971 A.B. Martin directed a study for the Public Library Association (PLA). The Proposed Public Library Goals - Feasibility Study was designed to answer questions about the current status of the public library and what its status should be in the last quarter of the twentieth century. For several years public library leaders had been requesting a study which would provide direction for public libraries. The project advisory committee identified several areas in which public libraries were facing problems that could not be resolved with present resources. Examples of the most pressing needs included (a) the development of new patterns of service to meet the needs of underserved clienteles, (b) the redress of the imbalance between the financial resources of the central cities and the suburbs, (c) the reorganization of public library service into larger governmental units, (d) the utilization of computer technology to provide information to users and to improve the efficiency of routine library processes, (e) the provision of library services to sparsely populated areas, and (f) interlibrary cooperation among different types of libraries serving the same clienteles (Martin, 1972, pp. viii-ix).

The Goals Feasibility study consisted of a review of the literature of public library development since the Public Library Inquiry (PLI) of 1948, a series of 63 personal interviews with library leaders, and questionnaires directed toward 306 libraries and individuals. Questionnaires were addressed to 92 exemplary libraries, all state libraries, all Regional Program Officers of the Bureau of Libraries and Educational Technology, all ALA accredited library schools; the 60 libraries in the original Public Library Inquiry sample; and a selected group of 40 nonlibrarians (Martin, 1972, p. ix).
Library leaders and librarians from exemplary libraries were asked to comment on "the state of the public library, its major problems, its goals and the need for a major study or investigation" similar to the Public Library Inquiry (Martin, 1972, p. ix). State librarians, Regional Program Officers, and library school directors and students were asked to supply information regarding pertinent studies, surveys, and research projects. Libraries in the original Public Library Inquiry sample were asked to comment on their present status and the effect of PLI recommendations on current policies. Nonlibrarians were asked to state their views of the current status of the public library and of the societal factors having an impact on its development (Martin, 1972, pp. ix-x).

The Goals Feasibility Study used the Public Library Inquiry as a benchmark for comparing the status of the public library in 1950 and 1970. The project advisory committee assumed that the inquiry had exerted significant influence on public library programs and services since its publication 20 years earlier. The inquiry provided a picture of the public library as it existed in the late 1940s. Although the Public Library Inquiry did not make specific recommendations regarding future library development, it did make some general recommendations for improving the status of the public library. These recommendations were used by Martin and the study committee to measure the public library in 1970 against the institution of 1950 (Martin, 1972, p. 11).

The study committee sent questionnaires to the 60 libraries that made up the Inquiry's original sample. The vast majority (90%) of the libraries responded and provided information regarding their status in 1948-1949 as compared to 1970-1971. These libraries also examined the influence of the Inquiry's recommendations on their current goals and practices (Martin, 1972, p. 14).

Librarians were asked to list major developments since 1948-1949. The responses were indicative of the library community's acceptance of the Inquiry's strong endorsement of the systems concept, the formation of "larger units of service capable of performing more
effectively" (Martin, 1972, p. 15). The respondents indicated that there had been substantial improvement in physical facilities—particularly new or expanded main library buildings, new branches, and bookmobiles. Other areas of notable progress were the addition of new media, the expansion of service areas by developing cooperative systems, and receipt of more money from the federal, state, and local governments. Another major recommendation was a 50-60% increase in library funding for the period of 1950-1959 (Leigh, 1950, p. 147). By 1971, the median income for the libraries in the sample had increased 500%, while the economy grew only 242%. The median size of collections had grown by 90% while book costs had gone up 190%. Median circulation had increased by 60% (Martin, 1972, p. 16). The study committee concluded that the inquiry’s major recommendations had been largely accepted and implemented by the libraries in the sample (Martin, 1972, p. 18).

The Inquiry had recommended that public libraries emphasize adult services. There was some indication that public libraries had accepted this recommendation. About one half of the libraries (25) reported a greater increase in usage by adults as compared to children since 1948. Eight indicated that the percentage of children using the library had increased while adult usage remained about the same. Four reported no change, and 17 failed to answer the question (Martin, 1972, p. 16).

The recommendation that public libraries focus their efforts on known users rather than attempting to serve everyone in the community was not well received. Only one library in the sample supported this recommendation. Several libraries made concerted efforts to serve influential people in the community, but only as a part of the total adult services program (Martin, 1972, p. 16). In direct opposition to the Inquiry’s recommendations, a substantial number of libraries had developed outreach programs to serve nontraditional clienteles such as inner city, low income, and minority residents (Martin, 1972, p. 15). Martin observed that librarians in the early 1970s tended to judge library success by the breadth of the community they
served. "Service to all" was reiterated as the public library's primary objective (Martin, 1972, p. 16).

The Public Library Inquiry had recommended that public libraries acquire materials of enduring quality rather than items to satisfy popular demand. Reaction to this recommendation was mixed. More than one-third of the sample reported that they emphasized quality materials but also included popular materials of acceptable quality. These librarians argued that quality materials and popular materials were not necessarily mutually exclusive. Another one-third said they tried to balance the acquisition of popular and quality materials. A small number of respondents reported that they purchased what people wanted regardless of the quality. Many of the libraries in the sample used rental services and paperbacks to meet the demand for popular materials. In general, the central library in the system collected quality resource materials, while the branches stocked a greater percentage of the popular items (Martin, 1972, pp. 16-17).

A related recommendation had suggested that the public library maintain its educational/information emphasis by developing a collection of well-written, scholarly educational and informational materials. Response to this recommendation was almost evenly divided between those who supported the recommendation and those who rejected it. Librarians who supported the recommendation believed the provision of recreational reading materials should be a function of the community's recreation department; they discouraged a purely recreational use of the library. Those who favored a balance of informational, educational, and recreational materials explained that increased leisure time, outreach programs, and response to public demand necessitated the inclusion of popular recreational materials. Other librarians suggested a different rationale for purchasing recreational materials. They chose to focus on the individual library user and his or her needs rather than rigid categories. Although the acquisition of educational and informational materials was often stressed in official policy statements, in practice public libraries frequently used recreational materials and programming to draw people into the library (Martin, 1972, p. 17).
The inquiry suggested that the public library could serve two educational roles: as the people's university or as the library of the people's university. In the first role, the library was an adult education agency performing an active educational function. In the second role, the public library provided materials and resources to support the activities of other active adult education agencies. In either role the focus was on out-of-school adults. The inquiry concluded that the majority of public libraries lacked the financial and human resources to be active agencies of adult education (Leigh, 1950, pp. 106-107). In the Goals Feasibility Study, 13 of the sample libraries indicated that they were active adult education agencies, while 19 reported that they played a supporting role in relation to other adult education agencies. Five performed neither role. Only three performed both roles. Respondents' comments reflected uncertainty about the effectiveness of their adult education programs in responses such as "We try" or "We perform in a modest way" (Martin, 1972, p. 17). Some librarians asserted that the community college was the people's university, not the public library (Martin, 1972, p. 18).

In response to the Goals Feasibility Study's question about the public library's perceived role in 1970, librarians identified several fundamental functions: (a) free service to all individuals, (b) provision of a broad range of materials for informed decision-making, (c) service as a repository of recorded knowledge, and (d) provision of educational resources. Other functions frequently mentioned included (a) recreational and group services, (b) stimulation, (c) guidance and interpretation in the use of materials, and (d) services to adults (Martin, 1972, p. 20). State librarians emphasized service to all segments of the community (except students in formal educational programs) and service in response to public demand (Martin, 1972, p. 20). Library school faculty emphasized the role of the public library (a) as an open forum for the discussion of community issues; (b) as an active agent in coordinating the activities of all types of libraries; and (c) as an instrument for meeting the unfulfilled informational, educational, cultural, and educational needs of the community (Martin, 1972, p. 20). Although exact terminology and
priorities varied, there appeared to be general agreement in the library community about the nature of basic library functions (Martin, 1972, p. 22).

The Public Library Inquiry demonstrated that the public library's statement of objectives and the realization of those objectives were miles apart. Public librarians had given "lip service" to these functions, when in everyday practice they were not being performed (Martin, 1972, p. 22). Subsequent studies such as those conducted by M. L. Bundy (1968) and C. F. Bonser and J. R. Wentworth (1970) supported the inquiry's finding that a wide disparity existed between the role espoused by the public library and its achievement (Martin, 1972, p. 22). Other studies demonstrated that the size and composition of the library's active clienteles had not changed significantly since they were described nearly 20 years earlier (Monat, 1967, p. 1309). The literature review for the Goals Feasibility Study included studies that had examined patterns of library use under varied conditions in different geographic areas of the country. Martin conceded that there had not been extensive study of library users and nonusers prior to 1970; however, the uniformity of findings among the available studies tended to confirm their validity (1972, p. 23).

Although studies demonstrated that libraries were not doing what the formal objectives stated should be done, they left unanswered the question—what were public libraries doing? To answer that question, the Goals Feasibility Study asked, "In what ways are public libraries performing most effectively?" One hundred practicing librarians responded to the question with answers falling into two categories: the clienteles being served most effectively and the most effective library services. The clienteles receiving the best service were the middle-class general reader, children, students, and self-directed learners. The most effective services were general reference (quick answer information service and telephone reference) and recreational reading (Martin, 1972, p. 23).

A second group of effective services was listed by librarians working in exemplary libraries in which new and different services had been successfully implemented. These services included "special services for minorities, multimedia resources, programs and other group
services, service to the blind, institutional services, service by mail, service to business and industry, service as a community forum, meeting rooms, model cities programs, school for dropouts, orientation to the library, and service to individual community agencies" (Martin, 1972, p. 24).

Martin pointed out that the public library's most effective and most commonly provided services were used by a small percentage of the adult population, children, and young adults, and that the number of children and young adults was beginning to decline in comparison with the total population in 1972. Although general reference was considered one of the most effective services, studies were beginning to cast doubts on that assertion. Two studies by Terrence Crowley and Thomas Childers (1971) found that public librarians were supplying outdated and incorrect information and were unaware of their errors. Although two studies were not sufficient to make generalizations, the findings suggested the need for more critical analysis of library information services (Martin, 1972, p. 24).

Another section of the Goals Feasibility Study dealt with the goals of the public library. Librarians' responses to the question about goals were grouped into six categories:

1. To provide service to all (stressed reaching unserved)
2. To provide information services
3. To provide adult and continuing education
4. To collect and disseminate all kinds of informational, educational, and cultural materials, including nonprint resources
5. To support education—formal and informal
6. To serve as a cultural center (Martin, 1972, p. 46).

A number of nonlibrarian respondents indicated that the public library would have an important role to play in a society shaped by social change. Ian Wilson, an executive with General Electric, believed the library should become a center for self development and a community resource for audiovisual materials (Wilson, as cited in Martin, 1972, p. 46). Adult
education professor C. O. Houle said “The library should be the leader and facilitator of community life—the encourager and stimulator of borrowers” (Houle, as cited in Martin, 1972, p. 46). Ferdinand Leimkuhler, Dean of the School of Industrial Engineering at Purdue University remarked, “Now more than ever emphasis is on the intellectual rather than physical aspects of human performance and the information processing aspects of production and service systems” (Leimkuhler, as cited in Martin, 1972, p. 7). Herman Kahn emphasized that institutions that protect the freedom of human choice must be perpetuated not only for the present generation but also for future generations (Kahn, as cited in Martin, 1972, pp. 7-8).


1. To support and sustain formal education from prekindergarten through graduate school, for which millions of students, widely diversified as to abilities and goals, will require access to a greater range of media than ever before

2. To play an initiatory role, with other agencies and institutions, in developing in people an orderly acceptance of change and in helping them to adapt to it

3. To serve as both the motivator and supplier of aspirations for the dispossessed and disorganized

4. To support the increasingly complex operations of government, of science, and of the business sector of the country

5. To provide support, with and through other agencies, for continuing self-education and training for people at all levels of work

6. To accept the individual as an individual and to provide spiritual nourishment, intellectual stimulation, cultural enrichment and information alternatives to him at the neighborhood or community level (Mathews and Lacy, as cited in Martin, 1972, p. 47).
The PLA Goals Feasibility Study identified four major problems and recommended solutions. First, there was a widespread lack of recognition of the public library's strengths and its potential as a community asset. To remedy this situation, the public library community should conduct an intensive public relations campaign, using all available media, to make the public library more visible on the local, state, regional, and national levels. The study committee suggested the commissioning of a publication and documentary film designed "to direct widespread attention to the American public library as an active community agent capable of meeting the real needs of real people" (Martin, 1972, p. 50).

Second, research on the institutional status and performance of the public library was inadequate. A program of extensive research and investigation should be undertaken on a number of important topics including "users and nonusers," "information need and supply," "societal and political factors," "education of librarians," "library operations," and "library services" (Martin, 1972, pp. 50, 51-52).

Third, research findings were not widely known and findings had not been applied to everyday practice. All segments of the public library community were asked to work together to insure wider dissemination of research results and to develop prototypes and demonstration projects that apply research findings to real-life situations (Martin, 1972, pp. 50, 52).

Fourth, library school students and practicing librarians were not equipped with the knowledge and skills they needed to "develop libraries which will continually change with society and perform effectively in the community" (Martin, 1972, p. 50). Library associations, library schools, and state library agencies were urged to undertake an intensive effort to strengthen formal library education and informal continuing education for practicing librarians. Public librarians needed knowledge and skills in several key areas: community assessment, planning and goal setting, public relations and publicity, management, and strategies for effecting personal change (Martin, 1972, pp. 50, 52). To implement the recommendations, the study
committee called for the formation of a PLA task force to develop a plan of action and to seek funding for its implementation (Martin, 1972, p. 53).

Shortly after *The Goals Feasibility Study* was published, PLA appointed “four strategy groups” to implement the document’s recommendations (Williams, 1988, p. 109). Although there was some discussion of the groups’ activities in issues of the *PLA Newsletter* between December 1973 and October 1975, efforts to implement the recommendations were gradually abandoned and references to the groups ceased (Williams, 1988, p. 109). Patrick Williams suggested that the study’s recommendations—a public relations publication and film, research, and education—were “a sign that the authors did not know what should be done” (1988, p. 109).
CHAPTER III

COMMITMENT TO ADULT EDUCATION: 1950-1979

Background

Numerous papers in the library literature provide insight into the social changes occurring in the period from 1950 to 1979. Writing in 1957, D. M. Lacy described the post war era as “a period of unusually rapid and comprehensive changes—social, political, technological, and intellectual” (p. 279). Lacy briefly mentioned several factors affecting public library use and development in the 1950s. Among these factors were (a) a rapidly increasing population, (b) the geographical redistribution of the population, and (c) changes in educational practices (Lacy, 1957, p. 279). In “Community Developments and Their Effect on Library Planning,” P.M. Hauser discussed a number of trends influencing library planning and development in the late 1950s: population growth, decentralization of metropolitan area populations, metropolitan area concentration, changes in the age structure of the population, changes in ethnicity and race, changes in the size of families, and changes in the physical structural of urban communities (1957, pp. 33-44).

In their 1967 study Social Change and the Library: 1945-1980, D. M. Lacy and V. H. Mathews analyzed the major social changes of the previous two decades (1945-1965) and the probable effects of these changes on future public library development. Lacy wrote “The two most dynamic forces impelling the social changes that affect the library are probably the changing population patterns and the radically increased social investment in scientific and technical research and development” (1969, p. 3). Lacy observed that the impact on libraries of the interaction of population changes and advances in science and technology was most readily seen in the field of education (1969, p. 7). Developments in the field of communications also held important implications for the library community. Lacy cited four developments: paperback books, news magazines, television, and information technology (1969, p. 11).
The Nelson Associates’ study of *Public Libraries in the United States: Trends, Problems and Recommendations* analyzed public library history, current status, trends, and problems (1967, abstract). Among the trends affecting the public library’s goals and functions in the late 1960s were changing population patterns, the growth of the information industry, growing demands on information services, declining circulation due to the improvement of school and college libraries, the growth of nonbook centered services and activities, and greater cooperation between schools and public libraries (Nelson Associates, 1967, pp. 1-12). The researchers found two main trends affecting the structure and organization of public libraries. The first and most important was the growth of systems and cooperative activities. The second trend was the incorporation of the public library into the local government structure and the resulting change in the role of the board of trustees from a governing to an advisory body (Nelson Associates, 1967, pp. 17-21). The authors of the study believed that these trends indicated that the public library was entering a new era in which librarians would be faced with important decisions regarding the library’s future—whether the public would be “an active or passive institution for public enlightenment and social change” (Nelson Associates, 1967, abstract).

In preparation for the Public Library Association’s *Proposed Public Library Goals Feasibility Study*, the project advisory committee identified several areas in which public libraries were facing problems that could not be resolved with present resources. Examples of the most pressing needs included (a) the development of new patterns of service to meet the needs of underserved clienteles, (b) the compensation of central city libraries for services rendered to nonresidents, (c) the reorganization of public library service into larger governmental units, (d) the utilization of computer technology to provide information to users and to improve the efficiency of routine library processes, (e) the provision of library services to sparsely populated areas, and (f) the development of interlibrary cooperation among different types of libraries serving the same clienteles (Martin, 1972, pp. viii-ix).
Respondents were asked to name critical problems facing public libraries in the early 1970s. The responses fall into twelve categories listed in order of importance:

1. Problems relating to finance
2. Public relations—the library image—failure to communicate
3. Staff—inflexibility—lack of service orientation
4. The problems of society—change—urban problems
5. Management—pattern of organization—rigidity
6. Failure to formulate objectives
7. Failure to serve all publics (minorities, deprived, new audiences, suburbs)
8. Library education—continuing education
9. Book selection policies
10. Inability to measure performance
11. Technology—failure to serve libraries, failure of libraries to adapt

A. B. Martin noted all of these problems were impeding the fulfillment of the public library’s role and represented “areas in serious need of study and research” (1972, p. 26). Few of these areas had received extensive study as indicated by the literature review prepared for the PLA Goals Feasibility Study.

In an article for Library Trends, Joseph Becker (library professor and member of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science) examined the principal forces of change in the library world: economic pressures, advances in computer and telecommunications technology, and the new information environment (1979, pp. 409-417). In another Library Trends article, “Demographic Trends and Social Structure,” L. A. Martin identified and discussed a number of trends and social issues affecting public library development in the late 1970s: (a) population growth, (b) aging of the population, (c) the changing status of women, (d) geographic redistribution, (e) urban concentration and dispersion, (f) persistent poverty among
minorities and the undereducated, (g) the effect of social class on library use, (h) and the need for more and better research (1979, pp. 269-298).

T. J. Galvin (1979) wrote about the library profession’s response to the crisis-based society of the United States in the 1970s and cited four “critical and profound social changes” that would inevitably have a significant impact on education and libraries: “the limits of economic growth, the transition to a post industrial society, the communications revolution, and the revolution in adult learning” (p.17). M. E. Monroe identified four societal trends that were currently influencing the development of library community services and that promised to continue to impact library services in the future: (a) the changing clienteles of inner city libraries, (b) advances in computer and communications technology that seemed posed to revolutionize library service, (c) the shifting demographics of the American population, and (d) the application of research findings in other fields to public library services (1979b, pp. 134-135).

The Role of Philanthropy

_Carnegie and the Carnegie Corporation_

There is no doubt that foundations and other benevolent organizations have played an important role in the development of the public library. Many public libraries owe their very existence to Andrew Carnegie. “Beginning in 1886, Carnegie, and later the Carnegie Corporation,” (Akst, 2003, p. 30) spent $56 million to establish 1,681 public libraries in the United States. Andrew Carnegie, who served as the president of the Carnegie Corporation from its establishment in 1911 until his death in 1919, initiated the library program at the foundation and inspired the corporation’s continued interest in libraries (Akst, 2003, p. 30). From 1911 until 1918, “the program emphasized the construction of new library buildings across the country” (Akst, 2003, p. 30).

Of more lasting significance than the buildings was Carnegie’s requirement that communities provide funds for the maintenance and operating costs of the new facilities. This requirement “planted the idea of universal, tax-supported library service” (Akst, 2005, p. 26).
Over the years, public funding had “a growing influence on library purpose” (Akst, 2005, p. 26). With the advent of public funding libraries had to consider the needs and wants of the electorate, a more difficult task than “pleasing a single benefactor, a small group of trustees or a staff of paid professionals” (Akst, 2005, p. 26).

While the corporation continued to make some grants for library construction in the years between 1918 and 1925, its efforts were primarily directed toward the appraisal and evaluation of its library grant program (Akst, 2003, p. 30). As part of its evaluation of the grant program, the corporation commissioned Alvin Johnson in 1915 to conduct a study of the condition of the libraries constructed with Carnegie funds and of the adequacy of library education. Johnson’s 1916 report indicated that there were serious problems: poorly trained library workers and substandard library programs (Rubin, 2000, p. 362). Johnson recommended that the corporation undertake efforts to improve the quality of library services (a) by assisting in the recruitment of better-qualified persons through scholarships, (b) by providing financial assistance to library schools and summer-school programs, and (c) changing the focus of its library development program from construction to library service (Vann, 1961).

The Carnegie Corporation was greatly concerned by Johnson’s findings. In the 1920s the corporation turned its attention to the educational preparation of librarians. The corporation appointed Williamson to undertake a major study of library education and library schools in particular (Rubin, 2000, p. 362). Charles C. Williamson conducted a thorough examination of 15 library schools and issued *Training for Library Service* in 1923 (1971). Referred to as the “Williamson Report,” it was very critical of professional library education programs (Thomison, 1978, p. 90).

The Williamson Report criticized library training programs for emphasizing clerical routines and techniques. The report emphasized that there was a distinct difference between clerical work which involved the following of rules and established procedures and professional work which dealt with theory and the application of principles. Although clerks could perform
their duties adequately with only a high school education and appropriate on-the-job-training, the professional librarian's duties required a broad educational background. Williamson recommended that professional librarians' educational preparation consist of the completion of a broad-based undergraduate degree and at least one year of graduate study. Williamson thought one year of graduate education was inadequate to cover the broad range of content needed to prepare students to work as professional librarians, but recognized that most graduate programs were not ready to require two years of graduate study. Ideally, library school programs would be extended to two years with the first year devoted to a program of general study. The second year would be highly specialized and would involve cooperative efforts with other educational institutions (Williamson, 1971).

Library school entrance requirements were very inconsistent with some schools requiring a college education, some requiring a year of post high school education, and others only a high school education. The Williamson Report insisted that a college education or its equivalent be required for entrance. To make library training more attractive to well-qualified students, the report recommended that library schools maintain high educational standards and provide fellowships and scholarships (Williamson, 1971).

Many of the library school instructors were not prepared to teach college graduates. Many lacked college degrees themselves, only a few had training or experience in teaching, and a substantial number (nearly one-third) had no library experience. Instructors relied too much on the lecture method, and there were few good textbooks for them to use. Library schools needed to raise teachers' salaries in order to attract better qualified instructors. Schools also needed to provide financial incentives for the more qualified teachers to write textbooks for library school courses (Williamson, 1971).

The report recommended that the library school be part of an academic department in a university because this was the model used by other professional schools, and universities were better able to maintain academic standards and increase the status of professional programs.
Library training programs in public libraries were often substandard because most libraries lacked the resources to provide quality instructional programs based on accepted standards. Part of the problem was that there were no fixed standards for the profession. The profession needed to establish formal standards. The report called for ALA and other national library associations to create a system of voluntary certification of librarians regulated by a national certification board. This board would also be responsible for accrediting library school programs (Williamson, 1971).

Employed librarians had little incentive to seek continuing education. Continuing education in the 1920s concentrated on clerical workers, not professional librarians. The Williamson Report recommended that library schools provide continuing education opportunities for professional librarians. Recognizing that geographic isolation presented a problem for many practicing librarians, the report recommended that correspondence schools be considered as a means for providing continuing education for librarians (Williamson, 1971).

The Williamson Report represented a major advance in library education. Although many of the issues it raised were not new, with “the imprimatur of the Carnegie Corporation” the findings of the report could no longer be ignored (Rubin, 2000, p. 364). “It established the essentially theoretical and professional nature of the discipline” and affirmed that a substantial part of the preparation for librarianship should consist of education in theory and practice, rather than simple training in methods and procedures (Rubin, 2000, p. 364). The report “forced the profession to consider the importance of consistency and high quality in the curricula, administration, and teaching in library schools” (Rubin, 2000, p. 364). The Williamson Report established a college degree as the requirement for library school entry; thus, the master’s degree became the appropriate degree for entry into the profession (Rubin, 2000, p. 364).

In 1926 the Carnegie Corporation expanded its library-related efforts by initiating the Ten Year Program in Library Services to implement some of the Williamson Report’s recommendations. The corporation provided a substantial endowment ($2 million) to ALA. In the
15 years after the report, the corporation gave almost $2 million to 17 new and existing library schools and more than $100,000 for study fellowships (Davis, 1976, p. 121). The corporation spent an average of approximately $830 thousand a year until 1941 (Akst, 2003, p. 30).

The Carnegie Corporation was especially concerned with the lack of research and quality instructional materials. To help resolve this problem, the corporation supported the creation of the new Graduate Library School at the University of Chicago in 1926 and the doctoral program in 1928. The Graduate Library School "emphasized theoretical approaches that involved applying the scientific and research tools of other disciplines to library work" (Rubin, 2000, p. 365). The Graduate Library School advanced librarianship in a number of ways. The diverse, interdisciplinary faculty produced a substantial body of research in which they applied established methodologies from other disciplines such as history and sociology to the problems of librarianship. The school disseminated the research findings through conferences and forums on major issues in the profession. These programs produced a large number of publications which served as texts for library school classes (Rubin, 2000, p. 365).

Corporation grants in the 1920s and 1930s did much to improve rural library services, especially in the South. The Carnegie Corporation supported the efforts of T. D. Barker, the ALA regional field agent for the South (McCook, 2002, p. 9). The Carnegie Corporation was also concerned about the lack of a library school in the South for educating African American librarians. As the number of primary and secondary schools and colleges for African Americans in the South increased, there was a growing need for trained librarians. The Hampton Institute Library School, the first school specifically dedicated to the education of African American librarians, was created by a grant from the corporation in 1925 (Rubin, 2000, p. 365).

After World War II the corporation's grant-making efforts shifted from grants to improve library services in individual systems to the funding of central services provided by the American Library Association, the Association of Research Libraries, the Library of Congress and other organizations, and for new technologies and equipment intended to facilitate library use (Akst,
The Public Library Inquiry was funded by the Carnegie Corporation in the late 1940s as part of its efforts to strengthen the library profession and the services provided by public libraries (Williams, 1988, p. 57).

The Carnegie Foundation also played a pivotal role in the development of adult education in public libraries. C. W. Stone pointed out that adult education in general and library adult education in particular "were products of philanthropy" (1953, p. 440). From 1921 to 1923, W. S. Learned, a staff member of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, undertook a study of the current status of library adult education services and the potential of the library as an agency of community adult education. Learned's report "presented a concept of public library service of such vision and breadth" that the foundation's trustees felt compelled to disseminate its contents in the hope that it would stimulate professional interest and discussion (Birge, 1981, p. 10). The published volume, *The Public Library and the Diffusion of Knowledge*, was the source of much discussion and some degree of controversy. Learned's vision "invigorated professional thinking about the purposes, rationale, and form" of educational services for adults (Birge, 1981, p. 13). C. W. Stone regarded Learned's report as "the single most thought-provoking blueprint for future development of the American public library" (1953, p. 439). The Carnegie Foundation also supported "the seminal adult education work by Thorndike," which demonstrated the capability of adults to continue to learn throughout the lifespan (Rubin, 1982, p. 104).

In addition to publishing Learned and Thorndike's reports, the Carnegie Corporation also provided the means for the public library community to undertake a study of current services for adults and to develop a program of guidance for libraries that wanted to initiate or expand library adult education programming (Birge, 1981, p.14). In June 1924 the Carnegie Corporation assembled the first conference on adult education. The conference proceedings revealed a lack of knowledge about the status of adult education in the United States. As a result the Carnegie Corporation decided to fund a series of studies in adult education. The study of adult education
practice in libraries was conducted in cooperation with ALA. In July 1924 the ALA Executive Board appointed a Commission on the Library and Adult Education to undertake the study (Knowles, 1977, p. 112; Williams, 1988, p. 43). The commission presented its report in 1926 and recommended the formation of a permanent adult education board. The Board on the Library and Adult Education was established in October 1926 for the purpose of promoting research, stimulating activity, and providing leadership in library adult education. The Carnegie Corporation supported the board and an executive assistant for adult education at ALA headquarters for several years (Knowles, 1977, p. 113; Williams, 1988, pp. 44-45).

The Carnegie Corporation supported a number of ALA initiatives in the period from 1920 to 1970. Carnegie grants funded the “Reading with a Purpose Series” between 1925 and 1933 and the “Reading for an Age of Change Series” in the 1960s. The corporation funded the publication of Alvin Johnson’s book *The Public Library—A People’s University*, written at the request of the American Association for Adult Education (Knowles, 1977, p. 114). The corporation also funded the 1939 Princeton Conference, an important national forum on Johnson’s analysis of public library services for adults (Birge, 1981, p. 57). Carnegie funds largely supported ALA’s activities related to the readability of adult reading materials including a study of the reading habits of adults and the publication of two books: *The Reading Interests and Habits of Adults* and *What People Want to Read About*. The Carnegie Corporation also funded a project in which ALA was interested, the Advisory Bureau on Readability at Teachers College, Columbia University (Knowles, 1977, p. 114). The Carnegie Corporation spent $60,000 to develop library adult education from 1924 to 1934 and millions more from 1934 to 1941 (Monroe, 1963, p. 4; Stone, 1953, pp. 440-442).

*The Fund for Adult Education*

The Ford Foundation’s Fund for Adult Education also played an important role in library adult education. The fund was established by the Ford Foundation after World War II to contribute to the foundation’s overall goals of strengthening democracy and the economy,
improving the quality of education, expanding educational opportunities, increasing the body of knowledge about human behavior and human relations, and working toward the establishment of a lasting peace (Birge, 1981, p. 78). The major objective of the programs sponsored by the fund was to promote lifelong learning for all adults through the expansion of educational opportunities with an emphasis on liberal adult education. Areas of special concern were world, political, and economic affairs and the humanities (Birge, 1981, p. 78).

The Ford Foundation spent $3 million on adult education in general in the year 1950, and the Fund for Adult Education spent millions of dollars between 1951 and 1961 (Monroe, 1963, p. 4; Stone, 1953, pp. 440-442). The Fund for Adult Education’s grants to ALA began in 1951 with the inauguration of the American Heritage program, part of ALA’s 75th anniversary celebration. Initially the grant was for $150,000 to support the nationwide program for one year. Renewal and increase of the grant was contingent upon the success of the program during the first year (Stevenson, 1951, p. 302). The launch of the American Heritage Program was successful and the program continued to receive “generous and continuing support from the Fund for Adult Education” (Williams, 1988, p. 85). From 1951-1957 the Fund for Adult Education gave ALA $750,000 to support the American Heritage program (Williams, 1988, p. 87). The Fund for Adult Education funded several other projects between 1953 and 1961 including H. L. Smith’s survey of adult education activities in public libraries, the Office for Adult Education at ALA headquarters, the Subgrant Project, the Allerton Park Conference on the training and educational needs of library adult educators, the Library Community Project, and an evaluative study of the ALA projects (Knowles, 1977, pp. 115-117). ALA received $104,500 to finance the operations of the Adult Education Office between 1953 and 1961. The Library Community Project was supported by a grant of $500,000 (Williams, 1988, p. 93). The fund supported the evaluative study at the cost of $1.3 million (Williams, 1988, p. 94).
The Council on Library Resources (CLR), an independent, nonprofit corporation, was established in September 1956. Its purpose was to assist in improving the resources and services of libraries and to assist in solving the problems of libraries in general and research libraries specifically. In 1956 the Council was awarded an initial grant of $5 million from the Ford Foundation; it received a second grant of $8 million from the Foundation in 1961. CLR was primarily interested in basic research in the distribution, organization, storage, and communication of knowledge; cooperative efforts; methodological development; improvement in techniques; and standardization of processes and procedures (Lee, 1966, p. 97).

“CLR’s early programs focused on bibliographic structure, automation of library operations, preservation, and international activities aimed at helping European libraries recover from the devastation of World War II” (Council on Library and Information Resources [CLIR], 2006, para. 5). During the first two decades of its existence, CLR was primarily concerned with the preservation of books and journals; many of its grants were for the development of local preservation programs (CLIR, 2006).

Although CLR’s main focus was academic and research libraries, it was also interested in the problems of public libraries, especially small public libraries. In 1962 CLR provided a grant to the American Library Association to fund the beginning of the ALA Small Libraries Project, a series of publications designed to help small libraries improve the quality of their collections and services (Birge, 1981, p. 71). CLR and the National Endowment for the Humanities jointly funded the PLA Proposed Public Library Goals Feasibility Study in 1971 (Martin, 1972, p. iii). CLR joined with the College Entrance Examination Board, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the U.S. Department of Education in funding the Adult Independent Learning Project in the 1970s (Mavor, Toro, & DeProspo., 1976c, p. 294).
The W.K. Kellogg Foundation

In 1975 the W. K. Kellogg Foundation began a 3-phase, 15-year effort to develop alternative delivery systems for career information and counseling in rural and underserved areas with high employment. Phase I of the project began in 1975 when C. S. Johnson, director of the Career Planning and Placement Center at the University of California at Irvine (UCI) applied for a grant from the foundation to fund a trial of a new computer program, SIGI (System of Interactive Guidance and Information) for use in working with the adult student population (Johnson, 1991a, p. 4-5). Although SIGI was developed by Educational Testing Service for use with college students, the UCI staff used also used it with adult learners and later in corporate settings (Norris, Shatkin, & Katz, 1991, p. 61). The computer program proved to be an effective tool which enabled the staff to learn more about the values and needs of adult students. The software provided a process designed to encourage women re-entry students to make their career choices based on their values instead of job availability thus “shifting their locus of control from external to internal in terms of decision making” (Johnson, 1991a, p. 5).

Although the university’s part-time degree program for adults was not successful, the results of the SIGI trial on a number of dimensions were so promising that the Kellogg Foundation asked the Career Planning and Placement Center staff to write a grant to expand portions of this project to serve adult learners nationwide (Johnson, 1991a, p. 5). The second grant led to phase II, Project LEARN—the Lifelong Education Assessment and Referral Network, which was initiated in 1980 (Norris, Shatkin, & Katz, 1991, p. 61).

During the late 1970s the Kellogg Foundation was also involved in the creation of Educational Information Centers (EICs) in public libraries. The first EICs were located in New York State (Bradley, 1988, p. 257). With funds from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation and the Higher Education Act, educational information centers were established in the Brooklyn Public Library, the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System, the Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System, the Nassau Library, the Neoga Library System, and the Onondaga County Public Library
These centers were established to assist adults who were reentering the job market or facing the loss of a job or changing careers. The success of the New York State projects prompted the Kellogg Foundation to fund similar projects in other states in the 1980s. The foundation provided start-up money for EICs. Grants to individual states stipulated that EICs had to become self supporting within three years (Bradley, 1988, p. 257).

The Federal Role

Legislation

The library community witnessed a dramatic change in federal policy towards libraries in the 1950s. The passage of the Library Services Act (LSA) in 1956 represented a departure from the 180-year-old theory that libraries and other educational programs were a local and state responsibility rather than a federal one (Ferguson, 1972, p. 748). LSA, the result of a ten-year legislative campaign, was the first federal program to provide funds for public library development. The major purpose of the LSA was to provide new or improved library service to rural areas of fewer than 10,000 residents. Funds were used to establish demonstration libraries in rural areas, to develop and strengthen county libraries, and to promote the formation of regional library systems (Lee, 1966, p. 91).

The Library Services Act had a profound effect on libraries for a number of reasons. LSA did not allocate funds to a particular village or town; funds were administered by the state library extension agencies and could be applied wherever they were most needed. LSA's legal requirements, its emphasis on planning, and its matching requirement led to many improvements at the state and local levels. The state library agencies were strengthened so that they could adequately fulfill their responsibilities for administering LSA funds. LSA's emphasis on planning encouraged state library agencies to develop long-range plans for public library development. With the promise of matching funds, state legislatures were more willing to provide funds for new and existing public library programs (Ferguson, 1972, p. 748). Both state and local
governments were encouraged to spend more of their resources on improving library service (Lee, 1966, p. 91).

Passage of the Library Services Act did much to improve public library services in rural areas. Funds were available to build more adequate collections; millions of books and other informational and educational materials were added to the holdings of rural public libraries (Lorenz, 1960, p. 18). LSA also addressed the lack of skilled personnel in rural libraries by promoting (a) better utilization of current personnel through intensive in-service training programs (workshops, institutes, and conferences), (b) cooperative projects such as centralized processing, and (c) the development of more efficient and effective procedures (Lorenz & Carl, 1961, p. 539).

The Library Services Act was renewed in 1961. Between 1957 and 1964 more than 40 million people living in areas with less than 10,000 population received new or improved library services (American Library Association, 2006q), and state funding for rural library services increased 100% (Lee, 1966, p. 91). Other accomplishments included (a) an increase in local allocations for rural library development, (b) the purchase of bookmobiles to provide library services in more remote rural areas, and (c) the strengthening of some of the state library agencies through increased staffing (Lee, 1966, p. 91).

In 1964 the Library Services Act was amended, expanded, and renamed the Library Services and Construction Act. The act was extended to include urban as well as rural areas in which there were no libraries or in which the libraries were substandard. The expanded legislation also provided funds for the construction of library facilities, the organization of county and multicounty systems, the establishment of centralized cataloging services and book processing, the study of rural library services, the provision of scholarships for rural library school students, and the training of rural librarians (Lee, 1966, p. 91).

The provisions of “Public Library Services,” Title 1 of LSCA, created more opportunities for public libraries to serve special groups. Programs for children, young people, and the elderly
were expanded and improved; library school scholarships for disadvantaged students were increased; in-service workshops were financed; work-study internships were established for disadvantaged groups; and special positions such as community librarians were created (Drennan, Kittel, & Winnick, 1964, p. 3267). LSCA was amended again in 1966 to add Title III “Interlibrary Cooperation” and special provisions for library services to persons in institutions and people with physical handicaps (Molz, 1990, p. 14).

The public library also benefited directly or indirectly from much of the educational and job training legislation approved by Congress in the 1960s. The original purpose of the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962 was to fund educational and vocational programs for unemployed young people. When administrators discovered that many of the participants were functionally illiterate and thus unable to benefit from the training program, the act was amended to provide adult basic education (Rolstad, 1990, p. 253). The 1963 amendments to the act contained provisions for remediying problems caused by lack of education and for training programs in basic educational skills. The main impact of the Manpower Development and Training Act on public libraries was in the area of materials to support educational and training programs. Public libraries working in cooperative programs received funds to purchase materials for literacy education and vocational and occupation guidance (Drennan, Kittel, & Winnick, 1964, p. 3270).

Further opportunities for libraries were provided under the provisions of the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) of 1964 and its 1965 amendments. The act stressed education as the primary weapon in the attack on poverty and allocated direct funds for literacy education. All of the programs within EOA required libraries to strengthen their educational and informational roles (Drennan, et al., 1964, p. 3272). Four of the seven titles of the act had special significance for librarians working with adults. These titles provided economic opportunities for young adults and unemployed or underemployed adults in the community (“Federal Legislation,” 1964, p. 708). These titles enabled libraries to “serve either as an instituting agency or as a community
educational resource center, or both, in combating one of the major problems relating to poverty—lack of education” (Lee, 1966, p. 92).

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 was designed to strengthen and improve the quality of educational opportunities in the nation’s public schools (Drennan, Lyman, & Winnick, 1966, p. 141). Title II of ESEA provided federal funds for improving school libraries. Improvement in the school libraries lessened the strain of student use of public library facilities (Havighurst, 1967, p. 540). Title III, Supplementary Educational Centers and Services Act, was also significant for public libraries. Title III authorized the creation of local grants programs “to establish centers and services to improve education, enable a community to provide services not available, raise the quality of educational services, and develop model demonstration programs” (Drennan et al., 1966, p. 141). Public libraries were eligible to participate in programs initiated by local school systems (Drennan et al., 1966, p. 141).

Title II of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965 was intended to improve college and university libraries and the quality of library service throughout the country. Part A: College Library Resources provided grants for the acquisition of books, periodicals, and other library materials for college and university libraries. As academic libraries improved, the demand on public libraries decreased. Part B: Library Training and Research provided grants for training all types of librarians including those working in public libraries. It also funded research and demonstration projects, including the development of new methods and devices for processing, storing, and disseminating information. Public libraries were eligible for research and demonstration project grants (Knight & Nourse, 1969, pp. 549-550).

In 1966 educational programs were shifted from the Office of Economic Opportunity to the Office of Education. This move brought the educational programs for the disadvantaged under the purview of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The 1966 amendments to ESEA placed greater emphasis on compensatory education (Winnick & Lyman, 1967, p. 1069). The Adult Education Act of 1966 (Title III, Elementary and Secondary Education Amendments
of 1966) encouraged the development of new programs and expanded already existing literacy and basic educational programs for adults. The Act was administered by the Office of Education in the Bureau of Adult and Vocational Education (Winnick & Lyman, 1967, p. 1071). The goal of the act was to enable adults to “become more productive and responsible citizens” (Monroe, 1991, p. 3). The Adult Education Act sought to accomplish this goal by developing programs that would assist adults in overcoming obstacles to occupational competence such as poor reading, writing, and computational skills (Winnick & Lyman, 1967, p. 1071). These programs were intended to reach “individuals over 18 years of age, with less than 12 years of formal education, and not currently enrolled in school” (Monroe, 1991, p. 3).

The capability of the public library to meet the needs of the undereducated was strengthened by the Adult Education Act of 1966. The act formally recognized public libraries as educational institutions by making public libraries eligible to receive federal funds and by creating partnerships between public libraries and public schools. Public libraries, in cooperation with public schools, could receive federal money to develop literacy and adult basic education programs (Monroe, 1991, p. 3). The 1966 act reinforced a long-held aim of the public library “to meet the diverse needs of individuals in the context of social necessities and community readiness” (Monroe, 1991, p. 3). Cooperation with other agencies enabled the public library to reach more underserved adults through basic education classes (Birge, 1979, p. 156). The Adult Education Act of 1966 was particularly notable in that it “formally linked literacy education with adult basic education programs” (Monroe, 1991, p. 17). One of the most important provisions of the Adult Education Act of 1966 was the creation of the National Advisory Committee on Adult Basic Education. The committee was responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of ABE programs supported by federal funds (Knowles, 1977, p. 313).

The Adult Education Act was amended in 1969 to extend educational opportunities to all individuals who had not completed high school (Eyre, 2000, p. 3). The 1970 Amendments enlarged the original eight-member National Advisory Committee on Adult Basic Education to
15 members and renamed it the National Advisory Council on Adult Education. The National Advisory Council represented a first for the adult education field; it was the first "national body with the express authority to influence national policy regarding adult education" (Knowles, 1977, p. 313). The National Advisory Council influenced legislation and programs through the studies it conducted and the findings and recommendations it published (Knowles, 1977, p. 313).

Other federal legislation having relevance for public library materials, programs, and services were the 1962 Depository Library Act, the Vocational Education Act of 1963, the Educational Television Facilities Act (1962), the Older Americans Act of 1965, and the Model Cities Act (Nauratil, 1985, p. 31). Legislation providing federal assistance for library planning and construction included the Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965 and the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965 (Drennan & Price, 1966, pp. 139-140; Nauratil, 1985, p. 31).

The Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) was amended several times during the 1970s. In 1970 LSCA was extended for an additional five years. Titles I, IV-A, and IV-B were consolidated. LSCA emphasized services for low-income families, strengthened state library agencies, and reinforced metropolitan libraries serving as national or regional resource centers (Molz, 1990, p. 10). The "Library Services Program," Title I of the Library Services and Construction Act, was one of "the most consistent sources of federal funds for library literacy projects" (Mathews, Chute, & Cameron, 1986, p. 220). LSCA Title I began funding literacy projects in libraries in 1970 when Congress reauthorized LSCA and added several priority areas, including services to the disadvantaged. The first LSCA Title I literacy projects were funded as services to the disadvantaged (Mathews et al., 1986, p. 220).

LSCA was amended in May 1973 to add a new title IV: Older Readers Services; however, this title was never funded. In October 1973 LSCA was amended to expand the definition of "public library" to include research libraries meeting certain criteria. The 1974 amendment gave service priority to areas having a high concentration of persons with limited

The Adult Education Act was amended several times in the 1970s—in 1972, 1974, and 1978. The 1972 amendment improved educational opportunities for adult Native Americans (Eyre, 2000, p. 3). The 1974 amendments added the community school program, provided for bilingual adult education and special projects for the elderly, and authorized the formation of state advisory councils. The 1978 amendments empowered the Secretary of Education to conduct a variety of research activities and stipulated that public or private nonprofit entities were eligible for federal funds to conduct adult education programs (Eyre, 2000, p. 3). Under this provision, public libraries were eligible to apply for federal grants to support library programs in adult basic and literacy education.

**Funding**

The 1970s marked “the beginning of the end for the boom in library funding that had begun in 1956” with the passage of the Library Services Act (Duncan, Campbell, Rastogi, & Wilson, 1998, p.150). Throughout the Nixon administration, library programs were threatened with “retrenchment, rescission, and impoundment of federal library funds” (Molz & Dain, 1999, pp. 25-26). The height of the Nixon administration’s attack on federal funding for libraries came when President Nixon “proposed a fiscal 1974 budget that would cut federal library funding from $140 million to zero” (Duncan et al., 1998, p. 150). The library community was stunned when the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare announced in January 1973 that federal support for all library services would be discontinued in fiscal year 1974 (Molz & Dain, 1999, pp. 26, 98).

Public libraries were in an especially precarious position because they had little support in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. School libraries (supported by ESEA Title II) and college and university libraries (supported by HEA Title II) were seen as performing a supportive educational role. Government bureaucrats viewed the public library’s educational role
“as lying outside the educational mainstream” (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 99). Although the public library’s role in reading and literacy was seen as useful, it was viewed as less important than elementary and secondary educational programs. The Office of Education was more concerned with its own priorities, such as funding programs for groups with special educational needs, so it did not challenge the Nixon administration’s budget request (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 99). However, Congress disagreed with the administration’s recommendations and restored a substantial portion of the library funding that Nixon wanted to cut in 1974 (Clark, 1992). During the Nixon-Ford years Congress continued to disregard the administration’s recommendations for little or no funding and provided some funds for the public library program (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 99). Library funding did not improve significantly under the Carter administration, but the 1979 White House Conference on Library and Information Services boosted morale, generated interest, and won support for public libraries across the nation. Unfortunately, Congress did not follow up on the conference’s recommendation for a substantial increase in federal aid to libraries (Clark, 1992).

Changes in the distribution of federal funds had a significant impact on human service agencies and the development and continuation of public library outreach services (Estabrook, 1979, p. 159). President Nixon favored revenue sharing, a decentralized approach, which redirected a large portion of federal monies to state and local governments. Unlike the categorical-aid programs which funded specific programs, revenue sharing funds were used to assist state and local governments in achieving their priorities. Often the priorities of local and state governments were not those of human service agencies such as the public library. Decentralization of funding tended to weaken the power of minority groups and their advocates to influence public policy decisions. As a result, the needs of human service agencies were low on the list of priorities. Revenue sharing became fiscal policy when the State and Local Fiscal Assistance Act was passed by Congress in 1971. Many categorical-aid programs were eliminated because the federal budget could not sustain a major revenue-sharing initiative while continuing
to support a large number of categorized-aid programs (Estabrook, 1979, p. 159; Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 98).

Other changes in the distribution formula of federal funds during the Nixon administration caused problems for public libraries. Population parity, in which funds were allocated based on the number of people within the community rather than demographic factors such as the number of people living below the poverty level, resulted in an inequitable distribution of funds. Population parity ignored the special needs of underprivileged residents, thus affluent suburbs received the same amount of money as poor urban communities. Universalism removed restrictions on age, economic circumstances, or special problems of the recipients. Human services programs were required to offer services without restrictions. Although there were provisions for a sliding-fee-scale for the poor, universalism opened once restricted services to the middle-class. Unrestricted services meant that resources were no longer targeted to the groups in greatest need (Estabrook, 1979, pp. 159-160).

**Federal Library Agencies**

*Library Services Division.* In the 1930s ALA’s leadership called for “a federal level library agency to provide nationwide leadership in the library movement” (National Commission on Library and Information Science [NCLIS], 1981, p. 13). In 1937 the federal government authorized the establishment of the Library Services Division in the U. S. Office of Education. The division had a relatively small budget and small staff; its work consisted primarily of participation in statistical surveys and the provision of technical assistance to the profession (Molz, 1990, pp. 7-8). The division was small, but its creation was “of great significance in the history of Federal relations to libraries” (Joeckel, 1935, p. 468). Prior to its establishment, there had been no federal office directly responsible for library development on a national level (Joeckel, 1935, p. 468).

*The National Advisory Commission on Libraries (NACL).* By 1966 it was clearly evident that massive federal involvement in library services demanded a comprehensive library policy at
the national level. In the latter part of that year a temporary commission, the National Advisory Commission on Libraries (NACL), was established by President Johnson to appraise the effectiveness of library roles, policies, practices and programs, to assess the adequacy of library funding, and to develop recommendations for action (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 497).

NACL used a variety of methods to carry out its assigned tasks. It held regional hearings, heard the testimony of expert witnesses at commission meetings, and sponsored several major studies (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 497). The regional hearings were designed to elicit information about the public’s needs for library and information services. These hearings included a broad cross-section of the general public and representatives from special groups (Knight & Nourse, 1969, pp. 534-544). The expert witnesses at commission meetings included representatives from government agencies, library associations, state library agencies, graduate library schools, academic libraries, public library systems, and other interested parties (Knight & Nourse, 1969, pp. 545-547). NACL commissioned a number of specialized studies on a wide range of subjects. Among the disciplines contributing to the studies were social science, history, political science, economics, information science, education, and library science (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 531).


Two of the studies provided insights into the library profession’s “thought about the users and uses, present and potential, of public libraries in the shifting society of the United States” (Knight & Nourse, 1969, pp. 22-23). D. M. Lacy and V. H. Mathews’ study analyzed the effects of major social changes during the 1950s and 1960s on libraries and the probable future effects of
social change. Their study focused on public libraries, school libraries, and academic libraries. The analysis of the public library was based on a search of the professional literature, a field survey, and an opinion sampling of public librarians and members of the National Book Committee (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 23; Lacy & Mathews, 1967, abstract). Mendelsohn and Wingerd's study examined the use of public and academic libraries. The study of the public library consisted of a review of the relevant literature, a nation-wide public opinion poll conducted by the Gallup Organization, and a survey of a selected group of library experts (Knight & Nourse, 1969, pp. 41-42; Mendelsohn & Wingerd, 1967, abstract).

The respondent groups for the two studies were quite different. The sample for the Lacy and Mathews study consisted of 134 public librarians, probably “somewhat select in terms of interest and enthusiasm” (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 23). The sample for the Mendelsohn and Wingerd study was comprised of 14 nationally recognized experts in the field of librarianship, some of whom did not have public library experience. Given the difference in the respondent groups, the results of the two studies were remarkably similar. Both groups expressed concern about the public library’s financial and personnel problems, the impact of changes in education on public libraries, and the public library’s failure to attract the disadvantaged. Both studies indicated that respondents were aware in a broad sense of the impact of social forces, and both groups advocated “the shattering of traditional attitudes and experimenting with new alignments” (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 23). The public librarian survey revealed that practicing public librarians were “considerably more willing to initiate new ventures toward the goal of serving, and even creating, user needs” than the experts recognized or were willing to acknowledge (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 23).

Another component of the Mendelsohn and Wingerd study was a review of major research studies on public library use from 1949 to 1967. The review of the research literature showed that “the body of recorded knowledge concerning the use of public libraries [was] inadequate, fragmented, and noncomparable” (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 63). There was very
little “broad-based trend data concerning the use of libraries” and there were almost no studies
dealing with nonusers (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 63). Only 11 “people-oriented” studies were
found and nearly half of these dealt with the use of academic libraries. Berelson’s 1949 study,
conducted nearly 20 years earlier, was still the most comprehensive (Mendelsohn & Wingerd,
1967, abstract).

The literature review revealed that the population served by public libraries had doubled
between 1949 and 1966, but the number of libraries had not increased proportionally. Age was
shown to be an important factor in library use—as people grew older they were less likely to use
libraries. Children and young adults comprised a majority (50 to 70%) of the public library’s
clientele in the mid-1960s (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 63). “The educational level of library users
emerged as the most important single factor” predicting the extent of library use (Knight &
Nourse, 1969, p. 57). Library use increased with educational attainment; college graduates were
strongly overrepresented in the library’s clientele. The employment characteristics of the
community strongly influenced the kinds of reference services provided by the public library
(Knight & Nourse, 1967, p. 57). There were very few studies on public library usage by different
economic groups. Berelson’s study found that the majority of users were middle-class
individuals; neither the very rich nor the very poor made frequent use of the library. Although
there was little data available on the reasons why people used the public library, circulation was
“the single most-utilized service” followed by reference service (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 60).

Recognizing that research literature on library use was severely limited, the National
Advisory Commission called for a special study on library use and nonuse. A third component of
the Mendelsohn and Wingerd study was a nationwide opinion poll of 1,549 adults conducted by
the Gallup Organization. The survey investigated the following: “(1) frequency of use of public
libraries and, to some extent, of other kinds of libraries; (2) factors that explain why some adults
go to libraries while others do not; (3) factors that might induce greater use of libraries; (4) the
public’s image of libraries; (5) the frequency of book-reading by adults as related to where the books are obtained” (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 69).

The opinion poll confirmed many of the Public Library Inquiry’s findings. In the Inquiry, Berelson found that only 25% of the adult population used the library (1949, p. 10). The NACL study found a small increase in adult usage from 25% to 30% (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 78). Both studies concluded that only 10% of the adult clientele could be characterized as frequent users (Berelson, 1949, p. 10; Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 78). Berelson said that the public library served “the middle class, defined either by occupation or economic status, more than the upper or the lower classes” (1949, pp. 49-50). The NACL study found that the adult clientele was predominantly upper middle class, not representative of a broad cross-section of the general public (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 78). Berelson found that the proportion of people using the public library rose dramatically with their level of educational attainment. Whereas only 10-15% of adults with a grade school education used the public library, four times as many college graduates used the library (Berelson, 1949, p. 24). The NACL study also found that there was a direct relationship between the level of educational attainment and public library use (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 63).

Berelson’s study dealt with the public library’s clientele and did not examine reasons for nonuse. However, the NACL study did elicit opinions from nonusers. Nonusers made up 70% (1,058) of the 1,549 adults in the national sample. The most disturbing finding was that most nonusers (60% of the 1,058 nonusers) “could think of no way that libraries could get them to use their facilities” (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 78). Other useful findings of the opinion survey included the characteristics of users and nonusers. Library users were generally “women, young adults (21-34 years old), college-educated persons, parents of two children, Caucasians, residents of large cities, professional people, and those engaged in white-collar occupations” (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 78). Nonusers were generally “men; persons 50 years of age and older; persons separated, divorced, or widowed; and childless persons” (Knight and Nourse, 1969, p. 78). Using
these characteristics as a guideline, the researchers determined that the potential adult clientele was about 60% of the adult population or twice the actual proportion of 30% (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 78). Mendelsohn and Wingerd recommended that "libraries take an extensive self-examination of objectives and target publics and that a national library usage research body be created" (1967, abstract).

The National Advisory Commission on Libraries commissioned one other study, one that pertained specifically to public libraries: the Nelson Associates' study of *Public Libraries in the United States: Trends, Problems and Recommendations*. Objectives of this study were to analyze public library history, current status, trends, and problems and to suggest approaches to improve library services (Nelson Associates, 1967, abstract). Although the findings from this study were not included in NACL's resource book, *Libraries at Large*, its conclusions undoubtedly influenced the National Advisory Commission's recommendations.

As expected, the study found that public libraries were underfunded. Traditionally library services have been financed from local government revenues, primarily property tax receipts. Unfortunately, as local revenues failed to keep pace with the demands for public services, localities were forced to resort to sales tax, gross receipt taxes, and special charges for services in order to meet their budgetary needs. Although local support for public libraries increased from a mean of 72.2% in 1940 to 86.7% in 1965, this increase did not represent real improvement in public library financing. In terms of its capacity to afford library services, the nation was financing public libraries at only a slightly higher rate than it did 30 years earlier during the last years of the Great Depression (Nelson Associates, 1967, p. 22).

While libraries were getting a somewhat larger share of the municipal budget in the 1960s, the costs of library operations were increasing. Starting salaries for professional librarians increased from $4,450 in 1957 to $6,468 in 1965. The average price of books went up from $5.29 in 1957 to $7.94 in 1966. Periodical costs increased from $4.92 in 1957 to $7.44 in 1966. Suggestions for lowering costs included shifting some duties performed by professional staff to
nonprofessional staff, instituting better management controls, simplifying procedures, and exploring the centralization and automation of circulation, technical services, and supporting services. Given the fact that municipal sources of income were nearly exhausted, securing support from the state and federal government was becoming an increasingly important issue (Nelson Associates, 1967, pp. 22-24).

The library profession appeared to suffer a personnel shortage in the 1960s. The Nelson Associates research team attempted to determine if the problem was an actual shortage of professional librarians or a problem of manpower utilization. If the problem was caused by the inappropriate deployment of personnel, the team would have to determine if the restructuring of professional education was necessary to resolve it. There was little pervious research on manpower utilization in public libraries on which to base their investigation. The research team was unable to arrive at a clear answer to these questions. Nelson Associates concluded that an accurate picture of the public library manpower situation or the need for restructuring educational preparation would not be possible “until a complete evaluation and reclassification of positions was accomplished and generally accepted throughout the profession” (Nelson Associates, 1967, p. 29).

The lack of research on manpower utilization provided “a striking but not unusual” illustration of the status of library research (Nelson Associates, 1967, p. 29). Public libraries lacked “sufficient information on which to base their daily operating decisions let alone long-range professional objectives” (Nelson Associates, 1967, p. 29). Among research needs were the development of quantitative instruments for measuring library effectiveness; better library statistics; well designed studies of library users and nonusers; studies of library organization, internally and externally; studies of public library costs and finance; and studies of manpower utilization and educational preparation for library workers (Nelson Associates, 1967, p. 29).

Nelson Associates described the most pressing concerns of public librarians as “improving the ways of measuring the library’s effectiveness as a social institution and in
determining the nature and behavior of the user and nonusers, the appropriate utilization of manpower, the most effective way of financing library service, and the most effective way of organizing and running the library as an institution" (1967, p. 30). Among the potential public library functions suggested by Nelson Associates were (a) leading the movement to coordinate all local library services; (b) continuing “to facilitate the on-going education” of its clientele; (c) developing meaningful services for disadvantaged adults, especially literacy education; (d) assuming the responsibility of serving the staff and residents of institutions; (e) developing its capabilities to serve as “the community reference and information center”; (f) exploring new ways to extend its services into the community; (g) working to achieve cooperative relationships between public libraries and public schools; and (h) expanding its role as “the transmitter of ideas” and “catalyst for the community’s cultural life” (1967, pp. 14-16).

The Nelson Associates research team recommended the creation of a permanent commission on the federal level to guide research and development of library services and to formulate a comprehensive national plan for library service. Among their other recommendations were federal appropriations for public libraries, the development of federal standards for libraries, broadening of Title IV of the Library and Services and Construction Act to include services for underprivileged and undereducated persons, the strengthening of state library agencies, the use of the “matching funds” concept to promote higher levels of state and local support for public libraries, and the transfer of all existing federal legislation pertaining to libraries to a single statute (Nelson Associates, 1967, pp. 31-33). Many of these recommendations later became part of the National Advisory Commission’s recommendations, most notably the creation of a permanent library commission (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 515).

In 1969 NACL published its findings and recommendations in Libraries at Large: Tradition, Innovation, and the National Interest, a resource book which assembled the findings of the various studies, conclusions drawn from special hearings, and the texts of commissioned papers (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. x). Political scientist R. H. Leach addressed the topic of
federal library policy in a paper for the commission. While the federal government was actively involved with libraries in many ways, there was "no detailed, comprehensive federal library policy" in place in the late 1960s (Leach, 1969, p. 346). Federal government efforts on behalf of libraries lacked coordination. Leach wrote: "There is no single spokesman for library interests in the Federal Government, and in many parts of the Federal establishment there is neither deep interest in nor fundamental concern about libraries" (Leach, 1969, p. 346). Recognizing the need for a permanent agency to represent library interests at the federal level, the National Advisory Commission recommended the establishment of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS, 1980, p. 56).

National Commission on Library and Information Science (NCLIS). The law creating NCLIS, the branch of the federal government primarily concerned with institutional and technological change in libraries, was signed on July 20, 1970 (Becker, 1979, p. 413). The commission consisted of 15 members, one of whom was the Librarian of Congress. The commission first met in September 1971 (Rubin, 2000, p. 120). The commission was authorized to advise the President and Congress on national policy; to conduct studies, surveys, and analyses of library and informational needs; to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of current library and information resources, services, and programs; to develop a comprehensive plan for meeting the nation's library and informational needs; to promote research and development; to prepare an annual report for the President and the Congress; and to publish additional reports as needed (NCLIS, 1981, p. 63).

At its initial meetings NCLIS developed this goal: "To eventually provide every individual in the United States with equal opportunity of access to that part of the total information resource which will satisfy the individual’s educational, working, cultural, and leisure-time needs interests, regardless of the individual’s location, social or physical condition, or level of intellectual achievement" (NCLIS, as cited in McCook, 2002, p. 16). The commission focused its attention on four areas of concern: "access to information; information technology and
productivity; improving library and information services; and policy, planning, and advice” (Molz, 1990, p. 21).

In its first year the commission’s work—including regional hearings, commissioned studies, the creation of committees and task forces, and other activities—focused on five areas in which the NCLIS had determined progress was critical to the further development of library services and information systems: “(a) understanding the information needs of users, (b) financing of libraries and information systems, (c) assessment of adequacies and deficiencies of present libraries and information systems, (d) application of new technology to users’ information problems, and (e) improved staffing of libraries and information systems” (NCLIS, 1995b, 1970-1974 section, para. 3).

Soon after its creation, NCLIS began work on a national plan for library and information service. Two major principles guided the commission’s deliberations: first, the commission adopted a user or client, rather than supplier or institutional, orientation to its work; and second, the commission asserted that “national equality of access to information is as important as equality in education” (NCLIS, 1981, p. 9). The idea of equal access for all was espoused as the guiding principle for the commission’s work (NCLIS, 1981, p. 9).

To gain a better understanding of library users’ needs, NCLIS commissioned a series of studies addressing the library and information needs of occupational, ethnic, and other groups in the United States. A research team of 16 experts studied and reported on the information needs of specific groups: 6 occupational and professional groups, various age groups, women, persons with disabilities, persons restricted to their homes, residents of rural areas, and ethnic groups—primarily the Mexican American community. Various characteristics of the groups were analyzed—“rationale for service, needs for library and information services, inadequacies in existing services, and strategies for change” (Cuadra & Bates, 1974, abstract). The commissioned reports were presented at the NCLIS Service Needs Conference at the University of Denver in May 1973 (Cuadra & Bates, 1974, abstract).
The first draft of the commission’s proposed “New National Program of Library and Information Service” was completed in October 1973 (Molz, 1984, p. 114). The plan emphasized network technology calling for “an interstate network of electronic communications . . . for the management of information” to be funded by the states and the federal government (Savage, 1974, p. 21). The plan stressed the advantages of a national network in which “the computer would ultimately become central” and in which “rapid and inexpensive telecommunications among libraries could turn out to be the greatest boon ever to the national distribution of knowledge for education and progress” (NCLIS, 1974, p. 454).

A series of regional hearings were held to present the draft version of the national plan to the library community. At a regional hearing held in Boston in 1973, many librarians expressed their displeasure with some of the plan’s glaring omissions—failure to call for the restoration of federal support for libraries, to mention service to the community, or to even mention books. The commission responded by releasing a statement criticizing revenue sharing as a means of financing library service; the commission argued that revenue sharing alone could not solve the long-range funding problems of local libraries or regional library systems. Subsequent NCLIS statements emphasized that library service was more than a local concern; adequate library service required funding from the federal government as well as from local and state governments. The commission also broadened its library representation by appointing a school librarian and a public library trustee (Savage, 1974, pp. 21-22).

NCLIS’s final report, Toward a National Program for Library and Information Services: Goals for Action, was published in late 1975. The plan set forth eight program objectives:

1. Ensure that basic minimums of library and information services adequate to meet the needs of all local communities are satisfied.

2. Provide adequate special services to special constituencies, including the underserved.

3. Strengthen existing statewide services and systems.
4. Ensure basic and continuing education of personnel essential to the implementation of a national program.

5. Coordinate existing federal programs of library and information service.

6. Encourage the private sector (comprising organizations which are not directly tax-supported) to become an active partner in the development of the national program.

7. Establish a locus of federal responsibility charged with implementing the national network and coordinating the national program under the policy guidance of the National Commission.


The report emphasized the commission’s vision of a nationwide network of libraries and information centers encompassing “state networks, interstate networks and specialized networks in the public and private sectors” (Becker, 1979, p. 413). The commission recommended that the federal government facilitate the creation of a national network of library and information facilities “by developing uniform computer standards, providing low-cost communications services, and coordinating state and regional network programs (Becker, 1979, p. 413).

Development of a library and information network necessitated planning on a national level. The high costs of technology required a long-range commitment on the part of the federal government to ensure the stability of the project. Also the complexity of network technology demanded technical direction at the national level to coordinate the activities of all relevant agencies and to orient project objectives toward a common goal (Becker, 1979, p. 413). NCLIS stressed that a coordinated program on a national level was essential to prevent the unnecessary and costly duplication of expenditures, facilities, and efforts. Without the coordination of goals, objectives, methods, and standards, “interconnection would become increasingly difficult as local, state, and multistate systems developed without benefit of a common purpose and a common approach” (NCLIS, 1975, p. ix).
Advocates of equality of access for all were disappointed in the plan. Although the plan recognized that all citizens needed information including the poor and library nonusers, it emphasized "the commitment of national resources to specialized information to experts in economic, scientific, and social sciences" (Monroe, 1977, p. 15). M. E. Monroe voiced disappointment that the plan did not give equal attention to the needs of special groups within the general population. The working papers for the 1973 NCLIS-sponsored conference, Library and Information Service Needs of the Nation, had also been published in late 1975 (Cuadra & Bates, 1974). These papers reflected a more user-centered approach to library planning and gave more attention to the needs of special groups of citizens such as homemakers, children, older adults, people in rural areas, persons in institutions, people with disabilities, and the economically disadvantaged (Monroe, 1977, p. 15). L. A. Martin echoed Monroe's concern that the NCLIS plan called for libraries to narrow their focus to better serve a subgroup of specialists instead of modifying and extending their programs to gain a wider social base (1979, p. 290).

In 1975 the commission turned its attention from planning to implementation. Data collection became a principal concern, to provide information needed to make decisions on implementation. The commission also undertook a number of studies including "(a) the role of the Library of Congress in the national network, (b) the impact of federal funding programs on public libraries, (c) an inventory of national library needs, (d) the volume and characteristics of library photocopying, (e) the national periodicals system, and (f) the role of school libraries in a national network" (NCLIS, 1995b). The commission was also concerned with (a) coordination of bibliographic control, (b) resolution of copyright issues, (c) the identification of issues for national information policy, (e) continuing library and information education, and (f) authorizing legislation for a White House Conference on Library and Information Services (NCLIS, 1995b).

The first White House Conference on Library and Information Services (WHCLIS) was held November 15-19, 1979. Planning and implementing the conference was NCLIS's responsibility. Preparations for the White House Conference included six special national
preconferences and preconference forums held in every state and territory to identify policy issues, to write resolutions, and to set goals for future library and information services (Fleming, 1980, p. 37).

The overall theme for the White House Conference—"Bringing Information to People"—was based on a consensus derived from the 57 state and territorial preconferences (NCLIS, 1995b). The conference program was structured around user needs. The five major themes were selected from an analysis of the more than 3,000 resolutions and recommendations sent to NCLIS from the preconferences (NCLIS, 1981, pp. 7-8). The major themes were "library and information services for meeting personal needs, enhancing lifelong learning, improving organizations and professions, effectively governing society, and increasing international cooperation" (NCLIS, 1995b).

Delegates at the White House Conference considered a number of important issues including the place of the library in the Information Age, the need for a national information policy, the flow of information across national borders, information as a public good or as a private commodity, and the appropriate application of freedom of information principles (White House Conference on Library and Information Services [WHCLIS], 1980, p. 7). A total of 64 resolutions were approved by the delegates. These resolutions reflected the conference's five basic themes (NCLIS, 1995b). The resolutions set forth three major goals: "to reshape library and information services to serve the people in more useful ways, to maintain local control of these services, and to insist on more economy and accountability from the institutions that provide the services" (WHCLIS, 1980, p. 7).

While the delegates met, three open hearings were conducted by members of the commission to provide an additional mechanism for individuals, groups, and organizations to express their views. Also, a Joint Senate and House Congressional Hearing was held at the conference. Ten Conference delegates were invited to testify on issues related to the five theme areas (NCLIS, 1981, pp. 13-14). The White House Conference stimulated the publication of a
number of documents including background papers, discussion guides, preconference summaries and reports. Discussion guides were prepared on all the major themes. The conference promoted discussion and consideration of important library and information issues throughout the nation (NCLIS, 1982a, pp.104-105).

Although the conference dealt with matters concerning all type of libraries and information centers, a number of the final recommendations addressed issues having special relevance for public libraries including “intellectual freedom, access to information, literacy, the needs of minorities and the physically handicapped” (Molz, 1990, p. 22). The resolutions called for a larger role for public libraries in providing literacy training; in improving access to information for all underserved clienteles such as ethnic minorities, persons with visual and physical disabilities; and in promoting increased efforts to ensure the free flow of information among nations. Many delegates endorsed the concept of the public library as “a total community information center and as an independent learning center” (WHCLIS, 1980, p. 8). The resolutions recognized the public library as an essential element in a civilized society, a public good that government at all levels should give a high priority in decision-making and allocation of funds. Delegates stressed the importance of technology, studied ways in which the nation’s public libraries could use it to improve information services, and considered the implications of advances in public telecommunications for “a new, expanded role for libraries” (WHCLIS, 1980, p. 8).

The 1979 White House Conference on Library and Information Service addressed many of the concerns expressed by ethnic minorities and the disadvantaged such as the imposition of fees for library services. Fees were seen as a barrier to access for those individuals who could not afford to pay. Resolutions approved by the White House Conference called for the development of an information policy which would enhance access to information for all people (WHCLIS, 1980, p. 8). Resolution A-5 reaffirmed the service to all ideal in the statement “libraries and information services are obligated to reach out to all persons” (WHCLIS, 1980, pp. 45).
Resolution D-4, Special Constituent Concerns, called for special emphasis on the involvement of representatives from racial and ethnic minority groups in the development of library collections and staff training programs (WHCLIS, 1980, p. 47).

Lifelong learning was one of the five areas addressed by the 1979 White House Conference. The basic philosophy of service espoused by the conference was that "all learners, regardless of age, residence (including institutions), race, disability, ethnic or cultural background, should have continuing access to the information and material necessary to cope with the increasing complexity of our changing social, economic, and technological environment" (WHCLIS, 1980, p. 44). Of the 64 resolutions approved by the delegates, several dealt specifically with the public library's role in lifelong learning and in the creation of a learning society (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 180). One resolution specifically mandated the provision of educational and career information and referral services at centers for independent learning to bring these badly needed services to minorities, the poor, and other underserved populations. The resolutions also called for an aggressive publicity campaign at the national level to promote awareness and use of public libraries and information and referral centers (Chobot, 1989, p. 371).

President Carter's report to Congress on the White House Conference emphasized resource sharing through the further development of networks. The president called for libraries to assume more important roles in the research and development of new information technologies, in efforts to eradicate illiteracy, and in addressing the needs of the public for information about job opportunities, career planning, training programs, and governmental regulations (Shearer, 1981, p. 228).

The Center for the Book. Former Librarian of Congress D. Boorstin was instrumental in the founding of the Center for the Book in 1977 (McCook, 2004b, p. 194). The Center sought "to promote public interest in books and reading and in the role print culture plays in the diffusion of knowledge" (Cole, 1993, preface). The first Advisory Committee for the Center for the Book was
formed through the merger of the National Book Committee and the U.S. Government Advisory Committee on International Books and Library Programs (McCook, 2004b, p. 194).

**Federal Initiatives in Adult Education**

**Adult basic education and literacy.** The federal government played a significant role in efforts to combat illiteracy. The Right to Read program, established by the Nixon administration in 1971 (Rolstad, 1990, p. 253), was a national campaign “to develop and improve the reading skills of all citizens through the coordinated involvement of every segment of society” (Jackson, 1978, abstract). The goal of the Right to Read program, funded by federal, state, local, and private contributions, was to eradicate illiteracy by 1980. The program’s first objective was to focus national attention on the problem of illiteracy. An estimated 19 million adults and 7 million children in the United States were functionally illiterate in the early 1970s. Second, the Right to Read program attempted “to encourage, coordinate, and facilitate” the efforts of all interested parties including government at the federal, state, and local levels; industry; foundations; public interest groups; professional associations; schools; and adult training centers in improving reading instruction for all age groups (Right to Read, 1974, abstract).

In its first three years, the program funded school and community-based demonstration projects, provided start-up money for the development and implementation of statewide Right to Read programs, and coordinated its efforts with other Office of Education programs to strengthen the impact on the nation’s illiteracy problems (Right to Read, 1974, abstract). The Right to Read program was a cooperative effort on the part of librarians, parents, and teachers to promote reading as a lifelong activity. Federal funds were used to sponsor local library activities in support of the program’s goals. Activities included “tutorial sessions in inner-city libraries, reading-readiness programs in daycare centers and nursery schools, remedial reading exercises for out-of-school adults with difficulties in reading and writing, and bilingual collections and services for those who were literate in a language other than English” (Molz, 1973, abstract).
In 1979 the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare changed the name of the Right to Read program to the Basic Skills and Educational Proficiency program. The revised program emphasized adult new readers. The new emphasis pleased librarians who had been frustrated with what they felt was the "one-sided school orientation" of the former program (Fleming, 1980, p. 38). Although the program failed to meet its goal, it did provide useful research findings and established several pilot reading programs (Rolstad, 1990, p. 253).

Federal legislation which had the greatest impact on the development of literacy programs in libraries were the "Library Research and Demonstration Program," Title II-B of the Higher Education Act; "Public Library Services," Title I of the Library Services and Construction Act; and the "Library Literacy Program," LSCA Title VI (Heim, 1991b, p. 22). These programs, administered by the Office of Library Programs, funded a number of landmark studies. An outstanding example was the Library Materials Research Project conducted by H. H. Lyman.

Lyman's study was one of the most extensive research projects ever undertaken in the area of adult illiteracy. The basic problem addressed by the study was that of "appraising reading content and levels in materials accurately and matching the print material to that of the reader's abilities, skills, and interests" (Lyman, 1973, p. 25). The project was composed of four separate investigations and lasted for a period of nearly five years, from July 1967 to May 1972 (1973, p. 25). The first investigation was the Materials Analysis Study. This study analyzed the characteristics of existing reading materials in order to devise evaluation criteria for use in selecting suitable materials for the newly literate. The second investigation, the Population Study, used the survey technique to identify the general characteristics of readers in the disadvantaged population and to determine if these disadvantaged readers displayed characteristics that distinguished them from their nonreader counterparts (Lyman, 1973, pp. 57-59). The findings of this study contributed "a fundamental understanding of the social characteristics and reading behavior of new readers" (Heim, 1991b, p. 23).
The National Adult Programs Study examined the various kinds of materials used by adult basic education and job training programs and evaluated their effectiveness in helping to achieve program objectives. The purpose of the fourth study, the Indigenous Literature Study, was to determine if native literature was an effective stimulus for newly literate adults to continue reading (Lyman, 1973, pp. 57-59).

The results of the research project were published in *Library Materials in Service to the Adult New Reader*. The most significant outcome from the research project as a whole was the development of the “MAC Checklist—Materials Analysis Criteria: Standards for Measurement.” Using the checklist, librarians could analyze print materials both in terms of quality and quantity (Birge, 1979, p. 167). The checklist was a selection tool that enabled librarians to make “a critical, objective analysis” of print materials for use by adult new readers (Lyman, 1976, p. 11).

A second book, *Reading and the Adult New Reader*, was also based on the findings of the research project. This volume offered background information on reading and adult literacy; discussed the “heritage, values, and reading interests” of specific minority groups; described the development of reading collections for adults from the viewpoint of adult developmental responsibilities and tasks, dealt with the evaluation of reading materials using the criteria developed in the Library Materials Research Project; and discussed the implications for library services (Lyman, 1976, pp. 10-12). Among the suggested staff activities for reading development programs were (a) cooperative programming with the staff of other agencies, (b) reading lists in relevant areas of interest, (c) book talks and reviews, (d) lectures on reading comprehension, (e) demonstrations of reading materials, (f) individual reading guidance, (g) tutorial programs, (h) discussion groups for new readers, (i) recruiting and training volunteers, (j) programs for parents and children, (k) reading resource centers, (l) exhibitions and displays and (m) teaching and research collections (Lyman, 1976, pp. 235-236).

Mathews, Chute, and Cameron (1986) described several research and development projects funded by HEA II-B, “Library Research and Demonstration Program.” Among the

The Right to Read for Adults project was a cooperative effort sponsored by the Monroe County Library System, the Model Cities Program, and the Adult Basic Education Department of the City School District of Rochester, New York. The project explored the feasibility of a multiagency approach, using the resources of social agencies and an area survey by library aides, to determine communication needs and recruit participants for an area adult basic education program. The library system encouraged participation in the adult basic education programs and supported these programs with library materials and resources. The most important outcomes of the project were the knowledge acquired from the joint venture and the continuing interaction between the library and the involved agencies (Adams, 1974; Mathews, Chute & Cameron, 1986, p. 221).

The Cooperative Planning project was a joint venture of the Mayland Technical Institute, the Avery-Mitchell-Yancey Regional Library, and Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. Working together, these institutions assessed the needs of the functionally illiterate adults and designed a demonstration outreach project. The project, called Rural Appalachian Progress Skills (RAPskills), emphasized skills needed to achieve high school equivalency—reading, writing, and arithmetic. A means of measuring the strengths of various adult basic education strategies was developed. The research component developed a profile of student personality factors and utilization patterns based on descriptive and observational records; a library questionnaire to elicit information about attitudes, usage patterns, and library skills; and tests to determine the participants’ attitudes toward education, their self-concepts, and levels of
coping skills. Although cooperative efforts were not completely successful, many participants achieved high school equivalency and demonstrated improvement in their attitudes toward education and in their coping skills. An evaluation of the project indicators revealed that libraries played a minor role in furthering the literacy efforts of users; adults in ABE programs showed a slight gain in self-concept after several months of study; and functionally illiterate adults showed improvement in basic coping skills with the help of paraprofessional home visitors (Mathews, Chute, & Cameron, 1986, pp. 221-222; Newman, 1975).

The experiment-demonstration project, entitled Interrelating of Library and Basic Educational Services for Disadvantaged Adults, begun in 1972 by the Appalachian Adult Education Center in Morehead, Kentucky, was of great interest to libraries. The project demonstrated four alternative working models for adult basic education-library cooperation. Two of the models involved metropolitan libraries in Birmingham, Alabama, and Columbia, South Carolina. The project demonstrated that a cooperative approach resulted in better service to adult nonreaders. Although joint efforts were complicated for a variety of administrative and philosophical reasons, obstacles were identified and overcome. Among the project findings were (a) outreach services were effective in helping disadvantaged adults, (b) evening and weekend hours were the best times for scheduling these services, (c) multimedia materials were more effective than print materials, (d) publicity geared to new readers was desirable, and (e) the inclusion of undereducated adults on advisory boards was a very important factor in program success. Other important outcomes were an increase in library users as a result of ABE classes in public libraries and the finding that information and referral services helped to meet unfilled needs in community life (Casey, 1974, p. 282; Eyster, 1975; Mathews, Chute & Cameron, 1986, p. 222).

The Libraries in Literacy study was commissioned by the Office of Libraries and Learning Technologies of the U.S. Department of Education and conducted by E. G. Smith for the Contract Research Center (CRC). Smith’s study sought to determine the nature and extent of
library involvement in literacy education activities and to develop "a systematic, nationally based body of data" (Heim, 1991b, p. 24). Smith used surveys and case studies to examine the role of public libraries, public school libraries, community college libraries, state institutional libraries, and state library agencies in literacy education and to determine the role of agencies cooperating with libraries and state library agencies in literacy education (Smith, 1981, abstract).

Smith later summarized the findings of the CRC study in Library and Information Science Research. The survey collected information on 17 factors which included size of budget, reasons for and against providing literacy education, background of library staff, and attitudes of the staff and the administration toward the provision of literacy education services (Johnson, Robbins, & Zweizig, 1990, p. 127; Smith, 1984, p. 85).

Out of 160 public libraries contacted, 121 responded. The CRC study found that 52.3% (64 out of 121) of public libraries provided some type of literacy service (Smith, 1984, p. 80). The most common literacy activities for libraries of all types were (a) supplying materials for students and tutors, (b) furnishing space and equipment for literacy classes, (c) tutoring new readers, (d) training volunteers as tutors, (e) providing information and referral services, and (f) publicizing literacy education services (Smith, 1981, p. v). Libraries were least likely to serve as coordinators of literacy instruction to individuals by volunteer tutors (Johnson et al., 1990, p.127).

The survey provided interesting insights into the library's role in literacy education. Public libraries tended to be reactive; they became involved in literacy education in response to the urgings of literacy education providers and community groups (Heim, 1991b, p. 24). Librarians were motivated to become involved if they were aware of the need for literacy services and if they perceived these services to be an appropriate function of the library. They were deterred from involvement if they perceived literacy education to be outside "the scope of services librarians usually provide" (Smith, 1984, p. 80). Public libraries were willing to become literacy providers themselves if there were no other providers in the community. Libraries often collaborated with adult basic education programs and literacy education groups (Heim, 1991b,
The study found that the majority of literacy programs were provided by libraries in major metropolitan areas and that these libraries provided a wide range of services (Mathews, Chute & Cameron, 1986, p. 223; Smith, 1981). Beginning in 1970 funds available under the Library Services and Construction Act, Title I: “Public Library Services” supported literacy projects in the states. Title I was a state formula grant program (McCook, 1992, p. 246). LSCA Title I was the source of much of the funding public libraries used to develop model programs and to participate in literacy efforts. Library-based literacy projects funded under Title I appeared to have been innovative and diverse. The findings of the Libraries in Literacy study are important because they provide valuable insights into the role of public libraries in literacy during the 1970s. The survey was published when many literacy efforts were underway, but reports of the progress of these programs were not widely disseminated (McCook, 1992, p. 247).

While the overall impact of the LSCA Title I program could not be characterized as “monolithic,” the program “encouraged and supported community-based efforts rooted in an analysis of state and local needs” (McCook, 1992, p. 247). Its contribution was the “sustained” and “steady” strengthening of library-based efforts on the local level (1992, p. 247). As communities became more diverse, libraries were often confronted with the problem of how to meet the needs of adult nonreaders when the needs of various populations often dictated different models of service within the same community. Fortunately the guidelines for Title I programs were not rigid (McCook, 1992, p. 247). The flexibility of Title I guidelines and “the evolving theory and philosophy of planning and role setting” based on community needs strengthened the role of public libraries as literacy providers (Heim, 1991b, p. 25).

The 1979 WHCLIS resolution on literacy recommended a stronger role for libraries in the literacy movement. “This resolution called for the expansion of literacy programs at the community level, identification of effective library adult literacy programs, coordination of library programs with other adult education programs, cooperation among public educational agencies, and joint planning” (McCook, 1992, p. 247). McCook pointed out the significance of
This resolution. The resolution was important because it demonstrated that “commitment to literacy concerns was a basic philosophical stance of librarians throughout the decades of the sixties and the seventies” and “it provided a climate for increased literacy activities in libraries” throughout the eighties (1992, p. 247).

Library services for older adults. The first national conference on aging was held in 1950 when President Truman directed the Federal Social Security Administration to hold a national conference to assess the challenges posed by the changing age structure of the nation’s population. The 1950 conference served as an exploratory forum for addressing issues related to the growing number of older adults (White House Conference on Aging [WHCoA], 2005a). In 1959 former President Truman convened the National Conference on Aging, which laid the groundwork for the first White House Conference on the Aging (WHCoA) in 1961 (Turock, 1990, p. 350). Preparations for the 1959 and 1961 conferences on aging generated a great deal of interest. The 1961 White House Conference on Aging had a significant impact on the enactment of legislation to help the aged. The Library Services and Construction Act of 1964 included funding to make libraries accessible to people with physical disabilities, many of whom were older adults. LSCA’s Title I was a major funding source for new library programs, services, and large-print collections for older adults. The 30-year-old Pratt-Smoot Act was expanded in 1966 to provide a wider range of materials and to include a broader segment of the population in public library services for people with visual impairments. Many older adults, although not legally blind, were unable to use conventional books because of other disabling conditions. The Older Americans Act (OAA) of 1965 provided funds for services, training programs, and research in many fields, including librarianship. Title III of OAA was a major impetus in increasing library services to older adults confined to their homes and institutions (Turock, 1982, pp. 7-8; Turock, 1990, pp. 350-351). A number of libraries used funds from OAA to purchase large print books and recordings and to provide bookmobile service to older adults (Javelin, 1973, p. 381). Funds
for specialized equipment such as ceiling-mounted projectors for bedridden patients were also provided by OAA (Lee, 1966, p. 106).

Special training programs were needed to prepare librarians to work with seniors. Title II-B of the 1965 Higher Education Act, “Library Career Training and Library Research Demonstration,” provided funds for workshops, institutes, and research programs. This legislation laid the groundwork for the development of leadership capabilities in this area of librarianship (Binnick, 1978, p. 20).

A major recommendation for libraries coming out of the 1971 WHCOA was an amendment to LSCA which created Title IV, “Older Readers Service.” The amendment became law on May 10, 1973, but the title was never funded. Title IV would have provided grants for (a) training librarians to work with older adults, (b) conducting special programs for seniors, (c) purchasing special library materials for use by seniors, and (d) paying the salaries of older adults working as program assistants (South & Drennan, 1973, p. 452).

In 1972 the National Survey of Library Services to the Aging was undertaken as a joint project of the U.S. Office of Education and the Cleveland Public Library. The survey was supported by Title III of the Higher Education Act and conducted by the research firm of Booz, Allen & Hamilton. The survey was the last comprehensive investigation of the status of library services for older adults until 1985 (Turock, 1990, p. 351).

Cultural programming. The National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities Act of 1965 created the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The National Endowments were established as independent agencies of the federal government (Molz, 1990, p. 20). Both agencies have made many valuable contributions to adult programming in public libraries.

Since its inception NEA’s mission has been to support excellence in the visual and performing arts. The arts are defined as music (instrumental and vocal), dance, drama, folk art, creative writing, architecture, painting, photography, graphic and craft arts, industrial design,
costume and fashion design, motion pictures, television, radio, tape, sound recording, and other activities involving the execution or rendition of the arts. NEA has provided leadership in arts education, served as the largest annual financial supporter of the arts, and brought art to the entire country "including rural areas, inner cities, and military bases" (National Endowment for the Arts [NEA], 2005, para. 1).

NEA grants have funded art shows, art film showings, lectures, exhibits, and concerts in public library settings (Monroe, 1978, p.18). Examples of public programs funded by NEA in the 1970s include the Dallas Central Library's fine arts series called the Community Showcase; art instruction at the Columbus and Franklin County, Ohio, Public Libraries; an older adults' art show at the Houston Public Library; and a "Salute to the Arts" exhibit at the Buffalo and Erie County Public Libraries in New York. NEA funded a unique program at the Akron-Summit County (Ohio) Public Library. The library presented two concerts featuring Renaissance and medieval music using period instruments (Monroe, 1978, p.19; Monroe, 1979a, p.13).

Since its founding, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has espoused the belief that the study of the ideas, values, and experiences contained in the humanities enabled individuals to better understand the past and the present. According to the act which established NEH, the humanities include history, philosophy, languages, literature, linguistics, archaeology, jurisprudence, ethics, comparative religion, and the history and criticism of the arts. The humanities also include those areas of the social sciences in which historical or philosophical approaches are employed. Philosophical approaches encompassed cultural anthropology, social and political theory, international relations, and other subjects dealing with questions of value (The National Endowment for the Humanities [NEH], 1982, p. 485).

NEH has supported research, education, and public activity including public library programs in the humanities (1982, p. 485). Although various library projects received aid from the endowment during the first 12 years of its existence, libraries received special recognition when NEH established a Public Library Program Office in 1978 (Molz, 1990, p. 20). The Public
Library Program Office has specialized in funding humanities programs for the general public sponsored by all types of libraries, state library agencies, and library associations. The program’s goals have been to strengthen library programs that stimulated and increased public interest in the humanities, to enhance the ability of library staff to plan and conduct humanities programming; and to increase the public’s awareness and use of the library’s existing humanities resources (NEH, 1982, pp. 488-89).

NEH funded library projects that emphasized the humanities or provided a humanistic perspective on an issue or topic. Projects were required to include the participation of the adult out-of-school public (NEH, 1982, p. 488). Many of the projects focused on the needs of people with disabilities, older adults, and rural and small town residents (Molz, 1990, p. 20). Library projects receiving NEH grants were designed to encourage increased and continued use of the library’s resources—books, media, services, and staff. These projects employed a wide range of activities such as thematic programs, exhibits, media, and publications (NEH, 1982, pp. 488-89).

Many of the projects sponsored by NEH drew on the library’s collection and staff resources. Themes were related directly to the humanities or provided a humanistic perspective on local topics or issues. The Houston Public Library and the Toledo-Lucas County, Ohio, Public Library chose to emphasize their collections. The Houston Public Library sponsored “City—Images of Urban Life,” a program on the history of cities. The program used a variety of techniques—lectures, film, discussion programs, and walking tours. The Houston Public Library prepared reader’s guides based on the library’s collection which included topics such as Houston’s history, the city’s minorities, and city life as depicted in fiction and nonfiction works (NEH, 1982, p. 491). The Toledo-Lucas County Public Library undertook a local history project utilizing the library’s local history holdings. Seven slide programs on the ethnic and community history of Toledo and Lucas County were used in library programs and loaned to community groups and individuals (NEH, 1982, p. 491).
Some libraries worked with community groups to plan and present humanities programs for the public. These projects often included humanities workshops for community and group leaders, the production of special print materials about the project, and displays on the library’s humanities resources. The Alabama Public Library Service conducted a statewide program entitled “Perspectives, the Alabama Heritage,” on the state’s literary heritage and social history. Resources for the program included audiovisual and print materials for use by libraries and community clubs, a roster of speakers, and programming guides based on selected library materials (NEH, 1982, p. 492).

Television programs featuring humanities-related topics or humanities exhibitions developed by other community institutions offered unique opportunities for libraries to extend the use of their humanities resources. The PBS-TV program, “The Adams Chronicles, 1750-1900,” was the basis for a series of programs presented by Prince George’s County Memorial Library in Maryland. The series entitled “The Adams Epoch” consisted of displays, reading guides, and discussions featuring the library’s resources on that period of American history (NEH, 1982, p. 492).

Some projects were designed to achieve two goals: strengthening professional staff expertise in the humanities as well as offering humanities programming for the public. The Indiana Library Association/Indiana Library Trustee Association received a two-year NEH grant to fund humanist-in-residence programs, miniseminars, workshops, and institutes. Humanist-in-residence programs enabled public librarians to employ the services of scholars in planning and conducting programs. Regional library meetings featured miniseminars on specific humanities subjects. Program planning in the humanities was the focus of an intensive two-day workshop. Bibliographies and program trends in the humanities were examined in five-day summer institutes for librarians (NEH, 1982, p. 492).

Packaged programs were an effective way to extend humanities programming into branch libraries and small rural libraries. The “Humanities and the Public Library of Ohio” project
consisted of program packages on five themes developed by the State Library of Ohio. The themes were (a) Ohio authors, (b) teaching values using children's literature, (c) the ethnic and social foundations of Ohio culture, (d) the influence of technology on human values, and (e) the history and economic and social impact of different forms of transportation in Ohio. Some program packages contained detailed instructions for presentation. Others provided a framework within which local libraries could select their own speakers and feature their own resources. Staff training in planning and presentation of humanities programs was also provided (NEH, 1982, pp. 492-493).

Some projects were designed to promote adult learning through a formal or informal sequence of activities based on a humanities topic or a community issue. In the “Sonoran Heritage,” the Tucson Public Library developed a series of courses showing how architecture, hunting and agriculture, cowboys and cattle, tools and technology, and church and family contributed to the development of the city. Field trips, film series, walking tours, discussions, exhibits, and the preparation of materials for individuals and group study were among the activities utilized to advance the objectives of the program (NEH, 1982, p. 493).

Parent education. Family life in America changed dramatically from 1940-1960 as a result of the baby boom and the migration of millions of people from rural areas to the cities. American society became more mobile, families moved more frequently, and the extended family became a thing of the past. The concept of the “nuclear family” was introduced to describe families composed of only the mother, father, and their children. These families were deprived in that they did not enjoy interaction with extended family members such as grandparents on a regular basis (Baechtold & McKinney, 1983, pp. 37-38).

During the 1950s education was valued and supported more than during any previous period in American history. Financial well-being and the presence of stay-at-home mothers provided a healthy environment for child development, at least in middle and upper-class homes (Giamalva, 1990, pp. 411-412). Although there were many more children, interest in childcare
and development did not keep pace with the birthrate. The use of childcare centers increased in the 1950s, but the centers were mainly babysitting facilities. Piaget's theories on child development were published in the early 1950s, but they had little influence on the services provided by childcare centers. There were few opportunities for parent-child interaction in preschool programs (Siegel & Laosa, 1983, p. 35). Many of the preschool programs of the early 1960s did not emphasize parental involvement, including those conducted by the public library. Story hours were child-librarian oriented with little or no parental involvement in the activities (Carlson, 1983, pp. 5-7).

The Great Society program of the mid-1960s sought to compensate for cultural deprivation caused by racial and sexual discrimination. Parent education and childcare programs benefited from the renewed interest in low income families. Title I of ESEA provided remedial education services for children from preschool to high school. Its goal was to improve academic performance through educational programs designed to offset the effects of culturally deprived backgrounds (Giamalva, 1990, p. 412).

The Head Start program, a comprehensive childcare program for preschoolers, began in 1965. The program focused on "health, nutrition, cognitive development, and social skills" and provided activities to promote "socialization, reading competence, and shared acculturalization [sic]" (Giamalva, 1990, p. 412). This essentially community-based program required substantial participation on the part of parents. An important objective of the Head Start program was the development of reading readiness. Thus storytelling, book use, and library visits were an essential part of the Head Start program (Granstrom, 1976, p. 120). Although Head Start and other related childcare programs were not provided by public libraries, these services did have an influence on public library programs for children (Giamalva, 1990, p. 412). As these programs demonstrated the importance of early learning opportunities to children's educational achievement, public libraries were encouraged to increase their programs and services for young children (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 178).
The impact of parents on the growth and development of their children was an aspect of parent education that had been neglected by researchers and policymakers (Giamalva, 1990, p. 414) until studies of early intervention efforts indicated a positive relationship between high parent involvement and cognitive achievement. This correlation reinforced the importance of parent education and parental involvement in preschool programs (Florin & Dokecki, 1983, p. 38). By the late 1960s child development specialists were beginning to recognize the important role parents played in their children's cognitive development (Giamalva, 1990, p. 412).

The status of the American family became the source of great concern among public policymakers in the 1970s as changing societal mores (the higher divorce rate, sexual revolution, unwed mothers) were threatening the foundation of the traditional family unit (Giamalva, 1990, p. 413). A community based approach to parent education was developed under the auspices of the Office of Economic Opportunity. The PCDC (Parent-Child Development Centers) provided the framework for the community compatible model in which community agencies and organizations including public libraries agreed to provide support and nurturance for eligible families in the local area. The program focused on the entire family—the needs of the parents as well as the children. Adult growth and development was a central concept. The program recognized that parents like all adults change their beliefs and behaviors over time in response to their changing environment. To address the needs of both parents and children the programs included service referrals to other professionals such as doctors and counselors (Dokecki, Hargrove, & Sandler, 1983, pp. 80-83).

Federal legislation encouraged the development of childcare and parent education programs and reinforced reading programs for young children. In 1974 title XX of the Social Security Act provided funding for various social services including childcare and parent education (Hobbs, 1984, pp. 183-184). The child intervention programs of the 1960s led public libraries to reinstitute programs for young children and their parents in the 1970s. Colleges and universities began to offer programs in early childhood education. The University of North
Carolina at Greensboro developed an early childhood specialist program for librarians in the early 1970s. The program taught librarians how to assist parents in facilitating the development of their children's cognitive and social skills. Young mothers between the ages of 18 and 25 were the group most often participating in parent education programs (Young, 1976, pp. 128-140).

The home environment was recognized by many researchers as the single most important factor in the social and cognitive development of children (Hobbs, 1984, p. 134). The findings of Thorndike's 1973 study of the reading comprehension of children in 15 countries reinforced the importance of the home environment. The study revealed that the parent's educational level and the availability of books in the home were the two most statistically significant factors in a child's reading attainment (Schmidt, 1978, p. 9). Giamalva noted that "the inclusion of parents within the research literature had reintroduced the adult factor into childcare" (1990, p. 413).

*Library services for persons in institutions.* Federal funds allowed a number of public libraries to initiate new programs or expand existing programs such as shut-in and bookmobile services to hospitals, nursing homes, and correctional facilities (Nauratil, 1985, p. 141). LSCA, the Social Security Act, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act funded programs of public library-institutional cooperation (Pool, 1977, pp. 148-149).

In 1966 Congress added Title IV-A to the Library Services and Construction Act to provide funding for institutional libraries. For example, the Toledo-Lucas County (Ohio) Public Library received a LSCA grant for the provision of informational, recreational, and legal library services for each of the three correctional facilities in Lucas County (Giblon, 1977, p. 49). LSCA funding was an important factor in the professionalization of prison librarianship. LSCA grants allowed state library agencies to add institutional consultants to their staffs and to connect prison libraries through networks to other library resources in their states. Consultants were able to persuade prison authorities of the usefulness of library facilities in maintaining discipline and
order. A number of correctional agencies used federal grants to hire professional librarians to establish and manage library programs for their facilities (Sullivan & Vogel, 2003, p. 120).

The prisoners' rights movement of the 1970s encouraged Congress to examine the conditions in which federal and state prisoners were confined. Congress recognized the need for library facilities in correctional institutions and passed the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration Act in 1971 to provide funds for prison law libraries, educational materials to prepare prisoners for re-entry into society, and recreational reading materials for constructive use of leisure time (Sullivan & Vogel, 2003, p. 121).

Library services for persons with disabilities. In 1897 the Library of Congress opened a special reading room for the visually impaired. After World War I the Veterans Bureau received funding from Congress to publish Braille books for veterans (Carlson, 1998, p. 136). Librarians helped to secure the passage of the Pratt-Smoot Act in 1931 which established the Library of Congress' National Library Service for the Blind (Simpson, 1990, p. 375). Initially the program was limited to adults, but it was expanded in 1952 to include children. In 1966 the program was amended by Public Law 89-522 (Carlson, 1998, p. 136), the name of the program was changed to the Library of Congress' National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, and services were extended to library patrons with physical disabilities that prevented them from turning pages or holding books (Vellman, 1979, p. 103). The Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) Amendments of 1966 provided funding to state library agencies to improve library services for those with physical disabilities (Carlson, 1998, pp. 136-37).

The National Library Service furnished only Braille books in the beginning, but its services expanded to include recorded books, tapes, and cassette and record players. Public libraries were able to meet many of the needs of people with visual impairments and physical disabilities through the network of regional and subregional libraries. The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped represented an early example of library networking (Simpson, 1990, p. 375).

*Professional education and continuing education.* In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the nation's library systems were expanding, and public libraries were inundated with students from the baby boom generation. There were not enough librarians to meet the demand and not enough library educators to prepare students for careers in librarianship. After years of advocacy by library educators, the Library Services Branch of the U. S. Office of Education became involved in manpower and library education issues in the early 1960s. In 1963 S.R. Reed was appointed Library Education Specialist. Reed served as liaison between the federal government and the various library education agencies. In 1962 the Library Services Branch cosponsored a four-day institute on the future of library education at the Western Reserve University School of Library Science. The Commission on a National Plan for Library Education was formed in 1963 in response to the institute's recommendations (Davis, 1976, pp. 126-127).

The Library Services Branch, recognizing the need for more library educators and better educated librarians, called for the inclusion of federal funding for professional education and continuing education in the Higher Education Act of 1965. The act provided federal "funding for assistance in professional study" for prospective library school faculty members and for "the support of short institutes" for practicing librarians. The Higher Education Act supported institutes serving 6,532 librarians through fiscal year 1970 (Davis, 1976, pp. 127-128). Federal support of graduate library schools encouraged the establishment of new doctoral programs in 11 new schools between 1961 and 1971 (Summers, 1972, p. 792).

Continuing education of library personnel was identified as a critical need for libraries in a study funded by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (Knowles, 1977, p. 320). Elizabeth Stone's 1974 survey, entitled *Continuing Library and Information*
Science Education, provided “an excellent state-of-the-art review of the current status of continuing and library education” (Giblon, 1976, p. 166). The survey identified needs that were not being met or inadequately met in five areas: (a) updating knowledge and skills, (b) management training, (c) human relations training, (d) automation, and (e) nonprint media. Stone recommended that a nationwide organization be established to provide a forum for library associations, library educators, state library consultants, library administrators, and others to discuss the problems and needs of continuing education (Stone, 1974, abstract). As a result of the study, the Continuing Library Education Network and Exchange (CLENE) was established in 1975 with Stone serving as director (Knowles, 1977, p. 320). CLENE was intended to serve as “a vehicle for the implementation of Objective Four” of NCLIS’s National Program Statement (Stone, 1978, p. 101). In Objective Four, NCLIS recognized that basic and continuing education for personnel was an essential element of its National Program for Libraries (NCLIS, 1975, pp. 39-49).

The American Library Association’s Role

Background

In the 1920s ALA was closely aligned with the adult education movement. In a paper on the founding of the American Association for Adult Education, A. D. Rose (1989) noted that the Carnegie Foundation viewed adult education and libraries as playing complementary roles in the dissemination of knowledge to assist people in making informed decisions in their personal and public lives. M. S. Knowles’s history of the adult education movement traced the development of public libraries as adult educational institutions. Knowles noted that by the 1920s public libraries had “moved from the status of an adult education resource toward that of an adult education operating agency” and had “moved from regarding its function as custodial toward regarding it as educational” (1977, p. 115).

During the period from 1920 to 1961, ALA played an important role in the general coordination of the adult education field. ALA was an active leader in the formation and
continuing operations of the American Association for Adult Education, the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A., and the Council of National Organizations. There was a close relationship between the professional associations. Librarians sometimes served in leadership positions in both fields simultaneously. C. H. Milan served on AAAE’s first Executive Board, while holding the position of executive secretary of ALA. G. T. Stevenson was associate executive director of ALA and president of AEA in 1957-1958. ALA was a member of the Joint Commission for the Study of Adult Education in the late 1940s. J. M. Cory, ALA’s Executive Secretary, served as chairman of the commission for a number of years. ALA provided office space for AEA headquarters’ staff during the organization’s first year. The library profession achieved a greater degree of coordination in its adult education activities while building a closer relationship between library adult education and the rest of the field (Knowles, 1977, p. 170).

The period from 1920 to 1961 marked increasing cooperation between the library profession and other adult education organizations. Stevenson’s review of the history of the Adult Education Board revealed that ALA had collaborated with other organizations in conducting projects, hosting conferences, preparing lists, issuing publications, and other activities. Among the organizations included in cooperative ventures with ALA were the League of Women Voters, the National Education Association, the Congress of Parents and Teachers, the National University Extension Association, and the U.S. Office of Education (Knowles, 1977, pp. 169-170).

In 2002 McCook wrote “ALA has a long history of commitment to adult education” (2002, p. 25). For almost 80 years ALA endeavored to expand opportunities for adult new readers through partnerships with literacy organizations and work with local, state, and federal government agencies. ALA supported library-based literacy services through research studies, educational and training opportunities at conferences and workshops, and the development of instructional tools such as manuals, texts, and websites (McCook, 2002, p. 28).
W. S. Learned’s 1924 report to the Carnegie Corporation, *The American Public Library and the Diffusion of Knowledge*, has been cited as the inspiration for ALA’s commitment to adult education (Williams, 1988, pp. 42-43). ALA confirmed its commitment by establishing the Commission on the Library and Adult Education in 1924. The Commission’s report, *Libraries and Adult Education*, was published in 1926 (Knowles, 1977, p. 112). The commission made three recommendations that served as guide lines for the development of adult education practice in public libraries. The first recommendation called for libraries to provide consulting and readers’ advisory service for those who chose to pursue their studies through self-education. The second recommendation was that public libraries furnish information about adult education opportunities in the community. The third recommendation was that the public library supply books and other printed materials for adult education activities conducted by other agencies and organizations (American Library Association, 1926, p. 9). The report also recommended that the library community take actions to increase the number of qualified readers’ advisers and the supply of readable books, and that the ALA Council establish a permanent board (Williams, 1988, pp. 44-45).

