

Pathways to Excellence:

A Report on Improving Library and Information Services for Native American Peoples

*US. National Commission on Libraries
and Information Science
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"The opportunities for a lot of our Native people start in the library."
Mike Williams (Yupit)

December 1992
The Honorable George Bush
The White House
Washington, D.C.
Dear Mr. President:

It is my distinct honor to transmit this report on Native American library and information services on behalf of the Members of the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS). This report, Pathways to Excellence, is the result of

nationwide regional hearings and other activities conducted by the Commission. As stated in the Presidential Proclamation designating 1992 as the Year of the American Indian, the Nation supports efforts to "...celebrate and preserve each tribe's unique cultural heritage..." in recognition of "...the special place that Native Americans hold in our society..... This report on Native American library and information services responds to this call.

This report concludes more than three years of intensive study, dialogue, assessment, and planning by this permanent, independent agency. The process included a series of regional hearings, conferences, interviews, and site visits to Indian reservations. The Commissioners talked with librarians, Native American leaders, members of the tribes, and others concerned with library and information services for American Indian peoples. The results of these activities are presented in the findings and challenges included in the report.

As a second part of this report, NCLIS is providing a Strategic Long-Range Action Plan, which was developed to assist Native American leaders and tribal communities in the development and improvement of library and information services for all American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians. This Action Plan is a blueprint for progress and is intended for use by the U.S. Congress, Federal agencies, the States, the Native American community, the education community, as well as all citizens concerned with the improvement of Indian libraries and information services. The Action Plan reflects the ideas and plans of many contributors, reviewers, and endorsers.

The Commission's report highlights unique challenges critical to the development and improvement of library and information services for Native Americans. The report identifies National challenges to develop stimulating, responsive, and innovative programs that address the distinctive needs and the richly variegated cultural texture of the Native American's tribal heritage.

The study underlying this report reflects the contributions of many in the library, information services, education, and Native American communities. The wealth of Native American wisdom and culture offers substantial contributions to our Nation's future, just as tribal science and traditional knowledge enrich America's history. Strengthening and expanding Native Americans' library and information services are critical for this future contribution.

The members of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science are honored to join you, along with other policy officials and leaders in Congress, the Native American community, the education community, and other citizens throughout the Nation, to forge new Pathways to Excellence for providing Native American library and information services to meet the informational needs of these communities as we enter the next century.

Sincerely,
J. Michael Farrell
Chairman

INTRODUCTION

Rapid and sweeping technological changes of the past decade have transformed many of the functions and services of libraries and information institutions. New developments in information networks and information media promise increased products, capabilities, and services for all types of libraries and information concerns. In this evolving technological landscape, Native American communities present a unique challenge for applying the new technologies to expand the effectiveness of the library and information services Indian peoples need.

For untold centuries, Native Americans have passed their unique legacy to successive generations through an ancient but fragile chain of oral tradition. Today, within the complexity of contemporary life in America, this heritage of American indigenous culture is reflected in the habits, customs, and traditions of the "Knowledge Seekers," as well as those "Wisdom Keepers" who live within Native American tribes and maintain links with traditional tribal knowledge, customs, and history. Tribal Elders with knowledge of traditional Indian technology, government, natural science, folklore, religion, art, natural healing, legend, and tribal history serve as living libraries for their communities.

This largely undocumented knowledge base, containing the expertise and wisdom of the Native American experience, must be recorded and preserved through more permanent institutional structures in libraries and information resources if it is not to be lost. Before Native American traditions and customs disappear from historical memory, policy officials, legislators, tribal leaders, private agencies and individuals, and state and national library organizations, must join efforts to ensure that the first Americans will have access to the tools, technologies, resources, and skills needed to successfully enter the Information Age of the next century with clear channels to the wisdom of their past.

The successful application of new information technologies would improve library and information services to our indigenous people and would present potential solutions to their inherent problems. Addressing the preservation of a unique Native American knowledge and culture base will benefit future generations of Americans from many diverse backgrounds.

The oral tradition of Native Americans presents special problems for documenting, recording, transmitting, and preserving their unique cultural, linguistic, religious, governmental, scientific, and social heritage. Similarly, the dislocation of Native peoples has exacerbated these difficulties. The educational, social, cultural, and economic

opportunities presented by the development of an information service infrastructure for Native Americans call for clear priorities and actions.

This report documents a three-year study performed by the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) that focused on the information needs, resources, and services of Native American tribal peoples. The release of this report in 1992 is particularly appropriate because it coincides with the observance of the Year of the American Indian, which was declared by President Bush on March 2, 1992. The Presidential proclamation includes the following statement:

"I encourage Federal, State, and local government officials, interested groups and organizations, and the people of the United States to observe this year with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities. "

Over the course of the Native American library and information services project, NCLIS reviewed the current condition of tribal libraries and identified improvements needed to adequately address the needs of American Indians in the future. They then drafted preliminary recommendations for implementation actions that are needed for improving the range and quality of library and information services available to Native Americans or Native American peoples who reside and work on tribal reservations through-out the United States, as well as to those who do not live or work on a reservation.

The study's findings demonstrate that the full range of library and information needs of native Americans are not being adequately met. In addition, these communities require specialized library and information resources that can address their unique information and educational needs. As a result, these under-served groups do not have access to the general information services that are essential to the fulfillment of their basic needs, nor do they have effective access to specialized information resources that reflect the distinct cultural identities inherent in their heritage.

Also reflected in the report is an urgent National need to record and preserve the heritage, traditions, achievements, and wisdom of native American cultures. The tribal wisdom and indigenous knowledge of the American Indian people face extinction if these challenges are not addressed. If this opportunity goes unfulfilled, this fragile knowledge base may be lost to future generations. In addition, the report also outlines strategies for ensuring that Native American peoples have access to library and information services adequate to satisfy the full range of their needs.

Remarkable progress has been made in a few specific areas related to American Indian tribal libraries. New library and archival facilities have been constructed and existing structures have been renovated or redesigned with Federal grant funding. Specialized library training for Native Americans has been made available, and assistance has been provided to acquire library materials and other resources for tribal libraries. These progressive developments present potential models for successful application on a broader scale. New and innovative programs involving different approaches and methods are also required in order to increase the range of library and information services

available to the Native American community. Instances of development and progress, both traditional and new, can point the direction for future overall improvement of library and information service programs that will satisfy the informational needs of the earliest Americans.

