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1991

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Recommended Citation

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**THE WHITE HOUSE
CONFERENCE ON
LIBRARY AND
INFORMATION
SERVICES**

1991



Delegates at preconferences will look at library and information service issues of concern to their states, as well as services that are impacted by federal policy and legislation. Resolutions developed with a national thrust will be taken to the national Conference for further discussion and debate. Those dealing primarily with local concerns will be considered for future action at the state or territorial level.

What will be discussed at the national Conference?

The three overall themes of the Conference are Library and Information Services for Productivity, for Literacy and for Democracy. Although the actual topics to be addressed will not be known until all state preconference activities have been completed, the following issues are among those that might be considered:

- How library and information services can provide business and industry improved access to information;
- How the information needs of senior citizens, the disabled, the disadvantaged, the functionally illiterate and those whose primary language is not English can be met;
- How access to new information technologies can be assured;
- How new technology can be applied to the educational process in penal institutions;
- How library and information services can be improved through cooperation with the private sector;
- How technology can be used to store, analyze and transmit information needed by the public and by government decision makers;
- How information users can be helped in their efforts to sift through an ever-expanding information supply, extracting what is useful, reliable and timely.



In addition, the report will be widely disseminated to raise public awareness of library and information services and the benefits of these services for the individual, the economy and the nation.

Who are the delegates?

Official delegates to the national Conference are chosen by their states through a variety of ways. Whatever process is used, the state delegate composition must adhere to the distribution mandated in Public Law 100-382, the legislation authorizing the WHCLIS.

One-fourth of the delegates will represent library and information professionals; one-fourth will represent local, state and federal government officials; one-fourth will represent Friends, trustees, and other library supporters; and one-fourth will be from the general public.

Can persons other than official delegates attend?

Yes. More than 3,000 observers attended the first WHCLIS, held in 1979.

What is a state preconference?

Federal funds have been made available to the states and territories to assist in conducting their own preconference activities. Starting with the Illinois preconference in April 1990, all states and territories, the District of Columbia, plus the American Indian Tribes and federal library community, will hold statewide and regional activities to identify issues that need to be addressed and/or resolved. The delegates will carry these needs and issues to the national Conference in Washington.



From July 9-13, 1991, more than 900 delegates and alternates and thousands of observers will convene in Washington, DC, for the White House Conference on Library and Information Services (WHCLIS). This Conference provides a rare opportunity for full participation by the citizens of the United States and its territories in the development of recommendations for future public policies in the areas of library and information services. With an emphasis throughout the proceedings on the provision of library and information services for literacy, productivity and democracy, the White House Conference stands on the cutting edge of some of the nation's most critical challenges.

Authorized by Public Law 100-382, the White House Conference will include broad representation by library and information professionals; local, state and federal government officials; supporters of and volunteers in library and information organizations; and the general public. Official delegates to the White House Conference will debate and discuss hundreds of recommendations brought forward from thousands of participants and, at the conclusion of the deliberative process, the delegates will vote on a set of recommendations to be sent to the President of the United States for improvements in library and information services for all citizens in this information age.

The conference is being planned and conducted by the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) with assistance and advice from the White House Conference Advisory Committee, whose 30 members represent all areas of the nation.

President's Message

THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON

November 30, 1989

I am pleased to send my warmest greetings to everyone preparing for the White House Conference on Library and Information Services.

If the United States is to remain a global leader in the 21st century, we must keep pace with rapid advances in technology, as well as with increasing trade and commerce between nations. Our ability to stay ahead depends, in large part, on our ability to stay informed.

Today, problems such as illiteracy threaten to undermine our Nation's strength and productivity. That is why we must improve educational opportunities in the United States and why we must meet the information needs of all our citizens — especially minorities, the elderly, disadvantaged young people, and persons living in rural areas.

I am committed to working with you and with others, both in the public and private sectors, to enhance our nation's library services and information systems. By examining the diverse needs of our population and by exploring ways to make the maximum use of new information technology, we can bring the rewards of learning to more and more Americans and ensure that our Nation's libraries continue to serve as a valuable source of knowledge and training. Most important, improving the Nation's library and information services may be one of the best investments we make in our campaign to end illiteracy in the United States.

My thanks to each of you for your efforts to make this upcoming Conference a success. I look forward to the reports and recommendations that will be issued when the Conference convenes in 1991.

Barbara joins me in saluting your dedication to this great cause — one that means so much to our nation and is so close to our hearts. God bless you.





What is the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science?

The U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) is a permanent, independent agency of the federal government charged with advising the executive and legislative branches on national library and information policies and plans.

What is a White House Conference?

The President of the United States can call a White House Conference to focus attention on a topic of concern to the nation. The Congress can also request that the President convene a White House Conference. As a general rule, the purpose of a White House Conference is to involve a wide range of individuals in the development of recommendations for future public policies in the area of concern. Among the many critical issues on which White House Conferences have been held are aging, a drug-free America and productivity.

What is the purpose of the White House Conference on Library and Information Services?

Delegates will gather to develop recommendations for the improvement of the library and information services of the nation and their use by the public. Resolutions will be adopted by the official delegates on the federal role in expanding literacy, increasing productivity and strengthening democracy through changes and improvements in library and information services.

The final report of the Conference, including its findings and recommendations, will be forwarded to the President, and by him to Congress, for consideration in the development of policies and future legislation concerning library and information services for the nation.



Why should people get involved?

- Productive citizens need to keep pace with the information explosion;
- Libraries of all types play an important role in developing and expanding literacy for all citizens; and
- Information that enables citizens to make informed decisions in the workplace, at school or as a part of lifelong education is the democratic foundation upon which this country was built. Democracy depends on the informed participation of its people.

How can you get involved?

A first step to participation is to contact your Governor's office or the head of your state library agency. The name and address can be found in any neighborhood library. These offices will know what is happening in your state and how you can participate.



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