The Board on the Library and Adult Education was authorized by the ALA Council in October 1926 (Birge, 1981, p. 49). The board was created to administer and coordinate adult education activities in the library field. Its functions included the following: (a) continuing the library adult education studies begun by the Commission on the Library and Adult Education, (b) preparing and publishing bulletins about library practices in adult education, (c) studying the feasibility of publishing a manual on library service in adult education, (d) sponsoring a series of library experiments and demonstrations in adult education, (e) assisting in the experimental study of the development of reading habits, (f) devising an accreditation system for those who had completed library sponsored reading courses, (g) finding ways to supply books to adult students who had no access to libraries, (h) establishing cooperative relationships with national organizations that sponsored programs of instruction and training for adults, (i) carrying out other
tasks related to the function of the board, and (j) preparing an annual report for the ALA Council (Stevenson, 1954, p. 226). The members of the board were enthusiastic about its mission and immediately undertook several projects: a study of the feasibility of offering reading tests and awarding credit for the completion of library reading courses, creation of a consulting service using the ALA headquarters’ collection of resources in adult education and library adult education, continuance of the Reading with a Purpose project begun in 1925, and liaison with the newly formed American Association for Adult Education (American Library Association, 1927, pp. 194-199).

For the first five years of its existence the board was supported by Carnegie funds and had its own executive assistant at ALA Headquarters. The board was involved in a great variety of projects. Among its publications were Emma Felsenthal’s Readable Books in Many Subjects (1929), the journal Adult Education and the Library, Judson Jennings’ Voluntary Education through the Public Library (1929), and Matthew Dudgeon’s The Worker and the Library (1929). The board supported or cooperated in experimental projects on library extension, discussion groups, reading interest and habits, parent education, rural education, and educational radio programming (Birge, 1981, p. 49).

Although the board’s activities had stimulated a great deal of interest among librarians, educators, and others in the growing library adult education field, they also provoked the ire of many influential members of ALA (Birge, 1981, p. 50). A December 1930 report by the Activities Committee of ALA on adult education and reading courses elicited disgruntled comments from several past presidents of ALA, a member of the Council, as well as several practicing librarians. From the nature of the comments one could conclude that this group considered library adult education to be a passing fad. They clearly thought that ALA should stop supporting the Board on the Library and Adult Education (“Activities Committee,” 1930, p. 615).
It was not a surprise that the board’s income was greatly reduced in 1931. Publication of
the journal, *Adult Education and the Library*, stopped in October 1930, and for several years, the
board engaged in little new activity (Birge, 1981, p. 50). By 1933 Carnegie funds had expired
and the ALA Council decided to combine the Board on the Library and Adult Education and the
Library Extension Committee in the Public Libraries Division. For a time the board did not have
its own staff. J. W. Merrill served as executive assistant for all three areas—adult education,
library extension, and public libraries—until John Chancellor was appointed Assistant in Adult
Education in 1934. During Chancellor’s eight-year tenure interest in adult education activities
was renewed and the board changed its name to the Adult Education Board (Stevenson, 1954,
p. 226).

Chancellor played a major role in securing support from the ALA Council for adult
education activities. During Chancellor’s tenure the board undertook an assessment of its
activities during the previous 10 years and a survey of current practice (Birge, 1981, p. 50). The
board discovered several problems that needed to be addressed: (a) continuing inadequacy in the
availability of adult education services for the public; (b) increasing need for the publication of
readable books for beginning adult readers; (c) the need to improve the quality of adult education
service by making the educational objective an integral part of the work in all departments of the
library (for example, by simplifying routines and procedures to accommodate inexperienced
library users and those with special needs); (d) the need to recruit more qualified people as library
adult educators and to improve the quality of training; and (e) the need to apply significant
research findings and developments in other fields to the library’s program (Birge, 1981, p. 50).

In its 1939 report the Adult Education Board was able to report expanded interest and
activities in library adult education. The ALA office was receiving more inquiries, several
libraries had started new readers’ advisory services, a number of libraries had initiated
cooperative arrangements with other adult education agencies, and several library schools had
added more adult education and reader guidance courses to their curricula (Adult Education
Board, 1939, p. 561). There had been improvement, but there was still much work to be done. Heading the list of recommendations was the formulation of better-defined and more specific educational objectives “so that libraries could work toward development of a multifaceted, truly educational, informal service institution for adults” (Birge, 1981, p. 51). Other recommendations included (a) putting into practice some of the researched-based models for innovative services; (b) evaluating the quality of services; (c) providing better training for adult education activities in library schools and in-service programs; (d) adding coursework on educational theory, the learning process, adult psychology, research methodology, reading and readers, and the sociology of the community to the curriculum of library schools; (e) working cooperatively with other adult education agencies; and (f) pursuing motivational leadership rather than dominance in the community’s program of adult education (Adult Education Board, 1939, p. 562).

The Adult Education Board also was involved in an active program of publication to promote the development of the public library as a community resource for adult education. The board published or sponsored several books to assist librarians in developing specific services including Chancellor, Tompkins, and Medway’s *Helping the Reader toward Self-Education* (1938) and Sigrid Edge’s *Books for Self-Education* (1938). In 1940 the board published *Experiments in Educational Service for Adults, Suggested by the Board*, which offered more than 30 proposals for innovative adult educational services in public libraries (Birge, 1981, p. 58). The board’s proposals reflected the influence of Alvin Johnson’s call (1938) for a stronger, more active educational commitment.

Although the board encouraged “diversification and imaginative planning of adult education services,” it did not suggest “extravagant, expensive services” (Birge, 1981, p. 59). Most of the suggestions were derived from innovative examples of already existing programs (Birge, 1981, p. 60). The board intentionally recommended services that were not dependent on the size of the library and services that, for the most part, were based on existing financial,
human, and material resources (Adult Education Board, 1940, p. 2). Its suggestions represented a broad range of services including services to individuals and groups.

Some of the proposals focused on the recruitment of new patrons. Among its suggestions was an “itinerant readers’ adviser” to work with community agencies (Adult Education Board, 1940, p. 17). The board advocated the expansion of collections to include newer media and the extension of library services to underserved clienteles in the community. Librarians were urged to assume more responsibility for counseling and guidance by going out into the community to help those in need of educational assistance (Adult Education Board, 1940, p. 10). This proposal was not well received by those librarians who “felt ill equipped by training and disposition” to take on a counseling role (Birge, 1981, p. 60).

Other recommendations concerned types of services. The board suggested that libraries provide services for nonreaders and individuals with limited reading ability. The board recommended that librarians establish good working relationships with other community organizations because nonreaders could best be reached through contacts with literacy and adult basic education classes and social agencies (Birge, 1981, p. 60). A number of useful services were suggested including (a) advisory or testing services, (b) remedial reading assistance through special texts and exercises, (c) individual tutoring, (d) study groups, and (e) courses or classes organized by libraries (Adult Education Board, 1940, p. 10).

Although the board recommended the expansion of collections to include newer formats such as film, it recognized that print materials would continue to be the most commonly used resource. The board suggested that librarians relax standards somewhat and develop the kinds and forms of print materials most appropriate for educational needs. Suggestions included the preparation of special study outlines or syllabi and the abstraction, revision, or adaptation of materials to meet the educational needs of specific readers (Adult Education Board, 1940, p. 11).

Finally, the learning environment was the subject of some of the suggestions. The board recommended that libraries, when possible, allocate a special room or alcove for “self-education
through reading.” If possible, libraries might provide separate areas for particular groups such as labor or union members, men or women. The idea was to provide a comfortable, inviting atmosphere for independent or group study (Adult Education Board, 1940, p. 5).

In a critique of the proposals, L. E. Birge (1981) noted that the board’s proposals emphasized community needs as the determining factor in planning services. A fundamental tenet of the board’s proposals was that the library’s program of services and activities should be community-oriented (Birge, 1981, p. 59). Although reports of the use of community analysis in large urban libraries had appeared as early as 1908, public libraries generally were inclined to forgo community surveys and make programming decisions based on assumptions about community needs or interests (Birge, 1981, pp. 58-59). Although the board’s emphasis on community analysis was commendable, it failed to emphasize the importance of building the library’s program on “a coherent foundation on policy and objectives which would unify, focus, and direct the development and interrelation of all pertinent services” (Birge, 1981, p. 59). The board’s proposals seemed to suggest that providing an extensive and diversified program of services was a more important factor in achieving excellence in adult education work than relating activities to a well-defined philosophy of library service (Birge, 1981, p. 59).

These proposals were well-received by those librarians who believed that the library was “first and foremost an educational institution” (Birge, 1981, p. 60). However, those librarians who were opposed to expanding services or opposed to library adult education activities in general were not persuaded by the board’s proposals “that the public library’s first commitment should be to educational service” (Birge, 1981, pp. 60-61).

The board continued to make significant progress during 1940-1941 and enjoyed support from much of the professional leadership who advocated intensifying and expanding adult education service (Birge, 1981, p. 51). The picture changed when Chancellor resigned in 1942. After the resignation, support for the Adult Education Board declined and the board endured a
lean period of six years with little support from ALA headquarters ("ALA Adult Education Board," 1948, p. 434).

Encouraging news came in the 1943 report of the ALA Committee on Post-War Planning. *The Post-War Standards for Public Libraries* recommended that libraries direct their efforts to strategic areas and placed special emphasis on adult education.

Among these strategic areas for the concentration of public library effort, perhaps the most important is the field of adult education. If it is true that "the future of democracy depends in a genuine sense upon adult education," the public library should point its efforts more toward this area of service. Whether the library is a leader or a follower in the adult education program, its services as a "people's university" should be continuously strengthened. (American Library Association, 1943, pp. 22-23)

Support for adult education grew during the post-war years. In 1948 the Adult Education Board was rejuvenated when the ALA Council adopted the Four Year Goals, a program designed to address the growing problems of the early post-war period (Williams, 1988, p. 58). These "critical problems" were international, national, and local; political, economic, and social; racial, agricultural, industrial, ideological, and spiritual" ("Four Year Goals," 1948, pp. 121-122).

Although these problems were not new, they assumed critical importance in an atomic age when conflicts could potentially have grave consequences. The Adult Education Board regrouped to develop a grant proposal to extend the adult education elements of the ALA Four Year Goals and to assist in the formulation of the 1948 *National Plan for Library Service* ("ALA Adult Education Board," 1948, p. 434).

The ALA Council established a four-year timeframe for the attainment of the goals "in whole or large measure" ("Four Year Goals," 1948, pp. 121-122). The projected completion date of 1951 coincided with the 75th anniversary of ALA. The council adopted these goals:

1. Programs and types of service in every library which will contribute to the awareness and understanding of the urgent problems
2. Informational and educational materials in every library adequate in quantity, and suitable in quality and variety

3. Good library service for every American

4. Every library staffed by an adequate number of librarians competent to perform the public service suggested above ("Four Year Goals," 1948, pp. 121-122).

To promote the Four Year Goals adopted by the ALA Council in 1948, ALA organized the Great Issues Program, a nationwide adult education program focusing on current problems of critical importance (Williams, 1988, p. 58). The ALA Public Relations Office conducted a poll of leading authorities to determine the issues to be included in the program. The five topics selected were (a) world government, (b) inflation and deflation, (c) labor and management relations, (d) civil rights, and (e) United States and Russian relations ("Great Issues," 1948, pp. 397-399). Libraries were asked to promote the Great Issues Program in their communities by collaborating with community groups such as the YMCA, business leaders, and veterans’ organizations and establishing a community-wide coordinating committee to take the program to schools and colleges. The entire library staff was encouraged to be well versed in the arguments for and against all the issues. ALA’s president F.W. McDiarmid felt that successful promotion of the program would contribute greatly to “the realization of the Four Year Goals and toward a better informed America” ("Great Issues," 1948, pp. 399). The program began October 1, 1948, with the topic of world government and concluded March 1, 1949, with the topic of United States and Russian relations (Williams, 1988, p. 59).

Lester Asheim directed the assessment of the Great Issues project. The overall project was evaluated by surveying the extent of library participation in the program on inflation and deflation held during November 1948. Questionnaires were sent to approximately 1,000 libraries. Asheim received 379 replies, of which 367 were usable. The survey revealed that only 14% (51) of the libraries had participated to some extent in the program. The full program (all five topics and the accompanying lectures, films, and discussions) was presented by less than 1% of the
libraries (Asheim, 1950b, pp. 285-289). The results were disappointing. Asheim concluded that “the picture of the library which emerges from the response is a disheartening one” (1950b, p. 289). Given the failure of the Great Issues Program, it was not surprising that all mention of the Four Year Goals program disappeared from the index to the *ALA Bulletin* after 1948 (Williams, 1988, p. 59).

In 1949 a subcommittee conducted a survey of adult education activities within ALA. The study revealed that adult education activities were diffused throughout the association. While diffusion of adult education activities among the various units of ALA was desirable in theory, it created a number of problems in practice. Adult education activities lacked coordination; some of the activities were opportunistic without clear goals and objectives and continuity. There was sometimes a wide gap between the proposed programs and the actual activities conducted by individual libraries. The picture ALA presented in its representation in national agencies was not an entirely accurate one (Stevenson, 1954, p. 229).

Among the other components of ALA involved in adult education activities, the Adult Education Round Table was the most active and influential. Created in 1927 the Round Table was an interest group for librarians engaged in adult education work. The group planned and conducted programs on adult education topics at national conferences. The Round Table was accorded higher status in 1944 when it became the Adult Education Section in the Division of Public Libraries (Knowles, 1977, p. 169). The division’s Adult Education Section conducted projects similar to those overseen by the Adult Education Board. Projects included preconference institutes, programs on services to older adults and services to labor, and discussion group planning (Long, 1948, pp. P55-58).

The Adult Education Board decided to hold a joint meeting of all ALA units involved in adult education at the annual conference in 1950. At this meeting, the various groups discussed common interests and concerns and ways in which the board could strengthen adult education in the association. The board agreed to collect, publish, and disseminate information about the adult
educational activities of all ALA units and other significant items of interest in the field of adult education (Stevenson, 1954, p. 229).

The ALA Adult Education Projects

In 1951 ALA began to receive a series of grants from the Fund for Adult Education, which would have a significant impact on the role of the public library in adult education. These grants funded H. L. Smith’s survey of adult education activities in public libraries, a conference on the educational and training needs of library adult educators, and three projects designed to improve and extend the practice of adult education in the public library field (Knowles, 1977, p. 116). The projects included The American Heritage Project, 1951-1955; The Adult Education Subgrant Project, 1953-54; and the Library-Community Project, 1955-60.

ALA Office for Adult Education. The Fund for Adult Education also supported the operations of the ALA Office of Adult Education (Stevenson, 1960, p. 304). The Office for Adult Education (OAE) was established at ALA Headquarters in May 1953. The fund provided a grant of $75,000 to support this office’s operations for five years (Stevenson, 1954, p. 230). A capable staff headed by G. T. Stevenson, the Associate Executive Director of ALA, provided technical assistance and leadership in library adult education (Knowles, 1977, p. 116). OAE was responsible for coordinating headquarters activities associated with project grants in the area of adult education. The unit ensured that project staffs were utilized to the best advantage and that appropriate counseling and advisory services were provided (Stevenson, 1954, p. 230). The additional staff and funds enabled the Adult Education Board to review the role of libraries in adult education, to assess the needs of libraries engaged in adult education work, and to determine the best way in which to supply the needed resources (Stevenson, 1954, p. 230). When the Adult Services Division was formed in 1957, a small amount of the OEA grant funds was allocated for discretionary funding for special studies and activities initiated by the new division (Stevenson, 1960, p. 304).
The American Heritage Project. The American Heritage Project was the first program financed by the Fund for Adult Education. The project gave libraries throughout the United States the opportunity to sponsor discussions on current political, social, and economic issues as they related to the values and ideas expressed in fundamental documents such as the Declaration of Independence (Stevenson, 1960, p. 304). ALA used the grant funds to assist libraries in organizing local discussion groups and in recruiting and training lay leaders (Knowles, 1977, p. 116).

The American Heritage Project served several purposes. *The American Heritage Project Newsletter* defined two objectives for the program: to contribute to a deeper appreciation of the American cultural heritage and to give public libraries an opportunity to demonstrate their effectiveness as essential community agencies (Ferguson, 1972, p. 747). The project did much "to bring the essentially educational role of public libraries to the attention of the more intellectual and civic-minded people in their communities" (Ferguson, 1972, p. 747). The project also gave the library community an opportunity to respond in a constructive way to McCarthy’s attack on intellectual freedom in the early 1950s by promoting the exchange of ideas and the development of critical thinking skills (Williams, 1988, p. 87).

Selected readings or films or a combination of the two formed the basis for the discussions (Stevenson, 1960, p. 304). Selected readings included titles such as *This I Do Believe; USA: A Permanent Revolution;* and *Living Ideas in America* (Williams, 1988, p. 87). Participating libraries provided assistance to local groups in the choice of topics for discussion, in the selection of suitable materials for study, and in the provision of the suggested materials (Stevenson, 1960, p. 305). More than 300 communities in 33 states formed discussion groups (Williams, 1988, p. 87). From 1951 to 1955 when the project ended, 1,474 groups were formed with a total of 28,476 participants and 1,288 discussion leaders. After the close of the American Heritage Project, many libraries continued to sponsor their own discussion groups focusing on new topics. R. E. Lee’s *Getting the Most out of Discussion, a Guide for Participants* (1956), and
The Library-Sponsored Discussion Group (1957) were the most important publications arising from this project (Stevenson, 1960, p. 305).

Survey of adult education activities. The Adult Education Board, with the endorsement of representatives from other boards, committees, and divisions interested in adult education, submitted a proposal in early 1952 requesting that ALA undertake a survey of adult education activities in public libraries and state library agencies. The purpose of the survey was to provide a statistical and descriptive picture of adult education practice in public libraries. The study, funded by the Ford Foundation’s Fund for Adult Education, was directed by H. L. Smith under the supervision of G. T. Stevenson, Associate Executive Secretary of ALA (Smith, 1954, p. vii).

The one-year study began in September 1952 and was completed in September 1953 (Smith, 1954, p. xi). The ALA Survey of Adult Education Activities in Public Libraries and State Extension Agencies of the United States examined the adult educational activities of public libraries in communities of more than 2,500 people (Smith, 1954, p. 3). Group activities were the focus of the survey. The survey examined (a) the extent of the public library’s service to civic, church, labor, and other groups; (b) its leadership in the presentation of programs on current issues, community concerns, cultural resources, and humanistic values; (c) its participation in community adult education programs; (d) the range of methods used with some indication of their effectiveness; and (e) the means of evaluating program results (Smith, 1954, p. vii). Smith stressed that the adult education program was best understood in the context of the library and its community and favored a broad interpretation of adult education that included “arrangement of books, techniques of display and publicity, advisory and information service, group and mass media services” (Monroe, 1963, p. 63).

Findings from Smith’s survey defined the library’s role in adult education and served as the basis for planning and research (Conroy, 1981, p. 83), and promoted awareness among public librarians of their adult education responsibilities and opportunities for service to adults (Knowles, 1977, p. 116). The study’s recommendations provided the foundation for ALA’s
long-range planning to expand and improve the quality of adult education programming in libraries (Stevenson, 1960, p. 305). The April 1954 issue of the *ALA Bulletin* focused on the findings of Smith's survey. The areas of greatest concern in the field of library adult education were identified as "(1) training personnel; (2) extension of use of audiovisual material; (3) evaluation of programs, methods, and results; (4) publication of suitable materials; and (5) analysis of community needs and resources" (Warncke, 1954, p. 191).

*Conference on the training needs of librarians.* In response to Smith's finding that training for library personnel engaged in adult education work was inadequate, the adult education issue of the *ALA Bulletin* called for the development of better training programs. In response to this expressed need, the Fund for Adult Education gave ALA a grant for a conference on the training needs of librarians involved in adult education programming. The conference was held at Allerton Park in Monticello, Illinois, in 1954. Participants included library school directors and faculty, directors and faculty of university adult education departments, representatives from state library agencies, library administrators, and practicing librarians (Asheim, 1955, pp. 1-2; Stevenson, 1960, p. 306).

The first order of business for the participants was to formulate a consensus definition of library adult education.

The conference is concerned with those library activities for adult individuals and groups which form a part of the total educational process and which are marked by a defined goal, derived from an analysis of needs or interests. These activities aim at a continuing cumulative education experience for those who participate, require special planning and organization, and may be originated by the library or by a request from the individuals or groups concerned. (Asheim, 1955, pp. 8-9)

To clarify the definition, the group listed activities that could be considered adult education: (a) reader's advisory programs; (b) discussion programs focusing on specific subjects, books, or films; and (c) cooperation with other agencies in planning and implementing similar
programs (Asheim, 1955, p. 9). Activities not included in the definition of adult education were (a) provision of physical facilities, (b) general book selection, (c) quick reference service, (d) technical processes such as cataloging and classification for the total collection, (e) display materials for the general promotion of reading, and (f) purely promotional activities (Asheim, 1955, pp. 9-10). In a 1976 paper on the history of adult services, Herbert Bloom wrote the following:

Asheim developed a succinct but comprehensive approach based on a dynamic definition of adult education at a 1955 Allerton Park Conference. The conference approach was based on explicit recognition that supplying and informing were not part of adult education, and that planning, advising, training, and acting were. From this special grouping of library services, adult education was defined as the purposeful and guided use of library materials derived from an analysis of adult needs and interests. (p. 421)

Conference participants prepared a list of the attitudes, areas of knowledge, and skills they considered essential for librarians engaged in adult education activities. The four most important attitudes needed for successful performance were conviction that the librarian is an educator, faith in the learning ability of adults, belief in the library’s staff-wide responsibility for adult education, and conviction that librarians should take a positive role in working cooperatively with other adult education agencies (Asheim, 1955, pp. 12-13).

There were two types of knowledge: background knowledge and specific knowledge. Background knowledge consisted of “general sociological information which will create a framework of understanding and insight to give meaning to the specific work of adult education” (Asheim, 1955, p. 13). Specific knowledge was “that which relates directly to history, theory, and practice of adult education” (Asheim, 1955, p. 13). The areas of background knowledge included (a) knowledge of social structure and processes, (b) psychology of individual personality, (c) social psychology, (d) psychology of adult learning, and (e) communications. It was assumed that the librarian who planned to do adult education work would have been exposed
to these areas of knowledge in basic liberal (or general) education and basic professional education (Asheim, 1955, pp. 14-15).

Specific knowledge areas within the field of adult education were to include adult education theory and adult education practice. Adult education theory included the philosophy of adult education, its history, and its present nature. The knowledge areas in adult education practice formed the foundation for the development of skills. These areas included (a) the principles, methods, and techniques used in teaching adults; (b) principles of organization and administration of adult education activities; and (c) the methods and techniques of program planning and evaluation. Program planning was considered to be the single most important area for librarians to master (Asheim, 1955, pp. 14-15).

The skills needed for effective performance of adult education programming fell into three broad categories. The first category was the ability to communicate effectively with individuals and groups. Communication skills included “the ability to train leaders and members for group participation; ability to lead and conduct discussion groups, forums, panels, demonstrations, etc.; and the ability to interview, counsel and develop a program of reading guidance for the individual” (Asheim, 1955, p. 17).

The second category was the “ability to plan, organize, and administer a program for adults of all ages” (Asheim, 1955, p. 17). Program planning skills included “the ability to identify the needs and interests of the individuals and groups in the community; ability to recruit discussion group leaders and speakers from the community; and ability to select and use books, printed materials, films, recordings and other materials for groups and individuals” (Asheim, 1955, pp. 17-18).

The third category was the “ability to work with other departments, other adult education agencies, and formal and informal groups in the community and to interpret the library’s functions to them” (Asheim, 1955, p. 18). The relationship of skills and areas of knowledge was easily discerned from a comparison of the two lists.
The conference concluded with recommendations for the graduate library schools; for various library associations at the national, state, and regional levels; and for library administrators and library adult educators (Asheim, 1955, pp. 36-41). In 1956 participants were asked to prepare progress reports for the ALA Office for Adult Education. The conferees met again in January 1957 to discuss their efforts to implement the conference’s recommendations. Unfortunately, few of the recommendations had actually been implemented (Stevenson, 1960, p. 306).

The Adult Subgrant Project. The Adult Education Subgrant Project was designed to encourage libraries to develop new and innovative adult education services and to improve existing services to adult and young adult community groups. Subgrants were given to 20 libraries in 19 states. The institutions chosen to participate in the project ranged in size and governmental structure from small public libraries to large academic libraries, including one graduate library school. A variety of programs were developed including a program planners’ institute, a music appreciation series, a televised half-hour book discussion program, and a group discussion series on improving family and community life (Stevenson, 1960, pp. 305-306). The Subgrant Project gave libraries an opportunity to demonstrate their capability to present “meaningful and vigorous adult education services to groups” (Stevenson, 1960, p. 306). The project also “revealed the importance of libraries as a valuable means of delivery” (Conroy, 1981, p. 83). Probably the most important of these projects was Phinney’s case studies of educational services for adults (Stevenson, 1960, p. 306).

Phinney’s case studies were made possible by a grant from the ALA Subgrant Project to the Graduate School of Library Service at Rutgers University (Stevenson, 1960, p. 306). Eleanor Phinney’s book, Library Adult Education in Action: Five Case Studies (1956), described the programs of the public libraries of Mt. Vernon, New York; St. Mary’s County, Maryland; La Crosse, Wisconsin; Andover, Massachusetts; and the West Georgia Regional Library. A major premise of Phinney’s study was that continuing education was the fundamental purpose of the
Phinney did not equate library adult education with library-sponsored group programs (O'Brien, 1968, p. 24).

Phinney identified three basic elements essential to a successful program of library adult education:

1. Conviction on the part of the chief librarian of the importance of adult education, and sharing of the staff and board in this conviction
2. Popular support of the library by its community, to the point where programs initiated arouse no opposition and readily gain a group of adherents
3. An adult education program which grows out of community conditions, library capacities, staff interests and capabilities (Phinney, 1956, p. 147).

In reference to the third point, Phinney noted that library adult education programs were more likely to be successful if other community organizations were supportive of the library's efforts (Monroe, 1963, p. 139). A favorable environment in which the library staff, the board, and the community recognized the value of adult education was the most important factor in ensuring the success of a library adult education program. Phinney's study reaffirmed the importance of linking community needs and interests to library adult education programming and emphasized the need for community analysis (Monroe, 1963, p. 65).

The Library-Community Project. In 1955 the Fund for Adult Education awarded a grant to ALA for the Library-Community Project, a five-year project intended to assist local libraries and citizen leaders in assessing community needs and developing long range adult education programs based on those needs (Knowles, 1977, p. 117). The project, administered by the Office for Adult Education, "developed and broadened the work and experience of the previous ALA adult education projects" (Lee, 1966, p. 100). Grants were given to eight state library extension agencies—Kansas, Tennessee, Michigan, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, North Carolina, and Maryland. Each extension agency developed programs on two levels, statewide and within designated libraries. On a statewide basis, the extension agencies distributed publications and
conducted workshops and institutes designed to develop interest, knowledge, and skills in library adult education (Stevenson, 1960, p. 307). Participants included more than 5,000 librarians, library workers, trustees, and interested citizens (Lee, 1966, p. 101).

Within each state one library was designated as a pilot library. Pilot libraries experimented with the use of community analysis as the foundation for planning continuing education activities. Library staff members, trustees, and volunteers studied the “needs, interests, and educational resources of the community” (Stevenson, 1960, p. 307). Findings of the study were analyzed, the library’s role in the community educational system was defined, and long-term adult education programs were developed based on the community’s needs (Stevenson, 1960, p. 307).

An important component of the Library-Community Project was the consultant services provided through the state library agencies. These services were available to public libraries, library schools, and library associations all over the country. Consultants were used primarily to help plan and present workshops and institutes in adult education for librarians, trustees, and lay people. Stevenson felt that the in-service training may have been the most beneficial part of the program (1960, p. 307). Extensive leadership training was a major contribution of both the American Heritage Program and the Library-Community Projects (Stevenson, 1960, p. 312).

The project was judged a success not only in terms of the accomplishments of the pilot libraries and their communities, but also in terms of the knowledge it contributed to the profession. The project resulted in the development of the community analysis process described in *Studying the Community: A Basis for Planning Library Adult Education Services* (American Library Association, 1960). Among the contributions of the project cited by Lee were (a) increased knowledge about the community analysis process, (b) a better understanding of the ways in which the library can respond to community needs, and (c) a clearer appreciation of the library’s potential as a key agency in community adult education (1966, pp.101-02). Monroe stated that the project did much to change the conception of library adult education from an
emphasis on group services to the integration of adult education into the library program at all levels, both organizational and administrative (1963, p. 65). Birge observed that adult learners in the communities involved in the project benefited in several ways—from improvements in the library’s publicity about its own adult education offerings, from the library’s expanded directory of community adult education programs, and from the library’s enhanced human and material resources (1981, p. 80).

The Library-Community Project helped to correct some misconceptions about library adult education. Prior to the Library-Community Project, the conception of library adult education had been characterized by two extreme definitions—it was broadly defined as everything a library did or it was narrowly defined as discussion groups in libraries. The leadership of the Library-Community Project refused to accept either of those definitions. Instead the project was designed to encourage librarians to think about the library’s educational objectives in relation to the needs of the community and to consider how all of the library’s services and materials could be used to meet those needs (Warncke, 1960, p.15).

The second misconception concerned the audience for adult education services—individuals or groups. Participants in the project learned that debating the advantages of serving individuals versus serving groups was a waste of time and energy. They came to recognize that adult education services were more useful and relevant when both individual and group activities were included in a program designed to serve the actual needs of the community (Birge, 1981, p. 80).

C. H. Hewitt conducted an evaluative study of the Adult Education Projects for the ALA Office for Adult Education. Among the conclusions was the following statement.

The ALA Adult Education projects supported by the Fund for Adult Education have had far-reaching and significant effects not only upon the libraries which participated in the projects, but upon the entire public library field. The ALA projects have produced more skilled professionals, stronger adult education institutions, and a profession better able to
define its role in adult education and more willing to accept the responsibilities in the total adult education field. (1958, p. 178)

Hewitt concluded that the ALA projects promoted greater acceptance of the adult education function as an integral part of the total library program (1958, p. 180).

In terms of the effectiveness of the grant program, Hewitt asserted that the program “made a genuine contribution to the development of continuing liberal education for adults as an established part of community life” (1958, p. 180).

Although the ALA Projects were considered successful, they did not succeed in changing the overall pattern of library adult educational services in the nation. While the pilot libraries were able to sustain the momentum of the projects and move in new directions, public libraries in general did not exhibit any real change in their adult education services. There was little movement toward a more dynamic role in adult education. For the most part libraries continued to play an auxiliary role in the provision of educational services for adults. Librarians were unable or unwilling to apply the knowledge they had acquired in the conferences and workshops to their own libraries and communities. The new services and programs were not integrated into the library’s regular program of activities. Once the novelty had worn off, librarians returned to their old patterns of service and the familiar tasks of collection development and circulation (Birge, 1981, p. 82).

Patrick Williams (1988) questioned the objectivity of the evaluation because it cost $1.3 million and was written by a staff member of the Detroit Public Library under the supervision of the ALA Office for Adult Education. The Ford Foundation closed the Fund for Adult Education in the early 1960s (Williams, 1988, p. 94). F. H. Harrington wrote that the Fund for Adult Education was closed for having been “less than successful” (1977, p. 24).

*ALA Divisions Concerned with Public Library Services for Adults*

*Adult Services Division.* The Adult Education Projects were almost certainly the major impetus for the creation of the Adult Services Division (ASD) in 1957. With the establishment of
ASD, "the Public Library Division's Adult Education Section achieved division status" (Stevenson, 1960, p. 309). ASD was initially established as the Adult Education Division at the 1957 midwinter meeting. The division's name was changed and its responsibilities were broadened at the 1957 annual conference (Hansen, 1995, p. 317).

With full division status within ALA, the adult education function received the same recognition as other central library functions such as technical services, children's services, reference service, and young adult services (Knowles, 1977, p. 169). The new division was responsible "for those library services designed to provide continuing educational, recreational, and cultural development for adults in all types of libraries" (Stibitz, 1968, p. 845).

Included in the division's general responsibilities were many adult education related activities—identifying and evaluating library materials for adults, encouraging the production and use of these materials, identifying and developing a set of principles to guide the selection and use of library materials for adults. Specific duties included (a) continuous study and review of library activities for adults, (b) conduct of library activities and projects for adult users, (c) coordination of adult educational activities for all units within ALA, (d) representation and interpretation of adult services to the public and other professions, (e) provision of staff development opportunities in adult services, and the development of study and research programs in adult services for the entire profession (Knowles, 1977, p. 169).

With the creation of the new division there was no longer a need for the Adult Education Board, and it was dissolved. The Program Policies Committee of ASD took over the advisory and counseling services previously performed by the Adult Education Board (Edge, 1959, p. 120). According to A. M. Hansen, former Executive Director of the Reference and Adult Services Division, the ALA Office of Adult Education continued to receive support from the Fund for Adult Education for several years after the Adult Services Division was established in 1957. During this period OAE served mainly as "an administrative device to further the work of the Adult Services Division" (Stevenson, as cited in Hansen, 1995, p. 317). OAE received its last
allocation from the ALA budget during the 1966/1967 fiscal year and was discontinued in 1967 (Hansen, 1995, p. 317).

The Adult Services Division served a broader purpose than that of its predecessor, the Adult Education Section of the Public Libraries Division, which was primarily concerned with the adult educational function (Lee, 1966, p. 98). Officially ASD was concerned with adult services in all types of libraries, but in practice it tended to emphasize “general service in libraries with a broadly based clientele—public, armed forces, and hospital libraries” (Sinclair, 1971b, p. 198). Reading rather than information was a major concern. ASD focused on the needs of special groups of readers (older adults, newly literate adults) and the selection of general adult materials of all types. ASD was concerned with the selection of appropriate reading materials for the entire spectrum of adult readers from the beginning adult reader to the highly educated reader (Sinclair, 1971b, p. 198).

In 1958 the Notable Books Council and other bibliographic projects relating to adult materials were added to ASD’s responsibilities (Heim, 1991a, p. 389). Other committees in the division included (a) the Committee on Library Service to the Aging, (b) a committee on standards in adult services, (c) a committee on the preparation of a program planning handbook for adult education groups, (d) a committee on internships in adult education services, and (e) the Joint Committee on Library Service to Labor Groups (Edge, 1959, p. 120). ASD also served in an advisory capacity to the ALA Office for Adult Education until OAE was discontinued (Hansen, 1995, p. 317).

In the early years ASD “built on the legacies of two major projects of the early fifties, the American Heritage and Library-Community projects” (Hansen, 1995, p. 318). Early programming efforts centered on the dissemination of the findings of the Library-Community Project findings (Hansen, 1995, p. 317).

In the 1960s the Adult Services Division focused on library services for the aging, reading improvement, adult literacy materials, and library orientation for adults (a joint effort
with the Reference Services Division). ASD played an active role in cooperative endeavors with other national organizations and federal agencies. The division assumed a strong leadership role in encouraging and assisting librarians to participate in the 1961 White House Conference on Aging (Hansen, 1995, p. 317). In 1966 the ASD membership adopted "Guidelines for Library Services to Adults," a preliminary statement of standards for adult services provision (Hansen, 1995, p. 317).

ASD conducted projects and studies such as the Reading for an Age of Change project and Bernice MacDonald's study on literacy activities in public libraries (Hansen, 1995, p. 318). MacDonald's study was the stimulus for H. H. Lyman's project on "Library Materials in Service to the Adult New Reader" in the 1970s. MacDonald's study also stimulated interest in further study of materials and services for Spanish-speaking people and Native Americans (Hansen, 1995, p. 318).

ASD participated in the 1969 Galaxy Conference of Adult Education Organizations and in the creation of the Coalition of Adult Education Organizations (Hansen, 1995, p. 318). The Coalition was established to provide a forum for the discussion of issues, to encourage cooperation within the field, and to gain support from both the government and the general public (Coalition of Adult Education Organizations, 2006).

ASD's last project financed by an outside source was the 1969 "National Invitational Conference on the Future of General Adult Books and Reading in America," funded by the J. Morris Jones-World Book Encyclopedia—ALA Goals Award. The two-day Chicago conference featured papers by six distinguished authorities on adult reading. The papers included "Varieties of Readers and Reading in 1980"; "The Future of Media and the Taste Makers"; "The Publishing Decision—the Relative Influence of the Bookseller and the Library"; "The Literate Nonreader, the Library, and the Publisher"; "The Generalist Reader in a Specialist Society"; and "The Prospects for the Future" (Jennison & Sheridan, 1970). Among the 85 invited guests were editors, critics, librarians, publishers, authors, and media specialists. The papers, discussion, and
commentary were published by ALA in 1970 as *The Future of General Adult Books and Reading in America* (Jennison & Sheridan, 1970). Although the report included recommendations for a follow-up local or regional conference, there were no published accounts of any additional conferences (Hansen, 1995, p. 318).

In 1970 the Adult Services Division prepared a fuller statement concerning the library rights of adults. “Library Rights of Adults—A Call for Action” was issued in pamphlet form and adopted by both the Adult Services Division and the Reference Services Divisions (Hansen, 1995, p. 317). This statement stressed that every adult had the right to a library which endeavored to understand both the needs and wants of adult patrons and which made every effort to satisfy them (“Library Rights of Adults,” 1970, pp. 2-3). The goal of optimal service to adults required the library to provide a wide variety of resources, employ a knowledgeable and skilled staff, and provide efficient, effective service (Heim, 1991a, p. 390).

*Reference and Adult Services Division.* After several years of discussion between the two divisions, the members of Adult Services Division and Reference Services Division voted to merge the two divisions in 1972 (Heim, 1991a, p. 390). A merger of the two divisions appeared to be a logical step because both divisions belonged “to that part of librarianship which has to do with direct service to the user” (Sinclair, 1971a, pp. 35-36). Also the separation of reference services from adult services did not reflect the reality of actual practice. Many libraries did not have separate departments for reference services and adult services (Sinclair, 1971a, pp. 35-36). Both reference librarians and adult service librarians were concerned that library users received the materials they needed whether it was for research, education, cultural appreciation, or recreational purposes (Lynch, 1971, p. 503). Other factors that favored a merger of the two divisions were a general reorganization of ALA and the need to cut expenses due to financial shortfalls. Reference librarians and adult service librarians agreed to join together in an organization designed to “promote research, publications, and programs of interest to all librarians who provide direct service to adult patrons” (Lynch, 1971, p. 503).
The ALA Council voted at the 1972 midwinter meeting to merge ASD and RSD into a single division with the tentative name of “Reference and Adult Services Division” (Hansen, 1995, p. 314). The overall goals of the new Reference and Adult Services Division as recorded in its bylaws were to “stimulate and support full access to library services which are user oriented. The division seeks actively to foster the fullest use of all media in meeting the educational, research, informational, recreational, and social interests and needs of users of all types of libraries in every subject field” (“Reference and Adult Services Division’s Proposed Bylaws,” 1972, p. 25).

After the merger of the divisions ASD’s new journal *Adult Services* was discontinued. The Reference and Adult Services Division (RASD) continued to publish its journal *RQ*. Each issue of *RQ* featured a column on adult services called “Backtalk.” The spring 1979 issue of *RQ* was devoted entirely to adult services. Topics covered in this special issue included (a) adult program planning; (b) services to adults with developmental delays, adults in institutional settings, and adults with disabilities; (c) programming in academic libraries; and (d) the informing function of adult services (Fleming, 1980 p.38).

*Public Library Association.* Literacy and adult education became the focus of professional concern within the Public Library Association in the mid-1970s. The PLA Board of Directors declared the public library’s role as an alternative education agency a priority area of concern for the association (“New Directions for PLA,” 1977, pp. 1-3). PLA established the Adult Literacy and Learning Committee in 1975. In 1976 the committee became the Alternative Education Program Section (Schmidt, 1978, p. 11). The mission of this section was

To promote library programs and services relating to literacy, adult basic education, continuing education, independent and other learning modes; to stimulate continued professional growth in these special areas; to provide a broad forum for the exchange of current research, strategies, techniques, and activities; and to create an environmental role of the library in learning services. (McCook & Barber, 2002a, p. 4)
One of the section’s projects was a survey of publishers in which it discovered that publishers were reluctant to publish materials for adult new readers because of the high costs associated with producing these materials and the limited demand for them (Monroe, 1978, p. 18). Practicing librarians interested in adult literacy formed the Basic Education and Literacy Task Force within the Alternative Education Program Section. To counter a perceived bias toward print literacy, a Task Force on Visual Literacy and Audiovisual Communications was also formed (Lynch, 1978, p. 483).

In the late 1970s the Alternative Education Programs Section (AEPS) worked to establish itself as part of the national network of educational organizations. AEPS strove to inform librarians and the general public about the educational role of public libraries and the many opportunities for service and learning that the public library offered. Literacy and independent learning were emphasized (Dubberly, 1980, p. 247).

Office for Library Service to the Disadvantaged. The Office for Library Service to the Disadvantaged (OLSD), established in 1970, was the product of the social activist movement within the American Library Association. OLSD’s primary objective as described in ALA Executive Board documents was “to ensure that all urban and rural poor have convenient access to library service that they recognize as meeting their needs” (American Library Association, 1980-1981). The OLSD program stressed “(a) education, within libraries, for literacy and the maintenance of literacy skills; (b) the provision of life-centered ‘survival’ information and referral; (c) promotion of library outreach services” (Coleman, 1976, p. 149). Subcommittees within the Office included the Library Service for American Indian People created in 1972 and Library Service for Appalachian People established in 1976 (Lippincott, McCook, & Taffae, 1996, pp. 2, 3).

The Library Service for American Indian People Subcommittee dealt with issues related to American Indian library services, encouraged the implementation of the ALA policy “Goals for Indian Library and Information Services,” advocated for increased funding for American
Indian library services, and worked with other ALA units to promote the publication of bicultural materials, the planning of effective programming, and the development of indigenous library personnel. In 1976 the Office for Library Services to the Disadvantaged began sponsorship of the *American Indian Libraries Newsletter* (Lippincott et al., 1996, pp. 2-3). A major accomplishment was OLSD’s leadership role in encouraging Native Americans to demand community-based library service (Lippincott et al., 1996, p. 5).

**The Health and Rehabilitative Library Services Division (HRLSD).** In 1956 the ALA Institution Libraries Committee merged with the Division of Hospital Libraries to form the Association of Hospital and Institution Libraries. The merger gave institutional librarianship a more prominent place in ALA activities. The Health and Rehabilitative Library Services Division (HRLSD) was formed in 1973. The purpose of the division was to promote “the educational, recreational, cultural, and rehabilitative development of persons needing library services and materials of a unique nature because of visual, physical, health and/or behavioral problems, and the professional development of those providing these materials and services” (Power, 1976, p.180). The division stressed the importance of library services for special populations in community libraries, special facilities, agencies, and institutions. Special populations were defined as adults, young adults, and children with physical and mental disabilities, those restricted to their homes because of poor health or disabilities, and persons confined in institutions. Publications of the division included the *HRLSD Journal* and the *HRLSD Newsletter* (Power, 1977, p.147). HRLSD merged with the Association of State Library Agencies in September 1978 to become the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (Dalton, 1979, p.156).

**ALA’s Activities in Adult Education**

*Reading guides.* The idea for “The Reading for an Age of Change” project began with a query in 1958 from Florence Anderson, Secretary of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Anderson asked if ALA would be interested in publishing annotated reading lists in various
subject areas. With funding from the Carnegie Corporation and cooperation from the Public Affairs Committee, Inc., the Adult Services Division undertook the production of ten bibliographic essays in pamphlet form. ALA published the guides between 1962 and 1968 (Hansen, 1995, p. 318).

The series was intended “to serve as reading guides for the college graduate looking for background on or a basis for understanding current trends and developments” (Hansen, 1995, p. 318). The authors of the guides were recognized authorities in their respective fields. Each guide consisted of an essay to introduce the topic and an annotated bibliography of resources and included titles such as “Space Science,” “The Contemporary Arts,” “Freedom of the Mind,” The Expanding Population in a Shrinking World,” and “The World of Economics” (Allen, 1965, p. 62; Lee, 1966, p. 99).

The first five pamphlets were well received. Although the pamphlets were designed for individual reading, the guides were also used with discussion groups and informal study groups. Lyman’s handbook, How to Use the Reading for an Age of Change Series: A Handbook for Librarians, contained useful information for librarians and adult educators. Library adult educator L. A. Allen praised the series, but was concerned that the pamphlets might be reaching only well-educated readers—the people who would read about these topics anyway. Like so many other educational attempts, the pamphlets were not reaching the general public (Allen, 1965, pp. 63-64).

The Carnegie Corporation renewed the grant for the “Reading for an Age of Change” series in 1963 (Lee, 1966, p. 99). Subjects selected for the second series of five reading guides included cultural anthropology, philosophy, political science, contemporary poetry and drama, and twentieth century biology (Allen, 1965, p.64). In 1964 authors were selected and work began on two new guides, “Man and His Government” and “Contemporary Drama” (Lee, 1966, p. 99).

The second set of pamphlets was not as well received as the first set. Hansen wrote that the second set was plagued by production problems including disagreements between authors and
the editor, missed deadlines, text written for professionals rather than general readers, and marketing difficulties. There was little publicity about the project in the last two years of publication, which prompted H. H. Eason (1968) to write an article, entitled “What Has happened to the Reading for an Age of Change?” Studies of the use of the series showed relatively little public interest in the topics (Monroe, 1970). Eason felt that librarians had not promoted the series because their priorities had shifted from the needs of the intelligent general adult reader to the needs of the disadvantaged and the aging (Eason, 1968, pp. 41-42). M. E. Monroe attributed the lack of public interest to a decline in the number of active programs in readers’ guidance, which had ensured ready-made audiences for the reading guides (1970, p. 250).

**Literacy.** ALA began to promote public library involvement in literacy education in the early 1960s. A survey of reading improvement programs in libraries serving more than 15,000 people was the basis for a library adult education guide and a preconference institute on reading improvement for adults. The May 1963 issue of the *ASD Newsletter* included the guide, “Adult Reading Improvement.” The guide contained a discussion of reading improvement as an area of adult library service and a bibliography of books and articles on the subject. In June 1963 a one-day preconference Institute on Reading Improvement for Adults was held at the annual ALA conference (Lee, 1966, p.100). The institute allowed library adult educators to explore the problem of reading improvement for adults from three perspectives. The first perspective was the level of need—there were various levels of need from the nonreader to the highly skilled reader. The second perspective was that of approach—current methods emphasized reading comprehension rather than reading rate and motivated readers by using new techniques such as teaching machines. The third perspective was the library’s role in reading improvement—the question of whether the public library should provide courses in reading improvement itself or support the efforts of other agencies (McClarren, 1963, p. 726).

The Adult Services Division’s standing Committee on Reading Improvement for Adults was created as a result of this institute (Lee, 1966, p.100). The duties of the committee included
(a) encouraging librarians to accept the responsibilities of literacy programming, (b) surveying existing library programs for undereducated adults, (c) providing information to support legislation and promote cooperative endeavors in adult literacy education, (d) providing a bibliography of high interest, low reading level materials for undereducated adults, (e) developing activities to reinforce the reading skills and habits of new adult readers, and (f) documenting the critical need for more and better instructional and supplementary reading materials for adult beginning readers (MacDonald, 1966, p. vi).

One of the committee's first activities was the publication of "Services to Adult Illiterates: Guidelines for Librarians" in 1964. This leaflet briefly described the extent of the illiteracy problem in the U. S. and listed 27 ways librarians could serve nonreaders and new readers. Examples included (a) disseminating information on literacy classes; (b) preparing reading lists of easy-reading books on topics of interest to adults; (c) providing guidance and assistance to all new readers, individually and in groups; (d) informing the community about the problem of illiteracy; and (e) offering training workshops for librarians working with literacy programs (Adult Services Division, 1964). However, the guidelines failed to suggest that public libraries take a more active role in literacy education, such as initiating, providing, or directing instruction in reading (Birge, 1981, p. 108).

Recognizing the need for more information on literacy program materials and methodology, the Committee on Reading Improvement for Adults obtained funding for a study entitled, "Methods and Materials for Public Library Service to Functionally Illiterate Adults." The intent of this project was to further the development of public library service to adult nonreaders by providing a bibliography of recommended materials and a manual for training librarians. The project was not fully funded, but a grant of $7,000 allowed the committee to conduct a preliminary study of library services to illiterate adults. Bernice MacDonald began the study in November 1964 and completed it in March 1965. The study was carried out through field trips during which MacDonald sought information about the literacy education programs of local
adult education agencies as well as public libraries. The study included information about (a) the adult education agency's personnel, methods, instructional materials, and supplementary materials; (b) its cooperative programs with public libraries; and (c) the library's own services, programs, and materials for adult new readers. Fifteen communities were included in the sample for the study (MacDonald, 1966, p. vii).

MacDonald's survey revealed that there were few library services available to adult nonreaders. Although some libraries participated in cooperative programming with other literacy agencies, most libraries encouraged instructors to bring their literacy and adult basic education classes to the library. All of the libraries tried to furnish high interest, low reading level books for use by literacy classes and tutors. Librarians considered the lack of appropriate materials to be "the most critical and immediate need" (MacDonald, 1965, p. 49).

Only a small number of libraries were committed to bringing innovative services to bear on the problem of illiteracy. MacDonald's report brought national attention to the model programs in Kalamazoo, Michigan; Cleveland, Ohio; Yakima Valley, Washington; Fayetteville, North Carolina; and Dallas, Texas; and to the efforts of the Brooklyn Public Library and the Philadelphia Public Library to persuade publishers to print more and better materials for adult beginning readers (MacDonald, 1965, p. 49). Through library conferences and workshops, public librarians across the country were able to learn about some of the techniques that these model programs had developed in working with nonreaders and new readers (Monroe, 1991, p. 17).

Although there were model programs in some urban areas, the majority of public libraries did not play an active role in literacy education in the mid-1960s. Public library involvement "was still auxiliary to the work of literacy organizations" (Monroe, 1991, p. 17). MacDonald found an unfortunate lack of cooperation between public libraries and literacy education organizations. Instructors and supervisors in literacy education seldom used the library, and students rarely had time to make use of the library's resources (MacDonald, 1966, p. 7). However, public librarians were chiefly responsible for the lack of interagency cooperation.
MacDonald concluded that the public library's efforts to expand services to new readers were "hampered by the fundamental lack of knowledge, skills, and ideas in doing so" (MacDonald, 1966, p. 34).

The ASD Committee on Reading Improvement for Adults sponsored other activities designed to help librarians improve their skills. In 1966 the committee sponsored a two-day workshop on how to select books for beginning adult readers in conjunction with the Public Library Association. Among the activities was a presentation on a checklist for evaluating books for new adult readers. The checklist analyzed content, treatment, and format. Each component was rated as very good, adequate, or unsatisfactory and an overall score for the book's usefulness and quality was determined (Birge, 1981, p. 109).

In 1965 PLA's Committee on Services to the Functionally Illiterate prepared a policy statement on the public library's responsibility to this special group. This statement, formally adopted by the Public Library Association, explained the philosophy underlying the provision of library service to adults with limited reading skills (Birge, 1979, p. 110). The library's responsibility to individuals with limited reading ability was seen as "an extension of the library's long-held educational goals" (Hiatt & Drennan, 1967, p. 9). Reading was recognized as an essential skill needed to acquire the knowledge for self-government. As an educational agency in a democratic society, the public library had a responsibility "to work aggressively and creatively to increase the opportunities for people of limited reading ability to reduce their ignorance and to include them among the users of materials for communication and learning" (Hiatt & Drennan, 1967, pp. 9-10). In its social role as a change-agent the public library had a responsibility "to select, to organize, provide, and stimulate the use of materials for communication and learning" (Hiatt & Drennan, 1967, p.10).

At the ALA annual conference in 1967, the PLA Committee on Services to the Functionally Illiterate sponsored a panel presentation on library services for the culturally disadvantaged in general and undereducated adults specifically. Topics discussed included the
findings of Drennan’s survey of literacy education services in 300 public libraries, characteristics of adults with functional illiteracy, their subject interests, the librarian’s role in serving them, and the public library’s responsibility for service to them. The panel discussion and the findings of Drennan’s study were published in *Public Library Service for the Functionally Illiterate* (Hiatt & Drennan, 1967). The publication provided examples of the types of services public libraries were providing in literacy education. Among the activities were adult reading centers, working with existing classes, sponsoring discussion groups, providing individualized reading services, training library staff as literacy tutors, cooperating with other educational agencies, and supplying special materials (Hiatt & Drennan, 1967).

During the period from 1974 to 1979, the Office of Library Services to the Disadvantaged (OLSD) concentrated its efforts on literacy and leadership. OLSD provided “leadership, resource materials, training, liaison with other libraries and national literacy organizations, counseling, and coordination of relevant programs with ALA” (Lippincott et al., 1996, p. 5).

In 1975 the U.S. Department of Education funded the ALA Literacy Manual Project headed by J. E. Coleman, Director of OLSD. This project resulted in the publication of H. H. Lyman’s *Literacy and the Nation’s Libraries*. The manual was intended primarily for librarians, but it was also a valuable resource for adult educators. The manual covered a wide range of topics including background information about the literacy problem in the United States; a description of the developmental stages of literacy; reports of recent studies and their findings; the steps in developing a successful literacy program; literacy program planning for various types of libraries; profiles of six major client groups (independent learners, adult basic education students, preschool children, college students, bilingual and bicultural clients, and imprisoned and institutionalized clients); and the basic elements of reading and reading instruction (Lyman, 1977, p. xiii).
A number of activities were suggested for public libraries ranging from supportive functions such as providing materials for beginning readers and providing physical facilities and equipment to activities requiring more direct involvement such as sponsoring group instruction and conducting tutorial programs (Lyman, 1977, pp. 60-62). Some activities suggested a more activist orientation such as “serve as a catalyst and take a coordinating and leadership role” (Lyman 1977, p. 60). Lyman’s handbook presented an effective argument that literacy education was justified by an analysis of community needs and should be considered a basic library service not a special service (Rolstad, 1990, p. 252).

In 1978 the Office of Library Services to the Disadvantaged (OLSD) received literacy program reports from more than 71 library systems in 23 states and the District of Columbia. The program profiles were published in the Directory of Literacy and Adult Learning Programs (OLSD, 1979). The directory contained a wealth of information and ideas for developing library literacy and learning programs for adults (Lippincott et al., 1996, pp. 5-6).

In 1979 OLSD obtained a grant from the Lilly Endowment Foundation to carry out the Literacy Training Project. The project consisted of a series of four-day workshops designed to instruct librarians in the teaching of reading and the development of library literacy programs (Coleman, 1986, pp. 211-212; Lippincott et al., 1996, pp. 4-5). The workshops were held in Bloomington, Indiana; Denver, Colorado; and Syracuse, New York. Librarians and trustees learned how to plan, organize, and implement training workshops for their colleagues at the local level (Fleming, 1980, p. 38). The workshops stressed the identification of community literacy needs and cooperation with other literacy education providers in the establishment of local library literacy programs. Trainers for the series of workshops were librarians, adult educators, and members of Literacy Volunteers of America and Laubach Literacy International. OLSD also used grant funds to establish a demonstration collection of materials for adult new readers. These materials were made available to librarians through the ALA headquarters office (Coleman, 1986, pp. 211-212).
In 1979 ALA established closer ties with national literacy organizations with similar objectives. Laubach Literacy International (National Alliance for Literacy Advance) and Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc., became national affiliates of the American Library Association. OLSD's director served on the board of directors of both organizations (Lippincott et al., 1996, p. 5).

Library services for older adults. In 1957 the ALA Office of Adult Education began a study of public library services and activities for older adults. Eleanor Phinney, executive secretary of the Adult Services Division, conducted the first phase of the study which consisted of a postcard survey of all public libraries in towns of 2,500 and over. The postcard study revealed that the three most frequently provided services in rank order were furnishing books, providing services to shut-ins, and working in cooperative programs with other agencies (Phinney, 1957).

In 1958 the Adults Services Division appointed the Committee on Library Service to the Aging. One of the committee's first actions was to undertake the second phase of the study. The second phase, a more detailed survey, involved 200 libraries across the nation, representing communities of various types and sizes. The questionnaire was designed to find how libraries were serving older adults both as individuals and as members of a group. The committee also wanted information about the services libraries were providing to professionals or volunteers working with older adults and information about other agencies and organizations serving older adults (Phinney, 1959, p. 534).

The response rate was good with 140 libraries returning the questionnaires. Among the most frequently offered services for older adults as individuals were (a) readers' guidance at 81% of the libraries, (b) community information service at 73%, (c) accessible facilities at 60%, (d) flexible rules at 42%, (e) special sections devoted to the interests of older adults at 35%, and (f) large-print materials at 30%. Services for groups of older adults included (a) special programs and activities at 27% of the libraries, (b) general interest programs at 61%, (c) meeting facilities for activities sponsored by other groups at 70%, (d) film showings at 58%, (e) programs using
recordings at 39%, (f) discussion programs using library materials at 30%, and (g) packaged programs at 20%. A majority of the libraries participating in the survey provided services for professionals and volunteers working with older adults. Eighty percent offered help in program planning. Other services offered by more than 50% of the libraries included (a) newspaper publicity about the library’s materials and services for older adults at 69% of the libraries, (b) information on local activities for seniors at 67% of the libraries, (c) materials for use in programs and activities for older adults at 65%, (d) bibliographies at 61%, (e) audiovisual materials at 61%, and (f) training materials at 52%. Radio publicity about the library’s services for older adults was offered by 48% of the libraries, but television publicity was offered by only 18% (Phinney, 1959, p. 534).

Phinney concluded from the results of these two surveys that librarians were concerned about meeting the needs of older adults, but there was disagreement over the issue of specialized library services for older adults. Some librarians recognized the special needs of older adults as a group and wanted to provide more programming for them. Some were hesitant to categorize this diverse group solely on the basis of age and feared that many older adults would be offended if they were treated differently. Others did not feel that specialized library programming was necessary and favored an integrated services approach (Phinney, 1959, p. 534). The surveys indicated the need for public libraries to develop a philosophy of service that recognized the varied needs of older adults without stigmatizing this special group of adults (Phinney, 1959, p. 535). The 1959 Institute on Library Services to an Aging Population, held in anticipation of the first White House Conference on Aging in 1961, supported the integrated services approach with the recommendation that “older people should not be segregated, either in programming, informational services, or expanding library facilities” (Adult Services Division, 1960, p. 35).

The White House Conference on Aging in 1961 generated much interest in library services to older adults. The Adult Services Division participated in all aspects of the conference from preparations to follow-up activities. In 1960 the ASD Committee on Library Services to an
Aging Population conducted a survey of state library agency activities in the field of aging. The survey findings were a valuable source of basic information for the White House Conference on Aging (Owens, 1960). ASD lent its support to the conference in other ways: (a) it prepared reading lists, (b) published a leaflet on library cooperation, and (c) featured the conference in four issues of the *ASD Newsletter*. The *ASD Newsletter* also provided information on current materials in the field of aging and library activities for older adults. Letters were sent to the directors of state commissions on aging to make them aware of the many resources available at their state library agencies, state library associations, and local libraries. Librarians served as delegates at the regional conferences on education for aging held in conjunction with the White House Conference. These conferences recognized the importance of public libraries in educational programming for older adults (Phinney, 1963a, p. 46).

In 1961 Phinney published an evaluative study of current practices in public library service to older adults. Activities were listed in the order of their frequency. Provision of books was the most frequently offered service, followed by the publication of materials for older adults. Providing services for shut-ins and institutionalized older people was the third most common service. Less frequent activities were cooperating with other agencies to assist the aged, making library facilities available for meetings, and providing films and other nonprint materials. Phinney provided a list of topics used in informational programs and activities on aging for the general public. Among the most frequently used topics were creative use of leisure time, planning for retirement, family relations, and mental health (Phinney, 1961).

The first statement of “The Library’s Responsibility to the Aging” was adopted by the Adult Services Division of ALA in 1964 (Lee, 1966, pp. 107-108). In 1970 the Adult Services Division revised its 1964 statement on the “Library’s Responsibility to the Aging” in anticipation of the 1971 White House Conference on Aging. ALA began to move away from the “antispecial programming stance” of the 1964 statement. The 1970 revised version of the statement reflected movement toward an “activity” orientation with recommendations for special services and

In the 1970s two groups in ALA addressed the needs of older adults. The first group, the Reference and Adult Services Division’s Library Service to an Aging Population Committee, continued the work begun by the ASD Committee on Services to the Aging. In 1975 the RASD committee published “Guidelines for Library Services to an Aging Population” (Nauratil, 1985, p. 64). In 1976 a new section, Library Services to the Impaired Elderly, was established within the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Agencies (ASCA). The ASCA section focused on outreach, while the RASD committee emphasized information services (Turock, 1990, p. 351).

*Library services for underserved populations.* Although ALA was aware that library services to minorities were poor or nonexistent, the association did little to tackle the problem before the 1960s. ALA at times seemed almost indifferent to the needs of minorities, especially the needs of America’s largest minority group—African Americans. T. D. Barker addressed the issue of library services for African Americans in the 1936 report, *Libraries of the South: A Report on Development.* The chapter on “Library Services to Negroes” discussed the Rosenwald demonstration libraries, but the report was a factual description with no social commentary (McCook, 2002, p. 28).

ALA did not address the issue of segregated conferences until the 1930s. The association did not want to offend librarians from the South who favored segregation, so it chose to view segregationist policies as a local matter (Cresswell, 1996; Josey, 1994). In 1936 Stanley Kunitz (editor of *Library Journal* and later Poet Laureate of the United States) exposed the cruelty of segregated conferences in an open letter to librarians planning to attend the ALA annual conference in Richmond. The letter originally appeared in the May 1936 issue of the *Wilson
Library Bulletin. Kunitz condemned ALA’s “shockingly cruel and feudal policy with respect—or should I say, ‘with disrespect’—to Negro librarians at the conference” (Kunitz, 1976, p. 211). Kunitz quoted a letter sent by ALA to African American librarians informing them of the conditions that they should expect to find in Richmond during the conference. Black librarians were told that they would be segregated throughout the conference and would not be permitted to attend meetings where food was served. Kunitz wrote that if the library profession permitted “this organized insult to pass unchallenged, there is but one conclusion to be made: that American librarians do not, in their hearts, care for democracy or for the foundation principles of decent and enlightened institutions” (1976, p. 212). No eloquent speeches about “devotion to the idea of a free and equal society” could change that conclusion (Kunitz, 1976, p. 212). Kunitz’s protest and that of many other librarians persuaded ALA to change its policy in 1936 and hold conferences only in cities where all of its members would be treated equitably (Jordan, 1977, pp. 18-19).

C. B. Joeckel and Amy Winslow, authors of the 1948 National Plan for Public Library Service, acknowledged that the lack of library service to African Americans in the South was one of the profession’s most serious problems, but they offered no commentary on the political or social issues surrounding the practice of segregation (1948, pp.19-20). Although the findings of the Public Library Inquiry were dismissed by many librarians because of the authors’ elitist attitudes, the Inquiry clearly showed that most libraries did not serve the needs of “the disadvantaged—a euphemism for the poor, the uneducated, and the minorities” (Salter & Salter, 1991, p. 21). Although librarians expressed belief in the democratic goal of library service to all, they showed little concern for the dispossessed (Colson, 1975, p. 65), and they provided few services for them (Wray, 1976, p. 329).

H. L. Smith’s 1954 survey on adult education activities in public libraries provided some insight into the extent of library services for ethnic groups. The term “foreign-born” was still being used to describe ethnic groups in 1954. Only 9% or 153 of the nearly 1,700 responding libraries offered services for foreign-born groups. Service to intercultural agencies was a little
higher; 287 or 17% of libraries reported having worked with these agencies (Cain, 1990, p. 216; Smith, 1954, p. 37).

ALA was hesitant to speak out aggressively on the issue of segregation until the early 1960s (Rubin, 2000, p. 240). Prior to that time, ALA saw itself as a national organization representing librarians from the entire country, including the South. ALA was also concerned that too much criticism would create more resistance among the southern membership. It was feared as well that widespread publicity would bring unfavorable attention to those public librarians who were already peacefully desegregating their facilities (Cresswell 1996; Josey, 1994) such as the Louisville Free Public that became the first desegregated public library in the South in 1952 (Jordan, 1977, pp. 18-19). Although ALA had taken a stand against segregated conferences in 1936, the 1956 ALA annual conference in Miami Beach was the first fully desegregated association meeting held in the South (Jordan, 1977, pp. 18-19).

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s was the catalyst for change; it represented “a critical turning point” in ensuring that minorities, most notably African Americans, “were equally included in the mission of public libraries” (Rubin, 2000, p. 241). Librarians became increasingly concerned about segregationist policies, discriminatory practices, and other factors that prevented minorities from physically accessing library services (Weibel, 1982, p. 3). “Segregation was the key issue in the library literature on service to the poor published between 1960 and 1962—not only in public libraries, but also in library associations themselves”(Weibel, 1982, p. 12). The ALA Council appointed the Special Committee on Civil Rights in 1960 “to examine existing ALA policies and recommend an amendment or new statement on civil rights” (American Library Association, 2006b, Milestones section, 1960). In 1961 the committee submitted an amendment to the Library Bill of Rights for approval by the ALA Council. The amendment stated, “The rights of an individual to the use of a library should not be denied or abridged because of his race, religion, national origins, or political views” (Moore, 1961, pp. 303-304).
The ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee denounced segregationist policies and discriminatory practices in libraries and state chapters. The committee made a series of recommendations to the ALA Council at the 1962 annual conference. First, any state chapter that engaged in discriminatory practices should be excluded from membership in ALA. All state library associations having chapter status in the American Library Association should be required to certify that membership in their organization was open to all who applied with all members accorded full privileges (Lee, 1966, p. 94). Second, an institutional membership should be declared void if the institutional member were found guilty of discrimination. Libraries applying for institutional memberships were required to sign a statement affirming that they did not practice discrimination against users on the basis of race, religion, or personal belief (McCook, 2002, p. 29).

After lengthy debate the ALA Council adopted a strong statement. The “Statement on Individual Members, Chapter Status and Institutional Membership” declared “that membership in the Association and its chapters had to be open to everyone regardless of race, religion, or personal belief” (McCook, 2002, p. 29). The Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi Chapters withdrew in response to the Council’s approval of the statement (Thomison, 1978, p. 219).

The “Statement on Individual Members, Chapter Status and Institutional Membership” acted as the impetus for the 1962-63 study, *Access to Public Libraries* (McCook, 2002, p. 30). The Library Administration Division (LAD) of ALA commissioned the study to investigate barriers to free and equal access in all libraries in the United States (Lee, 1966, p. 94). The study prepared and conducted by International Research Associates was a self-audit designed to help the public library community to better understand the extent of the problem and to formulate effective strategies to improve access (McCook, 2002, p. 30).

The study examined four areas: “(a) restrictions on race, (b) restrictions on students, (c) limitations on foreign language resources, and (d) regional distribution of library resources” (Lee,
1966, p. 95). Major emphasis was placed on the problem of racial segregation in the southern states. In regard to racial segregation, the study examined “(a) the extent and pattern of segregation, (b) the rate of change, (c) factors tending to retard or promote change, (d) the role of law in the segregation of public libraries, and (e) the attitude of librarians and library boards toward segregation” (Clark & Sasse, 1965, p. 171). The study consisted of a questionnaire mailed to every public library in the United States, interviews from a sample of 43 systems in 12 southern states, a review of the literature on public library access, and an analysis of branch libraries in 10 cities in regard to the location and size of the facilities and the size and quality of their collections (Clark & Sasse, 1965, p. 171).

As anticipated Access to Public Libraries revealed bigotry, denial of service, and direct discrimination in the South. In regard to racial discrimination, the study found “outright denial of access in the five-state area of the Deep South (Mississippi, Alabama, South Carolina, Louisiana, and Georgia); direct discrimination (restrictions based on race) in the other southern states; and indirect discrimination throughout the United States” (Weibel, 1982, p. 12). In indirect discrimination, branch libraries “were so differentiated in terms of quantity and quality that one group [was] more limited in its access to the library resources of a community than another” (McCook, 2002, p. 30).

The major criticism of the study was its finding of indirect discrimination throughout the United States (Clark & Sasse, 1965, p. 171). Northern librarians were shocked to learn that indirect discrimination existed in the North (“Access to Public Libraries,” 1963, pp. 742-743). Discrimination in the North was more subtle than in the South. African American librarian V. L. Jones could not understand why anyone “should have been surprised that branch libraries discriminate against Negroes, since all public institutions in the United States had discrimination against Negroes built into them” (“Access to Public Libraries,” 1963, p. 745). Jones observed that this fact was well known in the South, and it was time people in the North recognized the truth (“Access to Public Libraries,” 1963, p. 745).
Indirect discrimination was reflected in the construction of more and better equipped library branches in the suburbs than in the inner city areas where Blacks and other poor minorities made up the majority of the residents (Parker, 1963, p. 4716). The study also revealed that race, not educational level or income level, was the dominant factor. Low income, undereducated nonwhite neighborhoods had “significantly less adequate library service than white neighborhoods of the same educational and income levels in a number of major cities” (Monroe, 1971, p. 254).

On a positive note, Access to Public Libraries found that desegregation had advanced further in public libraries than in some other public facilities, due in part to the efforts of professional librarians. However, the rate of desegregation was lower than it might have been if segregation in public libraries had been considered a more important issue. Public library integration was not a high priority of Civil Rights leaders (“Access to Public Libraries,” 1963, p. 743). Another reason may have been that urban libraries were almost completely irrelevant to the needs and concerns of inner-city Blacks. When African American librarian J. M. Cloud was asked why public libraries were spared during the riots of the mid-1960s, Cloud replied: “The reason they didn’t burn the libraries is that they didn’t know the libraries were there” (1969, p. 787).

The Library Administration Division (LAD) was asked to do an evaluation of the Access to Public Libraries study. LAD submitted its report to the ALA Council at the 1964 midwinter meeting (McCook, 2002, p. 30). LAD evaluated the findings and concluded that the study showed that segregation and the distribution patterns of library materials were significant barriers to free public access (Lee, 1966, p. 95). No conclusions were drawn regarding restrictions on students and limitations on foreign language materials because the research in those two areas was too superficial to provide significant data. Calls were made for further research in those areas (“Report on the Study,” 1964, p. 302). LAD’s report included a complete chronology of the study and recommendations for follow-up actions. The final recommendation was “that the American
Library Association, using every means at its disposal, continue to promote freedom of access to libraries for all people” ("Report on the Study," 1964, p. 304).

Concern about obstacles to free access, appropriate services, and professional advancement for minorities continued throughout the 1960s. When noted Black librarian E. J. Josey was not allowed to attend a meeting at which an ALA staff member was speaking, ALA members were incensed by this mistreatment of a colleague. At the 1964 annual conference, ALA members approved a proposal that would prohibit officers and staff members from attending, in an official capacity, the meetings of any state association that had failed to meet the requirements for chapter status (Lee, 1966, p. 96).

In 1965 the ALA Council approved a bylaws amendment which committed ALA to support civil rights laws and authorized the Executive Board to suspend, “until such time as the Executive Board has been completely satisfied that the member is in full compliance with the law,” any institutional member “found by a competent governmental authority to have violated any federal, state, or local civil rights laws” (American Library Association, 2006x, Milestones section, 1965).

At the 1966 ALA midwinter meeting, the Council Committee on Freedom of Access to Libraries was asked to prepare a report on the actions taken by the association to implement the 1964 LAD recommendations. The committee’s report, presented at the annual conference in July 1966, was concise and to the point: “The answer is, inescapably, nothing” (Thomison, 1978, pp. 223-224).

The ALA Council called for a second review of actions taken by the association to execute the LAD recommendations. The Special Committee on Freedom of Access to Libraries was appointed to undertake this study. The committee’s investigation included a questionnaire survey on access to public libraries; interviews with African American leaders, officials of the Research Division of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, and other national leaders; and a review of pertinent ALA activities from 1964-1968. The committee noted substantial
improvement in access in the years since 1960; however, librarians appeared to be more concerned with access from a practical, operational standpoint than from a legal or moral viewpoint ("Special Committee," 1968). The committee stressed that the problem of restricted access demanded immediate action (McCook, 2002, p. 32).

The Special Committee on Freedom of Access to Libraries recommended that studies be made to determine the most effective location, size, and type of library facility for minority groups; to assess the suitability of materials for the needs and interests of minorities and other special groups; to identify the characteristics and needs of nonusers; to develop effective approaches for serving minority groups; to develop appropriate educational and in-service training programs for librarians and staff working with minorities; and to create greater opportunities for employment and advancement of minority librarians and staff members ("Special Committee," 1968). Finally, the committee recommended that "the development and improvement of library services to the culturally disadvantaged and underprivileged be viewed as a major goal of the American Library Association as long as it may be necessary" (Cain, 1990, p. 223; McCook, 2002, p. 32).

As a result of the recommendations of the Special Committee on Freedom of Access to Libraries, the ALA Coordinating Committee on Library Service to the Disadvantaged was established in 1968 (American Library Association, 2006). Its major responsibility was to gather information about the activities of the various units of ALA involved in developing and promoting services for persons with economic and social deprivation (Heim, 1982, p. 147). The committee conducted the 1969 survey, Library Service to the Disadvantaged: A Study Based on Responses to Questionnaires from Public Libraries Serving Populations of Over 15,000 (Lippincott et al., 1996, p. 1). Of the 896 libraries responding, 212 or 24% reported programs of service to the poor. Services for persons with limited reading skills were provided by 29 libraries. A somewhat larger number (64) reported serving older adults. Only 12 libraries reported service to the Spanish speaking population (Monroe, 1971, p. 256).
Although programs provided ranged from the traditional (deposit collections for the Job Corps) to the innovative (creative dramatics for children), the majority (59%) fell into three categories—deposit collections, storytelling, and film showings. Nontraditional services such as employment centers, concerts, consumer education, and coffee hours accounted for no more than 2-3% in each category. The various types of service tended to conform to the categories found in Smith's 1954 study of *Adult Education Activities in Public Libraries* (Monroe, 1971, pp. 256-257).

The 1968 annual conference in Kansas City has long been regarded as a landmark in ALA's history. Activist librarians criticized the association for having done little "to secure open access for all citizens and to address issues of equality and social justice within the profession and in society at large" (Rubin, 2000, p. 242) and called for the creation of an ALA round table on the social responsibilities of libraries "to provide an outlet for expression of libraries and librarians' concerns on these issues—race, violence, war and peace, inequality of justice and opportunity" (Duhac, 1968, p. 2799). In response to this group's concerns, ALA created the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) in 1969. One of SRRT's purposes was "to act as a stimulus to the Association and its various units in making libraries more responsive to current social needs" (American Library Association, 2001-2002, p. 135). The work of the ALA Coordinating Committee on Service to the Disadvantaged and the stimulus of the Social Responsibilities Round Table led to the establishment of the Office for Library Service to the Disadvantaged (OLSD) in 1970. Many of OLSD's activities—literacy education, information and referral services for the economically disadvantaged, and library outreach services to underserved clienteles—included service to minority groups (Coleman, 1976, p. 149).

In addition to OLSD, there were several autonomous library organizations serving minority groups affiliated with ALA. In the 1970s these groups included the American Indian Library Association (AILA), Asian American Librarians Caucus (AALC), the Black Caucus, the Chinese-American Librarians Association (CALA), REFORMA (the National Association to
Promote Library Services to the Spanish Speaking), and the Ukrainian Library Association of America (Cain, 1990, p. 228).

The American Indian Library Association (AILA) was founded in 1979 in conjunction with the White House Preconference on Indian Library and Information Services on Reservations. The membership of AILA consisted of American Indians, Alaska Natives, and others interested in improving Native American library, cultural, and information services in school libraries, public libraries, and research libraries on reservations. One of AILA's major goals was the dissemination of information about Indian culture, languages, values, and information needs to the library community and the broader society. As part of this goal, AILA became an affiliate of ALA and assumed the publication of the American Indian Libraries Newsletter (American Library Association, 2006c).

The Black Caucus was created in 1970 to promote the professional development and advancement of African American librarians and to improve library and information services to the African American community. The caucus worked within the framework of ALA to make the association more responsive to the needs of its African American members. It encouraged ALA to focus more of its efforts on the library and information needs of the Black community and to use its resources to persuade publishers to produce more and better reference materials about African Americans for dissemination to the wider community (Black Caucus, 2005). Among its early accomplishments were the successful sponsorship of a resolution calling for censure of libraries providing services or materials to private all-white schools established to circumvent racial integration, the successful sponsorship of an ALA resolution calling for African American representation on library governing boards, and a resolution asking libraries to require their vendors and suppliers to exercise fair employment practices. The caucus successfully supported the election of ALA's first Black president, C. S. Jones, in 1976 (Black Caucus, 2005).

The Asian American Librarians Caucus (AALC) began in 1975 as a discussion group formed by the ALA Office for Library Services to the Disadvantaged (OSLD). The caucus was
founded by librarians of diverse Asian/Pacific ancestries who shared a common vision—the provision of appropriate library services for all Americans of Asian/Pacific descent. The caucus was created to meet the needs of Asian/Pacific American librarians and librarians of other nationalities who served Asian/Pacific American communities. The caucus actively promoted the professional development of Asian/Pacific American librarians through a program of recruitment, mentoring, and scholarships. AALC served as a forum for discussing problems and exchanging ideas, as an instrument for supporting and promoting the development of library services to Asian/Pacific American communities, and as vehicle for cooperating with other organizations having similar interests (American Library Association, 2006i). The caucus and OSLD conducted a survey in 1976 which demonstrated that library resources and services for Asian Americans were “disproportionately low” (Asian American Librarians Caucus, 1977, p. 182). OSLD published *Asian Americans: An Annotated Bibliography for Public Libraries* in the summer of 1977 (Lippincott et al., 1996, p. 4).

The Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA) began in 1973 as a regional organization, the Mid-West Chinese American Librarians Association. In 1976 the association expanded to become a national organization with the title Chinese American Librarians Association. CALA became an affiliate of the American Library Association in 1976. By 1979, CALA had grown to five chapters—the Northeast, Mid-West, Atlantic, Southwest, and California chapters (American Library Association, 2006j). The objectives of the organization are (a) to improve communications among Chinese American librarians and with the library community in general, (b) to act as a forum for the discussion of mutual problems and professional issues, (c) “to promote Sino-American librarianship and library services,” and (d) to provide a means for developing cooperative relationships with other library and information service associations and organizations (Chinese American Librarians Association, 2003, Constitution, Article II).

REFORMA (The National Association to Promote Library Services to the Spanish Speaking) was another organization that was established as a result of the activities of the 1960s
and 1970s. REFORMA was created in 1971 to promote the development of Spanish-language collections including materials written by and about Hispanics. The association affiliated with ALA in the 1970s. REFORMA worked to develop services and programs for the Hispanic community and to encourage the recruitment of bilingual librarians and staff. REFORMA used various media to educate Hispanics about the services and materials available for them in public libraries and lobbied local government at all levels to maintain and improve library services for Hispanics (REFORMA, 2006).

In 1971 the ALA Council approved a resolution submitted by the Gay & Lesbian Task Force of the ALA Social Responsibilities Round Table. In this resolution ALA recognized the existence of minorities whom were not ethnic in nature but who suffered discrimination and oppression for various reasons. The association asked libraries and ALA members to “strenuously combat discrimination in service to and employment of all minority groups, whether the distinguishing characteristics of the minority be ethnic, sexual, religious, or of any other kind” (American Library Association, 2006t, Milestones section, 1971).

In 1977 ALA Office for Research conducted a study to determine the extent and effect of fees for library service on equality of service. The Council on Library Resources and three online search companies (BRS, Lockheed, and SDC) sponsored the study. The findings were published in Financing Online Search Services in Publicly-Supported Libraries. The findings confirmed the council’s consensus opinion that fees for service were an economic barrier for poor people. In 1977 the ALA Council affirmed its position on the “fee-for-service” issue by expressing support for free access and opposition to charging fees for library services (American Library Association, 2006m, Milestones section, 1977).

A special task force on national information policy appointed by ALA President Eric Moon presented a discussion paper at the president’s program at the 1978 midwinter meeting of ALA (Williams, 1988, p. 117). The paper entitled, “Toward a Conceptual Foundation for a National Information Policy,” affirmed ALA’s position on equality of access. “All information
must be available to all people in all formats purveyed through all communication channels and delivered at all levels of comprehension. If any one of these five qualities is compromised, the whole is enervated, and the national enterprise as a consequence suffers” (American Library Association, 2006m, Milestones section, 1978).

Labor education. In October 1945 the ALA president appointed a Joint Committee on Labor “representing the American Federation of Labor, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the Grand Lodge Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, and the American Library Association” (McBride, 1961, p. 1). At a meeting in December 1946, the committee formulated five objectives which were later synthesized into a concise statement of functions: “To discover ways of encouraging and assisting public libraries to develop specialized library services which will be useful to labor groups” (McBride, 1961, p. 1). This statement was approved by ALA in June 1948. In 1950 ALA made the Joint Committee on Labor a standing committee. In 1957 the Adult Services Division was assigned responsibility for the committee’s functions (Schneider, 1990, p. 298). ASD served as the administrative home within ALA for the AFLCIO/ALA Joint Committee on Library Service to Labor Groups until its merger with the Reference Services Division in 1972 (Hansen, 1995, p. 318). The committee published the newsletter, Library Service to Labor, from 1948 to 1970. The newsletter was a major vehicle for communicating to librarians the importance of providing services for labor groups. It reported the committee’s activities at ALA annual and midwinter conferences, published case histories of public library services to labor, issued bibliographies on topics of interest to workers, provided source lists for general and reference labor collections, described examples of successful library-labor programs, and published a news column about persons and events of interest to librarians and educators working with labor groups (Schneider, 1990, p. 299).

In 1963 the landmark book, Library Service to Labor, was published. Edited by Oko and Downey, this book brought together many of the articles published in the newsletter, Library Service to Labor, and excerpts from dissertations published on library services for labor groups.
The book, a classic reference on how to establish library services to labor, presented "historical background, theory, practical ideas, and case studies" (Sparanese, 2002, p. 20).

The AFLCIO/ALA Joint Committee on Library Service to Labor Groups was very active during the mid-1960s. In addition to the newsletter, the committee also published guides and pamphlets describing how to establish and develop library service to labor. The committee's publications included: Developing Library Service to Labor Groups; Labor: A Reading List; and Library Resources for Union Research Activities (Schneider, 1990, pp. 299, 312). Other activities included (a) the preparation of a reading list on labor history and issues for junior and senior high school students, (b) the publication of a selective list of 16mm films dealing with labor issues, and (c) plans for a survey of current trends and practices in public library service to labor (Phinney, 1966, p. 247).

The committee sponsored two surveys on current trends and practices in public library service to labor, one in 1967 and another in 1976. The 1967 survey reported that 22 libraries had assigned specialized staff to work with labor (Rogin & Rachlin, 1968). The committee decided to sponsor another study in 1976 as the basis for planning special programs on labor-related issues and compiling a collection development guide to current resources for labor education. The committee also hoped that the survey findings would stimulate renewed interest in library services to labor groups (Wente, 1979, p. 231).

The 1976 study, the last survey of labor collections and services in public libraries, showed a marked decline in service since 1967. Only 18 of 385 responding libraries said that they had special labor collections. The number of libraries reporting staff assigned to work with labor had fallen to 14 since 1967 (Imhoff & Brandwein, 1977, p. 151). In addition to the decline in the number of public libraries offering services to labor groups, the 1976 survey revealed a disturbing trend. "Many statements indicated the librarian’s mistrust of unions" (Imhoff & Brandwein, 1977, p. 156). Labor union involvement with organized crime had caused librarians to distrust union leaders and to avoid providing services for union members.
In 1979 the committee created the John A. Sessions Memorial Award in an attempt to renew the library community’s interest in providing services to labor. The award recognized a library or library system that had developed or implemented service to the labor community (American Library Association, 2001-2002, p. 120).

**Services to persons in institutions.** The 1966 standards for public libraries, *Minimum Standards for Public Library Systems*, recognized the public library’s responsibility to serve the institutionalized. It included a specific reference to services for “patients and inmates of hospitals and institutions” (Public Library Association, 1967, p. 33). Another ALA publication, *Standards for Library Functions at the State Level*, recommended that state library agencies take the lead in establishing cooperative programs with other libraries to serve the needs of institutionalized persons (American Library Association, 1963). Library standards for both juvenile and adult correctional facilities identified the public library as one of the community agencies responsible for meeting inmates’ informational needs (Pool, 1977, pp. 142-143).

**Professional Education and Continuing Education.**

Prior to 1920 ALA seemed to be reluctant to assume a leadership role in education for librarianship. ALA responded to the 1923 Williamson Report on library education by creating the Temporary Library Training Board in 1924, which shortly thereafter became the Board of Education for Librarianship (Rubin, 2000, p. 364). The Board of Education for Librarianship (BEL) issued minimum standards in 1925 and 1933 for “library schools, summer courses, training and apprenticeship classes, and school library curricula” (Davis, 1976, p. 121). The BEL standards helped to establish the “fifth-year” master’s degree program (five years of post high school education) as the desired educational model (Robbins-Carter & Seavey, 1986). By 1950 most library schools had adopted this model (Rubin, 2000, p. 364). Finally in 1951 BEL issued a new set of standards that stipulated that the Master’s degree was the basic professional degree (Rubin, 2000, p. 366). The *Standards for Accreditation* approved in July 1951 effectively put an
end to alternative forms of library education such as apprenticeship and public library training programs (Rubin, 2000, p. 366).

BEL did more than set standards for library education. BEL sponsored two summer institutes for library science teachers, conducted a curriculum study to gain information for use in designing instructional materials, and commissioned seven textbooks on aspects of librarianship (Churchwell, 1975). BEL acted as ALA's liaison with the Carnegie Corporation and served in an advisory capacity to the corporation (Anderson, 1970).

During the reorganization of ALA in 1956, BEL was abolished and its functions divided between the Library Education Division (LED) and the new ALA Committee on Accreditation (COA). Although LED assumed responsibility for the study and promotion of library education at all levels, some of the functions of general coordination previously performed by BEL disappeared. COA was formed in 1956 to maintain standards and to review and accredit library schools (Davis, 1974, pp. 269-270).

The 1960s was characterized by a perceived shortage of professional personnel, increased interest in library education, and growth in the number of library schools. In 1962 a four-day institute on the future of library education was held at the library school of Western Reserve University. The institute recommended that ALA seek funding for the study and development of a national plan to develop library schools ("Suggestions, Recommendations, and Proposals" 1962). The Commission on a National Plan for Library Education was formed in 1963 to assess professional personnel needs and recommend actions for meeting those needs (Davis, 1976, p. 127). At the commission's recommendation, ALA established the Office for Library Education in 1966, with assistance from a five-year matching grant from the H. W. Wilson Foundation. Under the direction of L. Asheim, the office was responsible for promoting coordination of library education activities. Some of the functions that had disappeared with BEL were resumed. The office represented a higher level of concern for library education and the utilization of library manpower. The office's statement on "Library Education and Manpower" became official ALA

In the 1970s the adverse economy and political shifts in Washington resulted in less support for state and public libraries and, consequently, less demand for library school graduates. As a result of changing emphasis within the profession and the end of financial support from the H.W. Wilson Foundation, the ALA Office for Library Education was closed in 1971. The office’s functions were assumed by the new Office of Library Personnel Resources. Unfortunately, the new office had much broader and diffused interests, so once again the coordination of library education activities was largely neglected (Davis, 1976, p. 129). Meanwhile the Committee on Accreditation (COA) revised the Standards for Accreditation (1972) and instigated a four-year-period of examination and reexamination of applicant library schools. It is interesting to note that accreditation of library school programs continued, although ALA no longer supported its coordinating agency for library education. The Committee on Accreditation accredited an increasing number of library school programs which had been established in the 1960s to alleviate a personnel shortage that rapidly disappeared in the 1970s (Davis, 1976, p. 129).

The ALA Library Education Division (LED) recognized that ALA needed to exercise leadership in library education. The division submitted a report entitled “Responsibility for Library Education: A Proposal for Reorganization” to the ALA Council at the 1977 ALA conference. Pending action by the ALA Council, the ALA Standing Council Committee on Library Education (SCOLE) and the Library Education Assembly were formed to study ALA’s role in library education. SCOLE’s membership included both practitioners and educators with support from the ALA Office for Library Personnel Resources. In 1979 the association convened the “ALA Looks at Continuing Education: A Policy Development Forum” (American Library, 2006n).
In June 1979, the ALA Council approved a resolution outlining ALA’s role in continuing education.

The ALA accepts responsibility for the promotion of continuing education for persons involved in library service. ALA will set standards for continuing education programs for librarianship and will provide for periodic review and updating of these standards. ALA will work through its chapters to encourage funding for continuing education at the state and local levels. ALA will also press, as part of its legislative program, for federal funds that will include continuing education scholarships and funds for development of model curricula. ALA will cooperate and coordinate its efforts with providers of continuing education. There will be a strong relationship between ALA’s continuing education program and the Association’s policies. As new policies are adopted by the Association, their implications for the continuing education program will be reviewed. (American Library Association, 2006n, Milestones section, June 1979)

ALA has provided continuing education and professional development through its conference and publication services. ALA annual conferences and midwinter meetings have offered a wealth of opportunities. Conference sessions have been devoted to the discussion of current issues and concerns, the presentation of research findings, and the demonstration of innovative practices in the field. ALA’s publication program has been a source of informational materials to assist practicing librarians in staying current with the latest trends and practices. In the late 1950s librarian J. L. Wheeler proposed that ALA begin a series of publications for small community librarians and public library trustees. The Small Libraries Project “was designed to provide reliable information about the organization, operation, and administration of the small public library” (Lee, 1966, p. 97). H. H. Lyman’s Reader’s Guidance Service in a Small Public Library (1962) and Gregory’s Library Service for Adults (1962) were among the adult education related titles (Lee, 1966, p. 103).
In 1958 the ASD Committee on Bibliography of Library Adult Education began publishing the *ASD Guides to the Literature of Libraries*. Guides in the series included:

- *Program Planning*;
- *Program Planning, Supplement*;
- *Television*;
- *Reading Interests and Habits of Adults, 1942-1958*;
- *Services to the Aging*;
- *Film Utilization*;
- *Service to Labor*;
- *Reading Guidance*;
- *Services to Community Agencies and Organizations*; and
- *Reading Improvement for Adults* (Lee, 1966, pp. 102-103).

**The Role of Research**

*The Public Library Inquiry*

Although adult education was not a specific focus of the Public Library Inquiry, Leigh provided some insight on the delivery of adult education services in a brief discussion on this subject in the summary report. In the discussion of educational services for adults, Leigh noted that public libraries had always been a resource for self-directed learning. The public library was responsible for serving “the potential, individual reading and information interests” of all the adults in the community (Leigh, 1950, p. 104). This broad responsibility forced the library to develop services that were adaptable to a wide range of individual interests and needs. To some extent both circulation and reference departments performed this general adult service. The size of the collection and the quality of the staff were the major factors determining the adequacy of services for adult learners (Leigh, 1950, p. 104).

Leigh noted that public library service to organized adult groups began to appear in the late 1930s and early 1940s. In the provision of educational activities for groups, the public library established itself as a force in the adult education movement. The public library’s approach to adult education reflected the “hospitable, decentralized concept” characteristic of the national movement (Leigh, 1950, p. 105). Public libraries provided materials of all kinds to community organizations involved in educational activities. They offered guidance in the selection of program materials and assistance in program planning and presentation. Some libraries organized and conducted their own programs consisting of lectures, discussions, concerts, and forums.
Occasionally these library-initiated programs focused on ideas, problems, issues, or topics rather than on the use of library materials; in these programs library materials were merely instrumental in achieving the goal of learning. In most instances library-initiated programs were designed to promote the use of materials (Leigh, 1950, p. 106).

The vast majority of adult education activity in public libraries consisted of the provision of materials for other organizations, both formal and informal. This cooperative approach had the advantage of allowing the public library to concentrate its resources in specific areas and to offer tangible service to identified groups. It also permitted the library to base its claims for public support on concrete services, the value of which could be measured in terms of the group activities served (Leigh, 1950, p. 106).

Leigh compared the public library's resources with three other institutions recognized as leaders in adult education—the U.S. Agricultural Extension Service, adult education units in colleges and universities, and adult education divisions of city and state boards of education. Only the largest and best funded public libraries had the resources to serve as adult educational agencies—adequate collections of materials, staffs knowledgeable in the use of these materials, meeting rooms, and staff trained in instructional techniques. Leigh concluded that "the balance of human and financial resources . . . were strongly weighted on the side of the school and university agencies of adult education" (Leigh, 1950, pp. 106-107).

Given the public library's strengths in materials and staff knowledge, Leigh considered the possibility that the public library could serve as the library for the other formal adult education agencies. Although this was an obvious role for public libraries, Leigh failed to find a single instance in his sample where "the public library was clearly recognized as the official library unit for the school, university, or community adult education program" (Leigh, 1950, p. 107). Leigh observed that the public library "has not become either a major center of formally organized adult education under its own initiative, nor does it serve as the officially designated library for the existing major agencies of formal adult education" (Leigh, 1950, pp. 107-108).
Warncke's Survey of Adult Education Activities

Ruth Warncke's survey of library adult education activities in rural libraries was part of a larger survey, *Rural Social Systems and Adult Education*, conducted by the Association of Land Grant Colleges and Universities in 1951 and 1952. The survey was based on questionnaire responses from 102 rural libraries. The results showed that 58% of the libraries provided educational programs for adults promoting civic, international, and economic understanding. The majority of the programs were presented in a public meeting format utilizing lecture and discussion techniques (Warncke, 1953, pp. 176-179).

Adult Education Activities in Public Libraries

Birge suggested that this study was prompted in large part by the professional reaction to Berelson's recommendation that the public library direct the majority of its services to its natural clientele, a very small segment of the community. The almost total rejection of this recommendation led to “a profession-wide effort to identify the broad scope of library adult education work and to demonstrate that the library was providing useful adult education services to a greater segment of the populace than Berelson indicated” (Birge, 1981, pp. 95-96).

It is also quite conceivable that Leigh’s observation about the public library’s role in adult education also prompted ALA to undertake a survey of adult education activities in public libraries. Leigh recommended that the majority of public libraries should not attempt to function as formal agencies of adult education but rather should support the programs of more established agencies of adult education. In other words, the public library should strive to become “the library of the people’s university” (Leigh, 1950, p. 108). It is telling that this recommendation was the subject of a symposium entitled “If Not the People’s University, Then What” at the ALA midwinter meeting in January 1950 and the topic of a panel discussion with the same title at the ALA annual conference in July 1950 (Williams, 1988, pp. 73-75). Although Leigh’s recommendation was a relatively minor point, the Adult Education Section of the Public Libraries
Division, the Trustee’s division, and the Extension Division considered it important enough to
direct attention to national venues (Williams, 1988, pp. 73-75).

H. L. Smith’s survey of adult education activities in public libraries and state extension
agencies was one of the ALA adult education projects supported by the Fund for Adult Education
(Lee, 1966, p. 86). The survey and the report were part of a series of studies conducted by several
organizations with financial support from the Fund for Adult Education (Downs, 1954, p. vi). The
purpose of the survey was “to obtain specific and detailed facts that would provide a reliable
picture of what public libraries of the country were doing in the field of adult education” (Smith,
1954, p. vii). A basic assumption of the study was that the public library represented “a major
educational institution with responsibilities for helping adults to learn” (Smith, 1954, p. xii).

Public libraries serving communities of more than 2,500 people were the focus of Smith’s
survey (Smith, 1954, p. 3). Smith stressed that the adult education program was best understood
in the context of the library and its community (Monroe, 1963, p. 63). The survey, focusing on
educational services for groups, examined (a) the extent of the public library’s service to
community groups, (b) its leadership in the presentation of programs on community issues and
concerns, (c) its participation in community adult education programs, (d) the methods and
strategies used in adult education programming, and (e) the means for evaluating the
effectiveness of library adult education programs (Smith, 1954, p. vii).

Establishing a definition for adult education was difficult since there was no complete
agreement about the definition within the field of adult education, and the term had many
different meanings for libraries. Smith noted that “adult education from the library point of
view . . . defies definition . . . It breaks across institutional and organizational lines. It resists
evaluation and presents difficulties for research” (Smith, 1953, p. 191). Furthermore, adult
education service seemed to be composed of “many interrelated services, some . . . basic and
some ancillary” (Smith, 1954, p. 64). The survey committee could not agree on a single
acceptable definition so they decided to define library adult education in operational terms:
A library was assumed to be providing educational services to adult education agencies and groups and to young adults (16-21 years of age) and adults in the community if it performed with planning, direction, or participation one or more of the six general categories of service—supplying, planning, advising, training, informing, and doing. (Smith, 1954, p. 1)

The survey identified 37 services that Smith divided into six categories: supplying, planning, advising and counseling, training, informing, and doing. The supplying category included activities such as furnishing displays, exhibits, book collections, reading lists, films, recordings, and permitting the use of physical facilities. Planning activities consisted of initiating and cooperating in community-wide programs. Advising and counseling services took the form of program planning assistance to community organizations and community leaders and assistance to other libraries. In training services individual librarians and lay volunteers were taught how (a) to tell stories, (b) to review books, (c) to participate effectively in group activities, (d) to lead discussion groups, (e) to plan programs, (f) to provide fundamental reading instruction, (g) to provide remedial reading instruction, (h) to employ adult education techniques, and (i) to use audio-visual aids. The informing category included activities such as providing information (a) about adult education opportunities in the community, (b) about films and other audiovisual resources, (c) about resource persons in the community, and (d) about the library’s services. The doing category included activities conducted by the library such as (a) the presentation of book reviews, (b) the presentation of activities centered on the use of library resources, (c) the creation of educational radio or television programs, (d) the preparation of adult learning materials, and (e) the study of adult education needs and resources (Smith, 1954, pp. 1-2).

The study was concerned with two major areas: "(1) the investigation of the extent of services to other adult education agencies and to community groups, [sic] and (2) the library’s own programs and activities" (Smith, 1954, p. 2). The survey covered the time period from September 1952 to September 1953 (Smith, 1954, p. xi). Questionnaires were addressed to all 48
state library extension agencies and to 4,048 public libraries serving more than 2,500 people. Of
the 4,096 libraries to which questionnaires were sent, 2,236 or 54.5% responded. The returns
from 544 libraries could not be used. The sample used for tabulation consisted of 1,692 public
libraries and state library agencies. The libraries were grouped according to the size of their
population area (Smith, 1954, pp. 3-4).

Additional information was obtained from site visits to 82 libraries. Personal interviews
were conducted with more than 200 librarians. The librarians provided additional information
including rankings of the various service categories as to their perceived importance (Smith,
1954, p. 14). Smith noted that "the size and stratification of the sample of libraries visited insured
further validity in the findings" (Smith, 1954, p. 5).

Results of Smith’s survey were published in 1954. Smith found that 128 libraries or 7.6%
of the libraries were doing a great deal of adult education programming, 795 or 47% were doing a
moderate amount, and 769 or 45.4% were doing a little (1954, p. 11). The study provided
evidence that public libraries were conducting adult education programs and providing adult
education services to other agencies and groups (Smith, 1954, p. 64).

However, an examination of the types of services libraries provided presented a clearer
picture of what libraries were actually doing in the field of adult education. Service categories
rated as the most important in decreasing rank were supplying, advising, doing, planning,
informing, and training. The two categories of service offered most frequently were supplying at
30.7% and doing at 29.5%. Since the provision of materials was one of the basic functions of
libraries, it was not surprising that supplying would appear at the top of the list. Libraries, in the
sample visited, rated supplying as the most important service at 37.7%. The second place ranking
of the doing category was somewhat surprising since it was rated most important by only 13.1%
of the librarians interviewed. The advising category was considered more important by 21.3% but
was provided by only 10.1% (Smith, 1954, p. 15).
The specific services provided most often were exhibits and displays within the library, book talks, advice in program planning, exhibits and displays outside the library, assistance in community planning programs, publication of library activities, library programs on special subjects, printed materials in duplicate quantity, use of physical facilities, information about adult education opportunities, book-based library programs, and information on audiovisual materials (Smith, 1954, pp. 15, 18). Of the 12 specific services, four fell into the supplying category, one into the planning category, one in the advising category, three into the informing category, and three in the doing category. The training category was not represented among the top 12 services (Smith, 1954, p. 15).

Part two of the study dealt with services to adult education agencies. Leisure and recreational agencies, served by 42.8% of the libraries, received the highest ranking. Agricultural extension agencies and public, private, and parochial schools, ranked second and third respectively, were served by more than a third of the libraries. Health and safety organizations came in fourth at 30%. Adult education divisions of public school systems were served by 27.5% of the libraries, while the adult education divisions of colleges and universities were served by only 16.7% of the libraries. Other public libraries providing educational programs received program support from only 11% of the respondents. Smith noted that while it was evident that public libraries were providing services to other adult education agencies, the extent of these services was limited. A substantial number of the libraries in the survey (27%) did not serve any agencies (Smith, 1954, pp. 35-36).

The chief services offered to adult education agencies in rank order were (a) providing exhibits and displays within the library, (b) providing exhibits and displays outside the library, (c) furnishing meeting space, (d) participating in program planning, (e) supplying printed materials in multiple quantities, (f) supplying films and film lists, (g) presenting library programs based on books, and (h) providing information on audiovisual materials. Fewer than 10% of the libraries
provided any of the other 28 services listed on the questionnaire. Larger libraries served more adult education agencies than did smaller libraries (Smith, 1954, pp. 36-37).

Part three of the questionnaire addressed services to community groups. Four groups were served by one-half or more of the libraries. Women's clubs, including study and reading clubs, and parents' organizations were served by about two-thirds of the libraries. Informal local clubs and the missionary societies and church groups were served by about 50% of the libraries (Smith, 1954, p. 37). Except for these four groups, many community groups were served only to a limited extent. All the other community groups were provided services by less than 40% of the libraries. Less than 10% of the libraries served foreign-born groups, political parties and organizations, industrial groups, and labor unions. About 16% of the libraries did not provide services to any group (Smith, 1954, pp. 37-38).

The principal services provided by libraries to community groups in rank order were (a) exhibits and displays in the library, (b) book talks, (c) exhibits and displays outside the library, (d) program planning advice, (e) physical facilities for meetings, (f) films and film lists, (g) publication of library services, (h) printed materials in multiple copies, (i) participation in community-wide programs, (j) library programs based on books, (k) information on adult education opportunities, and (l) information on audiovisual resources. The other services were reported by fewer than 10% of the respondents. A comparison of the services provided to community groups with those provided to adult education agencies showed remarkable similarity. In general, the same services were provided to both groups and to a very similar extent. As might be expected, larger libraries served more community groups (Smith, 1954, pp. 37-39).

Part four of the study examined the nature and extent of the public libraries' own programming. Almost 40% of the responding libraries sponsored and conducted programs, while nearly 60% did not. The major reasons for offering particular activities or programs were “to emphasize a special subject, to fill an expressed need, to fill a felt need, and to provide continuing education” (Smith, 1954, p. 40). Other important purposes were to promote the use of library
materials and to cooperate with other groups. The least frequently reported reasons were “to inform about the library, to serve a special group, to reach individuals, and to help other agencies or groups achieve educational objectives” (Smith, 1954, p. 40). Smith felt that librarians did not give enough consideration to the reasons and purposes for programming (1954, p. 40).

Various book-related programs were the most popular with 20% of libraries offering this type of programming. Great Books programs, ranked second, were offered by 13.6% of the libraries. American Heritage programs in third place were offered by only 9.6% of the respondents. Programs featuring the fine arts, audiovisual materials, the library and its resources, public affairs, miscellaneous topics, the practical arts, and the interests of special groups were offered by less than 9% of the libraries (Smith, 1954, p. 41).

The purposes of the programs and activities as perceived by the librarians fell into four broad educational purposes: “information, training, liberal education, and education about the library and its resources” (Smith, 1954, p. 42). Other programs reflected primarily recreational and social purposes such as encouraging creative expression, providing recreation and relaxation, and helping people to cope with everyday problems. A few content-related programs were designed to foster increased knowledge about special subjects and to stimulate greater appreciation for the fine arts. Most often these programs were planned and organized by the head librarian or director of the library. Persons conducting the actual sessions were generally public services librarians or lay volunteers (Smith, 1954, p. 43).

Part five of the survey examined miscellaneous aspects of the provision of adult education services. These aspects included cooperating agencies, participants, personnel, methods and techniques, methods of evaluation, knowledge and skills needed to do adult education work, record-keeping, sources of funds, size of the book collection, size of the audiovisual collection, annual total expenditures, and percentage of library budget dedicated to adult education services (Smith, 1954, pp. 88-93).
In the conclusions Smith asserted that “the findings of the survey were conclusive evidence that the public libraries of the United States were providing adult education services to other agencies and groups and in the libraries’ own programs by a variety of services and activities and with various materials, means, and personnel” (Smith, 1954, p. 64). As Smith’s survey was the first of its kind there were no previous studies with which to compare its findings. Smith noted that a perusal of the recommendations from the ALA Commission on the Library and Adult Education indicated that a number of the most frequently provided services mentioned in the 1954 survey were only beginning, or were practically unheard of, in 1926 (1954, p. 64). Library adult education services had progressed remarkably since 1926. The fact that 45% of the libraries were doing a little adult education work and 55% were doing a moderate to a great deal was no small achievement (Smith, 1954, p. 65).