This report also looks ahead to future contributions of the descendants of America's original inhabitants based on Native American libraries, archives, and information services, which are critical links that relate the traditional culture of the Native American heritage to the promise and potential of the future.

The Summary Report provides a brief document for use by policy makers, legislators, tribal leaders, state library agencies, and other decision makers at the Federal, State, and local community levels to improve the library and information services provided to Native American populations in the continental United States, Alaska, and Hawaii. Improved access to a broad array of information services, technologies, and resources is essential to ensure effective educational development, to enhance literacy, to increase productivity, to preserve the Native American cultural heritage, to provide a basis for economic vitality, to facilitate full and meaningful employment, and to support tribal self-determination, stability, and sovereignty.

The complete Report, containing detailed descriptions of activities performed by the Commission in this vital area of study, includes a copy of the Summary along with the Commission's Long-Range Action Plan, which identifies strategies for providing high quality information services to Native American peoples.

The Report provides a blueprint for action that focuses on the challenges involving the Federal, State, and local governments and agencies, the tribes themselves, and the Nation at large.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to the 1990 U. S. Census, there are approximately two million Native Americans throughout the United States of America, half of whom live on sovereign Indian reservations and half of whom live off-reservation. *The Commission's study reveals that reservation Indians suffer from minimal or inadequate library and information services as well as geographic barriers to access. Discrimination and lack of culturally appropriate library and information resources are among the constraining factors affecting the quality of library and information services available to non-reservation Native American peoples.*

The Commission, in early 1989, began to verify, visit, and communicate with Native American peoples and their leaders and, in accordance with the Commission's statute, to report all findings and recommend viable solutions to assure optimal library and information services to Native Americans. This report is the culmination of this

assessment and it presents ten major challenges for change to all concerned in order to initiate a process for dramatically improving library and information services for Native Americans.

The ten major challenges are:

DEVELOP CONSISTENT FUNDING SOURCES REQUIRED TO SUPPORT IMPROVED NATIVE AMERICAN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

Implementation Strategies:

- Provide steady, reliable financial support at the Federal, State, local, and tribal government levels.
- Continue Federal library programs such as the Library Services for Indian Tribes and Hawaiian Natives Program (Title IV of the Library Services and Construction Act) at higher funding levels.
- Adopt State statutes patterned after New York State's landmark statute that authorizes permanent, ongoing State funding for tribal libraries.
- Assess the condition of tribal library and information centers to determine the resource requirements needed to meet basic library and information service standards.
- Encourage tribal leaders and decision makers to include library and information services as basic services critical to overall tribal governing and planning activities.
- Encourage tribal planners and decision makers to pursue more vigorously private sector assistance for library and information services support.
- Action by the Federal government on all resolutions affecting Native Americans that were adopted at the second White House Conference on Library and Information Services.

STRENGTHEN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

Implementation Strategies:

- Accelerate efforts throughout the Nation to recruit and retain more native Americans in the fields of library and information services.
- Expand individual financial aid opportunities at all levels for Native Americans to pursue careers in library and information services.
- Improve recruitment efforts to encourage Native Americans to specialize in archival studies and the development of archival service centers.
- Enhance the educational role of library and information specialists and its importance, in order to enlighten and influence tribal leaders and decision makers.
- Establish a national Native American library and information technical assistance center to provide leadership, support, and coordination.

DEVELOP PROGRAMS TO INCREASE TRIBAL LIBRARY MATERIAL HOLDINGS AND TO DEVELOP RELEVANT COLLECTIONS IN ALL FORMATS

Implementation Strategies:

- Improve the quality and quantity of tribal library resources through enhanced leadership efforts at all levels.
- Develop more effective measures to assure the publication and availability of and access to culturally appropriate materials for tribal libraries.
- Develop guidelines to enable assessment of existing material in all formats, in order to identify relative and appropriate items.
- Develop guidelines to assist in the production and selection of Native language books and resources as well as culturally sensitive and non-stereotypical materials about Native Americans in all formats.
- Amend the Native American Culture and Arts Program under the Higher Education Act to provide support for the correction of inaccuracies in existing materials about Native Americans.

IMPROVE ACCESS AND STRENGTHEN COOPERATIVE ACTIVITIES

Implementation Strategies:

- Create cooperative programs involving school and community libraries to better serve smaller Native American populations.
- Consider the establishment of a permanent National Advisory Committee on Native American libraries to recommend policies and programs to the President and the U. S. Congress that affect tribal library and information services.
- Establish a national Native American electronic network for information sharing.

DEVELOP STATE AND LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Implementation Strategies:

- Promote State/local partnerships together with the Federal sector to develop a progressive program of library and information services for Native Americans.
- Amend the Library Services and Construction Act to include Native American governments as direct recipients of State administered funds.
- Encourage formal cooperative agreements by Native Americans with State, local, and regional governments.
- Improve relationships between Native American governments and State Library Administrative Agencies.

ESTABLISH GENERAL FEDERAL POLICY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Implementation Strategies:

- Formulate, coordinate, and implement a national information policy for Native American library and information services with NCLIS and other Federal agencies.

IDENTIFY MODEL PROGRAMS FOR NATIVE AMERICAN LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SERVICES

Implementation Strategies:

- Plan and implement a study of existing Tribal, Hawaiian Native, and Alaska Native Village libraries to identify model library and information service programs.

DEVELOP MUSEUM AND ARCHIVAL SERVICES FOR PRESERVING NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURES

Implementation Strategies:

- Expand the tribal library service program to include archival services.

ENCOURAGE ADULT AND FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMS, BASIC JOB SKILLS TRAINING; AND, STRENGTHEN TRIBAL COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND LIBRARIES

Implementation Strategies:

- Establish the tribal library or community college as the tribal literacy and job skills center.
- Improve working relationships with non-Native American literacy providers to benefit from their expertise.
- Amend the Community Services Act to provide for family literacy programs and culturally based programs that incorporate the oral tradition.

ENCOURAGE APPLICATION OF NEWER INFORMATION NETWORK TECHNOLOGIES

Implementation Strategies:

- Enact special legislation to provide Indian reservations with funds to establish a basic program of library and information technologies.
- Provide specialized training and retraining activities for Native Americans in new library and information technologies.
- Encourage stronger participation by Indian tribes in information networks.

The adoption of the implementation strategies that follow each challenge would contribute immeasurably to the development and improvement of Native American

library and information services. This action agenda should sound a clarion call to all levels of government and to the private sector to undertake a stronger, more proactive role in assisting one of our country's national treasures the Native American peoples.

