

The American Library Association Goal 2000

Under its new director, Elizabeth Martinez, the American Library Association (ALA) has proposed a reinvention of the Library Services and Construction Act to the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). Its purpose is

1. to stimulate excellence and to promote equity and lifelong access to learning and information resources in all types of libraries

2. to combine federal stimulus to improvement and innovation in library services with state and local support, with cooperative programs with other agencies, and with public / private sector partnerships

3. to establish national library service goals for the 21st century

The ALA proposal consolidates the eight present titles into two. Title I is comprised of two parts. Part A, Information Access through Technology, provides for the improvement of library services so that all people have convenient and appropriate access to information delivered by libraries through new and emerging technologies. Projects would involve (1) organization,

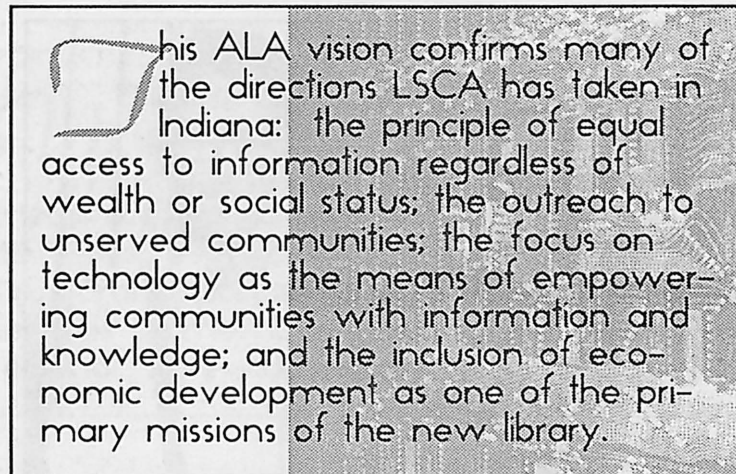
access, and delivery of information; and/or (2) lifelong learning, and workforce and economic development; and/or (3) support of technology infrastructure. Priorities would be specified in the state plan.

Part B, Information Empowerment through

Special Services, provides for the improvement of library and information services targeted to those of all ages and cultures who have difficulty getting to a library, who need special materials or services, or who would benefit from outreach services for equity of access to library services and information technologies, including children (from birth through age 17) living below the federal poverty

level. Projects would involve (1) increasing literacy and lifelong learning; and/or (2) serving the nation's diversity; and/or (3) serving people in rural and urban areas; and/or (4) supporting special services. Priorities, again, would be specified in the state plan.

Title II, General Provisions, stipulates the requirements for funding and administration. The idea is to streamline and simplify the administration of the program. The provisions would increase accountability and evaluation as well as flexibility at the state and local levels. States would join with the federal government as partners for change and implementers of equity.



This ALA vision confirms many of the directions LSCA has taken in Indiana: the principle of equal access to information regardless of wealth or social status; the outreach to unserved communities; the focus on technology as the means of empowering communities with information and knowledge; and the inclusion of economic development as one of the primary missions of the new library.