The role state library agencies played in adult education was revealed to some extent in the survey; the survey indicated that a few strong state library agencies had made “a promising beginning” in the field (Smith, 1954, p. 64). Smith believed that the state library agencies could play a prominent role if they were strengthened. The American Heritage Project demonstrated that smaller libraries could provide quality adult education programming with a little professional backing and financial assistance from the state library agencies. Some of the best American Heritage programs were presented in communities with fewer than 1,500 people. In the 1950s the large majority (75%) of public libraries was in communities with populations from 2,500 to 25,000, and generally lacked both the financial and human resources needed to conduct effective adult education programs without outside assistance. Leadership, professional guidance, and funding from state library agencies was a crucial factor in enabling small communities to provide effective educational programming for adults. The vigorous promotion of adult education services by strong state library agencies could have had an enormous impact on the growth and acceptance of these services in public libraries (Smith, 1954, p. 64).
In the interviews Smith encountered two very different philosophies regarding the role of libraries in adult education. Some librarians strongly believed that public libraries should focus their efforts on services to already existing groups in the community. They would place exclusive emphasis on the supplying, planning, advising, and informing services. Some librarians held the equally strong opinion that the survival of public libraries depended upon the recognition of libraries as an integral part of the educational system. They argued that libraries had to assume responsibility for providing active programs of their own in order to demonstrate their unique role in the adult education field. The survey made no attempt to resolve this dichotomy; it only presented the facts about what libraries were actually doing (Smith, 1954, p. 65).

While praising public library achievements in adult education, Smith also pointed out some-less-than-encouraging facts about the nature and extent of public library adult education services. "Among the kinds of service provided, supplying and doing ranked highest" (Smith, 1954, p. 65). The highest ranking activity under the supplying category was exhibits and displays inside the library. Although exhibits and displays could be educational, Smith regarded them as a passive activity. Smith also questioned the highest ranking activity under the doing category—presenting the library's own programs. Although there were some excellent library-based programs, Smith wondered to what extent these were purely "inside" activities which reflected the library's own priorities. The ranking of these programs suggested a possible unwillingness or inability on the part of librarians to determine what the community wanted and how to best provide it. Smith suggested that the preference for the library's own programs might also be reflected in the relatively low ranking of "leadership in initiating community programs" (1954, p. 65).

Although some libraries had established good working relationships with other adult education agencies, assumed leadership positions in community activities, and participated in the education activities of other agencies or groups, most were not actively involved in the life of the community. Often the most representative agencies or groups in American communities were not
served by the public library. The only groups served by a substantial number of libraries were “leisure and recreational agencies, women’s clubs, parents’ organizations, informal local clubs, and missionary and church groups” (Smith, 1954, p.65). Smith urged libraries to establish closer relationships with other agencies and groups in their communities starting with young adult groups, business, labor, and industrial groups of schools, colleges and universities (1954, p. 65).

The fact that 80% of the libraries did not conduct studies of their community’s needs and resources and that only 9% of the libraries were interested in undertaking a community study was the cause of considerable concern, because two of the reasons given for not providing services of all kinds were “community needs unknown” and “no community need.” Smith wondered if these reasons were based on fact. Without a study of community needs, it was difficult to determine what basis the libraries had used for deciding which programs to provide (Smith, 1954, p. 65).

Very few libraries (about 7%) allocated special funds or planned a fiscal program to secure permanent funding for adult education. Because lack of funds was the primary reason given for not providing adult education services, a stronger commitment to making adult education part of the library’s annual operating budget was needed (Smith, 1954, p. 66).

Another significant issue raised by the survey was the fact that over 55% of the people conducting library-sponsored programs were volunteers, specialists, and adult educators from the community. The use of community resource people tended to dismiss “the argument that libraries were not capable of offering adult education programs because they lacked trained specialists on their staffs” (Smith, 1954, p. 66). The use of resource people also raised a question about the staff’s level of knowledge and skill. It might have indicated that they needed more training to lead discussion groups or present “credible” book talks and reviews (Smith, 1954, p. 66).

Smith saw “two primary and urgent needs.” The first was the formulation of an adult education philosophy grounded in well-defined principles. These principles should form the basis for standards to guide the development of specific goals, objectives, and activities. In short, librarians need to know “what adult education in libraries [was] about” (Smith, 1954, p. 66).
Smith emphasized the importance of evaluation as an integral part of every service and activity and stressed that “evaluation presupposes and necessitates the formulation of objectives and philosophy” (1954, p. 66).

The second need was the ability to apply adult education principles and philosophy in actual practice. Librarians who wanted to specialize in adult education needed to obtain the necessary education, training, and experience to develop the needed knowledge and skills. Education and training of library personnel was considered the area of greatest concern among the librarians Smith interviewed and in groups discussing the survey’s results. An important concern for the library profession and graduate library schools was “the question of what training to give these people and how and when and where” (Smith, 1954, p. 66). Much of the subject knowledge could be acquired on the undergraduate level or through a carefully planned course of independent study. The major problem was the fact that library schools were “offering very little in the philosophy of adult education and less in the skills needed to conduct a program” (Smith, 1954, p. 66).

The Indiana Study in Library Adult Education

R M. Smith, Associate Professor of Adult Education at Indiana University, directed the four-year Indiana Study in Library Adult Education (1959, p.164). Sponsored by the Bureau of Studies in Adult Education, the project was part of a larger study designed to demonstrate the educational potential of certain institutions—hospitals, churches, industry and libraries (Smith, 1959, p.172). Principal activities included four demonstration projects involving public libraries (in Northeastern Indiana, Indianapolis, Terre Haute, and Southeastern Indiana), training activities for library personnel, and consultation with libraries conducting adult education programs and state library agencies providing in-service education (Smith, 1959, p.164).

The study had five purposes: (a) to provide a service to Indiana libraries; (b) to demonstrate that university adult education specialists and public librarians working together could advance adult education practice in public libraries; (c) to discover ways in which public
librarianship could contribute to the field of adult education; (d) to test the idea that adult education could help the public library develop into a more stable, thriving institution; and (e) to use the public library as an instrument for the application of certain learning principles and practices. Assumptions concerning the library and adult education included (a) public libraries were passive resources for adult education; (b) public library staff, administrators, and trustees needed encouragement to accept personal responsibility for lifelong learning; and (c) recognition and acceptance could be achieved through training activities that emphasized discussion fundamentals, group dynamics, program planning and evaluation, and adult learning principles and practices (Smith, 1959, pp. 164-65).

The project demonstrated that the application of adult education principles and practices could help library personnel to better understand the aims and purposes of public libraries; promote teamwork and cooperation between professionals, support staff, and trustees; and give library personnel the increased confidence and conviction needed to accept active responsibility for adult education in the community. Even small libraries were able to develop effective adult education programs when they received guidance from specialists and material support from the state library agency (Smith, 1959, p. 171).

Although the public library had historically considered itself an educational agency, it was relatively difficult to encourage library personnel to accept an active role in adult education. Public librarians tended to be more institution-oriented than people-oriented. It was difficult for many public librarians to accept the notion that the selection of appropriate resources was not “the critical element in learning” but only one factor in the process of education (Smith, 1959, p. 172).

Smith concluded that the development of effective in-service education in libraries and the growth of the public library as active agency of adult education would be a long-term process that required dedication and persistence. To ensure maximum effectiveness, library adult education should be an ongoing process with two interdependent phases: “(1) learning activities
for the staff and board of trustees (in-service education) and (2) activities and services for and with adults in the community” (Smith, 1959, p. 172). Adult education could contribute to public librarianship by helping public libraries adapt more effectively to social change. The public library’s emphasis on the continuous evaluation of institutional goals in relation to community needs and concerns made the public library “an ideal channel for adult education that helps develop mature individuals in a free society” (Smith, 1959, p. 172).

The Library Development Project.

The Pacific Northwest Library Association sponsored the Library Development Project, a two-year (1956-1958) study of library services and facilities in the Pacific Northwest (Kroll, 1960, p. v). M. R. Pamment directed the study of adult education activities in public libraries. The study was undertaken to answer questions concerning such issues as “(1) the degree to which public libraries should involve their staffs and energies in adult programs, (2) the question of library programs at the cost of curtailing other aspects of library work, and (3) corollary problems concerning the validity of the public library’s role as an educational agency in the community” (Pamment, 1960, p. 363). Public library administrators in the region had expressed concern about the adequacy of their staffs and budgets to serve as adult educational agencies (Pamment1960, p. 363).

Pamment’s study emphasized services to groups rather than individuals. The questionnaire used in the study was adapted from the one used in Smith’s survey. It served as both the instrument for personal interviews and as a survey of selected libraries in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and British Columbia. Of the 153 libraries selected for the study, 98 (or almost 64%) responded. Data from 29 responding libraries could not be used; thus, 69 libraries provided the information used in the study (Pamment, 1960, pp. 363-364).

Those libraries providing educational services for adults tended to emphasize the “supplying” and “doing” categories. Five of the 12 services provided by the public libraries fell into the “supplying” category including exhibits and displays both within and outside the library,
provision of multiple copies of books and printed materials, the provision of physical facilities as needed, the provision of recordings (both musical and spoken word), and the provision of guides. The only service in the “planning” category was assistance in planning community sponsored programs. Advice in program planning was the only advisory service provided by most libraries. The “informing” category included providing information about adult education opportunities, providing audio-visual resources for community programs, and publicizing the library’s adult education services and activities. There were no services listed in the “training” category. Only two services were listed in the “doing” category—presenting book reviews and book talks and producing materials for adult education projects (Pamment, 1960, pp. 369-371).

Of the 69 libraries considered in the study, 28 (40%) reported a total of 79 adult education programs and activities. In most instances, the public libraries offered programs and activities that they could provide using their own material and human resources without outside assistance. The 79 programs fell into 15 categories in order of their reported frequency: Great Books discussion groups; audio-visual programs; radio-TV programs; special-interest group programs; public and world affairs; a wide variety of book-related programs; practical arts, crafts, and skills; American Heritage programs; fine arts; orientation programs; training in group leadership and group participation; family relations; program planning; literature; general education programs; and vocational and technical education courses (Pamment, 1960, pp. 384-393). Adult education agencies were the most frequent partners in cooperative endeavors with the public library (Pamment, 1960, p. 397).

The major problem in providing adult educational services and programs was lack of adequate financial resources. The shortage of librarians trained for working with adults was another serious problem. Despite these and other handicaps, many libraries were responding to community interests and needs. Although the number of libraries providing adult educational services was still limited, “a comparison of the program activities presented by the libraries in the sample group with those that a comparable group provided in 1953” showed that “the percentage
of libraries providing programs and the number of activities had about doubled” (Pamment, 1960, p. 410). Pamment concluded that the primary needs of library adult education programs were “financial recognition of adult education as a part of total library service and the organization and integration of this function with other aspects of library service” (1960, p. 410). In order to strengthen the library’s ability “to coordinate its educational service with the cultural and educational needs of the community,” libraries needed to secure financial support for educational services by allocating funds specifically for educational activities and seeking other sources of revenue (Pamment, 1960, p. 410).

The 1959 Adult Education Survey

In 1959 the ALA office for Adult Education mailed questionnaires to a selected group of libraries known to have effective adult education programs. The survey was used to provide current information for Stevenson’s chapter on library services for the 1960 revised edition of the *Handbook of Adult Education*. The survey population included libraries of all sizes and a small number of state library agencies. M. S. Knowles, editor of the *Handbook*, requested information regarding the library community’s involvement in 13 subject areas of interest to community educators. Survey respondents indicated that provision was made for all of the subject areas through the acquisition of materials, information service, or reader guidance. Eleven areas were emphasized in adult education programming. In order of priority the areas were “community development, public affairs, creative arts, human relations, aging, home and family life, intercultural education, vocational education, personal development, health and safety education, economic education, fundamental and literacy education, and recreational and physical education” (Gregory, 1959, pp. 787-788). Community development was the major focal point for acquisitions, staff assignments, and active programming. Public affairs, creative arts, human relations, and aging were also important areas. Library adult educators were least interested in fundamental and literacy education and recreational and physical education (Gregory, 1959, p. 788).
The survey revealed that almost all the libraries had acquired special materials for their adult education programs. Materials of all types were employed with printed materials being the most common and films the second most common. There was also great variety in program topics and presentation methods. Television was used as a delivery method for adult education programs, especially in larger cities where educational television facilities were available (Stevenson, 1960, p. 310).

Stevenson reported that the survey emphasized the importance of cooperation with other organizations and groups as a fundamental aspect of library adult education. Cooperative efforts benefited the library as well as community organizations. While libraries supported the objectives of other organizations, they were able to extend their own services farther into the community through exposure to the membership of other groups and organizations (Stevenson, 1960, pp. 311-312).

The services and activities described in the questionnaires emphasized "the library's major function as an education agency in the community" (Stevenson, 1960, p. 312). However, the public library was not always able to fulfill its educational role because of budget limitations and lack of adequately trained staff. Library adult education programs were heavily dependent on community resources, particularly people skilled in program presentation. An area of concern was the lack of library personnel skilled in the various presentation techniques: lectures, panels, demonstrations, role playing, buzz groups, work groups, question and answer periods, and open forum discussions. Program planning institutes were the most effective form of leadership training provided by libraries, but the majority of libraries lacked the staff, time, or funds to undertake this type of program (Stevenson, 1960, p. 312).

Due to space limitations Stevenson was unable to include all of the survey findings in the chapter. Gregory prepared a more complete report for the library literature. Gregory concluded from an analysis of the findings that library adult education practice in the United States was "molded by self-discovered local needs, by a library-exposed gap in some aspect of community
life, or by the emergence of some problem which [could] be solved by community study and action" (Gregory, 1959, p. 789). Library adult education programs dealt with a variety of problems. Examples from the survey included metropolitan planning, community revitalization, traffic and highway safety, community taxation, and the interpretation of a new city charter to the public. Gregory concluded that participation in community development programs led to increased public confidence in the library’s effectiveness (1959, p. 789).

**Trends in Group Services in Public Libraries**

In a 1968 article on trends in group services, Eleanor Phinney reported the results of a series of informal surveys conducted between 1962 and 1967. In 1962 Phinney had asked the directors of the 50 state library extension agencies to respond to 10 statements about current trends in public library services for adults. Phinney’s survey was based on an earlier survey by Fox, Shue, and Penland (1961). The directors were asked “to indicate whether each statement was true for that state, or true to some extent, or that they saw little change, or no change” since *Adult Education Activities in Public Libraries* was published in 1954 (Phinney, 1963a, p. 50; Phinney, 1963b, p. 262).

Responses to the survey indicated that in some states a number of these trends were apparent before 1954. Of the 50 state library agencies, 38 responded to the survey, 32 of which reported substantial change. Only six agencies indicated that there had been little or no change in regard to the trends (Phinney, 1963a, p. 50; Phinney, 1963b, p. 262). There was one trend on which there was unanimous agreement: the movement away from an emphasis on recreational reading “to recognition of the importance of reference and informational services” (Phinney, 1963b, p. 262). The trends receiving the second highest ranking (those to which nearly all of the agencies agreed were clearly evident or evident to some extent in their states) were these: the movement away from reliance on a few staff members “to involving more people in the library’s program” and the movement away from individual efforts to achieve good library service “to
cooperation between libraries in the state in a variety of ways to accomplish their objectives” (Phinney, 1963b, pp. 262-263).

There were four trends that many of the state library agencies reported as clearly evident or somewhat evident in their states. The first trend was movement away from services restricted to the library building “to service throughout the community” in a variety of locations (Phinney, 1963b, p. 263). The second trend was movement away from emphasizing children’s services “to emphasis on service to all ages” (Phinney, 1963b, p. 263). The third trend was movement away from collections consisting primarily of books to the inclusion “of every media of communication” (Phinney, 1963b, p. 263). The fourth trend was movement away from an emphasis on individual services to greater willingness to include group services as part of the library’s program. Acceptance of group services came with “awareness of the fact that the individual’s needs may be expressed either alone or within a group, and that groups have corporate interests over and above individual interests” (Phinney, 1963b, p. 263).

The three trends to which the fewest state library agencies indicated agreement were these: movement toward “cooperation with other agencies and groups in promoting educational services,” movement toward “assuming increasing responsibility in community adult education,” and movement toward “systematic study of the library’s relationship to the community” (Phinney, 1963b, p. 263). Phinney noted that three less evident trends were particularly significant because they were “concerned with aspects of library service to adults clearly involving other community adult education agencies and activities” (Phinney, 1963b, p. 263). Although libraries had come a long way in developing cooperative services and encouraging individuals and groups to participate in library activities and objectives, “the extent to which they have been able or willing to assume a full role in community adult education is still very limited” (Phinney, 1963b, p. 263).

In 1963 a similar questionnaire was sent to 80 librarians in medium-sized and larger libraries in an effort to offset any bias resulting from the small-library orientation of the state
library extension agencies. The findings of this survey were never fully analyzed or published (Phinney, 1968, p. 97).

In August 1967 another questionnaire using some of the statements from the original 1962 survey and questions submitted by Phinney’s colleagues was sent to a selected sample of 72 libraries representative of the size, geographical distribution, and type of governmental structure typical of libraries providing adult group services (Phinney, 1968, p. 97). About 71% (51) of the libraries responded (Warncke, 1968, p. 7). The 1967 survey was designed to gather information on current services and data for comparison with the earlier surveys. For example in the 1962, 1963, and 1967 surveys, librarians were asked to respond to the statement concerning movement from services to individuals only to services for individuals and groups. Agreement with this statement rose steadily between 1962 and 1967 (Phinney, 1968, p. 98) as more libraries provided services for groups.

Phinney’s surveys indicated a favorable change in attitude toward outreach services for community groups since Smith’s survey in 1954. The 1954 survey indicated that 32.6% of the libraries in the sample were engaged in outreach activities to groups (Smith, 1954, p. 53). The outreach movement of the 1960s and the availability of federal funds strengthened group services (Phinney, 1968, p. 98). Federally supported programs such as VISTA, the Community Action Program, and the Job Corps were the impetus for the reevaluation of the library’s programs and of its relationship with community groups and agencies (Phinney, 1968, p. 99).

The trend from library service within the library to service throughout the community was confirmed by a large percentage of state library agency directors in the 1962 survey. The 1963 survey of librarians in medium-sized and larger libraries showed near unanimous agreement. Responses to the 1967 survey indicated the strong influence of federal funds and a growing recognition of the needs of specific groups such as older adults, people with disabilities, and people with limited literacy (Phinney, 1968, p. 99). The public library’s approach to group services was heavily influenced by society’s emphasis on social issues and adult education’s
focus on the economically and educationally disadvantaged as targets of community development efforts (Phinney, 1968, p. 100). Two significant differences in practice between 1954 and 1967 were the emphasis on making community contacts and freeing the adult services librarian from desk assignments to spend more time in the community (Phinney, 1968, p. 99).

There was a marked increase in cooperative endeavors between libraries and involvement of libraries in community programs between 1962 and 1967. Libraries began to move away from independent efforts toward “cooperation with other agencies and groups in promoting educational services” and toward cooperation with other libraries in order “to meet standards of good service” (Phinney, 1968, p. 101). Both forms of cooperation promoted the review of library activities to eliminate duplication of effort and to maximize the use of existing resources (Phinney, 1968, p. 101).

Responses to the 1967 survey revealed that not only the extent but also the nature of library cooperation had changed. Early attempts at cooperation did not involve the public library as an integral part of the program; the library’s role was not well defined and the library’s commitment was limited. In the late 1960s libraries were “involved with governmental and poverty agencies in long range planning which [required] a greater commitment of library resources over a longer period of time with some resultant loss of autonomy” (Phinney, 1968, p. 101). For example when public libraries participated in basic adult education centers, they became “an integral part of a total operation, rather than jointly cooperating” (Phinney, 1968, p. 101).

Public libraries provided a number of services for community organizations and agencies in the 1960s. Examples from the 1967 study in order of their prevalence included the following:

1. Compilation or other provision of booklists
2. Provision of meeting room facilities for community groups
3. Assistance in program planning
4. Provision of exhibits of materials
5. Co-sponsorship of programs with community organizations
6. Directory of community clubs and organizations
7. Files of community resources
8. Film previewing
9. Calendar of other adult educational activities
10. Moderator and leadership training

Public libraries also offered group activities as part of their own programming. These activities included “book reviews and book talks, instruction in the use of the library (including class visits and tours), discussion groups on special subjects or issues, film festivals, musical concerts, large group meetings on special topics, film discussion groups, poetry and drama listening groups, and music listening groups” (Phinney, 1968, p. 102).

Other activities mentioned in the survey included programming for specific age groups (e.g. teens, older adults), programs for immigrants, story-telling workshops, televised book review programs, creative drama and writing groups, and art exhibits (Phinney, 1968, p. 102). Alloway (1985) noted that libraries in the 1960s also provided “film and travel programs, projects for shut-ins and elderly, and community services such as oral history collections and newspaper indexes” (p. 32).

H. L. Smith’s 1954 survey included a table listing in rank order the 18 community groups most frequently served by public libraries. The following groups were listed in the top eight: “women’s clubs, including study and reading clubs; parents’ organizations; informal local groups; missionary societies and church groups; young adult groups; subject interest organizations; cultural or aesthetic organizations; religious groups” (Smith, 1954, p. 37).

Phinney attempted to compare the ranking of these groups in 1967 to their ranking in Smith’s survey, but the results were somewhat inconclusive because many libraries did not rank all of the groups. However, there were indications of change. Those groups ranked among the
first eight in the 1967 survey were "women's clubs including study and reading clubs, subject interest organizations, parent's organizations, informal local clubs, cultural or aesthetic organizations, missionary societies and church groups, young adult groups, and religious groups" (Phinney, 1968, p. 102).

The 1967 survey showed appreciable upward movement for services to intercultural agencies, industrial groups, and labor unions, while services to fraternal groups, farm organizations, and patriotic and veterans' groups showed a perceptible decline in frequency. Some groups not included in the 1954 survey were listed in the 1967 survey such as the disadvantaged (Phinney, 1968, p. 102). Although these groups could not be defined as organized community groups, they were recognized in the 1966 standards for public libraries as having identifiable and specialized needs (Public Library Association, 1967). The 1967 survey showed a marked increase in library services to older adults, people who were culturally disadvantaged, and people with limited reading skills. However, the survey revealed a major gap in services to people who were institutionalized in hospitals, nursing homes, and prisons, in which many disadvantaged, undereducated, and older people could be found (Phinney, 1968, p. 103).

The 1967 survey also contained several questions designed to determine if there were staff positions having specific responsibility for service to community groups. Responses to the survey suggested that public libraries were moving toward a stronger commitment to group services through the creation of new positions and efforts to free professional librarians for more work in the community (Phinney, 1968, p. 105).

The Role of State Library Agencies in Adult Education

In 1971 D. D. Foos conducted a study "to investigate the involvement of the state library agency in the development of adult education programs at the state, regional, and local levels" (1973, p. 13). Foos was primarily interested in determining if state library agencies played an active role—that is, if these agencies initiated or developed adult education programs. The study also looked at the involvement of state library agencies in supporting the development of
programs within other adult education agencies, e.g. public schools, community colleges, and professional associations. State library agencies in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia participated in the study (Foos, 1973, pp. 13-14).

The study consisted of field visits, interviews, the examination of agency documents, and the observation of internal operations of each agency (Foos, 1973, pp. 22-24). Foos found that all the state agencies had compiled bibliographies, special materials, or collections in adult education (1973, p. 117). Four of the nine agencies had assigned personnel to the development of adult education services and programs. Responsibility for adult education projects was generally given to the library development division. Only four of the nine agencies cooperated with other state agencies or professional associations. Only one agency engaged in active collaboration with the adult education section of the state department of education (Foos, 1973, p. 119).

Foos found that none of the agencies had a clearly defined program of adult education. Emphasis was placed on the development of general library services throughout the state with the development of specialized services such as adult education left to local units. Even agencies with personnel assigned to adult education development confined their services to providing consultant services to local agencies (Foos, 1973, pp. 120-121). Foos concluded that the state agency's role in adult education was largely one of passive support due to limited funding, inexperienced personnel, and outdated library policies (1979, p. 122).

*The Adult Performance Level Project*

A 1975 research study from the field of adult education had important implications for the library field. The Adult Performance Level study conducted by the University of Texas included a national sample of 7,500 adults and consisted of five national surveys to determine the functional competency of American adults in five general knowledge areas and four basic skill areas considered critical to successful functioning in everyday life. The five knowledge areas were consumer resources, occupational knowledge, consumer economics, health, government and
law. The basic skills areas included communication skills (identification of facts and terms, reading, and writing) computation skills, problem solving skills and interpersonal skills (*Adult Functional Competency*, 1975). The study found that "20% of the adults in the sample were functionally incompetent, 34% were marginally competent, and 46% were estimated to be fully competent or proficient" (*Adult Learning & Literacy Clearinghouse Fact Sheets*, 1996, p. 5). The APL study estimated that 23 million adults were functionally illiterate and 39 million were marginally illiterate (*Adult Learning & Literacy Clearinghouse Fact Sheets*, 1996, p. 5).

The project demonstrated that the mere teaching of basic skills was inadequate to ensure carry-over into everyday life; the application of those skills to everyday problem solving was essential. As a result of this project, libraries began to incorporate problem solving and the application of basic literacy and math skills into their adult basic and literacy education programs (Schmidt, 1978, p. 9).

The Role of the Nontraditional Education Movement

*Background*

As a result of "the shifting demographics of the 1970s," colleges and universities faced a shortage of college-age students and were eager "to explore alternative curricula and formats, including credit for experience or prior knowledge" (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 179). Noncampus degree programs, a new trend in post-high school education, appeared in the early 1970s. Leading this movement were external degree programs in London and New York, CLEP—The College Level Examination Program, and a few innovative university programs offering credit for home study (Martin, 1972, p. 4). Nontraditional study provided the options adult learners needed because it eliminated time and space limitations and was designed to accommodate individual learning needs and situations (Birge, 1979, p. 173).

*Free Universities and Learning Centers*

Free universities and learning centers appeared as part of the nontraditional education movement of the late 1960s and 1970s. Free universities (also known as experimental colleges,
free schools, and communiversities) were defined as “a specific type of organization under whose auspices noncredit, nondegree, classes were offered to the general adult public” (Calvert & Draves, 1979, p. 1). In the 1960s free universities were affiliated with college campuses and were used by students looking for alternative learning opportunities (Conroy, 1980a, p. 21).

By the 1970s many free universities were independent or affiliated with community agencies and served a wide range of people seeking learning opportunities outside graded, accredited institutions (Conroy, 1980a, p. 21). Free universities charged no fees or nominal fees for classes and operated on relatively low budgets. Learning referral centers (also called learning networks or exchanges and educational referral centers) served as “educational brokers, between persons seeking specific education and sources able to provide it” (Calvert & Draves, 1979, p. 2). Sometimes the distinctions between free universities and learning referral centers were not very clear because either agency might offer classes and referral services. Together these nontraditional educational agencies formed “a strong community-based system of voluntary, supplementary adult learning” (Conroy, 1980a, p. 21).

In some instances free universities and learning referral centers formed cooperative arrangements with public libraries. The mission of these community education agencies and the public library were very similar. They all shared the common purpose of “providing the resources and facilities to foster and support learning” (Conroy, 1980a, p. 22). Meredith McElroy’s study, *The Nature of Cooperation Between Public Libraries and Free Universities/Learning Networks*, examined several cooperative community-based educational programs including the Haysville (Kansas) Community Education Program, the Wichita Free University, and the Leon County (Tallahassee, Florida) Public Library’s CONECT service (McElroy, as cited in Conroy, 1980a, pp. 22-24).

These cooperative arrangements varied because they were individually tailored to the organizations involved, the needs of the community whether rural or urban, and the available financial and human resources. The expressed purpose of the Haysville Community Education
program, started by the Haysville Public Library and guided by a steering committee of community groups, was to make the library “the recreational and educational information and resource center for the entire Haysville community” (McElroy, as cited in Conroy, 1980a, p. 22). To accomplish its goal, the program offered a wide range of activities: classes, a speakers’ bureau, a tutoring program, and a directory of educational opportunities. The Wichita Public Library’s contributions to The Wichita Free University included distribution of the free university’s catalog through the library’s network, space for classes, teachers from the library’s staff, the director’s participation on the board of directors, and learning resources from the library’s collection. The Leon County Public Library integrated the People Index (a file of local people resources) into its regular reference services to create the CONECT service which gave library users access to resource persons as well as library materials (McElroy, as cited in Conroy, 1980a, pp. 22-24).

McElroy’s study showed that cooperation was “a viable option for providing important and essential educational support services for adult learners in communities” (McElroy, as cited in Conroy, 1980a, p. 22). Furthermore, cooperation helped each organization “to better meet its goals with more users and resources” (McElroy, as cited in Conroy, 1980a, p. 24). McElroy suggested that “public libraries be open to explore free universities and learning referral centers as educational models appropriate to meet the needs of their communities” (McElroy, as cited in Conroy, 1980a, p. 22). A mutually beneficial relationship between the two organizations was possible when the free university or learning referral center was able to identify and communicate the community’s educational needs to the public library, and the public library was able to respond to the expressed needs through the acquisition of appropriate materials or the development of supportive services (Conroy, 1980a, p. 26).

Commission on Nontraditional Study

With the growing popularity of nontraditional education, it soon became apparent that research into the nature and scope of nontraditional study was needed. In 1971 the Commission
on Nontraditional Study was formed to study current practices and to make recommendations for future planning (Birge, 1979, p. 174). Gould, chairman of the commission, outlined its purpose:

The Commission will ask how the individual can be served better, how institutions might expand present capabilities, and, in the long run, how the national interest may best be served. . . . In broadest terms, our Commission is concerned with increasing access to, and recognition of, post secondary learning by whatever means such learning is or could be achieved. (Gould, as cited in Martin, 1972, pp. 4-5)

The Commission on Nontraditional Study commissioned reports and research projects; held meetings, hearings and conferences with leaders in higher education; and consulted with national, regional, and state professional and industrial organizations (Birge, 1979, p. 174). The commission discovered that the diverse nature and variety of nontraditional study activities prevented the formulation of a concise definition. Gould concluded that nontraditional study “is more of an attitude than a system” (Commission on Nontraditional study, 1973, p. xv). The commission adopted a student-oriented perspective which placed a priority on students’ needs; fostered the development of a wide range of opportunities; demonstrated concern for learners of all ages and situations; and minimized the importance of scheduling, location, and course requirements while emphasizing competence and performance (1973, p. xv).

Nontraditional study was not limited to colleges and universities. A wide range of public and private educational agencies offered nontraditional educational programs. A growing number of “individualized basic, vocational, and special interest learning opportunities” were available (Birge, 1979, p. 175). Also there were an untold number of self-directed learners who planned their own learning activities according to self-instituted criteria. Although earlier surveys of formal educational programs had shown that only a relatively small percentage (12-31%) of adults in the United States were engaged in learning activities (Cross, 1978, p. 1), surveys in the 1970s indicated that adult learning was much more widespread. Studies by Tough (1979, p. 18)
and Penland (1978, pp. 6-7) that emphasized independent, nonformal learning showed a much higher percentage (79-98%) of adults were involved in learning activities on a regular basis.

Although countless adult learning opportunities existed, many “would-be learners” were not aware that these programs existed. Perspective students needed information about the availability of programs and guidance in choosing the appropriate education program to meet their needs (Birge, 1979, p. 175). The Commission on Nontraditional Study recognized that some potential learners were reluctant to approach formal educational institutions for assistance. They suggested that the community agency providing information and guidance should be one that is seen as familiar and welcoming to people from all backgrounds. They concluded that “the public library ... is probably the best community agency to house, staff, and maintain a full guidance and counseling center” (Commission on Nontraditional Study, 1973, p. xv).

In the commission’s vision of the public library as a community information center, the library would perform a number of functions. Librarians would refer those individuals with a well defined learning interest to the appropriate educational agency or to resources to help them design their own independent learning project. They would help less confident individuals explore their interests, assess their abilities, and determine their needs. The public library would maintain information on sources of financial aid and assist learners in investigating these resources. It would assist other agencies by providing supplementary services such as assessment, group counseling, and training. However, its most important function would be to serve as the primary source of information on programs and agencies (Birge, 1979, p. 176).

The commission recognized that the public library could serve a dual role, as an information center and as a depository of materials for independent learners. The commission made several recommendations concerning the public library:

The public library should be strengthened to become a far more powerful instrument for non-traditional education . . . ; community and regional resources should be assessed to identify existing educational activities and determine the potential for new or expanded
programs; and public libraries should be encouraged to take a leadership role in developing an inventory of educational opportunities through foundation grants and other sources of financial support. (Commission on Nontraditional Study, 1973, pp. 82, 90-91)

The Commission on Nontraditional Study believed that the library could be an important component in the nontraditional education movement, but it recognized that public libraries faced some serious challenges in undertaking an active role in community education. Perhaps the greatest challenge was overcoming a passive public image. As the commission observed, "public libraries have too long been regarded as passive conveyers of information or recreation, available when needed, but not playing, or expected to play, active roles in the educational process. Their vast capabilities have often been ignored" (1973, p. 83). However, if the public library could overcome the challenges it faced, it would emerge as a stronger, more viable institution. In the commission’s opinion libraries would “no longer be merely extensions of educational programs but active planners and collaborators in them” (Commission on Nontraditional Study, 1973, p. 85).

The Adult Independent Learning Projects

As the nontraditional education movement was gaining momentum during the late 1960s and early 1970s, educational organizations were assessing the public library’s potential role as a resource for independent learners. The College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) developed a strong interest in nontraditional education as a result of its College Level Educational Program (CLEP). CLEP enabled independent learners to obtain college credit in a variety of subjects by passing a nationally standardized examination. J. O. Toro, Assistant Director of the CLEP Program, believed that public libraries could reasonably serve as study centers for independent learners and could help them prepare for the CLEP examinations (Birge, 1979, p. 178).

Toro was instrumental in developing the Adult Independent Learning (AIL) Project which sought to involve “public libraries in the design and implementation of individually tailored support services for adults engaged in or planning to engage in independent learning.
projects” (The Role of Public Libraries, 1974, p. iii). The AIL Project chose the public library as the focus of its efforts “because it represents a major information resource in the community and because its primary function is to serve the community as an information center” (Mavor, Toro, & DeProspo, 1976a, p. 2).

The AIL Project consisted of two phases. In the first phase, CEEB recruited several public library systems to participate in a pilot study “to determine how the public library might serve as an information distribution and support service center for adults desiring to obtain credit by examination” (The Role of Public Libraries, 1974, p. 5). These libraries were located near colleges participating in the CLEP program. During the first year, 1968-69, three public library systems were involved in the program: the Serra Regional System (including the San Diego Public Library), the Miami-Dade County Public Library, and the St. Louis public Library (Boles & Smith, 1979, p. 168; The Role of Public Libraries, 1974, p. 5). These libraries concentrated their efforts on publicizing and distributing information about CLEP and providing follow-up information to adults interested in studying for the examinations (The Role of Public Libraries, 1974, p. iii).

The first phase demonstrated that the public library “could serve as a highly effective center for distributing information on the CLEP examinations to large numbers of adults” (The Role of Public Libraries, 1974, p. 6). The researchers discovered that adult learners wanted more than information about the CLEP tests. They wanted assistance in studying for the tests as well as information (Boles & Smith, 1979, p. 168). Toro was familiar with the readers’ advisory service concept and felt that these services could be expanded into “a more complete educational guidance and counseling activity” (Birge, 1979, pp. 178-179).

In February 1970 Toro and representatives from the Council on Library Resources (CLR) and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) approached the Dallas Public Library with a draft proposal for a more intensive two-year project. The project, entitled “The Library as a Counseling and Independent Study Center for Achieving a Two Year College Education,”
(Birge, 1979, p. 178) was designed “to examine more closely the educational planning needs of the independent learner preparing for a CLEP examination and the role of the public library in supporting those needs” (The Role of Public Libraries, 1974, p. iii). Planners hoped that the project would provide information about the library’s ability to offer specific educational information, supply supplementary materials, and serve as “an active agent in orienting the unaffiliated adult student to the process of learning” (Brooks & Reich, 1974, p. 4).

Although the staff had reservations about the project, they studied the draft proposal over the next several months and developed a formal proposal. The proposed project sought “to investigate the role and the effectiveness of one public library system, the Dallas Public Library, with the cooperation of one institution, Southern Methodist University, in assisting adults pursuing self-education directed to academic recognition in area colleges and universities” (Brooks & Reich, 1974, p. 170). The project was approved, funded, and subsequently implemented. This part of the project was cosponsored by the Council on Library Resources (CLR), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the College Entrance Examination Board (The Role of Public Libraries, 1974, p. iii).

In the proposed project each agency was responsible for those services in which it had the greatest experience and expertise. The Dallas Public Library provided a broad range of services for independent learners studying for the CLEP examinations and seeking credit for life experience. Five college information centers offering audiovisual and print information about local colleges and universities were established at branch libraries. In addition, librarians provided information about CLEP and conducted workshops on library use. The library developed a collection of supplementary study materials and made these items available to independent learners (Brooks & Reich, 1974, pp. 170-171).

Faculty at Southern Methodist University prepared study guides for CLEP examinations in 29 major subject areas with annotated reading lists of supplementary materials available at the
library. Selected faculty members also served as tutors and study group leaders. The university was also responsible for on-going evaluation of the project (Brooks & Reich, 1974, pp. 171-72).

The library profession reacted with much interest to news of the project. As anticipated, the project provided a great deal of information about the potential problems as well as the potential rewards of this type of expanded service. Librarians became more confident as the project progressed and prospective learners became more willing to communicate their needs. The nature of the interactions between librarians and learners changed from brief encounters to active partnerships. Many learners were interested in college credit by examination; 3, 576 basic informational pamphlets, 6,000 study guides/reading lists, and 1,787 CLEP examination booklets were distributed (Birge, 1979, pp. 182-183).

Although the project focused on CLEP preparation and counseling, librarians discovered that some prospective learners had different goals for learning. Often these goals were not related to the CLEP tests. Some learners were not interested in college credit; they simply wanted to improve their academic skills and subject knowledge. Others were seeking General Education Development or adult basic education programs. Still others wanted materials to assist them in passing civil service examinations (Birge, 1979, p. 182).

By the end of the first year of the project 105 people had taken 257 CLEP examinations in 27 subject areas and had earned 1,205 credit hours of credit (Birge, 1981, p. 124). The discrepancy between the number of study guides distributed and the number of examinations completed led the Dallas Public Library staff to question the value of the study guides. Librarians felt that the guides may not have been particularly useful because they were developed for general use in preparing for the CLEP examinations; they were not adapted to meet the unique needs of each individual learner (The Role of Public Libraries, 1974, p. 6). Librarians recognized that "adult learners’ needs for help in the actual process of studying . . . were not being completely met in the Project" (Brooks & Reich, 1974, p. 152).
Four conclusions were drawn from the first phase. First, the public library was an effective instrument for distributing information about nontraditional educational opportunities; the publicity campaigns produced a large number of inquiries about the testing program. Second, specialized training in the planning and implementation of a program of study was needed to prepare librarians to serve as learners' advisors. Third, there was a need for an agency to coordinate the activities of the participating libraries. Fourth, formal evaluation procedures were needed to determine the effectiveness of learners' advisory services (Mavor, Toro, & DeProspo, 1976c, p. 294).

In 1972 officials from CEEB, NEH, and CLR met with representatives from the American Library Association and the Educational Testing Service to review the results of the first phase. The group was encouraged by the results of the experimentation with four libraries and agreed that a national project should be undertaken. Although the participating agencies had wanted the professional association for librarians to administer the project, ALA declined, so CEEB continued its sponsoring role (Mavor et al., 1976c, p. 294).

The second phase of the project was initiated in 1972 with the establishment of a CEEB Office of Library Independent Study and Guidance Projects (the National Office) with Toro serving as its director. Financial support for the National Office came from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the U.S. Office of Education, the Council on Library Resources, and CEEB (Mavor et al., 1976c, p. 294). The three-year second phase of the project marked the beginning of "a national effort to involve libraries across the country in providing formal support services to all independent learners" (The Role of Public Libraries, 1974, p. 6). With the second phase, the potential clientele was enlarged to include "any adult who was planning to become involved or was involved in a serious, sustained effort to learn independently of a formal institution" (Mavor et al., 1976c, p. 294).

The National Office conducted a nationwide campaign to encourage public libraries in different areas of the country to participate. Nine individual public libraries and one state library
network participated in the three-year pilot project. The participants were the Atlanta Public Library; the Denver Public Library; the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore; the Miami-Dade County, Florida, Public Library; the Portland, Maine, Public Library; the Salt Lake City Public Library; the St. Louis Public Library; The Tulsa City-County Public Library; the Free Public Library of Woodbridge, New Jersey; and the New York State Library Network (Conroy, 1980c, p. 17). The National Office provided coordination, guidance, and assistance in service planning and execution, staff training, publicity and advertising, and testing and evaluation of planned services (Mavor et al., 1976a, p. 3; The Role of Public Libraries, 1974, p. iv ). Each library developed learners' advisory services structured to meet the needs of its particular community. Although the programs varied to some extent, the majority of the libraries used a combination of two service approaches: advisory service and information support (Birge, 1979, p. 189).

The advisory services were similar in many respects to the readers' advisory services of the 1920s and 1930s. Librarians interviewed prospective learners “concerning personal goals and interests, educational attainments, and past experience” (Birge, 1979, p. 191). Based on the information gathered from the interview, the librarian helped the learner to specify learning goals, to narrow the learner’s content area of interest, to plan the learning project, and find appropriate resources (Birge, 1979, p. 191).

Information support services included the “provision of materials, the development of study aids, and the making of referrals either inside or outside the library” (Mavor et al., 1976b, p. 1). Information support services were the means for executing the learning plan; thus materials selection and provision were an integral part of learner’s advisory services. Librarians maintained an extensive file of information on adult learning opportunities and resources in the community (Birge, 1979, p. 189). Using information from the file, advisors referred learners to other agencies if they felt their clients needed professional counseling or could benefit from exposure to other learning opportunities. Often librarians would introduce the learner “directly to the referral agency” (Birge, 1979, p. 191). In some programs librarians would contact the referral agency,
explain the learner's needs, obtain program information, and set up an appointment for the learner. Follow-up would be made after an appropriate length of time (Birge, 1979, p. 192).

Information support services also included the provision of group learning events such as lectures, workshops, seminars, etc. (Thresher, 1981, p. 39).

The learners' advisory service developed over a three-year period. During the first year, service planning and staff training were the major concerns. A series of three workshops were held to introduce perspective learners' advisors to the skills and knowledge they would need to work with adult independent learners (Mavor et al., 1976b, p. 1). The advisory component was the greatest challenge for most librarians. Few librarians had extensive prior experience in in-depth interviewing. They were uncertain how to structure client interactions to obtain the needed information. The staff training provided by the National Office was designed to address librarians' concerns. The initial series of workshops included topics such as understanding the adult learner, decision making and educational planning, interviewing techniques, needs assessment, and guiding the learner in the use of study materials (Mavor et al., 1976a, pp. 46-53). In a discussion of the project, Barbara Conroy observed that each of these topics was an integral component of adult education (1980c, p. 19).

During the second year the participating libraries conducted pilot studies to test the planned services. In the pilot studies the libraries provided services on a small scale and used a data collection system to describe and evaluate the results. Each library devised its own data collection system. The pilot studies identified the need for additional training for learners' advisors, the need to streamline service delivery procedures, and the need to modify data collection systems and evaluation methods (Mavor et al., 1976b, p. 2).

The pilot studies demonstrated that the public library could effectively serve adult independent learners. There were two significant outcomes of the pilot-testing phase. First, the libraries recognized the viability and usefulness of in-depth advisory and information support services for adult independent learners. Second, the libraries realized the value of a common
format for describing and evaluating learners' advisory services (Mavor et. al., 1976b, p. 2). During the third year services were expanded, a common data collection system was developed and applied, and information about service planning and delivery was disseminated to public libraries throughout the country (Mavor et. al., 1976b, p. 2).

One of the goals of the project was to increase awareness of the concept of the learners' advisory service and to stimulate professional interest in serving adult independent learners. Consultants from the National Office conducted 24 one-day seminars to acquaint staff from small and medium-sized libraries with this concept. Most of the 500 participants felt that the seminar had provided a basic understanding of learners' advisory work, but many indicated the need for additional training before undertaking this type of service. Only 25% of the participants considered learners' advisory service to be definitely feasible. Most (62%) wanted to give the idea further consideration. The remaining participants (13%) thought learner's advisory service was not feasible for their libraries (Mavor et. al., 1976b, p. 72).

By the end of 1975, oversight by the College Entrance Examination Board was coming to an end; however, the participating libraries continued to offer services to independent learners. A Consortium for Public Library Innovation was created to improve the quality of learners' advisory service; to promote research on library service and management problems; to encourage the development of better data collection and evaluation systems; to share expertise in planning, training, and evaluation; and to disseminate information about the consortium's activities (Mavor et. al., 1976b, p. 73). Initially the consortium consisted of the libraries participating in the Adult Independent Learning Project, but later it expanded to include other interested libraries (Birge, 1979, p. 196). Despite the initial interest, the consortium was not long lived; it disbanded in June 1980 (Conroy, 1981, p. 85).

There were a number of important outcomes from the AIL Project. The service model and to a lesser extent the evaluative model were replicated in selected libraries throughout the nation (Thresher, 1981, p. 39). A number of libraries adopted some of the model's components
and provided a modified form of learners’ advisory service (Conroy, 1980c, p. 20). Changes were made in resource development in the nine AIL Project libraries to better meet the many needs of adult learners. The project provided a wealth of information about who adult learners were and what they wanted to learn (Thresher, 1981, p. 39). The AIL Project deepened the interaction between librarians and library users (Conroy, 1981, pp. 84-85). It demonstrated that public libraries could help connect learners and educational opportunities, could provide informational support services to adult learners, and could provide other special services. In fact, the St. Louis Public Library developed the first library based, nonacademic CLEP testing center (Thresher, 1981, p. 39).

Jacquelyn Thresher credited AIL-New York State for (a) increased awareness among librarians of the needs of adult learners; (b) changes in material acquisitions practices to include more textbooks, self-study guides, etc.; and (c) improvements in the gathering, organization, and distribution of information about educational resources and programs. The New York State project also led to the development of job information centers and clearinghouses of information about jobs, job searches, and career opportunities as well as vocational and career education (Thresher, 1981, p. 39).

The AIL Project gave the public library an opportunity to move beyond its traditional supportive role to become an active center of learning. The movement toward an expansion of the library’s educational role was supported and encouraged by noted adult educators such as C. O. Houle and M. S. Knowles and a number of nontraditional educational agencies (Birge, 1979, p. 201).

Despite the positive outcomes, the Adult Independent Learning Project did not lead to widespread implementation of learners’ advisory services in libraries throughout the country. There was substantial change in many of the participating libraries, but other less committed libraries phased out the services when the project ended (Conroy, 1980c, p.20).
In a paper entitled "The 1970s—Decade of the Adult Learner," presented at an institute on adult services, Jacquelyn Thresher discussed the AIL Project and the public library’s role in serving adult learners. In the discussion following Thresher’s presentation, participants debated the library’s role in adult learning. Several barriers to involvement in adult learning were identified. First, many public librarians did not feel that sophisticated adult learning programs had any place in public libraries. Librarians felt ill prepared to become learners’ advisers because they lacked the proper credentials. They also found it difficult to find the time to give educational and vocational guidance on an individual basis (Shumer, 1981, p. 41).

Public librarians’ lack of interest in individualized services was attributed in part to the second barrier, the typical librarian’s orientation to reference work. Most librarians were taught more about “ready reference,” in which patrons’ needs were dealt with during a single and comparatively brief exchange at the reference desk or over the phone, than they were about more thorough and intensive reference interviewing techniques (Shumer, 1981, p. 42). Also reference service traditionally emphasized research skills and the identification of accurate responses to informational requests. Interviewing and guidance techniques were given a lower priority. Consequently, most librarians were not working with patrons to discover their real needs. Even when librarians understood patrons’ needs, they were not confident in providing guidance to assist patrons with decision making (Shumer, 1981, p. 41-42).

Finances were a third barrier in that public library funding was tight in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Learner advisory services were labor intensive and not cost-effective. They were given a lesser priority than ready reference and were often among the first services to be eliminated in a financial crisis (Shumer, 1981, p. 42). Also library managers encouraged reference librarians to be more efficient in their work; the number of reference transactions completed was an important statistic for annual reports. The quantitative orientation toward reference work was suggested as another barrier to effective learner advisory services, which required enough time to do a thorough interview (Shumer, 1981, p. 42).
The issue of whether public libraries should provide learners' advisory services continued to be debated at the end of the decade with important questions remaining unanswered: Can this commitment be shared by enough professional librarians to assure the incorporation of new elements into the service philosophy of public librarians? Can librarians accept the new role as consistent with their philosophy? Finally, and crucially, are librarians flexible enough to adapt to new responsibilities and methods and open enough to turn anxieties into opportunities for achievement? (Boles & Smith, 1979, p. 176)

Educational Services for Adults

Readers' Advisory Service

S. L. Baker provided a short history of readers' advisory services in a 1993 article on administrative support for reading guidance. Readers' advisory services had “a shaky foundation” from their inception because they received “mixed levels of administrative support” (Baker, 1993, p. 13). Advisory services as a separate, distinct service “began in 1923, when the Chicago Public Library established a ‘reading guidance’ department separate from its reference department, which was to remain ‘information-oriented’” (Baker, 1993, p. 13). Chicago’s service was soon replicated in Cincinnati, Minneapolis, Boston, and other urban libraries. These advisory services were staffed by librarians who interviewed their clients, determined their needs and interests, and designed individual reading plans for them—plans that generally encouraged patrons to read authoritative, yet well-written books. The librarians also provided an early form of selective dissemination of information (SDI) by notifying patrons when the library acquired new materials in their area of interest (Baker, 1993, p. 13).

This type of highly individualized service appealed to patrons and to many librarians. Advisory services grew rapidly during the 1920s and early 1930s. By 1935 advisory services were available in the main libraries of 44 large urban libraries. By 1941 formal reading guidance was provided in many branches within the large urban library systems and had spread to the main
libraries of smaller cities. However, the growth of advisory services stopped during World War II and began to reverse itself during the late 1940s and 1950s (Baker, 1993, p. 13). Conservative library leaders criticized the costs and labor-intensive nature of advisory service. The service reached too few people to be cost-effective on a large scale. The reorganization of large public libraries into subject departments and the budget restrictions of the 1940s were largely responsible for the move away from individualized advisory services to efforts to serve groups (Potts, 1994, pp. 538-539). Administrators began to phase out separate readers’ advisory services in the late 1940s (Baker, 1993, p. 13).

“Although the readers’ advisory movement generated numerous books and articles in the professional literature, most of a praiseworthy nature, the service was not an unqualified success” (Potts, 1994, p. 538). Readers’ advisory service, like many of the public library’s educational activities, was only moderately successful. “Fewer than one half of those who received the reading lists ever used them, and those who read the books read only one third of them, or an average of four books for each user” (Bloom, 1976, p. 383). These findings were interpreted in different ways depending on one’s viewpoint. Proponents of the service saw these findings as encouraging. Recognizing the demand for readers’ advisory services, they proposed expansion of the service. On the other hand, those who opposed the service saw these figures as discouraging, particularly when compared to the figures for book circulation. They recommended curtailment of the service (Bloom, 1976, p. 383).

Readers’ advisory services had diminished greatly by the mid-1950s. By 1958 the term reading guidance had replaced readers’ advisor as an indexing term in Library Literature (Rubin, 1982, p. 99). The change in terminology “reflected a shift in emphasis and a dispersal of the readers’ advisory function” (Potts, 1994, p. 539). In most libraries reading guidance had become the responsibility of all public service librarians. The focus of individual reading guidance had shifted from personal development to helping the reader find the appropriate book to meet his or her need. In large departmentalized libraries, reading guidance was often a component of
information services in either the subject reference or general reference departments (Monroe, 1970, p. 249). "In effect, the reference and information service librarian absorbed the role of the readers' adviser" (Potts, 1994, p. 539). Individualized readers' guidance "faded" from the adult services librarian's "repertoire of services" (Potts, 1994, p. 539).

Although reading guidance was still considered an important aspect of services for children and young adults, reading guidance for adults was largely overshadowed by the emphasis on group services and reference work. Reading guidance and information and reference work were interrelated, but librarians failed to stress the inherent connection between the two areas (Smith, 1966, p. 528). Some librarians who were "more oriented to reference than advisory service and less conscious of the adult education point of view" responded to the "readers' query as a question to be looked up rather than as an indication of an unexpressed need to be explored" (Hawes, 1959, p. 23).

Interest in individualized readers' guidance was still evident in the 1950s. Large urban libraries such as the New York Public Library continued many of the services that had been offered to readers even as readers' advisory was absorbed by reference and information services. In 1955 the New York Public Library continued to offer reading guidance and preparation of reading lists for individuals and organizations as part of its adult education services. The Cincinnati Public Library Readers' Bureau continued to provide separate advisory services and reading courses as well as group and community-oriented activities. The Wisconsin Free Library Commission sponsored the Institute on Informal Education through Libraries, which included discussions on aspects of individualized reader assistance (Birge, 1981, p. 71).

Although readers' advisory service, in the traditional sense, had almost disappeared as a distinct area of expertise by 1960, many librarians still considered it a fundamental library service. In 1962 H. H. Lyman prepared the booklet on Reader's Guidance Service in a Small Library for the ALA Small Library Project (Birge, 1981, p. 72). In June 1965 the University of Wisconsin Library School sponsored a three-day institute on readers' advisory services designed
to reinstate reading guidance as a function of adult services librarians. The institute drew a much larger than anticipated audience (Smith, 1965). In July 1969 the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Pittsburg presented the Institute on Readers Advisory Services: Advisory Counseling for Libraries (Penland, 1969).

A survey was conducted in 1972 in order to gain an idea of the current status of readers’ advisory services. Lee Regan sent questionnaires to a representative sample of 150 public libraries throughout the country. The response rate was 84% with 126 respondents (Regan, 1973, p. 230). Of these, 23 or a little less than 20% reported the existence of a “fully designated position, reader’s adviser or its equivalent, whose responsibility it is to suggest, guide, and develop patron’s book reading habits” (Regan, 1973, p. 230). This figure indicted that a small but significant amount of readers’ advisory work was still being done in the early 1970s.

In libraries in which reader’s advisory service was not offered, requests for reading guidance were handled in various ways. Among the methods were dispersing advisory responsibility among all adult services staff; provision of reader’s guidance at the circulation or reference desk; provision of reference and advisory services by subject specialists in departmentalized libraries; and the provision of booklists of recommended reading, book displays, subject bibliographies, and reader interest services (Regan, 1973, pp. 231-232). Of the 126 respondents, 37 libraries reported that requests for reader’s guidance were handled at the reference desk, while 20 said the circulation staff dealt with these requests (Regan, 1973, p. 232). Regan was in favor in of the reference desk option, “since the function of reference is more typically advisory in nature than circulation, where information-giving is usually cursory and impersonal” (1973, p. 232). Regan noted that good reference service methods closely resembled the techniques of readers’ advisory service; both “take into account the nature of the individual requesting information, including his or her motivation in asking, in order to supply the best, most apt answer” or appropriate level of guidance (1973, p. 232). The goals of the two services differed in that the primary goal of reference service was usually the provision of “facts or an
immediate solution to a short-term need," whereas reading guidance attempted to fulfill a need of longer duration "by developing for the reader a progression of facts, ideas, and personalities" (Regan, 1973, p. 232).

As discussed earlier, the concept of personalized advisory service was briefly revived by the Adult Independent Learning Project in the form of the learners' advisory service. Once again librarians counseled self-directed learners in individually designed learning projects. However, the learners' advisory service faded away after the AIL Project was concluded (Potts, 1994, p. 539). Like its predecessor, learners' advisory service was the victim of professional resistance and economic expediency.

**Literacy Education**

Public library involvement in literacy education was minimal before the 1960s. Obstacles to service included the lack of appropriate materials, minimal resources to expend on programming, and limited access to large groups of adult nonreaders (Birge, 1979, pp.155-156). During the relatively prosperous 1950s, there were few library literacy programs that attained national prominence. Except for a few highly publicized programs, such as the Brooklyn Public Library's Reading Improvement Program, the majority of public libraries limited their literacy efforts to providing high-interest and low-vocabulary materials and referring adults with minimal reading skills to adult education programs (Rolstad, 1990, pp. 249-250).

H. L. Smith's 1954 survey on adult education activities in public libraries provided some insight into the extent of literacy services in public libraries. The survey included two questions pertaining to literacy education. Under the category of *training*, question 18 asked if the library provided fundamental reading instruction. Examples were classes for foreign language-speaking groups or groups with limited reading skills. Question 19 asked if the library provided remedial reading instruction. Examples included classes in the improvement of reading skills for teachers, reading group members, study groups, and staff members (Smith, 1954, p. 28). A ranking of the 37 services included in the survey showed fundamental reading instruction at the 32nd position
and remedial reading at the 34th. Out of 1,692 respondents, 110 (6.5%) provided fundamental reading instruction; 94 (5.5%) provided remedial reading instruction (Smith, 1954, p. 17). When libraries were asked which programs they wanted to provide, fundamental reading instruction was ranked 29th, and remedial reading instruction was ranked 23rd. Out of 1,692 libraries, 168 or 9.9% expressed interest in providing remedial reading instruction, while 138 or 8.1% were interested in fundamental reading instruction. The actual number of libraries providing either of these services was small, and the number of libraries wanting to provide these services was not much greater (Smith, 1954, p. 21).

Some of the responses to Smith's survey indicated that librarians did not see literacy training as a service that libraries should provide. One librarian commented, "Don't think it is a part of library service; should be done by schools" (Smith, 1954, p. 7). One librarian seemed totally oblivious to the problem, "What I would like to know is, why is teaching reading included at all. Everyone can read" (Smith, 1954, p. 29). Another librarian was much more enthusiastic, "I'm so glad to see reading instruction. Can you tell me what libraries are doing something with it? I should like to write to them. I want to start it here" (Smith, 1954, p. 29).

The 1959 survey on library adult education tended to confirm Smith's findings. Of 13 areas of interest to community educators, librarians were least interested in fundamental and literacy education and in recreational and physical education (Gregory, 1959, p. 788). Few libraries were involved in literacy education until the social reforms of the 1960s when the resulting legislation persuaded public librarians to join "the struggle against illiteracy in appreciable numbers" (Nauratil, 1985, p. 86). E. T. Smith noted that public libraries did not embrace literacy education as a library responsibility until the National War on Poverty stimulated interest in illiteracy (1980, p. 66).

By the late 1960s the library profession finally began to recognize that literacy education was "a significant and relevant method for reaching out to those individuals and groups often identified as disadvantaged, nonusers, or under users of library services" (Coleman, 1986,
During the War on Poverty, storefront libraries offered adult basic and literacy education and English language courses as well as services to older adults and to Blacks (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 178). There may have been a self-serving element in the library community’s response. Although nonreaders had little reason to use the library, the newly literate had the skill, the need, and a reason for using the library (Coleman, 1986, p. 211).

By the early 1970s, professional concern for undereducated adults had grown. Studies were undertaken to determine how librarians could better serve nonreaders and the newly literate, and a variety of special projects were developed to reach the educationally and culturally disadvantaged members of the community. “Activist librarians sought to persuade less enthusiastic colleagues” of the importance of providing literacy services (Birge, 1981, p. 112). Recognizing the need to provide “leadership and direction” in literacy education, graduate school library programs began to offer seminars on library service to undereducated adults (Birge, 1979, p. 165). In 1972 Wayne State University conducted a seminar on Public Library Service to the Illiterate Adult. Papers presented at the seminar (a) addressed the characteristics of undereducated adults, (b) presented research on nonreaders, (c) reviewed materials for adult new readers, (d) discussed public library programs and services for newly literate adults, and (e) provided information about adult education activities offered by schools and other agencies (Casey, 1974).

Three studies published in the late 1970s and early 1980s provided a picture of the public library’s involvement in literacy education from the 1920s through the 1970s. L. E. Birge’s 1981 study placed literacy activities in the broader context of the public libraries’ commitment to educational services for adult independent learners. The study provided a historical review of the development of literacy programs in public libraries during the period from the 1920s to the early 1970s. Birge categorized adult literacy activities into service areas ranging from supplying materials to community literacy programs to sponsoring direct instruction. H. H. Lyman (1979) surveyed the literature on public library literacy efforts from 1955 to 1978 for an article in Library Trends. The review complemented and extended the historical information provided in
Birge’s study. E. G. Smith (1981) also traced the development of public library participation in literacy education and reviewed the professional response to illiteracy, beginning with ALA’s activities in the 1960s and 1970s.

Although the professional leadership encouraged and sanctioned involvement in literacy activities, literacy was still not widely accepted as a public library responsibility. Birge observed that there was “little evidence in the late 1970s that the majority of librarians were persuaded that service to illiterates was a priority concern for librarians” (1981, pp. 114-115). Public library staffs were not convinced that they should undertake specialized services when there was little or no federal funding to support their efforts and local financial resources were rapidly diminishing (Birge, 1981, p. 115).

H. H. Lyman noted that issues and controversies continued to exist regarding the public library’s role in literacy education. Questions about librarians’ involvement with undereducated clienteles and nonreaders, about the allocation of funds specifically for literacy programs, and about barriers to interagency cooperation were raised by library administrators and trustees (Lyman, 1980, p. 15).

Lyman emphasized that the provision of literacy classes was only the beginning. New readers needed library services and personal assistance from librarians during their studies and afterward in the practice of new skills. Improving reading skills was an on-going process. Librarians should not “abandon new readers” once literacy classes were over; rather, they should provide activities to help new readers “become confident and efficient learners” (Lyman, 1980, p. 15). Lyman stressed that “all this takes time, planning, and resource commitment” (1980, p. 15). Lyman acknowledged that the needs of new readers had “to be balanced against traditional demands and the current pre-occupation with the professional use of sophisticated, technological information and retrieval systems” (1980, p. 15). Lyman feared that the public library’s educational goals were in the process of being displaced by access to information. “The problem
of ‘goal displacement,’ i.e. when attention is diverted into a novel or more obvious need, is a real
one, particularly when those affected are the lesser informed and skilled” (Lyman, 1980, p. 15).

**Information Literacy and Library Use Instruction**

Information literacy and library use instruction include (a) the teaching of basic library
and computer skills; (b) instruction in the use of new information tools; (c) instruction in the
identification, location, and use of appropriate sources; and (d) instruction in the use of critical
thinking skills and evaluative techniques for determining the validity and reliability of retrieved
information (Crowley, 2005b, The Educational Model section, para. 9; Gorman, 2000, p.110).
Instruction is stressed rather than the direct delivery of information except in those instances in
which direct delivery is clearly the best method for meeting the patron’s needs (Himmel &

Library literature indicates that formal library use instruction has not been a commonly
provided service in public libraries. In 1927 ALA found that few public libraries reported any
organized efforts to instruct adult readers in the use of the card catalog or of reference works,
except when the patron requested assistance or a particularly conscientious librarian took
advantage of the opportunity to instruct the patron in an unobtrusive way (American Library
Association, 1926-1927, p. 110).

Although many public librarians believed that public libraries should offer library use
instruction, there were no published studies that evaluated the library use skills of adult public
library users (Diehl & Weech, 1991, pp. 33-34). Published surveys dealt with librarian’s
perceptions of adult library users’ needs, not the users’ perceptions of their own needs. A 1968
survey of 1,730 public libraries suggested that there was a need for research in the area of library
use instruction for adults. Kathleen Molz analyzed responses to the survey questions and reported
that librarians perceived library users as “hesitant, bewildered, reluctant, ignorant, and fearful”
(Molz, 1968, pp. 10-11). Respondents agreed that “orientation techniques were more honored in
the breach than in the observance” (Molz, 1968, p. 15). Many librarians thought the current
practice of providing individual instruction only as requested was inadequate and needed to be reconsidered (Molz, 1968, p. 15).

Studies in the 1970s indicated that formal library use instruction was rarely offered. Goggin’s 1973 study of 68 public libraries in Colorado found that three provided formal instruction, 27 offered informal instruction, and 32 provided no library instruction at all (Goggin, as cited by Newman, 1974, p. 61). R. T. Newman’s survey of urban public libraries in Colorado found that seven of 17 responding libraries had no program to orient or teach use skills to adults. The other libraries did not provide formal programs of instruction but offered basic library use instruction to special groups upon request (Newman, 1974, p. 61).

The public library section of the 1975 Directory of Library Instruction Programs in Wisconsin indicated that “formal library instruction programs [were] nonexistent in most public libraries in Wisconsin” (Stoffle, Herrick, & Chernik, 1975, p. 44). The authors explained that “formal instruction is just not one of the main objectives of these libraries whose functions are more oriented toward providing specific information when it is needed and towards readers’ advisory service” (Stoffle et al., 1975, p. 44).

Lack of public demand for this service was apparently the primary reason that most public libraries chose not to offer formal library use instruction in the 1970s. Studies suggested that public library users were satisfied with their library use skills. In M. L. Bundy’s survey only 16% of users asked for help from the library staff. Nearly half (47%) of users were completely satisfied with the results of their searches, 28.5% were partially satisfied, 7% were completely unsatisfied, and 17.5% did not answer the question. Furthermore, users seemed to think the public library was easy to use (Bundy, 1967, pp. 952, 956). A national survey conducted by the Gallup Organization in 1976 found that 90% of the public thought public libraries were very easy or fairly easy to use (p. 43). The results of a telephone survey of randomly selected Illinois residents supported the Gallup survey’s findings. Nearly all (94%) of public library users and over three fourths of nonusers thought the public library was easy to use (Elrick & Lavidge, Inc., 1977,
Kirkendall and Stoffle summed up the situation regarding library use instruction in the late 1970s by stating "Public library patrons do not appear to be aware of the need for library instruction and do not respond positively when such programs are offered" (1982, p. 56). There appeared to be little reason for public libraries to offer library use instruction for adults before the 1980s.

Chapter Summary

Interest in library adult education tended to ebb and flow with the availability of outside funding. Philanthropy played a key role in the early library adult education movement and in its revival during the 1950s. The Carnegie Corporation encouraged the development and expansion of reading courses and readers' advisory services in the 1920s and 1930s. When Carnegie funding ended, interest in adult education declined. The decade of the 1940s was a quiet period. Funding from the Ford Foundation's Fund for Adult Education revived interest in adult education throughout the 1950s. Library adult education in the 1950s focused on the humanities and the liberal arts. The ALA Adult Education Projects were featured prominently in the literature and demonstrated the capabilities of public libraries to serve as nonformal agencies of adult education. Adult education became more prominent in the structure of ALA when the ALA Adult Services Division (ASD) was created in 1957.

The Adult Services Division and federal legislation were the major stimuli for library adult education in the 1960s. ASD encouraged study and experimentation in the development of services for adults as individuals and in groups and laid a sound foundation for the future development of adult education as a component of adult services. As a result of the federal War on Poverty, library adult education came to be associated with remedial education. Federal funds were instrumental to the development of outreach programs in the 1960s, which provided adult basic and literacy education to disadvantaged adults. Adult literacy services were provided by only a relatively small number of large city libraries before the federal legislation of the 1960s. The development of educational programs for preschool children and parents was influenced by
the federal Head Start program. In the 1960s the public library was beginning to take on the role of a lifelong learning center, but there was no theoretical framework to support the trend (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 178).

When the information and referral movement came along in the early 1970s, I&R became the new topic of professional discourse, and outreach services and adult education were relegated to the background. As the decade progressed, computer technology and the provision of information became the central focus of public library conferences, publications, and publicity. Although information was emphasized by the professional leadership, public libraries continued to provide a wide range of programs and services for the general public including educational services and programming for adults.

The issue of illiteracy became a topic of national concern in the 1970s. The provision of adult literacy services was sanctioned and advocated by the professional leadership. The provision of literacy services for adults grew somewhat as a result of the federal “Right to Read” program and funding through the Library Services and Construction Act, but public library involvement still remained relatively limited.

By the end of the 1970s, commitment to education in American society diminished as public concerns shifted to the economy. At the federal level balancing the budget and increasing defense spending were viewed as more important than continuing social reform programs. The decline in federal support coupled with the growing unwillingness of taxpayers on the local and state levels to support public services resulted in the elimination of many library programs begun in the 1960s and 1970s. Specialized services such as the learners’ advisory service were seen as extras, rather than as essential components of the library’s service mandate.

Many librarians viewed adult education as just another fad, another attempt to find the right combination of services to persuade the public that the library was a useful, valuable servant of the people. Advocates of a more defined educational role for public librarians were criticized for believing “the rhetoric about the public library’s proclaimed historic responsibility for
contributing to an educated and informed citizenry” and ignoring the fact that the public library’s “original purpose of promoting continuing education was never actually fulfilled” (Pungitore, 1989, p. 36). Opponents to the concept of the learners’ advisory service pointed out that many adult education programs had failed in large part because “outside funding or cooperation from educational institutions” had been withdrawn (Pungitore, 1989, p. 128). In a review of the history of adult services, Herbert Bloom observed that when outside agencies discontinued their support, the librarian lost his or her “impetus as a teacher and counselor” (1976, p. 396).
CHAPTER IV
COMMITMENT TO ADULT EDUCATION, 1980-2006

Background

The library literature of the past 25 years documents the dramatic change in public libraries that has occurred since 1980. M. B. Eisenberg, K. L. Spitzer, Ilana Kingsley, and Christine Darby conducted a systematic content analysis of the professional literature published between October 1, 1988, and September 30, 1990. The analysis included journals, conference proceedings, input into the ERIC document collection (RIE) and dissertations (1990 p. 2). The content analysis identified 14 trends and issues in seven content analysis categories: “management, services, technical developments, the field, research/theory, personnel, and instructional processes” (Eisenberg et al., 1990, p. 6). The methodology used in the literature review was drawn from the techniques of content analysis and Naisbett’s approach to identifying megatrends (Eisenberg et al., 1990, p. 3).

Eisenberg characterized two of the trends as “megatrends,” pervasive trends found in every broad category and subtopic. The most important, overriding megatrend was “concern for the impact of technology” (Eisenberg et al., 1990, p. 7). Eisenberg and associates concluded that “the library world was in the midst of technological restructuring” (Eisenberg et al., 1990, p. 7). The second megatrend was a “focus on the user and the impact of specific developments on the user” (Brennan, 1991, p. 1). Regardless of the topic under discussion, there was “a clear emphasis on implications for users” (Brennan, 1991, p. 1). For example, the literature on technology focused on “end-user interaction, user-friendly systems and features, and the development of systems to meet diverse user needs” (Eisenberg et al., 1990, p. 9). Articles on planning and management concentrated on the use of output measures and determining how library operations could be improved to provide more effective user services. Specific services were discussed in terms of their effectiveness in meeting the needs of diverse user groups (Eisenberg et al., 1990, p. 9).
The top three topics—technical developments, management, and services—represented nearly two thirds (61%) of all the articles, papers, and presentations analyzed. Technological developments of interest included the growing popularity and expanding capabilities of CD-ROM technology and the enhancement of computer-based information resources as a result of “improved computing, user interfaces, storage capacity, multimedia options, and other techniques associated with artificial intelligence” (Eisenberg et al., 1990, p. 9).

Important developments in management included (a) “the adoption . . . of systematic planning processes and evaluation measures” such as the Public Library Development program that focused on outputs rather than inputs; (b) collection management issues such as preservation of rare collections, management of special collections, and the development of responsive, user-oriented collections; and (c) “management of automation activities, including retrospective conversion and system implementation” (Eisenberg et al., 1990, p. 10).

In the area of services there were notable developments: (a) an increase in services to special clienteles (e.g., minorities, young adults, immigrants, older adults) while maintaining the regular program of services, (b) an expanded information skills curriculum including instruction in how to use computer-based information systems (e.g., database selection, query formulation, Boolean logic), and (c) greater involvement in literacy promotion (Eisenberg et al., 1990, p.10).

Eisenberg’s research team also discovered another issue that would become increasingly more important in the 1990s. They found that the library literature reflected a growing consensus that “library school [was] not enough: professional education should continue throughout the librarian’s career” (1990, p. 33). The literature of the late 1980s addressed concerns pertaining to professional education and continuing education for library and information professionals. Two of the concerns were applicable to libraries of all kinds: “(1) the need for training related to new technologies, and (2) the need for libraries to offer more in-house training sessions” (Eisenberg et al., 1990, p. 33).
In 1990 J. C. Durrance and Connie Van Fleet conducted a public library leadership survey focusing on "change, the transmission of ideas, and the role of research in public library practice" (1992, p. 31). In their article, "Public Libraries: Adapting to Change," the authors examined the views of 23 public library leaders on the most important changes in public library practice in the previous 15 years and their predictions of "major changes likely to face public librarians in the next decade" (p. 32). The major changes fell into several distinct categories: "(a) increasing access to information technology, (b) planning to meet community needs, (c) responding to societal and community needs, (d) adopting public relations and marketing techniques, (e) responding to limited funding" (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 32).

The most dramatic change was the impact of technology on public libraries. All of the interviewees agreed that the computer had had "a profound impact" on library operations. Computers had enabled public librarians to serve their communities much more effectively and efficiently through "enhanced access within libraries and between systems . . . simplified data gathering for decision making," and "effective inventory control" (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 32). The development of informational and bibliographic databases had given librarians powerful tools. The addition of videos to public library collections had brought in new groups of users. Video and computer technology were "expanding the parameters of the library" and helping to change the image of the public library in the community (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 32).

The second change having the greatest impact on public libraries was the adoption of the community-based planning model. The planning process developed by PLA represented a "radical departure from input-based standards, which had been the basis for 'good' public library practice for most of the century" (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 33). The interviewees credited PLA's Planning Process for Public Libraries, the Performance Measures for Public Libraries, Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries, and strategic planning models developed by other organizations for having facilitated "some of the most important recent changes in public
libraries” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 33). PLA’s planning manuals were developed on “the premise that national standards could not adequately help local public libraries develop goals based on community needs” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 33). Public library leaders were convinced that the needs of the community were the most importance criteria for developing library services. Planning was seen as “a valuable mechanism for effectively identifying and responding to community needs” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 33). Library leaders indicated that the shift to planning had come at an opportune time just as “economic necessity and changes in their communities” had dictated “a more studied approach to management” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 33). Although the shift toward planning had not yet produced the dramatic changes characteristic of technological change, it promised to be just as revolutionary because it demanded that public libraries focus on library users (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 33).

PLA’s Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries recommended that library planners limit their roles to three or four. Leaders were unsure what impact this recommendation would have on the future direction of their libraries. Change in the public library’s program of public services was generally driven by the identification of specific unmet needs. Few of the leaders discussed “change as an outgrowth of the library’s role choices” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 33). However, some leaders were concerned about the possible over reliance on the “Popular Materials Library” role. Arthur Curley was concerned that major urban public libraries had abandoned much of their historic role in collection development, collection preservation, and provision of access and placed too much emphasis on the recreational function. Curley believed that this change in practice had tended to lessen “the ability of public libraries nationally to fulfill their potential” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 33).

Although evaluation and accountability were inherent aspects of strategic planning, these topics were mentioned less frequently than other facets of planning. Some leaders were concerned about the adequacy of current measurement tools (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 33). Although the current evaluation tools were a significant improvement over the input measures used in the
past, they were still “inadequate to the task” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 34). Robert Croneberger asserted that current approaches “seemed to be driven by a technocrat mentality” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 34). They were capable of measuring tangible impacts such as the number of people attending a library program, but they were incapable of capturing “the less tangible impact of library services on the lives of people in the community” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 34). New and better evaluation tools were needed to communicate the importance of library services and “the extent to which public libraries were effectively meeting the needs of their diverse communities” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 34).

The third major change identified by library leaders was the library’s new emphasis on responding to societal and community needs. Most of the leaders believed that public libraries were becoming more responsive to their communities. They recognized an increase in the development of “diverse, targeted services . . . designed to meet the needs of local communities” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 34). Library planners were more likely to conduct a needs assessment when developing programs and to respond to the identified needs of users when implementing and evaluating services. Library leaders expressed varying opinions about what responding to community needs actually entailed. They agreed that “meeting community needs was a complex process involving the development of services for and meeting the information needs of various groups, including a variety of immigrant communities, the disadvantaged, older adults, newly literate adults, job seekers, and community leaders” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 34). They also recognized that the library’s response became inherently more difficult as the diversity and complexity of the community increased (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 34).

Some library leaders criticized the “Give’ Em What They Want School of Selection” that emphasized meeting public demands rather than needs (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 34). Others believed that people asked for what they knew the library could supply. Most people did not think of the library as a source of information; therefore, they did not ask for information to meet their needs. They continued to ask for the popular reading materials that they knew the
public library could provide. Robert Croneberger was concerned about the growing gap between societal needs for information and the public library’s response (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 34).

Library leaders did not see a connection between the increase in targeted services and the specific roles identified in Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries. The increase in diverse, specially designed services did not appear “to reflect the concentration and limitation of library services often associated with the Public Library Development Program (PLDP) planning process” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 34).

The changing demographics of communities called for new library responses. Some public library leaders believed that the key to public library effectiveness in the 1990s and beyond was the ability to respond effectively to changing needs “while balancing the needs of multiple constituencies” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 34). Services designed to meet the needs of more diverse constituencies had greatly increased in the past decade. In the past many libraries considered their responsibility to meet special needs fulfilled “by merely providing materials such as a small literacy collection or a section of large-print books” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 34). By the 1990s libraries were more likely to offer services as well as materials. Linda Crismond observed that in the 1980s the only contribution many libraries made to the literacy movement was the provision of materials on literacy. In the 1990s a variety of literacy activities and services were offered. There appeared to be a trend toward a more comprehensive approach including materials provision and well-developed information provision and services (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 34).

Libraries were offering more services to assist people in making major changes in their lives such as education, job, and career information services. Librarians were “becoming more involved in helping individuals and communities in economic development projects” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 34). Public libraries were beginning to develop specific responses to community problems. M. G. Mason cited the example of the Cleveland Public Library’s dropout
prevention program developed in conjunction with the Cleveland Public Schools. The program used two approaches, “a tutoring program in the library and a computer-based, self-directed learning project” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, pp. 34-35).

Many library leaders noted that more services were being developed to address the needs of special groups, particularly minorities and immigrants. Major challenges facing libraries in the 1990s were the development of appropriate responses to the needs of an ever-expanding immigrant population and meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse society (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 35). “Acquiring materials in multiple languages” and communicating with residents were just two of the problems librarians faced in attempting to provide effective services to minority communities (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 35). Tamiye Trejo-Meehan emphasized that libraries needed to realize that the United States was “no longer a white, middle-class society” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 35). Library leaders saw a close connection between “constituency building and meeting specific community needs” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 35). Learning about the needs of different clienteles and designing programs to effectively meet those needs was the basis for winning the trust of minority groups, and, ultimately, gaining their support for library services (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 35).

The fourth major change in public libraries involved the adoption of public relations and marketing techniques. Public libraries were making greater use of public relations to communicate with their constituencies. Library leaders saw marketing as an integral component of program planning. Adoption of the marketing approach encouraged libraries to become “more user oriented” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 35). The marketing approach challenged librarians to think about their library services and programs in terms of what they were doing, how they were doing it, and why they were doing things the way they did (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 35). Some libraries were using marketing studies and experimenting with market segmentation to plan services for different constituent groups (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 35).
The term *marketing* had different meanings for different library leaders. Some leaders asked if marketing was the same as merchandising. Others asked if it meant response to demand, need, or both. C. W. Robinson, Director of Baltimore County Public Library, defined marketing as “finding out what users want rather than what the library wants to give them” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 35). Arthur Curley viewed marketing as the response to public demand without consideration for community needs. Curley believed that a marketing orientation trivialized the public library’s role in society and transformed public libraries from knowledge institutions into big bookstores (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 117).

Limited funding was the last major change identified by library leaders. While not all public libraries had endured financial difficulties in the 1980s, most leaders indicated that “planning and delivery of services had been constrained by limited funding” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 117). Most leaders predicted that the level of funding would be stagnant in the 1990s. A number of leaders were concerned about “continued reliance on the local property tax for support” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 117). M. K. Chelton voiced concern about some of the economic policies initiated during the Reagan era, specifically shifting the tax burden from the federal level to states and local communities. The shifting of the tax burden to local political entities placed the library in an even more competitive position in relation to other services (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 117).

Some public library directors had assessed their financial situation and made changes to better utilize human and financial resources. In order to free up money to buy materials, some directors used paraprofessionals in jobs that were once held by librarians. Some turned to the private sector for sponsorship of library programs. Donald Sager recommended that public library managers seek “alternative sources of funding, recruit volunteers, impose fees wherever possible, and partner and network with other agencies” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 117). Durrance and Van Fleet acknowledged that “the lack of adequate funding . . . would place limits on this
institution in the next century. Libraries enter this period as low-budgeted institutions run by underpaid staff" (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 117).

The public library “field’s need for research support was great” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 118). Communication between researchers and librarians was constrained by the reluctance of public librarians to ask “researchers for assistance in planning and evaluating services” and the tendency of researchers “not to choose research problems based on needs articulated by public librarians” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 118). Many library leaders believed that research should “focus on library staff rather than on libraries” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 118). Programs based on the latest educational research were needed to develop “new knowledge, skills, attitudes, and approaches” for librarians and support staff (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 118).

“New tools were needed to help librarians plan, evaluate, and fund services” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 118). Although these new tools should retain the community-orientation of current instruments, they should “more explicitly guide the development of need-driven services” and “incorporate knowledge of how people use information and perceive libraries” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 118). Public libraries needed new service models in interagency collaboration. Partnerships were seen as an effective way to respond more effectively to community needs, extend existing funds, and “overcome institutional isolation” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 118). Partnerships between libraries and the research community were critical “to making libraries more effective community resources” (Durrance & Van Fleet, 1992, p. 118).

Durrance and Van Fleet (1992) concluded that the five trends identified by public library leaders would continue to drive public library development during the 1990s:

1. Electronic storage of data will continue to shape practice.
2. New technologies can continue to make libraries even more responsive institutions.
3. Community-based planning will focus more attention on the need to respond effectively to community needs.
4. This, in turn, will bring the challenge of developing effective mechanisms that will respond to increasingly diverse communities.

5. Funding problems will deepen, forcing librarians and researchers to examine alternative approaches to funding public library services in the next century (p.118).

In their book, Civic Space/Cyberspace: The American Public Library in the Information Age, R. K. Molz and Phyllis Dain (1999) described several powerful societal trends influencing American public libraries in the 1990s. The trends concerned the public library’s role as a social institution and as a component of the nation’s information infrastructure. The needs of Asian and Latin American immigrants placed new demands on libraries during a time in which all public agencies were facing political and fiscal challenges. Public libraries functioned as educational institutions in a society in which education was more important than ever, but public schools were severely criticized for the mediocre performance of American students. The traditional Eurocentric culture and traditional print culture were threatened. English as a second language was becoming prevalent in many areas of the country. Racial and class divisions seemed to deepen and the nation appeared to be heading toward a population of information have and have-nots (Molz & Dain, 1999, p.10). Rapid advances in computer and telecommunications technologies transformed the forms in which information was conveyed, while an increasingly powerful information industry was changing the economics of information. National information policy was “uncertain” and unable to keep pace with, much less anticipate, rapid advances in telecommunications capabilities such as the evolution of the Internet (Molz & Dain, 1999, p.10). Information scientists and experts in many fields predicted that the library as a physical place would cease to exist in the not too distant future. “Cyberspace would replace civic space” (Molz & Dain, 1999, p.10).

In an October, 2004, posting on PUBLIB, T. J. Hennen asked subscribers to help define the emerging trends for public libraries. Hennen was writing an article on libraries for the 2005
edition of the *Book of the States*. Hennen listed eight trends that were affecting libraries in the early years of the twentieth first century.

1. Among the trends [is] the challenge of ‘balancing books and bytes,’ traditional print services with electronic and internet access.

2. The budget problems in most states are causing problems for many libraries, of course, but the impact varies by the type of library program in a state.

3. States, counties, and municipalities are increasingly demanding performance measures in their budget processes . . . .

4. Libraries are a traditionally countercyclical business. Library use increases when the economy sours but as the economy gets worse funding falls.

5. The fastest growing type of library is the district library, a wider unit of service, often with elected boards and taxing authority. Only 40% of states provide for this type of service, however, and this affects outcomes.

6. Libraries are also seeking other revenue sources such as e-commerce, foundation revenue, and impact fees but the successful ones balance these sources with stable tax support.

7. The graying of the profession is causing a potential crisis for libraries everywhere. Some estimates are that over half of all librarians will retire in the next 10 years.

8. Copyright, privacy, and filtering issues are also critical issues for libraries as well as state policy makers (Hennen, 2004).

In response to Hennen’s posting, Kathleen McCook (2004a) listed four emerging trends discussed in the textbook, *Introduction to Public Librarianship*. These twenty-first century trends are “(a) a sense of place defined in the context of regionalism, (b) convergence of cultural heritage institutions, (c) inclusive service mandates and social justice commitments, and (d) sustaining the public sphere” (p. 293). Although all of these trends have implications for adult services, two of these trends have special relevance for the public library’s educational
commitment: the uniting of cultural heritage institutions to promote lifelong learning and cultural and aesthetic appreciation and commitments to inclusiveness and social justice.

McCook explained that several factors are uniting cultural heritage institutions such as libraries, museums, archives, and public radio and television. Technology has been an important factor in the convergence of cultural heritage institutions because it has enabled people living in remote rural communities and blighted intercity neighborhoods to experience the fine and performing arts and to access the cultural and educational riches of museums and special archival collections (McCook, 2004b, p. 296).

Another important factor is a new prospective on lifelong learning. The concept of free-choice learning is creating a shared focus for cultural heritage institutions. The free-choice learning concept was introduced at the 2001 conference on the “21st Century Learner: Exploring Community Partnerships for Life Long Learning” sponsored by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services (McCook, 2004b, p. 296). Free choice learning (informal lifelong learning) accounts for 50% of all learning. Formal schooling and work-related learning make up the other 50%. The Institute of Museum and Library Services' educational mission is centered in this concept. The Institute’s goal is to integrate the resources of libraries, museums, archives, public television, and public radio to extend the benefits of lifelong learning to all American citizens. An example of the Institute’s efforts to integrate the resources of cultural institutions is the “Storylines” program on regional literature, a collaborative effort between the library community and the National Public Broadcasting Company (McCook, 2004b, p. 296).

McCook explained the impact of inclusive service mandates and social justice commitments on libraries. Inclusiveness (the service-to- all ethos) has been a foundational principle of public library service since the institution’s inception. Throughout its long history, the public library has moved “toward inclusive service to all community residents” (McCook, 2004b, p. 298). In 1998 the ALA Council adopted equity of access as a major goal of the association. Inclusiveness is a central principle of equity of access. Although equity of access is a
simple concept, its implementation is complicated due to the great diversity of need found in the American population (McCook, 2004b, p. 298).

In the American population, there are over 50 million people with physical, developmental, or mental disabilities that require special services. Of these 20% speak a language other than English in the home; 12.1% live in poverty; and 19.8% were born abroad. Each of these groups has needs that require special service responses from the public library (McCook, 2004b, p. 298). Cut backs in government services and social services have compelled the public library to assume a larger role in helping people connect with and use “a variety of needed services, such as literacy, career development, and health information” (McCook, 2004b, p. 298). As librarians work to make inclusive services a reality, they are also addressing the issue of social justice for the unserved and underserved members of the community (McCook, 2004b, p. 299).

Thomas Frey, the Executive Director and Senior Futurist at the DaVinci Institute, analyzed 10 trends that are influencing the development of the next generation of libraries. The first nine deal with technological, societal, and global trends while the 10th pertains specifically to libraries: “Libraries will transition from a center of information to a center of culture” (Frey, 2006, Trend #10). The central role of the library as an information resource is diminishing with the growth of the Internet and other distributed forms of information. The concept of the public library as a cultural center offers the library a more expansive role for the future. The public library will continue to serve as an information resource, but its mission will be broader and its goals will evolve and change over time. The culture-based public library will reflect the spirit, the identity, and personality of the community. Public libraries will develop strategies, assess priorities, and provide resources that support the things considered most important by its constituency. The library of the future will work extensively with other cultural centers such as museums, theaters, parks, and educational institutions. Frey suggests that all of these cultural centers may be integrated in a single complex in the future (2006). As mentioned earlier, the
concept of the library as a cultural center is a central focus of the U.S. Institute of Museums and Libraries.

The Role of Philanthropy

Foundations have played an increasingly important role in the development of the public libraries. In the past 25 years there has been a proliferation of foundation activity related to the educational, informational, and cultural role of public libraries and to the public library's participation in the nation's information infrastructure.

The W. K. Kellogg Foundation

Phase two of the Kellogg Foundation's initiative for library-based adult career counseling programs, called Project LEARN (Lifelong Education Assessment and Referral Network) began in 1980 and continued until 1986. This phase sought to develop a nationwide network of services for adult learners in which technology was an integral part of the program. The Kellogg Foundation had concluded that "four year colleges and universities designed for dependent, traditional age students," were too inflexible to meet the needs of the growing number of adult learners (Johnson, 1991a, pp. 5-6). The foundation's board of directors felt that a need existed for the development of alternative community based delivery systems for career counseling, particularly for adult learners in rural or underserved areas with high unemployment rates. The foundation funded Project LEARN as a means for furthering its interest in lifelong learning for adults. The Educational Testing Service, the developer of the SIGI (System of Interactive Guidance and Information) software program, wanted "to develop a career guidance program to meet the needs of adult learners and to explore ways to ensure widespread dissemination of career guidance services, especially to adults" (Norris, Shatkin, & Katz, 1991, p. 61). Project LEARN also included a training component to teach counselors how to work with adult learners and how to use computer assisted career guidance systems (Johnson, 1991a, p. 6).

Project LEARN advanced the development of alternative delivery systems in several ways. First, it helped fund the development of SIGI PLUS (a retooled version for adult learners)
and the Adult DISCOVER software programs to assist adults in career decision making, and funded the conversion of SIGI to microcomputer. The American Council of Education’s Commission on the Adult Learner was established as a result of Project LEARN. Over 1 million adults in 15 regions of the country received services, including those served by education and career service centers placed in auto factories and industrial parks in joint ventures with UAW/Ford and others. The counselor training component resulted in the training of over 2,500 counselors in 41 states, increased awareness of the needs of adult learners among members of the counseling profession, the expansion of the literature on the use of computers in counseling, the convening of several national leadership conferences on adult needs, and the production of numerous videos for training (Johnson, 1991a, pp. 6-7). Phase two encountered a number of problems including “organization problems of territoriality, convictions that special training was not necessary in order to do career counseling, resistance to ‘new ways of doing things,’ and debate about the ethical use of computer assisted counseling and guidance systems to name a few” (Johnson, 1991b, p. 84).

During this period, the Kellogg Foundation also provided a $2.7 million grant to the Intermountain Community Learning Information Service (ICLIS). ICLIS was “an ambitious pilot study to demonstrate the feasibility and effectiveness of using modern high-tech equipment to help meet the informational and educational needs of rural citizens in four Rocky Mountain states” (Haycock, 1991, p. 38). ICLIS was begun in 1985 to provide rural communities in Colorado, Montana, Utah, and Wyoming with greater access to information and educational programming. The project linked the land grant universities in these four states to their respective state libraries and computer centers housed in nine rural public libraries (Vasey, 1989, abstract). The computer centers provided literacy services, career guidance, distance education, children’s programming, and information sources for community businesses, medical professionals, and healthcare (ICLIS, 1992, abstract).
The pilot phase of ICLIS was completed in June 1990. The project "clearly demonstrated the viability of using modern technical communication capability to extend educational and informational access to rural citizens" (Haycock, 1991, p. 40). ISCLIS allowed hundreds of high school, college, and adult education students to access educational materials that were previously available only in large urban and metropolitan areas (Haycock, 1991, p. 40). The project provided a successful educational model for extending access to library and information services to residents in rural communities. A planning workbook describing the steps and tasks involved in planning and implementing the project was issued as a guide for other communities (ICLIS, 1992, abstract). ICLIS had a powerful impact on the educational role of public libraries involved in the project. "Through this project the original purpose of the local library was not only reestablished but was greatly enhanced, without detracting from its ongoing ability to serve the public role in its traditional role" (Haycock, 1991, p. 40).

The final phase of the Kellogg Foundation's initiative for library-based adult career counseling programs, the Library Project, began in 1986 and ended in 1990. The foundation provided a series of grants to fund the creation of education information centers in Michigan, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Nebraska (Durrance, 1991, p. 93). Each grant provided funds for staffing and equipping multiple sites in each state and hiring a state coordinator who assisted in the development of services at each site and providing extensive staff training. The three-year demonstration projects began in 1988 and concluded in 1990 (Durrance, 1991, p. 93). In each of the pilot states, education information centers were located in large urban libraries such as the Philadelphia Free Library and in small community libraries such as the Newport, Washington, public library. The sites selected for demonstration projects were generally communities with high unemployment rates and economic development problems (Durrance, 1991, p. 94).

The majority of the pilot programs in these states developed services centered on the use of computer-based career software and grounded in the knowledge gained from the first two phases and earlier Kellogg funded projects in New York State in the late 1970s and early 1980s.
Service development in these programs benefited from an extensive knowledge base of information about adults in transition, demographics of the workforce, and the changes in the world of work (Durrance, 1991, p. 93).

The counselor training component of the Kellogg Library Project provided training in counseling and career counseling skills to professional librarians and others working in the project. Librarians, counselors, social workers, and adult educators learned how to use SIGI PLUS and DISCOVER. The project also assisted librarians in understanding the needs of adults in transition and in designing and integrating career centers into existing programs. Training design took into consideration librarians' strengths and weakness. Although librarians were accustomed to using computers, they were not used to advising and counseling clients, and they lacked the attending and active listening skills necessary to elicit information about the adult student's needs (Johnson, 1991a, pp. 7-8). The professionals who staffed the Kellogg sponsored centers (librarians, counselors, social workers, or adult educators) invented their jobs as they went along. Their work was built on experience gained in "reference service, public library job and career information centers, earlier Kellogg and LSCA-funded Education Information Centers, information and referral services (I&R) and on the tradition of public library work in adult education" (Durrance, 1991, p. 95).

There was no one standard model for Kellogg-funded projects. All of the centers provided a comprehensive collection of resources and reference service in education, job, and career information. Most locations were equipped with at least one computer and one interactive computer program on career decision making. Many locations offered a career assessment program and an occupational information system designed to provide facts about that specific state's resources and needs. Most EICs provided a number of computers with word processing, resume writing, and other software (Durrance, 1991, p 96).

In most locations practice involved extensive client-centered activities such as advisement and counseling and sometimes provision of specific job notices and active
participation in writing resumes. The range of practice was broad due to the varied backgrounds of the staff. “Most Kellogg-sponsored sites . . . had a common focus on the client and the process in which the client was engaged” (Durrance, 1991, p. 96). The client-centered orientation strongly influenced the nature of the practice. For example, when someone approached a staff member and asked for a book on resumes, the staff member was more likely to inquire about the nature of the client’s need rather than just directing him or her to the resume books. Depending on the nature of the client’s need, he or she might have been referred to a social service agency, scheduled for a workshop on resume writing, or scheduled for an appointment with an interactive computer career assessment program (Durrance, 1991, p. 96).

Intervention strategies varied among the locations. Strategies included a diagnostic interview to determine the nature of the client’s need; information provision; a helping interview that focused on facilitating various actions of the client; career advisement and counseling; instruction in the use of materials, computer programs, interviewing skills, resume writing, the job search process, etc; the provision of specific job notices; and referral to other agencies (Durrance, 1991, p. 96).

There were numerous problems in the third phase from the counselor training perspective. Although counselor training for librarians was required as a condition of the grant, many librarians did not recognize the need for this type of training. Many librarians felt that counselors helped people fix their problems, and they did not see that as their role. On the other hand, counselors had stereotypical notions of who librarians were and what they did. Misguided assumptions interfered in the delivery of training. As consultant to the project, Durrance was able to eliminate much of the tension and resistance with revisions and individualization of the training program. There were also ethical concerns (a) about whether persons not trained as professional counselors should provide guidance and career counseling, (b) about the lack of private space in many libraries for conferences, (c) about the confidentiality of EIC clients’
records, and (d) about the appropriateness of using computerized guidance programs as stand-alone programs without follow up or support (Johnson, 1991b, pp. 84-86).

Other problems included (a) fitting appointments into the librarian/counselor's schedule, (b) resentment about the increased workload on the part of librarians not engaged in the program, (c) high turnover rates, (d) unavailability of training for new personnel, (e) the raised expectations and disappointment of communities in areas where the programs were discontinued when grant funds expired, (f) no control over the selection of librarians and other personnel to be trained, (g) lack of counselors in rural areas to help clients with personal noncareer related problems, (h) reluctance on the part of counselors and librarians to work together in areas of mutual interest and concern, (i) the foundation's apparent desire to transform the professions of counseling and library science, and (j) the lack of resources for unskilled and semiskilled workers not normally served by career counselors (Johnson, 1991b, pp. 84-86).

Despite logistical and personnel problems, evaluation of the Library Project showed that many education information centers had a positive influence on people's lives. Libraries participating in the project improved their career collections, attracted new patrons, and enhanced their public image as valuable community resources. The training component improved the staff's listening and interviewing skills and enabled them to better ascertain information needs. New beneficial agency connections and collaborations were developed as a result of the Kellogg Foundation's Library Project (Tice & Gill, 1991, abstract).

The Kellogg Foundation increased its support of adult education efforts and incorporated the advice of prominent librarians in its plans for future activities. In 1990 the W. K. Kellogg Foundation provided a grant to fund the publication of a guide for developing library services for adults in job and career transition. The guide was published by ALA for distribution at the annual conference in 1991. The manual was based on the experiences of library staff working in EICs and related projects and focused on planning, developing, and evaluating services using the process developed by the PLA Public Library Development Program (Durrance, 1991, p. 99).
The Kellogg Foundation also funded the production of a videotape, poster, and a brochure released at the PLA national conference in 1991. These materials promoted the development of "public library services for adults in job and career transition and for communities in economic transition (Durrance, 1991, p. 99).

In 1994 the W.K. Kellogg Foundation began the HRISM (Human Resources for Information Systems and Management) initiative. HRISM included schools of library and information science, ALA, the Urban Libraries Council, Libraries for the Future, the Council on Library Resources, Harvard University, a school for children with disabilities, the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library and others. The Kellogg Foundation funded a number of projects as part of the HRISM initiative. This program was intended "to affect professional and institutional change in library and information science" (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 177). The program had three strategic goals: "the reform of library and information science education, the redefinition of community library service, and the improvement of participation by library leaders in the public dialogue on information policy at all levels of government" (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 177).

The Kellogg Foundation convened a meeting to which all of the HRISM grantees were invited along with representatives from the Benton Foundation. The purpose of the meeting was to determine how the different organizations could work together to develop a common and united focus on the role libraries should play in the digital era. The Benton Foundation representatives were invited to help the group formulate a shared vision statement for a national public relations campaign. The group was unable to reach consensus on a public statement about the role of libraries, particularly the role of public libraries. The inability of the grantees to agree on shared beliefs and a common vision for libraries led to the 1996 Benton study, funded by the Kellogg Foundation (Estabrook, 1997, pp. 169-170). The study sought to accomplish what the meeting had failed to do: "to understand the shared beliefs of library leaders about the future of
libraries in a digital era as represented by the HRISM grantees; and second, to understand how the American public viewed libraries in a digital era" (Estabrook, 1997, p. 170).

The study consisted of three components. The first component was the HRISM grantees’ visions of the future. The researchers began by reviewing the grant proposals written by the HRISM grantees to determine if these statements revealed any shared visions. Then the grantees were asked to prepare written vision statements about the role of the public library in the digital era (The Benton Foundation, 1996, p. 1). L. S. Estabrook’s research team then conducted telephone interviews with each of the grantees regarding their perception of the public library’s role. Although the HRISM grantees were not the ideal group from which to obtain a professional opinion of public libraries (many of them had only limited knowledge of public library functions), the interviews reflected issues and concerns expressed in library literature (Estabrook, 1997, p. 170).

Estabrook was struck “by the lack of consensus . . . the real contradictions in their statements, and the palpable uncertainty and concern” that emerged from the interviews (1997, p. 171). The public library of the future as envisioned by the group was strikingly similar to the current public library: “institutions with collections (in both digital and print form), with buildings as a center for community life . . . and with staff who help new users navigate new information tools” (Estabrook, 1997, p. 171). The public library in the digital age was still viewed as an essentially middle-class institution. Several grantees voiced the fear that if public libraries became the safety net for the poor, they would be marginalized into that role. The future roles envisioned by the grantees were essentially the same roles libraries were playing in the mid-1990s (Estabrook, 1997, p. 171).

Many grantees were concerned that the public library community lacked the leadership needed to transform libraries. Others talked about competition with book stores such as Borders and Barnes and Noble which offered coffee shops, special programming, a comfortable setting area for browsing, as well as books for sale. Most disturbing to Estabrook was that “few
individuals talked about the broader political climate of libraries, the economics of support for all public and cultural services" (1997, p. 171).

The second component of the study was a national opinion poll of adults 18 years of age and older conducted by Lake Research and the Tarrance Group. Questions in the national poll were derived from a number of previous studies, including George D’Elia’s 1993 study on public library roles in the community and the 1991 study by the University of Illinois’ Library Research Center of public opinion and librarians’ attitudes. The opinions expressed in the national poll were consistent in many ways with the conclusions of the grantees. Both groups felt that public libraries should “stay the course” and not make dramatic changes in their roles (Estabrook, 1997, p. 171).

The findings of this study were in agreement with the findings of other studies which indicated that almost 70% of the public had visited a public library in the past year. More than half of the sample believed that public libraries should serve as neighborhood or community activity centers. A substantial number (40%) thought libraries would become more important as more information became available through computers. A relatively small number (19%) thought libraries would become less important and 38% said there would be no change. Estabrook noted that the real concern was the fact that computer owners were more apt to say that libraries will become less important (1997, p. 171).

The respondents thought the following roles were the most important: “(1) providing reading hours and other programs for children; [sic] (2) purchasing new books and other printed materials; [sic] (3) maintaining and building library buildings; [sic] (4) providing computers and online services to children and adults who lack them; [sic] and (5) providing a place where librarians help people find information through computers and online services” (Estabrook, 1997, p. 172). Estabrook was concerned that the primary service (information service) provided by professional librarians was ranked fifth (the least important) in the list and that only 10% of the respondents would go to a library if they wanted to learn more about computers (1997, p. 172).
The third component was a focus group. The group consisted of 11 middle-class, mostly middle-age, white library users from Montgomery County, Maryland (Allen, 1997, p. 15; Estabrook, 1997, p. 172). The focus group discussion was led by experts in public opinion polling and observed, behind a one way mirror, by the HRISM grantees and by political pollsters from the two major political parties. The purpose of the focus group was not to formulate a statement of national opinion but to expose both the HRISM grantees and the readers of the Benton Report to "some sobering opinions, albeit opinions of a small group" (Estabrook, 1997, p. 170). Among the key points expressed by the focus group participants were as follows:

1. Libraries should depend on charity and corporate support. These individuals did not want increased taxes. They are committed to the institution but do not want to go to their pocketbooks to pay for it.
2. They believe that libraries' biggest commitment is to children and education. They see the library as a safe space, particularly for women.
3. They believe that libraries are a source of information, but the needs of the information have-nots will not hold up against a need for more money. What is central to a democracy is equality of access to information, not the quality of information. Although they do not dispute that libraries will move into the computer world, they do not want libraries to do this aggressively.
4. The group members have given little thought about a standard of excellence for libraries. It is all right for libraries to be behind the curve in technology or to use volunteers as librarians.
5. The fundamental value is access to information, not equality; libraries are preservers of information, not preservers of [equality] (Estabrook, 1997, p. 172).

The political strategists who viewed the focus group discussion elaborated on these points. Republican pollster Brian Tringali was not surprised by the comments; Tringali noted that citizens will support services until they are asked to pay for them. Although the focus group
participants used the library on a regular basis, they did not want to increase the taxes they paid. Instead, they were in favor of finding alternative funding sources. Estabrook pointed out that while it was easy to dismiss the opinions of this small nonrepresentative focus group, other focus group sessions, with participants divided by race and education, not only supported the findings of this focus group but also those from the national opinion poll conducted by the University of Illinois' Library Research Center (1997, p. 172).

The summer 1997 issue of *Library Trends* was devoted to discussion of the Benton Foundation's report, *Buildings, Books, and Bytes: Libraries and Communities in the Digital Age*. Librarians, information scientists, and computer experts were asked to contribute to the special issue and to critique the Benton Foundation's report. Although most of the authors were quite critical of the report, all agreed that it was useful in that it provoked needed discussion and debate. Estabrook responded to the concerns of the report's critics. Estabrook acknowledged that the study was limited in a number of respects: it was exploratory in nature, it used only one focus group of white middle-class library users, and the report was written for a popular audience. Despite the study's shortcomings, its findings were consistent with the findings of studies conducted by D'Elia and the Library Research Center at the University of Illinois (Estabrook, 1997, pp. 168-177).

The Kellogg Foundation has been very much interested in library and information science education, technology training, and curricular reform. Kellogg funded innovations in selected library and information science programs through the Human Resources for Information Systems Management (HRISM) initiative of the mid-1990s. Library and Information Programs at Drexel University, Florida State University, the University of Illinois, and the University of Maryland were recipients of grants (Association for Library and Information Science Education, [ALISE] 2000, p. 2). Kellogg funded an Urban Libraries Council project to design a staff development series using video technology. Other projects included technology training for systems staff in its
member libraries, training programs related to the Internet, and the training component of the Flint, Michigan, Community Networking Initiative (Molz & Dain, 1999, pp. 194-195).