BACKGROUND

In the early 1970's NCLIS became increasingly aware of reported deficiencies in library and information services to Native Americans. Further investigations undertaken by the Commission led to a series of regional hearings that revealed serious problems in the ability of institutions and organizations to satisfy the informational needs of the Indian communities. Testimony presented at these hearings indicated the inadequacy of the existing library and information services and pointed to the need for the establishment and maintenance of new services and facilities specifically designed to provide for these tribal groups.

The Commission's interest in Native American library and information services resulted in convocation of the first Pre-White House Conference on Native American Library and Information Services, in Denver, Colorado, in 1978. This Pre-Conference was one of many held by the States and Territories in preparation for the first White House Conference on Library and Information Services (WHCLIS), conducted in Washington, D.C. in 1979. Among the 64 resolutions passed by the delegates at this Conference was a National Indian Omnibus Library Bill (NIOLB), which called for enactment of legislation to provide help in developing library and information services on all Indian reservations, and included training for librarians and other forms of assistance. Legislation passed in 1985 as Title IV of the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) incorporated 22 resolutions from the 1979 WHCLIS, including the NIOLB.

In late 1988, the Commission decided to hold another series of public hearings to learn of the progress made in the conditions and needs of library and information services for Native Americans. The purpose of these hearings was to assess the changes in the extent and quality of services to the Indian communities in the years since the enactment of LSCA Title IV in 1985. Five hearings were held between 1989 and late 1991, covering every region of the United States. In conjunction with the hearings, Commissioners and NCLIS staff also made site visits to local or nearby libraries and information service centers on or near reservations nationwide in order to gather information, make personal observations, and talk directly with Native Americans and tribal leaders. These hearings, visits, and discussions provided a wealth of information and impressions that serve as the basis for the report.

The findings resulting from the NCLIS hearings and site visits to Native American library and information service centers on or near reservations revealed that both improvement and deterioration had occurred in the decade since the implementation of LSCA Title IV. As a result of these discoveries, an Ad Hoc Committee on Indian Library Services was appointed by the Chairman of the Commission and charged to identify

strategies for improving library and information services for the Indian communities. Central to this effort was the announcement that NCLIS would engage in a renewed monitoring program in an attempt to assess directly the "...state of Indian libraries as well as the tribal environment in which they operate."

In addition to the series of regional hearings and site visits, other major activities of the Commission included the following:

- The formation in mid-1989 of a special Commission Interagency/Association Task Force on Library and Information Services to Native Americans comprised of representatives from key Federal agencies and Native American societies and associations, which was charged to assist NCLIS with planning and information gathering efforts related to Native American library and information services;
- The administration of a special survey of Native American public library and information services in the continental United States performed by the American Indian Library Association with the cooperation of the National Advisory Council on Indian Education and NCLIS. This survey was confined to Indians living on or near reservations;
- The preparation of a Strategic Plan for the Development of Library and Information Services to Native Americans, which was developed in cooperation with representatives from the Native American community, library leaders, and government officials;
- The planning and implementation of the second Pre-White House Conference on Native American Library and information Services in early 1991 in cooperation with the National Congress of American Indians;
- The planning and implementation, in coordination with the National Indian Policy Center at George Washington University, of a Forum on Native American Library, Information, and Archival Services held May 22-23, 1991;
- The presentation of testimony before the Select Committee on Indian Affairs of the U.S. Senate, May 23, 1991, "Oversight Hearing to Gain a Better Understanding of the Condition of Native American Libraries, Archives, and Information Services," Senator Daniel Inouye, presiding;
- The presentation of testimony before the Joint Congressional Oversight Hearing at the second White House Conference on Library and Information Services, (WHCLIS II) July 11, 1991, Senator Claiborne Pell, presiding.

The key objective underlying these and other NCLIS activities was to secure Native American involvement and perspective in gathering information and in understanding the issues involved with the provision of library and information services to Indian communities. In keeping with this strategy, the Commission sought the advice and opinion of experts, and used expert testimony as the basis for this report and for developing the Strategic Plan. A second key objective was to assist the Native American library and information services community in planning and preparing for the second Pre-White House Conference in order to assure full and meaningful participation at the National Conference in July 1991. Having accomplished these objectives, the Commission made sure that the findings and challenges included in this report are based

on proposals made to them by those Native Americans who were directly involved in the activities underlying this study.

CHALLENGES FOR CHANGE

A comprehensive and accurate understanding of the role of libraries in the educational, cultural, governmental, economic, and recreational life of a community is essential to the development of policies that assure that the needs of the people and the achievement of national goals will be met adequately through library and information services. This is especially true for Native American communities. The future viability of the Indian peoples depends upon the quality and effectiveness of the education and learning systems that support their communities. Without attention to improving the quality of Native American library and information services, the educational effectiveness of these communities will suffer.

As noted in the Final Report of the Indian Nations at Risk Task Force issued in October 1991, a significant barrier to achieving educational excellence is "...limited library and learning resources to meet the academic and cultural needs of the community." President Bush, speaking at the White House Conference on Library and Information Services, in July 1991, noted that the Nation's system of libraries plays a pivotal role in achieving increased literacy, improved productivity, and enhanced democracy for all citizens of our Nation. In transmitting the recommendations from the Conference to the Congress, the President pointed out that library and information services "stand at the center of the revolution..." occurring in reshaping education and restructuring our schools.

It is evident from the NCLIS study that Native American library and information services require assistance and attention. This section of the report presents the Commission's findings and offers challenges for change. In addition, suggestions for implementing programs and actions are identified that address the need for progress and development of Native American library and information services. The findings are grouped into ten issues or challenges. These challenges are those articulated by those many groups, organizations, agencies, and entities that share concern for the future of the American Indian peoples and their cultures.

1. Develop Consistent Funding Sources Required to Support Improved Native American Library and Information Services

FINDINGS

The single most critical need identified by the Commission's study is the need for consistent and adequate funding support for the improvement of Native American library and information services.

Most tribal resources and economies are insufficient to provide and maintain funding at levels adequate to support and sustain quality library and information service programs. Even among those isolated Native American communities that have made significant

progress towards self-sufficiency, only limited resources are available for library and information service support.

Regardless of funding source, the *consistency* of support is a key element in building strong and responsive library and information services. The consequences of funding support fluctuations whether through grants, from Federal, State, local, or private sector sources, through regular funding channels, or through one-time resource commitments produce an uneven basis for planning and development of service programs. Consistent, dependable, and regular fund resource allocations present a predictable basis for program development and are required for those programs that demand significant lead-time to realize the full return service benefit.

