

Tomorrow's Libraries: The Indiana Priorities

1. Building information Networks through Technology
2. Strengthening Children's and Youth Literacy
3. Marketing Library Services

These three Indiana priorities are the result of a planning process which involved over 200 delegates from across the state. Many were library professionals, but the vast majority were ordinary citizens who believe libraries are vital to improving the prosperity and quality of life in their communities. After much work at the local, state, and national levels, they concluded that the effectiveness of our libraries now and in the future depends on achieving the priorities listed above.

The connection between LSCA and the work of these delegates is organic. It is no exaggeration to say that networking and literacy programs grew directly out of LSCA funding. As we have seen, LSCA has been instrumental in building both the technical infrastructure and the cooperative alliances among people that have made networking a reality in Indiana. Likewise, literacy programs have been an essential feature of our national commitment to reach the unserved through LSCA.

The commitment to marketing marks a turning point in how Indiana libraries will operate in the future. Over the years, LSCA as a program evolved to meet the changing needs of the American people. The new marketing by Indiana libraries takes a similar position: it will not simply be an effort to publicize service. The point will be to find out what the public actually wants, just as a manufacturer or business would, and then provide it to them. It is that kind of philosophy which led the Allen County Public Library to initiate its Three-Phase Business Connection. LSCA has made "customer service" and outreach into the community the new mode of operating. It has made libraries proactive.

Although much has been accomplished since 1956, much remains to be done, and a restructured LSCA program would again provide the foundation. The networks are incomplete. Poverty and illiteracy still walk hand in hand in urban and rural areas alike. Our mission is to provide the information and knowledge which the people need and desire. Jefferson's faith in literacy, education, and libraries as the bedrock of democracy must be reaffirmed if we are to move with hope and vision into the next century.

For more details on Participating in Tomorrow, write to The Indiana Library Federation, 6408 Carrollton Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana 46220.