In 1996 Kellogg awarded the University of Michigan’s School of Information, which had played an important role in the Flint Initiative, an additional $5 million for curriculum development (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 194-195). The school started the Kellogg Coalition on Reinventing Information Science, Technology, and Library Education (CRISTAL-ED). The coalition was created out of the belief that the curriculum of library and information science programs needed to be revolutionized and that mere adaptation to information technology was not sufficient (Rubin, 2000, pp. 375-376). The coalition’s founders were also concerned that “computer science and management information programs were not taking a sufficiently broad view of the human aspects of information systems” (Rubin, 2000, p. 376). CRISTAL-ED asserted that these disciplines needed to be integrated with a new curriculum. The stated objectives of CRISTAL-ED were to

1. Build a coalition to reinvent an information and library science learning environment that produces information and library leaders for the digital information world.
2. Conduct joint pilot projects to support research, hands-on learning, creation of “living specification,” and continuing education.
3. Apply collaboratory [sic] ideas to distance-independent learning—perhaps, create a federated (virtual) school. (CRISTAL-ED, 1997, p. 1)

The Kellogg Foundation also funded the Kellogg-ALISE Information Professions and Education Reform Project (KALIPER). The KALIPER project of the Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) “sought to determine the nature and extent of major curricular change in LIS education across North America” (Durrance, 2000, Introduction section, para. 1). The two-year project (1998-2000) was “perhaps the most extensive examination of the LIS curriculum since the Williamson Report . . . in 1923” (Durrance, 2000, Introduction section, para. 2).
The KALIPER Report released in 2000 noted six trends that are driving curricular change in library and information science programs:

1. TREND # 1: In addition to libraries as institutions and library-specific operations, Library and Information Science (LIS) curricula are addressing broad-based information environments and information problems.

2. TREND # 2: While LIS curricula continue to incorporate perspectives from other disciplines, a distinct core has taken shape that is predominantly user-centered.

3. TREND # 3: LIS schools and programs are increasing the investment and infusion of information technology into their curricula.

4. TREND # 4: LIS schools and programs are experimenting with the structure of specialization within the curriculum.

5. TREND # 5: LIS schools and programs are offering instruction in different formats to provide students with more flexibility.

6. TREND # 6: LIS schools and programs are expanding their curricula by offering related degrees at the undergraduate, master’s and doctoral levels (Pettigrew, 2000, Aggregate Findings section).

*The Benton Foundation*

The Benton Foundation has played a prominent role in regard to the public library’s position in the nation’s information infrastructure. “The Benton Foundation [was] established in 1981 by Charles Benton, chair of the National Commission on Libraries under President Carter” (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 177). Since President Clinton announced plans to create the National Information Infrastructure in the early 1990s, the Benton Foundation has been concerned with “a wide range of telecommunications issues, including digital television, spectrum allocation, discounted rates for schools and libraries, and many others” (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 177).

In 1996 the Benton Foundation published *Buildings, Books, and Bytes: Libraries and Communities in the Digital Age*, a report on the Kellogg funded study. The foundation also
reported research undertaken by Libraries for the Future in its “What’s Going On” series. The “What’s Going On” series is part of the Benton Foundation’s Communications Policy and Practice Project funded by the Kellogg Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, the Mott Foundation, and the Carnegie Corporation (Benton Foundation, 1997, p.3).

The Carnegie Corporation of New York

The Carnegie Corporation has not had a program of support for libraries in the United States for over 25 years with the exception of a few grants for specific purposes. To commemorate the centennial of Andrew Carnegie’s gift of $5.2 million to New York City in 1899, the Carnegie Corporation awarded $15 million to 25 urban libraries serving large, culturally diverse populations. The grants were intended to promote literacy, services for children and young adults, preservation of library materials, and special collections. Nearly all of the recipients were Carnegie libraries funded by Carnegie in the years between 1899 and 1906 (Akst, 2003, p. 31). The largest awards were given to the New York City Public Library, the Brooklyn Public Library, and the Queens Borough Public Library. Other recipients included the public libraries of Atlanta-Fulton County, Georgia; Chicago, Illinois; Indianapolis-Marion County, Indiana; Detroit, Michigan; Houston, Texas; Kansas City, Missouri; Seattle, Washington; San Francisco, California; and San Juan, Puerto Rico (American Library Association, 1999a).

In 2003 the corporation made a $4.5 million challenge grant to the New York City Public Library and the Brooklyn and Queens libraries in memory of those who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The grants are to be used to support the book collections of these three library systems. Each book purchased with grant funds contains a commemorative bookplate. This grant was the second award made as part of the Carnegie Corporation’s $10 million pledge to communities in New York and Washington, D.C. Also in 2003 the corporation, in conjunction with the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, made a one-time contribution to support the administration costs of the Laura Bush Foundation for America’s Libraries (Akst, 2003, p. 31).
The Council on Library and Information Resources (formerly the Council on Library Resources) has a long history of identifying and addressing library issues and developing new approaches to facilitate library operations. The council has assisted libraries in taking advantage of emerging technologies to improve operations and expand services. Over the years the council's interests have evolved to include a wide range of topics as well as preservation and communication technology. CLIR is interested in the characteristics and use of information, the management of libraries and information systems, bibliographic systems, equitable access to information, and professional education. The council supports research projects designed to improve the quality and performance of library and information services (Duncan, Campbell, Rastogi, & Wilson, 1998, p. 163). CLIR's projects fall into three major areas: “leadership development, economics of information services, and transition from the traditional to the electronic library” (Duncan et al., 1998, p. 163).

In 1993 the Council on Library Resources commissioned the Palmer School of Library and Information Science at Long Island University to prepare an analytical bibliography on education for librarianship. The proposed bibliography was intended to cover English-language publications since 1980 and selected “classic” authors of the past and to provide a synthesis of major trends and issues. The major issues that emerged from the literature were accreditation, certification, and standards; curriculum; continuing education; extended educational preparation; information science, information resource management, and related fields; interdisciplinary linkages; international perspectives; nonclassroom experiences; recruitment and admission; specialization; technology; and theory versus practice. Curriculum emerged as the most hotly debated topic (Woodsworth, Packard, Robinson, & Sabia, 1994, p. v).

In the mid-1990s the council was greatly interested in the challenges facing public libraries in an era of rapid development in information technology. With a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the council used the case study method to examine the innovative use of
information technology in 12 public libraries across the country. The case studies were based on
site visits and interviews with library administrators, staff, and patrons. Among the issues
discussed in the case studies were “serving the local community, the need for vision, common
values, evolving roles, the challenge of partnerships, libraries and community-based information
networks, staffing and training, and the need for buildings and space” (Council on Library
Resources [CLR], 1996, abstract). The CLR report noted that “the central theme in each story is
the use of technology to expand and enhance the public library’s ability to serve the community’s
needs” (CLR, 1996, p. 8).

In 1997 the Council on Library Resources and the Commission on Preservation and
Access merged to create the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR). CLIR is “an
independent, neutral body” that represents the best attributes of its two predecessors (CLIR, 2006,
The Missions of CPA and CLR section, para. 2). It addresses important national and international
issues, administers the Digital Library Federation, brings together organizations and individuals
with disparate ideas and opinions, and assembles the best minds to develop solutions to “deep-
seated problems facing the library community” (CLIR, 2006, The Missions of CPA and CLR
section, para. 2).

CLIR works to maintain and expand access to information in all forms through
publications, projects, and programs. It works in partnership with other organizations to help
create services that expand the concept of “library” and support the creators, providers, and
preservers of information. In March 2007 the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded CLIR a
three-year, $219 million operating grant. The grant will enable CLIR to begin new initiatives in
six program areas: “cyberinfrastructure, preservation, the next scholar, the emerging library,
leadership, and new models” (CLIR, 2007, para. 1).

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Bill Gates’ involvement with public libraries began in late 1995. Working with ALA, the
Microsoft Corporation launched its “first large-scale philanthropic project” (Molz & Dain, 1999,
The project, Libraries Online, was "a program to equip selected public libraries in inner
cities and rural areas across the United States and Canada with computers, software, and technical
support" (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 79). Microsoft's commitment encouraged additional
contributions to the project. The success of the initial project encouraged Gates to launch a much
broader project in 1997, which would prove to have a profound effect on public libraries,
particularly small and rural public libraries.

In June 1997 Bill and Melinda Gates announced the formation of the Gates Library
Foundation—a nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing computers and digital information to
public libraries in low-income communities in the U.S. and Canada. The foundation provided the
computer hardware and software needed for community access to the Internet as well as support
and training for library personnel. The total commitment to the foundation was $400 million. Bill
and Melinda Gates committed $200 million to the foundation, which Microsoft pledged to match
with software of equal value (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation [Gates Foundation], 1997).

Between 1998 and 2003 the Gates Library Foundation (now the Bill & Melinda Gates
Foundation's U.S. Library Program) gave grants to about 11,000 libraries. These grants provided
for the installation of nearly 50,000 computer packages including specially developed library
model computers, suites of software (e.g., Internet, productivity, children's and educational
material), installation, training for library personnel and some patrons, assistance with Internet
connectivity (both technical assistance and cash grants and equipment) and one to three years of
technical assistance, and extensive documentation (Gates Foundation, 2004c).

In January 2004 the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation awarded grants to 18 states to
help public libraries continue to provide public access computing (Gates Foundation, 2004a). In
Libraries in Addressing the Digital Divide, during a speech at the PLA annual conference. The
report revealed that public libraries had helped close the digital divide by providing free, public
access to computers and the Internet, particularly for people without access at home or work
In the speech Gates also outlined the next phase of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's program for public libraries. "The foundation plans to build broader partnerships with local governments, business, foundations, nonprofits, libraries and library supporters that will keep libraries open, improve technology, and support ongoing training" (Gates Foundation, 2004b, para. 10).

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation cosponsored with the American Library Association the *Public Libraries and the Internet 2004* survey. The report found that 98.9% of public libraries in the United States offered free access to computers and the Internet. This represented a 400% increase since 1996 when only 25% of public libraries provided these services. Despite the dramatic increase, demand for public library computers in many areas often exceeded supply. The quality of Internet connectivity varied among rural and urban communities. High-speed Internet connections were more frequently found in public libraries in urban areas than in libraries in rural areas. Many public libraries faced financial challenges in their efforts to maintain quality technology services. Technology budgets for most public library systems remained stagnant with no increases for inflation or expansion of service (Gates Foundation, 2005a).

The latest study, *Public Libraries and the Internet 2006*, was released in September 2006. The study was conducted by the Information Use Management and Policy Institute at Florida State University and was funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the American Library Association. The report revealed that 99% of all U.S. public libraries provide free public access to the Internet. The large majority (71%) of librarians reported that the most important impact of free Internet access is on those individuals and groups whose economic deprivation prevents them from owning computers and paying Internet access fees. Unfortunately many libraries are still struggling; library technology budgets are not keeping pace with demand and many libraries are unable to provide enough computers or fast-enough connection speeds to meet the increased demand (Gates Foundation, 2006).
In January 2007 the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s U.S. Libraries initiative announced a new five-year commitment to help U.S. public libraries serving low-income communities continue to provide free computer and Internet services and training. While all public libraries offer free Internet access and computers, many libraries are struggling to maintain services because of huge demand, limited public resources, and advances in technology. Public libraries are a critical link to technology for the almost 40% of Americans who still do not have Internet access at home (Gates Foundation, 2007).

**Urban Libraries Council**

The Urban Libraries Council (ULC) is an association composed of urban libraries in metropolitan areas and the corporations that serve them. Located in Evanston, Illinois, ULC has focused attention on the library’s role in the urban community and served as a forum for sharing information about best practices gained from research, education, and forecasting. The council has worked to strengthen its members through the provision of professional development opportunities and the facilitation of connections to resources and information (American Library Association, 2006y).

The Urban Libraries Council (ULC) is also an interest group working to influence government library policy; it was one of the three groups that played a significant role in shaping the parameters of the Library Services and Technology Act. The council is particularly concerned with the identification and solution of problems relating to libraries serving populations of 50,000 people or more (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 178). The Urban Libraries Council is also concerned with improving the practice of librarianship as a profession and conducts research designed to address important issues in librarianship. In 2000 ULC partnered with the Urban Institute on a study titled “Partnerships for Free Choice Learning: Public Libraries, Museums, and Public Broadcasters Working Together.” A National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services funded this project. The project included a survey of adults; surveys of executives and staff of public libraries, museums, and public broadcasters; and field
investigations at seven sites (Lance, Russell, & Lietzau, 2004, Urban Public Libraries and Partnerships section, para. 1). The project findings identified the following:

1. Characteristics of individuals and communities leading to their participation in such learning
2. Alternative governing, financial, and legal arrangements for partnerships
3. Challenges and opportunities created by partnering activities themselves
4. Strategies for mitigating the risks of participation in partnerships

ULC monitors trends in library funding. In 2004 the ULC released a study entitled “Governance and Revenue Structures: New Field Data on Metropolitan Public Libraries.” The study found that although the economy declined in many areas of the country, more libraries received increases in general operating revenues in 2002-2003 than did not. Local funding continued to be the primary source of revenue for public libraries. Library foundations continued to play an important role in fund raising. Some ULC members reported that they have explored new revenue sources such as bookstores, coffee shops, and leasing space for special events (ULC, 2004).

In January 2007 ULC released the findings of a new study conducted by the Urban Institute and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. Making Cities Stronger: Public Library Contributions to Local Economic Development found that public libraries build a community’s capacity for economic activity and resiliency. The study adds to a growing body of research that suggests the role of the public library is transitioning from that of “a passive, recreational reading and research institution to an active economic development agent, addressing such pressing urban issues as literacy, workforce training, small business vitality and community quality of life” (ULC, 2007, para. 1).
Americans for Libraries Council

Americans for Libraries Council [ALC] is "a leadership group composed of civic, education, business, library[,] and philanthropic leaders" (ALC, 2003a, para. 3). ALC, formed in 2003, advocates for libraries at the national level and develops and promotes programs aimed at realizing the potential of libraries in the 21st century" (ALC, 2003a, para. 1). The Americans for Libraries Council provides programs at the national, state, and local levels. The organization Libraries for the Future serves as the program division of ALC. Generally, programs are offered in partnership with libraries, library systems, foundations, and community-based organizations. Current programs include “Family Place,” an initiative designed to transform libraries into centers for parent education, child development, and family literacy and “Equal Access Libraries,” model programs that help libraries make greater use of new technologies and improve their capacities to serve as community centers for information and education (ALC, 2003b).

In 2004 ALC began a national four-year initiative named Lifelong Access Libraries, a program designed to transform libraries into centers “for lifelong learning and civic engagement” (ALC, 2004, para. 1). The initiative is intended to bring about “fundamental change in how public libraries define, create, and deliver their services to older adults” (Lifelong Libraries, 2004b, para. 1). The initiative has three major goals: “to create a distinct specialty within adult services focusing on active, engaged older adults; to establish Lifelong Access Libraries in five demonstration regions as a practical framework for services; and to promote public and private investment in libraries as centers for productive aging” (Lifelong Libraries, 2004b, para. 2). Key strategies in the implementation of the concept include (a) informing and engaging library leaders, (b) training librarians, (c) developing a National Lifelong Access Libraries Institute and a cadre of Lifelong Access Fellows, (d) spotlighting emerging practices, (e) providing an Online Knowledge Center, and (f) creating a community of practice (Lifelong Libraries, 2004a, p. 2).
Lifelong Access Libraries offer these benefits:

1. Advisory councils to ensure peer planning and program development
2. Lifelong learning activities for new careers and enrichment
3. Spaces and programs that promote social and intergenerational connections
4. Community forums and conversations to promote civic and social engagement
5. Life planning information and services
6. Referrals to and information about opportunities for community service
7. Expanded collections, including electronic resources, to support learning and productive aging
8. Health and fitness information and programs

In 2005 ALC was awarded a two-year, $770,000 challenge grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The grant funded the implementation of Building the Case for Libraries, a three-part initiative designed to raise awareness of and increase interest in public libraries. The major component is a definitive study and national public opinion poll developed by ALC and Public Agenda, a nonpartisan opinion research organization. Other components of the project are the development of an instrument for determining the economic value of libraries, and the development of a Library Advocacy Knowledge Center (ALC, 2005).

The national opinion poll, Long Overdue: A Fresh Look at Public and Leadership Attitudes About Libraries in the 21st Century, was released in June 2006 (ALC, 2006b). The study revealed that 78% of Americans feel that public libraries are an important part of their communities; respondents said that if their public library closed because of lack of funding they would feel "that something essential and important has been lost, affecting the whole community (ALC, 2006a, para. 4).

The public believes that libraries are the appropriate agencies to address four pressing problems that other government agencies have handled poorly: "(1) supplying more engaging
services for teens; (2) fighting illiteracy and improving reading skills among adults; (3) providing free and ready access to information about government services, including making public documents and forms readily available; and (4) providing even greater access to computers for all" (ALC, 2006a, para. 5). An important finding of the survey in regard to policy making is the fact “that libraries, more than being under-funded, are being under-leveraged.” ALC President D. D. Schull said, “Americans overwhelming believe libraries could do even more to inform and energize their communities—if we made more of an investment in them” (ALC, 2006a, para. 6).

Americans have a favorable opinion of public libraries. Americans give their public libraries an “A” more often than any other community service asked about in the survey (45%). A majority of the public (71%) thought their local library uses public money well. However, the survey identified a troubling issue—“few Americans are aware of the increasingly tenuous financial picture faced by many libraries” (ALC, 2006a, para. 7). Schull said: “For those of us in the library community, this study should be a long, loud wake-up call” (ALC, 2006a, para. 8).

Libraries for the Future

Before Libraries for the Future (LFF) became the programming arm of the American Libraries Council in 2003, it was an independent national nonprofit organization of public library advocates with headquarters in New York City (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 177). Libraries for the Future, organized in the 1990s, specialized “in funding exemplary projects that enhance the relationship between libraries and communities” (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 177).

In the late 1990s LFF joined with the Benton Foundation to publish a report profiling eight library technology projects serving diverse constituencies ranging from inner-city residents to rural communities with fewer than 650 people (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 178). Libraries for the Future examined how these libraries were beginning to use new technologies to expand their traditional roles both as gateways to information and as public institutions. The research findings were published in a report entitled “Local Places, Global Connections: Libraries in the Digital Age.” The research findings provide “a theoretical underpinning and a practical guide for
librarians, advocacy groups, and others who seek to ensure that libraries continue to perform their vital role now and in the future” (Benton Foundation, 1997, p. 10). The report is part of the Benton Foundation’s What’s Going On series (Benton Foundation, 1997).

In 1999 LFF was awarded the Sessions Award for its “Pump Up the Volume” campaign for Labor History Month. The idea for the campaign began years earlier when Cynthia Lopez, the advocacy director for Libraries for the Future, attended a meeting of the AFL-CIO/ALA Joint Committee on Service to Labor Groups at the ALA annual conference in 1995. The meeting was the beginning of “a fruitful collaboration” which resulted in the publication of materials and brochures celebrating Labor History Month, a list of suggested activities for public libraries, and a bibliography entitled “A Selected Bibliography for a Public Library Labor Studies Collection.” The brochures, lists, and bibliographies were distributed to more than 100 public libraries. The LFF project encouraged libraries across the country to celebrate Labor History Month with programming and activities (Sparanese, 2002, p. 30).

The Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund

The Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund has made a substantial economic investment in public libraries, adult literacy, and the American Library Association. The Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund and the American Library Association cosponsored the Libraries Across America (LILAA) initiative. Thirteen libraries were involved in the first phase of the initiative, which lasted from 1996 to 1999. During the final years of the LILAA Initiative, the fund developed and funded research studies to assess the impact of literacy in libraries. One of these studies was Literacy Programs for Adults in Public Libraries conducted by Estabrook and Lakner with the Library Research Center at the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science (Lipschultz, 2001a, pp. ix-x). The survey “provides current and reliable information about the number of libraries providing adult literacy services and their needs for the future” (Lipschultz, 2001a, p. x).
In August 1999 the Wallace-Reader’s Digest Funds recognized the efforts of these 13 libraries by renewing support for the LILAA initiative until 2002. Extending funding enabled the libraries to implement new strategies for improving adult learner persistence and to participate in the LILAA learner participation and persistence study conducted by the National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy and the Manpower Demonstration Corporation (Comings, Cuban, Bos, & Taylor, 2001, p. 9). As part of the first phase of the LILAA initiative, these libraries had demonstrated their commitment to adult literacy through concerted efforts to improve the quality of their literacy programs. The public library systems included in the study were the New York City Public Library, the Greensboro, North Carolina, Public Library, Redwood City, California, Public Library, the Queens Borough, New York, Public Library, and the Oakland, California, Public Library (Comings et al., 2001, p. 8).

The study had three objectives: (a) improving library literacy programs, (b) making programs more accessible to adult learners with low literacy levels, and (c) exploring the role public libraries play in adult education (Comings et al., 2001, pp. 7-8). The research team (a) collected and studied student-produced materials; (b) conducted in-depth interviews with students, staff, and other literacy providers; (c) compiled socio-demographic and participation data on students; and (e) conducted extensive observations of the programs and students’ responses (Comings et al., 2001, p. 9). In order to obtain “a holistic picture of persistence from different perspectives,” the team examined persistence using several methods, at different points in time and in a variety of library literacy programs located throughout the country (Comings et al., 2001, p. 9).

Libraries were encouraged to implement strategies designed to increase adult learner persistence. Among the suggested strategies were (a) the provision of childcare and transportation, (b) the development of new curricula, (c) expansion of the hours of operation, (d) the provision of teacher and tutor training, (e) the use of new instructional approaches, and (f) simplification of the intake process and orientation for new students. The study sought (a) to
describe the strategies libraries adopted to encourage persistence, (b) to examine how the programs changed as a result of the employment of these strategies, and (c) to document changes in students’ participation and persistence in reaction to these strategies (Comings et al., 2001, p. 9).

The initiative produced four reports: (a) *So I Made Up My Mind: Introducing a Study of Learner Persistence in Library Literacy Programs*, (b) *I Did It for Myself: Studying Efforts to Increase Adult Learner Persistence in Library Literacy Programs*, (c) *As Long As It Takes: Responding to the Challenges of Adult Student Persistence in Library Literacy Programs*, and (d) *One Day I Will Make It: A Study of Adult Student Persistence in Library Literacy Programs*. The first three reports “defined the problem of adult student persistence and recorded early progress in enhancing library literacy program services” (Porter, Cuban, & Comings, 2005, p. 2). The final report (a) described the difficulties these library literacy programs encountered in attempting to increase student participation, (b) outlined the factors that undermine persistence, (c) discussed the kinds of support that adult learners need in order to persist, and (d) recommended additional strategies that library literacy programs and other adult education providers might try to improve persistence and participation (Porter et al., 2005, p. 2).

Key findings concerning the students in the LILAA programs indicated that participants were a diverse group who “shared the common desire to improve their low literacy skills” (Porter et al., 2005, p. 2), and native English speakers demonstrated lower average levels of literacy achievement than did students who were learning English as a second language (Porter et al., 2005, p. 4). The study revealed patterns of persistence. Generally, students did not participate in literacy services long enough or intensely enough to make substantial improvements in their literacy levels. Throughout the study period, overall participation remained low for all demographic groups with little change in duration or intensity of program participation. All the LILAA programs experienced similar problems in attempting to improve student persistence, but
the severity of the problems were greater in some programs than others (Porter et al., 2005, pp. 4-5).

Students participating in the LILAA programs showed only modest improvements in literacy skills. There were “small but meaningful average gains” on tests of reading comprehension but little or no improvement on tests measuring phonemic decoding and vocabulary. Students who attended more frequently were no more likely to show higher achievement levels after one year than students who attended less frequently. This finding seemed to suggest that even students with higher participation levels did not engage in learning activities long enough to improve the literacy skills measured by standardized tests (Porter et al., 2005, p. 5). Research studies have found that marginally literate adults need 100 to 150 hours of participation to improve literacy skills by one grade level (Comings, Sum, & Uvin, 2000; Darkenwald, 1986; Sticht, 1982). The U. S. Department of Education’s Office of Vocational and Adult Education has estimated that students in adult literacy programs participate an average of 70 hours in a 12-month period. In the past decade adult educators have become more concerned about persistence in adult education programs “as federal funding in recent years has been made increasingly contingent on programs’ abilities to demonstrate improvements in their students’ achievement” (Porter et al., 2005, p. 1).

The students in the LILAA programs faced personal difficulties that impeded their efforts to participate in literacy programs on a regular, sustained basis. Persistence can be improved if students are given assistance in overcoming personal barriers, but only three of the LILAA programs attempted to provide support services such as child care and transportation vouchers. Of the three libraries offering support services, only one succeeded in meeting the students’ needs (Porter et al., 2005, p. 6).

The LILAA programs were more successful in implementing strategies to improve their core services. Some strategies were designed to make literacy services more accessible such as (a) off-site instruction, (b) drop-in classes, (c) longer hours of operation, and (d) expanded self-
paced computer-assisted instruction. Some libraries employed strategies to make students feel more at ease such as student orientation and faster entry into instructional services. Other strategies dealt with students' educational needs and goals: (a) diagnostic testing, (b) improved tutor training, (c) new curriculum and instructional approaches, (d) interventions for students' with learning disabilities, and (e) goal-setting activities (Comings et al., 2001, p. 9; Porter et al., 2005, pp. 6-7).

The LILAA persistence study found five major patterns of participation or pathways among students in adult literacy programs: (a) the long-term pathway, (b) the mandatory pathway, (c) the tryout pathway, (d) the intermittent pathway, and (e) the short-term pathway. Pathways were often determined by the number and the nature of the barriers students faced in their efforts to achieve literacy. Although participation on a steady, long-term basis is the most promising route to literacy attainment, it is not feasible for many students. Most LILAA literacy programs lacked the resources to address the individual needs of all students so they attempted to develop flexible programs that could be applied to all students. The LILAA literacy programs offered warm, inviting environments, but some students thought that the long-term pathway was the only available option and were hesitant to enroll; they failed to “realize that other pathways to literacy were also available, acceptable, and valuable” (Porter et al., 2005, p. 8).

Among the study’s recommendations was that public libraries attempt to address some of the students’ personal and environmental difficulties. On-site child care, transportation assistance, and some forms of counseling show promise in increasing student persistence and participation. Public libraries should develop an information and referral system for referring students to other social service and education providers. Adapting and adding programmatic improvements such as off-site instruction and drop-in classes could do much to make programs more accessible to students. Evaluating and addressing learning disabilities would overcome a major barrier to persistence for many adult literacy students. Two other strategies were suggested by the study’s findings: “sponsorship programs in which students are matched with individuals who can support
their persistence and learning” and learning plans which incorporate “not only tutoring and classes but also homework and other activities—as well as any participation in social service or other education programs” (Porter et al., 2005, p. 9).

The final recommendation was that library literacy programs “modify existing services, [sic] and design new services to help students on all pathways” (Porter et al., 2005, p. 9). The pathway perspective provides a new framework for implementing and setting goals for library literacy programs. The study findings suggest that more emphasis should be placed on “one-on-one, computer-based, and self-directed activities” that give students more flexibility to drop in and out of the program as the ability to participate fluctuates (Porter et al., 2005, p. 9). The pathway perspective also emphasizes the importance of a well organized system of information and referral to social service and education providers. The content of learning plans may be determined by the student’s pattern of participation. Learning plans for those students following the intermittent pathway might include self-study plans. For students on the short-term pathway, additional education choices might be incorporated into their learning plans. Learning plans for long-term students might incorporate the attainment of benchmarks through a variety of activities (Porter et al., 2005, p. 9).

“Awareness of the variability and unpredictability” of students’ participation and knowledge of the various persistence pathways should be incorporated into training programs for tutors and teachers (Porter et al., 2005, p. 9). A goal of adult literacy programs should be to create an atmosphere of acceptance “in which there is no stigma associated with participating irregularly or with returning to the program after a hiatus” (Porter et al., 2005, p. 9). During the student orientation, students should be told how they can continue learning during periods when they are unable to attend on a regular basis or have to drop out for a period of time. The program should include a systematic follow up when a student’s participation becomes erratic (Porter et al., 2005, p. 9).
Other Foundations

Other foundations interested in strengthening the public library’s participation in the National Information Infrastructure include the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the C. S. Mott Foundation, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. All of these, along with the Kellogg Foundation, have supported some of the activities of the Benton Foundation in the area of communications policy. The Kellogg Foundation and the MacArthur Foundation have directly influenced the American Library Association through grants to fund the ALA Office for Information Technology Policy (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 178).

The Role of the Federal Government

Legislation and Funding

Legislation. Originally public library legislation had addressed the inherent inequality of library services to rural Americans. Over the years priorities changed as the population grew and became more diverse, as the economy changed from an industrial base to a service/information base, and as technology became more pervasive. As new needs were recognized, public library legislation was amended to address these new priorities and requirements. In the 1980s the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) was amended and reauthorized a number of times. In 1981 LSCA Title I, Public Library Services and Title III, Interlibrary Cooperation were reauthorized through fiscal year 1984 (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 95).

The Library Services and Construction Act Amendments of 1984 reauthorized LSCA for five years. Three new titles were added during the 1984 reauthorization: Title IV, Library Services for Indian Tribes; Title V, Foreign Language Materials Acquisition; and Title VI, Library Literacy Programs. In November 1985 the National Science, Engineering, and Mathematics Authorization Act of 1986 amended LSCA Title III, Interlibrary Cooperation. In 1988 LSCA Titles V and VI were reauthorized through fiscal year 1989 (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 96).
The Library Services and Construction Act Amendments of 1990 reauthorized LSCA until 1994. The amendments placed increased emphasis on technology within Title I, Public Library Services; Title II, Construction; and Title III, Interlibrary Cooperation. Congress added two new titles: Title VII, Evaluation of LSCA and Title VIII, Library Learning Center. In 1994 the Improving America’s Schools Act reauthorized LSCA for one year (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 96).

By the mid-1990s it was definitely time to reconsider LSCA’s purpose. LSCA had been amended so often with the addition of so many initiatives and goals that it had become cumbersome to administer (Molz & Dain, 1999, 103). The Department of Education was evaluating LSCA project reports in almost 20 legislated categories. Among the special groups whose needs were addressed by public library legislation were (a) economically disadvantaged people, (b) older adults, (c) people with disabilities, and (d) persons with limited proficiency in the English language. Among the institutional priorities were libraries serving major urban areas, community information referral centers, and cooperative library networks (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 103). The library community recognized that LSCA needed to be trimmed down in order to ensure its continued existence in some form. In an effort to retain federal funding for libraries, ALA, the Urban Libraries Council, and the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies appointed task forces to identify major goals that were truly worthy of federal support, goals that could not be achieved without federal funding (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 104). The task forces decided that new legislation should emphasize two key priorities for libraries: “information access through technology and information empowerment through special services” (McCook, 2002, p. 18).

Meanwhile, the public library’s old friend LSCA passed into history in 1995. “The demise of the Library Services and Construction Act ended forty years of federal support primarily designed to assist public libraries” (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 108). Federal aid through LSCA gave public libraries the freedom to experiment with new services and new technologies (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 112). Public libraries used federal funds “to develop computerized
applications, purchase essential equipment, modify buildings to accommodate the hardware, establish cooperative agreements essential for the support of computer-based resource sharing, and train the personnel essential for maintenance and operation” (Sager, 1996, p. 167). Although federal funds accounted for only a small percentage of public library funding, “they often played a critical role in the research and development of computerized applications” (Sager, 1996, p. 167). Public libraries received many benefits from LSCA over the years; probably the most important and far-reaching benefit was “the development of an increased statewide responsibility for public library support” (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 108).

The new legislation, named the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), was approved by Congress in 1996. LSTA retained the strengths of previous federal library programs such as the state-based approach, but it also included some major changes. It specified two categories for federal aid: “(1) the establishment of electronic linkages among libraries, library consortia, career centers, and other service providers, and (2) the targeting of library and information services to those who have difficulty in using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children from families living below the poverty line” (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 104). LSTA transferred the administration of federal aid from the Department of Education to a newly created Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). IMLS consolidated federal programs for museums and libraries, which were previously administered by the Institute of Museum Services and the Department of Education (St. Lifer, 1997, pp. 44-45). LSTA was different from the former categorical-aid programs which issued funds to specific recipients, such as school, academic, and public libraries. “In effect, the Library Services and Technology Act, now Title IIB of the Museum and Library Services Act of 1996, is a federal block grant that embraces constituents from all types of libraries . . .” (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 108).

LSTA was authorized for six years. A total of $150 million was authorized for fiscal year 1997, with the same amount authorized for each year through 2002. Congress actually
appropriated $134 million for fiscal year 1997 (Duncan et al., 1998, p. 160). Most of these funds (91.5%) were distributed to state library agencies for statewide services or for subgrants to local library systems. Subgrants were available for technological innovation, electronic linkage purposes, or outreach services. Other allocations included 4% for national leadership competitive grants or contracts, 1.5% for services to Indian tribes, and 3% for federal level administration of the program (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 105). The 4% allocated for the National Leadership Program funded competitive grants for educating and training library and information science personnel, for conducting research and demonstration projects in computer and communications technology and for preserving and digitizing library resources, and for cooperative programs between libraries and museums. The allocation for the National Leadership Program continued some of the programmatic objectives of Title II of the Higher Education Act, which was repealed under the new legislation. Title II in addition to funding the purchase of materials for academic library collections had also allocated funds specifically for research and training in library and information science (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 105).

LSTA also authorized the National Commission on Library and Information Science (NCLIS) to participate in an advisory capacity to IMLS in the selection of the museum and library discretionary grant recipients (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 105). This new responsibility linked NCLIS "directly to the annual federal appropriation process supporting public libraries" (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 105).

The Museum and Library Services Act (MLSA) was reauthorized in 2003. LSTA was updated to provide funding for improvements in all types of libraries, to facilitate access to resources, to foster resource sharing, and to promote "economical and efficient delivery of service" (McCook, 2004b, p. 69). The minimum state allotment under the Grants to States Library Agencies program was doubled by the reauthorization. LSTA grants help to fund the coordination of statewide library services and to support a wide range of programs "from family literacy to providing broad access to sophisticated databases" (McCook, 2004b, p. 69). LSTA
enables public libraries in economically depressed communities to provide resources and services that would otherwise be unavailable.

Funding. Federal efforts in the 1980s to control the negative effects of inflation by reducing government expenditures had an adverse impact on public library funding. The Library Services and Construction Act continued to be the major source of support at the federal level. For the fiscal year 1981-82, President Reagan recommended that LSCA funding be reduced by 25% from the levels of 1980-81. Congress recommended much smaller cuts. Although federal funds did not represent a large portion of the total income for libraries, the recommended cuts had an adverse effect on the adequacy of library services for two important reasons. First, state matching dollars were often paired with federal dollars; cuts in federal dollars meant a corresponding cut in state dollars for public libraries. Second, state and local funding problems, especially lower property tax revenues, compounded the public library funding problem. In Massachusetts Proposition 2½ reduced tax revenues by about 40% during the early 1980s lending to the elimination of many library services (Shearer, 1982, p. 216).

During the Reagan administration, federal funding continued to decrease. In 1982 federal funds comprised 3.7% of public library moneys. The 1982 NCES survey disclosed that federal funding had declined 31% between 1978 and 1982 (Duncan et al., 1998, pp. 150-151). This trend continued throughout the 1980s, although funding for library services and buildings was better in 1983 than had been anticipated. For the first time in a number of years, the federal government provided funds for new public library building construction and renovation. The emergency jobs bill passed in March 1983 included $50 million for construction, and Congress approved an $8 million increase in LSCA funds for public libraries in September 1983 (Shearer, 1984, p. 228).

Federal support for public libraries was in doubt during most of 1985. The Reagan administration attempted to eliminate both LSCA and General Revenue Sharing. General Revenue Sharing, which supplied the bulk of federal library funds, survived one more year with substantially reduced allocations (Sager, 1986, p. 245). LSCA was endangered by legislation
intended to reduce the federal deficit but was saved at the end of the year by the approval of a continuing resolution by President Reagan (Sager, 1986, p. 245). Public library funding problems were further complicated by a 24% hike in the library postal rate (Sager, 1986, p. 245). The elimination of federal revenue sharing in 1986 affected a number of library systems; Pennsylvania libraries were particularly hard hit (Sager, 1987, p. 243).

In their analysis of the declining federal role, the advocacy group Libraries for the Future cited the example of the fiscal year 1992 appropriation for LSCA Titles I, II, III. The appropriation that year was approximately $118 million, which when adjusted for inflation, came to only $71.7 million in 1980 dollars. This amount was only a little more than the $67.5 million actually appropriated in 1980 despite the fact that library use from 1980 to 1992 had risen 48% (Libraries for the Future, as cited by Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 122).

After LSCA’s one-year extension in 1994, Senator Pell, Chair of the Education, Arts, and Humanities Subcommittee of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, planned to hold hearings on reauthorizing the public library program in the spring of 1995. However, Pell was replaced as chair after the November 1994 elections. In January 1995 the new Republican majority in Congress called for “substantial reductions in federal programs as a way to accommodate tax cuts” (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 104). The ALA Washington Office issued an advisory warning that funding for all federal library programs could be severely reduced or eliminated altogether in efforts to downsize government (American Library Association, 1995).

Many library advocates believe federal funding for libraries is more secure under the Institute of Museum & Library Services. Library funding was at greater risk under the Department of Education because many Republicans in Congress wanted to make drastic cuts in that department (St. Lifer, 1997, pp. 44-45). Many librarians feel that the library community’s needs and concerns are better served in a small independent agency devoted to library programs than in a large Cabinet-level department where they are “overshadowed by the far greater emphasis afforded the nation’s schools” (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 108).
Federal Agencies Concerned with Libraries

The National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS). In the period from 1980-1984, NCLIS established three major program objectives: “development of specifications for library legislation, improving the dissemination of federal information, and improving library and information services through resource sharing and applications of technology” (National Commission on Libraries and Information Science [NCLIS], 1995b, para. 1).

In 1980 the major new initiative was implementation of the 1979 White House Conference recommendations. In the period following the White House Conference, some librarians expressed concern that the resolutions did not specifically address ethnocultural needs and did not recognize the wide range of cultural diversity in the United States (Haro, 1981, p. 225). In response to these concerns, NCLIS created the Task Force on Library and Information Service to Cultural Minorities in 1980 (NCLIS, 1983, p. x). Among other activities the task force held a hearing at the 1981 ALA annual conference to obtain information on the current status of library and information services to minorities (NCLIS, 1982, p. v).

The NCLIS Task Force on Libraries and Information Services to Cultural Minorities published its report in 1983 (McCook, 2002, p. 35). The report focused on “institutional racism” in library education and professional recruitment, programs for cultural minorities, the availability and quality of materials and resources, and funding for minority programs (NCLIS, 1983, pp. xiv-xv). In its examination of programs for cultural minorities, the task force affirmed the importance of information and referral services and computer technology. Lack of computer literacy was cited as a significant barrier to information access for minorities. Public libraries were assigned a strong responsibility for “bridging the gap between technology and the library’s community” (NCLIS, 1983, pp. 37-38). The report also addressed the issues of availability of materials, networking, censorship, and user fees. Censorship was seen as “one of the most insidious forms of access denial”; its impact was compared to that of segregation in southern
libraries in the 1950s (Cain, 1990, pp. 232-233). User fees were also considered "a means to deny service" because they imposed a financial barrier between information and the poor (Cain, 1990, p. 233).

Although there had been considerable improvement in library services to racial minority groups during the 1960s and 1970s, NCLIS concluded in 1982 that library and information services to minorities was inadequate. The commission attributed the inadequacy to reduced funding and a lack of cooperation and understanding between librarians and the residents of minority communities (NCLIS, 1983, p. 4). The lack of a good working relationship between librarians and community members sometimes resulted in the elimination of potentially useful programs and services and the introduction of programs and services that failed because they did not address the needs of the community. Active involvement of minority group members, both librarians and community residents, in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs and services was seen as the most effective way to ensure relevancy (Nauratil, 1985, p. 118).

The task force found that special services were largely dependent on federal funding. The Reagan administration's economic policy, "Reaganomics," resulted in severe cutbacks in federal funding and a corresponding decrease in public library services for minorities (NCLIS, 1983, pp. 68-69). The report pointed out that minorities had a right to library services and programming like all other taxpayers. It was educationally and politically expedient for public libraries to find ways to include services for minorities in their budgets (NCLIS, 1983, pp. 68-69).

NCLIS approved 34 of the task force's 42 recommendations, but refused to support eight of them. Recommendations 7 and 8 called for ALA and the Special Library Association (SLA) to conduct studies of the composition of library staffs in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender (NCLIS, 1983, p. vi). Recommendations 30 and 31 asked publishers to remove images that promoted racial and ethnic stereotyping from their publications and to encourage minority authors to publish their works by providing special incentives (NCLIS, 1983, p. vi). The 38th
recommendation called for NCLIS to persuade states to specify certain percentages of block grant allocations for minority library and information services (NCLIS, 1983, p. vii).

Recommendations 5, 25, and 37 addressed the de facto denial of access to library services as the result of the imposition of user fees, insufficient staffing to provide adequate service, and the lack of multicultural collections (NCLIS, 1983, p. vii). In most instances NCLIS declined to support the recommendations because the agency believed that implementation was outside its purview. The commission did not support the recommendation on the removal of stereotypical images because the wording was vague and seemed to advocate censorship. A decision on the imposition of user fees was postponed pending further study of the issue (NCLIS, 1983, pp. v-viii).

In its advisory capacity NCLIS responded to a number of requests for information related to public library activities. The commission advised Congress on the revision and reauthorization of the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA), the Administration on Aging on the information needs of senior citizens, and the Department of Agriculture on the changing information needs of rural Americans (NCLIS, 1995b).

In 1984 NCLIS responded to the National Commission on Excellence in Education’s report *A Nation at Risk* (1983) by emphasizing the important role school library media centers played in helping students acquire the critical information skills they needed to achieve their educational goals. The commission cosponsored with the United Kingdom a Seminar on Information and Productivity which stressed the importance of library/information professionals to a strong economy (NCLIS, 1995b).

In the latter half of the decade, NCLIS emphasized the necessity of information literacy for educational achievement. In 1986 NCLIS issued a concept paper on information skills and collaborated with ALA and other library and education associations in planning a national symposium on information literacy. The 1989 symposium brought together educators and school library media personnel (NCLIS, 1995b). Other activities during this period included promotion
of the National Library Card Campaign, hearings on the federal government’s attempts to restrict
the release of sensitive but not classified information, support of the Bicentennial of the
Constitution, and an agreement with ACTION to improve services for the older adults (NCLIS,
1995b).

In 1989 the commission began a series of hearings and site visits to determine the
adequacy of library and information for Native Americans. In April 1991 NCLIS began its
collaboration with NCES in the Library Statistics Program. The program published in print and
electronic format the first compilation of public library data from all states, based on standard
data elements and definitions (NCLIS, 1995b). In 1992 NCLIS issued a report on the status of
library services for American Indian tribes entitled Pathways to Excellence.

The second White House Conference on Library and Information Services was held in
July 1991. Prior to the second White House Conference, preconference forums were held in all
50 states, the District of Columbia, 7 U.S. territories, the Native American community, and the
federal library and networking community. Over 2,500 ideas and resolutions were approved and
submitted to state preconference planners (McCook & Geist, 1993, p. 4). These ideas and
recommendations were consolidated into key areas such as “Availability and Access to
Information, National Information Policies, Information Networks through Technology, Structure
and Governance, Services for Diverse Needs, Training to Reach End Users, Personnel and Staff
Development, Preservation of Information, and Marketing to Communities” (McCook & Geist,
1993, pp. 29-34).

Delegates to the conference consisted of more than 2,000 people representing the general
public, library and information professionals, government officials, and trustees and friends of the
library (McCook & Geist, 1993, p. 1). “The three conference themes were library and information
services for literacy, democracy and productivity” (McCook, 2002, p. 17). ALA provided a
summary of the issues which included a strong statement on equity of access: “Open and
equitable access to information in all formats is a linchpin of our democratic society” (McCook, 2002, p. 18).

Ninety-five recommendations and petitions were approved by the delegates and published in the report, *Information 2000: Library and Information Services for the 21st Century* (McCook & Geist, 1993, p. 1). Most of the recommendations made at the 1991 WHCLIS fell into four policy areas: “(a) lifelong learning, (b) industrial policy, (c) economic stimulus: rural and urban development, and (d) information infrastructure” (McCook & Geist, 1993, p. 6). Recommendations in these areas tended to support the national goals and priorities of the early 1990s. Two recommendations were given priority status: “services for children and youth and equity on the information superhighway” (McCook, 2002, p. 18).

NCLIS concentrated on those priorities in the early 1990s. NCLIS held three hearings on library and information services for young people, surveyed selected school libraries, and worked to secure provisions regarding school library media centers in the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (NCLIS, 1995b).

To advance equity on the information superhighway, the commission sponsored research studies on public library involvement in the Internet (NCLIS, 1995b). In 1994 the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science in cooperation with the National Center for Educational Statistics commissioned a national study “to determine the nature, extent, and form of public library involvement with the Internet” (McClure, Bertot, & Zweizig, 1994, p. 5). The study was undertaken to “(1) provide policymakers and library professionals and researchers with baseline data about public library Internet involvement and (2) inform the policy-making process regarding the role of public libraries in the development of the National Information Infrastructure” (McClure, Bertot, & Zweizig, 1994, p. 6).

The 1994 survey was the first of a series of surveys on the public library’s participation in the Internet. The survey was prompted primarily by the need for descriptive data about the nation’s public libraries and the Internet for use in resolving policy issues regarding the role of
public libraries in the National Information Infrastructure (NII). The data allowed NCLIS, ALA, and other interested parties to provide expert testimony in meetings with federal policy makers and to work to extend the role of public libraries in the NIL (Bertot, McClure, & Zweizig, 1996, p. 52).

Data collection took place between January and March 1994. Questionnaires were addressed to 1,495 public libraries. A total of 1,148 surveys were returned for a response rate of 76.8%. Data was collected on a variety of Internet-related topics including (a) the extent to which public libraries possessed operational connections to the Internet, (b) type of Internet service provider or special arrangements that public libraries used to obtain connectivity, (c) Internet services and resources used by public librarians, (d) public library programs or services that had been developed to incorporate Internet use, (e) factors influencing public library use of the Internet, and (f) the estimated costs public libraries incurred for connectivity to and use of the Internet (McClure, Bertot, & Zweizig, 1994, p. 5).

In 1994 public library involvement was relatively limited. Only 20.9% of public libraries had an Internet connection (McClure, Bertot, & Zweizig, 1994, p. 14). In general as the size of the service area increased so did the percentage of libraries having an Internet connection. A large majority (77%) of public libraries serving more than 1 million people were connected to the Internet, while only 13.3% of public libraries serving fewer than 5,000 people had Internet connections. Urban libraries had a much higher percentage of Internet connectivity at 78.9% as compared to rural libraries with 16.8% (McClure, Bertot, & Zweizig, 1994, p. 16).

A major conclusion drawn from the findings of the 1994 study was the existence of a number of key differences among public libraries in regard to access, use, need, amount of financial support, and other factors influencing their participation in Internet-based services. One implication of the disparities among public libraries was “the importance of defining specific federal and public library roles and policy positions in enhancing public library involvement in the Internet” (McClure, Bertot, & Zweizig, 1994, p. 38). Another implication was “the
importance of developing a flexible federal policy position that could help public libraries in
different situations solve different types of problems” (McClure, Bertot, & Zweizig, 1994, p. 16).
Rural libraries in particular faced a number of challenges: obtaining funding, obtaining
computing and telecommunications equipment as well as appropriate software, finding an
Internet service provider, and acquiring appropriate connectivity. Without monetary and technical
assistance, few rural libraries could deal successfully with the demands of connectivity (McClure,

The survey identified a number of issues concerning public library participation in the
Internet and the National Information Infrastructure Initiative. Among the key issues were (a)
public library participation in “building the National Information Infrastructure”; (b) public
library involvement in “developing cooperative ventures with NII participants”; (c) the public
library’s role in “providing a societal safety net” for economically disadvantaged people; (d) the
public library’s role as the “community-based network literacy center”; (e) the need for federal
government support to “help public libraries connect to the Internet, both with funding and
technological assistance”; (f) the public library as the community access point for electronic
government information services; (g) the elimination of “discrepancies in access to
telecommunications services”; (h) the impact on economically disadvantaged people of imposing
fees for Internet-based services; (i) the allocation of “adequate resources for public library NII
participation”; and (j) the “privacy/confidentiality of patron information requests” (McClure,

Recommendations for enhancing the role of the public library in the Internet were
addressed to three stakeholder groups—policymakers, public librarians, and members of the
National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. Policymakers were urged “to define
a federal role to support public libraries in a networked society, to promote network literacy, to
promote statewide networks, to use public libraries to deliver government information and
services, to provide local dial-up access, to provide direct support for the purchase of equipment,
and to promote the development of a national training effort" (McClure, Bertot, & Zweizig, 1994, pp. 43; 46-47). Public librarians were asked “to increase knowledge and training related to the Internet, to obtain basic networking equipment and connectivity, to obtain local community support, to offer innovative networked information services, and to collaborate with other local organizations” (McClure, Bertot, & Zweizig, 1994, pp. 47-48). NCLIS was urged to expand the debate about the role of the public library in the National Information Infrastructure by promoting additional research and sponsoring follow-up conferences (McClure, Bertot, & Zweizig, 1994, p. 48).

Based on the 1994 survey, NCLIS sponsored a 1995 study entitled *Internet Costs and Cost Models for Public Libraries* (McClure, Bertot, & Beachboard, 1995). The study addressed the public library community’s needs for a practical guide to Internet costs for planning and decision-making regarding investments in network services. The study identified five representative connectivity models and seven broad cost categories. A wide range of options were available depending on a library’s location and available financial resources (NCLIS, 1995a).

A third survey was commissioned by NCLIS in 1996. The focus of this survey was less on influencing NIL policy than on (a) obtaining longitudinal data for the identification of trends in public library in the use of the Internet, (b) providing descriptive information about public library use for library planning purposes, and (c) identifying key issues affecting the future development of public libraries in the Internet (Bertot, McClure, & Zweizig, 1996, p. 52).

The 1996 survey followed the same methodology used in the 1994 survey to allow direct comparison of results from the two surveys. The data collection period was January 1996 to March 1996. The 1996 survey was conducted in order (a) to determine the percentage of public libraries connected to the Internet in 1996, (b) to identify changes in public library connectivity between 1994 and 1996, (c) to make projections about the development of public library Internet-based services in the future, (d) to determine the percentage of public libraries that offered public
access to Internet services, and (c) to identify the type of Internet services public libraries were providing to the public (Bertot, McClure, & Zweizig, 1996, p. i).

The 1996 survey revealed that public library Internet connectivity increased from 20.9% to 44.6% between 1994 and 1996. The provision of public access to the Internet increased from 13% in 1994 to 28% in 1996. The survey found that public library use of the Internet varied with the size of population served; public libraries serving under 5,000 people were significantly less likely to have an Internet connection than libraries serving 100,000 to 1 million and more people. Nearly 40% of public libraries without Internet service had no plans to connect within the next year; and the surveys revealed discrepancies in “the extent of connectivity, the type of connectivity, connectivity costs, and the provision of Internet public access services” (Bertot, McClure, & Zweizig, 1996, pp. ii, 46-48). The authors noted that significant progress had been made by public libraries but cautioned that connectivity figures could be extremely misleading. Further analysis of “the type, extent, and impact of public library connectivity and the degree and quality to which networked electronic resources and services were also being provided by the library” would be needed before definitive conclusions about the public library’s progress could be made (Bertot, McClure, & Zweizig, 1996, p. 49). Connection to the Internet was only the first step in the transition of public libraries into the global networked environment (Bertot, McClure, & Zweizig, 1996, p. 49).

In 1996 NCLIS was involved in three major programs: libraries and the Internet/National Information Infrastructure, policy for disseminating federal information, and the proposed Library Services and Technology Act to replace LSCA. NCLIS established a website to disseminate its reports and other information. The new Museum and Library Services Act made NCLIS responsible for providing general policy advice on the Library Services and Technology Act and made the director of the new Institute of Museum and Library Services an ex officio, nonvoting member of the commission. This addition brought the total number of commissioners to 16 (Williams, 1997, p. 1).
Throughout the 1990s NCLIS participated in discussions of other major issues including copyright and public access to government information. Access to and dissemination of government information continued to be a high-priority focus throughout the 1990s as the commission worked with the Government Printing Office, the Office of Management and Budget, and other agencies to recommend information policies that best met the needs and interests of the public (NCLIS, 1995b).

NCLIS and ALA’s Office for Information Technology Policy cosponsored the *National Survey of U.S. Public Libraries and the Internet, 1997* (Bertot, McClure, & Fletcher, 1997). NCLIS also commissioned a short, analytical report identifying policy issues and trends from the 1997 and earlier surveys that NCLIS sponsored. In the separate report, *Policy Issues and Strategies Affecting Public Libraries in the National Networked Environment: Moving Beyond Connectivity*, Bertot and McClure discussed issues relating to public library Internet connectivity, costs, and uses. The authors urged federal policy makers and library managers to consider important issues beyond mere connectivity such as questions concerning the unequal distribution of Internet connectivity and differences in costs and provision of service in urban versus rural service areas (Bertot & McClure, 1997, abstract).

Bertot and McClure examined 10 federal information policies dealing with the topics of (a) public library connectivity, (b) Internet based services, (c) universal service, (d) subsidy of public library connection costs, (e) public access to electronic government information, (f) the effectiveness of LSTA for public libraries, (g) Internet-related costs, (h) the need for a new national data collection paradigm, (i) the role of the federal government, and (j) the problem of multiple federal public library policies and programs (1997, pp. 3-16). The authors also discussed nine public library policy issues: (a) “Thinking Locally in a Global Networked Environment”; (b) “The Endless Upgrade”; (c) “Focus on Network-Based Services”; (d) “Identifying, Describing, and Defining Internet-Related Costs”; (e) “Redeploying Library Resources”;
(f) "Comprehensive Internet Costs and Statistics Management"; (g) "Performance Measures and Statistics for Networked Services"; (h) "Resource Sharing"; and (i) "New Models for Learning and Applying Internet Skills" (Bertot & McClure, 1997, pp. 16-21).

Moving Toward More Effective Public Internet Access, The 1998 National Survey of Public Outlet Internet Connectivity was sponsored by the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science and the American Library Association (Bertot & McClure, 1999). The title indicated a shift in emphasis from Internet connectivity to the provision of effective public Internet access. The 1998 survey varied in several respects from the previous surveys. In 1998 the unit of measurement was changed to library outlets. Outlets were defined as a main or branch library (bookmobiles were excluded). The 1998 survey was based on a sample of 2,500 of the nation's 15,718 public library outlets. This report raised questions about unequal distribution of Internet access among libraries serving rural, suburban, and urban populations. It also addressed the concept of effective public access which encompassed such criteria of effectiveness as (a) access to the World Wide Web, (b) workstations of sufficient capability, (c) access speeds of 56 kbps or greater, as well as (d) the provision of a sufficient number of workstations for the population to be served (Bertot & McClure, 1999, p. ii).

This survey found that 85.6% of public library outlets had an Internet connection and 73.3% of public library outlets offered public access to the Internet. However, only 68.6% provided graphical public Internet access to the World Wide Web and only 45.3% offered graphical public access to the Web at speeds of 56 kbps or greater (Bertot & McClure, 1999, p. iii). The authors noted that there had been significant progress since 1996 when 28% of library systems offered public Internet access, but only 23.7% provided graphical public Internet access. In 1997 60.4% of public library systems offered public Internet access, with only 52.1% able to provide graphical Internet access (Bertot, McClure, & Fletcher, 1997, p. 1).

The 1998 study suggested that the poverty level of the service area's population was not a significant factor in determining the availability of public Internet access. However, metropolitan
status was a significant factor; rural libraries lagged behind suburban and urban libraries. Only 67.6% of rural public libraries offered public Internet access as compared to 76.7% of suburban libraries and 84% of urban libraries. Almost one-third (31.4%) of library outlets offered no graphical public library access. Another 42.6% provided only one or two graphic workstations. Although the criteria for what constituted an adequate number of workstations had not been established, one or even two graphic workstations for public library access were considered inadequate to meet public needs in most circumstances (Bertot & McClure, 1999, p. iii).

NCLIS stressed that achieving universal Internet connectivity was only the first step. Libraries needed to implement effective public Internet access which included graphic access capability at sufficient speed, workstation functionality, and staff support. The commission worked within the federal sector to determine what constituted a minimal level of effective public Internet access and used this knowledge to advise the President and Congress about the types and levels of support needed to achieve the goal of effective Internet access. The commission recommended that current and future programs be based on guidelines that allowed for wide variations in local resources and requirements (Bertot & McClure, 1999, pp. iii-iv). The 1998 survey was conducted between April and June 1998 just as plans were being formulated for the implementation of universal service support for telecommunications service including Internet access in schools and public libraries. Survey findings provided useful baseline data about public library Internet connectivity and public access prior to the advent of universal service funding (Bertot & McClure, 1999, p. 1).

NCLIS provided information to the President and Congress on a variety of proposals for federally mandated use of filtering software for schools and libraries. The commission held a hearing on the Perils and Promise of the Internet in late 1998 and issued a brochure entitled *Kids and the Internet: the Promise and the Perils* containing practical guidelines for librarians and library trustees (Vlach, 2000, p. 2; Willard, 1999, p. 4).
In 2000 and 2001 NCLIS examined (a) the role of school libraries, public libraries, and the federal government in literacy and information literacy; (b) held hearings regarding library and information services for individuals with disabilities; and (c) examined the effects of the digital divide on underserved members of the community. The commission participated in an alliance with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the American Library Association in conjunction with the Department of Education’s Community Technology Center Program to coordinate the establishment of the Community Assess Points database (Vlach, 2001, pp. 2-3). NCLIS sponsored the sixth study of public libraries and the Internet: *Public Libraries and Internet 2000 Study* (Bertot & McClure, 2000).


In 2001 and again in 2002, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) proposed that NCLIS be eliminated because other agencies could carry out the work of the commission (Willard, 2002, p.2). The commission's supporters were able to persuade Congress that the NCLIS served an important function as an independent agency free of outside influence. For the second time Congress rejected the proposal that NCLIS be eliminated (Willard, 2002, p. 3). However, Congress cut the commission's appropriation by one-third (Willard, 2002, p. 1). The reduced budget resulted in personnel reductions and program cut-backs, but the agency was still able to continue routine operations. NCLIS continued to advise Congress on the reauthorization of the Library Services and Technology Act (Willard, 2002, p. 1, 4). Despite its reduced budget, the commission moved forward on two new initiatives. The first initiative was a brochure and CD-ROM briefing on the role libraries can perform in communicating vital information to the public in the immediate aftermath of a manmade or natural disaster (Willard, 2002, p. 4). The
second initiative was planning for the International Leadership Conference on Information Literacy in partnership with UNESCO and the National Forum on Information Literacy (Willard, 2002, p. 6). The commission’s publication program was severely impacted by the reduction in the agency’s budget and the loss of staff (Willard, 2002, p. 7).

In 2003 OMB dropped its proposal that NCLIS be eliminated and restored a recommendation to fund NCLIS in the President’s Budget; Congress accepted the recommendation (Willard, 2003, p. 1). The White House Office of Presidential Personnel began the process of nominating candidates to fill the 12 vacancies on the commission that had developed over the previous two years (Willard, 2003, p. 2). The new nominees attended a commission meeting in December 2003 and began working on a strategic plan for the commission (Willard, 2003, p. 4).

NCLIS continued to operate on an appropriation of $1 million. Despite the reduced budget and staff, the commission was still able to achieve some of its goals (Willard, 2003, p. 1). NCLIS and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) began discussions with the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) regarding improvements in the Library Statistics Program. The Library Statistics Program marked its 16th year of operation in 2003. The agencies concluded that the framework for government data collection on libraries needed to be improved and updated. The agencies were also interested in developing programs to extend the use of these statistics and provide specialized training in their use (Willard, 2003, p. 6). The commission completed production and began limited distribution of Trust and Terror, the CD-ROM briefing on the library’s role as a source of emergency information for the public in the aftermath of disasters (Willard, 2003, p. 6). With financial assistance from the State Department, NCLIS convened a meeting of experts in Prague to discuss information literacy. The participants issued a one-page document, “The Prague Declaration: Towards an Information Literate Society,” in which they emphasized the importance of information literacy and called for further
international efforts including the proposed International Leadership Conference in 2005 (Willard, 2003, p. 8).

In December 2003 the World Summit on the Information Society was held in Geneva, Switzerland. Although the summit was primarily concerned with “technological issues such as Internet connectivity and domain name registration, the role of libraries in assuring access to information was recognized in the deliberations of the summit” (Willard, 2003, p. 8). The United States delegation to the summit included the NCLIS chairman and the IMLS director (Willard, 2003, p. 8).

In January 2004 President Bush appointed and the U.S. Senate confirmed 12 new commissioners (NCLIS, 2005b). The commissioners drew up a strategic plan to guide their deliberations and actions. The commission’s goals included appraising the adequacy of library and information services, strengthening the relevancy of libraries and information science, and promoting “research and development for extending and improving library and information services” (NCLIS, 2005b, p. 1). The commission established objectives that are to be accomplished through specific strategic initiatives. The initiatives selected for immediate attention were as follows:

1. Emergency preparedness and the role of libraries as community distribution centers for emergency preparedness and disaster response information
2. The role of libraries in distributing consumer health information and in promoting healthy lifestyles for all Americans
3. Adequacies and deficiencies of current library and information resources and services
4. Information dissemination about the relationship—based on scientific research and evidence—between school libraries and educational achievement
5. Library services for the aging
Other areas under consideration for in-depth study included (a) the role of libraries in influencing economic development; (b) an assessment of the E-rate program; (c) digitized information and the role of libraries; (d) scholarly publishing; (e) non U.S. ownership of scientific, technical, and medical research conducted in the United States; and (f) open access to published scientific, technical; and medical research findings. NCLIS's financial position in 2004 was such that none of these initiatives could be undertaken without additional funding; however, the commission was able to solicit and accept gifts to carry out its work (NCLIS, 2005b).

Although NCLIS's budget remained static, the commission accomplished several important goals during 2005. Commissioner Ashworth wrote an NCLIS position paper for the White House Conference on Aging. In the international arena, NCLIS examined the role of libraries in Sub-Saharan Africa in the battle against HIV/AIDS. Representatives attended the International Federation of Library Associations meeting in Ohio and the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis. In the Libraries in Health Information Literacy initiative, the commission's goal is to identify best practices and model programs and establish a body of knowledge that can be shared with the larger library management community through presentations at professional meetings and publication on the NCLIS website. To promote excellence in the provision of health information, the commission created the Consumer Health Information Recognition Awards for Libraries. Awards were given to 37 libraries in 2004, and a reception to recognize model library programs in health information provision was held at the National Agriculture Library in May 2005 (NCLIS, 2005c).

In March 2006 the Bush administration proposed the integration of the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science into the Institute for Museums and Libraries by fiscal year 2008. The proposal would also merge the current National Center for Education Statistics programs for public and state library surveys into IMLS. The Bush administration sees the consolidation of the grant-making, data collection, and advisory functions into IMLS as a means of "strengthening federal library and information policy efforts, enhancing the nation’s
research capacity on domestic and international library trends, and creating greater efficiency of
capacity on domestic and international library trends, and creating greater efficiency of
operations” (NCLIS, 2006, para. 2). NCLIS is currently working with IMLS and NCES to
evaluate the proposal and determine the best model for consolidation (NCLIS, 2006).

Institute on Museums and Libraries (IMLS). IMLS is an independent federal grant-
making agency; it is the main source of federal funding for the nation’s libraries and museums.
“The Institute’s mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to
information and ideas. The Institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and
local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation;
and support professional development” (IMLS, 2006a, para. 1). The Institute of Museum and
Library Services consists of two entities—an Office of Museum Services and an Office of Library
Services. The Office of Library Services (a) promotes improvements in services in all types of
libraries, (b) facilities access to resources in all types of libraries, (c) encourages resource sharing
among all types of libraries, and (d) analyzes the impact and effectiveness of library initiatives
funded by IMLS (IMLS, 2006a). The Office of Library Services is responsible for approving state
plans designed to provide access to information through “state, regional, national, and
international electronic networks” (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 105).

The institute’s activities include grant making, conferences, research, and publication
(IMLS, 2006a). IMLS initiatives reflect “the four critical roles” libraries and museums play in
American Society: (a) “Enhancing Learning in Families and Communities, (b) Sustaining
Cultural Heritage, (c) Building 21st Century Skills, (d) Creating Civic Engagement” (IMLS,
2006b). The placement of libraries within the Institute of Museum and Library Services
emphasizes that libraries are community-based institutions and recognizes lifelong learning as a
major part of the public library’s mission. In the new agency libraries are recognized as cultural
heritage institutions in the same sense as museums (McCook & Jones, 2002).

IMLS rewards libraries and museums for their efforts to promote civic engagement,
inform and educate the American public, and assist communities in addressing “a wide range of
concerns from workforce issues and parenting concerns to cross cultural understanding and student achievement” (IMLS, 2006b, Creating Civic Engagement section, para. 2). The National Awards for Museum and Library Service recognize exemplary museums and libraries (IMLS, 2006c).

Reading and information literacy are recognized as essential to success in modern American society. IMLS encourages libraries and museums (a) to form partnerships to combine their strengths in traditional learning, (b) to develop programming to promote interaction between generations, (c) to invest in modern communication technology to extend their educational benefits, (d) to promote all forms of literacy, and (e) to foster learning and literacy development throughout the lifespan (IMLS, 2006b, Building 21st Century Skills section).

The institute funds projects to preserve and conserve books, artworks, and other cultural artifacts through conventional methods and digitization of collections. Current initiatives include (a) the Heritage Health Index, (b) Save American’s Treasures, (c) the Conservation Project Support Program, (d) the Conservation Assessment Program, (e) Digital Corner, and (f) the Sustaining Heritage Publication (IMLS, 2006b, Sustaining Cultural Heritage section).

IMLS is also involved in a number of partnerships with other agencies and organizations. IMLS entered a cooperative agreement with the University of Illinois Library Research Center and the Pew Internet & American Life Project to study “how effectively public libraries and community technology centers provide government information to people with limited access to the Internet” (IMLS, 2005, para. 1). The institute and the National Endowment for the Humanities announced in September 2006 that they will dedicate $1.5 million to “Advancing Knowledge: The IMLS/NEH Digital Partnership” which will fund NEH’s Digital Humanities Start-Up Projects. These projects are intended to encourage collaboration among museum, library, archives and information professionals and humanities scholars in the development of new ideas for incorporating the use of information technology in humanities-related research,
publication, preservation, access, teacher training, and dissemination in informal or formal educational settings (IMLS, 2006d; IMLS, 2006g).

**Federal Initiatives in Adult Education**

**Literacy.** In the early 1980s “the focus of federal support for library literacy projects shifted from the Library Research and Demonstration program to the LSCA Title I program” (Mathews, Chute, & Cameron, 1986, p. 223). Literacy projects also began to receive increased state support in 1980. The amount of federal, state, and local funds spent on LSCA Title I literacy projects nearly tripled from 1980 to 1984, increasing from $1.5 million in 1980 to $4.2 million in 1984. During that same period, the number of projects increased substantially from 39 in 1980 to 97 in 1984 (Mathews et al., 1986, p. 223). Between fiscal year 1982 and 1984, LSCA Title I funded 250 literacy related projects. Many of these projects involved the development of selected bibliographies, literacy materials, and computer software for literacy education (Heim, 1991b, p. 26). Other LSCA Title I funded projects during the mid-1980s utilized three difference programmatic approaches: “community literacy, technology, and one-to-one tutoring” (McCook, 1992, p. 247). Techniques and methods from successful programs were identified and described in a publication funded by the Department of Education, *Effective Adult Literacy Programs: A Practitioner's Guide* (McCook, 1992, p. 248).

In addition to adult literacy programs, LSCA Title I supported literacy projects for special populations including (a) family literacy efforts, (b) young adult literacy initiatives, (c) literacy programs for physically and developmentally disabled persons, (d) literacy programs for prisoners and other institutionalized persons, and (e) literacy initiatives for people with limited English speaking ability. LSCA Title I also funded the development of statewide coalitions and literacy councils to promote interagency cooperation and support for literacy. Coalitions focused on (a) providing information and referral, (b) sponsoring speakers’ bureaus, (c) holding statewide conferences, and (d) establishing literacy hotlines to recruit students and tutors (McCook, 1992, p. 248).
In the 1984 reauthorization of LSCA, Congress made literacy a separate priority area under Title I and added Title VI, “Library Literacy Program” to the act (Mathews, Chute, & Cameron, 1986, p. 223). Title VI was a discretionary grants program which enabled state and local libraries to apply directly to the U.S. Department of Education for funds to begin, sustain, extend, or upgrade literacy services (Heim, 1991b, pp. 27-28). More than $5 million was made available to libraries in 1986 (Rolstad, 1990, p. 254). Apparently the addition of the new literacy program encouraged more states to become involved in literacy education. While 26 states had LSCA literacy projects in 1984, 47 states were engaged in LSCA literacy projects in 1986 (Mathews et al., 1986, p. 224).

The 239 projects funded by Title VI in 1986 included a wide range of literacy services: (a) recruitment and training of literacy tutors, (b) special services for Native Americans and older Americans, (c) public awareness campaigns, (d) family literacy programs, and (e) computer-assisted instruction. Projects in 1987 and 1988 followed a similar but a somewhat more diverse pattern. The annual reports on LSCA Title VI funded programs from the Library Programs Office played an important role in providing ideas and disseminating information about successful techniques and methods. Reports of successful programs encouraged library planners to initiate new and expanded literacy services (Rolstad, 1990, p. 254).

Seven basic approaches to library-initiated literacy programming were identified and summarized in the 1989 LSCA Title VI summary report prepared by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement and the U.S. Department of Education. The seven approaches included (a) collaboration and coalition building, (b) public awareness campaigns, (c) training programs for volunteers, (d) development of adult basic reading materials collections, (e) media-based and technology-assisted instruction, (f) development of instructional components geared to community needs, and (g) workplace and employment-oriented efforts (McCook, 1992, pp. 248-249).
Although a large number of projects were funded by LSCA and other federal legislation, Kozol argued that the government efforts were reaching only a small portion of the illiterate population because funding was insufficient (1985, pp. 41-42). For example, the Coalition for Literacy received only $50,000 out of a total U.S. budget of $1 trillion in 1985. The Reagan era was not a favorable time for library literacy initiatives. Rolstad observed that the Reagan administration wanted to do away with the National Commission on Library and Information Science (NCLIS). The elimination of NCLIS would have seriously impaired library efforts in literacy education because the commission was responsible for providing much of the statistical information used to plan library literacy programs. The Reagan administration believed that state and local governments could deal with the problem of illiteracy more effectively than the federal government. The administration also believed that the private sector would provide a substantial amount of support to literacy efforts (Rolstad, 1990, p. 254).

In 1989 President Bush and the governors of the 50 states participated in an educational summit during which the federal and state governments joined together in proposing six educational goals for the nation. The goals were adopted in 1990, and the AMERICA 2000 plan was developed for making fundamental changes in the American educational system (Swanson, 1991, p. 2). The six National Education Goals were as follows:

1. By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn.
2. By the year 2000, the high school graduate rate will increase to at least 90 percent.
3. By the year 2000, American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.
4. By the year 2000, U.S. students will be the first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.

5. By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

6. By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning (Brennan, 1992, pp. 2-5).

This federal-state educational initiative led to the creation of the first national literacy forum for state libraries. The first forum, entitled “Strengthening the Literacy Network,” met in May 1990 to establish a network of library literacy providers and to discuss recommendations for the 1991 White House Conference on Library and Information Services (Quezada, 1990b, abstract). Presentations at the conference focused on a number of issues including (a) community collaborations at the state and local levels, (b) adult literacy, (c) technology-assisted learning, (d) family literacy, (e) workforce literacy, (f) rural literacy, and (g) the administration of the Library Services and Construction Act—Title VI (Quezada, 1990b, abstract).

The conference participants adopted the following resolutions to be taken to the 1991 White House Conference on Library and Information Services

1. The incorporation of the concept of the library as an educational agency into existing legislation

2. The development of a strategy for more stable funding for literacy

3. The continuation of the improvement of evaluation, research, and dissemination of library-based literacy efforts by libraries and other literacy providers

4. The redirection of administrative responsibilities for LSCA titles related to literacy directly to the state library agency (Quezada, 1990a, p. 24).

Four resolutions adopted by the 1991 White House Conference addressed the role of libraries in literacy education. Resolution CRC GOV05-31 recommended “the inclusion of
libraries as educational institutions for lifelong learning in legislation, regulations, and policy statements . . . to make libraries the center of the revolutionary movement called American 2000” (McCook, 1992, pp. 250-251). Resolution CRC NIP12-1 called for libraries to be designated as educational agencies and for members of the library community to be included in the implementation of America 2000 (McCook, 1992, p. 251). Resolution CRC SER 03-1 recommended that “literacy for all people” be established “as an on-going national priority” and that “the central role of libraries as providers of adult, youth, family, and workplace literacy services” be duly recognized (McCook, 1992, p. 251). Resolution CRC NIP04-1 called for the “provision of incentives to develop and produce quality literacy materials, develop new technologies, and develop new programs in basic literacy and literacy enhancements” (McCook, 1992, p. 251). These resolutions demonstrated that participants at pre-White House conferences at the state and local levels had “placed literacy and involvement in education at the top of the library agenda” (McCook, 1992, p. 251). The idea that libraries could play a pivotal role “in strengthening literacy within the family” was also formally recognized by the federal government (McCook, 1992, p. 251).

The National Literacy Act of 1991 (NLA) “changed the structure of literacy support and action in the federal government” (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 69). Major provisions of NLA included increased authorization for literacy programs, the establishment of a National Institute for Literacy, authorization of state literacy resource centers, creation of national work force demonstrations, the amendment of basic state grants, revision of the Even Start Family Literacy Programs and authorization of new programs (Irwin, 1991, abstract). The National Literacy Act had a positive impact on adult literacy staff development. The act required each state to increase its staff development funding from 10% to 15%. Fifty states and three territories began new training activities during the period from 1992 to 1993 (Quigley, 1995, p. 61).

The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) was created by the National Literacy Act of 1991 in response to requests from literacy organizations for a federal office devoted solely to the
problem of illiteracy (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 69). The purpose of the Institute was “to enhance the national effort to eliminate the problem of illiteracy by the year 2000 by improving research, development, and information dissemination through a national research center” (National Institute for Literacy [NIFL], 2003b, para. 1). NIFL’s creation ensured that literacy would be included in the federal policy agenda and revitalized the national effort to improve adult literacy (NIFL, 2004).

In 1992 the United States Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Library of Congress, the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, and the National Institute for Literacy formed the AMERICA 2000 Library Partnership to support libraries in their efforts to achieve the National Education Goals. The Library Partnership focused on the following issues:

1. Supporting parents in getting their children ready for school and helping them reach high standards in the core subjects
2. Promoting the best of literacy theory and practice by distributing information on successful programs and funding literacy projects
3. Sponsoring a special project to promote the building of home libraries
4. Adapting and improving library services to meet the changing educational and social needs of the 21st century through short-term training institutes for school and public librarians and improving the dissemination of information to libraries
5. Improving and expanding data collection on public library services for children and young people
6. Commissioning papers by practitioners and researchers in the library field
8. Spotlighting innovative libraries and library programs
In 1996 the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress released “Even Anchors Need Lifelines,” the report of Spangenberg’s study of the role and future of public libraries in adult literacy. The purpose of the study, jointly sponsored by the Center for the Book, the National Institute for Literacy, and ALA, was “to refocus attention on the important institutional and service role of libraries in literacy” (Barber, 2001, p. 156). The study consisted of a survey of 200 professionals—state librarians, state library literacy contacts, heads of state literacy resource centers (SLRCs), and local library literacy program heads (Spangenberg, 1996, abstract). The study explored seven areas (a) “the mission and role of public libraries in adult literacy provision, (b) use and limits of technology, (c) the planning context of library literacy programs, (d) financial and funding questions, (e) state-level data collection issues, (f) local program issues, and (g) lifeblood issues and leadership” (Spangenberg, 1996, abstract). In the conclusion to the report, Spangenberg noted the following:

Judging by . . . the large number of public libraries now involved in the provision of adult literacy service (some 7,000 not counting branches), public libraries also embrace literacy as a central part of their ongoing mission, although with occasional ambivalence. They are a community anchor for literacy—or as one project advisor put it, they could well be seen as the “irreducible backbone of the literacy movement” (1996, p. 116).

Spangenberg’s report expressed great concern about the discontinuance of LSCA Title VI, “Library Literacy Program.” When LSCA came to an end in 1995, Title VI which had provided direct federal support for library literacy programs since 1986 also met its demise. Over $65 million in grants for literacy programs had been awarded to public libraries during that period (McCook & Barber, 2002b). With the discontinuance of Title VI, one of the major “lifelines” was gone (Barber, 2001, p. 156). Although 70% of state library respondents advocated adult literacy as a major public library mission, only 50% of state libraries had major adult literacy involvement. Lack of financial resources was the primary impediment to the use of technology. The study found that the State Literacy Resource Centers created by the National Literacy Act of
1991 had not been adequately funded, and many library literacy programs could not continue if federal funding were lost. Aggressive leadership was needed at the state and national levels to save library-based literacy programs. The most critical issue (perhaps the defining issue for continuing public library involvement in adult literacy) was funds and funding stability (Spangenberg, 1996, abstract, p. 121). The report concluded with 18 recommendations for improving and maintaining library literacy programs with the first two recommendations dealing with the “life-and-death” issue of funding (Spangenberg, 1996, p. 121).

Adult literacy programs were impacted by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), which reformed the nation’s welfare laws. Under its provisions states were pressured to “move people into work or work-related activities” (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 70). Work-related activities included adult literacy, basic education, and English-as-a-Second Language programs, which prepared adults to enter the workforce. The 1997 Department of Labor Welfare to Work Program strengthened the link between adult education and literacy and employers by funding work-related activities in an effort “to keep people in unsubsidized employment” (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 70).

Programs authorized by the Adult Education Act, the National Literacy Act, and the Job Training Partnership Act were restructured by the 1998 Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Title II of the Workforce Investment Act. AEFLA called for the involvement of all levels of government in partnerships (a) to assist adults in obtaining the knowledge and skills needed to become productive and self-sufficient members of society, (b) to assist parents in securing the educational skills and knowledge needed to enable them to serve as effective role models and partners in their children’s education, and (c) to assist adults in completing a high school education or a General Educational Development program (McCook & Barber, 200b, p. 70). Some provisions of AEFLA were especially important for library literacy programs: (a) libraries were named as potential providers which gave them “direct and equitable access” to apply for local grants; (b) provision was made for leadership activities at the state level “such as
professional development, maintenance of literacy resource centers, and support services”; (c) accountability standards were included in the federal guidelines and in most state plans; (d) states were given incentives to exceed the adjusted performance levels; and (e) adult education and family literacy were emphasized at the national level through the National Institute for Literacy and the Department of Education (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 70).

Also in 1998 the Reading Excellence Act was approved by Congress. The act was designed to improve students’ reading skills and teachers’ instructional practices. It also expanded family literacy programs and early childhood intervention programs. Public libraries in partnerships with schools and other qualified agencies were eligible to receive grants to develop creative programs for school-age children and early intervention literacy programs for young children and their families (Gomez, 2001, p. 149).

The National Institute for Literacy was reauthorized by the Workforce Investment Act and its mission expanded greatly under AEFLA. AEFLA mandated that the institute provide “national leadership for adult education and literacy programs, coordinate literacy services and policy, and serve as a national resource for adult education and literacy programs” (NIFL, 2003a, para. 1). The National Literacy Act and the Workforce Investment Act “positioned the institute as a national leader on adult literacy, a central source of knowledge about research, practice and policy, and a catalyst for innovation” (NIFL, 2003a, para. 1).

The institute hosted the National Literacy Summit held in February 2000. The Foundation Paper presented at the summit provided information on the history and current status of adult education in the United States and laid the foundation for building a stronger field committed to meeting the needs of new adult readers (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 67). The purpose of the summit was to articulate a vision and formulate an action plan to improve the quality of the nation’s system of literacy services. An action agenda for literacy, From the Margins to the Mainstream, was developed by summit participants. The agenda was a “blueprint for community action” which focused on the need for (a) adequate financial, material, and human
resources; (b) increased availability of services; and (c) better quality programs to assist all adults and families in achieving their literacy goals (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 70).

NIFL’s goal is to ensure that all Americans needing adult, child, or family literacy services have access to high-quality programs that can help them obtain the basic skills needed to function effectively in a variety of settings—family, school, the workplace, and the community (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 69). The institute’s major objectives are as follows:

1. To disseminate high-quality information and resources grounded in rigorous research
2. To translate scientifically-based information or the most rigorous available research into guidance and tools that can be used in practice
3. To identify high-performing programs, practices and policies that produce desirable outcomes
4. To support rigorous research on literacy acquisition
5. And to understand educators’ and other practitioners’ knowledge of scientifically-based research findings and their applications to practice (NIFL, 2007a, para. 4).

NIFL provides programs and services that “encourage the development and provision of high quality adult education and literacy services” (NIFL, 2007b, para. 1). Among its primary activities is LINCS, an Internet-based information and communication system which provides access to a wide variety of literacy-related news, literacy resources, public discussion lists, and information concerning technology training opportunities (LINCS, 1998; NIFL, 2007b). The institute addresses the needs of adults with learning disabilities through Bridges to Practice (a four-volume research-based guide devoted to improving services for this group) and training programs in the use of Bridges for service providers and trainers of trainers (NIFL, 2007b). The institute’s online searchable database, America’s Literacy Directory, provides information about adult, child, and family literacy services in communities across the United States (NIFL, 2007b). NIFL is a member of the Partnership for Reading, a collaborative effort among several government agencies, whose purpose is to develop and disseminate scientifically based reading
research and research-based products to educators, parents, policymakers, and others (NIFL, 2007b).

NIFL is currently engaged in a number of activities designed to improve instruction in adult education programs. The institute published two research-based publications on adult reading instruction: *Applying Research in Reading Instruction for Adults: First Steps for Teachers* and *Teaching Adults to Read: A Summary of Scientifically Based Research Principles*. A new newsletter about adult reading instruction for teachers of reading and basic skills was launched in 2006. The institute offers an online reading assessment tool for teachers and a minitutorial on teaching adults to read (NIFL, 2007b). Other initiatives include (a) supporting a national research program to improve reading instruction for adults, (b) convening a panel of experts to devise a strategy for identifying successful adult literacy programs, (c) sponsoring a national survey to explore the relationship between state and local adult literacy policies and student outcomes, (d) convening a national summit for community-based and volunteer literacy programs, (e) working with reading experts and stakeholders to plan initiatives to address gaps in knowledge and services, (f) working to strengthen the quality of adult literacy research, and (g) promoting evidence-based practice (NIFL, 2007b).

NIFL also sponsored Equipped for the Future (EFF), a ten-year initiative begun in 1996 to develop an adult literacy system with greater accountability. EFF recognized that the many roles adults play in society require more than the basic academic skills that have traditionally been the focus of adult education programs. Research was used to establish the core knowledge and skills adults need to perform effectively as family members, workers, and members of the community. EFF’s content standards represented the starting point for building a lifelong learning system intended to enable Americans to acquire the skills needed to succeed in the twenty-first century (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 70).

Since 1985 the federal government has funded four surveys of adult literacy. The Adult Education Amendments of 1988 required the U. S. Department of Education to submit reports to
Congress concerning the nature and extent of literacy among the adult population in the United States. Two surveys were conducted in the 1980s: a 1985 household survey of the literacy skills of young adults 21 to 25 years old and a 1989-90 survey of the literacy skills of job seekers (Jenkins & Baldi, 2001, p. 1). Two national assessments of the English literacy of American adults (people age 16 and older) have been conducted since 1990. The first was the National Adult Literacy Survey in 1992, and the second was the National Assessment of Adult Literacy in 2003. The definition of literacy used in the two surveys was “using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential” (NCES, 2007, para. 1). Both surveys used three literacy scales—prose, document, and quantitative—to report the results of the surveys (Jenkins & Baldi, 2001, p. 3).

The results of the 2003 survey were reported in terms of scale score averages and literacy levels on the three literacy scales. The literacy levels were below basic, basic, intermediate, and proficient; and each level corresponded to a specific range of scale scores. The 1992 and 2003 surveys were designed to provide comparable data. A comparison of the scores of the two surveys showed that “the average quantitative literacy scores of adult increased 8 points between 1992 and 2003” (Kutner, Greenburg, & Baer, 2005, para. 1). There was no significant difference between the average prose and document literacy scores. African Americans showed significant improvement in average prose literacy scores (an increase of 6 points) and in average document literacy scores (an increase of 8 points). The prose literacy scores of Asians/Pacific Islanders rose by 16 points. The average prose literacy scores of Hispanics declined by 18 points and the average document literacy scores fell by 14 points between 1992 and 2003. There was no significant change in the average prose and document scores among Whites (Kutner et al., 2005, para. 1). These surveys are important because they provide data about the nature and extent of adult literacy that can be used in state and federal program planning and resource allocation.

Parent education and family literacy. The decade of the 1980s was not a particularly generous period for childcare funding. Childcare funding was adversely affected by the reduction
of funding to both Title XX of the Social Security Act and ESEA Title 1 programs in the early 1980s. Title I was heavily criticized for ineffectiveness during the first five years of its implementation. The success of Title I programs was compromised by “ineffectual parental participation” (Hobbs, 1984, p. 192). Title XX, initially a cash assistance program, became the Social Services Block Grant in 1981. The program changed to a revenue sharing base in which states were no longer required to match 25% of the funds in order to receive federal monies. The change had a disastrous effect on childcare funding as “thirty-two states cut their funding base for Title XX funding” (Hobbs, 1984, p. 192). The effect of the change was clearly evident by 1983 when childcare funding was cut to $623 million and another $200 million intended for the training of caregivers was eliminated (Hewlett, Ilchman, & Sweeney, 1986, pp. 70, 106-115).

Throughout the 1980s Head Start continued to provide “a comprehensive child development program” for preschool children from low income families (Hobbs, 1984, p. 196). Parent education continued to be an essential element of the Head Start program. Funding for Head Start grew from $96.4 million in 1964 to $1.1 billion in 1985. Although Head Start was innovative in its attempts to reach as many low-income families as possible, it served only 20% (2.7 million) of the eligible children. In 1986 a freeze on federal monies reduced the number of children served by 19,000 (Hewlett, Ilchman, & Sweeney, 1986, pp. 106-115).

Various researchers concluded from their evaluations of the Title XX, ESEA Title 1, and Head Start programs that the outcomes of these programs “did not warrant establishing a federally supported program” (Haskins & Adams, 1983, pp. 351-69). Clarke-Stewart (1983) emphasized that expansion of parent education efforts would “inevitably come at the expense of other social programs” (p. 257). Clarke-Stewart believed that parent education did not deliver the promised outcomes and that other social programs offered greater opportunities for affecting social change (1983, p. 257).

Although federal parent education and childcare initiatives were limited in the 1980s, federal agencies have shown renewed interest in educational programs for parents and young
children in the past 15 years. In 1992 the Center for the Book (CFB) at the Library of Congress (LOC) began the five-year Library-Head Start-Museum Partnership project. The project culminated in the publication of a resource book containing many practical ideas and information for Head Start teachers, participants, and parents on how to promote family literacy through partnerships with children's librarians and museum specialists who serve children (Library of Congress [LOC], 1999).

In 1996 the Clinton administration initiated the America Reads Challenge intended to ensure that all 8-year old students in America would be reading at the appropriate grade level by the year 2000. The program consisted of five components. The first component was the America's Reading Corps of tutors, many of whom were college work-study participants. These tutors helped more than 3 million children a year. The second component was Parents as First Teachers challenge grants to fund national and local programs designed to help parents prepare their children to become successful readers. The third and fourth components were the expansion of the Head Start and the Title 1/Even Start programs to strengthen preschool and school reading programs. The fifth component was a challenge to the private sector to work with schools and libraries to improve the reading of children (Barber, 1997, pp. 42-43).

During this same period the Viburnum Foundation began its Family Literacy Project intended to foster "the planning, training, and promotion of family literacy projects among rural libraries and their community partners" (LOC, CFB, 2002, para. 1). From 1992 to 1997 the Office of Literacy and Outreach Services of the American Library Association administered the project (LOC, CFB, 2002).

In 1998 the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress was awarded a three-year grant to administer the Viburnum Project (LOC, CFB, 2002). The grant was renewed for two more years in 2001. From 1998 to 2003 the center administered the project and conducted two regional training workshops each year for new library grantees (LOC, CFB, 2006). In the training workshops participants learned about family literacy practices and techniques, but the major
emphasis was on how to form and sustain community partnerships. Workshop speakers came from a variety of backgrounds: healthcare, juvenile justice, youth services, childcare, public television, early childhood education, and mental health organizations (LOC, CFB, 2002). From 1998 to 2003 the Viburnum Foundation awarded $3,000 grants directly to 222 small rural libraries in 10 states (American Library Association, 2004b).

In 2004 the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress began a new family literacy initiative, "Reading Powers the Mind," with support from the Viburnum Foundation. In July 2004, 70 invited guests and representatives from the 12 states participating in the project met in Washington, D.C., for a training session. This was an opportunity for librarians and their community partners to discuss local efforts and to network with representatives from key national organizations including the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the Child Welfare League of America, Head Start, the National Black Child Development Institute, the National Council of La Raza, Johns Hopkins University’s Center for Summer Learning, the Aspira Association, and the Council for Exceptional Children (American Library Association, 2004b; LOC, CFB, 2005b). The keynote speaker for the event was Senator Bingaman of New Mexico who "praised the key role of all public libraries in community-building and fighting illiteracy" (Cole, 2004, para. 2). The objective of the training according to Virginia Mathews, project manager and Center for the Book consultant, was for the participants to learn from one another “to make early childhood literacy a top priority for teachers, parents and other caregivers, agency personnel, and even the courts in their communities” (American Library Association, 2004b, para. 2). The Reading Powers the Mind initiative involved 12 pilot projects developed by libraries in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia. These projects built on the successes of the earlier Center for the Book/Viburnum Foundation collaboration, because participants in the new initiative were selected based on the success of their earlier projects (American Library Association, 2004b).
The Center for the Book sponsors and supports other book and family literacy projects. For example, the Mother Goose Program is a family math, science, and literacy project developed by the Vermont Center for the Book (LOC, CFB, 2005a). Activities and resources are designed to enhance the self esteem, school readiness, and success of young children by giving parents, librarians, educators, and caregivers the skills and confidence they need to provide effective programs for preschoolers. Adults receive picture books, activity guides, materials, and training which enable them to transform reading with their preschoolers into a multidimensional learning experience. Other resources include book lists, a product catalog, and free articles for professionals and parents (Mother Goose Programs, 2006). Activities for older children include the “Letters about Literature” promotion program and the “River of Words” poetry and art contest. “Letters about Literature” is a national reading and writing competition for children and young adults in grades 4-12. Young readers write a letter to an author, living or dead, explaining how that author’s work has changed their view of the world or the way they think about themselves. “River of Words” is an international poetry and art contest that focuses on environmental themes. It is designed to increase awareness and understanding of the natural world. “Read More About It!” is a reading list for adults and young people about topics presented on television and radio and in exhibitions and in digitized Library of Congress collections (LOC, CFB, 2005a).

The National Institute for Literacy’s mission extended further with the passage of the No Child Left Behind law (NCLB) in 2002. NIFL was authorized to engage in activities to strengthen literacy across the lifespan. NCLB directed the Institute “to disseminate information on scientifically based reading research pertaining to children, youth, and adults as well as information about development and implementation of classroom reading programs based on the research” (NIFL, 2003a, para. 2). To carry out this charge, the institute is involved in the following activities: (a) running the Commission on Reading Research; (b) creating publications on K-3 children’s reading for educators, administrators, and families; (c) contributing content on
reading to WETA’s *Colorin Colorado* bilingual website for families; and (d) developing criteria for identifying exemplary school reading programs (NIFL, 2007c). NIFL initiatives in early childhood literacy and parent education include (a) funding scientifically-based research on emergent literacy; (b) disseminating publications on emergent literacy for parents, families, and caregivers; (c) funding the National Early Literacy Panel’s review of research on language, literacy, and communication in young children; and (d) developing comprehensive reports on effective preschool literacy programs identified by the national evaluation of Early Reading First programs (NIFL, 2007d).

*Cultural programs.* In the 1980s the National Endowments, especially the National Endowment for the Humanities, continued to be important sources of funding for public library programs. The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) collaborated with state and national professional associations to sponsor arts and humanities programming in libraries. Some NEH projects provided staff development in the humanities in addition to humanities programming for the public. Workshops on the humanities disciplines, reference resources, or programming ideas were used to expand professional staff expertise in the humanities. To assist branches and smaller libraries, packaged programs in the humanities were produced by state libraries, library associations, and large library systems. These packaged programs featured specially prepared materials, lectures by scholars and experts in the humanities, and special activities developed for use in public libraries. Formal and informal sequential educational programs for adults were developed on a humanities topic or on an issue of special interest to the community. Libraries were encouraged (a) to develop new concepts or themes such as studying the history of a community’s population and institutions, (b) to reach out to the underserved segments of the community through humanities programming, or (c) to explore how the community’s values have been influenced by rapid advances in science and technology (NEH, 1982, p. 493).
LSCA and the National Endowment for the Humanities were major sources of programming support for rural libraries in the 1980s. NEH and the State Library of Florida provided funding for a folk heritage program for public libraries. Thirty rural public libraries in Kansas benefited from programming on local history provided by The Kansas State University Library. Several public libraries in rural North Carolina were able to offer programs on the contribution of railroads to southern history and culture as a result of Richmond Technical College’s sponsorship of the programs ("Adults, Library Service to," 1984, p. 45).

Among the programs sponsored by NEH in 1980 were the Sonoran Heritage program at Tucson Public Library and the Writing-in-Chicago program at the Chicago Public Library (Shearer, 1981, pp. 228-229). The endowment also funded the second annual Community Education for Librarians workshop held at the Center for Community Education in Flint, Michigan. These workshops, developed by the ALA Office of Library Services to the Disadvantaged and the center, were designed to inform librarians about community education, to explain the role of librarians in community education, and to make community educators aware of the contributions that public libraries were making to the community education effort (Fleming, 1980, p. 39).

Currently the National Endowment for the Humanities is cosponsoring a number of the ALA Public Program Office’s programs for family and youth. The “Becoming American–New Immigration Stories” website features reading lists for adults, young adults, and children. The Great Stories Club is an initiative targeting young adults, especially at risk teens. The Prime Time Reading Time program continues to reach underserved families with children aged 6 to ten. The “We the People Bookshelf” project is an initiative designed to encourage children and young adults to explore themes in American history, culture, and ideas through the reading of classic works. Schools and public libraries are eligible to receive collections of classic books in the K-12 reading levels (Public Programs Office, 2006b).

In the 1980s the National Endowment for the Arts sponsored programs such as the Tucson Public Library’s “Spotlight on the Arts” series, which featured preview performances of plays and concerts such as Candide, Great Expectations, The Tempest, and Athol Fugard’s Sizwe Bansi Is Dead. The Farmington, Connecticut, Public Library presented the “Booked for Murder” discussion group series. The series was introduced by a play, Death at Spruce Haven Library (Rolstad, 1988, p. 22).


The Center for the Book of the Library of Congress sponsors and supports a variety of projects dealing with books and reading. “Telling America’s Stories” continues to serve as the theme of the Library of Congress’ national reading program. The theme emphasizes how “stories connect people to the world of books and reading” (LOC, 2001, para. 2). “Telling America’s
Stories" has proven to be a versatile theme because it complements many of the Library of Congress’ activities and existing Center for the Book projects such as the “America’s Library” Web site for children and families and the American Folklife Center’s American war veterans oral history project and storytelling collections (LOC, 2001).

The center’s current projects include the “Books and Beyond” project, in which authors of recently-published books present reviews of their works at the Library of Congress. Generally the works discussed have special relevance to the collections or programs of the library. The “Literary Heritage USA” educational project features maps of famous literary landmarks, awards for authors, and data bases of literary-related resources that “document, recognize, and celebrate America’s literacy heritage” (LOC-CFB, 2005b). The “Book and Library History” program consists of symposia, projects, and publications that promote the study of books, reading, libraries, and print culture in society. The program on “Books and Reading in the Electronic Age” considers the role of books, reading, and libraries in the electronic age through symposia, projects, and publications. The importance of books, reading, and libraries is emphasized in the program entitled “Celebrating Books, Reading, and Libraries.” Special events, commemorations, exhibitions, and publications are used to promote this theme (LOC-CFB, 2005b).

Currently the Institute for Museums and Libraries (IMLS) is partnering with the National Endowment for the Arts and Arts Midwest to sponsor the Big Read program “that encourages literary reading by asking communities come together to read and discuss one book” (IMLS, 2006h, para.1). The Big Read project is a nationwide program modeled on the successful “City Reads” programs. The Big Read is intended “to address the national decline in literary reading” (IMLS, 2006h, para. 3) as demonstrated in the National Endowment of the Arts’ survey Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literacy Reading in America. The survey revealed the distressing fact that less than one half of the American adult population now reads works of literature (NEA, 2004).

Participating communities choose one of eight classical American novels: Fahrenheit 451, My Antonia, The Great Gatsby, A Farewell to Arms, Their Eyes Were Watching God, To Kill
a Mockingbird, the Grapes of Wrath, and The Joy Luck Club. Four additional novels were added in 2007: Bless Me, Ultima, The Maltese Falcon, The Heart is a Lonely Hunter, and The Age of Innocence. Participation is encouraged through collaboration with community partners in the development of activities related to the selected novel, including read-a-thons, keynote presentations, film series, symphonic concerts, and museum exhibits (IMLS, 2006h).

*Lifelong learning.* In April 1999 the National Commission on Library and Information Science passed a resolution adopting *Principles for Public Library Service* based on the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto. The *Principles* document addresses 12 key missions considered to be the core of public library services and deals specifically with issues of funding, legislation and networks, as well as operation and management issues (Vlach, 2000, p. 4). Vice Chair Martha Gould observed, “We believe that by adopting and implementing these Principles for Public Library Service, our libraries will set new and higher standards of service and continue to serve as models for lifelong learning throughout the world” (Gould, as cited in Vlach, 2000, pp. 4-5).

In September 2006 IMLS announced the creation of The Partnership for a Nation of Learners, a leadership initiative of IMLS and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. These grants enable “museums, libraries, and public broadcasters to work together to address locally-identified lifelong learning needs and opportunities” (IMLS, 2006f, para. 5). Among the activities supported by the grants are (a) television documentaries, (b) radio journalism, (c) community archaeology projects, (d) family book clubs, and (e) oral history projects. These projects provide lifelong learning opportunities that (a) will teach local history, (b) promote family literacy, (c) provide a wholesome outlet for young people, (d) interest young people in the sciences, and (e) promote the conservation of environmental resources. Community Collaboration Grants were awarded to 13 applicants throughout the country in 2006 (IMLS, 2006f).

*Library services for older adults.* The 1981 White House Conference on Aging, which focused on Social Security issues, was held November 29-December 3. Two administrations,
those of Presidents Carter and Reagan, were responsible for planning and implementing the conference. Attendance at the conference was planned to ensure that women, minorities, and people with disabilities were included as delegates. Special interest groups such as the American Library Association held "their own 'mini-conferences' in conjunction with the national Conference" (White House Conference on Aging [WHCoA], 2005a, 1981 WHCoA section, para. 5). The conference produced "668 recommendations for legislative and administrative action" (WHCoA, 2005a, 1981 WHCoA section, para. 6).

The purpose of the conference was to emphasize the "right and the obligation of the elderly to plan their future" (Drennan & Caldwell, 1982, p. 29). Bernice Neugarten, Chair of the Education and Training Committee, led a discussion concerning library services for the aged. The Education and Training Committee was responsible for 20 of the resolutions that were approved out of a total of 120 that were discussed. The permanent record of the Conference on Aging included over 600 recommendations with numerous additional statements from all committees (Drennan & Caldwell, 1982, pp. 29-30). An important recommendation of the Education and Training Committee was number 424 that advocated "A complete range of basic and all other levels of educational programs[,] including multi-career and reeducation to improve the economic [status], health, social functioning [,] and life-satisfaction of the elderly should be given the highest priority for funding and made available and accessible to all older Americans immediately. . . ." (as cited in Drennan & Caldwell, 1982, p. 30).

The committee also recommended that "The American Library Association give high priority to the development and implementation of programs to educate and train on an on-going basis senior adults, personnel serving the elderly [,] and the general public. . . ." (as cited in Drennan & Caldwell, 1982, p. 30). The intent of this recommendation was basically the same as that of Title IV of LSCA: "Services to older Americans," which was authorized but never funded. The committee called for the inclusion of the content of this title in whatever national library legislation replaced LSCA after 1981 (Drennan & Caldwell, 1982, p. 30).
Other committees made recommendations that reflected library concerns. The Committee for Continuing Community Participation urged the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science to provide leadership in meeting the information needs of older adults and in encouraging the use of older adult volunteers in library activities (Drennan & Caldwell, 1982, p. 30).

The 1995 WHCoA, held May 2-5, was more pragmatic than its predecessors and produced few new initiatives. Instead it focused on “reaffirming support for exiting programs” (WHCoA, 2005a, 1995 WHCoA section, para. 3). Delegates reaffirmed the “essential value of Medicare, Medicaid, and the Older Americans Act” and adopted resolutions calling for the strengthening of each program to ensure its continuation into the future. Delegates demonstrated their commitment to “a future national policy focused on aging, not just the aged,” a policy that recognized “both the interdependence of all generations and the growing diversity of the older adult population” (WHCoA, 2005a, 1995 WHCOA section, para. 3).

The 2005 White House Conference on Aging, held in December, represented the first WHCoA of the 21st Century. D. R. Hardy, chair of the policy committee, stated that the purpose of the conference was to “look at aging in terms of today and tomorrow, to identify emerging trends and make appropriate recommendations to help the nation prepare for changes anticipated in the next decade” (NCLIS, 2005a, para. 1).

Delegates selected the top 50 resolutions to present to the President and Congress and developed strategies for implementing the resolutions. The top 10 resolutions chosen by the delegates were as follows:

1. Reauthorize the Older Americans Act within the first six months following the 2005 White House Conference on Aging.

2. Develop a coordinated, comprehensive long-term care strategy by supporting public and private sector initiatives that address financing, choice, quality, service delivery, and the paid and unpaid workforce.
3. Ensure that Older Americans have transportation options to retain their mobility and independence.

4. Strengthen and improve the Medicaid Programs for seniors.

5. Strengthen and Improve the Medicare Program.

6. Support geriatric education and training for all healthcare professionals, paraprofessionals, health profession students, and direct care workers.

7. Promote innovative models of non-institutional long-term care.


9. Attain adequate numbers of healthcare personnel in all professions who are skilled, culturally competent, and specialized in geriatrics.

10. Improve state and local based integrated delivery systems to meet 21st century needs of seniors (WHCo, 2005b).

Library programs for persons with disabilities. In 1999 NCLIS conducted a hearing on Library and Information Services for Individuals with Disabilities at the Kellogg Conference Center of Gallaudet University. The hearing was the first step in the examination of the effect of recent advances in information technology on the accessibility and availability of library and information services for people with disabilities. Although information technology has improved accessibility for many people with disabilities, it has created new challenges for others. The information obtained from the hearing, in addition to further research and study, was used to determine the need for policy recommendations for government agencies and other organizations (Vlach, 2000, p.3). In 2001 NCLIS published Library and Information Services for Individuals with Disabilities, which included the transcript of the commission hearing held at Gallaudet University (Vlach, 2001, p. 2).

Library services for minority populations. NCLIS’s 1992 report, Pathways to Excellence, addressed the heritage and culture of Native American Tribes as well as the Native
American community’s needs for library and information services. The Native American Library Services Program administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) “provides basic funds, assistance grants, and enhancement grants” to serve the library and information needs of Indian tribes and Alaskan Native villages (McCook, 2004b, p.9).

Continuing professional education for librarians. IMLS’s Office of Library Services supports life-long learning opportunities for librarians. Current initiatives include the Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program and the Future of Librarians in the Workforce Study (IMLS, 2006b). The 21st Century Librarian Program provides funding for projects designed (a) to create future leaders in professional education and library administration and management, (b) to recruit and educate future librarians, (c) to conduct research, (d) to attract and interest high school and college students in careers in librarianship, (e) to develop new curricula or broaden existing programs within graduate schools of library and information science, and (f) to develop or enhance continuing education programs in library and information science (IMLS, 2006e, para. 1).