Two primary sources of support for Native American libraries and information services are the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) Title IV and local tribal budgets. While tribes view LSCA Basic Grants as significant, this support is not sufficient for library operation or development. The majority of tribes do not have local income-producing resources or industries that provide sufficient revenue to support local services. Through treaty obligations the Federal government appropriates funds that support basic tribal functions and services. Federal appropriated resources are used for road maintenance, law enforcement, health services, administrative costs, and the other basic services necessary for tribal operations. Some tribes do allocate some funds for library services, but these instances are the exception rather than the rule.

A few States do provide a small amount of annual support for tribal libraries administered through the State's library agency. These instances, however, are rare since there is no State or local taxation on reservations or allotted land.

PROVIDE CONSISTENT FUNDING SUPPORT AT ALL LEVELS

The Commission believes that steady and reliable financial support needs to be established at the Federal, State, local, private, and non-public levels in order to enable Native American reservations and villages to meet minimum standards for the provision of a full range of information services responsive to the needs of their communities. These needs include the educational, economic, social, cultural, historical, and technical information requirements that vary from group to group, from community to community, from tribe to tribe, and from region to region.

CONTINUE THE PROGRAMS AS EMBODIED IN THE LIBRARY SERVICES FOR INDIAN TRIBES AND HAWAIIAN NATIVES PROGRAM (TITLE IV OF THE LIBRARY SERVICES AND CONSTRUCTION ACT)

The Commission also believes, in particular, that a policy review be instituted of appropriation levels for LSCA, including Title IV, the Library Services for Indian Tribes and Hawaiian Natives Program. Testimonial evidence received by the Commission overwhelmingly attests to the value and importance of the Title IV program, which was

enacted in 1985. Testimony provided to the Commission through the five regional hearings in 1989-1991 constantly referred to the effectiveness of this program.

The Basic grant portion of this program is substantial for small tribes, and has been particularly useful with the acquisition of resources, staffing, training, and minor construction projects. The Special Projects grant portion is especially important to both large and small tribes because there is no limit to the size of the grant, provided it is properly matched with commitment of local resources. In many instances, however, tribes do not have the resources for matching the grant and therefore cannot take advantage of these funds. This portion of the grant program has largely supported major construction or remodeling projects that facilitate the development of library and information center building programs for both new construction and for the renovation and rehabilitation of existing structures to be used for public, school, and community college library and information service functions.

The Commission believes that these grant programs should be continued and extended, noting also the following:

- The application and reporting process for Basic grants available through LSCA Title IV should be simplified. Current procedures present difficulties for the smaller tribes.
- A major resolution adopted at the 1991 WHCLIS recommends that the LSCA Title IV program be divided into two parts: a Basic and Supplemental grant program, separately funded; and a Special Projects programs, separately funded.

EMULATE NEW YORK STATE'S LANDMARK STATUTE PROVIDING PERMANENT SUPPORT FOR INDIAN LIBRARIES

All states are encouraged to consider the wisdom of enacting or otherwise adapting New York State's landmark statute, enacted in 1977, that authorizes permanent, ongoing State funding support for Indian libraries. Through this annual support, the Indian libraries in New York have met basic standards for public library service and have obtained State charters, thus enabling them to join their respective regional public library systems and participate in a variety of cooperative activities. The chartered libraries qualify for full participation in Title 1 of the LSCA Public Library Services Program, as well as LSCA Title IV.

Since the vast majority of States provide little or no State or LSCA financial support to Native American Tribal libraries, the New York model presents an exciting challenge to the Nation for serious consideration and policy discussion. The Commission encourages this activity.

ACCESS THE CONDITION OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES TO NATIVE AMERICANS

Standards for library and information services to Native American populations living on reservations need to be developed through a process that incorporates the identification of minimum levels of service appropriate to the information needs of these communities.

A program for the collection and compilation of regular and consistent quantitative and qualitative information about the status and conditions of American Indian libraries is required in order to serve as the basis for setting standards, perhaps as a subset of the Federal-State Cooperative System for Public Library Data (FSCS). This program should collect information about sources and levels of funding in support of Native American libraries.

ENCOURAGE TRIBAL PLANNING TO INCLUDE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

The Commission encourages tribal leaders and planners from Federal agencies and other groups to give high priority to the development of tribal library services in their planning process in order to assist in the provision of a basic program of library and information services including providing current and relevant information for use by the tribal leaders as they determine policies. Tribal leaders and those involved with community planning should seriously consider actions to implement to Strategic Plan (The Report, Part A). The successful inclusion of library and information services in the tribal planning process depends upon the availability of information support materials to facilitate the planning process. The Commission encourages the Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs to establish this a priority for tribal leaders and planners.

FORGE STRONGER BONDS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

The Commission believes that tribal leaders and planners should pursue more vigorously the diverse sources of financial support from private foundations and business concerns with a specialized interest in Native American community affairs. In particular, tribal leaders and planners encouraged to study private sector support based on experience in the Pacific North-west and in the Mountain Plains regions.

SUPPORT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF WHCLIS II

The Federal government should give every consideration to the implementation of all resolutions affecting Native American library and information services that were unanimously adopted with the only standing vote by the Delegate to the second White House Conference on Library and Information Services held in 1991. These resolutions were also adopted by the Delegates to the 1992 White House Conference on Indian Education.

2. Strengthen Library and Information Services Training and Technical Assistance to Native American Communities

FINDINGS

The majority of staff working in tribal libraries have little or no education or training in librarianship or information services. This lack, along with inadequate library personnel development programs, is considered to be the second most critical need for the improvement of library and information services to Native Americans.

It is estimated that there are less than 100 Native Americans working in reservation or village libraries, most of whom are paraprofessionals with no formal education or training in library science. This means that the majority of tribes and Alaska Native villages do not have a professional librarian.

Dozens of testifiers at all of the hearing sites clearly and strongly recommended that the Federal government establish a special program to recruit, train, and employ more Native Americans as professional librarians. They also recommended that paraprofessional and in-service training funds be appropriated and used for the training and retraining of Native Americans. This matter was the subject of two major resolutions passed at the 1991 WHCLIS and remains one of the most critical problems for Native American library and information services.

It is noted further, that at present no single State or Federal agency is coordinating and developing library and information services to Native Americans.