IMLS is sponsoring The Future of Librarians in the Workforce Study. The two-year study is designed (a) to identify the nature of anticipated labor shortages in the field in the next 10 years, (b) to assess the number and types of jobs that will become available, (c) to determine the skills required to fill these vacancies, and (d) to recommend effective strategies for recruiting and retaining workers. J. M. Griffiths, Dean of the School of Information and Library Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, heads a team composed of researchers from the University of Pittsburgh, Syracuse University, the Special Libraries Association, the Association of Research Libraries, and the American Society for Information Science & Technology (The Future of Librarians, 2006, para. 1).
The Role of the American Library Association

Background

The American Library Association has been concerned about adult education and adult literacy for many years. The Adult Services Division (ASD) was closely associated with the adult education movement. When it merged with the Reference Services Division (RSD) in 1972, the division brought its concern for adult education to the newly formed Reference and Adult Services Division (RASD). Although the merger was the major factor influencing the status of adult services in the organizational structure of ALA, it was not the sole factor. Other changes in the organizational structure such as the establishment of the Office for Library Service to the Disadvantaged, the Social Responsibilities Round Table, and the Ethnic Materials and Information Exchange Round Table preempted some of RASD’s adult services functions (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 69).

Adult services programming was further dispersed throughout the association when the 1976 reorganization “made each division semi-autonomous and responsible for generating its own operating revenues” (Pungitore, 1995, p. 71). The ALA dues schedule was revised so that membership in ALA was a prerequisite to involvement in individual units. An additional fee was charged for each unit in which the individual was involved. This revision raised the overall costs of membership so many librarians tried to confine their professional involvement to one unit in order to reduce their dues. This change “created a highly competitive situation among the divisions” as each division sought to attract new members by expanding its range of activities (Hansen, 1995, p. 321). Other ALA units applied for and received funding for adult services-related projects from government entities, major foundations, and other outside sources (Hansen, 1995, p. 321). In the past 30 years, other units of ALA developed programs responding to literacy, reading, and lifelong learning. The activities of the Office for Library Outreach Services (after 1995 the Office for Literacy and Outreach Services), the Public Information Office, Public Programs Office, the Public Library Association, Reference and Users Services Division, and the
Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies have provided a broader, but a more diffuse, response (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 69).

After retaining the name “Reference and Adult Services Division” for almost 25 years, the division was finally renamed the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) in fall 1996. The phrase “adult services” was deleted because it suggested that the association’s mission was limited to reference services to adults only, although RASD’s responsibilities included the promotion and support of reference and information services in all types of libraries for people of all ages. The phrase “users services” was added because it was a more accurate reflection of the association’s mission, and it formed a pronounceable acronym, “RUSA” (Reference and Users Service Association, 2006a).

With the change in the name of the division, “the designation ‘adult services’ disappeared from the organizational structure of the American Library Association” (McCook, 2004b, p. 187). There is currently no single access point within ALA for persons wanting to learn more about adult services as an area of library service (McCook, 2004b, p. 187). Literacy and adult lifelong learning concerns are diffused throughout ALA, making it difficult to describe adult education activities from an organizational prospective (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 69).

**Outreach, Recruitment, and Equality of Access**

In 1980 the Office for Library Services to the Disadvantaged (OLSD) became the Office for Library Outreach Services (OLOS). The name was changed because the term “disadvantaged” had negative connotations; the term “outreach” was thought to be more positive (“OLSD becomes OLOS”, 1980, p. 423). OLOS’s statement of purpose was revised to reflect three goals: to promote the provision of library service to the poor and to minority groups; to encourage the development of user-oriented informational and educational library services for the poor, ethnic minorities, the underemployed, persons with limited literacy, nonreaders, and the culturally isolated; and to ensure that librarians had the information, technical assistance, and continuing
education opportunities needed to enable them to provide effective outreach programs (Lippincott, McCook, & Taffae, 1996, p. 6).

In 1980 ALA published the *Directory of Outreach Services in Public Libraries*. The directory was the product of a survey undertaken by the Advisory Committee to OLSD/OLOS. The committee surveyed public libraries in 34 states to determine the nature and extent of outreach services being offered to the public in 1978. The directory presented 410 profiles of library outreach programs, providing a state of the art description of library outreach services at the end of the decade (Lippincott et al., 1996, p. 6).

In addition to several affiliated associations for minority librarians, there were several committees in ALA which dealt with the library and information needs of ethnic and racial minorities and the professional development of minority librarians. In 1981 ALA established a Council Committee on Minority Concerns and Cultural Diversity to provide a forum for minority librarians and culturally diverse groups within ALA, groups affiliated with ALA, and the profession at large to address, debate, discuss, and resolve problems and issues (McCook, 2002, p. 35).

In 1982 the Ethnic Materials Information Exchange Task Force of the Social Responsibilities Round Table became the Ethnic Materials Information Exchange Round Table at ALA’s annual conference (Ethnic Materials Information Exchange Round Table [EMIERT], 2004). Since 1982 the round table has worked closely with the Office for Library Outreach Services and other ALA units to improve outreach services. The group has been concerned primarily with the development of reference materials and collections of foreign-language materials (American Library Association, 2001-2002, p. 130).

In the mid-1980s, the Reference and Adult Services Division formed several discussion groups to provide forums on topics not specifically addressed by existing committees. Among RASD’s discussion groups was the Women’s Materials and Women Library Users (Hansen, 1985, p. 17). The Carnegie Reading List Fund administered by the ALA Publishing Committee
was the source of bibliographic information for the publication of *Women’s Legal Rights in the United States: A Selective Bibliography* in 1985 and *Spanish-Language Books for Public Libraries* in 1986 (Hansen, 1995, p. 326). The Feminist Task Force of the Social Responsibilities Round Table played a role in the development of discussion groups and sections devoted to women’s concerns including RASD’s Discussion Group on Women’s Materials and Women Library Users, the ACRL Women’s Studies Section, and the LAMA Women Administrators Discussion Group (Feminist Task Force, 2000).

In reaction to NCLIS’s rejection of eight of the Task Force on Library and Information Service to Cultural Minorities’ recommendations, the ALA Executive Board created the President’s Committee on Library Service to Minorities (Cain, 1990, p. 233). In 1984 ALA President E. J. Josey directed the President’s Committee, headed by cochairs Elizabeth Martinez and B. T. Wilkin, (a) to review the NCLIS report, (b) to recommend specific measures and activities that ALA could undertake to resolve access problems and (c) to prepare an action document for the association (McCook, 2002, p. 35). The President’s Committee recommended that ALA endorse all 42 task force recommendations and ask NCLIS to reconsider the rejected recommendations with the provision that the statements “be revised to removed any perceived conflict with intellectual freedom” (ALA President’s Committee, as cited in Cain, 1990, p. 233).

The committee’s action document, entitled *Equity at Issue, Library Service to the Nation’s Major Minority Groups*, was completed in 1985. The report of the ALA President’s Committee on Library Service to Minorities found disparities in the services provided in minority and poor communities compared with the services provided for white and affluent communities (Heim & Rolstad, 1986, p. 43). The report stated, “The major overall finding was that a disparity exists and continues to grow between the provision of library services for minority and poor communities compared to that provided for white and affluent communities. This inequity is most reprehensible in communities where the white population is actually the numerical minority” (ALA President’s Committee, as cited in McCook, 2002, p. 35).
*Equity at Issue* suggested specific methods for implementing the task force recommendations, including items to be included on the agenda of the next White House Conference on Library and Information Services (Cain, 1990, pp. 233-234). The document was reviewed by a broad cross section of ALA. The President’s Committee used the responses to revise the original document. The revised document, *Equity at Issue, 1985-86*, included 22 recommendations, each one correlated to task force recommendations and current ALA policy statements. In 1987 the Committee on Minority Concerns and Cultural Diversity presented an implementation plan which called for the prioritization of each of the 22 recommendations “according to its correspondence to one or more of ALA’s priority areas and goals” (Committee on Minority Concerns, as cited in Cain, 1990, p. 234).


In the mid-1980s librarians found themselves debating the same questions they had been discussing for decades: the nature and the extent of the public library’s social responsibility. Cain (1990) suggested that the only conclusive answer was that the library’s “responsibilities must be defined by and must keep pace with the needs of society” (p. 234). The authors of *Equity at Issue, 1985-86* expressed concern that the fiscally and socially conservative climate of the 1980s was indicative of a shift in national attitudes toward the plight of minorities from compassion and concern to indifference and antipathy (as cited in Cain, 1990, p. 234). Cain observed that the climate of fiscal and social conservatism would undoubtedly influence the role of the public
library. The question facing the public library community was whether the library would be "an institution of middle class culture, or an arsenal of democracy" (Cain, 1990, p. 234).

During this same period another important ALA commission was addressing the issues of freedom and equality of access. In 1983 ALA President C. A. Nemeyer appointed the Commission on Freedom and Equality of Access to Information. The commission, often called the Lacy Commission because D. M. Lacy was the chair and the author of the report, was composed of experts in the area of information policy. The commission was instructed to review emerging "issues related to the production and dissemination of information and to identify issues of public policy related to information access" (McCook, 2002, p. 45). The commission's final report, *Freedom and Equality of Access to Information—A Report to the American Library Association*, was published in 1986 (McCook, 2002, p. 45).

The Lacy Commission examined the propriety of library response to social changes brought about by "the evolution of the U.S. from a commodity-based to an information-based society" (Lacy, 1986, p. 105). The commission's report covered a broad array of issues: (a) telecommunications, (b) electronically stored information, (c) government information, (d) censorship, (e) copyright, (f) libel, (g) postal rates, and (h) for the purposes of this paper the most important issue "libraries and access to information" (Lacy, 1986). The report endorsed the traditional role of libraries "in assuring that all Americans have ready, effective access to the full range of information resources that are essential to meaningful participation in modern life" (Lacy, 1986, p. 107). The report expressed deep concern about the exacerbation of illiteracy as the result of "the growing ubiquity of technology in information access" (Cain, 1990, p. 234). The commission foresaw a greatly enhanced role for libraries in literacy education. Lacy believed that public library systems would be "in a unique position to provide a continuum of literacy training, spanning both print and electronic media, to a broad cross-section of society" (Lacy, 1986, p. 105).
Recommendations pertaining specifically to libraries included substantially increased financial support from the state and local governments (a) to enable libraries to continue to provide information in traditional formats, (b) to offer access to information resources in newer electronic formats, and (c) to provide the professional assistance needed to use those resources effectively. Other recommendations were (a) increased federal funding for libraries, (b) advocacy and support for information literacy, (c) the conservation and preservation of records in traditional formats, (d) government assistance for telecommunications costs, and (e) support for federal libraries (Lacy, 1986, pp. 109-115).

In 1986 the ALA Council revised the association’s mission statement to make it more inclusive by adding the phrase “for all.” The new statement read, “to provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all” (American Library Association, 2006s, Milestones section, 1986, and Scope section).

In 1989 the ALA Council supported the concept of linguistic pluralism and opposed any legislation that would restrict diversity in library collections such as that mandating the use of English only. The council urged libraries to provide library services and collections in all of the languages commonly used in their communities (American Library Association, 2006r).

In June 1990 ALA adopted Policy 61, “Library Services for Poor People.” The policy stated, “It is crucial that libraries recognize their role in enabling poor people to participate fully in a democratic society, by utilizing a wide variety of available resources and strategies” (McCook, 2001, p. 37). As McCook observed, the simple act of opening the library’s doors does not constitute proactive service (2002, p. 37). Approval of the policy was only the beginning. Berman’s essay in Poor People and Library Services described on-going efforts to achieve implementation of the policy (1998, p. 1).

Two units within ALA are concerned with library services for the poor; these are the Social Responsibilities Round Table’s Task Force on Hunger, Homelessness, and Poverty and the
OLOS Subcommittee on Library Services to Poor and Homeless People (McCook, 2002, pp. 37-38). SRRT’s task force was formed in 1996 to promote the implementation of ALA Policy 61 and to increase awareness of poverty issues. Since its founding, the task force has staged major conference programs such as the program “Poor People and Libraries: What’s the Connection?” at the 1996 annual conference and a program on fees as barriers to access at the 1997 ALA annual conference (Venturella, 1998, p. 31). The SRRT task force also encouraged the creation of the Poverty Subcommittee of the OLOS Advisory Committee, which published the first-ever statement on class and library use in the ALA journal *American Libraries*. The task force also inspired former task force chair K. M. Venturella to edit the book *Poor People and Library Services*. The OLOS subcommittee is responsible for ensuring that ALA Policy 61 is implemented through (a) the development of initiatives, (b) the establishment of priorities, (c) the formulation of recommendations to the OLOS Advisory Committee, (d) active participation in implementation, and (e) monitoring of the profession’s progress in implementing the policy (McCook, 2002, p. 38).

In June 1995 ALA Council passed a resolution honoring the 25th anniversary of the Office for Literacy and Outreach Services. OLOS was recognized as “the conscience of the American Library Association” and applauded for its achievements, which included: “increasing library service to the unserved and underserved; promoting literacy; advocating full intellectual participation for all members of the public; . . . and development of publications and programs on outreach, literacy, and community information” (McCook, 2002, p. 36).

OLOS continues to support library efforts to reach out to traditionally underserved populations. In 1997 OLOS established the Diversity Fair at the ALA annual conference. The Diversity Fair highlights effective strategies for serving people with physical or mental disabilities, the rural and urban poor, the undereducated, and others. OLOS also maintains a Web site with extensive resources. OLOS serves as liaison to ALA’s Social Responsibilities Round
Table; the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table; and the Ethnic and Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (American Library Association, 2006b).

OLOS also works closely with affiliate groups including the American Indian Library Association, Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association (formerly the Asian American Librarians Association), the Black Caucus of the ALA, the Chinese American Librarians Association, and REFORMA – the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-Speaking (American Library Association, 2006b).

In 1997 the ALA Executive Board approved plans for the Spectrum Initiative. The three-year initiative was intended to provide fifty $5,000 scholarships each year to students from four underrepresented groups, fund an annual Spectrum Leadership Institute, provide mentoring, fund development of recruitment materials, and provide additional staff to support the Initiative. The Spectrum Initiative was extended for a fourth year in 2000. An active campaign was begun to build the Spectrum Endowment to sustain the recruitment and scholarship effort begun by the Spectrum Initiative. The council-initiated campaign merged with the Spectrum Endowment campaign in 2001 (American Library Association, 2006b). In 2000 the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Associations established its Century Scholarship to recruit people with disabilities to the library and information services profession (American Library Association, 2006b).

In 1998 the OLOS Advisory Committee established the J.E. Coleman Library Outreach Lecture in memory of one of the champions of library outreach services. The lecture, presented each year at the annual conference, features an address by a current advocate of outreach services to traditionally underserved populations (American Library Association, 2006r).

The Office for Diversity was established in 1998 to advance diversity as a key action area of the association. S. R. Balderrama was named the association’s first Diversity Officer (McCook, 2002, p. 36). The office focuses on diversity issues that affect the profession, the workplace, and the quality of library and information services including “recruitment, retention,
personal/professional leadership, organization change, capacity building,” and the development of effective communication skills (American Library Association, 2001-2002, p. 4). The Office for Diversity helps the library community deal with diversity issues by (a) modeling the work of diversity, (b) providing counsel and training opportunities, (c) dispersing grant funds for diversity programs, and (d) developing and disseminating continuing education and professional development resources. Specific examples of the Office’s activities include (a) sponsorship of the Diversity Leadership Institute, which provides hands-on training; (b) the publication of Versed, a bulletin devoted to promoting awareness of the best practices in library-based diversity work, and (c) sponsorship of the Spectrum Initiative, which provides scholarships, mentoring, and leadership training for minority students in library and information science (American Library Association, 2001-2002, p. 4; American Library Association, 2006o).

In 2003 ALA President M. J. Freedman appointed an 18-month Task Force on Rural School, Tribal, and Public Libraries. The task force studied the needs of these libraries, identified current resources, and developed recommendations for an ALA initiative focusing on ways to improve rural and tribal libraries (American Library Association, 2006r).

In 2004 the Office for Literacy and Outreach Services (OLOS) produced a guide, entitled From Outreach to Equity: Innovative Models of Library Policy and Practice (Osborne, 2004). That same year OLOS launched a searchable database of library outreach resources (McCook, 2004b, p. 187). The OLOS website provides resources to assist librarians and others in working with traditionally underrepresented groups including (a) small communities served by bookmobiles; (b) people with disabilities; (c) Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered people; (d) incarcerated people and ex-offenders; (e) adult new readers and nonreaders; (f) older adults; (g) People of Color; (h) poor and homeless people; (i) rural and tribal libraries; and (j) underserved youth (OLOS, 2006c).

The Social Responsibilities Round Table continues to address a number of issues including promotion of equal rights for women, racial minorities, gays, the poor and the
homeless, and the advocacy of international human rights. Its focus is not limited to the library profession but is also extended to the policies and practices of society as a whole (Rubin, 2000, p. 242). Current task forces include (a) the Alternatives in Publication Task Force; (b) the Environment Task Force; (c) the Hunger, Homelessness & Poverty Task Force; (d) the Feminist Task Force; (e) the International Responsibilities Task Force; (f) the Information Policy in the Public Interest Task Force; and (g) The Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday Task Force (Social Responsibilities Round Table, 2006).

ALA’s Activities in Adult Education

Adult literacy. In 1981 J. E. Coleman, Director of OLOS, worked with ALA Executive Director Robert Wedgeworth, Associate Director Peggy Barber, and representatives from the Ad Council and the American Association of Advertising Agencies to launch the National Coalition for Literacy. Consisting of 12 organizations, the coalition functioned as an active agent for literacy. In 1984 the coalition launched a national public awareness campaign (produced by the Advertising Council) to focus attention on the hidden problem of illiterate adults (American Library Association, 2006s). The slogan of the national literacy campaign “Volunteer Against Illiteracy: The only Degree You Need is a Degree of Caring,” encouraged individuals, groups, and corporations to become involved in the literacy movement (Heim & Rolstad, 1986, p. 40).

In 1989 the ALA Literacy Assembly was established as a focal point within ALA to “emphasize the Association’s continuing commitment to literacy” (American Library Association, 2006s, Milestones section, 1989). Also in 1989 the National Partners for Libraries and Literacy, sponsored by ALA, gained a new member, the U.S. Small Business Administration (Selvar, 1990, p. 26). The National Partners continued the work of the National Library Week Partners in cooperation with the ALA Public Information Office. Associate Director Peggy Barber coordinated their efforts (McCoy, 2002, p. 27).

In the mid-1990s OLOS expanded its emphasis on adult literacy as a result of the Literacy in Libraries Across America project funded by the Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund.
The initiative was instrumental in helping library-literacy programs improve services for adult learners (American Library Association, 1999c). Thirteen libraries in four states (New York, California, North Carolina, and Illinois) were involved in the initiative. The funds enabled the libraries (a) to improve curriculum and instruction, (b) to expand the use of educational technology, and (c) to develop better methods for evaluating the gains made by adult new readers.

ALA performed a number of functions; the association (a) coordinated technical assistance to participating libraries, (b) staged a series of conferences for the participants, (c) developed a telecommunications network, (d) created a World Wide Web site for library-based literacy programs, (e) established an Internet list for librarians and other adult literacy providers, (f) implemented other strategies to support and strengthen library literacy, and (g) developed strategic plans designed to expand its leadership role in the area of adult literacy (American Library Association, 1999c).

To emphasize ALA’s commitment to literacy, the Office for Library Outreach Services changed its name to the Office for Literacy and Outreach Service in 1995 (Lippincott et al., 1996; McCook & Barber, 2002a). ALA was honored with a Leadership Award from Literacy Volunteers of America (LVA) in 1995 for “its profound influence over and enduring support of the literacy movement” (LVA, as cited in Barber, 2001, p. 157). The citation read as follows:

ALA has encouraged libraries to provide direct support to community literacy programs, through funding, space, staff and materials for tutors and students. It has added expertise and a strong voice to the literacy field’s effort to secure supportive public policies and funding for adult basic education. And perhaps most meaningful of all, ALA has sustained the fight for intellectual freedom and access to information for all, regardless of race, religion, age, national origin, social or political views, or the ability to read or speak English with fluency. (LVA, as cited in Barber, 2001, p. 157)

In 1998 ALA adopted the Twenty-first Century Literacy initiative as one of its “Key Action Areas.” In that same year ALA began to fund a Literacy Officer position within OLOS
In the new century OLOS has continued to address the library needs of underserved clienteles, which includes many nonreaders. The office also serves as a clearinghouse for information and resources related to adult literacy in libraries (21st Century Literacy, 2006).

In February 2000 representatives from ALA were invited to attend the Literacy Summit organized by the National Institute for Literacy (Barber, 2001, p. 158). The invitation to participate in the summit was significant in that it indicated that the adult education and literacy community recognized the contributions of librarians to adult lifelong learning, adult education, and adult literacy initiatives (McCook & Barber, 2002b, pp. 70-71). The summit produced a document, *From the Margins to the Mainstream*, an action agenda to guide the adult literacy field until 2010. ALA made a commitment “to demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of libraries and literacy to the agenda’s three priority areas: quality, access [and] resources” (Public Information Office, 2006, para. 7).

In 2001 ALA joined with Verizon, the National Center for Family Literacy, the National Institute for Literacy, and Reading is Fundamental to form the Verizon Literacy Network, an online network which provides continuous access to a wide range of useful resources for promoting literacy. In that same year Buildliteracy.org was launched at the ALA annual conference (American Library Association, 2006s). Buildliteracy.org is an interactive website devoted to establishing and sustaining literacy coalitions in library communities. The site includes (a) tips on coalition building, (b) profiles of existing literacy coalitions, (c) a menu of literacy coalition activities, and (d) a special section called “Building Literacy @ [at] Your Library.” ALA, the National Alliance of Urban Literacy Coalitions (NAULC), and the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) contribute to the website content. The project is funded by Verizon Communications (21st Century Literacy, 2006).

ALA’s publication program supports literacy by producing guides and tools for libraries. In 2000 and 2001 ALA Editions published two books which were products of the Literacy in
Libraries Across America project. The books, *The Adult Literacy Assessment Tool Kit* and
*Literacy and Libraries: Learning from Case Studies*, provide libraries with information and tools
for improving library-based adult literacy programs (Public Information Office, 2006). The ALA
Council established the Standing Committee on Literacy in 2001 with Peggy Barber serving as
the first chair (McCook, 2002, p. 27).

D. P. Lipschultz, OLOS’s full-time Literacy Officer, performs a number of duties within
the association such as coordinating the Literacy Assembly and serving as liaison to the
association’s new Council Committee on Literacy. Lipschultz also (a) works with other literacy
organizations such as the Verizon Literacy project, the Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund, and the
National Coalition for Literacy; (b) serves as ALA’s liaison to Build Literacy @ Your Library;
and (c) participates in national and regional literacy conferences such as the National Literacy
Summit (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 68). In 2003 the National Coalition for Literacy became
an independent not-for-profit organization, and Lipschultz was elected president of the new
organization (Public Information Office, 2006).

The Public Library Association has continued to be involved in adult literacy. PLA’s
Library Services Cluster is the administrative home of two committees that focus on adult
education and literacy—the Adult Continuing and Independent Learning Services Committee
(formerly the Adult Lifelong Learning Section) and the Basic Education and Literacy Resources
and Services Committee, which was formed by a merger of the Basic Education and Literacy
Services Committee and the Resources for the Adult New Reader Committee (Public Library
Association, 2006d).

The Adult Continuing and Independent Learning Services Committee serves the
following purposes:

1. To promote library programs and services relating to literacy, basic education, and
   continuing and independent learning
2. To advocate the use of library-based self-directed study as well as more traditional learning models

3. To stimulate continued professional growth in these areas


The committee fulfills the purposes by identifying, assembling, and disseminating information about existing resources and programs in public libraries and by staying abreast of new developments in continuing and independent learning in other types of libraries and in other fields. The committee promotes public library involvement in continuing and independent learning through the provision of conference programs, special projects, and publications. The committee works with other ALA committees whose activities involve various aspects of continuing and independent learning in planning and coordinating programs and projects to avoid duplication of effort (Public Library Association, 2006b).

The Basic Education and Literacy Resources and Services Committee is concerned with the identification and dissemination of resources for use in library literacy programs or to support the activities of community literacy programs. The committee’s activities include (a) compiling resource lists of books, multimedia products, and websites for literacy education; (b) collaborating with the Office of Literacy and Outreach Services and other ALA units to support literacy services and programs; (c) publicizing the best practices in literacy education; and (d) modeling the advantages of partnerships through conference programs, publications, and websites (American Library Association, 2004a, p. 123; Public Library Association, 2006c).

In September 2006 ALA received the Literacy Leadership Award from the National Coalition for Literacy. The association was recognized (a) for its selection of literacy as one of its five key action areas, (b) for its promotion of adult literacy through its adult literacy awards, and (c) for its participation in the national partnership that created the online Verizon Literacy
Network. ALA was instrumental in starting the National Coalition for Literacy 25 years ago (American Library Association, 2006h).

There is no question that ALA has contributed much to the advancement of adult literacy, but the association has missed some opportunities to be a more effective advocate. Former chair of the ALA Standing Committee on Literacy Peggy Barber noted in an article on ALA’s literacy initiatives that “support for literacy programs has not been a priority on ALA’s legislative agenda” (2001, p. 157). Barber also regarded the 1995 Literacy Volunteers of America award to ALA as a missed opportunity. Although the award was apparently intended to inspire the association to assume a larger, more active leadership role in the adult literacy movement, it seemed to go largely unnoticed (Barber, 2001, p. 157). Barber was also disappointed that literacy was not mentioned in the Goal 2000 plan. Goal 2000 stressed ALA’s commitment to intellectual participation, but it failed to recognize that “the ability to read is the most basic step toward intellectual participation” (Barber, 2001, p. 157). Literacy should have been emphasized as a key element in ALA’s national agenda, but it was not (Barber, 2001, p. 157).

Barber was pleased when literacy was adopted as one of ALA’s key action areas in 1998. As a priority in the ALAction 2005 strategic plan, literacy has received more attention. Barber regarded all of ALA’s achievements since 1998 as an indication that the profession is heading toward the realization that “we will teach or be irrelevant” (2001, p. 158). Yet Barber still questioned why literacy has been so marginal an issue in the American Library Association and why no ALA president has ever made literacy the association’s focus. The association and the profession have vigorously supported intellectual freedom issues, but literacy has not been given the same attention. Barber suggested that it was perhaps easier for the profession “to embrace an intellectual concept such as the First Amendment, [sic] than to teach reading to adults and families who need a second chance” (p. 158).

Parent education and family literacy. Public librarians recognize that in order to provide effective services for children, they must also serve parents. Helping children develop an
appreciation for reading and books is an important aspect of parenting, but it is only one facet of the complex process of child rearing. Parents need a wide range of information to succeed in parenting. In 1988 the Public Library Association (PLA) recognized the public library’s responsibility to aid parents in this important task. PLA’s Service to Children Committee prepared a list of the information needs of parents that should be fulfilled by public library programs and services. These needs were (a) general parenting information; (b) information on food, shelter, jobs, and medical care; (c) survival skills information for their children; (d) information on child care and after school activities for their children, and (e) information on ways the library can and cannot help them. (Public Library Association, 1988, p.37)

The Service to Children Committee suggested a number of creative ways in which librarians could reach busy parents. Among the committee’s recommendations were (a) including parenting collections in the children’s section; (b) mailing information directly to parents; (c) asking the public schools to assist in the dissemination of brochures; (d) distributing brochures at shopping malls, grocery stores, and other locations; (e) giving speeches to community clubs and organizations; (f) using the broadcast media to communication information; (g) and providing information through print materials and displays (Public Library Association, 1988).

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the need for parent education was clearly evident. The news was full of stories “about child abuse, latchkey children, children living in poverty, poor school performance, drug abuse, illiteracy, and runaways” (Giamalva, 1990, p. 420). Librarians joined professionals in psychology, medicine, sociology, and education in conveying the message that education was key to preventing many of these social problems (Giamalva, 1990, p. 420).

In 1989 the American Library Association and Bell Atlantic launched “A Partnership to Fight Illiteracy.” The purpose of this family literacy project was “to improve the basic reading skills of hundreds of parents and children, create a network of trained family literacy providers, and encourage the development of similar, community-based programs nationwide” (American Library Association, 2006s). ALA received a $300,000 grant from the Bell Atlantic Charitable
Foundation for community-centered family literacy projects. The funds enabled more than 20 libraries in the mid-Atlantic region to offer programs to improve library and literacy skills. Training packets were provided by Push Literacy Action Now, a nonprofit volunteer program. The packets included (a) information on reading instruction, (b) ideas for developing family workshops, (c) guidelines on child development, and (d) trainers’ booklets (Selvar, 1990, p. 26).

In 1992 the ALA Office of Library Outreach Services (OLOS) received grants for family literacy projects from the ALA Cargill Partners for Family Literacy Project ("Read All About It") and the Viburnum Foundation Rural Library Family Literacy Project (American Library Association, 2006g). OLOS administered the Viburnum project from 1992 to 1997 (American Library Association, 2004b).

In 1994 ALA and Bell Atlantic cosponsored a traveling literacy exhibit: “Read to someone you love: Literacy begins at home” (American Library Association, 2006s). That same year ALA began publishing Booklinks, a companion publication to Booklist. While Booklist provides lists of recommended books and book reviews, Booklinks provides strategies, activities, and materials for using books in the classroom and in library story hours and programs (American Library Association, 2006s).

Since the mid-1990s the ALA Public Programs Office has collaborated with the National Endowment for the Humanities on “Prime Time Family Reading Time,” a library-based series for literacy-challenged families. This family literacy program uses the reading, storytelling, and discussion of illustrated children’s books to promote bonding and learning as a family. The program models and encourages family reading, discussion of humanities topics, the selection of books, and active use of public libraries. Prime Time is intended for underserved families with children ages six to 10. Pre-reading activities are also available for preschool children aged three to four. Prime Time, originally created by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, began at the East Baton Rouge Parish Public Library System in Louisiana and expanded nationwide with

In 2000 PLA and the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), a division of the National Institutes of Health, formed a partnership to advance early childhood literacy. The Early Literacy Initiative was a two-part program designed to disseminate current research on the development of reading skills in children and to develop model public library programs for preschool children based on this research. NICHD had just released the National Reading Panel’s report, *Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction*. This report contained research-based findings of special interest to parents, child care providers, educators, and public librarians (Meyers & Henderson, 2005, para. 2). PLA’s role in the first component of the partnership was to help disseminate information about the report through America’s public library systems (American Library Association, 2006v). Dissemination began with the 2001 PLA Spring Symposium programs and continued with PLA programs and publicity at the annual conference (Garvey, 2002, p.3).

The second and most significant component of the partnership was the development of model public library programs incorporating the research findings (American Library Association, 2006v). The Public Library Association commissioned two well-known researchers in emergent literacy, Grover C. Whitehurst and Christopher Lonigan, to develop model public library programs for parents and caregivers. These model programs were based on the premise that parents and caregivers are the child’s first teachers and that they should be enlisted as partners in preparing children to read (Meyers & Henderson, 2005, para. 3). The research-based tools and materials developed for these model programs provided the most effective methods for helping parents and caregivers to create an environment that fosters the development of reading readiness skills (Garvey, 2002, p. 3). Whitehurst and Lonigan developed “a unique structure for
the distinctive phases of a young child’s emergent literacy—pretalkers, talkers, and pre-readers” (Meyers & Henderson, 2005, para. 3).

PLA and the Association of Library Services to Children (ALSC) formed a partnership to expand the dissemination of the research findings and to test the effectiveness of the model program in public libraries throughout the nation (American Library Association, 2006v). In October 2001 twenty public libraries of varying sizes and demographics were selected as demonstration sites. Demonstration sites tested the materials on a variety of audiences within the library and the community using an evaluation method developed by Virginia Walter, past president of ALSC and a professor at UCLA. The evaluation used standard output measures as well as the interview method for assessing outcomes. The parent/caregiver evaluations were developed specifically for each of the three developmental stages of reading readiness: pretalkers, talkers, and pre-readers. The evaluations were designed to indicate whether parents and caregivers integrated essential skill-building activities into their interaction with preschool children (Meyers & Henderson, 2005, para. 4). Evaluation data and tabulated reports were made available to the public library community in fall 2002 (Garvey, 2002, p. 3).

In October 2002 fourteen public libraries participated in the second year of pilot site testing. Participants received intensive training and practice in conducting workshops for all three levels of reading readiness preparation and instruction in implementing a more refined model of the outcome evaluation. The evaluation showed that the parents and caregivers had successfully incorporated the information presented in the programs into their interaction with preschool children. The successful integration of skill-building activities into parents and caregivers’ behaviors made them more effective “first teachers” for young children and increased the effectiveness of the public library’s efforts in early literacy development for preschool children (Meyers & Henderson, 2005, para. 5).

PLA also partnered with the National Center for Learning Disabilities to distribute a screening instrument for parents to use with their four-year-olds. The instrument called “Get
Ready to Read!” was distributed to the demonstration sites, and information concerning its use was disseminated to all public libraries. An online version of the screening instrument was made available, along with other materials on reading readiness and emergent literacy (Meyers & Henderson, 2005, para. 6). Through these partnerships and programs, PLA sought “to firmly establish public libraries as a partner in the educational continuum” (Meyers & Henderson, 2005, para. 7) and to develop preschool literacy programs that have been validated through research and evaluated for their effectiveness (American Library Association, 2006v).

PLA and ALSC continue to educate and inform public librarians about research-based programming and reading development through the Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library project. Public libraries can request trainers to come to their facility to train children’s librarians and service providers to conduct workshops for the parents of newborns, toddlers, and preschoolers. The training workshops and parent and caregiver resources are designed to enable public libraries to initiate new early literacy services or to strengthen already existing programs (Association for Library Service to Children, 2005).

The theme of the 2006 Diversity Fair at the ALA annual conference in New Orleans was adult and family literacy in libraries. Adult and family literacy was selected as the theme to emphasize “the role of libraries in facilitating learning for the broadest range of users, including those with limited reading skills” (American Library Association, 2005a, para. 3). Displays addressed at least one of the following topics: “library collections for adult basic readers; access to technology, collections and services for English language learners; adult and/or family literacy services to incarcerated people and ex-offenders; family literacy programs and services; other areas such as professional development or community partnerships” (American Library Association, 2005a, para. 4). Presenters used a poster session or a table talk format to share information about their diversity programs, activities, and services (American Library Association, 2005a).
Library and information use instruction. Part of the impetus behind the information literacy movement of the early 1990s came from the 1989 Final Report of the ALA Presidential Committee on Information Literacy. The report focused on the impact of the Information Age and the need to educate American citizens to be information literate (Eisenberg, Spitzer, Kingsley, & Darby 1990, pp. 29-30). The report defined information literacy as the ability "to recognize when information is needed" and the knowledge and skill "to locate, evaluate, and use" it effectively (Final Report, as quoted in Eisenberg et al., 1990, p. 30). The Presidential Committee's report, which was widely disseminated, stated that "the major obstacle to promoting information literacy [was] the lack of public awareness of the problem created by information illiteracy" (Final Report, as cited in Eisenberg et al., 1990, p.30).

Three ALA divisions have a special interest in information literacy. AASL is concerned with information literacy in K-12 education (American Association of School Librarians, 2006). ACRL is concerned with the information literacy of college and university students. ACRL has a section devoted to information literacy and library use instruction and maintains an information literacy Web site (Association of College and Research Libraries 2006). RUSA's Reference Services Section has a committee that promotes user education and information literacy and identifies and studies issues relating to these topics in all types of libraries (Reference and Users Services Association, 2006c).

Another ALA unit concerned with information literacy and library use instruction is the ALA Library Instruction Round Table (LIRT). Its membership represents all types of libraries. The round table (a) advocates the development of competency in library and information use as part of lifelong learning; (b) promotes library instruction as an essential service in academic, public, school, and special libraries; (c) furnishes a forum for discussion of activities, programs, and issues in library instruction; (d) offers continuing education and training opportunities for librarians in library instruction; and (e) coordinates communication among ALA divisions, state
clearinghouses, and other organizations interested in library instruction (American Library Association, 2004a, p. 141; Library Instruction Round Table, 2007).

*Cultural programming.* A trend of the 1980s was the joint sponsorship of reading and discussion programs by the National Endowment for the Humanities and ALA. NEH funded the Courses by Newspaper program which began in 1979 and continued through the fall of 1980. The American Library Association awarded grants to 11 libraries throughout the country to conduct the program. The topic for the course offered in the fall of 1979 was the history of technology. Energy was the topic for the course presented in the spring of 1980 (Fleming, 1980, p. 39).

The “Let’s Talk about It” program originated in Vermont as a reading and discussion group based in local libraries and grew into a nationwide program supported by a grant from NEH. From 1983 to 1987 NEH funded the “Let’s Talk about It” project sponsored by ALA’s Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (Heim, 1985, p. 38). The “Let’s Talk About It” model added a new feature to the traditional book discussion team of librarian, readers, and discussion leader—presentations by scholars (Durrance & Rubin, 1989, p. 92). Scholars in the humanities developed reading and discussion programs on 10 themes:

2. “The Way We Are, the Way We Were: Seasons in the Contemporary American Family”
3. “Not for Children Only”
5. “Individual Rights and Community in America”
8. “Rebirth of a Nation: Nationalism and the Civil War”
9. “Destruction or Redemption: Images of Romantic Love”
Each participant received a brochure containing an introductory essay on the chosen theme, a brief description of the works to be read and discussed, and suggestions for further reading. The literature for the program included a variety of forms—nonfiction, biography/autobiographies, novels, short stories, plays, or filmscripts. The materials were chosen for their readability, for their representation of important themes, and their accurate depiction of ethnic groups (Durrance & Rubin, 1989, p. 90). Libraries hosting the series received a planning guide, the *Let's Talk About It Planner's Manual*, and a set of publicity and program materials (Durance & Rubin, 1989, pp. 90, 93). The project was implemented by training teams who conducted workshops for librarians in their home states (Heim, 1985, p.38).

Most programs followed the same general format. The series lasted for 10 weeks. There were five biweekly meetings; each meeting focused on a different reading. Each meeting began with an introductory presentation by the humanities scholar lasting from 30 to 40 minutes followed by 45 minutes of small-group discussion. Discussions were based in part on questions provided by the scholar. Each session ended with a summary of the discussion and closing remarks by the scholar (Durrance & Rubin, 1989, p. 92). "Humanities scholars enriched the discussion with biographical information on the author, provided contextual perspectives from the literary tradition or historical era, and acted as a catalyst for discussion" (Baer, 1988, abstract).

The “Let’s Talk About It” reading discussion series continued to attract excellent attendance three years after its inauguration. The programs often drew standing-room-only crowds. This program filled a need for adult programming and created a strong demand for an ongoing discussion series in public libraries (Sager, 1987, p. 242). This highly successful program reached 30,000 adults in 300 libraries across the nation (Heim, 1991b, p. 33).

In 1985 NEH funded the transportation costs of the excellent “Censorship and Libraries” exhibit developed by the New York Public Library and the ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom (Sager, 1986, p. 250). In 1988 the PBS series “Voices and Visions” was the basis of an ALA initiated national project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The project was
"a library-based reading, viewing, and discussion series on modern American poets" (Rolstad, 1989, p. 20). In 1992 NEH funded ALA's "Seeds of Change," a traveling exhibit commemorating the 500th anniversary of Columbus' voyages, and "Brave New Worlds," the accompanying reading and discussion program (Heim, 1991b, p. 33). These programs demonstrated that adults were interested in discussions groups in an informal but structured setting outside the traditional educational environment (Rolstad, 1993, p. 36).

The creation of the ALA Public Programs Office (PPO) in 1992 was a major step in revitalizing the cultural and educational roles of libraries. The original mission statement of the Public Programs Office read as follows: "The Public Programs Office promotes and supports libraries in their role as community cultural and educational centers and 'universities of the people'" (American Library Association, 1996, p. 5). The wording of the original mission statement tended to emphasize public libraries. To carry out its mission PPO developed and implemented projects that encouraged libraries to provide public programming. In the early years of its existence, PPO's projects included traveling exhibits, literary programs featuring authors, and scholar-led book discussion programs (American Library Association, 1996, p. 5).

In the mid-1990s the mission of the ALA Public Programs Office expanded to include programming in academic, school, and special libraries as well as public libraries; the current mission statement reads "to foster cultural programming as an integral part of library service in all types of libraries" (American Library Association, 2004a, p. 5). PPO is the association's primary instrument for achieving the goals of the key action area "Education and Continuous Learning" (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 68). "Discussion programs are at the heart" of PPO's mission. These programs are "designed to more firmly establish the library as a community cultural center by bringing together current and future readers, writers, scholars, artists and lifelong learners" (American Library Association, 2006n, Continuous Learning section, para. 3).
PPO develops and implements projects that create lifelong learning opportunities through public programs in libraries of all kinds. PPO provides (a) programming models; (b) financial, material, and human resources; (c) training and technical assistance; and (d) networking opportunities (American Library Association, 2006n). Projects include (a) traveling exhibitions; (b) literary programs featuring popular authors; (b) performing arts programming; (c) reading and discussion programs on history, literature, and other topics; and (d) book and media discussions on topical themes (American Library Association, 2004a, p. 5).

PPO actively seeks opportunities to develop new partnerships and collaborations “to link libraries, communities, and culture” (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 68). Grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the National Video Resources have enabled the office to offer seminars, publications, program materials, audiovisual materials, funds, and other resources (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 68). Partnerships with state humanities councils, museums, public radio stations, and literary organizations have created some truly innovative programs (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 68).

In the 1990s the ALA Public Programs Office (PPO) partnered with the National Video Resources (NVR) to offer From Rosie to Roosevelt: A Film History of Americans in World War II. Films in the series included From Rosie to Roosevelt: the American People and From Rosie to Roosevelt: the American Command. Twenty libraries were chosen to host the program featuring documentary films, readings, and discussion groups. The National Endowment for the Humanities and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation funded the series (American Library Association, 2006v, Public Programs Office, 2006c). In another partnership PPO and NRV offered a documentary film study on the impact of science and technology in the 20th century. The program, entitled Fast Forward: Science, Technology, and the Communications Revolution, was a pilot project funded by the National Science Foundation and the Albert P. Sloan Foundation (American Library Association, 2006e; Public Programs Office, 2006c).
The National Video Resources and the Public Programs Office are again partnering to sponsor a documentary film viewing and discussion series entitled Looking at: Jazz, America’s Art. Forty-three public and academic libraries were chosen to participate as pilot sites. The six-week initiative is composed of six viewing and discussion programs, documentary films, essays by jazz scholars, and an extensive resource guide of reading materials, Web sites, videos and DVDs. The six themes are “New Orleans: The Birthplace of Jazz”; “The Jazz Age and the 1920s”; “The Women of Jazz”; “The Jazz Swing Era”; “Jazz Innovators: From Bishop to Hard Bop, to Cool and More”; and “Latin Jazz” (Public Programs Office, 2006d).

The “Let’s Talk About It” program was relaunched in 1999. One of the most successful discussion programs ever sponsored by ALA, it has attracted more than 4 million Americans to local libraries since it was first inaugurated in 1982. In January 2004 PPO and Nextbook (an initiative promoting Jewish literature, culture, and ideas) announced a new grant project for public and academic libraries entitled Let’s Talk About It: Jewish Literature—Identity and Imagination. The Jewish literature series featured four new themes: (a) “Your Heart’s Desire: Sex and Love in Jewish Literature”; (b) “Demons, Golems, and Dybbuks: Monsters of the Jewish Imagination”; (c) “Between Two Worlds: Stories of Estrangement and Homecoming”; and (d) “A Mind of Her Own: Fathers and Daughters in a Changing World” (American Library Association, 2004c). Following the “Let’s Talk About It” model, the Jewish literature series featured scholar-led, theme-based discussions that explore the best in contemporary and classic Jewish literature (60 Libraries, 2006). Program grants for “Let’s Talk About It: Jewish Literature—Identity and Imagination” were awarded in four rounds in 2004 and 2005 (American Library Association, 2004c).

In January 2006 PPO and Nextbook selected 60 public and academic libraries to participate in the final round of the “Let’s Talk About It: Jewish Literature” programs. During the course of the three-year initiative, 159 libraries participated in the program (60 Libraries, 2006). The program proved so popular, that PPO and Nextbook decided to extend the initiative. In
October 2006 PPO and Nextbook announced two new rounds of grants for the Jewish literature program. Grants were awarded in two rounds in 2006 and early 2007. Programming grants were increased and two new themes were added: “Neighbors: the World Next Door” and “Modern Marvels: Jewish Adventures in the Graphic Novel” (Public Programs Office, 2006b).

Previous discussion series have included “Lives Worth Knowing” and “National Connections.” In “Lives Worth Knowing” adult learners discussed autobiographies and how individuals portrayed themselves. “National Connections” used children’s literature to offer adult literacy students an opportunity to discuss enduring themes. “StoryLines America: A Radio/Library Partnership Exploring Our Regional Literature” was a partnership among libraries, regional scholars, and National Public Radio stations. The project included 13 live, one-hour book discussions during which listeners interacted with guests and on-air hosts through a toll-free telephone number (American Library Association, 2006n). StoryLines was broadcast in six regions of the country: the Northwest and Southwest in 1997, California and the Southeast in 1999, the Midwest in 2001, and New England in 2003 (StoryLines, 2006).

In 2000 ALA joined with the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Library of America in sponsoring the Millennium Project for Public Libraries, a national grant initiative funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The purpose of the initiative was to increase public awareness and appreciation of great American writing. This was accomplished through the gift of 50-volume sets of classic works from the Library of America to each of the participating libraries, the hosting by each participating library of a program or event designed to increase awareness of the nature and content of the Library of America volumes and library efforts to promote the reading and long-term use of these volumes. The initiative lasted for three years and involved 800 public libraries (Public Programs Office, 2006e). ALA served in an advisory capacity to the libraries that received the award; ALA provided advice and assistance in program organization, training, and presentation. The public programming activities consisted of reading
and discussion programs, lecture series, exhibitions, readings of excerpts from the volumes followed by discussion of the works, or a combination of these formats (NEH, 2000).

The National Endowment for the Arts worked with the ALA Public Programs Office to promote the fine and performing arts. In April 2000 the ALA Public Programs Office initiated a cultural program for family and adult library audiences entitled, “Live! At the Library 2000: Building Cultural Communities.” Funded by the endowment, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and the Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund, this comprehensive project “provided training, technical assistance, and funding for libraries to host live appearances by literary, visual, and performing artists” (American Library Association, 2006e). The two-year project provided grants for libraries, authors and artists, and arts organizations to present theme-based cultural programs on important issues and ideas confronting America’s communities (American Library Association, 2006e).

The Public Programs Office has created some tools to assist libraries in providing cultural programming for their communities. In 2005 PPO director D. A. Robertson wrote a practical guide to assist librarians in planning, funding, and promoting cultural programs. Cultural Programming for Libraries: Linking Libraries, Communities, and Culture offers examples of outstanding programs for varying audience sizes and budgets. The Public Programs Office announced in October 2006 that it had created an online archive for “Let’s Talk About It” reading and discussion programs. Librarians can use the site to review and acquire program materials related to more than 20 prior discussion themes. Resources include (a) annotated reading lists, (b) theme-related scholarly essays, (c) supplementary texts with brief summaries and (d) a “How To” discussion programming guide (Public Programs Office, 2006h).

In September 2006 ALA’s Public Programs Office announced the creation of a new website to assist librarians in planning public programs on the theme “Becoming American—New Immigration Stories.” The “Becoming American” website was created to share the outcomes of a collection development project sponsored by ALA in 2004. The project focused on building
collections of American immigrant literature for adults and families. The new website includes (a) reading lists for children, young adults, and adult readers; (b) downloadable bookmarks; and (c) programming resources (Public Programs Office, 2006a; Public Programs Office, 2006i).

*Program planning.* In the early 1980s PLA and NEH cosponsored the Libraries Humanities Projects Program designed to expand professional staff knowledge and expertise in the humanities. PLA and NEH hosted a series of one-day workshops on program planning in the humanities which provided staff development opportunities for librarians in addition to humanities programming for the general public (NEH, 1982, p. 493). In 1980 three one-day workshops were presented prior to the regional library association meetings held in Durham, New Hampshire; Omaha, Nebraska; and Birmingham, Alabama (Mills-Fischer, 1981, p. 231). PLA and NEH presented several one-day workshops in 1981 including one prior to the California Library Association’s annual conference in December. Another workshop was held at the joint Oregon and Washington Library Associations’ conference in April 1982. Patricia O’Donnell was the workshop director (Griffen & Mills-Fischer, 1983, p. 218). Participants in the workshops were introduced to the various disciplines that comprise the humanities, became familiar with reference resources in the humanities, and learned how to develop programming ideas (NEH, 1982, p. 493).

In 1983 the Public Library Association and the Association of College and Research Libraries collaborated in preparing a successful grant application to the National Endowment for the Humanities. The grant funded six two-day workshops for academic and public librarians and for humanities scholars at regional locations throughout the nation in 1984 and 1985. The workshops were designed to promote communication and working relationships among the participants and to teach the participants the fundamentals of humanities program development and proposal preparation (Bolt, 1984, p. 230). The NEH sponsored planning workshops resulted in a variety of creative programs designed to promote the humanities (Sager, 1986, p. 250). To
assist librarians in program planning in the arts and humanities, NEH and ALA published the

The Reference and Adult’s Services Division recognized the importance of adult
programming in helping to further the library’s educational, cultural, informational, and
recreational roles. Programs provided information on topics of current interest, encouraged
exploration of the arts, and enriched the leisure of adult library users. To aid librarians in
planning, implementing, and evaluating programs, the division’s Services to Adults Committee
compiled a guide on program planning for adults in 1989 (Selvar, 1990, p. 26). In 1997 RUSA
(formerly RASD) published *Adult Programming: A Manual for Libraries* as part of its
Occasional Papers series.

The ALA Public Programs Office is currently developing the Online Resource Center for
Library Cultural Programming (ORCLCP). ORCLCP is a digital library, a professional
development tool where librarians can find resources for developing quality arts and humanities
programming. ORCLCP provides a framework for program planning and features models of
successful programs. The program planning section offers resources for advocacy, grants,
networking, reference, planning guides, and professional development. The “Authors and Artists”
section is still under construction but will feature (a) a resource for finding authors, (b) a listing of
state and regional resources, and (c) a section on readers’ advisory. The discussion programs
section currently contains information on (a) book discussion series, (b) family discussion series,
(c) film discussion series and (d) discussion themes. The section will include information on
discussion series for special audiences in the near future. The section on traveling exhibitions lists
(a) past and current ALA traveling exhibits, (b) national exhibition sources, (c) regional and state
sources, and (d) an exhibition database (Public Programs Office, 2006f).

The ALA Public Programs Office held a preconference on program planning at the PLA
national conference in March 2006, entitled “Cultural Programming for Libraries: Linking
Libraries, Communities and Culture.” The preconference focused on preparing library staff to
conducted arts and humanities programs for the public. Participants learned (a) how to design and present high-quality cultural programming, (b) how to apply for cultural program funding, and (c) how to form partnerships with other organizations. They also learned about a wide range of model and turnkey programs including (a) reading and discussion programs, (b) traveling exhibitions, and (c) multiformat literary/humanities programs. Those attending the preconference also had the opportunity to participate in model programs, including a scholar-led lecture and discussion and an interactive poetry presentation (Public Programs Office, 2006g).

Educational information centers. The educational information center concept begun in the 1970s enjoyed a resurgence of interest in the late 1980s. The Delmar, New York, Career Resource Center established in 1975 served as a model for some of the new programs. New programs for adult job seekers were started at Enoch Pratt Free Library in Maryland and Gallop Public Library in New Mexico. Public library systems in Buffalo, New York City, Chicago, and Toronto also developed programs to meet the needs of unemployed or underemployed adults. These programs were broad in nature and included education and personal development components as well as information specifically geared to job availability ("Adults, Library Services to," 1984, p. 46).


In April 1987 the Kellogg Foundation awarded a grant to PLA to develop a national clearinghouse for collecting, sharing, and publicizing information on all the public library-based EICs receiving funds from the Kellogg Foundation (Bradley, 1988, p. 257). The PLA-EIC program had several goals:
1. To ensure the development and delivery of educational information that was comprehensive, impartial, and accurate

2. [To] provide equal access to information and counseling service for all residents, with a special outreach to adults who were handicapped, disadvantaged and geographically isolated

3. [To] support the use of existing institutions and agencies providing information and counseling services and promote cooperation among them (Flynn, 1988, p. 1).

The PLA/EIC project consisted of the PLA/EIC National Coordinating Office and a National EIC Advisory Committee appointed by the Kellogg Foundation (Bradley, 1988, p. 257). The Coordinating Office sought to facilitate networking among the Kellogg-funded sites through periodic meetings of EIC site staff and through the project’s newsletter, the EIC Linkletter. The newsletter reported on (a) training and evaluation activities, (b) program ideas and suggestions, (c) news from various EICs, (d) methods for improving EIC services, (e) comments from EIC clients, and (e) other topics of interest (Durrance & Nelson, 1987, p. 155).

The National Coordinating Office also (a) coordinated training efforts and resource development; (b) developed evaluation tools and techniques; and (c) disseminated information about EICs to librarians, educators, and other interested parities. The PLA/EIC National Advisory Council provided national leadership, vision, and encouragement for the development of public library EICs in the states with newly funded Kellogg Foundation EIC projects—Michigan, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, and Washington. The council supported the efforts of public libraries that wanted to establish or expand adult education, career, or job information services (Bradley, 1988, p. 252).

**Readers’ advisory services.** A new generation of librarians became interested in readers’ advisory services in the 1980s. PLA established a Readers’ Advisory Committee in the mid-1980s (Public Library Association, 2006f). In 1988 PLA’s national conference featured several very well-attended programs on readers’ advisory (Selvar, 1990, pp. 26-27). In an article entitled,
“Rediscovering Readers’ Advisory Service,” Balcom reported that PLA workshops on improving reading advisory skills, writing annotated bibliographies, and leading adult book discussions were very popular. The two most popular (standing-room-only) programs at the PLA National Conference in 1988 were the ones on fiction classification and browsing collections (Balcom, 1988, p. 583). Balcom attributed the renewed interest among librarians to the realization “that patrons want reading guidance from their libraries” (Balcom, 1988, p. 584). In 1989 a new group was formed in the Public Library Association to address the renewed interest in readers’ advisory—the Adult Readers Advisory Discussion Group (Selvar, 1990, pp. 26-27). In a related project ALA’s Resources and Technical Services Division and the American Association of Publishers worked together to compile basic lists of children’s and adult books of enduring quality that many librarians felt should never be allowed to go out of print (Selvar, 1990, pp. 26-27).

The Collection Development and Evaluation Section (CODES) of the Reference and Adult Services Division established a readers’ advisory committee in 1994. By the mid-1990s both PLA and RASD had readers’ advisory committees. To avoid duplication of effort the PLA Readers’ Advisory Committee restricted its programming to PLA conferences and symposiums while the RUSA (formerly RASD) CODES’ Readers Advisory Committee planned and conducted programs at ALA conferences. RUSA presented a program on readers’ advisory training at the 1996 annual conference. The annual conference offered a wealth of opportunities for librarians interested in reading guidance with nine programs on reading guidance, three popular talk tables on topics related to readers’ advisory, and two luncheon programs featuring popular fiction writers. All of these events drew overflow crowds. RUSA sponsored a program on readers’ advisers and the Internet at the 1997 annual conference and published a list of readers’ advisory resources (Saricks & Brown, 1997, p. 7).

In the new century enthusiasm for readers’ advisory continued to grow with numerous opportunities for public librarians to learn more about readers’ advisory. The entire


*Service to the labor community.* The John A. Sessions Award, established in 1979, continues to recognize the achievements of libraries in service to the labor community. Although the winners were frequently university or special libraries, a number of public libraries received the award for distinguished service by developing innovative labor programming, providing effective outreach, and developing significant collections in the area of labor (Sparanese, 2002, p. 26). Cash and Paar (1987) conducted a survey on current practices in labor education in academic libraries in 1984.

The work of the AFL-CIO/ Joint Committee on Library Service to Labor Groups was reported annually in the *ALA Yearbooks* until the yearbooks ceased publication in 1990 (Sparanese, 2002, p. 21). D. W. Schneider’s chapter “Library Service to Labor Groups” in *ALA’s Adult Services: An Endearing Focus for Public Libraries* made a significant contribution
to the literature on this subject (1990, pp. 283-313). In 1989 the Joint Committee prepared a set of guidelines for library services entitled, “Library Service to Labor Groups.” The guidelines reminded librarians that trade unionists “are concerned about the same things as everyone else in their communities. They are parents, consumers, taxpayers[,] and concerned citizens” (as cited in Sparanese, 2002, p. 26).

In 1992 the Joint Committee published a *Bibliography on Library Services for Labor Groups* for distribution at ALA’s annual conference. The bibliography consisted of several sections: (a) reference, (b) labor history, (c) biographies, (d) labor unions, (e) labor relations and labor law, (f) contemporary and international issues, (g) women and work, (h) occupational safety and health, and (i) labor songs (Reference and Adult Services Division [RASD], 1992a; RASD, 1992b). A. S. Meyers published a short article, “Building a Partnership: Library Service to Labor” in the July/August 1999 issue of *American Libraries*. A. C. Sparanese compiled *A Selected Bibliography for a Public Library Labor Studies Collections* that the Joint Committee distributed to more than 100 public libraries during Labor History Month in 1999 (Sparanese, 1999).

The Joint Committee on Library Services to Labor presented a successful program at the 2002 ALA annual conference. Members of the committee wrote or contributed to the articles in the special issue of *Library Trends* devoted to “Service to the Labor Community.” A. C. Sparanese contributed the article on public library services to labor groups (Sparanese, 2002).

*Library service for persons with special needs.* Currently the Libraries Serving Special Populations Section (LSSPS) of the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) is the major unit concerned with library services for persons with special needs. LSSPS works “to improve the quality of library service for people with special needs, including people who have vision, mobility, hearing, and developmental differences, people who are elderly, people in prisons, health care facilities, and other types of institutions” (Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies [ASCLA], 2006a, para. 4). LSSPS also seeks to improve library service for the families of persons with special needs and the professionals who
work with these populations. LSSPS promotes awareness of these populations and their needs among the general public as well as in the library community (ASCLA, 2006a).

LSSPS carries out its charge through the provision of forums, membership activity groups, and discussion groups "to stimulate activities, to discuss issues, and to exchange ideas concerning quality library services for these special populations" (ASCLA, 2006b, para. 1). The LSSPS forums are (a) the Library Service to People with Visual or Physical Disabilities Forum, (b) the Library Service to People Who Are Hard of Hearing or Deaf Forum, (c) Library Services to Prisoners Forum, and (d) the Library Services to the Impaired Elderly Forum (ASCLA, 2006b).

LSSPS's Library Service to People with Visual or Physical Disabilities Forum (LSPVDF) is dedicated to meeting the needs of persons with these disabilities. The forum's charge includes the following responsibilities:

To extend and improve library service to those unable to read or use standard printed materials because of physical limitations; to provide a symposium for the exchange of ideas and personnel; to acquaint all librarians whose service communities may include blind and physically handicapped readers with the forum and to enlist their cooperation in meeting these objectives. (ASCLA, 2006d, para. 1)

The Library Service to People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing Forum (LSPDHHF) of LSSPS promotes library and information service to persons with auditory impairments. To implement its mission, LSPDHHF performs a number of functions in cooperation with other ALA units and national organizations. These functions include (a) promoting deaf awareness, (b) monitoring and proposing legislation, (c) publicizing funding developments, (d) encouraging the library community to employ deaf persons, (e) encouraging deaf persons to participate in ALA, (f) persuading publishers to produce and distribute fiction and nonfiction resources in formats accessible to persons with hearing impairments, (g) encouraging publishers to produce materials that accurately portray persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, and (h) assisting libraries in
collection development and programming for the hearing impaired by serving as a clearinghouse of information on services to this group. LSPDHHF has compiled several Web bibliographies to assist librarians in providing services and programs for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Titles include (a) "Communication Issues"; (b) "Publishers and Vendors of Books, Videos, and CD-ROMs"; (c) "Collection Recommendations"; (d) "Books with Deaf Characters or by Deaf Authors"; and (e) "Gallaudet University Library Deaf-Related Online Resources" (ASCLA, 2006c, para. 2).

From 1996 to 2001 the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Agencies (ASCLA) administered "Roads to Learning: The Public Libraries' Learning Disabilities Initiative," a $663,000 project funded by the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation. The Public Library Association collaborated with ASCLA in sponsoring the initiative that promoted collaboration "among libraries, community agencies, and service providers to improve service to learning disabled people, the families, professions, and other interested persons" (McCook, 2002, p. 36).

The project was designed to assist public libraries in forming partnerships with other community agencies for the establishment and improvement of services and resources for learning disabled children and adults (American Library Association, 2006g; 21st Century literacy, 2006). The project had two major goals: disseminating information about learning disabilities to the general public through public libraries and improving the capacity of public libraries to serve as an information resource in the area of learning disabilities. This goal was accomplished through the development and distribution of resource packets and recommended lists of materials, the publication of numerous articles, the establishment of a website dedicated to the project, and the exchange of ideas and techniques for serving people with learning disabilities among thousands of librarians (Office for Literacy and Outreach Services [OLOS], 2006). Librarians discovered that improving services for persons with disabilities improved literacy and library services for the general public as well (American Library Association, 2006g; 21st Century Literacy, 2006).
As a result of the Roads to Learning Project, ALA made a stronger commitment to improving library service for all people with disabilities (OLOS, 2006). Although ALA had long recognized the problem of access for this special group, it was not until the Roads to Learning project demonstrated the great need that the association adopted an overarching policy dealing with library services to people with disabilities (McCook, 2002, p. 37). On January 16, 2001, the ALA Council adopted the following policy:

Libraries must not discriminate against individuals with disabilities and shall ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal access to library resources. To ensure such access, libraries may provide individuals with disabilities with services such as extended loan periods, waived late fines, extended reserve periods, library cards for proxies, books by mail, reference services by fax or email, home delivery service, remote access to the OPAC, remote electronic access to library resources, volunteer readers in the library, volunteer technology assistants in the library, American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter or real time captioning at library programs, and radio reading services. ("Library Services to People with Disabilities Policy" as cited by McCook, 2002, p. 37).

The policy was composed by the Americans with Disabilities Act Assembly, a group composed of representatives from all ALA units concerned with library services for people with disabilities. The assembly is administered by the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies. Assembly members compiled a fact sheet that explained disability law and identified some common myths about disabilities (McCook, 2002, p. 43, Note no. 56). ALA also published B. T. Mates' *Adaptive Technology for the Internet: Making Electronic Resources Accessible to All* in 2000.

*Library services for older adults.* The 1981 White House Conference on Aging began on a disappointing note for the library community. The American Library Association was not allowed to send official representatives to the conference, and planners seemed to ignore "the potential of libraries for serving the nation's older citizens" (Kanner, 1984, p. 94). However, the
library community made its presence known; copies of ALA’s 1975 statement, “Guidelines for Library Service to an Aging Population,” and copies of the 1971 WHOCA recommendation calling for an amendment to LSCA to create Title IV, “Older Readers Service,” were distributed at the conference (Turock, 1990, p. 352). The amendment to LSCA had passed into law in May 1973 but was never funded. Also the U.S. Department of Education commissioned two position papers from the library community to be read at the conference. V. H. Mathews prepared a paper on Libraries: Aids to Life Satisfaction for Older Women (1981) and B. J. Turock wrote Public Library Services for Aging in the Eighties (1981). Although the conference began on a disappointing note for the library community, librarians’ efforts to call attention to library services for older adults were rewarded. Recommendations from WHOCA 1981, which supported the allocation of funds specifically for library services to older adults, led to the inclusion of the Older Readers Service Act provisions in Title I of the Library Services and Construction Act in the 1984 reauthorization (Turock, 1990, p. 352).

At the time of the 1981 White House Conference on Aging no comprehensive studies of library services to older adults had been undertaken since the national survey conducted in 1971. However, two descriptive service guides issued by the American Library Association provided a partial sketch of the current status of library services for older adults. These publications were How Public Libraries Serve the Aging issued by the Office for Library Outreach Services and State Libraries and State Agencies on Aging prepared by RASD’s Library Service to an Aging Population Committee (Drennan & Caldwell, 1982, p. 29).

By 1981 ALA’s statement on “The Library’s Responsibility to the Aging” strongly advocated increased involvement with older adults in all library activities and recommended increased spending to improve services (Nauratil, 1985, p. 63). The statement emphasized that all types of libraries, but especially public libraries, were responsible for meeting the needs of older adults (“The Library’s Responsibility to the Aging,” 1981, pp. 21, 27).
In the mid-1980s the two units in ALA concerned with public library services for older adults, RASD’s Library Service to an Aging Population Committee and ASCLA’s Library Services to the Impaired Elderly Section, began revision of the 1975 “Guidelines for Library Services to Older Adults.” The two groups worked together to craft “a goals-oriented document that could be carried out in practice” (Mabry, 1995, p. 358). The new “Guidelines for Library Services to Older adults” document was approved by ALA in January 1987. C. H. Mabry discussed four of the most important guidelines from the 12 items named in the document:

Guideline 1. Exhibit and promote a positive attitude toward the aging process and older adults.

Guideline 2. Promote information and resources on aging and its implications not only to older adults themselves but also to family members, professionals in the field of aging, and other persons interested in the aging process.

Guideline 8. Promote and develop working relationships with other agencies and groups connected with the needs of older adults.

Guideline 12. Aggressively seek sources of funding, [sic] and commit a portion of the library budget to programs and services for older adults (1995, pp. 358-359).

Among the guidelines were statements that promoted “library services appropriate to the special needs of all older adults including the geographically isolated, homebound, institutionalized, or disabled” (Hales-Mabry, 1990, p. 73) and that encouraged libraries to incorporate consideration of the changing needs of older adults into the library’s planning and evaluation process (Hales-Mabry, 1990, p. 74). Although these guidelines did not ensure adequate services for older adults, they did focus attention on the needs of this previously neglected group.

The 1995 White House Conference stimulated considerable interest in the library community. The day-long Pre-White House Conference on Aging, entitled “Toward the White House Conference on Aging: Defining Priorities and Policies for Library and Information Services for Older Adults,” was held at the ALA midwinter meeting in Philadelphia. The
preconference was chaired by A.M. Kleiman and cosponsored by (a) the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, (b) the National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress, (c) the Reference and Adult Services Division, and (d) the Association for Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (Mabry, 1995, p. 358). The preconference drew about 100 delegates including librarians, trustees, library educators, and representatives of senior organizations (Kleiman, 1995, p. 34). Speakers included older adults, librarians, gerontologists, library trustees, and government officials. Ten major areas relating to libraries and information services for older adults were emphasized in focus group discussions: (a) “disabilities,” (b) “diversity,” (c) “interdependence of generations,” (d) “federal legislative policy,” (e) “research,” (f) “education and training,” (g) “special constituencies,” (h) “technology,” (i) “lifelong learning,” and (j) “arts and humanities” (NCLIS, 1995a, Pre-White House Conference on Aging section, para. 2).

Delegates formulated 24 recommendations, with five recommendations receiving the highest level of priority, for presentation at the White House Conference. They included recommendations that incorporated “technology, lifelong learning, and positive views of aging” in library services for older adults (Kleiman, 1995, p. 34). To maximize the library community’s impact at the White House Conference, participants chose recommendations that promised to have “wide-ranging consequences for the future” (Kleiman, 1995, p. 34). In regard to funding participants proposed that libraries look beyond traditional legislation for financial resources to support future programs and services. They urged libraries to actively seek cooperative and collaborative arrangements “in designing and implementing programs at the local, state, and federal levels” (Kleiman, 1995, p. 34). In light of the telecommunications legislation then being considered by Congress, delegates were in favor of “preferential rates” for libraries so that they could afford to offer “technology-based programs” as a component of their services for older adults (Kleiman, 1995, p. 34). Other proposals included a recommendation “that national adult education policies recognize and fund lifelong learning programs in public libraries” and that
model intergenerational programs involving older adults and young people be identified, studied, and replicated throughout the country (Kleiman, 1995, p. 34).

In 1999 the Library Services to an Aging Population Committee of the Reference and Users Services Association of ALA revised the Library Services to Older Adults Guidelines. The 1999 edition of the guidelines addressed "organizational functions and needs" in serving older adults (Reference and Users Services Association, 2005, para. 3). Since the last revision in 1987, there had been many technological advances: (a) nearly all libraries were automated, (b) the Internet had become a pervasive influence, and (c) the use of computers was commonplace in the workplace and the home. Also the Americans with Disabilities Act had been enacted in 1992. These factors plus the ongoing necessity for libraries to develop new services to meet the changing needs and requirements of their communities influenced the decision to revise the 1987 guidelines. The new guidelines emphasized seven major points:

1. Integrate library service to older adults into the overall library plan, budget, and service program.
2. Provide access to library buildings, materials, programs, and services for older adults.
3. Treat all older adults with respect at every service point.
4. Utilize the experience and expertise of older adults.
5. Provide and promote information and resources on aging.
6. Provide library services appropriate to the needs of older adults.
7. Collaborate with community agencies and groups serving older adults (Reference and Users Services Association, 2005, Guidelines 1-7).

To prepare for the 2005 White House Conference on Aging, ALA and NCLIS cosponsored a preconference forum at the 2005 annual conference, entitled "Libraries, Lifelong Learning, Information and Older Adults." Two ALA entities, the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) and the Office of Literacy and Outreach Services (OLOS), were involved in planning the forum. The event was attended by 110 librarians with a special interest in this area.

Participants were then divided into small groups with a discussion leader and recorder. Discussion and the development of recommendations followed the six themes chosen for WHCoA. Each group discussed one of the themes and developed two sets of recommendations, one for the White House Conference and another for ALA and the library community at large. Only the six top recommendations developed for the White House Conference, one in each category, were included in the final report and transmitted to the 2005 White House Conference on Aging (American Library Association, 2005c).

Using the White House Conference themes as a framework for their discussion, the participants suggested areas in which ALA and the library community could improve services for older adults. Under the category “Marketplace,” the preconference participants recommended that ALA should work with hardware and software vendors to improve the existing technology and develop new technology to meet the needs of senior adults (American Library Association, 2005c). In the category of “Social Engagement,” it was recommended that ALA and other interested organizations develop interdisciplinary programs of continuing education and training for library staff working with older adults. The disciplines of social work, gerontology, and geriatrics should be among the disciplines included in the curriculum of these programs (American Library Association, 2005c).

As part of ALA’s “Planning Along the Lifespan,” the association was urged to develop continuing education and training programs for library staff that address issues regarding physical barriers of library facilities; technology; the emotional, intellectual, physical, and financial needs
of older adults; and advocacy for older adults in libraries and in the community (American Library Association, 2005c). Under the heading of “Health & Long Term Living,” it was recommended that ALA use its influence to promote the provision of information and programming on health-related issues, financial planning, and the rights and benefits of seniors through the formation of library partnerships with human services agencies and community organizations concerned with the health and well-being of older adults (American Library Association, 2005c).

In the “Workplace of the Future” category, the forum participants urged ALA members and appropriate partners to work on the behalf of older workers by supporting public policy that ensures health insurance for part-time library workers and by developing incentives for library employers to retain older workers and retirees (American Library Association, 2005c). In the final category, “Our Community,” the library community was asked to solicit partnerships with agencies, institutions, and groups at a local level, and ALA was asked to form partnerships at the national level to improve library and information services for older adults (American Library Association, 2005c).

A. M. Kleiman, Chair of ALA’s White House Conference on Aging Task Force, noted, “For the first time, libraries are not just mentioned as an afterthought at this conference but have their own resolution for delegates to vote on” (American Library Association, 2005b, para. 2). Resolution number 60, “Develop Programs and Services Promoting Use of Public Libraries Among the Older Adult and Baby Boomer Population,” called for the expansion of public library services to older adults including adaptive technology and access to computer-based electronic and digital information (WHCoA, 2005b, p. 73). The resolution was among the 73 resolutions voted on at the White House Conference, but it was not among the top 50 resolutions (WHCoA, 2005c).

The ALA Office for Literacy and Outreach Services sponsored a two-day preconference on library service to older adults at the 2006 Annual Conference. The preconference, entitled
"Reaching Out to Older Adults: The Why and How of Library Services," was intended to introduce local library staff to issues affecting their work with older adults. The preconference was an outcome of the White House Conference on Aging Forum held at the 2005 annual conference. Discussions covered a wide range of topics: (a) active aging, (b) disabilities, (c) use of technology, (d) program management, (e) intergenerational programs, (f) staff development, (g) evaluation and research, (h) language, (i) cultural and gender issues, (j) forming local partnerships, (k) funding, and (l) the 2005 White House Conference on Aging (American Library Association, 2006u, para. 3).

Public libraries provide a wide range of services for older adults such as "homebound services, large print books, technology training, services to the blind and physically disabled, outreach to nursing homes, consumer education, and library programming" (American Library Association, 2005b). A. M. Kleiman predicted that public libraries will respond to the needs of the growing older population by expanding their services for older adults in the next decade by forming partnerships with other organizations in the aging network (American Library Association, 2005b).

ASCLA’s Libraries Serving Special Populations Section sponsors the Library Service to the Impaired Elderly Forum. LSIEF strives “to improve the quality of library service to the impaired elderly including those with physical handicaps, emotional problems, those in institutions, in group living situations, and the homebound who cannot avail themselves of traditional library service” (Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies [ASCLA], 2006f, para. 1). To carry out its charge, LSIEF (a) develops standards for library services for the impaired elderly; (b) collaborates with other organizations concerned with the needs of this clientele; (c) develops innovative service techniques to serve the impaired elderly; (d) promotes library programming to address the specific needs of groups within this clientele; (e) develops curriculum and instruction in this area of library service for library school programs and continuing education courses; (f) serves as a clearinghouse for information, ideas, materials, and
programs for library service to the impaired elderly; and (g) communicates the needs of this clientele to other ALA divisions (ASCLA, 2006f).

Library services to prisoners. The Library Services to Prisoners Forum (LSPF) of Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies strives to raise awareness of prisoners’ library and information needs and to encourage people within the library and correctional communities to work together to meet these needs. The forum promotes and supports the initiation, expansion, and improvement of library service to prisoners and correctional staff. Among its many functions LSPF (a) serves as clearinghouse for information, ideas, materials, programs, and human resources for correctional library services; (b) monitors, initiates, and supports pertinent legislation; (c) contributes to the development of standards for improving the quality of prison library services; and (d) promotes the adoption and utilization of standards for establishing and improving correctional library services (ASCLA, 2006c).

Professional education, continuing education, and staff development. ALA and its divisions provide continuing education opportunities for librarians, library support staff, and library trustees in a variety of locations and through a variety of formats. “ALA and its divisions also develop competency statements for various specializations and provide a broad range of publications” (American Library Association, 2006l, Scope section, para. 1). The “ALAction 2005” five-year plan approved in 2000 called for ALA to become a leader in continuing education for librarians and library personnel by 2005 (American Library Association, 2006f). Policy statement 56.3 committed ALA to “a national comprehensive long-range plan for continuing education” and recommended that a continuing education component be included in “the standards for libraries and library education and guidelines for services developed by any ALA unit” (American Library Association, 2006l, Current Goals section, para. 3). The association is currently addressing the following issues:

1. Meeting increased resource competition, internally and externally
2. Utilizing new delivery technologies appropriately and effectively
3. Developing a sustainable model for scanning the continuing education environment

4. Effectively pulling together work in the areas of competencies, sequenced continuing education, and certification


ALA provides a wide range of resources for continuing education. The ALA annual conference is "the largest event dedicated to the professional growth of librarians in the world" (American Library Association, 2006, Conferences and Institutes section, para. 1). Attendance at the annual conference generally exceeds 21,000 librarians, library staff, trustees, and interested persons each year. More than 250 programs and preconferences on a wide range of topics are presented by ALA divisions, round tables, and committees. Hundreds of companies exhibit the latest library and information products and services. Although not as well attended and smaller in scope, the midwinter conference also offers many opportunities for continuing education (American Library Association, 2006).

The ALA website contains a number of online resources for continuing education. The ALA Events & Conference page provides "information on ALA Midwinter Meetings, Annual Conferences, and other association meetings such as state conferences" (American Library Association, 2006, para. 2). The ALA Continuing Education Clearinghouse is a particularly useful resource. It is "a searchable database of current continuing education opportunities offered by ALA, its divisions, and other units" (American Library Association, 2006, para.1). Opportunities include traditional workshops and conferences, online courses, and workshops that can be licensed by local library systems (American Library Association, 2006). The ALA Profession Tools/Education page contains service guidelines and standards, information about publications, ALA related programs, and other resources such as information about the Association of College and Research Libraries Institute for Information Literacy. Knowledge and...
*Networking* is the quarterly guide to continuing education, which is also included as a supplement in *American Libraries*. The quarterly guide presents a listing of preconferences, institutes, publications, and online courses available from ALA and its units (American Library Association, 2006k).

Approximately 300 electronic discussion lists are provided by ALA and its divisions. School librarians and media specialists have a special electronic resource named ICONnect that provides annotated, evaluated web sites in all curriculum areas and beginning and advanced online courses on the use of Internet resources and curriculum development (American Library Association, 2006n).

ALA is the largest publisher serving the library and information science profession. More than 50 journals and 60 books covering a broad range of topics are published by ALA and its divisions and round tables annually. These publications are marketed world wide. Among the magazines published by ALA are *American Libraries*, *Booklist*, *Book Links*, and *Choice*. Collection development tools published by ALA include *University Press Books Selected for Public and Secondary School Libraries* and *Outstanding Academic Book List* (American Library Association, 2006n).

Three ALA divisions—the American Association of School Librarians (AASL), the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), and the Public Library Association (PLA)—offer separate national conference programs and exhibits for their members. Three divisions—the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), the American Association for Library Trustees & Advocates (ALTA), and the Reference and Users Services Association (RUSA)—offer joint biannual national institutes that provide continuing education for members, trustees, teachers, and other professionals. The Library Information and Technology Association (LITA) also convenes an annual national institute (American Library Association, 2006n).

The Public Library Association held its first national conference in 1983 with 2,600 attendees, nearly half (47%) of whom belonged to neither ALA nor PLA. Isaac Asimov was the
keynote speaker. The three-day conference included programs on literacy, rural librarianship, intellectual freedom, trustee/library director relations, information and referral, international relations, output measures, children's services, and other topics (Bolt, 1984, p. 230).

The 1986 PLA annual conference featured several programs on adult services. One workshop, entitled "Learning How to Learn: The Independent Learner in the Public Library," dealt with public library user education and presented examples of various instructional methodologies such as videotape and cable TV (Rolstad, 1987, p. 30). Another workshop on "Adult Programming" provided information on funding, publicity, and program ideas (Rolstad, 1987, p. 30). A third workshop dealt with the programming problems of small and rural libraries, "Support for Public Programs in Small and Rural Libraries" (Rolstad, 1987, p. 30).

Publications continue to be an important part of the Public Library Association's commitment to providing continuing education opportunities for public library staff and trustees. In 1998 PLA began its well-received "Results" series, part of the PLA planning process, with Planning for Results: A Public Library Transformation Process. In January 2001 The New Planning for Results was released. Staffing for Results: A Guide to Working Smarter was published in May 2002 (Garvey, 2002, p. 2). The fourth volume in the series, Creating Policies for Results: From Chaos to Clarity, was added in 2004. The two most recent entries are Technology for Results and Demonstrating Results: Using Outcome Measurement in Your Library published in 2005 (Public Library Association, 2006a).


In 2001-2002 PLA offered continuing education and “Train-the-Trainer” workshops based on the “Results” publications. The workshops were offered in libraries around the country and 48 librarians were certified as trainers in the *New Planning for Results* process. PLA collaborated with other ALA units in efforts to develop Web-based continuing education programs for its members (Garvey, 2002, p. 4). The first “Staffing for Results” workshop was held in April 2003 (Garvey, 2002, p. 2).

In 2003-2004 PLA launched its first online education program “e-Learning @ PLA.” The first study course offered was “Creating Policies for Results” in which participants worked with June Garcia and Sandra Nelson, the authors of *Creating Policies for Results: From Chaos to Clarity*. The curriculum afforded participants the opportunity to address real library policy problems through interactive exercises, collaborative work, and online chats with instructors and colleagues. PLA also sponsored two train-the-trainer workshops, “Facilitating the Planning Process” and “Creating Policies for Results.” PLA and the Mohawk Valley (New York) Library System cosponsored a trainer program for the updated “Managing for Results” in November 2003. Thousands of public librarians benefited from the workshops conducted by PLA trainers (Herrera, 2004).

After the merger of RSD and ASD in 1972, the Reference and Adult Services Division (RASD) continued to provide opportunities for adult services librarians “to examine problems through committee assignments, to communicate professional concerns, and to recognize exceptional service” (Selvar, 1990, p. 27). The editor of the “Adult Services” column in the late 1980s was Elizabeth Curry of the Southeastern Library Network. Among the topics addressed in the column were (a) personnel, (b) technology, (c) multicultural programs, and (d) rural library services (Rolstad, 1989, pp. 20-21). Featured stories included (a) the first White House
Conference on Library and Information Services and its impact on adult services, (b) the potential influence of the second White House Conference, (c) public library outreach services to individuals with developmental disabilities, and (d) the use of kiosk library outlets to reach rapid transit commuters (Selvar, 1990, p. 27). In 1988 RASD’s Library Services to Adults Committee and the Adult Library Materials Committee cosponsored “Discovering Literary Voices,” a panel presentation at the conference in New Orleans. Panel members discussed how to select small presses and literary magazines and how to promote local authors (Rolstad, 1989, p. 20).

Currently the Library Administration and Management Association (LAMA) and the Association for Library Collections & Technical Services (ALCTS) provide regional programming which deals with specific topics and needs identified by their members. The Young Adult Library Services Association (YALS) has a team of trainers who assist public library staff in providing quality services for young adults. Among the topics included in the team’s presentations are adolescent development, reading interests, behavioral problems, and computer services for teens (American Library Association, 2006n).

Additional learning and networking opportunities are provided in the single or multiple-session workshops and plenary sessions offered by other ALA divisions and offices on a regional basis. Several divisions also provide distance learning via the Internet and teleconferencing (American Library Association, 2006n).

The Office of Library Personnel Resources was renamed the Office for Human Resource Development and Recruitment (OHRDR) in 1998 to reflect its new emphasis on education and continuous learning (Office for Human Resource Development and Recruitment [OHRDR], 2003). OHRDR’s mission is “to facilitate the development of librarianship as a profession” (American Library Association, 2001-2002, p. 4). OHRDR focuses on education and learning programs, recruitment of a diverse workforce, and the development of management and human resource policies and practices. OHRDR promotes professional continuing education as an essential element of lifelong learning by providing information on education and professional
development opportunities. OHRDR promotes a diverse workforce by preparing and distributing recruitment materials designed to encourage a diverse workforce, by conducting recruiting programs, and by encouraging recruitment efforts at the community level. OHRDR seeks to develop policies and practices which best serve the needs of libraries and library staff. OHRDR confers with libraries and provides counsel on issues relating to management and human resources and serves as an advocate for fair and equitable practices in these areas. It promotes research in areas related to its mission. The Office of Human Resource Development and Recruitment acts as the coordinating body for ALA’s activities related to professional development, recruitment, management, and personnel practices (American Library Association, 2001-2002, p. 4).

Within OHRDR is the ALA Committee on Education (COE). COE was established by the ALA Council in 1977 and became effective after the dissolution of the Library Education Division in February 1978. COE formulates policies and makes recommendations in the area of continuing library education, coordinates recommendations and policies promulgated by other ALA divisions and units, identifies research needs in library and information education, and serves as a clearinghouse for information on all aspects of library and information studies education (American Library Association, 2006n; OHRDR, 2006a).

The Library Education Assembly is designed to provide an avenue for representatives from the various ALA divisions, units, and affiliated groups with education-related interests to exchange information, share ideas, and express concerns. The assembly assists the Committee on Education in carrying out its responsibilities. The assembly meets twice a year at the midwinter and annual conferences (OHRDR, 2006d).

The Continuing Library Education Network and Exchange Round Table (CLENERT) is the lineal descendent of the CLENE organization started by Elizabeth Stone in the mid-1970s. Due to the economic difficulties of the early 1980s, CLENE was unable to maintain a
self-sustaining status, so it applied to become an ALA division in January 1983. It was accepted as an ALA round table. In the early years CLENERT focused on “Train the Trainer” workshops. CLENERT also offered one-on-one tutorials for continuing education planners at ALA conferences. In the late 1980s and 1990s, CLENE published several well-received titles. There has been discussion in recent years of updating these out-of-print volumes. CLENE’s programs and its newsletter, the 
\textit{CLENExchange}, have been recognized for their consistent quality (Masters, 2006, p. 2). Currently the round table serves as a forum for the exchange of ideas and the discussion of concerns. It also provides learning activities and materials for library and information professionals engaged in providing continuing education, training, and staff development (American Library Association, 2001-2002, p.130).

In 2002 ALA established the ALA-Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA). The association promotes the “mutual professional interests of librarians and other library workers” (American Library Association, 2006l, Milestones section, 2002). ALA-APA is concerned with two broad areas: “certification of individuals in specializations beyond the initial professional degree and direct support of comparable worth and pay equity initiatives, and other activities designed to improve the salaries and status of librarians and library workers” (American Library Association, 2006d).

In 1988 the ALA Council adopted “Guidelines for Quality in Continuing Education for Information, Library, and Media Personnel” (American Library Association, 2006l). In 1991 ALA’s Special Committee on Library School Closings recommended that the ALA Executive Board “initiate an action program that will (a) recast the image of the functions of library and information science as vital to society in the information age; [sic] and (b) influence the direction of library and information science education in the modern age” (Recruitment, 2006, Milestones section, 1991, para. 2). In 1996 the Public Library Association and Library Administration and Management Association (LAMA) proposed that a Certified Public Library Administrator’s program be established. In 1997 the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library
Agencies joined in PLA and LAMA's efforts (American Library Association, 2006l). In 1997 the ALA Committee on Education (previously the Standing Council Committee on Library Education) proposed that a searchable "clearinghouse" database on continuing professional education be created and presented a draft design for the website (American Library Association, 2006l).

In 1999 ALA convened the first of a series of congresses on professional education. The first Congress on Professional Education (COPE I) focused on education for the first professional degree (American Library Association, 1999b). COPE I was called in response to growing concerns about (a) the elimination of the "L" word [Library] from the name of some graduate library education programs; (b) the perceived indifference to core competencies such as cataloging; and (c) the nation-wide shortage of school librarians and public librarians to work with children, young adults, and disadvantaged populations (Haycock, 2000, p. 2). The purpose of the congress was to "identify issues, strategies, and solutions to challenges facing the library and information studies community" (Kniffel, 1999, para. 7).

The congress was composed of delegates from national associations (e.g., affiliates, specialist associations, divisions, and accrediting bodies), membership groups (e.g., ethnic caucuses, round tables, and critical committees), and international associations of library and information educators and professionals (American Library Association, 1999b; Haycock, 2000, p. 4). Delegates sought "to reach consensus . . . on the values and core competencies of the profession and on strategies for action to address common issues and concerns" (OHRDR, 2006b, para. 1). Professionals issues including accreditation, continuing education, recruitment, and diversity were also discussed (American Library Association, 2006n).

The conference gave practitioners and educators "an unprecedented opportunity to spout off in a forum organized to effect change in the way education for librarianship is delivered" (Kniffel, 1999, para. 1). A question first posed by the ALA Committee on Accreditation in 1983 framed much of the discussion: "What is the profession for which ALA accredits graduate
schools?” (American Library Association, 2006a) The conference revealed a “disconnect” between educators and practitioners (Kniffel, 1999, para. 4). “Practitioners looking at the realities of library service” (Kniffel, 1999, para. 4) saw technology as a means of delivering traditional services (Kniffel, 1999, para. 3). Library educators, who “placed libraries in the larger context of an information field in flux” (Kniffel, 1999, para. 4), were attempting to keep their struggling schools alive by adapting to the realities of the marketplace and integrating an assortment of sometimes ill-defined “information” fields into the curriculum (Kniffel, 1999, para. 3).

At the opening session ALA President Ann Symons “called for consensus-building” and reminded the delegates that all of them had “a big stake in how library education is delivered . . .” (Kniffel, 1999, para. 7). Initial presentations by Ted Marchese, Barbara Moran, and Marilyn Mason provided “a framework for deliberations” (Haycock, 2000, p. 4). Ted Marchese, editor of Change magazine, spoke on the current trends in higher education. An anticipated trend was the “need to accommodate 30% more students with the same resources” currently available (Kniffel, 1999, para. 9). Libraries as “the single most expensive provider of a service on campus” (Kniffel, 1999, para. 9) will be expected to do “more with less in a web-based learning environment while remaining central to the university’s mission” (Haycock, 2000, pp. 4-5). Marchese predicted that the Web “will become the central resource for teaching and learning, for writing, for publication, for content delivery” (Kniffel, 1999, para. 9).

Barbara Moran from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill discussed the changes that have been wrought in library and information studies education “as a result of a decade in survival mode” (Haycock, 2000, p. 5). Graduate library schools in the late 1990s were providing many programs, including the traditional Masters of Library Science, “while dealing with the tensions of balancing university and employer demands, theory and practice, and librarianship and other information professions” (Haycock, 2000, p. 5). Moran attributed “the demand for information technology education” for not only saving some schools but also allowing “many of
the schools to grow larger, more central to the mission of the university, and more visible on
campus” (Kniffel, 1999, para. 11).

Cleveland Public Library Director Marilyn Mason emphasized the severity of “the crisis
in library education” (Kniffel, 1999, para. 12). Mason identified three areas of special concern:
“shortages of qualified graduates, core competencies, and the loss of the “L” word from program
titles” (Kniffel, 1999, para. 12). Mason indicated that the demand for qualified graduates was
rising as library work was becoming even “more staff-intensive with the introduction of more and
more technology” (Kniffel, 1999, para. 13). Mason suggested subsidized education for key areas
such as children’s service and emphasized that traditional skills needed to be “updated to the use
of technology” (Kniffel, 1999, para. 13). Mason also proposed that professional librarians be
engaged primarily for management and staff development and that salaries be increased to attract
more talented people to the profession (Haycock, 2000, p. 5).

Facilitated brainstorming sessions focused on critical skills, barriers to acquiring these
skills, and professional values. Critical skills included “communications, management, political,
specialized, and technological” (Kniffel, 1999, para. 23). Barriers to their achievement were seen
as: “compensation, image, time, and change” (Kniffel, 1999, para. 23). The consensus list of
professional values included: “intellectual freedom, equitable access, professionalism, quality
service, and respect” which encompassed “diversity, privacy, and confidentiality” (Haycock,
2000, p. 5). Some delegates were dismayed that “organization of knowledge, teaching, and
‘literacy’ were omitted from all of the consensus lists (Kniffel, 1999, para. 25). Ken Haycock,
Chair of the Congress Steering Committee, stressed that the professionals values on the consensus
list would not become reality until librarians become more effective managers, communicators,
marketers, teachers, and promoters of literacy. Creativity, innovation, technological proficiency,
and willingness to embrace change in different environments were qualities needed to realize
these values (2000, p. 5).
Educators and practitioners agreed that the curriculum of Library and Information Studies should provide graduates with a thorough understanding of "information, the relationship of people to that information, and technology as a tool to connect the two" (Haycock, 2000, p. 5). Graduates should appreciate how "theories of context, users, and communication" affect curriculum design and choice of delivery method. Two critical factors must be considered: "the environment (i.e., for profit or not for profit libraries) and the nature of the client (e.g., children)" (Haycock, 2000, p. 5).

After the participants had identified the critical issues and devised strategies for addressing them, the Steering Committee used the results to develop six broad recommendations to guide the work of ALA and its partner groups and enable the profess to:

1. Define the scope, content [,] and values of the profession.
2. Establish and apply standards for accreditation.
3. Enable credentialing and continuing education.
4. Position librarianship as the 21st century profession.
5. Continue the dialogue between library and information studies educators and practitioners.
6. Recruit, educate, and place students from diverse populations (Haycock, 2000, p. 5).

Groups were assigned to address each of the recommendations. The Steering Committee also prepared a number of "additional 'second tier' recommendations" to assist the groups in their work (Haycock, 2000, p. 5). Among the more than 30 specific recommendations were suggestions that ALA and its partner groups do the following:

1. Clarify the core values (credo) of the profession.
2. Identify the core competencies for the profession.
4. Determine whether ALA is accrediting programs for librarians only or also for other information professionals, including specializations.

5. Explore the possibility of an independent board for accreditation (Haycock, 2000, pp. 6-9).

A task force was appointed to study the idea of external accreditation. It recommended use of an external accreditation body representing and receiving funding from a broad range of library and information organizations. Although the proposal was well received by the boards of the other organizations, the ALA Executive Board did not support this recommendation. The recommendation was tabled pending further study (American Library Association, 2006a).

COPE-II held November 17-19, 2000, focused on continuing professional development and education. COPE-II was structured around three thematic sessions—"societal issues, trends in adult learning, and issues for the profession"—with a closing session devoted to the identification of priority areas for action (OHRDR, 2006e, The Congress section, para. 2). The three thematic sessions consisted of a presentation by a principal speaker or speakers followed by small group discussion. During the breakout sessions the groups brainstormed and identified issues (OHRDR, 2006e, The Congress section, para. 1).

The first session was presented by futurist Wendy Shultz who identified a number of societal factors that will have an impact on the need for continuing professional education: "the acceleration of the pace of change, the ubiquity of technological innovation, rapid globalization, economic issues, expanding educational formats and opportunities, demographic shifts, population diversity, changing workplace structures and ethics, altered worker demands, changes in customer expectations and lifestyles" (OHRDR, 2006e, Societal Issues section, para. 2).

A number of issues were identified as the small groups discussed several of the specific societal factors influencing continuing professional development. The issue of "competition from other information providers" raised questions about the ubiquity of the Internet and the commercialization of information and its effect on the public library's role in the community.
Although the Internet posed challenges to library information services, it was seen as providing teaching and learning opportunities for librarians. Librarians could provide a needed and useful service to their communities by teaching the effective and efficient use of Internet-based information. They could continue their own professional development through Web-based continuing education courses (OHRDR, 2006e, Societal Issues section).

Discussion of “the commercialization of information” produced a host of questions about copyright, intellectual property, privacy, and restricted access (OHRDR, 2006e, Societal Issues section, para. 8). It was very evident that librarians needed to stay informed about public policy in regard to information and to receive training in advocacy and lobbying skills. Commercialization of information also posed questions about the library’s role in the community. The library’s essential role has been to collect and provide access to information, but the library has embraced new roles as society’s needs have changed. An important question for librarians in the 21st century concerns the nature of the library’s role. “Should the library’s role be to teach, to build social and intellectual community, and/or to advocate for the information have-nots?” (OHRDR, 2006e, Societal Issues section, para. 7). Delegates agreed that each of these missions required (a) a redefinition of the professional librarian’s role, (b) a clear understanding of the librarian’s role in community education, and (c) willingness to learn new skills and competencies and to update previously learned skills and competencies (OHRDR, 2006e, Societal Issues section).

“Evolving educational structures” and their impact on the educational role of libraries was another topic of discussion (OHRDR, 2006e, Societal Issues section, para. 9). Advances in educational technologies such as distance education have enabled students to receive instruction and to access resources from their homes or any location with a computer and the appropriate equipment. Delegates discussed the implications for the library’s educational role of widespread information literacy and the ability to access resources independent of library facilities. Although students would be less dependent on libraries for access to resources and the development of
information skills, delegates believed that libraries would continue to play an important role in accreditation issues. However, librarians must become more effective advocates for libraries in the accreditation process (OHRDR, 2006e, Societal Issues section).

Dave Jennings, from the American Society for Training and Development, and Maureen Sullivan, an independent organizational development consultant, spoke about trends in adult learning during the second session. Both Jennings and Sullivan saw training as "an investment for both individuals and organizations" (OHRDR, 2006e, Trends in Adult Learning section, para. 1). They identified several important trends in continuing education. The first trend was "demand for continuing education focused on competency and high performance" (OHRDR, 2006e, Trends section, para. 3). This trend was emphasized in the development of competency-based learning in which "education and training are targeted at specific problem areas." Performance is quantified in terms of "the impacts of training" as measured by "pre- and post-course assessment" (OHRDR, 2006e, Trends section, para. 3). This trend is also reflected by increased interest in programs designed to provide certification (OHRDR, 2006e, Trends section).

The second trend was "continuing change and expansion in delivery formats" (OHRDR, 2006e, Trends section, para. 4). Advances in telecommunications technologies have produced new delivery formats in continuing education. Although the new formats have increased convenience and availability for many learners, "the increased use of computer and communications technologies to deliver continuing education" represents an impediment to learning for others (OHRDR, 2006e, Trends section, para. 4). Older adults accustomed to more traditional approaches such as "face-to-face or print-based learning" may be reluctant to engage in computer-based education (OHRDR, 2006e, Trends section, para. 4). "Generational differences" may also be a factor "in receptivity to collaborative as opposed to individual learning" (OHRDR, 2006e, Trends section, para. 4).

"Changing continuing education economics" was another trend noted by Jennings and Sullivan (OHRDR, 2006e, Trends section, para. 5). Historically participants were responsible for
financing continuing education and professional development through the payment of fees. In the 1990s the economics of continuing education began to change. More and more institutions are allocating funds for continuing education and staff development in their operating budgets. Professional associations and other organizations have formed partnerships to provide continuing education at reasonable rates. Training has been incorporated into product and service contracts (OHRDR, 2006e, Trends section).

Jennings and Sullivan observed a fourth trend, “increased commitment to continued professional development” (OHRDR, 2006e, Trends section, para. 6). Lifelong learning and development is receiving more attention from educators. Professionals, cognizant of the continuously changing work environment, are more committed to continuing professional education (OHRDR, 2006e, Trends section).

As congress participants discussed these trends in small groups, they gained new insights into the development of quality continuing education programs. Among their observations were (a) the need to understand the transfer of learning from the training environment to the work setting, (b) the need to identify core competencies and competency development tracks, (c) the “need to link core competencies to continuous learning,” (d) the need to identify and validate good instructional practices, and (e) the need to integrate “accessibility and assistive technology” into continuing education and professional development planning (OHRDR, 2006e, Trends section, para. 7).

The third session, led by Ken Haycock, Judy Card, Janice Dost, and Marianne Hartzell, explored issues in continuing professional development “from three perspectives: the role of the individual in professional development, the role of management in professional development, and the role of education providers in professional development” (OHRDR, 2006e, Issues for the Profession section, para. 1). The small group discussions following the panel presentation were very productive; a number of key issues were identified for each perspective (OHRDR, 2006e, Issues section).
Among the key issues for the individual were (a) knowledge of “one’s own learning needs and learning style,” (b) willingness to assume “responsibility for one’s own learning and growth,” (c) the ability to assess one’s learning needs and identify “needed competencies,” and (d) the ability to apply the lessons learned from training and education to practice (OHRDR, 2006e, Issues section, para. 2). Viewing professional development from the management perspective, participants emphasized that managers could best communicate “the value and importance of professional development” by “demonstrating and modeling” the application of professional knowledge and skills to practice and “linking” application to “the quality of information services” (OHRDR, 2006e, Issues section, para. 3).

Congress participants stressed that education providers could advance continuous learning and professional development for the entire profession by “challenging assumptions” and creating innovative programs, particularly for those library and information professionals who lacked affordable and convenient access to professional development opportunities (OHRDR, 2006e, Issues section, para. 4). Among the most important tasks that educational providers must perform were (a) identifying and defining the core competencies, (b) “helping learners identify their own learning needs and develop their individual learning plans,” and (c) developing assessment instruments that measure the impacts of professional development on the provision of quality library and information services (OHRDR, 2006e, Issues section, para. 4). Participants agreed that modeling effective educational practices was the best way in which to teach the needed competencies (OHRDR, 2006e, Issues section).

Three dominant themes emerged from a review of the three sessions (OHRDR, 2006e, Issues section). The first theme was the need to recruit a larger and more diverse group of people to the profession. An important subtheme was the need to mentor and support those people already in the profession. The second theme was the need to challenge “the ‘same old’ and current assumptions concerning delivery of professional education” (OHRDR, 2006e, Issues section, para. 7). Participants explored “the ideas of developing an information bureau or
clearinghouse of professional development activities, opportunities, and strategies; developing competency-based models; assessments; and advanced certifications” (OHRDR, 2006e, Issues section, para. 7). The third theme was the need to develop methods of assessing “the value of professional development at all levels—individual, institutional, and societal” (OHRDR, 2006e, Issues section, para. 8). Participants emphasized the importance of demonstrating that investment in professional development was linked to better services in order to ensure ongoing institutional support (OHRDR, 2006e, Issues section).

Congress participants made several broad recommendations regarding continuing professional education and development. The first recommendation called for the development of a resource network or clearinghouse with the capability of matching an individual’s needs and interests to job opportunities. This resource network should incorporate “a rich search engine, artificial intelligence and push technologies” (OHRDR, 2006e, Recommendations section, para.1).

The second recommendation called for the greater utilization of empirical research (a) to investigate problems arising from practice, (b) “to examine the organization and economic impact of continuing professional development,” and (c) to provide a better understanding of the characteristics of various client groups (such as “ethnic, cultural, learning style, and physical differences”) that influence the provision of quality continuing professional education programs (OHRDR, 2006e, Recommendations section, para. 2). Descriptive research could be used to find more effective ways to apply research findings to practice through the study and observation of successful programs in related fields (OHRDR, 2006e, Recommendations section).

The third recommendation concerned the development of standards for evaluating programs and identifying the best practices for continuing professional development. Strategies for implementing this recommendation included (a) defining the characteristics and delineating the processes necessary for “transforming a library into a learning organization”; (b) exploring various avenues for enhancing “the credibility and visibility of the library profession,” with
certification as a key consideration; and (c) identifying, extending, and improving current
guidelines and methods used in formulating standards and evaluation instruments (OHRDR,
2006e, Recommendations section, para. 3).

The fourth recommendation dealt with program development and distribution. Recommended strategies included (a) the creation of a curriculum which stresses community leadership development, (b) the development of communication “tools to initiate and advance a national conversation” among organizations at all levels and individual institutions on COPE-II issues, (c) greater and more “effective use of digital and network technologies in the development and delivery” of continuing professional education, and (d) the use of “mentoring and coaching” to encourage the creation of individual “continuing profession development plans” and to motivate persistence and accomplishment (OHRDR, 2006e, Recommendations section, para. 4).

The fifth recommendation was concerned with association collaboration. ALA and its partners were urged to “convene a group of visionaries” from each stakeholder group to brainstorm ideas and “identify innovative future directions” for continuing professional education (OHRDR, 2006e, Recommendations section, para. 5). Congress participants called for “expanded and enhanced collaboration among library associations and between library associations and other organizations” (OHRDR, 2006e, Recommendations section, para. 5).

The sixth recommendation dealt with advocacy. Participants suggested that the library community develop an advocacy plan; that library educators define the content of continuing professional education for inclusion in the Library Services Technology Act reauthorization; and that staff development coordinators develop effective ways to incorporate “individual learning into organizational practice so as to demonstrate return” on the library’s investment in continuing professional development (OHRDR, 2006e, Recommendations section, para. 6).

In January 2002 the ALA Council approved a revision of the Library Education and Personnel Utilization Policy statement. The title of the policy was changed to “Library and Information Studies Education and Human Resource Utilization” to reflect changes since its last
revision in 1976. The policy document needed “remarkably little revision,” given that it was originally written in 1970 (OHRDR, 2006c, para. 2). One of the major revisions to the document was the substitution of the phase “library and information studies” and the inclusion of the title “specialist” where the terms “library education,” “librarianship,” and “library assistant/technical assistant” previously appeared (OHRDR, 2006c, para. 3). Another revision was the recognition that the library and information domain of practice includes several professions at various levels of entry. A long overdue revision was “the acceptance of support staff as integral contributors to and participants in the library professions” (OHRDR, 2006c, para. 3). A statement was also added that expressed a preference for professional preparation which encouraged “a broad educational background in the humanities, the sciences, and the social sciences” as opposed to “a narrowly defined, specialized field of study” (OHRDR, 2006c, para. 3).

In May 2003 ALA hosted COPE III which focused on the educational needs of paraprofessionals and support staff. Support staff are library workers “who work in supportive roles in libraries and who do not have a master’s degree in library or information science” (“Delegates” 2003, p. 36). It should be noted, however, that many individuals working in supportive roles have advanced degrees in other fields (Kutzik, 2005, p. 33). COPE III addressed support-staff concerns identified in the Library Support Staff Interests Round Table’s 1997 survey. The survey identified three main issues: “career ladders [few opportunities for advancement]; compensation not appropriate to level of education, experience, and responsibilities; and access to continuing education and training opportunities” (OHRDR, 2006f, p.4). Other issues presented for the delegates’ consideration were (a) “support-staff recruitment,” (b) ways to create a sense of “common purpose among library staff members,” (c) “the role of support-staff members in ALA,” and (d) the association’s responsibility to paraprofessionals and support staff (“Delegates,” 2003, p. 36).

Much of the two-day Congress was devoted to a series of facilitated small-group sessions. Maureen Sullivan guided the delegates through a process called “appreciative inquiry”
which began with the definition of strengths. After listing the strengths of library support staff, the delegates transformed these statements into “hopes for the future” (“Delegates,” 2003, p. 36). Finally the process culminated in the “Destiny” conversation in which participants were asked to identify key issues and to suggest three to five specific ideas for action. The top three issues were “ALA and Library Support Staff, Certification of Library Support Staff, and ALA Membership Initiatives” (OHRDR, 2006f, p. 12).

Other key issues named by the delegates included “certification, accreditation of library technical assistant programs, career ladders, pay equity, and inclusion of support staff in ALA publications, committees, and campaigns” (“Delegates,” 2003, p. 36). Action ideas in nearly all of the key issue areas called for ALA involvement in “the planning, funding, organization, and/or implementation of the ideas” (OHRDR, 2006f, p. 12). The Cope III Steering Committee concluded that the library support community expected “ALA to take a leadership role” in addressing support staff issues (OHRDR, 2006f, p. 12). The Steering Committee noted in its report to the ALA Executive Board: “While ALA has made significant contributions, there are many who believe that changes must be made if ALA is to seriously address these issues” (OHRDR, 2006f, p. 12).

Recommendations were placed in six categories: (a) Association Life, (b) Workplace, (c) Credentialing, (d) Education and Continuing Professional Development, (e) Valuing People, and (f) Marketing and Public Relations (OHRDR, 2006f). Among the many recommendations were (a) an ALA survey of library support staff interests and needs, (b) appointment of support staff members to ALA and division committees and task forces, (c) development of a tactical plan for changing the status of the Library Support Staff Interest Round Table from an ALA round table to an ALA division, (d) appointment of a task force to create a career development plan for support staff, (e) the creation of accessible formal education programs to meet the needs of full-time library workers, (f) the promotion of more regional and local training opportunities, (g) creation of a Web-based continuing education clearinghouse, (h) programming and publicity to promote
inclusiveness, and (i) more coverage of support-staff issues in library publications ("Delegates," 2003, pp.36-37; OHRDR, 2006f).

The Role of the PLA Planning Process

*A Planning Process for Public Libraries*

In 1980 the Public Library Association published *A Planning Process for Public Libraries*. This landmark publication represented a new approach to national public library standards. Several key tenets formed the foundation of the new planning process: “decreased emphasis on quantitative standards; recognition that a library’s mission, goals, and services must be judged within the context of its community; and continuous local planning and evaluation of library services based on community needs assessment” (Owen, 1991, p. 3). The planning model suggested in *A Planning Process for Public Libraries* was designed to enable communities to establish appropriate goals for the local situation, develop strategies to meet those goals, and initiate a continuous planning cycle to track progress and revise goals and objectives as conditions and needs warranted (Elsner, 2002, p. 209). As might be expected in the introduction of any dramatically new approach, there was resistance to change. The planning manual itself contributed to this resistance. Skeptical public librarians dubbed the planning manual, with its green and white cover, “The Green Peril.” The planning process was viewed by many librarians as “a costly, time-consuming, and probably futile effort being forced upon local trustees and librarians by state agencies” (Pungitore, 1989, p. 78).

*A Planning Process for Public Libraries* was criticized for “focusing too much on data collection and community analysis” (Elsner, 2002, p. 209). Elsner (2002) noted that two thirds of the manual was devoted “to processes and forms for collecting community information and creating a community profile” (p. 211). The planning manual’s excessive emphasis on community analysis (the most labor intensive, time consuming, and complex part of the process) obscured the possible usefulness of the other steps. Some librarians who undertook the process found themselves swamped with vast amounts of data about their communities with only the
vaguest idea of what to do with it (Pungitore, 1989, p. 79). “The original planning manual failed to communicate a sense of the value of planning as an ongoing part of the library’s operation” (Pungitore, 1989, p. 79).

Distribution and discussion of the planning model described in *A Planning Process* seemed to increase resistance to its adoption. PLA promoted use of the planning manual and its accompanying volume for about seven years. No statistics were gathered concerning the number of libraries that actually adopted and used the process for more than one planning cycle, but there were indications that efforts to promote the planning model were not successful (Pungitore, 1989, p. 79).

One study that attempted to assess the extent to which the planning process had actually been employed was ALA’s Reference and Adult Services Division’s Adult Services in the Eighties (ASE) project directed by K. M. Heim. The ASE project found that “a distinct minority” of responding libraries had used the planning process described in *A Planning Process for Public Libraries*. Although a limited number of libraries had engaged in the planning process, there appeared to be “some fairly substantial differences” between those libraries and libraries that had not used the process. Those libraries that had employed the process provided more services overall and “were more likely to offer nearly all of the individually identified services as well” (Wallace, 1990, p. 51). The ASE project data suggested that this phenomenon was not a function of library size but did not provide “a definitive explanation” for the differences between libraries that used the planning process and those that did not. Wallace speculated that circumstances at the local level prompted those libraries using the planning process to be more inclined to adopt innovations in public library development and to provide a greater number and variety of public services (1990, pp. 50-51).

*Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries*

major roles that public libraries could play in their communities. L. A. Martin, who had identified various public library roles as a public library consultant, was credited as the originator of the concept of library roles (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 35). In the 1982 Bowker Memorial Lecture, L. A. Martin said the public library had tried to be “the people’s university, the student’s auxiliary, the children’s door to reading, the free bookstore, the information agency, the scholar’s workshop and the community activities center” (1983, p. 19). Although Martin received credit for the concept of roles, Leigh’s 1950 summary report for the Public Library Inquiry suggested “six fields of knowledge and interest to which the public library should devote its resources” (p. 17). These areas were (a) public affairs, (b) citizenship, (c) vocations, (d) aesthetic appreciation, (e) recreation, (f) information, and (g) research (Leigh, pp. 17-18). As Molz and Dain (1999) pointed out, almost all of the recommended roles, with the exception of educational programs for preschool children, would fit into Leigh’s categories (p. 35). The suggested roles were as follows:

1. Community Activities Center: The library is a central focus for community activities, meetings, and services.
2. Community Information Center: The library is a clearinghouse for current information on community organizations, issues, and services.
3. Formal Education Support Center: The library assists students of all ages in meeting educational objectives established during their formal courses of study.
4. Independent Learning Center: The library supports individuals of all ages pursuing a sustained program of learning independent of any educational provider.
5. Popular Materials Library: The library features current, high demand, high-interest materials in a variety of formats for persons of all ages.
6. Preschoolers’ Door to Learning: The library encourages young children to develop an interest in reading and learning through services for children, [sic] and for parents and children together.
7. Reference Library: The library actively provides timely, accurate, and useful information for community residents.

8. Research Center: The library assists scholars and researchers to conduct in-depth studies, investigate specific areas of knowledge, and create new knowledge.

(McClure, Owen, Zweizig, Lynch, & Van House, 1987, p. 28)

Each role was described in greater detail. “Each role description included a listing of possible service activities, benefits, critical resources needed, and output measures to explore” (Stephens, 2006, p. 224). All of the roles including the preschoolers' door to learning, which focused on the learning needs of infants and young children, included examples of specific adult services.

As a community activities center, the public library provided a number of services to local groups and organizations including the provision of meeting rooms and equipment for community-sponsored programs and activities such as health screening tests, tax preparation assistance, youth groups, voter registration, and similar activities. Some libraries conducted their own programs including (a) book talks or reviews, (b) health information fairs, (c) book discussion groups, (d) community issues forums, (e) speaker series, (f) concerts, (g) art exhibits or humanities programs, and (h) programming on local cable television programs (McClure et al., 1987, p. 32).

In the role of community information center, the library at a basic level (a) served as a source of community information, (b) provided microfilm copies and indexes of local newspapers, (c) created directories of local organizations and social service agencies, and (d) maintained and publicized a master calendar of community events. At an enhanced level of service, (a) public libraries responded to community problems such as high unemployment with specialized services like job information and information about educational opportunities and skills training, (b) participated in the community information and referral networks, (c) participated in community-wide program planning, and (d) cosponsored information fairs on
issues such as drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, teen suicide, school dropouts, and improving the local school system (McClure et al., 1987, p. 33).

Libraries serving as formal education support centers assisted students in “elementary and secondary schools, colleges, community colleges, universities, or technical schools, as well as those involved in training programs, literacy or adult basic education, and continuing education courses” (McClure et al., 1987, p. 34). The Formal Education Support Center role was distinguished from the Independent Learning Center by the emphasis on registration for formal instruction and the presence of an educational provider or instructor (McClure et al., 1987, p. 34). Among the services furnished in this role were (a) library tours for classes, (b) individual library use instruction, (c) homework service using qualified volunteers, (d) materials placed on reserve to meet classroom assignment needs, (e) information about providers of formal education and training, (f) support of local literacy education programs, and (g) the provision of supplementary print and audiovisual material for classroom use. As the financial, material, and human resources of most public libraries were limited, libraries often chose to support specific educational levels such as elementary and secondary, but not postsecondary education (McClure et al., 1987, p. 34).

The Independent Learning Center supported self-directed learners in their efforts to pursue a sustained program of learning and to achieve their objectives in areas such as “citizen education, self-improvement, job-related development, hobbies, and cultural interests” (McClure et al., 1987, p. 35). Staff members helped learners to identify and establish appropriate learning plans, to determine the resources that were needed to implement their plans, and to obtain these resources from the library’s collection or through interlibrary loan. This role was distinguished by “continuing, intensive staff involvement, or counseling with individual learners” (McClure et al., 1987, p. 35). On an enhanced level libraries offered a variety of services to independent learners including (a) occupational counseling or learning/skill inventory tools, (b) files of learning resource people, (c) programs on popular topics, (d) self-help research guides on selected subjects, and (e) assistance in developing an individualized sequence of study materials. Libraries
with limited resources focused on specific subject areas or on special age groups. Librarians working with children often assisted them in exploring interests outside the school curriculum (McClure et al., 1987, p. 35).

In the role of popular materials library, the library used a variety of techniques and strategies to encourage the use of its collection. Merchandising techniques such as face-out shelving, displays of new and popular materials, and the placement of paperbacks near the checkout desk were used to promote circulation. Programming was used to increase circulation by stimulating interest in selected topics. Circulation was further enhanced through the distribution of special booklists and the strategic placement of materials in connection with library programs. Libraries increased circulation by offering popular materials at off-site outlets such as shopping malls or including popular materials in its services to jails, nursing homes, and senior centers. Libraries sometimes placed limits on this role by specifying age groups or the types of materials to be emphasized (McClure et al., 1987, p. 36).

Libraries that chose the role of the preschoolers' door to learning emphasized services to children and parent education. These libraries promoted reading readiness through services designed to expose infants and small children to the pleasures of reading and learning. Among the programs provided for young children and their parents were (a) “read-aloud,” (b) day-care story hours, (c) traditional storytelling, (d) parenting skills development workshops, and (e) booktalks. Some libraries provided outreach to day-care facilities and reading readiness programs. Programs were designed for children only, for parents only, or for parents and children together. The library also maintained collections of materials on reading readiness, parenting, child care, and child development for parents and caregivers. Libraries emphasizing this role worked closely with other child-care agencies in the community and parents organizations (McClure et al., 1987, p. 37).

In the reference library role, the public library promoted the use of its information services, both on-site and over the telephone. In the 1980s computerized reference services were
becoming more common in urban libraries but were not yet available in smaller public libraries. Information services included (a) facts, (b) figures, (c) answers to practical questions, (d) specialized business-related research, (e) government information, and (f) consumer information. Interlibrary loan and cooperative reference services were used to meet patrons' information needs. Libraries selecting this role had the option of emphasizing certain subject areas of particular interest to their communities (McClure et al., 1987, p. 38).

Research centers were most commonly found in large urban libraries because they required a significant commitment of financial resources. Generally the central library served as the research center for the system, while branch libraries served the needs of individual communities. Library systems adopted this role as a result of tradition, community expectations, or as part of state agency plans. Research centers featured extensive collections in specified subject areas, which generally reflected the needs and interests of the local business community. Research centers served as major lenders for interlibrary loan activity, furnished assigned carrels and lockers for scholars and researchers, provided customized database searches, or operated photocopy centers. The range of services expanded with the development of computer technology (McClure et al., 1987, p. 39).

Although many public librarians liked the concept of roles, some professional leaders were concerned that "the delineation of too many roles further isolated the public library from the mainstream of tax support for education" (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 36). Public libraries like the public schools were sometimes expected to take on additional tasks and then were criticized for neglecting their basic purposes. Also, the localism of the roles and the emphasis on local concerns, attitudes, and opinions tended to inhibit the consideration of the broader implications of public library service at regional and national levels (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 36). Public librarians ran the risk of "becoming myopic—of failing to put their individual libraries into context" (Estabrook & Horak, 1992, p. 52).
Studies of the Public Library's Roles in the Community

The roles were the subject of numerous reports and analyses in the late 1980s through the mid-1990s. The role-setting process was a useful addition to the planning process for libraries, but its value was not fully realized because librarians lacked comprehensive information about "which roles were most important to their communities and, more importantly, to various service populations within their communities" (D'Elia & Rodger, 1994, p. 23).

To fulfill the need for comprehensive information about the public's perceptions of the public library's roles, the University of Minnesota obtained a grant from the U.S. Department of Education for a series of national surveys to assess the importance of the various roles. D'Elia directed a study to obtain the opinions of the general public, community leaders, and Hispanic and African Americans regarding the importance of the roles for their communities (D' Elia, 1993).

The University commissioned the Gallup Organization to conduct the opinion surveys in the spring and summer of 1992. Adults 18 years and older who could be reached by telephone formed the survey population. The national probability sample of 1,001 people represented a cross section of the national population. The sample consisted of 846 Caucasian Americans, 79 African Americans, and 41 Hispanic Americans. In addition, the survey accessed the opinions of four groups—Caucasian Americans (the 846 respondents from the national probability sample) African Americans (401 respondents, 79 from the national sample and 322 from a national probability sample of African Americans), Hispanic Americans (399 respondents, 41 from the national sample and 358 from a national probability sample of Hispanic Americans) and a sample of 300 community opinion leaders. Community opinion leaders were defined as "individuals who, because of the positions they held in the community, had an influence on the shaping of public opinion (D'Elia & Rodger, 1994, pp. 23-24). Opinion leaders included media leaders, political leaders, business and civic leaders, and educational leaders (Public Libraries Serving Communities, 1994, p. 8).
From previous studies D’Elia and Rodger had discovered that the reference role could be divided into different roles—reference services to the business community and reference services to individuals. They also found that many people used the library as a workplace. Consequently, they decided to include two new roles to the original list of eight: “the library serving as a reference library for businesses in the community and the library serving as a workplace away from home” (D’Elia & Rodger, 1994, p. 24).

Respondents were read the role descriptions over the telephone and asked whether they thought each role was “not important,” “slightly important,” “moderately important,” or “very important” to their communities (D’Elia & Rodger, 1994, p. 24). The results of the role evaluations were ranked according to their mean importance scores on the four-point scale and the percentage of the sample that rated the role “very important.” The relative ranking of the importance of the roles provided an indication of the public’s priorities for the library (D’Elia & Rodger, 1994, p. 25).

The roles receiving the highest mean scales were the set of educational roles: formal education support, independent learning center, and preschoolers’ door to learning. These findings suggested that “the public considered the library’s role of supporting the educational aspirations of the community to be its most important role” (D’Elia & Rodger, 1994, p. 25). The roles receiving the second highest mean scores were research center, community information center, reference library for community businesses, and reference library for personal information. These findings seemed to indicate that the public perceived “the library’s role of providing access to information to be its second most important role” (D’Elia & Rodger, 1994, p. 25). The roles that received the lowest scores (public workplace, popular materials library, and community activities center) seemed to be the least important set of roles in the opinion of the public (D’Elia & Rodger, 1994, p. 25).

The survey of community opinion leaders produced results that were similar to that of the general public. The roles rated “very important” by the opinion leaders were formal education
support center, preschoolers’ door to learning, and independent learning center. These rankings indicated that “the opinion leaders considered the library’s support of the educational aspirations of the community to be its most important role” (D’Elia & Rodger, 1995, p. 96). The mean scores for the roles of community information center, popular materials center, research center, reference library for business, and reference library for personal information were second highest, which seemed to indicate that “the opinion leaders considered providing access to information to be the library’s second most important role” (D’Elia & Rodger, 1995, p. 96). D’Elia and Rodger noted that the popular materials center role was included in this group which led them to conclude that “the opinion leaders considered the library’s role of providing access to popular materials approximately comparable in importance to information provision” (D’Elia & Rodger, 1995, p. 96).

All respondents were also asked how much they thought their community should spend on its library. The respondents were given a current range of actual community per capita support (from $4 a year to $100 per year) and were told that the national median was $16 per capita. A scale with $20 intervals (ranging from $0 to more than $100 per capita) was also provided from which the respondents were asked to select an interval (D’Elia & Rodger, 1994, pp. 24-25).

The majority (52.4%) of the general public thought that the community should spend more than $20 per capita. The respondents suggested an average annual per capita expenditure of $34.16, an amount that was more than twice the current median of $16 per capita. While library users recommended a slightly higher amount ($35.76) as compared to nonusers ($31.17), even nonusers of libraries favored spending about twice the amount of the current national median (D’Elia & Rodger, 1994, p. 25). The community opinion leaders were even more generous in their support of public libraries; they recommended an annual per capita expenditure of $41 (D’Elia & Rodger, 1995, p. 97).

The study showed differences of opinion among the three racial/ethnic groups in regard to the public library’s importance to the community. Comparisons of the mean importance scale
scores for the three groups seemed to indicate that Caucasian Americans held a significantly less favorable opinion of the public library’s importance than did African Americans or Hispanic Americans. On average 64% of Caucasians rated the public library as very important, while 81% of African Americans and 78% of Hispanic Americans rated the library as very important. African Americans and Hispanic Americans evaluated the importance of each of the public library’s roles more highly than did Caucasians. Although there was a significant difference in the overall evaluation of public library importance, all three groups tended to agree about which roles were most important. “There were only minor differences in each group’s rank ordering of the ten roles from most to least important” (D’Elia & Rodger, 1994, p. 25). All three groups gave the highest percentage of their “very important” responses to the three educational roles (p. 26).

Comparisons of suggested annual per capita spending by the three groups indicated that African Americans favored spending $39.90, followed closely by Hispanic Americans at $39.26, with Caucasian Americans coming in with the lowest amount at $33.65 (D’Elia & Rodger, 1994, p. 26).

The survey showed differences of opinion regarding the importance of the public library among different demographic groups within each of the samples. The results of each respondent’s answers were tested for differences between or among groups of respondents identified or created from some of the demographic characteristics reported by the 1990 census. Among the characteristics included in the study were (a) the region of the country; (b) the size of the community; (c) the gender, age, and race of the respondent; (d) the level of educational attainment, (e) employment status and annual household income of the respondent; and (f) the respondent’s use of the public library (D’Elia & Rodger, 1994, p. 26). Two of the more interesting comparisons were made among respondents with different household incomes and among respondents with different levels of educational achievement. Survey results indicated that those with household incomes below $15,000 and those with an eighth-grade education or less rated the educational roles of the library as “very important” more often than those with incomes...
of $60,000 or more or those who had completed college. To the poor and undereducated, the public library seemed to represent the opportunity to improve one’s social and economic status through self-directed learning (Public Libraries Serve Communities, 1994, p. 2).

D’Elia and Rodger believed that the data from these detailed analyses could be used by the public library to develop a tentative program of services. The tentative roles selected by the library could then be evaluated through a community survey, interviews with representatives of the various service populations, town meetings, or any other method suitable to local conditions and resources (D’Elia & Rodger, 1994, pp. 26-27).

A public library’s choice of roles was one of the data elements included in the Public Library Data Service Statistical Report beginning in 1988 and continuing for a number of years (Stephens, 2006, p. 224). This information was analyzed in research studies conducted by Durrance and Allen (1991), Shearer (1993), and others.

Durrance and Allen’s study looked at how the selection of PLA roles contributed to the realization of goals espoused at the 1991 White House Conference on Libraries and Information Science—literacy, economic development, and democracy. The researchers compared the roles selected by 199 libraries in the PLDS Statistical Report ’90 (Public Library Association, 1990) with their activities to promote these goals. They found that the roles of reference library and independent learning center were more likely to foster literacy than the others. Although most of the roles made an indirect contribution to economic development and democracy, none was directly related to either of these goals. The popular materials library role provided little support for any of the three goals. Durrance and Allen concluded that role selection did have “an impact on public library activity” (1991, p. 43).

Shearer compared the data from D’Elia’s study to the raw data found in the Public Library Data Service Statistical Report ’92 in an attempt to answer this question: “Which roles do public libraries currently emphasize and how do these priorities compare with the priorities of the American public and opinion leaders?” (Shearer, 1993, p. 194) The statistical report for 1992
contained data from 574 public libraries of all sizes and from all regions of the country. Of the 574 respondents, 311 reported their current primary, secondary, and maintenance roles (Public Library Association, 1992, pp. 97-112).

Shearer found that there was no one role that was universally emphasized as a primary or secondary role. Public libraries were attempting to meet the needs of their unique communities with different offerings and emphases. Nevertheless, there were three roles that were selected for primary or secondary emphasis by more than three quarters of the respondents: Popular Materials Library (94%), Preschoolers’ Door to Learning (78%), and Reference Library (78%). Shearer felt that those three roles most clearly indicated public library priorities in the early 1990s. Only one—Preschoolers’ Door to Learning—was among the three top-ranked roles in D’Elia’s survey of the general public and opinion leaders (Shearer, 1993, p. 195).

Shearer concluded that “learners pursuing education either formally or informally were not a priority in a majority of responding American public libraries, as they apparently were with the general public and the opinion leaders responding to D’Elia” (1993, p. 195). Shearer noted, however, that a significant number of the respondents chose the roles of Independent Learning Center (44%) and Formal Education Support Center (34%) as primary or secondary emphases. Although education was not a high priority of the majority of public libraries, a substantial minority of library systems chose to emphasize helping people with their studies (Shearer, 1993, p. 195).

Shearer was not surprised that public librarians so often emphasized popular materials because that role had been “standard fare for a very long time” (1993, p. 195). However, the strong showing of the Preschoolers’ Door to Learning was surprising because it was not a traditional role. Shearer believed that its strong second position ranking seemed to indicate a “rather rapid change in public library priorities in recent years” (1993, p. 195). The increased interest in this role could be attributed to research in early childhood development that suggested the majority of learning took place before a child entered the formal school system. The less
favorable performance of American children on standardized tests as compared to children in
other countries indicated an urgent necessity to prepare America's children for formal schooling
at an early age. Since kindergarten was generally the first year of free public schooling, public
library involvement in early childhood education fulfilled an important need that did not duplicate
the efforts of primary and elementary schools (Shearer, 1993, pp. 195-196).

Stephens (1995) assessed the use of Planning and Role Setting in a nationwide study. The
study revealed that 88% of the 255 libraries responding to the survey had selected roles from
those listed in the manual. Of the roles in which adults were the central focus of the service,
popular materials center was selected most often, followed by reference library, formal education
support center, independent learning center, community information center, and community
activities center. A majority (136 or 68%) of libraries reported that as a result of role selection
"they had added, dropped, or changed emphasis on collecting certain types of material"
(Stephens, 2006, p. 230). Nineteen indicated that role selection greatly impacted collection
development decisions. Collection development policies were rewritten to reflect the roles chosen
by the library, and the roles determined which areas of the collection were emphasized or

Some librarians reported that the role selection process had allowed their libraries to
narrow the focus of their services rather than trying to "be all things to all patrons" (Stephens,
2006, p. 230). A majority of libraries (130 or 65%) had added new services, discontinued some
previously provided services, or changed the emphasis on some services already provided. Most
of the reported changes in adult services were in reference or outreach services. Some libraries
chose to place greater emphasis on reference service by adding additional staff and materials;
decreasing the wait time at the reference desk; and increasing the use of interlibrary loan,
database services, and fax. Some libraries increased emphasis on business reference and user
instruction. A few libraries chose to increase emphasis on general services and programming for
adults. The planning and role selection process enabled libraries to (a) set goals, (b) establish
priorities for service, (c) realign expenditures, (d) decide which services not to offer, and (e) concentrate resources on the services they had chosen (Stephens, 2006, pp. 230-231).

*The Planning for Results Series*

Many changes occurred during the late 1980s and the early 1990s, especially in computer and information technology. To ensure that the Public Library Development Program would continue to meet the needs of public libraries in the twenty-first century, PLA commissioned a study in 1994 to evaluate its effectiveness. The study, “An Evaluation of the Public Library Development Program,” was conducted by D. W. Johnson for the Evaluation of PLDP, Phase I Committee. Johnson gathered information using “a national survey, individual and group interviews, an invitational ALA pre-conference, and a literature review” (Nelson, 1998, pp. v-vi). The study provided important information about the use of the planning manual, *Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries*, and the second edition of *Output Measures for Public Libraries* and about the revisions librarians wanted to see in these two components of PLDP. The study completed in 1995 recommended some changes in the PLDP (Nelson, 1998, p. vi).

The PLA ReVision Committee appointed in 1996 was given the task of revising and updating *Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries*. The committee used the findings of Johnson’s study and the advice of consultants Himmel and Wilson to make the needed revisions (Nelson, 1998, p. vi). Their work culminated in the publication of *Planning for Results: A Public Library Transformation Process* in 1998.

The new manual emphasized “the public library’s ability and capacity to concentrate its resources and services in those areas where excellence can be achieved” (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 37). It retained the concept of roles but refined it to provide more precise descriptions of what a library did to fulfill a set of well-defined community needs (Eisner, 2002, p. 212). The modified concept resulted in the creation of 13 library service responses. These were (a) basic literacy, (b) business and career information, (c) commons, (d) community referral, (e) consumer information, (f) cultural awareness, (g) current topics and titles, (h) formal learning support, (i) general
information, (j) government information, (k) information literacy, (l) lifelong learning, (m) local history and genealogy (Elsner, 2002, p. 212).

The responses were “community needs-based, situation-sensitive, and more specific, but at the same time more flexible, giving the library a new way in which to view its community” (Woodhams, 1997, p. 270). The responses represented “the gathering and deployment of specific resources to produce an identified public benefit or result” (Nelson, 1998, p. vi). The descriptions of the 13 responses were several pages in length and offered many examples of potential services and activities (Stephens, 2006, p. 224). Each description consisted of seven sections: (a) examples of the needs addressed by the service responses, (b) a description of what the typical library offers and some examples of desirable enhancements, (c) other options for carrying out a particular service response, (d) ways to narrow the focus of the services by targeting specific populations or concentrating on a particular aspect of the service, (e) resource allocation issues, (f) performance measures to use in developing objectives, and (g) brief sketches about libraries offering the service (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, pp. 55-57). All of these responses included services designed to meet the needs of adults.

The basic literacy service response stressed reading and other skills needed to perform essential daily tasks. At a basic level libraries emphasizing basic literacy provided “a learning environment, specialized materials, and access to trained tutors” (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, p. 58). At an enhanced level they often provided “English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, family literacy programs, tutoring or tutorial materials and exam preparation guides, programs teaching functional math skills, use of instructional media/tutoring software, and small meeting spaces for tutors and learners to meet” (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, p. 58). Examples of public libraries involved in basic literacy included the Broward County Library System in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and the Hancock County Library System in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, p. 61).
Libraries that chose the business and career information service response provided “information related to business, careers, work, entrepreneurship, personal finances, and obtaining employment” (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, p. 62). At a minimum these libraries provided “expert assistance; specialized electronic and print resources; access to information by telephone, fax, e-mail, or other electronic delivery systems; and services of interest” to business owners, to investors, to people seeking new jobs, and to individuals considering changing jobs or careers (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, p. 62). An enhanced level of service frequently included other services such as “career guidance counseling; job placement service; public use computer equipment for preparing resumes; copy or business services center; programs on investing, entrepreneurship, writing resumes, or interviewing skills; and World Wide Web links to business, investment, bid and procurement, and job placement Internet sites” (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, p. 62). Among the libraries providing this service were the Milwaukee Public Library and the Montrose, California, Library District (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, pp. 65-66).

A public library that served as a commons provided an environment conducive to social interaction and public discourse. At the basic level the library provided “an inviting, neutral, and safe” place for people to meet (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, p. 67). An enhanced level of service often included additional amenities such as “large, medium, and small meeting room spaces; community events bulletin board or kiosk; e-mail accounts for the public (or information about free e-mail service); videoconferencing facilities; and automated room scheduling” (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, p. 67). The Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, Public Library; the Public Libraries of Saginaw, Michigan; and the Sump Memorial Library in Papillion, Nebraska, were examples of public libraries providing a commons environment for their communities (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, pp. 69-71).

Public libraries that specialized in community referral services provided information about the services and programs offered by community agencies and organizations. At a minimum these libraries developed and maintained or cooperated with other agencies in the
development and maintenance of a database of available services, including information about eligibility and qualifications for receiving services. Public libraries made this information available to the public in a number of ways “such as walk-in service, toll-free telephone service, or Internet access” (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, p. 72). Other possible components of community referral service included “community information database; twenty-four-hour information and referral line; dial-in access to community resource files; electronic access to community resource files through computer kiosks in public places such as malls, post offices, and schools; counseling and follow-up tracking service; and three-way telephone capabilities to link users with service agencies or to provide for translating between library staff and customers” (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, pp. 72-73). Examples of public libraries providing community referral services were the Kootenai-Shoshone Area Libraries, Hayden, Idaho; the Spartanburg County, South Carolina, Public Library; and the Berkeley, California, Public Library (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, pp. 76-77).

The consumer information service response stressed the provision of information that library users needed to make informed and confident consumer decisions. Nearly all libraries providing this service offered expert assistance and specialized electronic or print resources including reviews of products and services, wholesale price guides for durable goods, and information on the maintenance and repair of consumer goods. Some libraries provided other services: “special programs on health, legal, or consumer topics; library web page on consumer issues; library-produced publications and flyers on consumer topics; consumer complaint hotline; tele-text service on consumer topics; and consumer affairs bulletin board” (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, pp. 77-78). Examples of public libraries providing consumer information included the Ann Arbor, Michigan, District Library; the Plainedge Public Library in Massapequa, New York; and the Chula Vista, California, Public Library (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, pp. 80-82).

Public libraries in which cultural awareness was a primary concern offered services that enabled library users to gain a better understanding and appreciation of their own cultural heritage
and that of other groups in their communities. These libraries usually provided in-depth
collections of materials and resources in many formats and offered programs and displays that
reflected the cultural heritage of the various ethnic populations in their service areas. Libraries in
diverse, multilingual communities frequently offered other components such as “ethnic resource
centers; library catalog, publications, and collections in several languages; lectures and book
discussion groups; performance and exhibit space; cultural fairs and exhibits; dramatic, musical,
and dance performances; and diversity and cultural sensitivity forums” (Himmel & Wilson, 1998,
p. 82). Cultural awareness was one of the service responses chosen by the Queens Borough
Public Library in Jamaica, New York; and the L. E. Phillips Memorial Public Library in Eau

One of the most popular service responses was that of current topics and titles. Public
libraries selecting this response provided information about popular culture and social trends,
recreational reading, and audiovisual materials. Libraries emphasizing current topics and titles (a)
selected materials primarily on the basis of local demand, (b) provided multiple copies of high-
demand titles in the formats and languages people wanted, (c) organized collections so that
popular items were easily located, and (d) displayed high-interest items in attractive and
appealing ways. Library staff monitored prepublication review sources and publisher advertising
campaigns in anticipation of public demand and stayed abreast of the content of best-selling titles
and the style of popular authors and performers in order to provide a high level of guidance to the
public (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, p. 87). Many libraries offered additional services to promote
the library’s collection such as (a) booktalks, (b) author book signings, (c) performances, (d)
exhibits, (e) readers’ advisory services, and (f) display shelving. To make borrowing simpler and
more convenient, they sometimes offered other amenities such as preview stations for videos and
recordings and drive-through check-out or return (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, pp. 87-88). The
provision of current topics and titles was the primary service response chosen by the Westlake
Porter Public Library in Westlake, Ohio, and the Churchill County Library in Fallon, Nevada (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, pp. 90-91).

The formal learning support service response was selected by public libraries wanting to emphasize the library’s educational role by helping students enrolled in formal academic programs or students engaged in programs of home-schooling to attain their educational goals. Commonly provided services included (a) informational resources, (b) personal assistance, (c) educational tools such as computers, (d) activities and materials that support the curricular objectives of local educational institutions and home-schooling programs, and (e) physical facilities conducive to study (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, p. 92). Additional services offered by some libraries included “Internet access, multimedia computers with educational software, educational videos, distance education equipment and facilities, specialized curriculum-based collections, homework help center, computer laboratory, tutoring, group study facilities, and World Wide Web site with links to curriculum and other educational sites” (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, pp. 92-93). Examples of libraries providing formal learning support were the DeForest, Wisconsin, Public Library; the Houston Public, Texas, Library; the Jasper, Tennessee, Public Library; and the Wicomico County Free Library in Salisbury, Maryland (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, pp. 95-97).

Public libraries that emphasized general information services provided answers to questions on a wide variety of topics pertaining to work, school, hobbies, interests, and personal life. At a basic level libraries provided (a) print, nonprint, and electronic reference resources that encompassed a broad range of topics; (b) skilled reference librarians to assist in locating relevant information; and (c) Internet access for staff and public use (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, p. 100). At an enhanced level libraries offered (a) basic reference resources available through the library Web page, (b) 24-hour e-mail reference service, (c) dedicated telephone reference service, (d) ready reference answers available by fax to home or office, (e) desktop videoconferencing, and (f) library use instruction programs (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, pp. 100-101). The Skokie, Illinois,
Public Libraries and the Montgomery County Department of Public Libraries, in Rockville, Maryland, offered general information services as a primary service response (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, pp. 101-102).

Libraries that specialized in government information offered at a minimum (a) a broad range of information by and about governmental agencies in print and electronic form, (b) a knowledgeable and helpful staff, and (c) full Internet access for staff (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, p. 103). Public libraries concentrating in government information services often served as federal, state, or local document depositories; as government contract and procurement centers; or as patent and trademark depository libraries. They sometimes offered enhanced services such as (a) electronic access to local government information, (b) facilities for public hearings, and (c) public access television broadcasts of public meetings. They sometimes sponsored town meetings with government officials (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, pp. 103-104). Examples of libraries providing government information services included the Pasadena, California, Public Library and the Corvallis-Benton County Public Library in Corvallis, Oregon (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, pp. 106-107).

Libraries that offered information literacy services provided training and instruction in the skills needed to find, evaluate, and use information resources of all types effectively. Instead of simply providing answers to questions, library staff taught the public how to find and evaluate information. Libraries emphasizing information literacy commonly offered access to information in a variety of formats and public Internet training and access (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, p. 108). The most important component of information literacy service was a staff skilled in evaluating information resources and knowledgeable about how people seek and process information. Other possible components of information literacy service included (a) classroom facilities, (b) special programs on media literacy, (c) computer labs, (d) library use instruction, (e) instructional technology, and (f) multi-media computer workstations for critical evaluation of resources (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, p. 108). Libraries specializing in information literacy services were
the Farmington Community Library in Farmington Hills, Michigan; the Seattle Public Library; and the Providence, Rhode Island, Public Library (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, pp. 111-112).

Public libraries that emphasized the lifelong learning service response offered opportunities for self-directed personal growth and development. An extensive collection of circulating materials on a wide range of topics formed the main component of lifelong learning service. Knowledgeable and helpful staff provided guidance in selecting and locating materials of interest (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, p. 113). Libraries enhanced these services by (a) developing substantial retrospective collections on certain topics, (b) providing in-depth collections in subject areas of local interest, (c) adding supplemental user-friendly terms to the subject and keyword searches in the online public access catalog, (d) identifying important World Wide Web sites on popular topics and organizing these sites on a Web page. Other possible components were “electronic and printed pathfinders, how-to programs on topics of general public interest, special topical displays of materials and resources, artist-in-residence programs, demonstrations and exhibits, and history and biography resources” (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, pp. 113-114). The Spokane Public Library and the Phoenix Public Library chose to emphasize lifelong learning services (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, p. 116-117).

Local History and Genealogy, a service response directed primarily toward adult users, addressed community residents’ interests in knowing and better understanding personal and community history and heritage. Libraries stressing this service provided (a) significant collections of resources relating to the history of the community or region; (b) family histories; (c) genealogical research tools; and (d) equipment for reading, printing, and copying all informational formats (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, p. 118). To meet the needs of local historians and genealogists, the library maintained an active interlibrary loan program with other local, regional, and national libraries and historical societies. Enhanced programs included services such as (a) instruction in genealogical and historical research methods, (b) programs on local history, (c) digitization of historic photographs, (d) temperature-and humidity-controlled archives
vault or room, (e) indexing of local newspapers, (f) oral histories, and (g) World Wide Web links to history and genealogy sites (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, pp. 118-119). Local history and genealogy were primary service responses for the San Antonio, Texas, Public Library and the Richland County Public Library in Columbia, South Carolina (Himmel & Wilson, 1998, pp. 121-122).

In response to criticisms that Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries did not provide enough guidance in implementation, the Planning for Results manual offered extremely detailed assistance in implementing the steps. However, many librarians were overwhelmed by the amount of detail. Feedback from librarians using the Planning for Results model suggested that the planning process was too time-consuming to be practical in most library situations. The fourth and most recent planning document, The New Planning for Results: A Streamlined Approach, was published in 2001 (Nelson, 2001). The New Planning for Results was published only three years after Planning for Results. Unlike earlier revisions, it did not represent a major change from the previous model. The new planning document retained the model core and the 13 service responses found in Planning for Results. However, the revision committee did much to reduce the work load and simplify the planning process (Elsner, 2002, p. 214).

The New Planning for Results encourages libraries to interpret the responses according to the identified needs of the community. The authors anticipated that the service responses would be modified as services were tailored to meet community needs. The manual provides a form to help libraries construct their own service responses when none of the 13 examples adequately address local needs (Stephens, 2006, p. 224).

In 2004 A. K. Stephens examined plans developed with the newer manuals, Planning for Results and The New Planning for Results. The sample was limited to plans that were currently available on library Web sites. The sample consisted of 20 libraries in 13 states: Arizona, California, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Missouri, Montana, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, and Wisconsin. With the exception of three locally devised responses, the plans contained
the original responses, slightly reworded responses, or combinations of the service responses found in the two manuals. The most popular service responses were Current Topics and Titles (chosen by all 20 libraries), Lifelong Learning (19), General information (18), Information Literacy (12), Commons (7), and Formal Learning Support (7). The Mesa, Arizona, Public Library and the St. Charles, Missouri, Public Library decided to focus on children’s services and added responses specifically designed to enhance those services. The Multnomah County, Oregon, Public Library emphasized outreach services to older adults, Latinos, and the business community (Stephens, 2006, p. 225). Stephens noted that most of the library sites listed the service responses selected along with the goals, objectives, and activities developed to accomplish them. Although Planning for Results was published in 1998 and New Planning for Results in 2001, little research has appeared in the library literature thus far on the service responses selected, and “nothing is known about changes in services resulting from libraries’ use of these manuals” (Stephens, 2006, p. 231).

Revision of the Service Responses

By 2006 it was time to modify the definitions of the service responses to reflect new developments in information technology. During the 2006 ALA annual conference, Nelson and Garcia solicited comments for revising and updating the 13 service responses. They solicited “input from librarians, library staff, and library trustees through meetings and online review and discussion on the PLA Blog. PLA members also used the PLA Service Response Blog to suggest new or revised service responses” (American Library Association, 2007b, para. 3). By December 2006 Nelson and Garcia had identified 17 new or revised service responses. Kathleen Hughes posted the proposed service responses on the PLA Blog with a brief description of the benefits that each service provides.

1. Be Informed Citizens: Local, National, and World Affairs. Citizens will have the information they need to support and promote democracy, to fulfill their civic
responsibilities at the local, state, and national levels, and to fully participate in community decision making.

2. **Build Successful Enterprises: Business and Non-Profit Support.** Business owners and non-profit organization directors and their managers will have the tools they need to develop and maintain strong, viable organizations.

3. **Connect to the Online World: Public Internet Access.** Residents will have high-speed access to the digital world with no unnecessary restrictions or fees to ensure that everyone can take advantage of the ever-growing resources and services available through the Internet.

4. **Create Young Readers: Emergent Literacy.** Preschool children will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.

5. **Discover Your Heritage: Genealogy and Local History.** Residents and visitors will have the resources they need to explore their heritage, to connect the past with the present through their family histories, and to understand the history and traditions of the community in which they live.

6. **Express Creativity: Create and Share Content.** Residents will have the services and support they need to express themselves by creating original print, video, audio, or visual content in a real-world or online environment.

7. **Explore Our Community: Community Resources and Services.** Residents will have a central source for information about the wide variety of programs, services, and activities provided by community agencies and organizations.

8. **Get Fast Facts: Ready Reference.** Residents will have someone to answer their questions on a wide array of topics of personal interest.

9. **Learn to Find, Evaluate, and Use Information: Information Literacy.** Residents will know when they need information to resolve an issue or answer a question and will
have the skills to search for, locate, evaluate, and effectively use information to meet their needs.

10. *Learn to Read and Write: Adult and Family Literacy.* Adults will have the support they need to improve their literacy skills in order to meet their personal goals and fulfill their responsibilities as parents, citizens, and workers.

11. *Make Career Choices: Job and Career Development.* Teens and adults will have the skills and resources they need to identify career opportunities that suit their individual strengths and interests.

12. *Make Informed Decisions: Health, Wealth, and Other Life Choices.* Residents will have the resources they need to identify and analyze risks, benefits, and alternatives before making decisions that affect their lives.

13. *Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning.* Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

14. *Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing and Listening for Pleasure.* Residents who want materials to enhance their leisure time will find what they want when and where they want them and will have the help they need to make choices from among the options.

15. *Succeed in School: Homework Help.* Students will have the resources they need to succeed in school.

16. *Visit a Comfortable Place: Public and Virtual Spaces.* Residents will have safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read and will have open and accessible virtual spaces that support social networking.

17. *Welcome to America: Services for New Immigrants.* New immigrants will have information on citizenship, English Language Learning (ELL), employment, public schooling, health and safety, available social services, and any other topics that they need to participate successfully in American life (Hughes, 2006).
The revision process was completed in February 2007. One additional service response was added to the list of 17. The new and updated service responses were made available to ALA members beginning in May 2007 as a downloadable PDF document (American Library Association, 2007b, para. 3). “Each service response contains eight sections: title, description, suggested target audiences, typical services and programs in libraries that select this as priority, potential partners, policy implications, critical resources, and possible measures” (American Library Association, 2007a, para. 1).

The Role of Research

Adult Services in the Eighties

ALA’s Reference and Adult Services Division sponsored the Adult Services in the Eighties (ASE) project directed by K. M. Heim. The project was funded by an ALA Goal Award in 1983 and conducted with support from the RASD Services to Adults Committee. Significant support was also provided from Louisiana State University and its School of Library and Information Science. Heim and a research team of professors, librarians, and library school students proposed to update H. L. Smith’s benchmark study, *Adult Education Activities in Public Libraries* published in 1954 (Hansen, 1995, p. 326). A national census of adult services had not been conducted in the almost 30 years since Smith’s study. The lack of information about the various types of library services provided for adults hampered efforts to describe the scope of adult services for public library planning. The ASE project sought to provide a comprehensive, state of the art description of public library services to adults in all U.S. public libraries with a service population of 25,000 or more (Heim, 1990a, p. 23). In addition to a census of the services and activities provided for adults through the public library, the study sought to determine if the imposition of fees for services was a widespread practice, to determine how many public libraries had actually adopted and implemented the PLA planning process, and to determine if regional differences and differences in selected demographic characteristics influenced the provision of adult services (Wallace, 1990, pp. 32-49).
The ASE Project began in 1983 and was completed in 1989. It consisted of two components, a national survey and an extensive literature review (Van Fleet, 1989, p. 107). The research team supplemented the presentation of data with bibliographic essays on key services (Heim, 1990b, p. 2). The essays "were commissioned to examine each service in its historical context with some reference to the ASE project findings for each service" (Heim, 1990a, p. 24). The ASE project data established a new benchmark for the study of adult services. Most of the essay authors compared pertinent findings from Smith's study with the findings from the ASE project. The comparison allowed readers to identify changes within specific services and to understand how adult services as a field evolved over time (Heim, 1990a, p. 24).

Phase I (1983-1986) of the project consisted of bibliographic research and survey development. Hundreds of documents related to key adult services were obtained and assigned subject headings (Heim, 1990b, p. 2). The extensive bibliography and index was too large (249 pages) to be included in the project report, so a separate publication was prepared for submission to ERIC (Heim & Nuttall, 1990).

Phase II (1986) included the distribution of questionnaires, the receipt of completed questionnaires, and data-entry. The final version of the questionnaire was sent to all 1,758 library systems with populations of 25,000 or more. Systems were defined "as a central library facility and its branches or a 'stand alone library' with no branches" (Wallace, 1990, p. 29). Questionnaires were mailed to the central library for the system and each of its branches so more than 8,000 questionnaires were distributed (Heim, 1990b, p. 3). The researchers received 4,215 responses from individual libraries representing 1,114 systems. Nearly two thirds (63%) of the systems serving 25,000 people or more were represented in the results (Wallace, 1990, p. 29). Two deficiencies in representation affected the interpretation of the data: smaller communities were seriously underrepresented, and libraries in the western region of the United States were slightly overrepresented in the study (Wallace, 1990, pp. 30-31).
The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section 1 contained 44 major questions designed to elicit information about a total of 73 public library adult services. The questions in Section 2 asked for specific information about exemplary programs (Wallace, 1990, p. 31). The questions in the first section were divided into five major categories. The first category was provision of resource materials that included displays, circulation of materials, in-library provision of material, reading lists and bibliographies, interlibrary loan, and maintenance of resource files. Questions 1 through 4, 6 through 18, 20, and 41 through 44 came from this category. The second category was provision of facilities and equipment consisting of audiovisual equipment, microcomputers, photocopiers, meeting rooms, and resources files. This category was represented in questions 5, 19, and 21 through 23. Provision of programs was the third category that included questions 24 through 27 about general programs and question 34 about programming for special groups. The fourth category, provision of educational services, is of special interest to this discussion. Educational services included library use education (questions 28 and 29) and literacy education (questions 30 through 33). The final category was provision of external and outreach services to hospitals, prisons, retirement and nursing homes, homebound persons, books by mail, and bookmobile services. Questions 35 through 40 belonged to this category (Wallace, 1990, p. 31).

In addition to determining what specific services were offered, researchers were interested in determining specific groups of adults for which services were provided. Questions 30-33 asked about the provision of literacy services for adult nonreaders and beginning readers. Question 34 asked librarians whether they offered programming for special groups such as business, genealogists, the handicapped, job seekers, labor groups, older adults, parents, minorities, and others. Questions 35-38 inquired about services for homebound persons and those in hospitals, prisons, and retirement or nursing homes (Wallace, 1990, pp. 58-61).

Phase III (1987-1989) consisted of data analysis and the development of bibliographic essays. Preliminary results of the data analysis were released as the essays were prepared for
publication. Wallace's analysis of the data appeared as a chapter in the final report, entitled Adult Services: An Enduring Focus for Public Libraries, published by ALA in 1990. Wallace outlined the procedures used in conducting the ASE survey and described the methodologies used in analyzing the data. Major categories included in the analysis of the data were “Provision of Services at No Charge,” “Services Provided for a Fee,” “Adult Services and A Planning Process for Public Libraries,” “Regional Differences in Adult Services Provision,” and “Adult Services and Demographic Differences” (Heim, 1990b, pp. 5-6).

The essays formed the chapters in Adult Services and covered the period through 1986 when the ASE survey was conducted. The report volume included a review of adult services literature, an overview and analysis of the ASE project questionnaire data, and chapters on lifelong learning, services to minorities, service to adult job seekers, literacy services, labor groups, the economic community, bookmobiles, older adults, the handicapped, genealogy, parent education, public access microcomputers, and the public library as a social/cultural institution (Heim, 1990b, pp. 4-10). The essays and findings of the ASE project provided a useful summary “of the status of resources and programming for adults in libraries throughout the United States” (Heim, 1990b, p. 10). The ASE project attempted to link library services for adults on “a service continuum undergirded by fundamental theories” articulated by Monroe, Rothstein, and Learned. The ASE project data served as “a unifying factor” for the essays in which the authors attempted to identify “the common themes and philosophies that activate adult services” (Heim, 1990b, p. 10).

In the summary of the ASE project data, Wallace observed that “the results of the study were difficult to summarize or condense because they represented a great diversity in response and the demographic characteristics of the libraries that responded” (1990, p. 49). Wallace noted that there were some general conclusions that could be drawn from the data. Although the adult services provided by the responding libraries seemed to be rather traditional and mostly passive in nature, nearly two thirds of the services listed on the questionnaire were provided by more than
25% of the respondents. Apparently services for adults were generally considered important, and
most libraries provided a fairly wide range of services (Wallace, 1990, p. 50).

Nine services were offered free of charge by 75% or more of the libraries (Stephens, 2006, p. 224). Those services ranked in order of their frequency were library use instruction for
individuals (93.9%), displays of library materials (90.2%), interlibrary loan (88.2%),
information about community events and activities (82.9%), group library use instruction
(82.9%), referral to other agencies for literacy education (80.2%), reading list or bibliographies
(80.2%), circulation of musical records (78.4%), and displays of nonlibrary materials (75.1%)

Twenty-nine free services were available at 25 to 74% of the public libraries (Stephens, 2006, p. 224). Services of special interest in this category included live programming (73.6%),
book talks and reviews (54.8%), facilities for literacy instruction (52.5%), programs for
parents (37.7%), and programs for older adults (37.5%) (Wallace, 1990, pp. 56-62). Thirty-three
services were offered without a fee by less than 25% of the responding libraries (Stephens, 2006,
p. 224). Among the least frequently provided services were individual literacy education
(24.6%), programming for job seekers (20.7%), microcomputers for in-library use (20.3%),
programming for retirement/nursing homes (19.4%), programming for people with disabilities
(15.4%), group literacy education (15.4%), programming for minorities (12.0%), deposit
collections for prisons (10.7%), and programming for labor groups (5.4%) (Wallace, 1990, p. 63).

Although the range of services frequently provided for adults by public libraries was
impressive, the list of services least frequently provided was a cause for concern. Two aspects of
the list were particularly troubling to Wallace. Although functional illiteracy was generally
recognized as “a national problem of crisis proportions,” only a fraction of public libraries
provided group or individual literacy education. There had been significant improvement since
Smith’s study reported that only 6.5% of the respondents provided fundamental reading
instruction, but the 1986 figures of 15.4% providing group instruction and 24.6% providing
individual instruction were disappointing. Given the gravity of the illiteracy problem, a much larger response on the part of the public library was expected. The second area of concern was the low frequency of provision of microcomputer hardware and software. The relatively high cost of computers and software in the 1980s was thought to be the major factor prohibiting the provision of these services (Wallace, 1990, p. 50). Other troubling aspects of the list were the relatively small percentage of public libraries providing services for prisoners, programming for people with disabilities, and programming for minorities (Wallace, 1990, p. 63).

Imposing fees for certain services appeared to be a widespread practice among public libraries. However, few libraries reported charging fees for more than one or two services and those services tended to be ones that "benefited individuals or special groups rather than the community as a whole" (Wallace, 1990, p. 50). The data supported the suggestion that most administrative decisions concerning adult services centered on the question of whether or not a service should be provided rather than the question of whether or not a fee should be imposed (Wallace, 1990, p. 50).

Regional differences in the provision of adult services were not totally consistent, but "overall the South appeared to lag behind the other regions" (Wallace, 1990, p. 51). The average number of services provided by southern libraries was fewer than for the other regions, and "the South was most frequently ranked fourth among the regions in the provision of specific services" (Wallace, 1990, p. 51). Traditional library services were the most commonly provided services in the South, and very few southern libraries offered services involving electronic media or special programming for specific population groups. Wallace believed that the historically depressed state of the southern economy was in some way related to the region's tendency to lag behind other areas of the country in the provision of public library services (Wallace, 1990, p. 51).

Other demographic differences did not "appear to be very strongly related to the provision of public library adult services" (Wallace, 1990, p. 51). However, some demographic characteristics such as the size, educational level, and per capita income of the library's service
area might have exerted some influence. The data did not suggest "any systematic relationships
between the provision of adult services and community factors such as ethnicity, percentage of
the community below the poverty level, or percentage of the population above retirement age,"
although there appeared to be relationships for some isolated questions (Wallace, 1990, p. 51).

Wallace concluded the narrative portion of the report with the same caveat Smith applied
to the 1954 study of adult education activities in public libraries. Smith emphasized the "fact-
finding" nature of the study. Wallace stressed that the ASE project like Smith's study was a
census designed to gather as much information about services from as many respondents as
possible (1990, p. 28). Statistical tests were applied to the data to examine possible relationships,
but any statements of cause and effect relationships between the responses to the questionnaire
and possible influencing variables were considered "quite speculative" (Wallace, 1990, p. 51).
Wallace cautioned that further in-depth study of the complex relationships behind the results
would be needed before any attempt was made to interpret and evaluate the results of the ASE
study in terms of cause and effect. Wallace hoped that the results of the ASE study might suggest
some possible problem areas in need of further research (Wallace, 1990, p. 51).

National Opinion Poll on Library Issues

The Library Research Center (LRC) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
launched a national public opinion poll on library issues in 1991. The Public Library
Association's planning process and increased competition for local funds had compelled public
libraries to become more community centered. In order to tailor their programming and services
to meet local needs, public libraries conducted surveys to measure attitudes and opinions at the
community level. While focusing on local trends was politically expedient, there was the danger
that public librarians might be unaware of broader national trends that could have a significant
impact on the future of their institutions. In the book Public Librarianship: An Issues Oriented
Approach, V. L. Pungitore (1989) argued that knowledge of national trends and the opinions of
opponents as well as advocates on important issues gave librarians and library boards a better
understanding of the local implications of public policy decisions. In order to provide a view of the broader context of public librarianship, the LRC initiated the national public opinion poll with plans to update and expand on this data annually (Estabrook & Horak, 1992, p. 52).

The LRC conducted a telephone survey of a representative national sample of 1,181 adults between October 26 and December 24, 1991, and a mail survey of 541 randomly selected PLA members. Originally the research team had intended to poll only the general public, but they decided to extend the poll to include librarians when preliminary analyses of data revealed substantial disparities between public and professional opinion. The response rate for the mail survey was 72% (390 respondents) and some librarians chose to include additional comments (Estabrook & Horak, 1992, pp. 52-53).

Public response to questions in the section on library services indicated that “the American people believed strongly in the educational roles of public libraries” (Estabrook & Horak, 1992, p. 53). Librarians and the public were questioned about five types of services that libraries offered: “videotapes of recent motion pictures, educational videos, programs that help adults learn to read, a reference desk that answers information requests, and after school care for children of working parents” (Estabrook & Horak, 1992, p. 53). Respondents were asked to indicate whether the service should be provided by all libraries, whether the service was useful but not always necessary, whether the service should definitely not be provided, and whether they had no opinion. The public strongly favored the provision of educational videos (87%), literacy programs (93%), and reference desks (89%) by all libraries. More than one third (39%) favored the provision of afterschool care in all libraries and 29% indicated that the service would be useful, but not always necessary. Only 25% of the public thought videotapes of recent motion pictures should be provided by all libraries (Estabrook & Horak, 1992, p. 53; National Opinion Poll, 1991, p. 5).

Librarians more or less agreed with the public on the necessity for most of the services. Almost all of the librarians (95%) thought all public libraries should have a reference desk. Most
(70%) favored the provision of educational videos, and 62% said all public libraries should offer literacy programs. Only 12% of the librarians thought the provision of videos of recent motion pictures was an essential service. The only service in which there was strong disagreement was the provision of afterschool care for children. Only 3% of librarians believed that afterschool care was an essential public library service. More than one third (35%) thought it was a useful but not essential service. Sixty-one percent thought the library should definitely not provide this service (Estabrook & Horak, 1992, p. 53; National Opinion Poll, 1991, p. 5).

Cultural Programs for Adults in Public Libraries

The ALA Public Programs Office and the Library Research Center at the University of Illinois School of Library and Information Science conducted a survey on public libraries as cultural centers during 1997-1998. Data was collected from 1,229 public libraries. Survey questions addressed issues such as: “the types of adult cultural programming offered at each library, program attendance and funding, collaboration with other organizations on cultural programs, the cultural role of the library, and the relative availability of cultural programming in the community served by the library” (American Library Association, 2003, para. 3). The study was unique in that it was the first questionnaire survey devoted entirely to gathering “systematic data about the scope and nature of cultural programs in American’s public libraries” (American Library Association, 2003, para. 4).

The survey showed that the vast majority of public libraries (86%) serving populations of over 5,000 offered some type of cultural programming for adults in 1997 and 1998. While the majority of programs were literary in nature, [e.g., book discussion (61%) and author readings/presentations (59%)], a substantial minority of libraries offered other forms of cultural programming such as lecture series (44%), musical performances (42%), dramatic performances (23%), film series (20%), creative writing workshops (18%), and dance performances (14%). In addition, 70% of libraries hosted locally developed cultural exhibits and 38% hosted traveling cultural exhibits (CPANDA, 2006).
Size was a factor in the provision of cultural programming. Libraries serving larger populations (250,000 or more) were more inclined to offer cultural programs than libraries serving smaller populations (5,000-250,000). The one exception was adult reading incentive programs which were offered by 20% of libraries serving large populations and 20% of libraries serving smaller populations. However, even small libraries serving populations of less than 25,000 recognized the value of cultural programming for adults; 59% offered book discussion programs and 46% offered author readings/presentations (CPANDA, 2006).

Respondents’ opinions were almost evenly divided on how important cultural programming for adults was to their missions. Slightly less than one half (47%) saw it as central to their library’s mission, while an almost equal percentage (45%) said it was not. The remaining 8% were uncertain about the importance of programming to their library’s mission. Again size was a factor. Libraries serving larger communities were more likely to view adult cultural programming as central to their mission than libraries serving smaller communities. Nevertheless, 44% of libraries serving populations between 5,000 and 25,000 also viewed adult cultural programming as an important part of their mission (CPANDA, 2006). The argument could be made that public library sponsorship of adult cultural programming was more important in smaller communities because of the relative lack of other sources of cultural programming.

Programs for Adults in Public Library Outlets

In the fall of 2000, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) conducted a survey on adult programming in public library outlets. The survey was conducted using NCES’s Fast Response Survey System which was designed to collect small amounts of issue-oriented data within a relatively short period of time while placing a minimal burden on respondents (Lewis & Farris, 2002, p. 5). The sampling frame consisted of 16,655 public library outlets (Lewis & Farris, 2002, p. 16). A public library outlet was defined as “a unit (usually a building) that provided direct public library service” (Lewis & Farris, 2002, p. 5). Public library outlets included central libraries, branch libraries, and bookmobiles (Lewis & Farris, 2002, p. 5). The sample for the
A survey was composed of 1,011 public library outlets, consisting of 461 central/main libraries, 485 branch libraries, and 65 bookmobiles. The results presented in the study report were based on questionnaire data for 954 public library outlets in the United States (Lewis & Farris, 2002, p. 16).

Programs were defined as "planned activities for groups and individuals that are offered by librarians to provide information, instruction, or cultural enrichment" (Lewis & Farris, 2002, p. 5). The FRSS survey was limited in scope and did not attempt to collect information about all the public library's programs for adults nor did it attempt to collect information about all the types of activities that libraries do to support adult programs in the community. Information was obtained for "three topics that were areas in which libraries serve the educational needs of their communities: adult literacy programs, programs for lifelong learning, and internet access for adult independent use" (Lewis & Farris, 2002, p. 16). The study addressed the provision of specific literacy and lifelong learning programs to special groups of adults including high school dropouts, adults with learning or physical disabilities or health impairments, people with limited English-speaking ability or recent immigrants, older adults, and parents (Lewis & Farris, 2002, p. 22).

A library-sponsored program was defined as one in which the public library made an active contribution through the provision of funds, materials, or staff to support the program, or the library system planned and executed the program within or on behalf of the library outlet. Programs could be presented in the library or at an offsite location. The provision of library space alone without further involvement of the library outlet or system was not sufficient to categorize the program as library-sponsored (Lewis & Farris, 2002, p. 5).

Adult literacy programs included adult basic education (defined as skills at the 4th grade level and below), pre-GED (defined as skills from 5th to 8th grade levels), GED (9th grade through high school equivalency), English as a second language, and family literacy (Lewis & Farris, 2002, p. 6). Activities which support the adult literacy programs of other educational agencies such as developing and maintaining literacy collections, building coalitions with other
literacy groups, and providing space for literacy classes and tutors were not measured in this survey (Lewis & Farris, 2002, p. 16). Only 17% of public library outlets offered adult literacy programs. Of the outlets offering adult literacy programs, 63% provided adult basic education programs. Pre-GED classes were offered by 42% of the outlets and GED classes by 45%. Instruction in English as a second language was available in 48% of outlets and family literacy programs in 46% (Lewis & Farris, 2002, p. 21).

The provision of literacy programs increased with the size of the library outlet as defined by the number of library visits per week. Large outlets had 1,500 or more visits per week. Medium-sized outlets had 300-1,499 per week and small outlets had fewer than 300 visits per week (Lewis & Farris, 2002, p. 20). Nearly a third (31%) of large outlets offered adult literacy programs. Adult literacy programs were provided by 19% of medium-sized library outlets and only 5% of small outlets (Lewis & Farris, 2002, p. 6). Metropolitan status was also a factor. Urban libraries offered literacy programs more often than suburban or rural libraries (26% compared to 16% and 15% respectively). Half of the library outlets offering adult literacy programs provided specialized programming for the limited English speaking population and/or recent immigrants (50%), and nearly half provided specialized programming for parents (48%). High school dropouts were targeted by 40% of library outlets. Adults with learning disabilities were afforded specialized programming by 26% of outlets and adults with hearing impairments by 11% (Lewis & Farris, 2002, p. 6).

Reasons given for not offering adult literacy programs included lack of staff and resources (77%), the presence of other literacy education programs in the community (53%), emphasis on services for other groups such as children and older adults (37%), and lack of a strong need for literacy programs in the community (20%). Lack of staff or resources was cited as an important reason less often by large outlets than medium-sized or small outlets; however, the presence of other literacy programs was cited more frequently by large outlets. Rural libraries cited the presence of competing adult literacy programs as an important reason less often than
suburban or urban outlets. Small library outlets listed the lack of a strong need for adult literacy programs as an important factor for not offering these programs more often than medium-sized or large outlets (Lewis & Farris, 2002, pp. 22-23).

Lifelong learning programs included book or film discussions, cultural performances, recreational activities, employment and career guidance, college/continuing education guidance, financial planning/investment information, parenting skills, citizenship preparation, and computer/Internet instruction (Lewis & Farris, 2002, p. 5). A number of other types of lifelong learning programs such as health education/information, civic awareness and government issues, and genealogy information were omitted due to the constrains of the FRSS questionnaire (Lewis & Farris, 2002, p.16). The most frequently offered type of adult lifelong learning program was computer/Internet instruction (56%) followed by book/film discussions or presentations (43%); cultural performances (41%); and recreational activities such as crafts, travel, or hobbies (39%). Other programs offered by less than one fourth of the respondents were parenting skills programs (20%), financial planning/investment information programs (18%), employment/career guidance programs (17%), college/continuing education guidance programs (15%), and citizenship preparation programs (5%) (Lewis & Farris, 2002, pp. 6, 24-25).

Again size was an important factor. Large and medium-sized outlets were more likely to offer a wider range of programs than small outlets. Only citizenship preparation programs did not vary significantly by outlet size. With the exception of programs on employment/career guidance and college/continuing education guidance, large outlets offered more types of programs than medium-sized outlets. Urban libraries were somewhat more likely than suburban libraries and much more likely than rural libraries to offer the full range of lifelong learning programs (Lewis & Farris, 2002, pp. 7, 25).

Library outlets offered adult lifelong learning programs for five specific groups of adults: senior citizens (24%), parents (24%), the limited English-speaking population and/or recent immigrants (9%), adults with physical disabilities (6%), and adults with learning disabilities
Barriers to the provision of lifelong learning programs for adults with learning and/or physical disabilities included the following: lack of trained staff to work with disabled adults (39%), lack of assistive/adaptive devices (38%), not enough library materials for adults with visual and physical disabilities (33%), and inaccessibility of library facilities (12%). All of the factors, with the exception of inaccessibility of library facilities, were considered to be either moderate or major barriers by most of the outlets. Small outlets were more inclined to see all of the factors as major obstacles. With one exception, perceptions did not vary significantly by metropolitan status. More than two fifths (42%) of rural outlets perceived a lack of trained staff as a major barrier compared to 32% of urban outlets (Lewis & Farris, 2002, pp. 26-27).

Internet access for independent adult users was provided by 92% of library outlets. While a large majority (84%) of small library outlets provided Internet Access, provision of this service was still somewhat lower than that of medium-sized library outlets at 96% and large outlets at 98%. However, metropolitan status was not a significant factor in the provision of Internet services. Factors cited as major barriers to providing Internet access included insufficient space for computers (29%), insufficient number of computers with Internet access (20%), insufficient number of telecommunication lines for Internet access (19%), not enough library staff to assist Internet users (12%), and lack of specialized training among library staff (9%). For the entire sample these factors were generally not considered major barriers; however, there were differences in perceived barriers between outlets that provided Internet access and those that did not. Library outlets not providing Internet access were more likely to view all of the factors as major barriers (Lewis & Farris, 2002, pp. 28-30).

There is a critical need for research to update professional knowledge about the number and types of adult services currently offered by public libraries. A. K. Stephens (2006) observed that it has been 20 years since the ASE study was conducted and much has changed during that time period (p. 232). Two of the services offered by less than 25% of the libraries in the 1986 survey, providing microcomputer software (20.3%) and microcomputers for in-library use
(20.2%), are now provided by most libraries. Programming for groups, especially those needing instruction in computer use, is much more prevalent. Computer/Internet instruction was the only type of educational program provided for adults by more than 50% of the respondents in the National Center for Educational Statistics survey. Programming for some groups such as "genealogists, the business community, job seekers, new immigrants, and the homeless" has also increased over the past two decades (Stephens, 2006, p. 232). Stephens also pointed out that reference was not considered part of adult services when the ASE study was conducted and thus was not included in the survey (2006, p. 232). Readers' advisory services, which had almost died out, were also not included in the survey. Since the ASE study there has been a resurgence of interest in reader's advisory service and electronic reference and readers' advisory services are currently available in many libraries.

Educational Services for Adults

Readers' Advisory Services

Readers' advisory services began to experience a revival in the 1980s, but the role of these services in libraries and their philosophical underpinnings had changed over the years (Saricks & Brown, 1997, p. 1). The readers' adviser in the period from 1920 to 1940 was concerned with the role of the public library in adult education. Readers' advisory service was seen "as a means of helping adults meet their need for further learning" (Saricks & Brown, 1997, p. 5). Saricks and Brown noted that the early approach to readers' advisory service was "clearly didactic." The purpose of the early efforts was to "move readers toward classic works, to outline a plan of reading that would be educational, not recreational" (Saricks & Brown, 1997, p. 5).

Although early readers' advisory service was regarded "as an educational function grounded in using both nonfiction and fiction to assist readers," fiction was seen as intellectually and morally less valuable than nonfiction (Crowley, 2005a, p. 38). When readers' advisory service was revived in the 1980s, fiction was emphasized. Readers' advisory service became "a patron-oriented library service for adult fiction readers (Saricks & Brown, 1997, p. 1). With a
prejudice in favor of fiction, public librarians rejected the didactic approach and the elitist attitudes some felt were characteristic of the early readers' advisory service.

A number of factors were responsible for the renewed interest in readers' advisory. The publication of the first edition of Rosenberg's *Genreflecting* in 1982 served as an impetus for the revival of interest in readers' advisory service. Although other fiction finding aids had been published earlier, Rosenberg's guide provided not only a list of popular authors and books but also an in-depth review of genre fiction. *Genreflecting* was unique in that Rosenberg confronted the stigma surrounding the reading of fiction with "Rosenberg's First law of Reading: Never apologize for your reading tastes" (Rosenberg, 1982, p. 3). The publication of Rosenberg's book helped to break down the elitist pretensions of librarianship and introduced librarians to the importance of individual reading tastes in book selection (Tracz, 1997, p. 6).

Bill Crowley saw "the founding of the northern-Illinois based but nationally influential Adult Reading Round Table" in 1984 as the defining event (2005a, p. 39). M. K. Chelton believed that the "banishment" of reader's advisory services officially ended when PLA published *Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries* in 1987. One of the suggested roles was that of a popular materials center. This endorsement in an official publication gave the role of readers' guidance for fiction readers a sense of legitimacy (Chelton, 1993, p. 33). Another indication of a revival in professional concern was the publication of the first edition of Saricks and Brown's *Readers' Advisory Service in the Public Library* in 1989.

A number of qualitative studies examining what readers themselves said about the importance of leisure reading in their lives were conducted in the 1980s and early 1990s. Janice Radway (1984) studied readers of romance novels, Donald Fry's 1985 study consisted of interviews with children about their reading, and the book *Read for Your Life* (1990) was based on Joseph Gold's clinical work as a bibliotherapist. The Library of Congress's Center for the Book sponsored the "Books that Made the Difference" project which provided additional examples of how fiction helped readers to cope with life's problems (Sabine & Sabine, 1983).
Two other researchers, A. J. Appleyard (1990) and Victor Nell (1990), both found that recreational readers of all types, regardless of their social status or education, read to alleviate stress and that their choice of reading materials was linked to their life experiences. T. J. Roberts's study of "the aesthetic of junk fiction" emphasized the appeal of fiction (1990). Saricks and Brown (1997) pointed out that the appeal or core attraction of a book varied from one individual to another (p. 24).

Interest in providing readers' advisory in public libraries continued to grow. In 1990 library professor C. S. Ross conducted over 100 open-ended, qualitative interviews with a wide range of readers. Ross examined the occupational, life experience, and stress factors of her subjects and concluded that everyday stress influenced book selection. Ross's study on recreational reading provided valuable insights into how books helped people, how readers selected books, and what readers liked or disliked about the provision of fiction in public libraries (1991, p. 503).

Ross (1991) asserted that research about popular culture and pleasure reading had paved the way for development of a new kind of readers' advisory service in libraries, one in which a new breed of readers' adviser was needed—one who paid "attention to both elements in the reading transaction: the reader and the book" (p. 503). The new adviser had a different perspective on what constituted a good book—a good book matched "the reader's own reading needs and preferences" (Ross, 1991, p. 505). The practices of the new breed of readers' advisers were much less didactic than those of their early counterparts. The mission of readers' guidance was no longer the "elevation of the masses." Readers' advisers in the 1990s strove "to be knowledgeable about fiction," particularly popular fiction, and "to respond with perception and insight to the reading interests of their patrons" (Saricks & Brown, 1997, p. 8).

In 1991 Jennifer Tobin conducted a study of the status of readers' advisory services in Ohio public libraries. Tobin's findings were not encouraging; many of the libraries did not own the basic resources for planning good programs, the staff received little training in readers'
advisory techniques, and there were no written guidelines for planning, conducting, or administering reader guidance programs (Tobin, as cited in Tracz, 1997, p. 11). Tobin’s findings reinforced S. L. Baker’s contention that readers’ advisory programs have had “mixed levels of administrative support” (1993, p. 13). C. M. Tracz replicated Tobin’s study in 1997 and found that there had been little progress in the development of formal readers’ guidance programs since 1991, despite the fact that most public services librarians felt that reading guidance was an important part of their job description (abstract).

The number of scholarly and practical articles in the library literature increased. Neal-Schuman published two scholarly compilations of research on readers’ advisory—McCook and Rolstad’s Developing Readers’ Advisory Services: Concepts and Commitments in 1993 and Shearer’s Guiding the Reader to the Next Book in 1996. In 1992 OCLC and the Library of Congress began their joint Fiction Classification Project designed to make fiction record entries more useful with information about fictional characters, genre classification, and geographic setting (Quinn & Rogers, 1992, pp. 14-15). The second edition of Saricks and Brown’s book, Readers’ Advisory Service in Public Libraries, was published in 1997. By 2000 the initial prejudice against nonfiction that was so evident in the revival of readers’ advisory in the 1980s had begun to diminish. In the third edition of Readers’ Advisory Service in the Public Library, Saricks expanded the definition of advisory service to include nonfiction (Saricks, 2005).

Literacy Education

The public library community began to take a greater interest in literacy education in the 1980s as the nation as a whole became more aware of the social and economic costs of illiteracy. Data from the Adult Services in the Eighties survey showed that 80.2% of the respondents provided some type of literacy programming, at the minimum a referral service (Rolstad, 1990, p. 261). In the final section of the survey in which librarians described five of their most successful programs during 1985, 210 librarians chose to highlight literacy education programs. Most of these programs, 82.4%, were cooperative endeavors, a collaboration of the library and
another literacy organization (Rolstad, 1990, p. 259). G. O. Rolstad concluded that the ASE survey revealed that the majority of libraries were providing some level of service and that the number of libraries providing literacy education activities had increased since 1980 (1990, p. 257). The ASE survey showed that libraries in every state were involved in literacy education (Heim, 1991b, p. 32). However, given the seriousness of the problem of illiteracy, public library response was still not adequate. Although studies demonstrated the importance of the mastery of basic academic proficiencies to the future progress of the nation’s young adults and to the nation’s economy, public libraries were still hesitant to assume more active roles in combating illiteracy. Barriers still remained—“inadequate awareness, poor funding, and resistant attitudes” still impeded the development of library literacy programs (Rolstad, 1990, p. 262).

The California Literacy Campaign initiated in 1984 was one of the better-known programs initiated with LSCA funds. The campaign was a statewide, community-oriented, library-based program designed to significantly reduce the number of adults with low literacy skills in California. There were 27 funded projects in public libraries throughout the state (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 71).

In the 1980s nine common approaches were used in library-based literacy programming: (a) the development of selected bibliographies, literacy materials, and computer software for literacy education; (b) collaboration, cooperation, and coalition building; (c) community literacy; (d) public awareness campaigns; (e) training for volunteers; (f) collection development; (g) technology-assisted instruction and management; (h) special instructional components; and (i) employment-oriented projects (Heim, 1991b, pp. 28-30). Ohio’s “Project Learn” was an example of the development of bibliographies of literacy materials. Project Learn distributed an annotated bibliography of specially selected materials evaluated by public librarians, adult basic education instructors, literacy experts, and adult new readers. Computer software projects included the development of software to support the Laubach literacy program by the Darlington County,
South Carolina, Public Library and the development of a program for limited-English speaking patrons at the Jacob Edwards Library in Southbridge, Massachusetts (Heim, 1991b, pp. 26-27).

The Buckley Public Library in Poteau, Oklahoma, used the collaborative approach. It served as the headquarters for the community literacy council. The council consisted of a number of local government agencies and community groups working to win local support for literacy education and to raise awareness of literacy needs (Heim, 1991b, p. 28).

Community literacy was the basis for a number of library-based literacy programs including the Prince George’s County, Maryland, Community Library Information Center. Community literacy emphasized the application of literacy to real-life needs. Education was considered to be “inseparable from the student’s life outside the classroom” (McCook, 1992, p. 247).

Public awareness was an approach used by a number of libraries. The Napa City-County Library, California, enlisted adult learners and tutors in taping public service announcements to publicize programs, recruit students and tutors, and to publicize the effects of illiteracy on individuals and the community (Heim, 1991b, p. 28).

The West Virginia Library Commission provided leadership development training for literacy organizations in counties where training workshops for tutors were not available. Through the leadership training provided by the commission, literacy organizations were able to establish or increase the number of workshops for tutors to work with adult new readers (Heim, 1991b, p. 28). Tutor training was important because one-to-one tutoring was identified as one of the more successful approaches in the 1985 Department of Education publication, Effective Adult Literacy Programs: A Practitioner’s Guide (McCook, 1992, p. 247).

The Charlotte/Mecklenburg County Public Library in North Carolina maintained a collection of adult basic reading and beginning literacy materials at its main library and in each of its 15 branches. The Library supplied deposit collections to adult literacy programs as well as to its own outreach sites at housing authorities, homeless shelters, and minimum security
correctional institutions (Heim, 1991b, p. 28). The Broward County Florida Division of Libraries undertook a collection development project to formulate guidelines for selecting materials based on the culture of the new readers' communities (Heim, 1991b, p. 27).

Technology-assisted approaches used computers, interactive software, videodisc technology, and radio and television broadcasts to supplement the tutorial and workbook methods and to provide an alternative means for adults to improve their reading, writing, and math skills. The Russell Public Library located in rural Kansas developed media-base literacy instruction to reach functionally illiterate adults. Weekly radio broadcasts of high-interest, low-vocabulary reading materials were a special feature of this literacy project. The project also included television broadcasts of family reading workshops to promote family reading (Heim, 1991b, p. 29).

Some projects used special instructional components to meet specific community needs. These components sometimes used locally developed ideas and materials. An example of this type of project was the St. Martin Parish Library in Louisiana. The Library administered diagnostic tests to new students to identify their preferred learning styles. The results of these tests were used to develop individualized reading programs (Heim, 1991b, p. 29).

Employment-oriented projects provided workplace or work-related opportunities for literacy instruction. The Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Public Library worked with local governmental agencies to determine the literacy needs of government employees. The library assisted these agencies in developing training programs that incorporated literacy information and referral (Heim, 1991b, p. 30).

The book *Literacy and Libraries: Learning from Case Studies*, published by ALA in 2001, included excerpts from Estabrook and Lakner's study for the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund. In their study entitled *Literacy Programs for Adults in Public Libraries* Estabrook and Lakner assessed "the role of public libraries in providing learning opportunities for adults to improve their literacy skills" (Estabrook & Lakner, as cited in DeCandido, 2001, p. x). Estabrook
and Lakner collected data regarding “the range of adult literacy activities in libraries, types of partnerships in which libraries are involved, forms of participation and instruction, and the factors that explain library involvement in literacy instruction” (as cited in DeCandido, 2001, p. x). Questionnaires were distributed to public libraries serving populations from 5,000 to 100,000 or more. To be included in the sample for the studies, libraries had to meet established criteria regarding the size of the library’s staff, the number of hours the library was open, and annual operating expenditures. Researchers received 1,067 completed questionnaires for a response rate of 72.7% (as cited in DeCandido, 2001, p. x).

Estabrook and Lakner reported that of the 1,067 respondents, most (94.1%) provided information and referrals to adult literacy agencies. Nearly one third (30.1%) were directly involved in the provision of adult literacy services. They “lend professional staff, library materials, and/or financial support to the instructional process” (Estabrook & Lakner, as cited in DeCandido, 2001, p. 10).

In dollar terms public libraries spent a conservatively estimated $25.9 million annually on literacy services. Public libraries served more than 43,000 adult learners in adult basic education programs, 31,000 in English as a second language classes, and 20,000 in family literacy programs (Estabrook & Lakner, as cited in DeCandido, 2001, p. 10). Although this may appear to be a substantial contribution, McCook and Barber (2002b) pointed out that these figures represent only a tiny fraction of the total number of adults involved in adult education programs nationwide (p. 67).

Comings, Cuban, Bos, and Taylor (2001) acknowledged that the public library’s contribution to the national adult education system is modest in comparison to that of community colleges and school districts, but public libraries “bring their own strengths to this system” (p. 8). Among the public library’s strengths are (a) its use is voluntary, (b) it conveys a sense of familiarity and continuity as a permanent institution in the local community; (c) it furnishes resources to support adult learning such as “accessible facilities, extensive referral systems and
collections of books, technology”; and (d) it provides “access to a large group of potential tutors, including retirees and casual library users” (Comings, Cuban et al., 2001, p. 8). One definite advantage of public library programs is that libraries generally do not receive funding that requires them to “move students into employment or into more advanced programs” within a specified period of time (Comings, Cuban et al., p. 8). Public library programs can allow students to progress at their own pace. Consequently, libraries are more accessible to adult students with very limited literacy skills, those with learning disorders and other special needs, and those with needs for flexible scheduling. “Many of these students have no other education providers to turn to for help in increasing their literacy” (Comings, Cuban et al., 2001, p. 8). The public library’s greatest contribution to adult literacy education is not in the numbers of people served but in its ability to reach those individuals who need help the most.

The case studies described in *Libraries and Literacy* offer many examples of adult education and literacy programs in public libraries. Among the programs examined in the case studies are the Second Start Adult Literacy Program in Oakland, California; the “Students Be Tutors” program at the Alameda County, California, Public Library; Project READ at the San Francisco Public Library, Project READ at the Redwood City, California, Public Library, and New York Public Library’s Centers for Reading and Writing (Lipschultz, 2001b, pp. xi-xiii). Literacy and Libraries also explores the history of literacy in libraries and encourages public libraries to embrace literacy and become “literacy-centered institutions” (Lipschultz, 2001b, p. xiv).

As demonstrated in the case studies, library literacy programs in the 1990s began to experiment with new models that incorporated many adult education concepts and principles. In 1996 the Oakland, California, Public Library’s Second Start Adult Literacy Program (McGinnis, 2001) began the transition from a traditional instructor-centered approach to a learner-centered participatory literacy model as described in the landmark book, *Participatory Literacy Education* (Fingeret & Jurmo, 1989). Participatory literacy programs were generally found in community
based organizations. The public library setting presented some challenges. Although the bureaucratic, hierarchical management model of public libraries has become more horizontal, the inclusion of adult learners in the decision-making process took some adjustment on the part of staff and management (McGinnis, 2001, p. 17).

The Alameda County, California, Public Library’s literacy program began with the one-to-one tutoring model and transitioned to small-group tutoring over the years. The program was guided by the concepts of collective leadership and civic responsibility from 1996 to 1999. In 2000 the Library initiated the “Students Be Tutors” program designed “to deepen the participation and leadership capacity of the students through an intensive three-year training and mentoring program” (Drobner, 2001, p. 32). Adult learners created new instructional models by “appropriating the role of the teacher and reconstructing the teaching of literacy skills” (Lipschultz, 2001b, p. xii).

The San Francisco Public Library’s Project READ used portfolio assessment and periodic interviews to document the adult learner’s progress (Price, 2001). The Redwood City (California) Public Library used its community’s opportunities as well as its needs to guide the development of literacy programs for adults, families, and children (Endaya, 2001).

Library and Information Skills Instruction

Traditionally, library use instruction has been a concern of academic and school libraries. Public librarians have provided individual library use instruction only when requested. Diehl and Weech’s 1991 review of the literature on library use instruction in public libraries revealed conflicting themes: many public librarians believed adults would benefit from library use instruction, but public libraries as a rule did not offer such instruction (p. 33). One possible explanation for the public library’s reluctance to offer library use instruction was “a philosophical commitment to providing information rather than instruction” (Diehl & Weech, 1991, p. 33). Another explanation was that there was not a great deal of demand for this type of program. Surveys conducted prior to the 1990s suggested that public library users were satisfied with their
library use skills and thought that public libraries were easy to use (Diehl & Weech, 1991, p. 38). Although Kirkendall and Stoffle (1982) pointed out that library use instruction programs had “never been widely established in public libraries,” (p. 56) opinion pieces in the library literature asserted that some public library users wanted and needed library use instruction (Diehl & Weech, 1991, p. 38). Diehl and Weech concluded that “further research [was] advisable to determine the need for library use instruction among public library users” (1991, p. 38).

Since the early 1990s the picture has changed. With the automation of public library catalogs, the provision of Internet workstations for the public, and the introduction of public access to the Internet, adult users in increasing numbers have requested that public librarians provide group instruction in the use of computers and the Internet. A study by the National Educational Statistics Center found that the most frequently offered type of adult lifelong learning program was computer/Internet instruction (Lewis & Farris, 2002, p. v).

Although technology introduced “new tools, new skills, new job descriptions, and more carpal tunnel surgeries,” it did not change what librarians did except in one important area—education. Public librarians became more formal educators as they taught people how to use the new information resources and tools (White, 1998, p. 106). When libraries replaced their card catalogs with online catalogs, librarians assumed the responsibility of teaching patrons to use the new catalogs. If online databases and Internet access were also provided, patrons needed assistance in learning to use these options as well (Crisman, 1998, p.124).

The availability of online searching changed the process of information retrieval and the interaction between the librarian and the patron. Before the advent of online searching, the patron made a request and the librarian carried out the search and presented the results to the patron. Online databases allowed the patron to conduct his or her own search with or without the assistance of the librarian. The relationship between the librarian and the patron became more instructional as the librarian explained and demonstrated the steps in the information retrieval process. The librarian interviewed the patron to define the information need, represented the need
in a searchable form, matched the need to the appropriate database, and displayed the results on the screen or in a printout. The patron learned how to define his or her request in the appropriate search terms and how to select and use the appropriate database to retrieve the desired information (White, 1998, p. 106). Although some librarians feared that their jobs would be jeopardized if students and public library users became self-sufficient, most felt a sense of accomplishment in helping their clients to become skilled, well-informed users of the library's resources.

Chapter Summary

Many public libraries operated in retrenchment mode in the 1980s. Learners' advisory services and other more innovative services were eliminated, and some more traditional services were scaled back in order to provide funding for library automation and online information technologies. Some progress in the provision of adult educational services was lost, but the picture was not entirely bleak. Some encouraging developments were the increased interest in literacy education, the revival of readers' advisory service, and the application of computer and information technology to services for independent learners. The Adult Services in the Eighties project demonstrated that public library interest in services for adults was alive and well, although public libraries continued to prefer a passive approach to service provision.

In the 1990s the emergence of the Internet provided new challenges and new opportunities. The Internet presented a world of opportunities for independent adult learners. Public librarians were forced to become more involved in library and information use instruction, particularly computer and Internet classes for adults of all ages. Internet websites were invaluable sources of information and resources for planning, implementing, and evaluating readers' advisory services, adult basic and literacy education programs, book and discussion programs, and programs for library and information use instruction. Continuing education opportunities were greatly enhanced by the introduction of online courses in the late 1990s. ALA and several of its divisions offered continuing education courses in many aspects of public library
administration, personnel management, and service provision. The number of offerings has increased in recent years as online learning has proven to be a popular and effective way for practicing librarians to keep up with the latest trends and best practices in the field.

The Internet as it has evolved, particularly the emergence of powerful search engines such as Google, has offered a great challenge to the public library’s mission of access to information. Access to information has been too narrow a focus and one that often ignored the public library’s educational, cultural, and social functions. In recent years the public library community has awakened to the fact that the public library has never been a major provider of information and is unlikely ever to be a powerful force in the nation’s information infrastructure. Computer technology and the Internet have also presented another challenge for the public library and that is how to ensure that all segments of the community have access to the library and information services they need. Many librarians believe that the public library must ensure equity of access to information for the economically disadvantaged and the undereducated. However, some library leaders fear that public librarians will be marginalized if the library assumes the role of electronic safety net for the poor because professionals working in human services agencies that serve marginalized groups such as racial minorities, older adults, people with disabilities, nonreaders, undereducated people, and economically disadvantaged people, are not considered important in an American society that sometimes seems to value economic productivity more than social justice.

Although access to information continued to dominate public library discourse in the 1990s, interest in the public library’s educational, cultural, and recreational functions has been revitalized by the creation of the ALA Public Programs Office in 1992 and the creation of the Institute of Museums and Libraries in 1996. Interest in these functions has been overshadowed by preoccupation with information and technology, but public libraries have quietly continued to provide services to meet their communities’ needs in all of these areas. The roles and service responses described in the PLA planning manuals are evidence that these functions continue to be
an important part of community-oriented library service. Opinion polls and surveys also indicated that these functions are valued by the public, and that the public expects the library to continue to offer traditional services as well as technology.
CHAPTER V
OVERARCHING THEMES

The Question of the Public Library’s Purpose

Background

Until the 1970s library historians had tended to view the purpose of the public library as fundamentally democratic in character. Shera (1949) observed that the founders of the American public library believed that it would play a key role in the preservation of democracy (p. 247). The founders “held that an intelligent and educated electorate [was] essential to democracy” (Shera, 1949, p. 247), so they created the public library to serve as an instrument of mass education to prepare the American people “for judicious self-government” (Nauratil, 1985, p. 3). S. H. Ditzion (1947) arrived at much the same conclusion in Arsenals of a Democratic Culture. Nineteenth-century supporters of the public library drew “heavily upon democratic and humanitarian values” to promote the library as a vehicle for “the self-realization of the broad masses of the people” (Ditzion, 1947, p. 193). The revisionist historians of the 1970s agreed with the earlier historians that the early public library functioned as an educational agency intended primarily for the working class, but they disagreed about the library’s underlying purpose.

According to the revisionist perspective, as exemplified in the work of M. H. Harris (1973), the founders of the Boston Public Library were more concerned about maintaining the social and economic status quo than they were in extending education for democracy (Nauratil, 1985, p. 4).

John Buschman (1998) divided library history period into three eras. The first era began with the establishment of the first public libraries and continued until the late 1930s. This was the era when the public library was viewed as the people’s university, and education was seen as the key to progress and prosperity (Buschman, 1998, pp. 17-18). This era was defined by the assumption by librarians of the self-appointed “role as guardians against ‘bad’ reading” (Wiegand, 1988, p. 72). This was the milieu in which the library adult education movement flourished. With due recognition of revisionist history, “it is historically accurate to characterize
libraries as public institutions founded upon a long-held public consensus—however authoritarian—to equalize educational and self-improvement opportunity for the working poor” (Buschman, 1998, p. 18).

The second era, the era of intellectual freedom, began in the 1930s in response to the censorship and book burning of the Nazi regime in Germany (Wiegand, 1988, pp. 72-73). Harris asserted that “a new philosophy of public library service in America” emerged during this era and librarians assumed a new role as “guardians of the people’s right to know” (1973, p. 2514). Harris also linked this period to the development of a pluralist perspective in librarianship. This ethos operated on the assumption that “all Americans are free to think as they choose” (Harris, 1986, p. 215). This ethos compelled librarians to support the First Amendment and the Library Bill of Rights. Librarians maintained their commitment to intellectual freedom by adopting a neutral stance to the contents of the library’s collections and the provision of services (Harris, 1986, p. 215).

M. H. Harris (1973) asserted that this new view of the library’s purpose was very appealing to many librarians. First, it confirmed the library faith, the belief in the book as the remedy for all social ills. Second, the library’s neutral stance allowed librarians to shift the responsibility for library use to patrons. Neutrality allowed librarians to feel justified in their passive approach to library service (Harris, 1973, p. 2514). On the other hand, library adult educators strongly supported intellectual freedom but believed that many adults (especially undereducated adults) needed guidance. Library adult educators did not propose to tell patrons what to read or how they should think, but they did suggest important issues and topics for their consideration. Library adult educators were not strictly neutral in their approach to library service.

Although the new role of guardian of the right to know had many advantages, it did not receive the wholehearted commitment of the profession. Harris saw this role as just the latest in a “recurring cycle of fitful and outer-directed . . . crusades” (1976, p. 284). Harris contended that
the library profession lacked a clear purpose because librarians had relinquished their responsibility for defining their role in society. Philanthropic organizations tried to influence the mission of the public library, and governmental agencies assigned the public library various missions throughout its history. These missions included serving as a means of self-education for the working class, socializing the flood of immigrants at the turn of the century, promoting patriotism during World War One, helping to preserve democracy in World War II, and reaching out to the undereducated and economically disadvantaged in the 1960s (Nauratil, 1985, p. 7).

When the need that created each mission was met or simply disappeared, the public library "reverted to a mindless focus on technical and bureaucratic matters" (Harris, 1976, p. 284). Public librarians were not fully committed to these missions; there was some element of resistance to missions imposed from outside the profession no matter how desirable the role might appear.

Concern about the public library grew during the 1960s when traditional values were questioned and all public institutions were seen as defenders of a corrupt and socially unjust status quo. The social forces that had dictated the earlier roles of the public library had disappeared and new forces were driving the social changes that affected the library (Nauratil, 1985, p. 8). Shifting demographic patterns and advances in science and technology were seen as "the two most dynamic forces" creating social changes that impacted libraries (Lacy, 1969, p. 3). There were many more opportunities for formal education. The public library's role as the resource center for the self-advancement of economically disadvantaged individuals was largely displaced by the emergence of tax-supported community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities (Nauratil, 1985, p. 8). The words of one librarian eloquently expressed the concern of librarians in the late 1960s: "We have inherited a situation in which libraries of various kinds had 'arrived' out of historical accident to a large extent, the forces or circumstances which gave them both birth and raison d'être having to a greater or lesser extent passed away, leaving them largely lacking in sense of purpose or clear direction" (Caldwell, 1968, p. 217).
Conflicting Paradigms

The financial stringency of the 1970s, demands for public accountability, and growing professional concern about the lack of a socially viable purpose set the stage for the clash of two conflicting perspectives of the public library’s purpose. Since the early 1970s “two seemingly incompatible perspectives have been contending for the soul of librarianship” (Raymond, 1997, p. 1). The first perspective, known as the service paradigm, is based on the library faith and is exemplified in the former Librarian of Congress D. Boorstin’s assertion that “the autonomous reader is the be-all and end-all of our libraries” (Boorstin, 1982, p. 1379). The second perspective, the information paradigm, is “distinguished by a focus on libraries as providers of ‘information’” (Raymond, 1997, p. 1). The conflict between the library service and information paradigms has been intertwined with concerns about the nation’s productivity and its ability to compete in the global economy.

Some writers have characterized the 1980s as the beginning of “the Era of the New Public Philosophy” (Buschman, 1998, p. 21). John Buschman saw the 1980s as the beginning of a new period in librarianship, a period influenced by the New Public Philosophy (1998, p. 21). W. F. Birdsall used another phrase to describe the new public philosophy—“the ideology of information technology” (1997, p. 54). The philosophy or ideology was based on free market values, less government interference, deregulation, and privatization of traditional public services (Birdsall, 1997, p. 54). On the societal level the new philosophy of economic instrumentality has clashed with humanist perspectives and the traditional egalitarian ideal.

The Origins of the Service Paradigm

“The original formulation of the functions of libraries was built around the activities of organizing, preserving, and circulating texts, in addition to providing a variety of auxiliary services to library users” (Raymond, 1997, p. 1). Its roots go back to antiquity and the establishment of the first libraries. Preservation and organization were the first functions of libraries. “Originally libraries were virtually indistinguishable from archives” (Raymond, 1997, p. 1).
The mission of the great library of Alexandria was “to collect every book written in Greek as well as the sacred and famous works of people outside of the OIKUMENE” (Wellisch, 1994, p. 19). The Alexandria Library also served as a research facility for a select group of scholars. In ancient Greece and Rome, libraries often “served as archival depositories for the priesthood,” but there were also libraries open to the general public (Raymond, 1997, p. 3).

The preservation and organization functions remained dominant throughout the medieval period in Europe. Libraries were often found in religious institutions such as monasteries or cathedrals and their use was generally limited to the clergy and religious organizations (Raymond, 1997, p. 3).

As secular literacy increased during the Renaissance, libraries began to appear in royal courts, in universities, and in the homes of the wealthy. Although the library’s clientele had expanded somewhat, the organization and preservation of texts remained the primary functions (Raymond, 1997, p. 3). In the 16th century Martin Luther advocated the creation of libraries. Luther believed that reading the Bible and other religious works contributed to the redemption of people’s souls and that “no effort or expense should be spared to provide good libraries or book repositories” (as cited in Raymond, 1997, p. 3).

The custodial role of libraries did not change significantly until the modern era. By the mid-19th century churches in England allowed literate parishioners to use the book collections once restricted to the clergy. Private collections were used to promote religious and moral education. Advocates of publicly funded libraries were convinced “that the reading of uplifting books would be a powerful tool in the hand of the virtuous; books could be used to improve the moral and educational level of the population and to spread useful knowledge among the lower classes” (Raymond, 1997, p. 3).

The belief in the power of books and reading was also strong in mid-19th century America. The public library’s educational, cultural, and socializing role was becoming widely accepted in the United States. Andrew Carnegie’s belief in the importance of libraries as the
peoples' universities led him to donate millions of dollars for the construction of library buildings. The public library carried out a number of important tasks—among them helping to ensure a literate industrial workforce and to acculturate a flood of new immigrants (Raymond, 1997, p. 4).

The essence of the library's service paradigm was embodied in the Boston Public Library's policy statement. The founders of the Boston Public Library believed that the future of American democracy was "directly dependent upon the education of its citizenry" (Raymond, 1997, p. 4). The public library was seen as "one of the principal constituents of the educational system" (Raymond, 1997, p. 4). Reading as a form of self-education was encouraged. The trustees of the Boston Public Library thought "reading ought to be furnished to all, as a matter of public policy and duty, on the same principle" that free education was furnished to children (Harris, 1984, p. 226). It was important that as many adults as possible understood issues and questions that affected the "very foundations of social order" (Harris, 1984, p. 226).

Over time the librarians began to resist the didacticism of the public library's mission. Librarians were not comfortable with the idea of telling adults what they should read or what they should think. Dissatisfaction with the prescriptive role was reflected in the debate over the inclusion of popular fiction in the public library's collection. By the 1890s librarians had rejected the notion that popular fiction did not belong in the public library's collection and were beginning to abandon "the claims to moral powers" (Raymond, 1997, p. 4).

The public services aspect of the service paradigm began to take shape with the work of W. S. Learned. In 1924 Learned identified the accepted and emerging functions of public librarianship as preservation, information, and guidance (Monroe, 1963, p. 445). The organization and preservation function dated back to antiquity. The information function as embodied in reference service began in the 1880s with the development of tools such as indexes and guides for locating information. Reference service consisted of "supplying information and sources of information" (Lee, 1966, p. 27). Guidance was personal assistance in locating and
selecting books (Lee, 1966, p. 27). S. W. Green presented the first detailed description of a program of reader's guidance in a paper read at the first ALA conference in 1876. Guidance gradually became an accepted practice. By the 1920s public librarians began to view themselves as facilitators of learning and expert guides who could assist adults in selecting suitable books on topics that interested them (Raymond, 1997, p. 4). Guidance evolved into the readers' advisory service, and guidance was recognized as one of the library's principal responsibilities (Lee, 1966, p. 23).

In 1955 the public services paradigm was expanded. Samuel Rothstein added another function, instruction. Instruction also called bibliographic instruction, was the teaching of library use skills such as how to use the card catalog and how to locate and select books and other materials in the library's collection. Rothstein identified three of the basic public service functions (information, instruction, and guidance), but limited their application only to reference work (Dresang, 1982, p. 14). Library use instruction was most often found in academic libraries and school libraries. This type of service was seldom provided in public libraries (American Library Association, 1926-1927, p. 110).

In the early 1960s M. E. Monroe conceptualized the public services paradigm as a framework for the study of public library service and the evolution of library adult education. Monroe's conception of public library service functions was based on the earlier work of Learned (1924) and Rothstein (1955). To these three functions, Monroe added a fourth function, "stimulation." Monroe argued that stimulation had always existed in public librarianship, but it was not recognized until the library adult education movement emphasized its importance. Monroe wrote the following:

The library adult education movement between 1924 and 1955 built a philosophy and a body of services to document the fourth major commitment: stimulation of the community to awareness of personal and community needs and of the library materials in
which socially significant ideas and the substance for meeting these needs were to be found. (1963, p. 445)

Monroe extended the concept of four basic functions to all public service objectives—reference, education, recreation, and culture. In other words Monroe considered the four fundamental functions—information, instruction, guidance and stimulation—to be components of every public library service regardless of its objective (Dresang, 1982, p. 13). Rothstein defined reference as “personal assistance given by the librarian to individual readers in pursuit of information” (1955, p. 12). Monroe defined education as “personal assistance with a purpose of teaching and guiding the learning experience” (1979b, p. 129). Recreation was defined as “assistance in pursuit of leisure time activities” and culture, as “personal assistance in relation to developing aesthetic appreciation and enriching personal life” (Monroe, 1979b, p. 129). The library public service paradigm described by Monroe consisted of “four specific functions, contributing to the overall function of library public service with the specific functions varying in emphasis according to the objective for rendering the service or the user’s objective in seeking or needing it” (Dresang, 1982, p. 14). The information and instruction functions were most closely associated with the reference objective. The guidance and stimulation functions played important roles in the educational objective. Monroe emphasized, however, that information and instruction may also be a part of the educational objective, and guidance and stimulation may be used to achieve the reference objective (Dresang, 1982, p. 14).

Various authors proposed models of the library service paradigm. Connie Van Fleet (1990) described the options for library participation in lifelong learning as “a continuum for service provision and professional attitude that moves from a traditional, passive stance to a nontraditional, active one” (p. 200). The term “traditional” referred to the philosophy accepted by the majority of the profession. Although library history documents that there were many attempts by advocates to create a more dynamic role for public libraries in adult learning, their ideas were often ignored or dismissed by the profession as a whole (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 200). L. E. Birge
(1981) asserted that those activities requiring "the least active intervention in the learning process and personal involvement with the learner" were the most widely accepted (p. 3). "Programs requiring more personal involvement and intervention [were] less readily integrated into the library's agenda" (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 200).

At one end of Van Fleet's service continuum was "the simple provision of support materials for the independent learner" (1990, p. 200). The provision of materials allowed librarians to concentrate on a fundamental, traditional area of service. Although the effective provision of materials required "efficient networking for interlibrary loan, anticipation of user needs, and organization for easy access," it was a basic service that required very little personal interaction with individual learners (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 200).

Further along the continuum were "support services for the educational activities of other agencies" (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 200). The passive support role consisted of furnishing "educational materials, meeting facilities, and bibliographies or study guides" (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 200). A more active support role included interagency cooperation and community partnerships. Although librarians had to interact with agency representatives and community leaders to establish working relationships, librarians were still "removed from personal interaction with the learner" (Van Fleet, 1990, pp. 200-201).

Even further along the continuum was the integration of independent library programming for groups into the library's agenda. Library-initiated programming represented significant movement toward a more active educational role. Although there was some controversy concerning the provision of individual versus group services in the 1930s and 1940s, programming for groups has been widely accepted since the end of World War II. Van Fleet suggested that group services gained popularity for a number of reasons. Some were obvious such as their efficient use of existing resources, cost-effectiveness, and ability to be measured quantitatively as in attendance figures. A less obvious reason may have been that group
instruction limited the degree of personal involvement and allowed librarians to distance themselves from learners (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 201).

All of these “types of service provision were widely accepted as fundamental to the library’s educational objective” (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 201). Although these services were valuable, the public library was not realizing its full potential. Jacquelyn Thresher conceptualized a continuum that reflected the public library’s commitment to the informational objective. This continuum moved from “the reactive provision of information only as it was requested, to the anticipatory gathering and provision of information through public information programs, to the active process of linking learners with needed services through I&R service, to the provision of advising and consulting services” (Thresher, 1981, p. 38). While many libraries were slowly moving along this continuum as they developed services in an evolutionary way, other libraries, such as those in the Adult Independent Learning (AIL) Project, attempted to “revolutionize the profession of librarianship by redefining the role of librarians to be learners’ advisors” (Thresher, 1981, p. 38).

Van Fleet noted that learners’ advisory services and consulting services both required more interaction and personal involvement with adult learners. However, they were more effective in linking the adult learner with a broad array of educational and informational resources (1990, p. 201). Birge viewed advisory and consulting services as an opportunity for the library “to reemphasize its long tradition of concern for the individual” at a time when technological advances were creating “greater depersonalization of many aspects of community public service” (1981, p. 4).

Monroe (1976) proposed a model that moved the public library from the provision of requested materials to participation in interagency cooperation to establishment as an independent community learning center and ultimately to leadership of a community task force for solving problems and formulating policies (pp. 56-58). Monroe’s model took libraries one step beyond what Thresher considered to be the most assertive role—“serving as advocates for adult learners
and learning, endeavoring to become true centers of lifelong learning from early childhood education to pre-retirement planning” (Thresher, 1981, p. 38). In Monroe’s model the public library would move beyond the passive provision of information to individuals to help them cope with a changing world to a dynamic role as a change-agent devoted to bringing about change starting at the local level (1976, pp. 56-58). Few if any public libraries reached the final step in Monroe’s model because this service continuum required a revolutionary change in public librarians’ attitudes.

The traditional service paradigm recognized that different types of libraries performed different functions. “Conserving the total graphic record of mankind (texts, images, and the like) was the primary responsibility” of major national, regional archives and research libraries and university libraries (Raymond, 1997, p. 5). “The function of informing clearly defined groups” such as scientists and engineers was “the domain of information centers and some special libraries” (Raymond, 1997, p. 5). School and college libraries were responsible for providing educational materials and services designed to support the curricula and to advance the educational goals of their parent institutions. Public libraries performed the socially useful functions of “encouraging reading, literacy, and the diffusion of commonly-held cultural values” as well as preserving the graphic records of their local communities and informing the general public (Raymond, 1997, p. 5).

The library faith, a concept first articulated by Melvil Dewey and later defined and analyzed by the Public Library Inquiry, formed the ideological underpinning of the service paradigm. In the book Innovation and the Library, library professor V. L. Pungitore wrote about the power of the library faith to unite the profession.

If there is a single professional value that has united public librarians across the decades, working in institutions large and small, living in communities urban and rural, and serving in leadership and non-leadership roles in the profession, that value is embodied in the concept of the library faith. The familiar motto, “the right book for the right person at
the right time” or its variant, “the best books for the most people at the least cost,” are outward expressions of this faith that guided the work of public librarians through the Depression, World War II, and the postwar era. Even the intrusion of sound recordings, films, filmstrips, and other nonprint media into public library collections was unable to dislodge the librarian from his or her profound faith in the educational, civilizing, and democratizing value of libraries, books, and reading. (Pungitore, 1995, pp. 49-50)

The library faith and its nineteenth century ideals came into conflict with the reality of the post-World War II era. The Public Library Inquiry represented the first important critique of the service paradigm and the public library ideology on which it was based. The inquiry ignited an enduring philosophical argument in public librarianship when Robert Leigh and Oliver Garceau questioned the effectiveness and appropriateness of the library faith in a postwar world (Raber, 1997, p. 67). The inquiry concluded that “the legitimacy of the public library, and therefore the status and strength of the library profession, had suffered from an inappropriate and no longer effective set of guiding ideas” (Raber, 1997, p. 79). However, Leigh and Garceau did not suggest that the library faith be abandoned, but that it should be adapted to practical political and economic realities (Raber, 1997, p. 80).