The Strategic Plan for the Development of Library and Information Services to Native Americans (The Report, Part A) indicates that the lack of coordination among diverse Federal agencies and the lack of overall coordinating leadership has impeded development of Native American library programs. Most States do not include tribal libraries in their statewide library network plans.

An enormous amount of testimony from a variety of sources singled-out the no longer funded project TRAILS (Training and Assistance for Indian Library Services) as one of the most valuable programs conceived, since it provided the tribes with the technical assistance that most of them desperately needed as a result of the enactment of LSCA Title IV.

Time and again, Native American tribal librarians, planners, and leaders attested to the fact that they could not have coped with the LSCA application and reporting process and could not have planned well for the effective use of grant funds received without the technical assistance provided by TRAILS.

Strong recommendations were made for the restoration of TRAILS, which had been funded for 16 months during the mid- 1980's under Title-B of the Higher Education Act (The Library Research and Demonstration Program). Many Native Americans feel strongly that the project or a similar effort is needed. A major resolution passed at WHCLIS II in 1991, calls for the creation of a National Native American Technical Assistance Center, the function of which is conceived as being able to do what TRAILS did. This is among the strongest findings and the tribes desperately need high-level,

professional guidance and direction by qualified experts in library and information science.

EXPAND EFFORTS TO RECRUIT NATIVE AMERICANS AS LIBRARIANS AND INFORMATION SPECIALISTS

The Commission believes that Federal, State, and local governments, together with academia, professional societies, and the private sector, should give higher priority to the recruitment and retention of more Native Americans to pursue careers in the library, and information industries as teachers, instructors, trainers, educators, librarians, information specialists/managers, media specialists, archivists, technology specialists, and administrators, both at the professional and staff levels.

PROVIDE INDIVIDUAL FINANCIAL GRANT OPPORTUNITIES FOR NATIVE AMERICANS AT BOTH THE PROFESSIONAL AND PARAPROFESSIONAL LEVELS

The Commission believes that discrete financial aid opportunities should be provided for Native Americans as an incentive to pursue advanced graduate degrees in library and information related disciplines in order to engage in graduate level teaching and research in areas related to Native American culture and history and to pursue professional entry level degrees in library and information science in order to serve as tribal library support/staff technicians. Such financial aid opportunities should also provide for retraining, in-service training, and distance learning.

STRENGTHEN NATIVE AMERICAN ARCHIVAL SERVICES

Native American archival needs present specialized career opportunities for those with a knowledge of tribal customs, history, culture, and language. Special efforts should be made to recruit Native Americans to enter this highly specialized field and to meet the critical needs of countless tribes for the preservation, organization, and storage of a priceless part of their unique heritage.

ENHANCE AND EMPHASIZE THE ROLE OF LIBRARIANS AND INFORMATION SPECIALISTS AS TEACHERS

The public and private sectors, including Native American societies, should mount a strong campaign to make tribal leaders and decision makers more aware of the unique role librarians and information specialists can play in the furtherance of tribal objectives. Librarians and information specialists can have a forceful impact on all aspects of tribal life. Through the provision of information, strong guidance can be provided to augment the fight to reduce and eliminate societal problems such as disease, alcoholism, unemployment, high school dropout rates, etc.

ESTABLISH A NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

The Commission believes that the U. S. Congress, with the full support of the Administration, should replace the previously funded project TRAILS with a National Native American Technical Assistance Center, which will provide leadership, coordination, advocacy, and development direction. The authorization and funding bills implementing this initiative should be based on Part G of WHCLIS II Petition 07 (The Report, Part E) and should include adequate, ongoing funding.

3. Develop Programs to Increase Tribal Library Material Holdings and to Develop Relevant Collections in All Formats

FINDINGS

Library collections in most tribal libraries (if they exist) are inordinately sparse, outdated, and sadly lacking in culturally appropriate materials. Many tribal people testified as to inaccuracies, misconceptions, and distortions in commercially available materials about Native Americans. They sought ways to heighten public and publisher awareness of these misrepresentations and to rectify the problem by the elimination of existing stereotypical materials.

During NCLIS regional hearings and site visits, a number of tribal representatives expressed frustration over their ability to access the Nation's rich resources about Native Americans. Native people are aware of many items related to their heritage that are housed in research libraries but are not readily accessible to them. Printed Indian language material is almost non-existent. Tribes lack the financial and personnel resources required to significantly impact the quality of their library collections.

Again, the application of networking technologies was mentioned as an effective, viable solution. Delivery of materials by facsimile, electronic mail, full text databases, or other means of resource sharing is deemed imperative if the problems of inadequate resources and access in tribal libraries are to be solved. In addition, the opportunities presented by interactive multimedia networking are worth exploring.

It is also found that, in addition to acquiring Native American cultural heritage resources in print, many Native Americans felt that the publishing industry should give higher priority to publishing resources that will help eliminate the traditional, negative stereotype of the Native American as savage and help reflect a truer picture of the rich, civilized, and cultural accomplishments of the tribes in pre- and post-Columbian times. At least one WHCLIS II resolution goes even further, recommending that a Federal program be established to support the writing and making and publishing of specialized resources by and about Native Americans. In all of this was the urgent, compelling desire to get these types of resources into the hands, minds, and hearts of non-Indians of all ages.

TAKE IMMEDIATE STEPS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF TRIBAL COLLECTIONS

The majority of tribal library collections are substandard both in size and appropriateness. Measures should be taken as quickly as possible to upgrade tribal collections by acquiring sufficient materials in all formats to meet minimum professional standards and specific tribal needs. Outdated, useless, and inappropriate materials, many of which, though well-intended, are gift items with absolutely no relevance to tribal needs or interests, should be discarded. In addition to tribal leaders, others at all levels of government and the private sector as well should take a proactive interest in the development of tribal collections.

ASSURE THE AVAILABILITY OF AND ACCESS TO CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE NATIVE AMERICAN MATERIAL

Multicultural and multilingual library and information resources, materials, and programs tailored to the specialized and individual needs of the Native American communities that they are serving must be developed or strengthened. These materials and resources are needed in all formats printed works, textual, visual, audio, and multimedia. These distinctive materials need to be made accessible through libraries and information services that provide effective distribution channels to the Native American populations.

The unique nature of the Native American oral tradition requires the creation and development of multicultural and Native language materials, which should be available to both Indian and to non-Indian peoples alike. The non-textual oral tradition culture necessitates a special effort to develop materials from a non-dominant cultural perspective.