The essence of the library faith, the belief in the educational value of books and reading, was still powerful in the late 1940s, but the service-to-all ethos placed an unrealistic burden on the public library’s limited resources. Bernard Berelson attempted to give the library profession an attainable and socially worthwhile goal. The professional leadership chose to reject Berelson’s recommendation and to reaffirm the traditional ideals of service. “Rather than choosing to focus on ‘opinion leaders,’ librarians renewed their commitment to an egalitarian mission and formulated new strategies to help libraries move closer to realizing goals which the Public Library Inquiry had shown to be out of pace with reality” (Maack, 1994, p. 78).

Noted adult education professor C. O. Houle observed that librarians had long ago accepted “the idea that books are potent when put to use in the lives of people” (1957, p. 766).
Houle also spoke of the librarian's "underlying sense of purpose and dedication in using the materials of communication to improve individuals and the society in which they live" (1957, p. 766). Library adult educators recognized the potential power of the ideas contained in books and developed techniques to put this power to use. Under the auspices of adult education, librarians developed services that used the facts, ideas, and descriptions of human experiences in library materials to enrich and broaden the education of adults from a variety of backgrounds (Monroe, 1963, p. 490). The librarian's faith in the power of books and reading to change people's attitudes and habits was "transformed into a positive program for libraries to guide, stimulate, and promote public use of public libraries materials for educational ends" (Leigh, 1950, p. 19).

Library professor and consultant L. A. Martin believed that adult education was the embodiment of the librarian's faith in books and reading. In the opening chapter of *Local Public Library Administration*, Martin (1964) wrote that the public library's purpose can be summed up in two words—"continuing education" (p. 1). Martin noted that reading was an important element of continuing education, but the public library was much more than a place for reading. It also provided "another ingredient of continuing education—accurate and up-to-date information. A good newspaper gives the facts of the day; a good library gives the facts of our time" (Martin, 1964, p. 1). The public library represented both a place for reading and a place for obtaining the information people needed to carry out their work, family, civic, and personal responsibilities. Martin conceded that most adults did not continue their education in the formal sense, serious reading was becoming something of a lost art, and the public library certainly was not the only agency of continuing education. "Yet in its individual, modest, steady way, the public library is pre-eminent [sic] as an agency of education. Each visit to the library is a small event, simply an individual stopping for a brief period at the fountain of accumulated knowledge" (Martin, 1964, p. 3).

In the paper "Public Libraries in Transition: Ideals, Strategies, and Research," M. N. Maack asserted that "the 'belief system' of public librarians was reaffirmed and refined without
being significantly altered” (1994, p.75). The library profession continued to adhere to what was viewed by many as an overly idealistic professional ideology that emphasized the moral prescription of service to all. V. L. Pungitore (1989) agreed with Maack’s thesis. “Public libraries continued, well into the 1970s, their attempts to provide services and programming that they hoped would reach every individual and group they were chartered to serve” (p. 29).

Maack (1994) documented the position of the public library leadership as presented in key ALA documents and publications. Six years after the completion of the inquiry, the standards document *Public Library Service: Minimum Standards for Public Library Systems* was published. The Public Library Inquiry’s critique of the profession’s professional belief system and its emphasis on service to all was almost completely ignored in the formulation of the 1956 standards (Maack, 1994, p. 78).

*Public Library Service* did not include any grandiose language on the social role of the public library, but the first guiding principle left no doubt that the service-to-all ethos was alive and well: “*Public library service should be universally available. Free and universal provision for library service is in keeping with the ideal of opportunity for every individual*” (Public Library Division, 1956, p. 13). The two standards that accompanied the first principle stated “(1) every individual shall have free library service available in his local community; (2) every individual shall have access through his local outlet to the full range of modern library facilities provided by regional, state, and Federal agencies” (Public Library Division, 1956, pp. 13-14). The concept of resource sharing through networks was advocated in the second principle which stated, “There should be a community library easily accessible to every reader, and it should connect him with the total resources of the region and state” (Public Library Division, 1956, p. 14). The systems concept was “the cornerstone of the 1956 document”; the formation of library systems was seen “as a means of extending and equalizing service” to all segments of the community (Maack, 1994, p. 79).
The 1966 standards also endorsed the creation of library systems. The concept of larger units of service, first proposed in the 1948 National Plan, "became an important strategy in achieving greater equalization of service to economically or geographically disadvantaged communities" (Maack, 1994, p. 83). As members of cooperative systems, many small rural and urban libraries were able to provide a broader range of services and resources to their users. Although considerable progress was made in extending and improving library services and facilities in the years between 1948 and 1968, the public library's strategy to achieve greater equalization of service to underserved communities was not as successful as the library community had hoped (Maack, 1994, p. 83). Although cooperative systems were becoming fairly commonplace by the late 1960s, they did not have a significant impact on library use among nontraditional clienteles. The 1967 Gallup Poll (part of the Mendelsohn and Wingerd study) commissioned by the National Advisory Commission on Libraries found that only 30% of adults had used any public library within the past three months. Library users still fitted the profile described in Berelson's study; they represented the upper middle class rather than a broad cross section of the general public (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. 78).

The social climate of the 1960s had a powerful influence on the philosophy of key documents in librarianship. Libraries at Large, the resource book published by the National Advisory Commission on Libraries in 1969, reflected the ideals of the "Great Society" and its commitment to helping the underprivileged segments of the population. Chairman D. M. Knight wrote in the preface that the commission's work was characterized by a central theme: "a concern that every individual in our society be provided with library and informational services adequate to his current and emerging needs" (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. ix). The commission recognized that the national interest demanded that social-cultural institutions respond to the needs of those "people in pockets of illiteracy" as well as those "people in the vanguards of intellectual achievement" (Knight & Nourse, 1969, p. ix).
In the first chapter of Libraries at Large, D. M. Lacy identified five priorities for all libraries:

1. To support formal education
2. To sustain the increasing complex operations of the Government and the economy of the country
3. To provide opportunities for continuing self-education and retraining
4. To play a role in the reintegration into the society of groups now largely isolated and excluded by their lacks [sic] in education and training
5. To provide resources for an informed public opinion and for personal cultural and intellectual growth and individuation (Lacy, 1969, p. 18).

In the fourth priority Lacy called for “the library to become an active force for social integration” (Maack, 1994, p. 79). Social integration was a major objective of the “Great Society.” Inclusiveness was the central value expressed in the library service to all ideal. The fifth priority resembled “the concept of the ‘civic library’ as it had been articulated by members of the Public Library Inquiry team” (Maack, 1994, p. 79).

In the book Library Response to Urban Change: A Study of the Chicago Public Library, L. A. Martin’s description of the public library’s role in the urban community reflected a modern, more realistic interpretation of the library faith.

A library does not stop riots or remove physical deterioration or eradicate prejudice. But an effective library, in its modest way, helps to get at the root causes of the urban problem: people unprepared to take their place in the economic order and people divided by lack of understanding. And an effective library serves to sustain the quality of life for all, not in utilitarian matters alone but also in the fulfillment of mind and spirit. (L. A. Martin, 1969, p. xiii)

As the economy became the focus of the nation’s attention in the 1970s, the question of the appropriateness of 19th-century library beliefs in the latter part of the 20th century became an
issue for debate. The service paradigm and the ideology on which it was based came under increasing criticism. Public libraries were criticized for their seeming lack of purpose. Critics argued that the public library in its attempt to serve multiple purposes had extended its resources so far that it failed to achieve any of them. The public library was criticized as “serving no real purpose at all in today’s world (Pungitore, 1989, p. 36). M. J. Bundy’s criticism of the public library was particularly harsh.

In sum, [sic] the public library remains a basically purposeless agency with relatively weak resources, diversified commitments, and fundamental biases which severely circumscribe its effectiveness. In these circumstances, [sic] it is little wonder that the library does not function in any of the ideal roles to which it aspires, as intellectual beacon, as information center, or as adult education agency. . . . (1967a, p.382)

Economist and public library critic L. J. White (1983) stated “In the absence of specific goals, the public library traditionally has tried to be all things to all people” (p. 9). White observed that “this attitude was epitomized by the American Library Association’s Minimum Standards for Public Library Systems, 1966, in which ‘service to all’ was enshrined as the goal of public libraries” (1983, p. 9). White listed some of the roles that the public library had tried to fulfill and asserted that the public library had not performed particularly well in most of them. White stated, “The public library has never been an important force in adult education; even specifically focused independent-learner programs have not had widespread or continuing consequences. The public library has had only a minor role in dealing with adult functional illiteracy” (1983, p. 9). White concluded that the public library has been primarily “a lending library, a research resource for students (who have continued to use it, despite the restrictions placed on them), and a reading-encouragement center for children” (1983, p. 9).

The public library also had its defenders. C. O. Houle was one of the strongest advocates and apologists of the public library. In a 1974 paper entitled “The Public Library’s Role in
Non-Traditional Study,” Houle observed that the public library was often criticized because it was said to lack a central guiding purpose. Houle’s articulation of the library’s purpose clearly supported the concept of service to all, particularly as it related to the library’s role as a resource for self-directed learning.

The most straightforward and obvious view of the policy of the public library is that it should be readily available to everyone in the community, regardless of his or her personal characteristics, who wants to take advantage of its services . . . . The concept of openness of access to virtually everyone with freedom of choice to the individual or the group to build a personally-desired program of reading is the central policy of the public library and all other approaches take for granted and build upon this solid foundation. (Houle, 1974, p.20)

The public library leadership was not comfortable with the traditional ideology of the library faith. The Public Library Inquiry had made the leadership acutely aware that a huge gap existed between the theory and practice of public librarianship. The strategies of consolidation, federal funding, and resource sharing had not closed the gap. “The knowledge of discrepancies between belief and action could not be ignored” (Maack, 1994, p. 91). By 1972 the public library community was forced to acknowledge that libraries were failing to reach the unserved despite “a period of significant growth in funding, staff, resources, and facilities” (Maack, 1994, p. 84). In A Strategy for Public Library Change, A. B. Martin asserted that the gap between the ideal of service to all and the reality of practice, instead of growing narrower, was growing wider (1972, p. 31). Essays and articles in the library literature of early 1970s called for reassessment of the library’s goals and objectives and a change in direction. “In reassessing the ideology of the field—both at the level of belief and actions—the issue of service to all as a source of professional legitimacy simply had to be confronted” (Maack, 1994, p. 91).

The leadership found itself in a quandary—whether to adopt a more rational approach and formulate achievable goals or continue to cling to the overly idealist goal of service to all
Although choosing the rational approach would seem to many people to have been the appropriate response, it would have placed the public library field in opposition to the then “prevailing national ideology of democratic egalitarianism at a time when the country itself was questioning its failure to realize its egalitarian goals rather than abandoning the ideals of Jeffersonian democracy” (Maack, 1994, p. 91). If the leadership abandoned the service to all ideal in favor of a more rational approach (such as that proposed in the Public Library Inquiry), it would have created a firestorm of controversy as most of the profession still adamantly supported this aspect of the library faith in word, if not in deed. From a political standpoint, the rejection of the egalitarian ideal would have made the need for continued federal funding more difficult to justify.

Respondents in A. B. Martin’s 1972 survey of the public library field reiterated the centrality of the service-to-all ethos. In the section dealing with public library goals, “librarians emphasized ‘service to all’ and stressed the importance of reaching the unserved” (1972, p. 46). In answer to the question about the unique role of the public library, the first response was “free service to all without question of user purpose” (1972, p. 20).

Library leaders recognized that social realities demanded an adjustment, but abandoning the library faith did not seem be a politically expedient move. Instead of forsaking the service-to-all ideal, library leaders chose to make an adjustment in terms of strategy rather than in ideology. During the 1970s the leadership of the Public Library Association attempted to devise strategies that would enable the public library to reach a greater proportion of its community (Maack, 1994, p. 91). Maack suggested that the development of the planning process for public libraries was one of those strategies.

While the PLA leadership was discussing the development of strategies to reach nonusers, the Standards Committee was working on a revision of the 1966 standards. Soon discussions surrounding the development of new strategies and new standards merged, and ideas derived from both discussions formed the basis for the concept of community-based standards.
(Maack, 1994). The public library leadership adopted the position that because the public library had “the responsibility to serve the total community rather than a specific clientele,” the development of new standards “must flow from the needs of actual and potential users rather than from the needs of the institution” (Public Library Association, 1979, p. 10). After much discussion and debate, the PLA Standards Committee concluded that no single set of standards would be workable for all public libraries. Public libraries varied greatly in terms of size, material and human resources, and community needs. Instead, the committee recommended that PLA develop a planning process that would allow each public library to determine its own goals based on the specific needs of its community and the library’s resources (Maack, 1994, p. 85).

The PLA Goals, Guidelines, and Standards Committee recognized that a research study would be needed to develop a planning process for public libraries. The Standards Committee prepared a research proposal entitled “The Process of Standards Development for Community Library Services: A Proposed Research Study” for approval by the PLA Board of Directors. The proposal was approved and submitted to the United States Office of Education. In August 1977 the Office of Education awarded PLA a grant to fund the development of the first planning process manual for public libraries (Maack, 1994, p. 85).

As development of the planning process would take some time to accomplish, the PLA Goals, Guidelines, and Standards Committee issued an interim document entitled The Public Library Mission Statement and Its Imperatives for Service. The service to all ideal was clearly evident in the document’s statement on total egalitarianism, which mandated the active provision of public library service and materials to the entire community.

Correlative to our practical acceptance of the equality of all citizens is the need of all people for access to the record of human experience. Society needs an agency that can actively bring every person regardless of age, education, language, religion, ethnic and cultural background, and mental and physical health, [sic] into effective contact with the human record. (Public Library Association, 1979, p. 3)
The service-to-all ideal was also reflected in the expanded definitions of the terms *access* and *community*. The meaning of the term *access* was enlarged to include new delivery techniques designed to "overcome geographic, educational, physical, and psychological barriers, as well as convenient location and schedule" (Public Library Association, 1979, p. 5). The Mission Statement's definition of the term *community* seemed to be "an implicit rejection of Berelson's recommendation to focus on opinion leaders" (Maack, 1994, p. 81). "Community means . . . not only the narrow group of often middle-class, educated people who are the traditional library users but everyone, rich and poor, uneducated and illiterate, majority and minority, young and old, disabled and nondisabled, eager and apathetic" (Public Library Association, 1979, p. 5). Maack observed that "nearly thirty years after the Public Library Inquiry was completed, the Mission Statement not only reaffirmed the ideal of 'service to all,' but also strengthened it by making the goal of service to minorities, the disabled, and other unserved populations explicit rather than implicit" (1994, p. 81).

L. J. White observed that resolutions approved at the 1979 White House Conference on Library and Information Services indicated that "the basic instinct of the public library to try to be all things to all people is still powerful" (1983, pp. 10-11). Resolution A-5 "Access to Library and Information Services" stated that libraries and information services were obligated to reach out to all persons especially those individuals and groups who were unserved and underserved. The resolution concluded with the following statement:

Therefore be it resolved, that barriers to such services whether legal, fiscal, technical, attitudinal, environmental, cultural, geographic, or other, must be eliminated, and that physical facilities and staff must be capable of providing services to all segments of society, and . . . that Federal legislation be enacted to guarantee the right of equal access to all publicly-held information for all citizens, and . . . that a national public policy to promote universal library and information services be adopted. (White House Conference on Library and Information Services [WHCLIS], 1980, pp. 43-44)
L. J. White also observed something new in public library discourse. This resolution along with others approved at the White House Conference and statements in the Public Library Association's *Mission Statement* were "indicative of a new emphasis by the public library on the provision of (free) information to the public as the primary social function of public libraries" (White, 1983, p. 11).

*The Emergence of the Information Paradigm*

The information paradigm emerged as a result of societal changes and rapid advances in science and technology. The roots of the information paradigm go back to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. As the nation's economy shifted from an agricultural base to an industrial base, a new and different library clientele began to emerge. "This clientele consisted mainly of engineers, managers, technologists, businessmen, government officials and scientists" (Raymond, 1997, p. 6). Their work required access to specific factual data. Information centers and special libraries "that contained primarily technical and other narrowly defined collections" arose to meet the specialized needs of scientists, engineers, and other experts (Raymond, 1997, p. 6). Growth in scientific and industrial research grew at a steady pace throughout the first four decades of the twentieth century. With the advent of World War II, scientific research and technological development exploded (Lacy, 1969, p. 6).

The information paradigm was "a by-product of the major growth in scientific and industrial research" during and after World War II (Raymond, 1997, p. 1). The explosive growth in research and development created an "unprecedented need for the provision of immediate factual as well as bibliographic data" to support the research activities of science, government, and industry (Raymond, 1997, p. 1). Information centers and special libraries quickly multiplied to become integral components of industrial, business, and government agencies (Harris, 1984, pp. 263-264).

Van Fleet and Wallace (2002) asserted that the library science field began a gradual shift toward the information paradigm sometime prior to the 1960s. They wrote the following:
This change was an outgrowth of the convergence of a variety of factors, including the documentation movement with its emphasis on alternatives to print-on-paper, the introduction of electronic digital computers, the solidification of efforts to make the word science meaningful in the expression library science, and the acceptance of an appropriately accredited master's degree as the preferred professional credential for librarians. (p. 104)

The organization presently known as the American Society for Information Science and Technology had its origins in the American Documentation Institute (ADI) founded in 1937 (Van Fleet & Wallace, 2002, p. 104). ADI reflected the European influence of the “documentalist (and bibliometrist) disciplines, which emphasized the need to develop scientific principles governing the storage and retrieval of information” (Debons, Horne, & Cronenweth, 1988, p. 9).

In the early 1950s the research and development activities of the federal government, the military, and the industrial sector fueled the development of information science. The federal government’s Scientific and Technical Information (STI) program provided funding for the development of the nation’s scientific knowledge base. The STI program, “a direct result of Sputnik and other Soviet technological advances” was the catalyst for reexamining “how scientific information was propagated and disseminated” (Debons et al., 1988, p. 9). The military provided a powerful stimulus in the Command-Control-Communication Systems program, an information system designed “to support the deployment of US military forces and firepower in the event of an attack on the United States” (Debons et al., 1988, p. 10). The National Science Foundation, the research arm of the federal government, solicited and supported research relevant to information science. The industrial sector stimulated the development of information science through research and development projects in the application “of existing information to the problems of managerial planning, operation, and control” (Debons et al., 1988, p. 11).

The first International Congress on Information System Science was held in 1961. Participants in the conference represented a wide range of disciplines (Debons et al., 1988, p. 11).
In the mid-1960s “computer technology achieved a level of efficiency that made it cost-effective for handling massive bibliographic data such as Machine Readable Cataloguing” (Raymond, 1997, p. 6). The new technology transformed information centers and special libraries affiliated with business and industry into “high-tech special libraries” and their professional personnel into “professional information managers” (Raymond, 1997, pp. 6-7).

By the late 1960s ADI members recognized that “the purposes and methods of documentation that led to the founding of the ADI were no longer fully relevant” (Van Fleet & Wallace, 2002, p. 104). The organization changed its name to the American Society of Information Science (ASIS) in 1968 (Van Fleet & Wallace, 2002, p. 104). Its membership was drawn from numerous disciplines. Subject areas of interest to information scientists as identified in the Journal of the American Society of Information Science in the years between 1979 and 1986 ranged from acquisition to user studies (Debons et al., 1988, p. 13). The major areas of interest pertained to “the logistical (acquisition, storage, and retrieval) properties and requirements of knowledge” (Debons et al., 1988, p. 12). In 2000 the American Society of Information Science added the term technology to its name to reflect the central role technology plays in the field of information science (Van Fleet & Wallace, 2002, p. 104).

As early as the mid-1960s, proponents of the service paradigm observed a noticeable shift toward the information paradigm as scientific and technical information became a commodity. M. E. Monroe observed that the demand for library service was “highly purposeful in terms of economic opportunity and ability” and expressed concern that information for economic development might overshadow other important library functions (1966, p. 1370). Monroe cautioned, “if libraries are to remain more than information centers and research centers, if they are to remain cultural centers for the experience with books, films, and art, then we must ensure the wide availability of the materials—together with the stimulation and guidance to their use which has made libraries stand in the minds and hearts of some of our intellectual leaders as a great spiritual resource” (1966, p. 1370). Although the development of regional networks offered
great potential for improved library services, they would emphasize information and research. The development of regional networks could result in the local public library losing touch with its community. The availability of professional service, community oriented collections, literacy programs, and library skills programs at local units remained an important part of community library service (Monroe, 1966, p. 1370).

The groundwork for the emerging information paradigm in librarianship was prepared "when a series of new theoretical constructs appeared in the writings of Bell, Licklider, and Lancaster" (Raymond, 1997, p. 7). Their writings contained early statements of key concepts such as "information society," "information retrieval," and "paperless society." Many of the information paradigm's postulates were based on Daniel Bell's (1973) assertion that theoretical knowledge and technology would become the central structural components of postindustrial society. Machine technology had been the base for industrial society, but intellectual technology or information would form the foundation of postindustrial society. Librarians were excited by the potential of the proposed information society because they considered information to be their turf (Raymond, 1997, p. 7).

W. T. Knox, chairman of the Committee on Scientific and Technical Information of the Federal Council for Science and Technology, observed that "the sweeping national interest in research and engineering in the physical sciences as an instrument of national security and of economic growth... is transforming the operations of the information industry" (1968, p. 721). Three factors contributed to this transformation—the tremendous volume of information, the demand for the efficient delivery of scientific and technical information, and revolutionary changes in information technology (Knox, 1968, p. 721). C. A. Cuadra (1969) noted that the rapid developments in the sciences, engineering, and technology were affecting libraries not only in terms of the quantity and type of information they generated, but also in the "range and character of the user demands they generated" (p. 760).
Knox warned the library community that, while the traditional storehouse-of-knowledge concept was still valid for some fields of knowledge, it was outdated and outmoded in the fields of science and technology. Knox emphasized that current and future demands dictated that libraries “dedicate themselves to the active exploitation of recorded knowledge and . . . pay relatively less attention to the acquisition and storage of information and more to those parts of the service which will promote the active use of information” (1968, p. 22). This was especially true for university and research libraries.

Cuadra (1969) emphasized that the new technologies—computers, micrographics, telecommunications, audiovisual systems—and new publication techniques such as photocomposition were “certain to bring about major changes in the ways information is generated, disseminated, processed, stored, transformed, and retrieved” (p. 760). Cuadra urged librarians to embrace the new technologies not only to meet current needs but “to help create new needs to be satisfied” (1969, p. 760). In a rapidly evolving technological society, service-oriented agencies had to create new needs for their services in order to avoid obsolescence. Cuadra cautioned that, if the library did not create the need for new services, it could “justifiably be suspected of being out of touch with its users and perhaps out of touch with reality” (1969, p. 760). If the library wanted to be a viable institution in the future, it had to be willing to accept new challenges and move beyond the familiar, comfortable roles of the past. This message was particularly pertinent to public libraries that tended to lag behind academic and corporate libraries in the adoption of new technologies (Cuadra, 1969, p. 760).

Cuadra noted that the library could choose to retain its traditional role but warned of the inevitable consequences of that decision.

It is no way necessary or inevitable that libraries shift the balance of their holdings and services to include microforms, digital information, videotapes, holograms, and other trappings of advanced technology. It is not necessary that libraries shift their concept of operations from circulation toward outright distribution. It is not necessary that libraries
invest in computers and other paraphernalia to provide users with a higher order of access to reference materials. It is not necessary that libraries become elements of networks for rapid identification and provision of material to users, regardless of geographical location. However, these functions are going to take place if the library does not bring them about, some other type of agency will. That agency will then occupy the central role in the information business—the role that was once occupied by the library.

(Cuadra, 1969, p. 767)

The Ideology of Information Technology

W. F. Birdsall (1997) wrote that an ideology of information technology had evolved over the previous two decades and that this ideology was “a conjunction of neo-conservative politics, laissez-faire free market economic values, and technological determinism” (p. 54). Components of this ideology “became evident in the 1970s when the U.S. federal science and technology policy began to emphasize research and development in the private and public sectors that would contribute directly to economic productivity” (Birdsall, 1997, p. 54). This public policy strategy was supported by the predictions of sociologists (most prominently Bell), management experts, and futurists that technology was moving American society from an industrial-based economy to a high-tech, postindustrial, information-based economy. In the 1980s “the convergence of free market values and information technology” was facilitated by the Reagan administration’s advocacy of less government interference through deregulation and the privatization of public services (Birdsall, 1997, p. 54). To increase productivity in a global information economy, proponents of the free-market economic strategy believed that “increasing use of information, more sophisticated technologies for manipulating and distributing it, and the privatization of all means of its production and distribution” were absolutely critical (Birdsall, 1997, p. 54).

The ideology of information technology as described by Birdsall (1997) is “a coalescence of technological determinism, free market values, and neo-conservative politics that advocates radical government deregulation and the withdrawal of support for public services” (p. 52).
Radical deregulation requires that free market values be applied to social and cultural issues that are normally addressed by government or subject to government regulation (Birdsall, 1997, p. 54). In a free market economy without any government regulation, all cultural and social issues are “subordinated to, and resolved by, the marketplace” (Birdsall, 1997, p. 55). As a consequence knowledge is no longer viewed as a public good but is reconceptualized into a commodity for sale on the open market. This reconceptualization of knowledge removes all distinctions among data, information, and knowledge. Data, information, and knowledge are consolidated into “a vague all-encompassing concept of ‘information’” (Birdsall, 1997, p. 55). Information becomes a commodity that is “marketed directly to consumers through electronic networks” (Birdsall, 1997, p. 55).

*The Conflict of Paradigms Begins*

By the early 1970s the two paradigms with their radically different conceptions of the library’s mission were actively competing with each other for the right to define the nature of the library profession (Raymond, 1997, p. 1). At this point the information paradigm was still in its early stages of development. In its most elementary form, the information paradigm’s message was simple: “everything that libraries handle is ‘information’” (Raymond, 1997, p. 7). There were no distinctions between library and information work; they were one and the same (pp. 6-7).

“The initial appeal of the information paradigm as a new formulation in the 1960s and 1970s was tied to the prospect that new job markets and opportunities would emerge as the information economy expanded” (Apostle, 1997, p. 138). New jobs in the private sector would require a higher level of competence in computer and telecommunications technologies. Jobs in the private sector promised to enhance the professional status of librarians by adding higher paying and more prestigious positions. The profession would be further augmented by interaction with higher status clients and the ability to exert greater influence in public affairs (Apostle, 1997, p. 139). Even work in the traditional settings of the public, school, and academic library would be modified and upgraded by new technologies (Apostle, 1997, p. 140).
The influence of the information paradigm on the structure of the American Library Association was evident in the creation of the Information Science and Automation Division (ISAD) in 1966. ISAD was renamed the Library and Information Technology Association in 1978 (Salmon, 2006). The merger of the Adult Services Division and the Reference Services Division in 1972 was another indication of the growing influence of the information paradigm. The adult educational, cultural, and recreational functions had enjoyed a position of prominence within the association until they were subordinated to the information function in the new Reference and Adult Services Division.

M. E. Monroe and other advocates of the library service paradigm were concerned that information was assuming too much importance in the library field. Monroe noted in the entry on adult services in the 1978 *ALA Yearbook* that “the concepts of cultural and learning centers for public library adult services acted in 1977 as a counterbalance to the overwhelming emphasis on information services” (p. 18).

R. A. Apostle (1997) suggested a number of reasons why the information paradigm became so popular in the library community. It enhanced the image and professional status of librarians working in information centers and special libraries affiliated with business and industry (p. 129). The labels “information professional” and “professional information manager” appealed to younger librarians because these terms were associated with advanced technology and its higher social prestige and greater financial rewards (Apostle, 1997, pp. 129-130). The “information manager” concept promised to free librarians from the “clerical” mindset, and association with technology glamorized the “fussy” image of librarians (Apostle, 1977, p. 131).

The information paradigm emerged at a time when the service paradigm was coming under increasing criticism. J. C. R. Licklider and F. W. Lancaster were two of the foremost critics of the service paradigm and the traditional library it represented. Licklider (1965) thought print was an inefficient and expensive medium for disseminating and storing information. Lancaster (1978) predicted that computer and communication technology would replace paper systems and
render libraries obsolete. Much of the criticism centered on the contention that, by not focusing on the “information” needs of individuals in postindustrial society, the service paradigm had allowed other professions to infringe on the library’s domain. Critics also predicted that the conservation function of libraries would be rendered redundant by electronic-based technology, which was far more efficient in processing information than the print-on-paper technology of the traditional library. Other critics argued that the service paradigm emphasized the library as an institution, rather than focusing on the information needs of people (Raymond, 1997, p. 5).

Librarians came in for their share of criticism. Librarians were seen as too conservative, too concerned with books, and too passive. Critics contended that these characteristics deprived librarians of the “prescriptive authority” enjoyed by other professionals such as doctors and lawyers and caused them to be more closely identified with clerks than professionals. Consequently, librarians were unable to advance in their careers, earn a high income, and enjoy the social status to which their education should have entitled them (Raymond, 1997, p. 5). Critics also charged “that librarians had allowed themselves to become increasingly redundant” in an “information society,” and were therefore “marginalized and doomed to extinction” (Raymond, 1997, p. 5). To avoid this fate, the proponents of the information paradigm asserted that librarians had to become “professional information managers” (Raymond, 1997, p. 5).

All of this came at a time when public libraries were experiencing another identity crisis. The public library community felt that achieving the role of a people’s institution, or at least assuming the identity of one, was critically important. The public library’s identification as a middle-class institution seemed to threaten its survival as a publicly funded institution (Williams, 1988, p. 106). The public library had to change from “a middle class, peripheral institution into a ‘vital agency’ that would provide ‘service to all’ and ‘meet the real needs of real people’” (Williams, 1988, p. 109).

After the educationally based outreach movement of the 1960s proved to be largely ineffective, advocates of library service to the disadvantaged began looking for more effective
and more rewarding forms of service. In October 1971 a conference at the University of Illinois explored innovative approaches to inner-city service. Community information centers quickly became the topic of a much discussion. An editorial in the February 1973 Library Journal reported that “news of community information activity is literally pouring into our offices from around the U.S” (“Community Information,” 1973, p. 487). The service receiving the most publicity was information and referral service (I & R). I & R services were designed to help disadvantaged inner-city residents locate and contact community agencies providing programs, services, and resources. Information and referral service seemed to be the answer to the public library’s quest for a useful, effective service to the inner-city poor. I & R had many advantages—it demonstrated the library’s concern for the disadvantaged, it appealed to funding agencies interested in helping the disadvantaged, and it was a service with quantifiable outcomes (Williams, 1988, p. 105). Many public libraries joined the information and referral services bandwagon in hopes “that information and referral service and community information centers would enable the professional community to plausibly claim that the public library was a people’s institution” (Williams, 1988, p. 106). The adoption of information and referral services was the first step in changing the public library’s central mission.

By mid-1973 reformation of the public library was already under way. Ironically, the people who instigated the revolution were involved in a task that hardly seemed revolutionary—helping the PLA Standards Committee decide whether to update the national standards for public libraries (Williams, 1988, pp. 109-110). The Standards Committee appointed three tasks forces to prepare working papers for the “use and guidance” of the committee. The papers were intended to “provide the committee with a conceptual framework within which to consider the philosophic implications of total community library service” (“Community Library Services,” 1973, pp. 21-22). The three working papers dealing with adult services, children’s services, and young adult services were published in the September 15, 1973, issue of School Library Journal. The working paper by the Task Force on Adult Services was the most important “because it seemed to
offer the solution to the problem—that of defining the new role of the public library as a people’s institution" (Williams, 1988, p. 111). The working paper appeared to provide the philosophical foundation for transforming the “old, passive, peripheral, and middle-class” library into a “new, active, vitally important” library which would serve all the people (Williams, 1988, p. 111).

The key to public library transformation seemed to be “a new conception of information” (Williams, 1988, p. 111). The working paper used a revised definition of the term information. Information included “not only facts and data, but also ideas and the products of man’s creative endeavors” (“Community Library Services,” 1973, p. 23). Since data, facts, and ideas were essential to the economic and social development of all people, the public library could provide an important service by meeting the information needs of the people in its community. The library would perform this new role by ascertaining and analyzing community information resources “in terms of the needs of the people” and developing services to meet those needs. “The working paper thus seemed to break new theoretical ground with its new concept of information” (Williams, 1988, p. 111).

The new concept of information was readily accepted by the public library community. Public librarians were eager to accept almost anything that offered the possibility that the public library might fulfill its philosophical goal of becoming a true people’s institution—and more important, anything that might allow them to escape the terrible fate of marginalization and extinction (Williams, 1988, p. 112).

Another document prepared for the PLA Standards Committee, Blasingame and Lynch’s “Design for Diversity,” adopted the new definition of information as “facts, data, ideas, and products of man’s creative endeavors” but expanded the list of information sources. The authors noted that sources of information included print and audiovisual materials such as books, journals, films, etc, but sources also included people such as “professional advisors, . . . commercial agents, coworkers, . . . family and friends” (Blasingame & Lynch, as cited in Williams, 1988, p. 112-113). They expanded the meaning of community to include two kinds:
place and interest communities. In their discussion of place communities (towns, educational institutions, and businesses), Blasingame and Lynch emphasized the potential importance of the public library as “the most fundamental of the information agencies in a place community” (as cited in Williams, 1988, p. 113). They stressed that the public library’s “primary purpose is to supply information to all people . . . . The public library should be the citizen’s first resort when he has an information need” (as cited in Williams, 1988, p. 113).

The Goals, Guidelines and Standards Committee, formerly the Standards Committee, issued a document entitled “Goals and Guidelines for Community Library Service” in the June 1975 PLA Newsletter (pp. 10-12). This document accorded “official recognition and standing to the position taken in the task force working paper of 1973 and in ‘Design for Diversity’” (Williams, 1988, p. 115). The public library could play an important role by ascertaining, analyzing, and responding to the information needs of its constituents. The Goals Committee believed that the expansion of the informational objective would allow the public library to serve the needs of the entire community, including the nontraditional clienteles such as the poor and minorities (Williams, 1988, p. 115).

A paper presented at the President’s Program at the 1978 midwinter meeting of ALA, “Toward a Conceptual Foundation for a National Information Policy,” stimulated a great deal of discussion and debate throughout the library community. The paper emphasized the important role information played in the American way of life. It urged society to “reaffirm its mandate to its publicly-supported libraries to seek out and deliver to all people the information they need or desire” (Kaser, 1978, pp. 545-546). The document proclaimed a wonderful new role for the public library—universal information service. “All information must be available to all people in all formats purveyed through all communications channels and delivered at all levels of comprehension . . . . All information means all information . . . . Everyone means everyone” (Kaser, 1978, pp. 545-546). Librarians had extended the concept of information and the principle of total community service to new heights. As Patrick Williams observed, “It was the ultimate
statement. It was impossible to imagine a more stupendous role for the public library. All information for everyone was the absolute limit” (1988, p. 118). No one seemed to question the capability of the public library to actually fulfill this wonderful new role.

L. J. White (1983) observed that the new definition of information encompassed education and apparently extended much further to anything in which the public was interested. “Defining all uses of the library to involve information and therefore to be socially worthwhile is a neat way of trying to resolve—by fiat—the education-versus-recreation dilemma of the public library” (White, 1983, p. 11).

In an editorial in *Library Journal* following the 1979 White House Conference on Library and Information Science, John Berry observed that “The potent in Washington was all about access to information, and for this editor, it clearly defined access as the over-riding, top priority issue as we enter the brave new information society and a new decade” (1980, p. 7). In the 1980s the phrase “access to information” appeared frequently in the public library community’s literature and discourse.

The Impact of Economic Trends

The economic crises of the 1970s generated increased support for the information paradigm. “A major source of support for the information paradigm [came] from the LIS sector of the profession” (Apostle, 1997, p. 131). By the late 1970s the library employment market had dropped dramatically due to economic and demographic factors. The expansion of public libraries, school libraries, and academic libraries had come to a halt and there was a drastic reduction in the demand for new librarians. Library salaries and maternity leaves had improved to the extent that the job turnover rate was low. Also a good number of professional positions had been lost as a result of the tendency of computer technology to de-skill the work of librarians. A number of new library schools had opened in the 1960s when there was an apparent shortage of librarians. In the late 1970s “the number of MLIS graduates was the highest in history” (Apostle, 1977, p. 131). In combination, these factors led to “a surplus of newly graduated librarians
relative to job openings” (Apostle, 1997, p. 131). LIS schools faced two options, shutting down or trying to find a new employment market for their graduates. Rather than close, most library schools chose to emphasize the “emerging information market” hypothesized by Bell and others (Apostle, 1997, p. 131).

Redefining the Library Faith

Economic difficulties continued to plague the nation and the early 1980s were marked by an “underlying pessimism” (Maack, 1994, p. 82). L. J. White observed that while the library faith was still a strong cultural myth, there was also “a sense of uneasiness about the functions and role of the public library, a sense of the foregone potential of the institution, a sense that it [was] failing to live up to the expectations that it serve as a major educational and informational force in American society” (1983, p. 1).

White predicted that the 1980s were likely to be problematic for many public libraries for two reasons: slow economic growth and the impact of technology. If the nation’s slow economic growth continued, voters would become even more insistent upon restricting the growth of the public sector and cutting government expenditures including funds for public libraries.

Technology acted like a doubled-edged sword offering both challenges and opportunities. Although technology increased the public library’s efficiency and range of services, it was very expensive to install and maintain. A greater concern was that technology created more competitors and greater competition for the library’s informational and recreational services (White, 1983, pp. 2-3).

The only positive development mentioned by White was the movement toward a more performance-oriented approach in the 1970s. White noted that ALA had sponsored an exploratory study to determine the components of effective library service and to identify specific performance measures and had published an instructional manual for evaluating performance and a planning guide for public libraries (1983, p.10). The planning guide to which White referred was *A Planning Process for Public Libraries*, the first in a series of planning manuals issued by
PLA. As the 1979 *Mission Statement* had addressed the question of the public library’s broad service mission, the new planning manual did not deal directly with the formulation of a mission statement (Maack, 1994, p. 85). Instead, the manual focused on the development of goals and objectives, which had been identified as a major problem in PLA’s Goals feasibility study. The first example of a goal statement was “To increase the proportion of the population served by the library” (Palmour, Belllassai, & De Wath, 1980, p. 57). Among the accompanying measurable objectives was the following example: “To increase the number of registered borrowers in the system to fifty percent of the total population by the end of the five year period” (Palmour et al., 1980, p. 57). There was no mention of a focus on opinion leaders or any group of traditional library users (Maack, 1994, p. 85).

In an effort to infuse a sense of optimism into the public library community in 1982, the PLA Board of Directors adopted “The Public Library: Democracy’s Resource: A Statement of Principles.” The “Statement of Principles” was a celebration of “the library’s historical roots in an egalitarian political tradition” (Maack, 1994, p. 82) and a reaffirmation of public librarians’ allegiance to “the service to all” ideal (Nauratil, 1985, p. 15). The first paragraph declared “Public libraries freely offer access to their collections and services to all members of the community without regard to race, citizenship, age, educational level, economic status, or any other qualification or condition” (Public Library Association, 1982, p. 92). Despite the economic uncertainties of the period, the statement concluded with a rousing affirmation of the library faith (Nauratil, 1985, p. 15).

As the forms in which ideas and information are stored change, and will continue to change, the challenge of making the widest possible range of information accessible to all remains constant. The ideals which brought the free public library into existence are as vital now as they were when they were formulated. Public libraries continue to be of enduring importance to the maintenance of our free, democratic society. (Public Library Association, 1982, p. 92)
In 1986 the ALA Council approved a revision of the association’s mission (American Library Association, 2006t). The revision added the words “for all.” The new statement read “To provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all” (as cited in American Library Association, 2006t, Scope section, para. 1). As ALA’s policies evolved the association’s mission statement took on a more activist tone. The term all meant everybody. ALA was finally really “to embrace persons of differing race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, abilities, economic status, political position, religion” (American Library Association, 2006t, Scope section, para. 1).

PLA’s first planning manual was not well received because its heavy emphasis on data collection intimidated many librarians (Maack, 1994, p. 87). Only 18.7% of libraries with service areas of over 25,000 had actually used the manual by the mid-1980s (Wallace, 1990, p. 35). PLA decided not to revise the first manual but to try a new approach based on the work of L. A. Martin who suggested grouping the various services offered by public libraries into “a set of service profiles, or roles, from which each library could choose a few on which to focus” (McClure et al., 1987, pp. xi-xiii). The new manual, Planning & Role Setting for Public Libraries, was published in 1987. The 1987 manual offered “a greatly simplified approach to planning,” which PLA hoped would be easier for small and medium-sized libraries to implement (Maack, 1994, p. 87). A study conducted by Pungitore, Wilkerson, and Yoon (1989) found that an estimated 56% of all public libraries serving a populations of 50,000 people or less had adopted long-range planning by 1989.

M. N. Maack suggested that greater acceptance of the second planning manual may also have been linked to the 1987 manual’s emphasis on “the importance of reconciling the mandate for excellent service to the whole community with the reality of limited financial resources” (1994, p. 88). The manual presented a new strategy for defining excellence: “Excellence must be defined locally. It results when library services match community needs, interests, and priorities.”
The new planning process consisted of the manual, output measures, and a data service. Curran and Clark (1989) praised the PLA planning process because it (a) allowed public libraries to compare past performance to current performance, (b) compelled librarians to understand the context in which the library functioned, and (c) enabled libraries to develop appropriate goals and achievable objectives that were “outcome related, observable, and time specific” (p. 350).

The 1987 manual linked the development of the mission statement to a particular planning cycle and a specific set of roles and priorities. In the sample mission statement, the library’s priorities were clearly stated. Criteria for evaluating the library’s overall performance were derived from the priorities set forth in the mission statement. By implication the mission statement indicated the limitations—those areas that the library had not chosen to emphasize. The authors did not imply that some roles were preferable to others or suggest that libraries should focus on the library’s traditional users in establishing priorities (Maack, 1994, pp. 85-86). The sample mission statement concluded with this sentence: “The library serves as a learning and educational center for all residents of the community” (McClure et al., 1987, p. 43). In their essay, “The Public Library as a Social/Cultural Institution,” Van Fleet and Raber stated “While Planning and Role Setting does not specifically delineate the need for services to special groups, one may expect that this is implicit in the community planning model” (1990, p. 490).

The PLA planning process renewed interest in community analysis, a technique with which most public librarians were acquainted, but one that relatively few librarians had actually used. J. L. Wheeler wrote a book on the methodology and application of community study to public relations efforts in 1924. L. A. Martin endorsed community study as a means of broadening the public library’s narrow social base (1979). Community analysis was also a useful technique for establishing priorities and limitations. Instead of trying to offer the full range of services to everyone, public libraries could use community analysis to determine which services
would be most useful and relevant to specific groups within a particular community (Maack, 1994, p. 86).

Research on public libraries on the national level was limited during the 1980s. Maack attributed the lack of nationwide surveys to a focus on local needs and services. Funding for research was probably also an issue as the Reagan administration sought to limit government spending. The most interesting national study of public libraries in the 1980s was the Adult Services in the Eighties (ASE) project begun in 1983 and completed in 1989. The service-to-all ethos was reflected in survey questions about literacy programs, services to special groups, and services to institutions such as hospitals, prisons, and retirement/nursing homes. It was also evident in the titles of some of the bibliographic essays: “Public Library Services to Minorities,” “Literacy Services in Public Libraries,” “Serving Older Adults,” and “Service to the Handicapped” (Heim & Wallace, 1990, v-vi).

The 1991 ALA publication, Using the Public Library in the Computer Age: Present Patterns and Future Possibilities, reported the findings of the public library section of the 1990 Equifax-Harris public opinion survey. Maack (1994) observed that the publication evoked the theme of the public library as a resource for democracy and contained “several statements that describe the nature of the public library’s mission in a rapidly changing electronic environment” (p. 82). The introduction reaffirmed the public library’s historic role.

The American Public Library is one of our proudest traditions. From its inception, it has been a place where anyone, regardless of social or financial status, can seek knowledge, entertainment, and solace. Novelists, journalists, educators, and inventors freely acknowledge their debt to its assistance in helping them master the language of their new country. The self-educated point out that they could not have managed without it. (Westin & Finger, 1991, p. 1)

The foreword to the publication, written by 1991 ALA President R. M. Dougherty, contained statements emphasizing the public library’s role as a safety net for the disadvantaged
and as an important source of information for civic and cultural leaders (Maack, 1994, pp. 82-83).

Among the report’s findings was “a strong connection between public library use and civic involvement, especially activity in voluntary associations” (Dougherty, 1991, foreword).

Dougherty observed that the public library’s service to the voluntary sector helped civic and cultural associations carry out their missions which benefited everyone in American society. Dougherty saw this finding as support for ALA’s stance that public libraries were “essential to a society that values an informed citizenry” (1991, foreword). Maack asserted that quotations from Using the Public Library in the Computer Age provided “another affirmation of the ALA leadership’s long-standing commitment to ‘service to all,’ while at the same time acknowledging the importance of serving the library’s traditional clientele, including civic and cultural leaders” (1994, p. 83).

The Equifax-Harris study provided data that could be compared to earlier studies on public library use. Using data from this study, the 1978 Gallup poll, and Berelson’s study for the Public Library Inquiry, Maack traced the changes in the proportion of the adult population using the public library from 1948 to 1990. These surveys clearly showed that the public library had been successful in increasing the proportion of the adult population who used the public library from 18% in 1948 to 66% in 1990 (Maack, 1994, p. 89). Although survey findings indicated that more people were using the public library in 1990, the proportion of heavy users in the adult population seemed to have grown much more slowly. Berelson found that 10% of the population could be considered frequent users of the public library in 1948. The 1990 Equifax-Harris poll found that 28% of the adult population could be classified as heavy users. This represented a modest gain of only 18% over four decades (Maack, 1994, p. 89). The profile of the heavy library user in 1990 still resembled the “culturally alert/opinion leaders” described by Berelson in 1948 (Maack, 1994, p. 90).

The public library continued its efforts to provide better services to the library’s traditional clientele as well as its efforts to broaden its service base. The Equifax-Harris poll—the
first to use race and religion as well as income as variables—seemed to indicate that the public library was indeed reaching beyond its traditional clientele and beginning to have an impact in ethnic communities (Maack, 1994, p. 90). Among the respondents of the survey, 62% of Hispanic Americans and 58% of African Americans had used the public library at least one time during the past year. Hispanic Americans were the most frequent users of five out of seven public library services. Although income and educational level remained the two strongest indicators of library use, the Equifax-Harris poll found that 61% of respondents with incomes between $7,500 and $15,000 had used the library. Even among the most economically disadvantaged of the respondents—those with incomes of less than $7,500—more than 50% had used the public library (Westin & Finger, 1991, pp. 4, 15, 26). The D’Elia study, The Roles of the Public Library in the Community, showed that African Americans and Hispanic Americans were not only aware of the public library they held it in higher regard than did Caucasian Americans (D’Elia & Rodger, 1994, p. 25). The results of these two studies suggest that the public library community had achieved some success in changing attitudes and creating more favorable opinions of the public library’s programs and services among traditionally underserved populations (Public Libraries Serve Communities, 1994, p. 2).

M. N. Maack observed that while the public library community was still a long way from realizing its ideal of service to all, the public library was “certainly known to a much broader segment of the community than ever before” (1994, p. 90). Although comprehensive service (100% of the population registered as users) was an unrealistic goal, statistics compiled by the Public Library Data Service showed that at least a few libraries had achieved registration rates of over 90% of their service population. Furthermore, in the context of comparable cultural and social activities, the Equifax-Harris Survey indicated that the public library performed better than most other cultural institutions (Maack, 1994, p. 90). While 66% of all adults used the public library at least once in the past year, only 60% were members of a church or other religious organization, 49% visited a museum once in a twelve-month period, 39% attended a ballet or
symphony, and 33% were members of a voluntary organization such as clubs, unions, and professional associations (Westin & Finger, 1991, pp. 24-25). Although its use is totally voluntary, the public library has reached “further into the community than almost any other cultural, civic, or religious organization” (Maack, 1994, pp. 90-91).

Proponents of the service-to-all ethos had used a number of strategies to close “the perceived gap between ideals and practice” (Maack, 1994, p. 92). These strategies included consolidation, cooperation, and expansion; the innovative outreach efforts of the 1960s and 1970s; the planning process and design for diversity; the use of community analysis to determine needs; and the use of survey research as the basis for planning (Maack, 1994, pp. 83-91). Maack observed that public libraries have made greater use of survey research and computer and communications technology in efforts to ensure equality of access. In response to criticisms, advocates of service to all had used various strategies to create “a new paradigm of service centered on the community rather than the institution” (Maack, 1994, p. 92).

*The Conflict of Paradigms Intensifies*

By the early 1990s the movement to replace the service paradigm with a new construct based on the concept of information had crystallized (Raymond, 1997, p. 7). The information paradigm had grown since the late 1960s to include a number of “assumptions regarding the process of informing users” with the assistance of computer and telecommunications technology (Raymond, 1997, p. 1). “The new paradigm’s prescription for librarianship [was] based on the central assumption that the function of libraries is the transmission of information” (Raymond, 1997, p. 7). Boris Raymond noted that many of the assumptions had not been stated explicitly, and none had been analyzed in-depth. The information paradigm’s eight key assumptions as delineated by Raymond were as follows:

1. “Information” is the basic concept upon which the paradigm rests.
2. Postindustrial societies are “information societies.”
3. A merger of library and information sciences is taking place.
4. "Information technology" is the driving force and the determiner of the future functions of libraries and of the "information profession."

5. The needs of library users and the functions of libraries need to be reformulated in terms of "information needs."

6. The concepts "information industry" and "information profession" are interdependent.

7. A convergence of library and information science education is necessary and inevitable.

8. Employment prospects for LIS graduates in the "emerging information market" are optimistic (Raymond, 1997, p. 8).

Raymond (1997) conceded that the information paradigm had made a number of positive contributions. Its theoretical formulation had been "congruent with rapidly evolving information technology" in that it placed "science, business, and technology in the forefront" (p. 8). It had provided a theoretical base for graduate schools of library and information studies, and it had given information professionals a theoretical focus for research and practice. The paradigm had provided a relevant and "comprehensive treatment of the process by which technical and scientific knowledge is retrieved" (Raymond, 1997, p. 8). The model provided by the information paradigm had helped the field of librarianship to assimilate the changes of the previous three decades and to view the world in a more realistic way. It had also forced proponents of the library service paradigm to adopt strategic planning and to make community needs and concerns the focus of library services. The biggest problem with the information paradigm was that it threatened to absorb the whole field. Its adherents had attempted to extend its generalizations into areas that were only remotely related to information work (Raymond, 1997, p. 9).

Raymond warned that the impact of the conflict on libraries, particularly public libraries, could not be overstated. Raymond posed these troubling questions:
1. Will libraries continue to serve the public's broad education, cultural [,] and recreational needs, or will future librarians consider such needs peripheral and outside their professional concerns?

2. Will all libraries be transformed into appendages of the scientific, technical, and business establishment?

3. Will the distinction between librarianship and "information management" disappear?

4. Will predictions about the proximate end of libraries be accomplished by librarians who have become converts to the information paradigm? (1997, p. 2).

Raymond pointed out that "acceptance of the information paradigm's vision of libraries entails a number of serious implications for the library profession as a whole" (1997, p. 2). Among the implications suggested by Raymond were "a major reorientation of library education, and of the public relations priorities of professional associations" (1997, p. 2). Another implication, one that struck at the very heart of public librarianship, was "a major reorientation from service to the general reader, to schoolchildren, and those who cannot afford to purchase the books they need, to commercial, technical, and research interests" (Raymond, 1997, p. 2). M. E. Monroe was one of the first to recognize this problem and voiced concern about the National Commission on Library and Information Science's emphasis on "the commitment of national resources to specialized information to experts in economic, scientific, and social sciences" (Monroe, 1977, p. 15) in its national plan for library and information services.

Raymond (1997) subjected the assumptions underlying the information paradigm to an in-depth analysis (pp. 9-34) and found that the many of the assumptions did not hold up under critical evaluation. The assumptions were based on an "overused and misused" definition of information (Raymond, 1997, p. 13). Other errors were (a) the tendency to make "straight-line projections based on current technological change" without taking into consideration "the economic, institutional, and cultural contexts" in which this change will occur (Raymond, 1997, p. 18); (b) the tendency "to obscure the substantial differences" between the clienteles of libraries
and information centers and the activities conducted by libraries and those conducted by information centers (Raymond, 1997, p.16); and (c) the tendency to ignore "areas that are not directly derived from 'information science' or based on 'information' technology" such as adult basic and literacy education and materials selection "for the social, political, cultural, and recreational needs of the reading public" (Raymond, 1997, p. 27). Although computer technology has greatly enhanced the performance of these functions, these areas "are no more dependent upon computer technology" than they were on earlier forms of technology such as "the printing press, the internal combustion engine, or the telephone" (Raymond, 1997, p. 27).

Raymond compared the two paradigms to determine if they could be reconciled. Raymond cited the Alliance of Libraries, Archives and Records Management's statement on areas in which the paradigms appeared to converge. The paradigms seemed to share the following beliefs.

1. Librarianship is a unitary profession, with a distinct body of theory and specialized skills.
2. Librarianship requires special professional education (LIS) schools.
3. Library and information science are closely related.
4. Their commonality is based upon a single set of theoretical propositions as well as related functions.
5. They have an intrinsic social value that warrants an enhancement of their professional status, greater prestige, and higher incomes.
6. It is appropriate for LIS faculty, irrespective of their specializations, to belong to a single academic unit (as cited in Raymond, 1997, p. 33).

The principal areas of disagreement identified by Raymond included the following:

1. A tendency of the supporters of the Library Service paradigm to present a rather amorphous conception of its principal function, as against the focused definition of the Information paradigm.
2. The divergence between the Library service [sic] paradigm’s concern with cultural/educational services, and the emphasis of the Information paradigm’s supporters on information retrieval in the sciences, technology, and administration

3. A difference in primary users, with the Library Service model concerned primarily with the general public while the Information paradigm concentrates upon the needs of a narrowly defined clientele of technical, scientific, and administrative personnel

4. A divergence of motivations, with the Library Service paradigm interested primarily in the “public good,” whereas the Information paradigm seeks for the most part to enhance profit and service-for-pay

5. The Library Service paradigm’s focus on the preservation, classification [,] and circulation of print-on-paper texts, as against the emphasis of providing access to electronically stored data

6. A focus on reading for its own sake, as against concern with retrieval and utilization of informative materials

7. A basically reactive/advisory rather than proactive and prescriptive approach to professional service

8. A conception of the profession’s mission as being basically for education, recreation, and cultural resource enhancement, as against service to business, science, and technology. The different attitude of the Library Service paradigm toward “information” technology—as being a very useful tool—contrasts with the Information paradigm’s assertion that the technology is central to the profession (Raymond, 1997, p. 34).

Raymond concluded that the question posed by a review of the literature was whether librarianship and information science had become “two separate professions, with each having a very distinct set of clients, distinct theoretical underpinnings, distinct skills, and distinct tools” (Raymond, 1997, p. 35). Raymond asked if the model proposed by the proponents of the
Information paradigm was "an attempt to fit all of the disparate activities of librarianship into one single model, that of the information centers and special libraries" and if its "description of the work of most librarians [corresponded] with empirical reality" (p. 35).

The conflict between the two paradigms played out in four principal arenas in the 1990s: "the library press, the Internet, the professional library associations, and the university-based library schools, many now renamed schools of library and information science (or study), LIS for short" (Raymond, 1997, p. 1-2). Although the information paradigm had not gained total acceptance by the end of the decade, a reading of library literature from the 1990s suggested that its major premises were widely accepted. Librarians working in information centers, special libraries affiliated with science and industry, as well as many library and information school faculty members were especially apt to accept the new paradigm (Raymond, 1997, p. 8).

The Impact of Economic Instrumentality

The era of the new public philosophy of economic instrumentality was said to begin in 1980 with the election of Reagan as President, although emphasis on the economy in public policy was not an innovation of the Reagan administration. Sheldon Wolin (1981) wrote the following:

The importance of economics in public councils is not a Reagan innovation . . . . It is rather that the prominence of economics is both the herald and the agent of a profound transformation in American political culture . . . . Economics thus becomes the paradigm of what public reason should be. It prescribes the form that "problems" have to be given before they can be acted upon, the kinds of "choices" that exist, and the meaning of "rationality" . . . . When the economy becomes the polity, citizen and community become subversive words in the vocabulary of the new political philosophy. (pp. 27-28)

With the recessions of the 1970s and 1980s, economically-driven ideologies found fertile soil among disgruntled taxpayers. Taxpayers grew increasingly reluctant to finance social and educational programs. A. C. Ornstein (1984) described four emerging trends in federal education
policy in the early 1980s: (a) a shift from social and educational concerns to business and military interests, (b) a decrease in federal funds for education, (c) decline in egalitarianism as a national policy, and (d) an increase in federal education programs designed to meet specific national needs (pp. 4-7). In 1990 Charlene Cain wrote, “The authors of *Equity at Issue, 1985-86, [sic]* assert that the current climate of fiscal and social conservatism is evidence that national attitudes regarding the plight of minorities are shifting toward indifference and antipathy” (p. 234). Economic instrumentality began to replace the eroded egalitarian ideal in national policy.

The extension of the new philosophy of economic instrumentality to the federal government’s educational and social welfare programs affected the delivery of lifelong learning and adult literacy programs. In 1996 Congress passed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), more commonly referred to as the Welfare Reform Act. The Welfare Reform Act brought sweeping changes in welfare policies affecting education and training. It also provided block grants that gave states greater autonomy, control, and flexibility. In some states super agencies were created by merging education, human services, and employment service agencies. These super agencies oversaw state work force development efforts including adult basic education, welfare reform, and vocational education. Many of the adult lifelong learning and adult literacy programs in the 1990s reflected the government’s emphasis on education for work (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 66). PRWORA changed the focus of welfare reform from an approach that invested in building basic literacy skills and job-related skills to an approach that emphasized quick job placement (Strawn, 1998).

The adult education community was very concerned about the work-focused direction in which adult education and adult literacy was heading in the 1990s. Elisabeth Hayes’ essay “Policy Issues That Drive the Transformation of Adult Literacy” addressed the question of whether the current system was in the best interests of adult students because work-oriented policies seemed to be geared more to ending welfare than eradicating poverty (1999, p. 12).
Hayes was concerned that adult new readers might join the ranks of the working poor, earning too much for welfare, but not enough to escape poverty (Hayes, 1999, p. 12).

Hacker and Yankwitt (1997) asserted that dependency on government funding created ethical dilemmas for educators in adult literacy programs. Adult educators were aware that adult learners in workfare and job-search programs frequently ended up as exploitable minimum-wage workers. They were forced to make the difficult decision between programmatic integrity and economic survival (Hacker & Yankwitt, 1997, pp. 109-117).

The work first ideology also created an ethical dilemma for adult services librarians involved in federally funded library programs for adult learners. Programs based on this ideology were more concerned with work-readiness (often for low-paying jobs) than educating “people for a life of fulfillment” (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 72). Historically adult services librarians have come from a humanistic background which emphasizes spiritual and intellectual development (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 72). They have viewed their work as helping people achieve a fuller, more rewarding life.

Although work-readiness has been an important objective of programming for adult learners, it has been only one of several objectives leading to the overall goals of individual self-fulfillment and social improvement. Assisting adult learners to develop a broader view of the world and a better understanding of themselves through reading and literature have been equally important objectives (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 66).

McCook and Barber (2002b) observed that “in the welfare-to-work driven socioeconomic context” of the present time, “adult literacy is coming to be seen more as a tool of workfare rather than a means of achieving critical consciousness” (p. 71). Librarians in federally funded library programs often experience feelings of cognitive dissonance “as demands for workforce accountability conflict with the librarian’s traditional focus on the humanistic and transformative aspects of adult education” (McCook & Barber, 200b, p. 66). McCook and Barber
questioned the ability of librarians in federally funded work-related programs to provide adult learners with the tools suggested by Paulo Freire: "an attitude of creation and re-creation, a self-transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's context" (as cited in McCook and Barber, 2002b, p. 71). In the era of "learning for work," there is little concern with the aspects of education which foster critical consciousness and empowerment. For public librarians involved in literacy education and working as partners with adult educators, the internalization of the history and philosophies of the adult education tradition in the United States, including the ideals of Freire and A. I. Horton, become critically important. These principles will enable public librarians to confront the dilemmas imposed by "the changing ideology toward the purpose of lifelong learning" and to make ethical, yet pragmatic, "decisions based on justice and care" (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 72).

John Buschman (1998) suggested that "the historical connection between librarianship (the professionals and their institutions) and the poor was in the process of a fundamental change, driven by what has been called the 'new public philosophy'" (p. 16). Buschman stressed that public libraries were not isolated "from the dominant trends of our market-driven culture and a new vision of the role of public institutions" (1998, p. 16). Buschman saw the Reagan administration's privatization of public information as "a harbinger of culture change in librarianship" (1998, p. 22). The privatization of government information legitimized the idea of fee for service and eroded the principle that public institutions have a duty to make information created through the use of tax monies available to citizens at no charge or at the lowest possible cost. Privatization introduced "cost-benefit analysis of government information activities, maximum reliance on the private sector, and cost recovery through user charges" (Buschman, 1998, p. 22).

Buschman expressed concern that equity of access was not being built into plans for new electronic networks and resources. The privatization of the National Research and Education Network in the early 1990s was an indication of preeminence of the economic priority.
D. L. Wilson noted that Congress supported the network as a means for solving “problems in science and engineering with broad importance in economics and research” (Wilson, as cited in Buschman, 1993, p. 134). Library applications were given a lower priority in the privatization framework adopted by Congress (Buschman, 1998, p. 24).

Instead of actively resisting relegation to “a tenuous third sector” position (Lago, as cited in Buschman, 1998, p. 24) the library community reacted by trying “to carve its own niche or share of this information market” (Buschman, 1998, p. 24). Librarians began to see information as a form of wealth to be exploited and the answer to the never ending quest for adequate funding. The notion of information as a commodity gave rise to the concept of “entrepreneurial” librarianship in which library resources (especially the electronic ones) were expected to “produce income, or create a more favorable budgeting and fundraising environment” (Buschman, 1993, p. 215).

Buschman noted some general trends in librarianship which seemed to indicate that the profession was embracing the new public philosophy. Controversies about social or nonlibrary issues resulted in the passage of a policy by the Association of College and Research Libraries Board to restrict involvement in social issues. The ALA Council took actions designed to limit discussions raised by the Social Responsibilities Round Table (Buschman, Rosenzweig, & Harger, 1994, pp. 575-576). Buschman cited the “blurring of roles between libraries and for-profit business” as an example of the library community aligning itself with the new public philosophy (1998, p. 22). Buschman charged that “enthusiasm for information technology has outweighed considerations of its negative impact” (1998, p. 24). In discussions of information technology and electronic resources in the library literature, the issue of intellectual property rights seemed to be more important than the issue of equity of electronic access (Buschman, 1998, p. 24).

As libraries began to adopt expensive new technologies in order to stay competitive in the new information environment, the debate about fees for services was re-opened. The library
community “sought ways to pay for capital investments” in computer and telecommunications technology and “to capitalize on its public appeal” to make libraries seem more vital (Buschman, 1998, p. 25). Institutional survival took precedence over the tradition of free library service and the “civic role of libraries” (Gray, 1993) which “posits that public information underwrites effective public policy, democratic participation, and equity” (Buschman, 1998, p. 22).

Many libraries tried to resolve their funding problems by soliciting increased funding based on their ability to advance their communities’ objectives. Many communities saw networked technology as a way to develop their economies and to make their businesses more productive (Buschman, 1998, p. 25). Strategies for capitalizing on library resources ranged “from business fee-for-information centers to proposed cost-sharing for national cataloging data” (Buschman, 1998, p. 22). Buschman saw this as an accommodation on the part of the library community to “the new public philosophy of economic instrumentality” for public institutions (1998, p. 25). Although the library community did not overtly repudiate service to the poor, it lowered its priority (Buschman, 1998, p. 25). The concern for equity of access for the poor was lost in the promises of the new public philosophy—“higher value and more recognition of libraries, efficiency, and basing services on need and demand” (Buschman, 1998, p. 23).

W. F. Birdsall’s concept of an ideology of information technology (1994) provides support for Buschman’s assertion that service to the poor has been relegated to a peripheral concern. According to this ideology, people have value only as consumers. This ideology interprets the value of an individual in monetary terms. Obviously poor people would have little value because they lack the financial resources to make large contributions to library foundations, and they have little political influence to affect favorable legislation. Services to the poor would do very little to advance the public library community’s professional or organizational goals.

The rise of the information paradigm and economic instrumentality

In the 1980s and early 1990s, all areas of education were affected by the new public philosophy. Higher education was no exception, and budgets for higher education presented
tempting targets for cost cutting. With cuts in federal and state funding, universities were forced to cut their budgets. Eliminating the least productive academic units was one of the most effective measures for reducing costs. Within the university schools of library and information were not high profile departments. As a rule they did not contribute to the university’s reputation as an academic institution nor did they produce alumni who could afford to make major donations to the university. In addition LIS programs did not establish strong links with other academic departments or develop an active alumni network. As a result universities found library schools fairly easy targets for closing (Rubin, 2000, p. 367). In the 1970s there were more than 70 accredited library schools in the United States and Canada. By the end of the century the number had declined to 56. Among the casualties were two very prominent library schools, the Graduate Library School at the University of Chicago and the Columbia University School of Library Service (Rubin, 2000, p. 367). The loss of these schools was a blow to librarianship because they had conducted much of the research in the field.

The rise of the information paradigm can be attributed in part to the effect of economic instrumentality on higher education. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, many library schools took steps to make themselves somewhat less vulnerable to closure. To demonstrate a theoretical foundation for the discipline, schools of library science changed their names to incorporate the term “information,” and added computer and information management courses to the curriculum to more closely identify librarianship with information science (Apostle, 1997, p. 131). Although schools were emphasizing information, enrollment in the information management track in most LIS schools was not sufficient to support an academic program. Schools could not afford to separate the two disciplines. Instead, they created the “appearance of ‘convergence’ between the traditional library curriculae [sic] and the ‘innovative information management’ stream” (Apostle, 1997, p. 132). In the process the “library” designation was sometimes eliminated from the name of the programs (Apostle, 1997, p. 132).
Connie Van Fleet and D. P. Wallace (2002) analyzed the names of academic units offering ALA-accredited master's degree programs to determine how many of these graduate library programs had added the term information to their names. They found that adoption of the “I-word” as a component in the name of ALA-accredited academic units was almost complete; it was a prominent component in the name of 98.2% of the 56 academic units. The only academic unit that had not incorporated some form of the term information into its name was the Department of Library Science at Clarion University of Pennsylvania (Van Fleet & Wallace, 2002, p. 105).

Of more concern to some librarians has been the deletion of the term library in the names of 26.8% of ALA-accredited academic units. Some librarians were so incensed that they have attempted to censure those institutions that chose to remove references to libraries or librarianship in the names of their academic units. Among the attempts was the introduction of a resolution at the 2002 annual conference containing the clause “that the ALA Council strongly recommends that ALA and the Committee on Accreditation clearly establish in their criteria that the words library or library science be a primary element in the name of programs of institutions seeking accreditation” (Council Document #51, as cited by Van Fleet & Wallace, 2002, p. 107). The resolution was not approved. As Van Fleet and Wallace observed, enforcing “any generic rule for naming ALA-accredited program” would be problematic and counterproductive (p. 108). As Van Fleet and Wallace noted, the fundamental question is “whether the programs are in fact producing graduates capable of entering professional careers in libraries” (p. 108). ALA would have reason to censure these schools if they were not offering courses designed to prepare students for work in libraries. The KALIPER Report released in 2000 found that jobs in libraries remained an important consideration in designing the curricula. However, most academic units were offering “education that prepare [sic] students for jobs in other environments and other situations” (Tenopir, 2002, Studies to Identify the Challenges section, para. 9).
Reaffirmation of the Library Faith

Official documents formulated by the American Library Association during the past 12 years seem to support Maack’s assertion made in 1994 that “even in the face of a persistent strain of pessimism in the literature, there was a tenacious reaffirmation of the ideal of service to all” (p. 91). In the five decades since Robert Leigh challenged the professional legitimacy of the library faith and the ideal of service to all, the profession has reassessed its traditional beliefs and made an adjustment “in terms of strategy rather than beliefs” (Maack, 1994, p. 91).

In 1996 the ALA Executive Board created a planning document based on the ALA Goal 2000 initiative, “New Visions: Beyond ALA Goal 2000.” The planning document underwent multiple revisions over a two-year period before its approval by the ALA Executive Board in Spring 1998. The document began with a statement of guiding principles which included the following paragraph:

In the United States, libraries are among the most potent national symbols of democracy. They uphold democracy by safeguarding three ideals: a diversity of ideas and perspectives, the intellectual freedom to articulate all points of view, and equity of access for all, regardless of social or economic status. They make these ideals practical by upholding the values of literacy and lifelong learning. It is the embodiment of these five values or ideals that makes libraries “an American value.” (American Library Association, 2006t, Guiding Principles section, para. 2)

Although the guiding principles (diversity, intellectual freedom, equity of access, literacy, and lifelong learning) were implicit in Goal 2000, they were made explicit in the New Visions document. They became the basis for the five key action areas identified by the Executive Board and approved by ALA membership in 1998: Equity of Access, Intellectual Freedom, Diversity, Education and Continuous Learning, and 21st Century Literacy (American Library Association, 2006t). Equity of access represented the overarching goal of the association’s program because it was seen as a fundamental requirement for the achievement of all the other key action areas.
There is no such thing as a free society without free and equal access to information" (American Library Association, 2006o, Why Equity? section, para. 2).

The key initiative of the 2003-2004 ALA President, C. D. Hayden, was equity of access. Hayden emphasized the importance of equity of access in the following statement:

At a time when our public is challenged on multiple fronts, we need to recommit ourselves to the ideal of providing equal access to everyone, anytime, and in any format. We need to pay particular attention to those groups who are already underserved, such as residents of rural and urban America, senior citizens [], and the disabled. By finally embracing equity of access we will be affirming our core values, recognizing realities, and assuring our future. (Hayden, as cited in McCook, 2004c, p. 24)

The key actions have been reapproved each year since 1998 by the ALA Council. In January 2006 the key action areas grew to seven with the addition of “advocacy for libraries and the profession” and “organizational excellence” (American Library Association, 2006r). The service-to-all principle is explicitly expressed in the description of three key action areas—diversity, equitable access to information and library services, and education and life learning.

1. **Diversity.** Diversity is a fundamental value of the association and its members, and is reflected in its commitment to recruiting people of color and people with disabilities to the profession and to the promotion and development of library collections and services for all people (American Library Association, 2006p, para. 2).

2. **Equitable Access to Information and Library Services.** The Association advocates funding and policies that support libraries as great democratic institutions, serving people of every age, income level, location, ethnicity, or physical ability, and providing the full range of information resources needed to live, learn, govern, and work (American Library Association, 2006p, para. 3).

3. **Education and Lifelong Learning.** The association provides opportunities for the professional development and education of all library staff members and trustees; it
promotes continuous, lifelong learning for all people through library and information services of every type (American Library Association, 2006p, para. 4).

The goal of service to all remains elusive. As McCook noted in a paper, entitled “Serving the Demands of Democracy,” equity of access is a goal that has become increasingly difficult since 1950. “Equity of access has many aspects including geographic (urban versus rural), usability for people with disabilities, linguistic diversity in materials for people with different languages, and overcoming economic barriers such as the digital divide” (McCook, 2004c, p. 22). McCook and Barber (2002b) emphasize that adult literacy and lifelong learning should be understood “as integral components of [the library] profession’s efforts to achieve information equity” (p. 68). Equity of access is a noble goal but one that is unlikely to ever be completely fulfilled in a world in which inequities are rampant. Nevertheless, commitment to democracy demands that the library community continue to pursue the goal.

Concerns About the Library’s Emphasis on the Provision of Information

In the 1980s and 1990s, there were some adult educators and librarians who perceived that an emphasis on information was not the appropriate course for public libraries. In 1983 J. R. Kidd noted that advances in computers and telecommunications had focused much more attention on the concept of an “information society” than on the concept of a “learning society.” To Kidd as an educator, “information, while potentially important, [did] not equal learning” (1983, p. 530). For learning to occur, the information must be processed intellectually and “there is needed an important linking operation which enables learners to make their own sense out of information” (Kidd, 1983, p. 530). Kidd added that learning also involves the psychomotor (skills) and affective (feeling) domains as well as the cognitive (intellectual) processes (1983, p. 530). Kidd observed that “the difference between information and learning is both fascinating and fundamental for libraries” (1983, p. 531). While the concepts of a “right to learning” and a “right to read” were important, the basic issue for libraries in Kidd’s opinion was the recognition “that all kinds of people are the ‘owners’ and need the services of the library” (1983, p. 531).
In his 1988 work, *The American Public Library and the Problem of Purpose*, Patrick Williams wrote the following:

The public library community should work to restore the identity of the public library as an institution for informal self-education . . . . This means setting the library once again to the only task of importance that it ever performed, providing education for those who seek it. This does not mean trying once more to make the library an instrument for the self-education of the masses. That is impossible . . . . Librarians who undertake to restore the identity of the library must do so without the vision that inspired their predecessors, the vision of educating the masses. (1988, p. 137)

In an article written in response to the findings of the Benton Foundation’s report, *Books, and Bytes: Libraries and Communities in the Digital age*, W. F. Birdsall asserted that the threat to the American public library’s continued existence was not information technology as the Benton Report seemed to suggest but “the ideology of information technology” (1997, p. 54). The competitive free market values and narrow focus of the ideology of information technology had the potential to “undermine community . . . devalue the worth of the individual and erode the support of public institutions” (Birdsall, 1997, p. 65). This ideology’s emphasis on privatization of public services threatened tax supported services such as libraries. The reduction of knowledge into a commodity transformed “the informed citizen” into “the info-tainment consumer” whose “commitments, activities, values, or concerns beyond economic ones are superfluous” (Birdsall, 1997, p. 55). Birdsall concluded that the information economy espoused by proponents of the ideology of information technology had no real role for the public library (Birdsall, 1997, p. 63).

The Public Library’s Role in Adult Education

*Varying Conceptions of the Public Library’s Role in Adult Education*

The public library’s role in adult education has been the subject of much debate since the 1920s. As a rule public librarians favored a more conservative, supportive role for the public
library. Individuals and organizations outside the field of librarianship promoted a more active role. The Carnegie Corporation, the Fund for Education, and adult educators seemed to have a clearer vision of the public library's potential than did librarians. In the 1920s W. S. Learned advocated the role of community intelligence service for the public library. In the 1930s Alvin Johnson saw the public library as "The People's University."

Advocates of library adult education held that "the most appropriate and legitimate public role for the library was to be found in the provision of educational services and materials for adults" (Raber, 1994, p. 39). Library adult education advocates believed that "the public library provided a significant public good only by virtue of its educational role" (Raber, 1994, p. 39). It was seen as the only role that could strengthen democracy by empowering individuals and communities. They believed that people, individually and collectively, should have access to the knowledge needed to fulfill their civic duties and serve as informed participants in the decision-making process. Douglas Raber suggested that this role "was merely a modernization of the Library Faith's commitment to self-improvement and moral progress" (1994, p. 39).

The Public Library Inquiry research team found that a small contingent of library adult educators advocated a much broader educational role for the public library, a role in which the public library would serve as "the chief institution of adult education and conduct classes, reading clinics, and so forth" (Leigh, 1950, p. 21). In their vision the public library would become a formal agency of adult education with education as both the library's central objective and function. In their conception the traditional functions of preservation, organization, and provision of materials would no longer be major functions of the public library; administering materials would become only one facet of a general educational program (Leigh, 1950, p. 225).

Most advocates of library adult education did not want to change the public library into a formal agency of adult education; however, they saw the potential of the library as a nonformal agency for adult learning. With this goal in mind, the adult education community attempted to help library adult educators develop a stronger sense of purpose and direction. Noted adult
education professor C. O. Houle was probably the strongest advocate of library adult education. In a paper entitled "Strengthening the Influence of the Public Library," Houle examined library services and programs to determine if there was a "structural framework of principles" which could be used to guide the library in becoming "a more powerful instrument of adult education" (1957, p. 766).

Houle emphasized that the library was an educational institution in the broadest sense. Houle defined education as "a way of helping people to change themselves, of aiding them to achieve skills and knowledge and insight, deepen their appreciation and their attitudes, and build that indefinable balance of values which we refer to as character" (1957, p. 766). Houle saw the public library's purposes as being basically the same as those of adult education—individual and social improvement (1957, p. 767).

Houle articulated what the library goals should be in terms of the development of individuals and of society. The library's first goal should be to help people accept responsibility for their own self-education. The practical ideal toward which libraries should direct their efforts was "the ideal of the man or the woman who continues to direct his or her own education" (Houle, 1957, p. 767). The second goal should be the development of "a society in which such thoughtful people work and want to work together in a reasonable, intelligent way, using factual knowledge in the service of their social needs" (Houle, 1957, p. 767). These goals suggested a positive approach to empowering people as individuals and as members of society (Houle, 1957, p. 767).

Houle described four areas of emphasis derived from an analysis of the two goals. These areas of emphasis provided specific guidelines for the work of the library. The first emphasis was on improving services "for those who are already capable of directing their own education" (Houle, 1957, p. 767). These were the people sometimes referred to as the "communications elite" for whom a "well-rounded" collection was an essential feature of public library service (Houle, 1957, p. 767).
The second emphasis "should be the strengthening of the library itself as an instrument of education" (Houle, 1957, p. 768). Factors such as the size of the collection, the scope of services, and the quality of the staff directly determined the library's educational effect on the community. To improve its performance as an educational agency, the public library had to not only strengthen its collections, services, and staff, but also expand and enhance its public relations efforts (Houle, 1957, p. 768). Public relations efforts needed to target all five of the groups that made up the library’s public—"professional librarians, actively concerned citizens, purposeful users, occasional users," and nonusers (Houle, 1957, p. 768). While nonusers should be a central focus of public relations, promotional efforts should also be directed at the other groups. Houle felt that each group could exert a strong motivating influence on the group immediately below it. Only a public relations program designed to reach all five groups would be successful in strengthening the library for adult education (Houle, 1957, pp. 768-769).

The third emphasis was to increase the number of people who were capable of self-directed learning (Houle, 1957, p. 769). Although this was a long-term objective possibly encompassing several generations of librarians, Houle suggested some specific, immediate activities for the present generation. First, librarians should stress the importance of adult education by publicizing it by any and all means—everything from posters to speeches to collection development in the area of lifelong learning. Second, librarians should set an example by demonstrating in their daily work a deep interest in books and learning. Third, librarians should seek to develop the kind of interpersonal relationship with their patrons that promoted "a deep interest in and concern for reading" (Houle, 1957, p. 769). Houle urged librarians to set for themselves the goal of helping a few people each year "to move toward a greater capacity for self-education" (Houle, 1957, p. 769).

The fourth emphasis was facilitating community development by serving the informational and education needs of the community (Houle, 1957, p. 770). To those who questioned the propriety of library staff trying to improve the community, Houle pointed out that
librarians were already engaged in community development. A study of the public library’s collection and its card catalog would reveal something about librarians’ values and their aspirations for their communities. Houle suggested that public libraries conduct studies of their communities. Since librarians were already making value judgments about the contents of their collections, these judgments should be conscious decisions based on a rational analysis of the community’s needs. A community study would provide the information needed to establish clear goals and objectives and determine the means for accomplishing them (Houle, 1957, p. 770).

Houle reiterated the four central emphases for the public library: “to try and serve those who are already directing their own self education, to try to broaden the library so that it is a much more powerful instrument, to try to reach those who are not being self-directed in their education, and to try to serve the needs of the community” (1957, p. 770). Houle emphasized that the library must strive to find a balance among these four areas in its day-to-day operation. “If any one of the four is given a dominant role, the others will suffer” (1957, p. 770). Library work was too complex to be guided by “any single simple goal” (Houle, 1957, p. 770).

Houle suggested some principles on which librarians should base their daily decisions regarding the education of the adult public. First, the library adult education program should grow out of the nature of the library. Houle cautioned that library activities should be developed “with a clear understanding of their relationship to the goals and emphases which the library has adopted” (1957, p. 770).

The second principle was that “library adult education programs should not be built around single purposes or single activities” (Houle, 1957, p. 770). Houle felt that there had been too many needless controversies. Examples included group activities versus service to individuals, service to the “communications elite” versus service to the total community, and the provision of educational materials versus the provision of popular materials. Houle said the library did not need to limit itself to one emphasis; rather the library should seek “a flexible,
balanced program which might grow out of the combined use of all of them” (Houle, 1957, p. 771).

The third principle emphasized that adult education was the responsibility of the entire library, not just one unit in the library. It was essential that adult education work be integrated into the daily activities of every unit and that all staff members have a fundamental role to play in achieving its goals. Houle conceded that an adult education specialist might be needed to lead the program, to provide in-service training, and to serve as a motivating force for the staff (Houle, 1957, p. 771).

The fourth principle stressed that the library’s programming goals must be based on the needs and interests of the community. Although the fundamentals of library service were universal, the situations in which they had to be applied varied greatly. The great diversity of contexts made a community study an essential aspect of public library planning. General principles must be adapted to fit specific situations. Goals and objectives must be attainable and reflect practical realities (Houle, 1957, p. 771). This principle, articulated by Houle in 1957, later became the basis for the PLA Public Library Planning Process.

The fifth principle was that of gradual, incremental change. Houle was aware that routine services consumed 95-98% of the librarian’s time. Houle hoped that librarians might be able to devote at least a small percentage (2-5%) of their time to planning for adult education services. The adult educational objective operated in the vast framework of the public library mission to improve the lives of individuals and to create a better, more equitable society (Houle, 1957, p. 771). Houle concluded that “adult education is not merely a set of techniques or processes or departments or people; it is a spirit which suffuses all the work of the library” (Houle, 1957, p. 771).

Almost 20 years later Houle still believed that public libraries had great potential as adult educational institutions, but this potential had not been realized because of a number of problems—inadequate funding, an insufficient number of qualified librarians, and poor planning
to name a few. All of these problems and others had contributed to the public library's failure to become a strong instrument of adult education; however, Houle believed "the key problem of the public library as an educational institution is that many librarians and the overwhelming majority of citizens do not realize that it is a center of learning" (1974, p. 80). Even librarians who recognized the educational mission of the public library had failed to integrate it into their practice (Houle, 1957, p. 80). Public librarians did not seem to have a real sense of commitment to the library's educational objective.

The Library Profession's Commitment to the Educational Objective

The commitment of librarians to the library's educational objectives was a critical element in the success or failure of adult education programs in public libraries. Some librarians and observers from the field of adult education suggested that widespread lack of professional commitment to the educational objective was one of the reasons the public library had not lived up to its potential. Alvin Johnson (1938) observed that most librarians were "custodians and administrators of books" who were more interested in promoting circulation than education (p. 30). If adult education programming increased circulation and induced adult patrons to read good literature, all librarians would regard it as an important component of library service. However, if adult education programming resulted in a reduction in circulation, most librarians would oppose its inclusion in the library's services (Johnson, 1938, p. 30). For most practicing librarians, adult education was "only an incidental, perhaps minor, objective (Johnson, 1938, p. 30). The real objective was to maximize circulation by promoting books and reading, whether educational or not (Williams, 1988, p. 48).

Johnson identified four obstacles that prevented the public library from assuming "its rightful place as leader in the movement for adult education" (1938, p. 73). The obstacles were (a) money wasted on purely recreational reading materials; (b) difficulty in acquiring readable, inexpensive yet authoritative books; (c) inadequately trained personnel; and (d) lack of sufficient
funds (Johnson, 1938, pp. 74-78). Inadequacy of personnel was seen as the greatest obstacle (Johnson, 1938, pp. 76-77).

A. M. Farquhar, chair of the ALA Adult Education Board, noted that few libraries were “motivated by an adult education ideal” (1944, p. 341). Amy Winslow, a member of the Post-War Planning Committee, was unable to name a single library that had adopted education as its central goal and committed all of its resources and its efforts to the promotion of education and self-directed learning (“What is ALA’s New Emphasis,” 1945, p. 486).

In the introduction to a special issue of *Library Trends* devoted to “Current Trends in Adult Education,” C. W. Stone (1959) quoted J. W. Powell who wrote the following in *Education for Maturity*.

> For lack of a teacher’s impulse libraries have remained places from which books are taken rather than centers in which a community may cultivate the skill and power of its thinking . . . . The education of librarians (where it rises above sheer management) stresses a scholarship of content rather than the contagion of ideas. (Powell, 1949, p. 182)

P. R. Penland’s 1960 dissertation dealt with the discrepancy between the aspirations expressed in the “library faith and objectives,” and the extent to which librarians were actually involved in adult education. A decade earlier the Public Library Inquiry had focused attention on “the gap between the social and educational objectives of the American public library and its accomplishments” (Penland, 1961, p. 239). Penland was concerned about the ambiguity in an agency considered by many educators to be one of the most fundamental adult education institutions. Penland attempted to determine how public library supervisors really felt about the educational function of the library and whether they were truly committed to implementing the official educational objectives of the library (1961, p. 239). Penland’s dissertation consisted of an historical overview of library adult education and an attitude study using Guttman scaling techniques. The sample was 260 supervising librarians from 33 public libraries in Michigan. Penland found that supervisors were “the key to the lack of commitment to adult education in
Penland concluded that the public librarians in the study had not “fully rationalized their positions in adult education” and “that resistance to adult education is prevalent” (1961, p. 246). Librarians appeared to be insecure about the library’s educational function and only mildly interested in professional objectives. Their noncommittal answers led Penland to conclude that there was a widespread lack of real interest in continuing self-education (Penland, 1961, pp. 246-247). In a letter to Penland, C. A. Metzner wrote, “When the level of professional aspiration is so distant from the level of individual involvement, rationalization and subsequent achievement, the goals may not even serve the purpose of motivating progress” (Metzner, as cited in Penland, 1961, p. 247). Penland was concerned that progress in library adult education would be limited if the decision making were left to the typical administrator (1961, p. 247).

Penland suggested that the most important finding of the study was the discrepancy between goals and attitudes. The majority of librarians appeared to have difficulty accepting an active role in community life and to be inadequately motivated to carry out the public library’s educational function. Penland was particularly distressed that librarians as adult educators were reluctant to practice sound educational theory—that is, pursuing continuous self-education (Penland, 1961, p. 246).

Penland saw no simple solution to the attitudinal problem but made some broad recommendations for the library profession. Because standards for library service had been prescribed on a national level, it was imperative that each library staff determine its own objectives for library service. If individual libraries were unable to write their own objectives, the library profession would need to either lower its expectations of achievement or find ways to improve its recruitment and training programs. The profession should strive to identify factors which prevent librarians from putting their “objectives to work for individual and community
betterment” (Penland, 1961, p. 247). Penland recommended community-based goals and objectives more than a decade before the Public Library Association recognized the validity of this approach.

The problem of commitment to the public library’s educational objective was very evident in the Adult Independent Learning project of the 1970s. A major factor in the limited success of the AIL project was the failure of librarians to support the project’s educational objectives. Many librarians could not or would not adapt to the educator-counselor role. In their defense, it can be argued that many librarians lacked the appropriate educational background to prepare them to take on a new role. Few librarians in the AIL project had formal training in readers’ guidance. Informal approaches to staff training and development were based on the underlying assumption that public librarians who undertook expanded roles already had an initial level of skill and expertise based on past education and experience (Pungitore, 1989, pp. 126-27). The educator-counselor role required skills and competencies beyond those generally included in a library school curriculum. Good interpersonal, communication, and research skills were not enough. Librarians also needed “the educational background and in-depth exposure to the theory and practice of related disciplines, such as counseling, education, and psychology” (Pungitore, 1989, p. 126).

The Impact of Professional and Continuing Education

L. E. Birge wrote, “Despite solemn pronouncements about the public library’s educational function, there is little real cognizance of this function in library school curricula” (1981, p. 143). The library school curriculum often reflected the areas of librarianship deemed most important by the faculty. The dearth of adult education courses in the curricula reflected a lack of commitment to the educational objective (Birge, 1981, p. 143). Library school faculty could not instill in students a strong commitment to the educational function of the public library if they were not fully committed to that ideal themselves. This lack of commitment was not a new
concern in the 1980s. The literature of library adult education had dealt with the problem of library education curricula for decades.

The Graduate Library School at the University of Chicago sponsored an Institute on "The Role of the Library in Adult Education" in 1937 (Knowles, 1977, p. 115). M. D. Tompkins presented a paper at the institute on "Adult Education and the Library School Curriculum." The paper represented the first attempt to analyze the educational needs of library adult educators. Tompkins felt that an effective program of readers' guidance required that the librarian be "a scholar, sociologist, and psychologist" (Tompkins, as cited in Bloom, 1976, p. 389). Tompkins found that most of the adult education courses in library schools were introductory in nature (Knowles, 1977, p. 115) and did not specify the tasks that comprised work with groups or cover the methods used in adult education (Bloom, 1976, p. 389).

Several studies between 1946 and 1956 looked at educational requirements for library adult educators. These studies tended to show that the first-year library school curriculum did not sufficiently prepare librarians for library adult education work. Workshops, institutes, short courses, and advice from consultants were required to develop the essential skills needed to carry out programs beyond the basic professional orientation of the first year (Monroe, 1959, p. 98).

In 1946 S. A. Edge examined the preparation for adult education work provided by library schools. Although a few schools had introduced courses dealing with subject matter specifically related to adult education, most offered a general introductory approach in which library adult education was integrated with traditional library school courses (Edge, 1946, pp. 45-46). Edge was concerned that the dispersal of adult education material throughout the curriculum might result in the student receiving "only a general and possibly superficial notion of the fundamental principles and methods involved in their application" (1946, pp. 46-47). Recommendations for the library schools included the provision of carefully integrated programs of training and opportunities for specialized coursework and practicums in adult education. Edge
recommended that public libraries conduct a continuous program of in-service training for the
staff (1946, p. 49).

In the study on librarians for the Public Library Inquiry, A. L. Bryan (1952) surveyed the
opinions of public librarians regarding the adequacy of their library school education. Many
librarians felt that their professional training had not been adequate to meet their professional
needs. The number of librarians who felt that too little emphasis had been placed on certain
subject areas such as “reading interests of adults, psychology of the reader, reader guidance,
sociology of reading, public relations and publicity” exceeded by three to five times the number
who felt too much emphasis had been placed on these subject areas (Bryan, 1952, p. 71). These
subject areas were particularly important to those librarians involved in adult education work
(Monroe, 1959, p. 96).

One of the critical problems that H. L. Smith identified in the 1954 survey of adult
education activities in public libraries was the inadequate preparation of librarians to do adult
education work. In the survey Smith asked librarians to name those areas of knowledge and those
skills that they considered essential for adult education work. Librarians were also asked to give
an indication of the level of knowledge or proficiency needed in each subject area or skill (Smith,
1954, p. 60).

Survey findings indicated that the nature and scope of adult education services demanded
knowledge in a wide range of subject areas and the mastery of many skills and techniques. The
final list consisted of 30 subject areas and 20 skills. In the list of subjects, the first 19 were
general subject areas such as science, history, music, psychology, political science and
government, national and world affairs, and public relations. Most respondents thought average
or above average knowledge of these subjects was sufficient to do effective work in adult
education (Smith, 1954, p. 60).

Items 20-30 were subject areas directly related to adult education services such as
principles of book selection, reader guidance techniques, discussion group methods and
techniques, administration and organization of adult education services, adult education philosophy, and library adult education services. The majority of respondents felt that above average to expert knowledge was necessary in these subjects. Most librarians indicated that further study in these subjects was needed. Among the subjects requiring in-depth study were discussion group methods and techniques, administration and organization of adult education services, library adult education services, adult education philosophy, audiovisual methods, and interviewing methods (Smith, 1954, p. 61).

The list of skills represented applications of the subject knowledge and actual physical and mechanical skills. Librarians indicated the need for above average or expert knowledge in most of the skills (Smith, 1954, p. 61). The primary skills requiring an expert level of knowledge were how to train leaders and members for group participation; how to conduct a community survey to determine what library adult education services the community needed and wanted; how to organize and administer an adult education program; how to evaluate young adult and adult education services using objective research-based measures; and how to conduct forums, panel discussions, and demonstrations. The chief skills in which librarians thought staffs needed more training corresponded almost exactly with the skills requiring expert knowledge. Librarians were interested in acquiring knowledge in those subjects and proficiency in those skills that they believed were most needed to conduct effective adult education services and programs (Smith, 1954, p. 62).

Education and training for adult education work in public libraries emerged as the greatest concern of the librarians in Smith’s study. Librarians in the study felt that library schools should assume the responsibility for providing the essential knowledge and skills. In-service training was designed to meet only the most urgent needs and was generally available only in the larger library systems (Smith, 1954, p. 59). Smith said that there was a great need for a library school curriculum that provided the necessary education, training, and experience librarians needed to plan and implement a successful adult education program. Smith called for the
expansion of the library school curriculum to better prepare students for working with adults (1954, p. 66).

In 1954 the Adult Education Section of the Public Library Division of ALA surveyed library schools, state library agencies, state library associations, and public libraries to determine how many educational opportunities were available in the period 1952-1954. The survey revealed that only 2 of 31 accredited library schools offered specialized courses in library adult education (Monroe, 1959, p. 97). A review of library school catalogs showed that adult education courses generally dealt with the philosophy of adult education or methods for working with individual readers. There were few courses dealing with adult learning theory or group methods (Stevenson, 1954, p. 229).

The survey showed that training and educational opportunities for library adult educators were limited. State library agencies offered more workshop and institute opportunities in adult education than did library schools. State library associations seldom offered institutes in areas related to adult education, and public library in-service training programs in adult education were few in number. The Adult Education Section urged state library agencies to work with state library associations to provide continuing programs of in-service training through institutes and conferences (Monroe, 1959, p. 97). Positive findings from the ALA Library Community Project reinforced the recommendation that state library agencies take a more active role in adult education by providing consultants and training services to state library associations and public library systems. Public libraries were encouraged to establish internships for on-the-job training in adult services (Monroe, 1959, p. 97).

As part of the ALA Subgrant Project supported by the Fund for Adult Education, Eleanor Phinney conducted a series of case studies to ascertain the essential elements of successful library adult education programs. Phinney found that the public librarians who guided these programs had not received specialized training in adult education as part of their library school education (1956, p. 142). Although these librarians had not received specialized training in graduate school,
M. E. Monroe noted that a minimum amount of specialized training had been available to these librarians at the time the special skills were needed. Specialized training was secured in relation to special projects (the ALA American Heritage Project for example), from professional associations, from consultants at the state library extension agencies, and from university extension (Monroe, 1959, pp. 97-98).

The problems in library education were indicative of the problems of practicing librarians. Librarians were confused as to what constituted library adult education. Many did not believe that adult education was one of their responsibilities. Tompkins, Edge, Asheim, Monroe, and other library educators attempted "to clarify the principles and practices of the field and identify the knowledges [sic] and skills needed by librarians doing adult education work" (Rohde, 1979, p. 235). The 1954 Allerton Park Conference represented the first professional consensus on the definition and scope of library adult education. The conference identified the attitudes, areas of knowledge, and skills needed to do library adult education work and described the appropriate learning situations for meeting those needs (Asheim, 1955).

In the 1950s the curriculum for library adult education "consisted largely of a general library education made up mostly of required technical courses" (Rohde, 1979, p. 235). Some schools provided a specially designed course on adult education. Others provided an introduction to adult education work in a course on public libraries. Most library educators agreed that "the first-year curriculum provided many of the knowledges [sic] and skills needed but that their application in library adult education should be made more explicit" (Rohde, 1979, p. 235). Library adult educators recommended that an increased emphasis be placed on the adult education objective in library school curricula and continuing education (Rohde, 1979, p. 235).

Much of the subject matter and many of the skills identified by the Allerton Park Conference were in areas not traditionally included in library school curricula, including psychology, sociology, adult education, and interpersonal communications. The conference suggested that the most efficient way for students to obtain the necessary background was to take
course work outside the library school (Asheim, 1955). Edge recommended that library school admission requirements include a background in sociology and psychology (1946, p. 48). Students were allowed to take "outside" courses at some library schools, but many schools considered courses in psychology, sociology, adult education, and communications to be irrelevant. The Allerton Park Conference was unsuccessful in affecting real change in the structure of library school curricula (Rohde, 1979, p. 235). Most library schools did little or nothing in response to the conference's recommendation that they add more adult education courses; thus, the preparation of librarians for library adult education work remained inadequate (Monroe, 1959, p. 92).

N. F. Rohde (1979) noted that by the 1960s adult education work had been integrated into adult services. If information services were designated as part of adult services, the library school curricula could be viewed as consisting largely of adult services courses, except for children's and technical services' courses (Rohde, 1979, p. 236).

Eleanor Phinney stressed the need to provide more continuing education opportunities for adult services librarians. Phinney emphasized "the need for re-tooling—for constant evaluation and refreshment"—of librarians' techniques and capabilities (1963a, p. 53). Phinney recommended that librarians make fuller use of adult learning principles in their selection of materials for adult audiences and that materials of all kinds be evaluated in terms of their appropriateness in presenting ideas in specific situations and for specific purposes (1963a, p. 53).

Eight years after the 1954 conference on training needs for library adult educators, A. B. Lemke found only eight or nine library schools that offered a course directly dealing with adult education (1963, p. 8). G. R. Purcell's 1965 survey of library school catalogs offered a more positive assessment; the survey indicated that nearly all accredited graduate library schools had "some form of course in adult education" (p. 47). M. E. Monroe thought Purcell's assessment was too generous. Most of the courses in Purcell's study were introductory courses that offered a broad overview of the field. Monroe asserted that Purcell's findings were "indicative of a broad,

A. C. Hall (1968) conducted a study to ascertain the areas of knowledge and skills needed to perform professional duties in a large public library and to determine the extent to which existing library education programs developed knowledge of these subjects and proficiency in these skills (abstract). The sample for Hall’s study included librarians in 13 large public libraries and faculty in 12 library schools. Using the data compiled from the respondents, descriptions of curricular content from the participating library schools, and Bloom’s taxonomy, Hall developed a taxonomy of educational objectives for public service librarians. The objectives included a description of tasks and expected levels of proficiency, which ranged from basic factual knowledge to complex intellectual skills including comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Hall, 1968, abstract).

Hall compared the educational objectives with what was actually taught in library school courses. The comparison showed that the schools were not providing an adequate education. The education offered by the schools was at a much lower level of proficiency than was needed in practice. Although library school objectives called for the development of more complex intellectual skills, factual information was emphasized in actual instruction (Hall, 1968, abstract). The study’s findings highlighted “the very real difference between proposed and actual objectives, the introductory nature of most library science master’s degree programs . . . and the neglect of important knowledges [sic] and skills that fall outside the traditional scope of library education” (Rohde, 1979, p. 237).

L. A. Allen proposed an educational program for adult services librarians. The social outreach emphasis of the 1960s and a background in adult education and management formed the framework for Allen’s proposed program (Rohde, 1979, p. 236). Allen’s proposed curriculum for educating adult services librarians represented a more concise, more up-to-date version of the
Allerton Park Conference's recommendations. Attitudes were more implicit, knowledge and skills were integrated, and responsibility for learning situations, both formal and informal, was assigned to libraries as well as library schools. Allen encouraged libraries to develop in-house continuing education opportunities for support staff and to provide sabbatical leaves and tuition assistance programs for professional staff to allow them to continue their formal education. Coursework in the behavioral sciences and management theory formed a large portion of Allen's proposed curriculum, and the program required more than a year to complete (Allen, 1968).

A 1971 study by N. J. Freeman examined "the organizational structure of library school curricula as it related to the preparation of adult services librarians" (Freeman, as cited in Rohde, 1979, p. 237). The study confirmed the findings of earlier studies on library education for adult services librarians. A pattern had evolved during the 1950s and 1960s in which general education in librarianship with the addition of a course or two related to adult services had become the accepted norm. Nearly 25% of the accredited library school programs did not include a course specifically concerned with the needs of adults. Courses that pertained to adult clienteles were of four types: "book courses, reading courses, services courses, and courses that combined materials and services in about equal proportion" (Freeman, as cited in Rohde, 1979, p. 237).

Freeman found that the programs were not structured to encourage specialization at the master's degree level. Some programs made specialization virtually impossible because so few electives were allowed. Even when more electives were permitted, students interested in an adult services specialization were either advised to specialize in reference service (only one aspect of adult services) or develop the core areas of knowledge and skills in more depth. An identifiable specialty in adult services was available in only a handful of schools. Only one of those schools had developed a specialization based on a carefully structured sequence of courses. Some library schools did not permit students to take courses in other schools or departments thus giving students fewer options for obtaining the knowledge and skills needed for adult services practice (Freeman, as cited in Rohde, 1979, p. 237).
N. F. Rohde’s examination of the 1978 directory issue of the *Journal of Education for Librarianship* found that one third of accredited library schools had no faculty member responsible for adult services courses. Of those schools having an adult services specialist on staff, one fourth had no identifiable course dealing specifically with materials and services for adults. In some instances adult services courses were reserved for students in the specialist or doctoral programs. A perusal of the schools’ catalogs, announcements, and news releases was more encouraging. It seemed that some schools were offering “more film courses, more communication media courses not aimed primarily at school librarians, more communication courses such as ‘The Process of Communication,’ and more emphasis on services and materials for special publics” (Rohde, 1979, p. 237). A few library schools were altering the structure of the core courses or requiring fewer courses to allow more electives. Also, a few schools had adopted more flexible programs which permitted students to take courses outside the library school (Rohde, 1979, p. 237).

Rohde concluded that with a few exceptions education for adult services in the late 1970s had changed little since the time of Tompkins. “There are some new courses, some new emphases, and a little more flexibility, but the basic structure remains the same” (Rohde, 1979, p. 237). Library school programs for adult services librarians continued to be general and introductory in nature. Continuing education programs were necessary to develop the knowledge and skills needed for an adult services specialization (Rohde, 1979, p. 238).

Given the economic situation of the late 1970s, Rohde was not optimistic about the development of an in-depth specialization in the first degree program or the development of a two-year program to accommodate specialization. The economic climate was also limiting continuing education opportunities for specialization. Rohde hoped that schools would become more innovative in their educational planning but feared that a “retrenchment philosophy” without a careful analysis of priorities and needs would lead to library education programs more suited to 1900 than 1980 (Rohde, 1979, pp. 238-239).
L. E. Birge wrote in 1981 that “aside from a few readers’ services courses and basic library-in-society classes (offered by some institutions), little training is directed specifically to the preparation of librarians for adult education work” (p. 145). Few library schools had even one course in adult learning or educational psychology, much less a fully-developed curriculum for students wanting to specialize in education and counseling in the library environment (Pungitore, 1989, p. 128). Courses covering topics such as the characteristics of adult learners, adult learning, interpersonal communication and human relations, methods and materials, program planning, and reading instruction of adults were nonexistent. Birge observed that until more opportunities were made for library school training in these topics, librarians would continue to enter the profession without the necessary skills to build a strong education program (1981, p. 145).

Unfortunately, the situation has grown more problematic in the last 25 years. Currently, there is “a deficiency of concentration on adult lifelong learning and literacy in programs of library and information science education” (McCook & Barber, 2002, p. 72). McCook and Barber suggest that the lack of a curricular focus on adult literacy and lifelong learning in library and information science programs may be ascribed to the fact “that the intellectual and historical bases of adult education and literacy are not part of the current research interest” of library school faculty (2002, p. 72). They also point out that the library and information science literature about adult education and literacy over the last 25 years has been largely “anecdotal and field-based, rather than theoretical and research-based” (McCook & Barber, 2002, p. 72). Most of the theoretical and research-based literature on adult literacy and lifelong learning has been produced by college and university departments of adult education and is seldom included or even referenced in library literature (McCook & Barber, 2002, p. 72).

Another problem is that there are very few faculty members who have studied adult education on the doctoral level. Doctorates earned outside the field of library and information science are generally in the areas of “history, computer science, information systems design, or instructional technology” (McCook & Barber, 2002, p. 72). The 2001 report of the Association
for Library and Information Science Education revealed that of the 249 library school faculty holding doctorates earned outside the field, not one current faculty member held a doctorate in adult education (Sineath, 2001).

Currently most library and information education programs provide little background in theories and practices of adult education. Graduates in recent years, for the most part, have not received a solid grounding in the history and philosophy of adult education nor have they received instruction in adult education learning principles and methods. Furthermore, library schools have failed to instill in their students a strong sense of commitment to the public library’s educational function (McCook & Barber, 2002, p. 73).

The majority of new librarians asked to collaborate with adult educators or to assume the responsibilities of adult educators are not adequately prepared. Currently, continuing education opportunities for librarians involved in adult literacy and adult education are supported by the same funding sources that mandate workforce preparation. These institutes and workshops provide the training librarians need to deliver programs focusing on work-related skills, but the limited time frame of these educational experiences compel instructors “to neglect the foundations and philosophy of librarianship’s traditions and history” with adult education and lifelong learning (McCook & Barber, 2002, p. 73). Because “90% of all public libraries either provide or refer patrons to adult education opportunities,” there is “compelling need” for more educational preparation among library and information students planning to work in public libraries (McCook & Barber, 2001, p. 73).