The application of electronic information technology gives special opportunity here, especially in the application of multimedia and networking technologies for graphic, audio, and full-motion color images. This technology is also able to mitigate the effect of great geographic distances characteristic of tribal lands.

Special areas of culturally appropriate Native American materials include:

- The archival needs of Native Americans can be addressed by the capabilities of electronic technology to generate, author, and create new, original materials, reflecting the distinctive tribal culture and heritage;
- Some Native American languages are dying, compelling the need for preservation efforts through the development and compilation of dictionaries and other tools that will ensure preservation of expression for future generations;
- Native language books and other print resources need to be published and made available as broadly as possible;
- Native American legal documentation presents specialized information needs that can provide a context for unique resource development, management, and interpretation.

PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL NATIVE AMERICAN ELECTRONIC NETWORK FOR INFORMATION SHARING

The sharing of information among Native American tribes, Hawaiian Natives, and Alaska Native Villages is essential. The Commission believes that consideration should be given to a legislative initiative to establish a National Native American Electronic Network enabling the tribes and villages to communicate, cooperate, and share information, and materials rapidly. The Network should be designed to address multiplicity of special library and information needs of Native Americans and have the capability to interface with other national library and information networks and databases. This initiative could be part of new omnibus bill, as was discussed at the second White House Conference on Library Information Science in 1991 or could be included by amending existing legislation.

DEVELOP GUIDELINES TO ACCESS LIBRARY RESOURCES ABOUT NATIVE AMERICANS

The Commission believes that guidelines should be developed by the library profession and the publishing industry together with the Native American community to encourage the publication of materials in all formats about Native Americans from a viewpoint that is not culturally inappropriate or stereotypical. The guidelines should be widely disseminated throughout the Nation with the endorsement of major professional societies

DEVELOP GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND SELECTION OF CULTURALLY SENSITIVE AND NON-STEREOTYPICAL LIBRARY RESOURCES

The Commission believes that guidelines should be developed to sensitize the library profession and publishing industry as to meritorious, positive criteria for the development an selection of culturally sensitive and non-stereotypical materials about Native Americans in formats. These guidelines should also be widely disseminated throughout the Nation with the endorsement of the Native American community.

AMEND THE NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE AND ARTS PROGRAM UNDER THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT

The Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, which includes the American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Culture and Art Development Program, should be further amended to provide funds for the correction of inaccuracies in Native American materials, including textbooks (The Report Part E).

4. Improve Access and Strengthen Cooperative Activities

FINDINGS

Native Americans are deeply concerned about access to resources and information both on and off the reservation. For example, many Indian students are bussed to and from distant schools daily. They leave immediately after school on the bus and return to their communities arriving after the tribal library is closed, so they have virtually no access to library resources. The same is true of some of the tribal college libraries that also serve as

the tribal library. Many tribes with a regular community library have limited hours of operation because of fiscal and staff constraints.

Isolation has been mentioned many times as a critical problem, not just in States such as Arizona and Montana (where the distance from home to library may be 50 to 150 miles) but also in smaller States, like those in New England. Bookmobiles are a possible solution. Associated with this issue is the finding that many Native Americans, both reservation and non-reservation dwellers, need to rely on the nearest local public library, but are either discouraged from entering or made to feel unwelcome.

However, it has been found that some positive interfacing between tribes and the local and State libraries is taking place. In California, for example, the State Librarian has launched a special program for Native Americans and has assigned a special consultant to work with tribes. The program operates in conjunction with the local county library. More cooperative efforts of this type need to take place, as several WHCLIS II resolutions recommend, and tribes need to learn how to borrow resources through interlibrary loan at the local, regional and State levels.

In this regard, the most startling finding is the clear admission that tribes will never get all the resources and information they need and that immediate steps must be taken to get them into the library and information networking mainstream. To do so, of course, will require money for machines, for expertise, and for administration. The concept of a national inter-tribal network emerged several times, as well as the prospect of a national clearinghouse for the acquisition and study of Native American resources, studies, and other materials.

Considerable testimony centered around the issues of whether or not the tribal school libraries (where they exist) should become the tribal community library as well. As indicated earlier in this report, there could be problems about hours of operation, especially on weekends. Further, some concern was expressed about the ready availability of adult materials to children and youth during school hours.

Under the principle of self-determination, each tribe makes its own decision regarding this issue. However, discussion can be furthered by disseminating to the tribes the school/community library models that exist primarily in Alaska and Hawaii. In these States, combined libraries have proven effective when properly planned and operated.

CREATE COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS

Cooperative programs involving school and community libraries should be encouraged in order to better serve smaller populations with a wider range of resources and information services at all levels of need including school age students, adult basic education, literacy training, information/referral services, students at post-secondary educational institutions, recreational reading needs, and the needs of the older citizen.

Crossing school, local, and tribal sector boundaries and jurisdictions presents challenges to successful programs involving multiple-agency coordination. Some achievements attainable through cooperation are:

- Combining resources, as well as skills and training, can offer an expanded array of collections, human resources, and facilities for more effective information service provision;
- Programming jointly for special subsegments of user populations is possible through job training, reading skills development, literacy training, adult basic education, etc.;
- Promotion of child-parent-elderly involvement with reading program is possible;
- Cross-cultural, inter-community cooperative programs involving non-Indian libraries with Native American library services are possible through these inter-institutional programs;
- Cooperative and collaborative service program development possibilities amplify the offerings of school library media centers and public libraries, as well as Native American Tribal libraries and Native American Community College libraries;
- Creative use of the Department of Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Satellite to BIA Schools Program should be encouraged for special programs and for training tribal citizens to work with library and information resources in their communities.

CONSIDER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Commission believes a permanent National Advisory Committee on Native American Libraries, the members of which would include representatives of Native American librarians, archivists and information specialists, and representatives of State and Federal agencies with Indian responsibilities, should be established. The Committee would recommend to the President and the Congress policies and programs to improve access to library, archival, and information services to Native Americans. The proposed Committee would regularly address problems of access, which are extremely diverse and locally specific, ranging from geographic isolation to the inability of library patrons to utilize new information technologies. Additional funds should be earmarked for administrative purposes to support the work of the Committee, which would also monitor the progress of library, archival, and information services to Native Americans.

5. Develop State and Local Partnerships

FINDINGS

Little formal cooperation exists between tribal libraries and State library agencies or other county, regional, or local public libraries.

Some instances of exemplary cooperative arrangements have been noted in site visits, but most often cooperation, if it exists at all, is on an informal, ad hoc basis and usually the result of particular individuals and their personal commitments.

It is evident from testimony given at NCLIS Regional Hearings that in some States, such as California and New York, the State and local public library systems can provide effective support to the tribes in terms of technical assistance, services, training, planning, and guidance. Regardless of tribal sovereignty, library and information services must be viewed as a whole within a State or region, and tribal libraries should be a consideration for all States in the planning and development of library programs.

Although the relationship regarding funding of tribal libraries and the responsibilities of the State is less clear than that of the Federal government, there appears, to be a need for dialogue at the national level on this topic. Some States, New York for example, provide financial support. Other States, however, due to the status of tribes as sovereign nations, adopt a "hands-off" policy and are, at best, reluctant to provide services or financial support to tribes.

PROMOTE STATE/LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

The States and localities can be partners together with the Federal sector in developing a progressive program supporting the development and improvement of Native American library and information services. Such partnerships require the following:

- A process to reach agreement among all parties in all sectors on program objectives, outcomes, and strategies for improving the quality of library and information services for Native American peoples;
- The incorporation of local private concerns and industry support;
- A community base and the representation of all elements and interests within a mixed and diverse cultural context.

AMEND THE LIBRARY SERVICES AND CONSTRUCTION ACT

Congress should consider amending the Library Services and Construction Act to include Native American governments as direct recipients of State administered funds. This would forge stronger bonds with State Library Administrative Agencies and promote a wide variety of cooperative activities.

ENCOURAGE FORMAL COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

Formal cooperative agreements, similar to the State, local, and regional memorandums of agreement with Native American governments as adopted by WHCLIS II (The Report, Part E) should be explored and implemented where appropriate.

FORGE STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS WITH STATE LIBRARY ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCIES

As noted earlier, under LSCA Title IV, most State library agencies want to help in the development of tribal libraries. States can provide effective support to tribes through technical assistance, training, funding, and other services. The places where it is working

(e.g. Arizona, California, New York, New Mexico, and others) should be studied and otherwise adopted or modified.

6. Establish General Federal Policy and Responsibilities

FINDINGS

Interestingly, NCLIS itself became a "finding" in terms of tribal needs. Several witnesses emphasized that NCLIS should take a more proactive role in assisting tribes and Native Americans by: providing technical assistance; speaking out more strongly on behalf of the tribes; securing funding; and conducting special studies and periodic updates on tribal library needs.

In this regard, a resolution was passed at the 1991 WHCLIS urging that NCLIS convene a national forum to develop a coordinated national research and development agenda for library and information technologies and a funding strategy. Several persons mentioned that Native American needs and interests should be a major focus of the forum, if and when it happens. And finally, the following is direct testimony from Jane Kolbe, the State Librarian of South Dakota:

I believe that NCLIS could make a step toward achieving the objectives identified by designing library programs, outreach, and delivery systems that will ensure timely access to information in a manner compatible with the Native American culture.... Sustained and continuous funding will be critical. Bringing together the many Federal, State, and local agencies and organizations that could impact such a program and funding will be the Commission's greatest challenge. The benefits to... America's culture and economy are worth the enormous effort required.

In short, it was found that NCLIS should maintain a strong, ongoing role in regard to library and information services for Native Americans and their special needs.

No Federal policy currently exists specifically for library and information services for Native Americans.

The rationale to support the development of a Federal policy lies in the unique government-to-government relationship between tribes and the Federal government. This relationship was recognized and reaffirmed by President Bush on June 24, 1991 when he issued a statement on Indian policy. In it he acknowledged the existence of the government-to-government relationship and gave the responsibility of working with tribes to a new office within the Department of the Interior. This new office is charged with finding ways of transferring decision-making powers to tribal governments.

Indian tribes are aware that information is a resource necessary for good tribal government decision making, problem solving, productivity and economic development, all of which lead to tribal self-determination and self-sufficiency. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the Federal government to execute a policy that ensures the provision

and appropriate access to information for Native American tribal governments and their tribal members.

FORGE AND IMPLEMENT A NATIONAL INFORMATION POLICY FOR LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES FOR NATIVE AMERICANS

The Commission believes that a national policy should be developed that would ensure the provision of a basic program of public library and information services to all Native American governments. Such a policy should include facilities, print and nonprint resources, equipment, properly trained library and information personnel, and regional Native American networking infrastructures. The National Advisory Committee, suggested in Challenge IV, along with tribal leaders and Native American organizations and societies could provide leadership in policy formulation.

7. Identify Model Programs for Native American Libraries and Information Services

FINDINGS

Model programs for library and information services to Native American communities can serve as examples that point the way toward more effective library and information services for all Native peoples and, by extension, to other cultural minorities who will be components of the diverse fabric of the Nation in the next century.

Because of the wide and diverse nature of the Nation's Native American Tribes, Hawaiian Natives, and Alaska Native Villages, there is great difficulty among Native

Americans and non-Native Americans alike in determining how best to approach solutions to the myriad problems facing the tribes and villages. Regional testimony, personal observations, and other information garnered by the Commission points to a critical need for identifying a variety of models from which the tribes and villages can choose and/or tailor to their unique, individual library and information needs.

UNDERTAKE A STUDY OF TRIBAL LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

Indian reservations and Alaska and Hawaiian Native Villages should be studied and surveyed to find out what programs have been successful and to identify program service models. To accomplish this, the Commission feels that sufficient funds should be appropriated and earmarked under the Library Research and Demonstration Program (Title II-B of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended) for five years. The results should be widely disseminated so that the tribes can have a large measure of meaningful, effective guidance and direction.

8. Develop Museum and Archival Services for Preserving Native American Cultures

FINDINGS

It was learned that many tribal libraries are beginning to assume responsibility for meeting the need for museum and archival programs. Not only are these programs important for the tribes, in terms of cultural heritage, but they also enable the Native American community to re-educate non-Native Americans by providing them with a more accurate depiction of Native American history and contributions. This trend clearly underscores the more dynamic role the tribal library can have within the tribal community.

CONSIDER ESTABLISHING THE TRIBAL LIBRARY TO INCLUDE ARCHIVAL SERVICES

Tribal leaders may wish to consider restructuring library and information services to include archival programs so as to serve all aspects of tribal information needs. Without archival materials, the Native American heritage can become extinct. To accomplish this, specialized training needs to be provided for the individuals responsible for these services.