The Influence of Professional and Organizational Goals

L. S. Estabrook’s 1979 article on “Emerging Trends in Community Library Services” explained why community outreach programs failed to exert any great influence on traditional patterns of library service. This article also provided useful insights into the factors contributing to the failure of the Adult Independent Learners’ Project to achieve widespread acceptance.
Estabrook wrote that a review of developments in community library services since the passage of LSCA in 1964 would lead the reader to conclude that there had been “little systemic change” (1979, p. 151). A review of new services reported in *Library Journal* in the period 1965-1978 revealed that the earlier, more general programs for disadvantaged people had been replaced with specialized services to specific groups such as the aged, the handicapped, minority groups, and independent learners by the early 1970s. Information and referral (I&R) programs began to replace the innovative community service styles of the mid-1960s in the early 1970s. By 1978 outreach and I&R programs for the poor were beginning to disappear because support for these services had not been incorporated into annual operating budgets. By 1979 there was little evidence that the innovative programs of the 1960s and early 1970s had influenced traditional patterns of library service to any great extent (Estabrook, 1979, p. 154).

A number of factors contributed to the failure of community outreach services to become integrated into the public library’s program. An important factor was the lack of adequate research on which to base the planning and evaluation of services. Deficiencies included insufficient reporting, inadequate methods for program evaluation, and the lack of established criteria for successful programming (Estabrook, 1979, p.151). The analytical literature of the period listed three reasons for the failure of attempts to extend community services. The primary reason cited in the literature was the curtailment of these services due to financial hardship. The second reason was the unresponsiveness of the intended users of community outreach and information services. In an analysis of the information seeking habits of poor people, Thomas Childers (1975) stated that disadvantaged groups “are often locked into their own subculture . . . In effect they live in an information ghetto. Their information universe is a closed system, harboring an inordinate amount of unawareness and misinformation (myth, rumor, folk lore)” (p. 32).

Finally, there were instances of staff and administrative resistance to the inclusion of nontraditional community services in the regular library program (Estabrook, 1979, p. 154).
Library decisions regarding the development of specific services or the recognition of the legitimacy of a client group's library and information needs could often be traced to the interplay of two factors: "(1) the personal and professional goals of librarians as members of an occupational group, and (2) the dynamics of organizational and interorganizational behavior" (Estabrook, 1979, p. 155).

The philosophical goals of total community service and the instrumental goals of public librarians as an occupational group were not always compatible. As an occupational group, public librarians sought to achieve professional status. The professionalization of an occupational group is said to consist of three critical aspects: "professional autonomy, professional expertise, and status in relation to other occupational groups" (Estabrook, 1979, p. 155).

The achievement of professional autonomy allowed an occupational group to independently define its role in society and to decide how that role should be performed. The community outreach programs developed in the 1960s employed methods which were often directly opposed to professional autonomy (Estabrook, 1979, p. 155). Advisory boards composed of community members created a situation in which the wishes of the community were pitted against the professional judgment of librarians; "community advisory boards by their very existence diminished professional autonomy" (Estabrook, 1979, p. 155). Thus, public librarians often exhibited a low level of professional commitment to community advisory boards (Estabrook, 1979, p. 155).

Professional autonomy was also threatened when community residents were hired as community service workers. Public librarians felt the loss of autonomy when nonprofessionals were given what were considered professional tasks to perform. Professional autonomy was also an issue when public librarians moved into information and referral work. Typically information and referral service was a function of the social work field. Social workers considered I&R services their domain and challenged the qualifications of public librarians to do this type of work. The employment of social workers in library information and referral centers created a
situation in which librarians felt that their competence to do this type of work was questioned (Estabrook, 1979, p. 156).

The use of nonlibrarians to provide community library services called into question another aspect of professionalization—the assertion of professional expertise. Hiring nonlibrarians was construed as an admission that public librarians lacked the skills to provide these services themselves. Formal programs to prepare librarians for community services work at the University of Toledo and the Columbia University School of Library Service were not well received by the profession. The concept of the community outreach librarian was discarded because librarians were uncomfortable with the idea of nonlibrarians providing community library services, yet they could not accept the legitimacy of programs designed to teach librarians the skills needed to perform effectively as community service workers (Estabrook, 1979, p. 156).

Professional expertise was also challenged by the type of clienteles for which community outreach services were designed. These services were intended to serve the needs of clients who were not traditional library users. These individuals were often poor, undereducated, and culturally deprived due to “the social, economic, and political circumstances of their lives” (Estabrook, 1979, pp. 156-57). Their information needs were difficult to assess because they frequently did not know how to express their needs. In circumstances in which the clientele’s communication skills were limited, professional expertise was constantly challenged. When librarians were unable to determine the client’s information need, they often shifted the responsibility for the communication failure from themselves to the client with the arguments that the client didn’t know how to ask the right questions or the client had turned to the wrong agency for the information (Estabrook, 1979, p. 157). In this way the librarian’s professional competence was not called into question.

The nature of clientele itself presented a problem with regard to the third aspect of professionalization—concern for status. Literature on the development of professions has indicated that the status of a profession group is very closely tied to the status of that group’s
Serving the disadvantaged as a client group did nothing to advance the status of public librarians among other occupational groups. Thus, Estabrook argued that "while the development of techniques to extend service to the 'disadvantaged' was consistent with the philosophical goals of the library profession, it was inimical to the instrumental goals of the professional group" (1979, p. 157). Estabrook was careful to point out, however, that community outreach services did not fail to be incorporated into the public library's program of services because librarians disliked lower-class persons or community service work. The failure was due to "the social and economic forces that shaped the behavior of occupational groups" (Estabrook, 1979, p. 157). Librarians wanted recognition that their activities were socially worthwhile, the authority to perform their duties effectively, and compensation commensurate with their educational credentials (Estabrook, 1979, p. 157).

Organizational processes also affected the integration of community outreach services into the public library's overall program. These processes included "the maintenance and development of interorganizational relationships, the competition for resources to support the institution, the assertion of authority and control within the organization, and the increased importance of evaluation of services provided by the organization" (Estabrook, 1979, pp. 157-158).

The development of effective community outreach services was dependent on the maintenance of a good working relationship between the library and the other human service organizations in the community. One of the major issues surrounding the creation of library information and referral centers was that of domain. In many communities I&R services were viewed as the province of community-organizing groups such as the United Way or that of social work agencies. Besides the conflict over professional domains, public libraries seemed to have difficulty in determining the types of information that the human services community needed and in establishing strong ties with these organizations (Estabrook, 1979, p. 158). In the 1966 study
on library literacy programs, MacDonald believed that librarians bore much of the responsibility for the lack of cooperation between public libraries and literacy education organizations.

Competition for financial resources had a major impact on the types of services provided, especially in the harsh economic climate of the 1970s. Traditional library users generally had more political clout than the disadvantaged clients to whom community outreach services were directed. Public libraries could not afford to risk the alienation of their primary clientele by cutting traditional services in order to continue community outreach and information services. Financially strapped public libraries were forced to make choices, so services valued by the more influential clienteles generally received the highest priority rankings (Estabrook, 1979, p. 158).

In attempting to establish authority and control within their organizations, library administrators confronted problems related to the issues of professional autonomy and expertise. The administrator faced the problem of asserting his or her official authority over those subordinate in the hierarchy of the library organization. Community outreach services that employed nonprofessionals created control problems for administrators in that these individuals generally were not as concerned about the success of the library's programs as were the professional librarians who had a greater stake in the institution. In addition, those librarians who chose to work with the disadvantaged were frequently social activists who saw community outreach services as a vehicle for social change. These librarians, whose social views were often in conflict with professional norms, presented a challenge to administrative control of the library organization (Estabrook, 1979, pp. 158-159).

Finally, accountability became an important issue in the late 1970s as taxpayers rebelled against increased taxes to support public services. In this conservative economic climate, evaluation of library services assumed greater importance. Unfortunately outreach services did not lend themselves to quantitative measurements. As most programs were funded by relatively short-term grants, few programs ran long enough to prove their usefulness. The essential problem with evaluation in the area of human services was the lack of a clear definition of what
constituted success. Circulation statistics and program attendance were traditional measures of library effectiveness. As librarians were trying to develop more effective measures for demonstrating library usefulness, other human services organizations were increasingly evaluated in quantitative terms such as the number of people processed. With the exception of information and referral services, few of the community outreach services produced a high number of transactions (Estabrook, 1979, p. 159). Although outreach services may have exerted a profound influence on the lives of disadvantaged library users, developing measures to determine “the extent of their success [was] problematic” (Estabrook, 1979, p. 159).

Estabrook concluded that “both occupational and organizational factors [affected] the direction of community library service” and that the types of services developed in the period between 1964 and 1979 “were in many respects incompatible with those forces” (1979, p. 159). The processes described in Estabrook’s article were not unique to the library field. As Estabrook pointed out, these processes were “a function of political and economic forces that affect all professional service organizations” (1979, p. 159).

In a paper on the Adult Independent Learners’ (AIL) Projects, Jacquelyn Thresher noted that “neither AIL-Nationwide or AIL-New York State proved that librarians, as a professional group, were willing to expand their helping roles to function as learners’ advisors” (1981, p. 39). As an active participant in the National AIL Project and the New York State AIL Network, Thresher provided some valuable insights into professional thinking. The project produced a twofold service model consisting of advisory services and information support services. The information support services were more readily accepted by librarians because they were seen “as being similar to or a natural extension of ‘traditional’ library services” (Thresher, 1981, p. 39). Thus, there were few problems in developing and implementing these services. The learners’ advisory service, on the other hand, was a different matter. Many librarians in the AIL Project viewed learners’ advisory as “a radical innovation” (Thresher, 1981, p. 40) despite its obvious
similarities to the readers’ advisory service of the 1920s and 1930s. As a radical innovation it was feared and resisted.

Thresher attributed some of the resistance “to the belief that advisory service required a re-definition of the librarian’s role, not merely an expansion” (Thresher, 1981, p. 40). Most library services were “anonymous single-transactions” involving little personal interaction (Thresher, 1981, p. 40). Librarians responded by providing materials or answering a question. Advisory service demanded a good deal of interaction—“extended, highly personal, private one-to-one contact with learners” (Thresher, 1981, p. 40). While librarianship has been regarded as one of the helping professions, formal training for the profession has been “resource-centered rather than client-oriented” (Thresher, 1981, p. 40). People with interest in and aptitude for counseling were often dissuaded from entering the field because librarianship was perceived as “largely ‘thing’ oriented (books, data bases, computers) rather than people oriented” (Thresher, 1981, p. 40).

Thresher observed that many learners’ advisors acted too quickly, suggesting a book or making a referral, rather than allowing learners “to explore and articulate the true nature of their needs” (Thresher, 1981, p. 40). Some librarians appeared to be “uncomfortable with client self-revelation” so they limited interpersonal interaction (Thresher, 1981, p. 40). Others were unsure about the distinctions between educational/career advisement and therapeutic/clinical counseling. The ALL Project attempted to distinguish between the services provided by an advisor/facilitator and those provided by a therapist/counselor, but the distinction was not always clear. The vast majority of librarians in the project believed “that they were not qualified and could not be trained on-the-job to function as counselors” (Thresher, 1981, p. 40). As a result referral to other agencies was necessary “to meet the counseling, assessment, and testing needs of adult learners,” and follow-up and advocacy were also limited (Thresher, 1981, p. 40).

L. E. Birge (1981) noted that many of the librarians involved in these projects protested that they were not adequately prepared to assist learners in the assessment of their needs and in
organizing programs of study. In their defense, Birge asserted that these protestations “were not mere apologiae” (1981, p. 145). Many librarians lacked the educational and experiential background needed to undertake the role of counselor and adult learning consultant. As a librarian and an adult educator, Conroy argued that librarians needed the knowledge base and skills of the adult educator to be effective facilitators of adult learning (1980c, p. 20).

Librarians’ feelings of inadequacy contributed to staff resistance, one of the most significant problems encountered in the Adult Independent Learner Project. Many librarians went along with the project but were not really committed to the goals of the new service and resented the additional work the project required, especially the recording of detailed information for the data collection profiles (Birge, 1979, p. 193). The final report of the Woodbridge, New Jersey, project listed a number of probable causes of staff resistance. Among the reasons cited were the (a) increased workload, (b) the redefining of roles, (c) poor communication, (d) resistance to change in general, (e) greater accountability, and (f) lack of leadership (as cited in Birge, 1979, p. 194). Boles and Smith found that the acceptance of library advisory services was dependent upon two critical factors: “(1) the commitment of the profession to the advisory function as a legitimate role for public librarians, and (2) librarians’ capacity to perform that role” (Boles & Smith, 1979, p. 172).

Thresher observed that a major obstacle to the success of the Adult Independent Learners’ projects was the lack of administrative support and leadership. Many library administrators regarded advisory services as labor intensive and very expensive frills. Information and advisory services for adult learners were considered nonessential services. Most of these services developed as a result of foundation grants and were too often allowed to die when funding was no longer available (Thresher, 1981, p. 40). Many administrators did not attempt to find funding to support the continuation of these services because they did not want “to confront the institutional changes that would arise if their libraries re-adjusted [sic] their priorities and resources to focus on the needs of adult learners” (Thresher, p. 40).
Thresher noted that the AIL Project "was not only a service demonstration project; it was an experiment in participatory planning" (1981, p. 39). The project required extensive program planning and staff participation in service design, monitoring, and evaluation (Thresher, 1981, p. 39). Participatory planning was a new concept in many of the hierarchically structured libraries participating in the AIL Project. It proved very difficult and time consuming to implement. Thus, more effort was devoted to the process of planning, development, and evaluation than to the actual delivery of services. The advisory services component of the service model, the one with which librarians were least familiar, may not have received the needed attention (Thresher, 1981, p. 39).

The final report concluded that the success of adult learner services was largely dependent upon the commitment of the administration and staff.

1. The top administration must actively support the service.

2. The key library policy makers must establish a personnel system which recognizes and rewards outstanding performance and does not reward 'non-professional' attitudes and behavior. The Learners Advisory Service will not persist and become integrated on a purely 'volunteer' basis or when top administration accepts de facto rejection of the service by any middle manager.

3. The service planners must continually monitor service provision procedures to insure that advisors continue to offer the service planned. In any situation where innovative programs are being tested, there is a propensity for new procedures to be rejected or ignored due to uncertainty, unfamiliarity [,] and lack of understanding. Unless constant attention is given to this problem, procedures revert to old habits (Mavor et al., 1976b, p. 76).

The Growing Distance Between Librarianship and Adult Education

Unfortunately, the relationship between librarianship and adult education has grown distant since the early 1960s. In the 1970s two noted adult education professors expressed concern that
adult educators and librarians no longer enjoyed the close relationship that had been characteristic of earlier times. C. O. Houle commented on the loss of the public library community's “leadership, assistance, and good fellowship” (1979, p.95) in an essay written in honor of library professor and adult educator Lester Asheim. Houle wrote the following:

Tragedies have occurred: international, national, and statewide movements of adult education have almost entirely lost the leadership, assistance, and good fellowship that public librarians used to provide. Sudden change has alternated with long slow spells of seeming inaction. Some of the leaders of library adult education have remained prominent (most notably Professor Asheim), others have submerged and then reappeared in unexpected places, and some have been lost permanently from view (1979, p. 95).

In a speech given at a conference of the Southeastern Librarian Association in 1975, M. S. Knowles commented on the change in the public library community’s commitment to adult education over the years. Knowles noted that back in the 1930s “the public library was an institution that was central in the field” of adult education (1975, p. 43). For about ten years the public library was a leader in the field with its “very innovative development in the readers’ advisory program, which was a new conceptualization of the adult education role.” (Knowles, 1975, p. 43). Then readers’ advisory gradually “disappeared from the scene as a pervasive institutional role” (Knowles, 1975, p. 43). Knowles noted that the adult education literature of the 1930s contained many references to the public library as the “people’s university.” The 1930s were remembered as great years for library adult education. “There was a very strong perception of the library as a central institution in our field.” (Knowles, 1975, p. 43).

The decade of the 1940s was an inactive period; there were few reports about adult education activities in libraries. “Then there was a kind of resurgence during the early fifties, with the flood of money that the Fund for Adult Education fed into the public library system” (Knowles, 1975, p. 43). Unfortunately when grant funding ceased, there were few funding sources available to continue the work started in the 1950s (Knowles, 1975, p. 43). Knowles
concluded the speech with this observation: “Now, I’m not making any kind of observation about adult education work being done in local libraries. I’m looking at the national picture, and it seems to me that in the last ten or fifteen years adult education has been less central to the purpose of the national library movement” (Knowles, 1975, p. 43).

J. R. Kidd wrote about the growing distance between the two disciplines in an article in the spring 1983 issue of Library Trends on the theme “Adult Learners and Public Libraries.” In preparation for the article, Kidd reread the July 1959 issue of Library Trends with the theme “Current Trends in Adult Education” (Stone, 1959, pp. 3-122). The 1959 issue of Library Trends contained articles about library services to adult education agencies and “the role of the library as the community information base” (Kidd, 1983, p. 526).

Kidd observed that the decade of the 1950s was “a period in which the library was perceived, along with the university offering textbooks, as the central agency in adult education” (1983, p. 526). Librarians like C. W. Stone, the editor of the Library Trends issue on adult education, “were very active members in adult education councils, local, state and national, and were cited frequently in adult education publications” (Kidd, 1983, p. 526). During this period adult educators “such as Knowles, Sheats, and Houle were published regularly in library journals” (Kidd, 1983, p. 526). Adult educators and librarians enjoyed almost daily contact. Kidd worked with a number of well-known library adult educators including Mathews, Crory, Stevenson, Long, and Tompkins. Kidd noted that in the 1950s librarians and adult educators were seen as “playing on the same team” (1983, p. 526). “Librarians, particularly public librarians, were considered front line militants in the struggle to advance adult education” (1983, p. 526). By the early 1980s Kidd regretfully concluded that the relationship between adult educators and public librarians had changed.

I hope I am wrong, but I suspect that the mutually advantageous and reinforcing relationships between practitioners called librarians and those called adult educationists may have declined somewhat since that period . . . . I sense that there is a greater distance
now between two kinds of professionals that used to be partners within many kinds of
shared achievements. (Kidd, 1983, pp. 527)

Houle, Knowles, and Kidd observed a change in the public library’s commitment to adult
education that began in the 1960s and was clearly evident by the mid-1970s. Given the time
frame, it is interesting to speculate how the shift in public library priorities from education to the
provision of information may have impacted the public library’s commitment to adult education
and the relationship between librarians and adult educators.

Boris Raymond (1997) clearly felt that widespread acceptance of the assumptions
underlying the information paradigm was detrimental to the library community’s involvement in
adult education and literacy. In those library systems favoring the information paradigm, access
to information became the overriding concern and educational programs and services for adults
became peripheral concerns. In those library systems adopting an egalitarian definition of
access—one that went beyond mere access to information—adult education, literacy, and lifelong
learning became important elements in achieving equity of access to knowledge that empowers
and liberates the individual. W. F. Birdsall (1994) believed that the ideology surrounding
information technology was detrimental because it devalued people as citizens. The public
library’s historical mission has been to serve as a means of self-education to enable adults to
better perform their roles as workers, parents, and citizens. Fundamental values of librarianship
and adult education, democracy and education for citizenship, have been undermined by an
ideology that devalues government and people’s participation in government. As many librarians
moved away from values once shared by both fields, the two fields grew further apart.

Librarians have also noticed a growing distance between librarians and adult educators.
Most recently, Kathleen McCook and Peggy Barber observed that librarians graduating in 2001
did not have “the same grounding in adult education theory and research that they had a
generation ago. Once librarians and adult educators worked through the same literature to come
to common understanding” (McCook & Barber, 2002b, p. 68). McCook and Barber noted that
today “the discipline of adult education has its own literature, its own scholars, its own think
tanks and its own policy institutes” (2002b, p. 68). They cited the National Center for the Study
of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) at Harvard University as an example of this trend.
NCSALL is dedicated to conducting “the research, development, evaluation, and dissemination
needed to build effective, cost-effective adult learning and literacy programs” (McCook &
Barber, 2002b, p. 68).

McCook and Barber’s review of the research and publications produced and
commissioned by NCSALL prior to 2001 suggested that adult education activities in libraries was
a marginal concern at best. However, in 1999 NCSALL and the Manpower Demonstration
Research Corporation initiated the Study of Adult Learner Persistence in Library Literacy
Programs with the support of the Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund. The study produced a
series of reports which began to appear in 2000 so McCook and Barber may have been unaware
of this important library-related research. In fairness McCook and Barber also noted that a
review of library literature revealed that the library community paid little attention to the concerns
addressed by adult education researchers (McCook & Barber, p. 68). They concluded that
professionals in both fields had forgotten much of their shared history and that many
opportunities for advancing their mutual objectives have been lost.

In a paper written in 2002, McCook credited adult education and extension for helping to
move the American Library Association toward “commitment to equity of access” (p.8).
Commitment to literacy and adult education has played a critical role in the “profession’s
historical efforts to achieve equity of access” (McCook, 2002, p. 25). Literacy and lifelong
learning are important components of equity of access. Access to library and information
services has little meaning without literacy and the ability to apply knowledge to the solution of
personal and societal problems.
The Evolving Conception of Library Adult Education

Library adult education has always been difficult to define in terms of specific objectives and services. H. L. Smith and the survey committee could not agree on a single acceptable definition, so they decided to define it in operational terms (1954). The 1954 conference on the training needs of library adult educators developed a different definition of adult education, one that excluded many of the activities included in Smith’s operational definition such as (a) the provision of physical facilities, (b) general book selection, (c) quick reference service, (d) technical processes for the total collection, (e) displays for the general promotion of reading, and (f) purely promotional activities (Asheim, 1955, pp. 9-10). Monroe found that the conception of library adult education had evolved from “first, planned reading programs and the readers’ advisory service; second, library services to community organizations and agencies; and third, library-sponsored group programs” (1963, p.12). By the 1950s library adult education was seen as a philosophy that encompassed all adult services (Monroe, 1963, p. 472).

Herbert Bloom believed that Phinney’s study, Library Adult Education in Action, changed the understanding of what constituted adult education. Phinney’s case studies provided a detailed analysis of adult education as a library process and demonstrated that exemplary libraries did respond to community needs in their service policies. However, the programs in Phinney’s model libraries were not examples of a systemic approach to adult learning. “Contents of the discussion and film programs were frequently influenced as much by circumstances as by the unique needs of a community” (Bloom, 1976, p. 423). Nevertheless, the programs did tie in with community needs and concerns. Librarians communicated with the community through participation in the activities of community groups, and the use of radio and newspaper publicity, and open houses. The dialogue with the community encouraged residents to express their needs and fostered greater awareness and responsiveness on the part of librarians. As a result efforts were undertaken to fulfill both the expressed and perceived needs of the community (Bloom, 1976, p. 423).
"Library adult education in action consists of building good relations with the community so that the resources of the library can be developed and used. Once adult education was viewed in action, it was not adult education but adult services that became the preferred term" (Bloom, 1976, p. 423). From this changed understanding of adult education, a more practical view emerged. Proponents of this view believed that the best way to improve educational services for adults was "to stress the development and delivery of library resources" (Bloom, 1976, p. 423). While adult education principles were used in the process of responding to community needs, education was not a visible component of service. Adult education came to represent a philosophy of service (p. 423).

J. R. Kidd's article, "Learning and Libraries: Competencies for Full Participation," discussed some of the changes that had occurred in adult education since the publication of the July 1959 issue of *Library Trends* entitled "Current Trends in Adult Education." Among the changes Kidd noted was a shift in focus from adult education to adult learning. Kidd described the change in emphasis from educating to learning as a paradigm shift or perspective transformation. Kidd believed that this transformation held great promise for libraries (1983, p. 527).

Kidd observed that in 1959 literacy was considered "a handout or welfare offering" for people who had failed in school and "was equated with a few basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic at about the level of fourth grade attainment by children" (1983, p. 528). By 1983 literacy was viewed as a human right for all people, and the concept had changed to include all the skills, attitudes, and knowledge that enable people to be competent at work and in everyday situations. In 1959 adult education or fundamental education was viewed as a remedial or soft activity, which was funded if there were extra funds available. Adult education did not appear as a regular item in a national budget (as cited in Kidd, 1974). The concept of adult education had broadened by 1983, and it was "perceived as a recognized and regular member of the educational
family” (Kidd, 1983, p. 528). Adult education expanded to include a wide range of topics including economics, nutrition, politics, and leisure activities (Hall & Kidd, 1978).

In the years between 1959 and 1983, changes in the field of adult learning occurred in many areas: (a) “concepts and styles of learning; the dimensions and various domains of learning (e.g. the affective domain gained more attention); (b) the extent of learning during all the developmental phases of maturity (life-span, lifelong learning); (c) the situational contexts of learning (e.g. nonclassroom or distance learning); (d) the facilitation of learning and the role of professionals”; and (e) the use of communications media for learning (Kidd, 1983, p. 529).

Two important concepts for library adult education gained prominence during this period, self-directed learning and lifelong learning. The concept of self-directed learning encompassed more than individualized study. “The inquiry method may be entirely individual or the learner may enroll and participate in classes, seminars, or courses” (Kidd, 1983, p. 535). The characteristic that set this type of learning apart from others was the element of choice. The learner chose the learning experience; the experience was not imposed upon the learner. Depending on the inquiry method selected, the learner had some to almost complete direction over (a) the content, (b) goals and objectives, (c) the learning activities to be undertaken, (d) the sequencing of activities, (e) the methods and materials to be used, and (f) the assessment of the results (Kidd, 1983, p. 535). Allen Tough and P. R. Penland researched and wrote about self-directed learning.

Kidd suggested that the public library should strive to become a more attractive and stimulating place for self-directed learners by “encouraging closer collaborative interactions between learners and library staff” (1983, p. 536). Houle noted, “One mode of service, the provision of the means of learning for the independent student, is accepted by all public librarians as essentially and inherently at the core of their institution’s educational service” (1979, p. 97). Today self-directed learning is often called “free-choice learning” to emphasize the element of choice.
One of the most important changes in the field of adult learning was the acceptance and application of the lifelong learning concept. Although the concept was used and accepted in North America long before 1959, it did not receive universal acceptance and application until the 1960s and 1970s. The concept was formally introduced and debated at the World Conference on Adult Education in 1960. Its use and application was endorsed by the UNESCO Advisory Committee on Adult Education, 1962-1967. It was emphasized as the basic harmonizing idea for the Faure Commission on Educational Development in 1973. In 1976 lifelong learning became the basis for a “Recommendation on Adult Education” approved at the General Conference of UNESCO (Kidd, 1983, p. 531).

The concept of lifelong learning has been readily accepted because it encompasses the entire life span and includes all phases of learning (formal, nonformal, and informal) and because it has three dimensions.

1. Perpendicular—of learning continuing throughout the entire life span, consonant with all the divisions of education, from the nursery school to the post-Ph.D. . . .

2. Horizontal—of learning penetrating into every discipline and every form of intellectual and spiritual activity known to man, and bursting through the artificial barriers erected between fields of study. . . .

3. Interior or Depth—of learning responding to simple basic needs up and into the most agonizing or most sublime search for the truth “that sets us free” (as cited in Kidd, 1983, p. 531).
CHAPTER VI
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
Summary 1950-2000

_The Educational Objective of the Public Library_

R. E. Lee concluded that the public library’s educational objective had shifted between
1920 and 1964 from concern with the remedial aspects of the library’s educational work to
individual self-improvement through liberal adult education. Liberal adult education stressed the
creative use of leisure time and increased understanding of social and political issues. From the
early 1930s to the mid-1960s, “the library’s educational objective was not focused on any
particular group of adults; instead, the aim was to provide all adults with the means to educate
themselves continuously” (Lee, 1966, p. 113). The change in the educational objective reflected
the rapid increase in the educational level of the adult population and the standardization of the
40-hour workweek (Lee, 1966, p. 113).

The importance of the educational objective waxed and waned during this period. With
the support of the Carnegie Corporation, the adult educational objective was strong during the
1920s and throughout the 1930s. The library service most closely identified with the adult
education movement was readers’ advisory services, which consisted of personal interviews and
the preparation of individualized learning plans (Birge, 1981, p. 33). Some readers’ advisory
departments offered other individualized services such as reader notification of relevant materials
and library instruction and group advisory services such as displays and exhibits in the library or
readers’ advisory services were considered “the cornerstone of public library service to the
community” and as “the greatest contribution of public libraries to the adult education movement
of the first half of the twentieth century” (Birge, 1981, p. 33).

The educational objective began to wane in importance during the 1940s. Readers’
advisory services declined during World War II as demand for the service diminished. A number
of factors were responsible for the virtual demise of readers’ advisory services: (a) the
departmentalization of library services, (b) the increasing costs of personalized educational
services, (c) the inconsistent quality of service due to the lack of training opportunities, and (d)
greater professional acceptance of group services and cooperative efforts. Library administrators’
preference for group services, which were much more cost-effective, was strengthened by
research work done in the adult education field. A growing body of supportive theory suggested
that group dynamics was an important component of adult learning (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 175).

After World War II the library’s educational objective was supported by increased
professional interest in civic enlightenment and the strengthening of democracy. National and
global events—book burning in Nazi Germany, World War II, the cold war, and McCarthyism—
increased professional awareness of the need (a) to supply unbiased information to citizens, (b) to
promote greater understanding of national and global political issues, and (c) to strengthen the
freedom of expression and inquiry (Van Fleet, 1990, pp. 175-176). Civic enlightenment was one

The Post-War Standards for Public Libraries emphasized the importance of the
educational function of the public library, particularly in the area of public affairs. Although the
Public Library Inquiry recommended that libraries “provide opportunity and encouragement for
people of all ages to educate themselves continuously” (Leigh, 1950, p. 223), that
recommendation was largely overshadowed by its controversial suggestion that public libraries
concentrate the majority of their educational efforts on the small but select group of adults whose
interest and ability enabled them to appreciate the library’s resources (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 176).

The Fund for Adult Education was instrumental in promoting adult education,
particularly the liberal aspects, in public libraries through the ALA Adult Education Projects. The
American Heritage Project stimulated interest in reading and discussion programs as well as
American history. The Survey of Adult Education Activities in Public Libraries examined the
nature and extent of adult services provision in public libraries. The Adult Education Subgrant
Project provided grants for the study of existing programs and the development of new programs. The Allerton Park Conference gave library school faculty and public library administrators an opportunity to examine and discuss the basic competencies needed to provide effective adult education programs. The Library Community Project was especially important because it was designed to promote the development of "long-term adult education programs using a community needs analysis approach" (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 176). The 1956 standards document "prescribed three main objectives for public libraries: education, information, and recreation" (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 176). Other significant events were the passage of the Library Services Act in 1956, the creation of the Adult Services Division in 1957, and the formation of the ASD Committee on Bibliography of Library Adult Education.

The adult education objective remained important throughout the 1950s, although it was accorded secondary status to recreational and informational services (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 176). The Public Library Inquiry demonstrated that the recreational objective was paramount in many libraries, particularly small libraries which made up the vast majority of public libraries in 1950. The informational objective assumed more importance after World War II with the expansion of scientific and technological research and development and the resulting exponential growth in knowledge. More of that knowledge was making its way into the workplace and everyday life.

Also the trend toward the institutionalization of adult educational opportunities was a serious limiting factor for the use of public library educational services. Public library adult education programs encountered stiff competition as a result of a dramatic increase in institutionalized or group learning opportunities for adults. As D. M. Lacy observed in 1957, more adults were enrolling in evening classes offered by the local school system or participating in training activities in the workplace. Although self-improvement groups had been a part of American society since the country was founded, the scale of organized self-education was unprecedented in the 1950s. According to Lacy more adults were involved in classes and
organized discussion groups than the total number of children and young people in schools and colleges (1957, p. 289).

In the 1960s the educational objective of the public library once again became the focus of adult services (Vainstein, 1981, p. 15). Public libraries and ALA promoted the public library as a supplement and complement to formal education. The library’s staff, resources, programs and services were directed toward (a) meeting the educational needs of adults, (b) fostering individual self-development, (c) working with special clienteles, and (d) collaborating with other agencies in the community’s informal learning network (Vainstein, 1981, p. 15).

Although library adult education had been directed toward the liberal education of the public library’s generally middle-class clientele during the period from 1920 to 1960, the public library’s educational objective was altered in the mid-1960s by a growing awareness of social responsibility. Publications such as Harrington’s *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* brought home the reality that there were many poor people in this country who were struggling to survive. The Johnson administration’s War on Poverty and the Civil Rights movement stimulated “renewed emphasis within the library community on provision of service to the traditionally underserved” (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 177). Also, the use of community analysis revealed groups that had been overlooked in the library’s planning for community-oriented programs and services. Many of these groups consisted of poor people and ethnic and racial minorities who were unable to use the library because of institutional, social, political, educational, motivational, and language barriers.

Initial outreach efforts were often thwarted by inexperience and lack of research regarding the needs of economically disadvantaged people and the best approaches for meeting those needs. Early outreach efforts seemed to be predicated on “the premise that providing a variety of quality reading materials to people who were not using the libraries would extend library services to them” (Salter & Salter, 1991, p. 22). These efforts were doomed to failure because librarians did not recognize that the needs of the disadvantaged were different from those
of the general library audience. Whereas the average library patron needed continuing education to stay abreast of change, these groups needed fundamental and remedial literacy instruction to bring them to the point that they could use a library. "There was little evidence of significant library efforts to help teach people to read" in the early 1960s (Salter & Salter, 1991, p. 22). As the outreach movement matured, the public library's response was more appropriate to the needs of undereducated and economically disadvantaged populations. Public librarians responded to the needs of underserved clienteles by establishing storefront libraries in minority neighborhoods offering adult basic education services, English language courses, services to older adults and to Blacks, consumer information, civil service training information, and vocational information (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 178).

A shift from the educational objective to the informational objective was evident as early as the late 1960s when the theme of "information as a source of power" began to grow in importance (Weibel, 1982, p. 21). Information (particularly the kinds of information provided by information and referral services) and instruction (particularly literacy instruction and tutoring) began to emerge as dominant functions in the early 1970s (Weibel, 1982, p. 22). Stimulation to use, as reflected in the development of outreach service models, became less important and began to serve as a supportive element to information and instruction (Weibel, 1982, p. 3).

In the 1970s technology was a prominent theme in the library literature, conference programming, and everyday conservation. In a 1979 article on education for adult services librarians, Rohde asserted that there had been a shift in emphasis from the educational to the informational objective by the early 1970s. The shift was clearly evident in a 1971 issue of Adult Services devoted to library education (Rohde, 1979, p. 236). Although the social outreach influence was still apparent in these articles, there seemed to be a growing emphasis on the needs of the more sophisticated library users and concern that they were not being adequately served. Rohde noted that "there was little mention of educational service, and even the most widely accepted remnant of adult education work, reader's advisory service was questioned" (Rohde,
The articles stressed the importance of librarians becoming more people oriented in their approach, a criticism which frequently had been directed at information services librarians. The educational needs of adult services librarians addressed in the articles tended to emphasize the information function of adult services such as the need for librarians to have "an understanding of the availability, flow, and dissemination of information; the development of better interpersonal communication skills; and a study of adult information-seeking behavior" (Rohde, 1979, p. 236).

A discussion on the nature and focus of adult services at a 1981 institute provides some insight into the perceived status of adult education in the early 1980s. Bernice MacDonald presented a paper describing how the New York Public Library took a leap of faith and started new services for adults while dealing with the financial crises of the 1970s. The library took the unconventional approach of cutting back in basic operational areas to protect programming, outreach, and decentralized book selection. The tough choices the New Public Library made in the 1970s were paying off in the early 1980s; the library experienced the most growth in the new services launched in the 1970s (MacDonald, 1981, pp. 32-33). These services included information and referral services, learner's advisory service, job information, literacy education, the Early Childhood Research Center for parenting education, computerized reader interest service for the people with visual handicaps, and the addition of videos to the library's collection (MacDonald, 1981, p. 33).

After the presentation MacDonald asked the group how they viewed the current health of adult services. One participant observed "that the educational function of adult services seemed to have become steadily de-emphasized in recent years" (Sutton, 1981, p. 34). Participants suggested that "the move away from librarians as adult educators had, in fact, been legitimized by American Library Association nomenclature when the Adult Education Division became the Adult Services Division and finally the Reference and Adult services Division" (Sutton, 1981, p. 34). The Adult Services Division was originally called the Adult Education Division, but this
designation lasted only a few months before it was changed to the Adult Services Division. The name change reflected the fact that adult education had already been absorbed into the broader area of adult services.

The discussion turned to the much debated questions of what constituted educational services in a public library setting, whether these services included entertainment and counseling, and whether "the librarian’s role in the delivery of such services [was] a perversion of the traditional function of a library as ‘the people’s university’" (Sutton, 1981, p. 34). Suzanne Sutton noted that this topic seemed to provoke a professional identity crisis as the group pondered these questions:

1. Are we inventing services only to justify our expensive, under-utilized facilities?
2. Toward this end, are we invading the territory of other social services?
3. Are our programs imitative rather than innovative?
4. Are we ignoring intellectual needs for social needs?
5. Are we uncertain whether librarians or the public should decide what services the library should offer? (Sutton, 1981, p. 34).

This discussion illustrates some of the insecurity and confusion adult services librarians were experiencing in the late 1970s and early 1980s. While public librarians yearned to (a) expand their roles, (b) make a valuable contribution to society, (c) raise their perceived status among other professions, and (d) increase their salaries, they did not feel confident about their abilities to do counseling and advisory work with adult learners. Most librarians were uncomfortable with the expanded roles offered by the library service paradigm, and in truth most librarians were not adequately prepared to perform these functions effectively.

In the “Adult Services” column in RQ, C. S. Alloway admitted that the changes occurring in library services in the early 1980s were “taking place with effort, uncertainty, and some reluctance” (1982, p. 133). For example, computer technology was allowing public libraries “to provide some very sophisticated services,” but libraries often did not have “the funds
to implement them" (Alloway, 1982, p. 133). Alloway wrote, "We try to adapt the technology to our specific library needs but take risks in the attempt because we lack the knowledge and skills to implement our plans successfully" (Alloway, 1982, p. 133). Despite the errors made, public librarians forged ahead because they knew that they had "to keep abreast of technological trends if libraries were to stay in the mainstream of society" (Alloway, 1982, p. 133). Adherents of the information paradigm made it abundantly clear that the alternative was total obsolescence.

By the early 1980s access to information (with information broadly defined) was seen by the public library leadership as the primary objective of public library service. The dominance of the reference and information function was established in response to professional concerns as well as the demands of an increasingly technology-driven society. The preeminence of the information function was an inevitable outcome in a postindustrial, information-based economy. Advances in computer and communications technology made this shift in emphasis "possible, credible [,] and even essential" (Vainstein, 1981, p. 16). Alloway wrote in 1982 that "the 1980s are seeing a renewed emphasis on reference and information services as society is confronted with new technology . . . people need information to adjust to the changes and to cope with the complexity of that technology" (p. 133). Technology was driving great sociological changes, and libraries were employing computer technology, video technology and other technological innovations to meet society's information needs (Alloway, 1982, p. 133). The public library's purpose was redefined in terms of the informational objective. The first planning manual for public libraries stated, "The ultimate purpose of any library is to meet the information needs of its community" (Palmour, Bellassai, & De Wath, 1980, p. 41).

While information was growing in importance as a tool for economic development, the nation's public school system was coming under increasing criticism for its inability to effectively address widespread functional illiteracy and the high dropout rate. Unemployment among young adults and the undereducated reached epidemic proportions as businesses reported the inability to find enough qualified applicants to fill job openings. Corporation executives were
concerned about competing in the global market (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 188). A series of reports focusing “on the links between educational performance, literacy skills, and the U.S. economy” (Kirsch, Braun, Yamamoto, & Sum, 2007, p. 8) called attention to the failure of traditional preparatory education to prepare students “to develop personally and to compete in the marketplace” (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 1988).

In 1983 the National Commission on Excellence in Education published a report dealing with the sad state of the nation’s educational system. In the report entitled *A Nation At Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*, the commission issued the following statement:

> The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people. What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur—others are matching and surpassing our educational attainments . . . we have allowed this to happen to ourselves (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, para. 2).

In 1984 the Committee for Economic Development issued another report, *Strategy for U.S. Industrial Competitiveness*, which emphasized the importance of “the quality of education, particularly at the primary and secondary levels,” in enabling the U. S. labor force to adapt to workplace changes brought about by “new technologies designed to improve labor productivity” (as cited in Kirsch et al., 2007, p. 9). The report noted that “a variety of economic, educational, and technological reforms” were needed to prepare the U. S. economy to compete successfully in the future (Committee for Economic Development, as cited in Kirsch et al., pp. 8-9).

In 1986 the Carnegie Corporation’s Forum on Education and the Economy published *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*. The report examined “the changing structure of the economy, its likely impacts on the education and skill requirements of jobs, and the consequences for the nation’s schools and the teaching profession” (Kirsch et al., 2007, p. 9). The report warned that America faced two choices. We can compete on the same terms as we did in the past—“making the most of the workers with low skill levels . . .” and accepting “the
prevailing world wage levels for low-skilled and semi-skilled labor" and "a massive decline in our standard of living" (Carnegie Forum, as cited in Kirsch et al., 2007, p. 9). The other choice was "to revise our view of the role of the worker in the economy" and prepare for a future in which the economy would "be based on the use of a wide scale of very skilled workers, backed up by the most advanced technologies available" (Carnegie Forum, as cited in Kirsch et al., 2007, p. 9).

*Toward a More Perfect Union*, a report issued by the Ford Foundation's Project on Social Welfare and the American Future, identified important connections between basic academic skills (reading, math, and writing) and a wide range of "educational, labor market, and social outcomes" for American youth" (Ford Foundation, as cited in Kirsch et al., 2007, p. 9). The authors of the report found that basic academic proficiencies were closely related to "school performance, graduation rates, college attendance rates, childbearing behavior, experience with the criminal justice system, and annual earnings" (Ford Foundation, as cited in Kirsch et al., 2007, p. 9).

Historically, the public library’s objectives have been determined in large part by the concerns of the larger culture. In the 1980s Americans were concerned with economic issues such as "slow productivity growth, real-wage stagnation, rising wage inequality, and international competitiveness" (Kirsch et al., 2007, p. 9). Public libraries responded to these concerns by emphasizing information services for economic development.

The library’s educational objective declined in importance in the 1980s for a number of reasons: (a) the educational objective was unable to provide a means for meeting the personal and professional goals of librarians, (b) the information objective had achieved dominance during the 1970s, and (c) concern about the quality of education in public school systems had grown. Identification with the nation’s public educational system no longer held the prestige it once afforded the public library community, and it was no guarantee of increased funding for public libraries. To library leaders recognition as part of the nation’s information infrastructure seemed
to offer more opportunities for increased funding for public libraries and professional status for public librarians.

Although information technology was not the only force driving public libraries in the 1990s, it was the dominant force. In the 1990s access to information was well established as the public library’s central mission, use of computer and telecommunications technology was widespread, and adult services librarians were becoming more comfortable with their new role as information suppliers. Computer and information technology affected public libraries in a number of ways: (a) the complex process of acquisition became easier, (b) library operations were automated, (c) the distinctions between various library departments became blurred as processes were automated, (d) cross-training and reeducation became a necessity, (e) librarians were able to exchange information with their colleagues across the globe, and (f) people in the library’s service area were afforded more equitable access to information (White, 1998, p. 105).

The emergence of the Internet in the early 1990s presented new challenges, such as how to finance public access and how to integrate the Internet into the existing mix of electronic, print, and audiovisual resources. Although some librarians viewed the Internet as a potential threat to library service, many were awed by its enormous potential. Public librarians seized the opportunity to provide access to “new, never-before-available forms of communication and stores of information” (Molz and Dain, 1999, p. 185) and to offer new services to individuals and the community. Having become more technologically savvy, adult services librarians were better able to handle the challenges the Internet presented to public library services. Taking a holistic view of adult services, they worked to integrate the internet with more traditional services.

Library leaders predicted that librarians could meet the challenges presented by the Internet and carve out a place for themselves within the ever changing information and communications environment. “Librarians, trained to organize and evaluate information and help people find what they need, would function as organizers and navigators, consultants and guides in the new information age” (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 183). Just as librarians had “collected and
organized the products of mass publishing spawned by industrialized economies" at the turn of
the twentieth century, they could do the same "in a new universe of global, evanescent,
unmonitored digital information" at the end of the twentieth century (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 184).

Although the situation was "fluid" and somewhat problematic in the 1990s, Molz and
Dain felt that librarians were making progress in "fulfilling this prophecy" (1999, p. 184). They
acknowledged that disintermediation—"the elimination of a helper or intermediary between
information source and user"—had occurred to some extent (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 184).
Disintermediation was not a new phenomenon, as some people had always learned to find what
they wanted without assistance. Disintermediation in the 1990s had not occurred to the point that
it threatened an end to library service (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 184). Librarians were relatively
confident in the late 1990s that the Web would not replace the library in the near future, but they
recognized that as it became better organized and search engines became faster and more
efficient, the Web would present a greater challenge.

By early 1990s the nation faced "serious obstacles to productivity as a result of rapid
social, economic, and technological changes" during the previous decade (Schamber, 1990, p. 1).
Although proponents of the ideology of information technology had theorized that the application
of information technologies would promote economic growth and productivity, productivity in
industrialized countries slowed in the 1980s and early 1990s despite increasing use of information
technologies. Studies failed "to establish strong correlations between technological investment
and the growth of productivity" (Birdsall, 1997, p. 64). These findings compelled economists and
policy makers "to look beyond the simple introduction of technology as a panacea for stagnant
economies" and to recognize that "a critical element in long-term economic growth is the
investment in human capital" (Birdsall, 1997, p. 64).

With the recognition of the importance of human capital to economic development,
education became a central focus of national concern. A 1990 report by the National Center on
Education and the Economy (NCEE) dealt with the need to develop strategies to boost economic
competitiveness (Kirsch et al., 2007, p. 9) in “a shifting global market” (Schamber, 1990, p. 2). The report stressed “the work-force development challenges” facing the nation if it wished to maintain high wages and a high standard of living in the future (Kirsch et al., 2007, p. 9). The Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce called for all levels of government and the private sector to increase investments in the education and training of both young people and adults to allow the nation’s economy to continue to follow a “a high-productivity/high-wage trajectory” (Kirsch et al., 2007, p. 9).

The problem of uneven distribution of knowledge was also an international concern. In 1996 the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) released the results of a two-year study on Technology, Productivity and Job Creation. Among its recommendations the report called upon business and industry and governments “to promote investment in human capital to ensure that individuals have the appropriate qualifications to enter the workforce and to undertake lifelong learning” (OECD, as cited in Birdsall, 1997, p. 64). The report also called for balance “between technological and human resource development” (OECD, as cited in Birdsall, 1997, p. 64).

The OECD report urged governments to adopt public policies designed to facilitate the development of learning economies that contribute to social cohesion to counteract the effect of global forces that were leading to a deterioration in the living standards among undereducated and underskilled people (Birdsall, 1997, p. 65). Dominique Foray and Bengt-Ake Lundvall (1996) emphasized the importance of access to educational and training opportunities to acquire the skills and competencies needed for self-directed learning. “The capability to learn” was identified as the key factor in strategies designed to limit the extent of social exclusion and to address the problem of “the uneven distribution of knowledge and information” (Foray & Lundvall, 1996, p. 29).

The three themes of the 1991 White Conference on Library and Information Services reflected the current concerns of the library and information science fields—literacy,
productivity, and democracy. The three themes were closely interrelated. Literacy was an essential requirement for productivity, and economic productivity was vital for the maintenance of a democratic society. In an Eric Digest on library and information services for productivity, Schamber briefly discussed two fundamental issues affecting productivity—access and control of information—and two major strategies for improving productivity—cooperation and education (1990, p. 1).

Government agencies played the major role in fostering competitiveness through the dissemination, exchange, and controlled access to scientific and technical information. Suggested roles for public libraries in the provision of information included offering access to current economic and employment information and contributing to policy discussions on issues such as privacy and intellectual property rights (Schamber, 1990, pp. 1-2).

Cooperation among information producers and users was put forward as one of the possible strategies to improve productivity. This proposed strategy would create cooperative projects among libraries, educational institutions, government, and industry to encourage information transfer and intellectual collaboration (Schamber, 1990, pp. 2-3). To improve productivity on the local level, it was recommended that public libraries help local business by providing access to data such as corporate profiles and stock quotations and services such as business database searches, workshops on business data resources, and job banks (Schamber, 1990, p. 3).

The second strategy for improving productivity was education in information skills, broadly defined to include everything from basic literacy to computer skills to the ability to evaluate information. As the U. S. economy became more dependent on information and information technologies, the need for information literacy grew increasingly important. Americans needed more than basic reading skills and subject knowledge to succeed. Information skills were seen as the key to increasing individual productivity by enabling workers to adapt to
new information sources and formats and to apply information in decision-making (Schamber, 1990, p. 3).

The task of teaching these skills fell to educators and library and information professionals. Teachers and public librarians were urged to work together to teach information skills by integrating these skills into subject-area curricula for students of all ages. Public libraries were encouraged to expand their basic literacy services, to offer preschool and family literacy programming, and to provide classes in computer and Internet skills for adults (Schamber 1990, p. 3).

On the graduate level educators sought to improve the productivity of education in library and information science by “training more library media specialists and information resource managers, and by conducting relevant interdisciplinary research” (Schamber, p. 3). Other suggested strategies for graduate library school programs were the use of information technologies to teach the use and management of these technologies and the redefinition of jobs and responsibilities to reflect the changes in the library and information center work environment (Schamber, 1990, p. 3).

Although government and foundation reports were beginning to focus on education as a tool to improve the productivity of the American workforce, the public library community continued to emphasize the library’s informational role. The public library’s educational objective continued to play a supportive but very important role in the library’s mission of access to information. Literacy education and library and information use instruction were identified as key components of access. Without the ability to read and the ability to locate and use information effectively, access to information was meaningless. These skills were prerequisite to the use of information to improve work productivity.
The Educational Role of the Public Library

R. E. Lee identified three distinct conceptions of the library’s educational role during the 1950s. The first conception held that public libraries should provide materials and services for the educational programs offered by other organizations and groups in the community (Lee, 1966, p. 80). This supportive role had been endorsed by the ALA Commission on the Library and Adult Education. In its report the commission recommended that in general organized adult education service in libraries might include three activities: “(1) a specialized service of advice to readers, (2) supplying information about opportunities for adult education, and (3) cooperation with other adult education enterprises” (Birge, 1981, p. 14).

This auxiliary role was the most widely accepted in the public library community. R. D. Leigh wrote in the summary volume of the Public Library Inquiry that the “provision of materials for existing formal and informal groups . . . constitutes the bulk of the adult education activity of most public libraries at this time” (1950, p.107). In its auxiliary role the public library provided materials to adult students enrolled in the educational programs of the adult extension divisions of public schools, colleges, and universities; offered program planning assistance and guidance in the selection of appropriate materials and resources; and maintained a directory of community educational offerings (Lee, 1966, p. 80).

The second conception of the public library’s educational role held that adult education should be the central purpose of the public library. The library should become “a general agency of out-of-school education” (Lee, 1966, p. 80). W. S. Learned advocated this conception in his report, The American Public Library and the Diffusion of Knowledge, published in 1924. Learned provided the first “detailed and systematic plan for making the public library predominantly an educational institution” (Lee, 1966, p. 47). Alvin Johnson was another strong advocate of developing the public library into a permanent center for adult education, an informal people’s university (Lee, 1966, p. 67). Robert Leigh also wrote about this conception of the public library’s role in the summary volume of the Public Library Inquiry (1950, p. 21).
The third conception held that the public library should provide educational services according to the needs and resources of the community. Acceptance of this viewpoint was not widespread during the early 1950s. This conception emphasized community study; a thorough knowledge of the people, groups, and institutions in the community; close cooperation with other agencies; and the development of the library’s adult educational programs based on the educational needs of the community, the programs and services offered by other agencies and organizations, and the library’s own material and human resources (Lee, 1966, pp. 81-82).

By the mid-1950s some librarians began to realize the value of community analysis and to recognize the need to plan their adult education program in relation to the community’s needs and resources. The community service orientation of the 1956 public library standards and the ALA Library-Community Project did much to encourage a broader acceptance of the community-oriented conception of the library’s educational role. By the late 1950s the library’s educational role reflected the emerging philosophy of integrating the library with the community (Lee, 1966, pp. 82, 104).

Lee identified a fourth conception of the public library’s educational role—the public library as a center for independent learning. Lee did not consider this role to be distinctive because it generally depended upon the quality of the library’s collection. The development of a well-rounded, high-quality collection of materials was an important factor in all conceptions of the library’s educational role (Lee, 1966, p. 80). The conception of the public library as an independent learning center harkened back to the beginnings of the public library movement and the public library’s original purpose. Irish librarian R. N. O’Reilly (1947) asserted that the public library had performed a valuable educational role independent of other educational institutions. Since its inception the public library had served as a means of self-education for any individual who had “the desire to understand something that can be learned from books or to experience something that can be found in good literature” (O’Reilly, 1947, p. 25). O’Reilly observed that
educational institutions only nurtured those educational desires; the individual learner was ultimately responsible for their fulfillment (1947, p. 25).

The Public Library Inquiry provided some support for this conception. Leigh recognized that the public library did provide opportunities for self-directed learners as individuals or as members of informal groups. "Without becoming general agencies of organized adult education, they stimulate, guide, and even initiate such educational and cultural activities in their communities, furnishing the materials and the essential skilled service for these activities" (Leigh, 1950, p. 108).

As the public library began to assume more responsibility for the needs of underserved clienteles in the 1960s, the educational role of the public library reflected a greater emphasis on the necessity of integrating the library’s programs and services with those of the community. By the late 1960s, many public librarians were beginning to realize that the problems of poor and undereducated were too great for a single agency to attempt to solve on its own; it required the coordinated efforts of all community agencies. The successful integration of the library with the community required a thorough knowledge of the importance of the following:

1. The educational benefits of working with community groups and organizations
2. Understanding the objectives, interests, and activities of community groups
3. Participating in the planning of community activities
4. Helping the library to become a more active force in the community (Lee, 1966, p. 104).

Interagency cooperation and community partnerships were encouraged by federal funding agencies. The public library’s contribution to community development was strengthened by coordinating the library’s educational services with the cultural and educational needs of the community. The public library increased its cooperation with other community groups, its participation in the planning and execution of community activities, its cosponsorship of
educational programs, and the provision of its own educational programming centered on community needs and interests (Lee, 1966, p. 104).

In the 1970s the third conception of the public library's role, which held that the public library should provide educational services according to the needs and resources of the community (Lee, 1966, pp. 81-82), became the foundation for PLA's planning process for public libraries. The concept of community-oriented library services based on community analysis was almost as old as librarianship itself. The first report of the use of community analysis to plan a library's program of services appeared in 1908 (Birge, 1981, p. 58). Community-oriented services were emphasized in the Library-Community Project, one of a series of adult education projects undertaken by ALA in the 1950s. This old idea was rediscovered in the early 1970s.

Public libraries varied greatly in the size and composition of their clienteles, in the amount of financial resources available to them, and in the needs and demands of their communities. The planning process was intended to allow public libraries to establish their own standards and determine for themselves what constituted excellent library service based on local conditions. The proposed planning process consisted of three steps: (1) the determination of "community information needs and resources," (2) the evaluation of community information resources, and (3) the establishment of goals, objectives, and priorities (Palmour & Bellassai, 1977, pp. 4-5).

Although the concept of community-oriented library services formed the basis for PLA's new planning process, the informational objective was emphasized, not the educational objective. The public library's educational aim took a decided backseat to the informational objective. After decades of less than successful efforts in adult education, the library community decided "that if it was unfeasible to educate adults, too costly to provide an intensive personalized readers' advisory service, and impossible to reach nonusers," it was time to try something else (Salter & Salter, 1991, p. 22). In the early 1970s a number of libraries began to offer information and referral services as part of their outreach services to special clienteles. Some libraries offered
I&R services at a basic level—providing a directory of community services. Others provided information on local resources and interpreted the information for the client. Other libraries saw the provision and interpretation of information as only part of the job; they practiced a comprehensive form of I&R service which included "intervention, advocacy, and follow-through" (Pungitore, 1989, p. 119).

Ironically as the library's educational objective was diminishing in importance, the necessity for continuous learning was becoming increasingly more apparent. Educators recognized that the formal education or training received earlier in life was no longer adequate to meet the needs of most adults in a rapidly changing society. However, formal education was not flexible enough to meet the needs of many adult learners, so they turned to informal, self-directed learning.

The fourth conception mentioned by Lee, the public library as a center for independent learning, received a great deal of support from the nontraditional education movement and the National Adult Independent Learners Projects. The Commission on Non-Traditional Study saw the potential of public libraries and recommended that they be strengthened to become more powerful instruments for nontraditional education. An expanded role, encompassing much more than the development of a well-rounded, high-quality collection of materials, was envisioned by the sponsors of National Adult Independent Learners Projects—the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Council of Library Resources, the College Entrance Examination Board, and the U. S. Office of Education. The National Adult Independent Learners Projects demonstrated that public libraries could perform an important educational service as part of collaborative effort. Although the concept of the library as a center for independent learning was adopted by a few of the larger urban libraries, the idea never really caught on in the majority of public libraries.

Although access to information was the major topic of public library discourse, the educational and recreational objectives were very much a part of public library practice. This was clearly evident when the Public Library Association decided to focus on the concept of roles in its
second planning manual, *Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries: A Manual of Operations and Procedures*, published in 1987. The manual suggested eight potential roles for the public library: “community activities center, community information center, formal education support center, independent learning center, popular materials library, preschoolers’ door to learning, reference library, and research center” (McClure et al., 1987, p. 28). Although three of the roles were clearly informational (community information, reference library, and research center), an equal number were educational in nature (formal education support center, independent learning center, and preschoolers’ door to learning). Only one role was clearly recreational (the popular materials center). The community activities center role supported various functions. Public libraries were involved in much more than the provision of information.

In 1997 the list of public library roles outlined in the 1987 edition of *Planning and Role Setting* were revised by the Public Library Association. “The advent of the Internet and the rapid changes in information technology in the 1990s raised new questions about the viability of public libraries and the applicability of the public library roles” (Nelson & Garcia, 2006, p. 2). The roles were replaced with 13 service responses. The service responses were areas in which the local library could choose to concentrate its resources. Several of these responses were definitely educational in nature including basic literacy, formal learning support, information literacy, and lifelong learning (Himmel & Wilson, 1998).

Writing in 1999 Molz and Dain summarized the public library’s purposes at the end of the 20th century: “Libraries are more than disseminators of community information or any other information per se. They serve communities as cultural and educational centers—as knowledge institutions—and by all accounts the public seems to expect them to go on doing so” (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 193). They emphasized that technology was not viewed as a goal in itself; it was mentioned in relation to larger goals such as personal and community empowerment (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 193).
Educational Goals of the Public Library

R. E. Lee identified the educational goals of the 1950s as civic enlightenment, personal development, community development, and social improvement. Civil enlightenment was a major emphasis throughout the World War II and the post war period. Objectives included helping individuals and groups to develop a deeper understanding of international relations and the challenges facing our democratic society during the Cold War Era. During the 1950s personal development received increased emphasis as librarians were able to devote more time to helping individuals and groups enrich their appreciation of culture, pursue their hobbies and interests, and further their intellectual and spiritual development (Lee, 1966, p. 82).

During the 1950s the goal of social improvement was predicated on the belief that the personal development of individuals was the first element in the creation of a better society. Community development constituted the second element. In "a kind of ripple effect," socially and culturally aware individuals would build the kind of communities that formed the foundation of a great society (Pungitore, 1995, p. 68). Library professor V. L. Pungitore explained the concept this way:

If through the provision of resources for continuous self-education and access to information, public libraries have the near-term capacity to enrich and transform individual lives, then, by extension, they have the long-term power to contribute to the advancement of individual communities, and hence, to society as a whole. (1995, p. 68)

The Great Society Era of the 1960s created a climate in which people embraced the notion of social responsibility. Education was viewed as the means to resolve "society's major problems: poverty and inequality" (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 177). Government agencies and public institutions worked to eradicate these social evils in the belief that their efforts would lead to the development of a more just and equable society. As a community-based institution, the public library continued to focus on the goal of community development but with a new sense of social responsibility. For many public librarians, the vision of the ideal community was tempered by the
realization that no community could develop to its full potential unless there was equality of social, economic, and educational opportunity for all its citizens. The poor and undereducated represented a pool of untapped human potential. The public library’s educational goals in the 1960s and early 1970s were personal and community empowerment through services designed to help individuals achieve their personal goals and to help communities adapt to the rapidly changing social, economic, and technological environment.

The 1970s was a decade of transition. Although the service to all ethos and the goals of personal development and social improvement continued to guide the provision of public library services in the 1970s, the means used to accomplish these goals changed as the decade progressed. With advances in computer and telecommunications technology and the recognition of the economic value of information as a commodity essential to community development, reference and information services began to assume greater importance. The provision of information (in its broadest sense) fulfilled a human need common to all people. By serving the information needs of their constituents, from adult new readers to self-directed adult learners to college students, public librarians felt that they could help individuals improve themselves and their communities.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the public library still championed the goals of personal growth and social improvement, but economic productivity became the major objective criterion for determining success. The educational objective was redefined in terms of access to information and the educational function became supportive of the information objective. Illiteracy which had been viewed from a more humanist perspective in the 1960s and 1970s was beginning to be viewed from an economic development prospective. The inability to read was viewed as a critical barrier to access of information and thus an impediment to employment and economic success. The advantage of “framing literacy as an economic issue” was that it removed the “welfare mentality” from literacy education (Gomez, 2001, p. 152). The disadvantage was that it made the adult learner’s ability to obtain and hold a job the primary if not the sole criterion for determining
success. Librarians with a humanist orientation were concerned that the goals of work-related literacy programs would not include objectives designed to maximize the adult learner's intellectual and spiritual growth.

*Educational Services and Programs*

Public libraries during the 1950s provided services to individuals, adult education agencies and community groups and conducted their own adult education programs. Educational services to individuals consisted of supplying educational materials, offering personal assistance, creating interest in educationally worthwhile books through a wide variety of techniques, and providing readers' advisory service. Services to groups consisted of two major types: services to adult education agencies and community groups and the library's own educational programming for groups. Services to adult education agencies include preparing library exhibits and displays to publicize their programs and course offerings, providing printed materials for adult students, and furnishing facilities for adult education classes. Library services to community groups consisted of the preparation of library exhibits and displays featuring the groups' activities and programs, the presentation of book reviews and talks, and the provision of program planning advice and assistance. Library-sponsored group programs generally consisted of programs focusing on books or films, discussion group programs centered on specified readings, and program planning institutes (Lee, 1966, pp. 82-84).

Writing in the 1960 edition of the *Handbook of Adult Education in the United States*, G. T. Stevenson stated that the public library had three or four unique functions as an educational agency. First, the public library served as center for continuing self-education. Second, it was a source of materials for other community agencies and organizations. Third, it provided program planning assistance to other agencies and organizations and sometimes assisted in program presentation by providing expertise, personnel, materials, or a meeting location. Fourth, some public libraries planned and executed their own educational programming on a wide range of topics. Activities included book reviews, lectures, art exhibits, concerts, demonstrations and book
discussions. In Stevenson’s opinion the major function of the library as an educational agency was to serve as the primary community resource—for materials, for assistance in program planning and presentation, and for information about community educational opportunities (Stevenson, 1960, p. 312).

In a 1963 paper Eleanor Phinney described the five categories of library services for adults included in the scope of adult services. The first category was indirect guidance which consisted of the preparation of displays and exhibits of library materials designed to meet the needs and interests of adults and the publication of reading lists geared to the educational, recreational, and cultural interests of adults. The second category, advisory services to the individual, included informal advisory assistance and planned reading guidance in which an individualized reading list was prepared for the client. Services to organizations and groups constituted the third category of services. These services included exhibits related to the educational, recreational, and cultural interests of the group’s members; the preparation of bibliographies and collections of study materials; the presentation of book talks; and program planning assistance. The fourth category, library-sponsored group programs, consisted of film programs, discussion programs, radio and television programs, and workshops related to materials or library services in areas of interest to adults. Community advisory services formed a fifth category. These services included conferring with other educational agencies on subjects of mutual interest; participating in studies of the educational, recreational, and cultural interests and needs of the community’s residents; and collaborating with other agencies in planning, sponsoring, and implementing community programs or projects (Phinney, 1963a, pp. 40-41).

During the 1960s there was a greater emphasis on cooperative ventures and the development of special programs in conjunction with other educational and cultural organizations. Public librarians demonstrated a greater willingness to accept group services as an integral part of the library’s service to the public. In the late 1960s, public libraries devoted more time to the development of services tailored to the specific needs of special groups in the
community. There was greater acceptance of group services and special programs that were once considered novel or innovative (Lee, 1966, p. 111).

In 1978 M. J. Lynch discussed the current and probable future status of eight broad categories of services for adults. This paper was written after the 1972 merger of the Adult Services Division and the Reference Services Division to form the Reference and Adult Services Division. Lynch included educational, cultural, and recreational functions in the title of her paper, but omitted the informational function. Lynch argued that, conceptually, reference and information should be included in adult services. Despite the merger of the divisions, the concept of adult services had not changed. “The three concepts—educational, cultural, and recreational—taken together and broadly conceived [still described] the public library functions sometimes known as ‘adult services’” (Lynch, 1978, p. 477). In writing this paper Lynch interjected an information services perspective into the description of adult services.

The first service was the provision of a circulating collection. Lynch emphasized that the public library provided a circulating collection of materials containing information. Lynch noted that public libraries had been accused of having “a functional fixation on books,” but many libraries were expanding their efforts to acquire informational materials other than books. The acquisition of nonbook informational materials was a growing trend (1978, p. 478).

The second category was the noncirculating collection consisting of expensive, heavily used, or easily damaged reference and nonreference materials. Lynch felt that the practice of restricting some materials to in-library use would continue as the costs of materials continued to escalate and budgets remained static. Computerized databases had begun to appear in large urban libraries but were not commonly available in public libraries in the late 1970s (Lynch, 1978, p. 479).

The provision of space and equipment for the use of library materials or for the presentation of educational, cultural, and recreational activities was the third category of services. This category included reading areas, audiovisual equipment, and meeting rooms. Lynch
predicted that this service would grow more important as the library added more nonbook formats to the collection. A related service, the loan of special equipment for home use, would also become more important. Lynch believed that public librarians would become more sensitive to the environmental factors affecting the physical and psychological comfort of library users. Services and facilities in the future would be more user-oriented (1978, p. 479).

The fourth category was access to other collections. Although interlibrary loan was a well-established library service, public library users in many communities seemed to be unaware of its existence. Lynch asserted that the challenge of the future was not only to make resource sharing a more efficient and effective service, but also to make users aware that their public libraries could get on interlibrary loan materials they did not have in the local collection. Public libraries needed to make users aware that access to library materials was not limited to what was contained in the local public library collection (Lynch, 1978, p. 480).

Delivery of materials to persons who could not use the library directly was the fifth service. Examples of this type of activity included bookmobile service, books-by-mail programs, and deposit collections. Sensitivity to the needs of people with restricted mobility and disabilities had grown during the previous decade and was still a strong concern in the late 1970s. Lynch believed that this kind of service would grow as modern technology provided new ways to bring library services and materials to people who were unable to come to the library. The then current new technology of cable television offered many opportunities for public libraries to reach out to people who were homebound and institutionalized (Lynch, 1978, p. 480).

Lynch traced the evolution of the sixth category of services, guidance for users, to S. W. Greene's speech in 1876. Green urged public librarians to establish a helpful, sharing relationship with library users. Green's concept of personal assistance was the wellspring from which reference services and readers' advisory work developed. By the 1970s reference service was called information service in many libraries, and the readers' advisor had almost disappeared (Lynch, 1978, p. 480).
Lynch observed that the outreach movement had given librarians a broader perspective on the nature of library use. Librarians recognized that not all people who used libraries were readers; some were viewers or listeners. Lynch emphasized that many librarians saw their role as much broader than dealing solely with library materials. Public service librarians connected users with many sources of information, “some of them outside the library and some of them unrecorded” (Lynch, 1978, p. 480).

Lynch noted that traditional readers’ advisors still existed in a few large urban libraries, but an enlarged concept of reader guidance had emerged as part of the Adult Independent Learners’ Project in the early 1970s. Advisors in independent learning centers were known as learners’ advisors and their role was not limited to the promotion of reading and the use of library materials. Advisors provided a wide range of services and used a wide variety of resources to help adults learn what they wanted to know. Their services ranged from helping the adult student to select an appropriate course at the local community college to assisting him or her to plan an independent study program (Lynch, 1978, p. 481).

Lynch pointed out that serving adult learners was not a new interest for public librarians; public librarians had been involved in adult education for decades. However, Lynch believed that something was different in the 1970s. The need for educational guidance was greater than it had been since the 1930s. The socioeconomic climate of the 1970s had led many adults to engage in “serious and sustained efforts to learn” either through formal education programs or independent study. Lynch saw the Adult Independent Learners’ Project as perhaps the “most dramatic evidence of a new direction in public library service” (1978, p. 481).

The seventh service category was programming for the public. To some librarians programming for groups was the definition of adult services. In the context of her paper, Lynch defined a program as “a public event planned by library staff as an addition to the educational, cultural, and recreational life of the community” (1978, p. 483). Lynch noted that the Library
Journal news section included numerous reports of public library programs; programs were often considered part of the public library's public relations efforts (1978, p. 484).

Despite the popularity of programs for the public, some public library administrators questioned the value of this type of activity since there was "little substantive literature and practically no research" on the effectiveness of library programs (Lynch, 1978, p. 484). Lynch expressed the opinion that public programs were an appropriate activity "not just as public relations efforts but because of what they do to enrich the lives of individuals" (1978, p. 485). Library programs for the public seemed an especially appropriate activity for a public agency that wanted to assume a more active role in the educational, cultural, and recreational life of the community. J. S. Robotham and Lydia LaFleur (1976) suggested that library programs were especially important in rural areas and small towns where "little or nothing of a cultural nature is being offered to the general public" (p. viii). Lynch predicted that programs for groups would continue to be controversial and that individual libraries would have to decide for themselves if public programming was an important part of their services for adults (1978, p. 485).

The eighth category was support for groups. Supportive services included everything from providing facilities for meetings to maintaining a directory of resource people to sponsoring a workshop or institute on program planning. Unlike the sponsorship of its own programs, this category of service was not controversial. Lynch speculated that program support was more acceptable because it was a supportive, auxiliary service rather than an entrepreneurial service that placed the library in competition with other community agencies. Lynch believed that this was a library service that would probably expand in the future as Americans continued to form new organizations and associations (1978, p. 485).

Writing in 1982 C. S. Alloway emphasized that adult services encompassed a wide range of library activities. In her column "Adult Services" in the Reference and Adult Services Division's journal RQ, Alloway chose to adopt the holistic view of adult services advocated by Rose Vainstein, a perspective in which reference was seen as an integral component of adult
services. Samuel Rothstein’s traditional division of reference functions into “instruction in the use of books and libraries, guidance in the choice of books, and getting information out of books” had been modified over the years to include instruction and guidance in nonprint materials and in the 1980s was undergoing further revision to include informational databases (Alloway, 1982, p. 132). Popular adult services included “programming; classes; vocational and job-hunting programs; and special delivery services such as bookmobiles, books-by-mail, and visits to shut-ins. Furthermore, audiovisual materials, computers, and an array of recreational and nonprint resources [were] often available with special materials and services provided for the handicapped” (Alloway, 1982, p. 132).

Alloway noted two other developments in adult services besides the widespread use of technology: “an emphasis on public relations and the use of community analysis” (1982, p. 133). Among the public relations strategies commonly used by public libraries in the 1980s were “publicity and promotion, organized campaigns seeking financial and legislative support, and an emphasis on courteous, accommodating public-service procedures” (Alloway, 1982, p. 133). Community analysis involved the use of surveys, census data, and other means to learn more about the library’s clientele. Data from the community analysis was often used in another component of public relations—marketing. Marketing defined and divided present and potential users into target groups for specialized services (Alloway, 1982, p. 133).

In the 1990s technology gave public libraries more service options. Local area networks (LANs) in public libraries not only connected patrons to OPACs and databases but also allowed libraries to install computer terminals capable of running popular software programs such as word processing for patron use (White, 1998, p. 112). A wide variety of databases were made available in various forms, such as CD-ROMs, networked CD-ROMs, online catalogs, and Internet accessible online databases. Patrons could request information in person, over the phone, and by e-mail. Difficult questions could be posted to listservs such as Libref-L or PubLib (White, 1998, p. 112).
With the emergence of the Internet, the public library staked a claim for itself in the national information infrastructure by serving as an on-ramp to the information superhighway, especially for the poor who could not afford home computers or commercial online service. In response to the recommendations of a study supported by the National Science Foundation, libraries sought to expand their provision of electronically derived information (McClure, Bertot, & Beachboard, 1995). A number of larger public libraries added new activities to their programs of public service including serving “as hubs linking and managing local information resources, as centers for making available local, state, and federal information . . . and as electronic classrooms providing lifelong learners with a range of educational opportunities” (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 17).

Despite the institutional emphasis on information services, the majority of public library use continued to consist of borrowing books and audiovisual materials. Traditional services such as lending books and audiovisual materials, compiling reading lists (both print and digital), and providing notices about educational and cultural programs, exhibits, and services continued. There was some concern that the costs of new technologies would lead to cutbacks in educational services and programming. It is difficult to know if these services were adversely affected because little survey research was conducted to determine how public libraries allocated their funds. According to Library Journal sample surveys taken in the late 1990s, increases in library budgets were generally spent on technology. However, spending on collections increased as the economy improved in the late 1990s (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 194).

The library literature of the period suggests that most public libraries tried to achieve some degree of balance between technology and traditional public services. Most public libraries continued to provide a range of educational and cultural activities for children, youth, and adults including story hours, homework assistance, exhibits, poetry readings, concerts, drama workshops, and film series. Services for special clienteles such as visits to senior citizen centers and nursing homes, the provision of talking book equipment and enlargement machines for visually handicapped persons, and the provision of literacy tutoring and English as a Second
Language classes were still considered an important part of library services (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 194).

Of course, technology greatly enhanced the provision of traditional activities. Literacy and ESL programs utilized computer-assisted instruction. Data found on the Internet and CD-ROM reference works helped students of all ages to complete their assignments. Book lists on CD-ROM were particularly useful to patrons looking for good books to read because they described and categorized the contents of books. The needs of people with visual or hearing impairments were met by video and telecommunications devices. Research at all levels from elementary school to graduate school was enriched by the use of databases and Internet resources (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 194).

There is no question that the objectives of traditional services were facilitated by the increased accessibly and flexibility afforded through information technology. The objectives of community information service, which included (a) supplying information for practical purposes and personal use; (b) informing “the public about governmental structures, rules, regulations, and actions”; (c) promoting “more informed participation in civic affairs”; and (d) encouraging “a sense of community” were advanced by the resources available through the Internet (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 192). Public libraries used Web pages to display a wide range of local, state, and regional information including “directories and services of municipal and county agencies and cultural institutions, calendars of events, schedules of legislative bodies and sports teams, job banks, availability of child care, or subway and bus maps” (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 192).

Another traditional practice, partnerships with community organizations and institutions to meet community needs, was strengthened through the use of electronic information systems. This approach was encouraged by foundations and groups interested in public libraries (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 192). The Benton Foundation, the Kellogg Foundation, Libraries for the Future, and the Council on Library Resources endorsed the strategy of using “technology to expand and enhance the public library’s ability to serve the community’s needs” (CLR, 1996, p. 8). However,
as the Council on Library Resources found, communities were very different. What worked in one community did not always work in another. “Not every library has viewed its future as tied to the fortunes of the local community network or Free-net” (CLR, 1996, p. 8)

Phases in the Evolution of Library Adult Education

R. E. Lee identified 1956 as the beginning of a new phase in the evolution of the library’s educational role. Lee cited the passage of the Library Services Act in 1956 and the publication of the national standards, Public Library Service: A Guide to Evaluation with Minimum Standards, as defining events for the public library. The creation of the Adult Services Division in 1957 could also be seen as a defining event for library adult education. During the 1940s and the early 1950s the library’s adult education work gradually lost its specialized status and was absorbed into the broader area of adult services which encompassed library services for the educational, recreational, and cultural development of adults. With the creation of the Adult Services Division, adult education was formally recognized as an integral part of adult services. The concept of library adult education was broadened as it was integrated into all of the library’s services for adults (Lee, 1966, pp. 82, 104).

The year 1972 represented the beginning of another phase in the evolution of the public library’s educational commitment. Two defining events occurred in 1972. The first was the publication of PLA’s Goals Feasibility Study which was the catalyst for the development of the public library planning program. The other event was the 1972 merger of the Adult Services Division and the References Services Division. With the merger “the dominance of the information function over the educational, cultural, and recreational functions was reasserted” (Rolstad, 1993, p. 36).

The latest phase in the evolution of the public library’s commitment to education began in the mid-1990s. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact year that the Internet became the topic of popular conversation throughout American society, but there it is no doubt that it was exerting a
powerful influence on public libraries by 1996. Recognizing the potential of this new information network, larger public libraries began to invest in the Internet in the early 1990s. By the mid-1990s a substantial percentage of public libraries were connected to the Internet. The 1996 survey revealed that public library Internet connectivity had more than doubled between 1994 and 1996, from 20.9% to 44.6%. The provision of public access to the Internet also showed a two-fold increase from 13% in 1994 to 28% in 1996 (McClure et al., 1994, p. 16; Bertot et al., 1996, pp. ii, 46-48). By 1998 public library Internet connectivity had increased to 85.6%, and the provision of public Internet access had increased to 73.3% (Bertot & McClure, 1999, p. iii).

In retrospect it is clear that the advent of the Internet and the World Wide Web in the early 1990s changed the role of the public library in information provision. In the late 1990s competition from search engines developed by Google and other for-profit information agencies further complicated a complex issue. By the turn of the new century, it was evident that these new information providers could supply information at a much lower cost than public libraries.

The mid-1990s were also notable for the demise of the long-lived Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) in 1995 and the passage of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) in 1996. LSTA affected public libraries in a number of ways. While LSCA had grown to contain many provisions over the years, LSTA specified two categories: technology and service to underserved populations (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 104). These emphases tended to reinforce the public library’s function as safety net for those who lacked the resources to access the Internet on their own. With the help of the Gates Foundation and federal E-rate legislation to implement the provisions of LSTA, the number of public libraries in rural areas and poor communities able to connect to the Internet and to provide public Internet access increased dramatically during the late 1990s and the early years of the new century.

Unfortunately, direct grants for library literacy programs were eliminated when LSCA ended. Lack of direct grants did have a negative impact on library literacy programs until new welfare legislation included public libraries as service providers. When LSTA was reauthorized
in 2003, more money was channeled to state agencies making more funds available for literacy programs in libraries (McCook, 2004b, p. 69). However, under LSTA public libraries no longer enjoyed the privileged position they once held; they had to compete with other types of libraries for federal funding (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 108).

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the new legislation for adult education and lifelong learning was the transfer of the administration of federal aid to public libraries from the Department of Education to the new Institute of Museum and Library Services (Molz & Dain, 1999, p. 105). The movement to a new locus within the federal government aligned the public library with other education and cultural institutions such as museums, archives, and public radio and television and promised to reinvigorate the public library’s educational and cultural objectives.

Conclusions 1950-2000

Reasons Why Library Adult Education Was Not Effectively Implemented

R. E. Lee concluded that although the educational objective was the earliest and one of the most important of the library’s objectives, it was not effectively implemented between 1890 and 1950 (1966, p. 119). The reasons for the public library’s failure to assume a leadership role in adult education were numerous—three of which Lee discussed in his work, Continuing Education for Adults through the American Public Library 1833-1964. The first factor was “the historical conflict between the provision of educational services and the provision of recreational services” (1966, p. 119).

In the 1870s the library profession’s idealist beliefs and its pragmatic operational values clashed on the question of whether the public library should provide recreational reading materials for those users who were not serious readers. The debate centered on the question of which objective was central—education or recreation. The question was put to rest for a time when the majority of public libraries chose to include popular fiction and nonfiction in their collections (Lee, 1966, pp. 36-39). The provision of recreational reading materials was justified
under the label “wholesome recreation” (Lee, 1966, p. 39). However, the issue would not go away and became the topic of debate again in the first decades of the twentieth century when the question became “how much popular fiction should be supplied” (Lee, 1966, p. 36). The provision of recreational reading materials then became “associated with a theory of democratic library service, which emphasized the indeterminate idea of the observance of the rights of the library user” (Lee, 1966, p. 39). Librarians did not critically examine their differences of opinion about recreational reading; they tended to avoid conflict through rationalizations such as recreational readers often become serious readers. Lee observed that beneath these differences lay “a fundamental and growing conflict about the ends that a public library should seek to attain” (Lee, 1966, p. 39).

The conflict has never been fully resolved because it continues to be tied to library funding. In many libraries the amount of recreational material purchased depends upon public demand and circulation statistics. The standard for measuring public library success continues to be circulation; the higher the circulation figures the more successful the library. In order to maintain or increase the library budget, librarians still need to show that the public library is performing well by increasing circulation. As a rule educational services have not increased circulation figures very much, but recreational reading has increased circulation substantially. Therefore, many librarians seek to improve the library’s perceived performance by responding to the public’s demand for recreational reading. For pragmatic reasons, more resources and staff time have been directed toward recreational reading and less toward educational programs (Lee, 1966, pp. 119-120).

The second factor discussed by Lee was the controversy about library adult education that raged from 1924 to 1950. Librarians could not agree (a) on a definition of library adult education, (b) on what role the library should play in community adult education, and (c) on what services and programs constituted library adult education. The controversial nature of library
adult education dissuaded many librarians from becoming actively involved in providing
educational services to adults (Lee, 1966, p. 120).

Part of the problem was that library adult education itself was not well-defined.
H. L. Smith observed that establishing a definition for adult education was difficult since there
was no complete agreement about the definition within the field of adult education, and adult
education within the context of the public library “seemed to defy definition” (1954, p. 64). The
public library community made some degree of progress in resolving the problem of defining the
nature of library adult education in the 1950s. In an article on the history of adult services in the
July 1976 issue of *Library Trends*, Herbert Bloom stated that “the literature of the 1950s was
providing direction for an active educational program more explicitly than had ever been done
before” (p. 390). Herbert Bloom cited the 1954 Allerton Park Conference, *Training Needs of
Librarians Doing Adult Education Work*, as an example of the progress of library adult education
in the 1950s. Bloom noted that Asheim had developed “a succinct but comprehensive approach
based on a dynamic definition of adult education” (Bloom, 1976, p. 389). Unfortunately, the
definition was “either not understood or, if understood, was not accepted” (Bloom, 1976, p. 390).

The third factor was the failure to clearly articulate and define the nature of the library’s
adult educational objective. The statement of the objective, “to facilitate informal self-education
of all people in the community,” was too vague and unspecific (Lee, 1966, p.120). It lacked the
intelligibility and specificity needed to serve as a guide for planning educational services. Many
librarians called for a clearer definition of the educational objective and a more detailed
description of the adult education function. However, attempts to clarify the library’s adult
educational purpose were opposed by some librarians who feared that a precise characterization
would inhibit innovation and lead to standardization of educational services for adults (Lee, 1966,
p. 120).

L. E. Birge noted that the failure to define the objectives went back to the beginning of
the library adult education movement. The ALA Commission on the Library and Adult Education
failed to “suggest a focused approach to provision of adult education services” and “tacitly sanctioned the undertaking of a collection of educational activities which might or might not be related to overall service objectives and goals” (Birge, 1981, p. 14).

For a number of reasons library adult education failed to win the acceptance of a majority of librarians: (a) library adult education was not guided by a clear philosophy, (b) the means were often given more consideration than the ends, and (c) sometimes enthusiasm outweighed sound reasoning in decision making. Despite all that had been accomplished between 1924 and 1956, library adult education was not “accepted by the majority of librarians as a legitimate library function” in the mid-1950s (Lee, 1966, p. 120).

C. W. Stone suggested that librarians themselves represented one of the greatest obstacles to sustained progress in adult education. Stone, editor of the July 1959 special issue of Library Trends devoted to “Current Trends in Adult Education,” observed that from a pessimist perspective of the issue’s contents, readers might conclude that a few librarians in some of the larger libraries had been responsible for most of the advances in library adult education (1959, p. 7). To Stone it seemed that the majority of librarians were still not ready to embrace adult education as an essential component of professional librarianship. Although education had been advanced as a central concern in American library philosophy for more than a century, librarians were still not committed to a strong partnership with other educational institutions. For many librarians adult education was a passing fad or simply a marginal activity (Stone, 1959, pp. 7-8).

Herbert Bloom (1976) concluded that library leaders had been more interested in library adult education than practicing librarians. Efforts such as the 1954 Allerton Park Conference failed to effect any real change in the rank and file’s understanding of adult education practice in libraries. This Allerton Park Conference like the Princeton Conference of 1939 had no sustained effect and disappeared into the archives of library literature (Bloom, 1976, p. 390). Although the work of the ALA Adult Services Division and the ALA Adult Education Projects helped to
extend the scope and diversity of adult educational services and programs, they did not result in “unification of purpose or philosophy of public library adult education” (Birge, 1981, p. 97).

C. O. Houle (1974) offered several explanations of why the public library had not been regarded as an educational institution. Houle observed that “the case against the public library (and, more specifically, against its educational impact) has typically been supported by figures drawn from the records of the institution itself, showing its low and selective drawing-power and the relative infrequency of its use” (1974, p. 79). Berelson’s 1949 study for the Public Library Inquiry, Mendelsohn and Wingerd’s 1967 study for the National Advisory Commission on Libraries, and Carp, Peterson, and Roelfs’ 1973 study in Planning Non-Traditional Programs demonstrated that the public library could not be considered “a self-sufficient educational entity” (Houle, 1974, p. 81).

Another possible explanation was the dominance of the classroom setting. The lecture method which emphasized instruction by a teacher in a classroom setting had been so prevalent since the latter part of the 19th century that many people did not consider sources of nonformal learning to be educational institutions. Houle suggested that “possibly as a consequence of the dominance of the classroom, the American public is not, on the whole, heavily committed to learning by the process of reading and, since books are a public library’s chief resource, a pervasive and hard-to-combat pattern of life appears to be operative” (1974, p. 84). Houle cited studies that seemed to suggest that educational institutions at all levels had been “negligent in nurturing the process of learning and particularly of learning by reading” (1974, p. 86).

Houle (1974) also cited the tendency of adult education institutions to work independently. Often they developed their programs without determining what was already available in the community and if a real need existed for the type of program they wanted to offer. The failure of adult educational institutions to coordinate and integrate their efforts with other educational agencies in their communities had worked against the development of a strong adult education movement. While the public library bore some of the responsibility for this
problem, “the basic fault is much broader and must be shared by all educational institutions” (Houle, 1974, p. 86).

Patrick Williams (1988) observed that there were a number of officially stated or implied reasons for the public library’s “poor showing” in adult education. These reasons were “there were too few libraries; libraries had too little money; advertising and publicity were grossly inadequate; and librarians were too few, poorly qualified, and poorly paid” (p. 60). Williams offered another reason that rarely appeared in published sources: “The public library had contributed little to the enlightenment of the masses because the masses were simply not interested” (1988, p. 60). In retrospect at least part of their apparent lack of interest could be attributed to the high rate of illiteracy. Another explanation for the failure of adult education to become integrated into the public library’s program of services may have been the extensive expansion of the higher education system after World War II, particularly the rise of community colleges that “offered a host of non-exclusive postsecondary learning opportunities” (Akst, 2005, p. 27).

Writing in 1990 Connie Van Fleet cited four basic obstacles that prevented public libraries from taking a leadership role in lifelong learning: “(1) librarians’ reluctance to assume a nontraditional role, (2) poor public perception of the library’s function, (3) lack of resources, and (4) the absence of an underlying philosophy to serve as a basis for coherent planning” (p. 202). Much of what Van Fleet wrote 17 years ago is still relevant today. Librarians have been reluctant to take on a role that requires advising and counseling. The majority of librarians in the Adult Independent Learner (AIL) Project felt that they were unqualified and that on-the-job training was insufficient (Thresher, 1981, p. 40). Van Fleet suggested that some of this concern may have arisen because librarians had a poor understanding of adult learning theory (1990, p. 202). They tended to perceive adult education as “a didactic form of instruction” (Houle, 1979, p. 95). Librarians, like the general public, were influenced by traditional concepts of education; thus, they tended to assume too much responsibility for the planning and execution of learners’ projects.
(Van Fleet, 1990, p. 202). When they recognized that the adult learner bore most of the responsibility for planning and carrying out learning projects, librarians were more enthusiastic and confident about providing personalized learning services (Seymour, 1980, pp. 24-25).

Public libraries have a history of underutilization and poor financial support because of the poor public perception of their services and functions. Public libraries have been "largely overlooked as educational institutions" (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 203), a problem Houle (1974) identified as the key reason that they have not achieved any real success as an agency of adult education (p. 80). P. R. Penland (1978) concluded from a study of independent learners that the library was "not generally perceived as a significant source of help" for adult learners (p. 6). The Commission on Non-Traditional Study (1973) acknowledged that the public library's reputation "as a passive conveyor of information or recreation" has cost it dearly and that its vast capabilities have often been ignored (pp. 82-83). Funding has always been an issue because the value of library services has not been recognized, and the public library's potential as a cultural, educational institution has never been fully realized.

The educational goal of the public library has suffered because of "the absence of an underlying philosophy to serve as a basis for coherent planning" (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 202). In 1946 Houle suggested that public libraries should develop goals focused on what they hoped to accomplish instead of stating goals in terms of resources (pp. 1516). The public library too often focused on the short term "here and now" perspective because of limited resources. Goals were often put aside to some future time when the library had sufficient funds.

Educational activities were "viewed as discrete services instead of a part of conceptual whole" and the library's educational program was "plagued by segmentation" (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 204). Librarians were reluctant to take a leap of faith in order to pursue their goals. As a result their educational goals were seldom realized. In 1938 Alvin Johnson observed: "If the need is recognized, the services can be found" (p. 35).
Lifelong Learning as a Theoretical Framework for Library Adult Education

Van Fleet believed that the lifelong learning concept could provide a theoretical framework for the public library’s educational goal.

Adoption of the lifelong learning concept as an underlying philosophy for library service can focus goals and provide a continuity of service provision . . . . If these activities can be seen as part of a unified adult learning program, and if that program can be viewed as part of a lifelong continuum that includes services to children and young adults, a focused educational goal can be presented to the public. (Van Fleet, 1990, p. 204)

Other educators and educational institutions have recognized the validity of the lifelong learning concept as a theoretical framework for libraries and other cultural institutions. J. R. Kidd believed that the concept of lifelong learning was a particularly appropriate framework for the public library educational function because “at many points the philosophical tenets of any library service meet and speak to this concept: for example, it is the only major educational institution with a mandate covering the entire life-span of its clients” (Kidd, 1983, pp. 531-532).

W. F. Birdsall proposed a role for public libraries in a learning economy. Although the public library has no real role in the information economy conceptualized in the ideology of information technology, the concept of the “learning economy” does offer “a traditional but central role for the public library” (Birdsall, 1997, p. 64). The learning economy or learning society demands “lifelong learning, skill development, literacy,” and the ability to adapt to social change (Birdsall, 1997, p. 65). Birdsall observed that the public library has addressed these concerns for decades. By adapting its roles to the new environment, the public library can continue to enrich the lives of individuals and enhance community cohesiveness (1997, p. 65).

The Benton Report reiterated the advice offered by Houle in 1974. Although the terminology was somewhat different, the concept was the same. The public library should “team with other public service information providers to form community education and information networks open and available to all” (Benton Foundation, 1996, p. 39). Computer expert and
activist S. E. Miller recognized the potential of the public library in the book *Civilizing Cyberspace: Policy, Power, and the Information Superhighway* (1996). Miller urged public institutions concerned about education, equal opportunity for everyone, and community to form alliances to further their mutual goals. The public library has been recognized as one of the institutions that can help (a) ensure equity of access, (b) contribute to the development of basic literacy and information literacy, (c) promote lifelong learning, and (d) “serve as one of the building blocks of community” (Birdsall, 1997, p. 65). Prominent educator E. L. Boyer (1991) proposed the concept of “neighborhoods for learning,” consisting of “learning stations” such as museums and libraries. Boyer believed that public libraries could play an especially important role in fostering emergent literacy and preparing children for school. Indeed, the public library’s work with children has received considerable support from both the library’s friends and critics throughout the years—from the Public Library Inquiry in 1950 to the Benton Report in 1996.

The New Century

In the new century many librarians have come to recognize that the challenge to the American public library “is not the technology of the digital revolution but the values in which it is enveloped, an ideology that devalues the role of government, of public institutions, and of citizens” (Birdsall, 1997, p. 66). R. B. McCabe (2001) was also concerned about the influence of marketplace values on public librarianship. McCabe argued that the civic role of librarianship has been seriously eroded by the utilitarian individualism of the marketplace. The first PLA planning manual, *A Planning Process for Public Libraries*, seemed to recommend the adoption of private sector developmental strategies, and its new definition of *information* encouraged “library leaders to think of their service as the distribution of a commodity, rather than as a complex human interaction” (pp. 37-38). McCabe saw the addition of library roles in the 1987 edition and service responses in the 1998 and 2001 editions as clear indications that the planning process for public libraries was closely modeled after the private sector’s development of market niches (2001, p. 38).
In 2005 Bill Crowley wrote about the detrimental effect the business model has had on the library profession. Information has been the king in the public library since the late 1970s. For more than two decades, the professional rhetoric of public librarianship has emphasized "that the value of public libraries [lay] in their being an information center" (Crowley, 2005b, Emulating business section, para. 2). Public libraries have attempted to provide services similar to those found in the information industry. Today the public library is often defined by the business information model, but that model is extracting "a heavy price" from the profession. As more for-profit organizations outsource information services to other countries where operating costs are much less, the public library is drawn more and more to outsourcing as means to cut costs and stay competitive. "It may not be possible to justify employing professionally educated librarians 'onsite' in this information-as-commodity world with its demands for lower prices and greater convenience" (Crowley, 2005b, Emulating business section, para. 3). Crowley warned that the future of community-based information services as well as the future of reference librarians may be seriously impacted.

Former director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, R. S. Martin, argued that the public library community may have painted itself into a corner by convincing the public and funding bodies in particular that its central mission is to store, retrieve, and provide information (2001). In a speech at the Colorado Library Association in October 2001, R. S. Martin used Adler's "goods of the mind" to make the point that public librarians have unintentionally created a misleading impression of what the public library is and what it does. Adler's goods are arranged in an ascending scale of values: "information, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom" (2001, para. 18). The information function addresses the lower level good of information, while the education function addresses the higher level goods of knowledge and understanding. By focusing exclusively on the information function, the public library community "misrepresents-under-represents-in a serious way what it is that libraries really do" (Martin, 2001, para. 22). The narrow focus of access to information "ignores some very important
social functions of libraries” (Martin, 2001, para. 22). If provision of information is perceived as the library’s only function or its most important function, elected officials and resource allocators are justified in asking, “Why do we still need libraries? All the information we need is on the Internet” (Martin, 2001, para. 1).

Public libraries stopped promoting the educational role in the 1970s and jumped on the “information” bandwagon in an effort to improve public support and enhance professional status (Martin, 2001). This strategy backfired with the advent of the Internet and worsened with the creation of powerful search engines like Google. It has been apparent for several years that “the primary ‘information issue’ for the public library is whether the institution and its professional librarians can really compete in the information arena dominated by Google and others. . .” (Crowley, 2005b, Rethinking Library Roles section, para. 3). Increasingly, the answer to that question has become “NO.”

Sandra Nelson and June Garcia cited some disturbing statistics regarding the public library’s information role. In July 2006 “Americans conducted 6.3 billion searches on the top five Internet Search engines” (2006, p. 6). Nelson and Garcia compared this statistic to the number of reference questions answered by staff in all 9,211 U. S. public libraries during the entire year of 2003 (the most recent year for which there was national data available). Public librarians answered 302 million questions in 12 months as compared to the 6.3 billion searches handled by search engines in one month (Nelson & Garcia, 2006, p.6). Nelson and Garcia conceded that “the comparison would seem to indicate that not only are public libraries not THE information place, for many Americans we are not even AN information place” (2006, p. 6).

These sobering statistics were reinforced by Lesley Williams’ survey of the information seeking behavior of online consumers. A survey of a representative sample of 3300 online information consumers revealed that 84% of information searches began with a search engine. While 72% of the respondents had used Google and other free search engines to initiate an information search, library web sites were selected by just 1% of the respondents. Williams
concluded that the majority of information seekers are making little use of the wide array of
electronic resources libraries make available to the public. The general public seems to believe
that the information provided by Google is just as good as that provided by libraries (Williams,
2006, p. 40). With the realization that the public library’s mission of access to information is not
sufficient to guarantee the library’s future in “an Internet-facilitated world,” public libraries and
public librarians have again been forced to confront the question of what they can do “to meet
critical public needs and thereby safeguard their future” (Crowley, 2005b, Rethinking Library
Roles section, para. 3).

R. B. McCabe (2001) advocated a renewal of the public library’s educational role in
*Civic Librarianship*. Education is needed more than ever in a society in which access to
information is increasingly available, but the educational support to use information resources
effectively is lacking. Education is an important mission that would improve the public library’s
standing “because it is highly beneficial, indeed vital to communities” (2001, p. 157). McCabe
concluded, “Public libraries that provide only access to information will be increasingly
unnecessary in the future” (p. 157).

Bill Crowley (2005b) asserted, “Critical to the survival of professional librarianship is
recognition that legislators, trustees, and librarians had it right when they deemed the public
library to be fundamentally educational in nature” (The Education Model section, para. 1).
Librarians must accept “the premise that the public library’s core mission is continuing education
for all . . .” (Crowley, 2005b, The Education Model section, para. 2). They must also recognize
that in “an Internet-facilitated world,” the public library’s information role has changed.
For-profit information agencies locate and deliver information much more efficiently and cost
effectively than public libraries (Crowley, 2005b, The Education Model section, para. 9). The
public library’s role in information provision must become “primarily educational” (Crowley,
2005b, The Education Model section, para. 9).
In recent years the U. S. Institute of Museum and Library Services has adopted an educational mission centered in the concept of free-choice learning. Free-choice learning is a new term for the familiar concept of self-directed learning, a form of adult learning that accounts for 50% of all learning. In 2001 the institute sponsored a conference on the 21st Century Learner: Exploring Community Partnerships for Life Long Learning (McCook, 2004b, p. 296). The institute's goal is to integrate the resources of libraries, museums, archives, public television, and public radio to extend the benefits of lifelong learning to all American citizens (McCook 2004, p. 296).

R. S. Martin affirmed the shared mission of libraries and museums “in developing and delivering public education and community service programs for lifelong learners of all ages” (Bell, 2002, p. 3). In a speech on “The Role of Libraries in Lifelong Learning” Martin spoke about the many resources and services that libraries and museums provide their communities and identified education as their most important contribution. Martin stated, “In my view, all of the numerous and varied roles and functions that libraries and museums play in their communities fall into one of three overlapping categories: education, information, and recreation. Of these the most important is education” (Martin, as cited in Bell, 2002, p. 3).

Martin “invoked adult education as an important role for libraries” in a speech delivered in 2001 (McCook, 2002, p. 9). In the speech entitled “Returning to the Center: Libraries, Knowledge and Education,” Martin emphasized the need “to re-institute a profound respect for the educational function of libraries” (2001, para. 25). Martin asserted that the public library must reverse its direction and set “the library once again to the only task of importance that it ever performed, providing education for those who seek it” (2001, para. 25).

Martin’s call for the public library to restore its identity “as an institution for informal self-education” comes at a time when excellence in education at all levels is needed more than ever (2001, para. 25). In 2003 the Hoover Institution’s Koret Task Force on K-12 Education issued a report updating the findings of A Nation at Risk. “Our Schools and Our Future: Are We
Still at Risk?" cited limited improvement in high school graduation rates and in the strengthening of literacy and numeracy skills of American students. The report also dealt with the consequences of accelerated globalization since the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 (Peterson, 2003).

The shrinking globe has made it easier than anyone in 1983 could have imagined for investments and jobs to go anywhere on the planet that seems likeliest to succeed with them. Here we must look to our schools to produce the highly educated citizenry on which America’s future economic vitality depends ("Our Schools," 2003, p. 9).

In November 2005 the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education issued an ominous warning “that unless states made significant efforts to improve the educational attainment of all residents, the personal income of Americans would decline over the next 15 years” (National Center, as cited in Kirsch et al., 2007, p. 10). The National Academy of Sciences also warned that the nation is quickly losing its competitive edge in the global economic market. To stay competitive in the years ahead the math and science proficiencies of K-12 students must be strengthened, and the nation must increase its commitment to basic research and the training and recruitment of scientists (*Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, 2005).

Most recently, the Education Testing Service issued a report in January 2007, entitled *America’s Perfect Storm: Three Forces Changing Our Nation’s Future*. The report named three powerful forces that are interacting to put the nation’s future at risk: “divergent skill distribution, the changing economy, and demographic trends” (Kirsch et al., 2007, p. 3). The report warned that “if we maintain our present policies, it is very likely that we will continue to grow apart, [sic] with greater inequity in wages and wealth, [sic] and increasing social and political polarization” (Kirsch et al., 2007, p. 3). *America’s Perfect Storm* estimated that “by 2030 the average levels of literacy and numeracy in the working-age population will have decreased by about 5 percent while inequality will have increased by about 7 percent” (Kirsch et al., 2007, p. 4).

This is a serious problem that educational institutions of all types and at all levels must address. Public library services address two of these concerns through literacy education services
and programming for racial and ethnic minorities, but the response is woefully inadequate in relation to the need. In order for the public library to make a significant impact on the serious problems facing the nation, the public library community must make political, financial, philosophical, and instrumental commitments to its educational mission. A political commitment mandates that the public library make lifelong education its central mission, both in word and in deed. It further requires that library administrator and trustees embrace an active role for the library in the community’s educational and informational networks. Although the effect of the public library’s efforts as an independent institution may be limited, the impact of its efforts can be greatly strengthened through collaboration with other educational and informational agencies.

A financial commitment requires public libraries to allocate sufficient funds to support an ongoing, coordinated program of educational services and to seek alternative sources of funds to sustain this program during periods of budgetary shortfalls. A philosophical commitment means that administrators, trustees, and staff value the public library’s educational role and recognize it as a legitimate area of public library service. An instrumental commitment requires administrators, trustees, and staff to actively support the library’s educational mission and to do everything within their power to advance the library’s educational objectives and goals. If history offers any lessons, instrumental commitment may be the most difficult to achieve. As the Public Library Inquiry demonstrated, the public library has sometimes been long on rhetoric and short on substance. It will take a substantive commitment on the part of the public library and willingness to collaborate with other agencies for the library to achieve its educational goals.

The current situation in professional education for librarianship is problematic. The current shortage of children’s librarians may soon extend to other public service positions. In a message to the ALA membership, past president Michael Gorman wrote, “There is a crisis in library education that threatens the very existence of libraries and librarianship” (Gorman, 2006, p. 3). Some library leaders say Gorman is overstating the problem and that all ALA accredited library programs continue to teach the core subjects of librarianship. However, Gorman asserts
that “an examination of their catalogs and the teaching and research interests of their full-time
teaching and research interests of their full-time
faculty do not support those assertions” (2006, p. 3). The litany of problems is familiar: “tension
between information schools and library schools, library schools in danger of closing, programs
seeking new institutional homes that more closely align with the type of education provided, a
new emphasis on distance education, and the disconnect between what is taught in the classroom
and what people need to practice on the job” (Burger, 2007, p. 5).

Past history and recent trends in graduate library schools suggest that it is rather unlikely
that courses in adult education will be added to the library school curricula. If the formal
instructional program for adult services librarians cannot be improved, then the library
community must develop effective programs of in-service training or other options for continuing
education for professional and paraprofessional staff. As L. E. Birge suggested in 1981, libraries,
library associations, and state library agencies will have to make up any deficiencies in library
school preparation (p. 146). If the educational needs of adult services librarians cannot be
adequately addressed through in-service training or continuing education, public libraries may
have to revise their policies in regard to some aspects of library practice. One of those aspects is
staffing. Public libraries may have to become more flexible in hiring by not requiring an MLS for
every professional position. As E. J. Rodger noted in a 2004 interview, not everyone needs a
MLS degree. “People doing specialized work in libraries need specialized degrees: academic
qualifications in adult literacy or childhood development, for example” (Rodger, as cited in Oder,
2004, para. 7). In other words library directors may choose to hire applicants with other types of
degrees for specialized work with children, young adults, and adults. Although this is not a
desirable strategy because it undermines the professional degree, it more adequately addresses the
staffing needs of public libraries. To achieve its educational goals, the public library must have
staff members with the appropriate education and training to implement the types of programs
and services that will fulfill the library’s objectives.
In reply to a question about reconfiguring the public library's mission, Rodger quoted the sociologist R. N. Bellah who wrote, "Institutions are socially organized ways of paying attention" (Bellah, as cited in Oder, 2004, para. 18). Rodger stated: "The public library is the way America has paid attention to equity and lifelong, free choice learning. We need to stay rooted in those two purposes" (Rodger, as cited in Oder, 2004, para. 18). Rodger acknowledged that the public library faces many challenges including the "ubiquitous" Google but remained optimistic about the public library's future. "As long as we stay faithful to those two deep purposes and stay flexible regarding what's going on elsewhere, we'll be fine" (Rodger, as cited in Oder, 2004, para. 18). Commitment to those two ideals, ideals that grew out of the library's nineteenth century belief in the value of books and reading, is key to the public library's continuing relevance in twenty-first-century America.
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