Tribal leaders may also wish to consider preserving valuable historical documents and also making them more accessible by utilizing microform and electronic technology. Oral history is another way of preserving and protecting Native American history, culture, and heritage. In all this, the tribal library can play an important role in providing the expertise to achieve these important goals.

9. Encourage Adult and Family Literacy Programs, Basic Job Skills Training; and Strengthen Tribal Community Colleges

FINDINGS

Illiteracy is a major problem on Indian reservations, yet with little or no public library services many tribes are helpless to combat it. Numerous tribes reported (or were found to have) illiteracy rates of 50 percent or higher.

Testimony from witnesses at the Commission's regional hearings indicates that library literacy programs are extremely effective and that dramatic progress is being made on Indian reservations where adequate library resources and well-trained staff are present. Witnesses also attribute the illiteracy problem to the lack of libraries in the schools their children attend and to the lack of relevant library programs for adults.

The need for culturally appropriate, high quality print and nonprint resources by and about Native Americans is viewed as one factor contributing to a lack of interest in reading and learning. Intergenerational literacy programs are also mentioned as being highly effective methodologies, particularly in an informal library setting rather than in a formal, intimidating classroom environment. It has also been noted that non-Native

American library services, when available, are not the answer because of cultural and geographical barriers.

ESTABLISH THE TRIBAL LIBRARY AS A LITERACY CENTER

The Commission believes that tribal leaders should expand tribal library programs and services to include literacy. Utilizing tribal funds, Basic grants such as under LSCA Title IV, and Library Literacy grants under

LSCA Title VI, specialized training, additional specialized print and nonprint resources, equipment, etc., can be made available. In so doing, the tribal library could serve as an education, training, and job skills development center.

Library and information services need to be mobilized to provide basic information skills and literacy training through programs that involve community resources from a wide array of public, non-profit, and private organizations and institutions.

Among the areas of special need are the following:

- Information literacy related to use of libraries and information resources and technologies;
- Basic reading literacy;
- Specialized reading resources to attract and sustain the interest of the Native American populations to use these literacy materials;
- Special bilingual training and resources for these literacy training activities centered in tribal and community college libraries on reservations;
- Literacy training for library staff to facilitate literacy work, manage literacy programs for the community, and to provide training to others who will supply instruction;
- Unique cultural forces at play in the tribal environment require specialized resources, services, and support for a successful literacy effort.

FORGE STRONGER BONDS WITH NON-NATIVE AMERICAN LITERACY PROVIDERS

Through improved cooperative activities with State, local and regional public library systems (as described in Challenges IV & V), Native American libraries can benefit immeasurably from their expertise, since they have been at work combating illiteracy for more than 30 years. With their guidance, literacy programs specifically tailored to meet the needs of the tribes can be planned and implemented. The Commission strongly urges tribal leaders to utilize this potential.

AMEND THE COMMUNITY SERVICES ACT

A major resolution adopted unanimously by the 1991 WHCLIS calls for amending the Community Services Act, which contains provision for the administration of Native

American services, to provide family literacy programs for Native American communities and to provide culturally based programs that incorporate the oral tradition, Native American cultural materials, and the utilization of Elders for intergenerational impact. The Commission concurs since at its regional hearings the effectiveness of culturally based library programs was frequently mentioned. This amendment could provide still another tool and funding source for the tribes to secure assistance.

10. Encourage Application of Newer Information Network Technologies

FINDINGS

As with staffing, resources, and facilities, the finding is that with a few exceptions Indian reservations are deplorably bereft of the equipment, expertise, and knowledge necessary to employ the new library and information technologies and to engage in meaningful networking and resource-sharing activities. Most tribes are without even the most basic types of technological support e.g., modems, computers, fax machines, etc. The tribes cannot enter the Information Age without these tools. It is also found that little or no cooperation exists among tribal libraries. As with other types of libraries, most tribal library cooperation is the result of efforts by individuals who form some kind of formal or informal arrangement with their counterparts and improvise.

PROVIDE FUNDS FOR A BASIC PROGRAM OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

A major initiative should be mounted at the Federal level to insure that Indian reservations are able to acquire the digital computing and telecommunications technology that is required for them to participate in the Information Age. This can be accomplished by amending LSCA Title IV or by introducing special legislation.

PROVIDE SPECIALIZED TRAINING FOR NATIVE AMERICAN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES PERSONNEL

In order to utilize the new technologies, Native American librarians and information specialists need to have specialized training. Federal, State, and Tribal governments must establish this as a priority in their planning for meeting library and information technology training needs. Distance learning activities with State library administrative agencies and graduate schools of library and information services should be considered.

PARTICIPATE IN INFORMATION NETWORKS

Network and multimedia information technologies present unique applications that can meet the culturally distinctive needs of Indian reservations and overcome problems of geographic isolation. Sharing information among the reservations presents special opportunities for extending the range of information and other resources, both general and unique. A mechanism for inter-tribal networking, resource sharing, and the development of special databases needs to be in place in order for users to access this

information and to be able to use commercial databases. All state-of-the-art telecommunication technologies should be utilized.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

It is most appropriate that this Commission report appears almost 500 years to the day since the first recorded cultural encounter between Native Americans and Western Europeans. On this occasion, as all Americans look back, we can reflect upon what has transpired, and project what needs to be done in the future.

This report looks forward; it presents a bold, dramatic plan that calls for change the kinds of change that are long overdue, desperately needed, and essential to the preservation of Native American culture, resources, and identity. The implementation of the ten Challenges thus becomes an eleventh Challenge to all Americans: the President and the Administration, the U.S. Congress, the States and localities, the Indian peoples, the private sector, and the general public. We all have a vested interest in helping every American, both Native and non-Native, to have equal opportunity of access to the resources required to achieve educational excellence. Our success as a Nation over the next millennium requires these changes and the recognition of the need for Native American cultural resources.

All Americans have a role to play in the implementation of the changes called for in this report. Some of the ways each of us can help effect change are:

- Work toward strengthening Federal support for Native American libraries and information services through Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) Basic Grants and other programs of technical assistance;
- Find out what your State, local, or tribal government is already doing to meet the library and information needs of Native peoples and what it can do to implement this report;
- Identify the Challenges that most closely relate to your organization's goals and objectives, and determine ways you can help them to be realized;
- Foster a spirit of cooperation among State and local agencies to welcome and serve Native Americans.

Individually these actions seem small, but when replicated throughout the Nation the collective impact will be significant. This report, if properly implemented, can build future Pathways to Excellence. This, then, is our vision and our eleventh Challenge as step toward the future.